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Encouraging a Remembrance of Adirondack French Louie on the 100th Anniversary of His Death

Adirondack French Louie (Louis Seymour) made the wilderness between Inlet and Lake Pleasant his home from the 1860s until his death in Newton's Corners (now Speculator) on February 27, 1915.

A famous character throughout Hamilton and Herkimer Counties while he was alive; Louie became a legend after the publication of the book *Adirondack French Louie: Life in the North Woods* in 1952, by Utica author Harvey Dunham. Louie's life exemplified the hard work, determination and humor it took to make a living in the region and his careers as a canal boat driver, lumberjack, trapper, hunter and guide, provide perspective on the lives of the sturdy people alongside Louie at the time as they struggled to tame the wilderness.

For his contribution to the region's heritage, I've suggested to many of the Town Supervisors and County Legislators in the two counties to declare a day of remembrance, make a proclamation, or pass a resolution declaring "French Louie Day" on Friday, Feb. 27, 2015, the 100th anniversary of French Louie's death. There is so little harm in doing something that promotes the rich history of the region and can make people laugh too. A great way to remember Louie would be to make this vow on the weekend of February. 27, 2015:

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In memory of French Louie this day I will:

Get up early,  
Refuse to bathe,  
Cook my breakfast in bear or bacon grease,  
Put homemade maple syrup on it, whatever it is,  
Let my dog "clean" the dishes,  
Go outside and enjoy the day,  
Howl like a wolf, screech like a panther or warble like a loon at the top of my lungs,  
Buy a drink for everyone in the house, (and soda is okay.)  
Watch the sunset.

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School was closed in Speculator the day they buried French Louie. Before the casket was closed, children filed by and laid sprigs of balsam on the body. Ernest Brooks the owner of the Brooks Hotel where Louie died paid for the casket. Louie was given a proper send off but there wasn't any money for a headstone. That came 39 years later after Harvey Dunham started a letter writing campaign to raise the money for a monument. On September 17, 1954 the *Utica Observer-Dispatch*, reported that "Louie Seymour, lone man of the West Canada Lakes, famed for woodcraft and made more famous by a book Harvey L. Dunham of Utica, is going to have a headstone."

A century after his death it is fitting for us to tip our hats to Louie's life well-lived and a time gone by.