

FISHING IN THE FORTIES

By Ina M. Isham, Williston, Vt.

"After all the work's done we'll go fishing." How I loved to hear Dad say those words. The summer days were long on our little farm, and a lot of work needed to be done. My dad always made me feel like I was a big help; even when I was very young he found something useful for me to do..

It didn't take long to get ready. The bamboo poles that Gramps had made for us were always ready and waiting in a corner of the kitchen. The size of the party varied--I had three sisters and a brother, not all of whom came on every excursion.

The big fat nightcrawlers, that I had helped collect in the middle of the night after a hard rain, were down in the cool dark cellar where we kept them in an old tin wash tub, covered with a thick layer of black dirt and leaves. I put several of my small handfuls of them in an old coffee can with dirt to keep them cool and moist.

Shelburne Pond was about a mile away and we walked. Dad had been a sergeant in the army and he sang marching songs as we marched behind him in a straight line, carrying our fish poles, down the big hill on Route 116, turning onto the Pond Road, then over a bridge and up the hill to where my great-grandfather had lived years before.

There was a big farm just as we got on the Pond Road; Mrs. Hill, the farmer's wife, was always on the lookout for us. We would visit a few minutes and she would ask Dad if he would let her have that little red-haired girl, meaning me! I remember her saying, "I only have boys; since you have four girls you wouldn't miss just one." You can be sure that I hid behind Dad.

On we went down to the shore where our rowboats were tied to a tree, no locks; the oars were always left there so other folks could use the boats too. With a tin can we bailed the water out of the bottom of one of the boats, and put all our stuff in.

Once in the boat we had rules, and good reasons

for them. One rule was never stand up in the boat, because you might fall out or tip the boat over. Another rule was don't talk loud, that scares the fish away. We had to put the worm on our own hook, and when we caught a fish we had to remove the hook from it. A fun rule was to count your fish to find out who caught the most.

Lastly, we had to string our fish on a hooked stick Dad made for each of us so we could carry them home. When the bugs started to bite and the sun went down behind the trees it was time to head home.

Shelburne Pond at that time was home to a number of varieties of fish. Our catch could include pickerel, northern pike, northern walleyes and perch. If we went at night, which was seldom we fished for bullpout.

At home it was getting dark so we took the lantern and went up by the barn to clean our fish. The barn cats got the heads and guts; the rest we carried to the kitchen; my mother would fry them for dinner the next day. If we caught too many, some were canned to make chowder the next winter.

At last it was time to get cleaned up. After a light supper, I went to bed tired and happy, and soon fell asleep dreaming about the next fishing trip.

SO THERE!

By Cena Galbraith, Essex Junction, Vt.

I moved to Waitsfield in 1935 when I was seven years old and a tiny, scrawny little thing. Mr. Jones was owner of one of the village stores and my mother sent me over to buy a pound of hamburger. Since I was new in town and Mr. Jones was a kindly man, he gave me, absolutely free, a popsicle.

Upon leaving the store I was accosted by a boy quite a bit bigger than I was; I'll not name him. With threatening demeanor, he demanded that I hand over the popsicle. Having grown up in a sheltered environment, I was astounded, but before I could think what I was doing, I leapt at him and hit him on the nose as hard as I could. I fled, was not pursued, and was never again bothered by that boy.