The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

FALL 1996 VOLUME 22 NUMBER 4

Kathleen Achor

Access

On a dirt road in Maine one August noon, my husband and I were trying to find a particularly remote pond, and it was eluding us. The pond was clearly marked on the *Gazetteer*, but we were discovering a lot of side roads that weren't. This pond, we were told, was sure to harbor moose. Moose was the reason I was in Maine—moose and landlocked salmon.

About to give up, we saw a pick-up truck coming the other direction and flagged it down. It was a Mainer on vacation; he thought he knew where we wanted to go. He said he had all the time in the world and would be happy to show us the way. He turned his truck around, and we followed him.

It soon became clear that he couldn't find the right road either. But he offered to take us to the pond where he'd just been fishing. He took a look at our VW Golf, made a quick assessment, and decided we could do it. We got back in the car and followed.

We followed a long way, for a long time. The roads got worse, more remote, and our clearance was becoming extremely questionable. My city survival instincts were beginning to kick in, and I wondered what we thought we were doing, following a complete stranger into the middle of nowhere. It could be weeks before our bodies were found. The fact that *we'd* flagged *him* down wasn't alleviating my anxiety.

Finally, without warning, he stopped. He got out of the car and showed us his secret carry to the pond, invisible from the "road," marked only by the smallest of cairns. By sharing this access with us, he'd saved us significant paddle time. We thanked him, Tim offered him some flies, and we carried our canoe down and ate lunch.

And there they were. Two calves, two cows, and a magnificent bull moose feeding in the pond. We paddled all around them. It had taken several frustrating hours to get there and to find them, but it had been worth it.

And I caught some salmon on the trip, too.

Two features in this Fall issue deal with access. In "Getting There," Curator Jon Mathewson reviews ways we have historically made our treks to river and stream. Photos that evidence how tough it used to be and advertisements that beckon the buyer to easier methods grace these pages. Easier access, of course, meant more anglers, a problem addressed in "Preservation and Posting." This excerpt from Ed Van Put's soon-to-be-published history, *The Beaverkill*, deals with the geographically universal tension between conservation of the resource and the public's right to fish.

And in his third contribution to *The American Fly Fisher*, Frederick Buller takes on the mystery of "The Macedonian Fly." With Ælian's description of an artificial fly, Buller ventures a guess as to not only what the tied fly would look like, but what insect it was meant to represent.

Thanks to those of you who have written to let us know you have a complete run of *The American Fly Fisher*. We are happy to know who and where you are. If anyone else can add his or her name to the list, drop me a line. As to potential advertising in this journal, your reactions have been mixed—some of you are adamantly against it, others understand that it could be of great financial benefit to the Museum. We'll keep you posted, so to speak.

Kathleen Achor
Editor

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The Macedonian Fly 2
Frederick Buller

Getting There 10
Jon Mathewson

The Beaverkill: Preservation and Posting. 16
Ed Van Put

Gallery:
The Woolner Collection 24

Notes & Comment:
On the Question of Dapping 25
Paul Schullery

Museum News 26

Contributors 28

ON THE COVER: *As modes of transportation expanded, so did the ways that anglers could reach their favorite waters. This photo is from an album of fishing trips made by George Parker Holden between 1916 and 1919. Museum collection.*

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The Macedonian Fly

by Frederick Buller

MANY FLY FISHERMEN are familiar with Ælian's account, translated from De Animalium Natura, *of the Macedonian fly. This second-century description of a natural fly and its dressing is believed to be the first written mention of an artificial fly.*

Frederick Buller examines this historic passage on the Macedonian fly and asks two questions: 1) What was the natural fly? and 2) What did the artificial fly look like and how was it dressed? The resulting research is a fresh, insightful, and entertaining look at one of the most important early records of our sport.

JIM BROWN
AUTHOR, A Treasury of Reels

ÆLIAN (170–230 A.D.) was a Roman citizen who wrote a masterpiece on natural history in Greek. Better known by its Latin title *De Animalium Natura,* parts of it were translated into English by Osmund Lambert in *Angling Literature in England* (1881) and more extensively by William Radcliffe in *Fishing From the Earliest Times* (1921). Ælian is famous for being the "first author of all ages and of all countries specifically to mention and roughly describe an Artificial Fly."[1]

The dressing of that "Artificial Fly" was simple enough.

> They fasten red (crimson red) wool round a hook, and fit on to the wool two feathers which grow under a cock's wattles, and which in colour are like wax. Their rod is six feet long, and their line is of the same length. Then they throw their snare, and the fish attracted and maddened by the colour, comes up thinking, from the pretty sight, to get a dainty mouthful; when, however, it opens its jaws, it is caught by the hook and enjoys a bitter repast, a captive.[2]

The simplicity of the dressing should not be confused with primitiveness or crudeness because the dressing would have matched the daintiness of the hooks on which the flies were tied (as I hope to demonstrate).

THE HIPPOUROS FLY

Although Ælian does not mention the sought-after fish by name, it is pretty obvious—from the location of the river in Macedonia (presumably in its middle or upper reaches) and the description of fish with "speckled skins"—that he is referring to brown trout.

> I have heard of a Macedonian way of catching fish, and it is this: between Berœa and Thessalonica runs a river called the Astræos, and in it there are fish with speckled skins; what the natives of the country call them, you had better ask the Macedonians.
>
> These fish feed on a fly which is peculiar to the country, and which hovers over the river. It is not like flies found elsewhere, nor does it resemble a wasp in appearance, nor in shape would one justly describe it as a midge or a bee, yet it has something of each of these. In boldness it is like a fly, in size you might call it a bee, it imitates the colour of a wasp, and it hums like a bee. The natives call it the Hippouros.
>
> As these flies seek their food over the river, they do not escape the observation of the fish swimming below. When the fish observes a fly hovering above, it swims quietly up, fearing to agitate the water, lest it should scare away its prey; then coming up by its shadow, it opens its jaws and gulps down the fly, like a wolf carrying off sheep from the flock, or an eagle a goose from the farmyard; having done this, it withdraws under the rippling water.[3]

William Radcliffe was not only mindful of the originality of Ælian's text, but also of the skill of the ancient fly tyers:

> It is undoubtedly the first and only express mention of a specially made-up Artificial Fly . . .
>
> And not only is he the first, but also (with possibly one exception) the only author during fourteen hundred years, who makes any reference to any such fly. From Ælian until the *Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* [1496] we find no mention of, or allusion to, the Artificial Fly . . .
>
> But I suggest and believe that this passage is intended, not as a description of a new invention, or of a striking departure from old methods of Angling. It merely instances the Macedonian's adaptability to his environment and his imitative skill in dressing from his wools and feathers a fly to resemble as closely as possible the natural fly on which the fish were feeding, a practice very common among anglers of the present day.[4]

Radcliffe observed that Ælian, in an-

This small silver bowl with its bas-relief sea fishing scene from the Delta region of Egypt (from about 100 B.C.) is categorized as Ptolemaic (Hellenistic Egyptian) and as such helps us to appreciate how Greek cultural influences were carried into Africa (and Asia) by the invading Macedonian armies. Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.

other part of his book, described how sea fish could be caught on lures made with hooks (presumably large) wrapped in wool of Laconian red (from the ancient Doric state of Laconia) to which is attached a sea mew's (gull's) feather.[5]

The art of *feathering* for mackerel, cod, whiting, or other fish is very old indeed, which is apparent from Radcliffe's summary of Ælian's note on the subject of catching pilamyds or young tunny fish: "One of the crew sitting at the stern lets down on either side of the ship lines with hooks. On each hook he ties a bait [or rather a lure] wrapped in wool of Laconian red, and to each hook attaches the feather of a sea mew."[6]

That fishing tackle and indeed fly-fishing tackle, even two thousand years ago, were well developed in the eastern Mediterranean countries (or at least in Greece and Macedonia) is evident from the next paragraph in Radcliffe's summary of part of his translation of Ælian's work.

> The list of those necessary for fishing with hooks, or Angling, recounts "natural horsehair, white, and black, and flame-coloured, and half-grey; but of the dyed hair, they select only those that are grey, or of true sea-purple, for the rest, they say, are pretty poor. They use, too, the straight bristles of swine, and thread, and much copper and lead, and cords." Now follow the important words—"and feathers, chiefly white, or black, or various. They use two wools, red and blue."[7]

Cache of Hooks

Ælian's reference (c. 200 A.D.) to a river in Macedonia called the Astræos was suddenly brought back to me when I read about a twentieth-century discovery of a cache of hooks in Macedonia that had lain for some two thousand years within a tomb in the ancient city of Amphipolis. A different Macedonian river was named—this time the Struma (in Greek the Strimon or Strymon), just

seventy-five miles east of the Astræos.

The story of finding the ancient hooks was revealed to me when, on the recommendation of Ronald Coleby, an antiquarian book dealer, I read a rather curious little book called *Rod, Pole & Perch* (1928). Its author, L.C.R. Cameron, combined the subjects of otter hunting and angling in the same work. The discovery of the hooks depended on the freak landing of an artillery shell on an ancient tomb. It happened this way.

Following the disastrous attempt of the British army to advance on Constantinople against the Turks along the Gallipoli Peninsula during World War I, the remnants of its Expeditionary Force were evacuated in October 1915. Some of these subsequently disembarked at the Greek port of Salonika.[8]

This movement marked the entry of British troops into the Balkan theater of war where they soon faced German and Bulgarian armies that were moving down the Strumitza (or Strymon) Valley in Macedonia in an attempt to effect a junction with their Turkish allies. During an artillery exchange in the area of Amphipolis, an enemy shell fell on a tomb that was more than two thousand years old. This unremarkable event had a remarkable result when it provided the means by which the troops (sadly lacking protein in their diet after so many consignments of meat had been condemned) could be properly fed on a diet of fresh fish. Cameron got his story personally from Dr. Eric Gardner, who was serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps (or R.A.M.C.) in Macedonia.[9] Gardner's unit was on the right of the River Struma, facing the Bulgarian army, some fifty miles east-northeast of Salonika.

