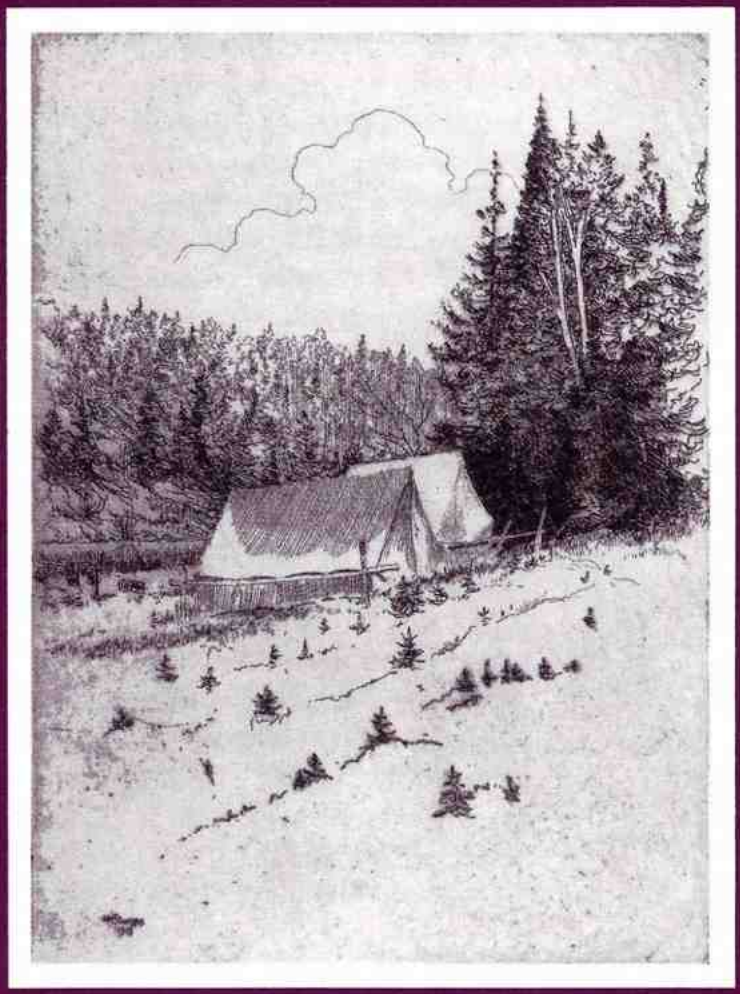

The American Fly Fisher

WINTER 1995 VOLUME 21 NUMBER 1

American Angler's Book (1865)

A Film Mystery, Rube Cross, and Thaddeus Norris

IT'S THE PEOPLE, really, who give our rich history its distinct personality and so here, in the Winter 1995 issue of *The American Fly Fisher,* we proudly present a panoply of notable figures. Ted Bronstad looks at the New Brunswick voyage that author/artist Lee Sturges made on the Cain River in the early part of this century, and chronicles his discovery of a fragment of surviving documentary film of the Sturges trip made by the Canadian government. We also get a close-up perspective of Rube Cross, the Catskill fly tyer who, according to acquaintance Al Brewster, who introduces our presentation of a 1934 *Outdoor Life* reprint, led a somewhat earthier life than popularly thought. These "legends" are, after all, just human beings.

In our next feature, one of our members, Bob Norris, goes genealogy hunting and finds that his "Uncle Thad" is actually *the* Thaddeus Norris, "nineteenth-century author, angler, tackle dealer, maker of fishing rods and artificial flies, humorist, fish culturist, philosopher, traveler, and fireside banjo player." And in our Notes & Comment section, noted ichthyologist and professor Bob Behnke, sparked by our recent article on Australia (Fall 1994), provides further information on a nineteenth-century family of fish culturists, the Ramsbottoms, who in addition to transporting trout and salmon ova to Australia in 1864 also imported salmon and probably brown trout to America in 1864, almost *twenty years* before the historic and "official" first importation date of 1883. Finally, also in Notes & Comment, Gordon Wickstrom writes about old flybooks, those wonderful leather artifacts of a time gone by which happen to be one of my favorite components of the Museum's archives (next to our library).

On a personal note, Museum members and friends might also like to know that my first book, a collection of essays about the fishing life (which was, incidently, elegantly designed by the art director of this journal, Randall Perkins), has just been published. If you care to, you should be able to find *Little Rivers: Tales of a Woman Angler* (Lyons & Burford, $16.95) in your favorite bookstore.

We here at the journal relish this ongoing process of putting all the pieces of our history together, a forum in which you as members, supporters, and readers play a great part. I look forward to hearing from you.

MARGOT PAGE
EDITOR

The American Fly Fisher

Journal of The American Museum of Fly Fishing

WINTER 1995 VOLUME 21 NUMBER 1

ON THE COVER: *In this Winter 1995 issue we report on a fragment of film discovered by author Ted Bronstad who believes it is from newsreel footage of Lee Sturges's fishing trip on the Cain River (New Brunswick) filmed by the Canadian government. Sturges, a renowned artist, illustrated the book chronicling his trip with stunning etchings, including the tent site featured on our journal's cover.*

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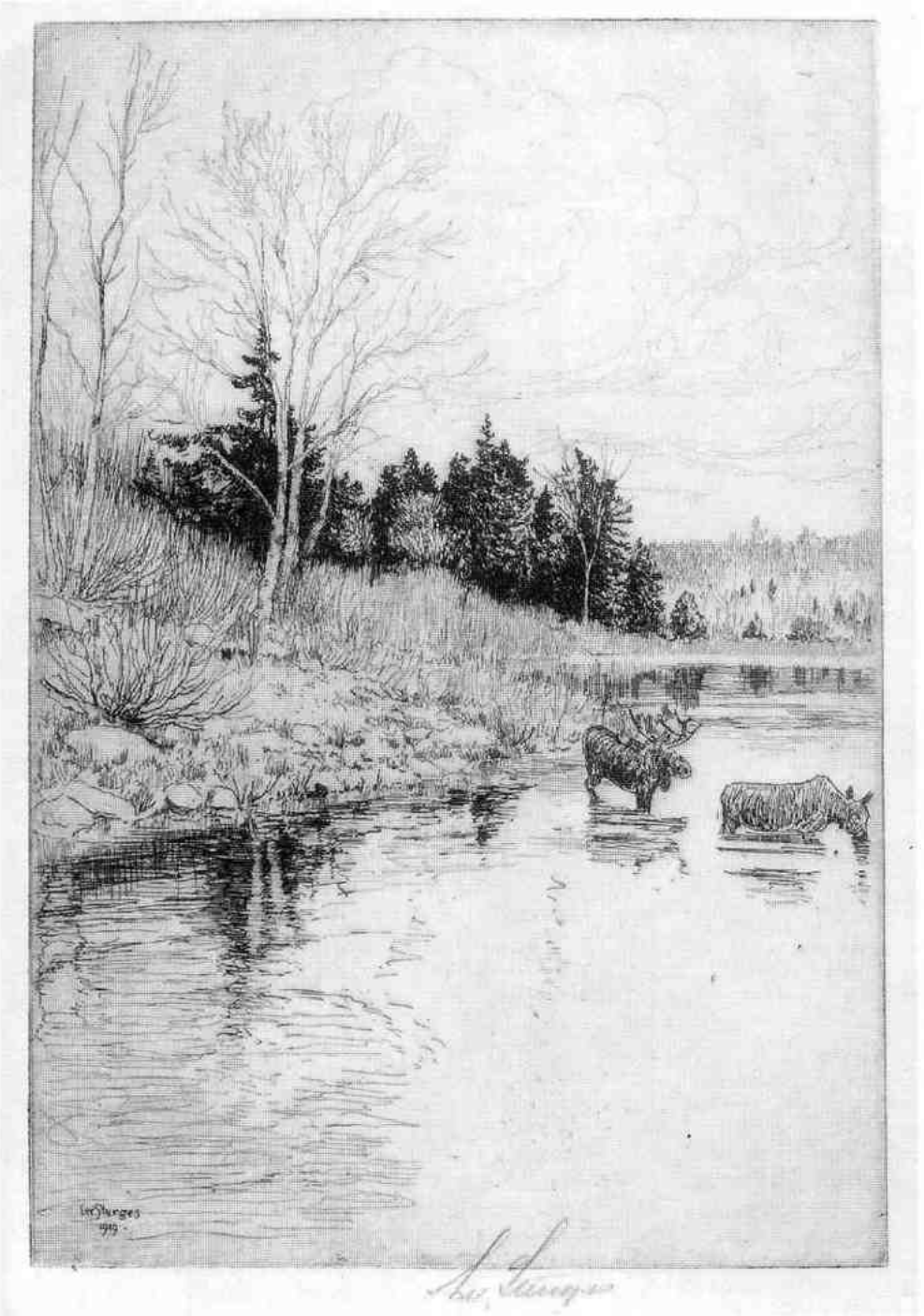


HOME OF THE MOOSE AND SALMON

Illustrations from *Salmon Fishing on Cain River New Brunswick* (1919)

Lee Sturges: The Search for the Film of Salmon Fishing on Cain River

by M. T. Bronstad, Jr.

First, a mysterious fire destroyed all but a handful of books, making the surviving volumes—breathtakingly beautiful books—about a salmon fishing trip to the Cain River precious. Now, a Museum member has recently discovered an existing motion picture fragment of this expedition which can only be sketchily dated circa 1912. What a story!

A rare edition of Lee Sturges's book Salmon Fishing on Cain River New Brunswick *(1919)—sumptuously illustrated, featuring glorious etchings by this renowned artist/author—was generously donated to the Museum's library by member Vern Gallup and accessioned in 1990. Careful readers will notice that in the book's narrative Sturges mentions a film made of the trip. Twenty years ago, this intriguing aside sparked the interest of another Museum member and he began to search. We are proud to publish the story of Ted Bronstad's discovery.*

The text of Salmon Fishing on Cain River New Brunswick *was reprinted in its entirety in the Fall 1988 issue of* The American Fly Fisher. *A copy of the short film fragment is on videotape in the Museum's archives, available for viewing.*

Margot Page
Editor

Eighty years ago—give or take a few—Lee Sturges made his long-dreamed-of trip to New Brunswick, Canada, probably his first salmon fishing experience. This highly gifted man did all of the right things to make a successful trip, then wrote about it. The resulting book, without the author's knowledge, created a mystery that as far as I know has not yet been recognized, the ultimate solution to which will possibly become a keystone in the early history of angling movies.

The book, *Salmon Fishing on Cain River New Brunswick* [privately printed for the author by Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago, 1919], is a twenty-page, beautifully illustrated tale of a salmon fishing trip in the first decades of this century. Copies of the book are quite rare and there is a curious intrigue woven by the questions it poses and the mystery it innocently presents. For me, the lack of explanation for some of the circumstances surrounding the trip and the roles played by its participants formed the impetus that has been the driving force of a prolonged personal quest.

The book and its author are unique in several respects. Lee Sturges—hunter, fisher, engineer, engraver, and inventor—was both the author and illustrated the book with his own excellent etchings. And the makeup of the group on the trip was unusual because the Canadian government requested of Sturges that he include as a passenger on the trip a professional filmmaker. [A telegram from his guide stated, "Fish are in the river. Be here Friday. Wire number in party. If no objections, Government will send moving-picture outfit to photograph the fishing trip."]

The expedition began in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where Lee met W. H. Allen (Harry), a well-known guide in the area who owned the fishing rights on the Cain River (current maps and correspondence indicate that it is properly called the Cains River). They soon met a Mr. Robinson, official filmmaker of the Canadian Northern Railroad, who was sent by the government railways to document the adventure on film. This seemed at once to constitute a singular addition to a fishing trip and is even more puzzling since there is no hint of a reason why the government wanted a documentary film. The author's fishing license was complimentary, through the courtesy of the Canadian Minister of Lands and Mines; the explanation for this, none.

Early on the morning of departure, Sturges, Harry, and Robinson were met by a Mr. Lindsey, an official of the C.N.R, which provided their transportation to the river. North of Fredericton at McGivney Junction the entourage changed trains and were met by guides with the canoes and camping gear. After a short ride, the train stopped at the Cain River Bridge where they got off, entered the river, and forthwith set out on their adventure. At the close of a successful week, with several large salmon, numerous trout, fine eating, and several action scenes preserved on movie film, the voyage ended 65 miles down the Cain at its junction with the Miramichi. They crossed the Mi-

ramichi, hiked a few miles to a country railway station, made camp for the night, and flagged the early morning train next day.

A Book, A Film

Sturges's story by itself does not stand out for its breathtaking action or exciting adventure, despite the fact that we all would enjoy such a junket. The tantalizing riddle relates to the very commission and whereabouts of the purported film of the expedition. All the courtesies and conveniences extended to the expedition would have been extraordinary for the average fisherman on an average fishing trip, but this fisherman and his mission had to be special to be accompanied by movie cameras. Was this trip picked or arranged by the government of Canada? Who was Lee Sturges that he should be given this much attention? And assuming that the professional filmmaker made a film, where was it stored and was it in viewable form?

It was twenty-something years ago when I added this little volume to my collection of angling books. The existence and location of a film as mentioned in the book was immediately a puzzle and I soon began a search, but answers were elusive and because of time constraints the unanswered questions were put aside. Now, after retirement, with more free time and encouragement from my wife, the search for the missing film began anew. As my interest mounted, it came to include not only the question of the existence of a film, but also who was Lee Sturges and why was this fishing trip the basis for a privately published book?

The Voyageurs

A phone call to Hank Bruns (bibliophile and author of the very fine *Angling Books of the Americas)* to inquire if he knew of any living Sturges descendants paid off. He had visited Lee years earlier in the home of Lee's son in south Alabama. Bruns could not recall the name of the city, so a call to the information operator was necessary. The story of why I was searching for "a Sturges in south Alabama" captured her imagination and she presented me with six listings for Sturges families living in the southern half of the state. On the third phone call, success: a conversation ensued with two of Lee's grandchildren, Frank Sturges III, and his sister Lillian Woolford.

