

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
November 6, 1931

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed October 30, 1931

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

WEATHER OBSERVING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

One of the unenviable jobs of the weathermen is that of operating posts of observation in uncomfortable places. Some of these are located on mountains. The loftiest weather station ever maintained in the United States, and, up to the time of its foundation, the loftiest in the world was the one established in 1873 by the Signal Service on the summit of Pike's Peak. It was closed in 1888, reopened by the Weather Bureau in 1892, and closed finally two years later.

The experiences of the observers who carried on work at this elevated station, especially before the construction of the cog railroad, in 1891, made it easy of access, were not devoid of hardships. Sergeant Robert Seyboth, who established the station, writes in his daily journal for October, 1873:

"Water, having to be conveyed in demijohns a distance of three-quarters of a mile over the worst part of the trail on foot, has been rather scarce with us; but that part of the labor has been done away with since October 22, on which day a terrible snowstorm began and continued for three days and nights, and during that time deposited three feet of snow on the peak. This snow, melted, is our only drink."

The observers suffered much with mountain sickness until they became acclimated; they had thrilling experiences with lightning; and they endured windstorms so terrific that, during one of them, prayers were offered for their safety in the churches of Colorado Springs.

They were much amused when a lady, who visited the station accompanied by a guide, "expressed surprise that a station should be established at such an out-of-the-way place when there were plenty of better places down below."

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
21st and Constitution Ave.
Washington, D. C.