

Preserving our fly fishing heritage for future generations

September 28, 1999

Hi, Bud!

Thanks for your nice note and the missing addresses.

The sponsors for the event were: Dave & Evy Cranston, John & Anita Lutz, John Mussey and Lewis & Linda Robinson. Their addresses were on the list I sent to you before.

The donors who contributed specifically for this event were: Greg Lilly, Bob Jacklin (both day trips, guiding), and Michael Owen (wine).

Just give a holler if there's anything else you need.

My best,

Paula M. Welch

Events



Preserving our fly fishing heritage for future generations

September 29, 1999

Hi, Bud!

Forgot (I think) to let you know that there were 3 contributions made after the fact. Here are the names:

Richard & Janet Breuner, 500 Beaver Creek Rd., Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730

Alan & Jean Kahn, PO Box 999, Bozeman, MT 59771

John Izard, 191 Peachtree St. #3900, Atlanta, GA 30303

I'll be in touch with any others.

My best to you,

Paula M. Welch

## **Bud Lilly Banquet**

September 11, 1999 comments by Paul Schullery

When my book *Royal Coachman* was published last winter, the dedication read like this:

This book is dedicated to Bud Lilly, a great fisherman, conservationist, and friend. In a world where the very concept of hero has been either cynically discarded or commercialized into triviality, it's good to know someone who still measures up to an earlier and higher meaning of the word.

That pretty much gives away my feelings about Bud, and it reflects the feelings of many others as well, so I can't express how pleased I am that The American Museum of Fly Fishing has chosen to honor him as it has.

The last time I was asked to speak at an event honoring Bud, it was for a roast at the Trout Unlimited annual meeting here in Bozeman a couple years ago. I would share with you a couple remarks I made at that time, as exemplifying the mood of the evening:

We salute this man for his tireless devotion to protecting wild trout. After all, it was Bud Lilly who, by the time he was old enough to vote, had personally killed more metric tons of trout than the last ice age.

We salute this man for his equally tireless promotion of the great sport of fly fishing. After all, it was Bud Lilly's promotional skills that almost singlehandedly turned the Madison River into a daily reenactment of the miracle at Dunkirk.

We had a great time that evening, and Bud endured it with sportsmanship and grace, which wasn't a surprise. After all, Bud Lilly has made a career out of letting other fishermen talk. He explained it this way in one of the early promotional brochures of the Trout Shop:

So first thing to do when you arrive in West Yellowstone is visit The Trout Shop. Get your license, get free current fishing regulations, swap lies, etc. NOTE: I will listen to all your fish stories with a straight face. No other tackle shop can make this claim.

Many of you here have known Bud longer than I have. I met him about 25 years ago, when I first visited the Trout Shop, and he did indeed listen to my stories with a straight face. Bud could see how hooked I was on fly fishing and wild trout, and always paid the kind of attention to me that made me think that perhaps somehow I mattered. I know that thousands of others left the shop feeling the same way, and that is only one of Bud's many, many contributions to the world of wild trout. If someone takes you seriously, you will probably take yourself more seriously too. Listening to us with a straight face was more than an exercise in patience; it was a gift, a compliment, and an invitation. The Trout Shop was more than a place to buy swell tackle or get good advice. It was a place you entered and instantly felt *included*. Trout Shop customers got the feeling that they were part of something that was both exciting and important.

And we were, weren't we? I was a seasonal ranger in Yellowstone at the time, and was part of that lucky generation who discovered fly fishing just as it experienced the great boom of the 1970s. The Lillys, besides being at the center of this enchanting sport, were instantly likeable, and I became a regular visitor to the shop. I hardly ever could afford to buy anything, but they were unfailingly kind and friendly to me. When I first walked into the shop, I was already a conservationist, and was already immersing myself in the lore of fly fishing, but I think that it was

my visits to the Trout Shop—the people I met, the books I bought, the conversations I stumbled into, and the superb example provided by the Lillys—that as much as anything else enabled me to put these passions and concerns together into a way of life as an angler.

But another of the reasons that I am so pleased Bud is being honored here is that even then I could see that his influence reached well beyond the Trout Shop and its customers. Some of my most important early impressions of Bud didn't come from my visits to the shop. They came instead from my colleagues in the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If you have ever worked for a large institution, whether civilian or military; whether educational, corporate, or government, you know how frequently things that must get done simply don't. Somewhere up the chain of command, responsibility is eluded, and a kind of bureaucratic constipation sets in.

If this were the roast, I would be tempted to pursue this digestive metaphor, but I think I'll let it go.

Anyway, it was through these co-workers that I learned how important Bud was to the world of wild trout. I learned, for example, that on occasion the park's fisheries operation would be in jeopardy from faraway inaction that local appeals could not affect. What finally would break the jam had nothing to do with government procedures. It had to do with someone quietly telling Bud Lilly the problem. Bud would then make the requisite phone call to the right person, either within or outside of the government but somewhere above the inactive parties in the chain of command, and things would get moving again.

This was terribly interesting to me, because I was just then a young government employee blessed with some remarkable inside opportunities to see how things really work. I was surprised how often the process of getting anything done takes place in a misty realm off to the side of legislative mandates and administrative procedures. High school civics class and college lectures had told me nothing about all this. There isn't a chapter in civics textbooks about the Gardner

Grants, Leigh Perkins, and Bud Lillys who not only know the right phone numbers to call, but have the immediate and respectful attention of the person who answers the phone.

As I look back on my early visits to the Trout Shop, and on those revelations about how conservation actually gets done, I realize that what matters about Bud, and why Bud deserves whatever honors we can heap on him, is bound up in his sense of citizenship—he could make the rest of us feel like citizens of an important community, and he had a clear vision for that community's needs. Lists never do justice to achievements, but somewhere here, for the record, I should say that among his many other actions, Bud was first president of Montana Trout Unlimited, first chairman of the International Fly Fishing Center, and a founder of the Montana Trout Foundation. He is and long has been an active and effective force in many organizations including The American Museum of Fly Fishing, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, American Wildlands, the Montana Rivers Action Network, the Whirling Disease Foundation, the Montana Land Reliance, and the Federation of Fly Fishers. His scope of operations as a conservationist has routinely reached beyond the sometimes rather provincial fishing interest groups, to larger, broaderbased outfits that saw the West as he did—a single landscape where every action has far-reaching effects, and where conservation must mean more than saving a single species or a single piece of land or reach of river. He sometimes seems to outrun even these groups in the breadth of his thinking. This is citizenship at its best.

Last February at an event at the University of Colorado Center of the American West, I found myself answering questions about the West. This was a pretty tweedy, well-educated audience, and I had no idea what they would want to talk about. It was great. One person would ask a question about the politics of wolf recovery in the Northern Rocky Mountains, and the next would be curious about imitative theory in fly patterns. I couldn't wait to get back and tell Bud about this, and when I did, he pointed out to me that one of the things that makes the West different is that fly fishing truly is a part of the regional culture. It isn't an idle

hobby a few people take up; it is part of our very complex and always changing identity, along with grizzly bears and clearcuts, big skies and militiamen, cowboys and Indians.

Bud and I have just finished another book, which will be published later this fall. It was Bud's idea to call it "a guide to fly fishing the New West," and to emphasize the concept of the New West as important to fly fishers. Though people have used the term New West for more than a century, western legal scholar Charles Wilkinson dates the current use and meaning of the term New West to the spectacular growth of the Colorado ski industry in the 1960s and 1970s; at that time, the American perception of the West changed. The old values that had driven traditional western lifeways lost ground in a significant rebalancing of the economic and social landscape that is still underway and that most of us here have participated in.

Bud's career as an angler, guide, and conservationist has parallelled these profound changes. Fly fishing must now rank up there with skiing as an exemplar of the New West. When Bud told me that fly fishing is a part of Western culture, he was speaking as a fourth-generation citizen of the region, one who had watched fly fishing go from something people just did because their fathers taught them how on the ranch, to something people come from all over the world to do because, to them, it is what the West is all about.

The Old West hasn't disappeared. There are still plenty of loggers, miners, cowboys, and ranchers. In fact, many of them were fly fishing here before it became fashionable, and they are also essential citizens of the West. Last weekend, as I was finishing up the index for our book, listing all the names and places Bud mentions, I was again reminded of his breadth of vision as a citizen of this changing landscape. The names we fly fishers all know—Ernie Schwiebert, Gary Lafontaine, Charles Brooks, Norman Maclean—are interspersed with others that even most western fly fishers need to be reminded of—Norman Means, F.B. Pott, Don Martinez. But even more important are all the other names, the ones that suggest

the extent to which our sport is embedded not only in the regional but also in the national culture—Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Brigham Young, and others, and a host of names that were people before they became places—Gallatin, Jefferson, Madison, . . . Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Flathead, . . . Bozeman. What makes Bud such a great citizen of the West is that he is conscious of these names, not as historical curiosities but as literal neighbors, as a living, dynamic heritage he shares and honors and is guided by.

Bud Lilly is a great fisherman in the finest sense of the word. I have described watching Bud fish as a kind of revelation, in which you learn that there really is a right way, and beyond that a supremely right way, to catch a fish. He is a master. But he has "gone fishing" with countless people who under his guidance had such an enthralling day that when it was over they were only vaguely aware that he had hardly made a cast; I think he sometimes carries a rod just to keep everybody else comfortable.

But being a great fisherman involves a lot more than being able to catch fish. Most of all, it involves nurturing a conservationist's conscience in yourself and others. In all the political wrangling and heartbreaking compromises of modern conservation, Bud proves that principals can be honored and ideals can be upheld. By lending his wisdom, force of personality, and energy to the conservation cause, he has materially improved our fishing and our lives. He has done all this unselfconsciously and as quietly as he could, as the obvious and necessary duty of a responsible citizen.

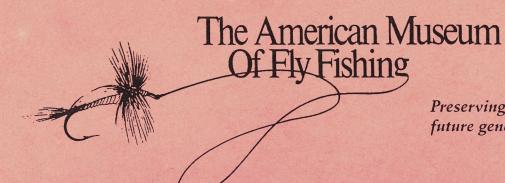
Arnold Gingrich, once president of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, was right when he wrote that "Bud Lilly is a trout's best friend", and to that sentiment I can only add that Bud is also a best friend of the American West, whose landscapes he has done so much to protect, and whose very culture he has helped to shape. Thanks to him, and to all of you for coming here to honor him.

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Dave Miller 19 E Ach 59752 V Jim Cashman McCallister, ont 59740 Som Radan 239 madison Auc Mry. 59758 V Chris Brodin 405 Fce fond Rd Dr. John Mest 317 So. Broadway manhattan, 5974) Bert Wesnick

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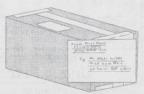
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Mr. Tom Rosenbauer RR#1 Box 1259 Arlington, VT 05250 Mr. David H. Walsh PO Box 11450 Jackson, WY 83002

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Mr. Arthur Stern RR2 Box 385A Sharon, VT 05065

Mr. John Swan 1425 Westbrook St. Portland, ME 04102-1917

You've need to use stamps!



Preserving our fly fishing heritage for future generations

August 2, 1999

TO: All Bud Lilly Heritage Dinner Committee Members

Hello from the Museum!

Things are really taking shape nicely. The invitations have just gone in the mail. I have enclosed the mailing list so that you will know who has already been invited. I've enclosed a few extra invitations if you know of someone who is not on the list that should be invited. All of the Museum's trustees were also invited, and a list of those is also enclosed. You'll also find a few posters to put up where you think they'll best serve the purpose. Thanks!

Your primary job is to get people to join us in honor of Bud. However, it is always great to have local talent included, so any day trips you can solicit from your favorite outfitter (Bob Jacklin has already donated a day of fishing with him), original or limited edition artwork fron local artists, gift certificates from local tackle shops, etc., that you can get your hands on really will add to the character of the event. I have a lot of wonderful merchandise to bring along, but these added "specialties" will certainly help.

We're looking forward to a big crowd! The Strand Union Building ballroom has been reserved and the menu has been selected. It promises to be a great evening.

Please get in touch with questions anytime. Thanks so much for all of your help. We couldn't do it without you!

My best,

Paula M. Welch

Events & Membership

Datter & Joen Ball Leigland 23 Riverside Dr 59715 59715 (G. dlow 3103 Old U-S. Hwy 9/ Coscale 59421 1/4124 Blan Ridge Rd Bent Kanahee Eoodrich Aus Ront A Car 307 Gallatin Field Rd Belgrade 59914 Dave Garber Gallatin Nat'l Forest 10E Babcock 59915 Wolverton P.O. Box 161 Twin Fails ID. 83303 Note Phil + Joan Wright 1/1011 River Dr 21 Uingstan 59047

Scott Carson 320 Tetan Auc Bogans



Preserving our fly fishing heritage for future generations

August 16, 1999

Hi, Bud!

Here's the best I can do for additional invitations. Sorry. We sent out all 1000 that we had printed up.

Another option: I sent each of the dinner committee members the complete mailing list, plus 5 extra invitations to mail to anyone not on the list. You might just want to call the committee members with your additional names that are not on the mailing list enclosed. That way, potential guests will get the "real" thing.

Hope this doesn't cause you any inconvenience. I also sent invitations to everyone on the second list (except for duplications), which is the personal list you gave us.

Let me know if there's anything else I can do for you. Really looking forward to meeting you and seeing Montana--albeit briefly!

My best,

Paula M. Welch

Events & Membership

Cal Dunbar Box 368 West Yellowstone MT 59758-0368

10 August 1999

Bud Lilly Bozeman MT 59715

Dear Bud:

More dope.

In rereading Gierach's Sex, Death and Flyfishing given me years ago by Gordy Young after I took him gulper fishing, I came across the name of Billy Crabtree. Better add him:

William Crabtree, Moose Horn Ranch, West Yellowstone MT 59759.

Lynda Caine who is now living in sculptor Pat Mathieson's house she bought in Bozeman just bought the Firehole Ranch. She is the sole proprietor. George Watkins of the Snake River Implement Co. in Idaho Falls wanted to go in with her with his extensive Mormon tribe, but Lynda had the capacity to do it alone. Thank goodness. She was afraid of subdivision and rightly so. Anyway I think she will become a force both with flyfishers and with Gallatin County land factors from box north side.

Unfortunately she could not get her aunt Kathyrn Wanless and her cousin George Wanless of the Eccles clan and summer residents of Kirkwood to act in time to prevent the sale by Mickewright to Billings interests who intend to make an enlarged hunting operation out of it. Ken Stepanik told me about it when we were at Slough Creek. He said that country can't take that kind of hunting pressure. He and Kenny Whitman have hunted those drainages for years.

Micklewright is to build a house near the Happy Hour, I hear.

Also add:

D.H. Ward, 482 Zachariah Lane, Bozeman, 59718. He goes by "D. H.".

I don't know if he flyfishes a lot, but he and wife Jane ski regularly at Big Sky and he supports the GVLT and Elk Foundation. He lives on the street north of the Fifth Ace Saloon, highway 191.

Also:

Bob Schaap, (Vivian) Lone Mountain Ranch, Big Sky, 59716.

Joel Scrafford, (Patty) Big Sky, 59716. He is the retired Billings US Fish and Wildlife agent who cracked the bighorn sheep poaching ring in YNP several years ago. He and his wife are great skiers at BS.

Phil Kirk, Hidden Village 51 Big Sky, 59716. He played football for MSU in the '50s and he and wife Anne ski BS.

All for now.

Terry Povah Bob Harridan Jack Cole

The American Museum
Of Fly Fishing

Preserving our fly fishing heritage for future generations

August 25th

Bud,

Please accept our sincere apologies. Your address was not updated in our files, and was originally the one Gardner Grant gave to us.

Anyway, here are some invitations that have been returned in the mail for bad addresses. I do not have any mailing envelopes, however.

In the parcel that is being forwarded to you from W. Yellowstone, there is a list of everybody who has been invited. Also, our entire board of trustees has been invited, as well as the out-of-state names given to me.

I began shipping merchandise today. If you know of other merchandise or whatever anyone is planning on donating out your way, please let me know ahead of time so that I can be as ready as possible to fit additional items into the format.

I'm really looking forward to meeting you and have been a "fan" for many years.

My best,



Federation of Fly Fishers PO Box 1595 Bozeman, MT 59715 Walter S. Ainsworth Box 160687 Big Sky, MT 59716 Tom Anacker 422 W. Henderson Bozeman, MT 59715

R.L. Winston Company Drawer T Twin Bridges, MT 59754 Archie G. Allen 405 Mt. View Dr. Bozeman, MT 59718 Mr. & Mrs. Buck Anderson 8420 Bridger Canyon Rd. Bozeman, MT 59715

J. Frederic Latour 418 River Dr. Lolo, MT 59847 USA Mike Allen PO Box 5990 Helena, MT 59604 Douglas R. Anderson First Interstate Bank PO Box 4667 Missoula, MT 59806

Grizzly Hackle Fly Shop 215 W. Front St. Missoula, MT 59801 Glenn Allinger 112 Westridge Dr. Bozeman, MT 59715 George Anderson c/o Yellowstone Angler US Hwy. 89 S. Livingston, MT 59047

The River's Edge 2012 N. 7th Bozeman, MT 59715 Lynn Alpers Hamilton Stores PO Box 250 W. Yellowstone, MT 59758

Mick Anderson 649 N. Ewing #11 Helena, MT 59601

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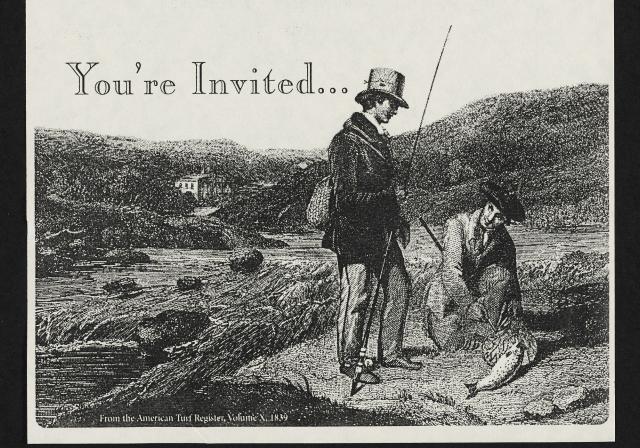
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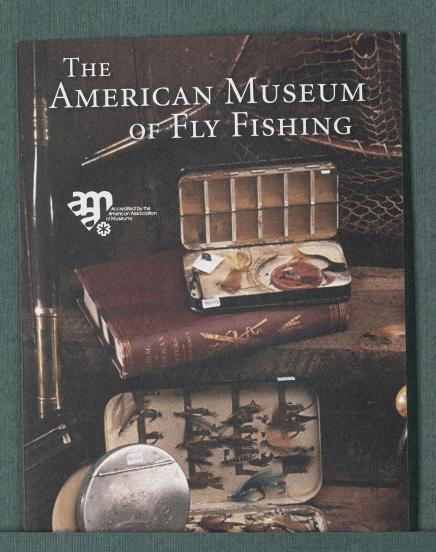
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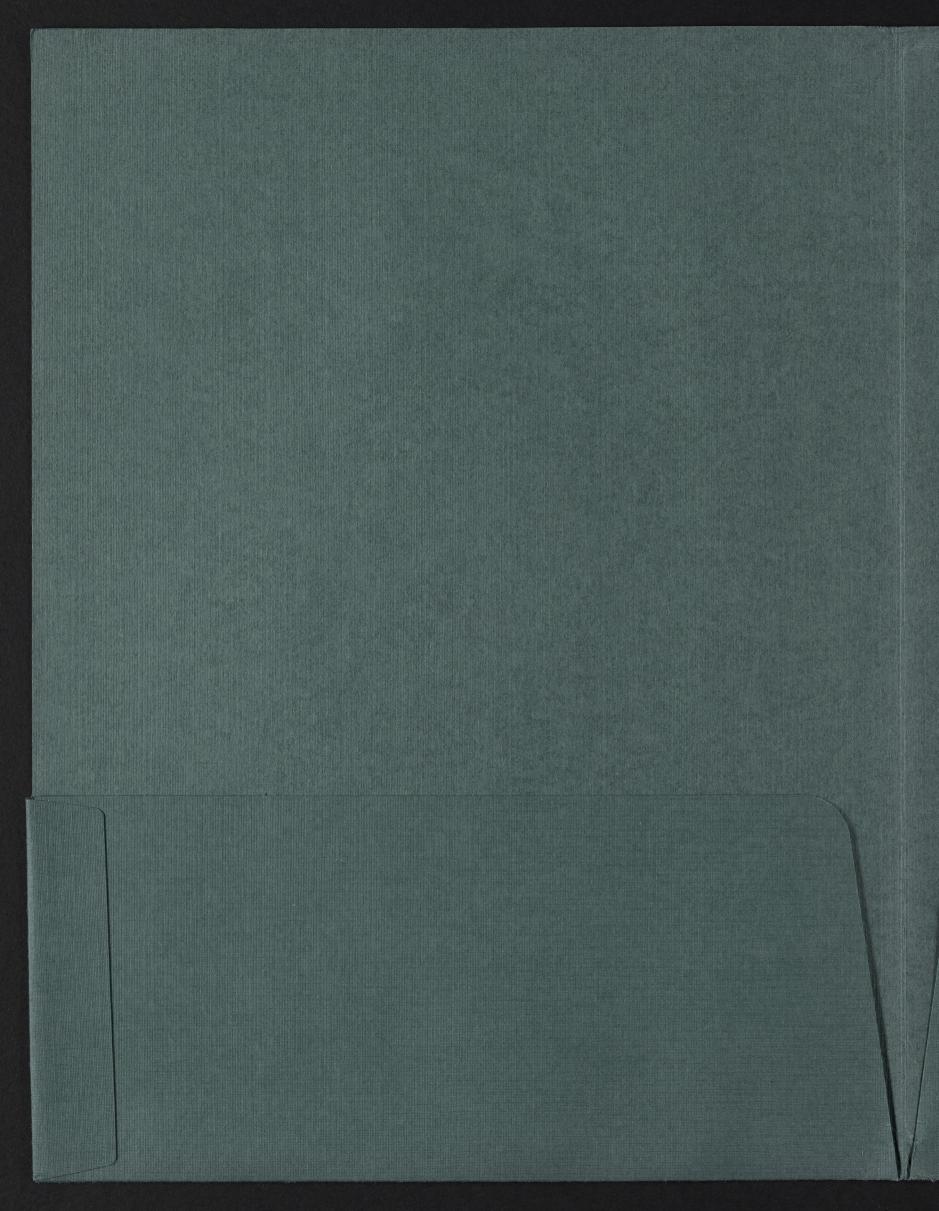


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The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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# Exhibits

Interested in seeing Ernest Hemingway's fly rod? How about Babe Ruth's? The American Museum of Fly Fishing maintains a program of permanent and traveling exhibits that present the fly-fishing items of the famous and not so famous. These exhibits are open to the public and include a selection of the finest rods, reels, flies, and other equipment from the sport's master craftsmen and women.



Mary Orvis Marbury, author of Favorite Flies and their Histories, is one of many historic faces found in the Museum's traveling exhibit "Anglers All".

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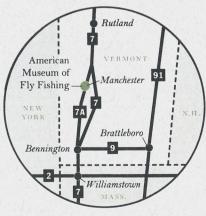
The American Museum of Fly Fishing is the only museum of its kind accredited by the American Association of Museums.

"...doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant, that it will prove to be like virtue, a reward to itself."

Izaak Walton (1653)



A few of the over 3,000 volumes in our library.



Located just three doors north of the Equinox Hotel on historic route 7A





Among the 20,000 flies in the Museum's permanent collection are those pictured here, which include the oldest documented flies in the world.

# The Museum

Founded in 1968, the American Museum of Fly Fishing has assembled the world's largest collection of fly angling art and artifacts available to the public. The Museum celebrates fly fishing in all of its dimensions: sport, history, ethic, philosophy, biology, art, craft and literature.

Caring for the collections, mounting exhibits and publishing *The American Fly Fisher* all require funding. To continue these efforts, the Museum needs your support.



# Membership

Members receive our nationally recognized journal *The American Fly Fisher*. Four times a year readers are transported back into angling history

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# A LOUIS A Museum of Fly Fishing Newsletter of the American Museum of Fly Fishing Volume 4 Issue 2 Summer 2001

# Gone, but not forgotten Preston Jennings

othing in his background suggests Preston Jennings (1893-1962) would write one of angling's most important books of entomology. He attended a medical school that is now part of the University of Virginia, worked as a sales engineer for Filtrine Manufacturing Company, and had an abiding interest in art, going so far as to study with an artist he admired. He also, of course, had a deep love of fly fishing.

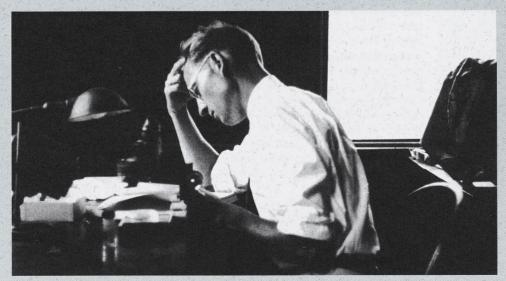
He brought these disparate perspectives to bear on an issue that was beginning to capture the attention of American anglers, although it was far from a pressing concern. Before 1935, anglers had no definitive work on the insects found on American waters. The most notable stab at such a book, American Trout Stream Insects by Louis Rhead, failed primarily because Rhead abandoned scientific nomenclature and gave the insects names of his own choosing. Jennings, who had been collecting information about streamside insects for years, decided to make his own attempt to meet that need.

He consulted the leading entomologists of the day and enlisted fellow anglers such as Roy Steenrod, Art Flick, and Eugene Connett to help collect insect samples from a variety of streams. According to his friend Alfred Miller, also known as Sparse Grey Hackle, "it was written backward, in a manner of speaking," as Jennings started with the most popular and effective flies and then set about identifying what insects they imitated and classifying those insects according to scientific methods. The result was *A Book of Trout Flies*, published in 1935.

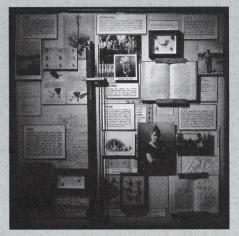
At the time, A Book of Trout Flies was the most comprehensive entomology of eastern American rivers ever published in the States, and became the bellwether of the genre. Ernest Schwiebert noted, "Like the appearance of Ronalds in 1836, the work of Jennings a century later set the standard of excellence that has measured all subsequent American work on fly-fishing entomology." It advocated a scientific approach to angling as well, emphasizing the need for anglers to study what insects were hatching and use flies that imitated them.

This is not to say the book was perfect, or without flaws. Arnold Gingrich points out, "Jennings had his blind spots and could be dogmatic in his insistence upon them." He

(continued on page 2)



Preston Jennings working on one of his manuscripts which can be found in the Museum archives.



One of the timeline panels now featured in the Museum galleries.

#### Timeline Ready to show...

The Museum is pleased to announce the completion of our new timeline display. These five panels, duplicates of the ones currently traveling with *Anglers All*, give an overview of the history of fly fishing beginning in 200 AD and concluding in the year 2000. Artifacts, photography, and illustrations combine to highlight the best of our fly fishing heritage.

Featured in the exhibit are Charles Murphy and Hiram Leonard rods, representatives of the *Treatyse* flies tied by Jack Heddon, books by authors including Edward Hewitt, Vince Marinaro, and Alfred Ronalds, and some of the original flies used for Mary Orvis Marbury's *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* as well as flies tied by Theodore Gordon, Bill Edson, Preston Jennings, and George La Branche.

In addition, Museum trustee Pam Bates was kind enough to loan some items belonging to herself and her late father. Joseph D. Bates Jr., including three Lee Wulff-tied flies and two outstanding variations of the Gaudy fly tied by Mark Waslick and Maxwell MacPherson.

We encourage all of our members in the area to stop in and see these beautiful additions to our galleries.

# On Display!

As part of our ongoing commitment to presenting fly fishing in its many aspects, a recent Museum exhibit highlighted the lives and belongings of Maxine Atherton and Kay Brodney.

Maxine Atherton (1904-1997) was a conservationist before it was popular and a woman who knew and fished with some of the greatest names in American angling history, including Edward Hewitt, Lee and Joan Wulff, and George LaBranche. Maxine came to the sport late, and did much of her learning on the Battenkill in West Arlington, VT, where she and her husband John Atherton lived. Her good friend Alfred Miller, also known as Sparse Grey Hackle, wrote: "On this infinitely rewarding, but supremely taxing, water Max learned to fish with the skill as well as the pertinacity of an otter, and made herself the best fisherman (or woman) with the nymph that I have ever seen."

Maxine cast her line all over the globe even after her husband's untimely death in 1952, blazing trails in Ireland, Labrador, France, and England, and was once accosted in Spain for unwittingly fishing on Francisco Franco's private stretch of water. A passionate advocate for the environment and a good friend to the Museum, Miller once said of her, "her husky voice continually uplifts in laughter, and I can't remember what she looks like when she isn't smiling." There are certainly worse ways to be remembered.

Born in Wisconsin, it took Kay Brodney (1920-1994) a while to be bitten by the angling bug. She came across a casting tournament in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1948, and that was it: "I saw those lines swishing about and it changed my whole life." Once hooked, Kay began making up for lost time with a vengeance. Listed among her many accomplishments is that she was one of the first anglers to take dorado on a fly, and in 1962, in front of a crowd which included baseball legend Ted Williams, landed a 137.6 lb tarpon on a fly. It was only 11 lbs shy of the world record, and she caught it on a fly rod, reel and line she had made.

