

## An Armistice Day memory

When I awoke this morning, my first thought was about Grandpa and the many pleasant times we spent together. I was sure that today was the day to write the story about finding the bear trap. The only trouble was that the man's name who we bought it from has slipped from my memory. Older people will tell you that failing to remember something can be depressing. Often the memory will re-appear. That is, happily, what has happened in this case. So I can continue with the story.

I do not know when Grandpa Garlock started to call himself "Buckskin Ben." It came about when he started to purchase deer skins from local hunters, have them tanned and made into gloves. It was done at Johnstown and Gloversville, NY, then the leather capital of the country, if not the world.

All of the hunters for many miles around me knew and liked Buckskin Ben. I was often asked to go with him as he purchased the deer skins in the foothills of the Adirondacks. The day that I will tell you about was a famous holiday and I did not have to go to school. It was Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1945.

Grandpa was 68 years old. That seemed quite ancient to me. I was 15 and already searching for old guns and relics that struck my fancy. We started for Northville. I told Grandpa that I would like a bear trap. He assured me that all we had to do was ask everyone we came in contact with the same question: Where can we find a bear trap? That same strategy of questions has helped me discover many hard-searched-for relics since that day 66 years ago.

Finally, we asked a man near Mayfield, NY. He sent us to George Wilson on the mountain road. Wilson had two bear traps and had actually used them to catch bear there in his mountainous area. The largest handmade one he said he found in the woods many years before. When he carried it home, he doubtless began to know that it weighed 46 pounds. I bought the huge trap for five dollars that day and have always kept it to help bring to mind my grandfather, "Buckskin Ben," and one of our great excursions from long ago.

by Skip Barshied