

***Knitting Needle:*** The knitting needle was an important tool in every lobsterman's household. The needle was about a foot long, made of wood or metal (my father's was brass) and used to knit heads, or nets for lobster traps. One end was pointed and the other had arm-like extensions on each side. The top third of the needle had an opening and a tongue, which faced the top. Twine would be put on the needle by wrapping it around the tongue and arms. Twine was either purchased or made by separating or "stripping" three-strand rope into three separate twines. A hook, usually on a door casing, held the twine while knitting the heads. It took about half an hour to make one head. Three heads were needed for each trap—two smaller ones at the front side and a larger one from the middle of the trap into the back area or "parlor." I remember many winter nights when everyone in the family either stripped rope or knitted heads. Rope would be hanging all over the living room. As young children, my brothers and I stripped rope. As we grew older, we became involved in the knitting process. The door casing leading from our kitchen area to the living room still has the marks of where we used to knit! The newly knitted heads would either replace those on older traps or be used in new ones. Once nylon twine was available, heads seldom needed replacing. Nylon didn't rot, was much stronger and was seldom broken by crabs, fish, or small lobsters. If broken, the heads were easily mended with nylon twine.