

**CURLEY DEIS WORE MANY HATS; HE MADE HARD WORK
LOOK EASY**
2/20/96

My first recollection of Curley Deis was of him wheeling into the parking lot across from the fire hall with the Marks & Wilcox truck. He was answering a fire alarm.

A life member, he joined the department in 1937. It would be interesting to know how many calls he answered over the years. Tom remembers his dad racing for the fire hall on foot and keeping right up with Gardner Vaughn's seven-foot nephew.

Curley was born in Thendara and spent his life in the area wearing many hats to provide for his wife, Una, and their 10 children. One of the most affable men I have ever known, his outgoing personality made him friends wherever he went.

His daughter, Terri Lehnen, remembers being on vacation in Atlantic City when she was a youngster. She thought all of the people he befriended were just old friends he had known for past years.

I only learned of one person who ever got Curley riled up. His son-in-law, "Tiny" Lehnen, exhausted Curley's patience when trying to pilot a two-man crosscut saw with him. If you have ever used a crosscut, you know it's hard enough work without trying to pull a guy Tiny's size too. If you know Tiny, you know he led Curley on some when he learned he was bugged.

On the other hand, I learned no one loved to kid around more than Curley. While making a delivery at a camp off the Petrie Road he noticed an unattended fishing rod on the dock.

He picked up the rod and caught a nice trout on the first cast. Pleasantly surprised, he made a second cast and was rewarded with yet another nice fish. On his way home and well pleased with himself, he mentioned his good luck to Tom's wife, Becky. She in turn ran into her mother-in-law and Sadie Baker out for a ride.

Mentioning Curley's good luck to Una, Sadie was told not to believe it, as it was another of Curley's pranks. The joke was on Una when she got home and opened the fridge.

Curley was running true to form when he first met Una as she was passing the Forest House where he was boarding at the time. He greeted her (as he did all the young

ladies) with a whistle or quip. Tom said his mother started the conversation by asking Curley if he was calling his dog.

He could sing and one place they loved to get him started was the Knotty Pine. They would call for an emergency ice supply for the old coolers and then prime Curley with a beer to two to see if he could be persuaded to sing. I will never forget hearing him sing for the first time at the Town of Webb School.

I did not mean to slight any of the other highway superintendents I have known when I said that Curley was my all-time favorite. Curley just seemed to make a difficult job look easy.

Another favorite of mine was Jack Christy. Art Baker and I used to like to prod him once in awhile. No need to worry Jack, you're safe.

I have received some welcome replies to my inquiries on various subjects. More on that later.

NOTICE: Will the young man from Boonville who left a message on my phone answering machine saying Bobby Wall was his uncle, please call back?