

# John & Mae Hakala



## **John B. Hakala (1919 - 2006)**

John B. Hakala was born September 12, 1919, in Ironwood, Michigan, to John and Nannie (Sarkela) Hakala. He graduated from Ironwood High School and studied pre-law at Ironwood Junior College, graduating in 1940.

Mr. Hakala enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1941. After fighter training, he was transferred to B-25 bombers. On Umnak Island, he flew for the 73rd and 77th Bomber Squadrons and later with the 390th Bomber Squadron in the Philippines. He was discharged February 20, 1946, as a highly decorated captain.

On June 7, 1947, he married Mae Matara. He earned a bachelor's degree in forestry from Michigan Tech, and in 1950 they moved to Fairbanks. They spent two summers working on the Kenai Moose Range while Mr. Hakala completed his master's degree in wildlife management. This was the first master's degree in wildlife management given to a student at the university.

He was a life member of Pioneers of Alaska. After his wife's death in 1996, he moved to the Fairbanks Pioneers' Home.

"John was a devoted husband and friend," his family wrote. "Everyone will miss his independent character and booming laugh." Mr. Hakala died January 3, 2006, in Fairbanks, Alaska.

## **Mae Matara Hakala (1922 - 1996)**

Mae Matara Hakala was born February 27, 1922.

She married John B. Hakala in 1950. Her parents had a farm across from his parents' in Michigan. On July 4, 1950, John and Mae packed up their truck and a small trailer and crossed the Alaska border.

In 1983 she earned an Associate of Arts from the Kenai Peninsula College branch of the University of Alaska Anchorage. Mrs. Hakala passed away in 1996.