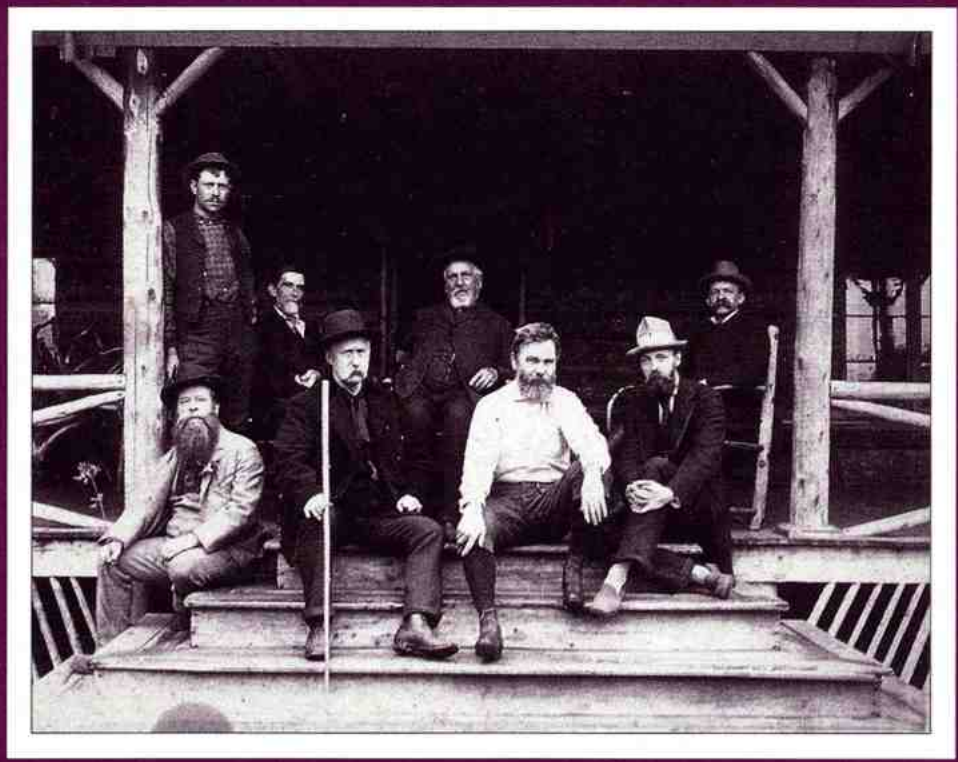


The American Fly Fisher

FALL 1995 VOLUME 21 NUMBER 4

Renaissance

THIS SUMMER has been a distressing one for those concerned about wildlife populations, in particular trout populations, in the drought-plagued East. The Battenkill, here in Vermont, has been virtually unfishable. Anyone who cares about that fishery resource has stayed away from the river, not wanting to further stress the fish gasping for oxygen in the dangerously low water. We find ourselves praying that these months of drought and heat will have less impact than we suspect and fear.

The Museum, though, is undergoing an inspiring renaissance. We have a new dynamic director whose energetic and visionary presence has been felt immediately; he has brought a new spirit to the Museum, one that we hope you will become part of as we head toward the twenty-first century.

In this Fall issue of *The American Fly Fisher*, we present a detailed history of the Adirondack League Club, written by former Museum director and author Paul Schullery. We think you'll find his comprehensive article—about a group of people who, over the years, has acted as steward to a huge section of the Adirondacks—most interesting.

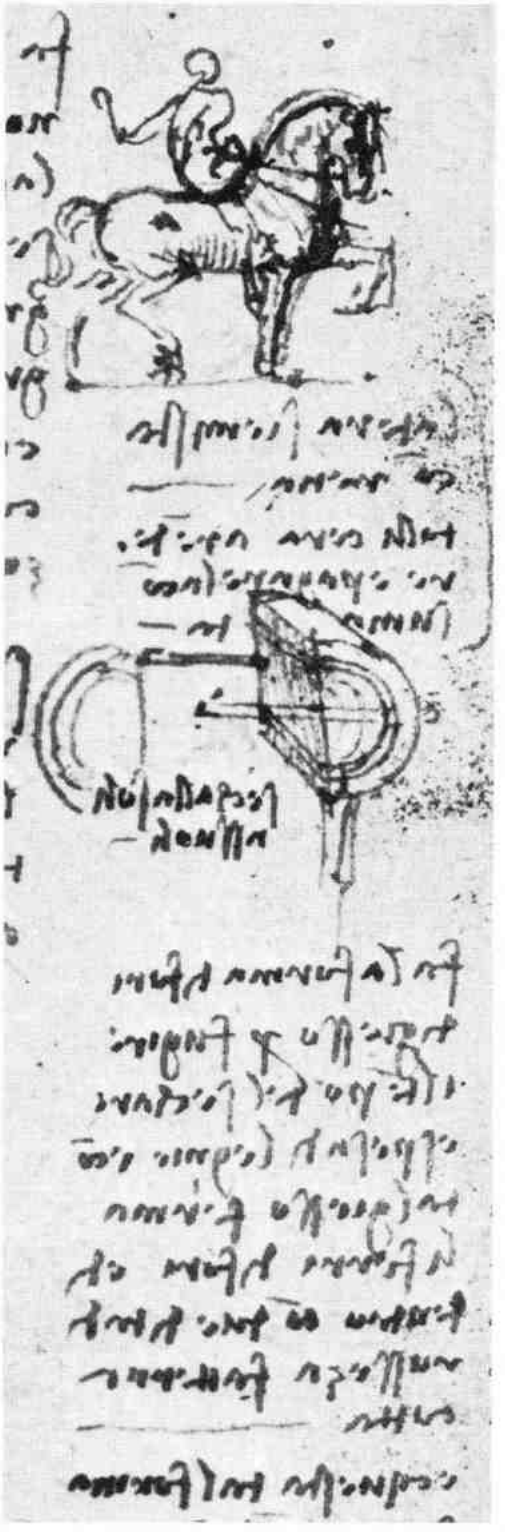
We have also excerpted some thought-provoking, historic quotes from a new book by another former director, John Merwin, called *Well-Cast Lines*. These nuggets have withstood the test of time. (It may appear that we are heavy in the area of former directors in this issue, but it so happens that these fellows are among the best writers in our field.)

Personally, I am delighted to report that we are adding another member to the team that produces *The American Fly Fisher*. Kathleen Achor has been hired as the new managing editor of this quarterly journal, an addition which will allow me more time to write my second book. You can read a little more about her in Museum News. I hope you will welcome her warmly and, as always, let us hear from you.

These are exciting times for the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Won't you be a part of them?

MARGOT PAGE
EDITOR

Leonardo da Vinci



The American Fly Fisher

Journal of The American Museum of Fly Fishing

FALL 1995 VOLUME 21 NUMBER 4

ON THE COVER: *In this Fall 1995 issue of* The American Fly Fisher, *author Paul Schullery presents a history of the Adirondack League Club, the largest club in the Adirondack Park. The cover photograph shows members of the Bisby Club, which was eventually absorbed into the ALC, on the steps of the lodge. General Richard U. Sherman, the club's first president and later commissioner of the New York State Fish Commission, is seated at the center rear. ALC Archives.*

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"A Sportsman's Paradise": Fishing at the Adirondack League Club

by Paul Schullery

An excellent book appeared in 1990 to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Adirondack League Club (ALC) in Old Forge, New York. Several years in the making by Edward Comstock, Jr., its editor, a Club member, and formerly a curator at the Adirondack Museum, The Adirondack League Club, 1890–1990 *is comprised of five comprehensive chapters which contain fresh material gleaned from files that predated the Club's official founding in 1890 by more than a decade. Comstock's authors examined the Club's development over the years, natural resources, social history, boating heritage, and contributions to camp architecture. However, the book remains known to only a handful of people because it went to ALC members and few others.*

Which is why The American Fly Fisher *readers should appreciate the publication of the following article by Paul Schullery, the first from the book to reach a wider audience. The Adirondack League Club is important because its size—50,000 acres, formerly twice that, making it the largest club in the Adirondack Park—has forced it, from the start to the present day, to confront issues of managing club resources. That Schullery dealt with fish and game in his ALC piece should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with his writings on fly fishing or with his tenure from 1977 to 1982 as director of this Museum and as editor of this journal.*

Craig Gilborn, Executive Director

The American sportsman came into his own in the late nineteenth century as a recognizable and respected element of society, as a self-aware supporter of certain standards of conduct, as a significant market for a wide array of industries and services, and as a political force. Though outdoor sports—hunting, fishing, horse racing, and others—had been tolerated or even admired in North America since the seventeenth century, it was not until the decades immediately before the Civil War that Americans developed a lively and dynamic sporting society.

That society revealed itself in many ways. Starting in the late 1820s, it supported a sporting press, the most significant early examples of which were *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* and *The Spirit of the Times.* Thus began the unruly and always stimulating interchange of opinion, ideas, and instruction that characterizes any healthy subculture. Sportsmen became progressively more aware of each other, and of each other's sporting grounds, through the pages of these journals, and through the first sporting books that appeared at the same time. In 1856, the *Spirit* claimed a circulation of 40,000, a figure that, even if exaggerated, suggested sportsmen were now out in the open as an identifiable and self-concerned group.

The Sportsman's Club Tradition

Perhaps even more revealing of the degree to which sportsmen felt a common bond was the remarkable proliferation of sporting organizations. Some of these first clubs are now nearly forgotten, others live on. Philadelphia had fishing clubs even before the American Revolution. The Cincinnati Angling Club was organized in 1830, the Carroll's Island Club, a hunting group near Baltimore, appeared in 1832. The famous New York Sportsman's Club was established in 1844, and seven prominent gentlemen created the Piseco Lake Trout Club in the Adirondacks in 1841. A few others appeared here and there in the years before the Civil War, but it was in the decade following the war that the movement really took off. In the early 1870s, the same years that saw the establishment of the second and much more successful generation of sporting periodicals, hundreds of organizations appeared and their power was suddenly extraordinary.

Where the earliest clubs had existed primarily for social reasons, these new clubs included among their members energetic fish culturists and game managers, and they campaigned vigorously for more scientifically based game laws and management of habitat. They

Courtesy Robert D. Wilkinson

At the original Proctor Camp, 1894, an era when "none but true sportsmen cared to visit the woods, for it was only the lover of nature who could find there sufficient reward to compensate him for the deprivations and hardships incident to a wilderness trip."

preached good sportsmanship and moderation of harvest in an era already suffering badly from the excessive kills and abusive land-management practices of previous generations. The great club movement of the 1870s marked the coming-of-age of American sportsmen. Nowhere was that new maturity more needed than in the Adirondacks.

The early club most influential in the development of the Adirondack League Club was the North Woods Walton Club, originally known as the Brown's Tract Association, established in 1857 by some upstate New York sportsmen. John Brown's Tract was a region of some 210,000 acres named for a previous owner, eighteenth-century Rhode Island businessman and politician John Brown. The tract lay mostly in Herkimer County, but also in Lewis and Hamilton counties, and included among its attractions the Fulton Chain of lakes, Raquette Lake, and the Moose River.[1] Among the notable names on the first membership list (published 10 February 1858) were those of John King, then governor of New York; George Dawson, editor of the *Albany Evening Journal* and author of America's first book devoted solely to fly fishing; and General Richard U. Sherman, the Club's first president, and its most important chronicler.

The Waltonians established their main camp on the Third Lake of the Fulton Chain, a location hilariously illustrated by Thomas B. Thorpe in his 1859 *Harper's* article, "A Visit to 'John Brown's Tract.'" Thorpe loved the rough accommodations, but his drawings show a flimsily built lean-to captioned "The Hotel," a warped plank under a slanting, sapling-supported bark roof captioned "The Dining-Saloon," and other amusing portraits of camp life. An article in *Forest and Stream,* 22 May 1897, reminisced about the early-day conditions.

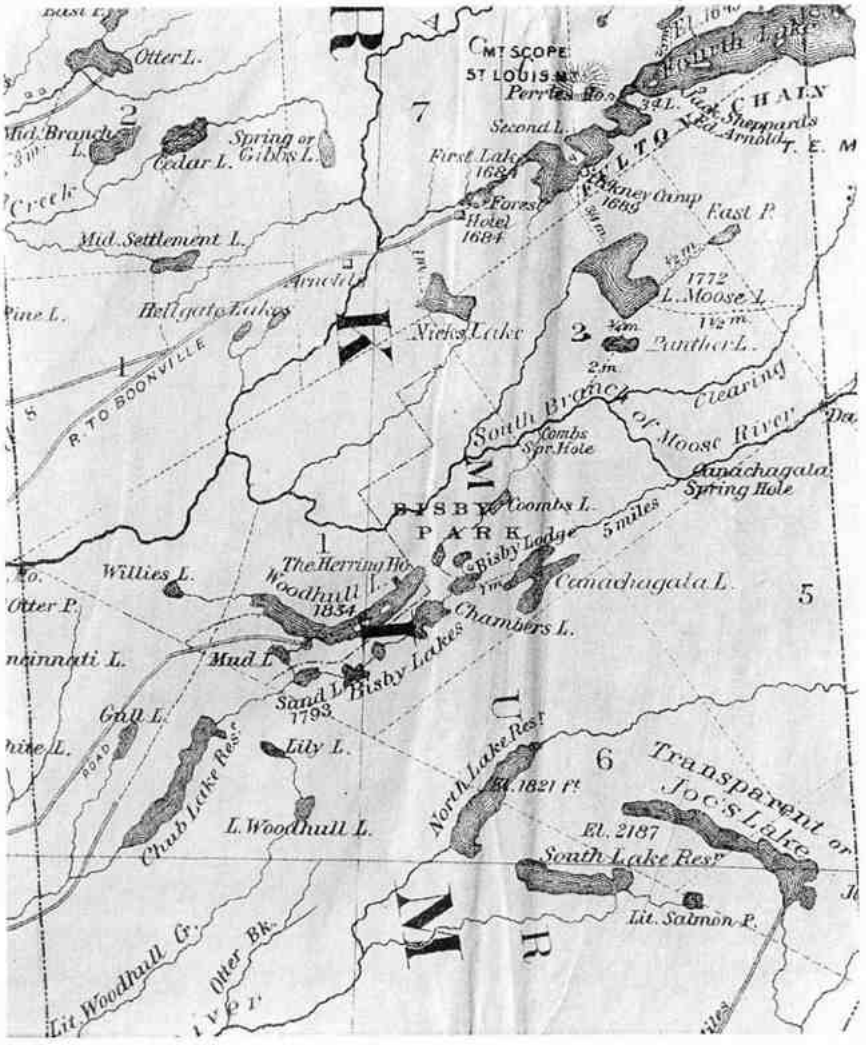
> Those were the days of long wagon rides over rough and rocky roads, long carries with heavily laden pack baskets and camping accessories, primitive logging rafts and open bark camps. In those times, none but true sportsmen cared to visit the woods, for it was only the lover of nature who could find there sufficient reward to compensate him for the deprivations and hardships incident to a wilderness trip.

