

## Farmer Bentley's: amazing discovery



As your mom looks outside, she makes an amazing announcement--a snow day! You run outside to play and notice a tiny snowflake on your mitten with its lacy, delicate pattern. Every child is unique. But are every single snowflakes all different too?

The man who figured out that snowflakes are all different was Wilson Bentley, "The Snowflake Man." In 1925, long before you were born, he wrote, "Every crystal was a masterpiece of design ... When a snowflake melted, that the design was forever lost."

But how did Mr. Bentley make his discovery? He took photographs of snowflakes! This was hard to do and had never been done before because snowflakes melt so fast.

Snowflakes melt because they are made of tiny, ice crystals. These little crystals stick together to become snowflakes high in the clouds. When they get heavy enough, snowflakes fall toward the earth. If there is enough snow, you get a snow day!

When it is colder than freezing (32[degrees] Fahrenheit), snow is dry and powdery. You can't make good snowballs. When the weather is closer to freezing, the snow is wetter and makes excellent snowballs.

Since Mr. Bentley was a farmer, he noticed the different kinds of snow because he was often out in the cold weather. He lived in a country town in Vermont, where it snowed a lot. He loved to look at the tiny snowflakes that stuck to his coveralls as he did his farm

chores. Mr. Bentley wanted to look more closely at these fascinating, six-sided crystals. He ran inside, but in the warm indoor air, the snowflakes always melted.

However, Mr. Bentley was determined. He used a microscope, the instrument that scientists use to look at small objects. He then attached his camera to the microscope, so he could take a picture of the tiny, incredible crystals. He devoted his life to photographing snowflakes.

Farmer Bentley was a pioneer in this special work of taking pictures of tiny objects. This work is called photomicrography. He took pictures of more than 5,000 snowflakes! And out of all those snowflakes, not a single one was like any other.

So it's true that no two snowflakes are alike. Farmer Bentley proved it!

Messina, Colleen. "Farmer Bentley's: amazing discovery." *Fun For Kidz*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan.-Feb. 2003, p. 24+. *Gale In Context: Elementary*, [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A110361087/ITKE?u=mlic\\_marlhs&sid=ITKE&xid=6a96b4c3](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A110361087/ITKE?u=mlic_marlhs&sid=ITKE&xid=6a96b4c3). Accessed 30 Nov. 2020.