

THE TALE OF WILLIE WALLEYE

As told by Mrs. Erickson's Second Graders

A long, long time ago, fishin' opener of '59, Mrs. Erickson's second graders hauled in the biggest catch ever seen in these parts.

That year our class got to go fishin' in Baudette Bay. We all hurried and piled onto the pontoon known as "Big Mike". Bobby Black, known as the champion of all the pontooners, was the captain. He promised our class would have a memorable trip. Boy, that's for sure. People are still talkin' 'bout it today!

On the way to our fishin' spot, we battled the thickest seaweed Bobby Black had ever seen. That should have been a sign 'bout what was to come. We had to pull it off the prop many times. Finally, Isaac and Jake volunteered to swim under the boat and cut that darn seaweed with a saw. Then we were able to get to Bobby's secret spot. It seemed to take us days, but it was really only 'bout half-an-hour. The sun was beatin' down on us and we felt like we were meltin'! Isaac and Jake were pretty cool from all the swimmin' they did under the boat.

Then Angel spotted somethin' on the horizon and screamed so loud Easton fell in the bay. Well, after fishin' him out, we looked at where Angel was pointin'. We saw the biggest dorsal fin anyone had ever seen, 'bout 16 feet long! We all were in a hurry to cast our lines in. Twenty-eight of us baited our hooks and cast out as far as we could. We had lines in the water with cheese, shiners, marshmallows, night crawlers, leeches, and frogs. Everyone was hopin' the creature would take a taste of their bait. Silence fell on the pontoon – you could have heard a hook drop!

One by one, each line was taken by the monster. All twenty-eight lines became tangled. Joe began reelin' in his line as fast as he could. Sydney was so excited she almost dropped her pole in the water! Jaylin, Luke, McKale, and Alysse all ran together and the poles became crossed with

each other. It was a real mess. Then Halle and Elissa said we should all braid the lines together. “Great idea!” shouted Mrs. Pelland. Zak Q. and Lexie organized the poles. We all braided the lines into a rope strong enough to pull in the whopper. Garrett, Kade, and Marissa suggested a kind of Tug-o’-War ‘gainst the gigantic creature on our lines.

Our class formed a line really fast with Alcia in the front. I tell you, that little girl is mighty strong. She pulled with all her might. Chase was right behind her givin’ it his all. Then the rest of us started pullin’ too. The creature was pullin’ like a son of a gun, he was so mad he jumped right out of the water and splashed so much water he almost put out the sun! We saw the biggest walleye ever! Alexis, J’Karay, and Tierra all let go and we almost fell into the bay.

That humongous walleye almost pulled us around the bay like water skiers on the Fourth of July! BayLeigh shouted and everyone pulled with all their might. Zach G. asked, “How will it fit in our net?” Grant and Mattie started tyin’ our coats and jackets together to make a bigger net. Bobby Black was so excited he screamed like a girl!

Well, we managed to get back to the dock, but we realized we would need help gettin’ the monster to shore. Bobby Black radioed ahead and the entire county showed up to help. Our class had managed to catch the biggest Walleye in the world! Newspapers, TV newsmen, and even the President of the United States (boy were we proud!) were there to meet us and lend a hand. We decided to have a huge feast with – you guessed it – fish as the main course.

Now, that there fish was so big no one needed to go fishin’ the rest of the season. Mrs. Erickson and her class fed every last person in the county for the entire summer! The town was so thankful they had the darn

thing taken to the taxidermist to mount – boy, I tell you Ol’ man Knacken sure was surprised to see that semi pull up with our catch on the trailer behind it! He liked to tip over from the shock of it.

Well, once he got over the shock he fixed up that there fish mighty nice. It just sparkled in the sunlight and moonlight while sittin’ so pretty up on the stand at the top of the hill. The town also had a contest to see what he should be named. Lil’ Sally Sue Boothsbee won with the name Willie Walleye – everyone thought it had a mighty catchy (he-he) ring to it.

To this day, the hill he sits on is called “Willie Walleye Hill”. The town celebrates every year with a weekend of fun and games for all called “Willie Walleye Days” – boy we were all in a “daze” (get it?) when we caught Ol’ Willie let me tell you! I haven’t been on a better fishin’ trip since and no other class has had a field trip quite like the one we took back in ’59 with Mrs. Erickson and Mrs. Pelland!

As told to me by:

Angel Brooks, Easton Carlson, Kade Chapman, Halle Dahl, Chase Davidson, Alcia Draper, Alexis Fairbanks, Zachary Gray, Alysse Hasbargen, Elissa Huff, Sydney Hufnagle, Tierra Husbands, Marissa Johnson, BayLeigh Lucek, Luke Lungstrom, Josiah Major, J’Karay Matthias, Garrett McCloud, Zakaryah Quran, Jaylin Raschke, Lexie Rennemo, McKale Risser, Grant Stebakken, Isaac Stephani, Mattie Ulfers, Jake Williamson, Mrs. Pelland, and Mrs. Erickson