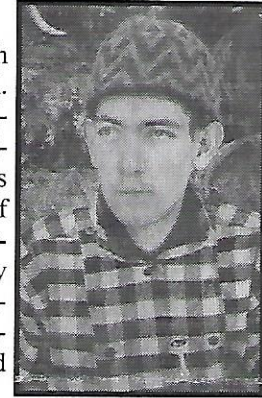


Richard K. "Dick" Wood Triumph Field Specialist, Outdoor Writer and Photographer

By Scot H. Dahms

Best known in the trap collecting community for his work with the Triumph Trap Company and his escapades with EJ Dailey in the Adirondacks, Richard K. "Dick" Wood greatly influenced the outdoor writing and photography community as well. Early in his career, his articles mainly graced the copies of the Triumph Trap Company literature and the magazine called Fur News which was later called Fur News and Outdoor World (FNOW). His articles told stories of his country wide trapping adventures or specifics on catching all types of furbearer species. Later in life, he focused more on his first love of photography and wrote fewer articles. His photographs are published in many books, magazines and brochures dating from 1917 to today. Photos which include Dick usually show him with his signature zigzag stocking hat and Marble Arms and MFG Co compass pinned onto his clothing.



Dick was born on June 15, 1895 in Scott County, Virginia to George Spurgeon Wood, a Methodist "circuit-rider" preacher, and Isabelle (Belle) Hart Wood. Sometime after his birth, the family relocated to Pond Creek in east central Tennessee. In Tennessee, Dick was introduced to trapping by an old trapper named Levi Fox. Dick gave Levi so much competition that Levi relinquished his trapping territory to Dick. Dick was given a book about Daniel Boone by his father. He thoroughly read this book and thought he had been born fifty years too late.



In 1913, Dick and his family relocated to Hixson, Tennessee just north of Chattanooga. His father died on April 24, 1915 while Dick was attending Hixson High School. After George died, Belle moved to southwest Virginia along with Dick's siblings – Stewart, Ruby and Nell. Belle's family owned property in that area and she was given 10 acres on which to build a house. The property was a mile outside of Hiltons on the Holston River.

Dick boarded with a family and stayed in the Chattanooga area until he graduated in 1916 and then moved to Hiltons. Shortly before graduation, Dick began taking photographs as a hobby which immediately tied in with his love for nature and the outdoors.

Triumph Trap Company

In April 1917, Dick won a photo contest promoted by the Triumph Trap Company. The contest was advertised in outdoor magazines including Fur News and Hunter-Trader-Trapper (HTT), but the results were only reported in HTT. All photographs were submitted to the managing editor of HTT who impartially judged every entry on its merits based on how well it conformed to the contest conditions and showed the appearance of a natural catch.

Triumph extended an invitation for Dick to visit them in Oneida at their expense. This visit resulted in him joining the company's advertising department as a copy writer, photographer and field specialist providing him an opportunity to travel throughout the United States and Canada. Winning this contest was the biggest event in his young career and provided a launching point into the outdoor writing and photography field. He wrote numerous articles and brochures for Triumph including Trapping Tricks, Gripping the Dollars and Modern Trapping methods.

During his time with Triumph, Dick met Raymond Spears. Dick sent Raymond a box of new Triumph traps to encourage him to do some trapping. Raymond chose to set the 415 and 415X for bear. A few days later he caught two bears. He took the bears with the traps still on their paws to the Triumph Trap Factory in Oneida for the makers to look their traps over after a catch. The traps showed no ill effects from holding the bears. Raymond wrote a story about this in the December 1917 issue of Fur News.



On December 16, 1917, Dick married Beulah Graham in Daisy Tennessee. At the time, Dick was residing in Oneida and Beulah was from North Chattanooga. They had one daughter in October of 1918 while living in Oneida.

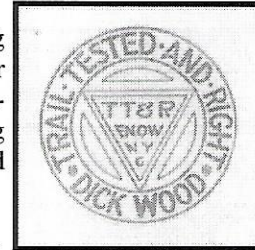
Fur News

Dick worked for Triumph for four years. He was let go because of the disruption that World War I had caused to business. After his release, Dick was asked to apply at Oneida Community Ltd (OCL) by Elmer Kreps who was OCL's staff artist. Dick declined as he had already accepted the position of managing editor for Fur News in New York City. Dick and his family moved to New York City in 1921.



One of the Dick's first articles with photographs was published in the March 1917 issue of the Fur News. The article was titled "Notes from Holston" referring to his family's property in Virginia. Amongst the many topics he covers, Dick discusses the lateness of the magazine and that it was "getting on our nerves" that the previous December issue had not arrived. This comment was an omen to changes to the magazine which would occur in 1921.