Because of the shifting bed of the River Struma (one only has to look at a 1916 map of the area, then glance at a current map to see how much shifting has occurred), a large expanse of marshland full of lakes and pools had come into being. This provided much-needed fresh meat when some of the wildfowl frequenting the wetlands were shot during morning and evening flights. The lakes also contained large populations of carp, whose meat couldn't be added to the soldier's diet because every consignment of fishing tackle needed to catch them had been lost on transports torpedoed en route.

Cameron wrote:

> The front-line trenches occupied a causeway, bordered by the tombs of the ancient inhabitants of Amphipolis, which dates from 400 B.C. and was successively occupied by Greeks, Macedonians, and Romans. One day an enemy shell burst on one of these tombs, and when Dr. Gardner and other officers examined the ruin out of curiosity they found the bones of a man dating from c. 200 B.C. holding in his hands a quantity of bronze fish-hooks. These ranged in size from about a No. 11 of our modern scale to No. 4 or No. 5. They were barbed and the ends of the shanks flattened [spade-end hooks] with lines cut on the shanks below the flattened ends, to hold the whipping more securely.
>
> They were distributed among some of the officers and sergeants of the Expeditionary Force, who with them caught thousands of carp, the biggest weighing 14 lb.; which formed a welcome change in the diet of the troops. One of these hooks was preserved and brought back to England, and is now in the R.A.M.C. section of the Imperial War Museum at South Kensington [London].[10]

In November 1995 I wrote a letter to the keeper of the R.A.M.C. section of the Imperial War Museum to see if the hook, brought back to England and presumably placed in a collection, had been kept safe. I received the following reply from Paul Cornish of the department of exhibits and firearms.

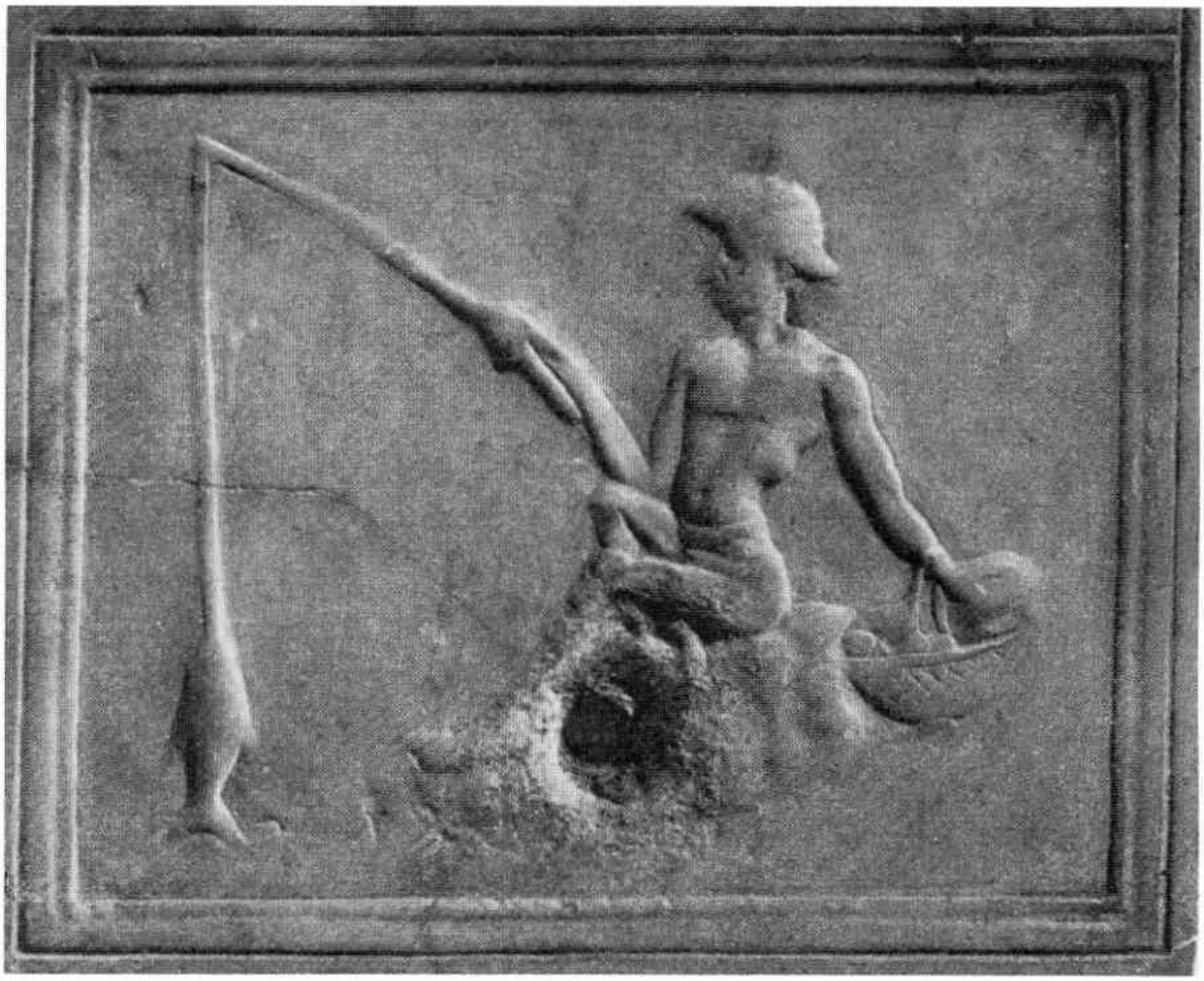
> Thank you for the photocopy of the article relating to the ancient bronze fish-hook reputed to be in our collection. Unfortunately I have still not been able to locate this item in our collections. The museum left South Kensington in 1935 and, given the vagaries of record keeping between then and relatively modern times, there would be ample opportunity for such an item to disappear from view. The only sure way of discovering whether we ever possessed it would be by an impossibly long search through the manuscript accessions of the period 1917–1935.[11]

Next I will seek through the good offices of the War Office to get in touch with the descendants of Dr. Eric Gardner to see if any correspondence relating to the hooks has survived. One thing is certain. If two-thousand-year-old hooks were used to catch sufficient numbers of wild carp to feed the troops of the 80th Brigade 27th Division, the hooks (probably sizes 4 or 5, the sizes a modern carp fisherman would use) must have been superbly made and of prodigious strength.

Doubtless the flies that the Macedonians used to catch the fish with "speckled skins" would have been dressed on the smallest and most delicate of the hooks found. If I could locate one of these ancient hooks, I could, with the dressing described by Ælian, get somebody to authentically reproduce the earliest known artificial trout fly, the Hippouros.

Entomological Intrigue

Whether or not I eventually succeed in locating one of the original bronze hooks that would enable one of my fly-tying friends to tie a Hippouros fly



An Etruscan panel from Orvieto, c. 300 B.C. Courtesy of The Fishing Gazette.

begs the question: What real fly was it meant to imitate? Remember that Ælian described it as resembling a wasp, or a midge, or a bee, yet having something of each of these in that it was as bold as a fly, as big as a bee, and colored like a wasp.

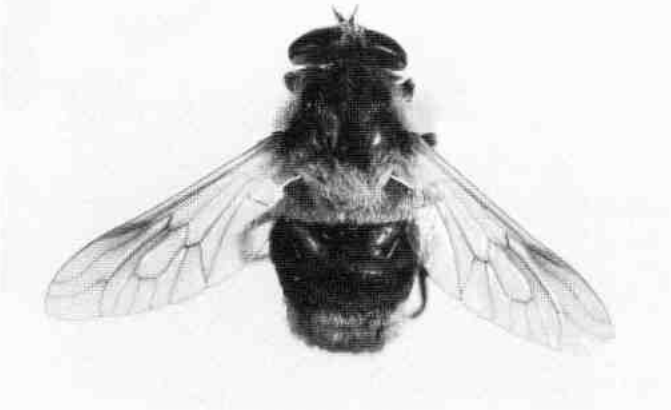
This description was an entomological puzzle until I read G. Ward Price's *The Story of the Salonika Army* (1918). Therein Price describes the discomfort and illness caused by flies, midges, and mosquitoes in the valley of the River Struma. I think that he might well have been describing the Hippouros when he wrote, "And not only the flies but superflies [as big as a bee?]; Beastly yellow-bellied things [the color of a wasp?] that if you hit them with your fly-whisk, just scuttle contemptuously to another spot [bold?] and can only be induced to leave by being pulled off with the fingers."[12]

Because Ælian's and Price's descriptions are so close, I sought the opinion of Stephen Brooks in the department of entomology at the Natural History Museum in London to see if he could make an informed guess as to the identity of the insect in question. Brooks's reply was surprisingly (but pleasingly) positive:

> As you suggest, it is difficult to be categorical about the identity of the fly in the descriptions. However, the descriptions seem to me to be reminiscent of a horsefly. Horseflies produce a deep droning sound when in flight. They are very persistent when trying to take a blood meal and produce quite a painful bite. Some species have markings similar to bees and are also of a similar size.[13]

Brooks then tentatively suggested that there could be a link between the

The Hippouros Fly, Candidate



Therioplectes tricolor *Kirchbergi, female. Courtesy of Dr. Milan Chvála, Department of Entomology, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.*

DRESSING

Hook:	Size 6 or 8 spade-end
Body:	Laconian (crimson red) wool
Wings:	Two; wax-colored (dun colored?) made from the feathers taken from under a cock's wattle

horsefly that he was proposing and the Greek name Hippouros. Because "hippo" is derived from the Greek word for horse, might not the name hippouros, therefore, be a reference to their habit of feeding on horses? *The Oxford English Dictionary* confirms the origin and meaning of hippo and gives examples of combining word forms, such as hippophile (a horse lover) and hippopotamus (a river horse).

