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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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MOUNT WEATHER

Strange has been the history of Mount Weather, the former research observatory of the United States Weather Bureau, located at the summit of the Blue Ridge (altitude 1,725 feet), six miles from Bluemont, Va., and 47 miles from the city of Washington.

The land on which the observatory stands was acquired by the Weather Bureau in 1902 and the first of the group of buildings was erected in 1904. Two principal objects were in view in the establishment of this institution. Upper-air research was then in its early stages and had aroused great enthusiasm among meteorologists on both sides of the ocean. The Weather Bureau, which had carried out a campaign of kite observations at 17 of its stations in 1898 and had been experimenting with balloons, desired a place not too far from Washington at which intensive work might be done in this field. Another purpose of the institution was to investigate various supposed relations between solar and terrestrial phenomena.

Upper-air observations were conducted successfully at Mount Weather for several years but proved unduly expensive owing to the rather inaccessible location, six miles from the nearest railway. Some interesting pieces of work were also accomplished in the large physical laboratory which formed part of the institution. A quarterly bulletin issued by the observatory attracted favorable notice throughout the world. The study of the cosmical relations of meteorology led to no tangible results, and eventually it became evident that most of the scientific work here could be carried on to better advantage in some less isolated and more convenient location. The observatory was closed, except for minor routine observations, in 1914.

After the sale of the property had long been in view, Congress decided, at the last session, to convert it into a "summer White House" for the use of the President, and appropriated money for making the necessary alterations. As, however, President Hoover prefers to take his outings elsewhere, the future of Mount Weather is at present in that fittingly meteorological location "the air".

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