



# Muk-Cha-Ko Frog Lure

If you have been even a novice follower or collector of vintage fishing tackle, you have probably noticed the Native American influence on the naming of both companies and lures. From towns such as Dowagiac, Mich., (home of Heddon) to Paw Paw, being both the town and brand name of the Paw Paw Bait Company, to numerous other examples. Paw Paw even incorporated a Native American in their logo. Today's bait is just another example. This one comes from Beaver Dam, Wisc.

## Muk-Cha-Ko lure

The Hub Bait Company was founded in 1937 by Irvin Hubbard and his wife Harriet. It was officially incorporated on March 10, 1941, in Beaver Dam, Wisc. While the company would make hundreds of different flies, poppers, spinners and lures, their most famous (and most collected today) is the Muk-Cha-Ko lure.

The Muk-Cha-Ko was first introduced in 1941. It is a 2 3/8-inch frog. It has a wood core with an outer covering which appears to be a cast plaster type overlay. The main part of the body is about 2 inches in diameter and has a stepped, 3/8-inch protruding nose lip. The tail has either a large single hook or treble hook and is dressed with dyed deer hair. The eyes on the lures were originally two lead balls inserted into drilled sockets and then painted. These early versions are very rare and were quickly replaced as the paint did not stay on them well. The later versions were deeper-drilled sockets with wood dowels and liquid wood built up to form the eyes prior to painting. This is the version of the majority that are found.

The name "Muk-Cha-Ko," which is often misspelled in reference books, means "Much Weedless Frog" in Native language. The lures are meant to be a mostly weedless bait. A box



A variety of Muk-Cha-Ko lures.

insert from the bait stated that the Muk-Cha-Ko was the "Greatest of all frog lures. Wood body with a shelled mouth that kicks up plenty of fuss when kicked up by jerking end of rod. Bucktail legs guard off weeds from point of hook. Glides through weeds and rushes. Cast it right on shore and it will slide in water like a live frog. A killer for bass and other surface feeding fish." In 1948 it sold for \$1.10 retail.

The Hub Bait Company appeared to be a very well run albeit small business, producing hundreds of baits. The peak production years for Hub were the late 1940s until the late 1950s. The company was in business from 1941-1969 although all production ceased in the late 1950s. The business was officially sold in 1969 for a sum of \$2,000 to a Wind Lake, Wisc., individual.

## Colors and packaging

The Muk-Cha-Ko came in a two-piece cardboard box that had a window topped box (partial cellophane top with a thin cardboard edge). These are difficult to find intact today as the cellophane is very fragile.

Colors found on the lure are frog green with black spots/yellow centers, yellow with black spots/red centers, white with black spots/white centers, white with red spots/black centers, light green with black spots/yellow centers, yellow with brown



Yellow with Green Spots/Black Center Muk-Cha-Ko lure.



Muk-Cha-Ko lure with treble configuration.



Muk-Cha-Ko lure in Green with Yellow Spots color.

spots, yellow with green spots/black center, green with yellow spots/black center, black with red spots, and black with white spots. It wouldn't surprise me if there were more variations out there.

The deer hair tail dressing can be found in multiple colors. This is an additional variation for collectors. The hair came in white, natural deer hair, yellow and a green/yellow mix. I have also seen an all-dark green version.

## Collector's value

A Muk-Cha-Ko in excellent condition without the box sells for anywhere from \$35 to \$100 depending on the color and eye

version. With the matching box in excellent condition, the price goes up to around \$100 to \$250 depending on the color and its rarity along with the eye version. This is a great miscellaneous Wisconsin bait to start off a Wisconsin or miscellaneous collection.

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