When I asked Brooks if he could supply an illustration of a species of horsefly that in addition to being native to Macedonia would also fit Ælian's description, he suggested that I contact John Chainey, a colleague in the department of entomology, who is the museum's specialist on horseflies. This I did, and in due course Chainey replied. He was very encouraging, but pointed out that there were problems about the identification that needed to be addressed. First, Ælian makes no mention of the Hippouros being a pest in any way, which one would expect if it was a man-biting species. However, some tabanid species do not bite man. Second, only males of some species gather in hovering swarms; otherwise, the flight of tabanids is fast and direct. Third, Ælian's statement, "peculiar to the country . . . it is not like flies found elsewhere," implies that if the Hippouros was a tabanid, then it must have been unusual in appearance and localized in distribution.

On the positive side, Chainey had this to say:

> I have come to the conclusion that if the Hippouros was a horsefly (*Tabanidae*), then it must have been an unusual one. As a result, I have taken a *highly speculative* course and suggested a possible contender. One tabanid species that is perhaps worthy of consideration is the very distinctive *Therioplectes tricolor* Zeller. This is a large insect (20–25mm in length) with a band of pale yellowish hairs that crosses the apex of the thorax and base of the abdomen, the tip of the abdomen conspicuously covered with bright rufous hairs and wings that could be described as wax coloured. It is found in the Caucasus, Turkey, the Greek island of Samos, Rumania, and Bulgaria, with one record from Sicily.
>
> Although there are no records from mainland Greece, it would not be unexpected in the Thessalonica area. It appears to be scarce through most of its range but is occasionally found in abundance. There is very little information on the habits of this species, though the females are known to attack horses and cattle but not man. *The larvae have been found in forest streams.* (Author's italics.)[14]

Chainey enclosed a photograph of

Number 1: The Horsefly

Frederick Buller

THIS FLY WAS DRESSED by David Beazley of Chesham in Buckinghamshire, one-time curator of the Flyfishers' Club, London. I asked him to tie his interpretation of Ælian's fly. He told me that his first challenge was to think of how it might be tied with no tools other than a knife—and certainly no vise.

His first effort was to see if it could be tied using only wool, but he found there was no way of keeping the dressing, particularly the wings, tight.

The fly was tied in his fingers, using a length of white tying thread, a short length of red wool, and two waxy cock hackles. Whether it would be recognizable to Ælian is anyone's guess.

Therioplectes tricolor Zeller and suggested that I write to Dr. Milan Chvála of the entomological department at Charles University in Prague for permission to use it. I subsequently did so and included with my letter some background notes so that he would understand why I needed the photograph.

Dr. Chvála's reply was extremely helpful. If the Hippouros fly was meant to imitate a horsefly, Dr. Chvála favored two other closely related tabanids (previously named by Chainey as alternatives) because they are native to Greece: *Therioplectes gigas* Herbst or *Therioplectes tunic atus* Szílady, rather than *Therioplectes tricolor* Zeller.

Subsequently, a photograph of *Therioplectes tricolor* Kirchbergi provided by Dr. Chvála was used (because it was the only one available) by my friend David Beazley as a model to tie the first of two twentieth-century versions of the Hippouros fly with the materials specified in Ælian's ancient dressing.

Dr. Chvála, intrigued by all the problems of identification, wondered whether the original word in Latin—translated as *hovering*—had a special and specific determining quality.

> My only possible explanation ("In boldness it is like a fly, in size . . . a bee, it imitates the colour of a wasp, and it hums like a bee") is some species of large hover-fly (family Syrphidae).
>
> The members of this family like to hover on a spot in sun-shine, over ground, vegetation or even water. They often hover on one spot over the glittering surface of water, "humming like a bee," imitating the "colour of a wasp"—many syrphids are of bright, warning yellow-black coloration of a wasp, especially the large (as large as the larger tabanids) *Volucella* species, some have even a reddish abdomen imitating a bumble-bee (quite like a tabanid of the genus *Therioplectes*). But the hover-fly could be caught by a fish while it hovers over one spot. The flies mentioned by Price might well be syrphids as well "beastly yellow bellied things that if you hit them with your fly-whisk, just scuttle contemptuously to another spot"—typical behaviour of a hovering syrphid fly.[15]

Now thoroughly warmed to the project, which he likened to a detective novel, Dr. Chvála added this postscript to his letter: "There is a discrepancy between the colour of the artificial fly ('they fasten crimson wool') and the Macedonian fly ('it imitates the colour of a wasp.')."[16] He thought that there were two possible explanations. Either Ælian did not differentiate between wasps and bumblebees (the latter sometimes have bright red abdomens) or that the early fly tyers had already

learned that bright colors could be more attractive to fish than the natural colors.

I sent a draft of my findings to Kenneth Robson, editor of *The Flyfishers' Journal* and author of *Robson's Guide* (on stillwater trout flies). This draft had not yet taken account of Dr. Chvála's choice of hover-flies or drone-flies (Syrphidae) as being likely contenders for the original model for the Hippouros fly. However, I received a reply volunteering his own (but identical) response to the riddle.

> What about drone-flies (Syrphidae)? Most members of this family are terrestrial but some have a partly aquatic life. Larvae live in mud of shallow water and rejoice in the malodorous name of rat-tailed maggot. The females return to the water to lay their eggs and they may attract the attention of trout. They resemble bees and wasps by virtue of the yellow and black bands on the body and have only two wings like all diptera. Although normally associated with small areas of water, they are found at two of our big waters, i.e., Grafham and Hanningfield.
>
> The late Cyril Inwood invented a dressing which he called the Grafham Drone Fly: You will find it on page 114 of *Robson's Guide*. The best method of presentation (in still water) is to cast it out to a rising fish and leave it motionless.[17]

Robson finished his letter with the following thought: "I do not find it hard to imagine our angler from Amphipolos as a younger man, attaching a Hippouros fly that was dressed according to Ælian, creeping along the banks of the Astreos and heart in mouth dibbling it in the path of a rising trout some 2,000 years before Halford and his disciples did likewise."[18]

Because I am by inclination a romantic, I hope that the uncovering of some of the practical aspects of a near 2,000-year-old puzzle will help to bring closer the vision of an ancient angler dapping his artificial fly on the stream and catching "the fish with speckled skins," later described as *Salmo trutta macedonicus*.[19] ≈

The Hippouros Fly, Candidate

Peter Gathercole

Because Dr. Chvála was unable to supply a color photograph of a Volucella *species, Peter Gathercole kindly offered a photograph of a drone fly that was identified as* Episyrphus balteatus *De geer by John Chainey, who wrote, "This is a very common immigrant (i.e., not resident) species to Britain. The Syrphidae is a very large family in Europe with over 200 species recorded in Britain alone. The hovering flight and beelike appearance of some of these could imply that Ælian was referring to a species of syrphid, though they are not associated with horses" (personal correspondence, 5 August 1996).*

DRESSING

Hook:	Size 6 or 8 spade-end
Body:	Laconian (crimson red) wool
Wings:	Two; wax-colored (dun-colored?) made from the feathers taken from under a cock's wattle

ENDNOTES

1. W. A. Chatto in *Scenes and Recollections of Fly-Fishing* (1834) was the first author to notice Ælian's famous reference to an artificial fly.

2. Osmund Lambert, *Angling Literature in England* (London: Sampson Low, 1881). In a footnote Lambert states, "This translation has been made

Number 2: The Drone Fly

Frederick Buller

I ASKED Kenneth Robson to tie his interpretation of Ælian's fly supposing them to be drone flies. At my request, he took the liberty of putting some ribbing on the thorax of two of his versions because Ælian stated that "it imitates the colour of the wasp." In the note he sent with his flies dated 6 August 1996, he states, "Here are three versions of the Drone Fly. I would like to have hackle, but I did not want to stray too far away from the Ælian version. Again you can take your pick from a black rib or a yellow one (I chose the yellow one). 'The fish attracted and maddened by the colour, comes up thinking from the pretty sight to get a dainty mouthful'—undoubtedly a dry fly! I wonder how long these versions would float unsupported by a hackle. When Ælian says 'fit on to the wool two feathers,' he does not specify wings. I've tied you a version using two feathers as hackle and without a built-up body. This is more an impressionist fly, but I guarantee that it would float and attract fish. That one's just for the fun of it!"

from Schneider's edition of Ælian. Book XV chap 1."

3. Variations in geographic names are dependent on the translator (W. A. Chatto or Osmund Lambert). Thessalonica was also known as Thessaloniki or Salonika. Berœa is now known as Beroca; Astræos is known as Astracus. According to Magda Hatzopoulos-Vlahos of the information office of the Embassy of Greece in London (correspondence dated 24 January 1996), Astræos in ancient Greek geography is a northern tributary of the Aliakmon (or Haliacmon) River running between Veria and Thessaloniki, perhaps that river known in modern times as Kotichas.

4. William Radcliffe, *Fishing From the Earliest Times* (London: John Murray, 1921), pp. 187–89. Richard de Fournival alludes to the worm and to the fly (probably the natural) as lures in his thirteenth-century Latin poem *de Vetula*.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 190–91. It is interesting to note that whereas Ælian's note on the Hippouros fly is the earliest description on record, then his dressing of the sea fly or lure for young tunny must, ipso facto, be the second.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

8. In his *The Gardeners of Salonika* (Berlin: Andre Deutsch, 1965), Alan Palmers says, "They were veterans of the Gallipoli Campaign and only nine weeks before, had stormed ashore in pitch blackness below the heights of Sulva, two hundred miles away."

