

BEN LOMOND FIRE LOOKOUT  
Plumas National Forest

Location: T25N R6E, Sect. 21. SE ¼

Elevation: 6453 feet

Year Constructed: Pre 1915

Type of Lookout: Plumas National Forest (?) cab. "A little square house with windows all around" located on a peak overlooking the North Fork of the Feather River. (Zelma McQuarrie, 1985) Probably similar to the lookout house on Claremont L.O. This lookout house was about 10 feet square with a peaked roof about 8 feet high. The walls and roof were shingled with three (?) windows on three sides. The wall with the entrance door apparently had no windows. The view was 300 degrees.

Comments: Butte Williams (born May 8, 1899 in Gridley, CA) manned this lookout in 1915. He acquired supplies by walking to Camp Rogers (in The North Fork Canyon 4000 feet below the lookout.). The original name for the lookout appears to be the Murphy Hill Lookout. A trail from this lookout and the Chambers Creek trail join and led to the Belden Bar Guard Station, which used to be located just above the Indian Jim School. From here it is a short distance to Camp Rogers, which had a store and railhead (on Western Pacific RR).

In his daily diary, Ranger Robert Harvey Abby describes this trail and the lookout as it existed in 1930. A native of Plumas County, Abby was born in 1870 and was appointed a Forest Guard on the Plumas Forest Reserve in 1905. In 1906 the Forest Reserves were renamed National Forests and the U.S. Forest Service was created by President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1905, Forest Guards were paid \$60 per month out of which they furnished their own uniform, saddle and pack horse, rifle and pistol and other equipment. Rangers were required to keep a daily diary up until the 1980s and the entries by Ranger Abby were written when he was 60 years old. Rangers were a tough breed in those days.

June 4, 1930: After arriving in Butte Meadows by car from Chico, Abby "went in search of saddle and pack horses for my trip to the Beldon Bar Ranger station."

June 5, 6: I located and hired two horses, saddle and pack, had them shod purchased supplies, collected a riding saddle, pack saddle and other equipment and left Butte Meadows June 6 at 4:30 on horseback pack horse to Chaparral on way to Belden Bar Ranger Station. I camped for night at Chaparral.

June 7: I left Chaparral at 5:30 a.m. going by saddle horse and leading pack horse via Philbrook Valley, Spring Valley Lake, Ben Lomond (Plumas Forest Lookout Station), Chipps Creek to North Fork Feather River trail to Belden Bar Ranger Station. This was a

very hard trip over a high mountain range, 8 miles of the trip over deep snow ranging from 3 feet to 10 feet in depth. Belden Bar Ranger Station was located at the bottom of the Canyon of the North Fork of the Feather River on the west bank only a stone's throw across the river from the Western Pacific Railroad. The elevation was 2020 feet with high mountain peaks 6000 to 7000 in elevation on either side...

June 9: ...I found the telephone trouble at Camp Rogers, connected the telephone line and talked to Ben Lomond lookout man, who had just moved there for the summer fire season.

June 12: I left Belden Bar Ranger Station on horseback.....and accompanied them to the abandoned Chambers Creek Ranger Station, an old time station...I went on horseback from Chambers Ranger Station to Ben Lomond Lookout Station, met Harry (Indian)and returned by the same route to Beldon Bar Ranger Station. (Note: He traveled 4500 feet up from Belden and then 4500 feet back down in the same day.)

July 13: I left Belden Bar Ranger Station ..... going via Beldon Bar Bridge to Camp Rogers over the old Utah construction road to Belden for supplies.

Status: Ben Lomond lookout was probably abandoned between 1933 and 1936 based on its presence on a 1933 map and its absence in a 1937 lookout study. Some debris from the lookout remains on the peak.