

Diary of a First Year Lookout

Glade Mountain, San Juan NF, Colorado, 1964

by Dolores Decker

May 22, 1964

The job was to start June 1st, but now I am starting May 25th. Thursday the Forest Service had a tour for the ladies, wives and employees of the F.S. We toured a lumber mill in Dolores, watched tree planting, saw reserves for animals, etc, and My Lookout! What a great place! Better than the pictures or what they had told me it would be like. The view is tremendous ... and I cannot wait until Monday now. But it looks like I will not get the summer through, but have weekends off, which is good for church, washing clothes and me, and seeing people. I hope the car can take the trips. It's a good car ... but a rough road for using often. Now to prepare things for the job - butterflies and hard to concentrate, shopped, packed, dinner, movie Sunday evening, "The sky above and the mud below", ... late to bed, early to rise....

May 26..

This endless earth... this endless life. From this Glade Mountain I can see into the encircling horizon and far reaching skies. Perhaps I should be afraid, being so far from anyone, a speck that means a house, a little star of light at dark that means a life...but I am not. And why?

May 27..

After a night filled with lightning and wild dreams I almost expected perhaps a booming fire right off, and probably under me.

Instead the day seemed touching on routine already. But, an exciting routine. Had a mild loss of contact with other stations, which was remedied by exchanging batteries. First congratulations from Ranger Booth for that. Then Harry came up at 1 p.m. to go over again the FDR (fire danger reading) data. Coup #2, he mentioned he and his crew saying how quick I was catching on to the job!!

May 28..

Ah-hah, I knew it was a little too simple! Today started easily, then after giving the FDR I realized I had erred, so I had to call back in to Durango and correct it. Then a flurry of back and forth calls to Cortez, a visit from a forester, while he was here a radio flurry again...confusing! Later, near the end of the workday, a pickup bringing my first visitors ... a guide from Dolores and his man and wife hunters of bear from Houston. While these people were here, Durango called asking me to repeat my FDR for the day! Mistake or no? Never told ... something to worry over for a while. The visitors stayed during and after the hectic calls...now I am looking forward to visitors, but I hope I am better prepared then.

My stomach is jumpy, my fingernails are dwindling, but I love it! Mostly the evenings ... the lovely peace, even the colors are peaceful. Colors nearest deepen gradually fading off into

pale pastels. The scattered reservoirs and ponds reflect the shine of the sky and the rugged mountains of the day become gentle outlines enclosing the beauty of the world ... three cottontails chasing each other about the lookout road, rolling, hiding and stopping play to nibble on young plants ... then the settling of cheerful birds for the night, their soft voices dimming with the light, the grey clouds gathering slowly to lower their soft shades on the setting sun of orange ... explain the values of another job.....?

May 30..

Well people, the job is great! The first week is over and I still love it! The first day was spent in getting ready, signing papers, going up to the lookout (1-1/2 hours from town) then putting in the weather equipment and radio, lights (butane refrigeration (butane), stove (butane), and water (milk cans)

and everything in order. Then I am schooled in the radio and taking the weather readings, and in general all about being a lookout in two hours! Then I was left in peace, spent most of the night cleaning and scrubbing everything in sight. I am sure I chased every creature away for miles with all the noise.

The sunset was gorgeous, and it brought on the most beautiful thunderstorm and lightning for the whole night! Now I know what this

unworkable phone was put in here for ... every time lightning hit the place, it rang to tell you so! But, all is grounded so I won't fry and will be perfectly safe. In fact the first day up, I was wondering what the fears were for! There is no need for a big dog, or a gun, or such things to protect you. I never felt so safe as I do up here in all this wildness ... fears I guess, are strictly for cities. Its so darn beautiful I wonder if even my slides will show just what it is like?

The weather readings have been the hardest to learn, they are pretty complicated for me with all the tables you have to follow. From this the fire danger reading is taken and each day at 1pm all regions and lookouts must radio in to the Supervisors Office in Durango.

The radio has been my joy, at first I was afraid of it ... broadcasting my stupidity to the whole San Juan Forest, but now I am not quite so backward at voicing it! In fact it is fun ... I feel so dramatic!

The first day I answered with "over and out" and sent everyone into hysterics. That's movie stuff, they tell me. We answer either 10-8 (clear) or 10-7 (radio-off) or just "clear", 10-4 is okay, really, O.K.!

Things will be hopping here soon, as it gets drier. The workday goes from 8 hours to 9, 10, 11, 12 hours and often



longer if a fire is on through the night, which sometimes happens.

June 2..

A hurried bucket bath, into pajamas and onto the bed to watch a huge, black cloud coming over with frequent roots of lightning shooting down from it... The radio is off and everything but the clock is holding its breath, the land is very quiet. A flash of lightning, a rumble of thunder, then a final buzz of a fly in its last voice of the day. The telephone rings warning of the closeness of the lightning. Now the light is too dim to write...

June 3..

