

Louie Spray 61-13 Lac Court Oreilles, Wisconsin - 1940

Louie Spray registered his second record claim from Lac Court Oreilles, Wisconsin. This fish was not subjected to world record scrutiny by the American Museum of Natural History, then responsible for the sanctioning of world records, because a larger fish, Haver's, was caught 52-days earlier and entered in the ***Field & Stream*** contest before Spray's 1940 contest entry.

We'll now go back to Ellis' search for the truth of Spray records in ***True*** magazine regarding Spray's 1940 fish.

...Louie's record fish became a second best shortly thereafter when Lake St. Clair in Michigan produced a larger 'lunge (Actually it was the Coleman fish that bested Louie's 1939 fish, as Louie's fish had bettered Haver's 1939 Lake St. Clair fish). But Louie was back out there pitching again in 1940, and sure enough he came up with a muskie that weighed 61 pounds 13 ounces.

Wisconsin didn't know whether to be happy or apprehensive about Louie's new claims. It wanted the world-record muskie to come from Wisconsin, but it didn't like the stories then making the rounds.

This is a good place to again point out that ***Field & Stream's*** contest editor Bob Bush evidently didn't like Spray's 1940 claim either as noted on the internal memo in the Haver section above and repeated here. ***...I don't like the smell of the Spray affidavit at all, and will declare the entry ineligible if it's OK with you. I don't believe we are obligated to accept an entry. BB*** It is assumed that Mr. Bush let the Spray matter drop when the Coleman application was received with a larger fish. Now back to Ellis.

Louie said at the time that he had caught the fish on August 19 in Rice Lake. The night previous a man named Jens Jorgensen of Hayward was in Spray's tavern with a muskie that draped from his chin to the floor. He said he had caught the fish in Lac Courte Oreilles. No one ever heard of, nor did anyone ever see, the Jorgensen muskie after that night.

Russ Lynch, sports editor of the Milwaukee Journal, and as honest a newspaper man as can be found despite the fact that he flicks his left out front plenty, duly reported the new developments and Louie's answer, which was published as follows in part "the old saying is, Once a fisherman always a liar, and a few friendly and harmless jests are welcomed by any sportsman, but that cheap, chippy, chiseling bunch of lousy white lies, insinuations and intimations you wrote in your article could hardly be tolerated by anyone."

Louie continued to maintain he had caught a world-record fish and in some circles he made his claims stick.

Just across Lake Michigan, however, that man Haver from Detroit was rowing like mad, and not long after the ducks came back the next year, Percy came up with a 62 ½ pound 'lunge and there went the world-record back to Michigan again.

Let us now review the rest of Louie's story.

...When we got him in the boat we put on the tape and it appeared to be around five feet long. We headed straight for Karl Kahmanns taxidermist shop. He had a fairly accurate scale that showed the fish over 60 pounds, but he advised me to go where there was an inspected, sanctioned scale and weigh in. It was weighed at the Pufahl Hardware with Johnnie Moreland, insurance man, Herb Simonson, city clerk, and Ray Ingersol, Pufahl Hardware employee, as the weighing committee. By now I had learned, no more bathroom scales! The weight was 61 pounds 13 ounces, which was a record. That fish was also placed on display in Spray's Bar and again a prize offered for the nearest weight, length and girth with the weight being the major factor.

Here once again, I have the book before me. There were 607 guesses, and six ties. The local Hayward people who tied were: Sigure Tonstad, Henry A. Larsen, manager of the trout pond, Bill Marquardt, golf pro at the Hayward course, Nester Gaden, blacksmith, Gail W. Davis, plumber, and Earnest F. Rice. No one guessed the exact weight, but were within an ounce of it. Nester Gaden, the blacksmith guessed 61 7/8 pounds.

Louie, who had been through it all the previous year, expected an onslaught from reporters and prepared himself with many affidavits, as seen below.

AUGUST 23, 1940

AN AFFIDAVIT TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We the undersigned Committee representing the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, hereby state and declare under oath that we weighed and measured a muskellunge caught by Louie Spray of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, at the Pufahl Hardware. That the weight was Sixty One Pounds and Thirteen Ounces (61 lbs. 13 oz.) That the Length was Fifty Nine and One Quarter inches (59 1/4in.) That the Girth was Thirty Two and One Half inches (32 1/2 in.).

*Signed by Committee,
John O. Moreland
Herbert Simonson
Karl W. Kahmann*

AUGUST 26, 1940

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I, Louie Spray of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, herein depose, state and declare under oath, that on the 19th day of August 1940, I, in company with Mr. T.W. Campbell of West Palm Beach, Florida, caught and landed a huge muskellunge in Couderay Lake near Hayward, Wisconsin.

That said muskellunge was weighed and measured in public by a Committee representing the Hayward Chamber of Commerce of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, and that said muskellunge weighed Sixty One Pounds and Thirteen Ounces (61 lbs.13 oz.), was Fifty Nine and One Quarter inches in length, (59 1/4 in.) and had a Girth of Thirty Two and One Half inches, (32 1/2 in.).

