

1938 Fish Story written by Nancy Oldham



Mother's Fish Story

My grandparents on my father's side, Ella and Coyne Oldham, built their cabin in the "Pine Haven Beach" region of Long Lake in 1940. The road they built on is now named Beach Haven Road. They had been coming here for visits and fishing for years, I believe mainly staying with their friends the Tam's, or perhaps also the Wooter's. The fun backstory is that Dad told us Grandma bought the lot one fall after Grandpa had already gone home to Des Moines, and without his knowledge. They had three grown sons. Dad said, "So, for the next two or three years, we got to build a cabin for our vacation!" I asked him if Grandpa was mad. "Oh, he pretended to be," he replied.

In 1938, two years before they built their own cabin, my grandmother caught a 16 pound, 5 ounce Great Northern Pike on Long Lake. We have the mounted fish, a photo, the rod and reel, a record of the Fuller's notation and her handwritten story about it. This is the transcribed story she wrote.

"Women enjoy and know how to fish and get them, as well as men. For the past few years I have had the opportunity of spending three months

of the summer in the north woods of Minnesota, accompanied by my husband and three boys, the younger one being a hay fever patient. The first of September, all returned home to their duties except the younger one and myself. We remained until October first.

Living in a cabin on the lakeshore we enjoy all phases of "wildlife", especially hiking, swimming, rowing and fishing. Until four years ago my family was content with me at the oars while they did the angling. One day while we were out on a fishing trip, someone remarked, "Ella, why don't you fish?" Well, the spirit moved and I learned how to cast, but I am a left-hand angler. My family then presented me with a "True Temper" casting rod and "Pflueger Akron" reel. I enjoy getting out on the lake before daybreak, and watch the sunrise and fish at the same time, and have had many an exciting experience which has resulted in many a good catch, in spite of being surrounded by men who claim they are 'professional anglers'.

1938 Fish Story written by Nancy Oldham

September 5th was Labor Day, and nearly all campers had left the lakes for their homes elsewhere, while we still had some good fishing ahead of us. It was a cold, foggy day, temperature 48 degrees, and the wind east, which made the lake very rough, but we decided to go out and try our luck. We started out with the motor, but found it impossible to go where we desired, so resorted to the east side of the lake. I settled myself with a sigh of relief after facing the cold wind, and cast my line out with a copper daredevil on for bait. I dropped the bait close to some logs. I started to reel in but my bait seemed to be stationary. I finally moved it slightly, so was sure it was weeds or a log. I worked carefully and moved with caution. Finally, I could reel my line in a little, then the fight began. I worked for some time before I could even get it where I could see it, then did I ever work and oh, the thrill. With much patience, and plenty of tight line and nerve, I got him to the boat then went to bring him in. He took another grand run and again I got him to the boat, and took him by the eyes and gills and brought him in and stunned him. Then entered him officially at the Fuller Tackle shop in Park Rapids and won the week's prize for the large fish, which was a silver spoon. Now I am going after a Muskie."

We have a Fullers entry card dated a year later showing Ella caught a 17 pound, 5 oz Great Northern Pike!

Three of Ella's granddaughters maintain cabins on Beach Haven Road today, Nancy Oldham in the original 1940 cabin which she had to sell in 2025. Jean Dalton has remodeled the cabin next to it that her parent's built in the late 1960's. Pam Oldham Petersen and her husband Mick bought Verna Plaster's (and then Kaiser's) cabin three doors down.

