The American Fly Fisher

Volume 10 • Number 2 • SPRING 1983

Firsts

We've devoted a good deal of space in *The American Fly Fisher* to the search for the origins of various fly fishing practices: saltwater sport, floating flies, bass fishing, and so on. There's something exciting about the idea of having been the first to hook a bonefish on a fly, something of pioneering to have been first to cast a fly on some unnamed Rocky Mountain lake. But there's more to this business of looking for origins than a mere search for primacy, or a quest for new heroes.

Take our ongoing examination of the origins of the floating fly. It's now clear that Americans played around with floating flies for thirty or more years before Halford's book was published in England. What we used to think of as an "invention," a self-conscious effort to keep a fly afloat, we now are seeing as a natural and occasional practice in various parts of this country and England. This is good news of a sort, because it is insulting to fishermen of the past to assume that only one or two out of all of them had the wherewithal to think of floating flies. It's also good news because it makes our history just that much more interesting and complicated. Hardly anything in fly fishing has been so revolutionary that it could be called an invention, especially an invention that could be traced to any one person.

The occasional mentions of floating flies in English and American writings before 1850 serve to prove that fishermen were bright enough in many places to fish both wet and dry. Other mentions tell us that they also understood the principle of the streamer, and the importance of imitating terrestrials. They understood refraction, and they fished in salt water. They were in many ways as much like us as the technology of the times would allow. We tend to think of people from earlier centuries as walking around in a flat, black-and-white (at best sepia) world when in fact they were just as astute and intelligent as we are.

There is another element to the search for "firsts," and it involves what the "pioneer" in question did with the new practice. It means a great deal more to us if we can prove that an angler fly fishing in Florida in 1870 told his friends. Then he is not an isolated incident; he is the beginning of something bigger. And that process of communication, that transfer of ideas, is, after all, what we most wish to understand better. Did Charles Orvis develop his narrow, upright, ventilated fly reel—a milestone in reel construction—simply because it seemed like a good idea? Probably not; more likely he noticed the quicker winding capacity of narrow-spool trolling reels. Just as probably, being a good mechanic, he applied what he knew about pulleys and gears to the winding of fishing line.

The thought processes behind our fishing practices are just as complex as those behind our fishing philosophies. Figuring out who did something first is often a matter of figuring out where an idea, or a technique, or a design first surfaced for public examination. In that way, being first was not as important as being heard.

The American Fly Fisher

Published by The Museum of American Fly Fishing for the pleasure of the membership.

Volume 10 Number 2

SPRING 1983

on the cover: George LaBranche fishing the Konkapot, in Massachusetts in 1930. See the article on page 32.

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The American Fly Fisher, the Magazine of The Museum of American Fly Fishing, is published three times a year by the Museum at Manchester, Vermont 05254. Subscription is free with payment of membership dues. All correspondence, letters, manuscripts, photographs and materials should be forwarded care of the Editor. The Museum and Magazine are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, drawings, photographs, materials or memorabilia. The Museum cannot accept responsibility for statements and interpretations which are wholly the author's. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless postage is provided. Contributions to *The American Fly Fisher* are to be considered gratuitous and become the property of the Museum unless otherwise requested by the contributor. Publication dates are January, May and September. Entered as Second Class matter at the U.S. Post Office, Manchester, Vermont 05254.

The American Fly Fisher – USPS-057-410

Vision

on sight and seeing

by Preston Jennings

In this, our third selection from the unpublished manuscript of The Fish and The Fly, *the late Preston Jennings explores the mechanics and biology of vision. He suggests, among other things, a reason why the old saw about fish preferring red and purple lures may have reason for being so widely believed.*

This material was in apparently final manuscript form, neatly typed and set aside in a light binder, indicating that it was probably Jennings's final thoughts on the subject for the book. We have made only minor editorial changes in most of the text, but have deleted a brief discussion of the effects of temperature on fish vision; that discussion has become outdated and erroneous enough to do injustice to the memory of the author.

We thank Dr. Steven Schullery, Chemistry Department, Eastern Michigan University, for his careful review of the manuscript of this chapter. And, as always, we thank Mrs. Preston Jennings for presenting the Museum with the Preston Jennings papers, and Museum Trustee Nick Lyons for his guidance in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

P.S.

A man once asked Thomas Edison to explain the nature of electricity, to which Mr. Edison is reported to have replied, "Well sir, there are at least two things about which I know nothing. I do not know of what electricity consists, and I do not know when a trout will rise to a fly."

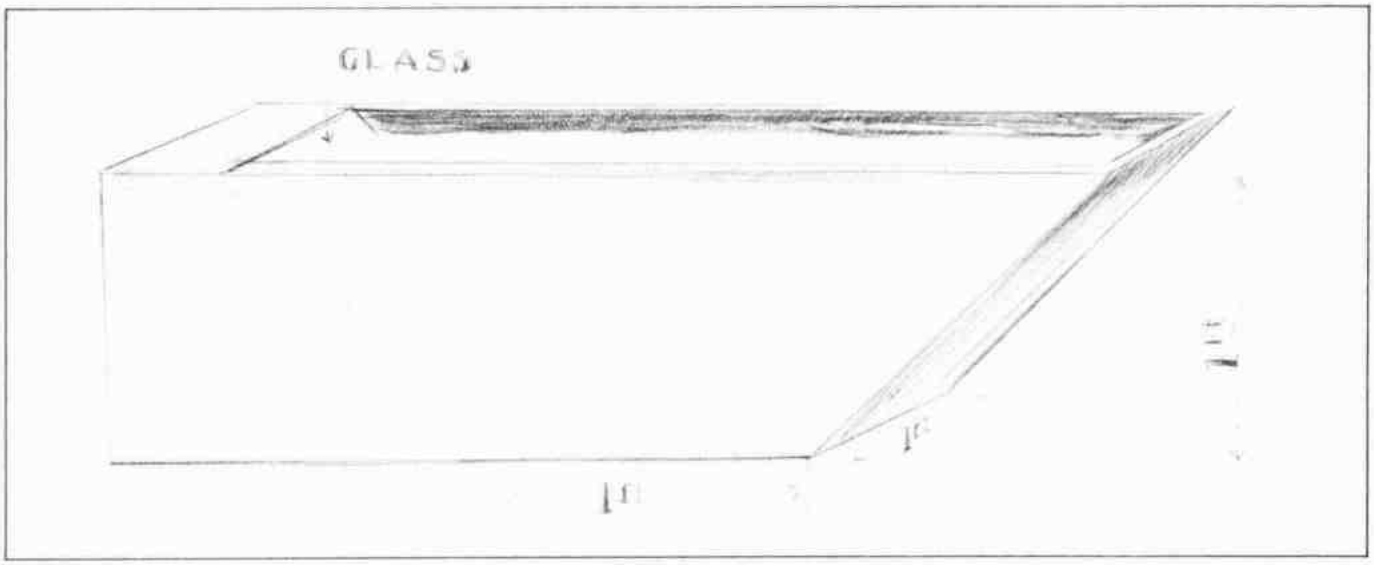
When it comes to the question of vision, man's knowledge is also rather limited. We can, however, take a look at some of the mechanical apparatus by which vision is accomplished and perhaps advance some theory as to how this mechanism works even if we cannot at present comprehend the entire process.

The act of seeing, or what we call vision, may be divided into two phases: the first, mechanical apparatus and, the second, the mentality of the user of that apparatus.

It is a rather well established fact that children have to be taught to see and appreciate colors, and to distinguish between the different shades of colors, and no doubt this same condition exists throughout the entire animal kingdom. Certainly small trout do not have the sense of discrimination that older fish have, and in my opinion trout learn from experience to distinguish between what is food and what is fraud by an appreciation of not only size and form but color as well.

I know how difficult it is to fool large

opposite: a Catskill brown taken by Preston Jennings. below: Jennings's own drawing of his tank for studying flies from the fish's perspective.



left: Mrs. Jennings with one of Preston's salmon, probably in the 1940s. above: Mrs. Jennings, Ken Reid (Chicago sports writer), Helen Bailey, Preston Jennings, and Dan Bailey at the Bailey's camp in Montana.

experienced fish and how simple it is to go out and catch pennywasters. I would like to stress the words "experienced fish" for the reason that many large fish have spent their lives in a hatchery and are accustomed to being fed, hence they are not "experienced" in selecting food but rather have to eat what is thrown to them. Again, a fish living in a hatchery tank has a great deal of competition. It has to grab food quickly at feeding time or else go hungry. For instance, at the New York Sportsman's Show there is always a tank of hatchery trout from which some five-year old child, with the assistance of an expert fly-caster, hooks and lands a trout to the amazement of the multitude! Trout-fishing difficult? Not at all; a five-year old can do it! The Greeks had a word for this too.

It seems logical to me to assume that under stream conditions much of a trout's education consists in the development of vision and the use of vision in the selection of food.

From purely a mechanical standpoint, both the eye of man and the eye of fish have been developed to meet the requirements of the individual in their respective environments. Man cannot see well under water, and it may be presumed that a trout cannot see well out of water. This has nothing to do with the mentality of either, but rather it has to do with the mechanical design of the eye itself.

Both the eye of man and the eye of fish may be compared to a camera, as both have a lens, or rather a series of lenses, which gathers light and converges it to a focal point on a screen which is sensitive to light. In both cases there is also a dark screen behind the sensitive one, which dark screen serves to prevent any visible light from being reflected, thereby causing interference with the formation of a sharp or clear image on the sensitive plate. This is the basis of the mechanical side of vision.

White light is broken or refracted into its component parts when it passes obliquely from one medium to a heavier one, such as from air to water. A similar condition exists in the case of the human eye, for light must pass from air into the watery portion of the eye (vitreous humor) before it can strike or register an image on the sensitive screen called the retina.

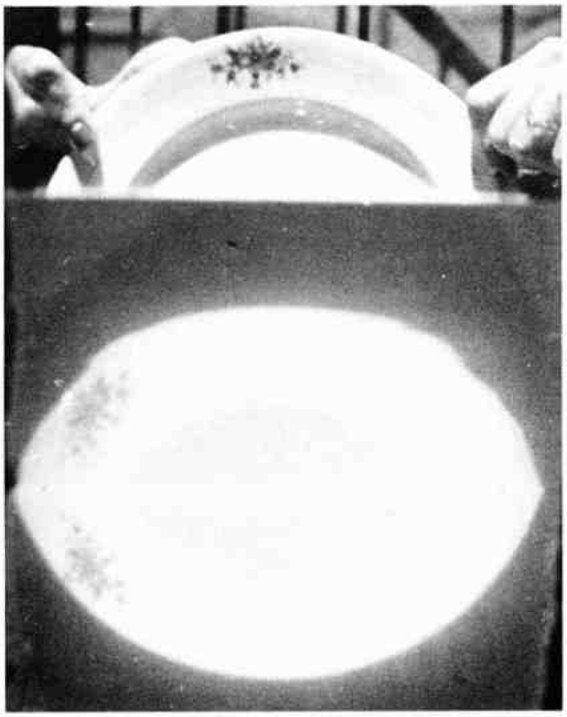
One prism will refract white light, and a second prism will unite again the colored rays forming white light. This is what happens when light passes through the series of lenses in the eye.

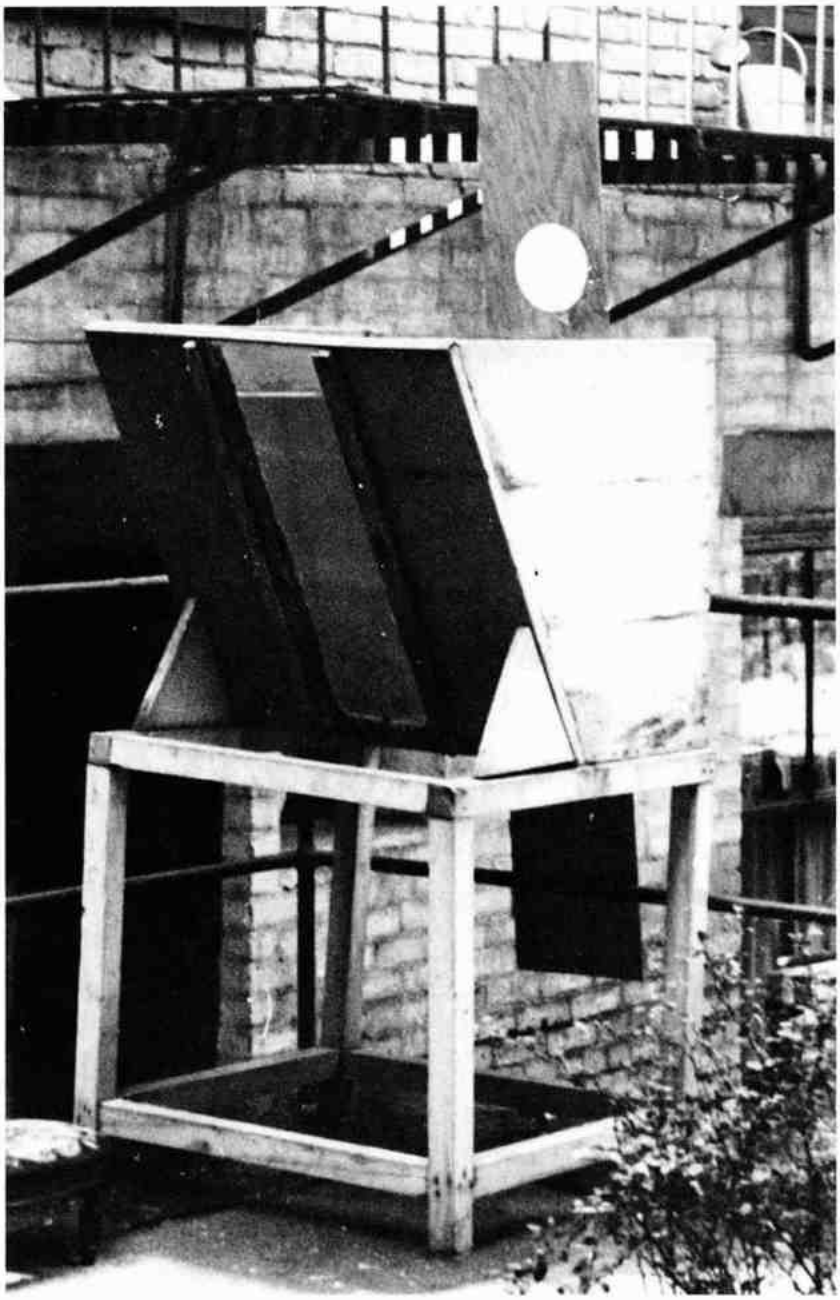
The cornea, or outer lens, acts as a diverging lens, while the crystalline lens acts as a converging lens and their densities are such that white light enters the eye and is converged to a focal point without being separated or broken by any action of the eye.

A similar condition exists in the eye of a fish. However, the densities of the various parts vary considerably from the human eye because light entering the eye of a fish enters from water, which has the same refractive index as the watery part of the eye. Hence, the only correction this eye has to make is to compensate for the slight refraction that takes place when white rays are bent or converged to a focal point.

It is apparent that both the human eye and the fish eye are designed to permit the entry of light from the respective elements of air and water without any refraction taking place. Makers of optical lenses have been able to accomplish even more difficult tasks, for in the case of optical instruments white light has to pass from air through dense glass and then to air again, and then converge to a focal point without being refracted. This they have been able to do by using a diverging lens and a converging lens made of two different types of glass, each type having a different index of refraction.

In comparing the human eye with the eye of a brown trout several important differences may be noted.





Preston Jennings's fascination with refraction and the effects on light as it passed from one medium to another led him to build this tank for viewing things from the fish's point of view. Above is one of his photographs of a dish being "split" by immersion in the water.

First. The outer lens or cornea in the human eye is curved, while in the fish's eye it is nearly flat.

Second: The inner or crystalline lens in the human eye is flattened while in the fish's eye it is spherical. Apart from any question of color correction that both types of lenses accomplish, it would appear that the eye of the fish has been developed so that the shape of the cornea or outer lens would conform to the general shape of the fish's head, and thereby carry out the general scheme of streamline form which is the most efficient for swimming. Fish have no eyelids, hence their eye has no protection other than to conform to the contour of the body structure that encloses it.

Third: For adjusting the focal point the human eye has a series of muscles attached to the outer edges of the crystalline lens; hence, when the eye is at rest we have what is known as a far-sighted vision; but, when we want to examine an object closely or read a book these muscles contract, decreasing the thickness of the crystalline lens and focusing it for short vision. In the case of the fish a single muscle is attached to the crystalline lens, and though the fish is also normally far-sighted it can, when it desires, contract this muscle, moving the crystalline lens closer to the retina. A short focus is thus obtained. In both instances, viz., the human eye and the eye of the fish, the light passing through these lenses is transmitted through the colorless watery fluid (vitreous humor) that fills the central portion of the eye and is registered on the sensitive screen or retina.

Fourth: In the human eye the retina does not extend toward the front of the eye as far as it does in the fish. This leads me to believe that the fish has a much wider angle of vision than man. It would seem necessary for a fish to have a wide angle of vision because it is open to attack from all sides and if it is to survive in a world where big fish eat little fish it must be able to keep a weather eye peeled in all directions at all times.

In a horizontal plane trout probably have monocular vision, that is they can see with either eye. This area of monocular vision must also include much of a vertical plane as well, as either eye covers almost an entire hemisphere. This particular aptitude works to great advantage in a strong light; the fish can have one eye blinded by the light and still see perfectly well in a direction away from the source of light with the other eye. This fact can serve the fly-fisher in good stead, for if the location of a fish is definitely known the fly-fisher can take advantage of the direct light that blinds the fish for concealing his own presence, and at the same

LYON & COULSON ◆ ◆ *Fine Fishing and Hunting Equipment* ◆ ◆ BUFFALO

Preston J. Jennings

IRIS NO. 1 STREAMER FLY

(Patent Pending)

Preston J. Jennings, internationally known fly-fisherman and author of "A BOOK ON TROUT FLIES" has designed a streamer fly based upon sound scientific principles.

Mr. Preston J. Jennings

After exhaustive tests on open fishing waters, by the designer as well as the officials of Lyon & Coulson, this fly is offered exclusively by Lyon & Coulson as "Jennings Iris No. 1" (Patents Pending).

In regard to the theory behind the design of this fly, Mr. Jennings writes: "Light entering the water from an acute angle is bent or refracted at the surface of the water. This bending causes sunlight to split into the basic colored lights which form sunlight. Minnows and other small fish, which are the regular diet of game fish, feeding near the surface are normally illuminated by these colored lights. The "Jennings Iris No. 1" design is my impression of how a small fish would appear to a game fish when viewed in this refracted light.

"In actual practice, which is of more interest to the fisherman than theory, 'Jennings Iris No. 1' streamer has produced record catches, wherever used. It has killed Eastern Brook, Brown, and Rainbow Trout, Sea-run Trout, and Atlantic Salmon."

Just a word as to the use of this fly: Since it is designed to suggest a minnow or other small fish, it should be cast at right angles to the stream and be retrieved in short jerks; in lakes or still water the line should be stripped in at the end of the cast, with occasional pauses so that the fly may imitate the darting movement of a swimming minnow.

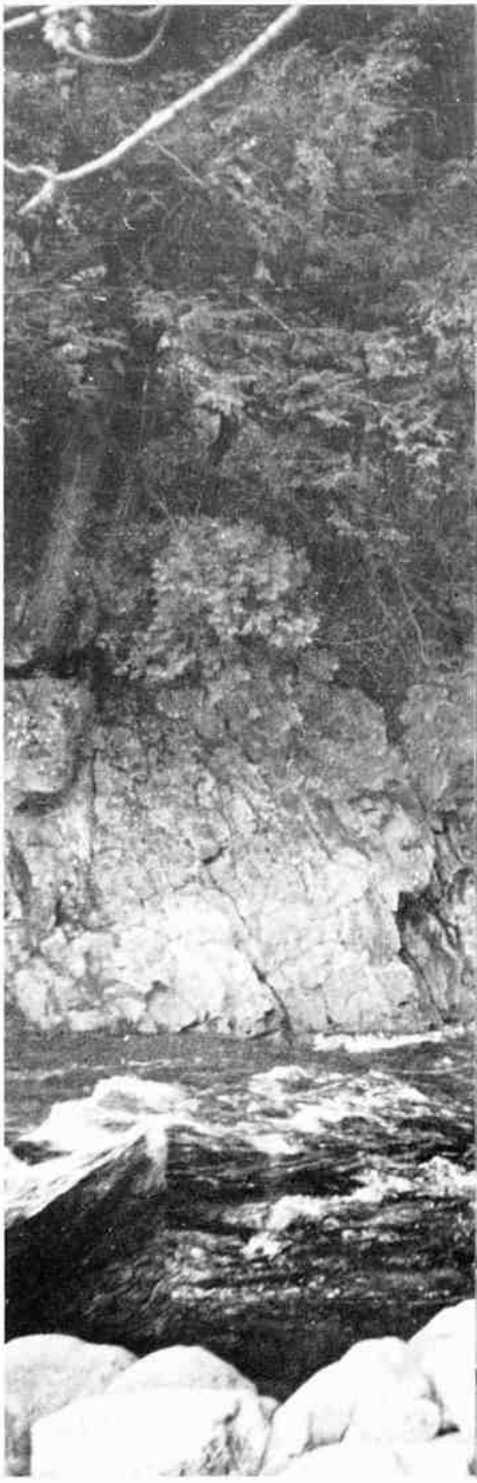
NOTE: In addition to "A BOOK ON TROUT FLIES", which is the first scientific study of American stream insects and their relation to artificial flies, Mr. Jennings has contributed many scientific articles on fishing to Field and Stream, The Sportsman, and Country Life.

