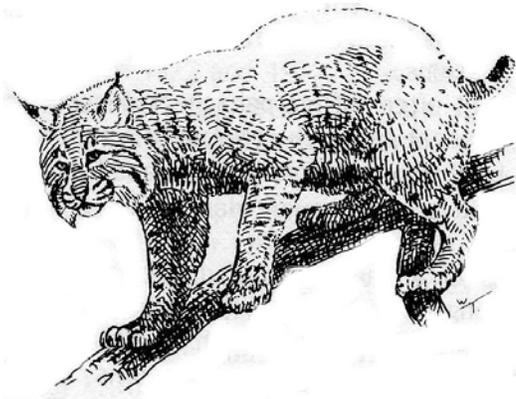


TRAP-LINES

New York State
Trapper's Association
Winter Edition 2009
www.nystrappers.org



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NYSTA'S

First Annual Members Meeting

All are welcome to attend!

New York State Trappers Association will hold it's first Spring Conference and Members meeting this year.

When: on April 11, 2009

Where: at the Gander Mountain Store Lodge in Rochester , N.Y.

Time: 10:00 am to 6:00 PM.

Directions:

To reach the Gander Mountain Store take:

Rte 390 north either off the NYS Thruway or Rte 17 (I86) to the Hylan Drive exit, turn West off the exit and go all the way to the end of Hylan drive to Gander Mountain.

Some of the newest and most innovative equipment and methods will be on display and speakers will discuss many issues of interest.

In the afternoon a business meeting of the membership will be called. The first item of business will be the installation of new officers then the floor will be opened to the members to speak on to issues as they wish.

Dinner will be: Saturday evening, April 10, at 7:00 PM at **Pandos' Restaurant** on Scottsville Rd. in Scottsville, N.Y. Choice of Chicken French or Prime Rib @ \$20.00 including gratuity. Bar is extra and up to individuals. Please send reservations and money to **NYSTA, 12320 Pople Road, Cato, New York, 13033**. Reservations for dinner and payment must be received no later than **April 1st**. The owner is an avid sportsman and is very enthusiastic and pleased that the Trappers are coming to his place, please join us in filling his dinning room!

Lodging: rooms comes from The Red Roof Inn., prices are as follows. One king size bed \$49.99 or with AAA or AARP \$44.99 plus \$5 for each additional person + tax, or 1 room with 2 double beds \$58.99-- \$53.49 with AAA or AARP plus \$5 for each additional person plus tax.

This motel is pretty close to Gander Mountain, easy to get to and seemed clean and reasonably pleasant as I have found Red Roof to be.

Directions to both places will be posted at the meeting, I will furnish directions to the motel on request.

For Trapping,
Dave Miller at 607-522-4707 or guarddn@empacc.net



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Trappers Association

President's Report

Complacency

In times when we think everything is going the way we would like them to be going people tend to shrug minor issues off. This is a true statement that I think everyone has been through at one time or another in there life. Many sportsman and women have a tendency to think someone else will write a letter or make the necessary phone call to there representative.

With trapping there is always a need for us to write and make phone calls. NYSTA in the last 3 years has asked our members to make these important phone calls and write letters. These campaigns have been very successful. For example when there was a dog caught on Long Island, the legislature wanted to severely restrict trapping. We got the word out to contact your representative. The bill passed the Assembly and eventually died in the Senate. I myself contacted several downstate members to have them call on this issue.

I learned, if there were more trappers from the NYC area to contact their Assembly person, some of those Assembly people would of voted in our favor. They need to hear from their constituents, people that live in their district. That didn't happen and they voted against us. In that case there wasn't much time to send letters out for support.

When it came to the issue of the 220 Body-grip regulations we had time to get proper notification by mail to all our membership. The response was overwhelming. The DEC received hundreds of letters many with constructive comments. The regulations were greatly revised based on trappers input. While it wasn't 100 percent the way we wanted it was a significant improvement, and most importantly, we still can trap.

We are working on our second season with these regulations with no instances of any dogs being caught in legally set body-grip traps. Now we have had no controversy against trapping for over a year. It seems the lack of controversy makes us complacent.

Looking into the future, I see where we will be needing your help again. We need to be vigilant of upcoming issues. This was an election year Nationally and State wide and it could be a difficult year for sports-people. Just looking at NY, our one seat majority in the Senate went to a one seat minority with Democrats holding the majority in both houses and the Governors office. Committee leadership will be changed in the Senate with most seats likely going to NYC Democrats. It is important to note that not all democrats are against trapping. We have some great supporters that are democrats. But when the pressure is on from there leadership to vote a certain way, we stand to loose.