Their stories provided another curious vignette. Lee's daughter Mary Sturges Thomas, now deceased, lived in a home just three blocks from my current home in Fort Worth, Texas, for fifty years. Her two daughters, Ms. Walter O'Bannon of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Ms. Hugh Crowgey of New Orleans, along with their two cousins in Alabama, provided much information about their grandfather, but still no answer to the big question of the mysterious film.

The book *Salmon Fishing on Cain River New Brunswick* is a handsome small volume featuring seven, excellent, full-page etchings of river scenes, and several smaller ones of guides and other members of the party. Fifty copies were privately printed on handmade paper for the author by Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Fine Arts Building, Chicago. Charles Wetzel, in his *American Fishing Books* (1950,) states that the publication date of the Sturges book was 1910, but the title page of the book shows the date MXMXIX, nine years later. Wetzel may have made direct contact with Sturges, learned that the trip was made in 1910 and assumed that it was also the publishing year.

THE RIVER AT HOUGHTON LODGE

The author/artist was a superb etcher. After high school, Sturges had studied at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts under Thomas Eakins, and later became president of both the Chicago Society of Etchers and the American Society of Etchers. The art in his book is far more fascinating than the fishing story itself and one can readily understand why the Chicago Art Institute awarded him the Logan Medal for another of his etchings, *Glacier National Park.*

More intriguing facts and/or myths about the book center around its history. There are dissimilar stories regarding the day the fifty copies were ready for delivery. Conrad Rafield, an angling bibliophile of note twenty years ago, provided the first such version I had heard: "The evening when Mr. Sturges was notified that his books were ready for delivery, he, wanting a few of the books for family and friends, picked up several copies, leaving the remainder for dispatch later on. That same night a fire at the printer's destroyed all the remaining books." The anecdote which Hank Bruns relates was that Sturges picked up the limited edition of fifty copies, left them on the kitchen table in his home that evening. That night his house burned down and Sturges was able to rescue only a few copies. Whatever the actual facts, the book is both unique and rare.

In his study, Mr. Bruns details the location of known copies as belonging to "The Kerridge collection, Conrad W. Rafield, Jr., the Bruns collection, the Author's son, and one is unaccounted for." A copy of the book held by Lee's son, Frank, Jr., is now lost; after Frank Jr.'s death, his house was sold and inadvertently some of his books were not removed. This misfortune was not discovered until after the new owner took possession, thus the loss of that copy. The research for details about Lee Sturges and his book revealed four undocumented copies belonging to members of Lee's family. I have also learned through correspondence with William H. Savage of The Anglers' Club of New York that the rare book section of their library contains a presentation copy, a gift from Lee Sturges. Curiously, it is numbered as "395 of a limited edition of 50"! These, plus the copies in the Bruns and Kerridge collections and the Rafield copy (now in my library), make a total of nine known copies (the ninth being in "someone's" library). A possible tenth copy, as reported by Bruns, completes the current inventory of known copies. [One of these copies may be the volume Vern Gallup donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing's library. —Ed.]

SEARCHING FOR THE FILM

In the book, the filmmaker is said to be from the "C.N.R." For years, I thought the initials referred to the Canadian National Railroad. I was mistaken. Between 1914 and 1919 it was called the "Canadian Northern Railroad," later merging with the "Canadian National." I contacted the National Archives of Canada which located a collection of films in the Vancouver, B.C., file dated from the second decade of the century. In these files were several reels of salmon fishing. Although it appeared unlikely that these films would lend information on the trip in question, the dates were about right and there was reference to the Canadian Northern Railroad.

After a more detailed examination of these documentaries, the Archives notified me that a short 35mm film relating

EVENING ON THE RIVER

to salmon fishing in Bantalor, New Brunswick, had been found. Maps revealed that the Cain River forms the northeast boundary of the Bantalor National Preserve and the chips were beginning to fall in place.

I then learned that the Archives would make a reference copy of the original film which they would transfer to VHS 16mm video. From this a copy of the video could be made and sent to me, provided there were no problems with obtaining rights to the film from the city of Vancouver. The film was said to show a fishing and camping group in canoes in the Bantalor Preserve. I figured this must be the film of the adventure, although for a film of a 65-mile canoe trip, the fragment it presented seemed a bit short!

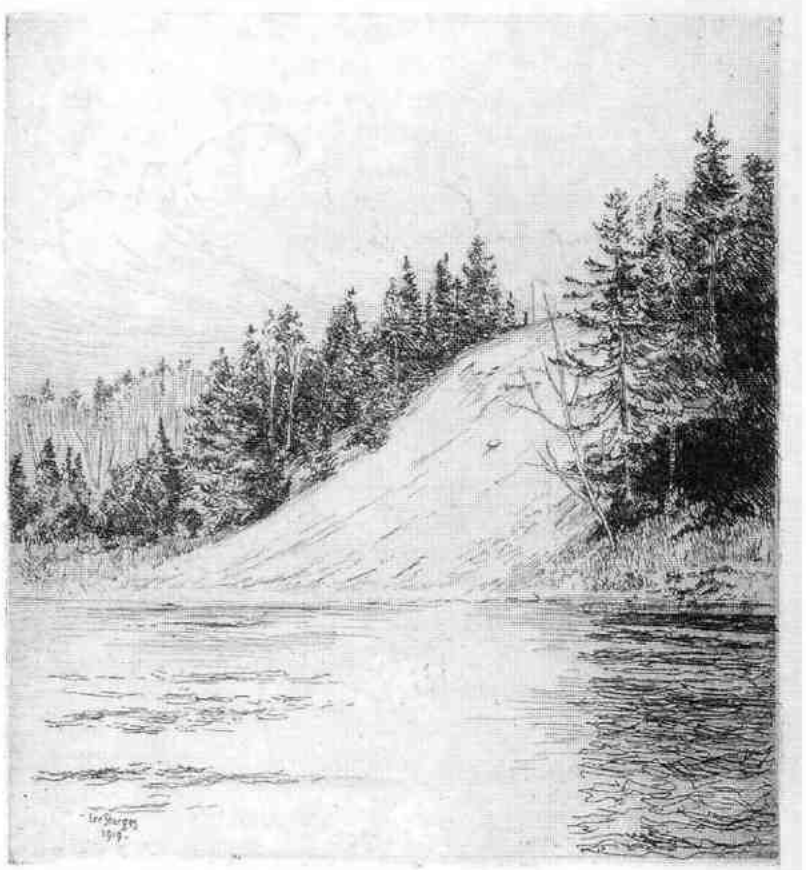
But whatever the length, my copy would be shipped to me. My elation was boundless and waiting for delivery was similar to waiting for Christmas. After the first viewing, it was obvious that the images—three canoes, some footage of leaping salmon on lines, then being brought to gaff and nets—certainly had to be a portion of the film taken on the Sturges trip. Considering the age of the film, it is in remarkably good condition, thanks to the Canadian Archives Office's excellent archiving techniques. One can assume that around the turn of the century large quantities of movie footage ended up on the cutting room floor due to the quality of cameras, exposures, film, and developing.

The mystery of why the Canadian government sent its railway filmmaker down the Cain, met the party with an official of the railway, and furnished transportation and a complimentary fishing license can be partly solved by searching through a comprehensive treatise on the history of the moving picture. The author reports that in the 1918-1919 period, a person purported to be representing the Canadian Pacific Railway invested $250,000 in the Associated Screen News which distributed *Kinograms*, a newsreel, and the *Gaumont News & Graphic*. The Cain film appears to be a newsreel, thus suggesting that it was made to bolster tourist trade, Canada being the first country to officially make travel marketing films.

On any fishing trip, the cameras and equipment would need to be somewhat lightweight to permit loading into the canoes. The early cameras in the decade before and after the turn of the century were gigantic, weighing about 500 pounds and requiring batteries that weighed almost as much. A practical portable camera that first became available in Germany about 1900 was the Kine-Messter, which chronicled many explorations to Africa. I do not know if it was ever exported to the United States. About the same time, Pathé Frères in France marketed a lightweight portable that was used by Billy Bitzer to film *Birth of a Nation*. Pathé established an American Pathé Studio in 1910 and published the *Pathé Weekly*, another newsreel, and their hand-cranked portable unit became available about 1912. In the same year, Pathé marketed safety film. It is reasonable to assume that Robinson could have used this camera on the Sturges trip.

Sturges was the chief executive officer of a sizeable manufacturing plant in Chicago, a cofounder and president of the Chicago Manufacturers Association, renowned in various etching societies, a hunter, and, presumably, a more than fair fly fisher. The chief executive officer of the firm that bought the Sturges company years ago knew Lee and recounted many vignettes about him, but knew nothing of the fishing trip or the book.

One-half the task of searching for the film and discovering the reason for its production has been accomplished. During this quest I have not only met and talked with many interesting and interested people, I have been left with



THE SKIDWAY

more questions: Where is a copy of the earliest film of sport fishing, especially for salmon? Is the film of the Cain trip the first professionally made moving picture of sport fishing? There seems to be no way to accurately date the film other than by inference in the book, and so, there remains more historical searching to do.

On 18 November 1994, the Elmhurst Historical Museum in Sturges's home town of Elmhurst, Illinois, opened an exhibit presenting the original etchings used in the book and many other etchings from their own collection. The exhibit remained on display until February 1995. In speaking to the curator on opening night, I learned their museum had received a copy of the Cain book as a donation, thus raising the known copies to ten, possibly eleven.

Lee Sturges
1865-1954

THE ELDEST OF THREE children, Lee Sturges was born on August 13, 1865, in Elmhurst, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago. His father Frank started a manufacturing business, the Chicago Stamping Company, at the end of the Civil War. After an early education in the Chicago public schools, Lee attended the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, studying under the well known artist Thomas Eakins. He returned to Chicago, decided against a career as an artist, and entered his father's business. He married in 1890 and had three children. The manufacturing plant was lost in the Chicago Fire and rebuilt in Bellwood, a suburb of Chicago, where it produced milkcans and other types of supplies.

Lee and his family moved in 1892 to Elmhurst. He was not only a bright well-educated engineer, he had a special talent with his hands. During his lifetime he patented several inventions, the most successful being the Sturges Etching Press, which was manufactured by his company. In 1893, he and others formed the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. The Chicago Stamping Company later became the Sturges & Burns Mfg. Company, at which Lee rose to become president (1900-1921). It was during this period that the Cain River trip took place. His accomplishments and business success may explain the red-carpet treatment on the trip to Canada.

Lee was an artist held in high esteem by his peers; the Chicago Art Institute awarded him the Logan Medal for his etching of Glacier National Park, and he served as president of the Chicago Society of Etchers for many years. He was also member and president of the American Society of Etchers and a member of the Brooklyn Society of Etchers. When his company merged with several others over the course of the first half of this century (eventually becoming the Graphic Chemical & Ink Company of Villa Park, Illinois), Graphic continued to manufacture the etching press after agreeing to Lee's requirement that the price would always reflect *only* the costs of manufacture and advertising. He was ever the artist.

In his later years Lee moved to Florida where he died in 1954, on his birthday, at the age of eighty-nine. He is buried at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

M. T. BRONSTAD, JR.

Reuben R. Cross, Fly Tyer

by Edwin Teale

with introductions by Albert J. Cohen and Albert Brewster

". . . When he [Rube] wrote his great little book *Tying American Trout Lures* in 1936, he opened the way for many of us to tie high-quality dry flies by revealing some of the 'secrets' of the professionals. It was really the first good book on the subject published in the United States. . . . His influence on American fly fishing became even more pronounced with the publication of *Fur, Feathers and Steel* in 1940."

—V.C. "Pete" Hidy, from his introduction to
The Complete Fly Tier *by Reuben R. Cross (1971)*

Rube cross, a highly regarded American fly tyer of the Catskill school, claimed to have learned fly tying from Theodore Gordon (see "Reuben Cross: Sportsman, Historian, and Tier of Fishing Flies," by Ed Van Put, Fly Rod & Reel, *January/February 1993). Whether or not Rube learned from Gordon has always been the subject of speculation, but this matter should be resolved as Rube tells us how he learned to tie flies in the accompanying article written by Edwin Teale, reprinted from a December 1934 issue of* Outdoor Life.

To preface this reprint, I asked my friend Al Brewster, who knew Rube personally, to write a few words about the man he knew, not the legend. His vignette accompanies the Teale article. Al Brewster lives on Cape Cod, is an active member of several fly fishing and fly-tying organizations, and has fished and tied flies for most of his life. Even today, weather permitting, he fishes almost every day and is always trying out new techniques and new flies he has tied. The Eastern Council of the Federation of Fly Fishermen conferred its first Man of the Year Award on Art Flick, Al Brewster received the second.

Albert J. Cohen

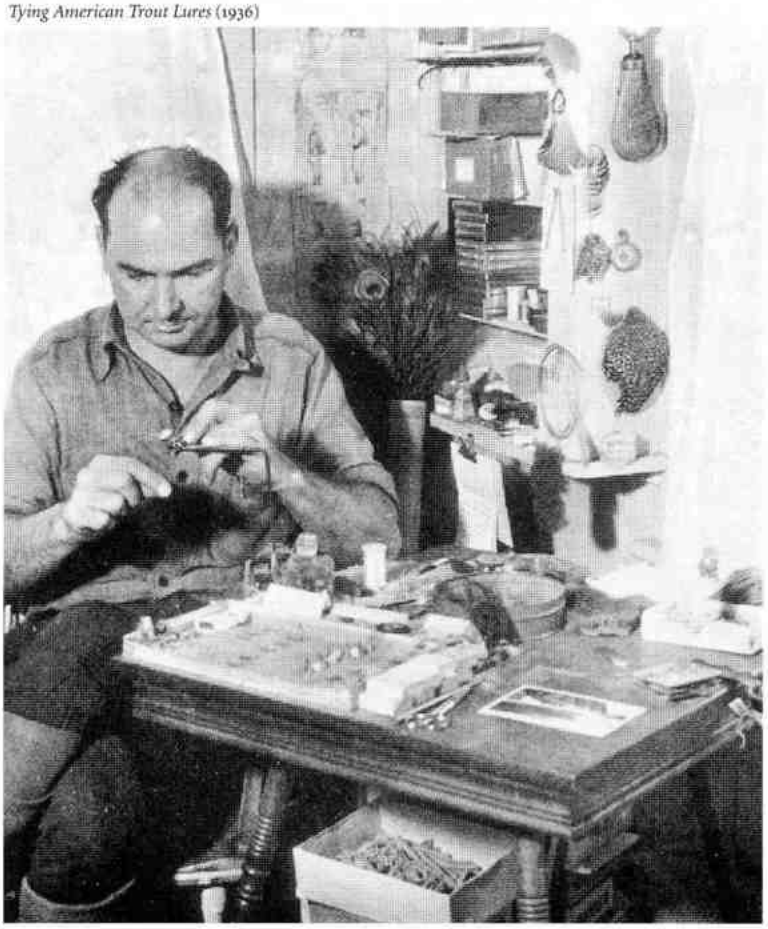
Rube Cross

by Albert Brewster

I first met Rube in the late 1930s. After Rube's house in the Catskills burned down, Harvey Flint brought Rube to Providence, Rhode Island, set him up in the Bordeaux Apartments, and got him a job as a bank messenger. I met Rube through my friend Horace Randall; Rube had an old beat-up Buick that Horace kept repairing for him. Horace brought Rube to one of our Sunday night fly-tying/bull sessions down at the South Seekonk Gun Club in Seekonk, Massachusetts.