One of the earliest Museum trustees, Kay worked under Austin Hogan to put together the research library, and donated over 70 books to the collection. She also compiled TAFF's first index in 1978. After her death, Stu Apte said, "Her life was so remarkable: the things that she did, the places that she went, and the way she went about it. I mean, she was fearless!"

The Museum invites everyone to come by and learn more about some of these lesserknown fishing pioneers.

## Gone, but not forgotten Preston Jennings (continued from page 1)

believed, for example, that salmon feed in fresh water when they return to spawn, paid little attention to caddisflies, and insisted that the Royal Coachman imitated an actual insect. It's possible Jennings was aware of such criticisms, for in his unpublished manuscript, The Fly and the Fish, he tells his readers, "What I can offer, therefore, is not the last word in either knowledge or technique; it is rather my impressions, after a good many years of trial, error, theory, speculation, and practice." And Gingrich was quick to add, "Deluded, or inspired, as he might have been in some of his personal convictions, Preston Jennings was resolutely disciplined in his scientific fly fishing. He passed away before approach to the subject of stream entomology."

In his American Fly Fishing, Paul Schullery said Jenning's book, "paved the way for a growing interest in serious angling entomology in this country, entomology that was to form the foundation for further American efforts at imitation. It did this in the face of a general attitude among the leading authorities that such imitation, though interesting, was not really necessary." Indeed, even friends such as Dan Bailey told him, "My theory which is borne out in practice is that the trout's vision is so different from the human's that there is little value in working from the naturals."

Perhaps this type of reluctance was the reason that, despite receiving rave reviews upon publication, A Book of Trout Flies did not meet with commercial success. It went through two printings, both rather small, after which, according to Gingrich, "Jennings went into the same eclipse that he had helped to impose upon Rhead." In fact, it wouldn't be until Ernest Schwiebert's Matching the Hatch was published in 1955 that the scientific approach would truly catch on with fly fishers.

Although undoubtedly dismayed by how quickly his work faded from public view, Jennings continued his research. As his interest in art indicated, vision and perception were to the nature of things." Jennings very important in how Jennings got down to that nature better than approached flies and fly tying. He anyone ever had before, and our viewed insects and other prey angling continues to be the richer through a prism to duplicate how the for it.

fish would perceive it, since a prism refracts light much as water does, and built a special water tank to study flies from underneath. This led to his development and patenting of his Iris streamers, designed to emulate the colors of a baitfish under varying light conditions.

Jennings was working on a second book at the time of his death, one much broader in scope and reach than his first. With The Fish and the Fly, he intended to not only discuss his findings on entomology, fish vision, and perception, but to examine the philosophical and aesthetic aspects of the sport and try to discover what it was that drew people to publishing that manuscript, and before A Book of Trout Flies saw a second life in 1970. As one of the first Crown Sportsmen's Classics reissues, it sold so well it was reprinted seven times in three years, elevating him from the ranks of the forgotten prophets and into the general angling consciousness at last.

The Museum was extremely fortunate when, in 1980, Preston Jennings's wife Adele donated a wealth of materials which serve as testament to both the depth of his research and the extent of his passion for fly fishing. The collection includes an amazing assortment of flies by tyers including Theodore Gordon, G.E.M. Skues, T.E. Pryce-Tannatt, and G.M.L. LaBranche, letters and other correspondences from such greats as Lee Wulff, Dan Bailey, and Roderick Haig-Brown, as well as drawings, clippings, flies, rods, reels, and the work he'd accomplished on The Fly

In mulling over the connection between fly fishing and art, Jennings recalled the words of Frank Dumond, a friend and artist: "He told me that the great trouble with students of art was their inclination to try and copy the things of nature rather than to study the nature of things. Fly fishing should be approached in the latter manner. Sooner or later we have to get down

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#### Words from the Editor

The AMFF News was designed, first and foremost, for our membership. So we're asking you—what would you like to see us talk about? Is there a fly pattern you've always wondered about? A historical figure who has captured your attention? A reel or rod company you're interested in? Drop us a line—we're always looking for ideas.

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June 16

Saltwater Tournament Westport, Connecticut

July 21 - October 21 Anglers All Exhibit at the California Academy of Sciences San Francisco, California

October 11 Heritage Award Dinner San Francisco, California

November 1 Dinner/Auction Hartford, Connecticut

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# THE BUMBLEPUPPY

o complement the articles on Theodore Gordon in our Spring issue of *TAFF*, we thought we'd take a look at Gordon's "other fly": the Bumblepuppy.

According to *Streamer Fly Tying & Fishing* by Joseph D. Bates, there is no definitive pattern for the Bumblepuppy; in fact, Roy

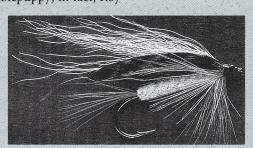
Steenrod told Bates that "bumblepuppy" was a word Gordon used to indicate a fly with no name. It was instead a work in progress, something Gordon was tinkering with throughout his life. Even his confidants, Steenrod and Herman Christian, had different senses of what the pattern should be, which themselves vary from a recipe Gordon sent to the Fishing Gazette in 1903, saying, "This fly has proved

attractive to all predatory fish. A good deal depends upon the way it is worked in the water...The "Bumble-Puppy" is great medicine—there is no doubt of that, after years of trial."

One of the earliest bucktail or streamer flies, Gordon used different sizes in various fishing situations, once telling Steenrod, "I

have taken 2 bass, bream, rock fish, perch, sunfish, pickerel, etc., on BP's, not to mention big trout in the Esopus."

While the Bumblepuppy never completely achieved the fame of Gordon's quill pattern, it still testifies to his inquiring mind and willingness to experiment, two of the reasons we continue to honor Gordon as a pivotal figure in American angling history.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- ...there are over 1,200 rods, 1,100 reels, 3,000 books, 10,000 catalogs, and 20,000 flies in the Museum's permanent collection?
- ...noted author and fly tyer Edward Hewitt also made reels for his friends? Only seven are now known to exist, and two of those are in the Museum's collection.
- ...bamboo rods have been made with 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 sides, as well as the now-standard 6?
- ...the Museum is one of only four museums in Vermont to be accredited by the American Association of Museums?
- ...some of the fly patterns in Mary Orvis Marbury's *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* call for fish scales to be used for the wings? Examples of such flies are currently on display at the Museum.

Keep watching this space for more interesting Museum and fly-fishing factoids.

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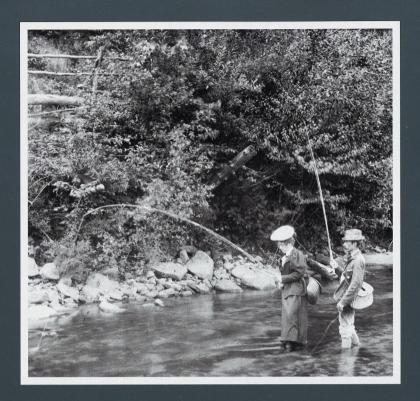
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# The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SPRING 2001 VOLUME 27 NUMBER 2

### Gordon, More Gordon, and Dressing Flies by Hand

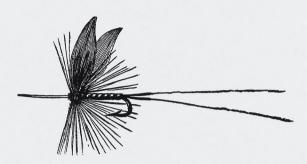


FIG. 21. RED OR CLARET QUILL GNAT.

An illustration from Theodore Gordon's copy of The Book of the All-round Angler (1888) by John Bickerdyke.

row that I live in Vermont, it seems strange that I don't get over to the Catskills to fish. I fish right around home or in the Adirondacks. I take the occasional trip to a far-off destination to wet a line. Mostly, I work, and think about fishing more than I actually get to fish.

I've been fishing in the Catskills only once. I was living in Washington, D.C., and my husband and I took a long weekend to explore the Beaverkill, the Willowemoc, the Esopus. It was the end of April and much less springlike than we expected. At the time, I doubt I could have told you much—if anything about Theodore Gordon. But I caught my first trout on that trip, seventy-four years after Gordon died, almost to the day. My proud husband framed the black stonefly nymph in a shadowbox.

Twelve years have passed since that life-changing event, and now, as editor of a fly-fishing journal, I am happy to devote two articles of this spring issue to the famed Theodore Gordon, dryfly angler of the Catskills. Both pieces give a bit of the history of this figure's life, as well as the authors' own interpretations of that history as they have found it. As Gordon Wickstrom states in his article, "The details of Gordon's biography are difficult,

largely memorial, and little of it documentary.

The two pieces are delightfully different in tone. Michael Scott, in "Theodore Gordon and Bamboo Rods," attempts to distance himself enough from the mythology of Gordon to report on Gordon the man-even Gordon the curmudgeon. But the focus of his article is really Gordon's writings about fishing bamboo rods: the rods Gordon owned, his ideas about what constituted a good rod, his words about casting rods,

and, like all of us, his changing opinions about particular rods over time. Scott also wonders about a rod that Gordon did not write about: a Payne rod that he is said to have passed on to his friend Herman Christian. Scott's article begins on page 8.

Reading "The Presence of Theodore Gordon," on the other hand, gives insight into why Gordon is so beloved and why he has become a mythic figure to so many. The words Gordon left behind are able to conjure a living presence for author Gordon Wickstrom, who recounts details of Gordon's biography in light of his importance to American fly-fishing and fly-tying history. The two articles gave the Museum an opportunity to include some photos of Theodore Gordon items from our own

collection. Wickstrom's piece begins on page 2.

Although Gordon used a vise for tying flies, apparently he could tie by hand as well. Few people tie by hand today, but author John Betts can and does (he also makes his own hooks, leaders, lines, reels, and rods). Until the end of the eighteenth century, almost all flies were dressed this way. In "Truly Hand-Tied Flies," Betts reviews what it was like to tie flies 150 years ago with the materials and tools available. Then he applies some of the old procedures to dress a fly. Try hand-tying the Cassard, using directions that would appear in earlier days. Betts's article begins on page 18.

We welcome you to the spring issue and issue an invitation as well. Come to the Museum May 19 for our annual festival weekend and dinner/auction (for details, see announcement

on page 26). We would love to see you here.

KATHLEEN ACHOR EDITOR



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# The American Fly Fishing Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SPRING 2001

VOLUME 27 NUMBER 2

The Presence of Theodore Gordon
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Truly Hand-Tied Flies
Museum News
Contributors

ON THE COVER: Theodore Gordon with an unidentified woman, probably fishing on the Neversink.

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# The Presence of Theodore Gordon

by Gordon M. Wickstrom



. . . HIS SYLVAN LIFE IS OUR LOST WORLD.
—John McDonald¹

It is a bitter cold winter's night and I am far away from the cheerful lights of town or city. The north wind is shrieking and tearing at this lonely house, like some evil demon wishful to carry it away bodily or shatter it completely. The icy breath of this demon penetrates through every chink and crevice, and the wood-burning stove is my only companion. It is on nights such as these, after the turn of the year, that . . . we return in spirit to the time of trout rising in the pools. We remember many days of glorious sport, and then somehow our thoughts take a turn and leap forward. Spring is near, quite near, and it will soon be time to go fishing.

-Theodore Gordon on the Neversink, 1906<sup>2</sup>

In the falling darkness of a winter afternoon, I sat reading the notes and letters of America's foremost fly fisherman, Theodore Gordon. His personality, his voice, his spirit—whatever one calls it—gained on me by the page and by the minute until, in a wonderful way, my reading became what seemed Gordon's very presence. The experience was so compelling that it brought me to my feet, book in hand, amazed and feeling something like the very touch of that elegant, fragile, reclusive genius of the trout fly.

What I'd known of Gordon before, now, in this instant of his "presence," seemed fragmentary and unfocused. I knew that I must try better to understand this extraordinary man who more than any other gave a distinctly American cast to fishing the fly and suggested new and native ways of thinking and feeling about the experience.

Living his "sylvan life" in his beloved Catskill Mountains, Theodore Gordon devoted nearly his entire adult life to fishing the fly for trout. He was to become a mythic figure, a man whose life is for us a glimpse back into what seems a little golden age. In our myth-dreaming, he models the ideal American angler's life.

Gordon was born to fortunate circumstances in Pittsburgh, 18 September 1854. A small and delicate child who lost his father almost at once, he nevertheless became enthralled with fishing, especially during summers spent on the Pennsylvania limestone streams around Carlisle, holidays which his father's legacy provided.

The details of Gordon's biography are difficult, largely memorial, and little of it documentary. Several of his contemporaries knew a bit about him, dined out on it, and passed it on, but apparently none knew Gordon's whole story. He kept his counsel.

In any case, after spending the first half of his working life in finance in the Northeast and in Savannah where he had family connections and origins, his finances and health broke. In

This article originally appeared in the February 1998 issue of *Gray's Sporting Journal*. It will be included in *Notes from an Old Fly Book*, a collection of essays by Wickstrom, to be published by the University Press of Colorado in September. Its preview appears here through their generosity.



The famous Halford letter and flies from the Anglers' Club of New York.

early retreat from active life, he seems to have lived for a time in comfort in West Haverstraw, New York, at the home of a relative, Theodore Gordon Peck Sr. From here he made regular angling forays into the Catskills and Poconos.

Sometime before 1905, he left the Peck home in favor of residence on the Neversink River in the Catskills, perhaps in the hope of benefit of the mountain air. Whatever his motivation, it was a move to a fine trout stream where he lived almost as a recluse in a succession of uncomfortable farmhouses along the river.

Gordon's mother, Fanny Jones Gordon, chronically ill herself and anxious about her son's well-being alone there up in the mountains, paid Gordon regular summer visits. Bearing the burden of each other's illness, tensions rose. On occasion, Gordon complained to friends that his mother's condition was for him all too confining. But they got on—against the odds, both to die in 1915.

Gordon fished hard throughout the season, read everything about fly fishing he could get his hands on—especially the English authors. From his reading he taught himself to tie the flies that would make him famous. Season by season, he became more and more the master angler/fly tyer of the Neversink—the complete American fly fisher.

Following the collapse of the family railroad interests, Gordon's paternal legacy was seriously diminished. He was able to augment his meager income, however, by dressing flies

to order at \$1.25 the dozen for a clientele of prosperous, vacationing anglers from metropolitan centers who came to the Catskills as to Mecca, where they sought to lionize Gordon and fish his definitive dressings.

Gordon was an inveterate correspondent with family, friends, and other anglers. A letter of inquiry to England's great Frederic Halford, the father of the dry fly, got from Halford on 22 February 1890, a full set of his new and revolutionary dry flies. That was a seminal day in the post for American anglers; for thus the dry fly arrived in America to be naturalized to these shores by Theodore Gordon. Though Gordon was neither the only nor the first to take up the floating fly in America, his study, practice, and ensuing reputation were to do for the "dry" what Hamlet says the actor does for his time: show its "form and pressure."

Though Gordon took to Halford's dry flies with enthusiasm, he realized that they would not readily suit the requirements of our often rougher American rivers and streams, with their many more diverse hatches of insects. Halford's flies would require considerable adaptation and the addition of wholly new patterns of imitation. In 1890, there was no full and systematic entomology of American stream insects as was available in England, and Gordon fondly hoped that some American would soon rise to the occasion. His own efforts to classify the mayfly were only tentative.

Still, he was always learning. "We can never learn all there is

in fly fishing, but we can keep an open mind, and not be too sure of anything.... It is a fascinating business" (14 May 1912).<sup>3</sup> Constant learning was what he said he liked best about fishing, its never-ending challenge and novelty. He was as without dogma as any mortal could be.

Though companions in the culture of angling, Gordon and Halford were profoundly different. The English Halford, ever the dogmatist, insisted that as a matter of angling decorum, scientific rectitude, and social class status, fishing the dry fly, and fishing it properly, on his chalk streams, was the solely acceptable behavior. Not so for our Gordon, whose mind was of that restless, inquiring, pragmatic American breed, always

experimental and always open to the next idea.

Gordon's work at his vise initiated perhaps the most significant movement in American fly tying: the Catskill School. On the assumption that a fly ought to suggest, if not imitate, insects actually encountered on our American streams, Gordon's dressings took on a sparse, somber-bright delicacy got by slender, nicely tapered, rather short dubbed or quill bodies. Hackles were selected for their stiff, glossy barbs in exactly the right duns, creams, gingers, and browns. The favored wing material, and basic to the genius of the Catskill School, was the lemon barred side of the wood duck. These delicately barred feathers suggested better than any other the even more delicately marked venation of a mayfly's wing. The tail, though in some cases also of wood duck, more frequently employed stiff, slightly elongated hackle barbs. These helped the flies to "cock," to sit up high and dry on the surface, as Halford insisted they must. Finally, the heads of Catskill drys are idiomatic, wonderfully slender and neat, and at the height of the style preserving a



Photo by Enrico Ferorelli from Land of Little Rivers by Austin McK, Francis

The Theodore Gordon fly box, which resides at the Anglers' Club of New York.



Theodore Gordon as a teenage sportsman; he obtained some of his best fly-tying materials by hunting.

speak of Nature itself and astonish with their superb, withal, conservative beauty.

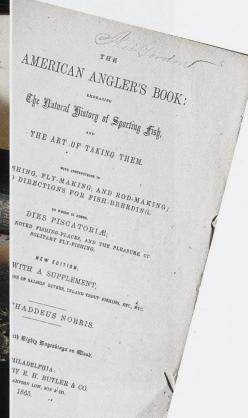
A representative half-dozen patterns developed by the Catskill tyers would include the Light Cahill, the Hendrickson, the March Brown, the Gray Fox, the Quill Gordon, along with that great searching fly: the Fan Wing Royal Coachman. The Quill Gordon was Theodore Gordon's emblematic contribution to what we might call "The American Collection." It remains essential to any wellappointed fly box.

In his earlier years Gordon remarked time and again on how difficult it was for him to get fly-tying materials, there being for practical purposes no American suppliers. Ordering from England, the only other alternative, was not without its frustrations. He wanted, particularly, stiffer, more web-free, glossier hackles than the English were content to use. He was a stickler for getting just the right shades of color and textures into his flies. Forever on the lookout for them on the birds

he shot, in milliners shops, costumers, and among fellow fly tyers-wherever silk, feather, and fur might be found-he bummed, borrowed, and begged whatever he could. And returned in kind.

Far from becoming a Halfordian purist, Gordon never gave up entirely his straps of two or three wet flies fished up or





Above: A photograph from the Spring 1994 issue of The American Fly Fisher of the American Museum of Fly Fishing's collection of books from Theodore Gordon's library, most inscribed by Gordon. Donated to the Museum in the fall of 1994. Right: An inscribed page from the American Anglers' Book.

down the stream as conditions required. He was acknowleged a master of that technique. Nor did he shun the bucktail come a new spring with its high, rough waters. He loved everything about fishing and fish and wrote enthusiastic letters about the latest Hildebrandt spoons for pike, about casting for bass, and about his yearning to catch a muskie. He was the complete angler.

Unhappily, there were days when he could cast no flies or anything else, days when he was too ill to be far from his bed. He spoke of a *perishing goneness*. "I will be working cheerfully at something and this goneness will suddenly grab me" (12 February 1915).<sup>4</sup> On these days he contented himself with tying flies, reading and writing, or perhaps just dreaming of the river on which, he could admit, he was not as strong a wader as he would like to be, that his "thin legs" would sometimes let him down.

Some winter days, too impossibly cold in his drafty old farm-house to sit at his table by the kitchen window to tie flies, he might be compelled just to hover over his woodstove, feeding it constantly. On one of those days, he discovered that he could sit by his stove and, without his vise, hand-hold the hooks on which he could tie quite nicely, especially the hackle patterns.

The 1880s were a watershed of development for fly fishing in America and in England. For Gordon the high point must have been the arrival of Halford's dry flies at the very end of the decade, but he had always taken a lively interest in the development of new tackle and techniques. He welcomed, for instance, flies tied on eyed hooks as Halford advocated. Their advantage over gut snells or loops wrapped onto blind hook shanks was clearly apparent to him.

He was enthusiastic about the new split-cane rods. Their fast, stiff, six-sided superiority, especially in the tapers of Hiram Leonard, were to carry the day for fly fishing. A Leonard tournament model of 10 feet and 6 ounces was Gordon's favorite, but how a man of his slight build could wield a rod of that magnitude all day, we might well wonder.

Essential for the new rods were the oil-impregnated tapered silk lines. Fly lines now had sufficient weight for long casts and could be greased to float. When cast from the new rods, they made possible dry-fly fishing as we know it—false casting to dry the fly, driving it well upstream into the wind, and then controlling its drift. It had to have been exciting.

On the dark side of things, Gordon witnessed the virtual disappearance of the beloved Eastern brook trout from its native range in the Eastern states. Floods, droughts, industrial pollution, lumbering, and overfishing all contributed to the





Theodore Gordon with an unidentified young woman, possibly the one he referred to as "the best chum I had in fishing."

lovely but vulnerable "trout's" near demise. (Gordon always resisted thinking of the brook trout as a char. For him the brookie was a TROUT and that was that!) Rescue of the fisheries came with the introduction of the German brown trout in 1883. Gordon welcomed the foreigner. It was exactly the right breed at the right moment to close the circuit of success for the dry fly's development. The "yellow trout's" readiness to feed at the surface, its ability to thrive in warmer water and moderate pollution, be prolific, and grow big recommended it, even if it was not as succulent at table as the brook.

Later, when from California the rainbow began to appear in eastern waters, he was expansive in his approval of what he felt were the excelling qualities of that western trout now come east.

Today we may flinch at Gordon's frequent remarking on the many and heavy "baskets" of trout he killed. He writes, "... on one opening day I made a basket of thirty-eight good fish during a snowstorm..." We read on, somehow expecting him to regret his kill. But he does not. A quarter of a century into our practice of catch and release, we wonder how it could ever have been thus.

He deeply regretted the increasing privatization of the most productive stretches on the Catskill streams by the rich and powerful. The wealth of big-city club men was too much for many farmers along the streams to resist, and so they sold their leases. When these vacationing anglers sought out Gordon to claim him for their own, he would turn down their invitations to fish their well-stocked and private waters. The dean of the Catskills said that he preferred to work over the fewer and tougher trout in "free" public water.

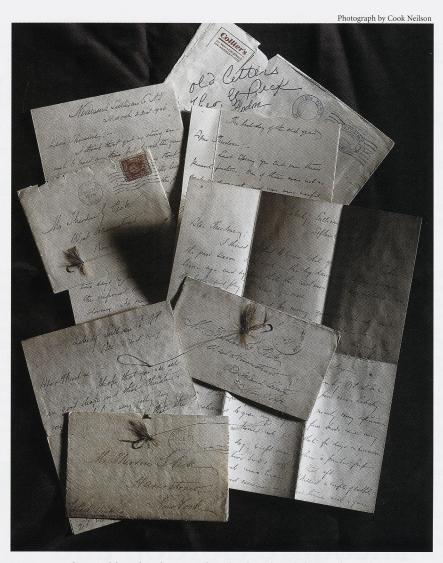
Gordon was on every bit as intimate and eloquent terms with the natural world around him as was Izaak Walton two hundred years earlier. In fact, there are those who have called Gordon the American Walton. His notes and letters are punctuated with his keen and appealing observations on the rivers, forests, and fields around him. Not to fishing alone, he was devoted to his shotgun and upland shooting and was afield whenever his wintertime health and open season permitted. He responded to nature in one breath as a problem in conservation and the next in aesthetic pleasure.

He thought fly fishing an ideal activity for women and wondered that more had not taken it up. We know of but one woman, other than his mother, who played a role in his life, a mysterious young woman of whom he said, "The best chum I ever had in fishing was a girl, and she tramped just as hard and fished quite as patiently as any man I ever knew" (20 October 1906).<sup>6</sup>

Among the few photographs of Gordon, perhaps the most fetching is one with this unknown lady, wading in her skirts with fly rod well bent into a fish. [This photo appears on our cover.—ED.] Gordon wades at her side in an attitude suggesting admiration. Who was she? What became of her? We want her story—a story it seems we cannot have.

Our Gordon indulged in none of the cant and self-promotion of today's aggressive fly-fishing professionals who so dominate the sport. He would have rejected out of hand even the suggestion that he was what we regard today as an "expert." Modesty defined the man.

Out of his intense experience with trout and fly, he contributed what, in that modesty, he called his "notes" to England's influential *Fishing Gazette* where he won great



Flies tied by Theodore Gordon displayed with letters from the Museum's collection written by Gordon to Theodore Peck.

respect and renown as the premier American angler. After 1900, his notes also appeared in the American magazine *Forest and Stream*, but during his lifetime, he would remain better known in England than in his homeland. Writing without any hint of self-consciousness or of the stylist, seemingly without plan, he appears merely to have wanted to talk with other anglers: to compare his notes with theirs in an effort to keep on learning about fishing.

Gordon's failure to collect, for whatever reason, his material into a book (he may have been doing so at his death) doubtless kept him from getting his definitive experience of fly fishing to a larger American angling public, and so he was to remain imperfectly known until 1947 when, with the publication of his letters and notes, edited by John McDonald, he at last took his pride of place in the fellowship of anglers.

Theodore Gordon, "The Sage of the Neversink," died at sixty-one years of age on the first of May 1915, in Bradley, New York, close by the Neversink. Tuberculosis, which may have been stalking him all his life, almost certainly was the killer. He lies in a family vault beside his mother in tiny Marble Cemetery in the East Village of Manhattan. His reach of the Neversink lies buried deep under a reservoir of that name.

Theodore Gordon defined a fully human life in the cast of a fly to a trout; and through his account of it, became a living presence to me on that special winter afternoon.

### NOTE

More than fifty years have passed since John McDonald and New York's Theodore Gordon Flyfishers club set out to recover the neglected Gordon. The first edition of *The Complete Fly-Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon*, collected and edited by McDonald, appeared in 1947 with later editions in 1968 and 1989.

### ENDNOTES

- ı. John McDonald,  $Quill\ Gordon$  (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972), p. 3.
  - 2. McDonald, Quill Gordon, pp. 10-11.
- 3. John McDonald, *The Complete Fly Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1947), p. 466.
  - 4. McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p. 507.
  - 5. Ibid., p. 33.
  - 6. Ibid., p. 154.

The Collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



This photo of Theodore Gordon appeared with his obituary in the June 1915 issue of Forest and Stream.

# Theodore Gordon and Bamboo Rods

by Michael Scott

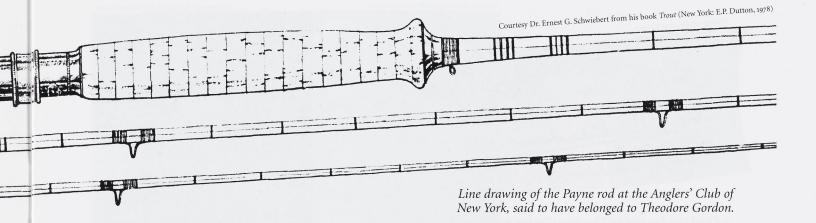
Though once a real person, he has become our myth.

—John McDonald¹

N THE LAST DAY of April or perhaps the first day of May in 1915, a small, consumptive man died lonely and obscure in a cold cabin in the Catskills. A few days later, his meager possessions were disposed of, after a brief, sparsely attended funeral service. These possessions included books, papers, letters, an artificial bait collection, and a few fly rods: a Hardy, a Heddon, and two-maybe three or four-Leonards. Some of his things were passed on to his few friends, others were taken by the two men and two women, apparently relatives, who appeared in Sullivan County for the funeral service. An unknown number of items, perhaps all that remained, were burned by his landlord's wife, who was fearful of the tuberculosis or the emphysema or lung cancer that finally claimed him. His body was taken away by train and its resting place passed from local memory (if it was ever known at all) and remained unknown for more than forty years. During that interval, the memory

of the man would be transformed from that of a lonely, complex, obscure fly tyer and fisherman into the first major icon of American fly fishing, to many the "father of dry fly angling in America."2 He was, of course, Theodore Gordon.

In his later years, Gordon wrote an ongoing series of short articles for the British and American sporting press-in particular, the Fishing Gazette and Forest and Stream-and conducted a wide correspondence with his Catskill neighbors



and with various fly-fishing luminaries of the time, among them G. E. M. Skues and Frederic Halford (who I believe is the undisputed father of the dry fly and its "proper" application). Perhaps on a par with actual fly fishing for trout was Gordon's interest in the artificial fly itself. One Catskill pattern still bears his name-the Quill Gordon-although he was perhaps just as satisfied with his Bumble Puppy, a pattern that, in a form similar to Gordon's design, is still used

today for night fishing for big browns, primarily in the East. Gordon was also fascinated with and wrote at some length on the split-cane bamboo rods of his day (the period from 1880 through 1915).

Now, eighty-five years later, it is still possible to attempt a look at Gordon and try to say something about him and the rods he and his contemporaries used. I think it is appropriate, before delving into Gordon's writings on bam-

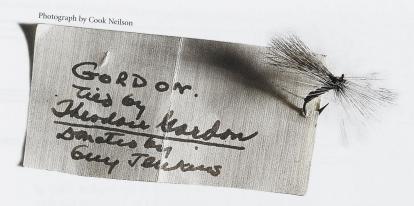
boo rods, that we take a look not at the myth he has become, but at the man himself: the fading, solitary curmudgeon struggling for economic, physical, and spiritual existence on the trout streams of New York while America was young and still full of possibilities.

