

## **NED BALL LED AN EARLY EFFORT TO BRING MOOSE TO ADIRONDACKS**

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History makes us aware that few things are new. I've known this for years, but the point is constantly becoming more apparent since I began writing this column.

An example was revealed while talking with Shirley Peacock about her grandfather, Ned Ball.

Ned Ball was a legend in his own time. Born in Sheffield, England, in 1854, he settled in the Port Leyden area shortly after his 20<sup>th</sup> year. He and Flora Burke, of Lowville, were married in 1890, and subsequently they had eight children. Of the four boys and four girls, I came to know both Harry and Bill, of Old Forge.

Harry followed in his father's footsteps as a respected caretaker and guide. I was remiss in not including him in an earlier article on others in that profession I knew and admired.

Edward J. Ball, or Ned, as he was known, moved his family to the Old Forge area soon after arriving in this country. He built a log cabin on the site now occupied by his grandson, Jack Ball and his family. His early living was made as a trapper, guide and caretaker. The Fisheries Game and Forestry Commission appointed him as one of the first Game Protectors. He served in that capacity for 16 years.

Shirley Peacock showed me some of his early expense account records. One was for a train ticket from Big Moose to Fulton Chain (Thendara) in 1902 for 32 cents. It is brought into perspective when you saw the salary he received.

There is an ongoing controversy about reintroducing moose into the Adirondacks. It is far from being a new or original idea; an unsuccessful attempt was made back in 1902.

Ned Ball, as the local game protector, was in charge of the operation. Initially, two moose arrived in Old Forge by rail from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, on July 7, 1902. They were taken the next day via the Raquette Lake Railroad to the Uncas Road and released.

They survived the hardships of the grueling train trip and would no doubt survive the Adirondack winters. Eventually, they were poached out and the idea was shelved until recently.

The moose are making a comeback on their own and with changes in attitudes and economic conditions, we all wish them luck. If they do, it just further proves you can't beat Mother Nature.

Ned Ball epitomized the early Adirondacker and demonstrated the qualities needed to survive. I quote from his printed obituary published in the *Boonville Herald* a few days after his death on April 6, 1927:

“A sturdy pioneer who through honesty, integrity, faithfulness and courage helped to make the changes necessary so that his children and those who came after him might not have to experience his hardships and privations.”

From my observations, the same may be said of many an Adirondacker.