For quite a few years, the fishing and hunting were all the sportsmen dreamed of. Thorpe claimed trout were so common in the Moose River that "their fins, if not their elbows, are in the way of each other," and that, contrary to fish encountered closer to civilization, the Moose River was "still full of inexperienced fish."

The "Plan of the Expedition for 1858," part of a pamphlet produced by the Club, contained detailed instructions on what equipment each member would need, including ample information about fishing tackle of the day.

> One fishing rod, such as are made for general use, being medium as to weight and elasticity with reel and trout line. A trolling rod, with reel, and line of 150 feet or more, will also be found convenient.

Courtesy Edward Comstock, Jr.



Bisby Park as shown on E.R. Wallace's map of the Adirondacks, 1881.

> One or more hand lines for trolling. A hauser-laid line of hemp is preferable. It should be of 1/16 inch diameter, and not less than 150 feet long. Tackle for fly fishing may be taken by those who are adepts [*sic*] at that branch of sport; but they are not at all requisite to success.

The North Woods Walton Club has left us a modest written record that indicates they epitomized the cultured, well-educated sporting club of the day. There are passages in their 1858 pamphlet that read as well as most of the more widely published sporting writing of the day. General Sherman, in a dinner toast, described New York City as, "A good place to go for fish hooks. Aside from this, it has no attractions to the true son of Walton." The club took a philosophical view of the black fly, at least in that early yearbook:

> *Blackflies, Mosquitoes and Punkies:* A cosmopolitan police, detailed by Divine Providence, to guard the great hunting park of the Republic from the incursions of cockney poachers, and murderers of deer in summer. Long may they wave.

There were more serious moments, too, as these sportsmen felt the need for some control and moderation in hunting:

> *Our Deer Friends in the Mountains:* Long may they roam over breezy cliffs, and among the fragrant forests of our great free wilderness. Cursed be he who murders them for money, or in mere wanton sport.

Or, speaking more generally of the type of member they wished to avoid:

> But to the pampered son of luxury who prizes nothing except as it ministers to his animal enjoyment; to the conceited cockney who recognizes not God save in city fanes; who knows his fellow-man only as the tailor has made him, and to whom all else in the animal creation is but beef in the shambles, our doors are forever closed.

Roughing it was part of the Club's philosophy and a matter of great pride. This was part fashion—one could not rough it, of course, unless one lived a fairly smooth life elsewhere—but it was also a matter of manly virtue to be able to handle oneself in such hearty rugged surroundings.

Alas, like so many other wild places, it changed. The North Woods Walton Club had no exclusive claim to any of the Brown's Tract, and soon they had more company than they wanted. Settlement increased and new hotels appeared, and these sportsmen thought of moving on. A few of them found a new home on waters that would eventually become part of the Adirondack League Club.

Bisby Beginnings

By the mid-1870s, as the fishing pressure on John Brown's Tract increased and the quality of the sport declined, a few members of the North Woods Walton Club were hearing of some wonderful unspoiled water to the southwest. By 1875, one of the future members of the Bisby Club, probably Sherman himself, had fished the water and pronounced it "the Canaan towards which my footsteps have trended the last forty years in the wilderness."

In 1878, Sherman and a few colleagues were able to purchase 320 acres and lease additional country around the lakes, which they revered as their "promised land," for their exclusive sporting use. The fishing opportunities are obvious in their description:

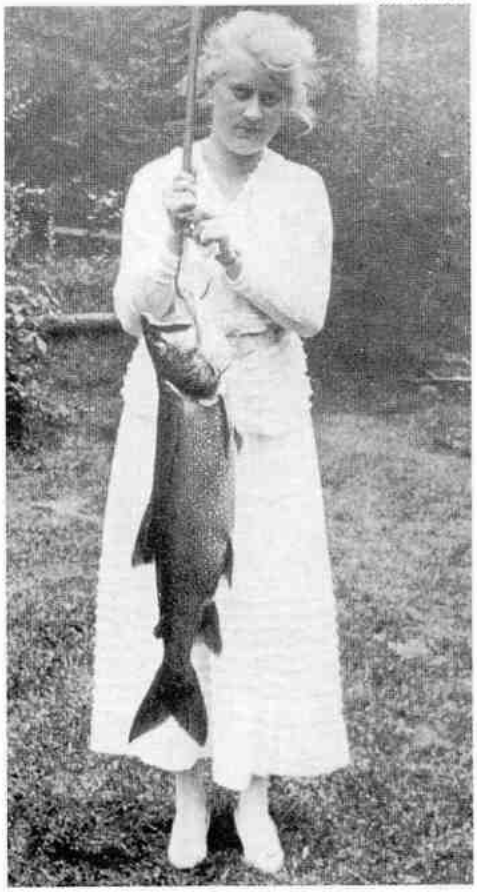
> Our tract covers a territory over nine thousand acres, extending from the south border of the Moose River tract, to and crossing the south branch of the Moose River on the north, including most of the "oxbow," where it has a width of two miles. This width is maintained till Woodhull lake is reached, when an L-shaped extension continues some six miles to the west border of the tract. Nine lakes and ponds, viz: The four Bisbys, Chamber [*sic*] lake, Sand lake, Coombs [*sic*] and the two Sylvan ponds, and parts of Woodhull and Canachagala lakes, are embraced in the tract. By the law of New York, providing for the protection of private parks, all the fish and game in this tract are our own personal property and the taking away from it by an unauthorized person, of any bird, four-footed animal, or fish, is larceny.[2]

Theirs was a pioneering step in Adirondack history, part of a greater

movement by which sportsmen kept resources for themselves exclusively, rather than watch them squandered in the name of some vague and outdated principle of common public ownership.

And what a treasure they had protected, and how aggressively they defined protection. Most of all, it meant improving and developing the resource for their purposes, and that meant bringing in more fish. "Pisciculture," the husbandry of fishery resources, was then flowering in this country, promoted by such leading angling and scientific writers as Seth Green, Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, Thaddeus Norris, and Spencer Fullerton Baird. Seth Green had brought whitefish from the Caledonia hatchery in western New York to Little Moose Lake in 1872, and in 1877 brook trout, also from Caledonia, were stocked in First Bisby. From the annual reports of the Bisby Club and from other early sources, especially Fred Mather's *Memoranda Relating to Adirondack Fishes* (1886), it is possible to piece together a rough chronology of the many fish plantings made before 1890; they were numerous, haphazard, and very exciting at the time. By the time Mather wrote his report (submitted to Verplanck Colvin, superintendent of the Adirondack Survey), it was clearly becoming difficult to get all the details straight. Much of Mather's information on fish introductions was based on a survey he sent to various interested parties, some of whom were obviously basing their responses only on incomplete personal recollections.[3]

ALC Archives



A Honnedaga laker, 1916.

In 1879, Sherman was named a commissioner of the New York State Fish Commission, a position he held until 1890. His leadership in fishery management and the promotion of intelligent resource use was not confined to Bisby waters, but was recognized throughout the state until his death in 1895.

The native sport fish of the Bisby chain was a diminutive strain of the lake trout, a distinctive little fish that usually grew to around a foot in length. Sherman, a keen naturalist, published a description of this supposedly new species in the 13 October 1888 *American Angler,* saying that most of the fish were smaller than 3 pounds, and that the largest known was 6. Obviously a skilled observer, he pointed out apparent differences in the fish from each of the four lakes, attributing the differences to environmental factors.

But the Bisby trout soon had more and more company. Rainbow trout were introduced to First Bisby in 1879 (keep in mind that the early reports sometimes differ by a year on the exact dates of some introductions; the real point here is the speed and diversity of the introduced fish), and in 1885 received Rangeley Lake brook trout and blueback trout, both from Maine. Second Bisby received lake trout taken from Lake Huron spawn in 1880, and by the mid-1890s had, either by introduction or by fish migrating from connected waters, rainbow trout, landlocked salmon, brown trout, frostfish, and numerous later plants of brook trout. Fourth Bisby was said to have smallmouth bass by 1880, though those fish did not appear in numbers in the other three lakes of the chain until around 1900.

Chambers Lake, originally fishless, received brook trout in 1880 or 1881, and rainbow trout introduced there in 1884 may have been important in the spread of that fish into the Bisby lakes. First Sylvan reportedly was stocked with brook trout in 1877; one of the most interesting of these early plantings was an 1885 introduction of "Loch Levens" (now known as brown trout) from Scotland into Second Sylvan. This was quite early in the history of brown trout stockings in North America, and suggests how quickly they were moved to new waters. By 1884, Woodhull hosted at least lake trout, rainbow trout, and landlocked salmon.

H.M. Beach, ALC Archives

Little Moose lakers, circa 1914.

Woodhull Lake, which has never been entirely included within the Preserve, was probably a painful reminder of the Club's vulnerability to the outside world. It had been dammed first in 1849 and enlarged in 1860 as part of the water impoundment system for the Black River Canal. Similar dams were built on North Lake (1856) and South Lake (1861) just to the south of the Club. Worse, in 1872 the outlet of Third Bisby was redirected into Sand Lake for further impoundment, and in 1881 Canachagala Lake's outlet was redirected from the Moose River into North Lake. These changes in flow were certainly not the only ones in the area, but they exemplify the extent to which the natural setting was modified.

All of this tampering with watersheds generated persistent bitterness among Bisby members. The 1882 Annual Report contained a withering statement, under the heading "Aggressions," that referred to such work as "vandalism" and reported on a remarkable project that failed in the fall of 1881.

> The crowning act of engineering folly was committed last fall when a party was found drilling away the natural rock dam that separates Chamber [*sic*] Lake from the Second Bisby. Fortunately the adamantine hardness of the material defied the powers of common blasting powder, and before very serious damage was done, orders came to withdraw the party.

The report, which railed against the impoundment of tiny bodies of water instead of a few large ones, concluded that "the stock of water which might have been contributed to canal supply in case the plan had been carried out, would have been about equal to the reinforcement which the old woman proposed to contribute, of slops, to the volume of the ocean."

A hatchery was finally built, near the clubhouse at First Bisby in the fall of 1883. Only the second hatchery in the Adirondacks, the building was twenty by thirty feet and its eight troughs had a capacity of 500,000 fry. That first fall, eggs from the Caledonia and Cold Spring (Fourth Lake, Fulton Chain) hatcheries were used, but the following fall 100,000 eggs were stripped from Bisby brook trout.

It is easy even today to imagine the intense excitement these fishermen experienced when they first saw evidence of a planting take hold. In the 1884–1885 Annual Report of the New York State Commissioners of Fisheries, Sherman discussed the prospects with an enthusiasm that neared elation:

> It would excite the wonder of the beholder, knowing the circumstances, to see, as he may at spawning time, *tons* of these fish on the spawning beds.

When, in 1882, Sherman presented the great American fish culturist Seth Green (an honorary member of the Bisby Club) with a landlocked salmon from Woodhull, the result of an 1879 planting, Green was so pleased to learn the fish had survived that "he kissed it lovingly."

But fishery improvements are nothing without fishing, and the club members were adept at many techniques. The 1870s and 1880s were decades of significant advancement in fishing tackle, and we can be sure that club members were equipped with the latest innovations in split-bamboo rods, lightweight reels, and an ever-growing assortment of flies from the likes of Chubb, Leonard, Orvis, and other leading manufacturers. They very quickly learned to handle local fishing situations.

When possible, they seem to have preferred fly fishing in the shallows. They clearly were acquainted with some local fly hatches, though they apparently did not have to imitate them too closely. Adirondack trout fly patterns were typical of many of the era. They were heavily tied and tended to be gaudy. Samuel J. Bryant, a Club member, listed his favorites in Mary Orvis Marbury's *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* (1892), including the Brown Hackle, Reuben Wood, Red Ibis, Babcock, Brown Stone, and Montreal. The Babcock, a fly similar to the Montreal, was named for a Club member, as was another local favorite, the Proctor, named for a prominent Utica, New York, member and angler. This was an era of great proliferation of fly patterns, when changing the tail or wing of a fly was reason enough to give it a new name.

The fly fishers were aware of a short fishing season for lake trout that has been rediscovered in more recent days by Little Moose Lake anglers. They called it shoal fishing, and Sherman described it in several reports and publications.

The Adirondack League Club Emerges

By 1890, the Bisby Club was alarmed to hear news of a huge new neighbor. The coalition of sportsmen that was to become the Adirondack League Club was gaining momentum and was causing concern among sportsmen not only in the Adirondacks, but in the broader sporting community.

The thousands of acres controlled by the Bisby Club might have seemed immense to local nonmembers, but it was hardly of sufficient size, and did not have sufficient control, to protect its sporting resources. It was the protection of such resources that provided much of the impetus for the creation of the ALC. Even with increased state involvement in fish and game management, the fabulous sporting opportunities of the Adirondacks were collapsing under increasing development. The ALC was founded in part as a response to that situation.

For example, on 26 June 1890, *Forest and Stream* Editor Grinnell, one of the day's leading sportsmen and conservationists, wrote a page-one editorial on the "system of buying and leasing territory for shooting and fishing" that was "progressing with great strides" in many parts of the country. His foremost example was the ALC, whose articles of incorporation had just been filed, and it is clear that Grinnell, among the most thoughtful and public-spirited of outdoorsmen, had mixed feelings and was a little bewildered by the speed with which large tracts of lands were being bought up. He predicted a dim future for the private sportsman, but he did not object to the new direction strenuously.

> This withdrawal of the Jock's Lake country from the public means a serious diminution of available hunting and fishing grounds in the Adirondacks. It is in line with the coming of a new order, under which the angler or hunter who does not belong to a club will eventually be shut out.[4]

Bisby Club members, on the other hand, were nowhere near so tolerant as Grinnell. At the conclusion of the Thirteenth Annual Report (1891), Club President Sherman spoke out in considerable agitation against the ALC's preemption of rights to so much previously open land.