Assistant Ranger Widhelm came up to fix the anemometer and check on my fdr data. Brought steaks with him and while he worked at the weather station I fumbled with my first pie on the tower and broiled the steaks through smoke in the tower!

June 9..

Into the third week ... the wind has done its best today to rattle the roof off the lookout, so far it has not succeeded. The hot setting sun is warming and settling on my vivid thoughts ... My car had to stay in town for repairs by Mr. Loyd last week, so I hitched a ride with two young FS fellows working on grading the forest road. Widhelm brought me back up Sunday afternoon. Yesterday afternoon with the FS radioman ... weird conversations, from radio connections, to lady lookouts, sex, religion and God! Evening visit from Garry... The day has passed as swiftly as the wind that travelled through it...

June 11..

This sun that shines each evening through the lookout windows feels warm and good, but right now it is warming my brain to a sleepy blankness. The radio is becoming silent as each station signs off for the night. One more day tomorrow and I'll sign off for the finish of the third week.

How glad I am that the first weeks are over, now I am more confidently calm, and things such as the radio, fires popping out suddenly, and everything else that comes with a new job are behind me. Now its just progressing with what I have learned and trying to do a good piece of work this summer. Each of the fire lookouts in the San Juan Forest this year is wo-manned by women, myself being the only unmarried, I guess. This, I hear, has caused some minor excitement in the ranks of the forest. Too bad I am not the devastating movie type, a brilliant blonde goddess beaming her big blue eyes about in the great primeval land. Instead I'm a terrible disappointment to the romantic mind, being an ordinary and plain girl with a little itch to be by herself.

The elk have been around almost every day now! Although I haven't seen more than four at once, even seeing one is great! And tonight topped it, a cow elk and her calf! At the moment the cow is feeding while the young one rests in the bush. It must have been born recently, it looks so small. With the elk and occasional deer, birds and chipmunks, and my little cottontails, also heifers in the distance, a human visitor now and then, tourist or FS people, and a airplane that almost came close enough for coffee the other day... only the latter hours are silent, and even those I fill with interesting people from all over the world who live in books. So life here is not exactly filled with loneliness.

But I do look forward to the weekends down, and that clear water that comes out of a pipe. I am anxious about the car, and hope it was fixed this week ...the darn thing, it at least could have waited until fall instead the first week of the job!

June 12..

Garry, the boy working on the road, came in last night, so we watched a good herd of deer up on the nearest low mountain and a cow elk chase away another cow from the area of her calf...this morning two cows are having breakfast together! If it hadn't started to get dark, may still be watching all this...instead we played cards. This morning it started right out again with the elk, then my first sight of the neighbor's horses coming up, then while looking for smokes I spied a hawk gliding over the scrub oaks stalking something. And now even the trucks below working on the road are visible. I will probably get so engrossed in all this looking I will forget what I am supposed to be looking for.

There was a fire on the district this week, but as usual, it was behind this certain little mountain that hides the view of the southeast. It was in the scrub and was caused by lightning and had been smoldering for several days. It grew over five acres until the plane spotted it while on its morning patrol. I got to help on relaying radio contacts from the plane to crew to the Cortez office. But I still have yet to spot a smoke.

June 14..

...car repaired...broken axle...

Yesterday morning I took the flight up with Baker Patrol, the forest air service, made the route with them that they make daily, soon twice a day, takes an hour to fly the area, going over three districts, Glade, Mancos, and Dolores. My area looked completely different than I had expected, much more canyon area, wild and rugged. Then over Mancos where it is mountainous but gently sloping land, covered with Pine, Aspen and Cottonwoods, and over Stoner and Rico, where the mountains crowd together. I was a little green by the end of the trip, don't know if it was because I am unused to flying small craft again, because of a slight headache when starting, because I have a weak stomach, or just because I am "chicken"!

The comment made about a person's modesty in the clipping I sent home is funny, because if you are modest about chipmunks, you're in pretty bad shape! This is about all viewers around interested in your movements.

Back in town, I miss the mornings I am woke up by the sun on my face, the stars at night, no noise, no wires and tv antennas cutting up the sky, no travelling to work. It has its problems too, as all jobs, its not perfect, but then I like it with its imperfections more than any job so far!

June 16..

Well, my career is ruined as a lookout! I spotted my first fire yesterday and the radio news of Cortez gave the credit to the air patrol! Now I shall never be famous. Oh well, had a write-up in the newspaper, and they misspelled my name, such is life.

A lookout life is filled with looking out, and the out looking in. These sturdy glass windows that enclose the tower, protecting it from winds and rain, give a most wonderful view. Now I am all for glass houses, that is, if they have wide-open mountain top living. Mornings bring the rising sun over the eastern crest to serve as an alarm clock warming my face and mind to wakefulness. At night I have a sky full of stars, or moon, or thunderheads releasing their burdens of lightning. Each sunset is a fascinating entertainment of colors and moods. And beside the sky, the mountains, and the land, there is the animal life. Recently a few elk have been around to watch. There are many deer but they are shy and seldom seen up close, and there are bold chipmunks, and the cottontails who think they are bold.

