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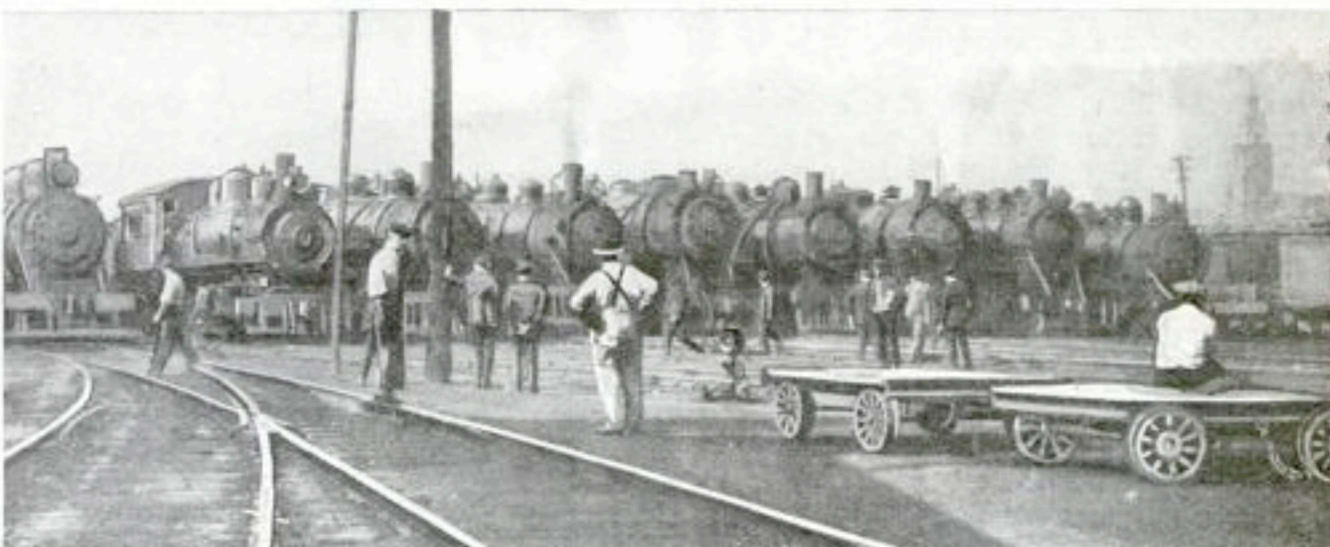
Smokiest Locomotives Made Smokeless

A PICTURE taken before and another taken after the application of a remedy are common in connection with advertised nostrums, but quite unusual in the matter of mechanical improvements. Probably for the first time in the history of railroading two pictures of this kind—and moving pictures at that—were taken of 50 locomotives lined up in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad yards, at Cincinnati, the first one showing the locomotives belching from their funnels dense clouds of smoke, and the second one, after the application by the engineers of smoke consumers, showing an almost total absence of smoke of any



The Upper Picture Taken before, and the Lower One after, the Application of Smoke Consumers by the Engineers on 50 Locomotives That were Lined Up in the Yards of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, at Cincinnati, for the Purpose of having the Great Difference Shown Photographically

J. R. Fichener, Box 16, Station J, Cincinnati, Ohio

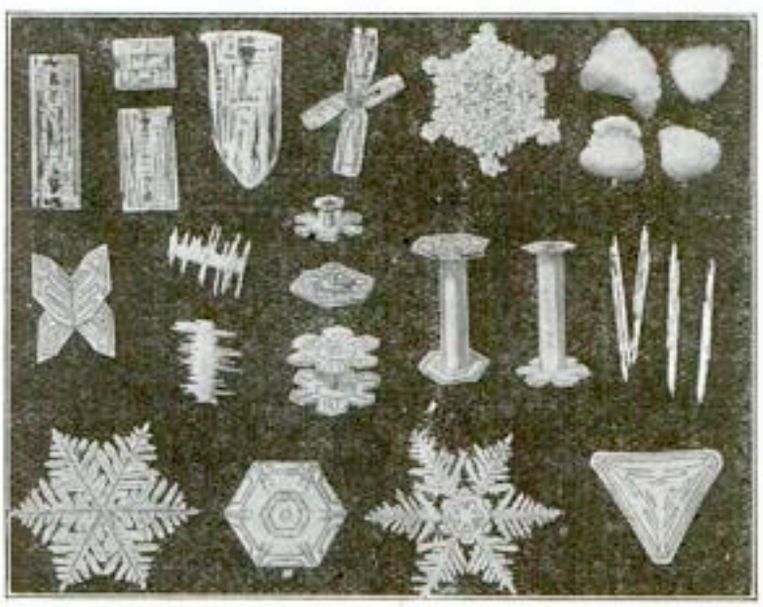
Baltimore + Ohio Railroad Yards
Foot of Evans St Cincinnati, Ohio

