

# WILLIE'S NORWEGIAN TAIL

*by Mike Hirst*

One fine afternoon, over a thousand years ago, Willie the Walleye was vacationing in the land of the midnight sun. He was swimming through the fjords of Norway admiring the fine craftsmanship the glaciers had left behind, when all of a sudden Willie found himself tangled in a great big net. It wasn't long until a ship approached and Willie was hauled aboard by over 50 men dressed in furs and horned helmets. The Vikings were ecstatic about their trophy catch.

Willie had dealt with Vikings before so he knew their weakness, unfortunately for Willie he didn't have any mead on him. That is how he escaped the Vikings once near Greenland. Willie hadn't been in such a pickle since the time the Ojibwa Indians back home had rigged a harness around old Willie and rode him up and down the Rainy River. But that is an entirely different story.

His Viking captors wasted no time after they hauled Willie aboard. They bound Willie with ropes and put him in a big vat of lye on the deck of the ship. The lye made Willie sleepy and he settled in for a long nap.

Willie awoke to find himself still on the deck of the ship. He was still pretty groggy from all the lye, but the rain that was falling from the sky refreshed Willie as it diluted the vat in which he was being marinated. As Willie peered over the edge of the ship he saw the prominent white pines of Pine Island, and felt the Rainy River rain fall on his face. He was never so glad to see his home. Willie could smell the Vikings preparing lefse, potatoes, corn, melted butter, and white sauce. He knew that his lye-soaked body would soon be the main course of a lutefisk feast for his captors.

Willie then noticed that the ropes that had bound him had dissolved away. With the Vikings preparing for the feast and singing songs of

Odin, Willie had to make a break for it. He jiggled his gelatinous body out of the vat and onto the deck where he slid off the portside like a slimy mass and plopped into the cool bog-stained water. The Vikings cried to Odin for their great loss. But Odin having a sense of humor provided for the Vikings. Instead of eating their conventional lutefisk feast they had to make do with Piping Plover Pudding.

Willie eventually recovered from the ordeal. His body returned to normal and lost the gelatinous feel. Ever since, Willie has been wary of Scandinavian fishermen.