IRIS NO. 1 — FOR TROUT

Tied with either Bucktail or Polar Bear hair on long shank Limerick Hooks with turned down looped eyes.

Sizes 6, 8 and 10	Each	$0.30	Per Doz.	$3.60
Sizes 2 and 4	Each	.35	Per Doz.	4.20

27

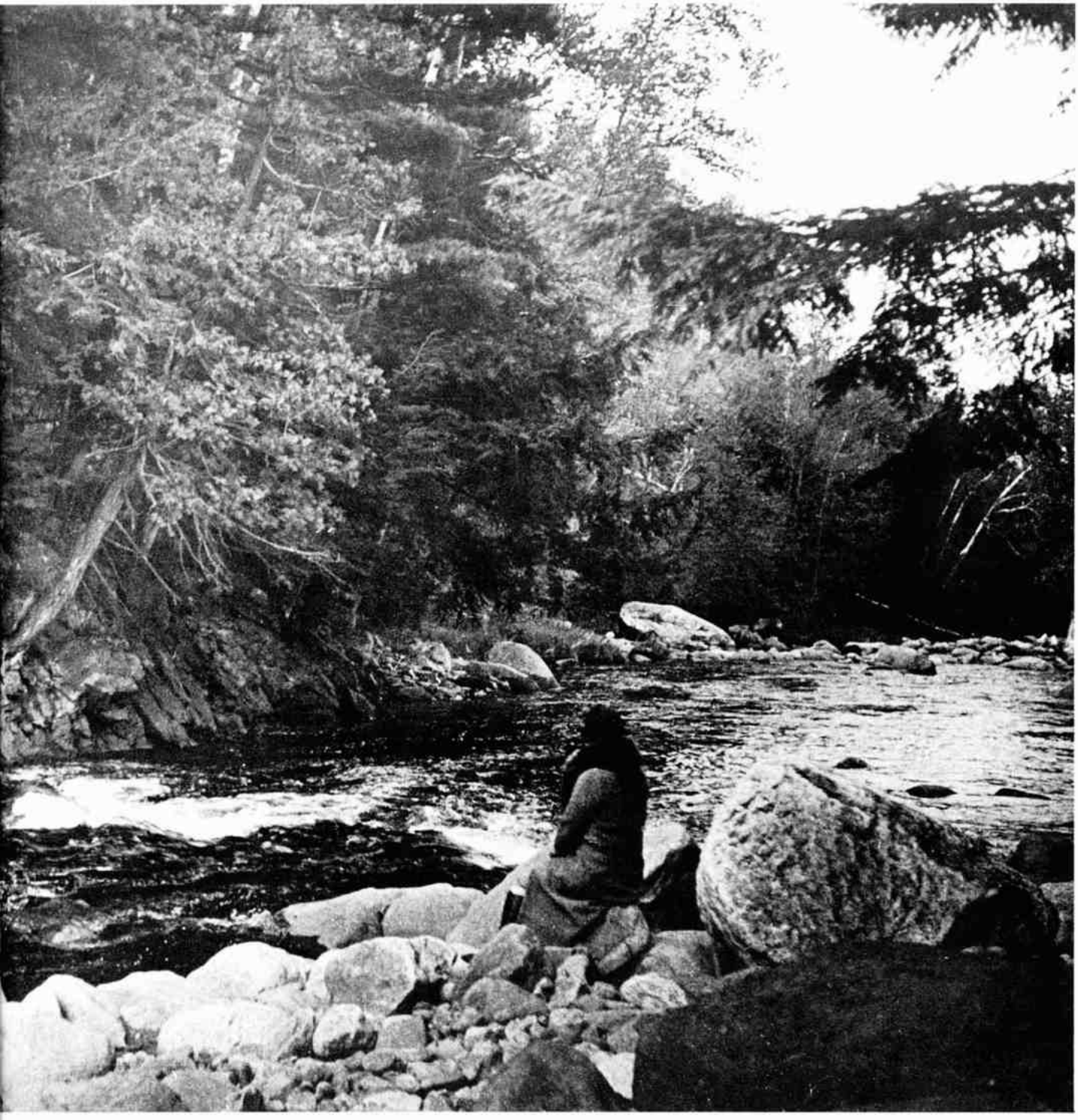


above: Jennings's Iris streamers were widely publicized in the early 1950s, and were sold by Lyon and Coulson of Buffalo, New York. right: He took this picture of Mrs. Jennings on the AuSable River in New York, a favorite stream of his.

time place his artificial fly where it will be most visible to the fish, viz., on that side of the window away from the source of light.

Monocular vision, however, has one great disadvantage in that it is impossible to judge distance with only one eye, except by comparing the relative size of the unknown object with another whose dimensions are known. It is doubtful if fish have the ability or the mental capacity to do this.

Humans have binocular vision, that is the line of vision from both eyes crosses at a point about 10" in front of our eyes and it is by the crossing of these two lines of vision that distances can be estimated. Stereopticon cameras are designed on this principle but their two lenses are set farther apart than human eyes; when we look at pictures taken with such a camera



we get an exaggerated sense of depth or distance.

Trout very probably have binocular vision at a point in their normal line of vision, for without it they certainly could not judge distances. Actual experience shows that they do judge distances very accurately.

Just how far a trout will move for a fly seems to be more a question of economy than vision. It takes lots of energy to drive a fish through the water and a fish cannot long survive if it uses up more energy in going for a fly than the fly will produce after the fish has eaten it. H.P. Wells, whose observations I respect, thought that a trout would not rise for a fly from a depth exceeding 9'. From my own experience with brown trout I should say that this distance is excessive.

In our case, normal vision lies in a horizontal plane for though we see over an angle of 120° in a vertical plane and 180° in a horizontal plane, our eyes are normally focused for sharp vision in the horizontal plane. The trout, on the other hand, looks up and ahead. From the location of its eyes I should judge the angle of normal vision to be about 55° to vertical. We know that all animals, including man,

Thoughts on Background

The following summary of backgrounds against which fish see flies was probably intended to serve as a portion of some larger discussion, either on vision or light. It was still in rough manuscript form, handwritten, but seems to summarize Jennings's basic beliefs about how some common backgrounds affect the fish's perception of flies on or near the surface, or between the fish and the sky. His suggestions about the natural advantage of translucency to egg-laying spinners is especially interesting.
P.S.

The background against which an object is viewed has a great deal to do with the appearance or visibility of the object. If it blends with the coloration of the background it is less conspicuous than if its colors or hues are in direct contrast to the background.

Many insects conform to the general principles of camouflage. In the case of aquatic insects (which spend the greater part of their lives as nymphs living in the water, then emerge as winged insects, then return to the water to deposit their eggs), camouflage is quite a problem. If they are readily seen by the fish they would not survive. On the other hand, if they are completely invisible they would not serve as food for the fish. It would therefore appear that there is a fine balance that allows a sufficient number of insects to escape to preserve the species.

As it is not always possible to secure specimens of the natural insect currently in season, I have found that it is a good idea to select an artificial that will conform in general to the background against which the fish is going to see the fly.

There are four general backgrounds. The first occurs in early spring before the leaves appear on the trees and alders edge the stream. This background is usually dark: reddish-brown mixed with grey. The early flies, such as *Blasturus, Iron,* and *Ephemerella,* all have dark wings.

As the season advances the leaves arrive and the background becomes pale green or yellowish green; you will find that the insects then generally conform to this particular coloration. Consider the group of mayflies beginning with *S. Vicarium* which is darkish, on through *S. Fuscum,* to *S. Ithaca* which is lighter.

The third background is autumn coloration, with its deep yellows, oranges, and reds. While this time is part the trout season here in the east, it is interesting to note that many of the caddis flies seen on fall salmon rivers are light tan in color.

The fourth background is not really a background at all but the source of light: the sky. Objects are seen as silhouettes against the sky. Here transparency is of prime importance and practically all mayflies are at their most transparent as spinners, when they must deposit their eggs in low light with the fish watching.

do not like to look directly into a strong light, and as long as the fish's window is brilliantly lighted it seems reasonable to presume that the trout watches the undersurface of the water just outside of his window rather than the window itself. A normal line of vision of 55° to vertical would be just outside of the window, which is limited to 48° 36'. Practical experience confirms this; it is generally necessary to place a floating fly well above the location of the fish's window rather than directly into the window itself.

Ability to see over a wide angle does not mean that either man or fish can distinguish the color, size, or form of an object over a wide angle. It merely means that movement can be detected. If closer inspection of the moving object seems necessary the eyes may be turned so that the more sensitive part of the retina will be brought into use. This most sensitive part of the retina is almost directly behind the center of the lens and we can see clearly only those objects that are focused on this spot (fovea centralis). As far as the writer knows, this especially sensitive spot has not been identified in the eye of a fish, but it is entirely probable that it exists, for practical evidence leads me to believe that fish can and do see very well, even under conditions humans would find adverse.

Fifth: The retina itself is the sensitive screen upon which the image formed by the lens is focused. It is a thin layer of tissue in which are embedded many nerve bundles and nerve cells, all of which appear to be in some manner connected with a main trunk-line or cable that leads to the brain. Light passing through the thin tissue of the retina affects these nerve terminals, and what we call vision results. Behind the retina in both the human eye and in the fish's eye there is a dense layer of black pigment. This pigment absorbs any excess light passing through the retina and prevents unwanted reflections within the eye.

Sixth: In the eye of the fish there is a silvery screen behind this layer of dark pigment. It is to be noted that both the layer of dark pigment and the silvery screen extend forward, covering the entire undersurface of the iris. A similar arrangement is also found in many animals that can see in very poor light or have what is called night vision. Many theories have been advanced about the probable function of this silvery screen. Perhaps the most common is that this silvery screen acts as a mirror, so that when a very weak ray of light, such as would be present at night, enters the eye it is reflected back out of the eye to the object from which the ray was originally reflected; by this shuttling back and forth the original ray is fully utilized, if not intensified, and vision aided accordingly.

This theory has one weak point in that the original ray of light would have to pass through the layer of black pigment before it could be reflected by the silvery screen; this we know cannot be true, for black absorbs light. That is why *black* appears to be *black*! It does not reflect white light or any of the constituent rays that make up white light. In albinos this layer of black pigment is lacking, and much of their poor vision may be attributed to this condition. Perhaps this is the reason why among wild animals albinos are a rarity.

On the other hand, learned men have expressed the opinion this silvery screen has no optical function because it is effectively screened by the layer of dark pigment. To me, this does not jibe either, as the silvery screen is a definite part of the fish's eye and if it had no optical function or no effect on vision it would not be there.

Scientists have been able to isolate at least one solid substance found in that portion of the retina known as the *rods.* This substance, called visual purple, is easily bleached by light. This same substance is also found in the retina of fishes who have more *rods* than we do. The visual purple not only is bleached by light but it resumes its color in the dark. In other words, as in all processes of life there is a continual breaking down and building up of tissues and substances. Visual purple is affected by the different wave lengths of light, and in the human eye it seems to be more sensitive to the shorter waves, on the violet end of the color range. On the other hand, the fish is more sensitive to the longer waves, on the red end of the color range.

Preston Jennings on his way to the Madison River on a western trip in the 1950s.

It has been generally thought that the cones in the retina were involved in color vision and perhaps this is true (*it has since been established—ed.*), but it is interesting to compare the reaction of visual purple to actual color reactions of the human eye. For instance, the French flag, the Tricolor, was originally composed of three bands of Red, White, and Blue, all of equal width. Everyone looking at the flag thought that the Blue band was wider than the other colors. Finally a commission was formed to investigate the matter, and it was decided to alter the ratio of colors: Blue 30%, White 33%, and Red 37%. The bands of the present French Tricolor are of these proportions, but to the human eye all appear to be of the same width.

From the light reactions on the visual purple of the fish's eye we might well surmise that the fish is long on the red end of the spectrum.

In the past it has been thought that the nerve terminals of the retina were divided into three groups, one sensitive to red, one to green, and one to blue, but this has never been confirmed by demonstrating any anatomical differences in the nerve terminals themselves. Considering that it is possible for sixteen conversations to be carried on, at slightly different frequencies, over a single pair of telephone wires, it is probable that each nerve terminal picks up and transmits to the brain any of the various wave lengths of visible light without interference.

From the foregoing we might, with reasonable assurance, make certain deductions:

First: Fish have a wider angle of vision than man.

Second: They can see and appreciate colors during the day, perhaps as well, if not better than, man.

Third: Their impressions of the color values tend to be more sensitive to the longer light waves, viz., Red.

Fourth: They can see in the night, or with what we call poor illumination, much better than man, but color is of little or no importance.

Fifth: As suggested by the present writer in *A Book of Trout Flies,* it is entirely possible, in fact much evidence indicates, that fish see objects only in terms of two dimensions. Not being able to handle an object and thereby determine its thickness they can judge it only by what it appears to be in a two-dimensional plane. This is an important consideration in the design of artificial flies.

ABSORPTION COEFFICIENT OF VISUAL PURPLE

Wave Length	Man	Brown Trout
6400 (red)	—	.0466
6200	—	.1107
6000	.0223	.2308
5800	.0876	.3591
5600	.1292	.4699
5400	.3398	.5043
5200	.4365	.4635
5000	.5285	.3647
4800	.4558	.1724
4600	.3451	.0237
4400 (violet)	.1807	.0009

Mr. Slim's Final Piscatorial Experience

an early American lampoon of fly fishing

In the Museum's early catalog, published in 1973, we printed this cartoon, probably the first portrayal of the American fly fisher as a buffoon, or, as the catalog said, as a "duffer." It was part of a series in Harper's New Monthly Magazine *in 1853, and we figure it's worth sharing with the members again, now that ten years have passed.*

He tries a "Fly" and a little of the "Original."

A Fly tries him, much to his annoyance.

He protects his eyes by the New Patent Goggles.

Appearance of Flies as seen through the Goggles.

Terrific Combat between Mr. Slim and the Flies.

Exhausted by his exertions, Mr. Slim faints.

Revives, and studies the effect of the Goggles. Flies still troublesome.

Flies defeated. View of Mr. Slim's Face after the Action.

VOL. XI.—No. 66.—3 H*

Mr. Slim tries the Brook again. Flies resume Hostilities.

Flies receive Reinforcements. Second View of Mr. Slim's Face.

Flies gain the advantage. Third View of Mr. Slim's Face.

Mr. Slim defeated. Leaves the field and starts for Home.

Day light scarce. Didn't see that Log.

Another invisible Obstacle. Mr. Slim in a bad way.

Meets small Boy. Boy is astonished at Mr. Slim's appearance.

Engages Boy to conduct him out of the Woods. Vows never to go Fishing again.

William T. Porter

an excerpt from a manuscript by Fred Pond, c. 1878 edited and with commentary by David B. Ledlie

According to the Dictionary of American Biography *(DAB),* The National Cyclopedia *and the title page of* The Sportsman's Directory *(1892), Frederick Eugene Pond (pseud. Will Wildwood) authored a publication entitled* Memoirs of Eminent Sportsmen. *The DAB implies that it was published in book form and gives the date of publication as 1878 (Pond was 22 years old at the time). Pond was a well-known sportsman, writer, and angling historian of his day. He was born in Packwaukee, Wisconsin in 1856 and passed away in November of 1925. During his lifetime he served as editor of several sporting periodicals; at the time of his death he was the editor of the Rod & Gun column of the* New York Herald *and* Herald Tribune. *We hope to include a detailed biography of Pond in a future issue of* The American Fly Fisher.

The references to Memoirs *piqued my interest for two reasons. First, I was unfamiliar with the title; and second, I was sure that it contained information on our early sportsmen that was not likely to be found easily elsewhere. Pond was quite a student of American sportsmen as well as nineteenth century sporting periodicals. To date I have found no conclusive evidence that* Memoirs *has ever been published in book form. Neither the Library of Congress, the Nation's well-known angling libraries (Princeton, Yale, and Harvard) nor the available angling bibliographies had any record of Pond's* Memoirs. *Interestingly, Princeton's Kienbusch collection contains a handwritten manuscript in Pond's hand entitled* Memoirs of Eminent Sportsmen. *Pond's manuscript contains the biographies of eleven eminent sportsmen: Thomas Ward, William P. Hawes, H. W. Herbert, William T. Porter, James Oakes, Isaac McLellan, George Wilkins Kendall, H. H. Sibley and T. B. Thorpe. (The biographies of Ned Buntline and William Cullen Bryant are appended, but it is not clear if these were part of the original manuscript.) I offer below Pond's biography of William Trotter Porter, Editor of America's first weekly sporting miscellany,* The Spirit of the Times. *How, when, in what form, and where* Memoirs *was ever published, if at all, remains a mystery to me. Perhaps it was issued in serial form in one of the many sporting periodicals Pond was associated with during his lifetime? We welcome from our readers any intelligence which might clarify this mystery.*

The style of Pond's memoir of Porter is baldly adulatory in a manner that would today seem almost distasteful; such profiles were common in the late nineteenth century. The overwrought prose does not lessen the historical usefulness of the memoir, which contains many details of Porter's life. This being a historical document, I don't hesitate to present it for both its dated flavor and its information. Pond's hand-written manuscript was rough, especially the punctuation, but in the interests of keeping editorial interruptions to a minimum only the least acceptable amount of editing has been done.

The Museum is grateful to Jim Merritt of Princeton University, who has helped us frequently in our search for important documents such as the Pond manuscript. This portion of Memoirs *appears with his permission.*

D.B.L.

William Trotter Porter, familiarly known under the sobriquet of "York's Tall Son"—was born December 24, 1809, in Newbury, Vermont, being the third son of Benjamin Porter.

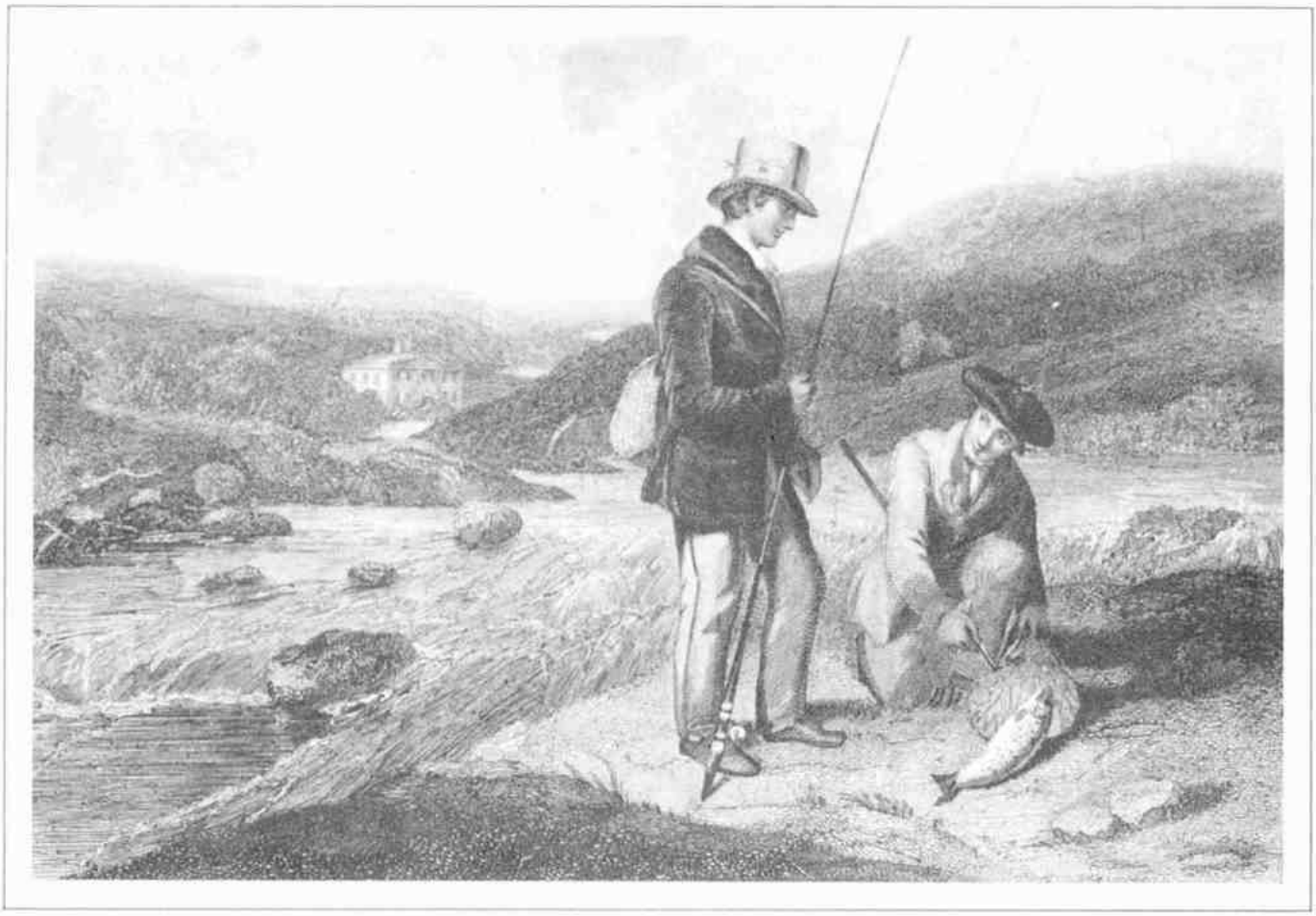
His early ancestor Samuel Porter emigrated from England to Plymouth in 1622, and thus William was of the eighth generation in America.