I have extracted from John McDonald's The Complete Fly Fisherman a great deal of Gordon's own words concerning bamboo rods-their use, actions, makers—and some ruminations as to why he preferred some rods over others.3 I have attempted to present Gordon's ideas, likes, dislikes, speculations, and experience with the split-cane bamboo rods he knew, owned, and fished more than one hundred years ago; rods that if most of us owned today would likely be carefully preserved and gently handled. Through Gordon's eyes we can get some feel for these fine, expensive fishing tools and the men who used them.

According to Paul Schullery, "Gordon was a perfect martyr, just obscure enough for his achievement to lie fallow and forgotten for a tasteful interval before his resurrection as a new, and wonderfully different person."4 How did this happen? Other than Gordon's own published writings and the letters collected in The Complete Fly Fisherman, there is little of substance about Theodore Gordon in the literature of the sport. The most exhaustive work about Gordon to date appeared in Fishless Days, Angling Nights by Sparse Gray Hackle (Alfred Miller), who was a bit of a Gordon nut himself. The chapter in Miller's book, "The Search for Theodore Gordon," is composed mainly of edited interviews with Gordon's Sullivan County neighbors and friends, Herman Christian and Roy Steenrod, along with some of Miller's own conjectures and conclusions. Other writers' accounts are merely summaries of Miller's work or selected extracts from McDonald, often



Cushner, from the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.



A Quill Gordon tied by Theodore Gordon from the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

propagating errors in both or containing the writer's personal opinions disguised as fact.

An exception to such propagation of error, and a fine synthesis of the sources, can be found in Paul Schullery's chapter on Gordon in his ground-breaking American Fly Fishing: A History. Schullery explores many Gordon myths and effectively disposes of the more blatant ones. Although these myths are interesting and tell us some things about their creation and propagation, they don't say much of substance about Gordon the man. The myths did, however, serve to make Theodore Gordon the first-and so far only—American fly-fishing saint. When the myth-makers were done with the original Gordon, there emerged a new person. Schullery says, "What survives, then, is a tragic story, of a promising young man whose misfortune compelled him to lead a simple life, one that if he might not have preferred it, was at least what we would have preferred for him. He became the total angler, devoting his entire energy to learning and understanding fly fishing."5

Gordon the man remains alive and accessible to us because he was a prolific and capable writer, documenting his fishing and fly-tying experiences on American waters, discoursing on ethics, tactics, and ecology, offering the occasional insight into his personal affairs. He wrote no book on flies or fishing, although there is a tantalizing suggestion that a manuscript he wrote was one of those items fed into the fire by his landlord's wife after his death.6 However, he wrote many articles in the Fishing Gazette and Forest and Stream. In the 1890s his writing drew the attention of Frederic M. Halford, who sent Gordon four dozen of his early floating (dry) fly patterns. Gordon kept most of those flies, perhaps recognizing their importance, and certainly was flattered to have received them direct from the master, although he never totally bought into the Halford cult. He corresponded with Halford and read many of his books,7 but he never became a dictatorial dry-fly fanatic as did many others were who espoused Halford's ideas.8

Gordon was not a member of the economic middle or upper classes, as were many of the prominent figures in fly fishing at the time-men like Halford, George Marryat, and Louis Rhead. He never made a solid business of fly fishing, which undoubtedly increased the purity of his legend. He may have scrambled for a living, especially after his health finally broke and he moved permanently to Sullivan County. He lived with and passed on his considerable fishing and tying skills in a relatively democratic way, although he always retained a degree of cranky, upper-crust Victorian prejudice against the "lower" classes. It is likely that if Gordon had been a member of America's wealthy sporting upper class, his writings would attract little attention today outside of obscure historians interested in tracing the technical and philosophical development of fly fishing.

His articles in the sporting press served as a bridge between fly fishers in the mother country and the new world at a time when fly fishing was undergoing considerable and fundamental change. New fly lines were introduced. New rods were being developed to cast the new lines upstream and into the wind when needed and to handle the quick and vigorous false casting required to dry the little flies for the next float. Ring-eyed, light-wire hooks were devel-



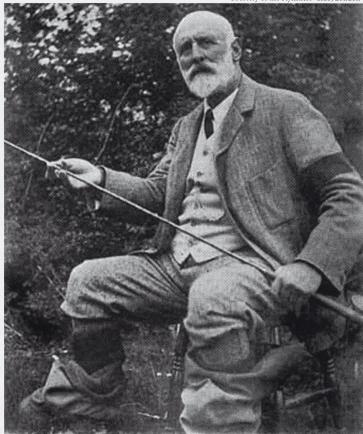
One of the few photographs of Theodore Gordon fishing from the collection of the Catskill Fly Fishing Center.

oped in England which, perhaps more than any other thing, made the development of small dry flies possible. Brown trout were introduced into British and American waters in spite of cries of doom and ruin. Halford was codifying dry-fly patterns and principles on the waters of the Test. Gordon was working out the American versions of those same fly patterns suitable for a rougher, more brawling strain of trout and fisherman. If there ever was a "golden age" of fly fishing, this was it.

### A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Theodore Gordon was born in Pittsburgh on 18 September 1854 to a reasonably well-to-do family. His mother, Fanny Jones, came from upstate New York, but was orphaned early and raised





Frederic M. Halford, pictured here with rod and waders, was an early and passionate proponent of dry-fly fishing. His correspondence with Gordon had a tremendous influence on Gordon's own thinking, although Gordon never abandoned fishing with other kinds of flies.

by her aunt and uncle in Mobile, Alabama. She married a Theodore Gordon, probably also from Mobile. Theodore senior died of malaria soon after young Theodore's birth—some sources say only three months later—in Mobile, where he is said to have returned for health reasons. Mobile is not known for its healthy climate, so this may have been one of those little lies we encounter so often in the recounting of the Gordons' economic history. In any case, the Gordons had moved back to the South shortly after Theodore's birth.

Schullery writes that Gordon's child-hood was spent both in Pennsylvania and in the South where he became an avid outdoorsman. It is possible to infer that during this period Theodore and his mother were well-off financially and traveled back and forth between north and south in the years before the Civil War. Theodore's attraction to the outdoors was amplified because it also got him out of the house and away from his domineering mother. He had respiratory problems as a child and his general

health was bad. His mother, as a result, increasingly kept him indoors and away from school. He probably had few playmates. This was likely the origin of his lifelong dislike of and embitterment toward her.

As a teenager and a young man he lived in Savannah, Georgia, and Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and likely traveled frequently between the two towns. Then, about 1893, his health and the family fortunes failed. We don't have the details, although Gordon does provide a clue in one of his letters to G. E. M. Skues: "That was before the midnight receivership of the Georgia Central Railroad, which practically ruined your humble servant and thousands of better men and women."9 Fanny and Theodore, who was then about thirty-nine or forty years of age, were forced to move to New Jersey and depend on the generosity of relatives.

Financial insolvency and dependence on his kin possibly further embittered the middle-aged Theodore. There are indications that he never forgave his mother for this downturn in their fortunes and social status. Later, when Theodore was living in the Catskills, his mother would come up to Liberty for the summer and Gordon would go visit for a week or two. She never came to him. And late in his life, when his mother was sick, Gordon made many excuses as to why he could not manage to travel the few miles to see her.

He evidently had some schooling or training in finance as there are indications he worked at accounting and bookkeeping. He also wrote obliquely of doing office work in the city. About 1900, when he was only forty-six, in addition to his respiratory problem, his general health failed. This was probably the result of the developing tuberculosis combined with either lung cancer or emphysema, or both, all of it exacerbated by his ravenous cigarette habit. Now a semi-invalid, he moved in permanently with his relatives, the Pecks in Haverstraw, New York, who furnished him with separate quarters for living and tying flies. It was probably during this period when he turned to commercial tying, an activity natural to him and of increasing importance as a means of livelihood.

For the next five years, he made frequent trips with some of his Peck nephews to the Beaverkill, Neversink, and other Catskill rivers. About 1905 he decided, for reasons still unknown, to move permanently to the Catskills, giving up any occasional employment he may have still maintained in the city. Why? Perhaps he found it easier and cheaper just to stay in the country near the rivers. Or, perhaps there were other reasons. Living poor in the Catskills is not easy; winters can be brutal, especially if one is old, sick, and alone in paltry

accommodations.<sup>10</sup> But for whatever reasons, he spent the remaining ten years of his life in Sullivan County living sometimes in hotels, sometimes in various inadequate quarters, fishing, tying flies, and writing near the rivers he loved.

From 1906 or 1907 until 1908 his mother's health took a bad turn. He was with her—probably in the Hall House in Liberty, New York—during this time, seldom leaving to fish. In 1908 she went to stay with relatives in South Orange, New Jersey, and Theodore wrote of finally being free to devote his time to

fishing again.11

Gordon wrote and fished and worked on his flies. He endured lengthy spells of bad health, sometimes unable even to walk to the river to cast a line. He bought a small typewriter and pecked out articles on fishing while huddled near the woodstove. He purchased trout fry and planted them secretly in depleted streams. He regularly brought neighbors a brace of trout; drank to excess (or rarely drank at all, depending on whom one believes); spat on the floor while tying flies; chain-smoked cigarettes, rolling each quickly, twisting the ends of the paper to make them stay, and quickly discarding one after a few puffs, then rolling another. Of his closest friends and neighbors he called one by his last name, Christian, always, and would show him nothing of fly tying; but the other he always called Mr. Steenrod and taught him to tie with and without a vise.

He was a local enigma. As Steenrod said, "If Gordon liked you, it was all right, but if not, you had better keep out of his way; he was kind of a cranky old cuss." 12

If we consider this latter period as the life of Gordon the man, rather than the final passion of Saint Theodore, it appears that he became increasingly alienated from his family, his mother, and from society in general. He complained about Fanny right up to the end, and, a few days before he died, he greeted a relative who had been summoned from New Jersey by a worried Steenrod with a testy, "What did you come up here for?" <sup>13</sup>

Something happened about 1912 or 1913 that signaled a real change in Gordon's situation. He was staying over winters in cold accommodations, sometimes tying flies over the stove to keep his fingers warm. He wrote more often of being sick and weak, too weak at times to walk the few yards to the river.

The night of 30 April 1915, Gordon penned a late, short letter to his great friend and correspondent G. E. M. Skues,

and sometime before dawn succumbed to his lifelong illness and died. I personally prefer to believe Gordon actually died on the first day of May, as would have been only fitting for the man who spent most of his last years studying, fishing, and trying to capture with hook and feather the mayflies of the Catskills.

### GORDON ON BAMBOO

Gordon wrote much about fly rods. He wrote more about flies, the artificial and the natural, but he also devoted much thought and ink to fly rods. Between 1889 or 1890, when he became enamored of the British dry-fly method, and 1915, the year he died, Gordon's views about what constituted a "good" fly rod changed considerably. Gordon and fly fishing underwent dramatic changes during that twenty-five-year period, and his writing mirrors that fact.

Before Frederic Halford's publication of Floating Flies and How to Dress Them in 1886, most fly fishing was done with long, whippy rods of 12, 14, even 16 feet, which flipped a cast of wet flies—usually three or four flies to a "cast"—across, but not far across, a stream. The angler then followed their progress down and across with the rod. The lines were light, not having to bend a powerful shorter rod so as to load enough power to shoot line upstream, sometimes into the wind.14 Such rods were necessary to prevent breaking off the fish on the downstream take, especially since everyone who was not still using braided horsehair fished with gut for leaders, and gut, especially old gut, was notoriously fragile. As rods began to change and became lighter and more powerful, the best solution to connect heavy fly line to light fly was still gut, and it was always the weak link. Gordon complained frequently of this.<sup>15</sup>

The development of the lightweight, ring-eyed hook by Henry Hall and others was a major factor in the development and spread of the "modern" dry-fly method—that set of fly design and fishing practices embodied in Halford's works. The new hooks were smaller, lighter, better tempered, and were manufactured with an eye of some sort, which not only permitted a small fly to be dressed on them that would not be sunk by a heavy hook and snell, but also allowed frequent and relatively easy onstream fly changes.

Hall, Halford, Marryat, and others used this type of hook to develop small, high-floating dry flies for the slow chalk-stream waters they fished. They created these flies and developed a methodology for fishing them, a methodology that

also relied upon heavier woven lines and the new split-cane bamboo fly rod, especially the ones being built in America by makers such as Leonard and Payne. Fly fishing with small flies, casting upstream to rising and often spooky fish, required an appreciable degree of accuracy and delicacy in presentation not possible with the old wet-fly rods. Also, a lighter rod was a virtue because one might have to false cast a few hundred times a day when fishing dry flies, and those old wooden or wood-bamboo hybrid fly rods were heavy. Even the early English dry-fly rods were heavy. Although Gordon was not a strong man, he favored heavy rods for most of his life, but even so, he complained that a Hardy bamboo rod acquired in the 1880s was so heavy that it wore him out.16 The early English bamboo rods must have been heavy indeed.

### A BRIEF LOOK AT GORDON'S RODS

It is possible to identify some of the fly rods Gordon owned and used, but, as with so much about Gordon's life, this is not an easy task, for the sources are

ambiguous and incomplete.

Gordon evidently fished fresh and salt, bait and fly-mostly wet fly-until he discovered Halford. He admitted, "The bacilli or microbe of the dry fly entered my system about the year 1889 or 1890 and the attack which followed was quite severe. I imported an English rod, dry flies, gossamer silkworm gut and all other prescriptions which I presumed were necessary to effect a cure."17 Although this new, imported rod was a genuine English dry-fly rod, it damn near killed him. In Gordon's estimation, this rod changed from "an imported rod by the most celebrated maker" to "...a big rather soft stout rod, no more fit for dry-fly fishing to my mind than a coach whip."18 Gordon's initial impressions of this rod were glowing:

About ten years ago I imported an English rod by the most celebrated maker, and have used it cruelly in much heavy fishing. The handle is very long, and it has a rubber button and spear. The tapered ferrule with lock joint struck me as funny. For a long time it rattled and had a slight tendency to turn. The rod was about 10 ft. 3 in. in length, in two joints, and was rather inconvenient in traveling. The weight is about 10 oz. All things considered, it was a fine, durable weapon, up to any amount of work, and almost unbreakable. A 20 lb. salmon would not be too much for it if backed by sufficient line. It is a thoroughly well-made, serviceable article. I have never found it very fatiguing to fish with,

although I am not a strong man. It lacks, perhaps, the sharp, quick action of many American rods. 19

However, about seven years later, Gordon complained that this rod was unnecessarily heavy and caused him great fatigue.<sup>20</sup>

Gordon's constant favorite was his old Leonard, a 10-foot, 61/4-ounce split-cane rod he called "... the best most perfect 10 foot Leonard rod I ever handled..."21 Gordon came by it in the mid-1880s through a friend who offered it to Gordon for forty-five dozen flies. The rod originally sold for fifty dollars. Gordon said, "I was idle at the time and jumped at the chance to get that rod on any terms. How I did enjoy fishing with it."22 Leonard was not working in Tonkin cane when this rod was made, but even so, Gordon kept it always, even when his tastes turned to shorter, more powerful, and lighter rods. This rod might have played a part in the mystery of the Payne rod, which is discussed later.

On 8 April 1912, sixteen friends presented Gordon with two rods, both Leonards. One was a Catskill, a 9-foot, 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-ounce dry-fly rod; the other a 9-foot, 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-ounce Leonard Tournament rod that, according to Gordon, was the equivalent of Skues's favorite rod, also a Leonard. Writing to Skues that April, he said, "Yesterday I received two beautiful Leonard rods and was informed that several angling friends had clubbed together to present me with a new rod."<sup>23</sup> Of the two, Gordon kept the 9-foot, 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-ounce Leonard.

In March 1915 he wrote to both Guy Jenkins,<sup>24</sup> a young friend and neighbor, and to Roy Steenrod,<sup>25</sup> the postmaster at Liberty at that time and his best friend, about two new rods. These were considerably lighter than any previous rods Gordon had owned or even considered: 35/8 ounces and 37/16 ounces, respectively. This is interesting because Gordon had gone to some length earlier on the disadvantages of the light rod after many years of writing in the Fishing Gazette and Forest and Stream about the superiority of the heavier rod. Perhaps this change in attitude derived from both experience and his increasing weakness. He wrote:

Very light rods may be used in boat work, particularly if one has a good man at the paddle or oars. One can cheat the wind, and if a big fish is hooked the guide will back up the rod, in playing it, doing quite half the work.<sup>26</sup>

### And:

Personally, I do not consider weight on the



G. E. M. Skues, to whom Gordon wrote his last words just before his death.

scales of great importance in choosing a rod. Of course, it is pleasant to be able to say, "I killed a ten-pound salmon on my five-ounce rod," but that same rod might have been far more agreeable to fish with if it had a bigger handle, and weighed an ounce or two more. It is the weight outboard, the leverage against you, that paralyses the grasping hand. I have said this before, however.<sup>27</sup>

Of the two light rods, it appears that he kept the lighter. He mentioned to Steenrod that it was a "...small dainty fly rod and you like to handle and fiddle with it."<sup>28</sup>

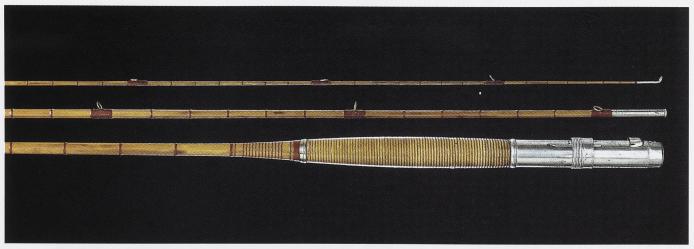
# THE BEST ALL-AROUND FLY ROD

Near the end of his life, Gordon evidently spent a great deal of time thinking about, possibly dreaming of, the best all-around fly rod. For a man who loved fishing above all else, who did not have the financial means of his peers—men like Halford, Skues, or George La Branche—a man who possessed only four or five fly rods over a span of twenty-five years, it must have been hard to read about the new rods, to see them in

use on the streams he haunted and to know that he would never have even a few of all that he craved. He instead dreamed of the one best rod for all fishing, which, if not perfect in all situations, would be serviceable and perhaps attainable. In this excerpt from McDonald, Gordon tells us a great deal about the "ideal" rod and about his own preferences.

I think a great deal about the man of limited means and opportunities. He may be a fine fisher and love the sport passionately. He loves a fine rod and will deny himself many things to get it, but he can have but one for all his fly-fishing, from the most delicate casting in hard-fished brooks to playing successfully some monster of the river, the prize of a lifetime. If he is a dry-fly or up-stream fisher he requires a rod with considerable backbone (power), which will enable him to cast into the wind with accuracy. It is exasperating to be obliged to make half a dozen casts to place the fly correctly.

Very little has been said about the handles on fly rods, and in the effort to obtain light weights on the scales the hand grasp has been cut down to an extremely small diameter. Ask any fly-fisher who is not ambidextrous, and fishes only occasional-



One of Gordon's favorite rods was his 10-foot Leonard. Although the rod Gordon owned disappeared shortly after his death, this example from the Museum's collection, made in the 1880s, gives an idea of what the rod probably looked like.

ly, where he feels most fatigue and he will be apt to tell you that it is in the grasp of the right hand. Personally, I like the old Wells hand grasp and I see that it has been copied in England. They have been imitating our best rods for years, but we doubt if they can duplicate the life and responsiveness of the American. One can become accustomed to any action, but to have a rod that suits your style and temperament is delightful. It adds greatly to one's pleasure, and the mere casting of the fly is enjoyed even when the trout are down and will not rise. If you are limited to one rod, do not select one of the extremes in weight, although the tendency is apparently in the direction of short and light rods. A six-ounce rod of ten feet may be far more comfortable and satisfactory in use than a three-ounce of eight feet. Some of the best fishermen use the nine-and-ahalf-foot rod, although the nine-footer is a great favorite with dry-fly men; but suit yourself, that is the great desideratum. One man wants a rod that plays freely right into the hand, another prefers a firm butt and fine point. The best rod I ever had measured ten feet, yet I once had a very short weapon that was quite perfect for small streams or boat work. But we are selecting one rod for its suitability to all sorts of conditions that will afford us the greatest pleasure in casting and effectively handling hooked fish. We may have to cast the smallest of midge "flies," or a bass fly, upon occasions. Compare a number of rods in the shop with reel in place, make them play from the wrist in a small figure of eight. Revolve slowly and see that there are no weak points.29

Not surprisingly, Gordon never found

his one best rod. If just throwing out a fly and hauling in a fish was all that was wanted in a rod, any middle-of-the-road tool would do. But there is little art and no grace in that. To a fly fisherman, the rod is the instrument that expresses the art.

### THE CASTING LESSON

In one article published in the *Fishing Gazette*, Gordon describes his casting method in some detail. It is not much different from the way many of us learned to cast a fly. Notice the reference to a practice rig for indoor casting. A similar product recently sold as the "Fly-O."<sup>30</sup>

There are some good rods that one loves to cast with, even when there are no fish. It is best to have water to practice on, but a lawn or open field is good enough. You can get the idea of how to cast in a room, with a switch and a piece of string. Use the wrist in short casts and keep the elbow down near the side. In the back cast never allow the point of the rod to go much beyond the perpendicular. It is the spring of the rod and the wrist that do the trick. It is only in long casts that the whole arm comes into play. Make the rod spring with the wrist; don't just wave it to and fro. Begin with a short line, not much longer than the rod, the longer the line the more difficult it is to allow the correct time before coming forward. . . . A high back cast is most important. Never allow the fly to touch ground or water behind you. A great many people throw the points of their rods too far back in casting and then wonder why so many hooks are broken and flies ruined. I have known men who could cast a long distance and who were quite successful in killing trout who never got over this habit of smashing flies. It is ugly work and it is very expensive.<sup>31</sup>

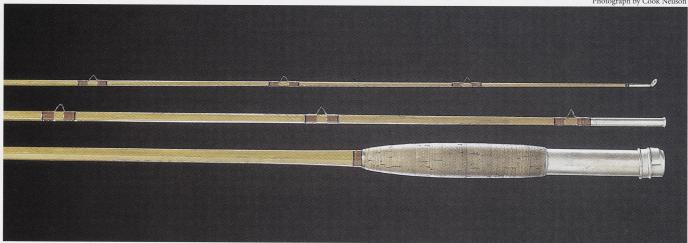
This advice is esentially the same as that offered in modern fly-casting schools, books, and videos. Keeping your elbow locked to your side is a bit Victorian, but the rest is still current (see Joan Wulff's techniques for a modern approach to making "the rod spring with the wrist").

### THE MYSTERIOUS PAYNE

Now we come to the question of the Payne fly rod. In Miller's recounting of Gordon's story, he writes that Herman Christian told him, "Ed Payne made Gordon a rod about 1895; Gordon tied him thirty-nine dozen flies to pay for it. About 1912, when he was staying at DeMund's Hotel in Neversink, I took him down some feathers and he went in and got this rod and said, 'I don't know anybody who would appreciate it as much as you would,' and gave it to me. I still have it and use it. It is nine and a half feet, three pieces, and of course, soft, wet-fly action."32 This rod is now in the collection of the Anglers' Club in New

In Miller's book, there is a photograph of Christian standing outside his house holding a rod. Perhaps it is a Payne; however, it is not clear that this is the rod referred to by Miller as being given to Christian.





A 9-foot Leonard, c. 1900, from the Museum's collection.

Ernest Schweibert reproduced a line drawing of this rod in his book *Trout* (see page 9). The interesting thing about this rod is that Gordon never mentions owning a Payne, or even using one, in all his writings published in the *Complete Fly Fisherman*. The only mention of Payne rods by Gordon is in passing and in reference to American rodmakers.

Gordon did write extensively about the rods he owned and fished—and these were not many, considering his long association with fly fishing, nor would this be unexpected, considering his long deteriorating health and poor finances. Consequently, the same rods appear over and over in his letters and articles. But there is no mention of this Payne or of Gordon even owning a Payne rod.

He did, however, acquire his favorite "old Leonard" circa 1885 by tying forty-five dozen flies and mentions this episode a number of times. This rod is always a Leonard, never a Payne. A few examples:

• "I wish you could have cast with my old Leonard before a careless servant crushed the point. It was simply fascinating to use the old thing. Before you knew it you could be casting twice the length of line necessary, just for the pleasure of doing it. It was 10 foot 61/4 oz. rod made of extremely light stiff bamboo. A new top was entirely too heavy for the old butt and middle. It is over 20 years old and the ferrules are worn quite loose."33

• "For years I have been in love with a rod which belonged to a friend of mine and

one day he said, 'I do not care to sell that rod but if you will tie me all the flies I want, I will give it to you.' I rose to that fly with the greatest eagerness and told him to send me a list. It came and the total was 45 dozen. (The rod cost originally \$50.00) It was quite an old rod, but I was well repaid in the pleasure I derived from its use." 34 • "When I was north a friend who had the best most perfect 10 foot Leonard rod I ever handled offered to give it to me for 45 dozen flies, and another friend begged me to fill up a box and large fly book with flies all moth eaten or used up. I was idle at the time and jumped at the chance to get that rod on any terms. How I did enjoy fishing with it. It is not a poor rod now, though so old and a servant once moved a wardrobe on it when it had fallen down, shortening tip and middle joint. It was far better finished and handsomer than present-day rods. It was individual." 35

One wonders if Gordon actually had a Payne rod for seventeen years and never once wrote about it, or if he did, why references to it do not appear in The Complete Fly Fisherman. It might be that Gordon actually gave his old Leonard to Christian, and this has been wrongly thought by Christian and Miller to be a Payne rod. However, that doesn't make sense, in that it would be immediately obvious whether a rod is a Payne or a Leonard, and, we are told, this same rod is in the possession of the Anglers' Club of New York, an organization imminently capable of making such a distinction. Christian also recounted to Miller that Gordon used the rod's tip case as a walking stick; however, Miller remarks that

the same case, now housed with the rod, shows no sign of having been so used.

In a recent phone conversation, Ernest Schwiebert verified that he had used the Payne rod in the Anglers' Club as the model for his drawing of it in *Trout*. It was certainly a Payne and carried a small tag that identified it as Gordon's rod. Schwiebert said the inscription on the tag appeared to be in a "nineteenth-century" hand—certainly old. He also said that many respected fly fishermen of his acquaintance who were close to Gordon's friends also were certain that this Payne belonged to Gordon.

Perhaps. However, it is very unlikely to be the rod Christian described to Miller. Gordon never writes of tying thirty-nine dozen flies for Ed Payne. He did tie forty-five dozen flies for a friend's "most perfect 10 foot Leonard rod..." 36

If the Payne held by the Anglers' Club was Gordon's, it would be interesting to know how this relationship was established, especially in light of Gordon only mentioning Payne rods in passing, never as having owned one or fished with one extensively.

Perhaps new information will come to light to lay this question to rest. Long forgotten letters may appear. Gordon's rumored manuscript may have survived his landlady's fire. It is unlikely, but one can hope.

### THE ROD NEVER FISHED

By the end of 1914, Gordon's health was on a downward slide from which he



The Payne rod at the Anglers' Club of New York, said to have belonged to Theodore Gordon.

would not recover. The winter of 1915 was deep, hard, and especially difficult for him. He spent time reading, tying, and poring over catalogs and his collection of artificial baits, on which, he admitted in letters to Skues and Steenrod, he was always spending too much of his scarce cash.

In February 1915, he purchased a little Heddon and wrote to Steenrod, "Man alive-you know I went up to \$2.25 on a Heddon rod to get over 5 feet. Well, it came this afternoon and a nicer looking, handier little tool for casting and trolling one could hardly want. It is stiff and light as a feather. I never saw a cheap rod finished so well and the guides are file proof metal as hard as an agate. How the devil do they do it?"37

In March, he wrote to Steenrod about another new rod.38 Which rod this was is not certain. It appears that somehow Gordon was actually shopping for a new rod. He wrote to Jenkins about these rods being "sent up," which could mean on inspection prior to a purchase.39 "The longer I have the rod the better I like it. It is the stiffer of the two sent up and weighs 35% oz., wonderful quickness and power for its weight. What a pleasure one has in a rod if it is a success. I am better this week and am now working on flies for friend No. 2. Of course there will be no fly fishing in April, but men expect flies because the season opens early and it crowds me to try to get enough for a few friends."40

As May 1915 approached, the weather worsened along with Gordon's health. He was fated never to fish with this new rod. This early in the year the streams were still closed, and he was far too weak to consider fishing, even had that been possible. In April, Gordon continued to weaken, writing to Skues of "queer nights and short days."41 And to Steenrod he also revealed how weak he was: "I have fished fly rods of 91/2 to 10 ft. 3 inches (the latter 10 oz.) without undue fatigue, and all day, but man, I couldn't stand 2 hours of it now. I must go in for easy things."42

This is almost the end. In hindsight, it is easy to see a poignant foreshadowing of Gordon's death the following night. However, Gordon demonstrated no inkling of this in his final letters. He had been sick before, up and down, and this probably seemed no worse than tough times he had overcome in the past.

I have spent 6 out of 7 days in bed during the past week. Caught cold and had rheumatism in the knee. The foot and ankle swelled so that at last I could not get on a tight leather slipper and sock. I can remedy that, if I can be well and I hope to tie flies, if I wish, tomorrow.

