



Fishing Village

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Working aboard a commercial fishing boat circa 1945



One of our historic buildings is named the LeClair Fishing Shed and it currently houses exhibits that bring to life the three main types of fishing done by our 'Two Rivers' commercial fishing fleet.

Gill Net Fishing

The gill net is made up of the mesh, the floats, and the leads. The nets are laid into the lake in waters up to 300 feet deep. The leads are placed on the bottom of the net to hold the net down and the floats (the earliest were made of wood, and later were made of aluminum) are placed along the top edge of the net to hold it taut and upright along the bottom. It's like a long fence that the fish attempt to swim through. They are then caught by the gills and tangled in the mesh. They do not live long after they are caught in the net, but the cold water at the bottom of the lake keeps them fresh. Gill nets will lay on the bottom for a week before being retrieved. Generally there was 1000 feet of net packed into one net box and four to six boxes of nets were tied together to make up one set of nets.

Pound Net Fishing

The pound net (also called a pond net) is essentially a fish trap set several hundred feet from shore in 20 - 30 feet of water. This type of fishing required the fisherman to pound six to eight wooden pilings into the lake bottom near shore; the pound net was strung between the poles; the lead to the net was stretched to shore to divert migrating fish; the "heart" of the net is where fish following the lead are enclosed and forced to swim into the pound. To harvest fish from the pound an open boat was used to float into the pound after lowering one side of the net slightly; then by gathering up the net onto the boat the fish could be corralled into a small area and scooped up by the fishermen.

Trawling

In this style of fishing the boats go out into the lake and pull a net behind the boat and near the bottom. Wooden planks called otter doors help to keep the mouth of the net open while it's towed behind the boat. When the net is filled with fish it is pulled up to the boat and taken aboard via a hydraulic platform. This is the style of fishing that brings us fresh smelt, a small style of herring, that is served up fresh at our yearly smelt fries.

Trapnet

This is a small net easily moved and set. Fish follow the lead and are funneled into the pot. When Harvesting, the net is heaved on the deck of the boat and the pot is opened. Whitefish are caught in a trapnet.



"Whitefish : Fresh Water Catch to Fine Dining Feast"



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