Rube was a huge man. I guess he weighed close to 300 pounds, but he wasn't fat or overweight. One of his hands was as big as both of mine and how he was able, with those big fingers, to marry feathers and put them on the hook so delicately, I'll never know. Rube wouldn't tie anything but dry flies—he wouldn't tie a wet fly (those were nasty words then) and of course nymphs were unheard of. But he was a very

Tying American Trout Lures (1936)



Far left: The frontispiece from The Complete Fly Tier *(1936) featuring Rube Cross and one of his favorite roosters. Left: One of the photographs that appeared in the 1934* Outdoor Life *profile of Rube Cross, as well as in* Tying American Trout Lures *(1936). Its caption read, "From this little corner table, Cross flies go out to fishermen all over the country."*

good dresser of dry flies. Surprisingly, he wasn't a very good fisherman.

I wanted to learn as much as I could about fly tying, but in those days fly-tying methods were like military secrets—nobody told you about his pet methods and about the only way I could get anything out of Rube was to disagree with him and get him into an argument. Then he would go all out to prove his point.

Rube was quite a drinker and a ladies' man. He was a great entertainer and could tell stories with the best of them, but at times, in my estimation, a little bit of Rube went a long way. For the fly-tying talent he had, he didn't do anywhere near as well as he could have. Rube had a difficult time holding down a job and making ends meet. When he died, Len Lambrick, the outdoor writer for *The Providence Journal,* raised money so they could bury him.

He was a clever fly dresser—he always dressed his flies with double wings (two strips of material in each wing) and lots of hackle. I made several trips to the Bordeaux Apartments when he lived there and learned a few things from him. He was always bumming materials—he had no credit and could not afford to buy, so he would always bum materials from anyone. I has a gross of Carrie Stevens's Gray Ghost streamers to do, so I traded him white Peking duck wings for blue dun shoulder hackles. Surprisingly, I found that Rube used dyed hackles—he wouldn't tell me what he used to dye the hackles with, but my wife told me that it was Tintex Armor Gray. When Rube found out that I knew the secret of the dyed hackles and how to dye them, he tried to swear me to secrecy, but I told him that as far as I was concerned I would tell whoever asked me.

Rube was really like that—he wouldn't tell anyone anything. For example, Rube and Ray Bergman were at sword's point over the kind of tying thread Rube used; Rube's thread was twice as fine as the finest thread we could find. Well, we finally found out the brand name when Rube ran out of it. He didn't have the credit to buy a case of it, so he sold it to a group of us for a $1.50 a spool, collected in advance.

I have on my wall the set of flies that Rube tied for me, along with the fan-winged Royal Coachman he did at the South Seekonk session. When I first started out, I had a lot of trouble with proportions and Rube straightened me out on that. The fan-winged Royal Coachman is interesting—that's how I learned about his thread—there are thirty-two turns of thread just to secure the wings and the way he tied it you can't see any trace of the thread base.

Rube claimed that the Hendrickson fly, as well as the Cross Special, were his inventions, but that Roy Steenrod had stolen them from him. And so it went, Rube was a good tyer of dry flies, but felt bitter about other folks' success. I always felt that had he been more responsible, he could have held a steady job and could have done better as a writer and as a fly dresser, but he was always waiting for that lucky moment—when he wouldn't have to work and could live off the fat of the land.

Reuben R. Cross: Dry Flies From a Kitchen Workshop

by Edwin Teale

(REPRINTED FROM *Outdoor Life*, DECEMBER 1934)

A MILE AND A QUARTER north of the village of Neversink, New York, you come to a white frame house on the left of a winding dirt road. You are in the celebrated trout region of the southern Catskills and the white house is the home of Reuben R. Cross, ace dry-fly tyer of America.

Not only in the Catskills, in the Adirondacks, on Maine lakes, and on the inland waters of the East, but in Colorado, Montana, California, Canada, and even in Scotland and England, Cross flies are famous. Working at a little table in a corner of the kitchen, he turns out delicately feathered hooks for a list of customers that reads like pages torn from a Who's Who of the fishing world.

When Eugene V. Connett, former president of The Anglers' Club of New York City, referred to Cross in his recent volume *Any Luck?* as the best professional fly tyer in America, he was voicing the opinion of a great many experts. For nearly a decade, Reuben Cross has made his living entirely from the product of his kitchen workshop.

If you ask anybody in the Neversink region where Rube Cross lives, he can tell you. Everybody knows him. He is 6 feet, 2 inches tall and built accordingly. You can see him a mile and hear his hearty laugh almost as far. He is a deputy sheriff of Sullivan County, a member of the local election board, and active in the social life of the village.

He was born thirty-eight years ago on his father's farm near Neversink and has lived in the same community all his life. In that region, fishing is in the air and Rube Cross began as soon as he could hold a pole. When he was eighteen, he tried out a dry fly he bought for a nickel at the local country store. The trout ignored it completely. He spent another dime on a second fly and, to his disgust, had no better luck. So he decided to make a fly of his own.

As he describes it, that first of the 60,000 dry flies he has turned out was a corker. It had queer feathers sticking out at odd angles from a hook "as big as your fist." The chances of a trout striking at such bait, he now knows, are about one in a million. Yet, by one of those freaks of fishing luck, the very first time he cast the homemade lure at a pool where he had never been able to catch a fish before, an 11-inch brown trout gobbled down the fly—hook, feathers, and all!

The moment he held that gleaming beauty in his hands, Cross became a confirmed flymaker. At the time, there were only two experts in the country. Even today, there are hardly more than half a dozen top-notchers.

After his first stroke of luck, good fortune deserted him. In the year that followed, he made hundreds of flies and hardly took a fish. They sank like lead or, when they floated, the trout passed them by. He had not learned to "think like a fish," to know the materials and color combinations that appealed to the trout. Also, he lacked experience in picking the right kinds of feathers and the delicate touch necessary for working with the tiny bits of fur and other materials needed in the work. But he kept plugging away. Luck started him, but hard work carried him on.

He spent days collecting insects along the waterways, studying them at night to note the delicate shadings and color patterns that were most common. He still studies the insect life along trout brooks for ideas. During the second winter, he copied scores of standard dry flies and worked out innovations by the dozen. He still has a bottle half full of the crude early flies he made during this period. He showed me one placed beside another he had just completed before I arrived. They differed in finish almost as much as an ox cart and an automobile.

By the end of the second year, he had learned the likes and dislikes of the trout and was catching them regularly. Word got around that he was taking game fish with homemade flies. Some of the neighbors ordered a few and city anglers coming up for the trout season added to his sales. That year, he turned out about forty dozen flies and sold twenty dozen. From then on, the fame of his product spread steadily until today he is turning out about 400 dozen flies a year, all to order. Oftentimes, down the back-country road that leads to his home, the local mail carrier brings orders—many of them coming by airmail—faster than he can fill them.

His record production for one day is four dozen flies. It takes him from five to ten minutes to tie one and he usually turns out from two and a half to three dozen in a working day. Because of the strain on eyes and nerves, he works only an hour or two at a time, then goes outside to chop wood or let off steam in

Tying American Trout Lures (1936)

Rube in his laboratory. The caption of this photograph from Tying American Trout Lures *reads, "Theories are acceptable only if they check and double-check against good old Mother Nature: studying nymph life during the winter months."*

some other way. He is able now to get through half the job of tying a fly before he puts it in the vise. His speed record for completing a single fly is two and a half minutes.

There are about thirty-five patterns of flies that Cross turns out in quantity. They are the most popular of the hundreds of kinds used by anglers. Every year he makes new kinds of flies to special order. On backs of envelopes and bits of paper, fishermen from distant points send him drawings of insects they have seen game fish take. They want imitation dry flies made. They designate the size of hook, the color of the body, the length of tail, the kind of hackle, and Cross makes the flies up according to specifications.

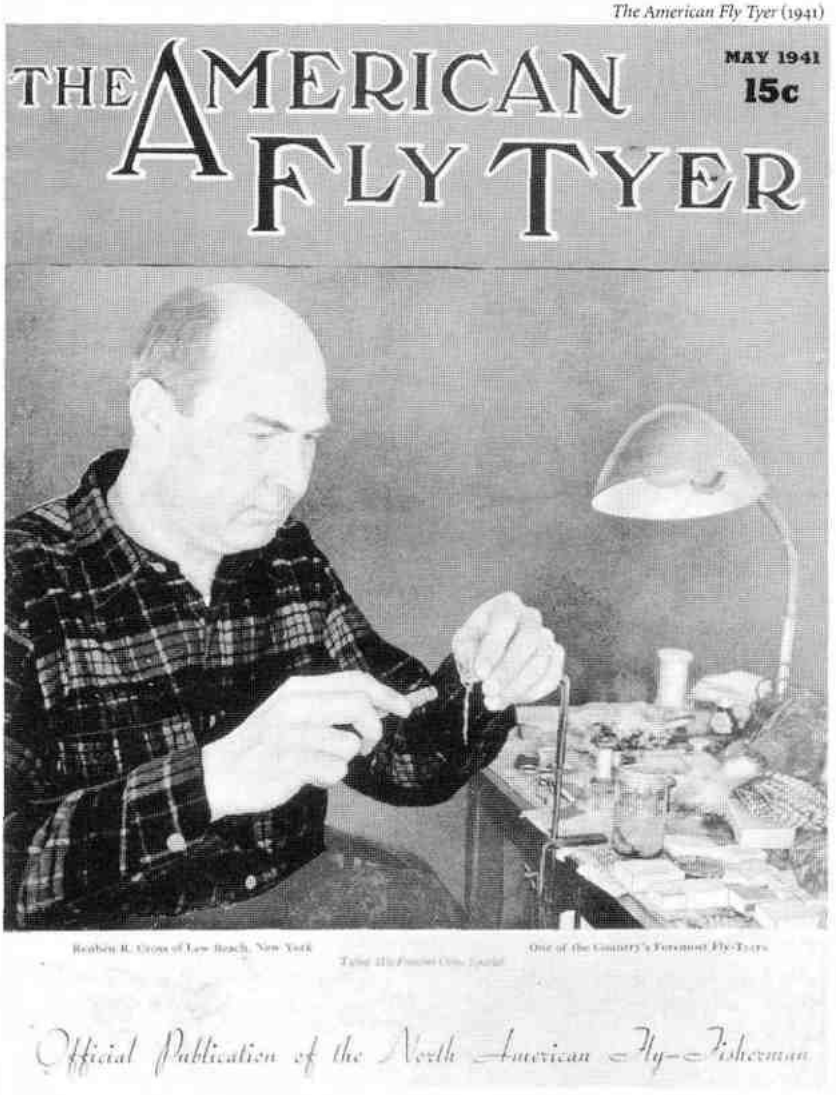
As many as forty such orders may come in in one season. Rarely, however, do such imitation insects produce the expected results. A curious fact that Cross learned early in his work is that a trout will often ignore an exact imitation, but make the water boil getting to a fly with some outlandish wing or tail. Mayflies and a few others are exceptions to the rule. They are produced as almost exact copies. But the percentage of such reproductions is small.

The subdued colors—the grays, buffs, and browns—form the most attractive combinations in dry-fly making. Bluish feathers are particularly attractive to trout. In the early years of his work, Cross tried to use the feathers of the Blue Andalusian rooster. But he soon found they were too soft and webby and often their color was almost black. So he has developed an entirely new breed of chickens just to get the right feathers for his flies!

By crossing black and white Leghorns, he has produced fowls whose feathers have a bluish hue perfect for fly making. Several years ago, he obtained the first of the new chickens. Now he has a flock of a dozen old ones and half a dozen younger roosters.

Acrosss the road from his house, beyond a mountain brook which contains native trout up to 10 inches in length, Cross has his "feather farm." This chicken yard probably contains more roosters per square foot than any other yard in the country. There are thirty-five and Cross has no trouble waking up early in the morning. The feathers used in fly making are the hackles or neck feathers of the roosters. The average yield is from six to eight dozen feathers at a plucking and new feathers grow in after three to four months. Cross plucks his roosters four times a year although "Joe," one of his prize Rhode Island

The American Fly Tyer (1941)



Rube was featured on the cover of The American Fly Tyer *in 1941, tying his famous Cross Special. His article "One Day on the Beaverkill" appeared inside.*

Reds and a pet that rode around on his shoulder and crowed when the mailman left an order, grew new feathers every two months. Oats and laying mash are the best feeds for producing feathers, Cross has found.

Two years ago, a mysterious epidemic swept the chicken yard. Roosters that were well at night would be dead in the morning. Veterinarians were unable to diagnose the trouble. Before it spent itself, the disease had taken eighteen of Cross's prize birds, Blue Duns and Buff Leghorns. It was a serious loss as he "lives off his roosters," their feathers being the mainstay of his fly production.