Queer nights and short days. I had quite a little fever and you know what a peculiar effect that has on a man.<sup>43</sup>

His last words were to Skues, the great friend he never met, and they were concerned mainly with flies, insects, and personal matters. The only hint of the seriousness of his condition appears in the postscript to the letter.

Every season I intend, or promise, to give myself the pleasure of tying up a dozen May flies and trusting you to give to any dry fly man to try. It is an interesting insect and I should be glad to kill a few English trout with it. I have studied many

patterns and lots of illustrations and have a fancy for the yellow leg or soft buttery body. Then I saw a lot of the yellow Esopus fly that I often tied and have often used successfully on the Esopus in Ulster County. If not a true may fly it certainly makes a very creditable effort to be. It is a lovely large fly. About 1st of November I sent for 3 May fly boxes to be given as Christmas present [sic]. They did not arrive until March 20, 1915. They are a nice article for the dry-fly man, and I would like to have a dozen to give to angling friends.

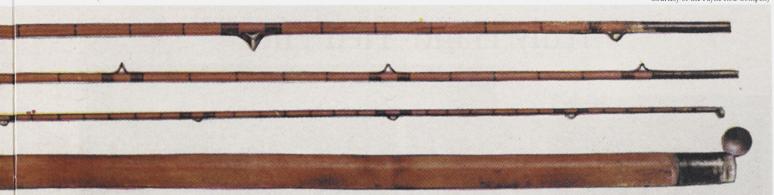
Am writing in bed.<sup>44</sup> —Theodore Gordon

So finished his last words and the life of Theodore Gordon, dry-fly saint, curmudgeon, recluse, naturalist, innovator, and lonely heart. It is possible that, at least at the end, Gordon did live out the fantasy: "Live to fish, fish to live." He is alive through his flies and his words and the works of those who seek to find and understand fly fishing as it was and as it has come to be.

Perhaps the best epitaph was given by his friend Herman Christian, who said, "He was a good fisherman and, particularly, a careful stalker. He paid a lot of attention to the sun and things like that. He used a big rod but with a very light line; and although he did not cast far, he cast very delicately and put his fly on the water 'just so.'"45

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to Dr. Andrew Herd—gentleman, author, historian, physician, and fly fisher-who provided advice and encouragement. A fine overview with



images of Gordon, Halford, and others is available through his website at www.flyfishinghistory.com. Also, my gratitude goes to Dr. Ernest G. Schwiebert for his personal insights and to Paul Schullery for his editorial comments, which have made this a better work.

### ENDNOTES

1. Quoted in Paul Schullery, *American Fly Fishing: A History* (New York: Lyons & Burford, 1987), p. 111.

2. Sparse Grey Hackle (Alfred Miller), Fishless Days, Angling Nights (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1971), p. 123.

3. John McDonald, ed., The Complete Fly Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1989).

4. Paul Schullery, *American Fly Fishing: A History* (New York: Lyons & Burford, 1987), p. 121.

5. Ibid., p. 115.

6. In a letter to R. B. Marston on Gordon's death, George La Branche wrote, "He [Gordon] wrote me some time ago that he had a manuscript which he was going to send me to read, but never sent it. If his relatives will let me have it I will see that it is published ..." (McDonald, *The Complete Fly Fisherman*, p. 549).

7. Among the books owned by Gordon at his death were *Modern Development of the Dry Fly, Dry-Fly Entomology*, and *Dry-Fly Man's Handbook*, all by Halford. Nearly all of Gordon's possessions were burned in a house fire two years before his death, so it is telling that of the nine books given to Steenrod after Gordon's death, three were by Halford on the dry fly. One other was *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* by LaBranche.

8. Even though it has been written elsewhere to the contrary, Gordon himself recounts fishing with the wet fly and using anti-Halfordian dry-fly tactics long after he had become enamored of the dry fly. Gordon was no purist on the stream, even though he fancied himself a social aristocrat.

9. McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p. 396. 10. Christian said that Gordon was in the Neversink valley from about 1896 or 1897. Although he did not have much at the end of his life, he didn't start out there in poverty. "He always stayed in as good accommodations as there were in the locality, and so far as I can tell, always had enough to live on. . . . While his mother was alive he used to stay winters at the Liberty House in Liberty, New York, with her, and in summer he would live in Neversink, Claryville (at the forks of the Neversink) or Bradley, close to the river. He would go from river to river in earlier years, staying a week or two at each place. In later years, probably because of his failing strength, he no longer went from one stream to another" (Herman Christian, quoted in Sparse Grey Hackle, Fishless Days, Angling Nights, pp. 135-136).

11. McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p. 404.

12. Sparse Grey Hackle, Fishless Days, Angling Nights, p. 145.

13. Ibid., p. 134.

14. "The native anglers made their own rods of two pieces of hickory, lashed or ferruled together and painted green. Usually they cared not for a reel, but wound the surplus line in one place on the rod, carrying it from that point and hitching it at the extreme tip. As a rule they used but one fly, and cast about 35 ft. to 40 ft. When a trout rose and was hooked the rod was dropped into the hollow of the left arm, and the fish was played and landed by hand" (McDonald, *The Complete Fly Fisherman*, p.

15. "The tapering of the last ten to fifteen yards is certainly an advantage, and the gut casting line should continue this tapering to the fly. The last two or three lengths of gut next the fly [sic] should be as fine as we can use successfully, without leaving too many flies in the fishes' mouths on the strike. Even the finest of gut will endure a steady pull from a big trout. It is the sudden jerks that are dangerous. Where there are many obstructions, finest drawn gut torments the angler, as he cannot but his large fish quickly and surely" (McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p. 267).

16. "Englishmen are supposed to prefer stiff rods of considerable weight, but their practice has

certainly been considerably changed or modified by the advent of the light yet powerful American dry-fly rod" (McDonald, *The Complete Fly Fisherman*, p. 359). One Irishman, according to Gordon, put it clearly: "Charles Kingsley considered any man a weakling who objected to singlehanded rods weighing one pound or more" (Ibid., p. 359).

17. McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p. 245.

18. Ibid., p. 539.

19. Ibid., p. 13. 20. Ibid., p. 245.

21. Ibid., p. 514.

22. Ibid., p. 514.

23. Ibid., p. 428.

24. Ibid., p. 477. 25. Ibid., p. 524.

26. Ibid., p. 358.

27. Ibid., p. 88.

28. Ibid., p. 523.

29. Ibid., p. 357.

30. The "Fly-O" was a product first offered some years ago by Joan and Lee Wulff. It consists of the tip section from a graphite rod to which is attached a length of heavy, wool yarn. This sufficiently imitates the action of a real fly line being cast by a real fly rod so that one can practice the necessary skills indoors.

31. McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p. 163.

32. Sparse Grey Hackle, Fishless Days, Angling Nights, p. 134.

33. McDonald, The Complete Fly Fisherman, p.

34. Ibid., p. 410.

35. Ibid., p. 514.

36. Ibid., p. 514.

37. Ibid., p. 516. 38. Ibid., p. 523.

39. Ibid., p. 477.

40. Ibid., p. 477.

41. Ibid., p. 462.

42. Ibid., p. 534.

43. Ibid., p. 462. 44. Ibid., p. 462.

45. Sparse Grey Hackle, Fishless Days, Angling Nights, p. 149.

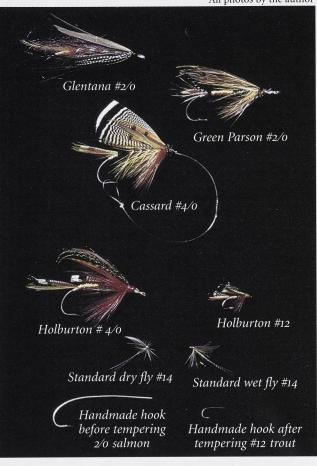
# Truly Hand-Tied Flies

by John Betts

All photos by the author



Bass and fancy lake flies. All of these are tied on the author's own 4/0 hooks and are dressed without a vise.



Assortment of flies.



Above all, he can find at every turn the aesthetic pleasures of both an artist and of a craftsman; the artist concerned perpetually with the problem of form and color, the craftsman with his skill in delicate and satisfying work, which will be "signed," as definitely as a painting, with his own technique.

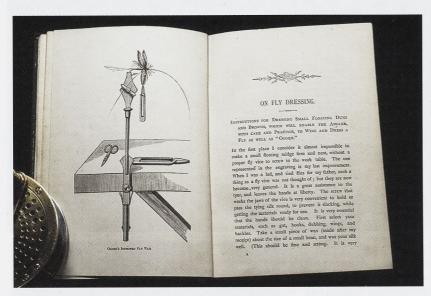
IN 1950, THE ABOVE PASSAGE appeared in T. R. Henn's *Practical Fly Tying*. This is the only book written that uses the technique of hand tying without a vise as its main theme.

Nowadays, tying without a vise is generally regarded as an oddity, but until the end of the eighteenth century, virtually all flies were dressed in a person's hands. Samuel Taylor first mentioned the use of a vise in his book *Angling in All Its Branches*, published in 1800. Taylor wrote that a

vise can be used "to dress flies more neatly as well as more perfectly." For the next half-century, however, vises were only occasionally included in fly-tying texts. They were considered by some as tools for beginners that could be set aside once the tyer had progressed beyond the early stages of training

By the 1870s, vises had become widely accepted and had begun to appear in illustrations. The trend continued, and by 1890 most flies were tied in vises. Since 1895 there have been only three books in which hand tying plays an important role. One is Henn's book, and the other two are George Kelson's *The Salmon Fly* (1895) and T. E. Pryce-Tannant's

An earlier version of this article originally appeared in the Autumn 1997 issue of *Fly Tyer* and appears here through their generosity.



An engraving of James Ogden's vise as it appears on page 1 in his book, Ogden on Fly Tying, published in 1879.



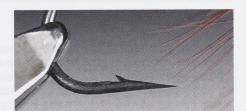
Illustrations depicting steps in hand tying. The one on the left is from T. E. Pryce-Tannant's How to Dress Salmon Flies, published in 1914 (pages 110 and 111). The engraving on the right is from George Kelson's The Salmon Fly, published in 1896 (page 95).



The author "pulling" a hook into its shape in a "wrest."



A fully functional hook made by the author. The blue color indicates the temperature at which the steel was tempered.



A hand-filed point on one of the author's 4/0 hooks.

How to Dress Salmon Flies (1914), both standard texts for tying traditional Atlantic salmon flies. Modern salmon-fly tyers, in their quest for tradition, often overlook or ignore the one technique upon which everything else in those books is based: tying by hand.

The acceptance of fly-tying vises brought about many changes in traditional practices. Advances in technology and the growth of modern economies caused other changes in fly-tying techniques. Whether these changes have resulted in better flies or more thoughtful tying is debatable. Certainly, many aspects of traditional tying have been lost.

Fly tyers of earlier times operated in conditions very dif-

ferent from those in which modern tyers work. Let's look at the situation of a fly tyer of 150 years ago, and then apply some old procedures.

### A WEALTH OF MATERIALS

Until recently in our angling history, all hooks were made by hand, one at a time, using processes similar to those described in A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle (1496); Salmonia by Sir Humphrey Davy (1828); The Angler in Ireland by William Belton (1834); and The Practice of Angling as Regards Ireland by James O'Gorman (1845).





Above: Assorted silk flosses, metal tinsels, mohair, and crewel.

Right: An old classic Atlantic salmon fly, the Black Doctor, tied without a vise by the author on his own 2/0 hook. The entire process took about fifteen minutes.



Some tyers made their own hooks. Others purchased hooks from local craftsmen who ran one- or two-man shops or from a larger commercial enterprise such as Charles Kirby's of London, which was in the hook business by the mid-1600s. Almost without exception, hooks did not have eyes, and a snell or link of horsehair, or silkworm gut, and occasionally Indian weed was needed to attach a hook to a line.

Once a tyer had made or procured his hooks and snelled them, he had to find the materials with which to tie flies. This was not so difficult as you might think. Before the advent of modern supermarkets, towns had butchers, poulterers, grocers, green grocers, milkmen, and bakers. English and European towns and villages had (and still have) weekly market days during which all manner of household items and food could be purchased. Wild birds, fish, animals, and plants augmented farm-raised supplies and were often found alongside local produce. Where both farm and wild species were made available, a fly dresser had a huge range of materials from which to select.

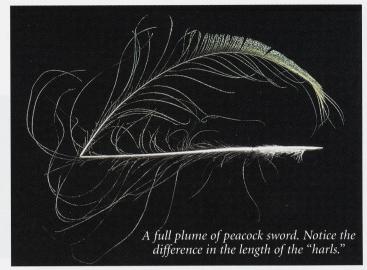
In season, there were hare, pheasant, partridge, duck, goose, woodcock, pigeon, salmon, trout, pike, and grayling for sale in stalls and shops. Some of these game animals can still be purchased at local markets. Missing from shops today are protected animals and birds; however, both shore- and songbirds were once part of everyday fare and therefore available to the fly dresser.

Many of the animals and birds for sale in markets were unplucked and unskinned, allowing customers to see different color phases. Those killed early in the season differed

from those killed later, northern specimens differed from their southern cousins, and young differed from old. Starlings, part of early diets, could be found in two forms. The young or "unsunned" birds, barely out of the nest, have thin, strong, translucent wing quills that are light tan in color. The mature birds sporting the familiar dark iridescence and "stars" have wing quills that are heavier and gray. Both types of feathers are specifically mentioned in old books for winging well-known wet- and dry-fly patterns. For fly bodies, there were silk flosses; crewel and mohair; and gold and silver tinsels, wires, and twists. All of these and more could be found in great variety wherever seamstresses and tailors served the military and the gentry. Raffia and horsehair were widely used by fly tyers, along with the fur of mice, rats, voles, moles, pigs, cows, hares, foxes, stoats, and seals. Most of these were easy to locate. Another fly-tying material was "slunk" (the hair of an animal, particularly a calf, born prematurely).

Classic, full-dressed Atlantic salmon flies did not reach their heyday until the second half of the nineteenth century. The exotic plumages used in such dressings may have been harder to get at that time than they are now. Rats and other vermin chewed on skins and feathers transported by ship or stored even briefly in seaport warehouses. And, of course, some ships were lost at sea. The uncertainty of supply may have helped to restrict the use of rare materials to a very small part of fly tying.

Most natural materials were available in greater variety than they are nowadays. Tyers could choose from many







Left: This Green Parson was tied without a vise by the author on his own 2/0 hook. The pattern was originated by Michael Rogan and uses peacock sword for the front half of the body.

Right: These capes were imported into the United States from China and the Philippines before World War II. Selecting from a variety such as this was common until the mass introduction of genetic hackle.

species of birds and animals that came as entire skins, or at least as complete sections, and in a variety of colors, sizes, and ages.

Michael Rogan, a great Irish fly tyer and the founder in 1836 of a studio where flies are still tied by hand, listed peacock sword as a body material for some salmon flies. He did not mean that one should wrap in dozens of the short little pieces we see on the 18-inch plumes found in fly shops. The whole feather is about 3 feet long, and further down the shaft are "harls" that are more than long enough to wrap the body of a large fly. Peafowl were not rare—they had been raised and eaten in the British Isles for centuries—and Rogan no doubt had complete skins in his stock of materials. A modern tyer, familiar only with the packaged pieces sold in fly shops, might wonder how Rogan made big salmon-fly bodies with peacock sword.

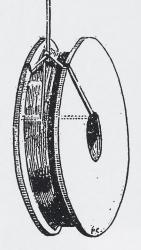
The almost limitless variety of hackle capes for sale even thirty years ago is now virtually gone. Because there were no genetic breeders of any size then, you bought whatever had grown on the farm. Now, with few exceptions, the genetic grizzly neck you bought yesterday will be almost identical in appearance and character to one you purchased last year or might buy next year.

Standardization—the reduction of random variety—is essential to the success of any large modern society. It may not, however, be good for fly tying. The fly-tying community is neither large nor modern. A relatively small number of people, both amateur and professional, using techniques and materials that have remained the same for centuries,

are producing the same product in the same way they have always done it-one unit at a time, by hand. If a tyer has a large quantity of hackles uniform in appearance and quality and they are almost identical to capes hanging on the local shop's pegboard, he may not need to buy another cape of that type. Before genetic breeding, there were fewer usable feathers on each cape, and only occasionally were there two capes of the same color. In order to maintain an inventory, a serious tyer had to be a regular visitor to the tackle shop, where, human nature being what it is, he might buy more than he went in for. Frequent visits also exposed a customer to materials new since his last visit, providing information for both immediate and future purchases. With standardization and, therefore, restricted inventories, the customer today knows a lot about what will be available even before he walks into a store, and this may restrict his purchases. There is no question in my mind that the standardization of hackle capes and other materials has affected fly design and thus appearance and effectiveness. Fly dressers nowadays, without the huge selection of traditional materials from which to choose, cannot display the same imagination and resourcefulness that our forebears showed years ago. To some extent, losses in natural materials have been offset by the rise of man-made ones. The increased use of synthetics has probably, to some extent, reduced the demand for traditional materials. Certainly one result of this shift would be a disappearance of natural materials because of a lack of demand, from both shops and articles. The public will not ask for what it doesn't know about.

Right: This "bobbin," an arrangement of thread around a spool, appeared in F. M. Halford's Dry Fly Entomology, published in 1897.

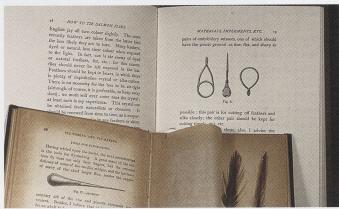
Below: "Stilettos" or bodkins illustrated in John Hale's How to Tie Salmon Flies (1892, FFCL reprint 1992, page 19), top right, and J. Harrington Keene's Fly Fishing and Fly Making (third edition, 1898, page 66). Some of the materials pasted into the book are visible on the adjoining page.

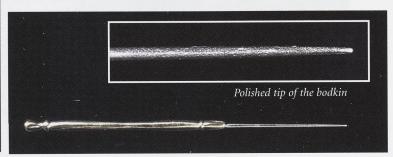




Above: Two modern dubbing needles.

Below: The author's reproduction of a "stiletto" or bodkin. The handle is turned from solid brass and threaded at one end to receive the steel point.





### TOOLS IN THE OLD DAYS

The tools of early fly tyers were few and simple. They consisted of wax, thread, a bodkin or "stiletto," "scissers," tweezers, and later something that could be used for hackle pliers. Notice that the list does not include a bobbin. Hand tying with a bobbin is nearly impossible.

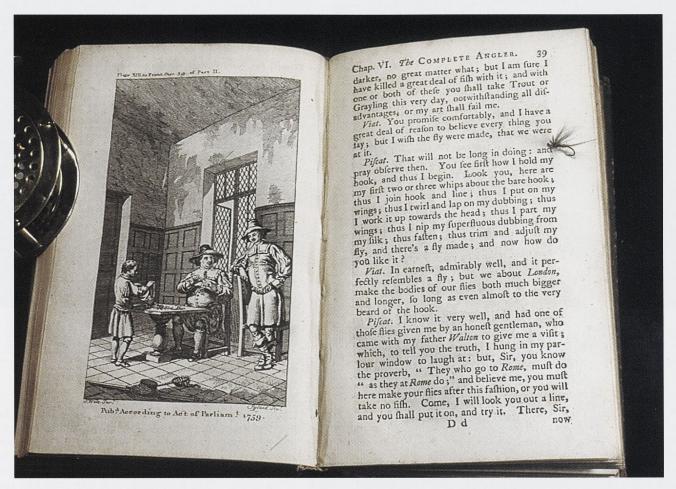
Fly-tying wax is the most important of all of the tools. Early on, it was cobbler's wax. An eighteenth-century recipe still used in Williamsburg, Virginia, consists of two-thirds pitch and one-third rosin, and probably a little tallow. This wax is black and has a wonderful smoky odor. A piece of thread is rubbed with or pulled through a cake of wax. Friction melts the wax so that it can be deposited on the thread. When the thread is later pulled through the shoe leather, friction again melts the wax and helps lubricate the thread. As soon as the thread is pulled tight, it stops moving, and the wax cools immediately, cementing the thread in place. This helps keep the stitch tight while the next stitch is being made. Because the thread we wax for tying is not pulled through anything during the procedure, it cannot melt again. As a result, the makeup of fly-tying wax must be a bit stickier than cobbler's wax and kept between normal room and body temperatures.

By the nineteenth century, fly-tying writers began listing their "best of the best" fly-tying wax formulae. Specialized dubbing waxes were not really heard about until later. There are significant differences between the makeup and purpose of *tying* and *dubbing* waxes.

In fly tying, just as in shoemaking, the wax is cement and the thread is its delivery system. The formula for a good wax must be held to fairly close tolerances if it is to work well within a normal temperature range. Beyond that range, in extremely warm weather, it should be of a harder type, whereas in colder conditions it should be of a softer one. The men and women who dressed flies years ago often relied on body heat to keep the wax at the right temperature between applications. The difference between the melting point of the wax and its consistency at body temperature is not great. It can be controlled with considerable precision by the formula of the wax. If the wax is too hard or too cold, the thread cannot be pulled through it at all. If it is too soft or too warm, it will spread all over everything.

Attempts have been made to wax and spool long lengths of silk thread. At the very least, this is a difficult and messy procedure. It is only fairly recently that prewaxed thread, in this case nylon, has become a viable product. It took years for the Danville Chenille Company to perfect the process.

Fine silk thread has been recommended for tying flies for centuries. Its real advantages are found in its great strength, even in small diameters, and that it is composed of continuous filaments. Small threads made up of staple or discontinuous fibers, such as linen, wool, or cotton, tend to sepa-



An early and possibly the first illustration of someone tying flies to appear in a book. Presumably the central figure in Charles Cotton, and the activity seems to be taking place in the Fishing Hut on the Dove. The engraving is from the third Hawkins edition of The Complete Angler (1775, Part II, page 39). The engraving probably dates from 1760 originally.

rate under tension and are for that reason undesirable.

Silk is for all practical purposes inelastic; it is also springy and slippery. These are valuable properties if one is pulling it through fabric, but real liabilities in fly tying. In order to keep both it and the materials being secured to the hook in place, the thread must be waxed.

In fly tying, a piece of thread 10 to 16 inches long is pulled through the wax in a single movement, which melts the wax so that it lubricates the thread. If the pull is interrupted, the wax will cool at once and seize the thread, which will usually break when the pull is restarted. With practice on heavy thread, a tyer may be able to pull it through twice.

The only silk fly-tying thread still available is Pearsall's Gossamer. For heavy work, standard silk sewing thread may be used. No other thread can match the luster and color of silk. The best fly bodies are those in which the color of silk shows, however subtly, through a thin layer of dubbing. There has never been a more secure fastening for fly-dressing materials than properly waxed silk.

The stiletto or bodkin has become the dubbing needle and is less functional. To work properly, the point should be rounded a little and then polished perfectly smooth. This will prevent damaging or cutting the thread when picking out the fibers. A sharp sewing needle jammed into a dowel is not at all the same sort of tool.

Although seldom mentioned nowadays, good tweezers

are often preferable to scissors when cleaning up a fly.

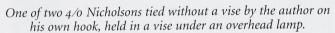
The light in which you tie can range from artificial and expensive to natural and free; the latter is what was used for the most part until the end of the nineteenth century. Gaslight was in use by the early 1800s, but it was unsafe and poisonous (sometimes it was piped through musket barrels discarded after the Napoleonic Wars), and was usually available only to those who lived in cities or had their own coal roasters. Electricity was not in common use until the end of the 1800s. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, Frederick Halford electrified his house and was quite happy tying under a 32-watt bulb.

Sunlight, the original light, is still the best light for fly tying. It is, after all, the light in which we fish and the light in which gamefish and their prey live. Checking colors and effects in sunlight is advice that goes back centuries.

VIA(TOR). This dubbing is very black.

PISC(ATOR). It appears so in hand; but step to the doors and hold it up betwixt your eye and the sun, and it will appear shining red; let me tell you never a man in England can discern the true color of dubbing any way but that, and therefore choose always to make your Flies on such a bright sun-shine day as this, which also you may the better to do, because it is worth nothing to fish in. Here, put it on, and be sure to make the body of your Flie as slender as you can. Very good! Upon my word you have made a marvelous handsome Flie.<sup>3</sup>







The other Nicholson fly held in the sunlight out of doors.

Natural light almost always approaches you at an oblique angle. When hand tying in it, you will hold the fly in many positions and the angle of the sun will light up the fly in ways you never thought possible. It is a phenomenon that cannot be experienced with the fly held stationary in a vise under a lamp directly above it.

As the sun changes position, so must you in order to maintain maximum illumination and keep your hands and body from casting a shadow on your work. Gripping and regripping a fly in sunlight will provide insight into formerly obscured parts of the design that were often consciously incorporated by someone years ago, ideas that you may never have suspected existed. All of a sudden you will see why great patterns fully deserve their reputations.

Sitting back in a comfortable chair, tying flies in your hands, is not only therapeutic, but has a practical side as well. You will produce better flies.

Over the last four or five hundred years, fly-tying instructions have become steadily more voluminous. In early works, tying directions were brief—often less than half a page—and not illustrated. They relied heavily on the reader's vocabulary, experience, and background. For those reasons, old instructions are sometimes hard to interpret in the twenty-first century. The sidebar opposite gives some simple instructions with photographs. In

some cases, these directions are more explicit than old ones. Cover the pictures and tie the fly using just the text. You won't go very far before you realize how much you needed to know before you began. The fly being tied is the Cassard.

# PUTTING OLD-FASHIONED SKILLS TO WORK

Before starting, we should dispose of certain myths about hand tying. Tying on blind-eye, snelled hooks is no more difficult than tying on eyed hooks; if you'd like to try some antique-style dressings, don't be afraid of the snells. Small flies, down to size 22, are no more difficult to tie in your hands than are larger patterns, though size 12 flies are easier to learn on. Tying by hand does not require great experience. Indeed, children and women with little experience are the people most receptive to learning; as a rule, experts have the most trouble. The need to hold a hook in hardened steel vise jaws is a myth. Consider how many beautiful flies have been tied in fingers no harder than yours. The most common mistake is holding the hook too tightly. How and where you hold it is much more important than how hard you hold it. Relax, and trust your hands.

With practice, a standard wet or dry trout fly can be completed in one's fingers in about five minutes. When you tie by hand, a lot of the work will be covered and, therefore, hidden by your fingers. You'll know what's going on more by how things feel than by how they look. Too much material will feel like too much, and too little like too little. Materials that are loose will feel that way. You will find that your instincts, even if untutored, are quite accurate.

Tying in your fingers requires you to select materials that will withstand repeated handling. This adds a dimension to selection that is every bit as important as appearance.

Because there is no vise to hold the fly as you go from step to step, all of the materials should be layed out in a useful array ahead of time. The process, once it is started, keeps on going and is hard to stop. This is much easier to deal with than it sounds and soon may become preferable to the stop-and-start techniques that are part of using a vise. In a very short time, you'll develop a sense of flow that will become part of the appearance of the fly. It will be the signature of your style.

### ENDNOTES

1. T. R. Henn, *Practical Fly Tying* (London: A. & C. Black, 1950), p. 8.

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2. Samuel Taylor, Angling in All Its Branches (London: Longman and Rees, 1800), p. 250.

3. Charles Cotton, *The Complete Angler, Part II* (London: Richard Marriot, 1676), pp. 45–46.

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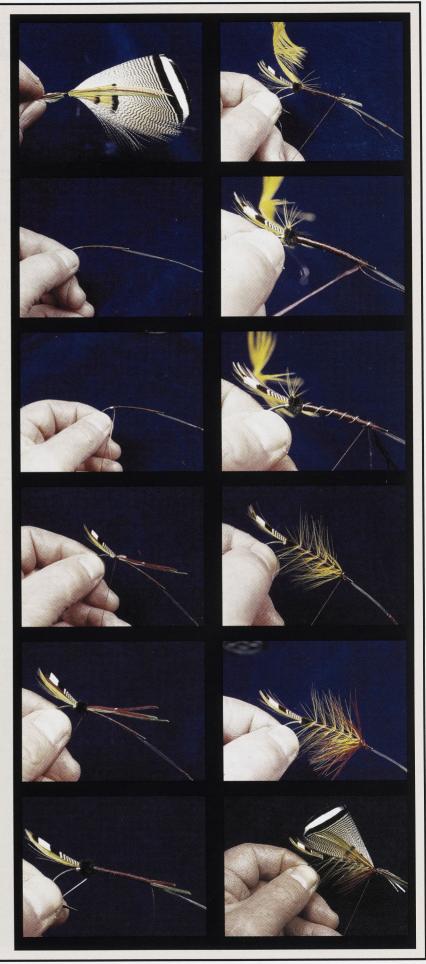
# Tying Steps for the Cassard



TAG, SILVER; jib, topping, barred wood duck, red and green slips; butt, black chenille; body, claret ribbed with silver lace, palmered yellow cock doubled or stripped on one side; shoulder hackle, red cock doubled; wing, barred wood duck, tippets; splits topping, red and

green slips; head, herl.

