



### **General Background:**

Before the National Weather Service, the Signal Service reported the weather from various stations around the country. The highest signal service station was on Pikes Peak from 1873 – 1888. The mission of the men stationed atop Pikes Peak was to report the weather, and gather enough information to predict weather patterns. Initially, weather reports were made via telegraphic summaries sent to Washington, D.C. from the various observation sites around the nation, then distributed out to the public via railroad stations and news media outlets. The Pikes Peak mountain observation site was connected to the city of Colorado Springs down below by telegraph line #99. Harsh winds and heavy snow fall often downed the line, at times the poles themselves.

### **Historic Photograph Background:**

The back of the image states: "Scenes on the line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway: U.S. Signal Station and Observatory. Summit of Pike's Peak, 14,092 feet above Sea level. The Highest habitation on the American Continent. Opened Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1873. From observations during the Winter of 73-4, the extreme of cold was -26 degrees. Greatest velocity of Wind, 85 miles per hour. Total Snow fall, Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>, fifteen feet."

Notice the large rocks atop the roof. The shabby construction of the first Signal Service house left it and its' residents victim to the fierce mountain weather; it was not uncommon for strong winds to pull up the roof.

### **Discussion Questions:**

#### **Image 1: Exterior of the Signal Station.**

1. Where does your eye go first?
2. What is the Signal Station made of?
3. Is there anything unusual about the construction of the Signal Station?
4. Why would the roof need rocks on top of it?

#### **Image 2: Interior of the Signal Station 1880.**

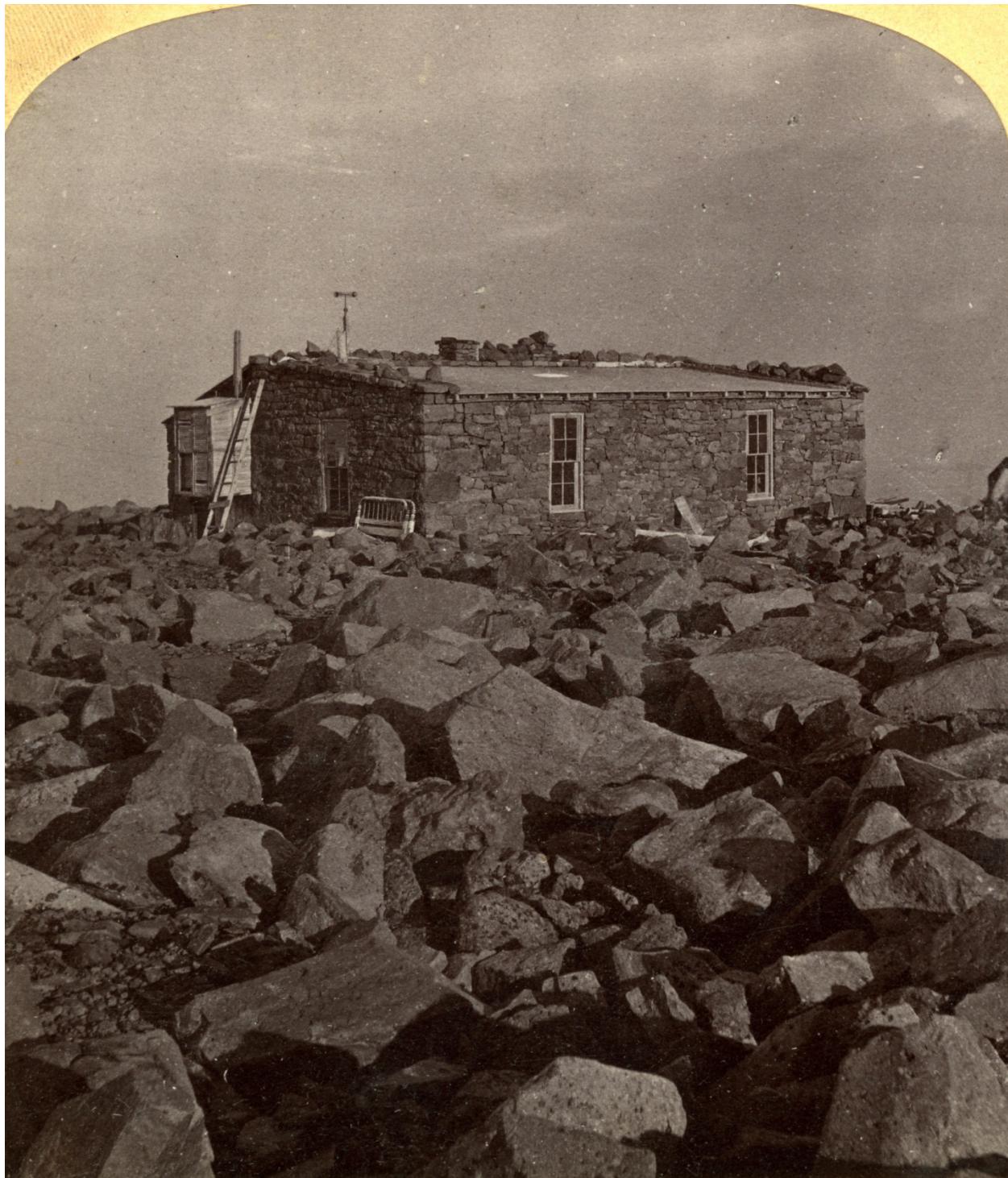
1. Where does your eye go first?
2. Is there anything unique in the room?
3. Do you have similar items in your house?
4. Does this room look warm?

### **Additional Source:**

- Pikes Peak Summit weather forecast (National Weather Service):  
<http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?lat=38.8406&lon=-105.0444#.VfsS2E10wdU>



Signal Station published by L.K. Oldroyd's on Huerfano Street [now: Colorado Avenue]. From the collection of the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.





Interior of the first Signal Station House in 1880. From the collection of the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