The next year will be very interesting to see what kind of bills will be coming out of Albany. As these bills surface we will be asking all of you to contact your legislators to either support or oppose a bill that is in front of them.

I ask everyone of you to do your part and help with any fight we may have to encounter. We will be looking for guidance from our Executive Director David Miller as he is our eyes and ears in Albany. Thank you for your dedication and vigilance

David Leibig, President
New York State Trappers Association
(607) 829-6813 or beavertrapper64@yahoo.com

www.nystrappers.org

Hello,

Many of you may not know this but the New York State Trappers Association has a working website, www.nystrappers.org. It just passed its two years of service mark in January.

There is an unsettling lack of information on the site. Many of you may not know but I am a member of NYSTA and a full time college student at R.I.T. My time is limited and tracking down information for the site is something I just cannot do anymore.

So I am asking **you**, the trappers of New York to send me information on events happening in your area and in New York. The events can be things like annual dinners, meetings, fur auctions and anything else that **you** think is important for other trappers to know about. I will be more than happy to put it on the site.

I would love to see this website become so much more than it is right now.

I maintain this site in my free time and receive no financial compensation for my work on it. Right now my time maintaining this site is my contribution to NYSTA as a volunteer. I do this because I want to promote trapping and NYSTA. I would love to see it grow.

This website is a unique and essential tool to the future of trapping in New York State, but only with your help. The future of trapping is in all of our hands. Let's make sure that it doesn't slip through our fingers. So please contact me at: slj8@yahoo.com.

Thank you,
Stephen Jones, Web Master

Election Results

NYSTA ELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Due to an uncontested election the secretary was directed by the Board of Directors to cast one ballot for the following offices, at the Board of Directors meeting in Herkimer, New York on January 24, 2009. The new incoming officers are:

President - John Rockwood
Vice President - Wayne Jones
Treasurer - Dale Gamba
Recording Secretary - Ed Hogan

As required by the new by-laws there can be no more than a total of five active past presidents to serve on the board as voting members. One of these members must be the immediate past president.

To be considered for this position a letter must have been sent to Bob Hughes on or before December 10th, 2008.

The following people sent a letter on time and are the 5 voting past presidents.

Al West,
 Bill Smith,
 Gerald Leggeri,
 Bob Hughes and
 the immediate past president Dave Leibig.

As a result of the election having only un-contested offices, the by-laws allow for no ballots to be sent out to the members, which saves the Association a considerable amount of money.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me any time. We are still working out the "kinks" of the new by-laws. But we are moving forward.

My congratulations to the new slate of officers.

Regards,
 Bob Hughes, Committee Chairperson
 585-728-2471 or bmh42b@frontiernet.net



The next round of elections that need to be held this year are for the first set of Regions and Regional Directors of NYSTA. That process is already in progress.

Following along DEC Regional Boundaries, the first set of Regions to hold nominations and elections this year are:

Region 1
 Region 2
 Region 3
 Region 4E
 Region 4W

Some of these Regions notably Region 3 have a long history of holding elections for their Director. For other Regions this will be a new process, which NYSTA will help people work through. In Regions where there are vacancies, and no organized trapping chapter of NYSTA the President may appoint an interim Director.

Letters will be sent by NYSTA to those Regions asking them to begin the process of forming nominating committees. If the race is a contested race the qualified names will be on the ballots sent to every ***NYSTA member*** in their respective Region for vote. If the race is un-contested no ballot will be sent, and the name will be forwarded to NYSTA, by the Chair of the regional nominating committee.

Included in the letter sent by NYSTA will be a reminder of the necessary qualifications and of the duties and attendance requirements, to be a Regional Director and Board members of NYSTA.

Thank you.

Executive Director's Report

Legislation:

As of this writing there are two bills in the Assembly pertaining to trapping: one that I am a little concerned about. Mr. Englebright has introduced a bill that would restrict the use of "body gripping traps", defined in the bill as any trap that grips any part of the animals body and so would include footholds and cables. Wait it gets worse. Trapping violations would become misdemeanors thus becoming part of a permanent criminal record. The good news is that I'm pretty friendly with Mr. Englebright and in the past have always been able to work with him. My guess is that we will work this one out ok.