A matched pair of barred wood duck are combined with the cheeks and splits to form the entire wing. This is then set aside. The hook is then armed with the snell using claret thread, which is closely wound down the shank to a place above the beard. After tying in the silver tip, the various pieces for the jib are selected and tied down; a black chenille butt covers these wraps. The silver rib and well-tapered yellow rooster hackle is set in by its tip. The thread is then evenly wound, covering the materials' ends up to the tip. Here the claret floss is fastened and warped down to the butt and back in smooth, even turns. If the underwrap of thread is smooth, there won't be any unsightly lumps. Care should be taken not to dull, soil, or fray the silk while it is being applied. The silver rib is taken up, and after its winds are evened, it is made tight and secured. The yellow body hackle follows the rib. Once secure, the claret thread is exchanged for red, and a doubled crimson rooster hackle is secured. The fibers spread by the first turn should be the length of the last turn of the yellow feather. The next turn of red will be a bit longer. Only two full turns are made before tying off. The wing unit is set on and made fast, being sure it is straight. Very firm turns are made here. A herl head is wound, and the final turns and half hitches are made just before it. The wing butts are trimmed but left long enough to prevent any turns from slipping off. They will be visible above the end of the shank. Avoiding the herl, the entire area in front of it is well varnished. When dry, the wings cannot be pulled out.



### Annual Festival Weekend & Celebration at the

### American Museum of Fly Fishing

MAY 18<sup>TH</sup> & 19<sup>TH</sup>

### **Friday Evening**

Join us at 5:30 pm for a cocktail party to kick off our annual celebration.

### Saturday - Open House

Stop by for our Open House between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm and visit with the talented craftspeople and artists who plan to join us for the day. Longtime Museum friend and rodmaker Fred Kretchman will provide insight into the making of bamboo rods, Kathy Stout of Wildscape will illustrate how she makes her unique caddisfly jewelry, and glass blower John Soward will demonstrate his technique for making his one-of-a-kind works. Artist Carol Rowan, members of the Green Mountain Fly Tyers, sculptor Bill Card, and the folks at Adirondack Guide Boat are among those who will also be on hand to demonstrate their talents and share their enthusiasm with visitors.

### **Saturday Evening**

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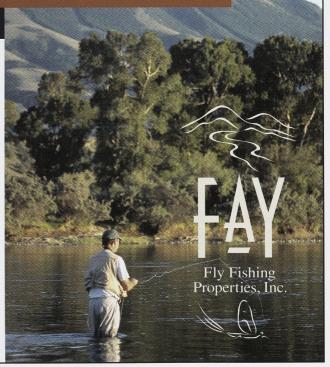
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Membership dues include four issues of *The American Fly Fisher*. Please send your payment to the Membership Director and include your mailing address. The Museum is a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, the New England Association of Museums, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, and the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame. We are a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution chartered under the laws of the state of Vermont.

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As an independent, nonprofit institution, the American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. We ask that you give our museum serious consideration when planning for gifts and bequests.

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### BACK ISSUES!

Available at \$4 per copy:

Volume 6, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4

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Volume 11, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4

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Volume 15, Number 2

Volume 16, Numbers 1, 2, 3

Volume 17, Numbers 1, 2, 3

Volume 18, Numbers 1, 2, 4

Volume 19, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 Volume 20, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4

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Volume 24, Numbers 1, 2, 4

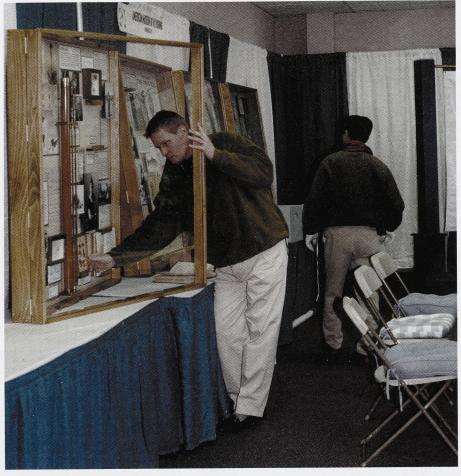
Volume 25, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4

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Volume 27, Number 1



Photo by Diana Siebold



Art Director John Price and Collection Manager Yoshi Akiyama put the finishing touches on the time-line panels at the Fly Fishing Show in Somerset, New Jersey.

### Fly-Fishing Shows

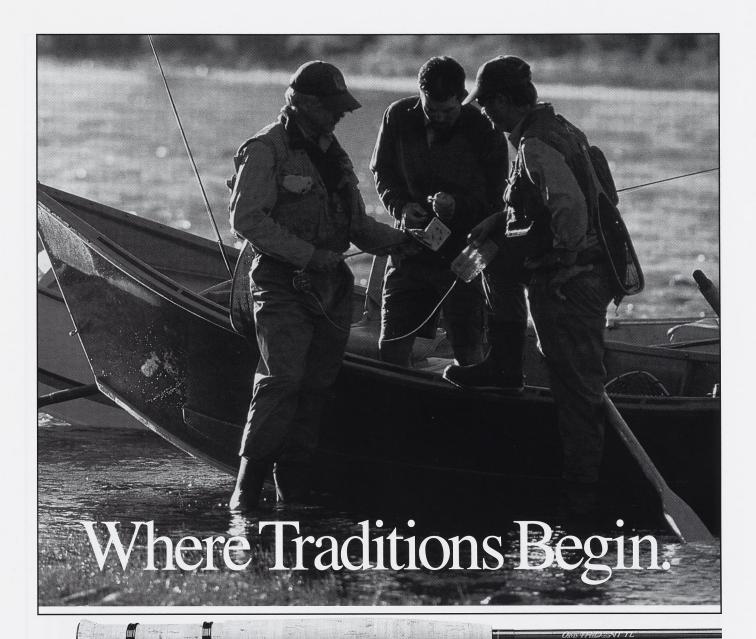
In January, volunteers and staff represented the Museum at fly-fishing shows in Denver, Colorado; Marlborough, Massachusetts; and Somerset, New Jersey. As has been the case for the past several years, our booth spaces were courtesy of the Fly Fishing Show's directors, Barry Serviente and Chuck Furimsky. We are grateful to them for providing these opportunities to bring the Museum to the fly-fishing public at no cost to the Museum. We could not participate otherwise.

In Denver, our good friends and frequent contributors to *The American Fly* 

Fisher, John Betts and Gordon Wickstrom, spent their entire weekend working in our booth with Executive Director Gary Tanner. This was a first-time show, and it was a great success. Gary reports that spending time in a booth with John and Gordon has become one of the very best aspects of his job.

The Massachusetts event saw Special Projects Coordinator Sara Wilcox, Events and Membership Coordinator Diana Siebold, and volunteer Bob Warren setting up for the weekend action. We had a steady stream of curious Georges, as well as some old friends and many new ones.

In simple terms, the Somerset, New



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Jersey show is massive. Art Director John Price, Collection Manager Yoshi Akiyama, and Diana Siebold staffed the booth at this gathering. This year, in an effort to spice up the lobby/entrance to the show, we brought along our five time-line panels, highlighting the history of fly fishing. The exhibit totaled 22 feet in length and weighed 400 pounds. We received many compliments on the display, not only from attendees, but from our peers who were exhibiting at the show. A great show once again for us: we were fortunate to renew some memberships and acquire some new friends.

Thanks to all of our current members and trustees who stopped by to wish us well and to just say hello!

### **Recent Donations**

**Donald A. Wilson** of Newfield, New Hampshire, gave us smelt flies, artwork, and catalogues that were used for photography in his book, *Smelt Fly Patterns*. He also sent us a first edition (1996) of the book

Sachiko Ashizawa of Tokyo, Japan, donated a collection of fly-fishing items belonging to her late husband, Kazuhiro Ashizawa, a famed fly fisherman and nature writer and author. The items included a Hardy 6-foot, 10-inch, 5-weight bamboo fly rod, the "Phantom Parakona"; a Hardy 4-weight reel, "the Flyweight"; books authored by Ashizawa; and fly-fishing magazines featuring his life story and more.

Ted Comstock and the Adirondack League Club of Old Forge, New York, gave us a copy of A Tradition of Excellence: The Adirondack Fishery Research Partnership of the Adirondack League Club and Cornell University, 1950–2000.

Guy Grima of Franconia, New Hampshire, and Virginia Robinson of Easton, New Hampshire, donated a box full of rare catalogues and brochures from the 1940s and 1950s in memory of James Robinson. Among these catalogues were a 1949 Ashaway, a 1949 Orvis, a 1948 Harters, a 1948 Montague, and a 1949 Paul Young. Sara Wilcox of Manchester, Vermont, provided us with missing issues of Fly Rod & Reel, Fly Fisherman, American Angler, and Trout magazines.

### In the Library

Thanks to the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become part of our collection (all were published in 2000, unless otherwise noted).

The Lyons Press sent us Wayne Cattanach's Handcrafting Bamboo Fly Rods (revised and augmented edition); Seth Norman's The Fly Fisher's Guide to Crimes of Passion; Mallory Burton's Green River Virgins and Other Passionate Anglers; The Sports Afield Treasury of Fly Fishing: One Hundred Years of Superb Stories and Articles (edited by Tom Paugh); Tom Rosenbauer's The Orvis Guide to Prospecting for Trout; and John Merwin's Streamer-Fly Fishing (2001).

Frank Amato Publications sent us Thomas Ames Jr.'s Hatch Guide for New England Streams; Fishing Journal: Angling Legacy; Philip Rowley's Fly Patterns for Stillwaters: A Study of Trout, Entomology and Tying; and Paul Ptalis's Century End: A Fly Tying Journey

OSÚ Press sent us Fishing the Northwest: An Angler's Reader (edited by Glen Love).

### **Upcoming Events**

April 19

Cleveland Dinner and Sporting Auction The Country Club Pepper Pike, Ohio

May 3

Heritage Award Honoring George Harvey Nittany Lion Inn State College, Pennsylvania

May 18

Festival Weekend Cocktail party 5:30 pm The American Museum of Fly Fishing Manchester, Vermont

May 19

Festival Weekend Open House 10 am to 5 pm The American Museum of Fly Fishing Manchester, Vermont

May 19

Dinner and Sporting Auction Equinox Hotel Manchester, Vermont

June

Saltwater Tournament Date to be announced

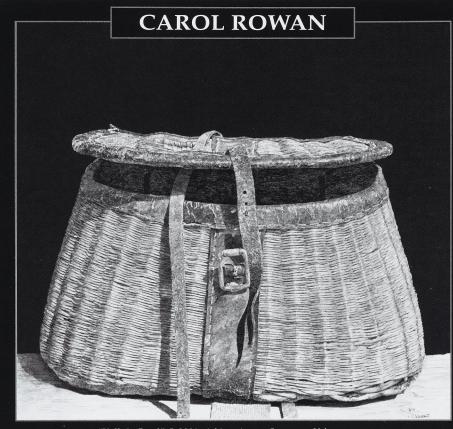
November 17

Annual Winery Dinner and Sporting Auction Gallo of Sonoma Healdsburg, California Call (802) 362-3300 for early hotel recommendations

See Wildlife Glass Artist John Soward create fresh and saltwater gamefish in miniature from glass.

John and many other artists and craftsmen will be demonstrating at the Museum during our Open House on Saturday, May 19th.





"Kelly's Creel" © 2001 giclée print on Somerset Velvet paper

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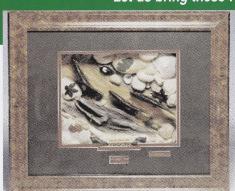
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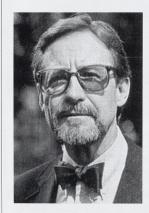


John Betts began tying flies for his livelihood in 1976 and published his first article a year later. He is a regular contributor to American Angler, Fly Tyer, Fly Rod & Reel, and Fly Fisherman. His work has also appeared in Field & Stream, Outdoor Life, and Sports Afield, as well as the major fly-fishing magazines of Europe and Japan. In 1981, he was featured in Sports Illustrated and is one of only a few tyers to be so acknowledged.

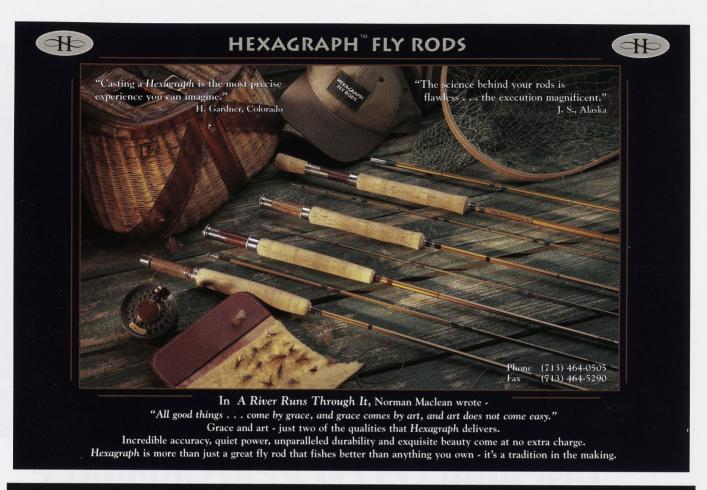
The Museum featured the artistic works of Betts (drawing, paintings, and mixed media of painting and tied flies) in an exhibit in 1997. His last contribution to the journal was "Fly Lines and Lineage," which appeared in the Fall 2000 issue.

Michael Scott works as a project manager with IBM, a job that keeps him too long away from the streams. He approached junior trout bum status for a few heady years in Colorado, tied flies for a sub-subsistence income, then moved inexorably into family, fatherhood, and the digital highway. Somewhere along the line, he developed an ongoing and deepening interest in the Victorian fly fishers, rodbuilders, hook makers, and book writers. He now lives in northern California with his wife, friend, and partner Barbara, son Travis, daughter Kayla, cats Timbo and Stripes, dog Cisco, and Rosie the tarantula.

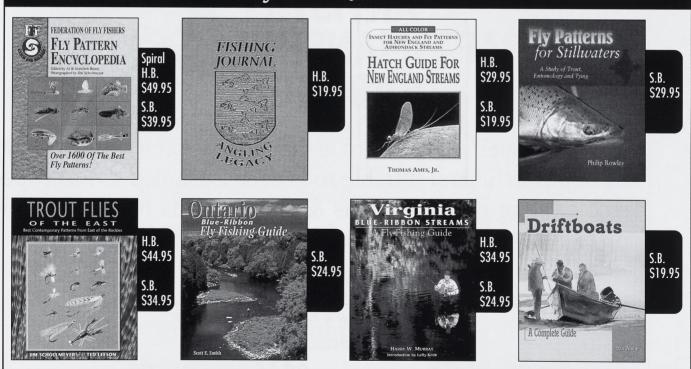




**Gordon M. Wickstrom** is professor of drama emeritus and was longtime chair of that department at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In 1991, he retired to his native Boulder, Colorado, where he fishes, writes, and produces a theater group for which, at this writing, he is appearing as Faustus in Christopher Marlowe's play of that name. His collected essays, Notes from an Old Fly Book, which will include several essays that first appeared in this journal, is expected to appear in September. The note "Tups Indispensable: A Dubbing Dilemma," in the Summer 2000 issue, was the latest of his frequent contributions to this journal.



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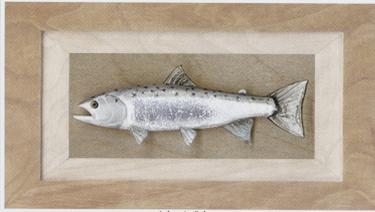
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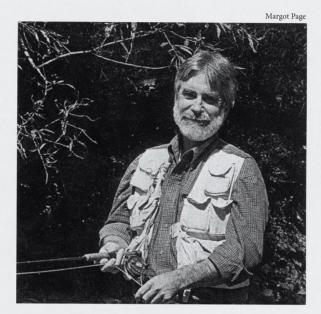
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#### Will Wonders Never Cease?



It's late February. Each morning, as I cross over Rupert Mountain down into the Metawee River Valley on my way to work, the Vermont Department of Transportation reminds me, with several yellow diamond-shaped signs, of an irrefutable fact of life and wonder of nature: frost heaves. It sure does. Every spring it pitches fence posts, rocks, and poorly designed house foundations out of the ground, not to mention me toward the roof of my pickup truck as I fly over what the DOT was really warning me about—frost heaves—severe bumps and dips in the road. But I like to read the signs as active indicators that some force is doing something that is sure and true. For once, even the government is right: frost does heave. It is a wonder.

Where am I going with this? To something far less sure and true, to my mind, than the above, but based, we are told, also on "wonder." A new book, with the rather unfortunate title *Deep Trout: Angling in Popular Culture*, purports to examine, in scholarly fashion, just that: angling in popular culture. The author, a University of Wisconsin anthropologist, discusses—among other institutions, organizations, and individuals—the American Museum of Fly Fishing. He offers his insights into our institution that, unlike the action of frost in early spring, may not be irrefutable, but that, he argues, are based on our use of "wonder."

The author offers us his opinion that our exhibits,

particularly our "Politicians in the Stream" and "Personalities in the Stream" exhibits, as they appeared on the day he and his wife visited us in Manchester, "cannot help but lead patrons to think of fly fishing as a noble national [his italics] pastime." "Why" he asks, "has the AMFF selected presidents, movie-stars, sports figures and other larger-than-life individuals to tell the story of fly fishing?" He answers his own question by stating, "In fly fishing, as in law, power and authority obviously count for a great deal." Perhaps, but in this museum, "power and authority" figures accounted on that day for only six percent of the total gallery wall space dedicated to exhibits. Hardly a "great deal." I can't figure out where "the nationalistic tone and style persist through its [the AMFF's] exhibits." And why should we hide presidential tackle-what museum in its right institutional mind would?

"Wonder, in the context of museums, refers to the 'power of an object displayed to stop the viewer in his tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention," according to the author and the reference he cites. He goes on: "But, in AMFF's case, the quest for 'wonder' is worrisome to the degree that it furthers the objective of establishing fly fishing as a feature of American national identity." He even asks the question: "But what about museums elsewhere that focus on regional angling experiences? Are they similarly dangerous?" As I have been known to utter on occasion: "Huh?" Dangerous?

And the capstone: "What is the AMFF's fault, however, is that 'wonder' is used strategically to shield and insulate angler-patrons from their own participation in the destruction of wilderness." I personally know only two of my four predecessors, but I am pleased to go on record as saying that none of the three of us strategically (or otherwise) use(d) "wonder" to that effect. The best I can come up with is that the author of this book looks at the world as if his glass is half empty. I say it's half full—our exhibits inspire people to protect, preserve, and conserve, as appropriate, our natural resources.

Frost heaves, a wonder of nature, are bumps and dips in the road. I think of this book as just a kind of a bump in the road. Fortunately, not enough of a bump to make me hit the roof, not like those wonders on Rupert Mountain Road.

GARY TANNER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

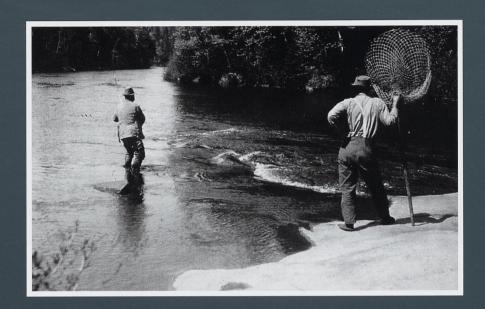


The american museum of fly fishing, a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of fly fishing, was founded in Manchester, Vermont, in 1968. The Museum serves as a repository for, and conservator to, the world's largest collection of angling and angling-related objects. The Museum's collections and exhibits provide the public with thorough documentation of the evolution of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry in the United States and abroad from the sixteenth century to the present. Rods, reels, and flies, as well as tackle, art, books, manuscripts, and photographs form the major components of the Museum's collections. The Museum has gained recognition as a

The Museum has gained recognition as a unique educational institution. It supports a publications program through which its national quarterly journal, *The American Fly Fisher*, and books, art prints, and catalogs are regularly offered to the public. The Museum's traveling exhibits program has made it possible for educational exhibits to be viewed across the United States and abroad. The Museum also provides in-house exhibits, related interpretive programming, and research services for members, visiting scholars, authors, and students.

The Museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. For information please contact: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, P. O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254, 802-362-3300.





# The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SUMMER 2001 VOLUME 27 NUMBER 3

#### **Ephemeral Summer**



The Museum on Festival Weekend 2001.

Spring. It's always like this at the Museum. This year found staff updating the galleries, planning for and traveling to dinner/auctions, hosting a dinner for the recipient of this year's Heritage Award, receiving television and print coverage, publishing the newsletter and journal, and gearing up for our annual Festival Weekend celebration—at which we not only invited the public to enjoy the grounds and learn about fly fishing, but also welcomed new trustees and honored our volunteer of the year.

No wonder our events and membership coordinator took off for Barbados immediately following.

By the time this reaches you, though, it will be summer, Vermont's ephemeral season. As you read these words, we will be feeling the end of it creeping close behind us, and we will wear a guise of healthy denial.

Charles B. Wood III is an expert in ephemera. In addition to being a collector of books on Atlantic salmon angling, he is also a collector of old photographs and ephemera related to that subject: manuscripts, letters, typescripts, pamphlets, advertising and travel brochures, old catalogs of salmon fishing tackle and salmon flies, manuscript fishing record books, individual photos and photo albums, menus, and postcards. In "Salmo salar: Notes from a Collector," Wood discusses his collection and shares some photographs. His article begins on page 2.

In "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants," Ken Cameron and Andrew Herd discuss an earlier literary tradition, before the advent of modern copyright law, in which authors would often reuse parts of previously published works to build on their own authority. In particular, Cameron and Herd focus on three engravings that appeared in the 1760 Hawkins edition of Isaac Walton's *The Complete Angler* that were picked up in various books over the next eighty years. Their article begins on page 12.

The Compleat Angler inspired this issue's Notes & Comment piece as well. Author Jim Repine's love of Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton's book takes him on a trip to England for a look at the world they inhabited. Repine reflects on Walton and Cotton's words and the thoughts of his guides in England, and offers his own as well. "Walton and Cotton: Compleat and Current" begins on page 20. [Editor's Note and Comment: The spelling of Isaac/Izaak and Complete/Compleat depends on the edition one picks up. The authors of these two articles have been allowed their respective preferences.]

Festival Weekend dawned bright and sunny for us. As we do each year, we'd like to share some photos with you from our favorite event. These begin on page 26.

May your summer be filled with stream time.

KATHLEEN ACHOR EDITOR



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Journal of ∅ the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SUMMER 2001

VOLUME 27 NUMBER 3

Salmo salar: Notes from a Collector
Standing on the Shoulders of Giants
Notes & Comments: Walton and Cotton: Compleat and Current 20  Jim Repine
Festival Weekend 2001
Museum News
Contributors

ON THE COVER: A guest of Glen Osler fishes the Trinity River. From the article Salmo salar: Notes from a Collector by Charles B. Wood III.

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### Salmo salar: Notes from a Collector

#### Printed Ephemera and Old Photograph Albums

by Charles B. Wood III

John Cook

RISTIGOUCHE SALMON CLUB

1880 100 1980
YEARS

SOUVENIR PROGRAM JUNE 14-22 1980.

Figure 1. Souvenir Program of the Ristigouche Salmon Club.

ing or of wanting my parents to take me fishing. I also collect books on the subject but restrict myself to the subject of Atlantic salmon angling.<sup>2</sup> The collection at present consists of about four hundred titles, the major focus being salmon fishing in Canada. A particular strength is in the area of privately printed books on the subject; I have about one hundred of these.<sup>3</sup> I also collect ephemera, old photographs, and photograph albums,

HAVE BEEN passionately

involved with two things

all of my adult life: old

books and fly fishing. An anti-

quarian bookseller for thirty-

four years, I have been a keen fisherman and fly fisherman

most of my life.1 Some of my

earliest memories are of fish-

which are the subject of this essay. Ephemera of all sorts, both printed and manuscript, have in recent years been increasingly recognized by collectors and historians as important primary-source materials. 4 My own collection includes manuscripts, letters, typescripts, pamphlets, advertising and travel brochures, old catalogs of salmon fishing tackle and salmon flies, manuscript fishing record books, individual photos and photo albums, menus, and postcards. This is a delightful category to collect because it is full of surprises. But it is also difficult and frustrating to find such salmon-fishing items—there is so little out there. Fishing books, on the other hand, have been collected for at least the past two centuries, and that field has been relatively well cataloged. There are certain rare fishing books that are very difficult to obtain in today's market, but at least their existence is known as a result of the work of previous generations of collectors and bibliographers. Much of the salmon ephemera that interests me is simply not recorded. But not all of it. Some years ago, I made the effort to plow through the two major American fishing bibliographies, Wetzel<sup>5</sup> and Bruns,6 and I made a want list of a dozen or so items that interested me, primarily pamphlets. I have since found some of these; others still elude me. For example, Wetzel lists a small pamphlet by Albert M. Bigelow called *Recollections* of Cascapedia and Camp Douglas Beck, no date but probably about 1900. I have never seen a copy. It is not listed in the NUC (National Union Catalogue) or the OCLC (On Line Computer Library Center, Inc.), but I believe it does exist, as Wetzel was pretty reliable. Bruns lists rather more items of ephemera, especially fishing travel brochures, although again, most of them are not primarily devoted to salmon angling.

A careful reading of other bibliographies and auction catalogs yields a thin harvest of attractive nuggets. For example, the standard bibliography of English angling

books, Westwood and Satchell, published as long ago as 1883, describes a privately printed broadside, Grand Cascapedia Fishing Score (1879).7 To quote the descriptive note: "The wonderful scores of the Hon. Charles Ellis, Mr. L. Iveson and Capt. G. A. Percy, made on this river in 1879." I have never seen another reference to this broadside; it is possible that no copy survives today. The sale catalog of the library of John Gerard Heckscher,8 sold in New York City in 1906, describes an item that is exactly my kind of ephemera: a small brochure, in printed salmon-colored paper covers, and published in Montreal in 1901 by the St. Lawrence Steamship Company titled Three Excursions to the Celebrated Salmon Streams of the Labrador Coast. How in the world does one find a copy of something like this? The most likely answer is you find it by accident, but with the help of much patient and informed looking.

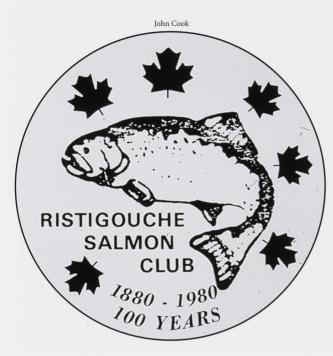


Figure 2. Centennial decal of the Ristigouche Salmon Club.

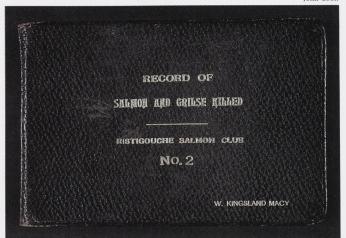


Figure 3. Ristigouche Salmon Club member W. Kingsland Macy's personal record book.



Figure 4. Engraved card from the Cascapedia Club, which accompanied shipped salmon to their ultimate destinations.

#### SOME WRITTEN ITEMS

Let me now turn to look at and discuss a few pieces in my collection. Atlantic salmon fishing has long been considered an elite sport. One of the most famous fishing clubs in the world is the Ristigouche Salmon Club, located in Matapédia, Quebec. This club was founded in 1880 with forty-one members and has about thirty today. In 1980, it celebrated its centennial and for that event it published a Souvenir Program, a pamphlet of a dozen or so pages (Figure 1). The best part of this rare little booklet is the wonderful series of reproductions of old photographs of the river, the clubhouses, the anglers and guides, and some very large salmon. Along with the booklet, laid inside the cover, was a large R.S.C. centennial decal (Figure 2). This is about as ephemeral as you can get; I cannot imagine that very many of these were saved. It was in part due to the reproductions of old photographs in this booklet that I was inspired to collect original vintage salmon fishing photographs, of which more is said later.

It has long been the custom for each salmon river to record the numbers and sizes of fish caught. The river managers and biologists need these statistics to understand and manage the rivers. My collection contains old salmon fishing logbooks from several Scottish rivers and one Canadian river as well as two personal record books of a member of the Ristigouche Salmon Club in the early

1920s, W. Kingsland Macy (Figure 3).9 The pages of the Macy book have columns for date, where killed (i.e., the name of the pool), weight, and "sent to." In the early days, it was the custom to pack the individual salmon in snow-filled wooden boxes and ship them by rail to friends back home, usually in the States. With each salmon went an elegant engraved card (Figure 4) giving the name of the angler, the recipient, the river where the fish came from, and the date. I have several of these cards; the one shown here is from the Cascapedia Club.<sup>10</sup>

The old-time salmon clubs were private and did not advertise; the only way one could go to them was to be a member or an invited guest. It is therefore not

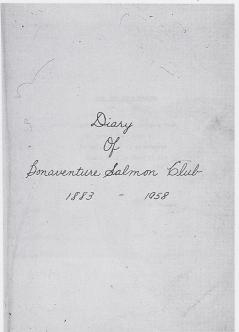


Figure 5. Diary of the Bonaventure Salmon Club, 1883–1958.

surprising that information about them is hard to come by. A few clubs published their own histories, primarily for their members in very small editions. One such book I have heard of but have never seen is A Little History of the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club by Gard T. Lyon published by the Radcliffe Press (Oswego, N.Y.) in 1916.11 Another club "history" I am fortunate to own is the Diary of the Bonaventure Salmon Club, 1883-1958 (Montreal, privately mimeographed, 1958).12 This is not really a history as much as a carefully edited transcription of the club logbook written by various authors and full of charm, wit and humor, history, lore, fact, fancy, and occasional poetry (Figure 5).

