

INTERVIEW WITH ROSEMARIE FARISH
OLD TRAPPER'S LODGE
AUGUST 19, 1985

Some spelling
Corrected

004 RF: Violet Michigan will not be found on present day maps. It was a logging camp, only a temporary set-up. The closest thing you might find, or most people will say, was that John came from Gould City Michigan which was the home base for the family. He and mother wed and lived and we still have the homestead and piece of land in Gould City.

013 LJ: Is there any of the family living there now?

RF: We have cousins and so forth that live in Gould City, but not on the homestead piece of land. It is still in my brothers and sisters and mine's hands. We pay the taxes on it and keep it. Dad was actually named Johan, the same as his father, later changed to John, and the Henry was put in to designate between his father's mail and his. Dad preferred to be called "O.T." or Mr. Ehn. About the only person who called him John or Johnny (and my mother preferred Johnny) was our mother.

037 Dad named me after his mother Marie after Rosemarie. He named me after the flower Rose which was his favorite and Marie which was his mother. Marie has gone down through four generations. My grandmother was Marie, I'm Rosemarie. My daughter is Linda Marie. My grand-daughter is Sarah Emily Marie and another name has repeated itself on the other side of the family which is Lorraine's name -- Ann is after the other grandmother Lorraine Ann, and there is her daughter and granddaughter Crystal Ann, so that has gone through four generations.

061 On Clifford's name, the Bell That is short for Bellows and was named after Dad's friend. Mr, Bellows.

064 Each name had something to do with someone in their lives..

074 Mother's real name was not Mary. She was born Leota Esther.
The priest gave her Mary and she liked it and went by Mary all of her living years.

091 My father has one living brother left, which is Oscar Ehn. My father had five brothers and one sister and all are demised except Oscar Ehn who is a trapper today.

098 LJ: Where does he trap?

100 RF: He works for the California Government, In Arizona and wherever they send him.

105 We still have a lot of Dad's trapping stuff which we gave to O on Dad's demise which he still hasn't picked up, and he's still doing that as a livelihood at 78 years of age. Him and our mother were the same age, within a few months.

115 The term they use is predatory animals. The State of Michigan got trappers to kill off predatory animals. They went on ranches. Animals weren't on. It was 20 years he worked for the State of Michigan

127 RF He came here in 1941, March of 1941 he came to the motel here and started working at Lockheed.

131 I was born in 37. Pretty little girl. I wasn't born when these things took place or would have been too little.

135 He came here in 41 If you go back 20 years it would be about 1921 that he probably joined up because he worked for the government for about 20 years before coming to California.

136 LJ: So the Department of Agriculture and Wildlife Service was in Michigan.

145 RF: This is supposed to be 20 years that he worked for the Michigan Government.
20 years prior to coming to California.

155 Now this Lorraine was telling me. I think all of her stories were fact, not fiction.

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157 LJ: But you don't know anything about the Florida ..
RF. No, other than what Sis wrote...

169 The story letter, she doesn't have dates on it at all, its just random talk ?
it doesn't say when he went to Florida. You see , She's 7 years older than me.

177 It wasn't really 6 books. It was like, subject sections, one on how to catch a coyote, how to do this how to do that, it was like pamphlets, or things, in fact my daughter has the whole set at the house. On e of the courses has over 100 pages, and another only 2 or 3. But they wouldn't be really books, they would be pamphlets or sections for a magazine.

196 I could make him (SR) up a set or have Theresa make up a set, that's her baby. And in reference to this--we still have a mail order business that my daughter is handling in trade journals, they can get them if they pay for them, whatever course they want.

204 Its actually trapping courses, is the word, instead of books. He published trapping courses would be a good way to put it and I think he published 10 of them. I can verify the ammount And they are still available to the public,

210 The originals would probably be collector's items now.now that Dad's demised.
Presently Theresa, one of the youngest grand-daughter's handles it.

220 He was known as the original Old Trapperbecause he was one of the first ones. and that's what his trapping courses say, he was the original.