Along with the roosters are a dozen gray mallard ducks. They have come from a single pair of domesticated birds Cross purchased years ago. He uses their wing and side feathers. Other feathers employed in his fly making come from far places on the map—from India, from China, from Tibet. He uses peacock feathers, jungle-cock feathers, and golden-pheasant feathers for special jobs. Raffia grass, coming from palms in Madagascar, is also employed for building up bodies which are later dyed red or brown. In other cases they are left undyed to form light tan bodies for imitation insects.

The corner of the kitchen where Cross does his work is between two windows beside the stove. His square table is littered with bits of fur, pieces of feathers, scissors, razor blades, rubber bands, spools of thread, coils of wire, fishhooks, pill boxes, a clothespin, and an assortment of tiny tools. Behind him is a cabinet packed with various materials. Tacked to the wall are fishing and hunting cartoons, and hanging on nails on the side of the cabinet are a compass, a silver watch, a sheriff's badge, a powder flask, and various odds and ends. On one corner of the table, a small monkey on a white base carries the greeting: "Don't Monkey With Anything on this Table!"

In this cramped corner of the kitchen, Cross has turned out the thousands of flies. Outside one of the windows, you see snowshoes hanging on a peg. And on the walls of the room are mounted butterflies, a deer's head, and several big trout on plaster of Paris plaques. Guns that range from old-time muzzle loaders to modern rifles are stacked in almost every corner of the house. Cross is an outdoor man who knows birds, plants, and animals and has the time of his life tramping

The Complete Fly Tier (1936)

The back flap photograph from The Complete Fly Tier *of Rube's own corner, behind the worktable. His corner looks a whole lot neater than some other "corners" we've seen.*

through the foothills of the Catskills.

On most of these hunting and trapping expeditions he is accompanied by Ring, his pedigreed bloodhound. Born on Groundhog Day, Ring gets his name from a collar of white hair which encircles his tawny neck. His grandfather was a celebrated "man trailer" at a Western penitentiary.

During winter months, Cross traps muskrats, mink, and foxes and shoots rabbits and squirrels. Their fur goes into making the bodies of dry flies. Martin, beaver, and badger pelts he has to buy.

From the raw material of feathers and fur, he has turned out approximately 5,000 dozen finished flies. One creation of his own, the Cross Special, which employs the bluish feathers of his prize roosters, has been making fish history in recent years. It has accounted for as many big trout catches in the East as any other single fly. Most of the flies he makes are for trout fishing, but some are for salmon, bass, and pickerel.

Frequently, lucky fishermen ask Cross to mount their prize catches. In a loft over his barn, he has fitted up a workbench where he makes the plaster of Paris plaques and does the mounting. On the walls of this room he has hung some of the big fellows caught with his flies. The room is also a storehouse for spinning wheels, antique vases, axes, boots, and overflow guns and fishing tackle, together with odds and ends of all kinds.

The largest order for flies Cross ever received came from a New York engineer two years ago. He was starting on a trip during which he intended to fish streams in Wisconsin and the Adirondacks and he ordered $180 worth of flies at one clip. The sixty dozen included only seven or eight different patterns.

Christmas orders start coming in about December 1. By March and April, Cross has so much work piled up ahead that orders coming in after April usually must wait until the following year before they can be filled.

In fact, the mounting tide of orders is causing him considerable distress. He used to get in a lot of fishing. Now, he tells me, he is so busy supplying flies to other anglers he can't find time to go fishing himself. About the time he gets his tackle out, along comes a rush order and he has to put his fishing equipment away and get to work! It's tough, but that's what happens when you're in the business.

Visiting with Uncle Thad: Thaddeus Norris, 1811-1877

by J. Robert Norris, Jr.

"If any man is entitled to be called the American Walton, it is Thaddeus Norris."

—Fred Mather, *My Angling Friends* (1901)

THADDEUS NORRIS was a nineteenth-century author, angler, tackle dealer, maker of fishing rods and artificial flies, humorist, fish culturist, philosopher, traveler, fireside banjo player, and, paradoxically, a city-dwelling country gentleman. His *American Angler's Book* (1864) is considered the best of our first American books on fishing. Not a rehash of English publications, as were all prior fishing books published in America, Norris entertainingly described our native fish and fishing methods. This book is best known for its account, considered the first such in America, of fishing with floating flies or, in today's terminology, dry-fly fishing.

I met Thaddeus Norris (Uncle Thad) in an unusual and personal way. Many years ago my grandmother Norris gave me the obituary notice for my great grandfather John Richard Norris, which mentioned briefly that he was born on March 20, 1827, on a plantation in Culpeper, Virginia, received his education in Philadelphia, and around the age of fourteen worked in his uncle's store there as a clerk for two or three years.

Some years ago I traveled to Culpeper to begin my search for more information about Thaddeus Norris. At the Culpeper Town and County Library, I learned some Norrises were buried at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Cemetery in downtown Culpeper, where I found forty or so graves, including a half dozen Norrises. On one tall gravestone I saw the Norris name at the top followed by names of the children of a Richard Norris and wife, Sarah Newby, together with several other Norrises, one being a William Calvert Norris, Sr., *son of Thaddeus Norris,* and his wife Ann Calvert. I took some photographs and returned home, but postponed any further research.

When I visited the International Fly Fishing Center in West Yellowstone the next summer I noticed an old mounted advertisement, "Norris Fly Rods by Thaddeus Norris of Philadelphia." Back home, the name Thaddeus Norris started to intrigue me. After coupling the obituary notice, the gravestone, and the fly rod advertisement, I contacted Ralph Moon, curator of the West Yellowstone museum, who graciously sent me a reproduction of the Thaddeus Norris advertisement. Somehow, I knew the Thaddeus Norris in the ad was also the uncle in the obituary notice who raised my great grandfather John Richard Norris. It took three years of research, a little luck, and an obscure 1932 book on the Norrises of Virginia and Maryland to verify that he was, indeed, the very same Thaddeus.

In addition to trips, long-distance calls, and correspondence to Virginia and Philadelphia, I have read every available writing about or by Thaddeus Norris and his immediate family. The more I learned, the more fascinating Uncle Thad became. With a minimum of supposition and conjecture, I shall attempt here to tell the story of his long and interesting life.

The Early Years

Our story begins in 1793 when Thaddeus Norris, Sr., father of our Uncle Thad, and his brothers, in migrating from Lancaster County, Virginia, traveled up the Rappahannock River to the adjoining Virginia counties of Fauquier and Culpeper. The brothers separated, with several settling in Culpeper County; Thaddeus, Sr., and one brother, Septimus, became merchants and major landowners in Fauquier County. After his first wife died, Thaddeus, Sr., married Ann Calvert between 1801 and 1805 and they had six children, four boys and two girls. Our Thaddeus, the second son, was born on August 15, 1811. Somewhat sketchy collateral evidence indicates Thaddeus spent his first years on a farm or plantation in southwestern Fauquier county near the Rappahannock River.

Although the possibility exists, I

My Angling Friends (1901)

"Filled to overflowing with humor, Uncle Thad was as charming a man as one could wish for on a month's trip," Fred Mather wrote in My Angling Friends *(1901).*

found no evidence that the family moved in 1819 when Thaddeus Norris, Sr., constructed a brick tavern in the town of Warrenton in Fauquier County known as the Norris Tavern. After Thaddeus Norris, Sr., died in 1823, his wife Ann continued to operate the tavern. In 1842 the estate of Thaddeus Norris, Sr., sold the tavern and it later became known as the Warren Green Hotel, a Virginia landmark for more than 100 years.

We are fortunate Uncle Thad gives evidence of his early life in *American Angler's Book*. With the many rivers, streams, runs, creeks, and ponds in and around Fauquier County, Thaddeus fished at an early age. He shows his love for the sport in this catfish story.

> In my boyhood, I frequently went Catfishing with a rustic angler whom I shall never forget. After breakfast, one of the servants would appear with a gourd full of worms and we would proceed to his favorite pool, and "set our poles" sticking the butts, which were sharpened, into the muddy bank, and resting them on forked sticks. Ponto, an old bob-tail pointer, would be one of the party, and appeared to enjoy the sport as his master; at the slightest tremor of the cork, he would become restless; when it disappeared he would come to a stand; and the fish was landed, he would seize it or keep it away from the water with as much assiduity as he would look for a wounded partridge. "Aunt Bett," the cook, one day docked Pont's tail with a cleaver, for some depredation, as he was retreating from the kitchen; and it is said the neighbors could always tell when "Uncle Tom" had been at his favorite fishing-hole, by the impression that Pont's tail left in the mud as he sat on his hurdies.[1]

In the following boyhood reminiscence, Uncle Thad describes angling for sunfish or sunnies.

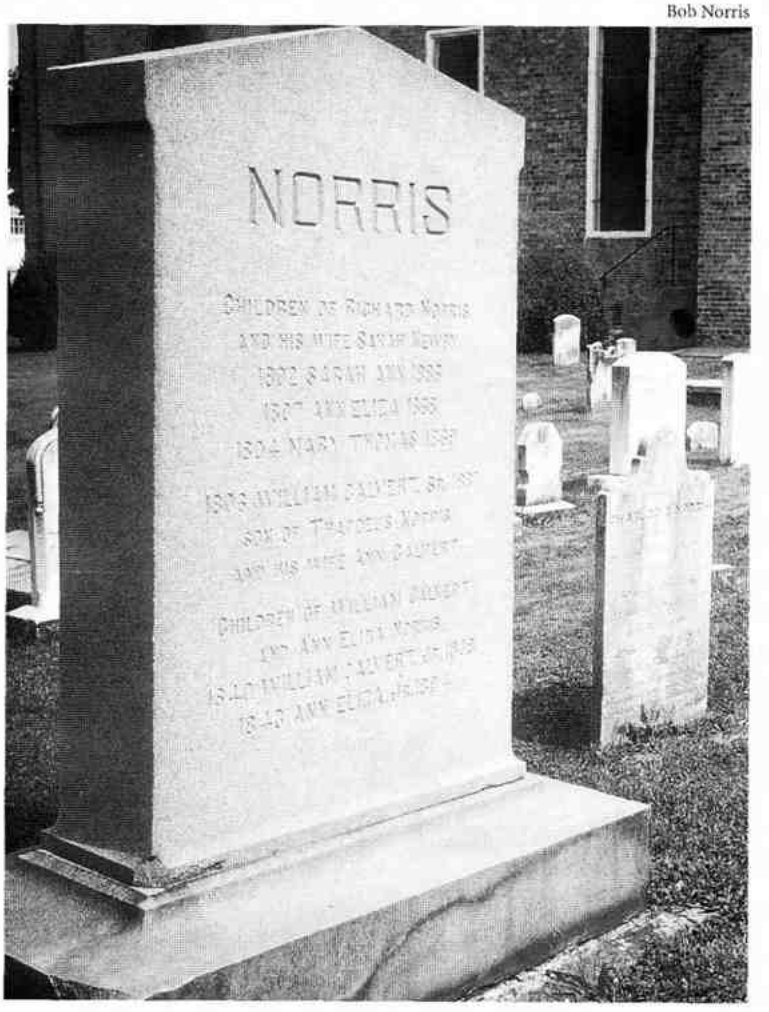
> It is a bootless task to describe the manner of taking Sunnies; any incipient angler of twelve summers would beat Theophilus South or Sir Humphrey Davy at catching them.
>
> It would be hard to tell the amount of early Saturday morning digging for earthworms; or how much bark-peeling of old logs for grubs; or how much anxious search of wasps' nests, they have occasioned. Or how many long sunshiny Saturdays have been spent in search of them; or, when alternating swimming with fishing, and starkly skirting the edge of the mill-pond, how often the youthful sans culotte has dropped his bait before their noses, beside the old stump or big rock, and whopped them out.
>
> Many an angler will remember the untiring patience with which, in boyhood, he has displayed his worm-covered hook before a half score of these pretty fish, and seen the larger (dux gregis) separate himself from the rest and come towards the bait, sail majestically around, backing and filling, eager, though doubtful of the cheat, and glaring on it with his big permanent eye, and, at last, just as the little angler gives up the game, and is despairingly drawing it away, with a bold rush, the Sunny seizes the barbed hook, and in a trice he is bouncing on the grass, and a hand is on him that relaxes not its grasp till the cruel switch is thrust through his gill.[2]

In a final boyhood fishing tale, Thaddeus exhibits his wonderful sense of humor.

> It is astonishing how many knots a nimble little Eel, of a half yard long, can tie in a boy's line, from the time he is landed, until he is taken off the hook, or until his head is cut off. There are hard knots and bow knots, single knots and double knots, all cemented with the prevailing slime. The last resort of the little angler is to do as Alexander the Great did with the Gordian Knot; and take out his jack-knife and cut his line; thus reducing the many knots to one.[3]

Thaddeus moved to Philadelphia in 1835 and established a branch of the Norris family's dry goods and general mercantile business. His older brother William Norris went to New Orleans and managed a branch of the business

Bob Norris



The author of this article traced his ancestry to Thaddeus Norris by way of this gravestone in a cemetery in Culpeper, Virginia, where a son of Thaddeus Norris was buried.

there. Orphaned by the death of his mother in the early 1830s and his father sometime in 1835, my great grandfather John Richard Norris probably accompanied his Uncle Thaddeus when he moved to Philadelphia. Failure to find the graves of young John's parents complicated my research. Several local historians said this is not unusual because many graves and structures on the old plantations were obliterated during the Civil War by the 127 Union and Confederate engagements and skirmishes in Culpeper County. The many cenotaphs in town cemeteries confirm this. I do know that John Richard was living with his Uncle Thad in Philadelphia in 1840 because the United States Census of that year lists Thaddeus Norris, then twenty-nine years old, as having one male, age ten to fifteen, living in his household. In 1840, John Richard was thirteen; it was not until 1843 that Thaddeus had a male child of his own. Thaddeus Norris married Dorothea Abel on January 17, 1837. Nine children were born of their marriage. After his wife Dorothea Abel died in 1858, Thaddeus married Caroline Abel who survived him at his death in 1877. There were no children of this second marriage.

My John Richard lived with his Uncle Thad until 1846 when he joined the army, fought in the Mexican War, and then, in 1849 during the gold rush, drove a team of oxen to California where he died in 1909.

