

Frank L. Singer Fur Company

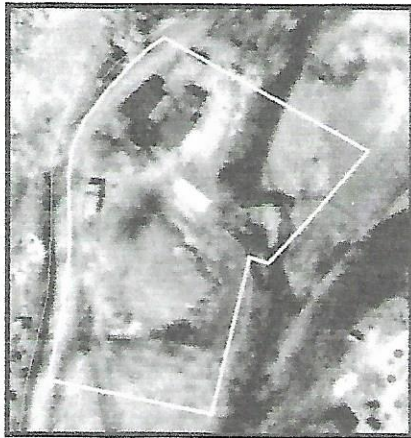
By Scot H. Dahms



Frank L. Singer operated a fur company outside of Peekskill, New York for 35 years starting in the 1930s. He partnered with Gibbs – Triumph to produce a Trapper’s Guide booklet and sent out fur price lists. Singer purchased fur outright or could make scarves out of a trapper’s fur and return the completed garment to them. To make money in the summer, Singer operated the Sprout Lake Beach Park.

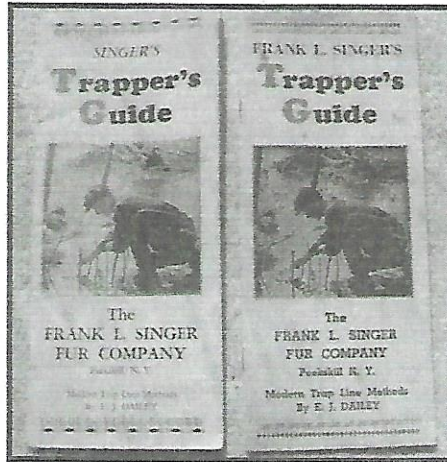
Singer was born in New York City on March 9, 1900. He married Vivienne Inge in April 1922 and had a son, Frank Jr, on January 27, 1923. A property deed shows that Frank Sr. and his son purchased nine properties from 1935 to 1953 and combined them under Singer Enterprises Inc. in 1968.

The fur company buildings were located on Sprout Brook Road. Although the mailing address was in Peekskill, the property was actually located in the town of Cortland.

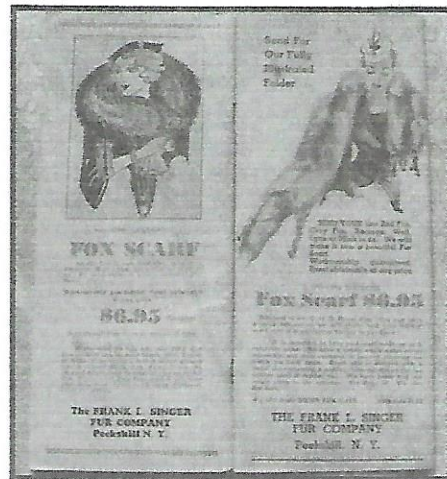


There are at least two versions of Singer’s Trapper’s Guide. Both have thirty illustrated sets. One brochure states that the thirty sets are courtesy of the Gibbs-Triumph Trap Company. This brochure also includes illustrations of Gibbs-Triumph traps. The other brochure still has the thirty sets, but the comment about Gibbs-Triumph has

been removed. The trap illustrations have also been removed. One brochure was probably printed while Gibbs-Triumph was still in business and the other was probably printed after Gibbs-Triumph sold out to Animal Trap Company.

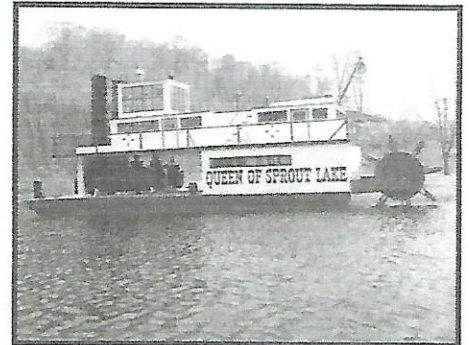


Besides buying fur, Singer would also create scarves from fur provided by trappers and return the finished garment to them. Although the brochure advertises fox, scarves could be made out of other species as well including raccoon, wolf, lynx or mink. At the trapper’s request, furs could also be dyed for the scarves. In 1938, Singer received a copyright for the term “Fox Scarves of Beauty by Frank L. Singer Fur Company, Peekskill New York”.



The Singer family operated the Sprout Lake Beach Park which was located north of the fur business. In the 1950’s, the Singers dammed Sprout Brook and dug out a swimming hole west of the brook. Sand was added

around the swimming area along with picnic facilities. A sand berm was built between the pond and brook.