From 1917 to 1921, Dick wrote numerous articles for Fur News along with contributing many photographs. Many were used on the front cover and throughout the magazine including in advertising for different companies. He had some series articles including A Trapper's Musings, Tripping the Wicomico, Fishing Craft, Trapper's Equipment and Trail Tested and Right which had an interesting circular emblem at the top of each article.



Fur News and Outdoor World

In April or May of 1921, Dick became the managing editor of the FNOW.

Dick added "and Outdoor World" to the name of the magazine. The magazine included more fishing and hunting articles along with the usual trapping articles. Dick added color to covers, increased advertising revenue and decreased the size of the magazine. The smaller size reduced the delivery time so the readership would have less opportunity for lateness to get on their nerves.

In the July 1921 issue of the Writer's Monthly, Dick is noted as being the new managing editor of FNOW. It also notes that FNOW had been slow in reporting in the past, but under Dick's management, it will be more prompt.

From 1921 to 1924, Dick's articles increased in diversity including more articles on hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, wildlife information and photography along with the usual trapping articles. His other series articles ended and a new series article called A Trapper's Country started.

In the September 1922 issue of FNOW, the editor discusses Dick's yearning to be back in the field and out of the office in New York City. The editor states "Dick is a rambler, always looking for the Trapper's Mecca". After leaving New York, the family did not have a fixed residence. They traveled around the country living in tents.

Although not living in New York City, Dick was the managing editor of FNOW until November 1924. The publisher offered to sell the magazine to Dick and the staff editor, but as noted in the 1922 editorial, Dick had had enough of city life. The magazine was finally sold to A. R. Harding with ownership changing with the August 1925 issue.

The early 1920's was the high point for Dick's articles and photography relating to trapping and various phases of the fur trade. During this time, he contributed to thirty-eight different publications. Dick published a few books at this time including Traps and Tricks That Get Furs, Trapping as a Professional and Narratives of Trapping Life. Traps and Tricks That Get Furs is a general how-to trapping booklet which is titled similarly to the Trapping Tricks booklets that he designed for the Triumph Trap Company. Trapping as a Professional includes sections on trapping different parts of the country with a few articles from other outdoor writers. The Narratives of Trapping Life includes articles by Dick about the Adirondacks which had already been printed in the FNOW. There are a few articles from other writers in that book as well.

In 1926, the family moved back to the North Chattanooga area and lived in Oweda Terrace in Red Bank. They built a house there. The garage was built first. The family lived in the garage and stored their furniture in tents until the house was done.

From 1926 through 1930, Dick contributed to multiple magazines including Outdoor Life, Sport-life, Sportsman's Digest and Midwest Sportsman. Dick was an advertising representative and department editor for Hunting and Fishing and the National Sportsman magazine. He had a series article in the National Sportsman called Motor Camping where he wrote about the expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation because of the automobile, better roads, and America's growing consciousness of its' beauties and recreational opportunities. During this time, he was appointed an associate editor of Automobile and Trailer Travel as well.

One thing that cannot be underestimated is the affect that E.J. Dailey had on Dick's early career. Their time together in the Cold River Area of the Adirondacks influenced both of their article writing for years. The partnership these men enjoyed provided a collection of their experiences which would build the foundation for many articles. Readers would be reminded of their partnership as they frequently referred to each other as "Pard" in articles.

A sign of their continuing partnership beyond the Adirondacks is in the January 1930 issue of the Hunter-Trader-Trapper. On the page showing the contents of that issue, a story with the title of "The Trapper Afloat" showing EJ Dailey as the writer is included. On the first page of the article, Dick Wood is noted as the writer. This shows confusion by the editor about who should actually be credited for writing the article.



Refocusing on Photography



After this, he was a staff editor for Crowell Publishing Company. While still employed with Crowell, he did free-lance writing and advertising work. This turned him back to his first love of photography which at the time was taking its first great strides towards almost universal popularity with the perfection of the miniature camera and improvements in film and processing.

Dick wrote "Photo Trapping Methods" after his time in the Adirondacks. This was a type written article on legal size paper with four plates containing four photographs each. The photographs show different types of trap sets and the article includes lure formulas from both Dick and EJ Dailey.

From the fall of 1930 to December of 1933, Dick worked for Walter A. Gibbs and Son as advertising manager which included taking numerous photographs of the traps and trappers using them. During this time, the family rented a house in Parkside, Pennsylvania which is a suburb of Chester. They rented out the house in Red Bank. Due to the Great Depression, he lost his job with Gibbs.



