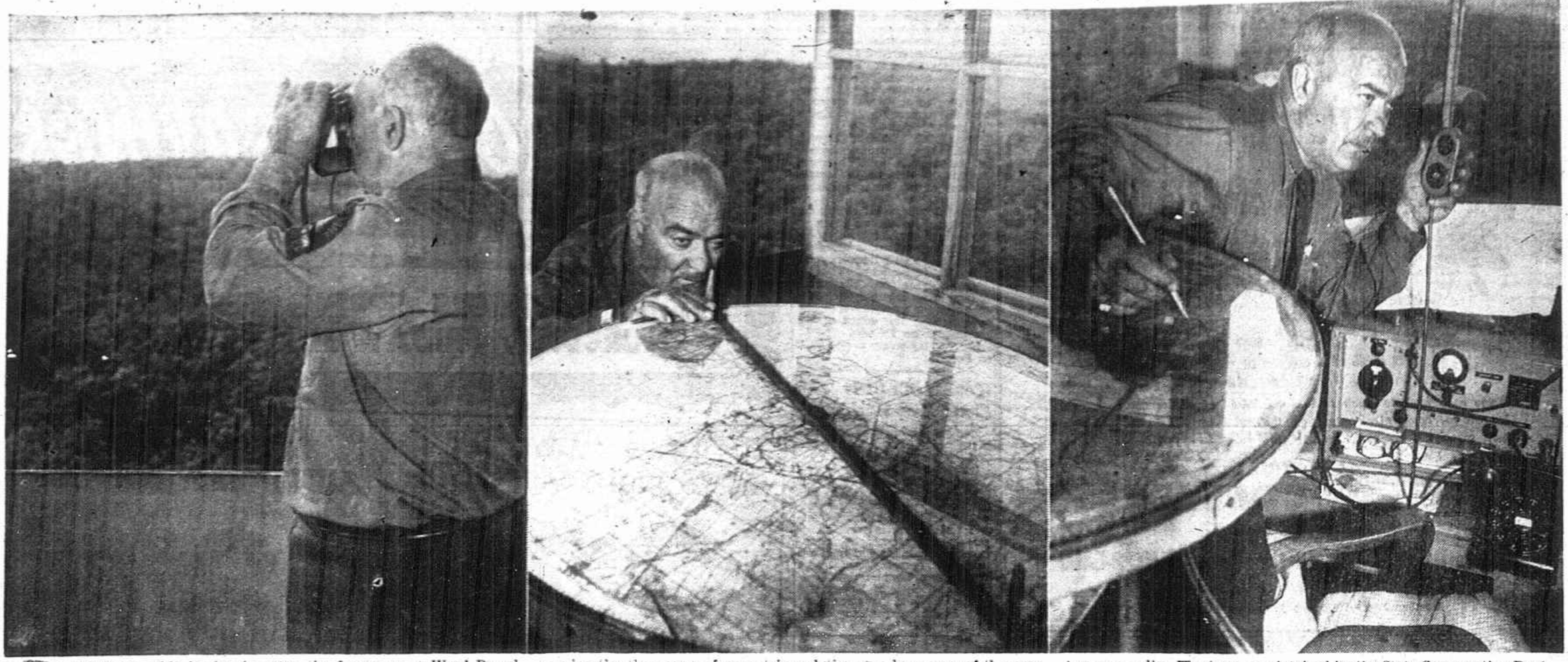
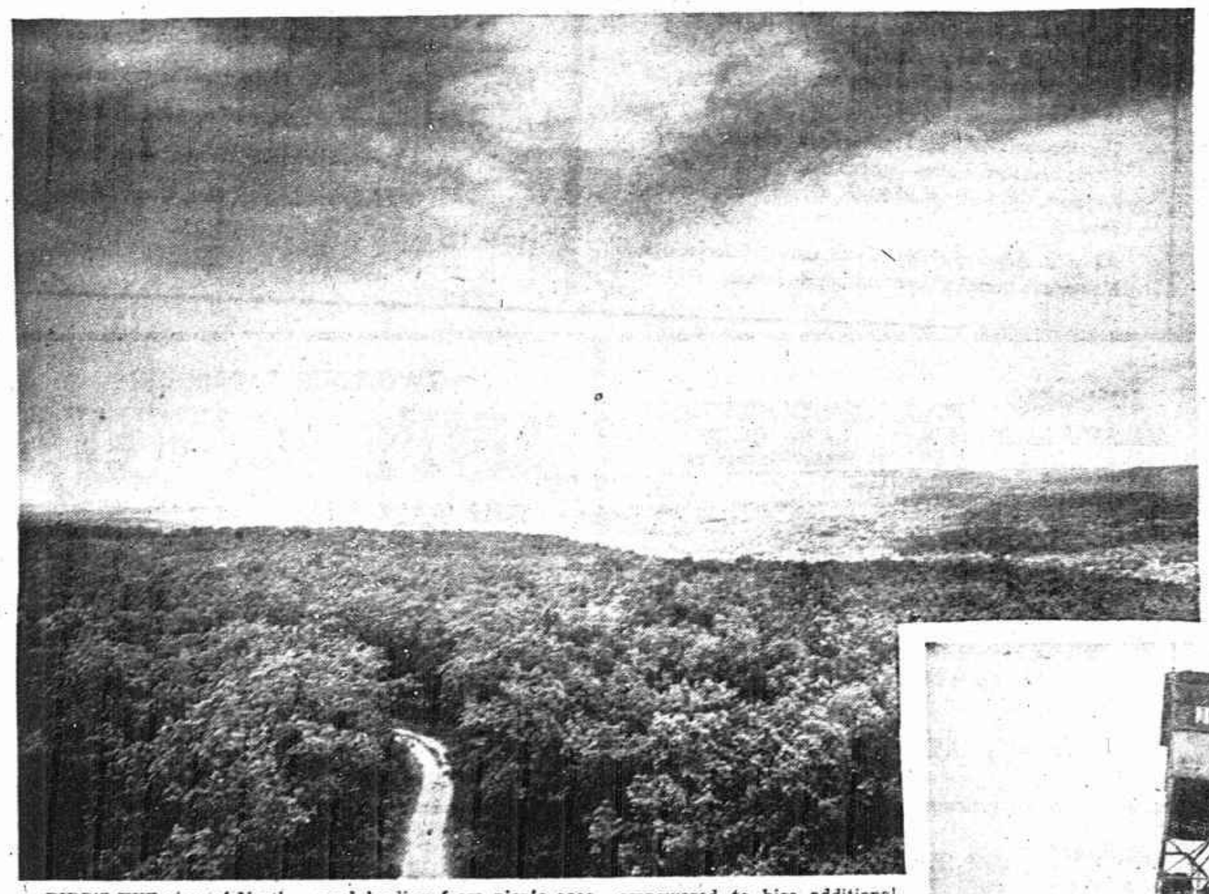
Two Fire Towers Stand Guard Over Rolling Timberlands Of County