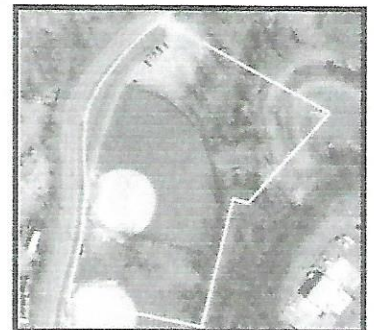


The Queen of Sprout Lake was a 25 foot paddle wheeler with chlorinating machinery hidden underneath to purify the water. The Singers used hand painted advertising on a 1950 Mercury to increase awareness of the park. Frank Sr. is driving the car in the photo included in this article.



Frank Sr. died on 1 February 1972. At the time of his death, his obituary said he had lived on Sprout Brook Road for over 50 years. Frank Sr was an active member of the Peekskill Lions Club and Elks Lodge 744. He was also a World War I veteran.

The Town of Cortland purchased the property in 1986. The buildings were torn down and the town now has ball parks in their location. This pond was drained by the town.



Frank L. Singer Sr. was an entrepreneur who utilized two businesses which provided income year round. Although the fur business and swimming beach have been gone for a long time, the property that he purchased is still having a positive influence on the community by providing parks and ball fields for outdoor activities.

I encourage anyone who has information contrary to what I have included in this article to call, mail, email or respond in the magazine.

References:

History of the Town of Cortland, unknown date. Courtesy of Kim Stucko of the Field Library, Peekskill, NY.

Town of Cortland, NY, Parks Division, Sprout Brook Ball Fields, www.townofcortlandt.com. Courtesy of Kim Stucko of the Field Library, Peekskill, NY.

The Evening Star, Peekskill NY, February 2, 1972, Obituary - Frank L. Singer. Courtesy of Kim Stucko of the Field Library, Peekskill, NY.

Property Deed, 1968, Westchester County NY. Courtesy of Patrick Raftery of the Westchester County Historical Society.

Queen of Sprout Lake and Frank Singer in Car photos courtesy of Frank Goderre, Peekskill City Historian

Library of Congress, Copyright Office, Catalog of Copyright Entries, Pamphlets, Leaflets, Contributions to Newspapers or Periodicals, Etc., Singer, Frank L., Volume 36, US Government Printing Office, 1939.

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HOW I BECAME A TRAP COLLECTOR

Jim Rigli, Colorado

I grew up on a large ranch south of Ft. Morgan Colorado. From the time I was very small, I remember my Dad talking about trapping when he was young. He also trapped a few skunks or badgers that would get into the chicken house. My brother and I attempted to follow in his footsteps and got a few of Dad's traps and a dead chicken and off to the sand hills we went to catch 'ol Wiley. Long story shorts 'ol Wiley sprung the traps and ran off with the bait. That was pretty much the end of our trapping careers. My Dad still chased coyotes with his greyhounds and would sell the fur to Isenhart in Denver, who also bought his wool and a few cow hides.

Moving forward to my college days, my Dad let me know that Isenhart, who had moved to Greeley, needed some help unloading a boxcar at his warehouse. I and a couple friends, helped with the task and when finished, Isenhart offered me a job at the warehouse while in college. I worked for him as a driver, hide and fur handler and other jobs in his business for about 12 years. We sold traps and trapping supplies and bought furs from trappers and hunters. There were always numerous traps around the shop including the Newhouse bear traps and all sizes of Victors. Traps really weren't an interest to me as they were always laying around the shop and I was always handling all kinds of them.

After Isenhart retired and sold out, a friend at the time, who was into collecting traps, had asked me if I knew any old timers with traps. I'd point him in the right direction and he and I

would go visit the trapper/trappers and buy traps if they were available.

During these excursions, I thought about trap collecting myself and got hooked on the idea. I really wasn't impressed with most of the different kinds of traps, not even the big bear traps, as they were just a big trap.

Since there were so many different kinds and brands of traps, I finally settled on just sticking to collecting the Newhouse brand in the off-set jaw with teeth. These traps had the teeth and you could see the teeth by just looking at the trap and you wouldn't have to turn the trap over to see if it had teeth.

My collection pretty much consists of almost all the Newhouse offset traps with teeth...15, 150, 114, 14 and #3 Govt' with the nub base in all the deferent versions...pat. Date, no date & ATC. I've picked up a couple Community 6's, a Slick Pan 5 & 6 and the 4½ Wolf traps in all their versions along the way. I haven't got the Newhouse 35 or Abbey 15 as these would take an arm and leg to acquire, but who knows? They may be out there waiting for me someday.

It's been said that trap collecting is an obsession or a disease, but I find it an interesting pastime and enjoy the hunt as much as owning the traps.

Submitted by

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To obtain one of these books, send us two names of people who trap or buy furs or seal when you make a shipment to us.

*Courtesy Gibbs-Triumph Trap Company