The second is really a rerun of part of last years Department Bill and includes the use of live cable restraints. This introduction was done just to "get it out there" and will likely be substituted with something much different. I will ask that the cable restraint legislation be done on it's own.

Antoine Thompson is the new chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee. Senator Thompson's district includes parts of the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Though I don't know him well he seems to be a sensible sort of person.

I strongly suggest that **Erie and Niagara County Trappers** invite him to a joint meeting or better yet to one of your events and make a friend where it will really count.

Senator Thompsons district phone numbers are:
(716) 854-8705 in Buffalo or in
Niagara Falls (716) 284-5789.

Fund raising:

Soon after you read this newsletter you will receive a letter about NYSTA's first Annual Spring Conference and Members meeting, April 11, 2009, at the Gander Mountain Store Lodge, Rochester, NY.

Also included with that letter will be a \$10.00/ten gun raffle ticket. Only two thousand of these tickets were printed, of which only one was sent to each member which means there are a very few left over. If we can get them all sold we stand to raise over \$15,000.00. Even in these difficult times we should all be able to sell (or buy) one ticket.

NYSTA works for all of us, every day and it takes money to do that. Please support NYSTA.

Thank you,
Dave Miller
607-522-4707 or guarddn@empacc.net

FUR HANDLERS AWARD:

A reminder from Pat Arnold, regarding this award.

As we enter the home stretch of this years' trapping season please consider entering this years "Fur Handler Award Contest".

Last year was a tremendous success and we would like to invite each and every one of you to participate this year.

Look over your furs and plan to keep some good ones to enter in the Contest, this September at the Convention.

Consider donating your furs after the event to the NYSTA Legislative Fund.

Full details will be included in the next **TRAP-LINES** Newsletter.

There is one important change from last year, each participant will be limited to **one** specimen per species.

There are also plans to add a handler demo, as part of the event.

Thank you,
Pat Arnold
Region 6 Director
315-644-4643 or patriciaarno@gmail.com

Note from the Editor:

Do you have Meetings, Fur Auctions, Dinners and other events to announce? Please send the information to:

AngieBerchielli@MSN.com

**Next Newsletter Deadline:
April 4, 2009**

Allow at least 6 weeks lead time for your event.
Thank you.

Message To The Members From The Editor: Please fill out this survey!!!

We are all looking be more cost efficient, and still hopefully improve services as well. A decision was made at the January 2009 Board of Directors meeting to drop the ads in the **TRAP-LINES** newsletter, thereby being able to reduce the number of pages to 12. This allows the newsletter to be folded in half and reducing the postage cost by almost half.

I would like to personally thank all of our advertisers for their support for all our previous newsletters. But the savings in postage and printing for each newsletter is more than the one time income we received for the ads. By changing to this format of the **TRAP - LINES** newsletter we will be able to significantly save on postage costs, and some printing costs.

We have received some requests to publish the **TRAP - LINES** Newsletter electronically. This can be done, but the huge stumbling blocks so far has been the lack of e-mail addresses, and the type of internet connection people have. As it stands the newsletter is a huge document and some people with dial-up will have difficulty downloading it. If we go with smaller, more frequent documents, that should be less of a problem.

The newsletter takes about 4-6 weeks from my putting it together to your house. Most of that time is spent in the Post Office (anywhere from 3-4 weeks alone, and we know that they all aren't being delivered). Electronic mailing of news items could be far more timely. If we can have your cooperation and develop a good database of e-mail addresses we can begin to send **up-dates, news items, action alerts, fur auction results etc.**

We would like your input on this and other suggestions. Please take a few moments to fill out the following survey. **Please fill it out so it is legible.** Your answers will go a long way towards helping us develop our communications mechanisms more efficiently and effectively to you, our members. After all it is your membership money that is being spent on this. Please take a moment to remove and complete this survey, and then mail it to the address on the back.

Thank you!

1- Do you read the **TRAP-LINES** Newsletter? ___Yes ----No

a. If "yes," what parts interests you the most (please list 3 items) 1. _____
2. _____ 3. _____

B. If "no," why not? _____

2- Do you want to continue to receive the Newsletter? ___Yes ___No

a. If "No", please give us your name and we will remove it from our newsletter mailing list.