The brothers of William T. Porter were Benjamin, George, Frank, and Dr. T.O. Porter, all men of culture, refinement, and more than ordinary brilliancy.

During his school days William was a most studious and zealous scholar, keen of perception, and persevering in all branches of education. Even in early youth his love of sports—and more especially of angling—displayed itself in the desire to peruse the various works upon this subject. Walton's *Complete Angler* was his favorite work, aside from his regular studies.

As a scholar he was considered by the teachers a very apt and industrious one, as were his brothers.—Notably, George a merry, manly youth, was afterward connected with the editorial staff of the *New Orleans Picayune.*

William T. Porter's life from his earliest boyhood had a firm and lofty purpose, and his rigid determination to do and conquer was the mainspring of his success. In youth as in manhood he was generous to a fault, and this generosity carried to an extreme constituted his chief error in life, though it cannot be deemed a serious or remarkable one, save that it reverted cruelly upon himself. His inclination seemed to lead toward a literary life and in the year 1829 he began his editorial career upon *The Farmer's Herald,* at St. Johnsbury,



"Trout Fishing" appeared in one of Porter's first American Turf Registers; *it was slightly altered from an earlier English engraving*

Vermont, and there remained about one year, when he took a position as associate editor of *The Enquirer* at Norwich.

These journals did not wholly satisfy his ambitions and on December 10th, 1831, he and James Howe devised and gave to the public the first issue of that rare sporting journal the *Spirit of the Times*, a weekly paper devoted to matters of interest to sportsmen. When it is considered how widely different were the tastes and opinions of the people of that day, from those of the present time, the venture may be called quite a hazardous one. The men of avowed and ardent sporting propensities were very rare, and the general public looked with much disfavor upon sporting, or "sporting characters", as those fond of field sports or racing were termed in those days.

As a whole, though reasonably successful, the journal was not self-sustaining, and it was consolidated within a few months with *The Traveller*, Mr. Porter having charge of the sporting department. This sphere was soon discontinued by him and he engaged as editor of *The New Yorker*, and soon after, of *The Constellation*, but as neither of these publications gave much space to sporting matters, Mr. Porter courted a position giving wider range and power to his favorite pastimes. To this end he purchased the interest of Mr. Fisher in *The Traveller* and *Spirit of the Times* and upon assuming entire control of the journal, he issued it on Jan. 3rd, 1835, with its secondary title only, the *Spirit of the Times*. He was now in the position he wished to be and his fitness, as well as fondness for this sphere, is shown in his editorial career of over a quarter of a century, as proprietor and editor of the first and longest sustained of sporting weeklies.

The tone and spirit he infused in the delineation of field sports, fishing, racing and kindred topics gave to these pastimes an impetus and placed them on an honorable footing which is felt to the present time. It was no light or trivial task which he essayed, but perseverance and honorable dealings, combined with the broad, comprehensive, and consistent views with which he presented his points, gradually toned down the public prejudice against sporting and sportsmen.

The origin of his familiar title, "York's Tall Son" is of much interest because of its peculiar adaptability to Wm. Porter. He was of lofty stature—he stood six foot four in height,—and of unbounded popularity.

In 1836 Miss Clifton made an offer, through the *Spirit*, of $1,000 for a tragedy, "adapted to her histrionic acquirements", and this meeting the attention of Sarah, the younger sister of William, she addressed a letter to him, enclosing a few extracts from an "unfinished tragedy" which she had composed. The passages particularly connected with origin of the pseudonym are as follows:

Gyneth. How! what! say you that he The Lord of *Porter*—will be here?

Ina. Yes, sweet lady,—he of six feet lineage and gilded crow-quill,

Gyneth. Hand oe'r the lines, And let my burning eye-balls trace the hand of him I love. Yes tis true, his own loud signet. Haste thee, Ina, and bid old Gaffner set in preparation all things fit, of mouth and song, and joyous cheer, to greet the near approach of York's tall son.

From this time the title of "York's tall son" became a familiar one as applied to William T. Porter, and he soon became widely known by this popular and appropriate alias.

William very characteristically acknowledged this playful "Tragedy" in a letter to his sister, and gave a flowing compliment to its style, as well as popularity. It was incorporated in an issue of the *Spirit* and met great favor among the many thousand

Both the masthead and the portrait are from the first number of Porter's Spirit of the Times, *published September 6, 1856.* The Spirit *was a broad-ranging miscellany that published everything from racing news to romantic fiction and home remedy advice.*

readers.

In February, 1839, Mr. Porter purchased of John S. Skinner, Baltimore, *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine,* the eldest sporting periodical in America, being instituted in 1829, nearly three years previous to the first issue of the *Spirit.* Upon purchasing this Magazine, Mr. Porter issued it from the same office with the *Spirit of the Times,* though keeping it wholly distinct and separate from this publication.

The change in proprietorship of the Magazine gave it a new popularity and its contents were thenceforth much more varied, unique, and valuable, as many new and able contributors were added to its list. Most prominent among these were the talented "Frank Forester" and "J. Cypress Jr.," the latter had previously obtained much favor in sporting literature—then in its infancy in this country—by the production of that delicious, charming serial, "Fire Island Anna," published in the *American Monthly Magazine* of 1832. This series is considered by many the masterpiece of "J. Cypress", and truly but very few sporting sketches in our language are more apt in delineation or delightful in general character.

The March number for 1839, being the first issued by Mr. Porter, was very elaborately and finely prepared and contained nearly one hundred and thirty pages, much of which was original matter written especially for its pages (*actually, Porter's first issue was January-February—ed).* The illustrations of the Magazine were unique and valuable, many of the engravings, of noted horses, etc. being prepared expressly for its pages at a large outlay. The engravings of sporting scenes were deserving of especial notice as beautiful and lifelike illustrations from nature. In an early number of the new series, Frank Forester began a fine sporting tale, entitled, "A Week in the Woodlands," which elicited much admiration among the fraternity of sportsmen. With this serial, he (Henry William Herbert) first assumed the title of "Frank Forester", at the suggestion of his friend George Porter, and he ever afterward retained his nom-de-plume in his sporting works and sketches.

The brilliant sketches by "Frank Forester" and "J. Cypress Jr." (Wm. P. Hawes) formed an attractive feature of the *Sporting Magazine* from the time of its purchase by their friend William T. Porter until it ceased to exist in 1844. William P. Hawes was a remarkably quaint and versatile writer, several of his productions being stamped with the indelible seal of true genius, wit, and humor; had he survived to a riper age, his name would have doubtless been enrolled on the page of fame as one of the very finest writers in sporting literature. A fitting obituary of "J. Cypress Jr." was given in the April number, 1841 of the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* by Mr. Porter.

Great as was the popularity of the old *Spirit of the Times* and of the *Turf Register,* they were not more popular than the tall editor, who throughout all sections of the country was the idol and preceptor of the sporting fraternity. No finer or more characteristic description of William T. Porter was ever given than that from the pen of Frank Forester, in the *Southern Military Gazette,* beneath the caption of *The Spirit* and its Editor; by one who knows them well."

The personal appearance of Mr. Porter is graphically described therein as follows:

"And still unchanged art thou admidst the change of all around us, Dear old Bill. "Dear Bill", If I may parody Dick Steel's apostrophe to Addison, Dear Bill, serious or merry, solemn or sentimental, still so calm and serene and softly smiling, in the ruby colored waistcoat, with thy soft silky hair, unchanged by a streak of gray, coolly disported from thy high, white, unwrinkled forehead, with the luxuriant flow of that close curled beard, which a Mussulman might envy, with that mild, clear, blue eye, that almost effeminately sweet smile, singularly contrasting the athletic frame, six-foot-four in the stockinged feet, the chivalrous and gallant spirit, the free open speech, the high soul made of honor, the simple minded straight-forwardness of thought and action, which go together in thee to make up that of God's works, a real man.

Loyal and firm and kind and true, that fear or falsehood never knew, long mayst thou flourish, dear Bill, the spirit of *The Spirit of the Times,* the glory of not yet utterly degenerated Gotham, the best as the tallest son of York".

And then that band of brothers, united as one never remembers to have seen, or heard tell of any other brothers, those

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1856. VOL. I—NO. I.

fine, brave, gallant, good, glorious Porters! One by one they have passed away from our sight, though they will never, never, pass away from our hearts, until—the last gone from among us almost since I began to pen these lines—Bill is left alone of all the fair fraternity.

And long may he remain, for when he is taken hence, as in the neccessary course of time he must be, although we may well and reasonably hope that many years of useful and honorable life yet remain to him, his place will never be filled again, as a sportsman, an editor, a man, or a friend".

In the same sketch also appears the annexed comments on the *Spirit*, and its contributors.

"In one of his later issues, the first number of a new year, the twenty fourth of *The Spirit*, he remarked, and never were truer words penned or spoken, that "most of the subscribers, and all the contributors and correspondents of the paper, were his own personal friends." No military or naval station in the United States but is a weekly recipient of the *Spirit of the Times*. From Edinburgh to Australia, from Canada to the Cape of Good Hope, from Canton to St. Petersburg, from Calcutta to Newfoundland, there is not a city of note but the *Spirit* numbers, in its inhabitants, subscribers and correspondents.

And what correspondents! It were not too much to say that, as probably no editor ever lived in the world, who possessed such really innumerable hosts of friends and who enjoyed such boundless and well-deserved popularity, so no journal ever rejoiced in such variety of talent in contributions—all volunteers—so eminent, so versatile, so able, so distinguished".

In 1846 Mr. Porter edited an American edition of that standard English sporting work, *Hawker on Shooting*, with many elaborate and an instructive article on American game and shooting from the most brilliant correspondents of the old *Spirit*. This was the first work strictly upon sporting subjects ever published in the United States, and nearly one half the matter was original and adapted especially for the American edition (*Pond was mistaken; other sporting works preceded it—ed.*). About this time also he compiled and edited at the request of his friends a volume of humorous and sporting sketches from the *Spirit of the Times*, which work was very popular at the time and took "immensely."

One of the most prominent acts of Mr. Porter's early career as a journalist was that of engaging as a printer the since illustrious Horace Greeley, the sage of the *Tribune*. Greeley was a verdant and uncouth lad in his teens, though adept at typesetting. From the acquaintance thus began the two were ever after friends and companions, their bond of mutual friendship being perhaps strengthened as brother Vermonters.

In the year 1848 the four brothers, William, George, Frank, and Dr. T. O. Porter, were in the zenith of their popularity and in the fullest possession of their mature judgment (of the physical as well as mental powers).

Benjamin had died in December, 1840, of pulmonary consumption. At the close of the year 1848, all the remaining four held high and appropriate positions in society and in literary walks as well.

George, the merriest, wittiest, and perhaps the most studious, was engaged in the editorial staff of the *New Orleans Picayune*, a position requiring great mental powers and application, as at times the entire editorial management of the *Journal* devolved upon him. Especially was this the case during the Mexican War, when his labors were trebly augmented by the long absence of the Editor-in-Chief, Geo. W. Kendall.

In this arduous position George acquitted himself creditably and with marked ability, gaining a widespread reputation as a journalist in all sections of the country.

Dr. T. O. Porter, who originally studied and practiced medicine, had devoted much of the later years of his life to literary pursuits with marked ability and success. *The Corsair*, of which journal he was at one time in editorial charge, was one of the best and most ably edited in New York. At this period, however, he was engaged as teacher in a classic school in connection with Mon's Coudert.

Frank, the youngest of the brothers, was also engaged in a literary life of more than ordinary success and William T. Porter was still the same genial, generous, compassionate man, the beloved Editor of *The Spirit*. Alas! how little did it then appear that in a few short years three of this "fair fraternity", then full of vigor, health and power, both mental and physical, would be no more among the living.

George was the first to yield, to that terrible malady jaundice, of which disease he died May 24th 1849. His illness had been very brief, and the announcement of his death was a sad blow to his numerous friends, and especially to his family and kindred.

Dr. T. O. Porter died Jan. 6th, 1852, and Frank followed in February, 1855, of consumption, leaving William desolate and

Fred Pond as he appeared in the frontis to his Sportsman's Directory and Year Book, *published in 1892. Above is Fred Pond's press card, issued to him by Charles Hallock, then owner of* Forest and Stream. *Pond was for some time a representative of that magazine, and the press card is part of the Museum collection.*

trebly so as beside these, his brothers and two sisters he had no nearer of him, being a bachelor (it is quite worthy of remark that one in his position in society never married).

From this time henceforward William T. Porter never rallied to his former genial self; even his interest in that especial pride, *The Spirit*, which he had nourished and sustained so well, was diminished, and life was to him but a shadow of what his ardent and fine temperament had felt it to be previous to his isolation.

His mind, which had been for so many years overtasked and weighted with editorial cares, now, more than ever, needed rest and comparative quiet. In September, 1856, he gave up the editorial management of his cherished journal and allowed his name to be associated with a new sporting journal, entitled *Porters Spirit of the Times.*

The talismanic word Porter, so well and favorably known throughout America, was the signal of success, and the new aspirant started with a circulation of 40,000 copies, a number unprecedented in the sphere of the American press.

Mr. Porter did not contribute largely to the journal, relying mainly and with just hopes, which were fully realized – upon the unparallelled corps of correspondents, which had so nobly supplied the grace and literary excellence of his columns before.

With one accord the "old guard" rallied around the new journal, and their contributions were as vigorous and powerful to sustain it as they had been in the old *Spirit.*

Henry William Herbert contributed a powerful, brilliant serial, a tale of the west of a sporting character. This story was continued through the entire volume, and it was the intention to present the work also in book form but a depression in financial matters and general stagnation of business throughout the country prevented it.

The final articles of importance, which Mr. Porter contributed to *Porters Spirit of the Times* were obituary notices of his late friends John C. Stevens and Col. Wade Hampton, both noted and respected turfmen and Sportsmen.

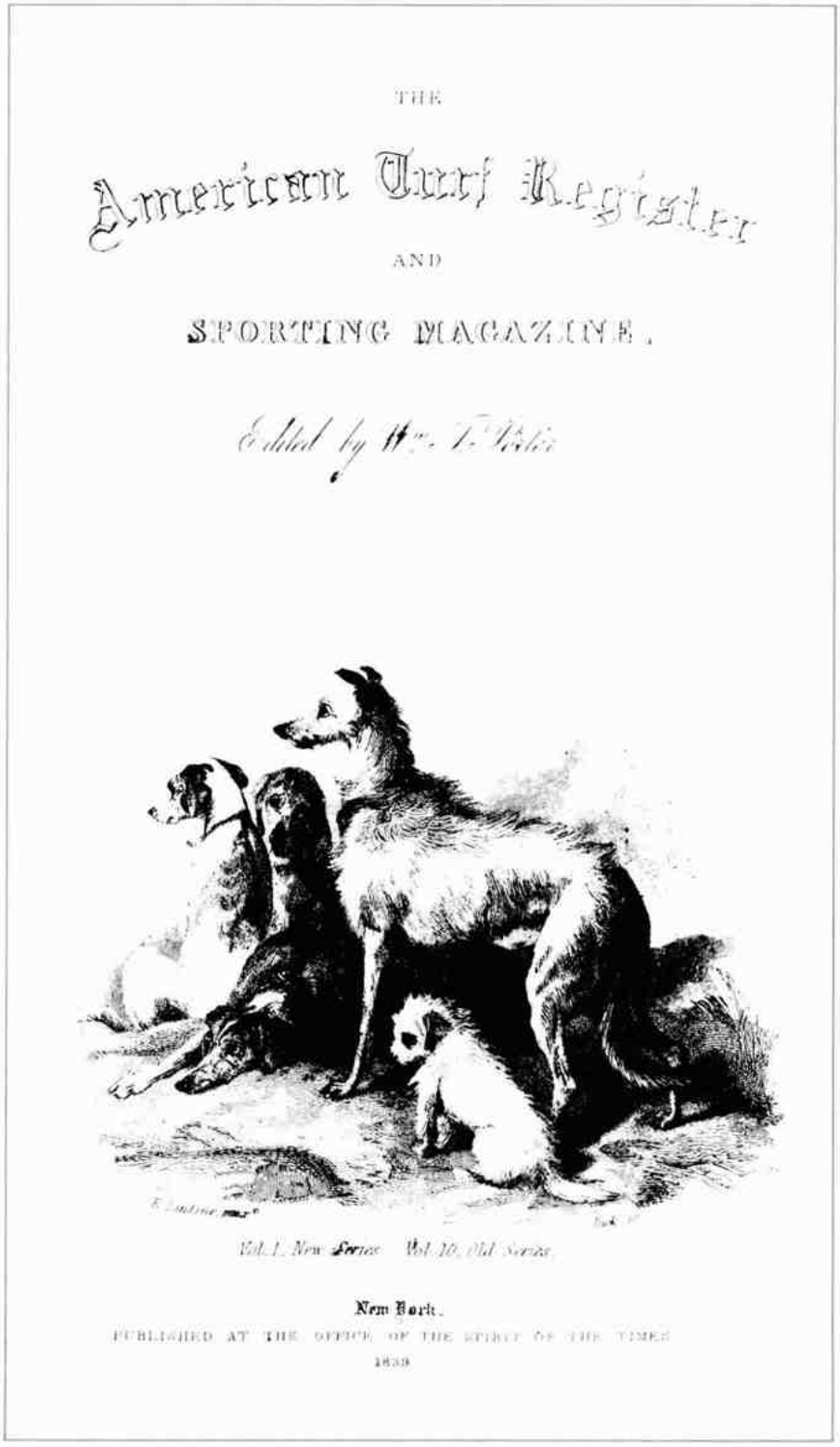
During his later years, he was a sufferer from the gout, though he never complained, nor was he morose or ill-tempered. A sad and confirmed melancholy, however, was upon his heart, and he withdrew from the active scenes of social life to the quiet of his home; care and deep grief told sadly on that majestic form and genial manly face, and it was evident to his nearest and dearest friends that his life work was nearly closed.

It is stated that shortly after the untimely death of his firm friend Henry Wm. Herbert Mr. Porter engaged upon a biography of his life, but this was unfinished at the time of his death, which occurred only a few months later and was occasioned by a severe and sudden cold, ending in congestion of the lungs. William T. Porter's earthly career terminated on the 20th of July, 1858, after a very brief illness of six days. Many were the expressions of regret upon the announcement of his death.

None more appropriate or more worthy of the man were published than that from his life-long friend James Oakes, well known to the readers of the old *Spirit* over the signature of "Acorn:"

"For more than twenty-five years have William T. Porter and myself battled our way on the banks of the river of life, as it were hand in hand, but in different professions. During that time I have never known him to wilfully commit an unmanly, ungenerous, unkind, dishonorable or even

The title page of Porter's first number of the American Turf Register.


THE

American Turf Register

AND

SPORTING MAGAZINE.

Edited by Wm. T. Porter

Vol. I. New Series Vol. 10. Old Series.

New York.

