

lyons-nick-2017-10-05.mp4

[00:00:11] I think the best place to start is at a boarding school. I was sent to one when I was five because my father had died just before I was born and my mother was working and there was a.

[00:00:25] Ratty little pond nearby called ice pond which had been used during revolutionary years to cut ice for the troops. It had a few small pick rope a lot of rock mass some blue gills. And catfish and from the age of about five or six almost before memory I can't remember anything that I like more to get away from that gray building.

[00:00:56] Where we all slept in in a in a quiet dorm together and then going down to the pond with a stick and a hook or a bent pin. Yes a bit. I would I would go down with a friend of mine. Who actually turned into a wonderful writer about fishing saltwater fishing art. Gallatin got glaucoma and we would stand in the water with a stick and a string and a bent pin and some worms that we dug. And catch some of these fish on the side of the barber on the water.

[00:01:40] Just going back and forth and and thinking of something in that other world below the water that mysterious world where all the lines seem to go and the tug the certain tug seemed to connect me with the natural world and it also seems to have saved my life because I was miserable at that school and this place was an enormous joy to me that the pond was an enormous joy me I think fishing has always been that it has been there before I can remember. I have always fished in Brooklyn down in ponds down at Sheepshead Bay. For all that odd series of Haskell head and and Ling and spearing that we found in the in the ocean off simple test here and that has graduated over the years to becoming I become closer and closer to the natural world and the active fishing became more and more all engrossing. So that I found in it a respite from the complicated days and also enormous joy and pleasure in itself. I can't think of a single story that really tells I know that you have to come at this question sideways it does not want to be answered directly but for me it has been a connection to the natural world which I otherwise would not have had.

[00:03:28] I think virtually from the beginning I released the fish.

[00:03:32] I can remember one notable exception my grandfather on their hotel in a remote section of the Catskills called the Laurel house. Pretty much a family hotel compound one hundred rooms. But. He owned what is now a state park north and south lake. State parks and he had the only access to South Lake where I fished all the time. Yes most of my fishing in those early days was done either when I was at the boarding school which are left when I was eight or for the summers when I went to the Laurel house and there I caught everything that moved when I caught newts salamanders crayfish frogs by the dozen. I always let them go and. Ate. At South Lake which was a wonderful lake at that time and had very large perch very large blue gills and particularly it had some rather monstrous pickle. They were not. Pike killer a pickle then they ran out of four hot sounds very very large and I got one of those that slashed at a shire that I was bringing in and wouldn't let go and I got up to the boat got it in. But I would release everything except for a trout. I once giggered with a I put a Carlisle hook on the end of a stick and stuck in its mouth and pulled it and I was a very mean spirited little kid to have taken it out. Such a beautiful fish so they wanted everyone to see it. I would have been eight I think at the time I brought it in and my grandmother cooked it. But it was it was a native brook trout probably 14 or 15 inches of some size it was in the middle of the summer and he was

tucked under a rock that I could just barely get to. So I have been a very dangerous fisherman from the very beginning. They are of absolutely immense importance. Their havens. They're. Safe areas that help us protect what is one of the great legacies of of any given area in which they appear and the restrictions that are put on the nature of the fishing all to make it better all to provide quality fishing are appropriate to my experience. Yellowstone is the place I've had the most experience and everything firehose the given the Madison all have been wonderful fishing experiences because they are protected because they are cared for with with love and great skill.

[00:06:33] It's a hard question. I'm not well enough verse to make a definitive point of view. I like the the. I liked the idea of native species on the other hand the brown trout is not a native species species and it is perfectly wonderful fish. To me it's the favorite among the Browns among the trout. I think that for its behavior and particularly toward the fly and and its behavior in the water it's the one I feel closest to. I fished Henry's Lake in Idaho a great deal just after I got out of the army and elsewhere had a huge number of what we called hybrids which were a rainbow and cutthroat and they grew much larger than either the Rainbow or The cutthroats separately would grow. They were very exciting. I know there was an attempt made on Henry's Lake to turn it into a cutthroat lake and I rather miss this the thought of there being these huge hybrids. It's a hard decision and I think it has to be made probably on given watersheds and that of the watershed. If the biologists whom I respect enormously can find the right logic for making something bringing it back to its native position it makes a lot more sense than doing it wholesale and doing it in places where perhaps there's some other fishing that has developed that is is is is very very worthwhile. I'm sure that Odell Spring Creek which I've fished with such great passion was once a brook trout stream possibly a rainbow trout stream. I don't. Not sure. But. Now it's probably 95 percent Browns. It is a brown trout river and the Trump act appropriately too. To the needs of the fishermen I know who fish it now and again and a rainbow trout will come in from the Madison during the gorge. I think it's called when the Madison. On occasion dumps off and gets water it when the ice causes the water to leave the banks of the Madison. But mostly I think 95 percent. Brown and I like it that way and they're not native but now they're the other fish. Any attempt to turn it into a cutthroat brook trout. Stream would seem to me a great mistake. Absolutely. James.

