

For upwards of 48 years, one Illinoisan has traveled the world, reeling in additions to his fishing lure collection.

Hooked on Lures

Story By Kathy Andrews
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“I like to fish more than I like to eat,” Dan Basore said from the lower level of his northern Illinois home, one replete with a boat and walls covered with fishing memorabilia. “But I like to find old fishing gear even more. I guess you can say fishing is my life.”

When Basore was 15 years old his grandfather passed away. Being the only one in the family that fished, he was bequeathed a tackle box containing lures—a lot of lures but lures too old to fish with.

“Besides that, the modern lures worked a lot better so I decided I’d display Grandfather’s lures,” Basore remarked.

From one display created in 1957 blossomed a collection that fills his home and has taken him around the world.

As a youngster, Basore spent hours around the Sutphin family bait shop, located a short distance from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The shop’s lure-covered walls may have been the

initial draw, but the casting tips provided by two generations of the Sutphins—Charlie, Harry and Mert, all national casting champions—kept him coming back. After school, Basore rode his bike to his favorite fishing holes, often accompanied by members of the high school fishing club he had formed. In his hip pocket was his fishing journal, crammed full of the Sutphin’s fishing tips and his hard-earned, first-hand knowledge.

Just as the Sutphin family helped the young Basore develop his fishing skills, he shares his time with children.

“One of the more rewarding things I have done is to adopt a Wheaton junior high school fishing club—a club that had more than 80 children attend its last outing,” commented

Basore. “I’m pleased to be a part of helping children discover some of the less-structured outdoor activities many of us grew up with.”

Over the summer, Basore and a host of volunteers dressed in period costumes and demonstrated techniques and equipment of the 1890s during a fishing outing at Naper Settlement on the Naperville river walk.

Created by gunsmith Riley Haskell in 1859, this minnow lure is one of only 15 known to exist in the world. Created from brass and copper without benefit of electrical tools, the intricately detailed trolling lure probably cost \$1 when new.



The Creek Chub Bait Company in Garrett, Indiana produced a fairly successful line of clothespin lures. The Wiggle Diver lure was eventually produced in plastic.



“Within two hours, nearly 200 fish were reeled in, representing eight species,” Basore said. “Some of the children said fishing was the neatest thing they had done all summer. It was very satisfying to see them return and try their luck day after day throughout the summer.”

The deceitful accuracy of the frog lure titled “Judas the Betrayer” was a hit with anglers in the 1940s.

His grandfather may have started his fishing passion, but his grandmother was responsible for instilling in the young man the many rewards one receives when they share their interests with others.

“I take my display to sport shows and children’s programs and enjoy talking with people about the importance of our fishing heritage,” Basore commented. “I want people to see these historic implements so they can understand and appreciate the evolution of the sport of fishing.”

For Basore, the adventure never ends. Preparing for a fishing trip to Florida and the tributaries of the Amazon River, Basore remarked: “Who knows, one day I may catch a fish unknown to science, or find a fishing lure that has gone by the wayside and not been seen in hundreds—or even thousands—of years.”

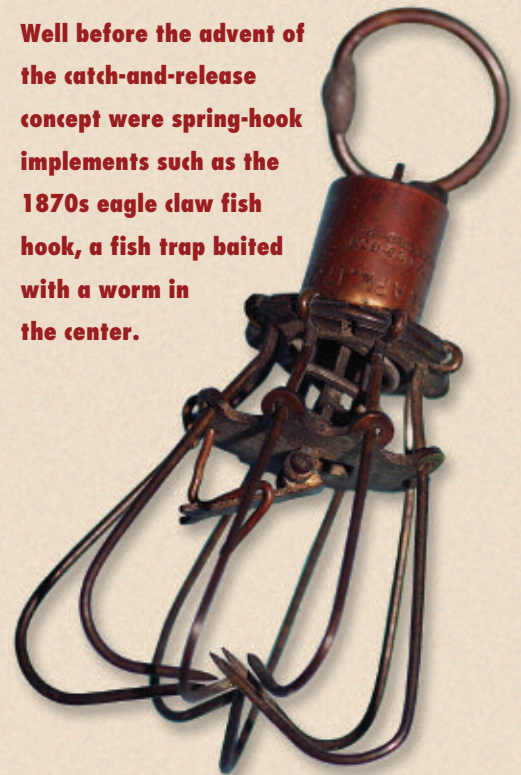


Included in Dan Basore’s collection are prehistoric lures dating back as far as 2,000 years and representing techniques from around the world. Included in this display are lures made from bone, sea shell, turtle shell and antler.

Month in and month out, Basore’s search for antique fishing equipment continues. And when he uncovers a new treasure, he gains joy from the discovery—and from the anticipation of sharing the news with others.



Well before the advent of the catch-and-release concept were spring-hook implements such as the 1870s eagle claw fish hook, a fish trap baited with a worm in the center.



Dan Basore’s quest for historical information on fishing lures continues. Readers having information to share can email Basore at ollures@aol.com or call toll free at 1-800-347-4525.

