

## My First Try at Fishing

My love of fishing started with a trip to Chauttaqua Lake with my grandparents when I was just about six-years-old. We went to visit some relatives that was staying on a houseboat just for the summer. We went in grandpa and grandma's car and the ride was about a half hour or so. I was extremely excited as I always loved the water. As we wended our way along the road and around the lake, I could just smell the feul from all the motorboats on the water and hear the lapping of the water around the keels of the boats. "Are we almost there?" I asked. "Oh yes", Grandma said, "just a few more minutes."

We pulled into a small spaces to park, got out of the car and walked down the dock to one of many houseboats that were tied to the posts surrounding the dock. It looked really beautiful to me as it was the first houseboat I had ever saw and to think that they could just eat and sleep on it was very fascinating to me.

I stood on the deck and just gazed down into the clear green water and smelled the lovely lake smells and reveled in the beauty of it all. The grownups lazily sat in deck chairs and I sat on the edge of the deck with my bare feet dangling in the water, watching the minnows testing my toes to see if there was anything really good to eat there. There were larger fish swimming beneath them, but just too far down for me to see them very clearly.

I vividly remember having a fish fry at my aunt's house last summer. I don't know what kind of fish they was, but they were sure good. With the fish, we had potato salad, cole slaw, French fries and ice cold Coca Colas. My cousins and I played all kindss of games and had a great time.

The deck of the houseboat had a round hole just about eight inches in diameter and Grandpa's friend asked me if I wanted to fish there. "Oh yes", I exclaimed, holding my breath

with excitement. He got out his fishing pole and I watched him string a small worm on the hook and slowly lowered the line through the hole and down into the water.

Worms didn't gross me out; I always liked worms. Behind the garage at our house, we had a compost pile, and it was filled with worms of all sizes, some almost as big as snakes. I liked to dig them up and play with them for a while. They wiggled and squirmed all over. Eventually, I let them bury themselves back in the black dirt.

"Now, just sit there and wait for a nibble on your line and then jerk it and you may catch yourself a fish", he explained briefly as he handed me the pole.

"Okay," I answered.

"Let me know when you catch a big one," he said.

I felt really grown-up and I held that pole just as if my life depended on it and proud that he let me use it. I just sat there for an hour trying to catch a fish, and damn, they just kept taking the bait, but I didn't care. I was really hooked on fishing and basked in the glory of it all.

The icing on the cake was I finally hooked and brought in a shining gold and black in color sunfish. I remember thinking it was the most beautiful fish in the world, too beautiful to keep so I let it go to live another day, thinking maybe I could come back again and just fish all day long.

The people who owned the houseboat were nice. They were just very old like my grandparents, and they lived on the boat every summer, all summer long. Sometimes they drive it out to the middle of the lake, but most of the time, they kept it tied up to the shore.

That event was a memorable day for me and the trip back home was quiet as I looked back at the really exciting day my grandparents gave to me.