

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
January 21, 1931.

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed January 14, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

DROUGHT-CRACKED BUILDINGS

Echoes of the great American drought of 1930 will probably be heard for a long time to come. A recent one is the statement by W. J. Knight, a consulting engineer in St. Louis, that many structures in that city were more or less seriously cracked through the effects of the dry weather. As early as last July his office received numerous calls from property-owners who stated that cracks had mysteriously appeared in brick walls, foundations, plaster, cement walks, etc.

Several of the buildings affected had stood for eight or ten years without previous indications of foundation settlement. An analysis of the situation, however, led to the conclusion that the long summer drought and abnormally high temperatures, following a dry spring, had caused the soil to dry out and shrink to such an extent to cause the settling of foundations. The soil is clay, which, says Mr. Knight, shrinks in drying from 5 to 25 per cent, according to its porosity, normal percentage of water, and other factors.

One fine St. Louis residence was rendered unsightly, though in no danger of collapse, by numerous cracks extending from roof to cellar.

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

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