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

1839

discourteous act to his fellow-man. He, it is true, had his weaknesses, but they were those that did injustice to himself only—no wrong to others. It was his nature to be as gentle and as kind as a child, and so made up, and so harmoniously mingled in him were all those rare and extraordinary characteristics which go to make the high-toned, high-bred gentleman, that he possessed the power to fascinate every one with whom he came into contact, whether it were the little girl whom he trotted on his knee, or the boy with whom he played, or the thoroughbred sporting gentleman. His mind was comprehensive, his perception keen, his deductions clear and concise; whilst his judgment and decisions in all sporting matters were more reliable and more respected than any other man's in this country. He was the father of a school of American sporting literature, which is no less a credit to his name than it is an honor to the land that gave him birth. Many of his decisions and sporting reports will be quoted as authority for generations to come. He possesses a fund of sporting statistics unequalled by any other man in America. While living he was respected and beloved by every one, no less for his child-like simplicity of nature, than for those high and manly characteristics which so strongly marked him as a journalist. His death will be deeply and sincerely mourned by every person who knew him. With much truth can it be said:

"Thou are the ruin of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times".

Other fine and touching tributes to the memory of Mr. Porter were published in various periodicals, among them one of considerable pathos and power by George Wilkes, his associate editor upon *Porters Spirit of the Times.*

A very appropriate and finely executed poem to his memory was contributed by an esteemed friend soon after his death:

"In Memory of William T. Porter

A heart where kindly word and deed
The founts were still unsealing,
Whence flowed, unchecked through all their course,
The streams of generous feeling;
A kind, true heart, that with the joys,
Could share the griefs of others;
And ne'er forsook the grand old faith
That all mankind are brothers.
A soul in which the manlier traits
And gentler, were so blended,
That none could say where these began,
Or where the others ended:
Alas! to fitly speak his worth
All words seem poor and common,
In whose large spirit Nature fused
The tenderness of Woman!
Enough! his heart has ceased to beat;
His soul has passed the portal
That shuts the other world from this,
And what remains is mortal.
But long as brave and gentle hearts
Are held in memory keeping
Our fond and sorrowing thoughts will haunt
The grave where he is sleeping.

R.S.C.

In 1860 a fine and elaborate biography of his life was prepared by that accomplished gentleman, Francis Brinley, and published by D. Appleton & Co. The work was entitled *Life of William T. Porter* and a finely executed engraving of Mr. Porter, from a portrait by Inman, accompanied the volume.

Charles DeFeo Salmon Flies

We present a selection of salmon flies, as well as the vise in which they were tied, by the late Charles DeFeo (1891-1978). The flies and vise were a recent gift from Museum member Rodolphe Coigney.

According to a brief biography published in *The Angler's Club Bulletin* in 1973, Charles DeFeo, an artist by training, began his professional involvement with fishing as early as 1911, when he started doing covers for *Field & Stream* magazine (he was paid seventy-five dollars for each). His career as a commercial artist really blossomed after World War I, but he continued to produce work on fishing subjects. He illustrated the great Haig-Brown book *Return to the River,* produced numerous magazine illustrations, and, more recently, provided the hand-colored plate of twenty-six salmon flies that appeared in the 1973 reprint of Dean Sage's *The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing.* Members of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers will remember his drawings in the club's excellent book *The Gordon Garland;* the Museum currently has on exhibit the original flies, by DeFeo, Ernest Schwiebert, and others, from which those plates were made, part of our Arnold Gingrich Collection.

One of the nice things about fly tying is that it's one of those fields where being called an amateur is not an insult; amateurs are simply fly tiers who don't do it for a living. Charles DeFeo was an amateur, but we gather from the opinions of his friends that he was an amateur fly tier rather the way Emily Dickinson was an amateur poet; that neither was paid for practicing their respective crafts should not bias our appreciation of their gifts.

Atlantic salmon fishermen form a small subculture within the greater ranks of fishermen. The sport is too expensive and the fish are too few for it to be otherwise. Atlantic salmon fly-tying, because it is one of the most notable crafts of fly fishing, gets a disproportionate amount of attention in many fishing publications; there are apparently a lot of people out there who tie salmon flies but fish for salmon primarily in their dreams. Of course we all do a lot of fishing that way, and if one is going to fish in fantasy, one might as well go all the way and fish for salmon. Perhaps some of the flies (and it is a diverse selection) tied by an acknowledged and loved master would be useful, to take along on your next dream.

This is perhaps the most famous photograph of DeFeo, and was given to us by Maxine Atherton; taken by the late John Atherton, it shows DeFeo at his tying bench.

Miseries of Fishing

In Volume Eight, Number Three of The American Fly Fisher, *we published a humorous article entitled "Maxims and Hints for an Angler." It first appeared as part of a book,* Maxims and Hints on Angling, Chess, Shooting, and Other Matters; also, Miseries of Fishing, *by Richard Penn, published in London in 1833 (The Museum Library copy is the 1842 edition). We pointed out that much of fishing humor is timeless, and that many of the points made by the writer 150 years ago are still true today.*

Because it was well received, we print another selection from the same book, this one entitled "Miseries of Fishing." It is a list of the kinds of misfortunes anglers expect to have visited upon them, thereby rarely suffering disappointment.

I.

Making a great improvement in a receipt which a friend had given you for staining gut—and finding that you have produced exactly the colour which you wanted, but that the dye has made all your bottoms quite rotten.

II.

Suddenly putting up your hand to save your hat in a high wind, and grasping a number of artificial flies, which you had pinned round it, without any intention of taking hold of more than one at a time.

III.

Leading a large fish down-stream and arriving at a ditch, the width of which is evident, although the depth of it may be a matter of some doubt. Having thus to decide very quickly whether you will lose the fish and half your tackle, or run the risk of going up to your neck in mud. Perhaps both.

IV.

Feeling rather unsteady whilst you are walking on a windy day over an old foot-bridge, and having occasion to regret the decayed state of the hand-rail, which once protected the passing fisherman.

V.

Fishing for the first time with flies of your own making—and finding that they are quite as good as any which you can buy, except that the hooks are not so firmly tied to the gut.

VI.

Taking out with you as your aide-de-camp an unsophisticated lad from the neighbouring village, who laughs at you when you miss hooking a fish rising at a fly, and says with a grin, "You can't vasten 'em as my vather does."

VII.

Making the very throw which you feel sure will at last enable you to reach a fish that is rising at some distance—and seeing the upper half of your rod go into the middle of the river. When you have towed it ashore, finding that it has broken off close to the ferule, which is immoveably fixed in the lower half of your rod.

VIII.

Feeling the first cold drop giving notice to your great toe that in less than two minutes your boot will be full of water.

IX.

Going out on a morning so fine that no man would think of taking his water-proof cloak with him—and then, before catching any fish, being thoroughly wet through by an unexpected shower.

X.

When you cannot catch any fish—being told by your attendant of the excellent sport which your predecessor had on the same spot, only a few days before.

XI.

Having brought with you from town a large assortment of expensive artificial flies—and being told on showing them to an experienced native, that "They are certainly very beautiful, but that none of them are of any use here."

XII.

After trying in vain to reach a trout which is rising on the opposite side of the river—at last walking on; and before you have gone 100 yards, looking back, and seeing a more skilful friend catch him at the first throw.—Weight 3 lbs. 2 oz.

XIII.

Having stupidly trodden on the top of your rod—and then finding that the spare top, which you have brought out with you in the butt, belongs to the rod which you have left at home, and will not fit that which you are using.

XIV.

Having steered safely through some very dangerous weeds a fish which you consider to weigh at least 3 lbs., and having brought him safely to the very edge of the bank,—then seeing him, when he is all but in the landingnet, make a plunge, which in a moment renders all your previous skill of no avail, and puts it out of your power to verify the accuracy of your calculations as to his weight.

XV.

Fishing with the blowing-line when the wind is so light that your fly is seldom more than two yards from you, or when the wind is so strong that it always carries your fly up into the air, before it comes to the spot which you wish it to swim over.

XVI.

Wishing to show off before a young friend whom you have been learnedly instructing in the mysteries of the art, and finding that you cannot catch any fish yourself, whilst he (an inexperienced hand) hooks and lands (by mere accident of course) a very large one.

XVII.

Attempting to walk across the river in a new place without knowing exactly whereabouts certain holes, which you have heard of, are. Probing the bottom in front of you with the handle of your landing-net,—and finding it very soft.

XVIII.

Going some distance for three days' fishing, on the two first of which there is bright sunshine and no wind, and then finding that the third, which opens with "a southerly wind and a cloudy sky," is the day which a neighbouring farmer has fixed upon for washing two hundred sheep on the shallow where you expected to have the best sport.

XIX.

Being allowed to have one day's fishing in a stream, the windings of which are so many, that it would require half a dozen different winds to enable you to fish the greater part of it, from the only side to which your leave extends.

XX.

Finding, on taking your book out of your pocket, that the fly at the end of your line is not the only one by many dozen which you have had in the water, whilst you have been wading rather too deep.

XXI.

Wading half an inch deeper than the tops of your boots, and finding afterwards that you must carry about with you four or five quarts in each, or must sit down on the wet grass whilst your attendant pulls them off, in order that you may empty them, and try to pull them on again.

XXII.

Jumping out of bed very early every morning, during the season of the May-fly, to look at a weathercock opposite to your window, and always finding the wind either in the north or east.

XXIII.

Having just hooked a heavy fish, when you are using the blowing-line, and seeing the silk break about two feet above your hand; then watching the broken end as it travels quickly through each successive ring, till it finally leaves the top of your rod, and follows the fish to the bottom of the river.

XXIV.

Receiving a very elegant new rod from London, and being told by one of the most skilful of your brother anglers, that it is so stiff,—and by another, that it is so pliant, that it is not possible for any man to throw a fly properly with it.

XXV.

Being obliged to listen to a long story about the difficulties which one of your friends had to encounter in landing a very fine trout which has just been placed on the table for dinner, when you have no story of the same sort to tell in return.

XXVI.

Hooking a large trout, and then turning the handle of your reel the wrong way; thus producing an effect diametrically opposite to that of shortening your line, and making the fish more unmanageable than before.

XXVII.

Arriving just before sunset at a shallow, where the fish are rising beautifully, and finding that they are all about to be immediately driven away by five-and-twenty cows, which are preparing to walk very leisurely across the river in open files.

XXVIII.

Coming to an ugly ditch in your way across a water-meadow late in the day, when you are too tired to jump, and being obliged to walk a half a mile in search of a place where you think you can step over it.

XXIX.

Flattering yourself that you had brought home the largest fish of the day, and then finding that two of your party have each of them caught a trout more than half a pound heavier than your's.

XXX.

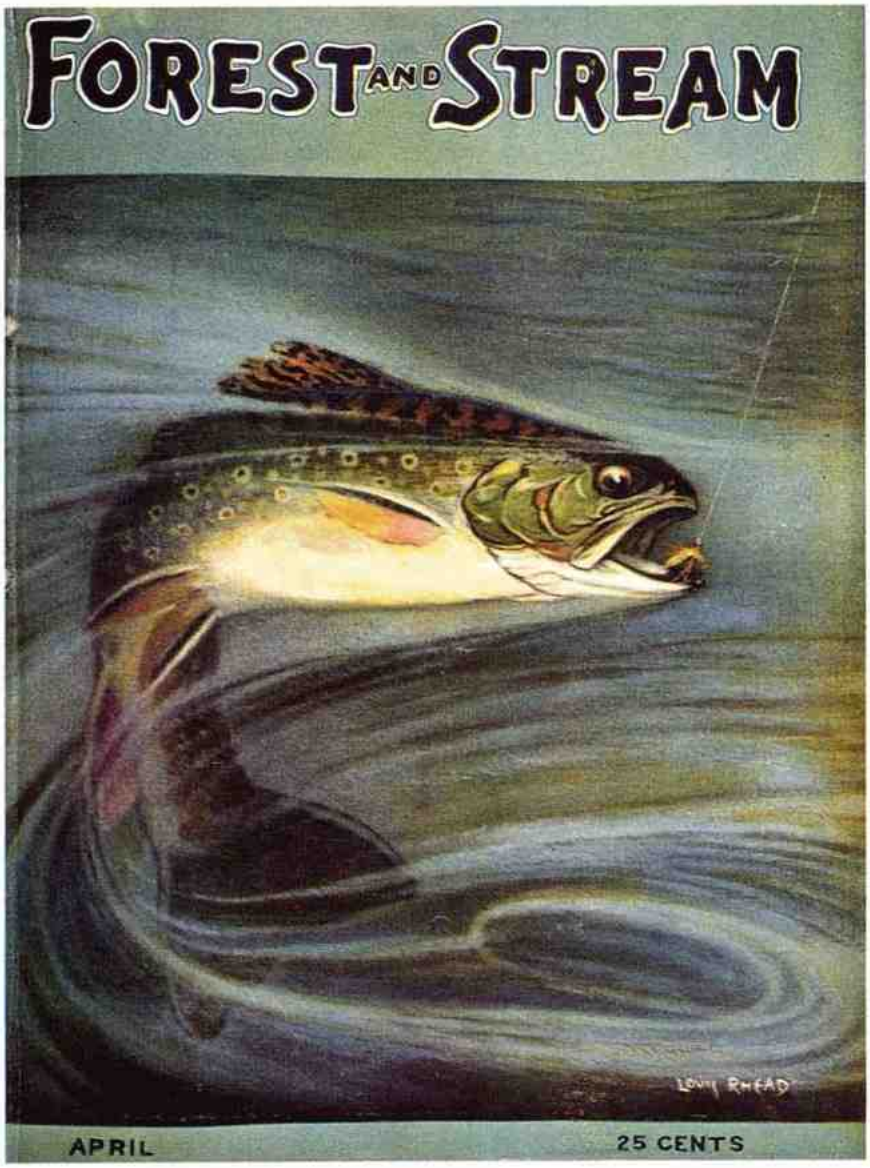
Finding yourself reduced to the necessity of talking about the beautiful form and colour of some trout, which you have caught, being well aware that in the important particular of *weight*, they are much inferior to several of those taken on the same day by one of your companions.

XXXI.

Telling a long story after dinner, tending to show (with full particulars of time and place) how that, under very difficult circumstances, and notwithstanding very great skill on your part, your tackle had been that morning broken and carried away by a very large fish; and then having the identical fly, lost by you on that occasion, returned to you by one of your party, who found it in the mouth of a trout, caught by him, about an hour after your disaster, on the very spot so accurately described by you—the said very large fish being, after all, a very small one.

XXXII.

Arriving at a friend's house in the country, one very cold evening in March, and being told by his keeper that there are a great many large pike in the water, and that you are sure of having good sport on the following day; and then looking out of your bed-room window the next morning, and seeing two unhappy swans dancing an awkward sort of minuet on the ice, the surface of the lake having been completely frozen during the night.

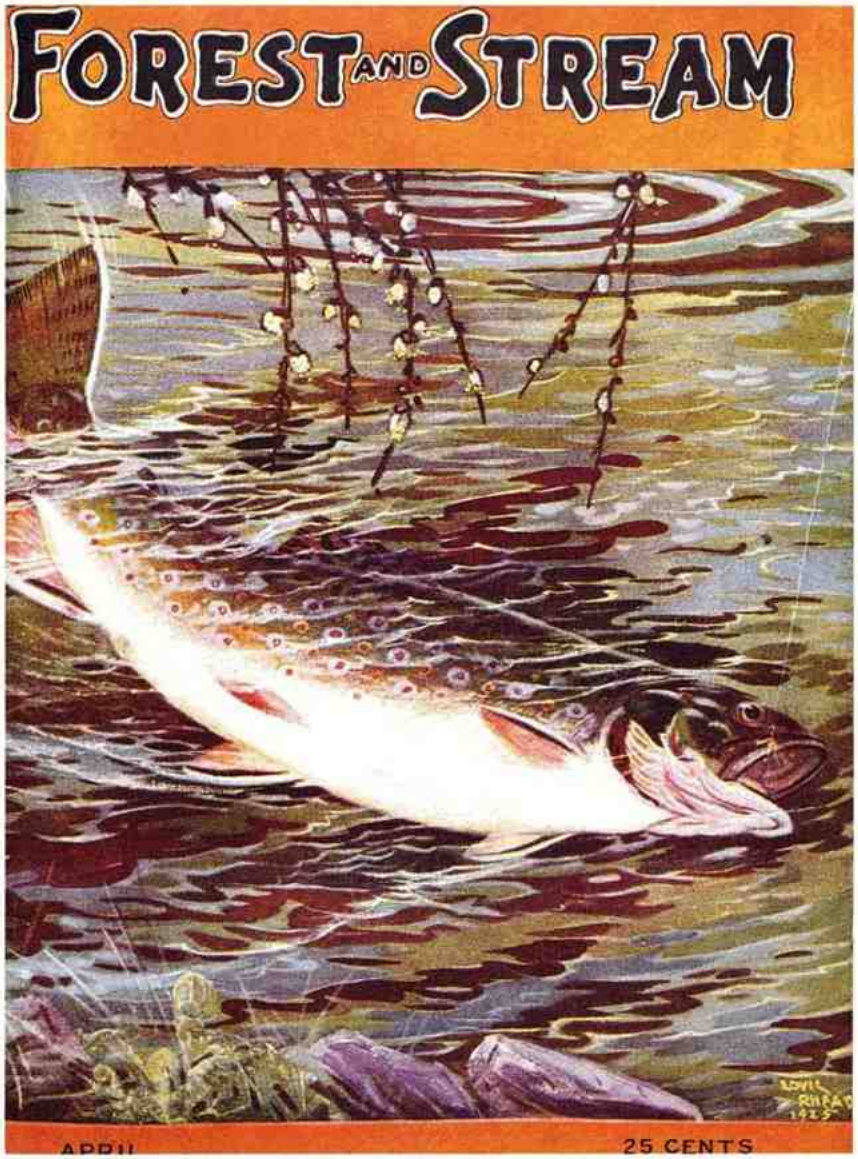


Louis Rhead's cover illustrations for Forest & Stream *included both fishing and shooting scenes. The brook trout shown here appeared in the cover of the April, 1924 issue.*

Louis Rhead and *Forest & Stream*

A checklist of articles, 1915-1925

compiled by David B. Ledlie



This Louis Rhead brown trout appeared on the April, 1925 cover. Notice around the inside edges of the white border on the title lettering the narrow band of red (especially, for example, on the inside of the "R"). Color printing was less consistent in those days than now and often one color or more was not laid down precisely on top of the others. In this case the red is slightly off true (the phenomenon is known as "out of register") and shows at the edges of the figures. It can be seen slightly at the top edges of the letters on the cover shown on page 22 as well.

"Louis Rhead, angler-artist, and writer died of heart-disease on July 29th [1926] at his country home in Amityville, Long Island.

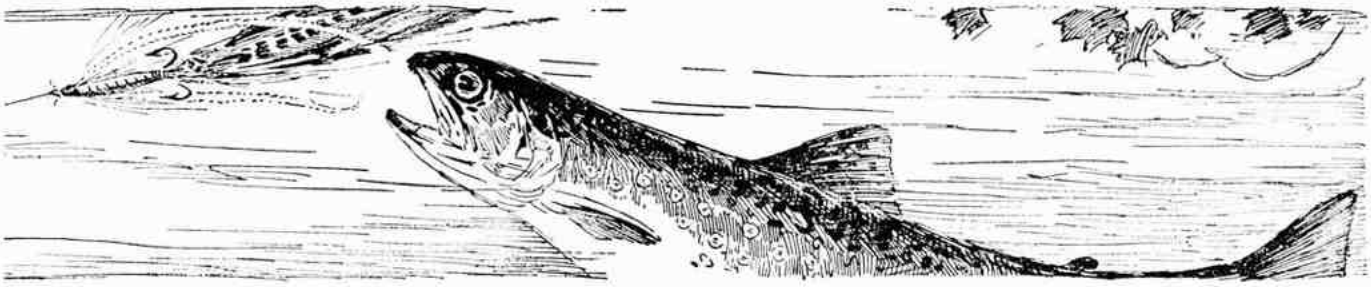
Mr. Rhead's death was brought about by over-exertion during a battle with an enormous snapping turtle that had been raising havoc with the fish in his private trout stream at Seven Oaks. Although Mr. Rhead successfully landed the turtle, he was utterly exhausted by the effort and died several days later.

With his brother, Mr. Rhead came to this country in 1883 and has since been well known to *Forest & Stream* readers as a contributing authority on piscatorial matters and as painter of many of our beautiful covers."

So reads the obituary of Louis Rhead which appeared in the September, 1926 issue (p. 558) of *Forest & Stream*. Rhead was one of our most innovative early twentieth century anglers. In addition to a plethora of angling articles, Rhead published (between 1902 and 1920) seven books on fishing. His work most well known to fly fishing enthusiasts is *American Trout Stream Insects* (1916). Unfortunately Rhead chose not to use scientific nomenclature in identifying his insects. Thus, Rhead has suffered the critical wrath of angler-entomologists who have published since then. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, *American Trout Stream Insects* was a valuable tome for the hatch-matcher of the early twentieth century, as it offered the American angler for the first time a description and color plates "of the most abundant and well-known trout insects that appear, month by month, on the rivers and lakes of the temperate regions of North America."