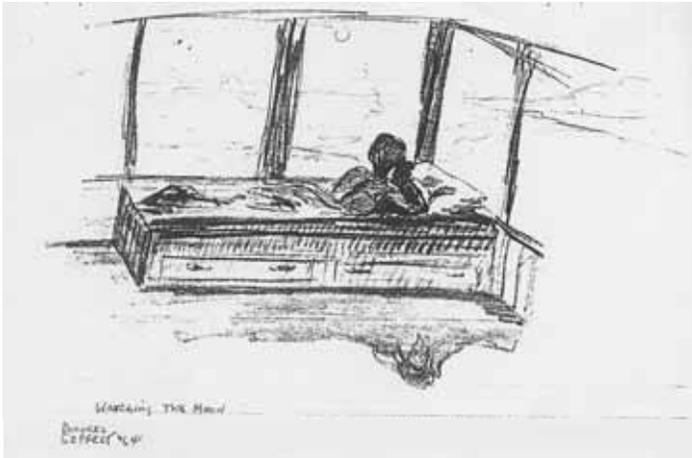
June 19..

It is chilly in here today, the butane left the tanks, so no heat, no cooking, no lights peanut butter sandwiches and cold coffee for breakfast. A day or so ago the wind ripped off the screen door, then a 40 mile per hour gust took a board off the roof and sent it flying into the tree. The screws on the window shade are dropping one by one. What next?

I started making a rock-lined path to the weather equipment yesterday, I can't stop looking at it; it pleases me. It won't be a straight path, but winding, what fun is a straight walking path? I ache a little from prying up boulders and lifting them, but its work that I find I have to stop myself from overdoing. Perhaps I should have become a rock digger? Down tonight for the weekend....

June 21..

Narraguinep Canyon was the scene of my first flat tire! A funny sound, as if I had dropped or was dropping something, had me stop the car to see what it was, and sure enough it was a blowout! Naturally, it was car troubles one by one. Luckily I was within a mile from my nearest neighbors to the lookout, the Bradfields, so walking hurriedly there to beat the dark, I arrived while they were doing evening chores about the ranch. Within a short time, we were back at the car. The two men and a boy quickly fixed the tire. Now I know how to do it, but I could not feel it wise if I had tried it alone, with my luck I probably would have had the car rolling down the road backward, with me standing tire in hand!



June 22..

Clear are the skies, and the orange setting sun is spreading its amber glow generously about, in sky, on mountaintops, on everything that is reaching for the last warming rays. The mountains to the west and northwest are evening blue silhouettes framing the last of the sun's colors. Another day has gone ... to be logged in with the others ... a pleasant day filled with good work, reading, and thinking ... a great sunset, looks like a red sea about to come rushing on this night land. I miss Garry, since his job has taken him to another road in the San Juan. At sunset when the animals are easier to spot, it is not as enjoyable as struggling with someone for the binoculars for the chance to look. No more funny card games, no more evening pie and coffee ... I have been spoiled ... now back to being alone again...

June 24..

I talked to my first person in three days, in person that is, the radio is on to talk to all the time ... but to a face ... Mr. Bradfield came up on his horse while out checking fences. What histories people have, and are so willing to tell! My red-capped bird friend is again sitting on the Glade sign, singing his evening

news ... a young cottontail hopped and stopped below him, listened awhile, then ran back the way he came ... spreading the news ... the two elk cows and their calves are down at the pond feeding among the skunk cabbage and water plants, how beautiful their rich brown coats gleam in the setting sun ... how wonderful it is to stand in the evening breeze and breath deeply ... the clean, green air, fresh and full. A movement at the corner of my eye caught my attention; two young deer had walked up to the tower! The first time so close! They had the adventurous look, nervous but eager to explore. There's the moon, tonight is an eclipse, it is half there. We almost missed this, it is passing completely behind clouds ... the light is fading, I can barely see to write, and yet I hate to light the gas lamp and break this pink and lovely evening.

June 26..

I have been sleeping less, and in breaks. Last night I put the flame off at 10:30 and woke at 12 p.m., fell asleep and woke again at 2 a.m. ... a bug had bitten my neck lightly and I tossed it off, could not find what it was, so I ignored it and got up. A light flashed in Disappointment, probably a poacher. Still not sleepy, I turned on the radio and for over an hour listened to music from Omaha. I was lulled to sleep, then finally it was 6 a.m.

June 30..

This has been a day! Five fires, activity starting at 6:20 this morning and ending late tonight! Its after 8 p.m. and the crews are just going home, while a few lonely groups are guarding burns in case of their breaking out during the night. The lightning that came out of the southwest early was with heavy rain and lightning, and pushing a rainbow! I watched the strikes all south of me, and as the storm cloud quickly moved over, the first smoke starting rising and I notified Jersey Jim Lookout, who was now in the storm with no visibility to see the smokes, but who had the phone into town, and she called the Glade rangers. Slurry bombers came out of Durango ... almost hits the crew ... a fire restarts ... a couple of cowboys recruited ... men sent from all available districts...