9. *Ibid.* Alan Palmers, in referring to Macedonia's strategic importance, called it "the great highway from Rome to Constantinople, a route trod by many of the World's historic figures."

10. L.C.R. Cameron, *Rod, Pole & Perch* (London: Martin Hopkinson, 1928), pp. 157–58. Macedonia's most famous son Alexander the Great, "Lord of Asia," used the shipyards at Amphipolis (previously called Nineways) to help to build his navy. He who held the city controlled the waterway into the Strymon Valley and the outlet of trade from the Balkans and the Danube Valley.

11. Paul Cornish, Department of Exhibits and Firearms, Imperial War Museum, London, letter to author, 14 November 1995.

12. G. Ward Price, *The Story of the Salonika Army* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918).

13. Stephen Brooks, Department of Entomology, Natural History Museum, London, letter to author, 31 January 1996.

14. John Chainey, Department of Entomology, Natural History Museum, London, letter to author, 23 February 1996.

15. Milan Chvála, Department of Entomology, Charles University, Prague, letter to author, 12 March 1996.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Kenneth Robson, letter to author, 22 April 1996. In a footnote within the letter, Robson noted "The rat-tailed maggot has an ingenious breathing apparatus consisting of a tail with a long tube that is telescopic."

18. *Ibid.*

19. The author consulted Alwyne Wheeler, formerly of the British Museum (Natural History) and learned that Macedonia, which once included Yugoslavia, has its own native brown trout. This fish was classified in the 1920s by the taxonomist S. Karaman as *Salmo trutta macedonicus*, a subspecies of the brown trout.

George Parker Holden (second from left, leaning against carriage), c. 1917. Museum collection.

Getting There

by Jon Mathewson

Izaak Walton opened his *Compleat Angler* with this quote from the Bible: "Simon Peter said I go a-fishing: and they said We also go with thee (John XXI: 3)." Neither Saint John nor Saint Izaak mention, really, how they would transport themselves to the fishing hole. By foot and by boat is generally assumed, but fly fishers have been nearly as inventive in modes of transportation as in methods of fly tying.

Walton and the other early angling authors neglected to mention how they traveled to their favorite fishing haunts because to them, it was fairly obvious: one walked, even if one lived in a city.

New York City first placed limits on fish caught in 1734 to ensure the survival of angling with a hook on Manhattan. Although fly fishing is no longer widely practiced on the island, the law was successful in prolonging this form of recreation, and Manhattanites fished on their own island well into the nineteenth century. The same was true for London as well.

Even when fishing within city limits was not desir-

Hikers in the Adirondacks. From the Columbian Exposition panels prepared by Mary Orvis Marbury in 1893. Museum collection.

able, alternatives were easily found. Gregory Greendrake, in his *Angling Excursions* (Dublin, 1832), described walking outside of Dublin in the early springtime.

> How delightful it is, now, to turn our backs upon the city; relinquishing reading-rooms, clubs, and coffee-houses, and betake us to some quiet out-let, some private scene, as near to nature, and as far from the city, as half an hour's walk will lead us. Thank heaven! and our happy poverty, we possess this advantage above the overgrown elder metropolis [London] and have not to seek nature through half a day's journey, and after all, find her but a semi-cockney sort of lady.

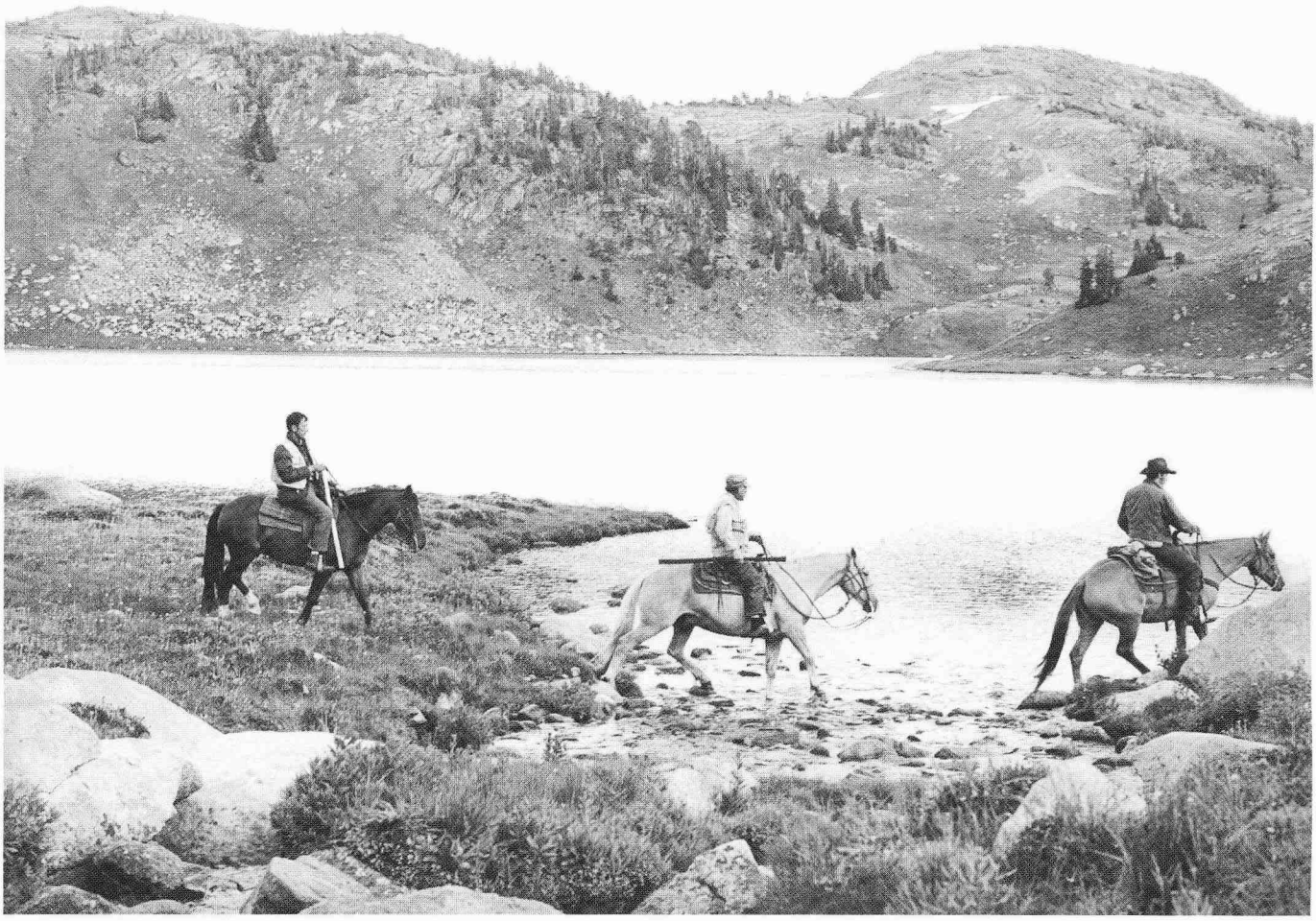
So, in the early nineteenth century, the second-largest city of the British Empire was still small enough to afford fly fishers their leisure of choice just by walking for half an hour. Presumably, the longest one would have to travel to reach a prime fishing spot was half a day, no matter where he or she lived.

Farther journeys were taken in horse-driven carriages, especially to favorite inns and country estates. In

The horse and carriage served many nineteenth-century anglers well. Museum collection, c. 1890.

the New World, travel by railroad became important —necessary even—to explore the new fishing venues of the West. According to Charles Hallock in his *Sportsman's Gazetteer* (1877), fly fishing could be dangerous. Of the Dakota Territory, he wrote, "The interior is uninhabited, or occupied by hostile Indian tribes, and traveling without armed escourt [*sic*] consequently dangerous." He describes the Yellowstone Valley of Montana as abundant with fish: "The streams are filled with large salmon trout of great weight and fine flavor." They were, however, difficult to reach: "Entrance to this valley is through the cañon of the Yellowstone, and this can be gained only during the months of June, July, August and September . . . The travel will not be found especially difficult, nor will the danger be great, as the Indians having a superstitious reverence for the valley, believing it to be the abode of the Great Spirit, never enter it." Hallock included a comprehensive railroad map of the country with his book.

The growing national railroad system enabled extended angling excursions. By 1880, *Forest and Stream* magazine included travel tips for fishers going to the usual eastern spots (Quebec to Tennessee) and further west. Montana, Colorado, Minnesota, California, Ore-

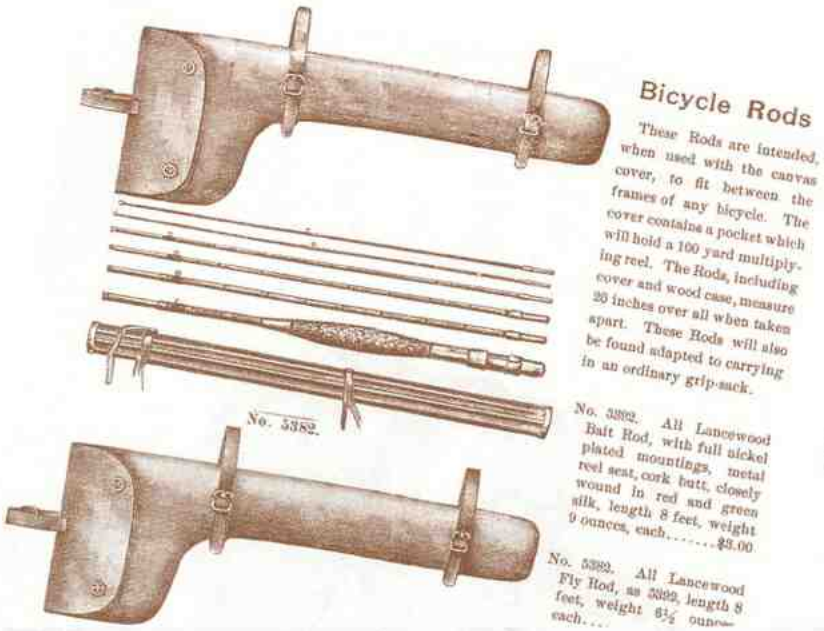


Museum friend Dick Finlay (center) in Montana's Beartooth Wilderness Area, c. 1976. Photo courtesy of Western Horseman *magazine.*

gon, and even Alaska had all been opened up to the angler by railway passage.