Rhead's book is to American angling literature what Ronalds' *Fly-Fisher's Entomology* (1836) is to British angling literature. Both wrote their country's first angling entomologies; and while Ronalds' has taken an esteemed and respected niche in British angling history, Rhead has never received the credit he is due.

Not only was Rhead an accomplished trout (fly) fisherman, he held his own with bass, muskellunge, and even saltwater species. His lures were innovative; he always tried to represent nature explicitly whether he was imitating a mayfly, a crawfish or a black nose dace. A large portion of Rhead's vast knowledge on a wide variety of angling subjects was passed on to the general public through numerous "How To" articles that appeared in *The American Angler, Outing Magazine, Field & Stream,* and *Forest & Stream.* I offer here a checklist of articles that appeared in *Forest & Stream,* to

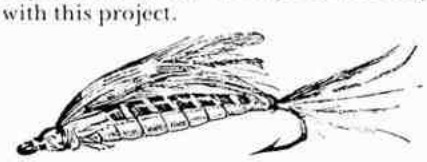


which Rhead began contributing on a regular basis in 1915.

Contributions of an innovative nature of specific interest to the fly fisherman included discussions of emerging-nymph patterns[2], reverse-body dry flies for fishing "dry" downstream[3], fishing wet flies and nymphs upstream[4], a pattern for a fresh water shrimp[5], cork-bodied stone fly imitations[6], hackle wing flies[7], nymph fishing in the surface film[8], and nymph fishing with a Leisenring-type lift to name just a few.

In a future issue it is my desire to catalog for readers articles from the other sporting journals to which Rhead contributed. Efforts in cataloguing the above mentioned Rheadiana will, I hope, lead our readers to a better understanding of one of our truly important American anglers who has been unjustly maligned for several decades.

I am grateful to Lynn Scholz, who probably knows more about Louis Rhead than anyone else in the country, for her help with this project.



[1]from the Preface to *American Trout Stream Insects*, p. viii.

[2]"Dry, Wet or Nature Fly—Which Shall We Offer," *Forest & Stream*, 1917, p. 893.

[3]"Downstream Dry-Fly Fishing," *Forest & Stream*, 1922, p. 157.

[4]"Fishing from Bottom to Surface," *Forest & Stream*, 1922, p. 205.

[5]"Tying the Fresh Water Shrimp," *Forest & Stream*, 1922, p. 254.

[6]"Unsinkable Cork Body Stone Flies," *Forest & Stream*, 1923, p. 179.

[7]"The Latest Idea of Best Trout Flies," *Forest & Stream*, 1923, p. 445.

[8]"The Troubles of Spring Trout Fishing," *Forest & Stream*, 1924, p. 205.

The Checklist

1915, Volume *85*

1916, Volume *86*

1917, Volume *87*

1918, Volume *88*

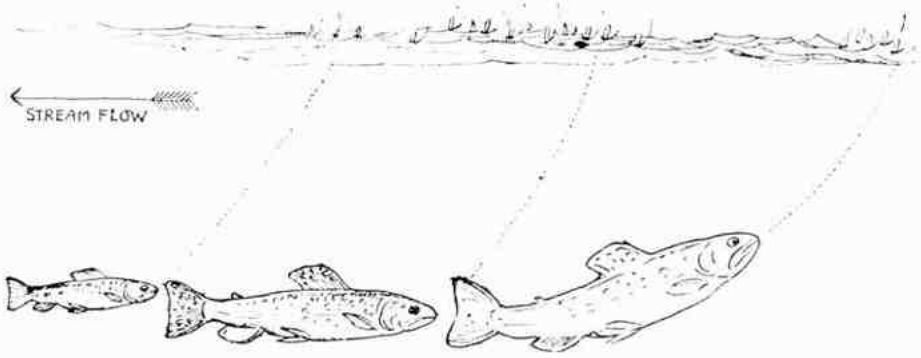
1922, Volume *92*

1923, Volume *93*

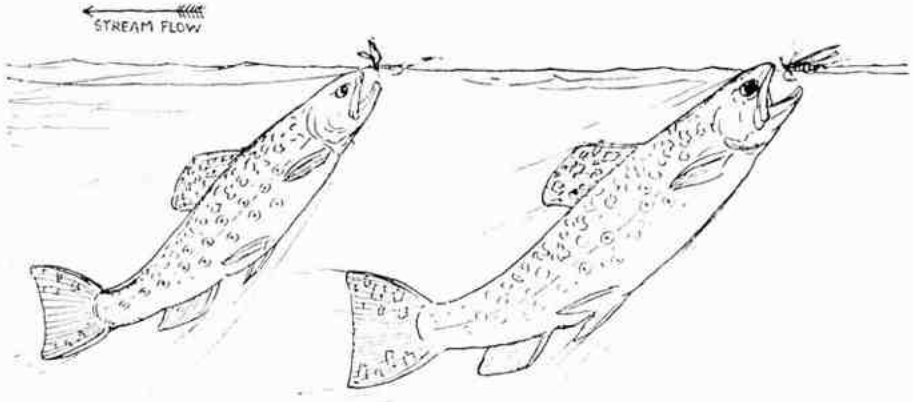
1924, Volume *94*

1925, Volume *95*

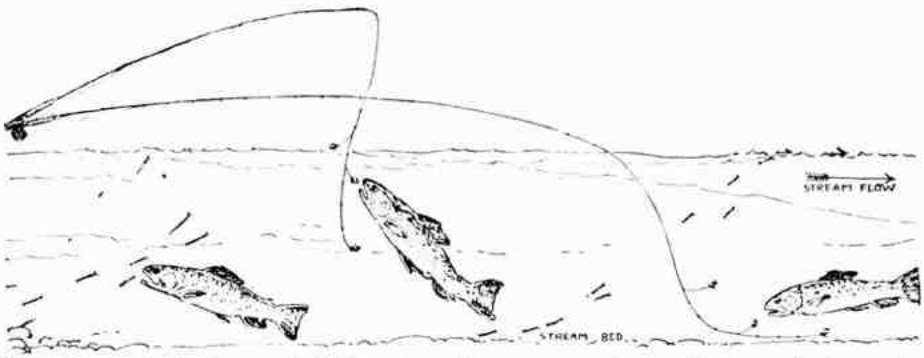
Some illustrations from Louis Rhead's articles in 1922 and 1923 reveal just how advanced he was. The insect imitations directly above are accurate representations. The upper two drawings show the advantages of fishing downstream with dry flies. The third illustration from the top shows the worth of a Leisenring-lift type technique, and the bottom illustration shows how to make a good shrimp imitation. All the drawings were by Rhead.



The largest trout always choose the head of the runway, each fish rising to a chosen place after the surface food of swift streams, one behind the other

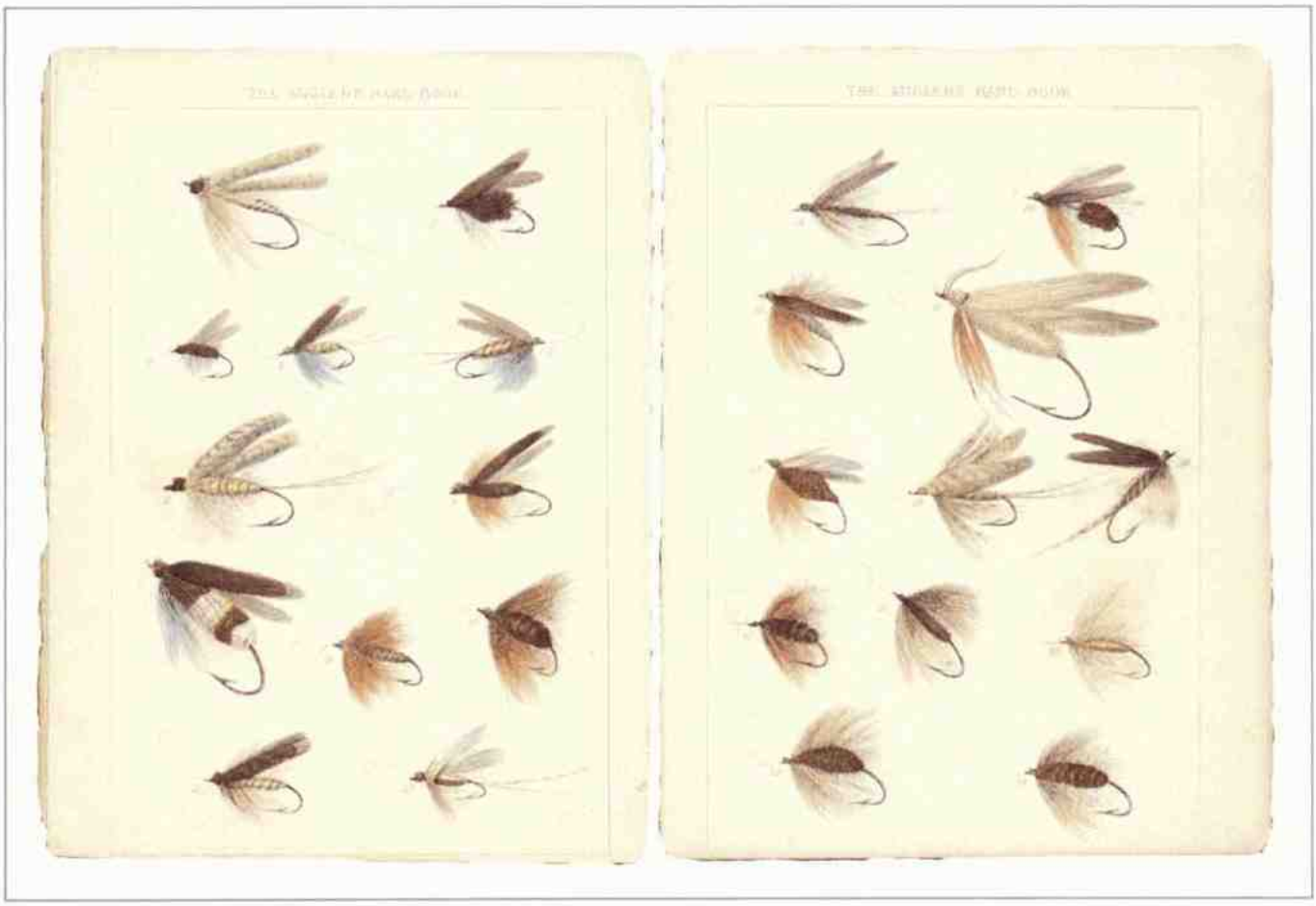


When a dry-fly is cast up-stream the trout invariably swim forward and hit the gut leader before the fly is touched, whereas when drifting the "reverse" dry-fly down-stream the trout can swallow the fly without impediment



Showing method of nymph fishing from bottom to surface. Upper rod shows the pump-lift gut leader, baited with three nymphs and several very small shot

Natural shrimp | Fig. 1, First stage | Fig. 2, Second Stage | Fig. 3, Completed artificial



We are intrigued by a small book in the Museum's library, one that very little seems to be known of. The book is The Angler's Hand-Book, *and our edition (described on the title page as a "NEW EDITION,") was published in London, at 36, Soho Square, by G. Routledge in 1846. According to Westwood and Satchell's* Bibliotheca Piscatoria *(1906) (the first place we go when we get curious about such things), the earliest known edition was 1838, and there was a third edition in 1840. That means ours is at least the fourth. The less reliable Robert Blakey's* Historical Sketches of the Angling Literature of All Nations *(1856) agrees that the first edition was, indeed, 1838.*

We are intrigued because of the book's two hand-colored plates of flies. We have made some effort in this magazine in the past few years to present and analyze early hand-colored plates of flies, and these are deserving of at least modest attention. We present both plates here for your possible edification.

The milestone angler's entomology we hear so much about—and for good reason—is Alfred Ronalds' The Fly-Fisher's Entomology, *first published in 1836 and reprinted frequently thereafter. Ronalds not only portrayed, in surprisingly accurate hand-colored plates, the important stream insects, he also portrayed right with them the artificial flies to be used to imitate each.*

The anonymous author of The Angler's Hand-Book *did not match Ronalds' in any regard. He did not portray the natural insects, his list of patterns is less carefully discussed, and the flies illustrated are not as well colored as were those in the Ronalds book. But* The Angler's Hand-Book *seems to have been rather more than a shallow imitation of Ronalds'. Many of the descriptions given for the natural insects are quite different from those in Ronalds'; moreover, the suggested fly patterns often differ greatly in materials recommended, and the colored fly plates themselves are in several cases so unalike as to seem to be imitations of different insects. A survey of patterns common to Ronalds' and the* Hand-Book *suggests to us that though the* Hand-Book*'s author may have known of Ronalds and his book, he was drawing on other sources of information as well, perhaps his own practical experience.*

The author leaned much more heavily, including copious paraphrases, on Bainbridge's The Fly Fisher's Guide *(1816), from which he cribbed much of his fly-tying instructions and other items. Again, however, there are clear dissimilarities that suggest that the author may not have been simply plagiarizing with no personal experience. It is possible, of course, that* all *his sources were printed, and that he contributed nothing of personal experience to the book, but at this point more investigation is required.*

We do not have much additional information on The Angler's Hand-Book. *Indeed, we do not know if such information exists. The references in various angling bibliographies are little more than listings of the basic publishing data. We wonder, among other things, if the earlier editions, especially the 1838 first edition, also contained the colored plates, and if they were better, or worse, than the plates in ours (as can be seen, most flies are colored with only one or two colors). Perhaps some of our readers have collected earlier editions, or have discovered additional information about this small book. If so, we'd like to hear from them.*

LIST OF FLIES,
with Reference to the Plates.

1. Green drake, or may fly.—This is one of the most valuable flies for trout fishing. It appears about the 20th of May, and continues nearly a month, and will kill at any time of the day, especially in still water; it is found in great plenty on sandy gravelly rivulets. The wings are made of the light feather of a grey drake, died yellow; the body of amber coloured mohair, ribbed with green silk; the head of peacock's harl; and the tail of three long hairs from a sable muff.

2. Black gnat.—This is a favourite fly with some persons, and is generally con-

The Angler's Hand-Book

sidered a good killer, especially when the water is low; it comes on about the end of April, and continues till the end of May. The body is made of black ostrich's harl, and the wings of a pale starling's feather it must be dressed short and thick.

3. Hare's ear.—This is on during the summer months: the wings are made of the feather from a starling's wing; the body of fur from the hare's ear; and legs of a ginger cock's hackle.

4. Cock tail.—This is on during the summer months: the wings are made of the light feather from a snipe's wing; the body of yellow mohair.

5. Whirling dun.—This is also on during the summer months; the wings are made of a snipe's feather; the body of blue fur, wrapped with yellow silk, and a blue cock's hackle for legs; the tail of two hairs from a light coloured muff.

6. Grey drake.—This fly generally appears about the same time as the green drake, or a little after, and very much resembles it in shape. It kills best from three till dark. The wings are made of a dark grey feather of the mallard; the body of white ostrich's harl, striped with dark silk; the head of peacock's harl; and the tail of three hairs from a sable muff.

7. Cow-dung fly.—This fly appears in March, and will kill till September. The wings are made of the feather of a landrail; the body of yellow camlet, mixed with a little brown bear's fur; and a ginger hackle for legs: the wings should be dressed flat.

8. Bee fly.—This is an excellent chub fly, and is on during the summer months: the wings are made from the feathers of a blue pigeon's wing; the body of chenil of various colours, arranged in stripes in the following order—black, white, light yellow, white, black, white; the legs of a black hackle; the body must be dressed thick.

9. Red palmer.—Palmers are all good killing baits, and may be used during all the fishing months. The body of this is made of dark red mohair, ribbed with gold twist, and wrapped with a red cock's hackle.

10. Peacock palmer.—The body of this is made of a peacock's harl, wrapped with a dusky red cock's hackle.

11. Kingdom fly.—This is on from June to August, and will kill fish in any part of the kingdom. The wings are made of a woodcock's feather; the body of white silk striped with green; and the legs of a red cock's hackle.

12. White gnat.—This is a delicate fly, and will kill well in an evening in the summer months. The wings are made of a small white feather; the body of white silk; and the legs of a red cock's hackle.

13. Blue dun.—This appears early in March, and is a good fly throughout the year. The best time for using it is from twelve to two in March and April. The wings are made of a starling's feather; the body of the blue fur from a water rat, mixed with a little lemon coloured mohair; the tail is forked, and should be made of two fibres from the feather used for the wing.

14. Red ant.—This is on from June to August, and is a good killer from eleven till six. The wings are made of a light starling's feather; the body of peacock's harl, made thick at the tail; and a ginger hackle for legs.

15. Gold spinner.—This appears about the middle of June, and is on till the end of August. The wings are made of a starling's feather; the body of orange silk, ribbed with gold twist; and the legs of a red hackle.

16. Great white moth.—This is a night fly and should be used in a dark gloomy night, from eleven o'clock till daybreak: when you hear the fish rise strike immediately. The wings are made of a feather from the wing of a white owl; the body of white cotton; and a white cock's hackle wrapped round the body.

17. Governor.—This appears early in June, and may be fished with till August.

The wings are of a woodcock's feather; the body of a peacock's harl, tied with orange silk.

18. March brown.—This fly appears about the middle of March, and continues on to the end of April: it is a most excellent fly, and kills best from eleven o'clock till three. The wings are made of the dark mottled feather from the tail of a partridge; the body of fur from a hare's ear, well mixed with a little yellow worsted; and a grizzled cock's hackle for legs.

19. Stone fly.—This fly appears about the beginning of April, and has been found to kill before that time: it may be used at any time of the day. The wings are made of a dusky blue cock's hackle, or a mottled feather from a hen pheasant; the body of dark brown, and yellow camlet mixed; and a grizzled hackle for legs: the wings should lie flat.

20. Black silver palmer.—The body of black ostrich's harl, ribbed with silver twist, and wrapped with a black cock's hackle.

21. Willow fly.—This fly appears in the beginning of September, and kills well during the remainder of the season. The wings are made of a dark grizzled cock's hackle, and the body of blue squirrel's fur, mixed with yellow mohair.

22. Yellow palmer.—The body is made of a white hackle dyed yellow, the body of yellow silk.

23. Black palmer.—The body of black ostrich's harl, wrapped with a black cock's hackle.

24. Black palmer ribbed with gold.—The body of peacock's harl, wrapped with a black cock's hackle, and ribbed with gold twist.

The foregoing list comprises twenty-four of the most killing flies, which are figured in the Frontispiece. The following are also considered standard flies.

25. The haze fly.—The haze fly is on during May and June. The wings are made of the red feather from a partridge's tail, not too dark; the body of ostrich harl, of two colours, black and purple, twisted very thick, and the legs of a black cock's hackle.

26. Fern fly.—This appears about the middle of June, and is a very good killing fly. The wings are made of woodcock's feathers, the body of orange-coloured silk, and a pale dun hackle for legs.

27. Little iron blue.—This fly comes on early in May, and continues till the middle of June; it is found in great numbers on cold windy days. It kills best from eleven o'clock to five. The wings are upright, and should be made of a feather from under a cormorant's wing, or from the tail of a tom-tit; the body of pale blue fur, wrapped with purple silk.

28. Gravel or spider fly.—This appears in the middle of April, and continues about a fortnight. It is a very delicate fly, and is not often seen on cold days; but it is found to kill best then. The wings are made of the feather from a woodcock's wing, the body of lead-coloured silk, with a black cock's hackle wrapped under the wings.

29. Granam, or green tail.—This appears about the same time as the Gravel Fly, and continues on about a week. The proper time to use it is from seven to eleven, and after five in the evening. The wings lie flat, and are made of the shaded feather from a partridge or hen pheasant; the body of the dark fur from a hare's ear, mixed with a little blue fur, and a yellow grizzled cock's hackle for legs.

