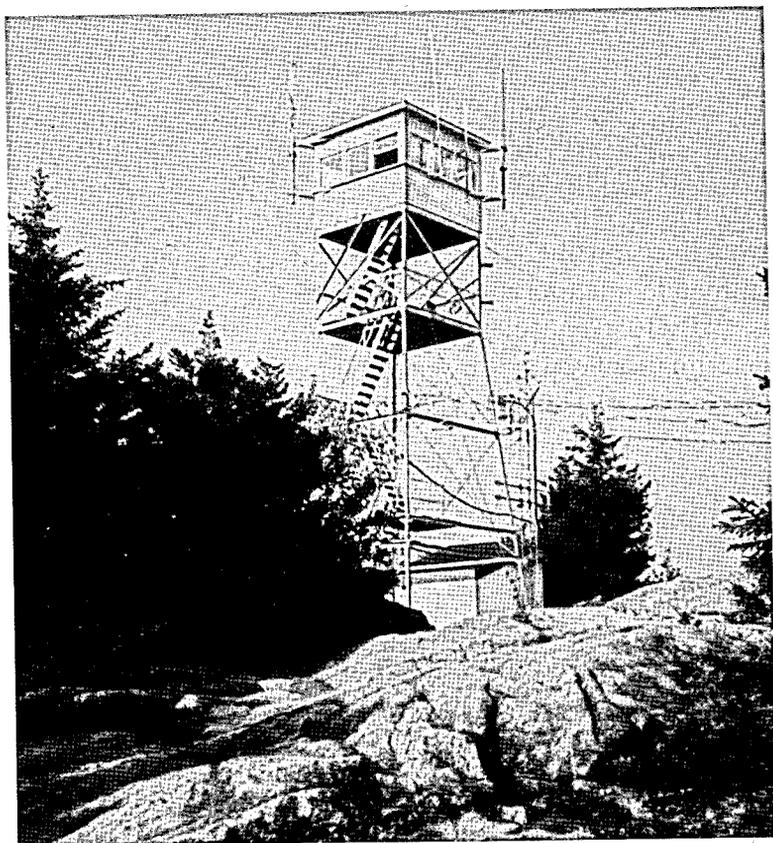


A  
Field Guide  
to  
**New Hampshire  
Firetowers**

by  
Iris W. Baird and Chris Haartz

Second Edition  
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GEOGRAPH  
Baird



## Belknap Mt.

NHLR # US 404 NH 05

2378'

Gilford

*Access:* From NH 11A at Gilford village, follow Belknap Mountain Road S. At 2.4 mi. the Belknap Carriage Road forks L and leads to a parking area from which several trails lead to the tower. The Green Trail (0.7 mi.) is short and fairly rough; the Red Trail (0.8 mi.) is slightly longer and more scenic. See the AMC *White Mountain Guide* for other routes. The Carriage Road is gated and the gate may be closed after 6 PM.

Belknap tower was placed in service by the NH Forestry Commission in 1913. In 1915 a steel tower was erected with a 10 by 10 ft. cab, a ground cabin, woodshed-toilet and 2 miles of telephone line.

A new tower was built in 1925 (or the original was remodeled.) The height to the floor of the cab was 24 feet and access was by ladder. The ladder was replaced with stairs in 1928 to accommodate increased numbers of visitors.

A new two-room watchman's cabin was built in 1934, and in the same year a new telephone line was constructed using poles and #12 wire circuit. The same year a new well 12 feet deep was blasted out of the summit rock, and the following year a garage for the watchman was built down on the carriage road.

In 1939 the phone line was moved to a new location, and a new map stand and phone set were installed. The following year a new observation room was constructed, the station painted and a cement curb built around the well.

Around 1950 electricity was brought to the summit in anticipation of the changeover to radio communication. In 1979 the tower was raised ten feet and a new cab installed.

Located near the Gunstock Recreation Area, Belknap gets a large number of visitors, and many fires are started by campers, picnickers and hikers. Some statistics: in 1981 the tower reported 95 fires and had 2626 visitors. In 1984 there was a major fire on the mountain; over a hundred men fought the fire, and laid 14,000 ft. of hose. The following year there was another major fire, involving 150 fire fighters. In 1987 the tower reported 129 fires and had 4047 visitors. By September 1989, 144 fires had been reported and 3935 people had visited the tower.