Further, that said muskellunge was on display in the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, for a period of three days during which time a guessing contest as to weight was conducted. That 607 persons registered their guess and that the total average guess was 62 1/4 pounds.

Further, that said muskellunge is being Mounted by Karl W. Kahmann of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, and will be on display as soon as completed. That said weights and measurements are Recorded in the Court House in the City of Hayward, Wisconsin.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1940

AN AFFIDAVIT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This Affidavit concerns two Newspaper articles, namely, the Rice Lake Chronotype of Rice Lake, Wisconsin, in their issue of August 21st, 1940, and the Milwaukee Journal of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in their issue of Sunday September 1st, 1940.

In each of the two mentioned issues of the two mentioned Newspapers, my name, Jens Jorgensen, was used and mentioned in connection with a Sixty One Pound Thirteen Ounce, (61 lb.13 oz.) muskellunge caught August 19th, 1940, by Louis Spray, of Hayward, Wisconsin, intimating and insinuating that there might be something irregular or fictitious concerning and regarding the muskellunge in question in the Newspaper articles mentioned above.

Therefore, I, Jens Jorgensen, of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, first being duly sworn on Oath, depose, say, state and declare, that I know nothing about the Spray 61 lb.13 oz. muskellunge, except that I saw it on display at Spray's Cafe & Bar, Hayward, Wisconsin. Further, that I had nothing to do with catching or helping to catch the muskellunge herein mentioned.

Signed Jens Jorgenson

SEPTEMBER 7, 1940

AN AFFIDAVIT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I, Ray Ingersoll of the City of Hayward, Wisconsin, being first duly sworn on oath, depose, say, state and declare, that I am employed at the Pufahl Hardware Co. of the City of Hayward.

That on the 22nd day of August 1940, a muskellunge was brought into the Pufahl Hardware Store to be weighed by John O. Moreland, Herbert Simonson and Karl W. Kahmann, a Committee in charge and Louie Spray, the owner, all of Hayward, Wisconsin.

That I weighed and measured the muskellunge in the usual manner. That the Weight was Sixty One Pounds Thirteen Ounces, (61 lbs. 13 oz.) That the Length was Fifty Nine and One Quarters inches (59 1/4) That the Girth was Thirty Two and One Half inches (32 1/2 inches).

Signed Ray Ingersoll

In addition to these affidavits I had in my possession and now have a photocopy of the book Louie mentioned with the guesses of weight for the fish. It was exactly as stated.

In their 2005 protest to the NFWFHF of Louie Spray's record the WRMA discussed the 1940 Spray fish in considerable detail. Rather than fragment the protest synopsis, I refer you to the Appendix for the pertinent details regarding Spray's 1939; 1940 and 1949 records. Professional photogrammetry was used to analyze the 1940 and 1949 fresh fish and mount photographs.

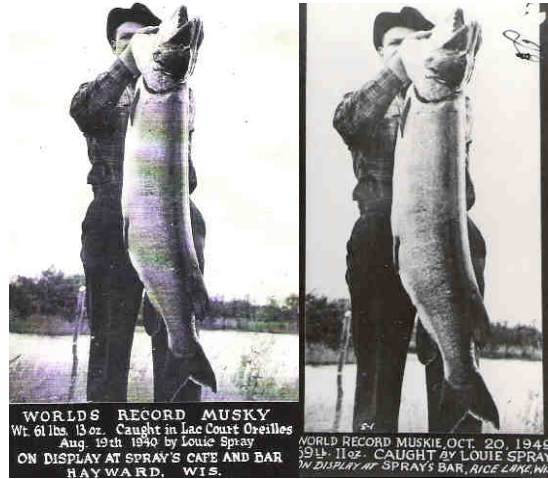
Brad Latvaitis, in a July 1998 *Musky Hunter* article titled, *How Big was that Musky*, discussed an advertisement postcard of Spray holding a muskie captioned as 42-pounds. Brad stated *...the muskie captioned as 42-pounds has the proportions for a musky of this weight*. He noted that the 42-pound muskie is the same fish captioned in a second postcard as 61-pounds 13-ounces and Spray has the same clothes on in each postcard photo! Brad's article documents that he queried John Dettloff on the matter and Dettloff agreed that comparative analysis shows each picture is the same fish. Dettloff was aware of the postcard with the 42-pound caption but advised he had a letter from Spray indicating the photo caption was a printer's error. However, when Brad reviewed the letter, sent by Spray to Larry Ramsell in 1979, only a switch of the captions for Spray's 61-pound 13-ounce and 69-pound 11-ounce muskies was noted.



*The post card on left is the referenced card.
The post card on the right is yet another altered version*

When I went through my post card collection things got even messier! The four-card series above and on the next page explains why. Shown are the cards referenced by Brad. The card on

the left above clearly shows by the split on the fish's cheek, that it was indeed the same fish claimed to be the 61-13 record on the correctly captioned card below. The card on the right above had clearly been altered to remove this cheek split! Apparently Louie had realized this discrepancy and decided to do something about it.



