

New York at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, 1904
Report of the New York State Commission
Prepared By DeLancey M. Ellis, 1907, pp. 233-235.

Forest, Fish and Game Exhibit

By A. B. Strough, Special Agent of the Forest, Fish and Game Commission, State of New York

The State exhibit in the Forest, Fish and Game Department was prepared and installed by the Forest, Fish and Game Commission with funds furnished by the Louisiana Purchase Commission of the State of New York.

A Sportsman's Camp

A modern sportsman's camp of rustic design, fourteen feet by seventeen feet in size, was constructed and furnished after the general style and appearance of the usual summer residence in the Adirondack Mountains. The contractor for the erection of this camp was the firm of **Messrs. D. B. and D. F. Sperry, of Old Forge, N. Y.** Mr. D. F. Sperry, "Frank," as he is known to visitors to the Adirondacks, had the personal charge of the construction and was something of an exhibit himself. Being a lifelong Adirondack guide, and having been employed by many prominent people, among others, ex-President Harrison, any rustic work from his hand was sure to attract attention.

It was unfortunate that it was impossible to have him, or some other Adirondack guide, in attendance at the "camp" all through the season, as many visitors wished to see and talk with some such person. Some of them, seeing the Sperry name-plate on the end of the camp, inquired for "Frank," expecting to find him in attendance. He has had many inquiries from people residing at widely separated places in various parts of the country, for duplicates of the camp exhibit, or for some other design of rustic building.

Construction of the Camp

The camp was constructed of Adirondack spruce logs and the chimney was of the same external construction. The roof was covered with spruce bark. All the material showing inside the camp was, as far as possible, left in natural condition, the logs with the bark on, and the underside of the roof boards unplanned, showing the coarse saw marks.

Innumerable inquiries were made by interested visitors, particularly those coming from the southern and western States, as to the species of timber used in constructing the camp. When informed that the logs were of spruce, much interest was shown. Many had never seen spruce before.

The Furniture

A part of the furniture was built by Mr. Sperry, and the remainder by another Adirondack guide, Mr. E. E. Sumner of Saranac Lake, N. Y. Mr. Sperry made the bedstead, the window settee and

the center table, after the style that is common in Adirondack camps. The woodwork was of spruce, turned smooth and stained a light smoke color to give it a finished appearance. Mr. Sumner constructed the other furniture in the best rustic style, the framework being of white cedar with the bark on, the bottoms of the chairs and settees of white birch. Both of these guides have had many inquires for duplicates of their handiwork as exhibited. The "atmosphere" of the camp was that of everyday life in the forest. The bed was "made up" as though the owner was expected to occupy it at night. Garments and articles that had seen service, such as a leather hunting jacket, a gun case, "pack baskets," fish reels and snow shoes were hung on the walls in proper places.

Attractive Features

The mantel and fireplace particularly attracted attention. The mantel was of spruce with the bark on, and the fireplace was constructed with a stone facing and lining, showing andirons and birch logs in place as in actual use. In one corner there was shelving for bric-a-brac, fishing tackle, ammunition, etc., constructed by utilizing a discarded fishing boat, cutting the same across the center into two parts and placing shelves at convenient intervals, fastening the same on the ribs of the boat.

In another corner was a swing table that could be hung up against the wall when not in use. On the mantel were placed articles of rustic work that harmonized with the surroundings—a rustic clock, wooden pipes and smoking set to match, a stein and mug of wood, together with other articles of ornament and utility. A piece of library shelving of unique design and special construction was provided and furnished with standard publications on fish, birds and animals, and stories of life in the forest and of the chase. Thirty books were shown, a number of which were kindly furnished by Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Co., of New York City. On the center table were kept the current numbers of the leading sporting magazines, both weekly and monthly.

Wall Decorations

The walls were decorated with bright colored Indian blankets, flags and souvenir paddles, on which were painted various national flags and camping scenes. The paddles being of a very white spruce and the background being the spruce logs of the camp with dark colored bark, the effect was pleasing and attracted much attention.

An interesting and valuable feature of the furnishing and decoration of the camp, and, incidentally, souvenirs of the chase, were a large fine moose head over the mantel, an elk's head on the gable outside, bucks' heads at the sides of the porch in the front of the camp, and the furs of red foxes, deer and black bear. Some of the furs were specially prepared for rugs and placed on the floors of the camp, giving the interior an air of comfort and cheerfulness.

Hunting and Fishing Outfit

The hunting and fishing outfit consisted of two repeating rifles, one a Savage and the other a Winchester, a double-barreled shotgun, three fishing rods, and one each of steel, split lancewood, and split bamboo, and a collection of trout flies, landing nets, minnow pail, reels, lines, cartridge

belt, loading set and other paraphernalia. A guide-boat of the latest style and of the superior workmanship was a part of the sportsman's outfit. It was kindly loaned by the manufacturer, Mr. Fred W. Rice, formerly of Saranac Lake, N. Y., but now living in Seattle, Wash. His son continues the manufacture of guide-boats at Lake Placid, N. Y.

Balsam Pillows

On the settee and bed in the camp were a number of balsam pillows. A large and particularly fine one came from the Higby camp on Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks. It was made by Miss Lila Daisy Higby, a little lady only seven years of age, whose needlework decorating the cover showed artistic ability of great merit for one so young. Many visitors admired it, and some of them have written to her in complimentary terms.

The odor from these pillows filled the camp, and instantly attracted the attention of visitors. One of the questions usually asked first of the attendant was where the perfume came from and what it was. Some supposed it to be from the logs of which the camp was constructed. Many visitors wanted to know where they could obtain such pillows. Those purchased for the camp came from Mr. A. M. Church, Boonville, N. Y., who also furnished the gun rack so much admired, and also the fur rugs.

Fire Notice

On the side of the camp in a conspicuous place was posted a fire notice such as may be found in thousands of places along the trail throughout the Adirondacks and Catskills. Visitors that had been through our mountains recognized this feature instantly, for those notices may be found at all the hotels and public places, and also on a great many of the private camps. This little placard printed on cloth attracted much attention. It contains our forest fire rules and much of the law related to woodland fires. Many persons interested in forestry, many of them from foreign countries, copied the notice verbatim. It is probable that similar rules and regulations will be incorporated in the forestry laws of other states and countries.

An attendant was employed at the camp who answered the numerous questions as to where the various articles of furniture and decoration might be obtained. Much information was also sought by visitors in relation to the Adirondack forests and the summer resorts of New York in general.

This sportsmen's camp was the only exhibit of the kind shown at the Fair. Sportsmen and lovers of life in the woods from all parts of the land visited it; many were ecstatic in its praises; some complimented it by saying it was the more artistic feature of the whole forestry, fish and game exhibit. It was photographed perhaps more than one hundred times during the season and in one instance by nine different persons on a single day.

Transcribed by Town of Webb Historian Peg Masters, October 2009