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Fishing Through the Cracks

By Terry Lee Higginbotham

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Take Time to Fish Between the Cracks

The summer of 1972, my brother and I were filling cricket and bait buckets for Mr. K.C. Bray at the Sunset Marina on the Toledo Bend Reservoir just south of Many, Louisiana.

It was just another hot, humid, July in the southwest Louisiana. Each day the same as yesterday and with almost certainty the same as it would be tomorrow. The wind was so still that the Spanish moss barely rustled in the old cypress trees. But these were the type of days I liked, cause the fishing would be good. Good fishing meant good tips.

Lil' Brother and I never did make a lot of money, but enough to keep us just short of even on our account at Mr. K.C.'s store. Our daily provisions consisted of two cokes, a moon pie, a Miss. Dailey's fresh made sandwich, and all the crickets we needed to catch our supper. By 7:00 p.m., every evening we would have our 3 bream apiece. We would gut `em, stick `em, and cook `em over a little fire we would make on the bank near our tent.

Lil' Brother and I had spent the last two summers camping on the banks of the Bend. We fancied ourselves as a modern day Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. We were accountable to no one and responsible for only our daily bread. Don't get me wrong, we were not bad kids nor did we come from a broken home. We had loving parents, grandparents, and friends. We were just lucky enough to grow up in a part of the world and in a time that allowed us to live free, truly free.

Our parents would come to the Bend on the weekends and we would get a reprieve from our day-to-day attempts to "survive". We didn't know until years later that mom and dad gave Mr. K.C. money to cover our supper in the case fishing ever went bad. They would bring us fresh clothes, comic books, candy, and fresh tackle for our nightly fishing. They would stay for the weekend then head for real world late on Sunday Evening.

Fishing Through the Cracks

On Friday night we would all go down to the dock. We would sit for hours talking about the week's events. Lil Brother and I would tell about our adventures. Dad would tell us stories about the jobs he was on. Dad was an ironworker and we were fascinated by his stories of "walking in the air". To us he was a superhero. Saturday we would spend the day fishing, swimming, and skiing.

Sunday morning was spent at "church". We would go down to the dock, bait a couple of hand lines. We would then lower the hand lines through the cracks in the dock. The really big fish would rest in the shade, just under the dock. The best way to get to them was to fish through the cracks where the two floating partitions of the dock joined. While Lil' Brother and I would fish for the Big Ones, Daddy would read to us about becoming "Fishers of Men". Some of the best times of my life were spent belly down on that old dock, coaxing those big bluegills out with worms and crickets. As I look back on it now, it wasn't because of the fishing but because of the time spent with Dad and Lil' Brother.

Recently my dad came to visit. I was in the midst of a major project and wasn't spending much time with him. Maybe a few minutes in the morning and an hour or so at night, before I passed out from exhaustion. On his last night, I finally got to tell him about the new boat I just bought. About the rods and reels, tackle, and accessories just waiting until we got a chance to go fishing. I told him about the cabin on Toledo Bend that we were going to rent, as soon as I got enough time to go. I told him about how excited the kids were when I had brought home new rods and reels for them, last month. He seemed to enjoy the talk although he seemed very quiet and almost sad.

My dad left that next morning. As we shook hands, he drew me near and presented me with an old box. He whispered, "The secrets to a happy life are in here". Dad was always a little strange when it came to good-byes, so I just smiled, waved and watched him slowly drive out of sight.

The small box was worn red with a small picture of a man battling a giant bass. Below the picture was the caption "Sunset Marina Toledo Bend Many, Louisiana". I slowly opened the box and smiled as I became aware of its contents. Truly these were the "secrets of life". In the box was a small bible with a bookmark with Matthew 4:19 printed on it. It had been a while but I did remember, "Follow Me and I will make you Fishers of Men". Beside the Bible was a small hand line wrapped in a piece of paper with my dad's handwriting scrawled on it. I unfolded the note and smiled as I read the simple key to a happy life.

"Son, Make time to fish through the cracks".

Today isn't just another hot, humid, July day in southwest Louisiana. Not quite the same as yesterday and with almost certainty the same as it will be tomorrow.

"Hey Jon, throw dad another moon pie".

"Just a minute dad, I think Erin's got another one".

"Be careful not to lose him, it's a little tricky getting `em back through the cracks".

"Hey dad".

"Yeah, Jon".

"Was fishing this good when you were a kid?"

"Almost".

Terry Lee Higginbotham – Owner of

and The Ouachita Group, Terry Higginbotham, is an

avid hunter, fisherman, and outdoorsman. He runs a research project studying the Whitetail Deer and the American Wild Turkey. He delivers the findings of this study through articles and data published on

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The Perfect Catch: Planning A Fishing Vacation

By Robert Coram

When planning for a fishing vacation the first thing you have to know is what type of fishing would you like to do. There are so many different types from fly fishing to deep sea fishing to lake fishing that it is hard choose from, especially from the avid angler. If you care more for the location than the type of fish than pick a place you would like to go and see if those places have fishing nearby, which they probably do.

Many fishing trips are also planned depending on what time of year it is. In some bodies of water the fish bite more than at others for various reasons. When planning a fishing trip look into the fishing conditions at the place that you want to go and try to go when there is a better chance of the fish biting.

The type of trip also is based on the type of fish you want to catch because obviously you aren't going to go fly fishing if you want to catch a marlin. If you want a certain type of fish scout out where they are and go from there. When planning a fishing vacation there are so many things that factor in tow what trip you want to take by knowing what you want out of the trip it makes it that much easier to plan for it.

Lodging is also important when planning a fishing trips because many times the fish bite better early in the morning so you want to stay as close to the fishing area as possible. Look at lodges, hotels, and campsites beforehand and if you picked the trip make sure to make reservations well ahead of time as you don't want to get to a place that is full only to have to go further from the fishing spot.

The most important thing to know when planning a fishing trip is what type of trip you want to take, whether it be by fish, area, or fishing style, knowing this will make the planning much easier.

Robert Coram writes about fishing vacations for

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