PHOTOGRAPHING SNOWFLAKES

By W. A. Bentley

EVERY snowflake has an infinity of beauty which is enhanced by the knowledge that the investigator will, in all probability, never find another exactly like it. Consequently, photographing these transient forms of Nature gives to the worker something of the spirit of a discoverer. Besides combining her greatest skill and artistry in the production of snowflakes, Nature generously fashions the most beautiful specimens on a very thin plane so that they are specially adapted for photomicrographical study.

The photographing of snowflakes, although quite delicate work, can hardly be called difficult, although some hardships attend it, because the work must all be done in a temperature below freezing, and under conditions of much physical exposure. The temperature at which photography is possible depends somewhat upon the thickness of the crystals; this varies greatly from time to time, and depends upon whether the temperature is rising from an intense degree of cold or falling from a point above freezing. If rising after a cold snap, photographing can often be continued until actual thawing commences.



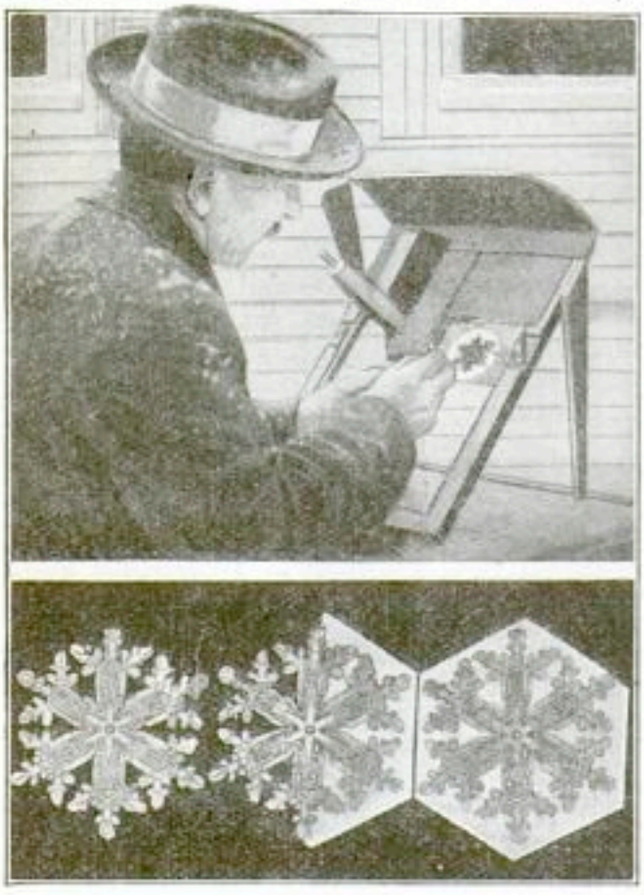
A Variety of Strange Forms of Snow Crystals: The Specimens near the Center Are of the Most Interest on Account of Their Rarity

Of course, location is everything in this work, and no one except those living in arctic climates or in regions having long and severe winters, can accomplish very much. Generally speaking, the western quadrants of widespread storms or blizzards furnish the most beautiful and perfect forms. At such times the wind is usually westerly or northerly, with the barometer standing at 29.6 to 29.9 in. and slowing rising. The percentage of perfect crystals is likely to be larger when the snowfall is not too thick and heavy, with the crystals medium to small in size rather than large. The character of the snowfall often undergoes quite abrupt changes as a storm progresses.

