



New York State Archives

**New York State Conservation Commission Forest Fire
Detection Map Negatives B1779**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of mostly glass plate negatives of topographic maps used in forest fire detection in the northern, central, and southern portions of the state. Observation rings, with observation stations or fire towers located at the center, are superimposed on the maps. Adjacent fire towers would use these maps to report smoke and ranger stations could then triangulate the location.
Creator:	New York (State). Conservation Commission
Title:	Conservation Commission forest fire detection map negatives
Quantity:	0.25 cubic feet
Quantity:	(125 glass plate and acetate negatives)
Inclusive Date:	1909-1925
Series:	B1779

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Arrangement

Geographical by quadrangle.

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Administrative History

Chapter 474 of the Laws of 1909 granted the Forest, Fish and Game Commission power to make rules for the prevention of forest fires. The lone commissioner who headed the agency was also empowered to divide lands in the forest preserve counties into fire districts and to appoint a superintendent of fires to oversee each district. Superintendents were in turn authorized to subdivide their districts into separate fire patrol districts and to employ fire patrolmen as the public interest demanded. The commissioner was also directed to "when necessary, provide all proper fire-prevention and fire-fighting apparatus and establish observation stations and employ men to attend them." The commissioner instructed that such

observation stations, commonly known as fire towers, be equipped with good topographic maps, set in proper relation to the surrounding country. A field glass was deemed essential, as were telephone communications with the nearest fire patrolmen and subsequently ranger headquarters.

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Scope and Content Note

This series consists of glass plate negatives (with the exception of one acetate film negative) of topographic maps used in forest fire detection. The maps encompass quadrangles in the northern, central, and southern portions of the State including Long Island. Observation rings, with observation stations or fire towers located at the center, are superimposed on the maps. The rings are divided into degrees of arc, with 360 degrees set in relation to due north from the observation station. Using plane table survey techniques, an alidade, and the topographic map, an observer would simply plot the direction in which he observed smoke. The direction would correspond to a certain degree of arc on the observation ring.

Observers in adjacent fire towers that were able to spot the smoke would do the same from their given vantage points. The observers would then call in their results to the nearest fire patrolmen or ranger headquarters. Equipped with the same maps, the fire patrolman or ranger would draw a ray emanating at the appropriate degree of arc from each observation ring. As long as at least two observers reported in, the patrolman or ranger could discover the location of the smoke from the point at which the two or more rays intersected. This greatly reduced the time and effort required in pinpointing the location of forest fires.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

This series contains regional key maps indicating the location of each numbered quadrangle.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

Access Terms

- Environmental protection--New York (State)
- Forest fire detection--New York (State)
- Forest fires--Prevention and control--New York (State)
- Glass plate negatives
- Forests and forestry--Fire management--New York (State)
- Protecting environment
- Forest protection--New York (State)
- New York (State)
- Maps (documents)
- Detecting forest fires
- New York (State). Forest, Fish and Game Commission