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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RECORD AMERICAN DOWNPOURS

The heaviest 24-hour rainfall ever recorded by the U. S. Weather Bureau occurred at Taylor, in southeastern Texas, Sept. 9 and 10, 1921, where 23.11 inches fell in 24 hours. This came during two severe thunderstorms, moving very slowly. The amount of this downpour can be better appreciated if we remember that this is over half the average amount of rainfall at New York or Boston and over two-thirds the average for Chicago for a whole year. In the surrounding country farmers' empty water barrels 36 inches deep were filled to overflowing, though standing in the open. It seems certain that the rainfall there exceeded 30 inches within 15 hours. The countryside for 10 miles south of Taylor was under water the morning of the 10th. Houses were washed away or filled with mud, and 87 people were drowned in Taylor and vicinity. Much the same sort of a rain and flood occurred in Beaumont, Texas, May 18, 1923, when in 12 hours 13.54 inches of rain fell, practically all of it in 2 1/2 hours during a heavy thunderstorm. A rainfall almost equalling that at Taylor, was that of 22.22 inches in 24 hours at Altapass, N.C., July 14 and 15, 1916, during a West Indian hurricane.

The more northern and western states also have their cloudburst records. At Concord, Pa., Aug. 5, 1843, 16 inches fell in three hours. At Guinea, Va., Aug. 24, 1906, over 9 1/4 inches fell in about 30 minutes and over 11 1/4 inches in 45 minutes. At Taborton, N.Y., Aug. 10, 1920, 8.95 inches fell in about 2 hours, but this appears to have been less of a downpour than one at the same place in Aug., 1891, at Campo, Calif., Aug. 12, 1891, during a 16.1 inch cloudburst, 11.5 inches fell practically in 80 minutes.

(Tomorrow: Mountain Cloud Prognostics)
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