

Osborne Fishing Memory Victor B. Osborne Jr. January 30, 2017

## BIG LAKE MAINE

I must have been about 6 years old at the time, maybe 7, but anyhow for a couple of years we would go to Big Lake Maine for a vacation with Uncle Lloyd's family. There were a lot of memories made here, but the one that sticks out in my mind was a fishing trip that Uncle Lloyd arranged with a Native Indian guide.

We got up real early on the day of our fishing trip, had a quick breakfast that Mom had gotten up and fixed for us, grabbed our lunch bag that was on the table and we were off.

I don't remember much about the trip there but I think we missed our turn off the main highway... but after a few tries we found it. Then after finding the right road we drove down this old logging lane, not even a road---full of ruts and rocks and stuff.

Finally after a very careful drive we found our guide's truck---but no guide. We all got out of our cars and gathered all our fishing gear along with our lunch bag. When we were almost ready to go, I asked dad where the water was to fish in. We had traveled several miles into the woods but no stream... but before he answered---our guide just appeared out of nowhere!

He was a huge man, not very clean, his clothes were baggy and ragged. But what I remember most about this man was his size and his hat. I had never seen a hat like it! It was a funny shaped hat that set right on top of his ears with a wrinkly brim that went all the way around the hat. In the sides of his hat there was a selection of hooks stuck into it from large to small.

Uncle Lloyd went right up to him and introduced us all to him, just as if he had known him all his life---I am sure he had just met him, but that was my uncle...

In broken English, like Indian talk on "The Lone Ranger," he told us to put all our fishing gear back in the cars and grab a bamboo pole from the back of his truck. Each pole had a string with a hook on it---nothing fancy here!

Dad took his pole and one for me. I got to carry the food bag and the bait can. This tin can had a long string through it so you could put it around your neck and let it swing in front of you as you walk into the woods. Our guide, Mr. Indian, came over to me and bent down and shortened the string on my can because it was swinging between my legs. Not a good thing!! There was a strange odor about Mr. Indian; in fact, from my perspective, he was just very strange.

Now finally we are off to go fishing!

There was no trail to follow. We had to get over fallen logs, go around puddles, go around a swamp, beat off the mosquitoes and finally, the stream! But we weren't finished with our hike yet! Mr. Indian took each of us to a separate location to fish from---and even then the bushes around the stream kept us back from the edge! We had to fish over the tops of the bushes---that explains the bamboo poles.

You put a worm on the hook and swung the string and hook over the top of the bushes into the brook. Mr. Indian told us that the trout stayed in pools just past the fast moving water in the shade of the trees

and that was the best place to catch them. Then Mr. Indian took Dad and me to a spot that he said was the best place to catch fish.

I was so excited that I forgot all about my wet feet, the scratches from where the bushes attacked me, the constant battle with the mosquitoes, how hungry I was, or the uneasy feeling I had about Mr. Indian... not to mention the thought of, "how were we ever going to find our way back" if Mr. Indian didn't come back?

Dad put a worm on my hook and swung it over the bushes right under a big tree root. I held onto that pole while he got a worm out of the bait can to bait his hook.

Before he could get his string in the water something almost pulled the pole out of my hands!!! But I hung on and dad pulled the fish out of the water, back over the bushes and onto the ground behind us. My very First Fish!! I looked at it in disbelief!! It was the Big BIG BIGGEST fish I had ever caught!! And it was the ugliest fish I had ever seen.

Even Dad was a little bit shook up about this fish----it was all teeth.

I could see the look of dilemma on his face, like how do you get the hook out of its mouth? I mean, a mouth full of teeth! Big teeth!!

Before we could do anything Mr. Indian just appeared out of nowhere. I mean he was just there. He put his big foot on that fish as he said, "Fish no good! Eats trout eggs!!" He yanked that hook right out of that fish's mouth, picked it up and threw it into the woods about 20 yards from us. "Food for the bears," he said as he left us staring at each other. Bear Bait? There are bears here???

I guess we caught some more fish because I can remember fish for dinner that night. And oh yeah, Mr. Indian did show up to lead us back to the road... but the first fish I ever caught----became bear food!!

Life lessons I learned from this memory story:

- 1) Perseverance: We can't just give up on people or situations; i.e. when we missed the road we kept looking until we found the right one (before GPS).
- 2) Evaluation: Size, smell, looks, nationality or other stereotypes of people can't be the way to judge them. Love as Jesus loves; love your neighbor no matter who they are.
- 3) Fear: Fear of being left in the woods for bear bait wasn't much fun. Fear always robs us of our peace, and ability to enjoy life. God's love casts out fear.
- 4) Faithfulness: God is faithful to use every experience to teach us something about ourselves and about Him.