[00:09:24] It's all the best trout fishing I know is takes place in beautiful surroundings.

[00:09:34] The wilder the better the clearer the water the better.

[00:09:38] Mary have that valley to herself for the equivalent of five or six months over the period of time where Kitchener and she just a daughter she had no interest in and fly fishing at all. She liked the things of fly fishing. She liked the shapes of the people figures in a landscape and figures in the landscape is one of the great art traditions that fly fisherman and a landscape is not.

[00:10:06] She drew them painted them mostly watercolor on the river and would use charcoal and also graphite. But she found it immensely rewarding to go.

[00:10:22] And did so more and more as the years went on. Last year we stated. That on O'Dell she was she. She was down there every day with us. And I loved to look up from the fishing I usually don't like too many people around but I love to look up on the head of the bench and see her sitting cross-legged working away with the intensity that she always brought to her work.

[00:11:00] I. I think that there's a distinction between art which is essentially artificial it is the making of something that is not natural and by definition it is. It is not nature. But I think that the process of fly fishing. I don't know whether I would call it an art. I. Would restrict art as I know it to.

[00:11:31] Various forms such as dance or movies or more painting. But it's it's an act of great delicacy and skill and totally absorbed this in the demand it makes on us to see more to see more experience more of the natural world which we would not see if we did not trapped fish.

[00:11:54] I don't think that even a trained biologist sees as much as a trout fisherman does.

[00:12:01] I once had a teacher named William Humphrey area reasonably famous Texas novelists and I once told him that I thought eventually I was not writing at all then but until I told them immodestly that I thought eventually I could write about rivers better than Henry James. And he said no. He said you couldn't do that James had a statement that he is a man on whom he wanted to be a writer on whom nothing is lost.

[00:12:32] And I think he was wrong. I say not that I'm a great writer about fishing but I think that you have to fish in order to know very much about what's going on now. I think I had a long running correspondence with John Graves and we would talk about that and talk about Hemingway's fishing and how. In his writing about trout fishing there was really nothing.

[00:13:01] That the the general reader could not understand.

[00:13:06] He was interested in having the general reader understand his saltwater fishing and also his early fishing for trout. I think I think that the writing about fishing is separate from the experience of it and that. Tom McGrane for instance can write brilliantly about fishing and you need not be a fisherman to appreciate it. I think that for me I liked the things of fishing the details of fishing so much that I could not write without being. Thinking very much about the names of some of those flies which sounds so esoteric to the uninitiated.

[00:13:57] The names of the artificial flies the real insects and so forth they seemed to me much the harder fly fishing. And when you speak about it being making special demands on you I think it does and I've always thought that you had to know those which Henry James would not have known to write about it. Well.

[00:14:23] I think the best writers know how to mix it and it's a very hard thing.

[00:14:28] I can't comment on what I've written but I I know as I've said Tom Macquane I think is is a master of it. I think he he knows both and you feel that the technical skill the heart of fishing and the technical knowledge of fishing beyond that incomparable narrative sense whether he's writing an actual narrative or writing. An essay that requires a narrative tug to it. I. I think it depends on the writer. I've seen writing by Craig Nova about fishing that I liked very much which includes both. I think. There is something one would call. Good writing successful writing which could exist side as separate from that as a general in general prose were very technical writing which is often very exciting which has run relatively little narrative skill in it but good writing somehow can carry either of them and that requires a lot of skill.

[00:15:42] As an editor. I had an awful lot of writers who are very very knowledgeable about. How to catch fish and how to do the things that fly fishing demands and relatively little. Skill. At writing what I thought was distinguished prose.

[00:16:02] I think. I think I think they can be separate and I think to answer the question the best of it has both. It's a good it's a very good question James. There probably is too much written about fishing and there probably is are too many writers who are writing too much about it. I think I think that. The skill of each each of the elements of being a fisherman who has something to say. Have you develop new flies have you develop new techniques. Have you seen the process of fishing in a fresh way. These are more of the technical side. And then there is the other side of how great your skill is as a writer. Myself. I was.