July 1..

Quiet here today; the other end had their share. Jersey Jim Lookout and friend came to visit today, now I know what the voice looks like ... nice person ... also Bradfield and son and three younger boys came later to visit before they rounded up several of their horses that have grazed here the past few weeks. Now after all the people visits I find it a little hard to settle back into the alone state again!

July 6..

Seventh week coming up, this Sunday. Battery on car went dead! Luckily I was coming up a bit earlier to visit with Nancy, the relief lookout, before she left the tower. We visited in her car as she took me up to the tower. So today my car sits among the pinyon as lonely as I am here, brooding time! Well, I do have Dopey; Nancy brought up a young squirrel from Mancos! What a character ... bottle feeding!

Part 3 ... (continued from last issue)

July 8..

Last night after 8 pm when everyone had called it a day, I spotted a smoke! It was too dark to tell exactly where it came up, on forest land or BLM land, so the men had to go out and look. I had thought the smoke, or glow, had come up from a canyon, and they are deep enough to hide until large enough to see. As the fire crew advanced to the area in the dark, we radioed back and forth and could keep up uninterrupted at this time until necessary. I watched their headlights winding through

the dark. They arrived at the forest boundary and had found no fire, but I found more definitely where the BLM line was ... and the glow had come from there! (And it most likely was a glow of the setting sun!)

This time I was glad to be alone, instead of facing all those grinning faces! The fire crew stayed at the Guard Station to be sure, then to check again in the morning. Not much sleep, morning came and no smoke, the men came up to the tower, and whittled me down a little, and during coffee and talk, laughed over the "smoke". I did too, but still felt pretty silly for their trouble. Later I learned also that they "enjoy" that extra overtime fire pay!

After the hectic night and morning, lightning and rain came with the afternoon. A smoke spiraled up then disappeared, the crew called, the lightning continued and rain blotted out the smoke. Again a frantic chase to do my sighting. And yet it is my job to see them, they are not dust or illusions (maybe mist?) so why should I feel so badly? The radio is quiet and in my mind thoughts race; self doubts, critical thoughts. They are holding back ... also with time I learn they are not thinking what I am thinking at all, but their own thoughts, maybe of getting home, or food and a bath ... anything but the worries I have!

A small light, a fire reported to Durango, relaying with the S.O. and Jersey Jim, such a small thing to brighten the world ... a coup! 9 pm, a fire is going on the other end, I'm not involved, but the radio is on to listen for info. Now, first time I've heard this, the radio was accidentally left by the crew, and my name came up. Indistinctly ... "her name is Dolores ... she's quite a gal ... artist, too." No kidding? ... click ... Aah ... radio is fun!

July 13..

A weekend flat again, fixed at Bayfield on a visit. I stayed in Cortez Sunday night and made an early run to the tower. No car trouble, I arrived before 6:30 am, greeted with happy chirps from Dopey squirrel. 8th week! A plane caught me with my britches down at 7:30 this morning while treating a sore bruise.

July 14..

Gorgeous sunset among the thunderheads, from the dark, huge clouds, pink rain seems to be falling...

July 15..

On duty with a froggy throat and fever ... some bug! A fire came up about 6 pm, and since the rain made the roads difficult, the time was rather late, and the fire tucked in a good rocky spot to leave awhile, they decided to try it in the morning. So now it is morning and we all are on it, with a plane to come soon to guide them in ... or down! The crew is on the mesa, and the fire below a good-sized cliff! But the plane now picks up no fire ... it has died out. My face is red again ... but this time I know it was a fire!

July 16..

I accidentally killed the squirrel today! I'll never forget it, I rolled over in my sleep and smothered it! I'd only had him around for two weeks, I'll miss his hide and seek games and running at me in a big bluff of fierceness ... when I made a move he would scamper quickly, feet sliding in all directions on the slippery floor, running for cover.

July 19..

I left the lookout Saturday morning to hike to where the fire was that wasn't ... but did not make it, instead I spent most of the morning stuck in a mud hole. Later Mr. Perkins pulled

the Ford out with his truck. I'd had enough playing Jeep with a Ford, so I headed for Cortez and stopped at the doctor's for a penicillin shot for a hanging-on sore throat.

Now there's a young buck at the tower with velvet antlers. Nancy brought up another squirrel ... with a different personality. It's the beginning of my ninth week ...

July 23..