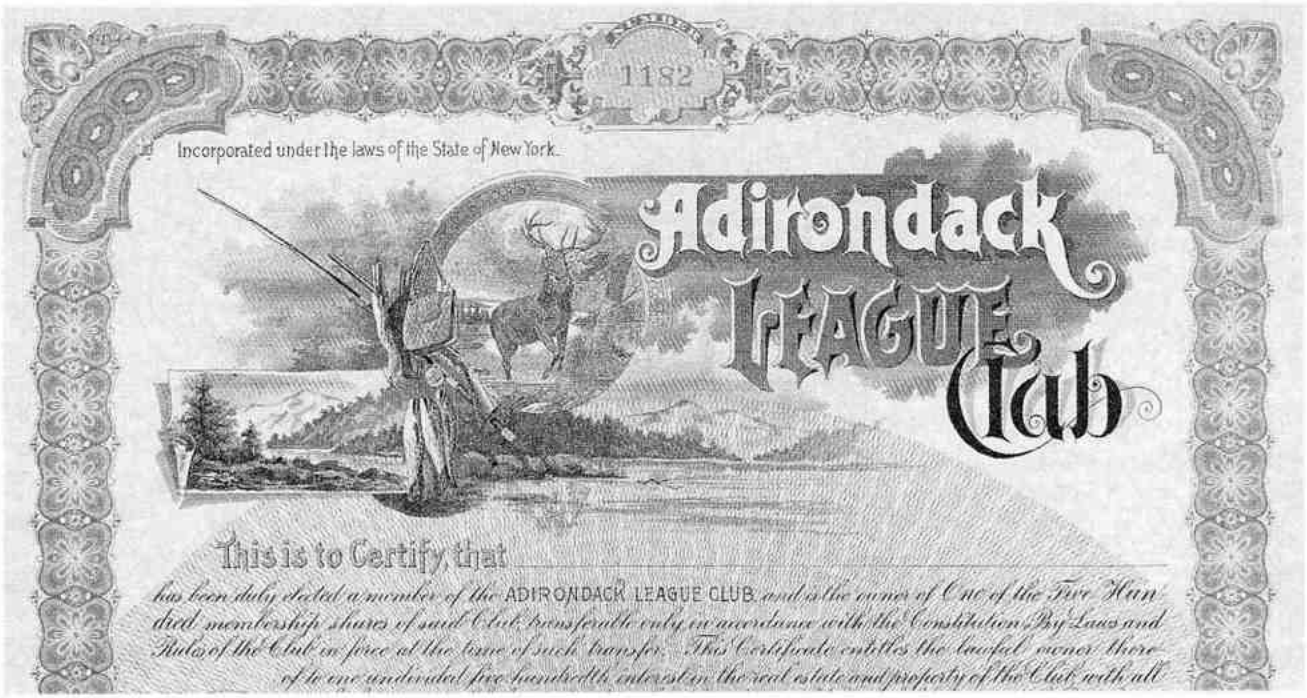
> What had been a great, free hunting and fishing ground for so many years is about to become, practically, a private preserve. . . . How far this Club, and the public at large, are to be excluded from their former privileges on the Moose River, is not yet known; but it is to be presumed that the companies of land speculators and lumber despoilers who now own the great tracts north and east of us, will appropriate to their own benefit all that ownership gives.

He concluded that the great forest was doomed and so was the sport. But in the next Bisby Club report (1892), Sherman seemed to have adjusted to the idea of being virtually surrounded by the ALC.

> Pleasant relations have been maintained between our organization and our neighbors, the Adirondack League Club, and we are indebted to them for courteous privilege to cross their grounds on the way to our old fishing and hunting resorts beyond, and to all the extent we could reasonably ask for hunting and fishing privileges on their territory.

Sherman did not mention hard feelings among Bisby Club members toward the ALC, but there were some.

ALC Archives



Sporting motifs predominated on the original Adirondack League Club stock certificates, 1890.

When the Bisby Club was absorbed into the ALC, only about half of the smaller club's members joined.

The Great Estate

An article in *The Peterson Magazine* in October 1896 referred to the ALC as "the highest type of the clubs of this class in the world," a "magnificent realm," and claimed that of the many such clubs then appearing, "the great estate owned by the Adirondack League Club" was "the greatest and most famous of all."

Greatness and fame were measured in many ways, of course, including comfortable lodgings, distinguished membership, and a variety of aesthetic values. But greatness was also a function of sporting opportunity and at the ALC sporting opportunity was wonderful.

Honnedaga Lake, earlier known as Transparent Lake and then as Jock's Lake, is, at 2,187 feet, the highest large lake in the state. Accounts of Honnedaga predate even the creation of the Bisby Club in 1878. Jeptha R. Simms, in *Trappers of New York* (1850), described Jock's Lake as "a great resort for trout fishing," and said that Jonathan "Jock" Wright fished it regularly, apparently taking his large catches back to settlements to sell. Syracuse Judge A. Judd Northrup, in *Camps and Tramps in the Adirondacks* (1880), told of a sporting trip to Jock's Lake in 1863 in which the black flies, trout, and deer were all abundant. A writer who identified himself only as H. H. T. (no doubt H. H. Thompson, later secretary of the Bisby Club) reminisced about the same outing in an article entitled, "Camping on Jock's Lake in 1863," in *The American Angler,* 5 July 1884. John Waldo Douglas, whose family has been closely associated with the ALC since its first decade, wrote a series of letters describing life on Jock's Lake between 1869 and 1882. His account of travel conditions gives some notion of what a fisherman might have to endure for sport in 1869.

> August 24th, P.M. We went five miles up the west branch of Canada Creek and camped. August 25, owing to a terrible rain storm only advanced one mile beyond and camped at the junction of Canada Creek and Jock's Lake outlet. August 26th, advanced through a pathless and tangled wilderness up the outlet in a zigzag course, now by the stream and now on steep mountain sides, six miles to Jock's Lake, which its lower edge we reached at 7:30 P.M., and the cabin here, where I write about 9:00 P.M. . . . Some nine hours I had my heavy pack on, off only once.

In the 1880s, of course, it got easier to reach the good fishing. In 1887, Amaziah Dutton ("Dut") Barber, a Utica man of considerable means, opened his Forest Lodge on the eastern end of the lake, eventually building camps and providing boats on several of the nearby lakes. He even tried stocking additional trout in Honnedaga at least once. He kept a pack of deer hounds and employed a team of guides for his customers. Barber and some of his guides stayed on when Jock's Lake became part of the ALC and his lodge became ALC headquarters at the newly renamed Honnedaga Lake.

Little Moose Lake, called Moose Lake until the 1880s, was named for the Adirondack's largest native mammal, once common near the lake but extirpated from the entire Adirondack region by the early 1860s. . . . Little Moose Lake was responsible for the earliest written record of a large lake trout taken from what would become ALC waters. The account of the fish, along with some description of the game in that area, appeared in Joel Headley's *The Adirondack; or, Life in the Woods* (1849):

> . . . The bottom of the lake looks like a vast bed of fine white salt. As you sit in your boat, you can see it glittering beneath at an immense depth, while ever and anon a huge trout flits like a shadow over it. A certain judge and his lady are accustomed in summer to come from the western settlements, and camp out for two or three weeks at a time on its shores, and fish. The lady, accomplished and elegant, enjoys the recreation amazingly, and once caught herself a trout weighing *nineteen pounds.* There are no islands upon it, but a long green promontory almost cuts

it in two, from which you get an enticing view of the whole lake.

My friend B—n, with a hunter, had great sport here one day. He did not fish over an hour, and yet in that short time, took a *hundred and twenty pounds* of trout, and left them biting as sharp and fast as when he began. Going back through the lake towards Brown's tract, two moose with their broadspreading horns and huge black forms, were seen standing on the shore. . . . Deer were stumbled on almost every half mile. B—n said he counted six, two of which the rifle of the hunter fetched down.

Early Fish Management

Of course there were more than thirty lakes at the ALC, each with its champions, and each with its own special fishing situations. Access was still quite limited, so the sort of effort still required today to reach Jones, Deer, and Otter lakes in the southern end of the ALC was then required to reach Green, Combs, and Rock Pond in the north.

But reached they would be, and soon the ALC initiated aggressive efforts to improve and enrich the fishing. The 1892 Annual Report revealed that "during the last year a fine hatchery has been built on Honnedaga Lake, at a cost of $3,500." It was, unfortunately not money well spent, as the following year's report explained that the Club's ambitious stocking program was thwarted by the hatchery's location. The report then noted that another hatchery had been authorized at the outlet of Honnedaga, and that hatchery was in place and operating successfully two years later.

Fishery management was enhanced by Bisby Club/ALC consolidation in 1893 because the Bisby Club's hatchery was recognized by the ALC as "one of the best equipped and most successful hatcheries in the Adirondacks." It was further facilitated by the completion, in 1895, of the Combs Brook Hatchery (near the site of today's Hatchery Camp). The Fish and Game Committee proudly announced that the ALC's hatchery system would soon "make the League Club waters the best trout fishing waters in the world."

Modern fishery scientists and managers might look back on these days of intensive fish stocking with disappointment, if not dismay. The late 1800s were an era of great faith in man's ability to manipulate and improve natural settings, and in the process of such "improvement," native life forms were displaced, and good fishing waters were inadvertently ruined, and a lot of energy and money were wasted on ill-planned stockings that did not take. Other outstanding fisheries were created, though, and it is too easy to see these fishery managers out of their context. There was so much to be learned, and so much with which to experiment; who could resist when the potential rewards seemed so great?

With the guidance of some of the day's leading professional hatchery men, the ALC embarked on a program of managing its waters. Do the brook trout seem small in Rock Pond? Introduce frostfish to improve forage. Is the fishing in the larger lakes too slow after the lake trout and brook trout leave the shoals in spring? Introduce landlocked salmon for better summer sport. What's new at the U.S. Fish Commission? They'll send us 1,000 Swiss lake trout, so let's try them in Green Lake. It was an era of great optimism and excitement and there was so much to look forward to each year. Would the Maine trout put in Moose River in 1894 take, and might I be the first to catch one? Would the fat brook trout in Panther Lake finally yield some summer fishing rather than vanishing into the deep water like they did last year?

Such optimism was often reinforced, with surprising results. Little Moose's capacity for producing huge fish became something of a local legend. The 1899 Annual Report indicated there was a factual basis for the rumors:

> For many years Little Moose fishermen have occasionally reported the carrying away of their tackle by irresistible forces in the water. By computations based on the known strength of the tackle, the shock to the holder of the rod, and his observed mental condition shortly afterward, the weight of the fish that did it was often determined with some variations from accuracy. The fishermen who have reported these facts, and their scientific deductions, found that unquestioning belief was a plant of slow growth, only slightly hastened by Commerford's [John Commerford was the Preserve manager at the time] report of seeing a school of lake trout on the spawning beds near the outlet that looked like pigs of iron, only bigger. A short time ago, two of these trout were captured; one weighed 24 pounds and the other weighed 27 pounds.

The ALC also experimented with restricting some waters to fly fishing only. By the turn of the century, many sportsmen knew that flies were often the best lure to use if small fish were to be released unharmed; bait-caught fish swallow the hook more deeply and many die from hook injuries. In 1903, the ALC guides were surveyed on the subject and voted eighteen to five that the South Branch of the Moose River be made a fly-fishing-only stream, a regulation still in effect today. This rule was adopted in March 1904 and applied to the river above Limekiln Falls. By 1910, similar regulations were applied to Chambers Lake, and by 1912, to First and Second Sylvan ponds in certain seasons.[5]

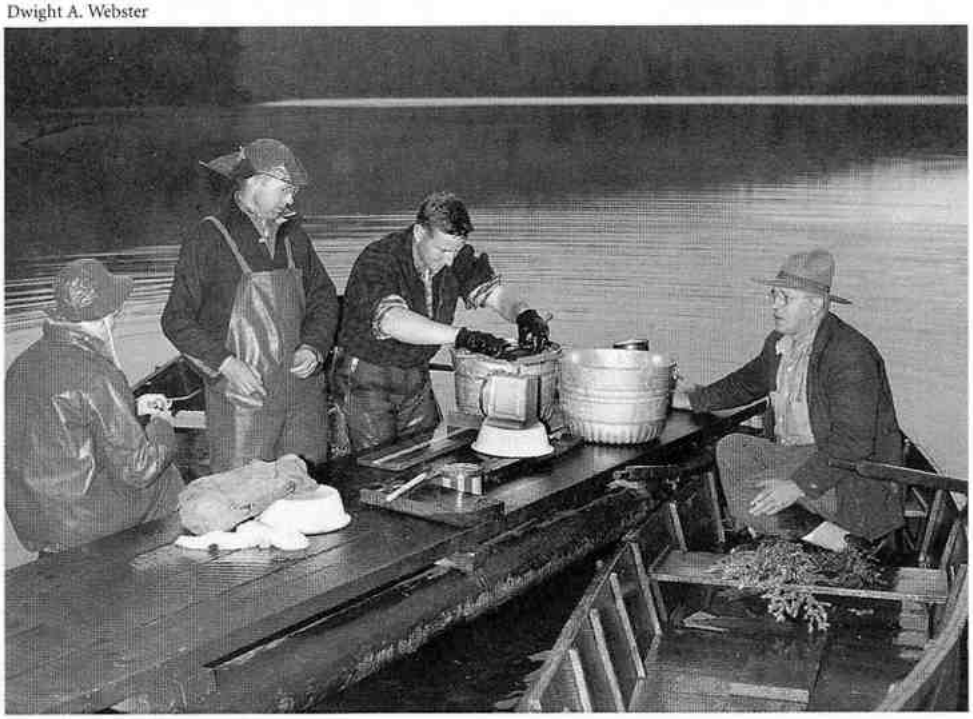
Other regulations, not directly involving fishing tackle and techniques, also had substantial effects on the ALC fishing experience. For example, the restriction of use of ALC waters by motorized craft was perhaps the foremost of such regulations. The 1914 Annual Report specified that "no boat propelled by steam, hot air, naphtha, gasoline or electricity shall be put on any of the waters of the Preserve without permission first being obtained from the Trustees or Executive Committee." Obviously the restriction was not absolute on all waters—transportation of supplies and guests sometimes necessitated motor power—but limiting the use of such equipment was essential to the quality of North Country life that the ALC wished to maintain. Not only did the restrictions help preserve the grand tradition of man-powered boats so well started in the Bisby days, they made fishing (to say nothing of living on the lakes) a quieter, more vigorous, and far slower activity.