[00:17:06] I I became a writer quite late and I am indebted very much to the best writers not about fishing but the best writers period from Shakespeare and Chaucer on to the best novelists in a long time. I studied them very hard. And then I think you've got to find the voice of your own.

[00:17:33] Is not imitated. But it's very hard to do and I think. Honesty clarity and knowledge of what you're writing about. A sense that there's someone on the other side of the page that has to be thought about as you write. You're not just writing for yourself. Ever no one ever writes for themselves or shouldn't drive just for themselves. There is somebody who is on the. On the receiving end of the writing and that kind of knowledge I think is very very important. I would think that they should read out loud what they've written. I should think that they should be as specific as possible and as a spare with their generalities or abstractions as they can be. Fishing is a very practical thing and I think you could do quite worse than learn the names of trees the names of the insects the names of the things that are connected to fishing. Very specific names and then I think you really have to be a broad reader. I don't know a good writer who is not a good reader Maguire and has read ten times the books that anyone else has written. And Ted Leeson is a very very wonderful writer about all aspects of fishing both technical and narrative and they are both great readers and I think that if you look look you scratch the surface of anyone. Hemingway who always took books to the river when he went you'll find somebody who just cannot get enough of reading and reads not merely for pleasure but reads for. The knowledge that is in in the writing. Those are the great teachers the great writers of the past and you can learn something a value for your writing about. The fishing process. By reading any great writer from Chekhov Chekhov short stories which are marvelous to D.H. Lawrence's Hemingway's folk there's all of them feed into a knowledge of the language which is your tool for writing well. About fishing. Sure I've been persuaded by the Grey Fox variant which art flick considered the fly that would catch anything anywhere if they were to be caught. It's a wonderful fly arts variations on the original invention by by Preston Jennings make it a very durable fly. He said he wanted to fly that can catch 20 fish on raw so it's fairly good when it rides high in the water. It's got grey and it's got some blue done in it and it has generally served me very well. I also very stupidly I suppose would like to see the fly and the heroine. Royal coachman has always been a wonderful fly for me even in places where the fish are very selective. I like those too. I think that. The knowledge of specific flies for specific areas is something that I've found most engaging about fishing and on Odell on the spring creeks where the pale warning done was so important as a fly at almost every day we fished it. I had ten variations of the names of pale mooring done Al troth would only tie tie them I him to seventeen hooks summer on a team by other tires and some on sixteen he tied on a seventeen and there were times when I like that. There

are times when I like the cool the cannon top and other times where Craig Matthews. You suggest a hair wing and a flat lying flat on the water work. Well.

[00:21:54] I forget the name of Craig's and when that Craig likes them it's almost like an elk hair caddis but it's about something done the not pale morning.

[00:22:11] No no I'd say it's a style of typing. Mm hmm. Oh I'm not sure. Whatever it is. Different tales different. So I think given a given river the most fun comes of having some capacity imitate the fly.

[00:22:30] That's there. But otherwise I. Go for a gray fox variant or a harrowing royal coachman which I can see even now with my own eyes.

[00:22:45] I I think that too really my revelation on the British truck streams occurred on the morale of the carnage I was in business with a British publisher for some years I was the whole American knew looking at the whole American subsidiary of a British firm and I would go over there every every June for five years and fish the candidate during the what they called the may fly. It's like a Danica and it's a rather large fly but it got me interested in in the Spring Creek on what they call this what is the chalk stream over there and I think that the Kennett was perfectly wonderful mysterious difficult forever and then the spring creeks of Montana Odell in particular simply because I fished it so often it's the it's the clarity of the water the fecundity of the insects the great great it seemed to me selectivity of the trout that made them just irresistible. I. Have Loved a dozen other rivers more than a dozen others with great pleasure and I had some fun in Salt water but the best fishing I know is of either the English Chalk streams like the canopy or the spring creeks like Mike Odell. There's so much gyms in. The country when you get out of any than a very populated place like like Bozeman. The water has a clarity. The official essentially wild when I first fish the Madison they were stocking it rather heavily and it was a very different river then. But since they are not stocking it now you're getting mostly wild fish. But it was the presence of a great number of wild fish which in the East you don't get. I think the size of the trout were more interesting. The quality of the fish themselves nature of the insects. But I think I think the space in Montana you've got that extraordinary space where you can be in a location and the word Big Sky is not a cliché but it is a defined. Statement of fact that you.

[00:25:26] Everything seems you seem to see much further and it goes into you. That space changes you. Got the space the clarity of the rivers the fact that they're much less crowded than the east and rivers for the most part there's some.