There was smokechasing again last night, but this time mine was not the only fire to go out. Still no sign of smoke this morning! I feel sorry for the fellows who have to try tracking it down with no success, then the waiting to make sure it does

not show again. But it's a job outdoors ... if they like to look at it that way. This squirrel is the cutest, in play, in snuggling, in yawning,



and scratching, stretching and biting my toes ... This is a thunderous day, the fiercest, most terrific storm of an afternoon on my record. I lost count and record keeping of lightning on this one. But it still was not close enough to sizzle my frizz ... now there are the colors in the sky as the sun sets, beautiful, scattered, many ... the clouds, from the quiet to the tumultuous, have gathered the sun's colors and shaped them to their own moods, thinly or vivid and thick with emotion.

July 24..

I'm moving in a dream, it takes a fire to get me down to earth, to work, and off myself. One from the storm this afternoon put itself out again ... but later I found a live one and Baker, up on patrol, found another, so we're still on the radio after sundown while the two crews work on their fires.

I had three brother ranchers, Perkins, with me through the trackdown, and enjoyed it ... visitors are nice, like these...

July 31..

Yesterday was a visit from the boss ranger's wife, children, and the forester's wife. The scout warned its way up with loud honking and they streamed up the steps with a birthday cake and birthday gift of toy binoculars! They also brought up a local newspaper with my face in it!

I heard on the radio today (FS gossip) that someone stole a radio out of a FS vehicle in Cortez, a \$750 two-way radio, plus a rifle and binoculars, so the FBI is now in on this. I also heard that one of the guys got hurt, a small cut, working on the range fence, and Sunday one of the trucks got pushed off the road going to Rico by a tourist! Nothing serious, just everyday! I had a typical, frustrating smoke last night, a small storm came over in the afternoon, when it was gone, the fellows went 10-7 for the day as it was about 6:30, then a smoke snuggled out of the pine several miles away and I had to call it in to Jersey Jim. Boss Booth was soon on the radio and dispatching out a crew. Naturally by the time they got to the area in the wetness of the afterstorm, the smoke had put itself out. But they still had to go in to check it out. The plane could not be sent out because it was already getting too dark, so I had to try to guide them in. We gave up about nine, it's pretty difficult to find a fire that isn't, among a million wet trees. At six the next morning a crew was

guided by the plane who thought they had the spot ... it turned out to be a lightning strike alright, but not burning. The crew said the area had a number of lightning hits, with trees scattered all about in pieces ... so another of the smokes disappears into the list ... but fires are found at times, like the ones of July 24th, both lightning-hit trees ... one difficult to get to with the pumpertruck and water had to be carried in back pumps a mile and a half away from the truck, with no cleared paths to walk on. The joking after the mop-up amazes me, tired voices going home hardly fail to talk a bit with the lookouts no matter how many hours of working. I don't know what the main office thinks of these conversations, but the people are great to work with, and fun!

I could kill this squirrel with my bare hands! It tears up



everything it can chew on with its new teeth, but I guess I really do love it ... and it still has the run of the tower and is the thrill of the visitors. It's dark now, past

my bedtime ... can you see me going to bed at nine and getting up at five? It's a good job, even on weekends I live it, watching the weather and worrying, going to the office to talk shop when it's open for high fire danger, and watching the planes head out over my weekend residence.

I watched the Pershing missile shots from Blanding, Utah a few days ago, where the army fired off two. I saw one really, but wasn't able to watch for the other at the time and missed it, but the one I did see was interesting. I watched the smoke, explosion, and the trail heading to White Sands, New Mexico, then the second stage and trail of smoke. Besides the high flying Frontier Airlines planes, there are still the little private planes that like to suddenly come from nowhere and shake up the tower.

It began raining today, and for the first time I'm really soaked in with low, heavy clouds ... wish pictures could show these fantastic clouds.

I left early for the tower Sunday night in the rain, afraid the roads would be too slick in the morning to get up.

August 3..

It rained quite a bit in the country, leaving the roads like butter ... Glade Mountain ... impassible. I started up, slipped into the ditch, slipped out, and backed down the road. When I reached the gravel and the crossroads I decided to head for the guard station to spend the night, then thought of Nancy ... no tracks showing she had made it down! So I packed the sleeping bag into the knapsack and started up. Her car was a little further up from where I had almost stuck mine, and her footprints deep in the mud going back up to the lookout. I followed the tracks going the same way I was going until it grew too dark to see them. I called out now and then in case she was resting along the side of the road still, but I saw nothing, not even the usual porky, until I finally saw the tower light shining through a wet cloud. Nancy had already called and was waiting for her husband to come from Mancos to rescue her and the car ... by midnight they were nearing home. This morning I went back down to my car, studying the road for possibilities of

bringing it up, but it was still too slick, so I packed my knapsack with essentials and backtracked to the lookout. Almost three miles down is a great walk, but almost three miles up with a backpack and sliding half the time is work!

August 5..