The railroads, obviously, did not bring the angler to stream's edge. The usual method of travel was by rail to near the destination, then whatever means necessary to the stream. One writer described going to Colorado by train and reaching a ranch; some members of the party then took a dogsled to the river, some went by horseback, and two went by wagon (Burr H. Polk, *Forest and Stream,* 28 October 1880). A month earlier, another *Forest and Stream* article described how to reach Lake St. Catherine in Vermont: "Leave Grand Central Depot (N.Y.) at 11 A.M., ticket to Poultney, drive three miles to the lake. . . . " How a stranger might acquire or rent something to "drive" is never mentioned, unless the modes of transportation were loaned by a generous host.

As cities grew in the late nineteenth century, people needed more than their own feet to reach the nearest fishable streams. During the 1880s, and especially the 1890s, this need was met by the rise of the bicycle. Tremendously popular, bicycles brought millions of people out of the cities into the countryside to participate in a variety of activities, including fishing. A special



An 1897 ad for bicycle rods by Abby & Imbrie.

From E.E. Butcher's article "The Sporting Motorcycle" in the July 1914 issue of Field and Stream. *Photo originally provided by the Feilbach Motor Co.*

pack-rod case was even developed to attach easily to bicycle frames. (A beautiful example of a "bicycle rod," an 1893 Kosmic, is part of the Museum's collection.)

By 1914, companies that had motorized bicycles were advertising their products, "motorcycles," as being perfect for the camper, hunter, and angler. Motorcycles could bring the outdoors man quickly to the most secluded, hard-to-reach places with little effort. This caught on for a while—even Wes Jordan took a motorcycle streamside—but, like all fads, disappeared.

By this time, of course, anglers were bringing cars to the wilderness. And airplanes. Gadabout Gaddis, the

From The American Angler and Hook and Line, *23 August 1890.*

These anglers enjoyed the advantage of motorized transport to the stream. Museum collection, c. 1915.

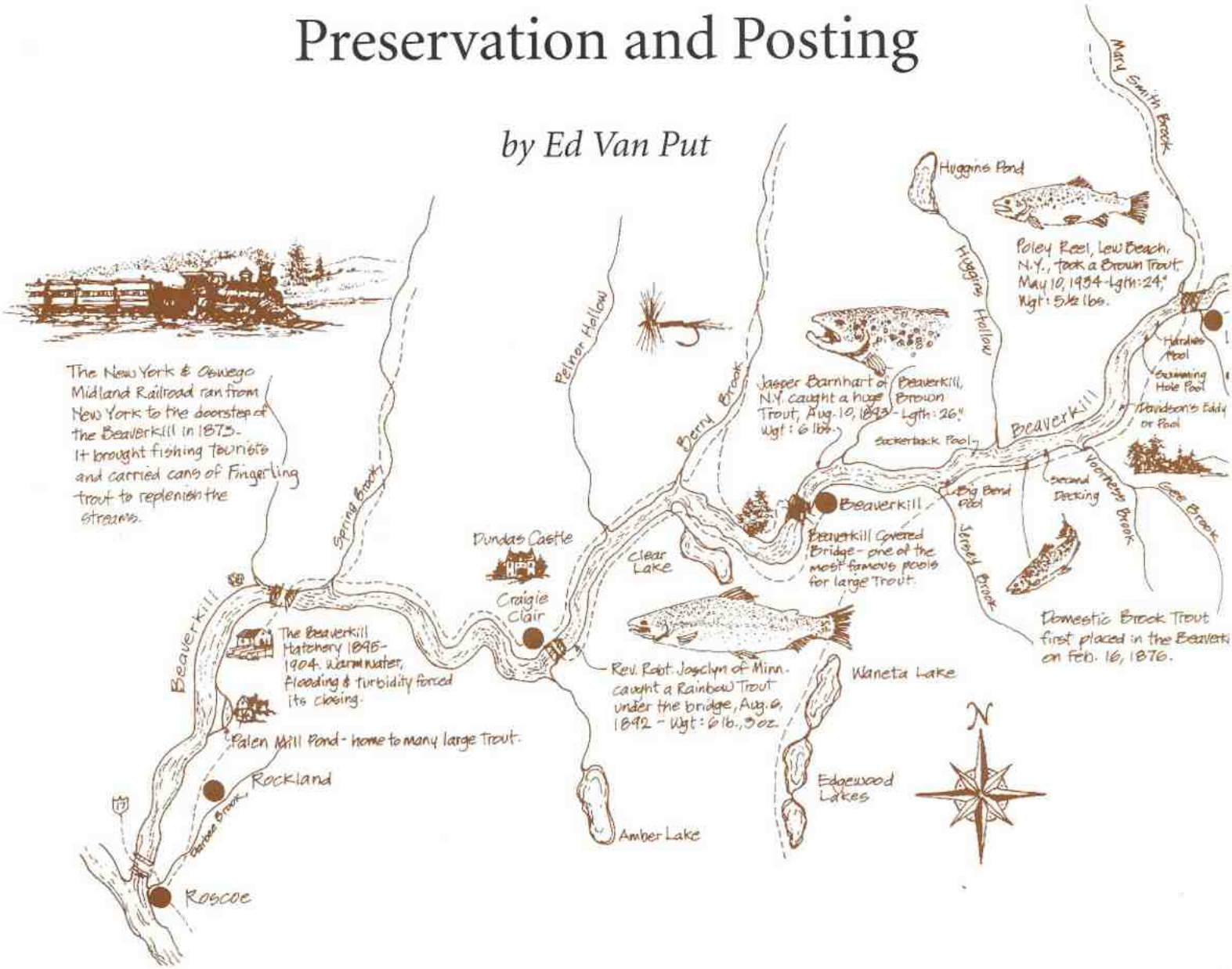
"flying fisherman," was most famous for flying to fishing holes, and some readers may recall that the esteemed Lee Wulff was also an aviator. Some of today's anglers have even begun taking helicopters to out-of-the-way places.

Improved methods of transportation have opened new places for anglers to practice their art. However, as more people get to these places, demand develops to reach even more remote areas. Eventually, the least crowded and best fishing may be just within walking distance.

THE BEAVERKILL

Preservation and Posting

by Ed Van Put



PRIVATE WATERS in the Catskills were first posted in 1868. By the late 1870s, posting in the name of stream preservation was well under way. More than 100 years ago, people were dealing with the same issues we struggle with today: conservation of the resource and access to sport regardless of class.

Ed Van Put's The Beaverkill, *a history of the river and its surroundings, will be released by Lyons & Burford in November. We'd like to present two chapters from the book, "Clubmen" and "No More Free Fishing," as a preview.*