[00:25:44] Like the Gallatin Canyon click crowd up at times very badly. But it's it's the freshness and the nod were too attached to it. Rivers seemed numinous to me. They seemed to have something spiritual there. They seem to come up out of the ground with great clarity and and then to provide something that is natural primitive in its way and extremely valuable at a time when so much as artificial. I think that. There is so much. For me personally changing from more primitive forms of fishing to more sophisticated forms going into fly fishing where even fishing with any kind of fly to preferring greatly the drive fly that's just so lovely to see the fish come up in and take it. But I think the amount of technology has changed a lot and has brought the movement from cheap bamboo to glass and then to sophisticated drug makers and then to graphite and graphite boron. This has changed. The technology has changed a lot and a lot of people lean a little more toward the technology than I think they should and should stay closer to the primary experience. I

fished with a few people. Who seemed to have only one raga. When I was fished with Al McClain I think he had one ranch that he loved.

[00:27:35] At that time of his life maybe given the others away. But. I think it was.

[00:27:44] The the fetish of too much equipment too many different flies too and too much too many different rods seemed to take away. For me the the some of the quality I think the river is a better protected today which I like very much I think.

[00:28:03] But Lily's Trout is too valuable to be caught and that's actually I think Lee Wolf's phrase Trout is more than too valuable to record only once is the start of a whole revolution of letting letting fish go and essentially. I think you can have no quarrel with that.

[00:28:24] It. I think there is a much greater sense of conservation today of protecting the rivers than there was when I first got into my teens.

[00:28:36] I was not catch and release I would kill everything that I could. I used a spinning Rod and I killed a lot of trout. Most of them probably 100 percent of them were stopped fish in the east branch of the Croton or caught them on night crawlers which we collected on lawns in Brooklyn but essentially fishing them was for me. Was fishing to collect trophy you know bring back a lot of fish and show them and I think it was. The ethic of catch and release and the.

[00:29:15] The insistence on protecting the rivers as the source of one's trout fishing. That is one of the great changes I think emotionally. It becomes of the worst of the modern fishing is that people jet around the world and and and don't have a specific connection to given bodies of water.

[00:29:42] Perhaps this kind of casual this and a kind of attempt to catch the big fish in the alter or one of the Patagonian rivers.

[00:29:57] I have been against the competitions that have started. I don't like them.

[00:30:03] I've never been involved in those. The one fly which I just heard about but the notion of a bass tournament and bass people collecting up I don't care whether they give them back or not. It just is not what fishing is about to me. I think the growth of the tournament the growth of competition is an unhealthy thing.

[00:30:23] If you want to raise money there are many ways to raise money. There are many ways to raising awareness. I don't think you have to do it on the back of the trout. Back of the fish it catch so I don't like. I'm against all the tournament. I think most of them are new and I think they're one aspect of modern. Fishing that I'm not particularly happy about. I think. I think some of the.

[00:30:52] The the central tenants of fishing quietly with a minimal amount of equipment are lost today and should not be forgotten. That's one of the reasons why we have such wonderful older books that remind us over and over again how.

[00:31:16] How lovely fishing can be and how quiet and peaceful as Walton suggests and how exciting that can be and the excitement. I don't like groups. That had difficult to get a group in my head when I think about fishing essentially alone with one or two people who were good friends.

[00:31:40] And it can still be done in so many places. I think it's hard to generalize on all fishing having been one thing and becoming another. But. The things that I don't like. Are they over involvement with technology the over involvement was flying all over the place the fish and the competition are the things I like about older days on the simplicity.

[00:32:20] I think to a certain good extent it is. I think that it doesn't always take all the same stages in the development. I think for myself there was never really a time when.

[00:32:36] The big fish was anything more to me than a tremendous excitement when one rose or I took one. I know that mostly I have been involved in in.

[00:32:48] The nature of the experience. I never counted the number of fish I caught. I've never taken down all the sizes and. And and all the detail though I know some people who do and who who like to do that. I feel myself I it is the experience of it and only the experience of it. I don't need to get big fish I certainly don't need to get a lot of them. I think a few fish have always sufficed me. I've never I'm. As I said. I have somebody who blogs up to the Catskills that tells you the exact number and the sizes and then they run to the 30s 30 40 fish up to 10 inches or. The like. And I can't understand it why. Why do it. A nice afternoon and a few fish up seems to me terrific. I never wanted to catch a lot of fish. I always wanted to catch a few and there. Some of the technically difficult fish to catch. I remember and then I.

[00:34:02] Have great pleasure in thinking about the past. Today life like happy to do any fishing. As my hips go bad and I can't walk and I'm afraid of falling down the rest of that jazz. And. Then the.