The apparatus required for snowflake photography consists of a compound microscope, fitted with a joint that permits the instrument to be turned down horizontally, at right angles to its base, so that it can be coupled to a camera bellows by means of a light-tight connection. The microscope objectives are used alone, without the eyepiece. It is best to have several different objectives; ½, ¾, and 3-in. combinations, which give magnifications of from 8 to 60 diameters (64 to 3,600 times), will serve well.

Ordinary daylight, coming through a window, is used for illuminating the crystal after it has been placed on a microscope slide, a tiny beam of light entering through the small aperture in the substage of the instrument. The apparatus is placed indoors, near by and facing a window. The room, the apparatus, and its accessories should always be away from any source of artificial heat, and at a temperature approximately that of the outside air. The necessary accessories are an observation microscope, a pair of thick mittens, microscope slides, a sharp-pointed wooden splint, a feather, and a turkey wing or similar duster; also, an extra focusing back for the camera, con-

taining clear glass instead of the usual ground glass, with a magnifying lens attached; this is used for final focusing. A blackboard, about 1 ft. square, with stiff wire or metal handles at the ends, so that the hands will not touch and warm it, is used to collect the specimens. As it is necessary to cover the end of the microscope objective with a strip of black card, that takes the place of the usual



Blocking Out the Snow-Crystal Images on the Photographic Negative: Right, Original Negative; Center, Negative Partly Blocked Out; Left, Completely Blocked-Out Negative

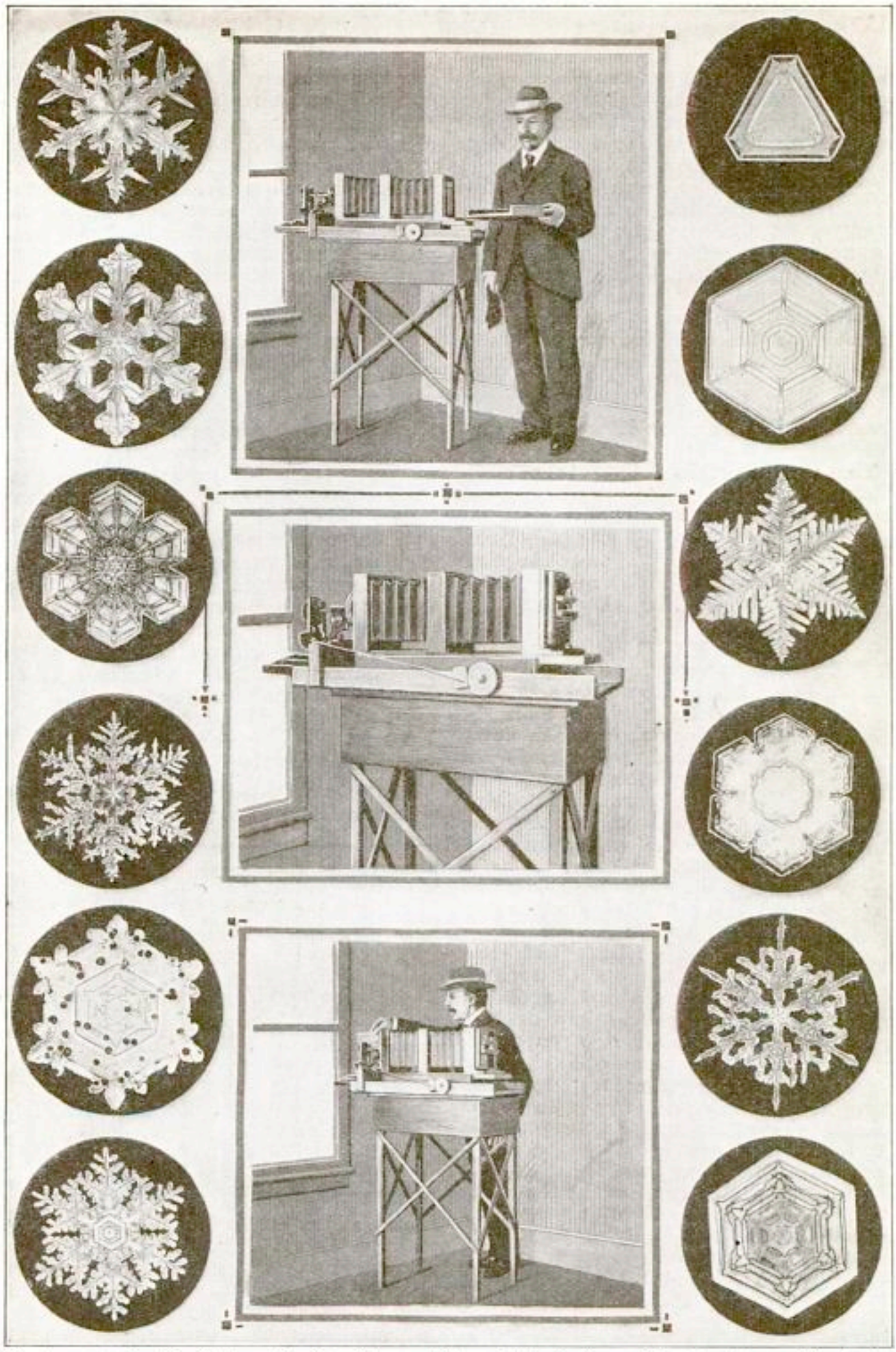
camera shutter which controls the duration of exposure, it is necessary to fit two vertical rods at each side of the microscope tube to hold the card.

