

Fishing, years gone by
By Kevin Dahlke

Many of us anglers these days can look back from the days we were kids and smile from all of the memories that we have. Those days may not be able to be relived, but these days are the days that we will never forget as we grow older. From the many days of fishing with our school buddies to those many excursions with dad and gramps to the water.

There were many trips that our buddies would show up on their bikes with the fishing rod strapped to the bikes frame and the tackle box in their hand. Of course the closest lake was around five miles away but at those times we really didn't care how far it was as we were going fishing.

After peddling for what seemed like an eternity, we could see the lake in the distance and knew that there were going to be fish caught when we got to our secret spot. This was our best place to fish and you always hoped that nobody beat you there. This place consisted of a culvert that went under the highway and the sunfish that lived in there were very nice sized fish.

The key to fishing here was to aim the cast to go into the culvert, but you had to cast as far as you could possibly cast. With the hook baited and the bobber set to the magic depth, you would eye up your target and get the angle just right and launch that cast as deep into that culvert as possible. As soon as the bobber hits the water, down it goes and the battle is on to get that trophy bluegill out of their deep dark homes.

The two of you would look at each other and start laughing hysterically at the size of these fish and how we were catching them. We weren't in any type of backwater type of lake with the tranquility of the breeze blowing or the birds chirping. We were fishing next to a major road with cars zooming by us not more than ten feet behind the guard rail. As the afternoon would wear on you know that you had to be home for dinner and would strap everything back onto our bikes and off we would go back home after a very fun filled day.

Then the weekend would come and it was time to go visit grandma and grandpa for a couple of days. They really enjoyed having fresh fish for a meal and grandpa had a great spot that would give us plenty of opportunities at catching a few meals. Run out to the garden with a bucket in hand and a digging fork to dig up a bunch of worms for the days fishing trip. After digging up a few dozen worms, load the rest of the gear in the truck and head for this honey hole.

This was one of those areas that you hoped that someone doesn't beat you there as it is another shoreline fishing spot. This area was a channel that came off of the main lake and wasn't to deep but also had some weed growth in it as well. Staking out our spot we would get all setup and get ready for a fun filled day of catching fish.

Gramps would help you get your fishing rod and bait setup and would tell you to cast over to that spot over there. The bobber would hit the water and as soon as it would standup, down it would go. There was cast after cast that would play out the exact same way over and over again. The bucket was filling up very quickly between gramps, dad and me as the fish were biting like they were having their last meal.

Then there is that time when the bobber goes down and when you set the hook it doesn't feel like a sunfish that is on the line. The fish is fighting and your mind is wondering as to what you have on the hook. Now gramps, dad and everyone else that is fishing there is watching you. Gramps is telling you how to fight this fish as we don't want to lose it whatever it is.

As it comes to shore the bobber is getting closer but no one has seen the fish yet. A few feet away you are pulling the line in and there it is, the biggest dogfish that you have ever seen. What a great fight this fish gave you and there was no way that you were going to touch this fish as it was the ugliest thing that you have ever seen.

As the afternoon wore on, catching all of these fish seemed to get a little boring after a while and I would start searching for other creatures that were living there. This is when I came across a little painted turtle and asked Dad if I could keep this little guy. Went and got another bucket and filled it with water and now I had a new little friend. We had our fair share of fish and looking at our catch, we knew that it was going to be a long night of filleting fish and many meals were going to be frozen and also a fish fry was in store.

There are many memories that have been made over the years and many more that are still to be made. But these memories that are from my childhood seem to be the best by far since at those times things were so simple and there wasn't much for complexity at those times as well.

Those early days of spending time with gramps are missed very much these days. Being the first grandchild of four, there was a much stronger bond between him and I and being we had such similar interests, we got along so well together and spent many days fishing and walking in the woods. These days of memories are never to be lost but they are very missed from time to time when grandpa comes to mind and I can relive those many trips together through all of my memories.