

Muskrats and Soldering Irons

Muskrats are of the genus *Ondatra*, an aquatic North American cricetid rodent. Its glossy, dark brown fur is used for coats, hats, trimmings, etc. The muskrats inhabited the region of our swimming pool and the Mill Creek stream that flowed through it. The muskrats lived in burrows level with the top of the stream. A number of the men and older boys who lived in the small Marriott community trapped them.

I don't recall how I obtained a trap to engage in this. I was only 12 years of age at that time. Trapping was done in the winter when the muskrat fur was the thickest. I only remember skinning two of the creatures. The pelts were stretched to dry on a metal frame.

The men and older boys collected a number of pelts and sold them to Greenband Hide and Fur Company located on the west side of Wall Avenue in Ogden near Scowcrofts. They paid the men and older boys \$1 per pelt but would only pay me \$.10. My pelts were equal to the others but it was a situation wherein the company took advantage of my youth.

I was only eight years of age when I was delving into radios, telephones, and other things electrical and I needed a soldering iron for my experiments. We lived five miles from where the main stores were located in Ogden, Utah. I had walked to Sears Roebuck with my meager savings, hoping that I had enough money to buy this piece of equipment. It cost \$2, a lot of money for me at that time in my life. I purchased my treasure and walked back to our Marriott farmhouse. I used it for only an hour and the instrument burned out.

Disappointed and discouraged, I walked back to Sears and told them that the soldering iron was not any good. The salesman would not refund my money and said that it was obvious that I had ruined it.

Luckily, my father walked back to town with me and confronted the salesman. As a result, I got a new replacement for the burned out soldering iron that lasted my needs for many years afterward.