228 This was all during the war, and we had soldiers. Now I don't know if you are putting a little bit of humour into your writing, but in the war years you got a bread and breakfast in the morning for 50 cents.

236 At that time they just had the one building.. We grew from one room . Us four kids and Mom and Dad slept in one room. with bunks on the wall so that the other rooms could be rented

244 LJ What type of work did your parents do for Lockheed?

245 RF:My father was a what you called a foreman on the loading docks. and a head sweeper and his famous line was "get the lead out of your heads and get moving", or something like that. And he worked there for 50 cents an hour, or something like that while building the first rentals. My mother worked in the spray paint booths, and my brothers and sisters all worked at Lockheed also, and I don't know what Lorraine and Clifford did, but Louise worked on the drill press. She has a deformed finger to this day.

259 Dad learned to live to know the honor. They declared the landmark in May of 81. So Daddy lived to know the honor before he died in December, which some people go on with their reward with their work never being acknowledged. Dad was one one of the luckier ones, contrary to poor people like Simon Rodia. His work wasn't acknowledged.

280 All family members worked on disposing of the house, but this letter writing was strictly Lorraine's idea and personal efforts. We might have all fed in a little bit of information, but basically it was all her.

285 The boy that did the work is Jerome Ward.

307 LJ: When Claude Bell came out here, do you remember anything about that?

RF He met Claude Bell at Knottsberry Farm on one of his trips there with the family. He was intrigued by Bell, making a donkey I think at the time and he talked about and got pointers on how to do the work, and I think Claude came out here. Claude Bells knowledge verbally and from what he learned from the sculpture, the main statue but he took off on his own. He actually never had any physical help from Claude Bell.

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319 He had been told by the doctors to slow down and he wanted to keep his mind and his hands and body active and alive and decided to do a memorial to his family in the way of the statues and that's why each statue except for the massive ones from Mormon biblical history, the others are all family members, where he did the live mask process and he took the image off and did the body's in the likeness of something he enjoyed such as the folk song Clementine is my niece Judith's face and her uncle Cliff, my brother. The dance Hall girls are Lorraine and Louise from a movie. He enjoyed comedy western. The one of me I don't know, but I think it's from a Marlene Dietrich movie of the 30's when a child was born. And if any one looks, and a little bit of humour to it, Dad evidently enjoyed large bosoms. Every statue has a large bosom and yet our mother was the only one that really had one. It's sort of ironic that the statue bodies are not to the likeness of our actual faces. They are different where he adlibbed or did something different.

340 It's just the faces that are memories. The bodies are storeies he enjoyed personally.

343 LJ: Now what about the dedications under each person? Do they have anything to do with you?

344 RF: The one on mine **Two Gun Rosie The Kicking Queen** comes from when we were kids, we each had a toy box. Mine has two cactus guns on it and says two gun Rosie the Kicking Queen. Papa used to joke and tell people that I kicked on everything including Ma's milk. Which was true. I was allergic to breast milk and was raised on goat's milk and they had a goat for me.

350 The Velvet man and the Pearl Girl they were sentiments of softness with Louise and Lorraine, they were softer women and children growing up than I the Tomboy all my life. It was his way of expressing something to us. Clementine was CLiff with his niece Judith was because he loved the Folk song Clementine.

360 The large statues outside, the kidnap scene, the face is distorted, but it was Judith's face that he took and Judy is the oldest daughter of Louise's and one of the oldest grandchildren who posed for him in many different statues when she was a little girl and when she was older as Clementine and on one of the favorites on the side of Boot Hill called Moon Flower. She was very close to Grandpa

370 LJ: As kids what did you think of the whole thing when it was going up.

RF: We weren't kids. All of this was done while we were growing. The last one of me, I was in my early or mid 20's. We thought that it was great that he wanted to keep himself alive and was doing something that he enjoyed. And it was fun for him at times. Myself, I am overly proud. I get carried away on certain days telling the tale it's very special, important to me. I was extremely close to my father and used to leave school and lie to Daddy and miss school and get a spanking and turn around the next week and do the same thing. I've always been a rebel. So what's new!

