

ALAN R. DAUS
P. O. Box 282 370
TETON VILLAGE, WYOMING 83025

DATE

4/6/92

SUBJECT

Boat

TO

(307) 733-6183

Bob Lilly
2007 Sourdough Rd
Bozeman, Montana 59715

Ohio Address

9249 WINNER RD
CHARDON, OH. 44024

Dear Bob

> A friend gave me a copy of your Western River Club
March '92 newsletter. Could you put me on the mailing list
with my Ohio address.

Enclosed is my check for a cloth covered autographed
copy of your "A Trout's Best Friend." Please send it to
my Ohio address.

Yours truly

PS Please advise about your trips and

Alan Daus

your speaking appearance. I'm on the board of our Cleveland TIE chapter at the Cleveland
Museum of Natural History.

SIGNED

PLEASE REPLY

NO REPLY NECESSARY

OK

Battelle Memorial Institute

5 0 5 K I N G A V E N U E C O L U M B U S , O H I O

AREA CODE 614, TELEPHONE 299-3191

August 26, 1963

Mr. Bud Lilly
Editor
The Wretched Mess News
West Yellowstone, Montana

Dear Bud,

About a month ago, I received a most disturbing letter from my good friend John Johnston, post marked West Yellowstone, Montana--disturbing because I was, at that time, in Panama on business sweating pure gin and tonic! My wife had the nerve to forward John's letter with the grocery list itemization of the catch you had guided him to on the Madison near Ennis. I fished that area about three weeks before the Quake, so was really envious. Because of business commitments, we were not able to make our annual western pilgrimage this summer.

John asked me to send you the following information on Macdonald's book. The title is "On Becoming a Fly Fisherman" by Alexander Macdonald, published 1959 by David McKay Company, Inc. New York price--\$4.50, Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number 58-13842. John indicated you have a customer interested in obtaining a copy of the book and that you were particularly interested in the author's chapter which deals with Henry's Fork. I'm enclosing a xerox copy of this chapter for your files.

The best I could do this late in the season upon my return from Central America was to talk the family into a few days on the Boardman in Northern Michigan. Nothing exciting but it is a beautiful, very swift stream, so still quite free of growth this late in the summer. We are planning a western camping and fishing trip next summer. I hope I may have an opportunity to become personally acquainted. Several years ago, I did stop by your shop but you were apparently out staking out some big ones for the tourist trade.

Battelle Memorial Institute

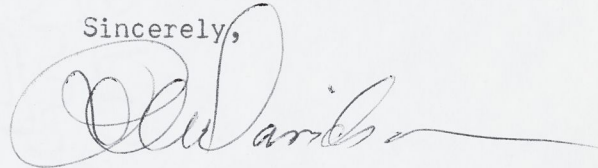
Mr. Bud Lilly

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August 26, 1963

Thanks to John, I enjoy your choice philosophy as published in your Piscatorial Periodical! Hope this information will be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. S. Davidson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. S. Davidson

1527 Doone Road
Columbus 21, Ohio

Enc.

cc: Mr. John C. Johnston, Jr.
Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston
Attorneys at Law
East Liberty Street
Wooster, Ohio

Mr. Wood.

13.

"Of shoes — and ships —

and sealing-wax —

Of cabbages — and kings — "

— Through the Looking-Glass

NO BOOK on trout fishing is complete without a part set aside for the stream reminiscences of the author. Such an excursion is always a help, for it tends to supply matter which has inadvertently been omitted elsewhere in the book—fills in the chinks, so to speak—and thereby rounds out the picture of fishing the writer is endeavoring to portray. But, putting utility aside, it is more fun for the author than the rest of his work, for the fisherman gets more pleasure out of telling about his adventures—especially when the reader can't interrupt or talk back—than he does in explaining the mysteries of his art; it conjures up pleasant and exciting incidents of his fishing career and enables him to enjoy them in recollection. Perhaps it is more fun for the reader, too; we shall see.

Let me kick off by announcing my favorite stream: it is Henry's Fork, more commonly known as the North Fork, of the Snake River, and has been mentioned in a previous chapter. Our Snake is not to be confused with the South Fork or main Snake, which rises in the southern part of Yellowstone National Park and quickly becomes a large, fast river too deep to wade.

To those who fish the North Fork, no other stream can quite compare. In the fixity of their allegiance they do not differ from the devotees of New York's Neversink, Pennsylvania's

Brodhead, Oregon's McKenzie, or Hampshire's Test, to name only a few of the famous rivers that have bewitched fly fishermen. And perhaps this is as it should be, for the angler's devotion to his own little gem tends to keep him away from the other fellow's favorite water, to the infinite relief of the latter.

