

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE BIGGEST SNOWFLAKES

The tallest snowflake story was published in the New York World of February 14, 1887. Flakes said to have fallen on a ranch near Fort Keogh, Montana, on January 8 of that year are described as having been "larger than milkpans," and to have measured 15 inches across and 8 inches thick. Unfortunately for the credibility of this tale, the writer dwells upon the extraordinary coldness of the weather at the time of the snowstorm. Intensely cold weather is not conducive to the formation of big snowflakes.

More plausible is the record in the Monthly Weather Review (Washington) of January, 1891, of a snowstorm at Nashville, Tenn., on the 24th of that month, in which some of the flakes nearly attained the size of a saucer. This description is conveniently elastic, as the sizes of saucers have a rather wide range.

Snowflakes from 3 to 4 inches in diameter fell in Berlin on Jan 10, 1915. These sizes were vouched for by a well-known German meteorologist, who described the flakes as having the shape of a round or oval dish, with its edges bent upward. They rocked about in the air as they fell, but none were seen to turn completely over so as to present the concave side to the ground.

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