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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,  
of Clark University,  
tells:

HOW ICICLES FORM

When roofs are heavily covered with snow and the temperature stays below freezing, long icicles may develop, hanging their daggers from eaves or window sashes, and imperilling the heads of passersby when a thaw arrives. The formation of such icicles is dependent upon the blanketing effect of the snow cover. Icicles form readily on eaves of sheds, barns and uninhabited houses, and on fence rails, aqueducts, and cliffs.

In all such cases water from some source, often from snow melted by sunshine, runs down the roof, or other surface, usually protected by snow from the low temperature of the air. The water then comes out at the eaves, where it is more or less rapidly frozen. The evaporation of the exposed water facilitates its freezing.

The house roof is warmed from the house below, and, thanks to the snow blanket, maintains a temperature above freezing. This suffices to melt a little of the snow in immediate contact with the roof. The water runs down to the eaves but freezes at the edge. As the process continues, day and night even in the coldest weather, the icicle becomes longer and longer. In a snowy winter, icicles 10 feet long and 6 to 8 inches in diameter are not infrequently seen. Smaller icicles form fringes on the lower margins of the upper sashes of windows. When the window frost melts, the moisture often runs down the crack between the two sashes and freezes, furnishing the moisture for these dainty little icicles.

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