[00:34:21] A permit and I love Tom McGuane's wonderful essay on the permit. The longest silence. But I fished for them and I once saw a permit come up to a crab fly. I was breaking in and look at it with this gigantic eye and then say no I don't want to play and turn away I. I think I think there are probably the permit is the most is the most difficult to catch though.

[00:34:54] A lot of people do sell regularly now. I am.

[00:34:59] I prefer trout. I think trout are always interesting I think Wild trout and Trout of a certain size not gigantic but I think getting up over 13 14 inches becomes very satisfying for fishing. And I have had on the carnage in particular some very very demanding trout that. Just put their noses up at some of the flies I put over them and you know in those circumstances you're forced to think about the size of the leaders and size of the fly and the nature of the cast. You've made a whole raft of other things related to your presentation and your choices and it may not be that the trout is that selective but that you have boxed it in some way.

[00:36:01] I think I think that there are certain sections of the world.

[00:36:06] I've never been to New Zealand or Patagonia but I think that the tourist moneys that come in are helpful to the communities. They don't seem to hurt the fishing. Fishing seems to be protected greatly and the fewer people that fish these waters is if somehow. And the rules the local rules or somehow I you know I guess I don't have any essential quarrel with with. With. Both the process of flying out. And. Fishing one of these places and I know people who just love their trips to.

[00:36:51] Both the salmon but also for a trout in New Zealand.

[00:36:55] One of the other great places to go. I tend to be more of a homebody I like to have a place that I know well. I don't know whether it. Can be of any economic help for that but to me knowing something well like. I knew my wife well after 58 years I didn't particularly want to. Change around and find somebody who might be something that she did not have. It just didn't occur to me. And I think my fishing. Also I have preferred that which I understand rejects which I've seen for three or four seasons or five seasons or if it's the the garage pool on the East branch of the Delaware that I've fished a dozen times and I can remember back and look through the layers of times I've visited I think I take enough pleasure in that.

[00:38:04] You know and it it's a good it's a perfectly good question James. I'm a bad traveller. I don't. I don't like. Planes my three sons and they all love to travel. I travel all the time but it increasingly and even now more so with. With some difficulty in flying. I loved fishing with the British Chalk streams. When I was there I loved fishing some of the French Chalk streams. When I visited my friend Pier offer. And I loved his little Pike pond which was a great deal of fun.

[00:38:44] I loved Iceland when I went there and I loved Canada where I fished for salmon four or five times. Now I think I think Patagonia sounds exciting but a lot of it is fishing in a way that I would have to learn for the day or for the trip and then I probably would not do again unless adventurous.

[00:39:10] McGuane has told me about his great delight and steelhead fishing and I know he enjoys almost every kind of fishing he does. I admire Erik I like it. I am so happy to get the reports from such people in such places. But for me personally. I'm much happier with an old pair of shoes. That's well-worn in.

[00:39:39] Oh I think so. I think. I think we're coming to the very happy time where well we must you must embrace far more than that that a little clutch of.

[00:39:52] Middle aged white guys that have done it. I think.

[00:39:57] To look out over some of the things that have happened the growth of women in fly fishing has has been astounding and lovely to see. I've seen I've spoken to her on the phone and I've also seen her cast. April.

[00:40:16] Purchased April April Archer. No. She's a steelhead genius very beautiful woman. I think it's wonderful. I think that. The. Some of the women look as capable or more capable than any man I ever selfish. Certainly Joan Wolf whom I know well as this is superior caster to 90 percent of the 95 percent of the fly fishers I know I love to see that I love to see the breaking down or any kind of separation of male and female for fishing.

[00:40:56] There's no reason why it should be that way.

[00:41:01] A woman named Holly Morris whom I know has edited several books and books by women fly fishers and I think that's to the good. I've I've said some things publicly about both books which I like a lot. I think there's less of a chance that somebody is going to write a book on. An African-American fly fishers. It's not going to happen but I would love to see more African-Americans fishing for trout fishing. I know that the numbers in saltwater are a little different. But.

[00:41:39] Some of the clubs alas are still restrictive and will not encourage it. I would like to see more of it. I've seen a great number of Asian fly fishers in Montana and I think that number is increasing. I think it's all to the good.