61-13 post card on left has correct caption and the one on the right is the incorrectly captioned version

Spray's letter said in part ...*The mix-up came when I ordered out 50,000 assorted Post Card photos of myself and muskies, to sell in the place at Rice Lake (Spray's Bar). In order to get a price, it was necessary to order that many. However, somehow the L.L. Cook Company of Milwaukee, got the weights of the 61 and the 69 pounder switched, and we never noticed it until a customer at the Bar told the bartender who told me. So long as I had all the prints made up, and since both fish were my property, I just let the thing go at that, until I heard from you some time back on the matter, that the weights were wrong, so I had them corrected...* Interestingly, the 42-pound caption and postcard was not mentioned! The caption reads, *Louie Spray with a 42 pounder and half stiff* (intoxicated). *World Record Muskies at Spray's Bar, Rice Lake, Wis.* Spray's stationary captions this same fish as being, *A 43-pounder!* That stationary is shown on the next page. Due to the small type and resolution loss of clarity you may be unable to read it, but I assure you that the caption under the photo on the lower right side says "A 43-pounder."

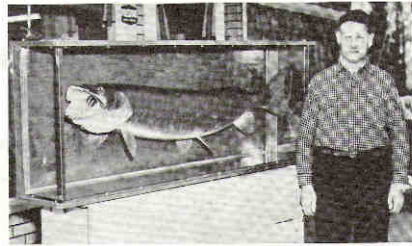
Lou Spray
 Box 58
 Morristown, Arizona 85342
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 MUSKIE RECORD
 Three Times



World Record Musky
 69 lbs. 11 oz.
 1949



Droite World Record, 1940
 61 lbs. 13 oz.



World Record Muskie—69 lbs. 11 oz.—1949

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59 1/2 lbs. — 1939



A 43-pounder

When Latvaitis was preparing his article, he contacted fellow fisheries biologist Art Oehmcke who confirmed in a January 7, 1998 letter (copied to Dettloff) that, *These two photos show the same fish which should have the same body proportions. Being 6 feet, 1 1/2 inches in height myself, it's easy for me to calculate the length of the musky in the photo of the "42 pounder" that reached from the tip of Spray's nose to a point halfway between his knees and the ground. Since Spray's height was approximately 6'2"* (note; as documented below, Spray was much shorter), *comparing my dimensions, the measurement comes to a minimum of 52 inches, which would possibly allow 52 1/2 inches for Spray's height. The photo of "the World's Largest Muskie" was not a "59 1/2 inch" fish* (The 61-pound 13-ounce muskie postcard is captioned, "The World's Largest Muskie").

Oehmcke then relates an inquiry with John Dettloff who, *concurred with the contention that both muskies pictured are the same fish. However, he directed my attention to the copy of a letter from Spray to Larry Ramsell in which Spray gives an explanation of the "mix-up" of the photos* (As detailed above, the letter notes that a printer's error switched the picture captions of Spray's 61-pound 13-ounce and 69-pound 11-ounce muskies. The 42-pound muskie caption is not mentioned). *John will be writing to you and will provide copies of the photos he has in his possession, besides the letter from Spray.*

Interestingly, Dettloff promptly visited Oehmcke and as a result Brad received a call from Art asking that he not share his thoughts in the article. In a letter dated January 9, 1998 (copied to Dettloff) Oehmcke said *After reviewing my letter of January 7 to you, John Dettloff called me to point out some possible flaws in the calculations I used in comparing Louie Spray's physical height to mine. John correctly states that aging has the effect of reducing one's stature, and I find he is right in my case. My present height is 72 ½" in stocking feet, not 73 ½." That gives the Spray "42 pounder" another inch but we are still about 6 inches short of 59 ½ inches. I could be off 6 inches on my measurement from ground level to the point midway between the knees and the ground. This is an unknown factor and I'll have to concede to that—particularly after seeing the sworn, notarized affidavits of reliable witnesses for the photo of the 61 pound, 13 oz – 59 inch fish. I feel John has substantial proof that both photos show the same 61 pound, 13 oz-59" fish and will supply you with the necessary back-up material. However, try as I might, it is hard for me to visualize that "42 pounder" as same as a 59 ½" fish. But so be it.*

Latvaitis was not swayed by the persuasive Dettloff and stated, *I disagree with any (Dettloff's) perspective calculations from these photos. I've never been a big proponent of perspective calculations and distortion analysis (Dettloff's) because camera angle and distance between the camera and object are somewhat speculative and complicated calculations.* Brad adds, *As stated earlier, the musky captioned as 42 pounds has the proper proportions for a musky of this weight based on simple comparison's (sic) of Spray's 6-foot-2 height to the musky's length (and as later learned, Spray was only 5-11!). I believe that the musky in Louie's "smoldering gun" photo is in the mid-50 inch range.* Latvaitis concluded, *Spray's 61-pound 13-ounce musky was extensively displayed and very well documented. I'm just not convinced that we have an appropriate photo of it.*

In light of the recent discrepancy discovered between a professional photogrammetric comparison of the proportions of Spray's fresh caught fish and mounts (discussed later), "extensive displaying" of Spray's 61-pound 13-ounce mounted muskie may have been a deception.



The photo of the 1940 Spray mount on the previous page shows how it appeared at Spray's Bar in 1951 and was provided to me in 1998 by Jerome J. Sloboda.