

Ehn Biography

(1)

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

His mother, Marie Ella Berg Ehn in Helsinki Finland (orphan)
- a servant who saved her money from childhood to buy
passage on an emigrant ship to the U.S.
spoke Finnish, Swedish, English. 4' 10" tall

His father Johan Ehn Sr. born Stockholm Sweden.
5 sisters.

apprenticed as Hydraulic Machine Engineer at age 14.
(trained to set up systems for lumber mill machinery
run by the power of falling water before electricity).

When 18, came to U.S. to set up a lumber mill in Upper
Michigan where he met Marie Ella Berg. Married.
homesteaded a farm near Gould City.

1904 July 27 Mary Leota Esther Gonyon born in
Gould City Michigan. Schooling to 5th grade.

Her mother Maryanne Polly Gonyon came from Ohio.
was one of 9 or 10 children.

Her father Isaac Gonyon French Canadian widower
Isaac farmed during the summer and worked as a
logger and lumberjack in the winter.

6 children: Mary, Joseph, Stephen, Edith, Ellen,
Amy.

John Ehn and Mary Berg had 6 sons, 1 daughter
Wilhelm, Friedrich, Oscar, John, Joel, Victor & Anna

The Ehn family farmed, owned a commercial fishery and

John Biography

(2)

ran a lumbering operation.

John Jr dropped out of school in 7th grade because of his father's ailing health.

1921 April 2 John married Mary

how long?

worked in lumbercamps.

John trapped for bearing animals as a sideline.

1924 son Clifford Bell born

1926 daughter Louise Joy born

1930 Lorraine Ann born

1937 Rosemarie born

children

1933 Iron County Michigan closest shave with death (re. tape).

when?

Visited brother Joll in Florida.

John became partners with a man named Snake Johnson trapped & shot alligators & snakes in the Everglades for their hides. Mary helped skin & stretch them.

when?

Returned to Michigan.

when
how long.

State of Michigan started a force of salaried trappers to catch animals feeding on livestock. John was hired.

John worked for the State of Michigan for about 10 years.

Federal Bureau of Biological Survey hired John to trap. Became a troubleshooter and worked in several states for the Department.

John Biography

(5)

When?

Federally licenced bounty hunter for the Department of Agriculture's wildlife service.

While in Michigan, began to teach other trappers.

What were the names of the books - & where they are copied
any other writing by him - you can see
xeroxed for his

Wrote and published six books on trapping which he sold through the mail along with scents and other trapping supplies.

1940

contracted spinal inflammation

1941

March moved to Roscoe (Sun Valley) southern California.

Began building a house. realized need of housing in the area due to burgeoning aircraft industry - built rental units.

When did they stop?

Mary & John both worked in aircraft factories to raise money for construction. John worked for Lockheed. Children helped with construction.

When? any copies.

John began a correspondence course "How to Snare: The best kept secrets of Trapper John." (mailed out since the Depression).

Began to dress in western style as publicity for his trapping & rental business.

Is there an inventory of the collection?

Assembled museum collection of western oddities.

1951. Began Boot Hill

Ehn hired a sculptor to build a huge trapper modelled after himself. After watching for 3 days and consulting with Claude Bell at Knottsberry Farm, he started on his own creations.

1951 Began Boot Hill

1965 April 10 Gun Record prepared by John for guns at 7819 Arvilla Ave Sun Valley CA (in John's handwriting (xerox). 4 pages.

Ehn Biography

(5)

1981 finished working on the Lodge and Foot Hill.

1981 May Old Trappers Lodge named as a California Registered Historical Landmark #939

1981 December 26 John Ehn died of heart failure after breaking hip.

1982 April 2 Mary Ehn died after a series of heart attacks.

1982 June 3 "A brief history of John and Mary Ehn" prepared to go with keepsake packets prepared for friends of Mary & John, John's brother & sisters-in-law, Mary's sisters & brothers, their 20 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren & for unborn great grandchildren. Packages include: ① a primitive indian necklace made by John, ② pieces of Mary's costume jewelry collection ③ picture taken on Mary & John's 60th wedding anniversary ④ business card ⑤ perhaps a knickknack from their home.

1983 April 23 - June 4 "Many Mansions: Four Folk Art Environments. Exhibition Beyond Baroque, Venice CA.

1984 Feb 3 State Historical Resources Commission recommended allocation of plaque for Old Trappers Lodge.
Site Repainted.

1984 Old Trappers Lodge repainted by Dan Ward's brother. (re 1983 letter & recommendations from Don Harte 17 July 1983 in files)

1985 March 25 Historical plaque unveiled at "Old Trappers Lodge".

Ehn

Bibliography ②

1983 Colker, David Happy trails lead to Old Trapper's Lodge:
Unknown L.A.
Los Angeles Herald Examiner Thursday December 1 1983

1977 Crane Tricia "Old West Museum Snares an Audience for
Trapper."
Valley News Section 3 Thursday June 23 1977

1978 Kirsch Jonathan Lost and Found Art: Four California
Visionaries
New West May 8 1978 pp 29 - 34

1985 Ianco-Starrels Josine Art News... LA Times calendar
Sunday April 7, 1985 p. 83

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~~Any other
articles?~~

- n.d.? Rochlin Margy (short article & photo - no title in
Boldface edited by Richard Gehr
L.A. Weekly.
- 1979 Rosen, Seymour In Celebration of Ourselves.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1979
- 1983 Rosenberg Jane Old Trapper Fulfilled Dream; Lodge, Bogus
Cemetery Eulogized pioneering Spirit.
Los Angeles Times valley section 3/13/83 pp 1, 3.
- 1976 Solman Paul The Captain of Mitwit Ridge, The
Underground Orchard and the Mortician's House:
The Odyssey of an Architect who believes people
can Design Their own Homes
Mother Jones Sept/Oct 1976 pp 9 -

Sources

Rosemarie Farish

daughter

10340 Keswick Street.
Sun Valley CA 91352.

818 767 1011 / 767 6029.

Lorraine Phillips

2256 Harper St

Santa Cruz CA 95062

408 / 476 - 6572.

The Site

re Sharon and Don Howlett's. Legend & Site Plan

Boat Hill Gravesites

Old West Museum (Old West Mooseum).

Pioneer Woman: Mary (his wife)

Two Gun Rosie: Rosemarie (his daughter)

"Free See Here: Old West Mooseum"

"For Rent — Miyaard: suitable for motion picture production and storage."

Blindman Brown.

Cut Rate Kate.

• Ehn had his portrait painted once each year.