The roads were dry, so last night I hiked down again to bring up the car, unload the water and odds and ends, and again took the car down ... not silly ... just preparing for another wet weekend! The walks have been fun! I've flushed quail, walked up on grazing deer, been buzzed by horned owls, walked with the Bradfield horses along the road, had skunks waddling quickly away, and the shy porkies... But the poor squirrel, left alone so much, had taken to wandering himself. This time he was missing! Where do you look for a squirrel in a forest? I just had to wait ... later I went down for a visit to the outhouse, and a frantic chirping came from the dark hole! I talked into the hole, coaxing, and let a long stick down into it hoping he would climb out on it, but he huddled in a fragrant corner. The radio called, so I had to leave, but when I returned he had made it to a level just below the opening. I could reach him and he slowly came up my arm trailing a long dripping tail ... he now lived up to his nickname of "Stinky"! It was the first squirrel bath for the both of us! But seeing him sitting in the sun, stretching and enjoying the warmth ... at least he must have enjoyed it! While up working on the radio I called and asked Nancy, working on Jersey Jim that day, how to get her squirrel up out of the privy hole ... she said it was my problem!

August 6..

Last night I walked the mile down to Bradfields cow camp to visit...

August 9..

I spent Saturday afternoon at Jersey Jim and visited the office Sunday morning...

August 11..

I hiked over to Benchmark Mountain, possible sight of the next new lookout. It took 40 minutes to get there ... nice view. I hiked through a draw and up the mountainsides of scrub oak and aspen, going back I scattered frightened cows and calves, fought my way through tangled scrub and spider webs, and finally broke through and reached the clear ridge. The rest was a steady climb up in the open, past the weather station and then to the tower's friendly dark form against the evening light.

The squirrel spent the night out ... in the outhouse! He can't have fallen in twice, can he? Stinky is so stinky now he can hear the call of the wild for all I care!

Fear ... lightning is on its way over the mountains of Utah, burning into the bean fields and canyons, coming slowly and straight at me from the West ... time to pray! Coming up Glade Canyon ... coming ... coming ... then suddenly it stops, still overcast, but no storms. A person watching this type of lightning display needs little imagination to know what the earlier man felt, why lightning was feared as a God, and why man would wait cowering beneath a scraggly cape of skin for his justice to be dealt ... as I cowered beneath the pounding roof of the lookout.

August 17..

Bow season started Saturday, I talked with a couple of hunters late last night looking for their lost companions, and this morning the two who were here Friday looking over the area. Now there are more that I am watching below in the draw, one riding in the back of the vehicle like Washington overlooking the crossing of the Delaware, only this "George"

has a shiny bow with arrow notched ready for instant action ... looks rather funny from here, but exciting!

Well, the temples of Yucatan have their stone images of huge snake heads guarding the entrance, the Egyptians their cats, the Art Institute of Chicago its proud lions ... and the Glade Mountain lookout has its proud squirrel! He perches on the protruding piece of wood nailed to the catwalk for the hasp and overlooks the life about the grounds, as proud and regal as the stone beasts that have guarded important places for eons!



August 18..

...a neatly ordered life ... newly waxed floor, fresh and bright colored flowers on a shiny table...

August 20..

This was my first time to town during a work week ... for necessities. I stopped for coffee at a hunters camp I knew several miles from the tower ... almost forgot how nice it is to sit by a campfire at night with friends and a hot cup of coffee. Funny, it's harder to settle down being alone when there are more people about, it's almost lonely during the quiet hours.

August 26..

I took a nearly ten mile hike last night ... had to walk off a mood, and did, mostly in the dark, practically feeling my way. The flashlight failed and the moon was late rising ... in fact, the moon and I reached the tower at the same time! I'll never forget having to walk as a blind person, with my feet telling me where to walk in the hard packed ruts to the tower. But I slept that night!

They changed the Fire Danger System lately, so I had to learn and struggle all over, with many radio exchanges between Cortez, the S.O. and Jersey Jim because of it.

August 29..

I picked up Kachina today at the clinic in Cortez, a female dog, two months old, brought to the clinic with a cut mouth by an owner who never returned for her. She belongs to the tower now, or should I say the tower belongs to her? Stinky became jealous, and barked and teased Kachina. Suddenly FS people are bringing around too many dogs...

September 8..

Stinky is gone ... I came back from the weekend and he never showed up! I guess Kachina was the excuse he needed to return to the wilds. I miss his noise, but I know he's better off and was bound to go eventually. But, a forest lookout without a wild pet?

September 10..

It's fruit season, making pies and giving pies away. I tried to take one down to some fellows at the Guard Station and stalled the car on the way back up ... two miles to the lookout. I hiked down after work the next day and it ran up just fine! After this, I sent out pies with whoever was going, if they did not eat it here!

The car has been doing fine, except for a bad tire which looks about ready to blow. Noise caused from the gadget that holds the two back shocks will have a welding job this Saturday by a friend who has been "treating" the old girl. There's a broken radio antenna from getting too close to low branches, and Kachina has been doing a good job on the interior ... we can't seem to make it up or down without her getting car sick!