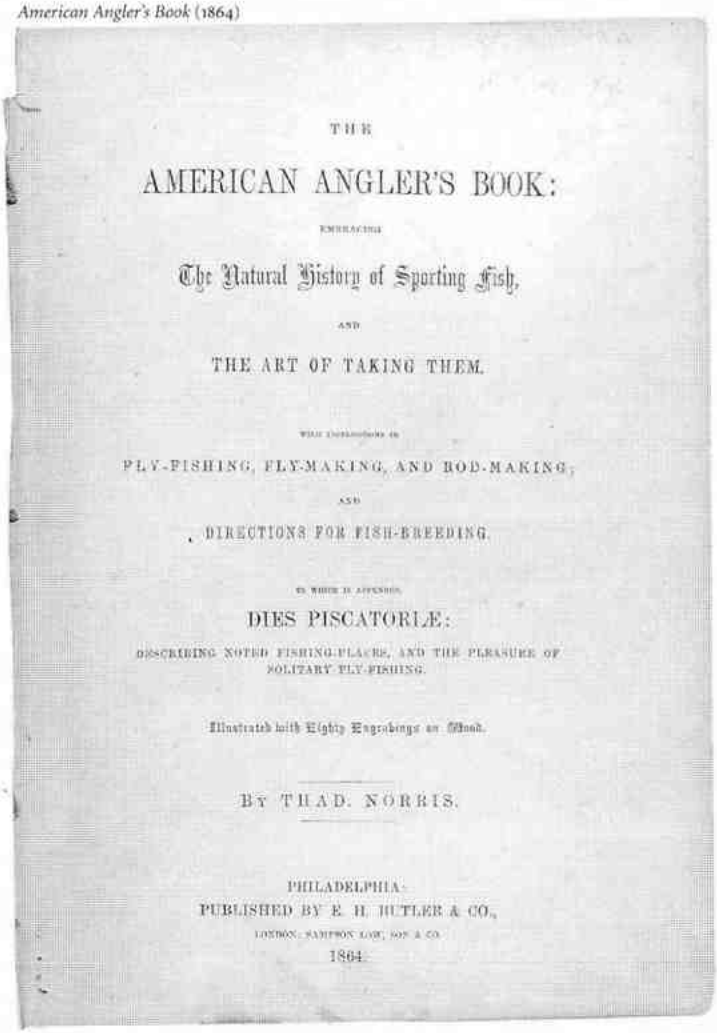
Though only a supposition, I believe the legal transactions in Virginia bear greatly on my Uncle Thad's story. On December 20, 1842, pursuant to a provision in the will of Thaddeus Norris, Sr., that "if his beloved wife shall cease to use the tavern herself as a public house" it shall be sold, our Thaddeus and his living siblings sold the Norris Tavern and a number of adjoining lots, buildings, and appurtenances. Then, by order dated February 1, 1850, confirmed by decrees on June 28, 1851, and January 26, 1852, the Fauquier County Court made a final distribution of the remaining assets in the Thaddeus Norris, Sr., estate to young Thaddeus and the other living devisees and legatees. I mention these transactions to suggest their probable effect on his style of life and ability to travel and fish extensively. In all candor, after reading Uncle Thad's angling book, one of my first thoughts was how can a fellow who owns a fishing tackle store have either the time or resources to fish all those places? I believe his mercantile store, though successful, gradually evolved into a labor-of-love fishing tackle shop.

Fly fishing in America matured in the nineteenth century and Thaddeus Norris played an important role. Uncle Thad clearly expresses his views on a proper fly rod in his *American Angler's Book*. I believe sometime after 1864 he embraced the split-bamboo rod as we know it today. Fred Mather wrote that on Tuesday evenings in 1875 and 1876 he visited Thaddeus's home workshop on Logan Square in Philadelphia to talk fishing and watch Uncle Thad work on his "justly celebrated Norris split-bamboo rods." Mather especially enjoyed seeing Uncle Thad make ferrules. He would watch him first braze and then smooth them with flat files. Norris would then grind them with emery powder and oil and finally burnish them in a lathe.

The Ideal Fly Rod

In three separate sections of *American Angler's Book*—"Tackle in General," "Trout Fly-Fishing," and "Rod-Making"—Norris described the ideal fly rod. For large waters, such as the rivers and lakes of Maine and the streams of Canada, he preferred a stout rod of 12½ to 13 feet, weighing at least 12 ounces. In the lively tributaries of the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Hudson, the streams of New England, and for general brook fishing, he liked a 7-ounce, 12 to 12-feet, 4-inch rod.

American Angler's Book (1864)



THE

AMERICAN ANGLER'S BOOK:

EMBRACING

The Natural History of Sporting Fish,

AND

THE ART OF TAKING THEM.

WITH INSTRUCTIONS IN

FLY-FISHING, FLY-MAKING, AND ROD-MAKING;

AND

DIRECTIONS FOR FISH-BREEDING.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

DIES PISCATORIÆ:

DESCRIBING NOTED FISHING-PLACES, AND THE PLEASURE OF SOLITARY FLY-FISHING.

Illustrated with Eighty Engravings on Wood.

BY THAD. NORRIS.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY E. H. BUTLER & CO.,
LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, SON & CO.
1864.

The frontispiece of American Angler's Book *(1864), a book that contributed to the popularity of fly fishing as this country entered the Victorian age.*

Uncle Thad recommended the butt of the fly rod be made of well-seasoned white ash. The middle joint should be of ironwood and the tip section of quartered and spliced bamboo or of Malacca (East India reed) cane, rent and glued. For strength, elasticity, and length, with joints of 16 to 18 inches, he preferred Malacca cane to bamboo with its 10-inch lengths. I found nothing in his book to indicate Thaddeus used Tonkin cane.

At times Uncle Thad stained his rods with diluted writing ink and smoking tobacco steeped in hot water. To get a permanent finish on his rods, he outlined several procedures using shellac, boiled linseed oil, copal, and unnamed varnishes. For guides he used small metal rings attached to the rod by small pieces of thin brass or copper, called ring-keepers, wrapped at appropriate intervals on the rod. A wire loop was used for a tip top. With ferrules of German silver or sheet brass he molded on mandrels, Uncle Thad used the finishing procedure previously described by Fred Mather.

Since Uncle Thad did not date his rods or make note of those with whom he worked, the curious must look elsewhere for this information. Austin Hogan's article "An Introduction to the History of Fly Fishing in America," which appeared in the Fall 1985 issue of *The American Fly Fisher,* is an excellent starting place. Hogan succinctly describes the role of Thaddeus in the history of fly fishing, writing that his efforts and dedication as a traveler, author, tackle dealer, and master craftsman made Norris as influential in his time as Porter, Bethune, and Forester were in theirs. He confirms that Samuel Phillippe, the consensus inventor of the split-bamboo rod, and Thaddeus Norris were friends and fishing companions, but they apparently disagreed over the use of split bamboo in a fly rod.

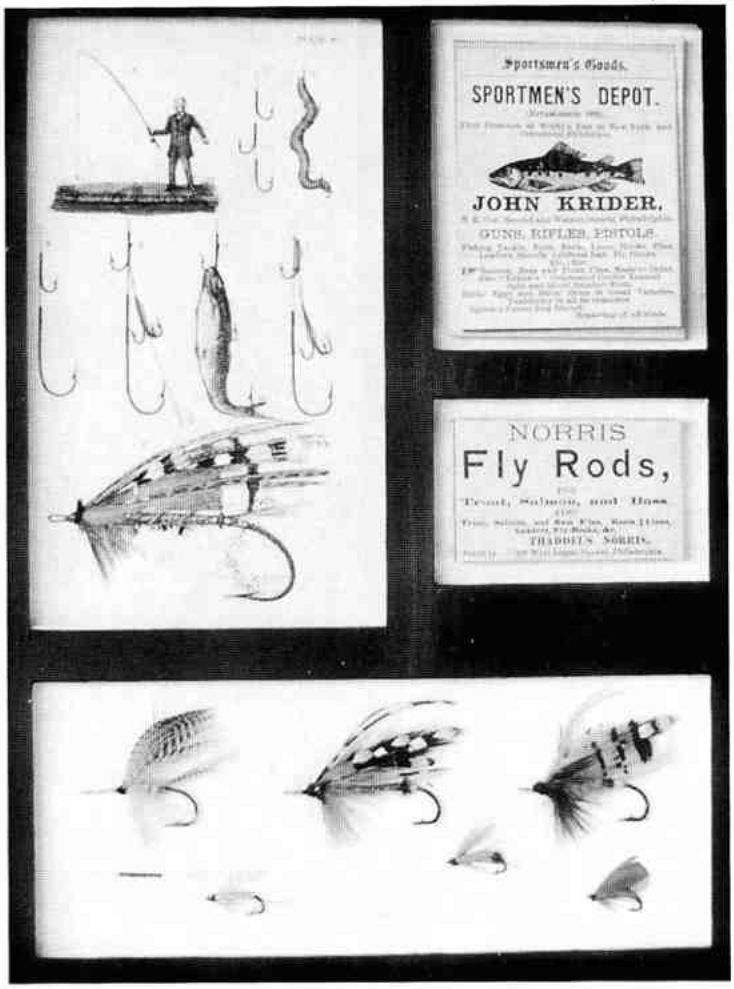
In an excerpt from the *Book of the Black Bass* by James Henshall (1881), which was reprinted in *The American Fly Fisher* ("Origin of the Split-Bamboo Rod," vol. 13, no. 3), Solon Phillippe writes that his father, Samuel Phillippe, was born August 9, 1801, in Reading, Pennsylvania, and died in Easton, Pennsylvania, on May 25, 1877. As a skilled workman in wood and metal, he made violins and fishing rods in addition to his regular work as a gunsmith. Phillippe was a good trout fisher and among his fishing companions was Thad Norris of nearby Philadelphia. He often traveled with Norris and, on one occasion, helped him locate a trout hatchery in Bloomsburg, New Jersey. Uncle Thad often visited Phillippe's shop to watch him work on split-bamboo rods. In Henshall's article, Phillippe's son goes on to say, "His books show that the first split-bamboo rod sold was in 1848. This was a four-section rod in three pieces, all split bamboo, including the butt. His first rods were made certainly as early as 1845."[4]

Without entering into a decades-old debate over who was the inventor of the split-bamboo rod, I believe it is likely Thaddeus Norris only *observed* the making of the first entirely split-bamboo fly rod. Though Uncle Thad probably originated the split-bamboo tip, there is nothing in *American Angler's Book* which indicates he made, except as an experiment, an all-bamboo rod. As previously indicated by Fred Mather, I believe that sometime after 1864, with the availability of improved varieties of cane, he did make entirely split-bamboo fly rods. I leave it to history to choose the split-bamboo rod's inventor: Norris, Phillippe, E. A. Green, Charles F. Murphy, H. L. Leonard, or the English entrants.

Offering Advice

In *American Angler's Book* Uncle Thad offered advice on fly fishing that still applies today. I love his phrase that you should cast your line so that your

Ralph Moon



The exhibit at the International Fly Fishing Center in West Yellowstone that caught the author's eye as he began the search for his ancestor.

fly touches the surface "light as falls the flaky snow." In making your cast Uncle Thad says, "Experience will teach you to cast no longer line than is necessary, whatever proficiency you may acquire." He generally cast with two flies, one fly at the end called the Stretcher or Tail-Fly and the smaller second fly, the Dropper, tied 3 to 4 feet up the leader.

Though his *American Angler's Book*, in general, contributed to the popularity of fly fishing as our country entered the Victorian age, it is the paragraph below which gives the book its immortality.

> If it could be accomplished, the great desideratum would be to keep the line and the flies dry. I have seen anglers succeed so well in their efforts to do this by the means just mentioned, and by whipping the moisture from their flies, that the stretcher and dropper would fall so lightly, and remain so long on the surface that a fish would rise and deliberately take the fly before it sank.[5]

Most regard this as the first account, in America at least, of fishing with floating flies. Recently I have read various writings by worthy fly-fishing historians that raise questions and suggest various eighteenth- and earlier nineteenth-century articles as the first reports on dry-fly fishing. Since I am biased, I only comment that if it has taken 150 or more years to learn of the existence of these articles, I question their value as a fishing tool to the nineteenth-century American fisherman.

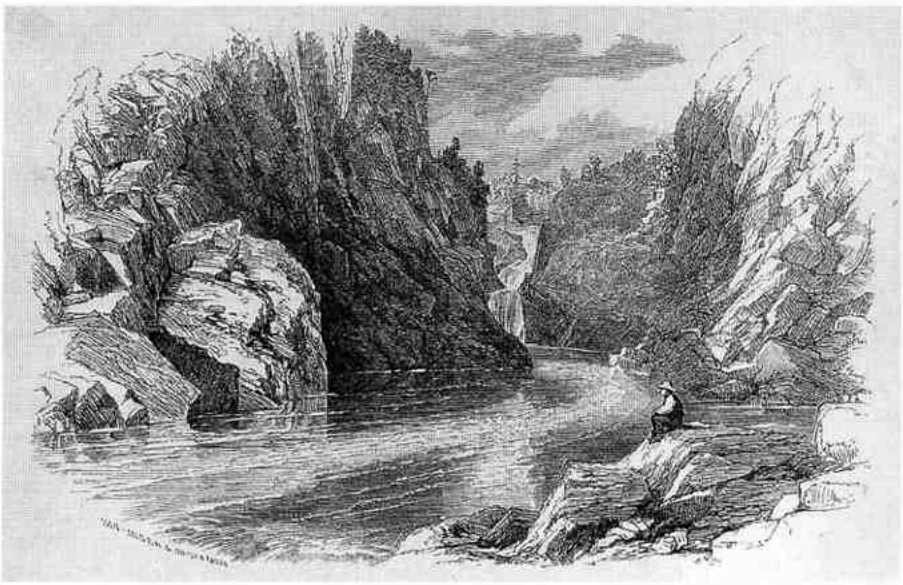
I concur with Ernest Schwiebert that Thaddeus Norris was America's first important angler, but it was Theodore Gordon who brought maturity to dry-fly fishing in America. Although there are several serious contenders, I favor Gordon as the father of *modern* American angling. I thank Schwiebert for furnishing this account by Theodore Gordon of his introduction to dry-fly fishing.