Although the North Fork is fishable all the way down to its junction with the South Fork near Rexburg, Idaho, the part of it with which we are principally concerned is the eight miles or so upstream from the Island Park Reservoir. This body of water was formed by a dam, constructed more than two decades ago to provide additional irrigation for the farmers down state. The dam obliterated for all time several miles of excellent trout stream; but this loss is compensated by the fact that the reservoir contains many large trout—rainbows, cutthroats, and eastern brooks¹—and some of them stay in the river for a while after their annual trip upstream to spawn.

Our reach of the river is fished by many persons hailing from all points of the compass, but most of them are transients who pause only for a breather in their annual effort to put more miles on their speedometers. The river's mainstays go directly there each summer for a more or less protracted stay; and among them none are more assiduous than the members of three fishing clubs located in this area: the North Fork Club, the Flat Rock Club, and Coffee Pot Lodge.

An account of the circumstances which led to the formation of these clubs is in order for it serves as a history of the early beginnings of trout fishing in this part of the world. Although there are fragmentary stories of fishing and hunting in this district as far back as the 1830's, when trappers employed by the American Fur Company² of St. Louis, Missouri, made

¹ The eastern brooks have not done well in the stream for some reason unknown to me. I don't recall ever catching one that weighed more than a pound.

² The American Fur Company was Mr. John Jacob Astor and vice versa. See *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, by Warren Angus Ferris (Salt Lake City: Rocky Mountain Book Shop, 1940).

prolonged expeditions into the Rocky Mountains, there is no record of trout fishing as we know it today prior to the 1880's when Henry Stamp came into the country and homesteaded a large ranch on the North Fork. Sometime between the appearance of Henry Stamp and the year 1902, when the North Fork Club was formed, a small group of fishermen from Salt Lake City, augmented later by a still smaller delegation from Los Angeles, began to visit Stamp's ranch with some regularity. These trips involved, in addition to transportation by train, a two days' journey by team from the nearest town. At that time the only trout in the river were the native Rocky Mountain cutthroats; the rainbows, which have done so well, were planted later. But the fishing was fabulous, and the North Fork Club came into being as a matter of course.

This club, the first of the three, was built on a site purchased from Henry Stamp a mile and a half upstream from his own cabin. It was originally conceived, and indeed is still used, as a vacation spot for the members' families. Four years after it was organized, however, a few of the members who preferred their fishing trips to be stag affairs, when time not spent on the river could be dedicated to the poker table, bought the remainder of Stamp's property and started the Flat Rock Club. The new club, the origin of whose name is no longer known, was managed for ten years by Henry Stamp and his wife.

From all that can be learned of those early days, Mrs. Stamp's cuisine, consisting principally of salt pork and beans—supplemented, of course, by the trout caught by the members—was nothing to brag about. Furthermore, the accommodations were primitive: the beds had only one badly sagged spring and the bedclothes were noted for their weight rather than their warmth. The sleeping rooms consisted of small cubbyholes, barely large enough to contain the bed and a washstand and separated from each other by flimsy partitions of lath and paper only six feet high. These partitions provided adequate privacy, no doubt, but they afforded no protection whatever against the

nightly symphony of snores accompanied by the noisy rattle of vibrating paper. This nocturnal disturbance plus the mosquitoes, which to this day can be an annoyance during the month of June unless one is provided with an efficient insect repellent, made sleeping a hazardous enterprise.

Henry Stamp, an enormous fellow of well over six feet, commanded universal respect. Although nowadays the law of Idaho holds the river to be navigable on the tenuous theory that it is commercially possible to float logs down it, and therefore that the state being the owner of the bed of the stream the public has the right to fish it, it is not clear what the law was in Henry Stamp's time. Not that it would have made any difference, for he was a law unto himself, and whenever a stranger appeared on the Flat Rock water he would take a long bamboo pole, topped with a leather thong, and flail the river in the vicinity of the intruder until he moved away. If this did not accomplish Stamp's purpose, the flow of profanity that followed was such that few were able to stand their ground under the lash of his invective.

The Stamps' cabin still serves the Flat Rock's members and so do its cubicles, although the uncomfortable beds and bedding have long since been discarded, and hot and cold water is now available; nor are the partitions between the bedrooms any longer made of paper. No information is obtainable as to whether the snores persist with their pristine violence.

Ironically enough, Coffee Pot Lodge, the last of the three clubs, came into existence because of the dim view the majority of the Flat Rock's members took of having women and children around. Even today only youngsters of sixteen or older are permitted the use of the Flat Rock Club; and as late as 1928 the ladies' quarters were so uncomfortable that most of the wives stayed home. The result was that at that time there was a defection in the Flat Rock's ranks and Coffee Pot Lodge was established four miles downstream.

The new organization with only a handful of members pro-

ceeded to provide facilities designed to attract the wives—more honestly, the wives designed the facilities and told their husbands to provide them!—and the Flat Rock ladies, on seeing these comforts, brought such pressure to bear that the older club was forced into a program that permitted the members to build their own cabins, thus reverting to the practice of the North Fork Club. In addition they constructed what, for want of a better name, can best be described as a social hall. At the present time it is not unusual to find a bridge game in progress in this building during the afternoons, and it is a rare evening during midsummer that does not produce one or more cocktail parties there. All of which indicates that those he-men who deserted the North Fork Club in order to free themselves from feminine restraints won only a temporary victory and that the ladies have had their way after all.