As well, keeping a close watch on road construction and on the development of access to backcountry waters also maintained the mood of earlier days. More recently in the ALC story, the arrival of aircraft and four-wheel-drive vehicles would change the sporting experience significantly, perhaps in ways that only the earlier generations could appreciate.

The Webster Era

In the late 1940s, fishing conditions at the ALC were a reflection of conditions throughout the Adirondacks. Because of the private stewardship of the ALC, some of the fishing was probably better than most Adirondack fishing, but it was poor by the standards of earlier generations. The list of lakes more or less lost to good fishing included both Sylvan ponds (populated mostly by suckers), Fourth Bisby (suckers and stunted bass), Canachagala (suckers and bullheads), East (suckers, dace, and a few trout), Honnedaga (a few brook trout and lake trout), and Panther (a few brook and rainbow trout, many suckers and sunfish). Even Little Moose

Dwight A. Webster



Tagging and releasing brook trout on Panther Lake, 30 October 1954. Dwight Webster is second from left. Tagging and fin clipping permitted researchers to keep detailed accounts of the progress of fish in each newly stocked water.

Lake, which had escaped some of the more harmful introductions of inappropriate fish, had poorer fishing than at any other time in its history.

Raymond P. Dorland, chairman of the Fish and Game Committee, invited Dr. Dwight A. Webster of Cornell University to serve as yet another consultant on fishery matters at the ALC in 1950. Eventually, Webster and the Club established a cooperative agreement with Cornell University to study and help manage the ALC's fisheries. The research program that evolved out of the collaboration became the single most important brook trout research project in American history, benefiting not only the ALC, but fishery managers and fishermen everywhere.

From the beginning, a scientific system was everything. The program was a combination of research and management. Rather than following the tradition of just trying something, seeing if it worked, and then trying something else ALC fisheries specialists applied the experimental method to everything. This meant that all aspects of the aquatic setting were analyzed, stocking was based on the best scientific information available, and the results of each stocking, whether successful or not, became part of the information base for future work. As understanding of the ecological complexities of the water and the fish grew, management became more sophisticated, and results became more predictable and reliable.

Biological and chemical surveys were initiated that covered, from 1950 to 1953, all significant Preserve waters and would be invaluable in later years when new changes occurred in those waters.

At the same time, reclamation got under way first in Panther Lake (1951), then later in both Sylvans (1952) and East (1954). Existing fish populations were poisoned, barrier dams were built to prevent recolonization by undesirable species, and preferred fish were stocked, thus giving many waters a fresh start rather than trying to build on some preexisting and out-of-kilter combination of fishes that might or might not respond favorably to years of manipulation. Tagging and fin clipping permitted researchers to keep detailed accounts of the progress of fish in each newly stocked water, and to evaluate the success of the program.

Looking back over the reports produced in the first decade of the Cornell cooperative agreement, that mood of a fresh start is common. This was what wildlife scientists call experimental management being practiced at its best. Nothing was done without forethought and nothing was done without the critical monitoring that would allow for later revision or correction. Managing a given water properly, as far as fishes stocked or removed, was no more important than continuity of attention to that water.

A variety of directions were pursued at once. Landlocked salmon were a favorite among members, so research was directed (especially on Little Moose Lake starting in 1950) to determine how well this romantic sportfish could be produced in ALC waters. Native fish were often given preference because of their known past successes in these waters, and yet there was open-mindedness enough to try cutthroat trout (notoriously unsuccessful in transplants from their western waters) in Canachagala. Kokanee salmon were tried in Third Bisby, splake (brook trout/lake trout hybrids) in Rock Pond and Green Lake, and brown trout in Fourth Bisby and East Lake. Extensive experiments were undertaken with nongame fish (alewives and smelt in Little Moose, smelt in First Bisby, and dwarf suckers in Panther) that might provide a greater food base for sport species.

Several problems had to be overcome if fishing quality was to be restored. Nonsport species dominated many waters (prohibition of bait fishing was in part a response to this problem, as nonnative species are often inadvertently "stocked" by careless bait fishermen). A variety of lumbering practices had damaged watersheds and warmed important tributary streams. The building of roads had created siltation problems in some locations.

Some waters seemed naturally acidic; even in the 1950s limestone was added to Lower Sylvan (1957) and Mountain Pond (1958) in an attempt to neutralize them, or, as the 1958 report put it, "to modulate drastic fluctuations in lime content in the Lower [Sylvan] Pond that is inevitable from the flushing effects of heavy rainfall."

Beaver had dammed streams and caused damage to fishing both by clear-

ing vegetation along streams and by warming the water in their stillwaters. Webster's 1979 report described the progress made since 1950.

> From the outset, a rigorous annual beaver control program has been maintained on Club waters. The result is clearly evident in an air tour of the Adirondack League Club, noting the contrast of dead timber and brush lands on peripheral lands, and directly measurable by the cold water temperatures of the tributaries themselves.

Perhaps the most exciting progress in the first twenty years, though, was in the trout themselves. Not only was more attention paid to the stocking of native species, but also a great deal of attention was paid to finding fish and waters that were compatible. Early fish stocking in this country was often rather like putting fish in a "You-Catch-Them" fish tank at the county fair. Fish were stocked with little regard for their possible long-term prospects for survival; the foremost concern was making fish available for immediate capture. Gradually, however, fishery managers recognized that the character of any water dictated which fish would do best in it, and so more attention was paid to accommodating that character.

Under Webster, lakes that could support fish in self-sustaining populations (that is, spawning populations that, under proper regulation, can maintain the sport fishery) were managed for wild trout. Other lakes, having no capacity for natural reproduction, were managed by annual stockings.

The simplest part of the waters and wildlife resource to fine-tune was the trout. In the late 1950s, Webster, his student William A. Flick, and others began research into the behavior and life histories of "domestic" trout that were reared in hatcheries, and discovered the extent to which a century of inbreeding had created a fish that was not well adapted to life in the wild. Fish fed in tanks for generations developed skills useful for tank feeding, such as staying near the surface and not fleeing from above-water movements. As Flick wrote later, "such a behavior pattern carried over in the wild and would likely make domestic strains as popular with predators as they are with fish culturists."[6]

Comparative studies with wild fish revealed just the opposite behavior in them, as well as greater strength and higher survivability. The challenge was to come up with fish that could be reared in hatcheries and that would retain many of the wild fish's more desirable characteristics. Eggs from wild fish in Horn Lake (on Township 5, a leased part of the Preserve until 1964) and Honnedaga Lake, and from Long Pond at Brandon Park in the northern Adirondacks, were used to infuse hatchery strains with fresh genes, imparting to the offspring a type of hybrid vigor. In a series of papers published from the early 1960s to the 1980s, Webster and Flick described the advantages of these interbreedings: fish that lived longer, grew larger, and provided much better sport.[7]

Reaching farther afield, the two scientists also tested the viability of two Canadian strains, obtained in the Province of Quebec. Both the Assinica and Temiscamie trout grew bigger and lived longer than domestic New York strains, but were quite different from one another in age of maturity and coloring. Eventually the studies suggested that the Temiscamie was the preferable of the two, and by the late 1970s a hybrid of Temiscamie and domestic fish was the standard trout for stocking ALC waters. Because of its success at the ALC, it was later adopted by New York State for its stocking program as well.

The developments in trout management of this period are reminiscent of the early days of Bisby and the ALC in the sense of excitement and discovery that accompanied each new experiment. Improved understanding of aquatic ecology enabled managers to make fewer mistakes in experimental management. Better attention to follow-up research also helped, as did the continuation of the reporting system by which anglers provided careful records of their catch.

Not everything worked, of course—a dam might go out here, or a fish stocking might not take there—but overall the success was obvious and encouraging. By the early 1960s, new records were being set for total fish take and some remarkable individual specimens were turning up in the catch reports. Heavy reliance on fall stocking of fingerling brook trout replaced stocking of catchable trout and native fish became the staple sportfish. Much was being learned, much was being improved, and ALC waters were producing better all the time.

Of Brook Trout and Band-Aids

In 1852, a British scientist named Robert Angus Smith announced that heavy industry in the city of Manchester was introducing so much sulfuric acid into the air that exposed metals corroded. Smith was echoed by a few other scientists over the next century, but it wasn't until the 1940s, when acid rain was identified in Sweden, that the world began to take much notice, and it wasn't until the late 1960s that another Swedish scientist, Svante Oden, got the attention of the scientific community with his ideas on the acidification of Swedish lakes. In 1971 and 1972, a number of researchers in the eastern United States undertook serious investigations of acid rain.[8]

Though even in the 1950s some evidence appeared that certain Adirondack waters were experiencing an increase in acidity, it wasn't until the late 1960s that sufficient evidence accumulated on ALC waters to indicate a definite trend.[9]

By 1971, Adirondack researchers, led by Dr. Carl L. Schofield of Cornell, a student of Webster's, were expressing alarm over declining pH levels in many waters. The twenty years of data gathered during the Webster-led research project suddenly had an unexpected value, as a baseline against which to measure changing water chemistry. A brief report by Schofield in the 1971 ALC Fishery Management Report indicated substantial evidence of acidification of many lakes between the early 1950s and the late 1960s. Most Adirondack waters are poorly buffered, and are rarely able to withstand the jolts of acid precipitation released periodically, especially during spring snowmelt. The sudden release of a winter's stored-up acid was flushed through some watersheds with lethal effects on fish and other aquatic life. Within a few years it was clear that the southwestern Adirondacks were most severely affected by acid rains. ALC waters were close to the center of the area of heaviest impact.

Though this discussion is concerned primarily with fish and ALC waters, acid rain is not. It may seem bad enough that more than 200 lakes in the Adirondacks are considered dead (some microscopic or vegetative life may survive; fish do not), but that is only the beginning. Acid rain is killing thousands of trees, especially conifers above 3,000 feet, and it is having as yet untold effects on other vegetation. It is routinely working its way into water systems, where it leaches toxic metals from soils and pipes, metals that are then ingested by humans. The stakes are higher here than just the quality of fishing.

At the ALC, management response to this crisis consisted of several parts. Re-

Dwight A. Webster

Loading "Bus" Bird's float plane at Little Moose Lake with trout fingerlings for aerial stocking, May 1959.

search was redirected away from improving lake productivity toward better understanding the phenomenon of acidification. By the mid-1970s, Deer, Fourth Bisby, and Goose lakes, and Mountain and Pinchnose ponds were known to be dramatically reduced in productivity.

Honnedaga, always known for its unusual clarity (partly the result of its low populations of plankton) and chemical character, had already proved exceptionally vulnerable to even slight increases in acidification. In 1968, all 2,000 brook trout stocked in the lake apparently died. As the report for that year concluded, "it appears that toxic conditions exist inimical to survival of introduced fish."

Conditions were nearly as bad in the South Branch of the Moose River. In 1974, the Fishery Management Report noted that high acidity in the runoff was killing stocked fish, even though efforts were made to time introductions to avoid peak runoff flows. The South Branch may be the most popular single fishery on the ALC, and many anglers enjoy the tradition of fishing well-known river pools such as the Slidebanks, Lunch Rock, Pork Barrel, and Limekiln Falls. Though logging, beaver activity, and overfishing were probably factors in the decline of the stream before 1960, since that time the worst problem has been the acid runoff that occurs every spring.

The acidity has affected both the fish and the insects upon which the fish feed, leaving the South Branch biologically impoverished without the help of man. There is some overwinter survival of native brook trout, especially where the fish can seek spring refuge in less acidic tributaries, but virtually none of the stocked fish—the mainstay of the modern sport fishery—survive into a second fishing season. Thus, 1,000 brook trout and 1,000 rainbow trout are typically stocked each year following the runoff period, so that the South Branch continues to provide ALC members with engaging sport in a beautiful setting.

On the other hand, the presence of some limestone in the watersheds of East, Little Moose, and Panther lakes makes them less susceptible to acidification. Roughly one-third of ALC waters fall into this naturally protected category.

Treatment of a given lake or pond depended on its size and location, as well as on the severity of its problem. Aircraft were used to lime backcountry lakes that could not be reached easily; lime was spread by snowmobile on the ice of other lakes. In 1971, a raft-borne hydraulic pump was first used on Lower Sylvan Pond to mix lime with bottom sediments, an unusual but successful technique that helped maintain that important brook trout fishery.

As in the past, though, it came down to what could be done with the trout themselves. In the 1970s, work was begun to test the acid resistance of various domestic, wild, and hybrid strains of trout, with the resultant discovery that there were indeed considerable differences in tolerance. In the fall of 1974, the Little Moose Hatchery was reactivated as an experimental station for that work. Research into acid-resistant strains of trout is still under way, using

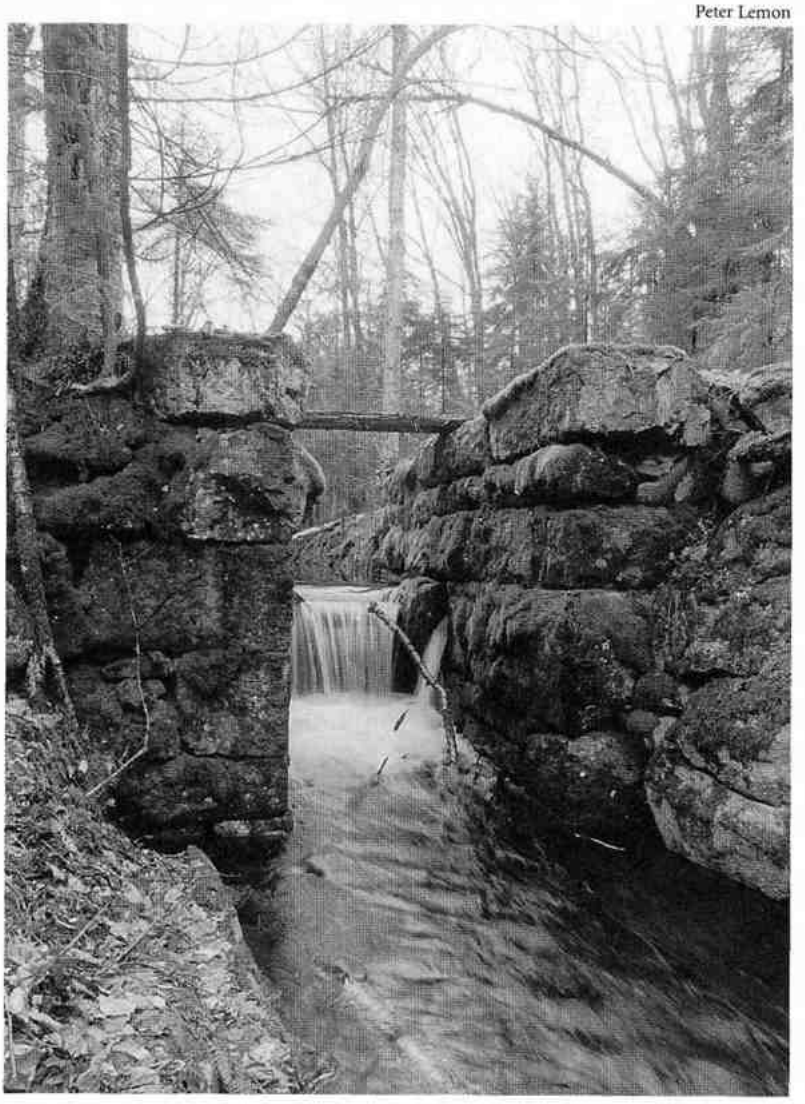
Temiscamie/domestic hybrids and pure Temiscamie trout. The fish are stressed by acidified water (a highly acid brook has been rechanneled to flow to the hatchery), and the survivors are then used to produce a new generation of trout that are similarly stressed. By this process, only the most acid-tolerant of each generation are allowed to contribute offspring to the next generation. The latest techniques of genetic manipulation are being applied to these fish, to improve and accelerate breeding capabilities in ways not even imagined only a few years ago. As in so many cases of ALC research, the implication of this breeding program reaches far beyond ALC waters.