385 LJ: What was the reaction of guest's in the motel

2 387 RF The tenants, we had various types from country folk to minority Latin's. There was generally a lot of respect, a lot of interest a lot of admiration I would say even amongst those who did not understand it completely. I had some guests the other day, mute, and when I took the time to write and explain and have a conversation with them that they go away with a bit of awesomeness a little bit of unbelief that this is here in the middle of nowhere. There was one newspaper article that said No you haven't walked into the middle of a Rod Sterling Science Fiction. There was just a little bit of disbelief. that there was a man in the middle of LA and his family behind him. Since his death, people have commented why did we go on keeping it up. It's mainly because of mother's wish when he died to restore it all in his memory. She didn't live to see it but that was her last wish. And if I have anything to do with it, and I think the other's feel the same (my brothers and sisters, that it will be kept on as long as we can, and if something happens to Old Trapper's per se as a rental business we will try and place it somewhere like Knotsberry Farm or Calico, Ghost Town and set funds aside for its upkeep. Something similar I believe was done to William S. Hart Park out in sagish (sp) and maybe other places, but this is what we will do as a family unit. It will keep goig. As far as we're concerned, we hope that the city will allow us to keep on as a rental business so we can keep most of the thing at least for the next 18 years if we have our way.

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415 LJ Have any of you ever been inspired to do any of your own. My sister Lorraine. Her hands are in a lot of things at the office that people don't know about such as the plastic gun replica. She put most of those together as a gift for Dad. Lorraine is artistic. She has done plastic art work, lamps and this and that. Myself. I am as clumsy as a bull in a China Shop. I don't have any artistic talent. Cliff I think if he was encouraged. He is the type, He's the reserved type. He made one piece that's in Boot Hill since Dad but most people think that it's Dad's work.

429 LJ Which piece is that?

RF It's on top of the showcase and it's called Big Foot something. He brought some driftwood out of the ocean and tinkered and had Jerome Ward paint it appropriately. But I think that there is probably a little bit of talent in each one of us, but to different degrees.

Lorraine has always been a book worm. She is basically an introvert, whereas I am an extrovert. Louise and Cliff are somewhere in between.

439 Years ago. Louise beaded all the leather jackets. We have one up in the office. We all wore leather fringe jackets and she beaded the old trappers and rainbirds and different things on each one. She has a talent. She used to do beautiful embroidery and crochet work, so there's talent in that one. Clifford, used to do a lot of drafting work. It's hard to say what people declare as art. I think if it's directed in the right way. I seem to be more of an organizer. I can get along with the crew and handle them and be mean when I have to and gentle when I have to. and the other three don't relate as well that way. Cliff and I worked as a teen ager. I've walked in each of their shoes at one time or another being the youngest.

457 LJ: When did your father start to wear western clothes

RF: Way way back. The goatee and stuff came in the later years. And he pierced his ear for the earring that he wore. Gosh I would say that the western gear went back, maybe the 50's.

LJ: So he was doing that more or less when he started the cemetery

RF: He was known around town. We could probably find the exact dates. In fact we have his western clothes that ? the tailor who's passed on also made some of his clothes we have all of his nice leather goods in a furriers being kept safe.

468 Was the motel called Old Trapper's Lodge right from the start?

RF No we had many name changes over the years. It was called Airport View, Airport this. All sorts of names I forgot. Then one day over breakfast table my mother came up with the idea because he had been a trapper and that it couldn't be confused with anything else, and came up with it and Dad liked the idea and we have it in Spanish in recent years on the business cards and it's just stuck and stuck very appropriately. with dad's work.. But the name came before anything else.