The most remarkable spot on the North Fork by all odds is Big Springs, one of its sources. A full-grown river issues forth from the earth at this point. What at first glance appears to be a good-sized pond is formed by many large springs which emerge from the western slope of the continental divide; and this body of water immediately forms a river fifty feet wide. The water under the bridge where the stream begins is never warmer than 52 degrees and is five or six feet deep.

Big Springs is at once the trout fisher's dream of heaven and his torment. Under this bridge in the crystal-clear water are collected some enormous rainbows for all the world to see. So much for its heavenly aspects; now for its agony: the sad fact is that the river at this point and for the first half mile below is closed to fishing. For many years tourists have fed bread to these fish, but the trout remain congregated here, unafraid. Some of them are monsters. While it is hard to estimate the size of a fish under water—no remarks, please—it is safe to say that there are several ten-pounders in this group. It is no mystery, of course, why the small trout do not come here: they

are well aware that their big brothers' steady diet of starch might get monotonous.

No one should ever go to the North Fork without paying his respects to these trout. A visit to Big Springs is a great morale builder, for when your luck's been bad and you've been unable to get a big fish to come to your fly, it is comforting to know that there are such trout in the river. There is nothing to prevent them migrating to the water you fished yesterday or—it will at once occur to you—the part of the river you intend to fish tomorrow. Do any of these leviathans ever leave this sanctuary? It is hard to say; but there is one old fellow, at least, who is always in evidence. He is easily identified: in addition to being a shade lighter than the rest, he bears a scar on both flanks: mementos of a life-and-death struggle in his younger days to escape from an osprey.

The legends of fishing exploits on the river are legion. One of the first individuals to fish here was a Swiss named Chris Reber. He came to the country in 1892 along with a number of his countrymen for the purpose, it is said, of establishing a cheese creamery. Be that as it may, he stayed on after that project collapsed and for ten years after the railroad was built into West Yellowstone he furnished trout to the railroad and to the West Yellowstone Hotel. The method he used in taking the trout was equally as shocking as the fact that he fished for the market: he speared them at night from a rowboat, using a basket of pine knots on the prow to furnish the light for his nefarious enterprise. Old Chris was thrifty; he saved a considerable sum with which he had intended to return to his native Switzerland and retire in luxury. He waited too long, however, for unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately, who is to say?—most of his savings were wiped out by the bank failures in eastern Idaho in the early thirties, and he passed the rest of his life in the place where he had spent so many happy years.

Because the first half mile below Big Springs is closed, the upstream limit of the fishing is the Bathtub, the name by which

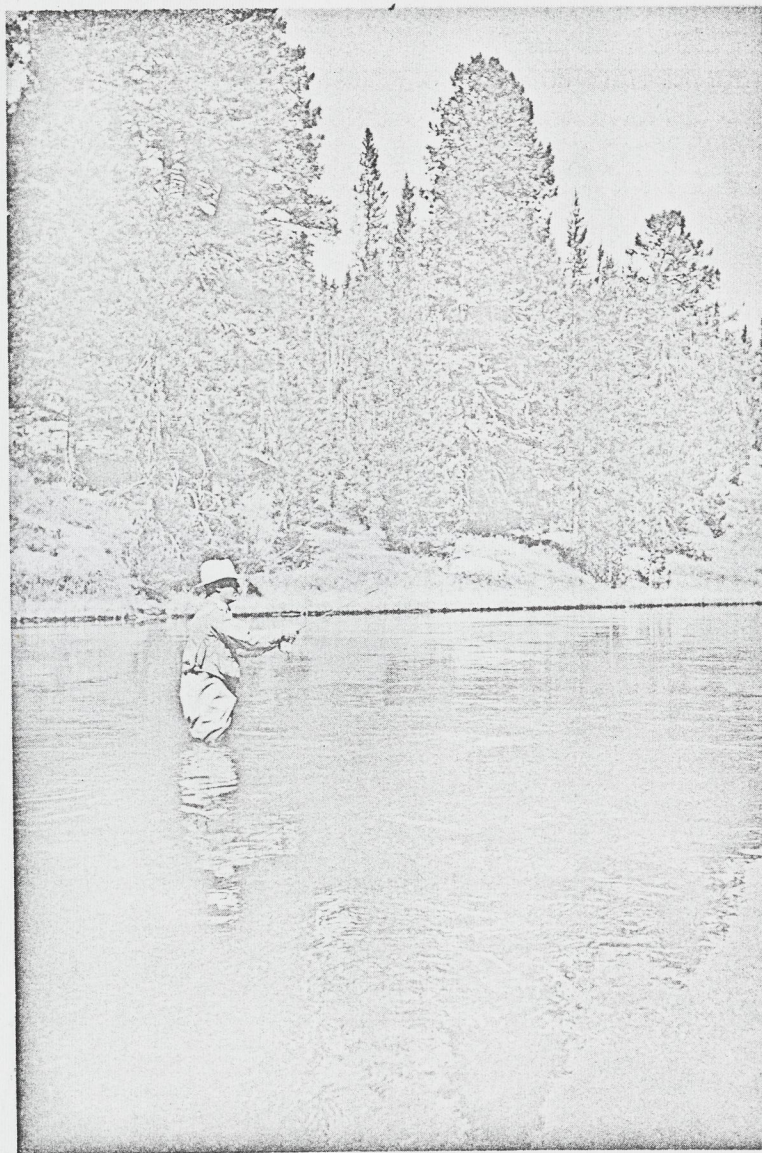
a wide, almost motionless expanse of the river is known. The seven or eight miles of the other branch of the North Fork which emanates from Henry's Lake and joins the Big Springs branch at the Bathtub must be eliminated from consideration for the purposes of fly fishing; it is always discolored and the fish will not rise to the surface. This murkiness is a permanent condition: the lake is shallow and the constant winds churn up the mud from the bottom and keep it in suspension. The Bathtub offers tolerable fishing, but the current is so slow that it is not unlike fishing a lake.