The revitalization of the Little Moose Hatchery was of great significance for reasons other than acidity research. The hatchery has become the center for research and management activities (the Bisby Channel facility is the other ALC fish culture operation, used only in the summer) as the headquarters for the Cornell University research program. The hatchery's efficiency was vastly improved in 1975 when the old water intake was extended farther into Little Moose Lake. The new intake, in forty feet of water, provides the hatchery with a reliable supply of sixty-degree water, ideal for brook trout growth.

The scientific and management responses to acidification have yielded promising results, and have made a big difference in the quality of today's fishing not only at the ALC, but throughout the Adirondacks, as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation followed the Club's lead in using Temiscamie/domestic hybrids in many public waters affected by acidification and related chemical problems.

But as Webster and his colleagues have repeatedly observed, treating the water and the fish is a "Band-Aid" approach to a problem that requires major surgery. Until the source of the acid is cleaned up, managers of waters such as those on the ALC will continue to struggle just to make do in the face of a gigantic environmental problem. If and when acid rain is stopped, it may be that some lakes, their modest buffering capacities exhausted by years of acid drainage to their watersheds, will require treatment for an indefinite amount of time (so-called natural rain is moderately acid anyway). For that and other reasons, the research into acid resistance now under way will have benefits far into the future of Adirondack fishery management.

Peter Lemon



Dam at Canachagala Lake, constructed by New York State in 1881 to impound water for the Black River Canal, shown in 1989.

Despite the acid rain emergency, an impressive amount of "routine" work was still accomplished in the 1970s and early 1980s. Though practically all research was in some way tied to acidification issues, much work was undertaken in the established course of experimental management. Experiments in stocking "sexless" sterile trout that might have faster growth rates, in improving the color of trout, and other challenging programs were developed and carried out in the spirit that characterized the work of the entire Webster period.

In 1982, Webster established an endowment for research, the Adirondack Fishery Research Fund, at Cornell. The brochure announcing the Fund, published by Cornell's Department of Natural Resources, summarized the objectives of Cornell's Adirondack Fishery Research Program, which the fund would help support.

> Broadly speaking, an improved understanding of the habitat requirements of Adirondack fishes and, by integrating information on survival, growth, life history, and management options, the development of new management strategies for recreational fisheries in the region.

The Fund was launched by an initial gift of $100,000 from the Prescott Foundation (Howard and Dessie Prescott were Club members). By 1990, the Fund had grown to more than $300,000.

Dwight Webster died unexpectedly in November 1986, ending an extraordinarily productive career. . . .[10] "Doc" Webster's longtime Cornell colleague and former student Dr. William D. Youngs immediately replaced him as

leader of the Adirondack research project and as the ALC's fishery consultant. Among the important objectives of the research work now under way is the development of an "expert system" for the analysis and management of waters in and outside the ALC. The expert system, still in its early planning stages, is a logical but ambitious outgrowth of past research and management. Among other fish-related projects is work with four of New York State's eleven recently classified Heritage strains of brook trout. One such strain, the Honnedaga brook trout, now exists in only a few streams around that lake. Another Heritage strain, from Horn Lake (once on a leased part of the ALC), is also being given special attention, and will soon be placed in Panther Lake. Not all such work involves trout. Little Moose Lake is one of only five Adirondack lakes containing the round whitefish, or frostfish, an endangered species in New York, so the Little Moose Hatchery is raising fry to help ensure the welfare of this fish.

ALC Sport Today

Forty years of consistent and inspired professional attention has given the ALC a range of sporting opportunities that in many ways rival the turn-of-the-century Adirondacks. In the folklore of every generation of trout fishermen, there is a persistent belief that in the "good old days" the fishing was always fabulous. Sometimes it was, but just as often it was not. In many places it is now impossible to know just what the fishing was like; the records do not exist to tell us. But after years of evaluating historical records, Dwight Webster came up with the following conclusions about what primitive fishing conditions were like in the Adirondacks. As you read this, compare it with today's sport.

> 1. The "large" brook trout present were generally three to four pounds, rarely exceeding this, with most of the fish running considerably smaller, even in the good waters. Larger trout reported were mostly from larger lakes inhabited by the multiple species complex noted . . .
>
> 2. Lake trout in the large lakes commonly reached a size in excess of ten pounds; although there is no clear idea of the abundance of fish in this class, there is little doubt that even bigger fish (on up to twenty and thirty pounds) were often present. In some lakes where adequate records exist, the average size of the fish at the turn of the century was two to three pounds, but this may have followed exploitation of the larger individuals and other changes.[11]

For all the great fishing that surely existed in the Club's early days, it is clear that today's sport is in many cases just as good, and in some cases may be better. Judging from harvest records and an increasing level of interest among members, the same is probably true of hunting.

In all, the ALC is a living museum of sport. Through conscientious management, the Preserve provides a wide assortment of opportunities, ranging from the most primitive walk-in conditions to the convenience of roadside (or planeside) fishing. Research has enabled managers to tailor both waters and fish to suit the needs of sport while at the same time remaining sensitive to the ecological integrity of the setting. Though preference has often been given to protection or reestablishment of native fish, nonnative species have been given prominent places in many ALC waters where their chances for survival and for providing good fishing seem best.

The ALC today is a vital and still growing organization, strengthened by its long and often difficult history. A century—with all its adventurous times, its mistakes, its hard-won knowledge, its scientific triumphs, and all its human warmth and satisfaction—is a powerful legacy. The ALC has become more than protector of good sport; it has become preserver of a singularly rich sporting heritage of which every member and guest should be aware, and should enjoy as part of the special experience in the woods and on the waters of the Preserve.

ENDNOTES

The original chapter from which this piece is excerpted is based on exhaustive research and extensive citation. For the complete text and footnote section, please refer to Comstock's book.

1. Alfred L. Donaldson, *A History of the Adirondacks,* 2 vols. (New York: Century Co., 1921), vol. I, pp. 89–132.

2. *Bisby Report,* 1881, p. 8; Joseph Morris, *A Brief History of the Early Adirondacks and the Beginnings of Bisby* (n.p., 1978); Katherine P. Dixon, *Activities of Bisby's Centennial Summer . . .* (n.p., 1978).

3. Joseph F. Grady, *The Adirondacks, Fulton Chain-Big Moose Region, The Story of a Wilderness* (Little Falls, N.Y.: n.p., 1933), pp. 168–69; Fred Mather, *Memoranda Relating to Adirondack Fishes* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1886).

4. George B. Grinnell, "The Preserve System," *Forest & Stream,* 26 June 1890; "Trouble in the Adirondacks," *The New York Sun,* 23 October 1892, is by its own admission "gossip" about the ALC, but it does portray some common moods and attitudes of the time.

5. The ALC and a few other private waters pioneered this sort of regulation in the United States. Though a few public waters were considered for, or briefly managed as, fly fishing only, it would be many years before such regulations received widespread public support beyond the confines of carefully managed private waters. Recent research on many waters in North America has shown that many spinning and casting lures, especially those with only one hook or group of hooks, are just as safe as flies for catch-and-release fishing, so there is less biological justification than once was believed for restricting waters to fly fishing. A summary of some studies of hooking mortality is Robert E. Gressell, "Hooking Mortality in Trout," Informational Paper No. 29, Yellowstone National Park, National Park Service, 27 April 1976.

6. William A. Flick, "New Trout for Old Waters," unpaginated offprint from the June/July 1971 issue of *New York State Conservationist.*

7. Dwight A. Webster, "Improvement of Survival in Hatchery Strains of Trout," presented at Fish Culture Seminar, National Fish Hatchery, Cortland, New York, 19 November 1963; William A. Flick and Dwight A. Webster, "Production of Wild, Domestic, and Interstrain Hybrids of Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in Natural Ponds," *Journal of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada,* vol. 33, no. 7, 1976, pp. 1525–39; Dwight A. Webster and William A. Flick, "Strain differences in brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and lake trout (*S. namaycush*) as related to management of Adirondack Mountain waters, New York," presented at Stock Concept International Symposium, Alliston, Ontario, September 30-October 9, 1980; Dwight A. Webster and William A. Flick, "Performance of indigenous, exotic, and hybrid strains of brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in waters of the Adirondack Mountains, New York, *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences,* vol. 38, no. 12, 1981, pp. 1701–07.

8. The literature on acid rain is immense and many sources discuss the development of acid rain research. A brief overview is Robert Boyle and R. Alexander Boyle, *Acid Rain* (New York: Nick Lyons Books/Schocken Books, 1983) pp. 31–37.

9. Representative examples of recent studies on acid rain in the Adirondacks are: Martin H. Pfeiffer and Patrick J. Festa, *Acidity Status of Lakes in the Adirondack Region of New York in Relation to Fish Resources* (Albany: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 1980); Adirondack Council, *Beside the Stilled Waters* (Elizabethtown, N.Y.: Adirondack Council, n.d.); Walter A. Kretser, James R. Colquhoun, and Martin H. Pfeiffer, "Acid Rain and the Adirondack Sportfishery," reprinted from *Adirondack Life,* March/April 1983; Mary Jaye Bruce, "What Are We Doing About Acid Rain?" *Cornell Countryman,* April 1984, pp. 16–17; Howard Fish, "What Goes Up . . ." *Adirondack Life,* January/February 1988, pp. 34–41 and 63–66.

10. "In Remembrance," in "Research for the Adirondacks" newsletter from Department of Natural Resources, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, Fall, 1986, p. 1.

11. Dwight A. Webster, "Proposal for Expanded Adirondack/Catskill Fishery Research Program," Ithaca, N.Y.: Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, 16 February 1971.

Adapted from The Adirondack League Club, 1890-1990, *edited and compiled by Edward Comstock, Jr. (Old Forge, New York: The Adirondack League Club, 1990).*

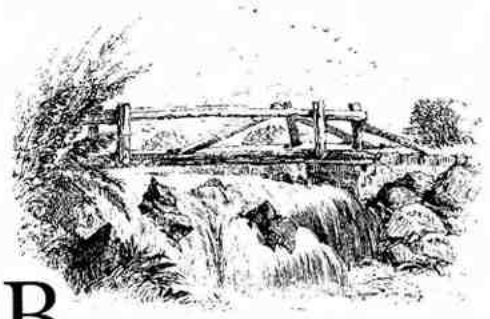
Well-Cast Lines

These wise (and sometimes irreverent) quotations are from John Merwin's new book, Well-Cast Lines: The Fisherman's Quotation Book *(New York: Fireside, 1995), published this fall. John, a former executive director of the Museum, has turned up both old chestnuts and new favorites in this compilation of famous nuggets about fishing. We have gone through his delightful book and excerpted the ones that particularly spoke to us; we think you'll enjoy these succinct perspectives on our sport and find a couple of new and bright truisms.*

Editor

Men first appeared as fishes.
When they were able to help themselves,
they took to the land.

Anaximander (circa 580 B.C.)



Bragging may not bring happiness,
but no man having caught a large fish goes
home through an alley.

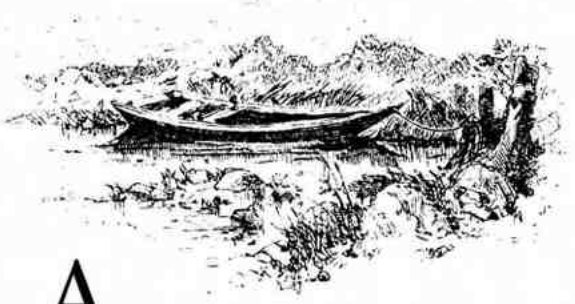
Anonymous

My favorite time on the water
will continue to be dusk. Not day,
not night, but the peaceful edge of
beauty in between.

W.D. Wetherell (1984)

A fiddler on a fish through waves advanced,
He twang'd the catgut, and the dolphins danced.

Arion (circa 600 B.C.)



"Then do you mean that I have got to
go on catching these damned two-and-a-half
pounders at this corner for ever and ever?"
The keeper nodded.
"Hell!" said Mr. Castwell.
"Yes," said his keeper.

G.E.M. Skues (1932)

And when he struck his first cod, and
felt the fish take the hook, a kind of big slow
smile went over his features, and he said,
"Gentlemen, this is solid comfort."

Stephen Vincent Benet (1932)

FISHING, if I a fisher may protest,
Of Pleasures is the sweetest, of sports the best,
Of exercises the most excellent,
Of recreations the most innocent,
But now the sport is marred, and wott ye why?

Fishes decrease, and fishers multiply.

Thomas Bastard (1598)

SUCKERS are trash fish,
an insult to divinity. They have
chubby humanoid lips and appear
to be begging for cigars.

Bill Barich (1981)

BUT what is
the test of a river? "The power to
drown a man," replies the river
darkly.

R. D. Blackmore (1895)

ARISING fish. Sunset and
scenery are at once forgotten.
We must get that beggar!