477 LJ: Now the Museum, did that start after the cemetery, or at the same time.

RF I think the other stuff, the stuff hanging in the office, and around and the statues and all, it all sort of merged together. Dad lived by the slogan that is posted in the office **Waste Not Want Not** and his garages and his storage areas showed that. When he demised here, there were 4 or 5 garages and trailer garage at the rear of his home that must have been wall to ceiling, floor to ceiling, wall to wall, full of implements and stuff. A lot of the stuff in the showcases here came from my grandparents garage in upper Michigan which he brought and he maintained all these years

490 LJ: When was the stuff brought out here.

RF Probably in the 50's. I know I've been here nearly 20 years and it was already in cases when I came back to work. I would say probably at least 30 years, maybe 55.

LJ So he would collect stuff too while he was trapping

RF: Trapping, saving, wherever, he didn't throw anything. To the end, he wouldn't allow us to throw laundry twine. There was always another use made, such as tying up the tree branches. He utilised and saved. He never-- because he lived such a poor frugal life--he never got over the frugal side even when he could buy whatever he wanted, be it clothing or what ever, he never dressed like a rich man, yet I think he was richer inside than most

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people, and I don't mean monetary wise. We had a talk with a policeman friend this morning. He had everything he ever wanted, I was saying Dad never got to see the places that he should have seen and he said , but Rose he had everything he wanted, he was happy why are you unhappy for him? Now on the other hand, my mother dreamed to see to travel around the world and yet she walked like most women in her father/husbands shoes. She stayed where he wanted to be and where he go. Right to the end, I believe my mother died of a broken heart. They were together, lacking three months for 61 years.

512 Patricia Crane. She was really a neat girl.

514 LJ I put this together from the articles we have in the archives at SPACES so it may not be a complete list by any means

RF It is not complete. I have a scrapbook in the office and I call it Speal's and talks and its got business cards of the different people who have talked about books and so forth and we can go over it.

531 There's a newspaper article. I should have brought it its at home. There was a time when Dad was so frugal. And he wanted to give us kids more when he was gone. That was his whole purpose of everything, was to give us kids a better life than what he had. That he got caught on tax evasion. And there is a newspaper article **Old Trapper Traps Himself** and he served six months in San Pedro Federal Facility 25 years ago roughly, because my daughter Theresa was an infant then, and I took her to the facilities to see father. When he was 63 years old. I just came across the article I was looking for the baby pictures of the youngest child the other day and I came across it. So He served 5 months and got a month off for good behavior. He served most of the time in the church and the garden. In the hospital because he got sick.

548 LJ: You mentioned that there were 3 Mormon scenes outside.

RF: The three larger massive statues beyond Mr. Boney. You have him as the monster, I call him Mr. Boney and Seymour likes the name better we're doing the graph, Next to Mr. Boney there is the Peg Leg Smith. O.K. That is the story of a whiteman and Indian, a morman story that fought over a cow, and both of them ended up needlessly dead and the wife and the squaw ended up living together pining the useless death showing how fruitless something like this was, that they all could have shared the meat. The second one is the kidnap scene which has Judith the nieces face as the horrified girl that ws kidnapped. There was an oaf of a man in the mountains that everyone feared. He kidnapped the girl kept her (Iforget how the story goes) for several months, returned her virtuous, healthy, unharmed and saved to prove that he was just a big man. And he was accepted by the villagers. And the other large one which is of our mother and two of the grandchildren's face which is Steven, the oldest grandson of Louise, pardon me, the oldest child of Louise, the oldest grandson and his sister Judith which is a tribute to my mother and my grandmother if anyone reads it, you see Junior on it and that is a tribute there. It is actually 2 statues that are in Mormon biblical history, the first two, that are on the front row there.

571 Dad had a lot of empathy and respect for the Mormon's because they did so much in the years on the trap line and so much respect for them because they helped their own and others and they helped people with food baskets and stuff here for the poor over the years. Dad was basically a very religious based man. I don't remember but my sister's and brother's tell me and my brother's tell me that he used to enjoy going to the black churches where you sit up in the balcony where they were separated the whites, and Daddy enjoyed and he was actually christened and raised as a lutheran. He has a bible collection in the office that starts with a Cherokee bible that is written in Cherokee and all right up to the Mormon, Jehovah witness books.