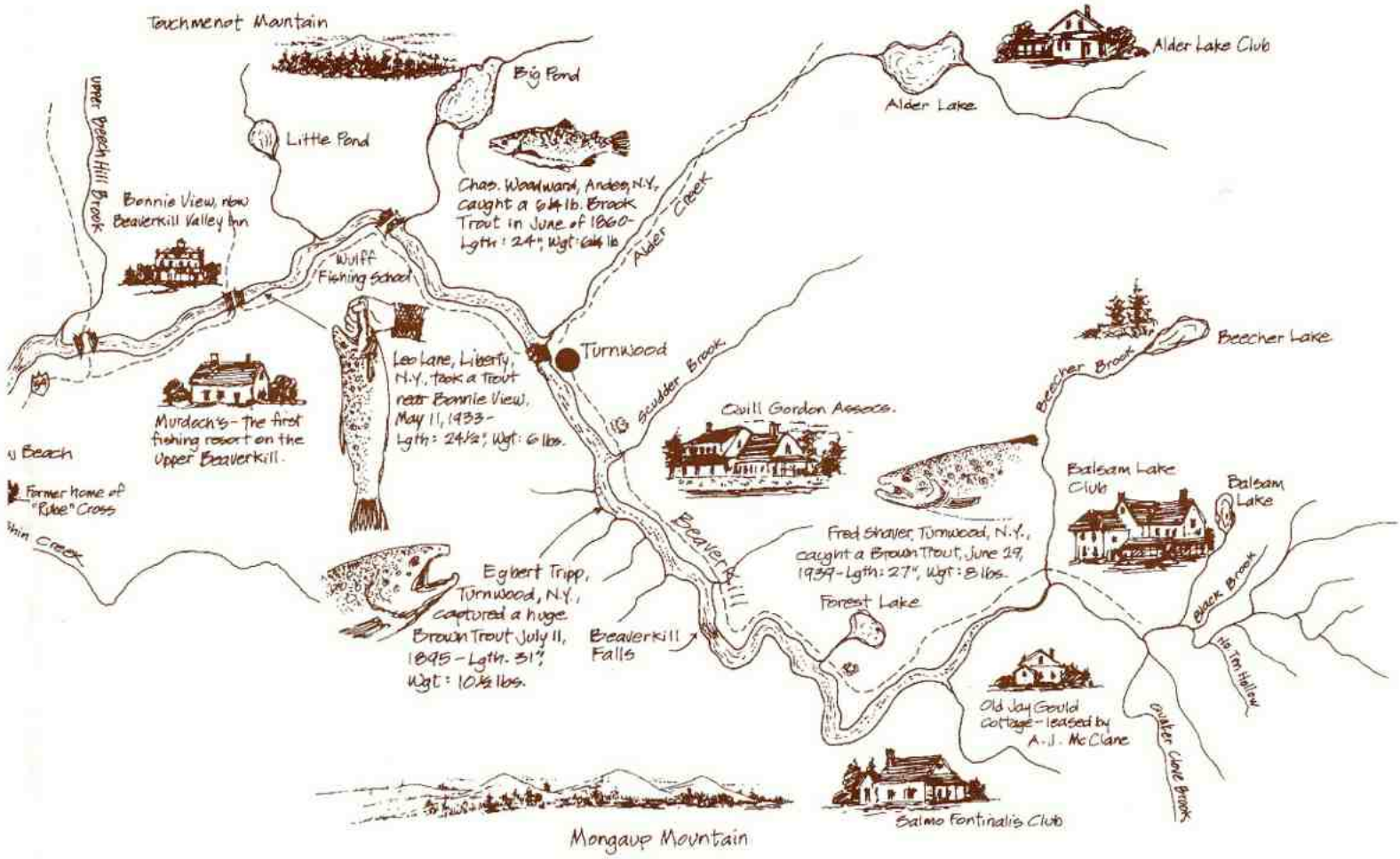
EDITOR

CLUBMEN

THROUGHOUT THE 1870S, overfishing had become a major problem in the Catskills. One solution that was gaining popularity among landowners and anglers was the establishment of private, or posted, water. Trout-fishing clubs were founded on the Beaverkill during this era, and for the first time notices began to appear along the stream advising anglers that they were no longer welcome.

Trout populations must have been in a deplorable state, as evidenced by the fact that legislation was introduced in Albany to halt trout fishing. This desperate attempt occurred in the spring of 1874 when "an Act for the preservation of fish, commonly called speckled trout" was introduced to the legislature. The bill prohibited anyone from catching or fishing for trout in any stream in Ulster and Delaware counties for a period of two years. Although the bill passed in the assembly, it failed in the senate.[1]

Stream posting actually began in the Catskills on the Willowemoc Creek in 1868 when the Willowemoc Club was established at Sand Pond. The club leased



four miles of the Willowemoc upstream from the tannery at DeBruce. In a letter to *Forest and Stream,* dated 19 March 1874, Cornelius Van Brunt, club president, advised readers that he and several others had formed the Willowemoc Club to not only have a pleasant place to fish, but more important, to put a halt to the destructive practice of keeping every fish no matter how small. Immediately they met with opposition, but attitudes changed as landowners witnessed an increase in the stream's trout population. The founders of the Willowemoc Club set in motion a policy of stream preservation, through private ownership, that exists on the Beaverkill and Willowemoc to this day.

In 1872, Junius Gridley, Edward B. Mead, Daniel B. Halstead of Brooklyn, and Robert Hunter of Englewood, New Jersey, spent the entire summer boarding on the upper Beaverkill. They slept in tents the first year, and in 1873 constructed a small clubhouse approximately a mile and a half upstream of the Beaverkill Falls. These men were the parent group of the Salmo Fontinalis Club; whether they operated their club in the traditional manner and leased and/or posted the stream is not known.

Posting on the Beaverkill began in earnest downstream of Shin Creek, on the farm of Royal Voorhess. Like other farmers whose lands adjoined the stream, Voorhess received a substantial portion of his income from boarding fishermen. And like others, he was concerned that his guests were bringing in fewer fish and were traveling farther upstream to where trout were more plentiful.

Most farmers were reluctant to post their lands and prohibit fishing. They were afraid they might incur the wrath of anglers who had always fished over their waters, and they held a "fear of some secret attempt at retaliation."[2] Something, however, had to be done and Royal Voorhess believed he had found the answer.

On 1 July 1875, Voorhess obtained leases along the stream from several adjoining landowners for the "exclusive rights of fishery, and preserving of the trout and other fish."[3] The leases included a ten-foot strip along either side of the stream and were in effect for a period of five years, with an option for five more. After obtaining the leases, Voorhess and several of his regular boarders filed a certificate of association and founded a society known as the Beaverkill Association: "the business of said society shall be fishing and other lawful sporting purposes."[4]

The leases and the certificate of association were filed and recorded in the Sullivan County Clerk's Office on 9 September 1875. The original trustees of the organization were Royal Voorhess, Whitman Phillips (Franklin, N.J.), Ed-

Map illustration by Michael Musto

ward A. Hastings (Brooklyn, N.Y.), Henry Bacon, and Charles Mead (Goshen, N.Y.). This filing was the first of its kind in either Sullivan or Ulster counties, making the Beaverkill Association the first fishing club of record on the Beaverkill. In the years ahead, the Beaverkill Association would evolve into the Beaverkill Trout Club, which yet today maintains the Voorhess homestead as its clubhouse.

The practice of posting had begun and soon other groups would follow. On 5 July 1877, the *Walton Chronicle* reported that the Mead brothers, from Brooklyn, would build a boardinghouse on the one thousand acres they owned at Quaker Clearing, and that no one would be allowed to fish on their property except their guests.

The Meads built their resort at the headwaters, far beyond where others had settled. The land had been partially cleared long before by a Quaker who had abandoned the idea of farming in such a rugged area. This was the most remote section of the Beaverkill and the last to be inhabited. Visiting anglers were surprised to find not only a homestead, but notices prohibiting fishing as well. One angler who visited the Meads during their opening season felt a touch of pity for these city people who found themselves far off in the wilderness, and stated, "It saddens one to see refinement buried alive in such a place. Over twenty miles to the nearest town, no church, no doctor, no neighbors, and no prospect for any advance in civilization for a lifetime. In the summer one vast forest, in the winter one expanse of snow, the only visitors are an occasional deer, or a starving bear; their lullaby, the screech of a wildcat, the howl of a hungry wolf, mingled with the roar of a biting wind which seeps through the valley with a restless fury."[5]

Those most concerned about the trout fishing in the Beaverkill were the veteran anglers who had fished the stream before its slide into mediocrity. One such angler was George W. Van Siclen, who fished its waters each season for many years. He, like Royal Voorhess, became convinced that measures had to be taken to halt the overfishing.

Van Siclen was a founding member of the Willowemoc Club; he, along with other club members, would hike three miles through the forest from Sand Pond to fish the Beaverkill and Balsam Lake. Now, in 1878, after obtaining a lease and the cooperation of adjoining landowners, he and other club members formed a new fishing club, known appropriately as the Beaverkill Club.

Van Siclen was an authority on angling and an expert caster; he helped organize some of the first casting tournaments in Central Park. He also contributed articles and letters to *The American Angler* and *Forest and Stream* on a variety of angling subjects. One letter that appeared in *Forest and Stream* must certainly have upset many who fished the Beaverkill:

> No more trout fishing in the upper Beaverkill. Please give notice through your columns. Last summer while I was at Weaver's there came down from "Quaker Clearing" three men on a buckboard, and they boasted "over four hundred trout"; I could not see nor imagine where they had so many stowed away, but after a while they opened a twelve-quart butter firkin and showed me the poor little things. They claimed four hundred, and I guess they told the truth. I think that not one of the "fish" was six inches long. Now this sort of thing must be stopped, and I have made up my mind to stop it on that stream. How many of us have fished the Beaverkill! We used to put up at Murdock's or Flint's or Walmsley's or Leal's, or camp out, and catch our creels full; but now-a-days the smallest creel half full of seven inch trout is good luck.
>
> After the sight of those poor little innocents my plans were soon laid. I obtained the next day, from Joseph Banks, a long lease of the stream across his two lots; I have since made arrangement with Mead Brothers, at the old Quaker Clearing. Van Cleef and Van Brunt, the owners of Balsam Lake, have joined me, and so has Ransom Weaver. I have hired a patrol to guard that stream from Balsam Lake down to Weaver's west line and I have posted notices and the fishing of the upper Beaverkill in Sullivan and Ulster counties, New York, is going to be preserved. All gentlemen sportsmen will keep away from there after this notice, unless they have my permission to fish, and all others will wish they had stayed away if they disregard it. It is unpleasant for me to write in this positive manner—it sounds boastful and ungenerous—but somebody had to take hold or the fishing would be gone from there in another two years.
>
> This notice will undoubtedly cause great disappointment to many, especially to sportsmen of Ulster, Delaware, and Sullivan counties, N.Y., but I do hope that it will be regarded, because we have the legal right and title and the means to enforce it, and we shall certainly do so. It is but fair to add that any one stopping at Weaver's or Mead's will be allowed to fish over their respective pieces of stream, but not on Balsam Lake nor the "Bank's lots." The increasing fondness for real sports sends more hunters and fishermen afield every year, and forests and streams near the great cities are almost stripped of fin and feather. Those who cannot take time to go far have but one resource—to preserve the game by restricting the privilege.
>
> Yours Respectfully,
> Geo. W. Van Siclen[6]

The stream section referred to was several miles in length and included practically all of the water upstream of the Beaverkill Falls. To make sure that local anglers were also notified of the upper Beaverkill posting, Van Siclen followed up by writing to newspapers all over the Catskill region. He requested that editors give his letter space before the fishing season opened since "this is a matter of such general interest" to the fishermen where their paper circulated.

Virtually every newspaper in the mountains published a letter similar to the one that appeared in *Forest and Stream*. Van Siclen again stated how he disliked the idea of preventing fishing that had been, for so long, free to all, and he emphasized that the fishing was gone because of careless fishermen who

Holland Society Yearbook—1888

killed every trout they caught.