3- Do you find the printed version of the Newsletter useful? ----Yes ----No

4- In what way is it useful to you? _____

5- Would you read a 12 page Newsletter sent electronically? ___Yes ___No

6- Do you want the ads continued? Yes No
a. Do you currently buy an ad? Yes No

7- Would you rather receive shorter pieces, but more frequently (please check all that apply):

- a shorter version of the newsletter Yes No
- more frequent up-dates, news items Yes No
- legislative alerts Yes No
- Fur auction results Yes No
- other _____

8- Please check the one that applies. I have: no internet connection,
 Dial-up
 DSL
 Cable

9- If you are willing, please give us your name and e-mail address now. Fill out the next two line *carefully, and legibly* so that we input it correctly, as we build this mailing list.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

10- Anything else you would like to add? _____

Thank you for your time and input. We will publish the results when they are ready.
Please remove this page and send this page to:

Angie Berchielli
3861 SR 85
Westerlo, New York 12193 or

Must be returned by March 31, 2009

Goals and Objectives of your Incoming President and Vice President



Communication -

Our goal is to ensure that information can be quickly accessed through the internet, by telephone, timely newsletters or special mailings when necessary. This will ensure all members can be notified of important issues and have a chance to voice their opinions, suggestions and concerns quickly. We will strive for open and accessible lines of communication between ALL members and affiliates to the officers, directors and representatives of NYSTA through a viable, open and working chain of communication, from top to bottom. In order to accomplish this end, the Executive Committee, Directors and County Representatives must be people who will remain active and be respectful of their duties to effectively distribute information to and from the trappers they represent in a timely fashion. In addition, we must continue to maintain an open line of productive communication between the NYSTA and the NYSDEC with mutual respect.

Representation -

Our goal is to have active representatives in every County. These fellow trappers will be the first point of contact for members seeking to give or receive pertinent and related information. We will work hard to ensure that every trapper in New York has a voice and an avenue to express that voice to the NYSTA. The collective voices and views of the NYSTA membership can then continue to be effectively carried to the legislature by our Executive Director and to the DEC by our JTI Committee. As your representatives, we work for you - the proud trappers of New York State.

Cooperation -

Our goal is to not only increase cooperation between NYSTA, its members & affiliates, but also the need to work towards increased cooperation and unity between the NYSTA and other sportsmen's

organizations not only in New York, but on a national level. We need to maintain and strengthen the mutual cooperation we have with the NYSDEC because the trappers of New York, are one of the best sources of "in the field" furbearer information DEC has. It is the on-going mutual respect and cooperation between New York's Trappers and the DEC that has helped the NYSDEC develop the extremely effective wildlife management plans we have today. All of which continues to promote, propagate and insure the future of trapping and trappers in New York State.

Education -

Our goal is to ensure that the message of trapping as a necessary and valuable wildlife management tool is promoted as such across the state at every opportunity with the NYSTA continuing to lead the way with this pro-active approach. Our goal is to not only increase the number of new trapper members through an aggressive recruitment program, but also to sponsor events that will help gain interest in trapping with today's youth. This, coupled with the need to educate all trappers to the changing demographics of New York State can be achieved through more advanced trapper training programs ensuring that trappers across the state have a chance to be involved with and kept abreast of innovative new techniques, changes in regulations and effective compliance with those changes, such as avoidance of non-target species. We feel this in light of recent issues and the changing demographics of New York are imperative to our very survival.

Obviously we cannot do this alone. It will take a lot of work. It will take a lot of cooperation and support from both within NYSTA's Board and from the membership that we pledge to represent. The future of trapping in New York State rests squarely upon our shoulders. Strong and active leadership in NYSTA is vital to both our effectiveness as an organization and to our continued ability to trap in New York State.

Contact Information:

John Rockwood
114 County Route 30A
Williamstown, NY 13493
(315)-415-4946
Loggerjohn@aol.com

Wayne Jones
9252 River Road
Marcy, NY 13403
(315) 768-8115
iluvny2@roadrunner.com

Part One:
Early Trappers and Fur Traders of New York

By Jerry Leggieri
 Photos by Angie Berchielli

New York's quadricentennial celebration starts in 2009, 400 years since Henry Hudson sailed up the river to which he gave his name in 1609 while looking for a new water passage to the Far East. While not finding the Northwest Passage to the riches he was hoping to find in China, he did find something nearly as valuable... furs.



