A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology

THE SIZES OF WATERSPOUTS

W. E. Hurd, of the U. S. Weather Bureau, who has recently completed a digest of nearly all the accessible information concerning waterspouts, tells us that, while on an average they are smaller than tornadoes, individual specimens may attain considerable size. Some have been measured with precision from favorable points on shore or shipboard. The famous Cottage City, Mass., waterspout of August 19, 1896, was found to be 3,600 feet high. The cascade of water at the base rose to a height of 420 feet. The tube was 144 feet in diameter in the middle, and very much wider above and below. A spout measured in Mobile Bay June 12, 1925, was about 2,600 feet high, and had a nearly uniform diameter of about 26 feet. The highest spout of which Mr. Hurd finds a record was one seen off the coast of New South Wales, May 16, 1898. Theodolite measurements made from the shore gave it a height of 5,014 feet.

Short spouts, 200 feet and less in length, are fairly frequent, but the most common lengths are from 1,000 to 2,000 feet. Some short waterspouts are remarkably thick. One seen near Blunts Reef Light Vessel, California, November 14, 1914, was estimated to be 100 feet high and 700 feet in diameter. A remarkable example of a slender spout was one seen off Rabat, Morocco, December 18, 1917, which is said to have been 1,050 feet high and only 3 feet in diameter.