

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
August 10, 1927

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed August 3, 1927

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman
Authority on Meteorology

THE DIREFUL WORK OF A TORNADO

The Weather Bureau has recently received a circumstantial account of a particularly destructive tornado that occurred on April 12 of this year in Edwards and Real Counties, Texas. Fortunately only one town was directly in the path of the storm. This was Rocksprings, the county seat of Edwards County, with a population of 1,200.

The tornado hit this place without warning at 7:50 p.m. A minute and a half later only 12 buildings were left standing in the town, and six of these were badly damaged. Many buildings disappeared entirely, even to the foundations, leaving no trace of timber or contents. Concrete and stone failed to withstand the fury of the wind. The courthouse and the post office partly escaped the tornado, but caught fire and burned.

This disaster cost the lives of 72 people and injured 200 more. Many injured people were further bruised and cut by heavy hail, which fell during and after the storm.

An interesting sequel of this tornado was the attempt made a few days later by a Weather Bureau official to follow and map the path of the storm from an airplane. Where the path lay over open country its course could not be determined, but where there were buildings and woods to provide debris the path was seen to be unusually wide; more than a mile at some points. The wreckage was strewn in such a way as to show plainly the "counter-clockwise" direction of the wind around the vortex of the storm.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE,
21st and B Sts.,
Washington, D.C.