

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Summer 2008

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The 10th meeting of the FFLA took place at the "B" Division forest fire office in Lebanon State Forest in the Pinelands of central New Jersey. The weather was a factor, governing this affair and would greatly influence recollections years later. What started out as a crisp mid-winter trip, in a few days would deteriorate in a downward spiral. The general meeting began with introductions and a talk by Assistant State Firewarden Joe Hughes on New Jersey's rich and varied fire tower history. "Special Projects" reports, an Appalachian Trail lookout report and State reports were given, followed by the Doug Newman award, an election amendment to the bylaws, and a Beebe Hill report. Standard research data and tower reporting forms were introduced and data on measuring tower footings was presented. Blue Mountain fire tower information was given, Bob Wolff gave a report on Catfish fire tower, and Keith Argow reported on the National Historic Lookout Register. Gary Weber, Idaho Director, sent a written report from the Missoula, Montana Chapter. Turning over of the Chairmanship took place with Henry Isenberg succeeding Steve Cummings and a vote to make Steve Chairman Emeritus was overwhelmingly approved. Appreciation certificates and awards were given and there were slide and video presentations. Larry Paul, of Long Island, New York did a presentation on his visits to various old sites on the island as well as the Adirondacks and earlier visits to New Jersey fire towers. Larry has been an active member since attending the Saddle River Conference in 1990, and had been a firewarden on Long Island going back to the 1950's when he occasionally staffed the remaining lookouts there.

With a full schedule of business and other activities taken care of over Friday and Saturday and with the weather taking a turn for the worse, some folks departed early for home while others stayed on. On Sunday, fire tower tours took a group on a rambling jog through the Central pinelands of New Jersey with visits to the Lebanon tower just down the road from the office. Then in different groups, visits were made to Cedar Bridge, Medford, Batsto, and Bass River fire towers. With the weather a factor, more southern locations were thwarted, but an excursion was made to one of the state's more remote fire tower locations at Apple Pie Hill. It being only 10 above zero, the bitter cold didn't permit much lingering on the platforms for a view of the pine forests! The woodstove back at the division office was more inviting and the last of the "networking group" finished the conference there with late night photograph and postcard sharing. The next day was departure for those that remained. Mark Haughwout, Chuck Helms and I headed for Trenton to get Chuck to the train station there. Along the way we re-discovered the old 4 Mile tower site in freezing rain. By the time we reached Trenton, the roads were treacherous and Mark and I heading north on Route 287 got ourselves into a thirty-mile traffic jam. What followed was a harrowing trip on ice and snow covered highways, eventually heading eastward for the coast and there encountering rain soaked but at least better footing we made it to my home in North Jersey. Steve had gotten into a traffic accident as we found out

later, slipping on black ice and ended up off the highway in the median as he had headed south toward the C division office. Unhurt, he made it back to Pennsylvania little worse for the experience. Henry had the best route, traveling South to Florida for the remainder of his vacation. The next Conferences would be Oakridge, Oregon and Cape Cod, Massachusetts later in 1994.

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