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THE LONGLADES: JIM, DONNA AND MARILYN AT THE OJIBWAY.



“Grandpa [Mike Geroux] was the guide, he was the one-finger man,” she remembers, laughing at the image. “We had to follow his finger. He knew where he was going – even driving up the channel – he’d stop – he didn’t speak – he just pointed.”

The children knew that dropping their lines in the direction of Grandpa’s pointing finger, was sure to yield them a good catch. And before long, they too, gained a good ‘fish sense’.

Jim isn’t sure how much of his fishing guide ability was learned and how much is innate intuition in the Longlade blood.

“Sometimes I’ll get a feeling that I’m going to go out to a certain spot, and that this is going to be a good day – and sure enough, it will be,” says Jim.

As an eager 8-year-old, Jimmy, fished with father and grandfather for the month of July.

“I learned a lot just in that short time,” he remembers. “I learned all the channels, different fishing holes, how to figure out where you’re going to fish that day. You couldn’t say: ‘Well tomorrow I’m going to a certain place, because the wind might be wrong. It may be too rough to get out there or it might be too quiet and there wouldn’t be any movement in the water. It could be too hot.

“Every day you had to look at the weather and the wind direction,” he says. “And if there was a big storm coming up that’s the best time to fish because the fish move around to feed before the storm.”

He learned what kind of bait and lures to use,

depending on what kind of fish his party was going after, where the best spots were for catching certain species and the best seasons for each.

“Bass, you can get just about anyplace,” he says. “And, of course, pickerel are in the springtime mostly. It’s a real treat in the summertime if you can catch one, or catch any.”

He remembers at 15, lining up in the morning with the more seasoned guides at the Ojibway dock, hoping to be assigned a fishing party for the day.

“So I did that for about three days in the first week of July and didn’t have any work,” Jim says. “When I didn’t have the work, I used to go picking blueberries - I’d pick an 11-quart basket of blueberries and get the same as a day’s guiding - \$8 in those days.”

Then, one morning, rather than leave the Ojibway at 8:30 a.m. along with other unsuccessful candidates, Jim stayed until 9 a.m. when he lucked into an opportunity to offer his services to a guest hoping to catch some bass.

“We’ll go out for an hour, I’ll try you out and see how you are,” Jim was told. After catching a 2-and-three-quarter pound bass, returning to the butcher shop and weighing it, he got the job for the month. It was the biggest job that came up that week at the Ojibway and young Jimmy ended up working for that guest for three seasons.

“The fellow’s name was Mr. Spence, and he owned RCA Records in Toronto,” recalls Jim, who at 71, still remembers that first job from the hotel like

it was yesterday.

Top executives from Toronto and Detroit would often come up to the hotel for a month and require a guide throughout their stay. Jim also guided on a day-to-day basis for area cottagers.

“I had a lot of customers, I still do,” says Jim, who has guided on Georgian Bay for 51 seasons.

Today, he guides part-time in the area and also serves as a lay minister in Midland, where he resides. One of the families he takes out now is in its fourth generation of fishing under his direction.



Marilyn figures the Longlade children couldn’t help but learn the ways of guiding with both grandfathers, Michael Geroux and Charlie Longlade, and her dad’s twin brother, Sim, living with them, while they did their seasonal guiding.