The snowflakes are caught on the blackboard as they fall, and examined by the naked eye or with the assistance of a hand magnifying glass. The feather duster is used to brush the board clean every few seconds, until two or more promising specimens alight upon it, when it is immediately removed indoors. From this point onward the photographer must work fast. The promising specimens are placed for a moment's observation under the observation microscope. The removal of the snowflake from the board to the microscope slide is accomplished with the sharp-pointed splint, which is pressed gently against the face of the crystal until the latter adheres to it, so that it can be picked up and placed on the glass slide. Usually several crystals are placed together on a single slide, a momentary glance being given to each, and care taken while doing this not to breathe on the crystals. The utmost haste must be used, for a snow crystal is often exceedingly tiny, and frequently not thicker than heavy paper. Furthermore, once these bits of pure beauty are isolated, evaporation (not melting) soon wears them away, so that, even in zero weather, they last but a very few minutes. When a desirable specimen is obtained, it is pressed flat against the glass with the edge of the feather and the slide inserted in the stage of the microscope on the camera stand, centered, roughly focused with the camera ground glass, then sharply focused with the clear-glass screen and magnifier, focusing on some tiny air tube near the center of the crystal. The plate holder is then inserted into the camera, the objective covered with the black card and the slide removed from the plate holder. The objective is then uncovered, and when the exposure, which may vary from 8 seconds to 100 or more, is deemed sufficient, the operation is reversed. Naturally enough, no rule for the length of exposure can be given, except that the greater the magnification, the longer the exposure should be.

The frail, feathery flakes are the most difficult to photograph, and it is always best to place five or six other crystals around the specimen, as this greatly retards the evaporation of the central one.

When working from the rear of the camera, and the bellows extension is such as to make it impossible to reach the focusing screw on the microscope, an arrangement similar to that shown in the page illustration can be used. This consists of a cord that runs over a wheel on each side of the camera and around the focusing screw. No lens is required in the camera, the microscope furnishing the optical equipment for projecting the images onto the sensitized plates.

Having recorded the fleeting substance of the snowflakes on the photographic negative and brought out the image by development, the photographer discovers that the body of the snow crystal is so transparent, that it does not contrast enough with its background to make a print in which the form will stand out in relief. There is no purely photographic method for producing the white images against a dark background, and yet it is necessary to do so if the images are to be



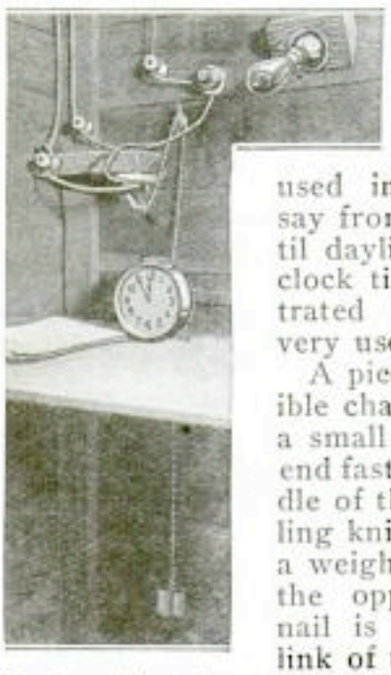
The Apparatus Used for Photographing Snowflakes and Some of the Specimens Selected. Above: The Author Holding the Tray on Which the Snowflakes are Collected. Center: A Cord That Passes over the Microscope Focusing Screw and Wheels at Each Side of the Camera Makes Sharp Focusing Possible. Below: Inserting the Transparent-Glass Microscope Slide, on the Surface of Which Is One or More Snowflakes, into the Microscope Stage, Preparatory to Photographing

