

FOREST LOOKOUTS

OREGON

BAKER COUNTY

BENTON COUNTY

CLACKAMAS COUNTY

CLATSOP COUNTY

MORE...

DOUGLAS COUNTY

BLACK ROCK

Umpqua National Forest
28S-3E-4



1828 - Umpqua National Forest Archives - Mike Curtis, L.A.

173611

1899: This point, the first fire lookout on the Umpqua National Forest consisted of an observation point with a compass.

c. 1911: A more permanent facility with an alidade on a pole platform established for locating fires.

September 3, 1914: "S.C. Bartrum returned this morning from Portland where he had spent the past few days on business connected with the forest service. O.J. Haring, one of the topographers of the service returned with him and will spend some time in this vicinity working on a control map. The glass lookout house on the top of Black Rock is being pushed to completion as rapidly as the nature of the work will permit and when completed will be one of the finest stations in the government service." **(The Evening News)**

November 7, 1914: "S.C. Bartrum, supervisor of the Umpqua National Forest, is installing a system of fire detection and location, which is something entirely new in the service, and which he has been endeavoring to get the department to adopt for several years. Three principal lookout stations located on the highest points of the mountain ranges are being equipped with plate glass observation towers in which are to be kept instruments with powerful telescopes and with the capacity for fine adjustments equal to the finest surveying instruments. In the present case these stations are located at points of a triangle, which gives a practical outlook over a very great portion of the forest.

The three observation points to be used at principal stations in the Umpqua Forest are to be Devil's Knob, Abbott's Butte and Black Rock." **(Roseburg Review)**

1915: A lookout house constructed on a concrete foundation measuring 12'x12'. with a thickness of 12" and an average height of about 4' 6" with a door opening on the north side.

January 17, 1915: "I am enclosing a statement of the cost of the Black Rock Lookout Station, segregated under the different headings as requested by Mr. Shirley Buck.

The total cost of this project as given on this statement is \$129.16 less than the cost formerly recorded for this lookout station. It has been found upon careful examination that this amount can be charged to other projects. Owing to the fact that the hauling and packing this year was done for four or five projects at the same time it has been a different matter to properly divide the cost for this work between the several projects.

Approximately \$40.00 of the total cost paid out for this project was for packing sand and gravel for the concrete work." **(Letter to District Forester from Acting Forest Supervisor, Umpqua N.F.)**

February 7, 1915: "The lookout station on top of Black Rock mountain, on the Umpqua national forest, in Southern Oregon is 6150 feet high, and the station is built on the bare rocky summit. A horse trail, two feet wide, was blasted through solid rock, in order that the material might be packed to the top. The station house is 10 x 10 feet, inside measurement, and has a stone and concrete wall one foot thick and reaching 3 1/2 feet above the floor. A wooden plate, 8 x 14 inches, rests on top of the wall, and above this is a two foot width of heavy plate glass, extending completely around the building. These plate glass sections are held together by narrow copper bars, so that there is the least possible obstruction to the view. The hip roof is supported by a steel angle bar at each corner. Of the material used, the cement (2000 pounds) was packed a distance of 35 miles, the sand (6000 pounds) was packed from Fish creek, a distance of six miles; the timbers were hewn from white pine growing on the slopes of Black Rock mountain, and moved to the top with block and tackle." **(The Oregon Daily Journal)**

August 26, 1915: "A.S. Peck, national forest supervisor, and S.C. Bartrum, local supervisor, left this afternoon for Black Rock, where they will take the trail to Diamond lake inspecting lookout stations and telephone lines." **(The Evening News)**

1915: "The principal point of interest along this stage is Black Rock Mountain. Here is located one of the chief ranger stations. A lookout is being constructed on the summit of the mountain, an elevation of 6300 feet. Sand for the cement is packed by the government pack train from Fish Creek, and other material which cannot be secured from the forest is packed from still greater distances. It is planned to also establish a weather observatory and to operate a heliograph between Black Rock and Bohemia, forty-five miles to the northward." **(Report of Vacation Trip into the North Umpqua Region, 1915 - on file at the Douglas County Museum)**

