

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

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By: Bob Spear

“Saving the past for the future” The 1996-1997 Conferences

McCLELLANVILLE, South Carolina

The 16th meeting of the FFLA was held at the McClellanville Town Hall in January 2006 with 16 people attending. Fire towers in South Carolina are coming down at a rapid rate; Mark Haughwout and Henry Isenberg found several towers recently removed, some on their sides next to their footings, with furnishings still inside. Henry was re-elected as Chairman and Mark as Eastern Deputy. Shirley Goodrich was elected Treasurer. Keith Argow is now heading efforts to acquire the 501c3 status. The “Duties of Directors” proposed by Ray Kresek was approved. Advertising in Lookout Network was approved with a limit of 20% of the newsletter available. Repair work was done on the McClellanville fire tower by FFLA members and townspeople.

WOODFORD, Vermont

The 1996 Eastern Conference was held June 21-23 at Greenwood Lodge at Mount Prospect ski area, east of Burlington. There was a room full of people this year and a full day's business was done. The “Serve Maine” program was reviewed by Director Caroline Parmenter. Central mailing was reported on and Western reporting was done by Gary Weber who had flown in from Idaho. Reports on Beebe Hill, Hunter Mountain and the Utsayantha fire tower New York projects were reviewed, and an idea to develop a “postage stamp” was raised by Steve Cummings. A Corporate update was also done by Steve; international correspondence was gone over and there was an Election Committee report. The Doug Newman award was presented and displays by the Vermont Forestry Department were outside.

HINTON, Alberta, Canada

Our first “International Conference” was held September 13-15, 1996 at the Environmental Training Centre, overlooking the town of Hinton. The 40-foot fire tower on the grounds of the Alberta Forest Service Museum was one of four lookouts visited; others included a single pylon type and a lookout cupola house. A photo display of all 130 lookouts in Alberta and terrific scenery were part of the package.

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia

The January 1997 Friday evening meeting was held at the District Fire Warden Headquarters with the main meeting held on Saturday at the Virginia Department of Forestry Headquarters. FFLA membership was reported to be about 370 paid members, but many more than that number receive Lookout Network newsletter through a number of ways. Budget proposals were put forth for discussion. It was announced that our own FFLA webpage on the internet was now up and running. The largest conference minutes document ever (58 pages) was circulated to all directors. The weather was brutally cold, only 10 above zero with snow and ice in the

back road areas, as we went to the Sugarloaf Lookout, an abandoned Federal site. Many other fire towers were visited to the east where ground conditions proved more favorable.

ALFRED, Maine

The 1997 Eastern Conference was held at the Walnut Grove Campground August 22-24. The evening business meeting covered many articles. Iris Baird spoke about archiving; budget proposals brought out at the January meeting were again gone over. Merchandise was presented; future conference sites were talked about as well. The Alfred Fire Department organized a pancake breakfast on Saturday morning. The 1947 Maine fires were reminisced about by Harold Jones, retired chief pilot for the Maine Forest Service, who later helped do water drops from the Department helicopter. A lobster and chicken feed was the late afternoon fare while a punishing rainstorm pelted the steel roof of the pavilion. A restored Virginia forestry sign was presented to Keith Argow, and Ossipee Hill, Mount Hope and Agamenticus fire towers and Blue Job tower in New Hampshire were visited.

OROFINO, Idaho

The Clearwater National Forest Headquarters was the site of the September 26-28, 1997 Western Conference. Keith Argow announced he is a candidate for Chairman at next election. Inactive directors were discussed and fund raising ideas were talked about. The Alberta Chapter officially became the "Western Canada" Chapter. New contacts in Scotland and a lookout in Sweden nominated for the NHLR were reviewed. Ray Kresek reported that a member of his chapter is on a Mount Everest team and will be researching to see if any lookouts exist in Nepal. Guest speakers addressed nearly 70 people at the meeting. A round-robin introduction of everyone there was done, and the Doug Newman award was presented to Gary Weber. On Sunday, over 60 people assembled at Bertha Hill Lookout for the group photograph.

The 1998 events would be at Kittatinny Valley State Park in New Jersey, in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, and at Big Bear, California.

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