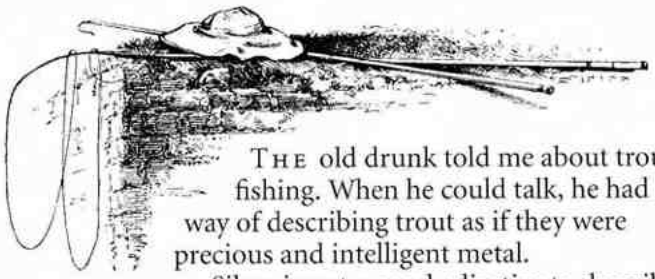
George Aston (1926)

IF you were
to make little fishes talk,
they would talk like whales.

James Boswell (1791)

THE reason that all other kinds of fishermen look up to the dry-fly purist is not that he catches more fish than they; on the contrary, it is because he catches fewer. His is the sport in its purest, most impractical, least material form.

William Humphrey (1978)



THE old drunk told me about trout fishing. When he could talk, he had a way of describing trout as if they were precious and intelligent metal.

Silver is not a good adjective to describe what I felt when he told me about trout fishing.

I'd like to get it right.

Maybe trout steel. Steel made from trout. The clear snow-filled river acting as foundry and heat.

Richard Brautigan (1967)

EVERY man
has a fish in his life that haunts him.

Negley Farson (1942)

WHEN you visit strange
waters go alone. . . . Play the game out
with the stream! Go to it completely
handicapped by all your ignorance. Then
all you learn will be your very own.

R. Sinclair Carr (1936)

HE learned to cast with a fly rod,
feeling that, cast by cast, he might
work his way into the terrain of his
father's affection and esteem, but
his father had never found time to
admire him.

John Cheever (1978)

A FRIEND of
mine, an ardent purist,
was challenged once by a
golfing acquaintance as he
turned loose a large trout
he had just netted. "Why
go to all that trouble to catch a fish,"
the exasperated golfer demanded, "if you
don't want to eat it?"

"Do you eat golf balls?" my friend
inquired.

Corey Ford (1958)

E are waiting
for the long-promised invasion.
So are the fishes.

Winston Churchill (1940)

Paul Bunyan's Natural History of Fish

GIDDY FISH. They were small and very elastic, like India rubber. They were caught through holes in the ice during the winter. The method pursued was to hit one on the head with a paddle. This fish would bounce up and down. Taking the cue from him the other fish would bounce also. Presently all would bounce themselves out of the water onto the ice. There they were easily gathered up.

UPLAND TROUT. These very adroit fish built their nests in trees and were very difficult to take. They flew well but never entered the water. They were fine pan fish. Tenderfeet were sent out into the woods to catch them.

WHIRLIGIG FISH. Related to Giddy Fish. They always swam in circles. They were taken in the winter months through holes in the ice like their relatives. The loggers smeared the edges of the holes with ham or bacon rind. Smelling this, the fish would swim around the rims of the holes, faster and faster, until they whirled themselves out on the ice. Thousands were thus taken.

C. E. Brown (1935)

THERE is nothing which in a
moment makes a tired, despondent,
perhaps hopeless man suddenly
become alert and keen as the hooking
of a big fish.

Gilfrid Hartley (circa 1920)

THERE were lots of people who committed crimes during the year who would not have done so if they had been fishing, and I assure you that the increase in crime is due to a lack of those qualities of mind and character which impregnate the soul of every fisherman except those who get no bites.

Herbert Hoover (1930)

TO LOOK into the depths of the sea is to behold the imagination of the Unknown.

Victor Hugo (1880)

THE nice people don't come to the Adirondacks to fish; they come to talk about the fishing twenty years ago.

Henry Van Dyke (1890)

YES, this sport fits me—physically, mentally, psychologically. Why do I love trout? For the same reasons men do.

Joan Salvato Wulff (1991)

SOME people dwelling near the sea affirm that of all living creatures the fish is the quickest of hearing.

Aristotle (circa 340 B.C.)

THE fisherman fishes as the urchin eats a cream bun—from lust.

T. H. White (1936)

FISHING is a means of meditating for me. Twirling the hook around and sending it out into the world, my thoughts go out into the world with the hook. I place my sadness on the hook and let the weights pull it down into the deep parts of the lake.

Sabrina Sojourner (1991)

IF a little madness be a necessary requisite to obtain the ultimate in the pleasure of angling—then, O Lord, give me insanity!

John Alden Knight (1936)

Reprinted by permission from Well-Cast Lines: The Fisherman's Quotation Book *(New York: Fireside, 1995).*

Figure 1. These two illustrations from the facsimile edition of T'ien Chu Ling Ch'ien *were photographed for the authors by courtesy of the University Library, Cambridge.*

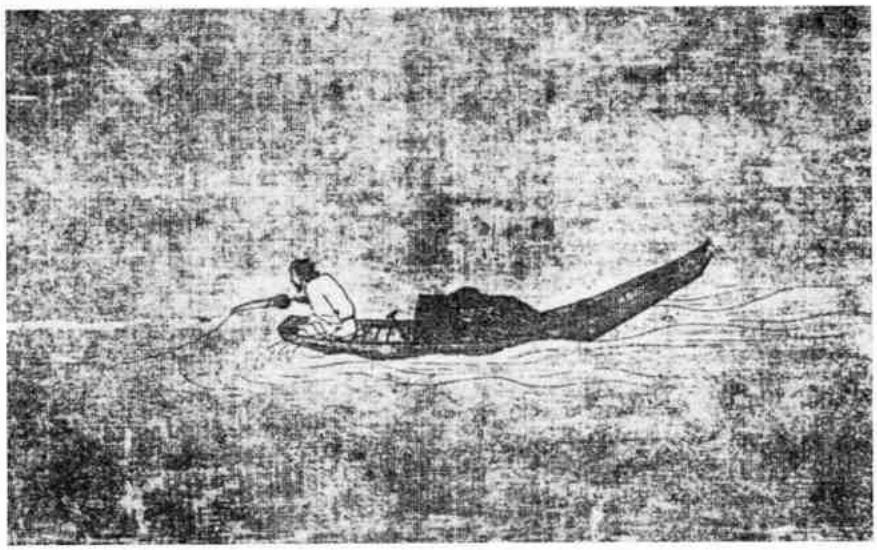


Figure 2. ANGLER ON A WINTRY LAKE, *painted by Ma Yuan circa 1195, contains the earliest known illustration* of a fishing reel. It was taken from O. Siren's* History of Early Chinese Painting *(1933) and* Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles *(1956).*

Origin of the Reel

INTRIGUED by the image of an early reel that appeared on a fourth-century A.D. plate at the Getty Museum (see The American Fly Fisher, *Fall 1994), author Frederick Buller, a Museum member from Buckinghamshire, England, was prompted to send us an excerpt of his book (coauthored by Hugh Falkus)* Falkus & Buller's Freshwater Fishing, *which further explores images of early fly fishing in Asian art.*

EDITOR

THE FIRST MENTION of a fishing reel in English angling literature occurs in Thomas Barker's *The Art of Angling* (1651), but the reel had been invented long before that. Its origin seems likely to have been in the Far East: a Chinese painting of 1195 depicts a type of fishing "wheele" in use five hundred years before *The Art of Angling.*

The 1195 illustration was soon followed by others. The book *T'ien Chu Ling Ch'ien* (1208 and 1224), a facsimile of which has recently been published by Cheng Chen-To, has two wood-block illustrations showing anglers using reels (Figure 1) similar to the one painted by Ma Yuan a few years earlier (Figure 2).

A river landscape entitled *Fishermen,* painted by Wu Chen (1280–1354), shows two anglers fishing with what by now appears to be standard Chinese tackle (Figure 3). It is particularly interesting because one of the anglers seems to be holding the line in order to feel a bite—perhaps the earliest example of "touch ledgering." It also has a curious feature in that the lines fail to reach the end of the rods, although this of course could be ascribed to artistic license.

Further evidence of an early reel comes in the form of an Armenian parchment gospel of the thirteenth century, which is discussed in G. Sarton's *Introduction to the History of Science* (1947) and Lynn White's *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (1962). Dr. Joseph Needham in *Science and Civilisation in China,* vol. 2 (1965), sketches the historical links between China and Armenia, showing that techniques could have been transferred from one to the other.

In the book *San Tshai Thu Hui* (1609) there is a very clear illustration of a rod and reel being used for turtle fishing—a method still common in China today (Figure 4).

**On 18 December 1886 the* Fishing Gazette *published an extract from the* Japan Mail *referencing an exhibition of antiquities which opened in Tokyo on 1 November 1885:*

> *There is one room, the contents of which alone will amply repay a visit. Its walls are entirely covered with pictures by the old Chinese masters. Two of them, gems from an antiquarian standpoint, hang inside a case which stands at the entrance. They are painters of the Sung period—Baian and Riushomen—and, apart from the merits as works of art, one of them established the fact that reels were used by Chinese Anglers in the* eleventh century. *(Our emphasis.)*

If there is substance in this report, then the Chinese invention of the fishing reel is older than is presently conceded.

Figure 3. FISHERMEN. *A river landscape painted by Wu Chen (1280–1354). Detail of painting in the Freer Gallery of Art Library, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.*

In circa 1850, according to Charles Chenevix Trench in *A History of Angling* (1974), a certain Dabry de Thiersaut noticed the reel being used in China. The picture once more illustrates turtle fishing with a characteristic Chinese-style "spoke" reel (Figure 5).

Chenevix Trench commented on the similarity of this reel to an earlier Chinese reel but made no comment on the obvious differences, viz:

(a) The 1850s reel possessed a winding handle whereas the older reels did not.

(b) The spindle of the newer reel did not pass through a hole in the rod handle as it must have done in the old models and certainly does in the reels currently used in China. Instead, we can see from the illustration that the reel was either slung below the rod for a right-hander—or perched above the rod (like a multiplier) for a left-hander (Figure 5). We prefer the first option because five out of the six Chinese anglers so far depicted are right-handers against the one left-hander.

(c) Notice the rod is fitted with two rings which are placed ideally for a left-handed fisherman using the reel on top of the rod!

(d) The rod button fitted to the rod is like the one depicted on the title page (Figure 6) of *The Experienc'd Angler* (1662).

Throughout the centuries, Chinese fishing tackle has shown remarkably little change. When I toured China in March 1986 to discover more about early reels, I was astonished to meet a Beijing angler who was not only fishing during the bitter northern winter, but using an ancient handleless spoke reel similar in every respect to the one depicted in use more than eight hundred years before. There follows a short account of my quest.

THE EARLIEST FISHING REELS

In March 1986, I went to Beijing in the hope of studying the original paintings which depict the Chinese using fishing reels nearly five centuries before the earliest illustration of the reel (1662) appeared in European angling literature.

Locating these paintings, some of which had been reproduced in various books on Chinese art and technology, occasionally proved elusive because many of them were now possessed by foreign museums and art galleries.

Throughout the centuries the classical Chinese drumless or spoke reel appeared to accommodate line around six to twelve "cats cradles," each of which sat on the end of a spoke making up what looks like a miniature nine-spoke rimless cartwheel.

Since the reel was not provided with a handle or handles (although a handle is depicted in a nineteenth-century version [Figure 5]), I had assumed that line recovery was achieved by rotating the reel with the appropriate index finger poked between two spokes.

One morning all uncertainties as to how the reel functioned vanished after my companion Francis Plum spotted a group of local Chinese, some of whom were fishing with reels which appeared to be identical (except for the materials used) to those shown in the early paintings.

As soon as we had recovered from the excitement of this discovery we settled down to watch and photograph the anglers fishing a match.

Whereas 20-foot roach-poles were used almost exclusively for float-fishing (a method not requiring a reel) the reels were used by anglers who were ledgering, enabling them to make long and accurate casts; accuracy being a necessity in the case of one angler who was using five rods and casting out his baits in an impressive fanlike pattern.

Sure enough, as I had guessed, the index finger was used to wind in the line and playing fish presented no hazard. Hooked fish were dealt with in the traditional way—that is to say, the rod was moved upwards and backwards whenever the fish gave ground (or water) and then it was lowered quickly to facilitate line recovery by means of equally quick finger-winding of the reel.

After chatting to the Chinese fishermen through our interpreter, we discov-

IN THIS POEM, the poet reveals that anglers have used silk for a thousand years and since the technology of silk spinning in China is at least twice as old, we can only guess at the antiquity of the Chinese fishing reel.

A Poem of Silk and a Fisherman

Foam resembling a thousand drifts of snow.
Soundless, the peach and pear trees form their battalions of spring.
With one jug of wine
And a fishing line,
On this earth how many are as happy as I?
I dip the oar—in the spring winds the boat drifts like a leaf.
A delicate hook on the end of a silk tassel,
An island covered with flowers,
A jugful of wine.
Among the ten thousand waves I wander in freedom!

Liyu (936–978): Fisherman's Song
Translated from the Chinese by Hsiung Ting (1947)

Figure 4. This early seventeenth-century illustration shows a Chinese angler using a rod and reel for turtle fishing. For hundreds, perhaps even a thousand years, the Chinese have fished with seemingly identical rods and reels. Photograph of the original is courtesy of Dr. Joseph Needham.

ered the whereabouts of Beijing's best tackle shop where we were soon able to handle and purchase three versions of the classic spoke reel.

Technically, the reel possesses two surprising features which may or may not have been present in the reels depicted in the old paintings. First, the reel—otherwise free-running and checkless—could, with a simple turn of a knurled nut, be locked so as to provide the facility of an anti-reverse. Second, to prevent overruns, hand-braking is achieved by applying thumb pressure to a special drum-shaped wooden extension of the spool.

Casting with the spoke reel is easy for all those able to cast with a single-action revolving drum or multiplying reel.

A special long-stemmed butt-ring has to be used in conjunction with the classic Chinese spoke fishing reel. It is whipped on to the rod 15 inches above the reel axle.

The ring center of ⅛-inch bore is made of porcelain and is mounted on the end of a 2½-inch stem thus ensuring that line, as it is recovered, is guided straight on to the reel.

Since the rest of the rings hug the rod in the normal way, the porcelain ring at the end of the stem is slightly angled inwards so as to reduce line drag.

NOTES ON EARLY ENGLISH REELS

Since many accounts relating to the reel in English angling literature are inaccurate and confusing, we append a simple chronology.

