

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed June 1, 1934

SPRAY-BOWS

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

The horizontal rainbow is perhaps most frequently a "dew-bow," seen on the bedewed surface of a lawn or field in the early morning, but some fine examples are "spray-bows." Spray from ocean waves, lawn-sprinklers or what-not displays a vertical rainbow, when the sun, the observer and the spray are all in the right relative positions, and it also shows a horizontal bow when there is an approximately horizontal layer of spray below the observer's eye-level and when the sun is anywhere above the horizon. A good place to observe such a bow is the bow of a steamer, where, with the sun nearly overhead, one may often see almost a complete circle produced by the spray thrown up by the stem of the vessel.

Dr. Chant, the Canadian astronomer, writes of observing a beautiful horizontal spray-bow at Niagara Falls; where, of course, the vertical spray-bow is a much more familiar spectacle. He was walking in front of the falls to the Cave of the Winds at 11 o'clock one bright June morning. "The spray," he says, "was all about me, and the bow was a brilliant complete circle, which moved along over the rocks below as one went forward on the wooden walk."

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