

FOREST LOOKOUTS

OREGON

BAKER COUNTY

BENTON COUNTY

CLACKAMAS COUNTY

CLATSOP COUNTY

MORE...

DOUGLAS COUNTY

RED BUTTE

Umpqua National Forest
28S-2W-1



September 2007 - Ron Kemnow photo



June 28, 1917: "George Bonebrake, who is employed in the local forestry offices, returned here this afternoon after constructing a new telephone line and trail from Wolf Creek to the summit of Red Butte mountain.

The distance between the two points is about eight miles, according to S.C. Bartrum, and the improvements were made with considerable difficulty on the part of the men in charge. Besides constructing the trail and telephone line the Government will soon establish a lookout station on the summit of Red Butte. The station will be modernly equipped, and will prove very valuable in locating fires in that section of the county. Red Butte is one of the highest mountains in this part of the state, and the surrounding country can be seen for a distance of many miles." **(Roseburg Review)**

October 10, 1918: "Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Frazier came down from the lookout station at Red Butte, where they have been all summer. They will go to Oakland, Oregon, for the winter." **(Evening Roseburg Review)**

c.1919: The lookout established in a tree with the observer 15 feet above the ground.

September 30, 1929: "Mr. and Mrs. Marion Winslow came from Glide Monday. Mr. Winslow was in the forest service at Red Butte lookout station during the summer." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

July 21, 1930: "At Red Butte a new, standard lookout house has recently been completed under the direction of Asst. Ranger 'Mike' Church. The material for the construction of these lookout houses must be packed on horses for many miles over mountain trails and the erection of one of them on the high rocky points is a real engineering feat." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

1931: A three wire, one pole, pasture fence constructed at a cost of \$16.34. Over the next seven years another \$80.27 spent on fencing.



August 9, 1933: Panorama photos were taken by Robert Cooper and Reino Sarlin.

August 27, 1935: "Howard Church, brother of Dr. H.C. Church, who is lookout at the Red Butte station in the Little River district, was called to Roseburg this morning by the illness of his wife, who is at Mercy hospital." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

October 1935: "The lonely forest lookout, occupying his station high in the mountain regions of the Cascades, looks forward to weeks of monotony and isolation as the time comes that he must take his post. Such, however, is not the case with Howard Church, observer at Red Butte in the Little River district, about 20 miles, in an airline, from Roseburg. Church has his Seattle and San Francisco papers almost daily, in some cases in advance of subscribers. He receives fresh cigarettes, candy and even fresh, dainty lunches, actually "showered" upon him.

It all started along in June when Church took over his station. Red Butte is a high jagged peak that rises to an elevation of approximately 5300 feet. It is topped by a small plateau which is crossed by a low swale. The peak is directly in the path of passenger planes in summer and is used as a guide by the pilots.

When clouds hang low, the pilots must fly several miles out of their course around the peak or may cross through the gap in the peak. Church found that the removal of several snags on the top of the mountain would remove the hazards to the fliers, and he proceeded to take out the dead trees. In appreciation, a pilot dropped him a Seattle paper. Church wrote his thanks to the airline.

Now the pilots make it a practice to drop him the day's papers from Seattle and San Francisco. He gets the latest editions within a few hours after publication. Passengers, regularly using the line, have become interested, and include gifts in the packets. Cigarettes, candy, chewing gum, magazines, these and many other gifts have been tossed down on the forest lookout as the airliners have passed over his station. Recently one of the hostesses prepared a luncheon, complete to after-dinner mints and toothpicks, and the meal was lowered by means of an improvised parachute.

Church has established correspondence with some of the pilots and has arranged to take one or more on hunting trips during the deer season. He plans to visit in Seattle during the winter and will take a ride on the route to see his station from the air." **(Six Twenty-Six)**

August 21, 1937: "The Red Butte road is quite smooth and traverses a heavy stand of timber. The lookout stationed at Red Butte lookout reports a number of visitors each week. The view from the top of Red Butte is very good in clear weather. To go to Red Butte lookout requires about a twenty minute walk from the end of the road and is well worth the time to take this short hike on a good mountain trail." **(The News-Review)**



Activated: October 16, 1942; Deactivated: October 16, 1943. Roseburg Filter Center.

1942: A cabin was constructed by the Air Warning Service for their observer at this location.

March 25, 1943: "Wright Mallery is returning to Glide to take up his duties as protective assistant in the forest service. He has been on the Red Butte lookout all winter and is replaced by Mr. and Mrs. Edwards." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

April 14, 1943: "Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Edwards have given up their work as observers on Red Butte lookout because the high altitude affected Mr. Edwards health." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

April 28, 1943: "Mr. and Mrs. Carl Messing and daughters, Jean and Jane, made a trip to Red Butte lookout Sunday. There is still several feet of snow there and four more inches fell Sunday night." & "Mr. and Mrs. Paul Caswell have gone to Red Butte lookout where they will act as airplane spotters and fire lookouts during the fire season." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

October 8, 1943: "Mr. and Mrs. Dewey C. Bullock from Bend Ore. are now stationed at Red Butte lookout to replace Mr. and Mrs. Paul Caswell. A new tower has been built and improvements made." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

October 12, 1943: Mr. and Mrs. P.C. Caswell, who have been in charge of the Red Butte lookout station since last spring, have moved back to their home and Mr. Caswell has resumed his work at Churchill's hardware store." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

October 27, 1943: "Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Bullock, who have been on the Red Butte lookout, have gone over to S. Umpqua where they will both be employed by the forest service." **(Roseburg News-Review)**

1943: The garage and woodshed were acquired from the Air Warning Service for the sum of \$100.00.

1953: A 41 foot high timber tower and lookout cab constructed.

August 4, 1962: "Claude Roberts is a two-year veteran at this station. Roberts lives at Rock Creek. He is an education student at Southern Oregon College of Education." **(The News Review)**

August 9, 1974: "We would like to purchase carpeting for Red Butte Lookout. The floor needs refinishing or recovering now and we feel that carpeting would be the most economical in the long run. In winter, moisture comes up under the bottom of the Lookout and causes the floor to heave enough so tile would not hold together. The only choices we have are to refinish the floor which would have to be done by hand, do nothing, or laying carpet. The cost through a G.S.A. contract would be \$142.56." **(Letter from District Ranger, Glide to Forest Supervisor, Umpqua)**

September 3, 1974: "At this time we are retaining general Forest policy that lookouts not be carpeted. The Forest Supervisor has authority for approval but does not encourage its use in such applications until some existing lookout installations can be evaluated.

We suggest you apply 5/16-inch plywood directly over existing flooring; then use seamless vinyl roll flooring. The following precautions should be observed:

1. Nail plywood prolifically at no less than 16-inch centers over entire surface. You might consider renting an electric nailer or stapler

made for such installations.

2. Leave 1/16 to 1/8-inch butt joint expansion between sheets.

3. Assure that cement for seamless floor thoroughly covers plywood, since it acts as a seal-coat against moisture." (Letter to District Ranger, Glide from Forest Engineer, Umpqua)



REX'S FIRE LOOKOUT PAGE



MEMBER: FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