The stretch of three miles below the Bathtub, however, is fine dry-fly water and good trout can be taken there. It is hard to get to because of the willows and marshes on its banks. The accepted way to fish it is to put in a boat at the Bathtub and float downstream, getting out to wade whenever a particular run or pool appeals to you. The current is gentle and the surface slick, broken here and there with whorls: excellent water for the presentation of the dry-fly angler's wares.

As the river comes out of the willows at the North Fork Club it widens, and there are none of the deep holes so frequently found on trout streams. But this does not mean that there is a dearth of good fish; one is apt to run across one anywhere. The water is noted for its numerous clumps of underwater vegetation, and these growths, or sometimes a rock or a log, cause a hollowing out below which provides a safe resting place for a good-sized fish—generally one and no more.

The stream changes little as it flows down to the Flat Rock Club and beyond to the head of the rapids; and it offers quite a challenge to the angler for, again unlike most trout waters, he rarely finds a background which will render his activities inconspicuous. This means that a cast of fifty feet, and often more, is frequently called for in order not to scare the trout.

Among the legendary heroes of the North Fork and up until his death in the late thirties a leading spirit in the Flat Rock Club, was Rea Smith, a prominent surgeon from Los Angeles



The current is gentle and the surface slick . . .

whose wizardry with the fly rod is still held up as a mark to shoot at. A tall man, he would stand in the middle of the river with fish rising on all sides casting to any trout within seventy feet that interested him. Although he would have been the first to concede that a shorter cast was better tactics, he took the position that when the water was alive with rises he didn't want to waste any time, and moving closer to one fish only meant getting farther away from another.

A long time ago, when the native cutthroat predominated, you could literally catch as many trout as you wanted to, and I regret to say that I often killed a limit—in those days fifteen pounds and one fish. Perhaps I should not be blamed too much; trout were plentiful then and fish tagging by sportsmen unheard of; besides, anyone who returned a fish to the river at that time would have been regarded as slightly balmy. There is still good fishing to be had here, but the angler will have to work harder and must not be too disappointed if he draws a blank; and this is all to the good for it makes him appreciate his catches more when his luck is good. Whether the cutthroat is not so hardy as the rainbow or whether more rainbow than cutthroat have been planted in recent years, I cannot say; but the fact remains that the number of cutthroats has declined and the rainbows have increased, and this has been a boon to fishermen. Whatever points the brown may have over the rainbow—and they are few, if any, in my opinion—the cutthroat has none; he does not break water and he is not especially crafty. But he is a dogged fighter and he also has one thing to be said in his favor: he has interbred with the rainbow and this has proved to have been a glorious union.

I have one of these hybrids mounted in my office; he weighed five pounds, fourteen ounces when I took him, the biggest trout I ever caught in the Snake, and he put up a sensational fight. There was a trout that really got out all my backing! I was lucky to land him. These hybrids are still in the river and they are always good fighters; they have all the tenacity of the cut-

throat and at the same time have lost none of the jumping proclivities of their rainbow ancestors nor of the rainbow's fierceness and capacity to make unexpected runs.

