

Living in Atomitat Like Any Home, Almost . . .

Plainview, Tex. — (AP) — "When we first moved in, at least we used to go up and see what the weather was like," said Mrs. Jay Swayze.

"We've gotten so accustomed to it now that some days we don't even go up and look around."

The slender, attractive housewife spoke as she sat in a paneled den not unlike those in thousands of modern homes.

But her house is 13 feet underground.

She, her builder-contractor husband, and their daughters Cheryl, 20, and Nancy, 18, have lived in it three years.

The four - bedroom, three-bath house is called an atomitat, for atomic habitat. It has a den, living room, dining room, kitchen—and even a patio, all enclosed within a concrete shell.

The atomitat blossomed from an idea Swayze had some years ago at a civil defense discussion on family fallout shelters.

The Swayzes do not discuss the cost of the atomitat but Mrs. Swayze said recently her home was duplicated in Colorado for \$90,000.

Swayze also built a similar underground home for display at the New York World's Fair. Mrs. Swayze said this one was "considerably more expensive because of labor union specifications."

Everyone in the Swayze family has adapted to the sub-



—Associated Press WIREPHOTO.

GARAGE AND 'BACKYARD' OF UNDERGROUND HOME ... Fireplace-Like Structure Is Part of House's Air System.

terranean environment, says said Mrs. Swayze.

"We never feel closed in. It bothered me a little before we moved in, but when we got our personal articles in we felt at home.

"People who visit us remark that they'd really like the quiet down here.

"We hear an occasional airplane, and storms if they are directly above our fireplace."

Fierce West Texas sandstorms frequently bother the Swayzes' neighbors, but go unnoticed underground.

"The only way we can tell if dust is blowing is to go up and look," Mrs. Swayze said. "We never get any dirt down here at all."

Insurance rates are only about one-eighth what they are for ordinary homes of comparable cost, primarily because the atomitat is secure against fallout, tornadoes, hailstorms, dust and general deterioration by weather, she said.

The home includes 2,400 square feet of living space, with all floors carpeted in gold

nylon and walls and ceilings painted eggshell white.

A landscaped garden provides a ground level invitation to the atomitat. It is accented in the center with a 14-foot-thick rock garden which forms the exhaust for the air system below.

A brick garage sits on a corner of the lot, with a stockade fence on three sides. Attached to the garage are a study, kitchenette, half-bath and day room. This is all for entertaining topside.

A wide stairway of quarry

tile drops down to the entrance of the home. Plants, nourished by special lighting, flourish along the outside.

From this point the atomitat has the appearance of any fashionable home.

Special lighting treatment gives a three-dimensional effect of an outside scene from the front windows and doors, eliminating any cave-dwelling feeling.

Mixtures of special lights create illusions of twilight, daylight, and night.

"We love it," said Mrs. Swayze. "But if we built another house we'd put it in a hill. We're getting old and don't want to walk up the stairs."