The trout population must have indeed been low on the Beaverkill, and the public must have sensed the urgency or recognized the need of Van Siclen's action. There was no outcry, at least not in print, nor were there any angry follow-up letters on the stream closing. For that matter, the only editorial comments looked favorably on the idea. The *Hancock Herald* told its readers that trout once so numerous were now very scarce, and the cause was careless and destructive fishing by the public. The paper urged landowners and lessees to protect their fishing interests and post their water.

More posting did follow, and on the Beaverkill there were few, if any, complaints by the angling public, which seemed to recognize the action as justified and necessary for the preservation of trout fishing.

Another area newspaper, the *Ellenville Journal,* chose to speak out against the exploitation of Balsam Lake. Even though the lake was remote and travel difficult, men continually raided the lake's trout population, in winter as well as summer.

> Every winter barrels of trout are scooped out with nets through holes cut in the ice on Balsam Lake and whose business is it? Parties of ten or a dozen "campout" for a week at a time on the shores of these secluded ponds; each one fired with the ambition to beat his fellows in the numbers of trout taken. Hence it is fish, fish, from dawn to dusk, and everything that bites from two inches to twenty must be kept and counted.[7]

This type of outcry was not lost on the owners of Balsam Lake. In 1878, Cornelius Van Brunt and James S. Van Cleef broke up the boats at the lake, posted it, and hired a watchman. In response, the *Kingston Weekly Freeman & Journal* reported that as Balsam Lake was now "guarded by a mountaineer with a big dog and a springfield musket, it is not a popular place with the public generally."[8]

By this time, a rough road or trail ran over the mountains from Seager in the Dry Brook Valley. It traveled the west side of the foot of Graham Mountain to Samuels's Clearing on the Beaverkill. The road was steep, windy, unreliable, and fraught with hidden dangers. Although it made the lake more accessible, it was a deplorable road, and was best described by Ned Buntline, who in 1881 fished Balsam Lake at the invitation of the owners. Buntline made the trip with his special buckboard, which was followed by an ox sled loaded with two boats to fish from. They traveled "through swamps hub deep, over roots, fallen logs, rocks as large as a small house stuck up edgeways, lengthways, crossways and every other way, making turns so short that we had to lift the latter end of the wagon around to pass and even unhook traces to get between huge trees."[9]

Buntline avowed that should he be elected to join the club, the only way he would ever visit Balsam Lake again would be as a passenger in a hot-air balloon!

In 1884, a clubhouse was constructed on a hillside overlooking the lake and the Balsam Lake Club, which had been founded the year before, began operations. The parent group of anglers forming the organization was the same as the men who had formed the Willowemoc Club in 1868 and the Beaverkill Club in 1878. Just as he had been the first president of the Willowemoc Club, Cornelius Van Brunt also became the president of the new organization.

The Balsam Lake Club began leasing portions of the Beaverkill and acquiring others in 1886. One year later, they owned four-and-a-half miles, including waters previously leased by the Beaverkill Club. Through continuing land purchases, the club amassed more than three thousand acres, including six miles of the upper Beaverkill, by 1894.

FROM THE TIME settlers began salting down barrels of its trout, Balsam Lake had maintained a seemingly inexhaustible population of brook trout. The main reason for this bountiful supply is the small stream entering the lake at its north end. The stream has ideal spawning habitat, and each fall great numbers of trout enter its waters to reproduce. They do so very successfully and thereby replenish the lake with an apparently infinite number of new trout.

The reputation of Balsam Lake was

that its trout "always seem to be hungry and bite very freely."[10] Yet even during days of year-round slaughter, they remained abundant, and no matter how many were removed, the trout maintained a length generally between 6 and 8 inches. One angler who fished the lake for almost forty years, beginning in 1845, remarked after his last visit that he "found to my surprise no appreciable diminution in number and size of the trout in it. They are uniform in size, from three to five ounces."[11]

Records of the Beaverkill Club in 1880 reveal that 1,364 brook trout were kept, with a total weight of 205¾ pounds. The average trout taken weighed .150 of a pound, which, according to conversion charts, would be a trout approximately 7.5 to 7.9 inches.

When the Balsam Lake Club took over the lake, they too enjoyed incredible catches of brook trout. Early records reveal the following:

1885	2,135
1886	3,521
1887	3,163
1888	1,879
1889	2,350
1890	2,030
TOTAL	15,078

The lake's trout were small, but they were generally the same size as those found in the club's headwater section of the Beaverkill. Club members were not concerned with the size of trout, though; they enjoyed the outdoors and the quality of the fishing experience.

The same year the Balsam Lake Club was founded, Charles Orvis and A. Nelson Cheney published a collection of articles written by well-known anglers of the 1870s titled *Fishing with the Fly.* One of the contributions was by club member George Van Siclen. It is a sentimental essay about a day on Balsam Lake called "A Perfect Day."

Van Siclen was a lover of trout and nature, and he does an excellent job conveying to his readers the happiness he finds in the tranquility and beauty of Balsam Lake. He thoroughly enjoys his escape from business cares and the din of the city. This day, Van Siclen reflects on the pleasantness he finds about him.

> Soon seated in my boat I paddle to the shade of a tall, dark hemlock and rest there, lulled by the intense quiet. Ever and anon as I dreamily cast my ethereal fly, a thrill of pleasure electrifies me, as it is seized by a vigorous trout.
>
> I have long classed trout with flowers and birds, and bright sunsets, and charming scenery, and beautiful women, as given for the rational enjoyment and delight of thoughtful men of aesthetic tastes.[12]

No More Free Fishing

FISHING CLUBS were formed because of the scarcity of trout and a desire for social communion. They were important to the preservation of trout resources in the Beaverkill. In the 1870s, fishing clubs protected the remaining population of brook trout by immediately reducing fishing pressure. Before there were laws and officials to enforce them, clubmen initiated their own strict regulations on members by reducing daily creel limits and restricting angling to fly fishing only. In addition, by employing a watcher to patrol the stream on a regular basis, they further protected the trout from illegal fishing, such as netting, poisoning, and dynamiting.

Early on, posting was accepted by the public, at least on the Beaverkill. However, as it grew in popularity and spread to other streams, where more and more water was being leased and posted by newly formed clubs, it came to be resented. On the Rondout Creek, most of the headwaters were acquired by the Peekamoose Fishing Club; on the Willowemoc, by the Willowemoc Club; and on the West Branch of the Neversink, by the newly formed Neversink Club. Through leases, clubmen were acquiring all of the best trout-fishing water in the Catskills. In the spring of 1885, a reporter for the *New York Times* wrote that the Beaverkill, Neversink, and Willowemoc were no longer open to public fishing, and that natives who had fished these waters all of their lives, as well as visiting anglers, would be considered poachers if they attempted to do so.

No stream posting angered the public as much as the closing of the West Branch of the Neversink. The stream was much more accessible to anglers, especially those from the Kingston area. When a Kingston newspaper carried notice that the public could no longer fish in those waters, it triggered a war of words that raged for years. The conflict began with letters and editorials in local newspapers, then spread to sporting journals. One area newspaper decried the idea of leasing streams as "preposterous" and declared, "Why, there are men enough in New York City with money to control every trout stream in Ulster and Sullivan County."[13] An outdoor writer compared posting to monopolizing sunsets! He added, "And only those of sufficient wealth should see the recurring glories of the evening sky."[14]

One of the most persistent and outspoken critics of the clubmen was Robert E. Best, a Kingston fur dealer, who had fished the Neversink for many years and did not take kindly to the idea of posting his favorite stream. In a series of blistering letters, he questioned not only the legality of leasing trout streams, but the very character of the men undertaking such an "unAmerican" deed.

> These migrating vagabonds hailing from New York, forming themselves into clubs, and leasing fishing streams for their selfish purposes, have been on the increase for some years. As a rule they spend but little or no money in the country where their nests exist, and where they have their drunken orgies, and sing their obscene songs. A few barrels of rum brought

Ed Van Put

Beaverkill Trout Club, formerly the Royal Voorhess property, and home of the Beaverkill Association.

with them from New York, with what chickens they can steal from hen roosts, and the trout they can catch from the stream that has been stocked from the State hatcheries and placed there with Ulster County people's money, form their stock of summer substance.

It is but two years ago that an old and gray-haired man, born near the waters of the Beaverkill stream, wandered to its edge to catch a small mess of fish for a sick daughter. He was ordered off by two members of a club, who had leased that portion of the stream, upon which they told him he was a trespasser, and because the old man in his infirmity, could not move fast enough to suit them, they cruelly knocked him down, and kicked him when down in a most brutal manner. One of the assailants, a member of the New York City club, was the keeper of a house of prostitution, and the other, the keeper of a gambling den in New York City. Pretty specimens indeed of humanity to come to Ulster County to teach the natives to obey the laws of New York.

