



CEDAR HILL ARMY OBSERVATION POST

As part of Bethlehem's civil defense measures during World War II, an aircraft warning station was organized at Cedar Hill in 1942. Chief Observer was Thomas Finley and Esther Hillman was Assistant Chief. The archive is fortunate to have recently received Esther Hillman's scrapbook from that time donated by her daughter Elizabeth Hillman Zeronda.

The Post was part of the Army's Aircraft Warning Service. Many area residents volunteered to man the post 24 hours a day to be the "eyes and ears of the Army" on the lookout for enemy aircraft. Esther Hillman completed special training in aircraft recognition and became qualified to instruct others.

During the 1950's with its concerns of nuclear attack and the rise of communism, civil defense procedures were established and the post re-activated.

Today, the carriage house has been converted to a private residence and can be seen on the way to Henry Hudson Park.



Chief Finley on the observation roof. The horn contains a microphone to help locate high-flying planes by sound. Observations were phoned or "flashed" to Army headquarters. June 1943.



Swearing in of Observers on the first anniversary of the Observation Post, August 8, 1943. 60 spotters were sworn in as members of the Ground Observers Corps, U.S. Army Air Forces.



A picnic celebrating the first anniversary of the Observation Post. The picnic took place along the Hudson River, most likely near today's Henry Hudson Park just down the road from the post. August 8, 1943.



The Observation Post was located at the carriage shed of a Hudson River estate. This photo is dated March 10, 1943.

Sunken Barge Damaged in Two Fires

Observers for the First Fighter Command were initiated into the realities of destruction early today and probably saved enough of a Hudson River barge so it can still function at its accustomed task.

The barge is an old one, sunken at the river's edge five miles south of Glenmont, at the foot of Winne Rd. It has been used for years as a mooring dock for stone barges.

About 2 a. m. today an alert

observer for the Fighter Command saw flames and smoke issuing from the old craft. The command was flashed and in a little while a fire barge owned by an oil company appeared and extinguished the flames.

At noon today the fire broke out again on the land side of the barge and the Selkirk Fire Department was called to finish the job.

Enough of the barge remains, it was reported, to serve as mooring purposes. *Aug. 19 '42*

Cedar Hill Observers Guests at Picnic

Observers of the Cedar Hill Post for the First Fighter Command met at the Wiggand home in Cedar Hill Sunday for a picnic. Among guests were the sub-district director of the Air Raid Warning Service, John Bergin, Albany, and Mrs. Bergin. The committee included Mrs. Kathrynne Milvo, Mrs. Harold Hillman, Edwin Gouge and Thomas Finley, chief observer.

Defense Meeting For Cedar Hill

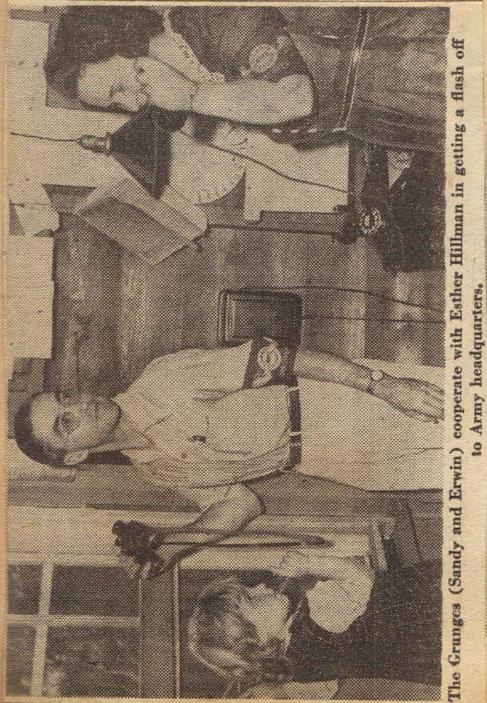
All residents of Cedar Hill and vicinity are invited to attend a meeting sponsored by the First Fighter Command, Tuesday, August 25, at Cedar Hill school, Mrs. Harold Hillmann of Selkirk has announced. Army speakers will explain the work of the Fighter Command and slides will be shown. Mrs. Hillmann and Second Lieut. Preston Symes will conduct the meeting.



The carriage shed of a Hudson River estate has been converted into a plane spotting station.



Sept. 17, 1942



The Crunges (Sandy and Erwin) cooperate with Esther Hillman in getting a flash off to Army headquarters.



The horn contains a microphone to help Mrs. John Delay, left, and Mrs. W...



A page from Esther Hillman's Cedar Hill Army Observation Post scrapbook.



Esther Hillman. This photo was taken about 1944.