

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ICE CRYSTALS

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Ice crystals include those formed in the free air, as cloud and snow crystals; those deposited on the surfaces of terrestrial objects as hoarfrost, rime, etc., and those formed in bodies of water. The microscopic study of these fascinating objects began, with the examination of snow crystals, almost as soon as the microscope was invented, but the wealth of information we now possess concerning them is mainly a product of the twentieth century. The late Wilson A. Bentley, the famous "snowflake man," who died three years ago, photographed more varieties of these crystals under his microscope than all other persons combined. He left a collection of over five thousand pictures, about half of which are contained in the marvelous album "Snow Crystals," published just before his death.

The ice crystal is one of Nature's outstanding mysteries. All crystallization is mysterious, but the case of ice is the most remarkable because its crystals assume a far greater variety of forms than do those of any other substance.

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