Throughout 2009 each edition of **TRAP-LINES** will hi-light an aspect of New York's early fur trade and trapping history. During the early years of New York's history as a Dutch colony, the colony's entire reason for being was the fur trade. In addition to the Dutch, other players in the fur trade were the Native Americans, the English, and French. In fact, the rivalries that came about because of the major role the fur trade played in the economies of New Amsterdam, New York, and New France as well as the Native Americans led to the later wars for control of North America. And once New York became a state, it spawned its own unique group of trappers and the Oneida Community that generated the first mass produced traps. Those of us trapping in New York today are the descendants of those early trappers and fur traders. This series will be a look back at our heritage.

Iroquois hunting and trapping methods

Native Americans pursued hunting with a passion and none more than the Iroquois. Hunting was the most important job of an Iroquois man. It provided subsistence for his family and tribe, excitement, and training for his other job, fighting. As it does today, hunting and trapping requires patience, stamina, hardiness, and intimate knowledge of the animals being pursued; all qualities also needed to survive when on the war-path.

An Iroquois hunter had to observe a strict code of conduct that included virtues such as kindness, patience, and quiet speech. It was

believed that if a hunter adhered to these then the animal would offer itself to the hunter. Also, a hunter did not waste game and hunted only when he needed food. Female animals were not hunted at all at certain times of the year in order to maintain sufficient numbers and not diminish the supply. After the hunt, when the Iroquois hunter broke camp, parts of the animal would be left for other animals to eat.

But this was about to change when the Dutch, and later the English, showed up. The Iroquois' desire for European trade goods would bring about a change in their attitudes towards conservation. For example, their desire for liquor and the ease of catching beaver led to the beaver being exterminated and the Iroquois culture being disrupted.

Before the coming of the white man the Iroquois employed a variety of methods and means to capture or kill animals.

Traps of one form or another were used either alone or in combination with their Stone Age weapons to capture game whether it be deer, elk, bear, or moose as well as numerous smaller game.



For example, a bear was too formidable an animal to simply take on with a bow and arrow or hunting spear, so the hunters first tired the animal out by a long chase, and then when worn out, was more easily able to overcome the quarry with their traditional weapons. One tactic used by the Iroquois was to hunt bears with snow on ground. The bear, with its weight, would break through the crust of the snow while the hunters stayed on top with the use of snowshoes. They also used deadfalls to capture bears, constructing the trap in such a way that would cause a heavy log to fall on the back of the animal when sprung, pinning it to the ground. Deer would be caught several different ways. Using an early form of snare, they would bend a young tree over and position a loop in such a way that when sprung would catch the deer around the hind legs and at the same time release the tree, thus suspending the deer in the air. Another method the Iroquois used was to build a brush fence in the shape of the letter V. This fence would be 2-3 miles in length on a side! Then a fire would be started several miles back from the opening and the deer would be driven towards the opening. Once inside the "V" they would eventually be subtly guided down to the narrow portion of the trap where hunters

would be waiting with their bows. It was said that sometimes 100 deer would be taken at one time.

Nets were used for birds such as quail, but a snare-like device was also used as well. They would make a bird trap for small birds by using a piece of elm bark around 8" long by 4" wide. A hole would be drilled in one end and a piece of bark twine with a noose at its end attached to the other. The bark would be fastened to the ground and bait such as corn put on the ground inside the "eye" with the noose adjusted around it. When a bird put its head through the hole attempting to pick up the corn, its ruffled feathers around the neck would engage the noose, taking up the loop and tightening it around the bird's neck. When the bird attempted to fly away it would either be held securely or else would strangle itself.



Animal skins were indispensable to Native Americans and were in constant use among the Iroquois. Pouches, sacks, and all sorts of other repositories were made of white weasel, mink, squirrel, and fisher skins and used to hold everything from tobacco to favored possessions, or for carrying necessities on a long expedition.

The early Dutch and English colonists didn't usually go out and trap animals themselves, but instead relied on the Native Americans, primarily the Iroquois who had their villages in what is now New York State, to either trap the animals themselves or procure them from other Indian tribes further west. In the fall of the year, small parties of Iroquois hunters would leave their villages and head west, sometimes up to a thousand miles away. Out in the wilderness they would spend the winter collecting pelts of just about any fur-bearing animal that they would come across. The beaver was easy to catch and also the animal most in demand by the colonial traders. As a result, beaver population soon became depleted not only in the Iroquois home territories, but also in the western parts of the continent.