The clubs discussed above were exclusive and not open to the ordinary angler. But there certainly was plenty of other salmon fishing available for those without club connections. One of the major obstacles to salmon fishing was the simple problem of getting there. The more inaccessible the river, the better the fishing was likely to be (indeed, this is still true today; the best salmon fishing on earth is now on Russia's Kola Peninsula). At the turn of the twentieth century, maritime Canada was just opening up to the rank and file of sportsmen, and the Intercolonial Railway was the major land-based means of getting there. It

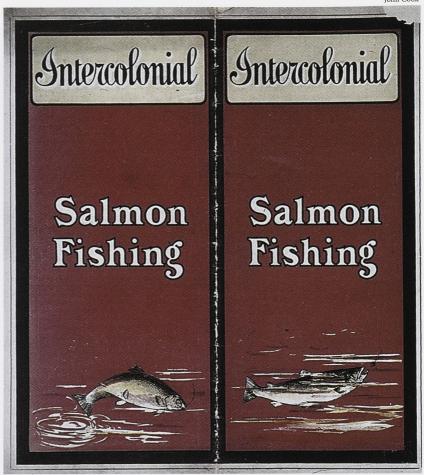


Figure 6. Intercolonial Salmon Fishing, a brochure published by the Intercolonial Railway in 1903.

served the maritime route, starting from Montreal, running out toward the Gaspé Peninsula, turning south at Rimouski, down the Matapédia River Valley, south along the coast of New Brunswick, and on out to Sidney at the eastern end of Nova Scotia. In an effort to lure passengers to its train service, the Intercolonial Railway published a wonderful and graphically appealing brochure, *Intercolonial Salmon Fishing* (Figure 6), printed in April 1903.

During the 1930s, the Consolidated Paper Corporation of Montreal published a pamphlet, *The Salmon Streams of Anticosti Island* (Figure 7). In addition to ads, it gives copious information for the prospective salmon angler, many photos, and a typical "Diary of a Trip to Anticosti Island." This last feature is interesting; the salmon fishing on Anticosti inspired six privately printed books on the subject, and my theory is that at least some of them were written and printed as a result of the "Diary" in this pamphlet.<sup>13</sup> Anticosti Island, in the

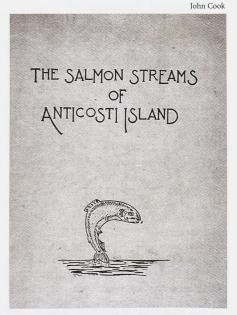


Figure 7. The Salmon Streams of Anticosti Island, published by the Consolidated Paper Corporation of Montreal in the 1930s.

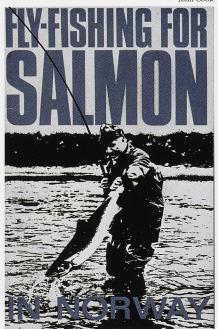


Figure 8. Fly Fishing for Salmon in Norway, a pamphlet written by Ernest Schwiebert for the air travel association Mytravel in 1964.

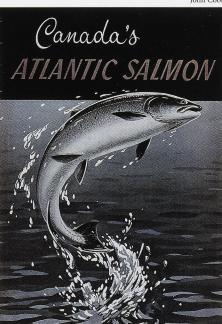


Figure 9. Canada's Atlantic Salmon, a pamphlet written by F. H. Wooding and published by the Department of Fisheries in Ottawa.

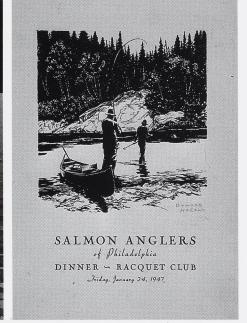


Figure 10. Menu from a dinner at the Salmon Anglers of Philadelphia, 24 January 1947.

middle of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, had been privately owned by the French "chocolate king" Henri Menier from 1895 to 1926. He used it as a private hunting and fishing preserve. After his death, it was bought by a group of Canadian pulp and paper companies, and today it is a Quebec provincial park. In the 1930s, the Consolidated Paper Corporation made serious efforts to bring wealthy sportsmen to the island for the salmon fishing. Access during this period was provided by the steamer *Fleurus*, which sailed from Quebec City.<sup>14</sup>

Later, in the 1960s, when the world's salmon fishing elite (mostly rich British and Americans, and a few Europeans) sought out ever more exotic places and better fishing, the fiord rivers of Norway were promoted. These were hardly a new discovery; the best of them, especially the Alta15 and the Laerdal,16 had been fished since the middle of the nineteenth century by the British aristocracy, most prominently the dukes of Roxburghe. But by the 1960s the Norwegians were looking for more anglers, and the air travel association Mytravel commissioned the famous American angler Ernest Schwiebert to write a pamphlet for them (Figure 8).17 By this time, air travel had become the norm.

There are two other categories of salmon angling ephemera I would like to

mention before moving on to the old photographs. The first is general pamphlets on the subject of the Atlantic salmon, both from the point of view of angling and conservation. In 1949, the Atlantic Salmon Association was formed in Montreal. That same year the founder of the association, Percy Nobbs, wrote a series of twelve "documents," basically small pamphlets on the subject of the management of salmon rivers in eastern Canada; I am lucky to have the complete series in my collection. A bit later, in the 1950s, the federal government of Canada, under the auspices of the Department of Fisheries in Ottawa, began to realize that the Atlantic salmon was a national treasure and accordingly commissioned F. H. Wooding to write a pamphlet on the subject (Figure 9).<sup>18</sup> The object of this attractive brochure was to elicit the cooperation of all parties in salmon conservation. In addition to the handsome cover, painted by Gordon Fairbairn of Ottawa, the illustrations include three fine photographs taken by Lee Wulff.

One other category of ephemera that appeals to me is that of keepsake/menus of special angling dinners. The earliest one of these to come to my attention is that of the Salmon Anglers of Philadelphia (Figure 10) from 24 January 1947. This club met once or twice under

the rubric of Salmon Anglers of Philadelphia, and then changed its name in 1951 to the more encompassing Anglers' Club of Philadelphia. For the meeting of 24 January 1947, there were remarks by Chairman Frank C. Roberts Jr., a talk on salmon by the legendary Edward R. Hewitt, and a showing of Lee Wulff's film, September on the Serpentine.

#### PHOTOS AND ALBUMS FROM THE COLLECTION

As I have noted previously, I am always on the lookout for old photographs and photograph albums of salmon fishing. Such photographs from before the year 1900 certainly do exist, but they are rare in the marketplace. I do have one certifiable nineteenth-century salmon image: it is an albumen cabinet card of a nattily dressed young man holding a large male salmon. It is inscribed along the lower margin "Restigouche River, 1897" (Figure 11). I also have in my collection several fishing albums, one of which dates from the first decade of the twentieth century. This album contains a remarkable collection of more than three hundred snapshots made by Dr. Charles C. Norris (1876-1961) of Philadelphia, recording his annual trips to Newfoundland and



Figure 11. Restigouche River, 1897.

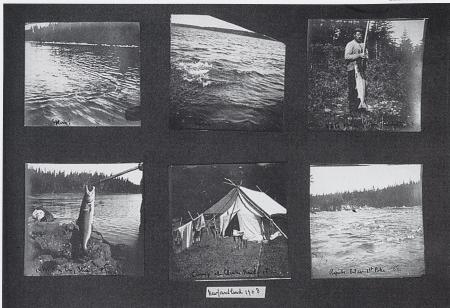


Figure 12. From the photo albums of Charles C. Norris of Philadelphia.

Labrador.19 The Norris photos record the years between 1906 and 1911; each trip was made in the company of his good friend Dr. Williams Cadwallader. Getting to Newfoundland during this period was a challenge. They reached the island by schooner, dodged icebergs (well documented in the photographs), and then traveled up the salmon rivers in small lapstrake double-ended boats unique to Newfoundland (more commonly known today as dories). The conditions were primitive-they lived in tents-but they caught many salmon (Figures 12 and 13). This album is particularly interesting and pleasing as almost all the leaves are titled and identified in white ink, as are the individual snapshots, though Norris's handwriting is not the easiest to read. The photographs also identify the rivers they fished, including the River of Ponds in Newfoundland, later made famous by the fishing writer Lee Wulff, and the Wachesoo, then in Labrador, now in Quebec (due to a boundary change by the government of Quebec). He also identified many and various "steadies," the Newfoundland word for long, quiet stretches of river. It is known that Dr. Norris kept meticulous fishing diaries; they must initially have accompanied this album. He also wrote a short story, "The Twilight Salmon," which was published in Gray's Sporting Journal in 1976.20 Norris and Cadwallader made these trips when they were relatively young men; in later years, Norris wrote a

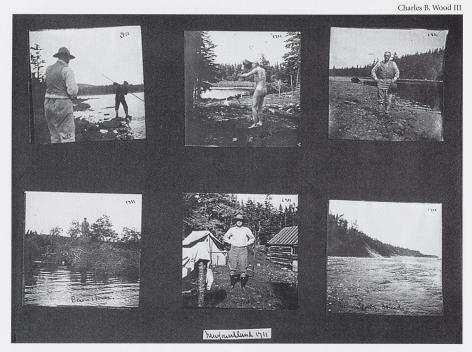


Figure 13. From the photo albums of Charles C. Norris of Philadelphia.

Eastern Upland Shooting, published in 1946.<sup>21</sup>

Another album, undated but probably from the middle 1910s, is formally titled "Scenes of, at, in, near and roundabout Runnymede Lodge, Ristigouche River, New Brunswick, Canada" (Figure 14). This presents a stark contrast to the Norris album, as the living and fishing conditions here were easy, if not luxurious. With more than 160 fine and sharp photos, some of which are panoramas, and all neatly titled in carefully drawn

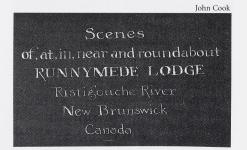


Figure 14. From an album probably dating from the 1910s, with photos by Edward Alan Olds Jr.

standard work on bird hunting, called

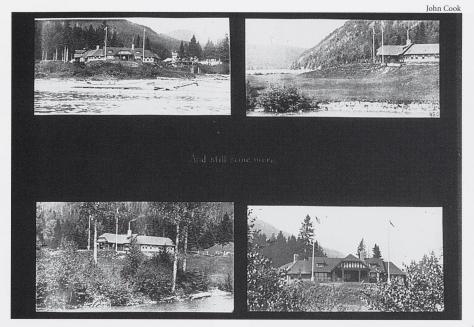


Figure 15. Runnymede Lodge photos by Edward Alan Olds Jr.

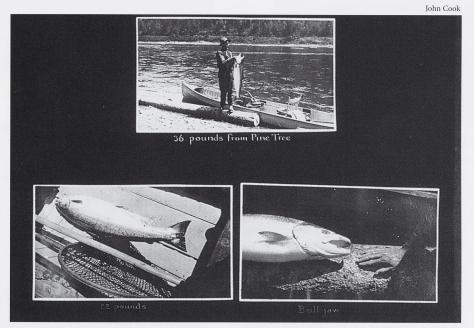


Figure 16. Runnymede Lodge photos by Edward Alan Olds Jr.

white-ink captions, this is one of the best fishing photo albums I have ever seen. Runnymede Lodge was built sometime between 1912 and 1916 by Archibald Mitchell (1844–1923), a prosperous drygoods merchant from Norwich, Connecticut.<sup>22</sup> The photos were taken by Edward Alan Olds Jr., son-in-law of Archibald Mitchell, and are far more than mere snapshots; Olds had a sophisticated and sensitive eye and made very good pictures. There are pages and pages of images that lovingly document the new building both inside and out

(Figure 15), as well as give views on the river, of anglers "at work," and of some splendid bright fresh-run June salmon (Figure 16). There are also a few purely "artistic" photographs, such as land-scapes, close-ups of flowers, and calves in the fields. This famous camp is still used every June; it is presently the property of Joseph F. Cullman III, retired Philip Morris chief executive officer.

The Norris and Runnymede Lodge albums document the fishing in Newfoundland, Labrador, and New Brunswick; I have another group of about fifty



Figure 17. Glyn Osler (right) on the Trinity River.

high-quality photographs of salmon fishing on the Trinity River on the north shore of Quebec for the seasons of 1926 and 1927. These came together with the actual camp fishing record book covering the years from 1925 to 1941, as well as other records and statistics for earlier years. The Trinity River at this time was leased by Glyn Osler, K.C., a lawyer from Toronto (Figure 17). As with the Runnymede photos, these too are high quality; it is not stated who took them, but the prints were made by H. G. Tugwell & Co. Ltd. of Toronto. They are rather better than amateur snapshots (Figure 18). Osler is a prominent name in Canada; I would not be surprised if Glyn Osler turned out to be a relative of the famous physician and book collector Sir William Osler, whose great medical library is now at McGill.

My most recent acquisition in this category is a set of three albums recording trout fishing in Maine and salmon fishing in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Scotland between 1919 and 1929. Together they contain some 1,070 snapshots, all mounted and captioned. They were made by someone whose initials were G. K. W., whose wife was named Helen, and who lived, I think, in Brookline, Massachusetts. But I can't identify him. The first album is mostly trout fishing in Maine, primarily at York's Twin Pine Camps, on Daicey Pond, near Greenville. These photos are very evocative and meaningful to me—it was here, at the age of ten, in 1946, that I learned to fly fish. The second album



Figure 18. A guest of Glyn Osler fishing on the Trinity River.

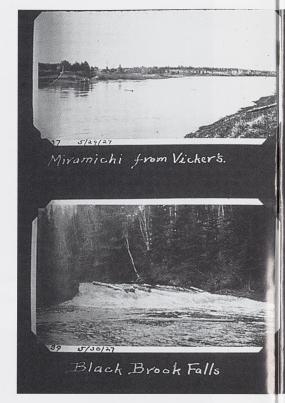


Figure 19. G.K.W.'s

fish

records salmon fishing trips to New Brunswick in 1927 and 1928. They fished the Cains River, Miramichi, Tobique, and Upsalquitch. Some of the images are of water that is still very productive today (Figure 19); shown here, for example, is the famous Black Brook Pool just below the mouth of the Cains River.

Another interesting feature of this New Brunswick album is that it shows the home camp of the pioneer outfitter Charles Cremin on Nepisiguit Lake (Figure 20). The neat-looking log camp in the upper left belonged to Cremin and is so identified in the caption. This dovetails nicely with a small printed brochure in my collection issued by Cremin in the mid-1920s advertising his Nepisiguit Lake camps (Figure 21).<sup>23</sup> The third album covers Cape Breton Island (Nova Scotia), where they fished the Margaree River in 1928. It then jumps to salmon fishing on the Grand Codroy River in Newfoundland, 1928. The final section records a trip to the Aberdeenshire Dee in Scotland in 1929 (Figure 22). The Dee is one of the three most famous Scottish salmon rivers and was then, in the twenties, the summer

home of the famous salmon angler A.H.E. Wood. His estate, Cairnton, and his water on the Dee was the scene of the development of a new type of salmon fishing, the so-called greased line method, in which the line was meant to float and the fly was tiny and fished barely under the surface.<sup>24</sup>

All of the above albums were made by anglers and show the actual acts of fishing and catching. I have another album entirely devoted to the Scottish River Dee that seems to have been made for another purpose, perhaps as a record for a riparian association. It consists of seventy-six original professionally taken photographs of named pools of the River Dee (yes, the same river our friend G. K. W. fished with A. H. E. Wood). The pools, or "beats" as they are called in Scotland, are named for their long-dead owners, lessors, or local landmarks, e.g., Crathes, Cairnton (this was A. H. E. Wood's water), Kincardine, Glen Muick, Abergeldie, Mar Lodge, and others (Figures 23 and 24).<sup>25</sup> In addition to the photos of pools, there are a dozen images of fishing inns or hotels, and a final portrait, laid inside the front cover,

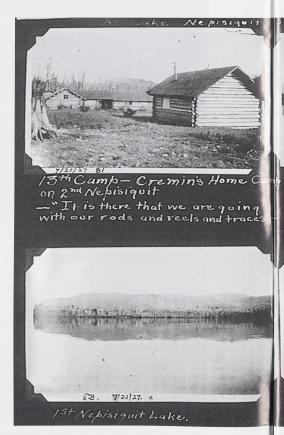
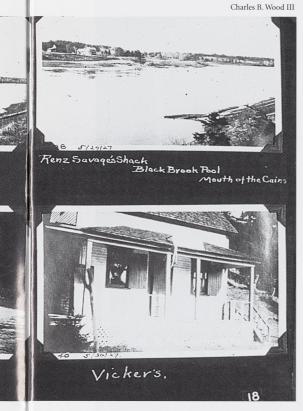
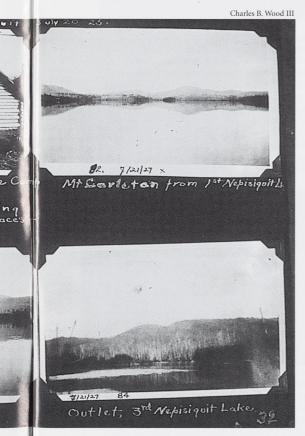


Figure 20. G.K.W.'s



fishing album, 1927-1928.



fishing album, 1927–1928.

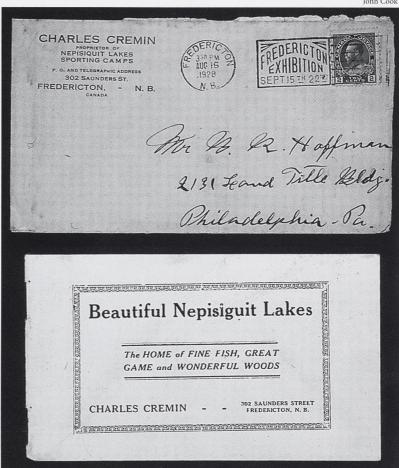


Figure 21. Brochure issued by pioneer outfitter Charles Cremin advertising his Nepisiguit Lake camps.

of William D. Irvine, inspector of the River Dee District Fishing Board, dressed in his working clothes, hip boots, tweed hat, coat, and necktie. To judge from one or two of the automobiles visible in the fishing hotel photos, they would date from the 1940s.

Finally, to conclude, I illustrate two examples from a series of typescript histories of annual trips to the Miramichi Fish and Game Club on the Northwest Miramichi River between 1951 and 1969 (Figure 25).<sup>26</sup> Unlike the items discussed above, these are not, strictly speaking, photo albums; rather, they are typewritten accounts of fishing trips, each one illustrated with original pasted-in photographs. The "title page" shown here is from the trip of 1952. All the typescripts are carbon copies; the party was pretty much the same year after year, all Bostonians. In 1952 it was Guido R. Perera, A. Lassell Ripley, Doris Ripley, and H. deForest Lockwood Jr. In the old days of typewriters, before word processors, the maximum number of legible carbon copies one could make was

about four, and my guess is that about four sets of each of these booklets were made, one for each member, or couple, of the party. Each one is illustrated with photographs, occasionally in a doublepage spread (Figure 26). You can see in Figure 26 (middle photo on the left) a man behind an easel working on a watercolor: that was Aiden Lassell Ripley (1896–1969), the noted sporting artist, watercolorist, and member of the Guild of Boston Artists.<sup>27</sup> These typescript histories came as a group from Ripley's widow to a neighbor of hers; that neighbor is a friend of mine, and I had a book he wanted, so we made a trade. That is how they came to me.

There is one category of salmon ephemera that I know exists but which has so far eluded me: real estate agents' brochures for salmon camps or lodges. Someday I'll turn one up. Like fishing itself, much of the charm and appeal of collecting lies in the anticipation and thrill of the chase!

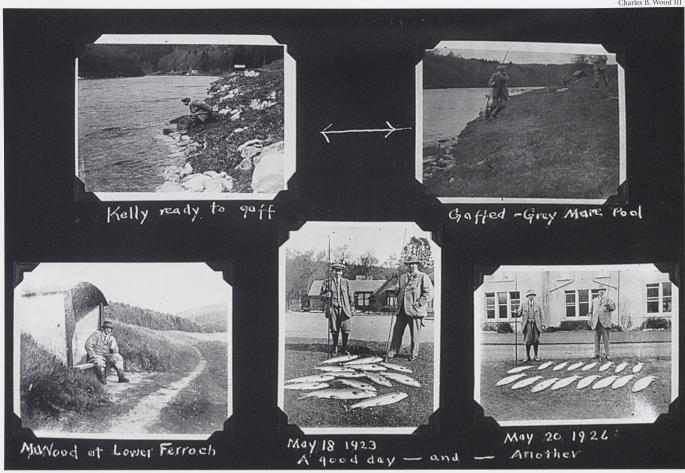


Figure 22. G.K.W.'s fishing album, Aberdeenshire Dee in Scotland, 1929.

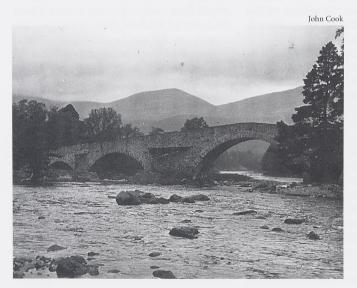


Figure 23. From an album devoted to the Scottish River Dee.

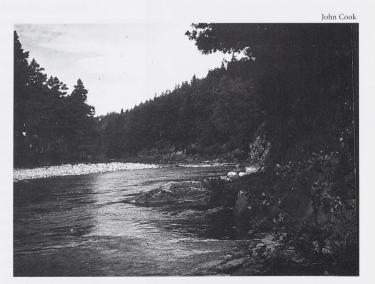


Figure 24. Another from an album devoted to the Scottish River Dee.

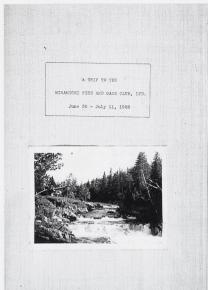


Figure 25. History of an annual trip to the Miramichi Fish and Game Club, 1952.

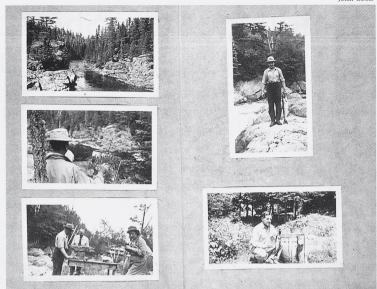


Figure 26. Photos from the 1952 annual trip to the Miramichi Fish and Game Club; the middle photo on the left features watercolorist Aiden Lassell Ripley.

#### ENDNOTES

1. My specialities are architecture and related arts. I do not deal in fishing books; I collect them.

2. Some readers may recall the auction of my collection of angling and shooting books at Swann Galleries, New York City, 23 October 1986. About 1992, I began to collect again, this time only salmon fishing titles.

3. This is a long-standing interest of mine. See Charles B. Wood III, "Privately Printed Books on Atlantic Salmon Fishing," *Atlantic Salmon Journal*, no. 3, 1973, pp. 7–10; and also Wood, "More Privately Printed Books on Atlantic Salmon Fishing," *Atlantic Salmon Journal*, no. 4, 1979, pp. 42–45. I am currently working on a bibliographical catalog of my book collection (to be self-published).

4. See, for example John Lewis, *Printed Ephemera* (London: Faber & Faber, 1962); see also Maurice Rickards, *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).

5. Charles Wetzel, American Fishing Books (Newark, Del.: privately printed, 1950; reprinted Stone Harbor, N.J.: Meadow Run Press, 1990).

6. Henry P. Bruns, Angling Books of the Americas (Atlanta: Anglers Press, 1975).

7. T. Westwood and T. Satchell, *Bibliotheca Piscatoria* (London, 1883; reprinted London: Dawsons's of Pall Mall, 1966), p. 51.

8. The Library of the Late John Gerard Heckscher of New York City, Parts I–III (New York: Merwin-Clayton Sales Co., April 25, 1906; reprinted New York: James Cummins Bookseller, 1992); lot no. 1693 under "Salmon Fishing," part II, p. 63.

9. W. Kingsland Macy was a member from 1921 to 1937. See H. Al Carter, *The Next Best Place to Heaven, the Ristigouche Salmon Club,* 1880–1998 (Campbellton, N.B.: privately printed, 1998), p.

10. For the early history of this club, see F. Gray Griswold, *The Cascapedia Club* (Norwood, Mass.: privately printed, 1920). Griswold identifies "Mr. Bourne" as F. G. Bourne; Frederick G. Bourne was president of the Singer Company of New York (of sewing machine fame). Mrs. Strassburger was

Mrs. Ralph Beaver Strassburger of Normandy Farm, Gwynnedd Valley, Pennsylvania, a famous racehorse breeding farm.

11. I have this information thanks to David Lank of Montreal, who is a member of the club. He told me some years ago that there was a photocopy of the book at the club; I have been unable to confirm the existence of any other copies of the book.

12. This "book" is 276 pages, entirely mimeographed, and contained between stiff binder covers. There is no indication of edition, but it was surely very small, perhaps a dozen or so copies.

13. In chronological order: 1. D. B. Lowrey, History of a Fishing Trip (n.p., n.d., 1933, 100 copies); 2. Sir V. Bessborough, "Baldemec," A Week on the Jupiter River, Anticosti Island (n.p., 1934, 100 copies); 3. Edward B. Leisenring, A.E.F.—Anticosti Expeditionary Force (n.p., July 1935, 300 copies); 4. Alexander E. Duncan, Tight Lines and a Happy Landing, Anticosti—July 1937 (Baltimore: privately printed by the Reese Press, 1937, 300 copies); 5. Eugene E. Wilson, L'Isle de Anticosti (Hartford: privately printed by the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1940, 150 copies); 6. Eugene E. Wilson, A Pilgrimage of Anglers (Hartford: privately printed by Connecticut Printers, 1952, 500 copies).

14. For a good general history of the island, see Donald MacKay, *Anticosti—The Untamed Island* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979).

15. See Roy Flury and Theodore Dalenson, *Alten, The Story of a Salmon River* (Birkhamsted, England: privately published, 1991) and same authors, *Alten, Reflections* (Birkhamsted, England: privately published, 1993).

16. See John Bruvoll et al., Angling in the Laerdal River. Sportfiske i Laerdalselven (Oslo: privately printed, ca. 1974).

17. Ernest Schwiebert, Fly Fishing for Salmon in Norway (Oslo: Mytravel, 1964). My copy belonged previously to the noted collector and dealer Colonel Henry A. Siegel; it retains his bookplate.

18. F. H. Wooding, *Canada's Atlantic Salmon* (Ottawa: Department of Fisheries, 1956).

19. A good account of Dr. Norris can be

found in George Bird Evans, *George Bird Evans Introduces* . . . (West Virginia: Old Hemlock, 1990), pp. 236–48 (though this account deals entirely with his life as a shooting man).

20. Charles C. Norris, "The Twilight Salmon," *Gray's Sporting Journal*, vol. 1, issue 2 (Spring 1976), pp. 70–77. The story is accompanied by a useful introduction by George Bird Evans. Norris states that he had fished these northern waters for eighteen seasons and taken more than 2,000 salmon.

21. Charles C. Norris, *Eastern Upland Shooting* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1946).

22. See Paul A. Morosky, "The Ristigouche Atlantic Salmon Fishing of Archibald Mitchell," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 23, no. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 2–13. Mr. Morosky is a great-grandson of Archibald Mitchell. Mitchell himself wrote two important chapters on salmon fishing in angling books of the period: E. A. Samuels, *With Rod and Gun in New England and the Maritime Provinces* (Boston: Samuels & Kimball, 1897), pp. 216–26; and Frank M. Johnson, *Forest, Lake and River* (Cambridge, Mass.: Printed for subscribers by the University Press, 1902), pp. 33–43.

23. For a little more about Cremin, see Clayton Stanley Stewart, *Recollections* (Frederickton, N.B.: printed for the author, 1990), Chapter 1, "Guiding and Outfitting in New Brunswick," pp.

24. "Jock Scott" [Donald G. Ferris Rudd], Greased Line Fishing for Salmon Compiled from the Fishing Papers of the Late A. H. E. Wood (London: Seeley, Service & Co., 1935).

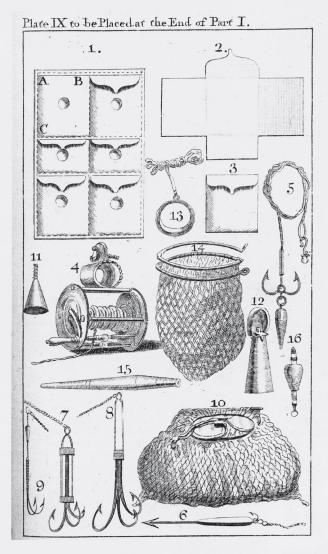
25. Good accounts of the River Dee and its pools can be found in Derek Mills & Neil Graesser, *The Salmon Rivers of Scotland* (London: Cassell, 1981), pp. 78–84. See also John Ashley Cooper, *The Great Salmon Rivers of Scotland* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1980), pp. 49–73.

26. For a history of this club, see Edward Weeks, *The Miramichi Fish and Game Club, A History* (Frederickton, N. B.: printed for the author by Brunswick Press, 1984).

27. See A. Lassell Ripley, Sporting Etchings, Commentary by Dana Lamb; introduction by Guido Perera (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishers, 1970).

## Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

by Ken Cameron and Andrew Herd

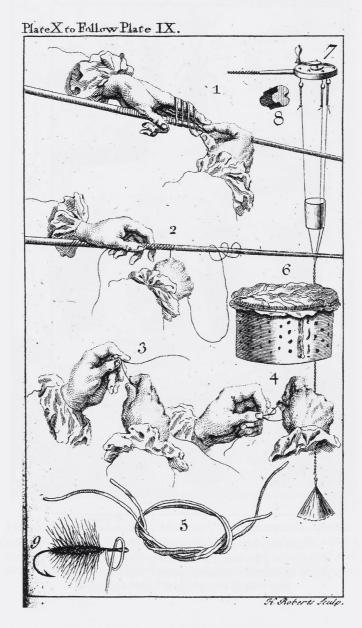


Hawkins plate IX: From Walton, The Complete Angler, ed. Hawkins, London 1760. Engraving on copper by H. Roberts (no artist given). For some reason, this plate attracted little attention, despite the quality of the engraving.

The Year of our Lord 1760, John Hawkins, recently retired from legal practice as a result of a ten-thousand-pound inheritance, published a new edition of Izaac Walton's Complete Angler. The publication was an immense success, running to no fewer than seven editions, the last of which was printed in 1797. The book is notable both for Hawkins's notes and for its illustrations, as well as for comprehensive biographies of Walton and Charles Cotton, the latter contributed by William Oldys. Staid though this edition of the Complete Angler may appear, it conceals a few surprises: for example, plate XIII of part II shows, as far as the authors know, the first image of a fly tyer at work, the artist's vision showing

a prosperous-looking Piscator tying a fly in the hand while he informs Viator that his London patterns are laughed at in Dovedale. But the main strength of the work is Hawkins's copious remarks on all aspects of fishing, which were so popular that they appeared again and again in others' works into the nineteenth century, often without any acknowledgment.

Interleaved within the text were a number of plates, most drawn by S. Wale and engraved by Ryland, but the plates that interest us most are three engravings on copper by H. Roberts (no artist given), situated between Walton's and Cotton's texts. They show a miscellany of objects, including the first example of the line-twisting machine; several instructional illustrations

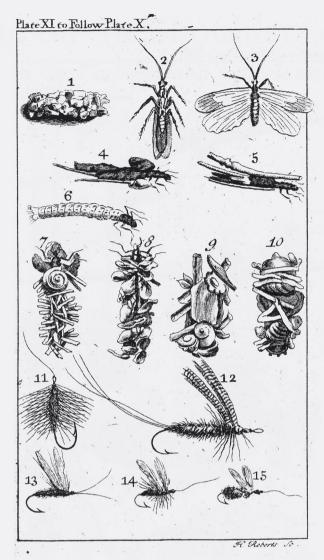


Hawkins plate X: From Walton, The Complete Angler, ed. Hawkins, London 1760. Engraving on copper by H. Roberts (no artist given). The hands, the winder, and the fly were later widely copied.

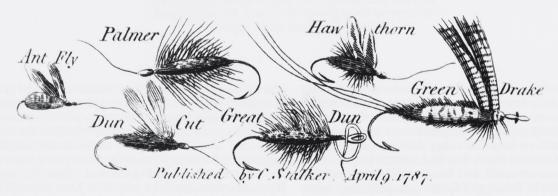
of hands, including splice-making and "arming" of a hook; insects, particularly four caddis cases; and the first six believable illustrations of artificial flies to be found anywhere in the angling literature. In their day, the plates must have been very eye-catching, and we know that they didn't go unremarked because, like Hawkins's notes, they had a much longer career than their originator could ever have intended, not only in England, but also in France and Spain. Later publishers treated them as a kind of early clip art, with the result that parts of them appeared in at least nine other books, the last of which was printed eighty years after they first saw the light of day.

Thomas Best, gent., reused elements from the Roberts plates

(the flies) in his 1787 A Concise Treatise on the Art of Angling.³ In addition to Best's work, bits and pieces of the Roberts plates also turned up, reengraved, in Duhamel du Monceau's Traité general des pêsches (1769, principally the flies, the four caddis cases and insects, and the instructional hands),⁴ The Sportsman's Dictionary (1792, the three plates recut as one),⁵ Osbaldiston's The British Sportsman (1792, the same),⁶ the Diccionario historico de los artes de la pesca nacional, by Sañez Reguart (1795, the flies),७ Daniel's Rural Sports (1801, the instructional hands, the flies, the caddis cases),⁵ Scott's British Field Sports (1818, the flies, the twisting machine, other gear),⁰ Rennie's Alphabet of Angling (1833, the caddis cases),¹o and last,



Hawkins plate XI: From Walton, The Complete Angler, ed. Hawkins, London 1760. Engraving on copper by H. Roberts (no artist given). The caddis and the flies proved irresistible to later printers.



Detail from the frontispiece of Best, A Concise Treatise on the Art of Angling, London 1787. Here the flies have been collected together on one plate.

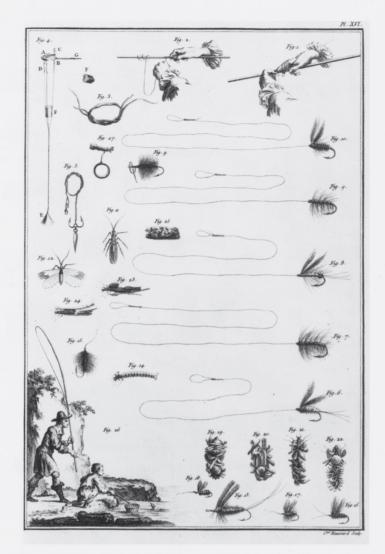


Plate XVI from Duhamel du Monceau's Traité general des pesches (1769), showing the flies, the four caddis cases and insects, the winder, the hair link, and the instructional hands. Ironically, Westwood and Satchell comment in Bibliotheca Piscatoria that the plates from du Monceau's book had been "much pirated."

but by no means least, Blaine's *Rural Sports* (1840),<sup>11</sup> though by then the illustrations were getting a trifle long in the tooth and Blaine did at least have the grace to modernize the images slightly. In addition, the flies may have been copied and somewhat redrawn for the 1806 edition of Bowlker's *Art of Angling*<sup>12</sup> and Howitt's *The Angler's Manual* (1808),<sup>13</sup> and the instructional hands seem to have been the basis for one cut in Salter's *The Angler's Guide* (1815).<sup>14</sup>

On the face of it, such frequent copying, recutting, adaptation, and plagiarizing of the plates would seem rather remarkable, but for the fact that they belonged to an age with quite different attitudes. In the eighteenth century, copyright was a relatively new idea, governed by the Statute of Anne, which was passed in 1710, an ordinance that recognized for the first time that authors should be the principal beneficiaries of copyright law. The statute set a period of twenty-eight years as that in which copyright applied, after which the work reverted to the public domain. Similar laws were passed in the United States in 1790 and France in 1793. 15

The fact that the notion of copyright as we understand it did not exist before the eighteenth century is no accident, and it can be seen as a reflection of the philosophy of the time. A quite different literary tradition from ours prevailed, in which it was acceptable, indeed expected, that authors would reuse parts of previous works in an attempt to build on authority. In a sense, time was also more fluid, so that a writer of a hundred years before could be regarded as a kind of literary contemporary. The age was cautious: old and established were preferred to new and unsettling. Hawkins himself, in the 1760 edition of Walton, borrowed heavily from Brookes (1740)<sup>16</sup> in his lengthy notes, and he points out in one of those notes that the illustrations of the caddis cases in his own edition were in fact copied from somebody else: "And there are many other kinds of these wonderful creatures, as may be seen in Mons. de Reaumur's Memoirs pour servir a l'Histoire des Insectes, Tome III, from which, for the reader's greater satisfaction, the figures 7, 8, 9, 10 in plate XI are accurately delineated."17

Nonetheless, with a copyright law in place, outright theft

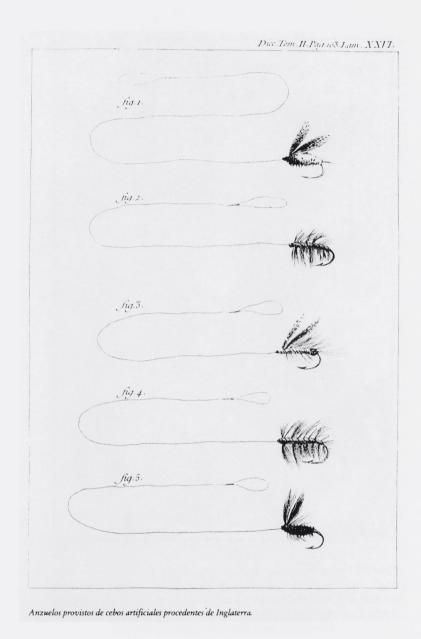


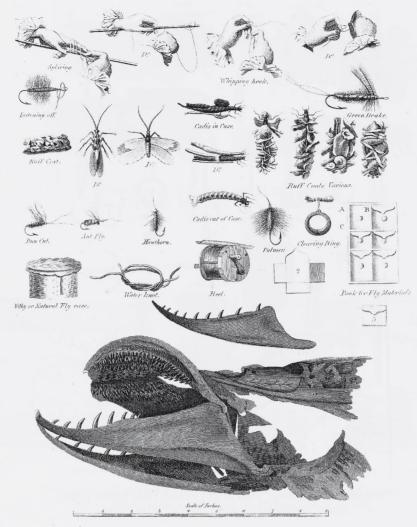
Plate XXVI from Diccionario historico de los artes de la pesca nacional, by Sañez Reguart (1795), showing the flies.

was different from respect for literary authority. It is perhaps for this reason that the three Roberts plates were not copied in England until 1787: the twenty-eighth year after their engraving. Even then, the first copied images (the flies) appeared only as adjuncts at the bottom of the pictorial frontispiece to Best. Hawkins was dead by then, but it may be that neither Hawkins nor his son (who prepared two more editions, 1791 and 1797) had ownership of the plates, anyway; they may have belonged to the publisher. Because the piratings of the plates were recuttings, there was no question of sale of the plates by either author or publisher. In any case, by 1792, when the plates appeared in two more publications, there would have been no legal restriction on their use, and the three plates were reengraved as one; it may be that this same copper engraving was used in both Osbaldiston and The Sportsman's Dictionary, which also have other similarities.

The eighteenth-century uses in France and Spain, on the

other hand, were not subject to English copyright. The French plate was actually better than the original and was beautifully engraved; the Spanish may have borrowed from it rather than from the English original. In both cases, the emphasis was on the Englishness of the material, especially the flies, so that using an English original made sense.

Baudelaire observed that the only good thing about Romanticism was that it destroyed Neoclassicism, and in the first years of the nineteenth century we see that process happening in angling books. An explosion of originality occurred—Samuel Taylor, Alexander Mackintosh, George Cole Bainbridge, William Carroll—with an emphasis on new ideas that looked forward to Alfred Ronalds rather than backward to Hawkins and Walton. Use of the 1760 plates began to trickle away with the old idea of authority, although Hawkins's notes continued to be the basis of editions of Walton until midcentury (Ephemera, 1853). 18 However, along with the revolution in



JAW BONES OF PIKE. &c. &c.

Plate opposite page 342 in Daniel's Rural Sports (1807), combining elements from all three plates.

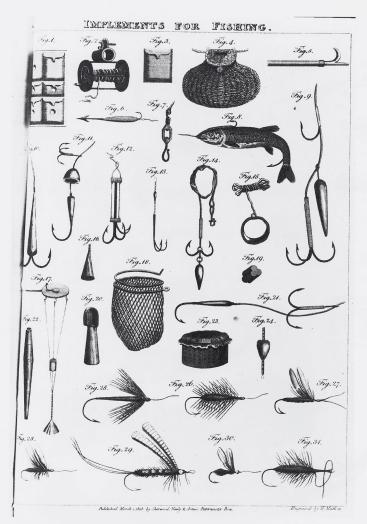
books came revolutions in angling technology—silk fly lines, workable reels, new rod materials—that made Hawkins irrelevant and Walton quaint. To be sure, the old and the new contested—hence the use of the 1760 plates up through Blaine—but by the time Ronalds's *Fly-fisher's Entomology* was published in 1836,<sup>19</sup> even the 1760 flies, once so innovative, looked archaic. Needless to say, however, the spirit of plagiarism lived on: much of Robert Blakey's *Hints on Angling*<sup>20</sup> was outright theft, for example; the flies in Frank Forester's biggest book on fishing<sup>21</sup> were lifted from an English source; and even in the twentieth century, there was more than one case of plagiarism by a fishing writer.

Thus, the Roberts plates conveniently bridge an abyss that divides Walton's antiquity from Ronalds's modernity: the age of angling as Art and the age of angling as Science. In 1653, Walton wrote in the dialogue form so popular at the time, unselfconsciously borrowing from works written up to two

centuries beforehand: Conrad Gessner, William Samuel, Thomas Barker, and even the *Treatyse*. Much of Walton's borrowed science was dubious, even medieval, and he was attacked in his own time by Richard Franck, who chanced upon him at Stafford and took Walton to task not only for plagiary, but on the rather unlikely fact related by the latter of pike being bred from pickerel weed. Franck related with barely concealed glee that Walton fell back on quoting Gessner and then "huff'd away."<sup>22</sup>

By contrast, in 1836, Ronalds based his work almost entirely upon personal observations made as he hung in a sweaty little observation chamber dangling over the river Blythe. Thereafter, scientific observation would dominate fly fishing at least.

Still, we have to ask why the plates had such long lives, actually appearing for the last time after Ronalds. One answer is that they appeared in the most influential edition of Walton of



"Implement for fishing," from Scott's British Field Sports (1818), again, combining elements from all three plates.

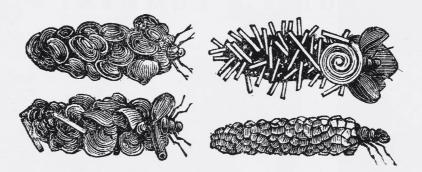
the eighteenth century, and perhaps ever—they were seen a great deal, and they had Hawkins's authority. Another is that, in France and Spain, they were judged peculiarly English. Yet another is that they were well drawn and well engraved. And they were comprehensive, offering a full range of models to anybody trying to illustrate fishing. A final reason may have been sheer idleness among publishers anxious to cut costs, perhaps explaining why so many of the piratings were in general works on rural sports or genteel pursuits.

The continued reuse of the plates must have had some unexpected side effects, not least the miseducation of several generations of anglers about what a modern reel or fly looked like. This perpetuation of old ideas, however, played to the large overlap between new and old in the period, when, particularly in the country, anglers might still be making their own tackle according to Hawkins's directions and fishing without a reel in the old way, while in the big cities they were able to buy tackle made to the newest models. And the reuse has had a side benefit for us: Daniel's choice in 1801 to dump the reel with a ring clamp and substitute a reel with a modern, "saddle" foot allows us to date the first printed appearance of that device.

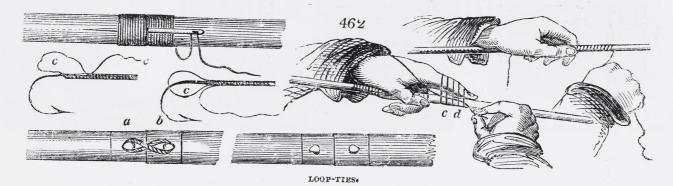
Sir Isaac Newton, a contemporary of Walton's and the defin-

ing figure of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, once acknowledged his debts to his forebears in a letter to his fellow physicist Robert Hooke with the words, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."23 The real triumph of angling literature and art across the centuries is that authors have not been afraid to build upon the work of others. In the age of carbon fiber and bar-stock reels, where last year's product is old hat, it is rather pleasing to find that this tradition has survived. Of course, we have modified it: as befits creatures of the twenty-first century, we are too sophisticated to borrow wholesale like Walton and Hawkins, or to take a pair of scissors to the Hawkins plates, like Best, but our strength is that we have preserved a Waltonian respect for the continuity of ideas. Our modern concept of copyright means that angling writers cannot copy directly from the works of their predecessors, but we are fortunate that they can still learn from them. So it isn't too difficult to trace the scientific legacy of Alfred Ronalds through Edward Ringwood Hewitt, Colonel E. W. Harding and Vincent Marinaro, to John Goddard and Brian Clarke. These are some of the giants upon whose shoulders the next generation of anglers will stand.

What we learn from the use and reuse of the Roberts plates is that tradition and enthusiasm for novelty are always in ten-



From page 35 of Rennie's Alphabet of Angling (1833). The caddis have been redrawn and reoriented, but there is no doubt about their origin.



From page 966 of Blaine's Rural Sports (1840). A modernized image, but we think we have seen those hands somewhere before.

sion. In our time, the pull is stronger from the new; hype and flackery want us to believe that every new book will at last solve every fishing problem. In Hawkins's time, tradition had the stronger arm. Plagiarism is not a nice thing, but perhaps it was the price paid for being able to resist the claim of every new feather or new fly or new technique that it would make good our deficiencies as fishermen.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1. Dictionary of National Biography, vol. IX (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967–1968), pp. 220–21.
- 2. Isaac Walton, *The Complete Angler*, ed. John Hawkins (London: Thomas Hope, 1760).
- 3. Thomas Best, A Concise Treatise on the Art of Angling (London: C. Stalker, 1787).
- 4. H. L. Duhamel du Monceau et de la Marre, Traité general des pêsches et histoire des poisons qu'elles fournissent, tant pour la subsistence des homes, que pour plusiers autres usages qui ont rapport aus artes et au commerce (Paris: Saillant & Nyon, 1769).
- 5. The Sportsman's Dictionary, 4th ed. (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1792).
- 6. William Augustus Osbaldiston, *The British Sportsman* (London: printed for the proprietor, 1792).

- 7. Sañez Reguart, Diccionario historico de los artes de la pesca nacional (Madrid, 1795).
- 8. Reverend W. B. Daniel, *Rural Sports* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1801).
- 9. William Henry Scott, British Field Sports (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1818).
- 10. Reverend James Rennie, Alphabet of Angling (London: Orr, 1833).
- 11. Delabere P. Blaine, An Encyclopaedia of Rural Sports (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1840).
- 12. Charles Bowlker, *The Art of Angling*, 7th edition (Ludlow, U.K.: Jones, 1806).
  - 13. Samuel Howitt, The Angler's Manual (London: Bagster, 1808).
  - 14. Thomas Frederic Salter, The Angler's Guide (London: Tegg, 1815).
- 15. "Copyright" Encyclopædia Britannica Online. <a href="http://www.eb.co.uk:195/bol/topic?eu=26641%sctn=1">http://www.eb.co.uk:195/bol/topic?eu=26641%sctn=1</a>.
  - 16. Richard Brookes, The Art of Angling (London: Watts, 1740).
- 17. Isaac Walton, *The Complete Angler*, ed. John Hawkins, 3rd ed. (London, 1775), p. 262.
- 18. Isaac Walton, *The Complete Angler*, ed. Ephemera [Edward Fitzgibbon] (London: Wertheimer and Co., 1853).
- 19. Alfred Ronalds, The Flyfisher's Entomology (London: Longman, 1836).
- 20. Robert "Palmer Hackle" Blakey, *Hints on Angling* (London: Robinson, 1846).
- 21. Henry William Herbert ("Frank Forester"), Frank Forester's Fish and Fishing . . . of North America (London: Richard Bentley, 1849; New York, 1850).
- 22. Richard Franck, *Northern Memoirs*, new edition (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1821; first published London, 1694), pp. 175–77.
- 23. Letter to Robert Hooke, 5 February 1675/6, Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (Bury St. Edmunds, U.K.: Book Club Associates, 1981), p. 360.

## Walton and Cotton: Compleat and Current

by Jim Repine

In 1653, A MAN published a book about sport fishing. It wasn't the first publication on the subject by a long shot. In fact, what is usually credited as the first such effort appeared more than a hundred and fifty years earlier, in 1496. A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle, in the second Boke of St. Albans, was written just four years after Columbus made it to America, by Dame Juliana Berners, a noble English sportswoman and nun. But no fishing book before or after the Treatyse has come close in readership or lasting popularity to Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler.

It didn't begin as a fly-fishing work per se. Although flies and their use are described, the text teaches a wide variety of methods, baits, and equipment. When the fifth edition came out in 1676, Walton's young angling disciple and friend, Charles Cotton, added a second part, which is mostly fly fishing. There's also a subtitle—*The Contemplative Man's Recreation*—which may have more to do with the book's amazing success and

lasting popularity over four centuries than its overall how-to information. It is the recreational aspect that is both fascinating and timely. With global population still exploding at a documented rate of 90 million additional people annually and no decrease expected in the future, the continued meat harvest (kill) in the name of sport obviously can't continue. With ever-diminishing angling waters, fly fishing for food has become a rapidly compounding insanity-the ever-growing numbers of anglers should not be encouraged to kill from a diminishing resource in the name of sport.

Although most fly-fishing editors insist that easily understood, simply worded, how-to writing is what readers demand—and a beginner could use *The Compleat Angler* to learn to catch fish—I believe that *Compleat* is the word that explains why this is the third most widely published book in England's literary history. Bested only by the Bible and the works of William Shakespeare, Izaak Walton encourages us to enter into the wide periphery of other offerings that

surround and enhance our sport: music, poetry, holy scripture, alluring milkmaids, cozy inns, fine ales, and tempting fish dishes. His idea was to enjoy practicing and satisfying a deeply embedded predator instinct (capturing prey species) as only the beginning for a broadening and much more fulfilling interest and appreciation of all of the above, and more. Walton's love of fishing motivates travel, an ever-widening appreciation and knowledge of the natural world, and of other people—from fishers, hunters, and innkeepers to clergy, poets, and balladeers. All this leads to a higher-quality quest for a completeness that does not lose its allure and challenge. Talk about a "must read."

I'm not a historian in any sense, but the closer the aging process brings me to being history, there is a ripening appeal (kindredship?) for things aging and aged. Cane rods, replica reels (mine are Adams), older fly patterns, and growing personal connections with angling forebears seem to draw more and more of my attention. Each time I read new things by and about Walton and Cotton,

Photos by Jim Repine

2.0



The Temple. This is the fishing house of Charles Cotton on the River Dove.



A window from inside the Temple and Richard Ward's old Hexagraph rod.

the stronger the pull toward their history. This was why three weeks of my last trip to England were devoted to an intensive search for these two gentlemen and a look at the world they inhabited.

#### IN SEARCH OF WALTON AND COTTON

My journey began with the good folks at Roxton Bailey Robinson World Wide, a premier angling/sporting adventure agency headquartered in England, and their Miles Thompson, who turned out to be not only a skilled and caring travel consultant, but a bit of a Walton buff himself. Miles ensconced us first in the lzaak Walton Hotel overlooking the fabled River Dove. It's a magic place for Waltonians, tastefully decorated with appropriate art, artifacts, and period fixtures. Just knowing the fragrant breeze in our spacious room (canopied bed and all) was coming to us from the very river and across freshly cut hayfields that our subject knew and loved so well was enchanting. I fell asleep that first night with words of one of the poem/songs

that Walton quotes lingering in my thoughts:

Let me live harmlessly; and near the brink Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling place, Where I may see my quill or cork down sink

With eager bite of perch, or bleak, or dace; And on the world and my Creator think: Whilst some men strive ill-gotten goods t'embrace,

And others spend their time in base excess Of wine, or worse, in war and wantonness.<sup>1</sup>

The next day Thompson drove us to Alstosfield Village in Staffordshire where we met Tony Bridgett, our guide, ghillie, and first Walton tutor. Tony is a retired senior police officer with a deep commitment to fly fishing in general and to Izaak Walton in particular. Among many other angling credits, he is secretary of the Leek and District Fly Fishing Association. A founding member, he has served this post for thirty years. With good fortune, you can enlist his services as your guide at the Izaak Walton Hotel. Luck and advance planning are re-

quired, as he is much sought after.

Our teacher began our lessons. "This is on the route from Ashbourne, to Charles Cotton's home at Beresford Hall," said Bridgett. "It's mentioned in the book, and I wanted to show you the Church of St. Peters where Cotton and Walton worshipped. Just through the door on the left is the Cotton family pew." The family coat of arms is clear on the back of the pew. Cotton and Walton sat there four hundred years ago. The olive-gray color is drab, but research verifies that it is the original tint. The pew is not only intact, but looks like it was made last month. England is like that.

Nearby we came to tiny Milldale village, quaint and lovely, and walked over the Dove on Viator bridge, named in honor of Walton and Cotton. Bridgett told us that it was a packhorse bridge on a connecting trail from that point to all parts. It is very narrow, which elicited this remark from Viator: "Do you use it to travel with wheelbarrows in this country? Because this bridge certainly



Izaak Walton Cottage.

was made for nothing else; why a mouse can hardly go over it; 'Tis not two fingers broad.'2 The bridge is quite safe, but the side walls were added after Walton's day.

Bridgett explained that what made the Dove attractive to anglers from London was that it was perfect for the way that people fished at that time. "The fishing gear in that day was pretty basic, not like we have today," he said. "They had heavy rods of fourteen to sixteen feet. The lines-plaited horsehair-were attached to the top of the rods. There were no reels. The fly or bait was allowed to run in the current in front of the angler. It was a lot like dapping. Because of the weight of the rod, bigger rivers could only be fished by wading. As you can see, the width of the Dove at this point is perfect for this style."

For once in my life, it was hard to concentrate on fish, though the river has a very healthy brown trout and grayling population. This portion of the Dove flows through high hills too beautiful to describe, with clear fresh water that sparkles in sunlight. I was taken with the

idea that around any bend we might come up on a couple of ghosts, see their peculiar clothing and gear, chat a moment about their luck and ours, maybe ask to hold one of their rods, just to get the feel of it, and then quietly pass on with a cheery wish of good luck.

Bridgett answered my endless questions with kindly patience, much like Walton does in the book, all the while pointing out famous runs and landmarks along the way. When I asked why he felt *The Compleat Angler* enjoyed such amazing success, he didn't hesitate in making a reply, obviously having devoted time to considering this.

A lot of what Walton says is relevant today, because [he talks] about the philosophy of fishing, about being in the countryside, and being as one with nature. He fished for a lot of the reasons we fish today—to recharge our batteries, to get away from the monotony and drudgery of the commercial world. That is as true today as in the seventeenth century.

There were five editions published in his lifetime. The fifth contained Cotton's part two. It's a book of great charm, a bestseller. Written in dialogue, it contains thirty-six poems, some set to music. There are recipes for cooking fish and a trick with numbers. It's a thoughtful book. Walton spent many hours revising and enlarging it. The final edition in his lifetime was three times the size of the first edition. It's a book about seventeenth-century English life.<sup>3</sup>

Today, fly-shop bookshelves groan with the ever-increasing weight of more and more how-to books. Yet from rosary beads and holy mantras to variant other forms of meditation-even tranceinducing dances—each generation rediscovers healing merit in introspection, directed or not. Remember window gazing during algebra class? How else would you get through that sort of brain-numbing ordeal? Fishing as a meditative discipline is exactly what lzaak Walton's subtitle, The Contemplative Man's Recreation, is about. For those with the sensitivity to seek it, he would have us believe that there is more to angling than the simple brutish act of killing meat—a lot more.

It seems apparent that the accou-



Fold Farm in Derbyshire.

trements of the sport—as they are revealed through growing introspection and not so much the how-to information—explain the incredibly long success of this book. If this is true, then why—with the title *The Compleat* Fisherman—is so much attention and space given to how-to? I don't know what such a sales strategy (if it was a conscious one) was called then, but today it's known as marketing. Another reason for the immediate success of a book about peaceful pursuits and healing thoughts might have been that the book came out during terrible times. The Civil War was cause for great stress and tension all over England, and there was even some clandestine intrigue for Walton. At one point he actually had the king's ring in his possession for safekeeping. Mild-mannered churchman and poet Izaak Walton? So the story goes.4

Quiet hours beside peaceful streams hold the power to lift a basic primal activity to a higher level, a step up from simple predator to a more "compleat angler." Reading Walton, one believes that the whole experience can and should be a healing pastiche of poetry, music, fine ales, and a maturing closeness with divinity; and after the evening fish fry, the night should be passed in some cozy inn twixt scented sheets. Not exactly the bug bites and hangovers "the guys" so often return with from fishing trips now.

An angler, not a biologist, Walton does include some interesting if near childish things: pike are born from pickerel weeds; a carp pond is almost emptied of the species by frogs attaching to their heads; salmon lose their kipes by casting them off like (he relates) eagles do with their beaks. Does this invalidate the book as a source of knowledge? Some have tried to make that case, but for me it's an accurate portrayal of what learned men believed and wrote in the 1600s. Like all dogma, it is probably no farther off the mark than present "knowledge" will be in another four hundred years.

Vince Gwilym of Fold Farm in Derbyshire helped me to arrange a day with my other Waltonian schoolmaster, Richard Ward. Ward guided us to the Temple—Charles Cotton's fishing house beside the River Dove, built for himself and his best fishing pal, Izaak Walton. Ward also set the stage for Gwilym to catch a lovely brown trout from the fabled Pike Pool with an identical Black Fly, detailed in Cotton's portion of the book.

In an interview with Ward, he shared these thoughts about Izaak Walton and *The Compleat Angler*.

When I think of Isaak Walton, I think of the book first, rather than the person. . . . When you read Charles Cotton's addition to *The Compleat Angler*, you start to get a lot more interested in Izaak Walton the man, because obviously Cotton was quite affectionate toward him and held him in very high esteem. . . . I think, "Here's another angler, who happens to be a fly fisherman, who happens to fish rivers I fish, and he is eulogizing this old man who traveled from London in the winter to come and fish with him, riding on horseback at eighty-two years old."