[00:41:58] I think that the central quality of how thoughtful a fly fisherman is and how much he respects some of the things that should be respected like the water like the nature of the camaraderie and I like the process of fishing those things I think belong to everyone. And I would love to see more. But the women is something that's special and it has already grown vocally vocally April vote conscious and in spectacular fly fishing. And there are many others as well. I publish so I publish several books and when I was a book publisher by women fly fishers I was very happy to do so and very happy to see it. I do know several African-American fly fishers but they're are also water fly fishers. I once published a book by not on fishing by a wonderful writer named Eddie L. Harris who had written about a canoe trip he took down the Mississippi River of Mississippi so wonderful book. He said he was a serious fisherman was going to pass out to West Yellowstone. What should he fish. I gave him some suggestions I put him in touch with Craig Matthews and I. I know that he was very pleased to be there. I did speak this to a few people he was about 6 4 or 5 quite large and I did speak to a few people as it was the strangest sight to see this big black. African-American on a trout stream. I was I was you know. Had some sense that he was probably something that they had not seen on the other hand I was happy that he had gone and I would love to see more of it. He was a wonderful writer and I know he enjoyed being there and I I'd like to see more of that would be my view. I. I care. I thought about it a lot. I was an English professor at Hunter College. We had four children living in the city about you what year.

[00:44:27] What year would have been this 67 68. I've been teaching for about six years and it seemed clear that I soon simply couldn't support a family in my size on a teacher's salary I'd start to get one hundred dollars a week as a full time professor a teacher at Hunter College and that I had to do something else and I had no idea what publishing really meant. But I went to a whole batch of I sent out about 100 letters and finally Crown Publishers said they needed somebody right away. Could I come in tomorrow and I said sure. And started a second job. I had myself switched from the day session at Hunter College to the night session so that I could have a second job. Got the dean's permission to do this and started a crown as a proofreader. I think within a year or so it became clear that my real interest in publishing was something to be interested in but that I did not want to be a proofreader on my life I wanted to sign up books and I thought what do I know what what what are the fields that I know. I played college basketball and I guess I could have gotten some basketball books but they didn't interest me that much. Fishing did I've just begun to fly fish. So I signed up.

[00:46:09] For five books for the first season. I got permission to do it.

[00:46:13] From crown. I signed up practical fishing knots my lefty Cray and Marcus Olson whom I met selected trout had come onto my desk by two unknown writers Swisher and Richards. I had several. Books that I have been looking for like art flicks stream side guide which were out of print. Somehow someone mentioned marinara and I had met Preston Jennings widow tiny Jennings. I about five or six books and Crown also asked me to if I liked it so much would I do an anthology piece and so I put together a book called fisherman's bounty a large anthology at least. Half of it in public in Maine and the rest of it. Modern people so that in one period of about a year I became really very very much involved in publishing books about fishing.

[00:47:22] And they did well selected trout so a ton of books right away. Lehmann helped in the New York Times said if you're a fly fisherman you must buy this book and be sold about 20 30 thousand copies right away.

[00:47:44] I had met a man at the Anglers Club. I was not a member of the club but I had met somebody down there through him I guess named Alfred W. Miller who wrote under the name sparks great Haskell.

[00:47:59] And he and I had become friends and had lunch every couple of weeks or so and he had a book an old book that he had written called Fish list stays for the Anglers Club. So I added that the second year I got that on the contract after some really very strange negotiations and I. Bet him.

[00:48:24] A dime that we would. I was cocky that we could sell a lot of books in those days and I was cocky that we could sell as they were printing seventy five hundred. He said Buster will never sell seventy five hundred and I bet that we go into a second printing by Christmas. I think this was published in May which we did. I bet him a dime. And finally he paid me the dime by having it inserted into a green leather bound book with some nice inscriptions on it. But within a very short period of time about two years I published maybe 15 or 18 books most of which were on fly fishing and I had a real library. That's how I got into it. It really was that I didn't have anything else to publish that I knew and was very happy to be. To be publishing in that field which I knew so well and it grew and eventually I had over 100 books I think in what I called in modestly the sportsman's classics series goes. When I met some British publishers they wanted me to sign start a whole subsidiary a city subsidiary which I mentioned before. Called Nick Lyons books which they would fund completely I'd be the only employee. These were done as packaged books books that I would produce and then sell an entire edition to another publisher. There was a process I did not like. I did it for four or five years to get a total of 50 books like that and eventually I got that out. I raised some money from Bernard Gallup and. Some other investors and bought it out and started my own business which is the beginning of.

[00:50:31] Nick Lyons books which became Lyons and Burford which eventually became the Lyons press when I bought out my youngest young partner Peter Burford that's in ensure the pattern.