Dick had also done some speculating in the stock market and had lost money when the depression hit. The family moved back to the house in Red Bank. From approximately 1935 to 1940, Dick was on the editorial staff of Sports Afield writing extensively on woodcraft, camping and trailer travel.

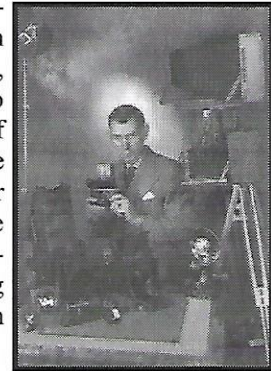
Dick took assignments from companies to tour with their products through different parts of North America. The photographs from these trips would be used in advertising of their products. The product information was included in motor camping articles he wrote. In 1936, one trip was across Ontario for the Covered Wagon Company of Detroit. Another one was to Silver Springs, Florida for the Acme Boat Company of Ohio and Coleman Company. One photo includes a Coleman Lantern, Acme Boat and Ross Allen, the Silver Springs naturalist.



In 1938, Dick won an award for a photo of a wolverine. The award was given at the First Annual Exhibition of Natural History Photography. The event was sponsored by Frontiers magazine which covered natural history.

The May 1940 issue of U.S. Camera, one of the foremost American journals of photography of the time, listed Dick among the twenty two leading illustrative photographers of the United States at that time. He had covered special assignments for

Life, Look and National Geographic magazines. Dick photographed Native American tribes from the Cree in Manitoba, Canada to the Seminole in Florida. Dick's photographs had been used by national advertisers including Standard Oil Company, General Motors, Evinrude Motors, Mans Corporation of Chicago, Folmer-Graflex Corporation and Carl Zeiss.



In the September 15, 1940 article of the Chattanooga Times titled "Meet Dick Wood, Chattanooga Photographer", the writer comments on Dick's slow drawing speech and notes that some of his friends say this is because he likes to taste his words. Dick believed it is because he thinks twice before he speaks. The writer believed this provided a true estimate of Dick as a man writing that Dick is careful, painstakingly methodical and studious in applying himself to any problem at hand.

In 1960, Dick retired and moved to Ringgold, Georgia which is on the south side of Chattanooga. Dick said he retired "to go into the mowing and gardening business". He said his hobbies, through his life, were, first, trying to emulate Daniel Boone, then girls (until he got hooked) and, after retirement, it was trying to beat Wall Street.

Standard Oil Company produced a brochure of the scenic south in November of 1966. One of Dick's photos was used in the brochure. It was of three possums on a fence. Dick wrote a note about the photograph. "While visiting a cousin, Ralph Hart, on a farm near Hiltons, VA., we heard the farm dog barking early one morning and discovered it had three possums treed on a rail fence, near a persimmon tree. Having a new Graflex camera to try out while the marsupials were intently watching the canine, I composed this animal portraiture."



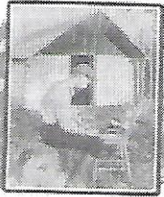
Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA)

Dick was the last survivor from the list of names appearing on the original Bill of Organization of the OWAA at the 1927 meeting in Chicago. Although many called him a Charter member, he pointed out that he did not join the new association until the following year even though his name was on the list. He always took great pleasure in his OWAA membership and enjoyed attending the conventions. He actively participated in events that they held including a tour of the Tennessee Valley in 1946 and an Alaska tour in 1947.

In 1972, Dick felt he should resign from the OWAA. The Board of Directors, in recognition of his being the lone survivor on that organizational document, voted him a Life Membership that year. Dick was deeply pleased about receiving the Life Membership and communicated with the OWAA headquarters annually after receiving it. Dick died from lung cancer on November 1, 1977.

Legacy


Dick and his family were always on the move. This is the foundation for his far reaching legacy which positively impacted outdoor writing and photography. His younger years provided the experience and a warehouse of memories which would be used later in life as a base for many articles. Dick's first articles focused on trapping and his outdoor adventures in the Adirondacks. Later his focus was on camping. He went full circle back to his first love of photography and made that into a career later in life. Dick made sure that none of his contributions ever got on his followers' nerves.



Dick Wood Coronatyping
20 miles from civilization

DICK WOOD, sportsman—wild life photographer—and writer is inseparable from his Corona. From the highlands of the south to the frozen tundras of the north, Corona has accompanied Dick in his ramblings on the Fur Trappers' trails.

"As a sportsman," says Dick Wood, "I have long discarded the pen and gun in favor of Corona and camera. With these two implements I have made thousands of dollars."



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