

## Commercial Fishing

Richard Garnell tells Barb Koski about **Gabrielle Kangas's** way (Bob Olson says that Oscar Hermanson did this as well) of seine net fishing out on Lake Superior by lighthouse. A rope was attached to shore. The other end of rope was attached to top and bottom of net. The net was maybe 12' from top to bottom. The net came out of a rowboat as the rower made a sweep in the lake. Once at end of net there was a rope tied to top and bottom of net also and that rope end was brought back to shore. Richard says that a family could pull in the two ends of the net and gather in the fish. They paid \$1.50 for all the fish in one pull. It was sometimes 200# of fish. The net would be reeled in again by hand. Mostly herring were caught. Bob says Whitefish had to be thrown back in. He remembers as a child going down from his home thru the woods to shore and making a bonfire and cooking the herring. 1910 census says that Peter Marshall family lived next to Gabriel Kangas.

**Oskar Hermanson** used to have a boat in the Misery River to go fishing from there. There was a dock near today's park. They had a shack near the river. His son Arnold fished too. Dad and son would visit Oz's grandfather, Oskar Fratick, at his hunting camp near Misery Bay. Oscar Fratick and Oscar Hermanson had a net/boat house together in Oskar. The net house still stands as Oscar H's part. The Oscar Fratick part is now Ray Shoos home.

Names obtained in interviews/ or census were:

1) **Oscar and sons Yalmer and Harold Hermanson.** Hermanson Brothers Fishing Co. They did seine net for herring by the North Entry to the Canal in the fall. In the summer they fished out of Misery Bay/River -Gill "trap netting" for whitefish and trout. They would rush back with catch to catch the train to Chicago every night or locals would come to the fish house/net house dock to buy locally. Martha (wife of Harold) would get ice out of icehouse sawdust. Wash off the sawdust and chip the ice for the fish transport to Chicago. Daughter Linda Jo would make shipping labels. The fish came to the fish house all ready cleaned/dressed out in Lake Superior.

2) **Lepisto** farther out on Canal Rd.

**Lepisto Brothers.** Waino had a 4 month policy with Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Oskar. \$1000 on fishing nets and supplies. \$5. Premium on 1/12/51.

3) **Gabrielle Kangas.** Across the road from present Mrs. Lexson's home on the Canal.

4) **Emil Kalliainen** on the now Osma Plat Road - present day Butch Karinen's home. 1943, July - Emil/Syme Kalliainen got warranty deed 1964, Nov. - Robert/Dorothy Kalliainen got warranty deed

In 1943 they fished with gill nets with one boat and trap nets with another boat. Calvin Krapu (mom was a Juntunen gal) as a teen about 1937 helped Kalliainen on the fishing boat taking fish from the nets. Some days the catch was 2000#s.

The fish house and icehouse were torn down in 1964 when son Robert took over the property.

5) **AP Kelly** on the now Osma Plat Road and West and Karinen property. Kelly used gill nets from 1943 to 1958. The catch was taken by to the Houghton Train depot by 4 PM to go to Chicago. Art grew up on Relief Road with parents John and Josephine.

Jack Ruohonen in his history of Oskar wrote on page 73. John Kelly. I found this in his bible "I was born on what is now Kandalaksha bay off the White Sea (in Northern Karelia now in the Russian republic). Came to America in 1890, received the Grace of conversion from God. Married Briita Kaisa Raattamaa, and have lived in Oskar all my life, first as a logger and later as a farmer, and once in a while as a fisherman". He died June 8, 1944. His wife died in 1938. Three children are living.

6) **Nillo Juntunen**. Lived on today named Osma Plat Road. Trout and whitefish.

7) **Otto Jukkara** sp? 1920 census: age 34. Head of household. Emigrated in 1902 from Finland. Parents from Finland.

8) **Siira**. Ed and Irene were children of Toivo/Sigrid who was the fisherman with dock and selling fish in South Oskar kind of near today's Ruth/Jim Johnson property.

9) The 1910 Stanton Township census says **E. Erickson** was a fisherman. Age 58. Father in law to Alfred age 29 Sorenson and Johnan age 27.

10) Ted Ruohonen says: "**Happy**" **George Nelson** was a fisherman too. Ozzie Koski says he lived on left side of Canal Road going toward the Stanton Park just before the big hill by the park. He thinks he is related to Hermanson.

11) **Usitalo**

12) Hancock side of canal by Oskar... **Huru (Hurn)**

13) " ...**Mikkola**.

GET INFORMATION FROM BOOK FINNISH FISHERMEN OF LAKE SUPERIOR BY DR. MIKA KOINILA.

14) Fisherman in Toivola area in 1910 census: William Rauilla age 52. and Mary. Sons Edward and John are in fishing.

15) Carl and Waino Remali. Section 7, T 56, R 33. Took out insurance policy from Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Oskar from 5-10-56 to 8/1/57 to include an ice and fish house. (Milk machine etc) 3 cent postage stamp on correspondence.

16) Wiinika Brothers Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Co. of Oskar policy: from 1945 to 1957. On house, contents, net and boat house, sauna, warehouse and boat building.

They would set their nets in spots they had selected through trial and error, dead reckoning and the use of a hand held “lead line”. Dead reckoning, the accepted method of locating reefs rich with fish by navigation means... go straight north at six miles per hour for 2 hours and the boat would be 12 miles north of the starting point. They knew when the engine was “turning revolutions” to attain six miles per hour because a rudder control line would set up a sympathetic harmonic vibration.

A “lead line” was a lead weight attached to a line calibrated in “fathoms or six foot lengths would be cast over the side. When it struck bottom, the calibrations (knots tied in the line, were counted to determine the depth of the water.

A bearing in those days was looking at shore. Put the bow to the tip of the point of land. Lay the net along the reef that lies there. Is our guess correct?

In 1932 the Anderson brothers out of Marquette asked the Koski brothers in Portage Entry to build a boat for them. The Andersons sent their fish to Chicago via train.

Opening the Great Lakes to the Ocean created a problem with sea lampreys coming in and sucking the life out of the fish. Less fish to catch.

And rules restricting gill nets protected the trout populations but hurt the fisheries.

Research done by Barb Koski Osma Plat Road, Houghton MI. I welcome more stories. Contact webmaster. Submitted 2009.