July 3, 1917: "J.H. Bosard was in the city today attending to business affairs at the local forestry office. Mr. Bosard has been assigned as the forestry lookout at Black Rock, which is one of the most important lookout points in the county, being surrounded by a very large range of forests." **(Roseburg Review)**

July 4, 1920: (For the 1919 season) "Mrs. Minerva Bidwell served all last summer at Black Rock lookout in the Umpqua national forest. Her head station was at Roseburg and her home is at Hoaglin." **(The Sunday Oregonian)**

August 2, 1920: "Mrs. K.G. Hanson arrived in Roseburg Saturday from Los Angeles and left Sunday for Black Rock, where she will spend the remainder of the summer with her husband, who is employed as lookout there." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

July 7, 1921: "Following breakfast the bride and groom left for Wolf Creek with Mr. and Mrs. Marsters where they enjoyed a two days' picnic. From there Mr. and Mrs. Macnab will go to Black Rock where Mr. Macnab is employed as lookout in the forest service. This fall they will leave for Lincoln, Nebraska, to make their home." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

October 1922: "A 7 foot cougar was killed on the Umpqua on August 6 by fireman W.C. Curtis at the Black Rock Station. Mr. Curtis says he did not hear the varmint scream but it did a heap of growling." **(Six Twenty-Six)**

September 1923: "A telephone message was sent by Lage Wernstedt from Black Rock Lookout, on the Umpqua Forest, to a man at Crescent, Oregon, which is on the road from Bend to Klamath Falls. The message was sent over Forest Service lines and was relayed at Oakridge and McKenzie Bridge on the Cascade Forest and at LaPine on the Deschutes. The distance is about 250 miles. The entire time consumed was about ten minutes." **(Six Twenty-Six)**

May 1, 1924: "At the Black Rock ranger station, situated at an elevation of 6,000 feet, there is one foot of snow at the cabin and 100 feet away the ground is clear. Last year at this time the snow was up to the eaves of the lookout cabin and did not fall below that level until after the first of July." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

1926: A cupola and new roof added to the lookout house.

1927: Standard lightning protection installed on the lookout.



August 5, 1933: Panorama photos taken by Robert Snyder & James Rittenhouse.

June 20, 1935: "Ernest Taylor arrived from Portland Tuesday to visit with Jack Chapman before attending guard school at Wolf creek. He is a student in the forestry school at O.S.C., and has been stationed at Black Rock lookout for the summer." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

August 13, 1937: "Jack Bathrick, employed by the forest service as observer at Black Rock lookout station, spent today visiting here with his parents." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

1938: The cupola lookout house replaced by an L-4, 1936 model cab built atop the existing lower walls of the old structure.

1941: The lookout staffed for 80 days and reported to the Big Camas Ranger Station by way of forest line to Pacific Telephone and Telegraph.

September 29, 1942: Some facts about the lookout from a 'Report on Lookout and Guard Stations': The structure was built in 1938 atop the concrete lower wall of a previous building. The lookout was equipped with a Kellogg Grabaphone; the chimney, a Safety Flue w/o damper; The fire finder was a new #4 Osborne. The windows 30" x 60" - 4 lights @ 13" x 27 1/4" each; The door size 27 1/2" x 6'9 3/4", 4 lights @ 8 1/2 x 25 1/2" each. The toilet facilities utilized the Wallowa style. Water was obtained from a spring located approximately one quarter of a mile south of the lookout. From Roseburg the travel to the lookout started with a road trip of 65 miles, then a trail of 8 miles to the summit.

June 21, 1943: "Mrs. Bruce Yeager and daughter Marilee of Roseburg have gone in to the Blackrock lookout which they will man this summer." (**Roseburg News-Review**)

August 11, 1943: "Marilee Yeager applied to County Clerk Roy Agee Monday for bounty on a wildcat, which she killed in the Black Rock lookout area." (**Roseburg News-Review**)

August 4, 1962: "Samuel Zafirau comes from Bowling Green Ohio, where he attends Bowling Green State University." (**The News-Review**)



1965: The Forest Service burned the discontinued lookout building.

June 2007: The foundation has survived the elements and stands as a monument to possibly the oldest lookout site in Oregon.

REX'S FIRE LOOKOUT PAGE



MEMBER: FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