FROM his cabin in the sky, atop the fire tower at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Forest Fire Observer Anthony Manstrelli spots smoke; then by means of cross triangulation on a large map of the area he pinpoints the blaze, and notifies Forest Ranger Ira Thomas via two-way radio. The tower, maintained by the State Conservation Dept., crowns the highest point in the 4,200-acre County-owned reservation.

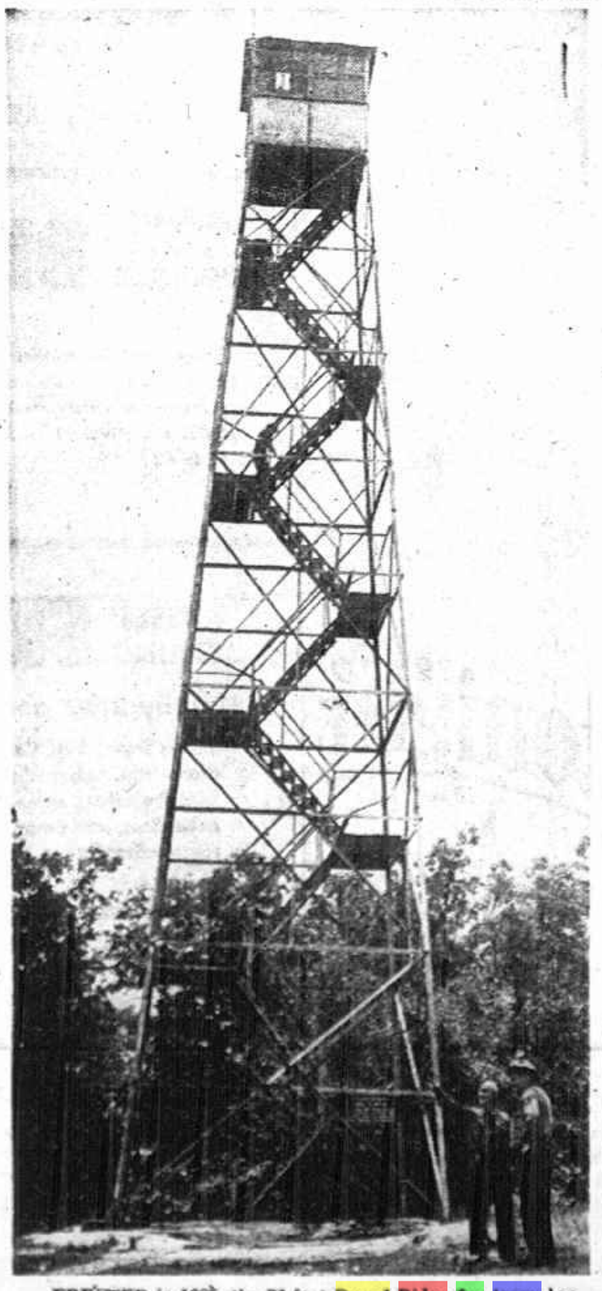


BIRD'S EYE view of Northern Westchester's verdant hills, including the towns of Lewisboro and North Salem, as seen from the Pound Ridge fire tower, one of two such towers maintained in this county by the Bureau of Forest Fire Control, State Conservation Dept. The other is located on Nelson Mountain, northeast of Croton. In foreground is road leading from picnic area of Ward Pound Ridge Reservation to the tower. The road is closed to autos, but available for hikers who wish to inspect the tower, which is manned from April to mid-November. Seventy-six active wardens, located in every township in the county, are on call to fight forest fires. They are fully equipped by the State and are empowered to hire additional help whenever the need arises. However, according to Forest Ranger Ira Thomas, there is considerable "orphan territory" not covered by anybody, "and very few people are aware of the extent to which the State goes to protect land holdings."

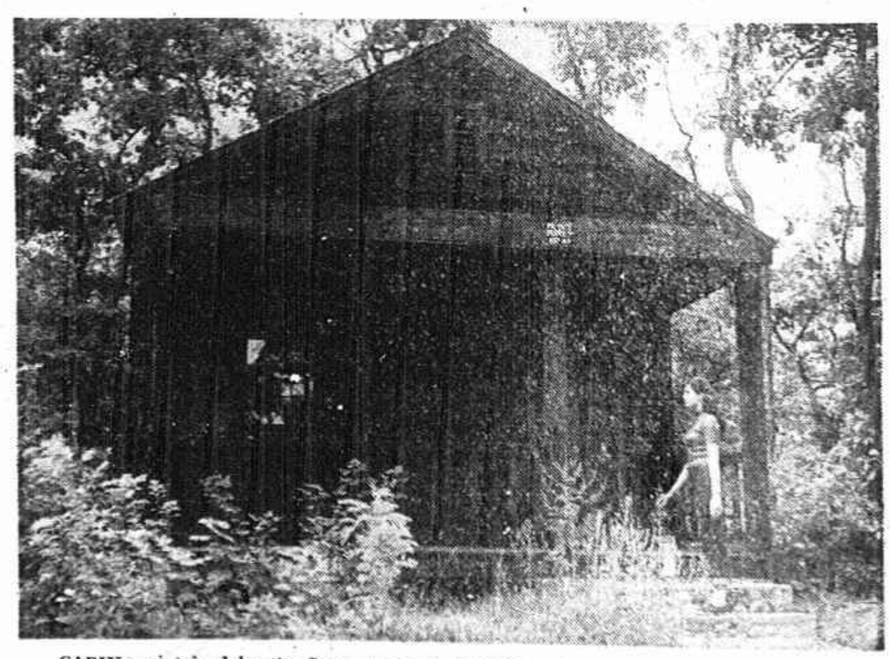
(ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER DANTE RAFFAELLI).

FIRE TRUCK operated by Ranger Ira Thomas is equipped with two-way radio by which he can keep in constant touch with observers at Pound Ridge and other towers. The truck also has a front end pump, adapters for fire department relays, 12 Indian pumps, and fire fighting equipment for 40 men.

OBSERVER Manstrelli, (at left) a resident of Goldens Bridge, has been on duty at Pound Ridge for six years. Ranger Thomas, whose headquarters also are in Goldens Bridge, started out in the State service in 1930 as a fire warden in Westchester, and has been a ranger since 1936.



ERECTED in 1925, the 76-foot Pound Ridge fire tower has withstood the elements, including at least three king-size hurricanes, for more than a quarter of a century. At the base of the tower, the elevation is 870 feet above sea level. Visibility on a clear day extends up to 40 miles.



CABIN maintained by the State at the Pound Ridge fire tower is inspected by a visitor to the reservation—Miss Judith Pierce, of Stamford, Conn. During emergency periods, when the danger of forest fires is heightened by droughts, observers must remain at the tower day and night.

ALL the comforts of home are available for Observer Manstrelli in the cabin at Pound Ridge fire tower. In addition to a small kitchen-living room, there are also sleeping quarters and phone service in the pine-panelled building.

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