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## FUR TAKER TALK

Tricks, Tips, and Musings  
with Mike Marchewka

### **One regret I have is...**

I regret that I didn't take the time to spend with Ron Cauble in the woods. I have written about my traplines in Southern Indiana in these columns before.

Those times spent in the woods and creeks of that beautiful country remain vivid in my memory. I was staying with my in-laws back then, who lived in Corydon, Indiana, which is not far from where Mr. Cauble and his late wife Joyce resided. Like other readers of *The Fur Taker* magazine, Ron's column was one of the first I turned to when I opened it up. His stories of days gone by, making a living from the land, and his trapping tales entertained this "greenhorn trapper." Mr. Cauble had a way with words that readers could easily relate to. The thought of earning an income from the various leaves, barks, and berries that Mother Nature produced enthralled most of us. Not to mention

last of his breed, and I hope that he rests in peace.

### **"The Last Conibear Letters"...a new book!**

Prolific historical trapping writer Scot Dahms has produced another fine book titled, "The Lost Conibear Letters" How One Canadian and the Animal Trap Company Revolutionized Trapping, Frank Conibear 1896-1988. We trappers take a lot for granted these days. The equipment available to us today is second to none. But it wasn't always like that. Mr. Dahms' new book describes the extensive process of finalizing the details to build a workable body-gripping trap. The intense "behind the scenes" that took place over 60 years ago was a big surprise to me. You can find more details about the book and others Mr. Dahms has written by visiting [www.adirondackdick.com](http://www.adirondackdick.com).

# Book Review

by Dave Hastings

***The Lost Conibear Letters: How one Canadian and the Animal Trap Company Revolutionized Trapping Frank Conibear 1896-1988*** by Scot H. Dahms Copyright 2025, Adirondack Dick Enterprises, Wilmington, Ohio 395 pages (over 190 photos/images, including many early Conibear family photos, Northwest Territory historical photos, patent images, etc.)

In the Foreword to *The Lost Conibear Letters*, Mr. Dahms writes, "When I wrote my book titled *Hardware for Hitler: How the Animal Trap Company Helped Win World War II*, I knew I had too much material to put into one book, so I specifically kept the material about the Conibear trap out, and have put that material into this book with a focus on Frank R. Conibear's life from being part of the first white family in the Northwest Territories to his continuous improvements to his Conibear trap patents."

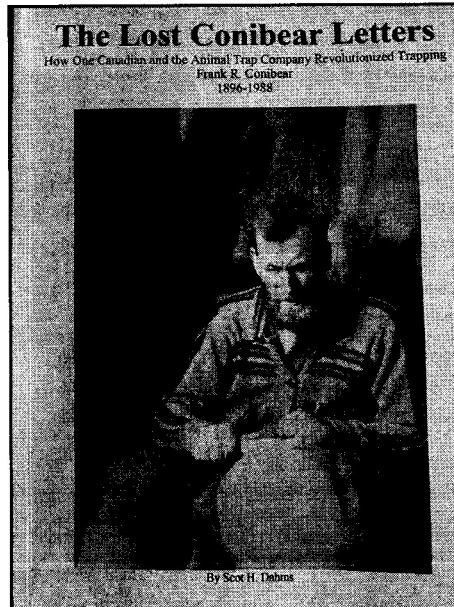
This is a great summary statement and should be an indicator for the eventual question, "Who might want to read this book?"

*Lost Conibear Letters* is likely a must-read:

- For trap collectors seeking comprehensive information on the Conibear trap, patents, and developments

- To engage history enthusiasts who appreciate reading about the efforts from the previous century to "colonize" the wild Northwest Territories... The Conibears were the first independent white family to settle in the Northwest Territories.

- For folks who want to be "in the know" about the complexities, twists and turns that went into the production of the "Conibear" trap that is widely used today; starting with the financial support from the "American Humane Society" (The Conibear trap was posed as the answer to the "cruel steel jawed leg hold trap" because it killed "instantly." Obviously, humane ac-



tivists moved on to any killing of wildlife, however done); to the decades involved in the evolutionary process of trap manufacture and modification by Animal Trap Company; to the 1957 production of the Victor Conibear Trap; through several modifications, including several by Mr. Pete Askins, to the trap we recognize today.

In our modern, internet-speed world, we tend to take for granted the time and effort necessary to first create a potentially workable trap concept through trial-and-error developments, to the essentials of modifications needed to prepare a trap for mass production processing, and to evolutionary improvements in the "trial and error" after-sale phase. Each "generation" of this process that created the Conibear trap is outlined in the book.

Dahms has written half a dozen previous books that would be of great interest to those looking

for a "deep dive" into modern trapping history; however, this one focuses on the evolution of a trap that has become one of the cornerstones of modern fur harvesting. In the advanced research done by the Canadian Government regarding humane trap standards for the International Standards Organization, the "Conibear style" trap passed the scientific thresholds of humane capture.

The Conibear trap we know today originated from one man's idea, inspired by the mechanics of his wife's egg beater, and evolved through decades of input and modifications, including several patent versions (and patent challenge court trials), contributions from various detail engineers, numerous design improvements, and input from many trappers and trap testers.

Personally, it would be very helpful if a book of this detail and complexity included a detailed index of photos, an index of ideas, and complete endnotes. There is a great deal of data here, and my copy is bristling with yellow post-it notes so I can revisit salient points.

To obtain your copy and any of Mr. Dahms's books, visit [www.adirondackdick.com](http://www.adirondackdick.com), or contact: Scot H. Dahms, 1087 Warren Drive, Wilmington, Ohio, 45177. [ranger1971@comcast.net](mailto:ranger1971@comcast.net). ♦

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