

CONKEY WAS A CHARACTER - MAKE THAT A CAPITAL "C" **6/18/96**

"Crusty" is the way Bill Marleau describes Dave Conkey in his book, *Big Moose Station*. Dave was a long-time Beaver River resident and its first Patrolman/Ranger for the Stage of New York.

He was appointed to the post on May 9, 1911, and remained on the job until 1930.

My first accounts of him were given to me by Bill Marleau. Over the years, several discussions with a variety of people whetted my interest in learning as much about Dave as possible.

Don Potter, Brandreth Park native, provided me with some observations of his own.

I quote: "Dave Conkey, hunter, trapper, fisherman, guide was a North Country character with the "C" under lined."

Fred Potter, of Brandreth, father of Don, was a hunting and trapping buddy of Dave Conkey's. Dave would hop the train from Beaver River to Brandreth and walk the eight miles to Fred's hunting camp at Mud Pond. On one occasion, Dave took the night train up, getting off at Brandreth at 11 p.m., walked the eight miles in the dark, the last half without a good trail. Arriving at the camp at 2 a.m., he carefully opened the door, flashed his light around and discovered Fred had a third person he had forgotten to tell him about. Without even laying down his rifle, he turned around and walked back the eight miles to Brandreth Station and then down the four miles of track to Beaver River.

In the beginning, the Ranger's job was seasonal so Dave supplemented his income guiding hunting and fishing parties. When attorney Arthur Evans and his cousin, Dr. Richard Evans, were young aspiring fly fisherman, their fathers decided to treat them to a weekend of professional tutelage under the expert eye of a real Adirondack guide.

They arrived at Beaver on the train full of anticipation to be met by Dave. As Don Potter recalls, "The euphoria didn't last long when Dave said, "We're going frog hunting; one of you boys can row and the other sit up front with me this .22." They didn't get to cast a dozen times the whole weekend.

Dave had a beautiful house, large front porch and lawn. Fred Potter and sons visited one afternoon in the mid-thirties and discovered several large holes and piles of

dirt scattered about the lawn. When Fred asked the obvious, Dave replied in an irate manner that he was trying to find the dandelion wine he had buried last summer.

I want to thank Don Potter for his information on Dave and welcome any other details about Dave or other Adirondack characters. I enjoy hearing from you readers and welcome your responses or comments.

To learn more about Dave and many other interesting characters, I highly recommend William Marleau's book *Big Moose Station*.

To make a long story short, as the great late Dean Martin used to say, "Keep those cards and letters coming, folks."