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Smelt Fishing on the North River Ice Looking for smelts in the net (It's not just a matter of dropping the net straight down and letting it hang.) Jackie Smith: No, no. That's a gill net. But these that we fish with--"bag nets," they're called. The smelts are inside them and they're swimming around when you haul the.net up, (The smelt) go with the tide and they'll swim, too. When there's hardly any tide, you'll see them swimming. Mostly they're sort of a lazy fish--let the tide carry them. Raymond Smith: It's set right in the cur- rent. And the smelts sometimes come back? wards, sideways, headfirst. They're not all swimming. Jackie: (The net) is like a bag. The tide will open it up. Well, if there's no tide, it'll just hang straight down, the top part. Then when the tide comes, this top will then open up. And there's a funnel in it--only about 2 feet high by 6 feet long. And then once they go in through there, . the net'is a lot bigger and it's harder for them to find the opening to come back out, Raymond: See, it's not a net. It's called a "bag net," but it's halfway between a trap and a net, Jackie: One week you'll get good tides-- you'11 get a steadier flow of the water coming in. And the following week you'll get what they call "nip tides," They might run in maybe for 10 minutes--all of a sud? den stop and go back out. And then run out maybe for half an hour and "turn and come bacH in. You just set the net and you've got to be watching it continuously. If not, it'll go inside out on you. You've got to have the net set with the tide. They're like a big bag, so you have to have the tide in order to set the net. Raymond: The new moon and the full moon-- that's when we fish. We start 3 or 4 days before the new moon and fish till a couple of days after the moon, when the tides are at their best, running the best. If you went about fishing here and didn't pay any attention to the moon, you wouldn't get an? ything . (67)