

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,  
Authority on Meteorology.

TORNADO SHELTERS IN TOWNS

Cellars, detached from houses and serving, according to circumstances, the purpose of a refuge from tornadoes or a cool, dry place in which to store perishable farm products, are fairly common on farms in the middle west of America. They are rare or unknown in large cities and towns. Yet tornadoes are by no means confined to the rural districts, and the numerous deadly storms of this character that have occurred during the present year must have caused many a city-dweller to ask himself: "Where could I find shelter if a tornado struck my home?"

The recommended procedure of taking refuge in the southwest corner of the ordinary cellar applies to frame houses, the wreckage of which is likely to be carried away from that location by the wind, as most tornadoes travel in a general northeasterly direction. The wreckage of a brick house struck by a tornado will mostly fall straight down, but the cellar of such a house is generally a safer place to be than out of doors, simply because, as the average tornado is a small affair, the chances are against any individual house being struck, while the air outdoors will be filled with flying débris of all kinds over a considerable area.

One of the great lessons, however, of the many tornado disasters that have visited the United States and southern Canada is that in any region where past experience shows that such storms are liable to occur every house should have a tornado shelter of some sort attached to it. In building a house little extra expense would be entailed in providing somewhere in the cellar a small room, below the level of the ground, with a roof strong enough to withstand the fall of heavy material upon it. The vast majority of tornadoes occur during the daylight hours, and even in a city they can usually be seen approaching a few minutes before they strike, so that time is afforded for the occupants of a house to get into the proposed shelter.

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21st and B Sts.  
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