I have had my share of success in this part of the river as well as a full quota of failures, but of all my trials and tribulations there is one that stands out in my memory more distinctly than all the others combined. It so happens that the renowned Dr. Smith served as *my* companion-mentor; he taught me the essentials of fly fishing. Without his help and guidance my development as a fly fisherman would not have gone so smoothly as it did. He was a better fisherman than I was; he always caught more fish and bigger fish than I did. One afternoon when I was fishing some water not far above the Flat Rock Club and just after I had landed a beautiful rainbow,³ the largest I had caught up to that time, the doctor pulled up on the bank in his station wagon. I showed him my prize—it weighed four pounds, two ounces—and was fairly bursting with pride. He looked it over calmly and then, without saying a word, reached into the back of the car and held up for inspection a fish that was twice as big as mine. To make sure that I was properly impressed—he might have spared me this—he got out his pocket scales and weighed the monster. It went exactly eight pounds.

"That's about what I guessed him," said the doctor. "I hooked him off the Flat Rock pier this morning before breakfast. I was still in my pajamas," he added. "Thought you might like him down at the Lodge served cold with mayonnaise [the way I like trout best]. Hear you haven't been able to catch any fish big enough for that lately." Then, glancing at my four-pounder now dwarfed into insignificance, "Not a bad pan fish you got there."

That did it. The week before he had caught another huge

³ It now reposes, I am proud to say, on the walls of The Anglers' Club of New York.

trout weighing ten pounds⁴ and after that I thought I was prepared for anything, but an eight-pounder off the pier in his pajamas! That was too much. It never occurred to me to question his story: there was the fish and there was the doctor! Both he and I having been recently converted to the dry fly, I liked to think of him as a dry-fly purist; it never entered my mind that he had caught this enormous trout in any other way. The truth came out the next day: he had been fishing on the Trude ranch and had caught the fish with a large wet fly sunk deep. A. S. Trude was a patriarch in the community; he had built several ponds around the turn of the century by damming some small creeks that ran through his property on their way to the river, and he had stocked them plentifully. The trout had no means of escape from these ponds and, the food being plentiful, some of the fish had grown to prodigious size. I have never recovered from the shock of the doctor's eight-pounder; I never expect to.

The hatches on the river are still prolific and the rises numerous, but unhappily there aren't so many big trout as there used to be. The oldsters don't complain: this is all of one piece with the smaller print, the steeper stairways, and the less audible speech they have to cope with today. The youngsters fortunately have no basis for comparison.

Coffee Pot Rapids, which gives the third club its name, is unlike the rest of the stream; it rushes turbulently for a mile through a wild, rocky gorge. Here the river is narrowed to a width of only twenty feet in many places and it is too deep to wade; fishing it with a fly rod is virtually impossible. But the reach from the foot of the rapids down to the head of the reservoir provides some of the most interesting fishing we have. The Coffee Pot members would say the best, but we won't go

⁴ I do not want to give the impression that the taking of fish of such enormous size was usual or that they could be caught with a dry fly. The doctor confessed to me afterward that the fly which took his big fish might have been slightly damp.

into that. Unlike the stretches above the rapids, the current is faster here and there is a riffle on the surface. Rises are harder to detect, but the trout when hooked are able to put up a better fight.

One of the most provocative pieces of water on the Snake lies within the boundaries of a large ranch downstream from the eight miles with which we have been dealing. Several sizable tributaries enter the river before it enters this ranch, the largest of which, the Buffalo, joins up right below the Island Park dam. Here the stream is four hundred feet wide in many places; yet it is easy to wade almost anywhere. The current is slow, the surface smooth, and when there is a hatch of fly the fish rise everywhere. There is plenty of feed and the trout are always fat and strong. Big fish are always in evidence whenever there is a rise, usually enough of them so that the angler can profitably work on two or three from the same casting position.

Fortunately for me the owners of this property are friends of mine. I have accepted their hospitality many times and hope to do so many more. A trip to this spot rarely fails to be rewarding in one way or another. Some years ago, after a fruitless morning in near-freezing weather, one of these gentlemen definitely saved my life; by comparison the St. Bernard's legendary rescue of the Alpine traveler lost in the snow pales into insignificance, although, as will presently appear, my friend used the St. Bernard's technique. The cold had driven him in by midmorning and when I arrived at the ranch house at noon, defeated and shivering, he met me at the door with a hot buttered rum, a drink for which there is no substitute in an emergency like this.

Long casts are the order of the day in this part of the river and, the wading being on the deep side, getting the line out is considerably harder than it is in the shallower water upstream, for the line gets soggy more quickly and is therefore harder to retrieve. The combination of deep wading and long casts is nevertheless an excellent therapy: it is the best insurance I

know against letting the waistline get out of hand; three or four days in a row here are guaranteed to take off the pounds without counting the calories.

In recent years, unfortunately, this reach has become infested with whitefish. For the benefit of those who do not know the Rocky Mountains it should be explained that the whitefish is the pest of the trout streams in this part of the world. These fish have a small mouth, not unlike that of a sucker, but they are avid surface feeders; they take the floating fly as readily as trout, but there the resemblance ends. They are ugly fellows of a drab-brown color, they put up a poor fight, are not palatable as table fish, and have an odor which verges on the unpleasant. Yet in Idaho whitefish are classified by the authorities as game fish and seasons and bag limits for them are established by law. Everyone I know who fishes our Snake deplors this and the consensus seems to be that the presence of whitefish is detrimental to the trout, that they compete with the trout for food and, in addition, feed on the latter's spawn. Whatever there may be in this, the fact remains that the increase in whitefish through the years has been proportionate to the decrease in trout.

