

Where Omaha's Plain Fishermen Indulge in Their Favorite Sport

Scenes at Cut Off Lake from
Photos Made by a Staff Artist



WOMEN ENJOY FISHING, TOO.



A MODERN NEPTUNE

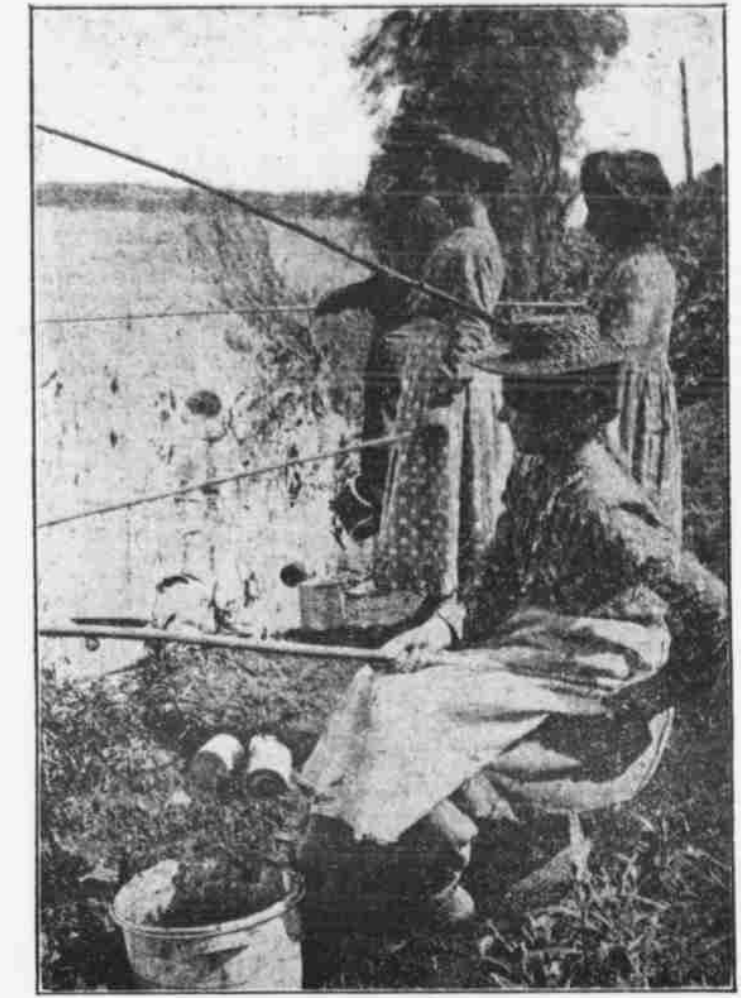
FISHING is either an occupation, a pastime or a sport, depending for its condition on the viewpoint. Even at this distance from salt water there are some who eke out their livelihood during the season when the rivers and lakes are not covered by ice by pursuing the finny denizens of the murky waters, turning their uncertain catches into cash and providing fresh fish for the tables of those who have not the time or the inclination to provide themselves with the toothsome morsels. These fishermen are comparatively few. Another class not particularly numerous in these parts is made up of those who make a sport of fishing, and who, provided with a collection of paraphernalia and apparatus quite beyond the understanding of one not accustomed to their uses, find more satisfaction in testing rods and reels, landing nets, scafs and their multifarious lures and baits than in the actual taking of a fish by any one of the various measures they adopt for the undoing of the swimmer. Between these two comes that great class of people who, when the first soft days of springtime come, feel irresistibly moved to abandon all other occupations and devote a few hours to soaking a cotton or linen line in the water from which the ice has but recently vanished. This class isn't likely to suffer any loss of meal or appetite if it doesn't get any fish, and it isn't at all particular about equipment. For its uses a twisted cotton line serves as well as a braided silk; a willow pole, a bamboo or a cane does just as well as a "split bamboo," or a "nickel steel," and its wielder probably never heard of a "leader" in his life, and couldn't tell the difference between a "hackle" and a multiplying reel if all the fish since Jonah's time depended on it. Ten to one he bets with worms, and two to one he spits on his bait for good luck before he shies his hook, and closed around the line, into the water to wait for a "bite." He is fishing more for recreation than for fish, and if he gets a nibble or makes a catch he is just that much ahead.

For this latter class of fishermen, Cut Off lake is a paradise in its conditions. It is reasonably shallow, contains an extent of shore-line that is enough to satisfy any one, and affords all the opportunity of sitting on the bank and dangling a line from the end of a pole that the most ambitious river or lake can offer. Moreover, it is known to contain a variety of fish, for large numbers have been caught out there, fish of the most toothsome sort, and some that make the eyes of the most blasé old sportsman snap. It also contains myriads of the most voracious young fry that ever nibbled at a worm and disgusted the expectant waiter on the bank, who, responding to a jerk that might come from a full-grown pike or pickerel, yanks his pole and jerks the hook end of his line up on the bank, only to find that he has landed a bullhead about the size of his finger.

All around the lake they sit, these people who fish for the fun of the thing, for there is no favoring of Cut Off, and every now and then one is rewarded with a nice catch of crappies, a sunfish or two, and not infrequently a two or three-pound bass. Buffalo and carp are plentiful, and yellow-bellied catfish are also on the list. The sucker doesn't often get into the lake, for it doesn't offer the conditions necessary to his life; and for this reason pike are not often seen there, nor the vigorous channel cat. But the still fisherman isn't at all particular about this; any old fish will do him, for it is not only a joy to his soul to be able to haul one of an estimable size from the water, but he has added reward of knowing that his next meal will be varied by a dish that can only be appreciated by one who has tasted it—a fish that was swimming an hour or two before it is brought steaming from the oven, to the table. When he goes fishing, he often takes his whole family with him, for he is usually a sociable personage and likes to have plenty of company during his hours of relaxation. Sometimes he is a solitary and does his best to get away into a shady nook, where he can smoke and ruminate and wait for the fish to take his bait and not be disturbed by the chatter of man or woman. Every type of this class of fisherman can be found around the shores of Cut Off lake from early spring until late autumn.



ENOUGH FOR A "MESS."



A FAMILY GROUP.



ON THE WAY TO THE FISHING GROUNDS.



WHERE THE EXPERTS GO FOR BIG ONES.



MESSENGER BOYS "ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON."



HIS "CATCH" IS GROWING.



SECTION OF A SUNDAY "LINE UP" AT THE LAKE.



"THE LONE FISHERMAN."



"MAUDE MULLER" AT CUT OFF LAKE.