



## **Fishing**

by Dale Jorgenson

I don't fish on the Kinni anymore. It's not that I don't like fishing; it's just that my priorities have changed over the years. Some might say for the worst, but life is sometimes like that I guess. What I do have are the many memories of fishing on the river in years past. I can't say that I ever caught a lot of fish and I don't remember too many of the fish I did catch...but I do remember the experience of fishing on the Kinni. Like an old, favorite song the memories keep playing in my head.

In my mind's eye I can travel the entire stretch of the Kinnickinnic that flowed through the center of our farm. There were deep pools and shallow rapids, there were places where the banks on the rivers edge were undercut from the current. And, there were "secret" places seldom visited by other fishermen because they were difficult to get to. Even now, when I walk the riverbanks bordering the old farm, I can pick out some of the spots where I fished. It's as if the secret places still remain secret, known only to me, locked in my memory forever.

For a number of years I worked mowing lawn for a retired couple that had a home right on the river. John was a master fisherman. His fly-fishing prowess was well known, and over the years he tried to pass his knowledge on to me. I marveled at his ability to catch trout. His techniques were the classic style of a long practiced fly fisherman. The slow, flowing arc of his line always landed where he wanted it to, and it seemed to me that more often than not he could hook a trout almost anytime that he wanted to. Try as I might, I was never as good as John was with the fly-fishing technique. He invested a lot of time in me, but in this case I think the student failed the class. I never could catch trout as well as he could.

John had a path cut right from the back of his house that wound through a small patch of woods right to the edge of the river. Every week when I mowed the yard behind his house I also had to mow this path to make it easy for John to walk to the river. He must have been in his seventies at the time and I could see that even without his waders on, walking sometimes was a slow process for him. I would sometimes see him slowly making his way down the pathway dressed in his fishing gear, fly fishing rod in-hand. He always seemed to come back with a trout, and he would often stop on his return and show me his catch. It wasn't bragging on his part, it was pride of accomplishment, and I sensed a passing on of knowledge to another generation.

As I see the river in my mind's eye, I can also see John headed down the path. It's a good memory, he was a good fellow.

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