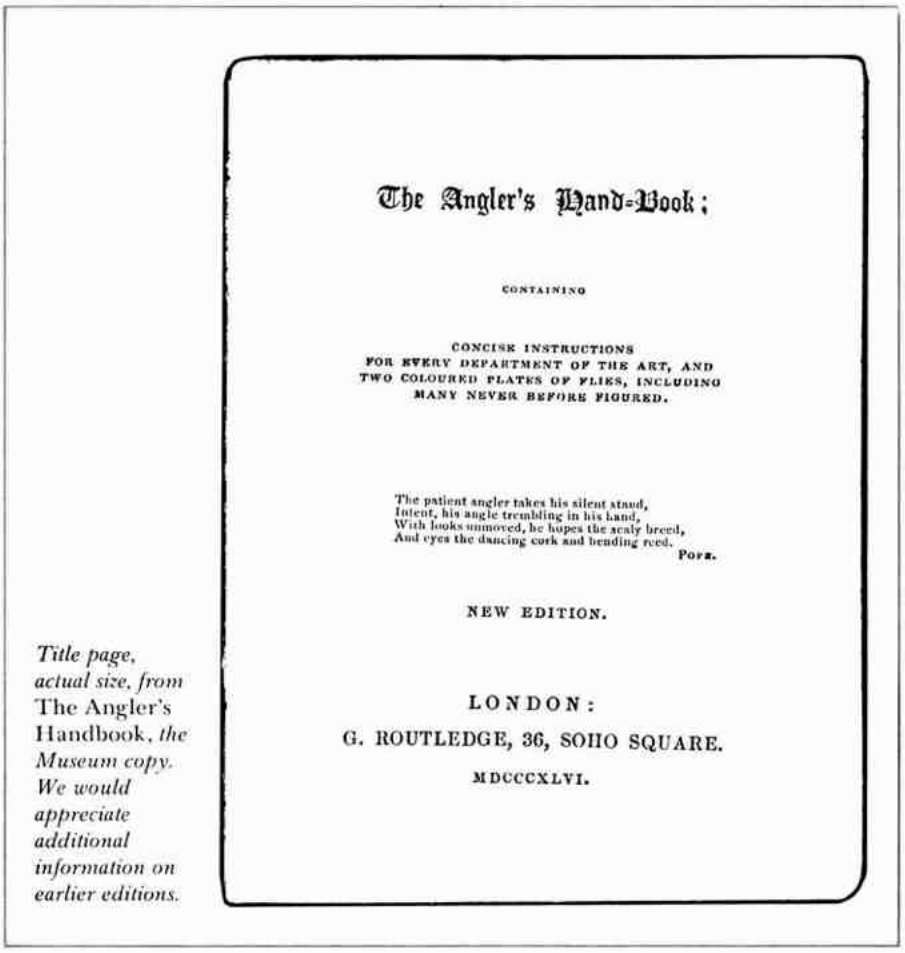
30. Orl fly.—This fly appears about the end of May, and continues for two months, and is a good killing fly at all hours, if the water is not very low. The wings should be made from the feather of a brown hen, and a grizzle hackle for legs; the body of peacock's harl, worked with dark red silk.

31. Blue gnat.—This fly appears about the end of June, and continues about a fortnight; it is a good fly for grayling in September and October. The wings are made of a feather from a snipe's wing, or a blue cock's hackle; the body of light blue fur mixed with a little yellow mohair.

32. Oak fly, downlooker, or canon fly.—This fly is frequently found on oak, ash, and willow trees, in May and June, and points its head downwards. The wings lie flat on the back, and are made with a feather from the wing of a partridge; the head of the fur from the hare's ear; the body of dun fur mixed with orange and yellow mohair.

33. Yellow sally.—This appears early in May and continues till the end of June. The wings lie flat and are made of a hackle dyed yellow; the body of yellow worsted unravelled and mixed with fur from a hare's ear.

34. Whirling blue.—This appears early in August and continues till the end of the season. The wings are made of the feather of a sea swallow, the body of pale blue fur mixed with yellow mohair, and a pale blue hackle for legs.



The Angler's Hand-Book;

CONTAINING

CONCISE INSTRUCTIONS
FOR EVERY DEPARTMENT OF THE ART, AND
TWO COLOURED PLATES OF FLIES, INCLUDING
MANY NEVER BEFORE FIGURED.

The patient angler takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand,
With looks unmoved, he hopes the scaly breed,
And eyes the dancing cork and bending reed.
Pope.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
G. ROUTLEDGE, 36, SOHO SQUARE.
MDCCCXLVI.

Title page, actual size, from The Angler's Handbook, *the Museum copy. We would appreciate additional information on earlier editions.*

MONTHS IN WHICH FLIES USUALLY APPEAR.

March—Cowdung Fly, Blue Dun, March Brown.

April—Black Gnat, Stone Fly, Gravel, or Spider Fly, Granam or Green Tail.

May—Green Drake, Grey Drake, Oak Fly, Hazel Fly, Little Iron Blue, Orl Fly, Yellow Sally.

June—Hare's Ear, Cock Tail, Whirling Dun, Bee Fly, Kingdom Fly, White Gnat, Blue Gnat, Governor, Fern Fly.

July—Red Ant.

August—Whirling Blue.

September—Willow Fly.

Homosassa Fly Fishing

We've made an effort in The American Fly Fisher *to document the beginnings of saltwater fly fishing, and over the years we've printed material on a variety of saltwater fish. The following is possibly the earliest instance we have found of fly fishing for saltwater fish in Florida. It appeared in* Forest and Stream *on July 20, 1876, and recounts an episode that occurred the previous year. This proves a more or less ongoing fly fishing experience in Florida of 107 years duration. The author is given only as a "Huntington."*

Homosassa (we preserve the author's incorrect spelling of the word in his text, but correct it for this introduction) is on the west coast of Florida, and is still well known for its fishing. We've deleted some non-fly fishing material from the article but have otherwise left all the author's punctuation and spelling alone.

We can't really know how far back fly fishing in Florida goes until someone does a lot more homework. A search of local historical societies and early newspaper files would certainly turn up a lot more sporting information; Florida, like so many other parts of the country, attracted sportsmen before it attracted very much settlement.

A certain evening last February found us safely landed at the comfortable house of Alfred P. Jones, on the Homasassa River, Florida, where we met with the kindest possible reception. Here we found a goodly number of gentlemen from the north, heroes of the rod and gun, with a fair sprinkling of ladies, who had braved the sail hither across the open Gulf of Mexico.

The Homasassa River winds through a tortuous channel, and it is ten miles from its spring-head to its mouth. Opposite Mr. Jones' it widens into a bay about one-fourth of a mile in width, the banks sloping gradually towards the centre of the river. At high water (for there is a considerable rise and fall of the tide) the various kinds of fish which inhabit these waters run up the river and hide in the grasses on the edge of the banks. Before leaving home we inquired whether we had better take our fly rod along, and were told that it would be useless in Florida. The same thing was afterwards told us at Jacksonville. Nevertheless we brought it. After several days of most excellent sport with the heavy rod and reel, catching sheepshead in great numbers, we made up our minds to try the fly rod. We had noted many likely spots along the river, and particularly the grassy banks opposite the house. We had also noticed that black bass (southern "trout"), sea trout, skip-jacks, etc., were to be seen jumping at these places at certain times in the morning and evening, as if feeding, and we immediately resolved that these would be the most likely places to be rewarded with a rise to our flies. The next evening the fly rod was brought out and limbered up, much to the edification of the incredulous ones. We selected one fly only for our cast —a large one, with red ibis wings, crimson molian body, and golden pheasant tail—which was tied on a No. 6 hook. With one similar we had taken many a bass at the north.

"Now, Doctor, suppose you exercise your muscles a little, and paddle us out into the deep water so that the flies will land just at the edge of that bank." 'Twas done; Five or six skeptical disciples of Walton stood on the piers of the boat-house awaiting the result of the experiment with an incredulous expression on their faces.

"That will do, Doctor; keep her well off the shore—just about so far—paddle slowly so as to go over every inch of the ground thoroughly." Away goes the fly. A first, second, and third casts are made with no results; a fourth and the water fairly boils, but the fish did not take the hook. "Whew! Doctor, did you see that?" "Yes," he says, "give it to him again—quick!" Away goes the fly again. This time the fish breaks the water magnificently, and is fairly hooked. Then follows a tough fight, but there is finally brought to the net a magnificent bass of two pounds weight. Soon another, and then another are caught, weighing as high as five or six pounds each, and the astonished spectators on the wharf say they never saw better sport in Florida.

This was only the beginning of our fly-fishing. We whipped almost all the best-appearing places in the river, but found none where the fish rose better than just opposite the house. We took frequently a sea trout or weakfish of three and a half to four pounds weight on the fly, and when we happened to get hold of a skip-jack, there was music on the reel equal to a brass band. One day, when coming down the river, we cast the flies nearly opposite the pier at the old plantation. A school of about a dozen large cavalli rose to the fly all at once, fairly churning the water into a foam. They would not take the fly in their mouths, but simply rushed at it in a most frantic manner, and when the fly was drawn toward the boat they very nearly jumped into it. This continued for fully fifteen minutes, and was a sight never to be forgotten. Had one of them been hooked, rod or line would have broken, as they were of fully twelve to fourteen pounds weight, very powerful, and very tenacious of life, though not particularly edible.

We cannot close without giving our testimony as to the comfort we had in the use of one of Holabird's improved fishing coats. It was light, very pleasant to wear, rowing, and contained pockets for all our little traps. We used it also with equal comfort as a gunning coat.

Wise River Flood

a memoir, a history, and a lesson

by George Grant

On June 13, 1927, Ellsworth Cardey and his friend were fishing for Montana grayling on Pattengail Creek, feeder stream of Wise River. The Wise, in turn, was the main tributary of the upper Big Hole River, entering the latter near the village of Wise River several miles to the north.

It was early season, the weather was warm, the heavy snow pack was beginning to melt. The creek was high and rising, but not too roily as they fished near its source. The grayling, still not spawned at this high altitude, were feeding avidly and the two-fly cast of yellow-bodied "Gray Hackles" often produced a double catch of 15 inch purple-hued beauties.

The day was not the sort that would forebode disaster. But Cardey noted the rapidly rising water and recalled that the earth-fill Pattengail Reservoir that they had passed on the way up had looked unusually full, and his sense of caution was greater than his desire to continue fishing.

Hastily dressing their catch they packed up and started back toward Wise River, knowing that their old Dodge touring car was going to have to negotiate about twelve miles of rough winding road.

Arriving at the dam they were alarmed to see that the water was lapping over the top; a sudden rain, a strong wind, or both, could be disastrous. Their route would lead them through one of the most beautiful coniferous forests in western Montana and in close proximity to the picturesque Wise River, but the majesty of the setting was now lost in an understandable concern to get back quickly to the town of Wise River.

Being a week-day there were few fishermen or campers on Wise River, but whenever he saw one Cardey would make it a point to warn him about the condition of the dam. The tense, arduous journey was completed in about two hours—good time considering everything, and a stop was made at the Wise River General Store to warn them, too, about what seemed to be an impending precarious situation. Yes, they knew it was quite full, but it got that way every year, and they felt that it would hold—it always had before.

Proceeding down the Big Hole toward Divide, Cardey found a few more anglers and told them about the possible danger. They, with typical western indifference, appeared not to be unduly concerned. Cardey and companion continued past the power-generating dam, across the Big Hole just west of Divide, and to the Butte water-pumping station just below. At both places they gave their warning which, by this time, they had begun to feel was probably a little premature and unnecessary.

Illustrations on pages 30 and 31 are by Harvey Eckert, from Montana Trout Flies.

Still, feeling relieved to get away from the river and satisfied that they had at least made some people aware of the possible danger, the two tired anglers pointed their car toward Butte, some thirty miles away. Their thoughts returned to the pleasant early morning hours in the high mountain meadows and to the fat grayling reposing in their baskets.

The Pattengill Dam started to crumble some time during the night and in the early morning hours the entire retaining face went out with a roar that shattered the silence of the forest. Surging water poured down creek to its juncture with Wise River and then northward, wreaking havoc on the river and its surroundings, leaving scars that can be seen to this day.

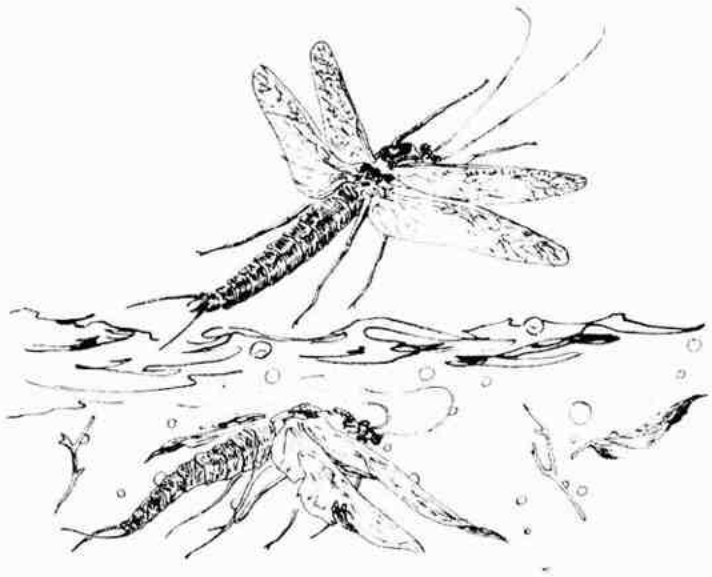
The main portion of the town of Wise River was almost totally destroyed. The first major casualty as the flood reached the Big Hole River and proceeded downstream was the Montana Southern railroad bridge where this narrow-gauge rail line crossed the river just below the town of Wise River.

The raging water continued through the little community of Dewey, which was completely inundated and wiped out. Just below Dewey the river enters a canyon, which was sealed off a few miles further on by a power-generating dam. Pattengail Reservoir had been a water-storage dam to provide reserve for the power dam during periods of low water. In a short time the flood ended the useful life of the lower dam although remnants of it remained until another high water in 1966 removed the last vestiges.

When the flood waters passed the little town of Dewey residents who had gathered on high ground observed a kitchen table with a lighted lamp riding on the crest of the flood. It is believed that this table with its lamp was swept out of a house in Wise River, survived the destruction of the railroad bridge, and was still intact and undisturbed as it disappeared into the canyon below Dewey—one of those seemingly impossible oddities that always seem to accompany disaster.

With the power dam partially destroyed and Divide and Morrow river bridges taken out, the powerful torrent headed for Maiden Rock Canyon where the Union Pacific Railroad (Oregon Short Line) tracks paralleled the river. Fortunately a train was not in the canyon for the force of the water between the narrow walls was great. The rock-ribbed roadbed was swept away in many places and eighty-pound rails were bent and twisted. At "45-Bend," a famous fishing riffle, there remained embedded in the river for many years one of these deformed rails. It would stick up out of the water grotesquely during periods of low water, a grim reminder of past tragedy.

Beyond the canyon the town of Melrose was far enough away from the river to escape damage and, as the river widened and the rate of descent became more gradual, the force of the water lessened and the extreme danger passed. If the dam had gone out on a weekend with scores of people on the river, there could have been a heavy loss of life. As it was, four persons were drowned, there was a considerable loss of livestock, and property damage was extensive.



Wise River was almost completely destroyed as a trout stream—certainly as a quality trout water. The river channel was widened, most of the deep runs and holes were flattened out, the original banks along with their protective willows and other shrubbery were washed away. The streambed itself was gouged out and practically all of the insect and fish life devastated. Many attempts were made to revive it with heavy stocking and closed seasons, but it never recovered, and it is now quite evident that it never will.

The Big Hole River, being a larger body of water, was better able to absorb the effects of the flood. There were many visible surface results, such as washed-out bridges, dams and railroad beds, and there unquestionably was some damage to fish and aquatic life, and to the streambed itself, but the effects were transitory and the river suffered no lasting damage.

It is believed by some older fishermen that the force of the flood water may have caused a wider distribution of the rainbow trout in the Big Hole. Prior to the flood no one could recall taking this species farther south than Melrose, but the season following the flood anglers began catching large rainbows as far south as the canyon below Glen, and it seems reasonable to assume that they were carried downstream by this unnatural occurrence.

A somewhat belated result of the flood occurred in 1966 when the remainder of the old power dam at Divide was completely removed by extremely high water. Previously this barrier had been the dividing line between the upper and lower portions of the river, preventing the brown trout from migrating to the upper river. As is usually the case, there were many large trout in the water just below the dam, many of them browns, and already this species is being caught as far as ten miles above the damsite. If this migration continues it may revitalize the upper river, which now provides good fishing for small and medium-sized rainbows, but lacks the large trout that it once had in abundance.

Charlie Ferguson, hunter and trapper from Wise River, was one of those who lost his life in the tragic flood. Everyone from the smallest child to the oldest man or woman knew genial Charlie. He loved the hills and streams, and fishermen of the area owed a great deal to him for each year he made it his business to see that the streams were restocked. It was one of his pleasures to cut trails to mountain lake retreats and then, with packhorse, take in thousands of trout fry, making the quiet mountain lakes alive with speckled beauties. Although his body was carried downstream, his cherished violin was found not far away, high and dry on a pile of driftwood.

Charlie would have mourned the loss of his beloved Wise River. He, at least, was spared the slow agony that is the lot of those who survive and watch the gradual decline of the great trout rivers in Montana as they are sacrificed, one by one, to an ever encroaching civilization. His violin's lively square dance tune of yesteryear would, by this time, have turned into a funeral dirge.

George Grant is one of this country's most original and influential fly tiers. He has lived in or near Butte, Montana, all his life. This article is taken with the publisher's permission from his new book Montana Trout Flies.

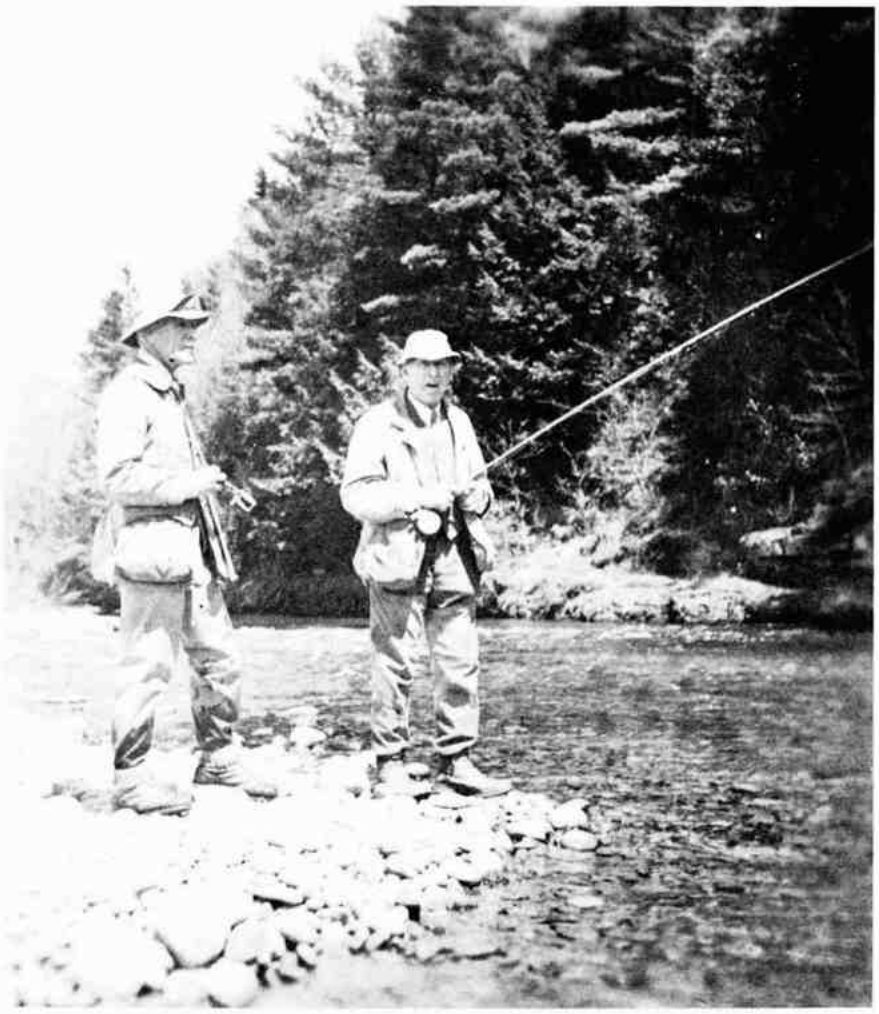
George LaBranche

an angler's album

Elizabeth LaBranche, daughter of the late George LaBranche, recently presented us with an excellent collection of memorabilia, including the following photographs. George LaBranche, author of two great American fishing books, The Dry Fly and Fast Water *(1914) and* The Salmon and the Dry Fly *(1924), died at the age of eighty-six in 1961. The picture below was taken around the turn of the century, and on the following pages we present a brief tour of his angling interests.*

New York

This series of photographs was taken by fellow New York Angler's Club member Henry Davis in the early 1930s. One shows LaBranche with Edward Hewitt, his occasional and equally famous fishing partner. Lower right is a shooting scene; LaBranche was an avid bird hunter, and named several of his dogs after famous fly patterns.