Kachina is learning words fast, the only trouble is "towerbreaking" her. She can go up and down the tower steps

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better now, only sometimes her behind tries to get down first. And her puppy legs seldom slip and cause her to bump her nose anymore. We scared up six blue grouse on a hike yesterday. The chokecherries are ripe, the game warden up the other day said that this should bring a few bear around. I still have not seen a bear, but have seen a few elk again, first time in a month. They might be about but they know when it's hunting season and are getting cautious and scared ... it's harder to see elk and deer. The bow hunters complained of the dry skunk cabbage and fallen oak leaves making it miserable to stalk. The colors are changing, a world of brown, red and gold, beautiful, but, fire danger!



I sat in a cloud for three hours yesterday, today is mostly clear and warm, with hardly a wind.

September 11..

Kachina dropped a puppy tooth in play this morning! I woke up to a beautiful morning ... Up, Danger, Up! ... a terrible thing to say, but I don't want this job to end yet, but I haven't had a fire for a couple of weeks. Though on the boundary line, a ranch smoke in the bean fields stirs you up a little, with the big fires in California, Nevada, and Wyoming at the moment. But we are not that thickly forested on the Glade or that dry ... and I don't want big fires. Just the job! A copter flew over the other day, Department of Interior men mapping the country ... it made me think of the chances of a copter being stationed on the Glade. This would mean very high danger. Baker Patrol will be up in a few minutes, last week they started having the lookouts monitor their 10-20's for the hour, a check-in every ten minutes. Even Baker has not spotted any smokes lately, hah! Just friendly competition!

September 24..

An oil rig on the Glade ... last evening, men from the oil rig invited me over for a steak supper (after hours) and a tour of the works. Noisy and fascinating, but I didn't understand a thing they told me ... and they knew it! And this is why I make a better lookout than a geologist! The whole rig and workings was explained, why they decide to drill, the details of drilling, breaking down, analysis of particles taken from the earth ... much too much! I felt much more comfortable when taken back to the tower.

September 25..

Thunderheads have moved over the area and it looks as if we may have some kind of action. The wind sounds stronger than it is, probably fifteen miles per hour. I can hear lightning static on the radio, but not close yet. If the rain or snow hits, I hope it's very light.

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I watched the Perklins ranchers move their cattle below, in the draw, the past two days, to different pastures. The nearer Bradfields will be moving their stock out sooner this year, in fact right before hunting season they say ... seems hunters still mistake cattle for game!

September 30..

9:30 am and the place is cleaned, dishes washed, pie out from the oven, 4-1 as far as fires, target practice with gun borrowed for this week over ... a beautiful autumn morning! The car has been down at the gate again since this weekend ... each forced walk is getting easier. Kachina enjoys them the most though, she's active and curious, bluffs the horses, pulls at plants and sneezes at pollen. It's cooler walking now, it makes carrying supplies up to the tower from the car much easier. The sunsets are unbelievable ... the colors!

Hunting season is on for rifle and big game ... early morning lights blink in the darkness, hunters hurrying to choice spots where unaware deer or elk might be. As the light begins to find the area, roads are quiet, every thing is quiet ... then the first shot cannons across the country and the barrage is on ... red caps, red jackets, and vests, banners of color, all shades of reds and all shapes of men ... behind trees, in trees, behind and in bushes, on horses, on jeeps and pickups ... suddenly movement everywhere, sounds of life and sudden death!

Fear and excitement fills the air with the days light ... another fierce burst of fire and several bounding deer head north over the bare ridge as fast as their fear can take them. One morning, a shot, and a billow of yellow dust in Far Draw brought my attention to a confused doe and two bucks. They ran behind some aspen in their flight, then into view again ... the doe on one side, the bucks running up the mountain under the slim cover of the aspen ... another echoing shot caused the doe to stand for a moment of wonder, then off again into cover with shots following...

Three days after hunting season opened, the now autumn-covered mountain still blooms with red caps ... a dead cow elk lies among the bare oak scrub, blending her pale brown color to the earth, soon to be with the earth. I keep wishing she would get up and walk off!

The day before opening, this country was taken over by the hunter ... camped, scouted, anxious for the first light of the next morning ... a happy bunch. Now they are leaving ... just a few left behind like the last wisps of smoke when a fire is dying after its full burst of flaming energy ... the quiet is coming again.

Though the weather is dry and warm, winter is coming. The mountains are still and waiting ... in my scanning, the binoculars found a V-shaped formation of geese in flight southward ... a snowshoe rabbit, white against the dark earth and crisp dry grass, is dressed for snow.

Here a hunting day ends with the dusk and then the dark, and the lights of cars are blinking their way back to camp, some taking longer than others to stretch the day...

October 30..