> My attention was first seriously engaged soon after the publication of Frederic M. Halford's fine work in England, I think in 1886, but the dry fly had been used at least a quarter of a century earlier. In Thaddeus Norris' *American Angler's Book* published in 1864, there is a description of dry-fly fishing on the Willowemoc. Norris, using two flies tied expressly for the occasion and a leader of the finest gut, was able to lay them so lightly upon the glossy surface that the trout rose and were hooked before the flies sank.[6]

Though trout fly patterns recommended by English writers still dominated the American fly-fishing scene, Uncle Thad felt many of the English theories and practices for artificial flies were inapplicable in this country. Norris warned the novice fly fisherman that after purchasing the flies described in English books or on their fly-makers' pattern cards, he would find that "he had gradually got rid of at least three-fourths of them, as he has of the theory of strict imitation, and the routine system (that is, an exact imitation of the natural fly, and particular flies for each month)."[7] He predicted that the fly fisher would end up using "a half dozen or so of hackles and a few winged flies, and with such assortment, considers his (fly) book stocked beyond any contingency."[8]

Many are known today under a different name, but some of the flies he recommended were Red Hackle, Soldier Hackle, Ginger Hackle, Grizzly Hackle, Grouse Hackle, Dotterel, Great Red Spinner, Iron Blue Dun, Black Gnat, Grannon, Alder Fly, and Fancy Fly. He had little success with such patterns as Stone Fly, Cowdung, Scarlet Ibis, Green May Fly, Gray Drake, and Governor.

As a fly tyer, he made and fished with "the Brown Hen and the Coachman; of Hackles, only a brown, a black, and ginger."[9] Uncle Thad confessed that other flies may be just as successful "on the whip of other anglers," but he had used these flies constantly for the last five or



Norris salmon-fished the Nipissiguit and wrote about the river in an 1870 edition of Putnam's *magazine, in which he returned to the light literary style of his first book.*

six summers and had "kind of a blind faith in them, which has led me to adopt them to the exclusion of nearly all others."[10]

To the fly tyer, his chapter "Fly-Making" shows little change in the craft in 130 years. The equipment has improved, but even then he used a hand or pin-vise, spring-pliers or forceps, "a stout darning-needle to pick out the dubbing, sharp scissors," and other tools.[11] His materials included Aberdeen, Limerick, and Kirby hooks, gut, tinsel, floss, wrapping silk, gold and silver thread, wings, and dubbing from his wife's muff, buffalo robe, bear skin, lap dog, cat, red or gray squirrel, hare, and down from "a hog-killing, with refuse place."[12]

Like any devoted fly fisherman, Thaddeus had an opinion on the theory of strict, or exact, imitation of the natural fly. After advising the beginning fly fisherman to ignore this theory, he elaborated on it in *American Angler's Book.*

> For the theory of *strict imitation,* there is some show of reason, but I cannot concede that Trout will rise more readily at the artificial fly which most closely resembles the natural one, for the fish's attention is first attracted because of something lifelike falling on the water, or passing over the surface, and he rises at it because he supposes it to be something he is in the habit of feeding upon, or because it resembles an insect or looks like a fly, not that it is any particular insect or fly; for we sometimes see the most glaring cheat, which resembles nothing above the waters or beneath the waters, a piece of red flannel, for instance, or the fin of one of their own species, taken greedily.[13]

At least we now know his position on our match-the-hatch discussions. Even though I concur with Thaddeus, I believe I would accomplish nothing in discussing all the pro and cons written on this subject. However, my theory, like Uncle Thad's, is to use whatever fly *you* believe will catch trout.

American Fish Culture

In 1868, four years after the publication of his first book, Thaddeus Norris wrote *American Fish Culture,* a scholarly study of "the propagation of fish by artificial means, and the protection of the young from the dangers to which they are exposed in their natural haunts; assisting and in a great degree improving on nature."[14] In this work Uncle Thad abandons the folksy intimate style of his prior work and writes as a college professor composing his doctoral dissertation. The change in style is startling, but it fits the subject matter. He discusses trout breeding and the culture of the salmon and shad. He covers the naturalization of a number of fish, including brook, lake and sea trout, grayling, white fish, rock fish, crappie, smelt, and black bass. Surprisingly, he also discusses at length t he culture of oysters and the breeding of the mink.

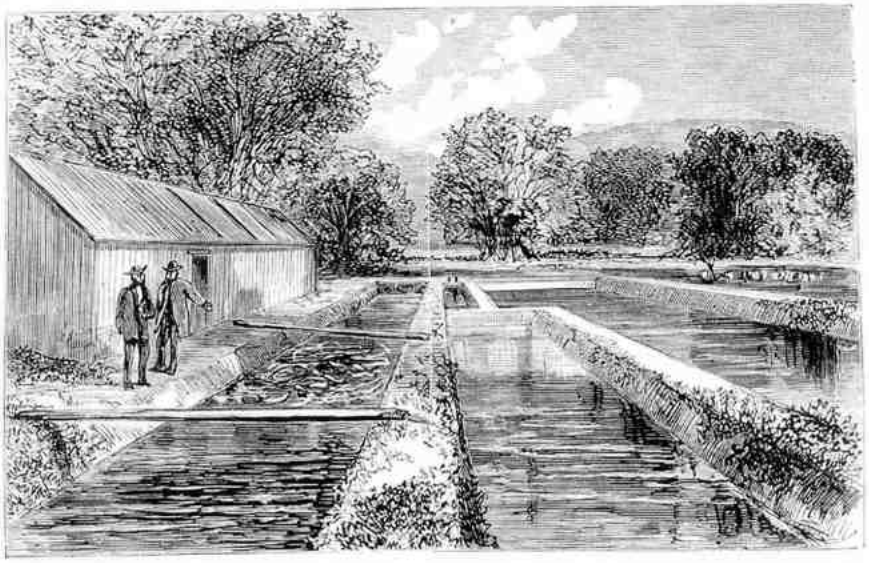
Although it lacked the popularity of his first writing, his second book was well received. Fred Mather, after purchasing a farm near Honeoye Falls, New York, bought the book, the first such publication he had heard of, and found, "It has little value to the fish culturist to-day, but it gave all that was then known about breeding trout, salmon, oysters, and other things, and yet I had much to learn."[15]

As Uncle Thad was finishing this book, according to Mather, he started breeding trout at Bloomsbury, New Jersey, for a year or two and then sold out to Dr. J. H. Slack. Mather found that Professor G. Brown Goode, commenting on whitefish in his book, *American Fishes* (1888), wrote: "In a single paragraph Mr. Norris, who, making no profession of scientific skill, has been one of our best observers of fishes, has given almost the only reliable information which has ever been collected regarding this species."[16]

In *American Fish Culture* Norris makes this still timely comment: "In this country, our utter disregard for the bounties of nature so wonderfully lavished upon us, and our inordinate rage for internal improvements, have caused our state governments rather to legislate for the extinction than the protection and continuance of the finer species of migratory fishes."[17]

In my search for additional writings by Uncle Thad, David Ledlie, trustee emeritus of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, furnished three of Thaddeus's magazine articles. As supplements to his fish culture book, Norris wrote two articles for *The Penn Monthly,* "Biography of a Salmon" (May 1871) and "Post-Mortem Examination of a Salmon" (August 1871). Both efforts

American Fish Culture (1868)



An illustration from Norris's American Fish Culture *(1868), his scholarly study of the artificial breeding and rearing of trout and salmon.*

were scholarly but humorous. At the time, I imagine they were valued additions to the knowledge of the salmon or, as Thaddeus would say, the life of Sir Salmo Salar. In his third article, "Salmon-Fishing on the Nipissiguit" in *Putnam's* magazine (July 1870, vol., 16), Uncle Thad returned to the light literary style of his first book. Those who fish the Nipissiguit and know its fishing spots will enjoy the story more than a stranger.

Fifteen days after his death, April 26, 1877, *Forest & Stream* featured a poetic and highly personal memorial signed "Joe" to Thaddeus Norris written by his friend of twenty years, Joseph B. Townsend. Townsend tells of Uncle Thad's enjoyment of woods and water, the companionship of fellow anglers, his great mechanical gifts, unschooled literary ability, wide and varied angling experience (including more than twenty-five years of fly fishing) and Norris's love of children, the unfortunate, and the novice angler. Townsend further says, "He acquired, as a boy, a love of fishing; but to quote his own words, he 'never became an angler until he ceased to trust in the flesh'—that is had abandoned the bait and learned to cast the fly."[18]

A final Uncle Thad story came from Fred Mather. While Thaddeus and Fred Mather were looking at the aquaria arranged by Uncle Thad for the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, a noisy obnoxious sort of fellow introduced himself as "a brother of the angle" and after reciting his exploits said, "Yes, Mr. Norris, I'm the boss fisherman of western Pennsylvania, and I catch more fish than anyone I ever met." Norris said he was pleased to meet a *thorough* angler and with a straight face asked, I suppose you fish with the fly? Always, he said, Mr. Norris, always. Norris asked, Always rig the line properly with a float and sinker? Oh, yes, the boss fisherman said, Always use the float and sinker. That's right; I see that you are really an expert angler and I am glad to know you, said Norris.

Uncle Thad didn't smile even when he and Mather exchanged glances and the man never caught on. After the fellow left, Thaddeus commented, "I often meet such men, and I sized him up for a man who knew nothing of fly fishing and would need a float and sinker if he tried to cast a fly."[19]

Fred Mather, after hearing of Thaddeus's death, reports he felt "the falling of a great oak in the stillness of the woods."

I can imagine Norris's agony during the Civil War because of his childhood memories and family and old friends still in Virginia. Yet he had become a Pennsylvanian through and through. This emotion surfaces after relating a fishing anecdote about a boyhood friend nicknamed "the Major."

> Since penning the foregoing sketch of an old friend, the bosom war has swept over the broad fields along the upper Rappahannock, where he lived; crops have been destroyed, farm stock driven off, servants scattered, and many a hospitable home, that was open to all comers, has been desolated. I prefer not altering what I have written, for I love to think of that part of the country and its people as they were, and indulge the hope that when our Union is restored, I shall again behold the Major as I last saw him after returning from Jack-fishing—warming himself before his big log fire.[20]

Even vicariously, Uncle Thad, I am honored to know you.

ENDNOTES

1. Thaddeus Norris, *American Angler's Book* (Philadelphia: E.H. Butler & Co., 1864), p. 181.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
4. James A. Henshall, "Origin of the Split-Bamboo Rod," *The American Fly Fisher* (vol. 13, no. 3), p. 24.
5. Norris, *American Angler's Book*, p. 333.
6. Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978), p. 156.
7. Norris, *American Angler's Book*, p. 313.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 421-28.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
14. Thaddeus Norris, *American Fish Culture* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1868), pp. 13-14.
15. Fred Mather, *My Angling Friends* (New York: Forest & Stream Publishing Co., 1901), p. 37.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
17. Norris, *American Fish Culture*, p. 20.
18. Joseph B. Townsend, "In Memoriam," *Forest & Stream* (April 26, 1877), p. 182.
19. Mather, p. 48.
20. Norris, *American Angler's Book*, pp. 145-46.

The Ramsbottom Family—Fish Culturists

by Bob Behnke

THE ARTICLE "The Grand Experiment: Angling in Australia," by Bob Dunn, published in the most recent issue of *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 1994), reminded me of a virtually unknown importation of salmon and probably brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) eggs to America, which also occurred in 1864, almost twenty years before the historic and "official" first importation of 1883.

The article mentions that William Ramsbottom was in charge of transporting the salmon and trout ova to Australia and then to the fish culture station in Tasmania in 1864, eventually leading to the establishment of brown trout in Tasmania, Australia, and New Zealand. As mentioned in the article, William was the son of the noted salmon culturist, Robert Ramsbottom. Robert Ramsbottom began the artificial propagation of salmon on a British estate in Ireland about 1850. In 1854, he published a book, *The Salmon and Its Artificial Propagation*, making him a recognized authority on salmon culture. He supplied the salmon ova for the unsuccessful shipments to Australia in 1860 and 1862.

Evidently, about the time William Ramsbottom was shepherding the salmon and trout eggs to Australia in 1864, his brother, Robert Ramsbottom, Jr., was taking a similar shipment to America, an incident that remains largely unknown in the history of fisheries and fish culture.

The artificial propagation of trout in the United States began in 1853 near Cleveland, Ohio. For the next ten years, numerous men were involved, but mostly as a hobby. Thus, in the early 1860s, if the services of a professional fish culturist were sought, one would turn to an established European authority such as the Ramsbottom family.

Thaddeus Norris [profiled by descendent Bob Norris on page 14], a prolific writer on angling, was one of the early trout culturists in America. He was not successful with this venture, but it did result in a successful book, *American Fish Culture*, published in 1868. On page 114 of this book, Norris wrote:

> The first attempt at breeding salmon artificially in the United States, as far as I have been able to ascertain, was by James B. Johnson, Esq., of New York City. Four years since he imported the ova of salmon, salmon of the Danube, trout, and charr. A part of these were hatched out at the studio buildings on Tenth Street, New York, in troughs similar to those at the College of France, but the Croton water was fatal to most of them. The fry which Mr. Johnson removed to Long Island were promising in confinement, he says, 'but died from preventable causes when liberated.'

It appears clear that Norris had personal communication with Johnson and was told that ova of salmon *(Salmo salar)*, salmon of the Danube (huchen, *Hucho hucho)*, trout *(Salmo trutta)*, and charr (assumed to be *Salvelinus alpinus)* were imported.

More details on this shipment and the relationship between Johnson and Robert Ramsbottom, Jr., can be found in two articles on propagation of trout in the *New York Tribune* of September 30, and October 7, 1865.

Much of the technical information on fish culture in the *Tribune* articles was supplied by Robert Ramsbottom, Jr., who is identified as the son of Robert Ramsbottom and brother of William Ramsbottom—"now engaged in propagating trout in Australia from fecundated roe transported from England." The *Tribune* articles reveal that Robert Ramsbottom, Jr., was employed by Bowman Johnson of Islip, Long Island, to stock the Snedecor Preserve with both salmon and trout, and ". . . salmon roe was imported from Ireland last winter at the insistence of Mr. Ramsbottom. . . . The roe was hatched at the Artists' Building on Tenth Street in Croton water, from whence they were transferred to the Connetquot Preserve below Islip."

