

The Hermit of Hemlock Lake - Prinny Chesbro

Unknown Author - Livonia Gazette

September 1907



Prinny Chesbro of Hemlock NY circa 1900. Prinny died in Dec. 1907. Here Prinny holds a 14 pound trout in front of the mill in Hemlock. The steeple of the Methodist Church is in the far background.

In a tiny, low-down board cabin, some ten by sixteen feet, made of undressed hemlock boards, with a floor of the same material, a roof of paper interspersed with pieces of old tin and steel, with two small windows to admit the light, some six miles from the village of Hemlock, may be found Prinny Chesbro, the hermit of Hemlock Lake.

His home could not be in a more lonesome or picturesque place - about fifteen rods from the lake and a short distance from the highway. None but a close observer would note the cabin among the trees and underbrush on the south side of a deep ravine, midway between Bert Miller's Mineral Springs Hotel and the old Half Way House, two resorts that years ago were famous on the State over. Since the City of Rochester purchased the land around Hemlock lake the fame of these places has waned.

Prinny Chesbro was born in Erie County and comes of Scotch parentage. With the exception of an impaired hearing the hand of time has dealt gently with him. For many years the hermit was a sailor and is the only man for miles around who can perfectly splice a rope. His home has been about Hemlock lake for many years, in fact he was among the first to locate in this region and is its last living landmark.

Chesbro attributes his longevity to his simple diet of fish, eggs and bread. The aged man seldom ventures far from home and for long periods he does not see a person. He is still hale and vigorous and an expert oarsman. He employs his time making Scotch gill nets. In the course of a year he makes a fairly good living by this means.

He gives a hearty welcome to a caller and fishermen annually hunt him out, seldom leaving without a goodly catch, if they follow his advice.

Prinny Chesbro Found Dead

Unknown Author - Livonia Gazette

5 December 1907

Prinny Chesbro of Hemlock, so the Livonia Gazette says, was found dead in his boat last week near the St. James Hotel. He was an old fish peddler, and was known to many Dansville people.

The Livonia Gazette

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