First mention of the reel: Thomas Barker, *The Art of Angling* (1651); strangely, it was used by a namesake of Barker's:

> One of my name was the best Trouler for a Pike in this Realm. . . . The manner of his Trouling was, with a Hazel Rod of twelve foot long, with a ring of Wyre in the top of his rod, for his Line to run through; within two foot of the bottom of the Rod, there was a hole made for to put in a wind, to turn with a barrel, to gather up his Line and loose at his pleasure.

Repeat mention of the reel: Thomas Barker, in another edition of *The Art of Angling* (1653).

First mention of the reel in relation to salmon fishing: Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, second edition (1655).

> Note also, that many use to fish for a Salmon, with a ring of wyre on the top of their Rod, through which the line may run to as great a length as is needful when he is hook'd. And to that end, some use a wheele about the middle of their rod, or nearer their hand, which are to be observed better by seeing one of them than by a large demonstration of words.

Second mention of the reel in relation to salmon fishing was by Thomas Barker in a further edition of *The Art of Angling*—now retitled *Barker's Delight* (1657). This edition also introduced a line drawing of the reel with the "spring" fitting, which enabled the position of the reel to be varied:

> . . . [Y]ou must have your winder within two foot of the bottom to goe on your rod made in this manner, with a spring, that you may put it on as low as you please.

In *The Arte of Angling* (1577), attributed to William Samuel, there is an interesting remark. Piscator says:

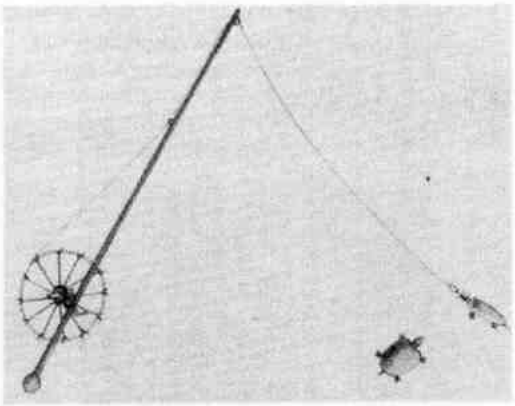


Figure 5. Dabry de Thiersaut's picture of a reel, circa 1850.

> My Master that taught me to angle could not abide to catch a Ruffe; for if he toke one, either he would remove or *wind up* and home for that time. (Our emphasis.)

Now, what was meant by that? Did Piscator's master wind up his line round his rod; or on a line-winder? Or was it a reference to an early reel? If so, it is certainly the first in English literature, preceding Barker's by seventy-four years.

That two of these proposals are not unreasonable can be seen from developments in other countries, namely a Chinese painting by Tu Shu Chi Ch'ing depicts an angler fishing with a pole with spare line hooked round the rod, and in France (according to Charles Chenevix Trench) Liger's book *Amusements de Campagne* (1712) illustrates a hand-held bobbin round which spare line is wound. Indeed, we are told that even today some Japanese still favor the system of winding spare line round a cleat attached to the butt section of their rods.

Although not impossible, the proposals seem unlikely. One of the intermediate authors—Mascall, Dennys, Markham, Lauson—would surely have mentioned the reel had it been in use. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the first use of "wind up" (circa 1205) referred to the hoisting of sails. It was subsequently used in the figurative sense: "To sum up, or conclude." In all probability Piscator meant simply that his master would "pack up and go home."

All the same, it is worth remembering that before a reel could have been used there *must* have been a hole or a ring at the rod top for the line to pass through, doubtless to be taken up on a line-frame.

Figure 6. The title page of Robert Venables's The Experienc'd Angler *(1662) has caused much confusion. The left-hand rod has a knob on the butt resembling the recent screw-in button. The right-hand rod, however, has what seems to be a gun-butt. In fact, it is not part of the rod at all, but a bait-horn standing in front of the rod. Another bait-horn can be seen on the shelf, top left.*

The use of a top ring in conjunction with a line-frame or "winder," before the use of a reel, is not on record. Is Piscator's remark the first hint?

The first illustration of an identifiable reel is on the title page of Colonel Robert Venables's *The Experienc'd Angler* (Figure 7). This, like most of those other early reels, had a "pin and hole" fitting and was fastened with a wing nut.

The methods used in fastening the reel to the rod give the all-important clues to the age of reels. First, the pin fastening through the rod butt (circa 1650–1700). Next, the spring-clip and the spring-clip with leather padding (1657–1880). Finally, the modern type of reel seating with sliding bands on the rod butt. These dates are very rough, for it is impossible to establish an exact

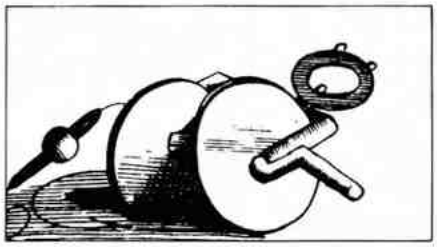


Figure 7. A detail from the title page of Colonel Robert Venables's The Experienc'd Angler *(Figure 6) also contained the first identifiable illustration of a fishing reel, or "winch." The reel is enlarged and the crudeness of the drawing calls for some textual support to convince the more skeptical reader that it really is intended to represent a fishing reel. This is provided on pages 44–45 of* The Experienc'd Angler: "*The next way of Angling is with a Trowle for the Pike, which is very delightful, you may buy your trowle ready made, therefore I shall not trouble my self to describe it, only let it have a winch to wind it up withall. For this kind of fish your tackle must be strong, your Rod must not be very slender at the top, where you must place a small slender ring for your line to run through.*"

chronology and it seems clear that the various methods overlap considerably. The modern type of seating was illustrated by Daniel in 1807, but it seems that earlier versions were sometimes bound or nailed on.

The idea of two sliding bands on the rod butt may seem a fairly simple engineering device, but it has to be remembered that in order to clasp the reel firmly the rings need to be on a slightly resilient surface, such as cork, and cork handles were not in use until much later. Cholmondeley-Pennell, in *Fishing* (1885), wrote:

> Some reels are—or used to be—fitted with a circular clasp underneath. . . .With butts such as are now the fashion, however, sloping rapidly away from the handle, these fastenings have naturally become obsolete.

So it can reasonably be assumed that the spring-clip, or "circular clasp" as Cholmondeley-Pennell called it, was in use until about 1880.

FREDERICK BULLER

Excerpted by permission from Falkus & Buller's Freshwater Fishing *by Hugh Falkus and Frederick Buller (London: Stanley Paul, revised edition, 1988).*

Heaven

Fish (fly replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time
Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

RUPERT BROOKE (1887–1915)

Photograph by Cook Neilson

SOME ITEMS in the Museum's collection stand out more than others. Hemingway's Hardy fly rod, for instance, is asked about more often than, say, a standard old Horrocks-Ibbotson shaft. One such item is 91-28.50, the Livingston fly wallet (pictured above), which has awed Museum visitors for four years now. The vintage flies and hand-drawn sketches are absolutely beautiful.

The wallet, however, is part of a larger collection of tackle donated by Helen H. and Elizabeth A. Livingston, through Museum friends Jean and Michael Kashgarian. The collection belonged to Robert LaRhett Livingston (1844–1907) and his son Robert Forsyth Livingston (1886–1950).

Robert Forsyth Livingston, a resident of Long Island for almost all his life, held a deep fascination for the water that would sharply influence his life. He worked in the marine insurance industry, built his own sailboats (as well as beautiful cabinets and weather vanes), and fished his entire life.

Livingston's collection of angling apparatus passed to his daughters, Helen and Elizabeth, of Northfield, Connecticut (they later lived in an old stagecoach inn that they restored in Brookfield, Vermont). The Livingston sisters were longtime friends of Museum patrons Jean and Michael Kashgarian. With the assistance of the Kashgarians, the Livingston collection found a permanent home at the American Museum of Fly Fishing in 1991.

As Long Island residents, the Livingstons, not surprisingly, bought most of their tackle at Abbey & Imbrie. The collection includes local tacklemakers such as Empire City (an A & I trademark), Vom Hofe, Leonard, and Kiffe. The collection is truly complete, including tackle boxes, flies, leaders, fly wallets, rods, reels, nets, creels, scales, a leader cutter, and artwork such as cut-out tracings of impressive catches. One of these is even drawn on birch bark!

The importance of this collection lies in the fact that the two generations of Livingstons were lifelong amateur anglers who showed taste and discretion in their selections. There are no Hardys in this collection, but neither are there any Horrocks-Ibbotsons. The Livingston collection is testament to the average-quality tackle owned by fishermen from the 1880s to 1950, and so, as a whole, is valuable to students of the history of fly fishing.

JON MATHEWSON
REGISTRAR

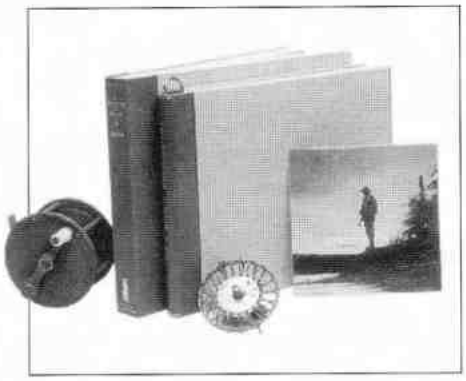
Museum Gift Shop

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

Ceramic Mug $6



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

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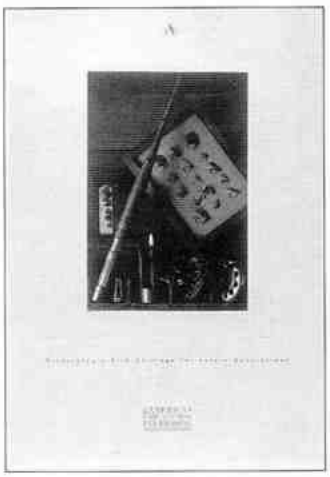

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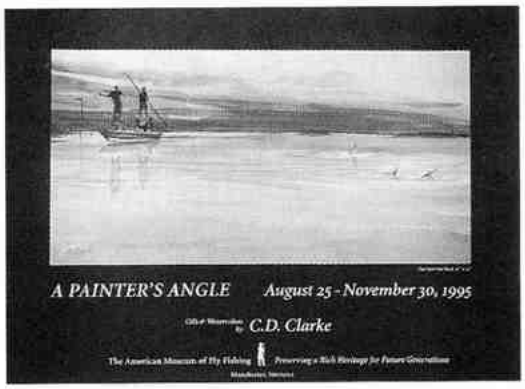
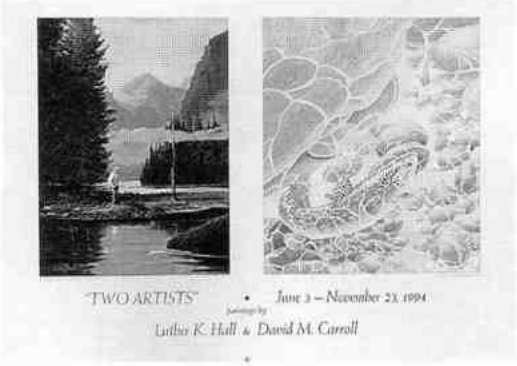


"A Painter's Angle"
C.D. Clarke
(26" x 20")



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

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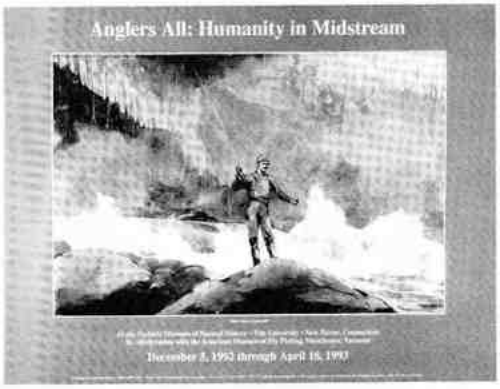


"Anglers All: Humanity in Midstream"
"*Casting*" by Winslow Homer
(18" x 24")

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

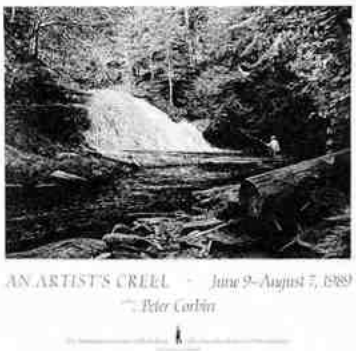
"Berwanger's Pasture"
by Thomas Aquinas Daly (9¼" x 14")
$25 each

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")

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Museum News

by Jon Mathewson
REGISTRAR

New Director

Craig Gilborn started full speed as the new executive director on August 7 and is already driving the Museum in new and exciting directions. His top priorities relate to helping the general public better appreciate the history and craft of fly fishing because at present the exhibits do not do justice to the artifacts and visual material in the Museum's collections. Other areas needing attention include education programming, especially outreach efforts, and the Museum Shop. Stay tuned.

Clarke/Abraham Opening

Our exhibit of **C.D. Clarke**'s oils and watercolors and **Darryl Abraham**'s three-dimensional sculpture opened to an enthusiastic crowd on August 25. The Clarke exhibit, "A Painter's Angle," includes twenty-five outdoor sporting landscapes. Abraham, whose specialty has been the recreation of rural American life in miniature, exhibits nine fly-fishing scenes. The artwork will be on display until 30 November 1995.

AMFF on TV

Watch for the Outdoor Life Channel's "Fly Fishing the East with Mark Bradley," premiering sometime after the first of October. Every week, Bradley visits the American Museum of Fly Fishing and talks to Registrar and Acting Curator **Jon Mathewson** about various parts of the Museum's collections.

New Faces

The publications department of the American Museum of Fly Fishing is pleased to announce that **Kathleen Achor** has been hired as the new managing editor of *The American Fly Fisher*. She has assumed the daily responsibilities of ushering this journal through its editorial and production stages. Her extensive editorial background includes work as an editor at World Wildlife Fund in Washington, D.C., and with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She lives with her husband Tim Achor-Hoch, an art director with the Orvis Company, in West Pawlet, Vermont. **Margot Page** will stay on as editor.

Jan McCormick started in July as the Museum's newest intern. Jan comes from a long line of Adirondack boat builders and guides and has so far impressed everyone with her quick and efficient conservation work on the Cushner collection.

