



SKY HOSTEL

Three miles above sea level, on Colorado's Mt. Evans, is this building, the highest hotel in the world

GEOGRAPHY

Three Mile High Hotel Built on Colorado Peak

Built Entirely by Hand, Structure Is Made of Granite
With Nearly Half of Its Surface of Glass for View

THOSE fantastic fiction-writin' fellers who in five minutes—on the typewriter—run up a bubble-city on the moon, might as well take a lesson in the difficulties of such an enterprise, from a structure just completed here on earth.

It is the massive, turtle-backed sky hostel just completed on the crest of Mt. Evans, 62 miles west of Denver and 14,259 feet above sea level. At that height, internal combustion engines are ineffective. So workers went, not forward with science gadgets of the future, but back 4,000 years to the days of the Pyramids. The hostel, built of the massive granite slabs on the ground, was put up entirely by hand. Engineers spotted two- to five-ton stones that would fit. With slings and jacks, they were hauled into place by manpower.

The entire structure was virtually mor-

tised into the granite of the peak with concrete. In winter, it must stand the fury of blizzards that rage across the peak at from 140 to 150 miles an hour, and it was designed to pass those winds across its rounded form, not buck them directly.

Nearly half its surface is of glass—for better viewing of some 10,000 miles of tumbled mountain and tawny plain visible from the peak. This is good thick glass, cemented into steel sash, but it has no other reinforcement. It will hold, confidently says Edwin A. Francis of Denver, the architect, being angled to turn the wind. Walls are from five to 11 feet thick, and some smaller windows are recessed five feet into the granite.

Workers brought up from Denver, 9,000 feet below, couldn't stand the altitude more than a day or so. So the

contractor, W. H. Roehling, located a camp of brawny Scandinavian miners who make their living at 9,000 feet up in the mountains. They did the job, but even for them, the work-day was four hours. The frequent lightning storms presented another problem. Finally, after trying to insulate the building, it was grounded instead—with scores of thick copper leads buried into cinder-beds among the rocks.

Everything except the granite and the water had to be brought up from below, as must supplies for operating the hostel—even logs for the big fireplace, as it is more than 3,000 feet above timberline.

The water was found in natural cisterns in the rock crevices, which with their freezing and thawing, afford a lesson in the way Nature labors to bring the mighty mountains low.

The building is revolutionary, too, in that it is not tied down by cables, as are most buildings at such altitudes—for instance, the cosmic ray laboratory of the University of Denver, a hundred yards away.

A staff of 14 will operate the hostel this summer. There will be sleeping-rooms, and meals will be served.

The building stands at the very brink of the 3,000-foot perpendicular drop on the north face of the mountain, down to Summit Lake. This chasm is a "cirque" typical of high Rocky Mountain peaks, carved and ground out by a primordial glacier now gone, and leaving the lake as its sole memento.

Though 62 miles from Denver, the crest of Mt. Evans is a Denver mountain park. The hostel was built by the Mt. Evans Club, composed of Denver business men who have agreed to turn it over to the Forest Service in 20 years. It cost about \$50,000. Certainly the highest hotel in the U. S., it is reached by the highest auto road, wide, safe and oiled to within five miles of the summit. The rest will be oiled this summer. The hostel is 150 feet higher than the top of Pikes Peak.

Science News Letter, August 9, 1941

● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories resulted in the location by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey of the following preliminary epicenter:

Tuesday, July 29, 8:15 p.m., EST

Near Prince William Sound, Head of Kenai Peninsula. Latitude, 61 degrees north. Longitude, 148 degrees west.

For stations cooperating with Science Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Jesuit Seismological Association in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs, see SNL, July 19.