When a beaver pond was discovered the beaver would be forced by the Iroquois to leave their lodge by breaching the dam with axes and draining the water. In winter, they would chop holes in the beaver lodges forcing the animals out to surface through the ice at air holes where the hunters would be



use until near the end of the 18th Century. Smaller animals like mink, raccoons, muskrats, and martens were captured using a variety of methods including snares, nets, and cage-traps. Another method of acquiring muskrats was to spear them through thin ice.

The Iroquois set themselves up as the middlemen in the fur trade. Once the furs from their own lands had been trapped out, they would go to the tribes in the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys and the Great Lakes area to secure furs. They provided Ft. Orange, later Albany, with their only source of furs since the Iroquois would not allow Indians beyond their lands other than the Ottawas, passage through Iroquois territory until after 1710.

Next Issue:

Dutch fur traders and articles of trade.

***A Few 2009 Calendars
are still on sale NOW.***

***New York State
Trappers Association***



Call:

Tom Zeider - 845-647-4631 or
contact your Regional Director for 2009
calendars.

The calendars are \$20.00 each
and the proceeds benefit NYSTA's
legislative fund.

Memoirs of a Beaver Trapper

This winter has sure served as a reminder of the "Good Old Days". As I think about it I realize that I've been trapping beaver under ice for the past 40 years. Let me begin by stating that beaver trapping is a disease; it gets in your blood and which one can not get rid of, or want to. It seems like winters were a lot tougher then, with 4 to 5 feet of snow on the ground being the norm of an Adirondack winter. The year my wife and I were married it hit 42 below zero in Warrensburgh. You had to put your name on a list for the local garage to come around and jump start your car. That was the coldest I've ever seen it.

For the most part I have trapped alone and always on snowshoes. I've never owned a snow machine. I did trap with another man, Ken French, for a few years. I remember him asking if I minded him bringing along a high school student of his and I still have pictures of us as we trapped the remote Wolf Ponds in north Bolton. That kid went on to become a nationally known trapper, Jim Comstock.

To me there is nothing quite like snowshoeing down a beaver flow on a zero degree morning and seeing the "smoke" rising from the beaver lodge.

There are so many memories, and places that I've trapped. I always liked being away from everyone else and trapping the out of the way places. I don't like trapping backyards for beaver, mink, fisher, or anything else. I like the solitude and working alone.

Looking back on it now I realize how dangerous it was and the foolish chances I took. I came close a couple of times and have only to Thank God for keeping me safe.

I remember snowshoeing into the Spectacle Ponds one winter between Hague and Brant Lake. In those days the paper mills did not have the scrubbers they have today and I can still remember that awful odor back in there from the International Paper Mill at Ticonderoga many miles away. Anyway when I got to the pond I decided to check the ice and as I hit the ice with my spud a huge hole broke open at the tip of my snowshoes and I was looking down into 10 or 12 feet of water. I was so shaken by the experience that I gingerly backed away, never set a trap, and was glad just to get out of there.

I also remember trapping in the Minerva / Newcomb country. Once you got over the Minerva hill it is like entering a different world, more balsams, more snow and lower temperatures. Those were fun days trapping the flows of Vanderwhacker brook and along the Boreas River. Another year I trapped the perimeter outside of the North Woods Club in Minerva. As I think of it now I was back in seven miles and when you got to the main road (Rt.28N) you still were nowhere.

One notable memory was the time I trapped Little Joe Pond. I snowshoed into Cod Pond, down the pond and through the notch to Little Joe. The snow was deep and often I would walk up upon deer using my snowshoe path. One morning when I got in there I had 4 big beaver. I made the decision to build a fire and rough skin them on the spot. Anyone that has ever skinned wet beaver in the woods knows what I'm talking about. Not a lot of fun. I decided to stash my conibears at the base of a white pine and return for them another time. Packing those 4 pelts out in my basket was all I could do, and I was exhausted by the time I reached the truck. I decided enough of that and since then I have cheap kids sleds stashed in many locations. I buy them at garage sales. I finally recovered those traps, but it took a good deal of searching after the snow was gone .

I remember another time standing on the dam of a pond in behind Jinx Hill. The stream below was alive with big brook trout and I had a ball when I returned in the spring.

Another time I remember playing tug of war with a huge live beaver on a drowner. When he finally came up he was only inches from my leg, but he never attempted to bite me. Have you ever tried to dispatch a live otter? It's like playing with an anaconda!

