

JOHN EHN: OLD TRAPPER'S LODGE

BIOGRAPHY

1897 September 15, John Henry (John) Ehn was born in Violet, Mackinaw County, Upper Michigan. Violet was a logging camp.

John Ehn Sr. (John's father) was born in Stockholm Sweden. He had 5 sisters. At age 24 he apprenticed as a Hydraulic machine Engineer. He was trained to set up systems for lumber mill machinery run by the power of falling water (before electricity was invented). He came to the U.S. when he was 18 to set up a lumber mill in Upper Michigan. Here he met Marie Ella Berg. They married and homesteaded a farm near Gould City.

Marie Ella Berg Ehn, John's mother was born in Helsinki Finland. She was an orphan who worked as a servant and saved her money from childhood to buy passage on an emigrant ship to the U.S. She was 4'10" tall and spoke Finnish, Swedish, and English.

John Ehn and Mary Berg had six sons and one daughter: Wilhelm, Fredrich, Oscar, John, Joel, Victor and Anna.

The Ehn family farmed and owned a commercial fishery at Scotts Point Michigan and ran a lumbering operation. John Junior dropped out of school in the 7th grade because of his father's ailing health.

1920 John worked as a trapper from Mexico to the Canadian border for 20 years, with his headquarters on the family property in Michigan.

1921 April 2, John married Mary Leota Esther Gonyon. Born July 27 1904, in Gould City Michigan Mary had a fifth grade education. Her mother Maryanne Polly Gonyon came from Ohio. She was one of 9 or 10 children. Her father, Isaac Gonyon, was a French Canadian widower. He farmed during the summer and worked as logger and lumberjack in the winter. Mary was the eldest of six children, Joseph, Stephen, Edith, Ellen and Amy.

John and Mary had 4 children: Clifford Bell 1924; Louise Joy 1926; Lorraine Ann 1930; and Rosemarie 1937.

1929-34 The Ehn's moved to Florida where John's brother Joel lived ~~Florida~~. John became partners with Snake Johnson. Together they trapped and shot alligators and snakes in the Everglades for their hides. Mary helped skin and stretch them.

1933 *John had his closest shave with death in Iron county Michigan (source: John's tape).*

1934 Returned to Michigan. The state of Michigan started a force of salaried trappers to catch predatory animals feeding on livestock. John was hired as a bounty hunter by Mr. Williams of the Field and Game Department/Fish and Wildlife Service. John worked for the government in Michigan and Arizona for 20 years before moving to California.

The Federal Bureau of Biological Survey hired John as their trouble shooter trapper. He worked in several states for the Department.

1937? While in Michigan John began to teach other trappers. He wrote and published ten courses on trapping including How to Snare: The Best Kept Secrets Of Trapper John. He continued mailing the correspondence courses, scents and trapping supplies, from the Depression to his death. In 1985 the Ehn family was still receiving requests for them.

1940 John contracted a spinal inflammation.