Timothy Achor-Hoch

Kathleen Achor

Tune Us In on the Internet

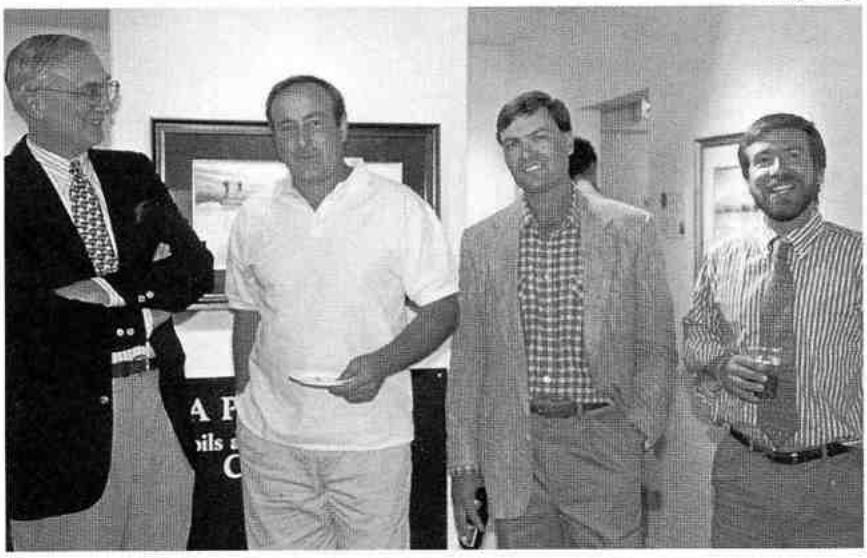
The Museum has a place in cyberspace! To find us on the World Wide Web, use our URL address:
htt://www.gorp.com/cl_angle/canecoun/museum.htm

Wanted: Films of Fly Fishers

The Museum would like readers to help it find and perhaps acquire movies showing fly fishers at work. The film need not have been professionally produced, although a segment of President Eisenhower at a favorite stream in Colorado—perhaps for one of those newsreels that used to be shown before the feature film—is exactly what the Museum should have in its library. Home movies, the earlier the better, can amuse and instruct. And where is the silent film in which Buster Keaton, playing a fly fisherman, casts and the fly catches, unbeknownst to him, on the seat of his pants? Finding resistance, he gives a yank and does a somersault into the water.

Paul Schullery, in *American Fly Fishing: A History,* likens fly fishers to dancers: George LaBranche's "delicate precision," he finds, was "sort of the Fred Astaire of the dry fly, and [Lee] Wulff, with his athletic power, was the Gene Kelly." Movies of LaBranche, Wulff, and others would lend support to this claim. Astaire and Kelly live in their

Margot Page



Executive Director Craig Gilborn, Darryl Abraham, C.D. Clarke, and Trustee Tom Rosenbauer at the recent Museum opening of Abraham's and Clarke's works.

films and not their still pictures, which is why one prefers seeing LaBranche and Wulff in action and not just in stills. A museum exhibit can come to life with an aptly chosen portion of film on a loop player.

So send us clues for finding movies of men and women fly fishing. Old film can be transferred or copied, so the Museum need only borrow it and not ask for ownership.

Margot Page

The American Museum of Fly Fishing welcomes its new executive director and his family at a summer reception. From left Museum President Richard Tisch, Amanda Gilborn, Alice Wolf Gilborn, and Executive Director Craig Gilborn.

Recent Donations

Henry M. Gridley of Slingerlands, New York, dropped by with a wood carving of a brook trout. The award-winning piece was sculpted by Fritz and Elaine Ralph. A truly wonderful work of art, it currently welcomes visitors to the Museum.

Don Phillipson of Golden, Colorado, presented us with some odds and ends formerly belonging to his father, Bill Phillipson. Included in the donation are various pieces of jewelry related to fly fishing, as well as salesmen's samples of rod tubes and five copies of Don Phillipson's newly published *Brief History of the Phillipson Fishing Rods.* (For more information on the Museum's collection of Phillipson paraphernalia, please refer to *The American Fly Fisher,* Spring 1995.)

Michael Coe, who recently relocated to Heath, Massachusetts, popped in on his way through town with one of the more exotic donations of past years. On a trip to Bali last spring, Professor Coe noticed that the local commercial fishermen use artificial flies to ply their trade: about a hundred flies (of various materials) are attached to a line held by hand behind a swiftly moving catamaran. They are apparently quite effective in nabbing mackerel. Ironically enough, the hand-held line is stored wrapped around a large culm of bamboo.

Tom Daiello of Lecanto, Florida, recently donated a Young reel; **Gordon Wickstrom** of Boulder, Colorado, donated a 1976 letter sent to him by none other than Vince Marinaro; **Jim and Kelly Watt** of Issaquah, Washington, gave the Museum twenty-five different entries in their "Fly Fishing Video Magazine" series, currently available for viewing in the Museum's Leigh and Romi Perkins Audio/Visual Room; **John Betts** sent three pamphlets he authored and illustrated about ten years ago; **Ray Salminen** sent us four of his Finn salmon flies.

Karen and Kevin Coffey of Irasburg, Vermont, dropped off a nicely made hat from the Northeast Kingdom (Vermont) Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The hat was made to support TU's efforts to restore the Clyde River, once famed for its runs of landlocked salmon. See the summer issue of *Trout* magazine for more details.

Richard Hoffmann, regular contributor to *The American Fly Fisher,* sent us the May 1995 issue of the *Guelph Ichthyology Reviews (no. 3),* which features an article by him. The article is extremely interesting, dealing with the depletion of fish populations and the remedies to restore them in Europe during the twelfth century.

Charlie Mann of Winthrop, Maine, gave us a fly of his own design called the Governor Angus King fly, one of which will be presented to its namesake, the current governor of Maine, later this year. **William J. Young III** of Canandaigua, New York, sent us a limited edition print of John Swan's wonderful painting of Iceland's Laxa River. **Ron and Sally Glogg** of Montauk, New York, presented us with an exquisite and rare Garrison salmon rod in memory of Ned Houpt.

Craig Gilborn, whose name you certainly should recognize by now, donated two books: Faust's *Fly Fishing the Coastal Gulf Streams* and *Wild Impressions: The Adirondacks on Paper,* written by Georgia Barnhill and edited by Alice Wolf Gilborn.

Autumn Museum Schedule

SEPTEMBER 22
Chicago Dinner/Auction
University Club of Chicago

OCTOBER 27
Boston Dinner/Auction
Tara's Ferncroft Conference Resort
Danvers, Massachusetts

OCTOBER 28
Annual Meeting for Members and Trustees
Tara's Ferncroft Conference Resort
Danvers, Massachusetts

NOVEMBER 2
Hartford Area Dinner/Auction
The Country Club
Farmington, Connecticut

NOVEMBER 17
Philadelphia Dinner/Auction
Adam's Mark Hotel
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DECEMBER 7
San Francisco Dinner/Auction
St. Francis Yacht Club
San Francisco, California

Please call the Museum, (802)362-3300, for details.

March O. McCubrey kindly deposited his thesis, *Diana of the Maine Woods: An Analysis of Cornelia "Fly Rod" Crosby's Involvement in Women's Outdoor Sporting Culture,* in the Museum's library. **Ken Callahan** of Peterborough, New Hampshire, gave us a copy of his new book, *A Dictionary of Sporting Pen Names,* and **the Adirondack League Club** of Old Forge, New York, presented us with history of their organization, *The Adirondack League Club, 1890–1990,* an excerpt of which begins on page 2 of this issue.

Last, longtime friend **Lothar Martin,** of Berlin, Germany, popped in with a bag of rods he brought with him on his annual trip to Vermont. The rods, now part of the collection, include a Milward's Bartleet and seven vintage Hardy rods, including a General from 1922 and a more recent Neocane Mallard. Not bad for a surprise visit. The bearded Martin, sack over his shoulders, was a true reminder that the holidays are almost upon us.

All in all, a very enriching quarter.

Your Thoughts?

George Dawson, whose figure has served as the logo for the American Museum of Fly Fishing since at least 1971, was the first American to publish a book on fly fishing, *The Pleasures of Angling with Rod and Reel for Trout and Salmon.* The original engraving can be seen more than once on these pages. It is realistic, showing Dawson with the sun on his back, which casts his shadow, along with that of his rod, on the ground. We want to simplify the figure to lend currency to it in the eyes of moderns, but we don't want to completely give it up. What little likeness there is of Dawson is lost anyway, because the detail of the engraving is nearly always lost in the printing. What do you think of the logo? The Museum staff welcomes your opinion.

We also challenge you to devise an English or Latin motto or phrase that might appear with the logo in the manner of college and school emblems and the Great Seal of the United States (E pluribus unum). The phrase should be brief and apt. Your suggestions will be published next year on these pages and the winning motto, to be chosen by the staff, will earn the contributor $100 worth of merchandise from the Museum Gift Shop. Send your suggestions to Craig Gilborn, Executive Director, The American Museum of Fly Fishing, P.O. Box 42, Manchester, VT 05254 by 1 **March 1996.**

Terri L. Hendrickson

CONTRIBUTORS

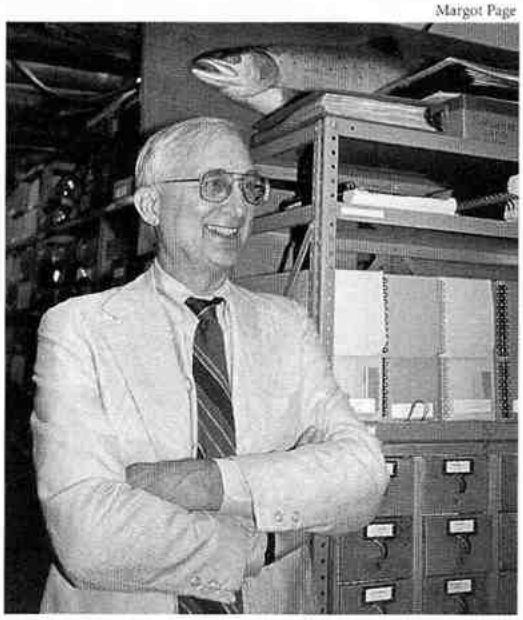
John Merwin is the author and/or editor of more than a dozen angling-related books. His numerous articles have appeared in such diverse magazines as *Town & Country, Fly Fisherman, Atlantic Salmon Journal,* and many others. During the late 1970s, he was an editor at *Fly Fisherman* and during the 1980s was the founding editor and publisher of both *Fly Tackle Dealer* and *Fly Rod & Reel* magazines. He now serves as a contributing editor to *Field & Stream* magazine. Merwin is a former executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing and has also served on its board of trustees. He will soon publish *Well-Cast Lines: The Fisherman's Quotation Book* (New York: Fireside, 1995), which is excerpted on page 14.

Paul Schullery, who was director of the Museum from 1977 to 1982, is senior editor in the Yellowstone Center for Resources, Yellowstone National Park. He has written for a wide variety of technical and popular publications, including *The New York Times, BioScience, American Forests, National Parks, Encyclopedia Britannica Yearbook of Science and the Future, Country Journal,* and a batch of outdoor magazines. His twentieth book, *Yellowstone's Ski Pioneers: Peril and Heroism on the Winter Trail,* was published this summer.

Three books—a "coffee-table book" about Glacier Park, a book of readings about Yellowstone wolves, and a fly-fishing novella—are scheduled to come out next year. He is an affiliate professor of history at Montana State University and an adjunct professor of American Studies at the University of Wyoming.

Is There a Visitor in This Audience?

Margot Page



WHO VISITS the American Museum of Fly Fishing? Questions like this could be expected from the new kid in class. But it's the first impressions of newcomers that are often the most insightful.

Ninety-five people answered a questionnaire I left in the reception area of the Museum during July. It was unscientific and incomplete (passersby should be quizzed at random), but useful in a broad-brush way. I believe in the commandment "Know thy visitor," which, given a membership scattered across North America, is different from "Know thy audience." The distinction may elude the reader, but I'm counting on fly fishers' reputation as hair-splitters for indulgence here: visitors are one category of audience and the readership of *The American Fly Fisher* is another.

Visitors filled out the one-sheet questionnaire after their visit. Respondents did not necessarily answer every question. They were mostly men (82 percent) and first-time visitors (82 percent). The great majority were vacationers (83 percent) accompanied, on average, by one other person. They were older—the age groups thirty-seven to fifty-five and fifty-six to sixty-five returned forty-five and twelve questionnaires, respectively, and three were sixty-six or older. The young adult groups, eighteen to twenty-three and twenty-four to thirty-six, were well represented with twenty and fifteen questionnaires, which implies a young generation moving up to replace its elders. Twenty home states were given, with New England and the middle Atlantic states having fifty-eight out of the eighty-one responses given to that question.

Manchester, Vermont, known for its upscale factory outlets, was a "destination" for 73 percent of the respondents; however, 79 percent said they came *not* "principally to shop." Fly fishing motivated most to visit the Museum: 77 percent said they were fly fishers and fifty out of eighty-two had fished in 1995, a number of those within the last week or month. Some likely came from the Orvis school a half-mile distant.

Fly fishing: is it mainly for men and rich people or for catching dinner? Respondents said no to these stereotypes. Is it a sport for "loners"? Less certainty was shown here, though the majority rejected that proposition as well. "I'd like to learn to fly fish or go" fly fishing got nearly every respondent's vote.

The film *A River Runs Through It* had been seen by 73 percent and 43 percent had read the book. A literate crowd, they understood the centrality of fishing in the lives of the brothers and their father. A Michigan visitor commented, "It was their life, their way of relating. Do you have time for a thesis?" A Virginian quoted a line in the Maclean book, "' . . . [A]ll good things—trout as well as eternal salvation—come by grace and grace comes by art and art does not come easy.'"

Regarding the various aspects of "interest" about fly fishing listed, respondents, who could check any or all items, marked "History" most often, followed by "How to Catch" and "Famous Fly Fishers." Other items—"Tackle," "Ethic," and "Art"—came up less often, roughly sixteen times each.

Fly fishing motivates our visitors, who by and large are supportive of what they find in the Museum. They're willing to pay an admission fee instead of offering a donation and would pay between $2 to $5. However, sixty-two out of seventy-one who responded to this question said, in effect, that changing the exhibits would make no difference to them. Given their familiarity with *A River Runs Through It,* the respondents' lack of criticism comes as a surprise. This leads us back to the beginning and the unscientific quest to know thy visitor.

From the questionnaire I conclude that the Museum and its exhibits attract visitors who are among the converted. The task ahead is wooing a larger audience, lacking information about and interest in the sport, but whose curiosity can be attracted to a fly.

CRAIG GILBORN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

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

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

Accredited by the American Association of Museums