

The Wisconsin Archeologist

Published Quarterly by the Wisconsin Archeological Society

Vol. 7

MADISON, WIS., JANUARY, 1928
New Series

No. 2

WISCONSIN INDIAN FISHING—PRIMITIVE AND MODERN

Herbert W. Kuhm

PREFATORY

Although much has been recorded concerning the fishing activities of the Wisconsin aborigines, it is unfortunately scattered through many volumes.

The intention of the writer is to record for the information of students of Wisconsin archeology the evidence available concerning native Indian fishing. This has proven an inviting field for research for it aids to a great extent in reconstructing an interesting phase of the life of primitive man in this state.

The principal reliance of the American aborigines for a major part of their food supply was upon fish. Fish was the basis of subsistence of most of the Indian tribes. It was by the abundance of this article of food that certain centers of aboriginal population were created. Likewise was this a factor of no little importance in influencing the tribal migrations of primitive man.

Dorsey was informed by Iowa chiefs that "their people and the Oto, Missouri, Omaha and Ponca 'once formed part of the Winnebago nation'. According to the tradition of these tribes, at an early period they came with the Winnebago from their priscan home north of the Great Lakes, but that the Winnebago stopped on the shore of a great lake (Lake Michigan) attracted by the abundant fish." (Bur. Amer. Ethn., Bull. 30, p. 612)

Hence it is evident that the early American Indian found "Ouisconsin," with its abundance of lakes and streams that teemed with aquatic life, unequaled for fishing.