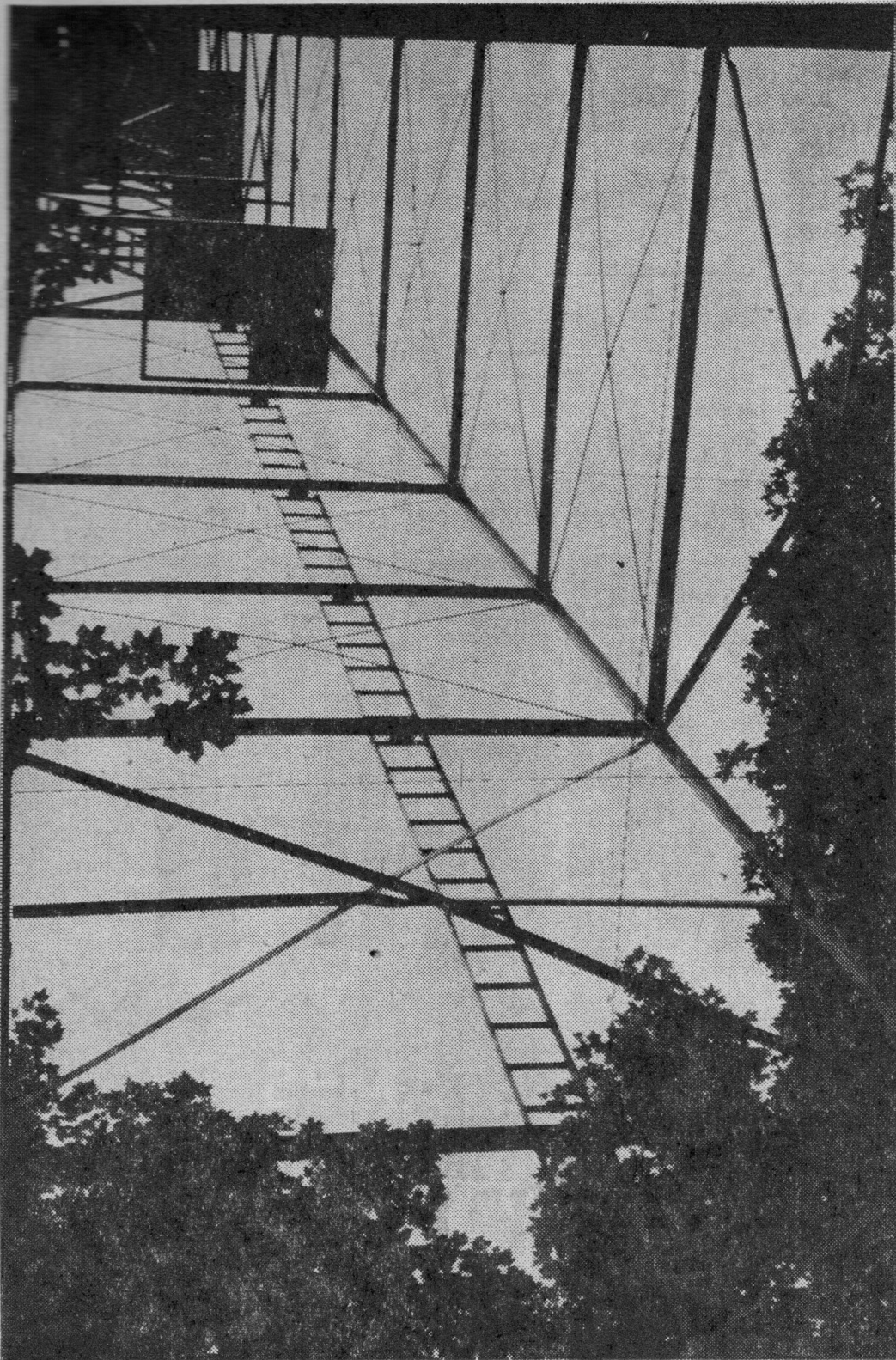


Diamond Drill

Out of the Past

July 32, 1961

Imagine working in your private office, glassed in on all four sides with excellent views on all four sides but with complete privacy and cross-ventilation. Geno Stockero, employed as a fire "towerman" for the Michigan Department of Conservation spends most of his summer days perched aloft the Crystal Falls Fire Tower located on Fire Tower Road near the Tobin Location just west of Crystal Falls. The tower, first used in August 1925, is one of the five remaining structures of dozens that have been used across the Upper Peninsula for detecting forest fires during the fire season. Geno's Office rises out of a hardwood forest which is supported on four steel legs 105' above the ground. To report for work, Stockero must climb 60' straight up a rung ladder to a rest station then use a series of short ladders between platforms 15' apart to reach the trap door in the floor of the platform. He has a view of up to 30 miles depending on weather conditions and is able coordinate any fire observations with other towers located in Sagola and Bates by use of two-way radios.



A LONG WAY UP — This is the view of the Falls firetower a towerman has when he reports for his day aloft. The rung ladder goes almost straight up for over 60 feet before the first of several platforms are reached. Shorter ladders then zig-zag back and forth for the remaining 45 feet until the climber reaches the glassed-in canopy, 105 feet above the ground, that serves as the towerman's lonesome work area. The Drill cameraman, who had requested a tour of the tower, almost had a change of heart when the time had come for the trip up.

(Drill Photo)