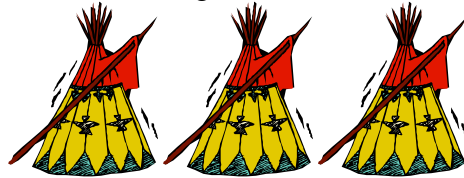


# Jim and Running Bear

## A Fishing Adventure

By Dwayne Sharpe

Jim had a day off from the ranch and was trying to figure out what he was going to do. His friend, Running Bear, lived in an Indian village not far from him. Most of the time that Jim had free he went with Running Bear hunting, fishing, or camping. Today he thought he might take a fishing trip on the plateau. Jim loaded up his equipment on his packhorse and started out toward the village.



It was early morning and Running Bear had already spotted him coming up the trail. The plateau was a long climb up a very steep mountain. If you wanted to go there you needed to start early in the morning, so that you could see the trail clearly and that the horses would not trip. Jim and Running Bear started the trip. Running Bear led the way. There were many switchbacks that needed to be maneuvered in climbing up this mountain. By the time the two got to the top, it was mid-afternoon. From there it was only a short distance before they could hear the roar of the river.

Jim and Running Bear rode side by side as they approached the river.

Jim kidded Running Bear saying "I bet I can catch the biggest fish". Running Bear only grinned back at Jim. He knew that with Jim using only a fishing line that he was at the disadvantage. That's because Running Bear caught all his fish by hand.

Then Jim added, "Well, I bet I catch the first one anyway".



Together they found a shady tree and the spot where they could unhitch the horses. They made camp and Jim got out his fishing line.

Then Running Bear shouted to Jim "I'm going to catch the first fish" as he ran toward the river.

Jim looked around for short tree limb. He would use it to tie his fishing line to and use it as a fishing pole. After looking at 3 or 4 limbs, he found the right sized one. He tied the fishing line onto the stick and then walked toward the river. Jim knew that he needed some bait. The best place to find some would be under a rock. After turning over several

rocks, he found some grubs. He then put one on his fishing hook. He looked into the fast running water and found a rock that he could stand on and cast out his fishing line. In the distance he saw Running Bear laying on a rock.

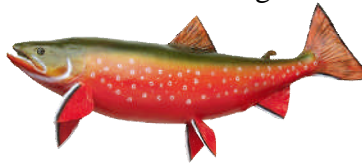


Running Bear had a special way of catching fish. He would lay out on a flat rock where the water flowed by easily. He would then lower his arm into the water and keep it very still. Fish would not notice his arm for what it was, rather simply another object in the water. If it didn't move, it probably was not dangerous. When a fish would swim near, Running Bear would wait for the right moment and then quickly grab the fish very tightly and then throw the fish up on the river bank. There he would tie the fish to a stringer and place the fish back in the water.

Running Bear was not having the luck that he usually had this afternoon. Two fish had already swum by, but he could not get a good grip on either one. His arm was getting very cold from the water that surrounded it. He was beginning to wonder if his boast about catching the first fish would be true today.

Jim had his fishing line in the water and was hoping for a bite. He had seen several fish swim by, but none had gone by his hook. He had even pulled the line out twice to make sure that the grub was still on the hook. He then heard a whoop and a cry from his friend Running Bear.

"I caught one!" cried Running Bear. "And it's a big one too!"



True to his word, Running Bear had indeed caught the first fish for the day. Jim pulled out his line and walked up the shore to where Running Bear stood.

"Looks like a Brown Trout," said Jim. "There will be some fine eating tonight."

Running Bear laughed and then replied, "What do you mean? This will only be a warm up for me tonight. You had better catch some fish. Then there will be some fine eating for both of us!"

Jim said, "You're right. I'd better get to it." With that said, Jim turned and headed back down the river to find another spot to put his line in. He was more determined to catch some fish now.

Jim stopped and looked under a few more rocks. He found a young beetle and put that on his hook. It was still wiggling when he dropped his line into the water. It was but a few moments later that a fish struck his bait. The limb he was using as a pole was bending

sharply and was about to break. He quickly grabbed the end where the line was tied and pulled. He could tell that this fish was a fighter and he wasn't careful, the line might break. Jim pulled on the line to keep it tight and let go a little when he thought it might break. He could now see the fish in the water and knew his line was not strong enough to hold its weight.



Running Bear was grinning thinking about how he lucked out catching the first fish. He and Jim always joked about who was going to catch the first fish and who was going to catch the biggest fish. He thought now that he had both the first and the biggest for the day. While he was thinking about this another fish brushed by his fingers and his hand took hold. It was quickly landed and added to his string.

Jim jumped into the water still holding onto the line with the bent pole behind him. He continued to pull gently on the line as the big fish drew nearer and nearer. He then worked the fish closer to shore trying to avoid the rocks that the fish might wrap itself around. With one hand on the pole, Jim reached out with his other trying to flip the big fish up onto the shore. Once landed, he grabbed the fish with both hands and threw it up on the river bank to keep it from jumping back into the water. The fish had looked like a salmon because of its size.

Jim then proceeded to climb up the steep river bank to string his fish and show it off to Running Bear. Much to his surprise as his head cleared the river bank, he saw a brown bear. Apparently the bear had simply wandered by and spotted this big fish lying before him and he wasn't about to share. Jim knew better than to anger the bear and he slipped back down the embankment. He then waded out and then climbed onto a rock where he could see the top of the bank where the bear was. The bear had taken the fish in its mouth and was moving off away from the river.



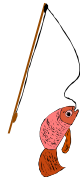
Jim then moved back to the shore and went up river to find Running Bear. He cautiously looked behind him to make sure that the bear was gone. He saw Running Bear and yelled out to him "Bear. Bear."

Running Bear at first thought Jim was just using his shortened name, but then realized that Jim's expression was one of concern. He then replied, "What's wrong?".

Jim pointed behind him and said, "Bear".

Running Bear now understood and quickly moved to the shore and scanned the river bank and surrounding area for any activity. Nothing was moving except for the water. Running Bear asked, “Are you OK?” Jim replied with a nod of his head.

The two then sat on the river bank while Jim explained what had happened. He told of the big fish and how his pole had bent and how he had to jump into the water to pull the fish to shore. He then told Running Bear the size of the fish and how he had to use two hands to throw it up on the river bank and then the shock he had when he saw the bear picking up his fish.

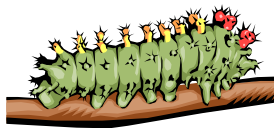


Running Bear thought about what Jim had told him and then looked up at the sky. “I didn’t know it was time for fish stories this early! We had better start the fire to cook the fish that I actually caught!”

That night, Running Bear kidded Jim on his fish story several times. Jim kept trying to tell Running Bear how big the fish was. It was a night to remember for two good friends.

The next morning, the two were up early fishing for breakfast. Jim caught two small fish and Running Bear caught one. While roasting these fish over the fire, they discussed their plans for the rest of the day. They would fish for a little longer hoping to catch enough to bring back to Running Bear’s village.

Both Running Bear and Jim headed out to fish. Jim found a caterpillar to use as bait and Running Bear found another flat rock to lie on. Jim caught a string full of fish along with his friend.



They then broke camp and started down the steep plateau. It was late in the day when they arrived at the village where they shared their fish. After eating, Jim mounted up and returned to his ranch.