The account in the *Tribune* does not mention that most of the developing eggs were lost (in Croton water at the Artists' Building or Studio Building) or that the surviving fry were subsequently lost to "preventable causes," as Norris was told by James B. (Bowman) Johnson. Only salmon roe is mentioned as being imported in the *Tribune* story, but Norris's account of the importation of salmon, trout, huchen, and charr ova is based on personal communication with Johnson. It appears that, as with the Tasmanian shipment, the Atlantic salmon was the primary species, but eggs of other species (brown trout to Tasmania; brown trout, huchen, and charr to the United States) were added to "round out" the shipment as space became available.

With the loss of the brown trout shipped to New York in the winter of 1864-1865(?), Robert Ramsbottom, Jr., seems to have disappeared from the annals of American fish culture. What was his fate? The first shipment of brown trout eggs that resulted in the establishment of the species in the United States was in 1883. This is the date given in virtually all historical accounts as the first importation of brown trout to North America. Although failures merit only a historical footnote, James Bowman Johnson and Robert Ramsbottom, Jr., most probably imported and hatched the ova of *Salmo trutta* almost twenty years before the historically recognized

"first" for this species in the United States. I wonder why they didn't try again?

Robert Behnke is a professor in the Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology at Colorado State University.

. . . . . .

Crusty Old Fly Books

by Gordon Wickstrom

Our Colorado correspondent Gordon Wickstrom, winner of the Museum's 1994 Austin Hogan Award, sends us a paean to the flies of his boyhood. Some of our readers may identify with his reflections.

What was in those old fly books anyway? When my Uncle Clarence died in 1940, I found his fishing tackle out in his shed. It was a powerful moment for me. There was his Granger Champion fly rod and a badly worn creel stuffed with gear, including his fly book, just as he'd left it after his last trip to North Park. Marvelously, my aunt gave it all to me. The worn leather fly book held new and used snelled wet flies in its felt pages, as well as gut leaders in the pockets along with a couple of Aeroplane spinners. It was all rather messy, but rife with romance, if not magic. I was enthralled. I now owned a real Granger fly rod! At the tender age of fourteen!

But what about the flies one would find in a Colorado fly book in those days? In the first place, they would have most likely been tied on size 10 hooks and always snelled. They would nearly all of them have a quite similar profile, with duck quill wings, heavy with hackle, and bearing little resemblance to anything in nature. They were *traditional* patterns, some with English ancestry, now become Western.

As far as anything in nature goes, the flies we saw astream we called either gnats or mosquitos. Such was our entomology in 1940. I look back on it with something like grief, thinking if only I knew then what I know now, if only I had the tackle then that I have now and knew how to use it! Judas Priest, I'd have wreaked havoc on the trout!

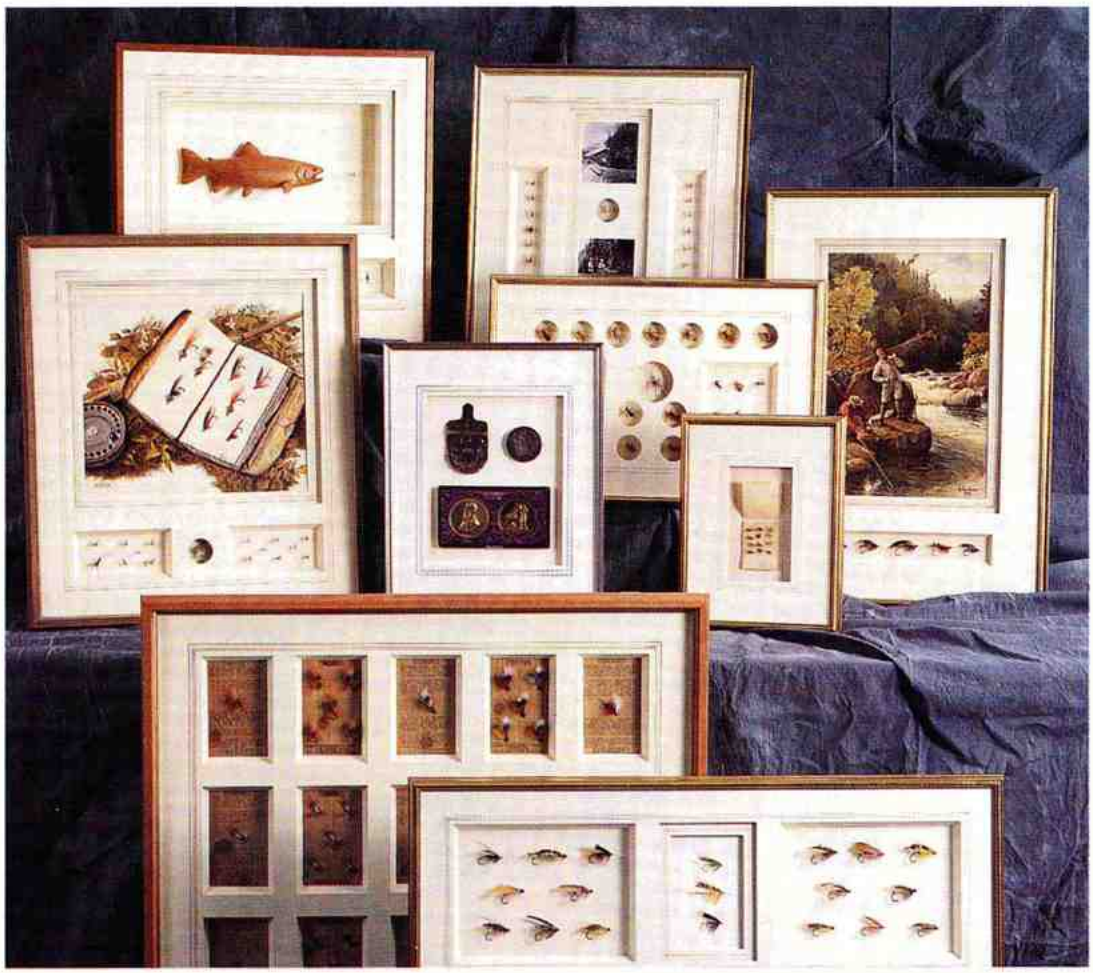
But those flies . . . I want to list most of the popular ones from that time, many available in nearly every mountain filling station and drugstore, which each had a small counter filled with stuff for the fisherman passing through on the narrow rough roads. These snelled wet flies, twelve to a box, were also in hardware stores where today we may have to settle for ice cream instead of blasting powder, mining tools, and Rio Grande Kings. When we got to Denver and to the big stores, we could buy a few dry flies and something even more arcane called a "nymph," but they belonged to another world, not as yet ours.

These old Western wet flies have wonderful names, fine-sounding names, names to make one hum with pleasure.

Let me list them, a litany for the heart to sing in memory of angling days past. Read the list aloud and listen: Rio Grande King, Western Bee, Captain, Coachman, Royal Coachman, Cowdung, Blue Bottle, Jock Scott, Silver Doctor, Wickham's Fancy, McGinty, Greenwell's Glory, Blue Quill, Ginger Quill, Black Gnat, the Grey Hackles (yellow, red, green, and peacock), Grizzly King, Hare's Ear, White Miller, Yellow Sally, Badger Palmer, Blue Dun, California Hackle, the Brown Hackles (peacock, red, and yellow), Flight's Fancy, Professor, Pink Lady, Mosquito, Queen of Waters, King of Waters, Red Ant, Black Ant, March Brown, Cahills (light and dark), Rube Wood, Red Ibis, Governor, Parmachene Belle, Blue Upright, Whirling Blue Dun, Warden's Worry, Willow, Dusty Miller, Deer Fly, Iron Blue Dun, the Mormon Girl. And the fabled and patented Pott hair flies from Montana, the Mite family, Sandy, Buddy, Dina, Mister, and Lady Mite. They were our most expensive flies, but no book was ready for the water without a Sandy Mite or two.

You talk about romance!

We could "tell" over those fly books the way a nun, longing for grace, might tell over her beads. ≈



WILLIAM CUSHNER'S LEGACY to the fly-fishing fraternity was born purely from an aesthetic interest. Although he was never a fly fisherman, he was influenced by two angling friends—Ted Niemeyer and Charles DeFoe—to seek out flies that were the work of master craftsmen or historically important, which he would then frame.

Cushner was a professional framer for decades in New York City, working with advertising agencies, art galleries, magazines, and individual artists. His style, described as geometric constructionism (it has been displayed at the Whitney Museum in New York) blended well with his fly-mounting technique, showing a designer's eye for balance. As his collection grew, more material came in to his studio from other fly and art collections because word had spread about his framed masterpieces.

In 1978, Cushner moved his collection to Cape Breton's highlands in Nova Scotia. He opened a museum, and, despite the remoteness, drew visitors from Canada, the United States, and eleven foreign countries. It was during that year that the Museum acquired the Cushner collection in its entirety through a long-term option/purchase agreement. The collection consists of 216 framings, plus a variety of unframed inventory, including two vises said to have been used by Theodore Gordon. In 1986, Cushner moved to the Oregon coast, where he opened another museum and continued to add to an already extensive collection.

William Cushner's approach to mounting flies begins with a self-evident idea: to be appreciated fully, they should be mounted three-dimensionally. He attached flies to plexiglass rods, which are in turn mounted in inch-deep recessed panels, much like small inset shadow boxes. The second signature of Cushner's method is the addition of a painting, print, drawing, woodcarving, photo, letters, bookplates, or fly book, which share the frame with a carefully chosen set of patterns.

Though framed mounts were the mainstay of his work, Cushner began to experiment with other themes such as author/fly tyers wherein the frame contains a copy of the title and a fly tied by the author.

Sadly, William Cushner died last year. His interest in the fly-tyer's art was purely aesthetic. For a man who never tied or cast a fly, and didn't fish, his framing work is a remarkable testament to a sport and art form.

CRAIG THOMAS

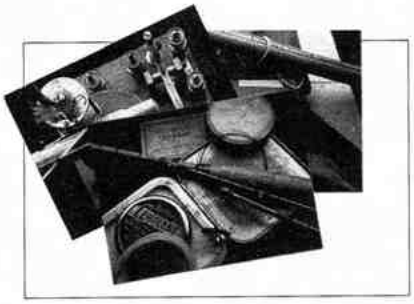
Photograph by Cook Neilson

Museum Gift Shop

Vest Patch. Museum logo, hunter green with silver/gray $5

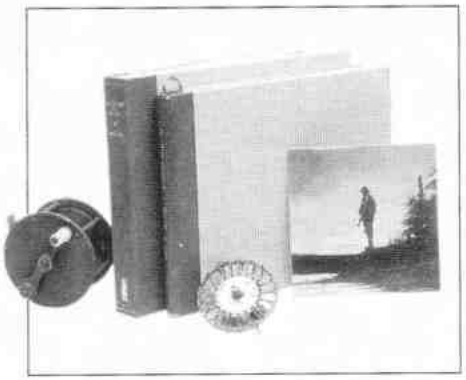
Pin. Museum logo, hunter green with silver $5

T-shirts. Museum logo, specify hunter green with white or heather gray with hunter green $12



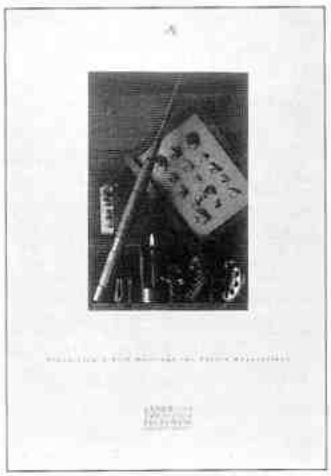
Note Cards. Photographs of personality tackle includes Hemingway, Crosby, Eisenhower, Webster, Homer, and Samuel Morse. 12 cards per box, 2 of each image with envelopes $12.95

Ceramic Mug with Museum logo. $6



A Treasury of Reels:
The Fishing Reel Collection of
The American Museum of Fly Fishing

by Jim Brown, photographs by Bob O'Shaughnessy.
Deluxe edition is handbound and boxed, with a signed and numbered print by John Swan. $450 each.



"25th Anniversary Poster"
by Terry Heffernan (20" x 30")
$19.95

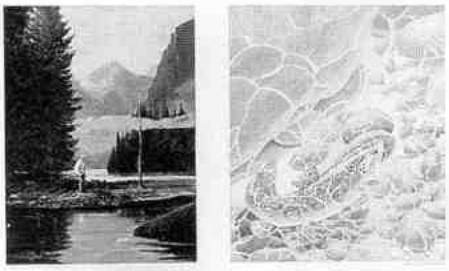
Please add $5 for postage and handling for this item.

Up/Downer Hat. Durham Ranger fly. Specify bright blue or tan supplex $16.50

Baseball-style Hat. Durham Ranger fly. Corduroy available in burgundy or teal. Supplex available in bright blue, teal, or tan $14

American Fly Fishing: A History

by Paul Schullery
278 pages illustrated with historic photographs, prints, and drawings.
Hardcover $35.



"Two Artists"
Luther K Hall & David M. Carroll
(26" x 20")

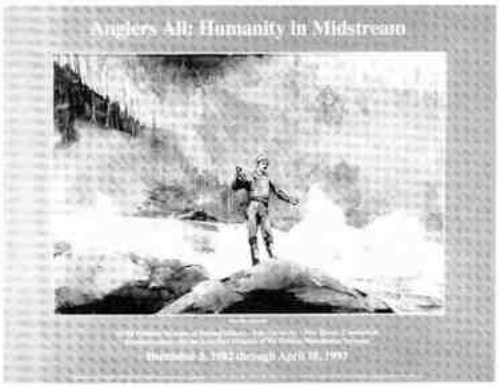
Please make checks payable to AMFF and send to P.O. Box 42, Manchester, VT 05254. Telephone orders: 802-362-3300. Mastercard, Visa, and American Express accepted. $3 postage and handling for first item, $1 for each additional item.

