

**EVEN THOSE WHO KNEW HIM FOUND BOBBY HARD TO
KNOW
7/30/96**

“Best little man I ever knew,” was the way Bill Payne described Bobby West. Eccentric and independent were terms others used to portray him.

He has always been an intriguing figure to me from the time I first knew him. We met briefly in the late ‘30s on the trail from Limekiln to the Moose River Plains. I was on a fishing trip with my uncle Stanley who told me about Bobby.

The story starts with him moving to the Adirondacks for his health. A camp on Mitchell Ponds was the center of his life and he spent much of his time hunting, fishing, trapping and guiding. Day work made up the balance of his life. An energetic man, he was constantly on the move, asking little from anyone.

My uncle told me Bobby would pack your deer from the Plains area out to the road for \$10. Ted Harwood recalls meeting Bobby on the trail, deer slung over his shoulders, stopping to chat briefly, never dropping the deer even for a short break.

He took great care of his automobiles. It may have been because he walked so much. In any event, few people ever were allowed to share a ride with him and by the same token, he seldom accepted a lift from others.

Deriving much of his living from the woods and waters, he ended up facing a game violation over in Lake Pleasant. After the formalities were over and the fine paid, the Conservation Officers offered to drive Bobby back to Inlet. With a “I am not going anywhere with you two SOBs,” he struck off through the woods for Mitchell Ponds.

The two officers figured he was in such a big hurry to get back to camp they may have missed out on something on the first go-around. To make a long story short, they decided to check him out a second time.

Sure enough, they discovered another violation. Bob was so mad he buckled into them both and they had all they could do to handle him. After the State bought the Gould property in the ‘60s, Bob’s camp was burned along with others in the area. He carried the metal roofing out on his back to Inlet where he built a fence around his yard with it.

I have been unable to learn much about Bob, even from long-time acquaintances. Perry Smith knew him for years, even spending time back at camp with him, but could offer little insight into his background or origins. He was obviously a person of great intestinal fortitude and determination – qualities I admire in an individual. Long-time neighbor Walter Schmid came up with a photo of Bob and when son Hans passed it on to me he made what I thought was an appropriate comment: “It’s an action shot which would have been typical.”

Bobby West was certainly an enigma whom I would like to have known much better.