

MEN AND HORSES TEAMED UP TO CUT ADIRONDACK TIMBER 11/7/95

Both man and horse shared the many dangers of woods work and accidents were common to both.

Unfortunately, more of them proved fatal to the horse than to its master. Occasionally, a horse was injured to the extent that it would have to be euthanized. The remote areas and time constraints on at least two occasions led to unusual methods to carry it out. The gun was the accepted method at the time, but their possession on many of the large private parks was prohibited.

Mickey Freeman told me of a situation that occurred on the Nehasane Park when a horse suffered a broken back after a tree accidentally fell on it. Its suffering was ended by a stick of dynamite being tied to its head and detonated.

Story has it that legendary woodsman Herb Magee tried the same method with an ailing horse. The horse was led a discreet distance from camp, the dynamite attached and lit. Herb made for the camp in haste, but forgot to either tie the horse or he got loose and came hard on his heels. Herb was said to have just made it into the nearest camp building when the dynamite did its job.

In any event, the whole thought of putting a noble animal such as the horse out of its misery in such a manner is repugnant. I do not relate the story to shock or make light of the practice, but only because it at times did happen.

Lest you get too sorry for the horse, it should be remembered that some of them gave as well as receive. Many an unwary teamster was seriously injured or killed by an ill-mannered animal. It paid to know your horse and to respect both ends of the animal.

I well remembered old Duke, a very large workhorse my uncle Mart once owned. He was the kindest, most gentle giant imaginable. His sense of humor, however, was something else. Once when I entered his stall to grain him, he nonchalantly pinned me against the wall with his huge hindquarters.

I was about 12 years old at the time and talk about a desperate feeling! After that, I would pretend to saunter on by and then quickly dash by his hindquarters and up to his

front by the manger before he could get me. You had to reverse the procedure to exit the stall. He knew better than to try it with my uncle.

C.J. Strife, like most of his teamsters, knew horses and respected them. Bill Marleau relates an incident in his book, *Big Moose Station*, in which C.J. halted a runaway team and averted possible disaster.

The early logger and the logging horse were for the most part replaced by modern loggers with modern equipment and machinery. Today, one man can do the work of 20 and much more safely.

Like everything else, the entire logging industry has changed and is changing at an ever increasing pace. Since it is still an important part of the Adirondacks, maybe I will dwell on the subject a bit longer.