The United Kingdom

In his later years he visited the famous streams of the United Kingdom. To the right he is seen with John Waller Hills, author of A History of Fly Fishing for Trout *and other books. Below he is shown fishing, probably on the Dee. Bottom left he is seen, on the left, with two English companions; the man on the right is A.H.E. Wood, originator of the famous greased line technique. The man in the middle is unidentified. The salmon, lower right, are probably from the Dee.*

Florida

Shortly after The Salmon and the Dry Fly *was published, he began to spend more time fishing for bonefish. Until late in life he used bait, and he is shown here gathering shrimp for use as bait, and, apparently, to share with selected pelican friends.*

New York Fishing Report, 1838

along with some unexpected information on floating flies

The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine *published the following report on fishing in the New York area in August of 1838. It does not all deal with fly fishing, but it's a fascinating glimpse of an earlier time because it shows how fishing concentrations have changed. In the 1830s, as the writer explains, the most popular fly fishing was found on Long Island; he tells us that the famous Catskill streams were only just then being "discovered" by city anglers. Contrary to what many popular writers say, American fly fishing did not begin in the Catskills; it began in many other places, as we have shown in previous issues of* The American Fly Fisher, *including eastern Pennsylvania, Long Island, and Canada. The best case to make for the Catskills is probably that, in many ways, they are where we Americans took fly fishing and made it our own: where we did so much to adapt it to our circumstances (though even that generalization does not hold up all the time).*

This article contains a greater surprise than that, though. More than half of it is a reprint of an earlier English article apparently entitled "A May day in the Meadows," by a Sylvanus Swanquill." We have very little information on this pen name. We know it was used by a writer in a British book that first appeared in 1839. Perhaps some of our United Kingdom readers can help out.

Swanquill's article seems to have been reprinted in the Turf Register *from an earlier printing in the* New York Spirit of the Times; *at least there is credit given to the* Spirit *at the conclusion of the article in the* Turf Register. *We don't know if this means that only Swanquill's article, or the entire report, including the material about New York fishing, was a reprint. We don't know where the* Spirit *got the material in the first place. We suspect that the* Spirit *lifted it from some English sporting periodical, because the material by Swanquill does not seem to have been written with an American audience in mind.*

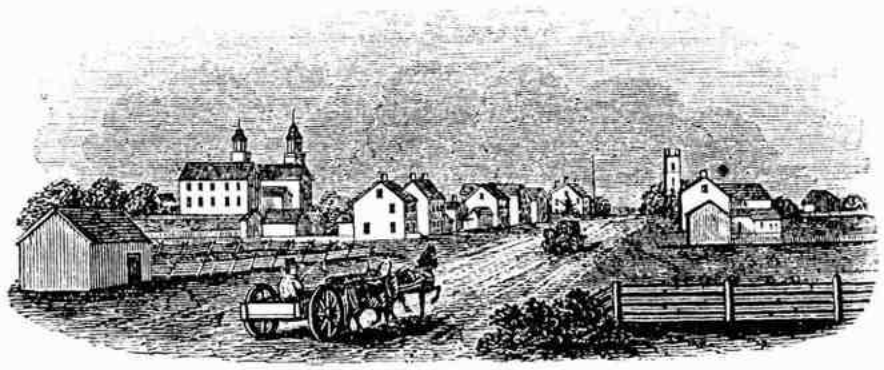
So what we have is an extended account by Swanquill of fishing an English stream, presumably in the mid- to late-1830s. It is gushy prose, typically idyllic and full of the pastoral flavor so popular (and so overdone) in those days. What we also have, and what makes it of interest to us, is a clear description of intentionally fishing a floating fly. As Ken Cameron pointed out in our last issue ("The Dry Fly and Fast Trains," Winter, 1983), there are scattered references to floating flies in British angling literature for centuries before Halford popularized and formalized dry fly fishing in the late 1800s. The one we reprint here is unusually clear about it, and now stands as the first known reference to floating flies in an American publication.

In the second paragraph of Swanquill's (can you imagine giving yourself a pen name like that today?) article, he describes the fly landing "on the curl" of the water, and "tripping up the stream," apparently afloat. Of course at the end of that sentence he says "dropt into *water" (our emphasis) rather than* onto *it, but look at the next paragraph. There we have a fly "sailing along against the wind," in company with real flies "bobbing up and down at his elbow." This sounds like surface drag, and a floating fly. The final proof is the swallow who comes and picks the fly from the surface (swallows aren't known for diving for submerged insects), something that many modern anglers have experienced themselves.*

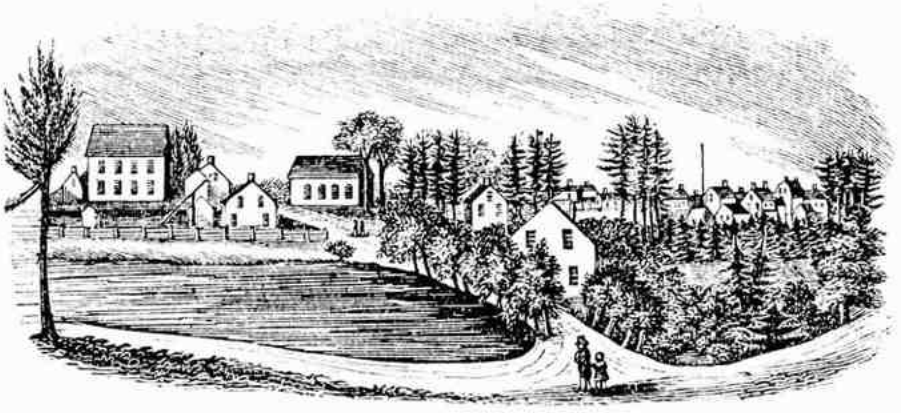
We think this is additional support for Ken Cameron's thesis that the simple floating of an artificial fly was such an intuitively good idea that people quite often did it without thinking anything of it. It took a highly sophisticated angling society and an advanced communications technology to turn something so obviously practiced into something of dogmatic formality.

For the sake of the color and mood, we have preserved the original spelling and punctuation in this article.

Notwithstanding the present month is emphatically the shooting season in this section, we doubt if the proportion of anglers is not greater by twenty to one. There are hundreds upon hundreds of our citizens scattered about the country within two hundred miles of us, and probably there is not a brook, river, or pond, within that circle, in which they have not wet a line. The largest proportion are whipping their flies over the placid ponds of Long Island, where the run of trout this season is of unusually fine size. Two or three parties, made up principally of 'old hands,' have lately made a descent upon the rivers of Sullivan and Montgomery counties, in this state, and with immense success. The Williewemauk, Calikoon, and Beaver-kill, are three of the finest trout streams in this country; they are comparatively unknown to city anglers, and are less fished than any others of like pretensions within our knowledge. The trout are large, very numerous, and of the most delicious flavour. The rivers referred to lie between 30 and 60 miles back of Newburgh. To reach them from town, take any of the North River steamers to Newburgh, and the stage to Monticello, where you will find some good trouting. Five miles farther on, at Liberty, you will reach Big Beaver-kill. Make your head quarters at Mrs. Darby's, and you will be sure to find excellent accommoda-



"Western Entrance into Monticello," New York, a woodcut made about the time this article was written. Distances that now seem inconsequential to New York City anglers required several hours travel before the Civil War.



"View of Patchogue in Brookhaven, Long Island," from the 1840s; Long Island was a popular sporting resort well before the Catskills or Adirondacks, and much of its remaining good fishing is still preserved in private hands.

tions, and capital fishing. You will reach the Williewemauk, seven miles further on, where Mrs. Purvis will take every care of you. At the pleasant residence of these two 'ancient and most quiet' ladies, you may spend a few weeks as delightfully as heart could wish. The shooting in the neighbourhood is particularly fine, and if you have a Manton, or a good rifle, take it along with you.

The bay fishing at this time about New York and Long Island, is capital. There are several fine streamers that make triweekly trips from town to the Fishing Banks outside of Sandy Hook. You leave at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning, and return before sunset. Some of these excursions are exceedingly pleasant, and there are so many fishing smacks and steamers advertised daily for different places about the harbour, that you may select a conveyance, and whatever fishing you prefer, from sharks to poggys. Sea-bass, blue and black fish, sheepshead, poggys, etc. etc., are now taken in immense quantities. Last Tuesday, we made one of a party of near two hundred ladies and gentlemen, who went down to the Fishing Banks, about 15 miles outside of Sandy Hook, in the steamboat *Sun*, Capt. Lane. We cannot determine the exact number taken, but they could not have been less than *four thousand!* They were principally poggys, with a sprinkling of sea-bass, and pretty much every thing else. We fished with a large hand-line, 100 feet long, having four hooks attached, baited with clams. It was great fun; two or three at a time were caught, and your bait was taken the instant it reached within a few feet of the bottom. Several ladies particularly distinguished themselves; half a dozen sharks were constantly 'cavorting' about the boat, attracted, probably, by their beauty, and if we could have persuaded one to allow us to 'play her' on the end of our line, no doubt they would have *'risen'* to such *a fly*.

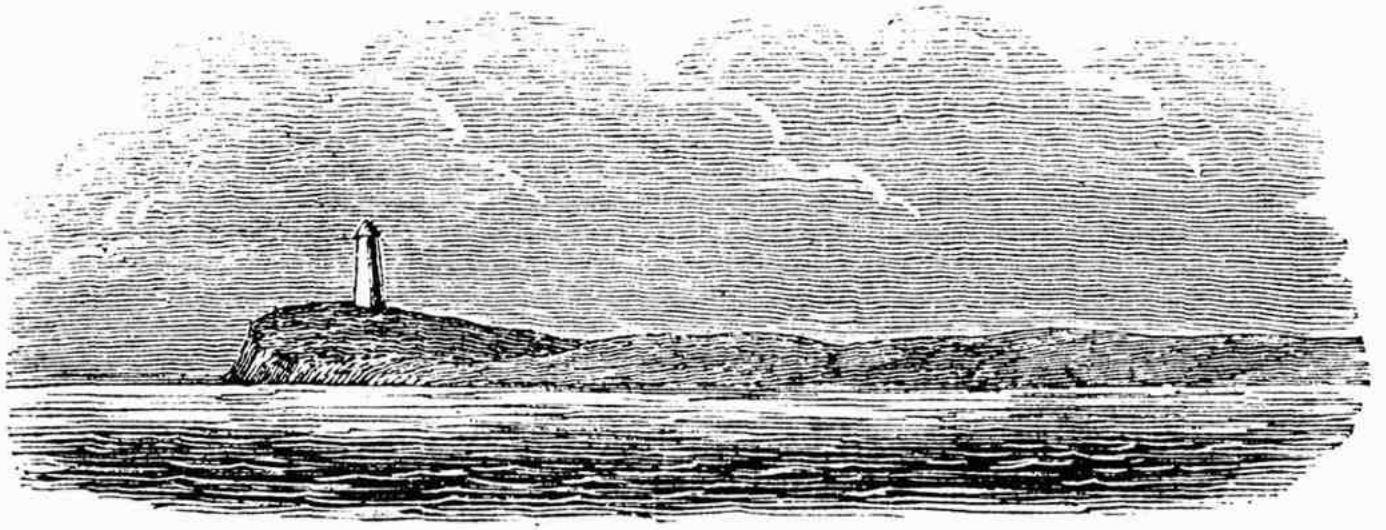
Ah! but this *bobbing-for-whales* sort of fun is not to be named the same day with trout fishing—and on Long Island we can show you that, in such perfection as is not to be enjoyed any where else in this country. We long ago informed our friends 'where to find sport,' and can give them but little additional information in that respect, nor, indeed, do they require it. Go down by the rail road to Hicksville, and trust to the Messrs. Jackson to give you a good team, and whether you go to Smithtown, Babylon, Islip, Fireplace, or Patchogue, you cannot fail to find sport and enough of it. You can hire a better team of the Jacksons than you can in town; they have three teams that will whisk you down to Babylon (12 miles) within an hour, or to Stump Pond (at Smithtown, 21 miles,) in an hour and forty minutes.

And then to throw a fly into Conklin's pond, or Blydensburgh's, or that of Liff. Snedicor! Why it is worth an eternity of ordinary exploits with vulgar black fish or every-day bass. Our first spring jaunt is always a *fete*, and is looked forward to, like Christmas. We think of it a good month before hand, and dream of it, and, may be, talk of it in our sleep. And when at length the day does really arrive—to day—what joy! what spirits! what jumping out of bed at the first cock crow! what peeping out of window to see if the wind holds south! what hasty and half-performed ablutions! what maledictions on the inventor of shaving! what hurry-skurrying over the coffee and toast, (we are too early for rolls!) what nervousness in cracking our eggs! (all of which we boil at least ten minutes, and put in the cup at least with the sharp end upwards;) what tremulousness in spreading the honey, and slicing the hung beef! And then when we once get fairly into the open air, how difficult to restrain ourselves from turning a sommerset, or kicking up our heels in some way or other, to testify the joy that is glowing in our hearts!

Just listen to the rhapsody of our trusty friend, Sylvanus Swanquill, upon 'A May day in the Meadows.' We stand ready to make our 'affidavy' in support of any fact or thesis he advances in the following graphic article upon the most delightful of rural sports. Says Sylvanus, "We are in our favorite meadow now; and, if possible, it looks prettier than ever. The trees have grown since we were last here, and I'm sure the daisies and daffodils have increased in number and luxuriance. That chestnut had not used to be so high and spreading; those alders did not formerly throw so broad a shadow (may their shadow never be less;) those primroses were not wont so completely to cover the brook side; those wood-anemones did not hide every blade of grass along this forest bank; those blackbirds were not always a-singing; there were not two butterflies fluttering over every flower. By the horn of Dian, there is beauty enough here to swell a man's heart to the size of an air balloon! beauty of sight, beauty of sound, beauty of fragrance—all sorts of beauties waiting upon us at every step, to gladden our senses and rejoice our hearts, as if man were a god walking in Paradise, rather than the poor thing he is.

But what have we to do with men? the fish are our fellows; water is our element; Undine is our love. Salmo fario, have at you! Our rod and line have been long in readiness—don't think that we had the patience (though patience is a virtue—and the angler's virtue par excellence) to wait till we arrived at the water's-edge to put our tackle in order. No, no: four meadows off we began the important operation; and in spite of tumbling over three stiles in our path, and running against a dozen trees, all but dislocating our ancles in about twenty gutters, and running the hook into our finger about fifty times in the course of our locomotion, we have happily achieved the task, and are ready to commence operations the moment we arrive at the brook side. Mind, I call our's a brook, gentle reader: but that's my modesty. You might call it a river (excuse the compliment,) and any one who knows Willowford at all (as who doesn't by this time?) will know that the merry Bourne has just as good a claim to take rank with father Thames and 'the soft-flowing Avon' as any stream in the kingdom.

Silence now! nobody must speak but the blackbird. Whish! goes the line through the air, as gentle as a butterfly's flight; down drops the little greendrake on the curl of the water like a snowflake, only rather softer; and see! here it comes tripping up the stream with its little wings ex-



"View of Montauk Point, Long Island," in the 1840s. Fishing party boats were common sights in Long Island Sound by this time.

panded, and looking as innocent as any real ephemera that ever dropt into water.

Don't he 'walk the waters like a thing of life?' The May-flies themselves that are bobbing up and down at his elbow take him for one of their own kin, and wonder how the deuce he manages to go sailing along against wind and tide that way. And, without vanity be it spoken, he is the most perfect little gem of a green-drake that ever was dubbed. We made him with our own hands—the day before Christmas day last, that we might be in time—and he is really so natural that Swammerdam himself might be deceived in him. By heavens! and a better judge than even Swammerdam is taken in! We have had a rise, you will say: on the contrary, it was a dip! a bird—one of the most sharp-sighted creatures that exist, has snapt up our little make-believe: we have caught a swallow! By Saint Martin, (the properest saint surely to swear by on such an occasion,) we are now more convinced than ever of the truth of the maxim that 'a fisherman should know every thing.' For ourself, we confess our ignorance: we are regularly nonplussed, completely flabbergasted, we were never out swallow-fishing before. What to do we know not; Walton gives no instructions on this point; Cotton has not provided for such a contingency. We must treat him fish-wise. There he goes, by Jove! he has run out all our line already, and doubled our rod up to the shape of a half-moon. Hold hard a bit now, my merry gentleman, and don't flap your fins about so—your wings, I mean—steady, if you please, over the willow-bushes—gently through the alders. Another turn or two of the reel, and I shall have him within arm's length—here he comes—hollo, where's the landing-net?—there, now I have him safe in the meshes—lie still my little beauty, and let me take the hook out of your gills (craw, I mean)—there—the operation is soon over—now you are at liberty again—and away flies 'the harbinger of spring,' not a jot the worse for his adventure, only so frightened that I believe he will never stop again till he reaches his old winter quarters in Tunis or Timbuctoo.

In just half a minute more my little pet green-drake is again at his duty. Shall I venture him this cast behind that stone where the water boils up like a steam-engine, and where the reeds and brambles grow so thickly that there is only a hole about as big as a hazel nut to throw into? It's a likely nook, and we determine on the venture. Whish! again flies our little greenie on the back of the most complaisant of all zephyrs; pop he goes into the very midst of the whirly-hole, where the waters rush with such impetuosity as fairly to jerk him out again. But he is not to be daunted: again and again he returns to the charge, and enjoys it as the petrel enjoys the storm: again and—no, not again, for a great lob-sided monster of a trout has cut him short in his career, and he is off with him across the stream with a bound which has nearly run all the line off my reel, and almost snatched the rod out of my hand. We are in the open now, however, and fair play will be had on all sides. If he can snap my gossamer gut now, let him! if he can find a flaw in the temper of rale ginuine Limerick, let him! if he doubts the quality of my hickory, let him pull till he has loosened every tooth in his head! He may tear a piece out of his own jaw—nothing more likely at the rate he is going on—but we defy him to break a filament of our tackle. Aye, plunge and splash—kick all the pebbles about, and fling the sand up like mole hills—it's of no manner of use—'this day a trout must die!'—we have set our minds upon just such a fellow as you for this fortnight past—we will have you cooked by Father Walton's own receipt (there's an honour for you!) and, as far as may be, dished up with the same ceremonies that worthy Isaac prescribes.

There, now that you have disturbed all the water, and frightened all the fish between here and the next township, you will perhaps be a little quieter. So, so: that's what I call being gentlemanly; that's behaving as a fish ought to behave; nothing like taking it cool and comfortable. Now, be so good as to wait there, and not speak a word, while I get hold of the landing-net; now if you would just have the complaisance to raise yourself up a bit, and take your head out of the gravel, while I place the net gently under your silver stomacher, I should feel particularly obliged. Whew! dunder and blitzen! what's the matter now? Hurry skurry, head-over-heels, splash, dash, crash, smash! for heaven's sake take care of my best fly! pray think a little of my new hickory rod! do have bowels for my gut! There—thank the gods! I have him safe in the landing-net at last; and truly he is worth all the agony of mind I have suffered on his account: four pounds at least, and every pound of him a picture by itself. There's a 'study of a head' for you! crimson and gold, scarlet and silver, are no names to describe him by; he must be seen to be believed; rubies and diamonds are fools to him. Iris is but a streak of Warren's blacking; painting him is quite out of the question (carmine and ultramarine! pshaw, charcoal and brick-dust!) describing him is equally beyond possibility—where are the similes and metaphors to come from? There is only one thing to be done with him—I grieve to say it, but it is the lot of mortality on such occasions to feel its own impotence—there is but one thing to be done with him, and that is—to put him in the bag."

N. Y. Spirit of the Times.

Early American Fly Tying

Our expanded number of pages tempts us to do something we've long considered: reprinting an occasional item exactly as it appeared in its original form. We present here a very early lesson in tying flies, complete with woodcut illustrations, from the American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine *for September, 1830. We have included a couple non-fly fishing items because they appear on the final page, as additional curiosities. Among other things, notice the explicit, and still accurate, instructions for dubbing given at the conclusion of the article. This was before eyed hooks became common, and so the first step was always the tying in of the snelled "line," usually of hair or gut.*

METHOD OF MAKING ARTIFICIAL FLIES.

MR. EDITOR:

In the "American" Turf Register, No. 11, for July 1830, page 550, I observe an inquiry made in relation to the method of making Artificial Flies. I will try to explain the process, premising that it is next to impossible, to describe this nice art, so as to make it perfectly intelligible to one who has not some previous information on the subject.

"There are two general divisions of artificial flies, viz. those whose bodies are composed of feathers or *heckles*, and those whose bodies are composed of hair, or any other substance except feathers; I will presently shew the difference to be observed in the process of making these two kinds. First of the heckles: The hook is held betwixt the fore finger and thumb of the left hand, the bend of the hook towards the junction of the thumb and finger and the barb downwards.