The maddening thing about whitefish is their rise: it is practically identical with the rise of trout. Some claim they can always tell the difference between the two but I cannot, notwithstanding I have studied their rises for years. But I made one useful discovery long ago: if, when fishing a rise, a number of fish come to your fly and fail to take hold, it is a good sign the rises are whitefish and not trout, for the whitefish's mouth is so small he is unable, more often than not, to get the fly in his mouth.

At one bend of the river on the ranch there is a high bank from which one can look down into deepish water and, if there is no wind, see clear to the bottom. I once got positive proof here that big trout rise to duns with the greatest of deliberation. I sat on the bank above while a friend fished. There were no

flies on the water when we arrived and I could see the trout lined up in a solid phalanx on the bottom. I waited—a few duns appeared; but still there was no action. After a while I noticed one of the big trout detach himself from the rest and take a position close to the surface. A second later he rose and took one of the duns.

I was giving my friend a running description of the movements of this fish, but when he saw the rise he obviously needed no more advice from me; he could see what was going on himself. After a few false casts he laid the fly a comfortable distance above the trout and waited for the current to do the rest. The fish noticed his fly at once and I began to report developments to my companion—whether he needed it or not. The trout moved toward the fly deliberately and finally I could see he was going to take it, all of which information I passed along to the fisherman. I noted a certain amount of nervousness on his part and this was unusual, for ordinarily he was the last word in poise and confidence under conditions like this; he was evidently torn between my report of what was going on and the unbroken, uncommunicative film of the water. When at last I announced that the fish was making for the fly he became so flustered that he struck too soon and snatched the fly away before the trout had a chance to get hold of it. He was and is an accomplished dry-fly man and he told me later he had not been conscious of striking prematurely, yet from my perch on the bank it was easy to see why he missed the fish. If he hadn't known the trout was after his fly my friend would undoubtedly have hooked him, but my description of the movements of the trout must have speeded up his reflexes to a point where the impulse to strike could no longer be resisted.

This part of the river has an additional attraction: there are more anthills near the river than there are in other places, and this means that winged ants are often blown upon the water. As indicated in an earlier chapter, trout are partial to these ants and they are easy to imitate; the fish feed on them voraciously.

ciously and seem to be less wary than they are during a hatch of duns or spinners. And the combination of a plentiful hatch, hungry trout, and the right fly is about as close to a fly fisherman's heaven as any of us can ever hope to get.

How different a rise like this is from the ones when the fish ignore our wares completely and take some tiny mite only a fraction of an inch away. This has happened to me many times, as it has to all of us, but—if I may jump parenthetically to California for the moment—the place where it is the rule rather than the exception is on the Rising River. Anybody who contends that trout are not selective in their feeding and that any old fly will do if presented skillfully should visit the Rising. Like our Snake it emerges as a full-blown river from a number of large springs. It is only a few miles long and then it empties into Hat Creek—the only case I know of a river flowing into a creek. Again like the Snake, it has a smooth surface and a gentle current. Absent a hatch of flies, you would never guess there was a fish in it, but when the rise occurs the river comes alive.

The Rising has the usual assortment of trout-stream flies, including the tiny Diptera generally known as midges. But it isn't the midges that do the angler in; it is the small duns and spinners, which frequently appear on the stream in large numbers, that cause his blood pressure to rise. They are bigger than the midges but still so small that nothing larger than a size-20 hook will do—and is there anyone who honestly believes he can cope with a hook as small as this? When these little creatures are on the water I challenge the modern-day Halfords to interest these trout with their flies.

It is exasperating to watch a number of heavy trout feeding on these little Ephemerae and not to be able to coax one to your fly; many times the fish are so engrossed with the hatch that not even a bad cast will put them down. Yet I never admit defeat; I continue to cast to these rises until they have quit—which ought to prove something or other.

This part of Idaho has an altitude of more than six thousand feet and it produces weather as cold as that anywhere else in the United States. The winters are long, and snowstorms can be expected as early as September and as late as June. The caretakers of the clubs and a few other rugged characters make up the winter population. With anywhere from four to eight feet of snow on the level for five months of the year, snowshoes or skis are the customary means of transportation for those who, like the caretakers, live off the highway.

Although the severity of the cold, which at times exceeds 35 degrees below zero, tends to suspend most activities during the winter, life is not without its occasional exciting incidents. Thus, one winter some years ago a bull moose broke through the top cover of one of the cesspools at Coffee Pot Lodge! According to the report of the caretaker, however, the animal was able to extricate himself without help.

