

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE MOUNT ROSE WEATHER OBSERVATORY

The highest meteorological observatory equipped with recording instruments in North America is on the summit of Mount Rose, Nevada, 10,800 feet above sea level. Nobody lives there to note the weather and tend the instruments: an ingenious meteorograph does this. Dr. J.E. Church, Jr., who established the station 20 years ago and is still in charge of it, first placed maximum and minimum thermometers on the summit to obtain some idea of winter temperatures in the high Sierras. Soon he discovered that "frost forecasts could be made with considerable certainty from the mountain top in advance of instrumental indications below." This proved sufficient to obtain government support for the observatory to erect a building and devise instruments that could make a very complete record without attention for weeks or months together.

A large tank was provided to catch and hold the entire snowfall of the winter, to aid in estimating the probable irrigation water for the Reno district the following summer. Then S.P. Fergusson, designer of the meteorograph for the observatory on El Misti, Peru, made a similar instrument for Mount Rose. It records pressure, temperature, wind direction and velocity, and relative humidity. The observations obtained on this mountain summit have formed the basis for a study of the general climatology of Mount Rose, the relation of climate to the plant environment, and the relation of timber to the conservation of snow.

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