The line to which the hook is to be attached is then placed on the under side of the

shank of the hook,  and in contact with it, then a very fine kind of yellow silk, called "*Marking Silk*," is waxed, with shoe-maker's wax, and is applied to the upper side of the shank of the hook;  after this take the feather or heckle, of which the body is to be made, and strip off from the stalk, the feathers of that portion which is about to be covered by the wrapping silk. Now apply  the heckle already prepared, to the silk thus: all these materials are held firmly in contact with the hook by the fore finger and thumb of the left hand. The artist now commences wrapping the silk over the hook towards the bend, and as far down the shank as the length of the fly requires, after the manner called by sailors woolding; the hook then presents this appearance:  when you have wrapped as far as is desired, fasten the thread by putting the end through the last turn, making thus a *half hitch*, and wrap the silk round the hook to the beginning, to be there ready for the conclusion of the next step, which is that of wrapping the heckle carefully round the armed shank of the hook until you reach nearly to the end of the shank, where you leave just room enough for the wings and head; the heckle is then fastened by another hitch of the thread, and the body of your fly is done, by clipping carefully off the surplus heckle with a small pair of sharp pointed scissors. Now prepare your wings by stripping off the feathers from the quill of some bird, and moistening their taper end with saliva, in order to keep them together; now resume your hook as before and lay on the torn ends of  the feathers over the body and end of the shank, thus, where they are confined by one or two turns of the silk and a hitch; now with a pin divide the wings equally, and then pass the thread through the division and bring it under the shank and behind the wing next to your body, carry the thread through the division again and under the shanks, and fasten it by three hitches in front of the wings, the thread in this process forms a cross;  finish your fly by clipping smoothly off all the feathers that project beyond the end of the hook, and cutting off the surplus thread. The other description of flies are made with this difference, that after attaching the hook to the line, and before returning the thread from the bend to the beginning, you prepare the substance from which the body is to be made, (suppose hair,) by spinning it betwixt the fingers

into a line the size of small twine, then lay it to the thread, holding one end fast against the hook and twisting the hair and thread with the other hand until they have become incorporated; wrap the thread and hair round the shank carefully to the beginning as you did the heckle in the other case, and make fast as before, (with a pin pick out some of the hairs to represent feet,) the rest of the process is the same as that first described.

B.

Fish Story, but a True One.

Some twenty-five years ago, a Mr. S. of this town, who was then at Siasconset, sent some cod-fish to his father in town. On dressing one which had a poke unusually large, a younger brother of him who had sent the fish, had a mind to open the poke, when, to his and his father's astonishment, he found in it, an open jack-knife, handle and blade eight inches in length, which the fish had swallowed point foremost. On examining it, E. G. were discovered marked on the handle, when the lad exclaimed, "'Tis uncle Eben Gardner's." The boy hastened to the supposed owner, to inquire if he had lost any thing. Being answered in the negative, he then questioned his uncle if he had lost a knife. His reply was, that when fishing eight or ten days before, he lost a jack-knife overboard, east of Bass-rip. When asked to describe the knife, it soon appeared fully evident that the knife found in the fish's poke was the one he lost. The boy who found the knife is now one of our most respectable citizens, from whom we had, within a few days, these curious facts. [*Nantucket Inq.*

Mount Pleasant, N. Y. July 6.

A sturgeon of no mean dimensions, made an unlucky flounce on Friday last, as he was sporting in the delicious sun-beams which sparkle on the broad and beautiful surface of the Tappan Zee. This restive tenant of the deep was indulging in that kind of exercise peculiar to its species, taking an occasional peep into the breathing element in which we bipeds live, when at a single bound, he threw himself completely into the stern of a sail boat, belonging to Mr. Van Valer, who resides at the landing directly opposite this village, and became an easy prey to the gentleman into whose vessel he so unceremoniously intruded. The captured sturgeon, which weighed 180 pounds, was brought to this village and sold.

Floating Flies for Bass, 1873

It has been our practice for some time to publish brief accounts of floating fly fishing that predate the American writings of Theodore Gordon; such writings, as we have pointed out, suggest that floating flies, if not common in this country, were at least being experimented with long before Gordon began writing about them at the turn of the century. Gordon, by most popular accounts, is given credit for being the "father" of dry fly fishing in America when actually he was part of an ongoing American experience with surface flies.

The following article is the earliest reference we have yet found to floating flies for bass. It appeared in Forest and Stream *for December 4, 1873, and the author was F.L. King of Rochester, New York. His article was one of many letters published during the 1870s, 1880s, and even 1890s, when many people did not believe bass could be taken on flies. Note also his plea for moderation of harvest of fish.*

I have read with increasing interest each article on this subject. I was astonished that such a question should ever suggest itself to a follower of Father Isaac. I have taken black bass from Canandaigua outlet and Genesee River for years with a fly, and I find that I have better success every year. Not by trolling as is the custom, in the St. Lawrence from a boat, but by casting from a boat or wading as the water will permit. Either I have become more experienced or as I have heard said in regard to trout, they have become educated and will take a fly better from year to year if the waters are humanly fished. I have made it a practice to return to the water all small fish and I believe that I have been amply rewarded this year. I never had better fishing in these waters.

The hint that I have aided in the increase of this splendid fish seems insignificant; but if you will think for just a moment and see what the increase would be by returning fifty or one hundred of these fish to the water, you will not be surprised or wonder at my insinuation.

If all anglers would just keep this in mind, return all small fish to the water, there would be no danger of our lakes and rivers being depopulated.

A little care, and a little humanity on the part of the true angler would in a great degree make up for the wholesale slaughter of the pot-fisher. But never mind that, I have thrown aside my bass rod and tackle as a whole, with the exception of dressing my flies especially for bass. I tie my own flies as every angler should who wishes to drink in the whole enjoyment of angling.

In its place I have adopted my Conroy trout rod and trout tackle as a whole, and find that it gives me infinitely more pleasure than the heavier one.

Now in regard to flies; I have tried the scarlet ibis, grizzly king, and many others with some success, but none with the success that I have had with a brown one which I have made and named king fly. In this locality I have taken them from the first of June to the first of October, with this same fly. I think it superior to any other for the reason that I have put others on the same cast and would in nine cases out of ten find them fast to this fly. Also I have taken off the other flies and put on just two of these and would take time after time two bass of a pound and a half or two pounds each at a single cast. That is what I call genuine sport. This fly might not do for other localities, but for these two that I have mentioned, I am certain it has no equal.

These magnificent fish seem to be very gamey here, giving almost as much play as a trout. It is seldom that I let my flies sink below the surface of the water. It is not necessary to with this fly, but the instant that it touches the water, if they are at all inclined, it is greedily taken, in fact I have seen them jump clear out of the water to seize the supposed prize. It looks too much like bait fishing to let them sink below the surface precisely as though it was really bait. When I bait fish I want to bait fish, and when I fly fish I want to fly fish.

Let it then be the aim of every true angler to exert all his influence to keep our lakes and rivers from being depopulated of this magnificent fish. If every angler will catch his fish artistically there need be no fear. If there can be no better laws, let what we have be enforced, and it will greatly aid us in our work.

Museum News

President's Report to the Museum Membership

On March 10, 1983, the Trustees of The Museum of American Fly Fishing met at the Yale Club for the purpose of discussing the proposed move to West Yellowstone, Montana, and to authorize the executive committee to hire a new executive director. Authorization was granted, and a search has now begun to fill this position. Candidates should have a proven record of successful fund raising; must have some familiarity with fly-fishing and its history; and should be capable of dealing on an equal basis with persons, corporations, and foundations willing to support the Museum financially.

The Trustees also decided not to relocate the Museum headquarters to West Yellowstone, Montana. However, it should be emphasized that the Museum still remains strongly committed to making the International Fly-Fishing Center in West Yellowstone a focal point of its exhibition effort. During the summer months, West Yellowstone, Montana, is simply the best place in the United States to display the history, art, and artifacts of fly-fishing to the greatest number of people. Despite the fact that the Museum headquarters will not be located in West Yellowstone the impact of our displays and exhibits will be the same. The Museum and the Federation of Fly Fishers have mutually agreed on this arrangement. The decision not to locate the Museum headquarters in West Yellowstone stems from our current perception that it would be inordinately difficult to operate there during the winter months of the year. It is our present concept that The Museum of American Fly Fishing should prepare exhibits which can be packaged and shipped, on loan, to various museum or exhibit facilities around the country in order to educate and stimulate interest in fly-fishing. For example, certain exhibits which may be on display in West Yellowstone during the summer months could be shipped to metropolitan areas for display during the winter months.

I further note that John Merwin agreed to chair a committee to develop and recommend criteria for the new location of the Museum headquarters, and Bob Johnson will head our executive-director search committee.

The 1983 Annual Meeting of the Museum will be held on Thursday, September 8, 1983, at a place easily accessible to one of the three major airports serving New York City. Watch for a later announcement giving details on time and place. All members who can be in the New York area on September 8th are urged to hold that date open and to attend the Annual Meeting.

In closing, I am delighted to report that the Museum's General Fund has increased by over $25,000 since July 1, 1982, as indicated by the Treasurer's Report of March 4, 1983. Since that report, a highly successful fund-raising auction was held in New York City on March 10 under the able chairmanship of Ian Mackay. On March 11, a similarly successful event was held in Madison, Wisconsin, under the chairmanship of Susie Isaksen. Additional fund-raising auctions to benefit the Museum are scheduled for Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Manchester, Vermont, prior to the end of our fiscal year on June 30. As previously reported, Museum Vice President Art Frey chaired the Museum's "kick-off" auction event, in the San Francisco Bay area on November 30, 1982.

Our deepest thanks to the Museum Trustees and members whose work and contributions are turning the Museum's financial condition around so that we can anticipate a very healthy report on our condition at the end of this fiscal year.

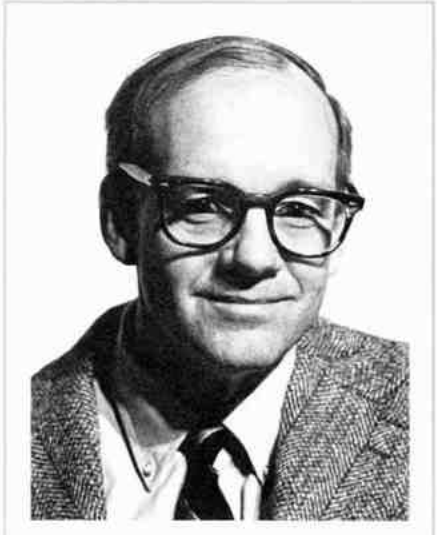
Gardner Grant
President

David Ledlie Named Editor

David B. Ledlie, who has served as Assistant Editor on *The American Fly Fisher* for the past five years, has been selected to assume the magazine's editorship starting with the Fall, 1983 issue. Paul Schullery, who resigned as Director of the Museum last November, agreed to serve as interim editor of the magazine until a replacement could be found, and has edited both the Winter and Spring, 1983 issues with David's help. A meeting of the Museum's Trustees held last winter agreed unanimously that David was the obvious choice, and so he was offered the position.

Design of the magazine will be taken over by Martha Poole of Dorset, Vermont, who has several years experience in fishing publications, and who served frequently as an advisor to Paul when he was both editing and designing the magazine.

David Ledlie has been a Trustee of the Museum for more than twelve years; he has been active in caring for the collections; and served as Museum Registrar in 1975 and 1976.



David B. Ledlie

His strong background, both in collection administration and in editorial work, made him the natural choice for the editor's position. Dave lives with his wife, Pat, an antiquarian bookseller, in Buckfield, Maine, and he teaches chemistry at Bates College. He holds a B.A. in chemistry from Middlebury College and a Ph.D. from MIT in organic chemistry. He has published numerous articles in chemical journals. Flyfishers know him best for his many articles in *The American Fly Fisher*, including a book-length series of articles on Dean Sage, and for his history column in *Fly Tyer* magazine. Editorial correspondence should be addressed to him at the Museum.

Auction Reports

Details of the Wisconsin and the New York auctions have not been received as of this date. However, informed sources advise us that approximately $2,000 was raised in Wisconsin while over $20,000 resulted from our New York efforts. Coordinators Susie

Isaksen and Ian Mackay are to be congratulated for their efforts. A special note of thanks is directed to Richard Kress and Laura Towslee for their herculean support of the Museum's Auction Program.

Trustee and Vice President, Art Frey reports below on the most recent, highly successful (3rd Annual) San Francisco auction.

On November 30, 1982, the Museum held its third annual West Coast auction to benefit Museum operations, at the Green Hills Country Club. The auction was attended by 100 friends and members of the Museum. The total net income exceeded $14,000.00.

Auction coordinators were Arthur T. Frey and Lawrence J. Gilsdorf. The auction committee consisted of Jim Van Loan, Robert E. Henderson, John Eustice, Don Labbe, and Jim Schaaf. All did an outstanding job coordinating the event. A special thanks to Will Godfrey who performed magnificently as auctioneer. Among those attending the event were Gardner Grant, Museum President; Marty Seldon, Executive Vice President of the Federation of Fly Fishers; Charles Nelson, Trustee; Mike Fong and his wife, photographer Christine Fong; casting authority Mel Krieger; Mike Stidham, noted California wildlife artist; Valentine Atkinson, well-known outdoor photographer from San Francisco; Richard May, President of California Trout; Esther Simon, Executive Vice President of the Federation of Fly Fishers; and Dave Allred, famous sculptor of wildlife art.

Vice President Art Frey announced that the 1983 San Francisco auction will be held sometime in November. Co-chairmen for the event will be Larry Gilsdorf and Don Labbe.

The auction could not have been possible without the support of those individuals and companies who donated the prizes.

The Museum of American Fly Fishing wishes to thank the following individuals and companies for donating the prizes for the San Francisco auction:

Chuck Stranahan
Ted and Mary Gerken
Bob Nauheim
Russel J. Quistgard
Sharon and Jim Van Loan
Mel Krieger
Valentine Atkinson
Maxine Atherton
Jim Schaaf
Arthur T. Frey
Bill Webster
Harry Adamson
Sportsman Specialities
Joe Kimsey
Rich & Shirley Irvine
Christine & Mike Fong
Ralph Wahl
George Grant
Grant Linn
Walter Wolfe
Bill Claypole
Ogden Pleissner
The Orvis Company
Jack Brewton
Maggie Merriman
Samuel C. Johnson
Harry Kime
Reg Turner
René Harrop
Janet & Marty Downey
Jack Francis
Dave Allred
Ned Bowler
Mike Stidham
J. Kennedy Fisher
Jim Teeney
Larry Foster
John F. Eggert
Harry Wilson
David R. Meyers
André Puyans
Doug Park
Ralph Moon
Aquabonita Fly Fishers
Hal Janssen
Bill Kreisl
Roger Cruwys
Kent Bullfinch
Chuck Nelson
Art & Scott Kimball
Plano Moulding Company
Wright & McGill Company
Cortland Line Company
Barbara Phelps
Thomas and Thomas
Syd Glasso
Dana S. Lamb
John Bailey
Scientific Anglers/3M
Mustad and Son
Paul Webber
Rod & Reel Magazine
Albert J. Munger

On the Auction Circuit

Information concerning donations, programs, and other pertinent details may be obtained directly from the auction coordinators listed below.

APRIL 20, CLEVELAND, OHIO
Dickson Whitney, McGean Chemical Company, Cleveland, Ohio 44113

MAY 17, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
Michael Fitzgerald, Post Office Box 161, Pearce Mills Road, Wexford, Pennsylvania 15090

JUNE 4, MANCHESTER, VERMONT
G. Dick Finlay, c/o Museum of American Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont 05254

NOVEMBER 29, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
Lawrence J. Gilsdorf and Don Labbe, Post Office Box 13, Burlingame, California 94010

Position Available

The Museum of American Fly Fishing is seeking applications for the position of Executive Director.
This rapidly growing non-profit institution requires a full-time, self-starting executive with proven fund-raising ability.
Apply or inquire in writing only to
The Museum of American Fly Fishing,
Manchester, Vermont 05254.
No telephone calls, please.

JOIN THE MUSEUM

Membership Rates	
Associate	$ 20
Sustaining	$ 30
Patron	$100
Sponsor	$250

Send your membership application and full address to the Secretary, The Museum of American Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont 05254. The Museum is a member of the American Association of Museums and the American Association for State and Local History. We are a non-profit educational institution chartered under the laws of the state of Vermont.

SUPPORT THE MUSEUM

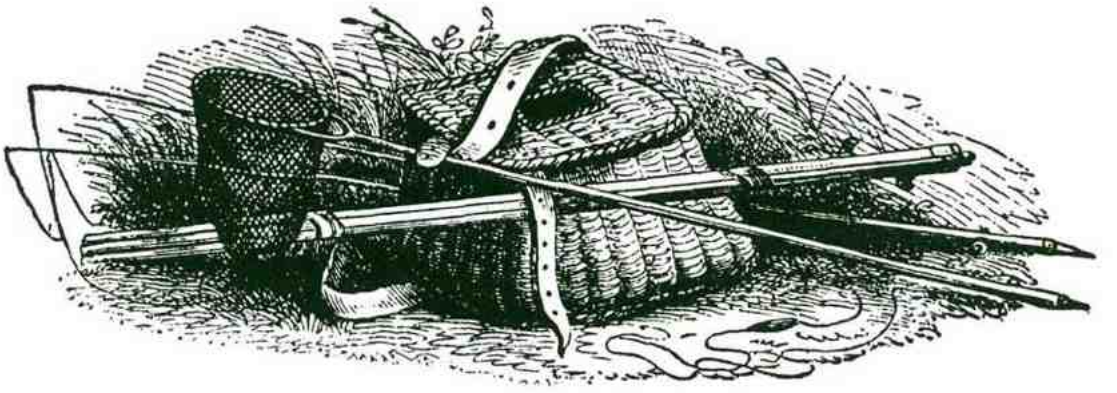
As an independent, non-profit institution, The Museum of American Fly Fishing must rely on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. We ask that you give our institution serious consideration when planning for gifts and bequests.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

We have the following back issues of the magazine available now:

Volume Five, Numbers 3 and 4
Volume Six, Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4
Volume Seven, Numbers 2, 3, and 4
Volume Eight, Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4
Volume Nine, Numbers 1, 2, and 3
Volume Ten, Number 1

Place your order with the Registrar, The Museum of American Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont 05254. Enclose $4.00 for each copy desired. The $4.00 covers postage.



Seconds

Most tackle collectors are primarily concerned with top-quality items: the best representative samples of gear by the best makers. Like book collectors, they seek always to find a better example than the one they have, to improve the quality of their collection. Second-best does not interest them much.

The Museum has a different function. We are of course interested in collecting the finest tackle, but our interests are broader than those of most collectors. Our mission is to document the development of the sport, and to do so as comprehensively as possible. That means collecting more than the finest. It means that we are interested in many items that collectors aren't. For example, at any given time most fishermen are not using the most expensive custom-built rods. Today, for every one fisherman using a bamboo rod there are thousands using fiberglass and graphite rods.

We have a democratic collection. While we seek to preserve the masterpieces, we also seek to preserve the much more commonly used tackle that was available to most fishermen. The famous masters of early bamboo rod building—Leonard, Payne, Thomas, Orvis, and so on—did not provide most Americans with fishing tackle. Most Americans used mass-produced tackle, the way they do today. While Leonard got fifteen to forty dollars for his rods in the 1890s, Sears sold split bamboo rods for a dollar. They weren't as good, but quality isn't the point; the point is that this is a museum about and for *all* fly fishers, not just for the fortunate few who have the best tackle. When we want to understand the fishing practices and sporting attitudes of our predecessors, we must look to more places than the books, which were mostly written by the people with the best gear. We want to know what they thought, but we also want to know what it was like to be "just another fisherman" back then. The market, and the angling subculture, is made up, for the greater part, of anonymous sports who don't write or become famous but who are the heart of what fly fishing is all about. Fly fishing has been called the most social of all the solitary pastimes, but most of the society —most of the communication—is conducted by conversation, not by writing. The tackle used by earlier generations is one of our best links with them, sometimes our only link with them. While we don't want to unleash upon the Museum a flood of old Montagues and unidentifiable-nine-foot-three-piece-Calcutta-cane-rods-with-intermediate-red-wraps (sometimes it already seems like a flood, each rod accompanied by a hopeful owner who thinks he's discovered a priceless masterpiece), we do want the membership to know that our purpose as a Museum encompasses all fly fishers.

A recent visitor to the Museum collection room was surprised to see a modern rod case in among the antiques, and he asked "What's *that* doing here?" "That" was, we pointed out, a singularly important item: a prototype of the first Fenwick graphite rod. We showed him the Shakespeare Howald process fiberglass rods, and told him about the boron prototypes we'd just received from Don Phillips, who caught the first trout ever taken on boron. We explained the breadth of our mission here at the Museum, and how history is happening all the time, and that we must keep up with it. Our guest, once he got over his surprise, agreed that we had the right idea.