appreciated by most people, whose ideal of snow is that of immaculate whiteness. The only effective method of accomplishing this result is what is known among photographers as "blocking out."

The negative is supported on an ordinary retoucher's desk, which may be merely a piece of glass, arranged to hold the negative so that the image is illuminated by transmitted light. Then, with an etching knife or other fine, sharp-pointed tool, the operator proceeds to scrape away the emulsion around the outline of the crystal to leave it standing alone against a background of clear glass. This requires considerable patience, and often considerable time as well. In order to avoid irreparably spoiling the original negative, it is best not to alter it in any way, but to make a copy negative on which the actual blocking out is done. After the negative has been thus prepared, prints or lantern slides are made in the usual manner. Blocking out the negatives is done indoors, instead of outdoors as shown by the photograph, which was thus taken to get sufficient light to allow the exposure to be made.

Alarm Clock Turns on Electric Lights

The use of artificial light in poultry houses has become quite popular, as, by increasing the number of hours of light, the hens have more time for feeding, and lay more eggs. Where electric lights are used in the morning, say from 4:00 a. m. until daylight, the alarm-clock time switch illustrated will be found very useful.



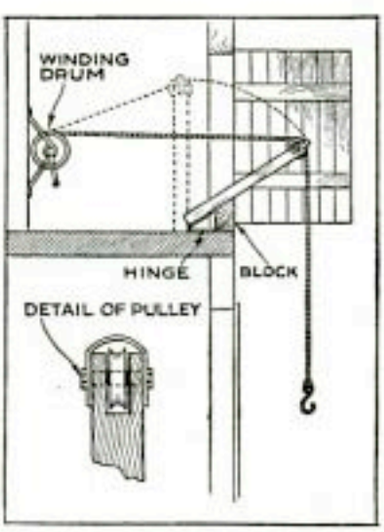
A piece of light, flexible chain, passing over a small pulley, has one end fastened to the handle of the light-controlling knife switch, while a weight is attached to the opposite end. A nail is run through a link of the chain, about level with the alarm-wind key of the clock. One end of this nail is supported on a small block immediately behind the clock and the other rests on the alarm key of the clock, after it has been wound. This arrangement holds the chain and weight, and provides for enough slack chain to leave the switch open. When the alarm goes off at the time set, the alarm key turns and allows the nail to slide off; the weight drops down and closes the switch.

Cleaning Plowshares

To keep plowshares and moldboards, as well as cultivator shovels, from rusting during the time they are laid up, it is best to give them a liberal coating of some thick grease. If the grease hardens on the surface so that its removal is difficult when the implement is to be used, a small amount of gasoline or kerosene may be poured over the share, and ignited just before the plow is to be used. The heat, together with the solvent action of the gasoline, will soften the grease, and if the plow is started in the ground while the grease is still warm, the coating will peel off easily and completely. A handful of dry hay or grass ignited under the plowshare will answer in the absence of gasoline. Either of these methods is better than scraping the grease off.

A Simple Farm Hoist

A simple hoist that will find many uses about the farm, for raising bags of grain and other bulky weights to the upper floor of a barn or other building, is shown in the drawing.



A wooden beam, of suitable thickness and length, is hinged to the floor at a convenient point inside the door or other opening. The upper end of the beam is provided with a single-sheave pulley, over which the rope passes to the winding drum; this can be easily improvised. A wooden block can be made and inserted underneath the projecting beam so that the arm is held in an inclined position, as shown. The packages are raised clear of the building and, when they reach the pulley, swing inward as the arm rises to a vertical position.