"Lost Pool"
by John Swan (15⅞" x 26¾")
edition of 400
$95 each

"Battenkill Afternoon"
by Peter Corbin (30" x 22")
25th Anniversary Edition of 200
$175 each

Limited Edition Prints

Printed on acid-free paper, ample borders.
Each signed and numbered. Postage and
handling included.



"Anglers All: Humanity in Midstream"
"*Casting*" by Winslow Homer
(18" x 24")

"World of the Salmon"
"*Wind Clouds*" by Ogden Pleissner
(26" x 22")

"Evening Mist"
by Chet Reneson (27" x 21½")

Exhibition Posters

Printed on high-quality glossy stock
with ample borders. Each poster is $15.

"Time On the Water"
by John Swan (26" x 20")

"Water, Sky, & Time"
by Adriano Manocchia (25" x 22")

"An Artist's Creel"
by Peter Corbin (26" x 23")

Please make checks payable to AMFF and send to P.O. Box 42, Manchester, VT 05254. Telephone orders: 802-362-3300. Mastercard, Visa, and American Express accepted. $3 postage and handling for first item, $1 for each additional item.

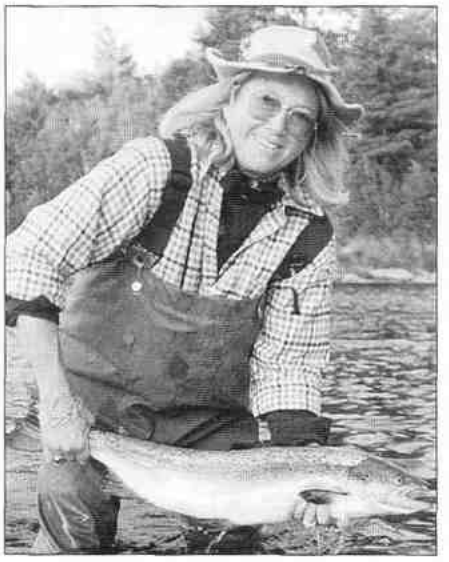
Museum News

by Donald S. Johnson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

New Trustees

Charles E. Ferree (Ted) worked in advertising before his retirement and move to Manchester. Many years of fly tying and trout fishing led to a deep interest in Atlantic salmon conservation and angling, and ownership of a camp on the Miramachi, where he and his wife Hut, an ardent salmon angler, have been spending their summers. Ted is vice president of New Brunswick's Miramichi Salmon Association, a director of the Miramichi Salmon Museum in Doaktown, New Brunswick, and a director of the Connecticut River Salmon Association.

James L. Melcher has spent more than thirty years in various investment fields and for the past sixteen years has been president of Balestra Capital, an investment advisory firm. He was a competitor in the 1992 Olympic Games and other international events in fencing, a sport which he regards as excellent preparation for his ambitions as a fly fisher. He lives in Manhattan and Pownal, Vermont.



Pamela Bates Richards landed her first fish at three, and from then on she pitched riverside tents, built tree forts, and fished with her father, Joseph D. Bates, Jr. She is currently the custodian of her father's extensive fly-fishing collection and is shepherding to publication the revision of her father's book, *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing,* originally published in 1970. She lives in Newburyport, Massachusetts, with her family.

Tom Rosenbauer has been a fly fisherman and fly tyer for more than twenty-five years. Educated as a biologist with a concentration on fisheries biology and aquatic entomology, he was editor of *The Orvis News* for ten years and is currently a vice president of merchandising for the Orvis Company. The author of four popular books on fly fishing, including *Reading Trout Streams* and *Prospecting for Trout,* he lives in East Arlington, Vermont, with his family.

Margot Page

Tom Rosenbauer

Dinner/Auctions in 1994: Record Setting

The Museum's critical dinner/auction program set new records in 1994, surpassing records set in 1993, the Museum's 25th anniversary year. Gross proceeds topped the $250,000 mark, an impressive comment on the strength of this program and a fitting testimonial to the many hard-working committees that organize and implement these events for the Museum in eleven cities across the United States.

Successful dinner/auctions have in large part been responsible for the Museum's continued growth in all areas of operation, especially in collections management and publications.

Special thanks to all of our dedicated 1994 dinner committees.

BOSTON Robert Blain, Peter Castagnetti, Richard Diamond, Tim Hinde, David Leitz, Mike Martinek, Bob and Krista McClellan, Bob O'Shaughnessy, Gary Pratico, Bill and Pamela Bates Richards, Pip Winslow

CHICAGO E.M. "Pete" Bakwin, Dick Besetzny, Jim Budelman, Joel Busse, Walter Daum, Tod Dawson, Pat DeMoon, Rev. Tom Dore, David Evans, Ralph and Rita Frese, Colin Haase, David Herships, Jill Jeska, Kerry Johnson, Mike Love, Dr. Harrison Mehn, Hugo Melvoin, Roger Moyer, James Otis, Kurt Ruud, Scott Schwar, Arnold Sobel, Wallace J. Stenhouse, Jr., Richard Stephanie, Scott Stewart, Andy Stzukowski

CLEVELAND Woods King III, (chair), Karl Badgley, Peter Bergsten, Hamilton Biggar III, George Brookes, Brent M. Buckley, Dr. Earl Fleegler, Jim

Heighway, Susan Holmes, William Koeblitz, Dr. John Kramer, Bob Mathews, Warren Morris, Claire Paskevich, Molly Perkins, Jo Reynolds, Thomas Roulston III, Keith Russell, Mark Samsonas, Jerry Tone, Dick Whitney, Jr., Dick Whitney, Sr.

HARTFORD Ed Ruestow (chair), Tom Daniels, David Egan, David B. Findley, Jr., Robert E. Hiler, Larry Johnson, Dick Lowrey, John Mundt, Lyndon "Red" Ratcliffe, Dr. Vincent Ringrose, Dr. Felix Trommer, Doug Turbet

KEY LARGO Thomas Davidson (chair), Richard T. Farmer, Joel Shepherd

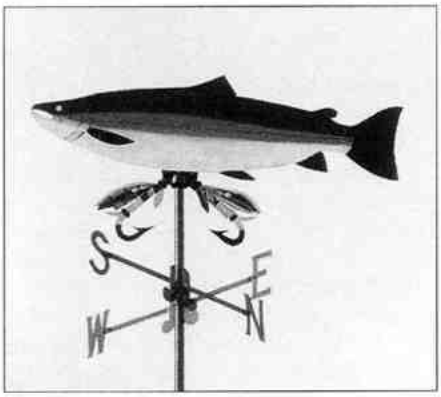
MANCHESTER Mimi Ams, Angus Black, Jean Black, Brad Coursen, Natalee Everett, Lyman Foss, David Gates, Laura Hatfield, Jim LePage, Joe McCusker, Paul Wheeler

NEW YORK John and Maureen Liberati, Ian Mackay, Pamela Murray

PHILADELPHIA George W. Angstadt, Robert Friedman, Emerson H. Heilman, Curt Hill, Ivan and Susan Popkin, Angler's Club of Philadelphia

SAN FRANCISCO Pam Dunn, Audun Frederickson, Arthur T. Frey, Reed Freyermuth, Golden West Women Flyfishers, Terry Heffernan, Herman Hittenberger, Fanny and Mel Krieger, Steve Shugars, Barbara Stevens, Sam Van Ness

New Weathervane



A hand-crafted weathervane has recently been donated to the Museum by Ron Swanson, sculpted in metal by Warren Gilker of New Brunswick using a 53-pound salmon caught by Lord Stanley (of the Stanley Cup) in 1892 as a model.

IN MEMORIAM

Kay Brodney, 1920-1994

WE WERE SADDENED this summer to learn of the death of Kay Brodney, one of the Museum's early trustees and faithful volunteers, who worked under the Museum's first director, Austin Hogan, to compile the Museum's research library as well as our information files, a task that took several years. These are merely two examples of her many accomplishments here.

Her life sounds fascinating. In 1950 she placed third in a Western Tournament Casting Championship but was denied her trophy because women were ineligible. To support her "fishing bum" lifestyle she worked as many as fifty jobs, but eventually she earned a master's degree from Rutgers in library science and went on to work at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Kay was a magnificent fly fisher, known for her penchant for privacy and wilderness. No posh fishing clubs for her; she preferred a hammock and a dugout canoe to a bed and a skiff, and she traveled extensively to remote places such as Argentina, Guyana, Venezuela, British Columbia, Quebec, and Colombia. In Argentina, Kay was one of the first anglers to take a dorado on a fly, and in the Keys in 1962 she hooked, fought, and landed a 137.6-pound tarpon on a fly. Stu Apte recalled, "Very few men had accomplished this feat in those days. She was one of the real pioneers, and that includes Joan Wulff, who opened the wonderful world of fishing to women."

Joan Wulff remembers Kay as the person who got her "interested in summer and winter steelhead fishing . . . She never sought publicity or recognition. Her relationship to fishing was completely personal."

The Museum was most fortunate, in its youth, to have benefitted from the talents of this great woman and pioneer. M.P.

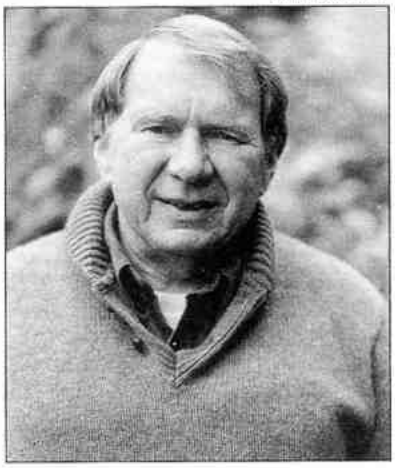
John Conte

Marbury Panel Surprise

What a find! While working on the Mary Orvis Marbury panels conservation project, Curator Alanna Johnson points out to Mary Bort, local historian, a mystery set of photos that covered the original photos put in place in 1893. Mary plans to research who took the photos, who replaced them and when, and she'll share with us her findings in an upcoming article in The American Fly Fisher. *The original photos were of the town of Manchester and Equinox Pond; the second set of photos show the Battenkill with fisherman and canoeists.*

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Yuskavitch

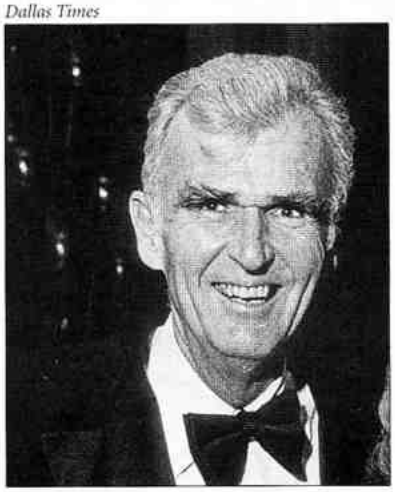


Dr. Robert J. Behnke is a professor in the Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology at Colorado State University. He is a world-renowned ichthyologist and expert on the systematics and biology of trout, salmon, and related fishes. He has thirty-five years of experience with fish and fishery concerns throughout much of the northern hemisphere. His book *Native Trout of Western North America* was published in 1992 by the American Fisheries Society (AFS monograph no. 6). He last wrote for *The American Fly Fisher* in Fall 1990.

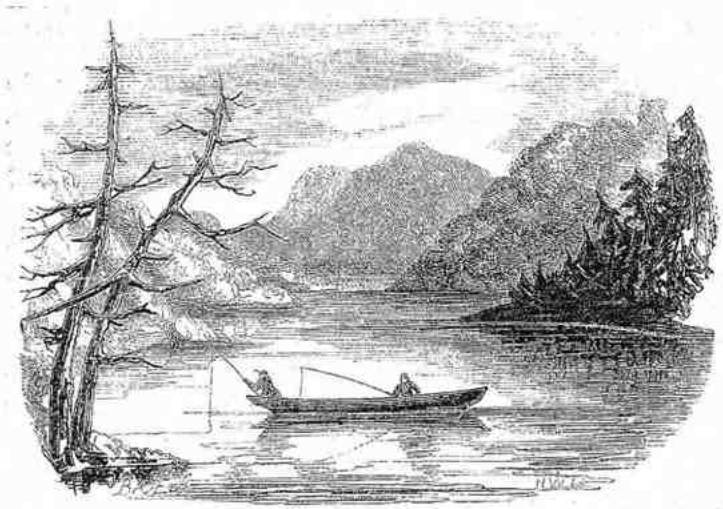
M. T. Bronstad, Jr., M.D., was in general practice in Fort Worth, Texas, for forty years before retiring in 1990. He began to fly fish about 1955, sometime before he became interested in flying private aircraft. The disease of collecting angling books was contracted through reading Gingrich's *The Well-Tempered Angler* in the 1960s. Since retirement, other activities have replaced some of his stream time, but recently he moved his vintage wooden powerboat to North Puget Sound where he and his fly-fisher wife hope that fly fishing can again resume its rightful place in their lives.

David W. Thomason

Dallas Times



J. Robert Norris, Jr., a native Texan, is a retired partner of a major downtown Dallas law firm. He is a long-time dry fly fisherman, making his own bamboo rods, leaders, and flies. He intersperses the occasional legal matter with fly fishing, writing, and playing with his eight grandchildren.



Testament of a Fisherman

I fish because I love to; because I love the environs where trout are found, which are invariably beautiful, and hate the environs where crowds of people are found, which are invariably ugly; because of all the television commercials, cocktail parties, and assorted social posturing I thus escape; because, in a world where most men seem to spend their lives doing things they hate, my fishing is at once an endless source of delight and an act of small rebellion; because trout do not lie or cheat and cannot be bought or bribed or impressed by power, but respond only to quietude and humility and endless patience; because I suspect that men are going along this way for the last time, and I for one don't want to waste the trip; because mercifully there are no telephones on trout waters; because only in the woods can I find solitude without loneliness; because bourbon out of an old tin cup always tastes better out there; because maybe one day I will catch a mermaid; and, finally, not because I regard fishing as being so terribly important but because I suspect that so many of the other concerns of men are equally unimportant—and not nearly so much fun.

Robert Traver (John Voelker)

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

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

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

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