These are special people! I can't imagine someone eighty-two years old these days riding on horseback and packhorse from London to the Peak District—unbelievable—and they thought it was normal.

I also like the way he was as a character.



Sonia Repine and Tony Bridgett on the River Dove.

Piscator says to others not to kill all the baby otters because the animals were put there for a purpose—even though he's an angler and otters eat fish and therefore are his enemy. And bear in mind that in those days, some people *needed* to eat fish. It wasn't unknown for human beings to starve in England in those days, in hard times, yet he says, "No, you must let some of the otters go, so that they can still be there. They were put there for a reason." That was his attitude. So I suppose he was also a very early conservationist.

Even though Walton made mistakes, people don't understand where he came from. There are things blatantly wrong that he picked up from what he had seen written. But the dialogue and the attitude of the people involved—that's all his. It's a good lesson to anyone who really wants to get the best out of his fishing to try and cultivate that sort of mindset.

I think Walton would be astonished at things like competitive fishing. He wouldn't understand it—I don't understand it. You know, when I fish, I'm not trying to compete with another human being. There are plenty of other sports for that.<sup>5</sup>

#### CONTEMPLATIONS

Was lzaak Walton a professional angling writer? Yes, although his greater literary accomplishments at the time were biographies. He wrote them mostly about his contemporary churchmen. It's one reason he prospered—that, and apparently he had a fair skill for business and wise investment. Not exactly rags to

riches, but his parents appear to have been of modest means at his birth, whereas ninety years later, his will listed an impressive collection of properties and wealth. And it's worth noting that given the average life span in England in the 1600s, he enjoyed more than double the years of most of the population.

Is this book for everyone? I think so. At least for anyone who wishes to optimize his or her satisfaction in the sport. The language and style is a bit like the King James version of the Bible, but don't back off. The angling content quickly overcomes that, and you will find the same marvelous fishing-book adventures that so many others have over the centuries.

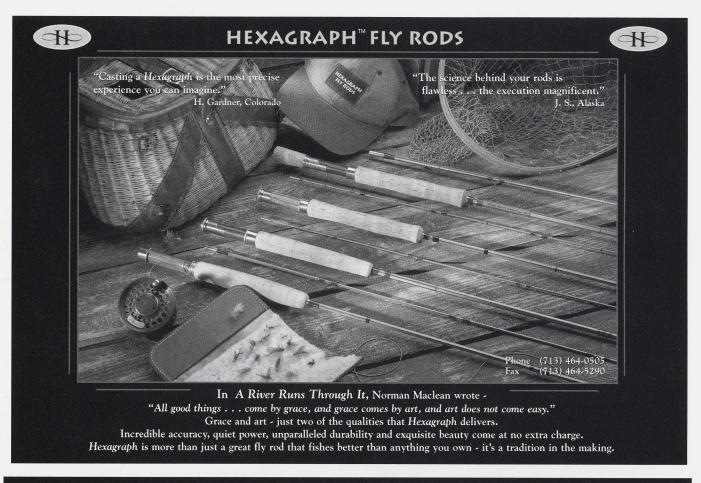
Perhaps my increasing time sitting streamside—still gazing out of my algebra class window—means only that sixty-seven-year-old legs aren't as spry as they once were. And maybe my increased introspection is nothing more than trying to keep aging memories from fading more than they already have. I can only say that by moving a bit slower and taking more time to look around, Walton style, fly fishing just keeps getting better and better.

So was I successful in searching England for Izaak Walton and his young friend, Charles Cotton? Maybe. I had already met them in a sense; reading the book introduced me. They both certainly live there—evidence of their presence

is massive. Photographing, fishing, and just walking beside the same river they fished brought about a new depth of kinship. Entering the Temple was an ultimate spiritual high in a fifty-year religious pilgrimage. Now I contemplate them from the angler's bench overlooking First Run, just downriver from our lodge on Patagonia's Rio Futaleufu. I'm thousands of miles from the River Dove, yet I can come face to face with these two master anglers by simply recalling the remarkable times I had with two of their closest brothers, Tony Bridgett and Richard Ward. And I came away from England with a strong feeling that four hundred years really hasn't changed the important stuff all that much.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1. Jo. Davers, Esq., quoted in Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Angler* (Hertfordshire, England: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1996), p. 110.
- 2. Walton and Cotton, *The Compleat Angler*, p. 297.
- 3. Letter to author from Tony Bridgett, 24 September 2000.
- 4. Richard Le Gallienne, Introduction, Walton and Cotton, p. 11.
- 5. Personal interview with Richard Ward, 9 September 2000.



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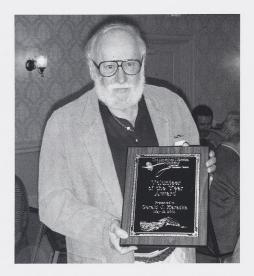
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## Festival Weekend 2001









Top left: Gerry Karaska, the Museum's volunteer of the year for 2000, shows off his new wall decoration.

Above: Staff members Diana Siebold and Toney Pozek get a grip on new board President David Walsh.

Left: Museum staff member Sara Wilcox tying flies during Saturday's Open House.

не миѕеим's Annual Festival Weekend was held on May 18 and 19 this year, beginning with a welcoming cocktail reception Friday evening in the Museum's galleries. Since last year, the galleries have been updated by Collections Manager Yoshi Akiyama and Special Projects Coordinator Sara Wilcox to include British reels, the Mary Orvis Marbury flies, an impressive assortment of fly boxes, as well as our recently updated history of fly-fishing time-line panels (see story on page 32). For the first time in recent years, the Museum is filled solely with artifacts from our own collection.

On Saturday, we hosted our Annual

Photos by John Price

Open House, held each spring to celebrate the world of fly fishing. Demonstrations of bamboo rod building by Fred Kretchman, fly-tying techniques by Sara Wilcox, and the art of making hand-blown glass fish by John Soward kept folks busy for the afternoon. The Adirondack Guide Boat Company brought their boats to the lawn in front of the Museum, drawing in crowds and answering questions about their unique fishing boats.

On Saturday evening, our Annual Dinner and Sporting Auction was held at the Equinox Hotel to a sold-out crowd. An impressive array of auction donors (see our list, page 32) set the

tone for the evening, which was a rousing success. We wish to thank all of our donors, as well as our event sponsors: Dr. Arthur W. Kaemmer, David and Margaret Nichols, Leigh and Romi Perkins, and Ron and Cheryl Wilcox.

During dessert, Executive Director Gary Tanner presented the Volunteer of the Year Award to Gerald Karaska of Worcester, Massachusetts. Gerald has made numerous trips to the Museum this past year to assist us in accessioning new library acquisitions, as well as getting those new accessions into our digitized database, a task that we have long needed to accomplish. We are deeply appreciative of his efforts on our behalf.



Trustee Michael Osborne and his wife Debby enjoy themselves at Friday's cocktail party with Trustee Gardner Grant.



Fred Kretchman demonstrates the art of bamboo rod-building to Open House visitor Marisa Cevaso.



New trustees David Nichols, Lynn Claytor, and Stephen Peet look happy to be on board.

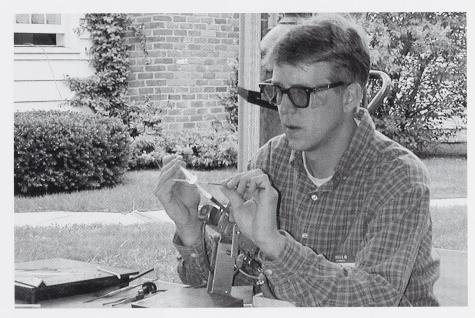
## Festival Weekend

~

continued



Special Projects Coordinator Kathleen Achor at Saturday's



Glassblower John Soward demonstrates how he makes his unique works of art.



Staff members Toney Pozek and Diana Siebold helping some of the many visitors who stopped in during Saturday's festivities.



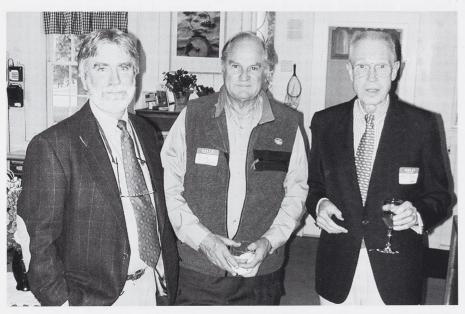
Trustees Irene Hunter toast to the



Sara Wilcox and Editor dinner at the Equinox.



David Perkins and Trustee Emeritus Dick Finlay, two of the many dinner attendees Saturday night.



Gary Tanner, new Trustee Emeritus Charles "Buzz" Eichel, and Trustee Foster Bam having a chat in the Museum gift shop.



and Gardner Grant Museum's future.

unter to the



Trustee Leigh H. Perkins, Trustee Pete Bakwin, Doris Bakwin, Trustee Michael Bakwin, and Romi Perkins smile for the camera.

## The American Museum of Fly Fishing

Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254 Tel: 802-362-3300. Fax: 802-362-3308 EMAIL: amff@together.net WEBSITE: www.amff.com

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Membership Dues (per annum)

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Membership dues include four issues of *The American Fly Fisher*. Please send your payment to the Membership Director and include your mailing address. The Museum is a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, the New England Association of Museums, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, and the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame. We are a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution chartered under the laws of the state of Vermont.

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Volume 27, Numbers 1, 2



#### **Board of Trustees News**

The Board of Trustees met on May 19 to discuss business, make a structural change to the board, elect new trustees, and elect a trustee emeritus.

In recognition of Board of Trustees President Robert G. Scott's promotion to president and chief operating officer of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and the significant additional time and energy commitments that that promotion entails, the board voted to make certain structural changes that will ensure that the level of attention to ongoing Museum matters remains as strong as it has under previous presidents and during Bob's tenure before his promotion. To that end, Bob became chairman of the Board of Trustees, a position provided for in our bylaws but vacant in recent years. David Walsh was moved into the president's position vacated by Bob, and Michael Osborne moved onto the executive committee as a new vice president.

Six enthusiastic new trustees were added to our board.

Lynn Claytor, from Philadelphia, founded Contract Compliance, Inc., in 1984 after accumulating more than ten years of marketing experience in the design/engineering field. Contract Compliance, Inc. provides consulting and management services related to race and gender-based issues. Lynn has cochaired our Philadelphia fundraiser for the last two years. She greatly enjoys fly fishing, sculling, and flying.

George R. Gibson III resides in New Vernon, New Jersey, and Rupert, Vermont. Retired from the shipping and oil-trading business, George is the treasurer of the board of trustees of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the largest land trust in that state. He enjoys bird hunting with his English setters as well as fly fishing.

James E. Lutton III retired from Spear Leeds & Kellog as a managing director after twenty-five years with the firm. He is a member of the New York Stock Exchange. He has been a dedicated fly fisher for many years. Jim lives in Pound Ridge, New York. David Nichols has been president of the Nichols Management Group, Ltd., a clinical laboratory consulting practice based in York Harbor, Maine, since 1988. He provides market planning and sales consulting for a number of laboratories and biotechnology and managed care clients. He serves on several corporate boards and is an avid fly fisher residing in York Harbor.

Stephen M. Peet, from New Canaan, Connecticut, is the copresident/cofounder (in 1988) of Fairway Investors, Inc. Before that, he spent fifteen years on Wall Street. He now serves on several small corporate boards. He is board chairman for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. He describes himself as "an avid, though not very accomplished, fly-fisherman."

William Salladin resides in Baltimore, where he is the chief executive officer of All Risks, Ltd. Bill considers himself semiretired and looks forward to spending more time at a second home in Vermont. He is a collector of Harley Davidson motorcycles and has fished in many places around the world.

Charles Eichel, a trustee of the Museum for many years, was elected a trustee emeritus by the board at this meeting. An attorney in Manchester, Vermont, Buzz has donated countless hours to the Museum as legal counsel. His new status is richly deserved.

#### The Heritage Award

This year's Annual Heritage Award Dinner honoring fly-fishing legend George Harvey was held May 8 at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College, Pennsylvania. One hundred of Mr. Harvey's closest friends, family, and colleagues gathered to honor him. Wayne Harpster, Robert Hartnett, Dan Shields, and Joe Humphreys each took turns at the podium relaying stories of life with George, fly-fishing tales, and how Mr. Harvey has influenced and still influences their lives. Dinner Chairman and Trustee James A. Spendiff presented the award to Mr. Harvey after the dinner festivities.



Trustee James A. Spendiff (right) presenting the 2000 Heritage Award to George Harvey.

"Angler, educator, innovator, and friend, George is a fly-fishing legend," said Spendiff. "As an educator, he has single-handedly created an army of lobbyists for conservation and fly fishing. And we need all the support we can get in this day of expanding population and intense pressure on trout and pure water resources.

"In 1934, George taught the first angling and fly-tying classes in the country. He taught the first accredited university-level angling course in 1947. He retired in 1973 as associate professor and head of required physical education for men at Penn State, but he did not stop teaching—he continues today.

"George's fly-tying skills are exceptional—he is a master, and he is also an instructor without peer. He has shared his fly-tying and angling skills in writing and in his classes. There is no doubt that George has taught more people to fly fish and tie flies (40,000) than anyone on record.

"George has received more awards than I can remember. I do know that they include the Order of the Hat from the Harrisburg Fly Fishers Club, the Buz Buszek award from the Federation of Fly Fishers, and the Award of Merit from the American Association of Conservation Information for his outstanding career in teaching anglers and conservation.

"Perhaps it's true, as J. W. Muller wrote, that 'All good fishermen stay young until they die, for fishing is the only dream of youth that doth not grow stale with age.' George is ninety years young this year and has been fly fishing

for almost eighty-three years, yet this enthusiasm and delight in fishing and the natual world have not paled.

"He has fished with presidents and kings, and doctors and lawyers, and industry chiefs, but he tells me he much prefers women. They listen and learn and have few bad habits.

"George is a tireless advocate of the beauty of fly fishing and trout and the environs where they are found. He is constantly making some new discovery or finding a new wrinkle—he is always learning. He is also the finest trout fisherman I know.

"He is in a class by himself.

"The Museum takes great pleasure in presenting its 2000 Heritage Award to George W. Harvey."

A gracious speech by Mr. Harvey followed, which was greeted with rousing applause. Special thanks to the Museum's dinner committee—Sylvia Bashline, Wayne Harpster, Robert Hartnett, Joseph Humphreys, and Robert K. (Buck) Metz—for their efforts in extending invitations to Mr. Harvey's rather large circle of friends!

After the awards were presented, a live auction was offered. We wish to acknowledge the following individuals and businesses for their generous contributions, which are so vital to the success of our events: Sylvia Bashline, Cakebread Cellars, Heck Estates, Joseph Humphreys, Charles Lee, Robert K. (Buck) Metz, Paradise Outfitters/Donny Beaver, James A. Spendiff, and the Nittany Lion Inn and its General Manager Jim Purdum. The Nittany Lion Inn, set on

the beautiful and expansive Penn State campus, did a truly professional job hosting our event, and we appreciate the hard work of their friendly and most helpful staff.

#### New York Anglers' Club Dinner/Auction

On March 8, we headed to the Big Apple for our annual outing at the Anglers' Club of New York. The Club was gracious enough to let us ship our goods directly to them, which made our trip much easier, and we thank them.

The dinner committee did a superb job. Under the leadership of Ian Mackay, the committee helped us find outright donations. Many committee members were donors themselves, thus contributing a great deal to the profitability of the event. Members included James H. Baker, Jim and Judith Bowman, William H. Hazen, Bob Johnson, John I. Larkin, Carmine Lisella, John Mundt Jr., Pamela Murray, Michael Osborne, Bill Pastore, David E. Sgorbati, and Richard Tisch.

The food at this year's dinner was outstanding. The Club served up the most tender prime rib (no knife required!), mashed potatoes, and fresh green beans—only Mom could do better (maybe!). The staff at the Anglers' Club as always was gracious and friendly to our guests, and the evening was enjoyed immensely.

Thanks to auction donors John Mundt Jr., Carmine Lisella, Bill Pastore, Ian Mackay, John Betts, Tom Colicchio and Grammercy Tavern, Robert Johnson, Charles T. Lee, Robert Cochrane, Ken Aretsky and Patroon, Jerry Bottcher and the Hungry Trout Motel, Peter Corbin, Chateau Montelena Chardonnay, Far Niente Chardonnay, Heitz Cellars Cabernet, Markham Chardonnay, Silver Oak Cabernet, Irene Hunter, and E. Richard Nightingale. And the event would not have been possible without sponsorship from Steven Benardete, Edmund Hecklau, Steven McConnell, John Mundt Jr., Thomas O'Brien, Michael Osborne, Mark Sherman, Steven Sloan, Jim Spendiff, and Sylvester Stroff.

We made new friends this year and thus recruited new members to the Museum. We thank our regular supporters and look forward to next year's event.

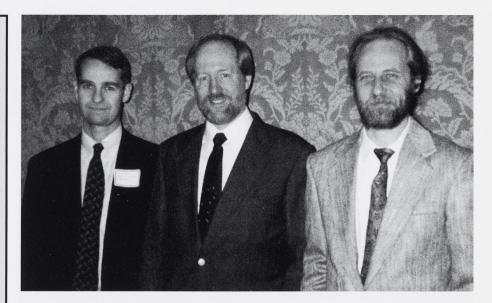
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Three members of the Cleveland dinner committee: Dinner Chair and Museum Trustee Woods King III, George McCabe, and Jeff Wagner.

#### Cleveland Dinner/Auction

We had a terrific outing in Cleveland this year! Dinner Chair Woods King III once again rallied the troops—along with committee members George McCabe, Jim Sanfilippo, and Jeff Wagner-to bring a special evening to attendees. The event was held on April 19 at the impressive Pepper Pike Country Club. Sponsors included Baker & Hostetler LLP and Dick and Ann Whitney. Grant Thornton graciously offered to sponsor the table wine for the evening. The event was a great success for the Museum, and our guests were very lively under the baton of auctioneer Scott Mihalic, who routinely joked with the crowd and coaxed them out of a few of their hard-earned pennies. Donors to the auction included Cakebread Cellars, Heitz Wine Cellars, Charles Lee, George McCabe, Mad River Outfitters, Sunnybrook Trout Club, and Turnbull Wine Cellars. We had two special volunteers parading our auction merchandise around the room for viewing—thanks go to George McCabe and Jeff Wagner for their efforts. The Pepper Pike Country Club, under the direction of Julie Andersen, did a spectacular job of putting forth this event, and we look forward with much anticipation to next year's dinner.

#### Time Line on Display

The Museum is pleased to announce the completion of our new time-line display. These five panels, duplicates of the ones currently traveling with "Anglers All," give an overview of the history of fly fishing beginning in 200 A.D. and concluding in the year 2000. Artifacts, photography, and illustrations combine to highlight the best of our fly-fishing heritage

Featured in the exhibit are Charles Murphy and Hiram Leonard rods; representatives of the *Treatyse* flies tied by Jack Heddon; books by authors, including Edward Hewitt, Vince Marinaro, and Alfred Ronalds; some of the original flies used for Mary Orvis Marbury's *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*; and flies tied by Theodore Gordon, Bill Edson, Preston Jennings, and George La Branche.

In addition, Museum Trustee Pam Bates was kind enough to loan some items belonging to her and her late father, Joseph D. Bates Jr., including three Lee Wulff-tied flies and two outstanding variations of the Gaudy Fly tied by Mark Waslick and Maxwell MacPherson.

We encourage all of our members in the area to stop in and see these beautiful additions to our galleries.

#### Trout Conservationist Bud Lilly Receives Honorary Doctorate

Bud Lilly, recipient of the Museum's 1999 Heritage Award and one of the West's pioneer trout conservationists, received an honorary doctorate degree during the 105th commencement ceremonies at Montana State University–Bozeman.

Bud Lilly-called "a trout's best friend" by Arnold Gingrich, founder of Esquire—is one of the most honored fishermen in America. Lilly grew up fishing in Manhattan, Montana, and he graduated from MSU in 1948 with a degree in applied science. He was a popular science and math teacher in Roundup, Deer Lodge, and Bozeman for nearly twenty-five years, supplementing his income as a fishing guide. In 1952, he opened his fly shop in West Yellowstone. He helped to pioneer the catch-andrelease philosophy in the Northern Rockies to preserve one of the region's most precious resources. He has become a passionate and persuasive spokesman for the wise use of those cold-water resources.

Lilly was the first president of Montana Trout Unlimited, first chairman of the International Fly Fishing Center, and a founder of the Montana Trout Foundation. Lilly is the author or coauthor of several books, including the classic Bud Lilly's Tackle Catalog and Handbook for Western Trout Fishing (1972) and, most recently, Bud Lilly's Guide to Fly Fishing the New West (2000), coauthored by AMFF Trustee Emeritus Paul Schullery.

#### Recent Donations

William B. Troy of New York City gave the Museum a three-piece Leonard Special Tournament Fly Rod.

David J. Haidak of Potomac, Maryland, donated a collection of flies tied by Harry and Elsie Darbee, well known for decades as master fly tyers from the Catskill region of New York State. The collection, which consists of 205 trout and salmon flies, has forty-seven different representative patterns and has been authenticated by fly historian Ted Neimeyer.

Paulo D. da Silva of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, donated a shooting head fly line

#### Memorial Contributions

Phil Castleman of Springfield, Massachusetts, made a donation in memory of William Althus, also of Springfield.

Jane E. Cruthers of Manchester Center, Vermont, made a donation in memory of Stephen Saltzman, also of Manchester. made by one of its developers, Peter J. Schwab; a photo of Mr. Schwab; Spanish silkworm gut trout leader; and a letter from John Stargis of Gardnerville, New York, which contains information about Mr. Schwab.

#### In the Library

Thanks to the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become part of our collection (published in 2001, unless otherwise noted).

The Lyons Press sent us a new reprint edition of Mary Orvis Marbury's Favorite Flies and Their Histories; Doug Swisher and Carl Richards's Selective Trout, a thirtieth anniversary revised and expanded edition (2000); John Gierach's Fishing Bamboo (1997) in paperback; Lefty Kreh's L. L. Bean Saltwater Fly-Fishing Handbook; The Best of Outdoor Life, edited by William E. Rae; Jack Samson's The Orvis Pocket Guide to Fly Fishing for Bonefish and Permit; and Lou Tabory's The Orvis Pocket Guide to Fly Fishing for Striped Bass and Bluefish.

Stackpole Books sent us a new edition of Oliver Kite's 1963 classic, *Nymph Fishing in Practice*, with a new introduction and notes by Robert Spaight (2000).

#### **Upcoming Events**

July 21–October 21
"Anglers All" Exhibit
California Academy of Sciences
San Francisco, California

#### October 11

Heritage Award Dinner California Academy of Sciences San Francisco, California

#### November 1

Hartford Dinner/Auction Farmington Marriott Farmington, Connecticut

#### November 3

Trustees Weekend Manchester, Vermont

#### November 17

Annual Winery Dinner/Auction Gallo of Sonoma Healdsburg, California

For more information, contact Diana Siebold at (802) 362-3300.



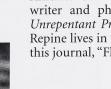
The Museum was featured on New England Cable News on May 14. Reporter Scot Yount spoke with Executive Director Gary Tanner and shot footage inside the Museum for the better part of the day. They edited and broadcast the report from their news van (pictured above) that same evening. If you'd like to see the finished piece in its entirety, visit the Museum's website at www.amff.com and click on the NECN image (you'll need RealPlayer to view the footage).

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Ken Cameron, former registrar of the Museum, is the author of more than twenty-five books, including the award-winning Africa on Film: Beyond Black and White (1994). He was a long-time contributor to this journal, and he has written on fishing history for magazines such as Adirondack Life and Antiques. He is the American correspondent of the British fishing magazine Waterlog. His last contribution to this journal, "First Impressions of the Harris Flies," appeared in the Fall 2000 issue.



Andrew Herd was born in London and has lived in the north of England for many years, within a few miles of the beck on which Canon Greenwell learned to fish. He has had a lifelong interest in history, which has led him all over the world. His first book, a monograph on medieval fly fishing, was published by the Medlar Press in 1999, accompanying a facsimile of The Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle. He maintains a website devoted to the history of fly fishing (http://www.flyfishinghistory.com), and his second book, a history of fly fishing, will be published by the Medlar Press this winter, with an introduction by Fred Buller (http://www.demon.co.uk/medlarpress/). Dr. Herd fishes for almost anything, but trout and salmon are his main interests. He is a member of the Flyfisher's Club, London. His latest contribution to the journal, "The Macedonian Fly Revisited," appeared in the Winter 2001 issue.



Jim Repine is international editor at Fly Fishing Broadcast Network the America Online/Worldwide Web fly-fishing magazine, a well as a freelance writer and photographer. His latest book, Pacific Rim Fly Fishing: The Unrepentant Predator, was published by Frank Amato Publications in 1995. Repine lives in Chile and has published a novel there. His last contribution to this journal, "Fly Fishing in Japan," appeared in the Spring 1999 issue.



Charles B. Wood III has been an antiquarian bookseller since 1967. He specializes in architecture and related subjects and is always quick to point out that he does not deal in fishing books. He has, however, published one (Dean Sage, Ten Days' Sport on Salmon Rivers [1997]), and he has plans for others. He has written articles on collecting angling books for the Atlantic Salmon Journal, Ephemera News, the ABAA Newsletter, and the Anglers' Club Bulletin. He spends two or three weeks every summer salmon fishing. This is his first contribution to this journal. He lives with his wife in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



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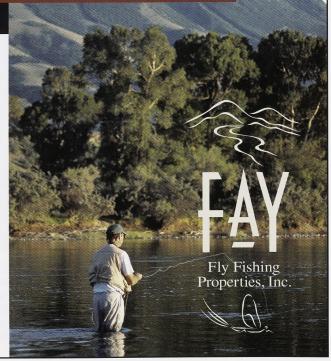
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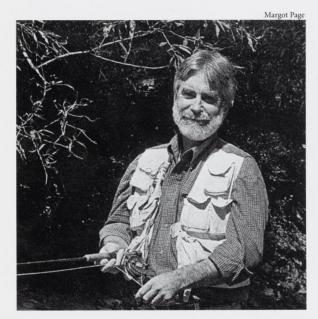
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## Hooked Up



In my younger days (fast-fading memories!), as a member of a professional racing team, I spent of lot of time around tracks like Watkins Glen and Pocono International Speedway. In those days, when a driver and car were doing really well, we said they were "hooked up." What an appropriate phrase to describe how the American Museum of Fly Fishing is doing: we're hooked up!

For example (speaking of hooks), our collection continues to grow in very important ways. We recently received 205 flies tied by Elsie and Harry Darbee, a gift of Dr. David Haidak. Elsie could certainly pack deer hair on an Irresistible like no one else, save perhaps Helen Shaw. You should come and see how both ladies tied this fly.

And "Anglers All" continues its hooked-up ways. Recently moved to San Francisco (where it opens at the California Academy of Sciences on July 21), the exhibition has been seen by some 115,000 people of all ages so far in Bozeman, Montana, and Salt Lake City, Utah. The Museum is bringing the riches of fly fishing to the world in a way unmatched in history—not just to the angling world, but, for example, to families visiting our host institutions on a Sunday afternoon. There was a picture in the Salt Lake City Tribune of a grandmother lifting her grandson up so he could touch (groan) one of our artifacts mounted 8 feet off the floor (thank heavens for Plexiglas!). Who knows what lives will be touched and in what ways by the beauty and craft of "Anglers All"?

Our trustees are hooked up, too. Led by Chairman of the Board Bob Scott and President David Walsh, they are working on substantive, creative measures to reinvigorate their standing committees, reduce our debt load, and improve cash flow (none of which is in the least way upsetting to this director!).

Our local fund-raising committees worked hard to make it a hooked-up spring as well. Our New York Anglers' Club, Cleveland, and Manchester dinner/auctions and our George Harvey Heritage Dinner each averaged \$15,000 dollars net—way up from last year's results. A tribute to what our friends in faraway places are willing to do to help us accomplish our mission.

So, there it is: the American Museum of Fly Fishing is, to use that old racing adage, hooked up. And to use it in a different light, I hope each of our members gets hooked up this year, with wonderful adventures, good friends, and rising fish. Now, if you will excuse me, I must leave for a little trip to Rangeley, Maine, for the express purpose of—you knew it was coming—hooking up.

Gary Tanner Executive Director



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING, a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of fly fishing, was founded in Manchester, Vermont, in 1968. The Museum serves as a repository for, and conservator to, the world's largest collection of angling and angling-related objects. The Museum's collections and exhibits provide the public with thorough documentation of the evolution of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry in the United States and abroad from the sixteenth century to the present. Rods, reels, and flies, as well as tackle, art, books, manuscripts, and photographs form the major components of the Museum's collections.

The Museum has gained recognition as a unique educational institution. It supports a publications program through which its national quarterly journal, *The American Fly Fisher*, and books, art prints, and catalogs are regularly offered to the public. The Museum's traveling exhibits program has made it possible for educational exhibits to be viewed across the United States and abroad. The Museum also provides in-house exhibits, related interpretive programming, and research services for members, visiting scholars, authors, and students.

The Museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. For information please contact: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, P. O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254, 802-362-3300.



