

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Spring 2007
By: Bob Spear

Lancaster, New Hampshire, Summer 1992 "The White Mountain Conference"

The White Mountain National Forest of New Hampshire was the backdrop for the sixth meeting of the Forest Fire Lookout Association. Weeks State Historic site, a few miles south of Lancaster, offered a beautiful lodge and the historic stone Mount Prospect tower, its top level utilized for fire detection. Mount Prospect was dedicated to the National Historic Lookout Register by Dr. Keith Argow. The ceremony was attended by some one hundred people. As a dramatic bit, the Division of Forests and Lands fire patrol Cessna overflowed the group as photographs were in progress.

A more picturesque location couldn't have been asked for, and nearly a hundred people attended the events. This also was truly a "working conference", with a lot on the plate to digest. Most important was the second reading of incorporation briefing with accompanying motions to vote on. A great deal of time-consuming discussion ensued on these issues.

A new Colorado Director was announced; Bill Ellis of Sedalia. A report by the Advertising Committee sparked lively debate and it was agreed to not incorporate advertising into the newsletter for now. Fred Knauf of New York was now the editor for Lookout Network newsletter and a report on that was read by Henry Isenberg. Nominations for the next term's positions of Western Director (voted on by Western Region members), Secretary and Archivist were acted upon.

With sadness, Keith Argow told all that Oregon's Doug Newman had passed away and as a tribute to his memory and dynamic personality, an annual award would be developed and presented to deserving FFLA members and partners.

Winter conference suggestions were discussed with the announcement that the January 1993 meeting would take place on Maryland's eastern shore at the Wicomico Experimental Forest, near Salisbury.

Al and Sylvia Grimes did a presentation featuring their mobile Smokey Bear displays. "A Field Guide to New Hampshire Firetowers" was presented by Iris Beard, it chronicles the state's fire lookouts. The tower touring part of the event was guided by New Hampshire Forest Ranger, Alan Bean*. Milan Hill, Mount Kearsarge North, and other towers were visited.

Scott Ritter and Bob Spear took off on an expedition to photograph covered bridges across New Hampshire and southern Maine and visited Agamenticus fire tower and Opportunity farm tower, as well as Cook Hill, Frye Mountain, Haskell Hill and other

towers. Later they rendezvoused with Mark Haughwout in Barre, Vermont and visited some towers there as well. Another high mark of this trip was a climb up Mount Washington in Scott's old International Scout. Departing the base elevation it was around 80 degrees, at the Appalachian Trail crossing on the summit it had plummeted to 35 degrees with zero visibility and rarified air at the over 6,400' altitude.

The "White Mountain Conference" was indeed a memorable one.

*Alan Bean; New Hampshire Forest Ranger passed away in 2005; this piece is dedicated to his memory.

.....to be continued.....

Bob Spear, National Historian