The episode carries a deep meaning which those who fish the North Fork might profitably ponder. It suggests that here, if anywhere, is the refuge to which any of those whose tranquillity of soul has not been sufficiently restored by his summer holiday might retreat for the winter. Granted there is no absolute escape from life's trials, it would seem that if one's worries for five months of the year could be limited to the single problem of keeping moose out of his cesspools, life should move along very evenly indeed.

We were leaving the Snake that afternoon. I had spent the early part of the morning downstream at the ranch—but this was not the day. The rise was on when I arrived and the fish were feeding ravenously but—why is it that whenever a fisherman tells about his less-fortunate days there always seems to be a "but" in it?—the only rises I could get were from whitefish. It did not take me long to come to the conclusion that this was not going to be a good day at the ranch, so I got out of the river and hurried back to the home water.

It was a lovely day in early October, warm enough so that the constant handling of the wet line did not numb the fingers of the left hand, yet cold enough to make a flannel shirt comfortable. There was not a cloud in the sky and the gentlest of breezes helped rather than hindered the cast. There was no sign of fly life and under these conditions a floating fly is generally a waste of time; but I put one on anyway. There are certain parts of the river below the Coffee Pot Rapids where the fish, though not rising to a hatch, are almost always on the lookout for floating insects. Do you remember two years ago, I asked myself, when everybody else was fishing wet and you caught them on a floater? Sure I do, I said, and I will never forget the big fish I hooked last year in the quarter-mile pool; I must have had him on for five minutes before he broke me. Well, I said, I guess I better finish up the season at the quarter mile.

Never was a spot more inappropriately named: it is nearer a half than a quarter mile from our lodge, and it is not a pool at all, just a run that is slightly deeper than the rest of the river. In the fall it is the boss place to hook a big trout, and I did want to tag one more good fish before I went home. The quarter mile is a friendly place and I was in no hurry; I sat on the bank for a while dangling the feet of my waders in the water idly watching the eccentricities of the current. It was midmorning and the little wavelets reflected a million pinpoints of light. I sometimes wear polaroid glasses when I am fishing to save the wear and tear on the eyes, but never here; the river is too beautiful. And now it was fall and the aspen and other deciduous vegetation were changing color; to have used dark glasses would have been a sacrilege. How thankful we trout fishermen should be that, without consciously seeking her out, we are continually coming upon Nature in one of her party dresses.

The dry fly was no mistake; the first fish materialized promptly, a rainbow weighing more than two pounds. He was a young fish; both mouth and tail were small in proportion to his weight and length. Being vigorous and active, he was



It was a lovely day in early October . . .

troublesome to handle during the tagging operation and needed a bit of resuscitation before he was ready to resume activities in the stream. It was interesting to watch this trout when I finally released him. His first move was to get under a piece of moss not two feet away from me; the cover of the moss seemed to give him a feeling of security, notwithstanding the dreadful creature who had brought about all this suffering and anguish, culminating in the attaching of that horrid tag to his gill cover, was still nearby and, for all he knew, ready and willing to inflict further tortures upon him. He stayed quietly under the moss for what must have been a full minute; then he moved away and was gone. Good-by and good luck, my friend, I said; I hope the next fellow who catches you will put a tag on your other gill cover or, better yet, let you go. Why clutter you up with tags? One is enough to keep track of you.

As I sat on the bank bathing in a glow of self-approbation my friend Porthos appeared on the scene. There was every reason to believe another sizable trout was in the offing hungering for the fly that had taken my fish, so I insisted that Porthos take over. It is a wonderful thing how the graciousness and generosity of the fisherman are accentuated when he has just caught a big fish. Is there a tinge of braggadocio in it, a silent challenge, a let's-see-you-tie-that attitude? Anyway, it gave me no pain whatsoever when the fish that presently fell to Porthos' rod scaled well under two pounds.

We had quite an argument over the propriety of putting one of my tags on his fish. Porthos did not have any of his own tags along and I protested that it was a misrepresentation to use a tag with my name on it. But Porthos insisted and gave my arm the final twist by pointing out that the tag did not say I had caught the fish, merely that I had released it. Nice fellow, Porthos; I knew I could count on him not to let me down.

I did not fish any more, but I had just as much fun. It is always a pleasure to watch someone else perform, especially when the man on the side lines has recently caught a fish bigger

than anything he expects the man in the creek to hook up with. You can quarterback his tactics: praise his good casts and criticize his bad ones, suggest he move upstream and then move back, tell him he ought to change his fly—the things you can point out he is doing wrong are without end. Why is it that the performer is so docile in doing everything his friend on the bank advises? I haven't the faintest idea, but it is fun for the one who calls the signals and is further evidence of the fly fisher's urbanity.