Some of the other areas I've trapped and have fond memories of were the Fishponds, East Stony Creek behind the Dog and Pup Club in the Harrisburg Country, Second Pond Flow, the Vly and Botheration Pond, the flows of Matt Cross Brook, Cook Brook, and Wolf Pond in Stony Creek. I finally gave up on the Fish Ponds. It is all up hill coming out of there. Dragging a sled with a couple of beaver was no fun.

I love trapping under ice. Beaver move in and out of flows in the Adirondacks and after awhile one gets to learn the channels. Some flows have no poplar nearby and beaver will not respond to it as a bait. Some places their primary food is water lily roots. I remember one flow in particular that I trapped in the shadow of Crane Mountain. I had the runs set up and I had a local French Canadian trapper as a competitor. Every time he'd check his traps he would chisel a tiny hole and peek down at mine. My traps were right on the money in the deep channels. It was a large colony, and I had gotten there first. Most every time there would be a beaver in my trap. I loved it!

There is nothing like chopping through the ice, clearing away the chips, laying down on your belly, letting your eyes adjust, and looking at

beaver chewings or droppings, or a clean swept bottom of a run. I just love that experience.

Just the other day I lost a trap and in searching for it the only way I located the beaver was spotting the two orange teeth against the dark background on the bottom of a deep hole. There are also the times of cutting through 18" of ice only to hit mud. I have trapped a number of beaver with scent mounds in the spring; the Hudson, Schroon, Boreas, and Sacandaga, but I still prefer under ice!

Times have changed. I can remember getting a "dollar an inch" for beaver and I can also remember getting a \$12 or \$14 average. I have fond memories of the Fur Taker Sales at Old Forge run by Lee Crowther, which also became quite a social event for trappers. One thing I've never forgotten were the huge hands of Ira Newman, a buyer at those sales from New York.

I wonder how many trappers today could set under ice with foothold traps. How many large catches would be possible without the conibears? I used to love those Blake and Lamb double longspring 44's and the big number 4's. Today I like the 280's.

Back in those days trappers used to claim their spots ahead of season by chopping a hole, inserting a pole, and wiring a name tag to it, to claim the site. Trouble was some guys eyes were too big for their stomach. Other trappers would come along, see the site already claimed, and leave. Frequently the pond did not get trapped because the first guy never returned. One old timer still puts out his claims to this day, even though they are now illegal.

There are many memories; not all good. I remember the morning Simon Cayer, the Indian from Quebec and I stood in the kitchen of Frank Morehouse, the game warden. All of our traps had been stolen from a colony too close to the road; another reason to get back in away from the road.

Another time I was trapping up in Moriah and broke a fan belt on the truck. I never carried more than a couple of dollars and no credit cards. I stopped across the street from the old Frontier Town. Finally struck a deal of leaving my snowshoes as a guarantee. The man replaced the belt. I drove home to Warrensburgh, got the money, drove back, and got my snowshoes out of hock. Another time I waited for many hours with a kindly little old lady who had no phone as we waited for the snowplow. The snow was so deep that it plugged my fan belt and I had to dig out all the snow around it. That was up near Trout Falls.

Today cell phones are the big deal. I own one, hate the thing. Doesn't work most of the time in the Adirondacks or in the mountains down in Pennsylvania. Even my truck has an On Star telephone that works off of satellites.

I've been through the ice on a number of

occasions and it is always scary. Today I carry a change of clothes in the truck and also a towel. A set of picks on a lanyard are standard fare around my neck. There's nothing quite like walking out of a place in 10 degree weather with your pants freezing solid and water squirting between your toes. A good water proof match container is also a must. Have you ever stood out in the cold in the middle of nowhere bare butt naked wringing the water out of your underwear? You do not linger!!!

I remember trapping against some darn good trappers; Johnny Thorpe, Ernie Lantiegne, John Baker, Frank Walter, and Joe Ferrone to name just a few.

My dad used to say that a man gets too soon old and too late smart. Perhaps he was right. My son tells me you need to be a bit stupid to be a beaver trapper; all of that work, chopping holes, lugging beaver, and the time spent skinning, fleshing, and tacking out the pelts. What is my hourly wage? Perhaps he too is right.

To me though there is nothing like the taste of a roasted beaver hind quarter, or the smell of castor, or the bonus of an otter now and then in my trap. Even muskrats are welcome; the smell of balsam, the solitude, and the quiet. I would not trade that for anything. I'm not a kid now and I've slowed down some, but I thank God that I can still throw a beaver on my shoulder and snowshoe out to the truck.

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Sketch by Glen Bold 1986



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