

Buck's Online

The Watermen: Seine Net Weights

Seine net fishing is a popular form of fishing that involves catching seafood via a weighted net. The net has weights on the bottom that sink it until only the top floats on the surface. Fish swim into the net, and then the net is pulled close, trapping the prey (12). This style of fishing dates back to 8300 BC Finland, and appears in Egyptian, European, and Native American historical records (13). Purse seines, which are seine nets maneuvered via boats, are a popular version of this technique (14).

Seine fishing provided fish at a cheaper cost for canneries than other methods; often canneries owned seine fishing sites in order to monopolize on this fact (14). Guinea watermen worked in close association with local canneries such as Shakelford-Thomas (more on that company in a later artifact), so a similar deal may have been in place on the local level (15).

These seine net weights in particular were donated by Raymond Shakelford, whose family was associated with local oyster canneries. These seine weights do not carry any brand label on them, likely they were created locally for the express purpose of being distributed to fishers via Shakelford. Thomas Green, a member of a Guinea watermen family, utilized haul seine fishing in his work, and likely others did as well (16).