[00:50:47] But it started by chance develop with great passion and finally became something of my own. Then branched out from fly fishing to hunting natural history and eventually I was able to publish some horses by my gran and some books by major writers about subjects they were passionate about but which their normal publisher was not particularly interested in publishing. So I did a number of those and we we did. I had a pretty good eye and found a lot of non-fiction books. David Carmen's first book Natural acts I published Jon Krakauer his book first book who became so successful elsewhere. Merlin clinking Boggs first look and gets. Couldn't hold on to the first book. People too well because they guts.

[00:51:50] They were so good that other people snapped them up and been more money. But that was really the pattern. That existed from my little house. Eventually my son came in who hadn't had for much more of a head for business than I have. And Tony. And the business was successful enough for him to sell it at a decent amount of money and have essentially been out of the publishing business for about 15 years now.

[00:52:30] No it's never been the first question.

[00:52:33] It is the first question for a lot of editors. Very good editors and they have a very strict sense of sticking to that and not not not not ever changing that. But. No I. I have had a good number of different ways of choosing a book. And one certainly was that I thought it was. Unusual important. With selective trout. I had no idea whether a no hack or fly was going to work better than a cold fly but it seemed to me that it broke a new pattern and that it was worth a try. It was a book that essentially depended on it selling well for us to have taken it on at Crown. But there were a lot of other books that I did when I was independent where it was my own money that could not possibly have sold well. One was French fishing flies by John Peck and no modest little book just on what flies they use in France. But I thought wouldn't it be interesting to have a spread out the interests internationally like this and have some of these maybe one or two of them are going to be a real interest. And then another book called. Called simply bamboo by a man who is connected to the Smithsonian a noted National Geographic who is obsessed by bamboo. The process by which it was grown harvested brought to the United States. He had tried to grow some himself. I knew the book couldn't sell more than fifteen hundred copies at most but it seemed to me Nobody had touched this thing before. It was an unusual book an important book so I have done them at that level. I think in the middle ground of narratives which is different. There are. The books that sell best are mostly those that that. Have have information that somebody wants. Either how to tie a fly better or how to cast better or some. Aspect of improving the sport not some view improving eye catching. But as someone who had taught literature fall in love with literature as a as a as an adult I wanted the stories and I wanted the narratives and I would get. Manuscripts by the dozen that were written by most of the outdoor writers who have their foot in their mouth. I'm afraid I'm I'm sorry to say but they could not tell. They could not do the narrative at all. And then I had others some of whom I found some came you know what's called over the transom. I had one battered manuscript. Called Vermont River that came in and looked like it had been read by one hundred people by a man and WD Weatherill and I read one chapter and it knew that it was a book I wanted to publish. I think it's still in print but I chose it because it had significant literary value. It did another which was probably not quite as good by a man who is one of the great on a theology on a theology that's at University of Kansas I think called Fly Fisher's odyssey.

[00:56:28] He was dead.

[00:56:29] He'd never written a thing on fishing before but it seemed to me a very good and very worthwhile book telling about how a man less than middle age had found fly fishing and had moved on to some very close relationship to it might publish that. So I did a certain number that I took on because I thought they were some serious literary value. Same way I did reprints of of serious books. One of the best is in his. Wonderful book on fishing free stone rivers in and in the British highlands. Name escapes me but it's a it's a wonderful book. How to fish a Highland stream was a way it was published. And I think I changed it to simply fishing a Highland stream. Wonderful book very serious very and full of wit and happiness. I did some I did the French book golden days and I did. A man can fish and so a number of others that I loved bringing them in sometimes in very small editions sometimes. Actually doing the printing myself. But it seems to me that there's a whole world there. Fly fishing and to to balance one side against the others is a mistake. Only people like McGrane can write about both at once. Really have a narrative structure but have.

[00:58:13] All that you need to know about fishing for a permit to go out and start doing it as well. Anyway.

[00:58:26] I have a lot. I have. I don't have one I have 50 and.

[00:58:33] I think Golden Days by Romley and to start some early relatively early books about a man fishing in France just before World War 1. It's a wonderful book. I think that. Where the bright waters meet. I am. Hurray clunk and green. A very tall. Man aware in this living as a concert singer. Not in singing opera but singing it as a concert singer. It's one of the very great books and has the great sadness of a river. He loves dying and the death throes of the born little born river that he loved so much are painful. I I. Tend to have maverick likes like that of the modern writers. I think I would put Ted Leeson and McGwire in at the very top of the list. They're both very good. I think I read Paul Paul salary with great pleasure. He's got a very steady thoughtful. Mind. I think that. Of the.

[00:59:55] Of the more technical writers. I think that.

[01:00:02] So some hardy writers like Lefty very pleasant to read and frankly find Lee a little too full of himself. It's not the best word statement but I find.

[01:00:21] Little beating on the chest.