It was not pleasant to contemplate going home, for it meant the sudden transition from the carefree life on the stream to a welter of work and responsibilities. But an end must come to all good things and I prepared to make my last cast—which is always repeated, I find, at least fifty times. As I trudged along the bank, the prospect of packing up my things was not a cheerful one, but by the time I arrived at the Lodge I had everything under control and as I was taking down my rod I said to myself, shucks, the season isn't over, it's just beginning.

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF DENVER

P. O. BOX 5808 TELEPHONE 303-266-2211
DENVER, COLORADO 80217

BRUCE E. DINES
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

October 20, 1969

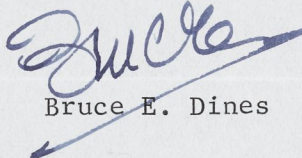
Mr. Bud Lilly
Bud Lilly's Trout Shop
Box 587
West Yellowstone, Montana

Dear Bud:

I hope this will help. I don't know how to address it so will leave that up to you. Furthermore, I have taken the Gerry matter up with the Gerry people and they will follow through in the near future.

Be sure to let me know how the Avon deal works out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce E. Dines", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bruce E. Dines

BED: b

Encl.



BRUCE E. DINES
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF DENVER

P. O. BOX 5808

TELEPHONE 303-266-2211

DENVER, COLORADO 80217

October 20, 1969

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Gentlemen:

I have known Bud Lilly and his wife personally for many years and have carefully followed their progress as the owners and operators of the Trout Shop in West Yellowstone, Montana. Mr. Lilly started as a fishing guide in the area and expanded his business into a successful sophisticated and knowledgeable retail sporting goods outlet. In the fall and winter he is employed as a teacher and during the fishing season of June, July, August and September he has the reputation as being the most knowledgeable fishing guide and boatman in the entire southwestern half of Montana.

Mr. Lilly tells me that he is most anxious to be an Avon Boat Distributor in his territory and being thoroughly familiar with your products and having been fishing and boating with Mr. Lilly for many years, it is a pleasure for me to recommend him to you.

Furthermore, being the owner of two of your Red Shank Boats, I personally feel highly qualified to make this recommendation. He is honest, forthright and able and will not ask for anything to which he is not entitled. It's my pleasure to speak on his behalf.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Dines

BED:b

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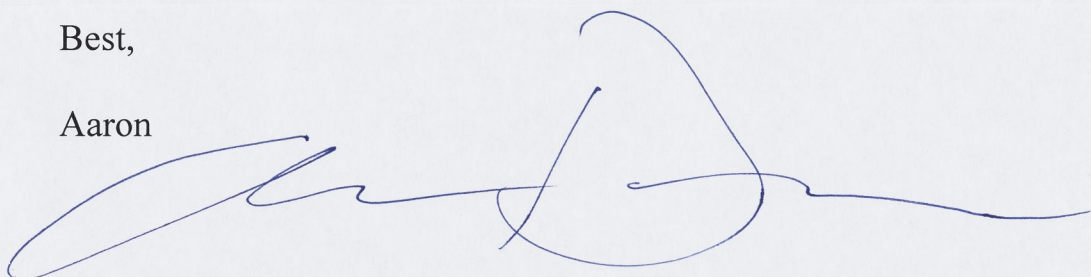
Mr. Lilly,

Leon Martuch asked if I would send you the "The Legends of Fly-Fishing" DVDs which my father, Jerry, and I edited.

I hope you're pleased with the result! Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments

Best,

Aaron

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Dennis', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Aaron Dennis
Aaron.Dennis@gmail.com
718-679-7204

1-8-98

Dear Mr Lilly,

Here is my check to reserve a sleeping room.

I plan to arrive on Sunday June 14th and depart on Friday June 19th.

I would like to do a float trip on one of the days. I'll leave it up to you to make the best arrangement. Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday would be fine for the float trip.

If you have any information concerning the fishing could you send it to me.

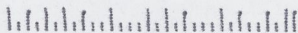
Also, although it's not of prime importance, it is possible to see and fish the Madison River from where you are without a long auto ride.

Yours truly
Laurie DeChesser

140 Ashley Circle
#2
Athens, GA. 30605



Bud Lilly's Anglers Retreat
POB 983
16 West Birch
Three Forks, MONTANA
59752



1-26-98

Dear Mr Lilly,

I received your letter acknowledging my reservation.

Your suggested schedule sounds fine. I am enclosing a check made out to Greg Lilly to reserve the float trip on the Big Hole river on the 16th of June. Hopefully you will forward the check to your son.

Am I correct in assuming that I'll be able to fish the other places you mentioned on my own?

I'll be looking forward to meeting you and fishing Montana.

Yours truly
Lucas DeChesser

Thank
You



5 22

[MARCH 3, 2005

Dear Bud,

thank you for your
very kind words a
Cory's funeral. they brought
back some fond memories
and some stories that people
did not know. thank you
for being a friend. love,
from the DeGroot family

CARLTON CARDS
CLEVELAND, OH 44144

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TORONTO, ONTARIO M8Z 1S7



TNTH 2H

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