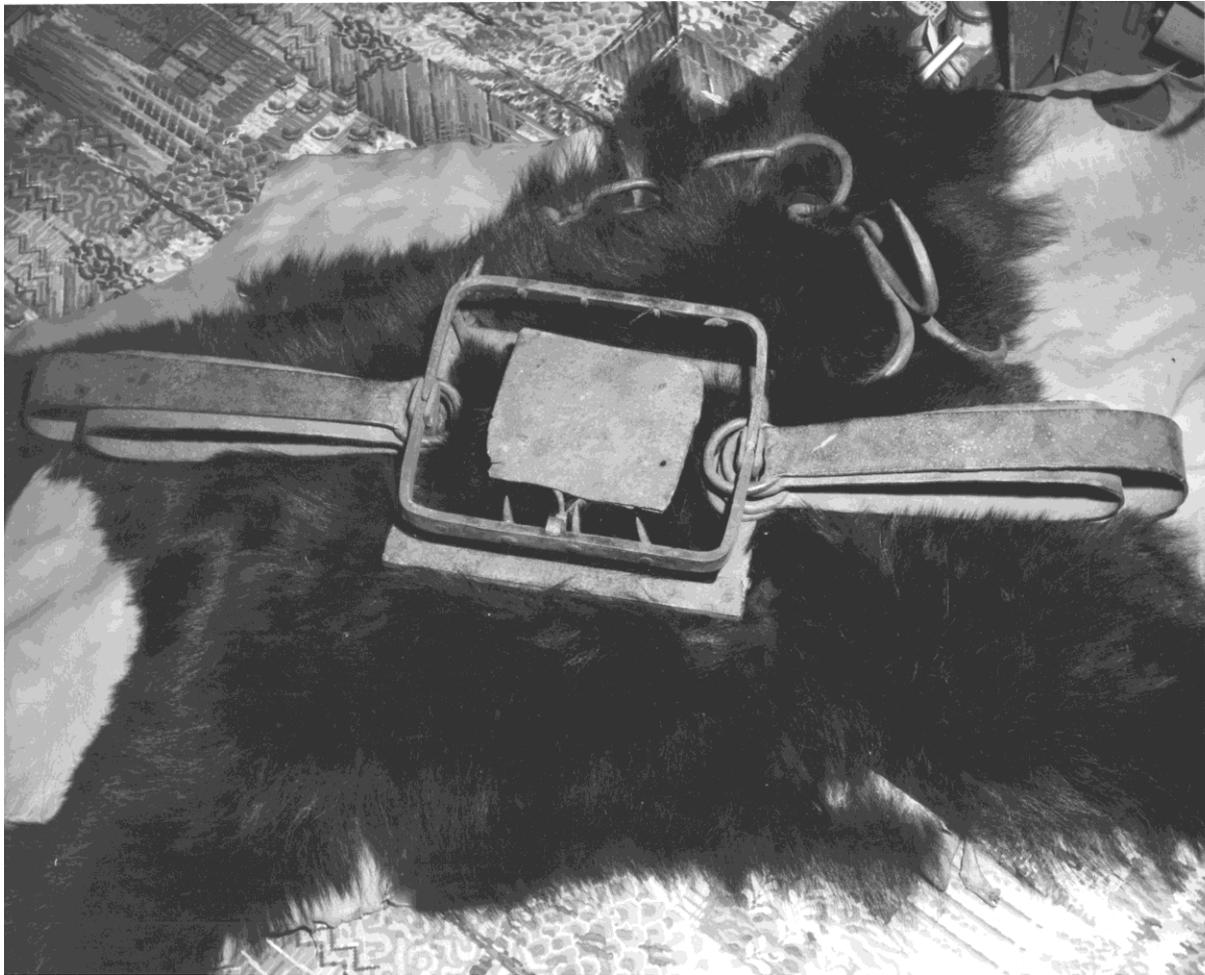


Grandpa Garlock and the Bear Trap

(Benjamin Garlock, 1877-1971)

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 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, New York, that were 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, November 11, 1945. Grandpa was sixty-eight years old. That seemed quite ancient to me. I was fifteen and already

searching for old guns and the 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 about everyone with whom we came in contact the same question: Where can we find a bear trap? This same strategy of questions has helped me discover many hard-searched for relics since that day sixty-six years ago. Finally, we asked a man near Mayfield, New York. He sent us to George Wilson on the mountain road. He 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 weighted forty-six pounds. I bought the huge trap for five dollars that today and have always kept it to help bring to mind my Grandfather, "Buckskin Ben" and one of our great excursions from long ago.

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