

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed March 28, 1932

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TORNADO WARNINGS

The weather forecaster can never tell definitely when and where tornadoes will occur, but he plainly recognizes the conditions that favor their occurrence and, on the other hand, the much commoner conditions under which the occurrence of a tornado is practically impossible. There are, moreover, abundant statistics, based on past experience, of the relative frequency of these storms in different parts of the country, showing that some regions are nearly or quite exempt from them. Their average seasonal distribution is also known for all regions where they are frequent, and, lastly, the vast majority of tornadoes occur in the afternoon.

In view of all these facts, Lieut. (now Col.) Finley, the well-known authority on tornadoes, suggested years ago that it might be advisable and feasible to organize a corps of tornado lookouts, whose duty it would be to keep watch for the coming of these deadly storms at times when and at places where their occurrence is possible, and to give warning of their approach to the rest of the community.

"On any day," wrote Finley, "when there is presaged in the weather conditions evidence of the probable approach of a violent windstorm, it should be the duty of those in authority to deputize certain intelligent persons to watch the character and approach of a storm and, if it was a tornado, to give timely warning of its advance to the various families in their respective wards, and take charge of the removal of persons and property to places of safety. The church and school bells might be rung in a peculiar manner as a signal."

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