[01:00:23] Some of the fishing writers because they can cast further because they catch more fish for some reason that in the larger scheme of life seems to make rich smaller.

[01:00:36] There are others but I like Craig Nova writing about fishing. He's a wonderful novelist. Bill Barash has written very well about it. And. Like John Geer acts writing. I think he probably. Is caught in the trap of writing so much about it.

[01:01:01] Maybe he writes too much. I don't know but I like what I know of his very much.

[01:01:07] I like Jim Babs writing a lot. He was the editor of.

[01:01:15] Great sporting journal for a while and is a wonderful writer very unique very unusual has a Tennessee love of language that that is very different from anyone else's. So it's a good number really. I tend not to. Like some of the some of the more technical writings like. And then the.

[01:01:50] Drive fly from the 19th century. Why do I forget all these things that. Alfred Halford of course tend not to the interest. Not really interested very interested in everything that skewers wrote. The excuse is a wonderful writer that some of a long.

[01:02:16] All of the above. All of those things James. I think that share in sheer numbers. There is absolutely no simple way to.

[01:02:32] To keep the rivers from drawing of a crowd populated unless you had do something like having a deer hunting permit for the year or something of that sort. I hate to think of it going that way because we've had it free for so long. But I do think we're going to choke them off. If there are too many people. And it's very hard to think of what the solution can be just on people that sell. And of course people bring with them pollution and that has got to be stopped 100 percent wherever it appears. Just any kind of contamination. I saw a presentation on the Smith River which has a potential plaque

coming in that is going to put something metallic in the water and. Maybe they can prevent it or maybe they can't but it sounds like a very dicey situation. And I think the river should take precedence over the the money involved. Frankly they should be told they cannot have. A manufacturing plant at the head of it. They've got the population which is so difficult to solve I think pollution. You have to solve by the law by by suing. By any means possible because once you kill a river you may be killing it forever.

[01:03:56] Cat. Yeah. I think that the biologists know a lot. They have studied things like whirling disease and green slime disease here and there and they they've got to be very careful. I think that. Keeping having your boots clean before you go to certain rivers is necessary as a necessary law. You are going to have to live with more laws I think fewer. I like it. I like things that are freer. Who doesn't. But I think that if we're going to have anything we may have to have more laws more restriction and that we've got to take some of these things find our pleasure. In much smaller doses perhaps than we've had in in order to have any. Your memory a memory is not going to outlast individual lives without without you. I think it's of immense importance that it provides. The archive of our brain the archives of our connection to everything that's gone before.

[01:05:18] It preserves in the hands of the right folks. That which is worth preserving that which is worth saving and which can provide a resource to resource to people in generations down the line where they will know and have a connection to the things that.

[01:05:42] The library has thought important enough to preserve. I think it's it's a it's a great good thing and I keep coming back to the word memory almost as an individual memory dies with the person when that person dies a museum a great library becomes a place that provides a consciousness and memory of. All that has gone before that is of value or as much of what has gone before that can be properly collected and preserved. I think it's in my mind of the greatest importance. Only my gratitude to fly fishing. It has been a very important part of my life. I wanted desperately to be a writer and I found at some point in the early 1960s when I was already in. My late thirties I found that the thing I won that I could write about that I wanted to write about was flood fishing. And that morphed into some. Connection to the publishing of books on fly fishing and the meeting of an exit meeting with an extraordinary number of good people. So I'm enormously grateful for the people the museums and libraries that I've had a contact with the publishing of books that I think are of some many of some value and also the the wonderful fishing I've had. I just capped fish anymore and I'm afraid of stepping in water because I fall and fall in six or seven times I always fall on my left arm so I can't lift it anymore it's got a bad rotator cuff problem but I don't fish. But I think about it a lot. I still read seriously into it and I don't think I'll write anymore about it but. I'm very grateful for having had something on the order of 60 or 70 70 or 70 years of my life that were centrally involved with fly fishing no matter what else. Teaching Learning. Years on I played basketball for Pan Am was a good athlete growing up with my children none of whom were very serious about about fishing. All of which been part of my life. But somehow through it all I have fished and it has given me both pleasure and also a chance to write with with great pleasure about something that seemed to me to. Be. Of.

[01:08:49] No consequence. I think past time as a consequence the pleasure of having a connection to the natural world. That. I think that.

[01:09:03] I owe this to fly fishing and the ability to write some stuff about fly fishing over the years which seems to have been probably the best writing I will ever do.

[01:09:21] That's good. That's.

[01:09:23] Gratitude. I think it's something that I take into my upper octogenarian age.