I won't forget this night, nor will the Booths. Boss Booth called early



evening to say he was coming back to the Glade because of a lost hunter ... his wife! Jersey Jim contacted the game warden who in turn got the sheriff and a search party. The night was a cold, windy and moonless one ... the silent hours they searched were terrible. Rita knew survival, but it was the unknown that bothered us. I hoped I could spot a signal fire from the area she was in, but nothing. No one had spoken on the radio all night and at 6:30am I could stand it no longer and called Jersey Jim. No answer, but suddenly both Booth and Moore came on telling me Moore had been in the plane since dawn ... no word or sighting. From then on I watched the plane circling over where Rita was supposed to be. At 7am Booth came on saying Rita was walking toward them near Doe Point Reservoir. Jack sounded great

to all of us! Rita had not actually been lost, but had hunted too long and it had gotten dark, too dark to find her way back safely, so she had made a fire, two fires, one for warmth in the canyon and one on a near ridge for help ... but it had not been big enough for me to see! And a big fire during extreme fire danger can be hazardous ... this lookout could not help no matter how much she wanted to.. The important thing was that Rita was found and unhurt! No more lost hunters...

Baker patrol is up in the air. We are running two flights a day because of being in Extreme ... I have lost count, but I believe it is six fires since hunting season started, Baker spotting most of them! One came up where I could see, but it was my day off! So I haven't spotted any since the last lightning. This morning the mountains are still hidden by clouds, so something should be here soon to break the dry spell. Most of my belongings are moved out but for food and the things I bring each weekend, ready to go when the snows hit, but I hate to think of it.

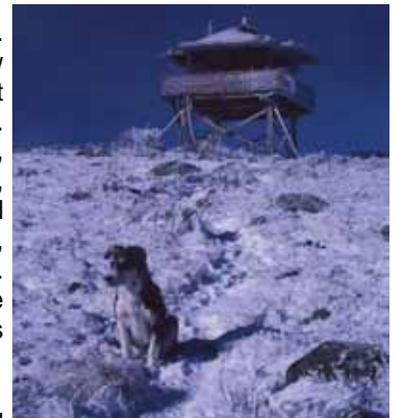
The game warden said eleven bull elk were killed here on Glade Mountain alone on opening day ... and I never saw a one! One fellow, after most of the hunters had left, got a huge seventeen point buck, on this mountain also!

The sky has broken cumulus, the first in a good month ... snow???

There was a big fire on the Dolores District while on my weekend, pushing forty or fifty acres. They got in the Zuni firefighters, and a couple of the rangers' wives are up cooking for the crew on the fire ... the biggest fire in the area this season!

November 2..

Monday morning ... cold, windy, off and on snow flurries ... clouds in and out of the canyons and valleys. I'm restless, made a stew, looked out the windows, wrote a note, straightened up shelves and drawers, looked out the windows ... the radio batteries are dieing and the snow flurries are increasing.



November 3..

Last night the wind had increased strongly from the north, blowing most of the snow through the region. If it had been still, the snow would have amounted to enough to cause me to be temporarily snowbound. After the clouds went on their way the skies were left clear and blue ... and very windy. The scrub oak, the aspen, every thing on the mountain, including the tower, is ice-covered. Slowly the sun is trying to compete with the fierce wind to melt

every thing back to bare brown earth ... still not enough moisture to leave!

A surprise visitor comes out of the mist, one of the rig geologists. Scarely a soul about to visit anymore ... as in the beginning, it's quiet.

November 6..

I'm still here! The area is drying a bit though patches of snow and the cold north winds are about...

November 9..

The sunset was beautiful tonight ... clouds gilded in gold. Boss Booth and Moore were here today, I am invited to be lookout again next year! I do want to return...

November 10..

It's snowing again this morning.

November 11..

The day the lookout closed ... by morning the snow had become a land of deep drifts ... a very quiet world. After a brief conversation by radio with the boss, I packed up to come down ... a final down from the mountain. But the car, old reliable, would not start! So I recalled the boss and had to wait until he and his family had to use their Veteran's Day holiday to remove me from the tower! So I sat, with feet in the oven, using the last of the butane for warmth and reading "Look Homeward, Angel", but mostly looking out at the white glades and the sky.

The Scout arrives with the laughing family and inlaws. Coffee first and then we chain up and start down, Rita driving the Scout and Jack the reluctant Ford. It was an interesting trip of two sliding miles ending with the Ford happily in a deep drift ... a run to the oil rig for gas and extra help ... a decision to abandon the car until the next day to pull out with the oil rig cat.

June 3 1965..

First day back on the tower ... it feels wonderful! Kachina is still with me, with a new friend ... a cat ... but she decided to spend a visit with the Bradfields on the way up! And we have a Jeep this year instead of the old Ford. But with my luck, or driving, I look forward to still being pulled out of mud holes and still breaking down! But I'm back on the tower! It's good to be back with the people....and the familiar country! **THE END**

Note: After two seasons at Glade Mountain, Dolores went back home to Indiana. But, as many lookouts know, it gets in your blood, so when the job opened up at 8-Mile Lookout on the east end of the San Juan NF, Dolores was back for several more years.