In this free country, thanks to God, the rich and poor are equals. Let the man be a millionaire or a bark peeler, let his hands be soft and white, or horny and brown, give him free fishing and free fowling in free America. However humble may be the man's calling in his home, the dainty and delicious trout is one of God's good gifts to earth to his children. He has vouchsafed it to all whether his smoke curls from a palace chimney or a bark peeler's shanty.[15]

Charles Hallock, past editor of *Forest and Stream,* laid much of the blame for stream posting on the Fish Commission for allowing the streams to deteriorate. He took issue with the commission, which seemed to believe that stocking more fish was the solution to improving trout fishing. He pointed out that after years of stocking, the fishing was not any better and argued that the Fish Commission should abandon the idea that stocking alone was the solution to good fishing. Hallock stated that the commission followed a policy of spending the public's money on "making fish so abundant that they can be caught without restrictions and serve as cheap food for the people at large, rather than to expend a much larger sum in 'protecting' the fish, and in preventing the people from catching the few which still remain (or did remain) after a generation of improvidence."[16]

Forest and Stream also took issue with Best's assessment of the clubmen and came to their defense "knowing the high character of the gentlemen composing the Neversink Club, the Balsam Lake Club and the Willowemoc Club, most of whom are personal acquaintances, we regard the article written to the *Freeman* as a most vile slander."[17]

Streams were being purchased and "preserved," and many felt that only men of wealth would be allowed to "enjoy a day's sport in fishing for trout."[18] Another noted angling authority who spoke out on the situation was William C. Harris, editor of *The American Angler.*

> Men have felt galled to see legal notices prohibiting them from taking fish from streams where their fathers freely fished before them and where they had as freely angled away the Saturday afternoons of their boyhood.
>
> This is a natural and by no means ignoble sentiment, but a little consideration will show any man that it is no more practically possible to leave all fishing waters free to all than it is to do away with farm fences and turn the crop fields of the country back into meadow-grazing lands free for all.
>
> We have nothing whatever to say for or against this system. We only point out a

Ed Van Put

known fact and draw the plain conclusion that every angler who cares to provide for his enjoyment in years to come had better lose no time in securing some good angling privilege somewhere.[19]

Fishermen were not the only ones upset over the leasing of trout streams: hotels, inns, and boardinghouse owners also became alarmed at the amount of stream mileage lost to posting. Such businesses had increased steadily ever since the railroad came through the region, and they viewed free fishing as vital to their success in attracting tourists. Boardinghouse and resort owners prepared petitions that they hoped would influence legislators into drafting a bill to prevent the leasing of trout streams.

One club member responded to their concerns.

> If the fishing in these streams would always remain as good as it was when the hotels were built and railways introduced into this section, their argument would be better, but unfortunately the reverse is the case. Four years ago I ceased fishing the Beaver Kill and adjacent waters, the river almost devoid of fish; that parties from a distance were in the habit of visiting the streams with the apparent view of carrying away as many fish as possible, regardless of size, hiring small boys to increase the catch, and making use of other unsportsmenlike ways of depleting the streams. I have heard parties boast that they had carried away 1,100 fish (some of which were scarcely two inches long), the result of three days fishing, besides all they ate.[20]

The most persistent argument put forth by those opposed to the leasing of streams was that if the stream was stocked with trout by the Fish Commission, it should remain open to the public. Stocking, it was stated, brought the streams back to their original value as trout waters and was done at public expense. Therefore, it was reasoned, the trout in the streams were public property, and it should be illegal to post such waters.

Clubmen did not disagree that the state owned the fish, even in their wild state; but, they argued, they had the "right of property, and can exclude any person from trespassing upon their grounds for the purpose of fishing."[21] In effect, they granted that individuals had the legal right to catch state trout, as long as they did not trespass over private land to do so.

When streams first began to be stocked, they were, for the most part, free to everyone; and when trout were planted in those streams, the public benefited from the stocking. Although not public waters in the strictest sense (since they flowed over and through private lands), they were public waters for all intents and purposes, since the public had "unrestrained" access and use of them for fishing.

As the growth of angling increased, fishing privileges grew in value. These waters that had always been free were posted and became in fact what they had always been legally: private waters.

All that the Fish Commission required of one ordering fish was an affidavit by the applicant that the trout would be placed in public waters. Very frequently, those ordering and stocking the fish were not stream owners, nor did they have permission of the owners. Yet "free" fishing advocates insisted on fishing the entire stream on the grounds that the stream had been stocked at public expense. The issue of stocking had one stream owner, J.S. Van Cleef, considering legal action: "The result has been that many of our finest streams have been practically destroyed by stocking through acts of trespass to which the State has really been a party, and it is a grave question whether a claim for these injuries to the rights of riparian owners could not be successfully made to the Court of Claims of this State."[22]

The argument over the public's right to fish in streams once stocked by the state continued for years and led to more frequent confrontations between fishermen and the stream watchers hired by the clubs. These disputes were, at times, taken before a judge; however, trespassers hauled into court were usually released, as it was almost impossible to procure a verdict against a man guilty of trespassing on private club water. Most often these arguments were settled with fists, stones, and even drawn revolvers. Some fishermen refused to recognize the rights of clubs to prohibit fishing and when asked to leave hurled insults at the watchman. When this occurred, the watchman would fill his pockets with stones, follow the trespasser, and throw stones in the water ahead of him, spoiling his fishing. This occasionally escalated into a fistfight where one side or the other was treated to uncomfortable bruises or a good ducking in the stream.

Not all watchmen were challenged in such a manner; one who was usually avoided was Sturgis Buckley, who patrolled the Beaverkill for the Balsam Lake Club. Buckley acquired a reputation as a determined, uncompromising stream watcher. It was said, rather sarcastically, that he wore a "winning smile," which "made would-be poachers fish, or cut bait."[23] Those daring enough to fish "his" water did not do so openly; they would hide along the stream, wait for Buckley to pass by, follow him until it was time for his return trip, and then follow him again. When they became

familiar with his pattern, they would fish the area where he had just left.

The idea of posting also began to catch on with farmers. Some refused all attempts to "fish over them" and would threaten to shoot, but others gave permission to fish for a fee of twenty-five cents a head. Farmers did not have time to patrol their water, nor could they afford to pay someone else to do so. One way to keep an eye on the water was to pasture an angry bull next to the stream. Another was the practice of having a large, aggressive, hungry-looking dog run free. When someone was fishing, the dog let it be known, and a very uneasy angler was only too happy to toss a quarter to the farmer and be rid of the annoying beast.

After years of exploitation and overfishing, trout fishing on the Beaverkill seemed destined to improve. One *Forest and Stream* writer reported:

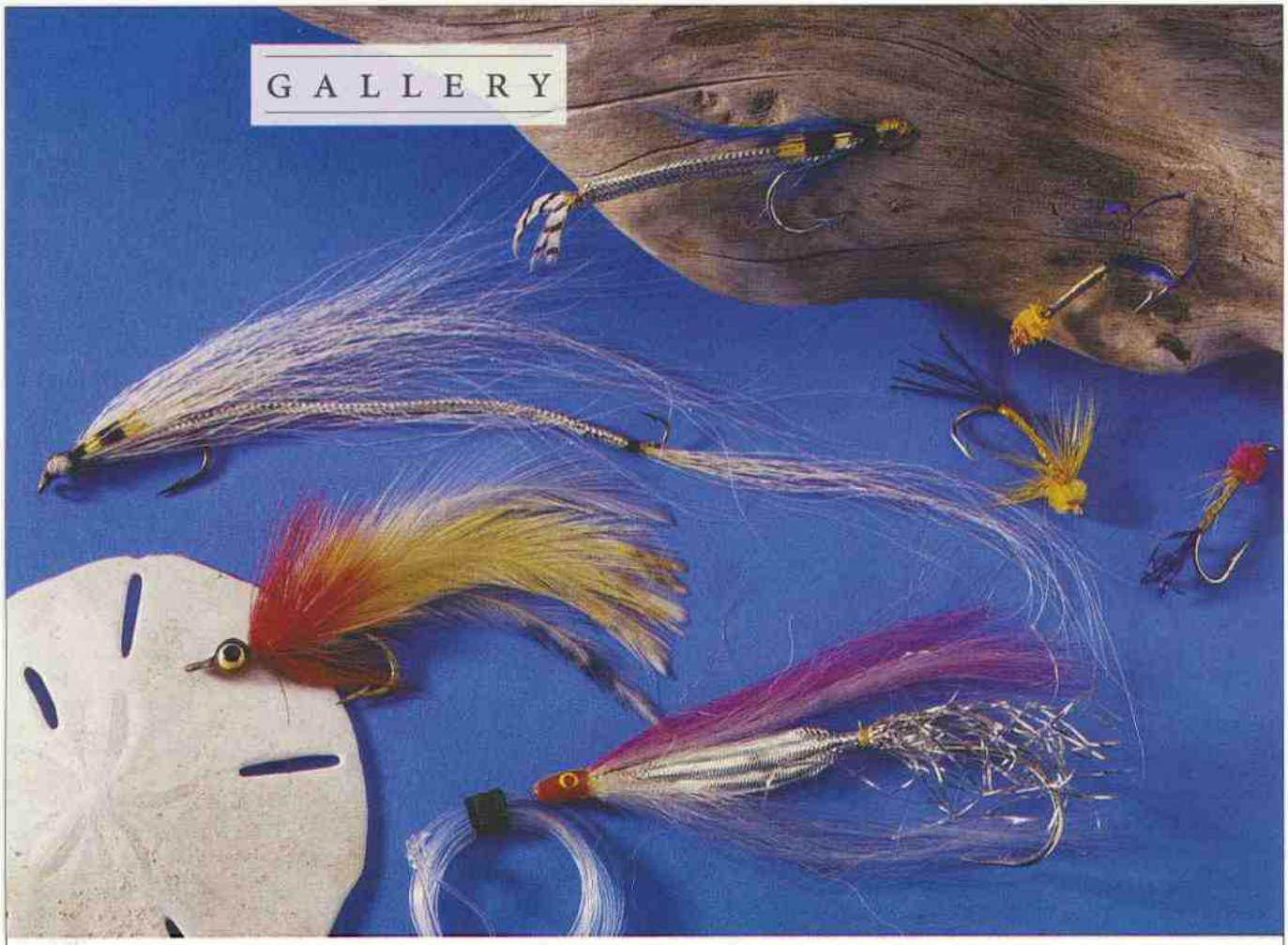
> We are glad to hear from some of the veterans who have for many years made it a point to fish these brooks, that last season's catch showed a very marked improvement over the previous years as that did over the one of 1888, both in size and number.
>
> This happy state of affairs has been partially brought about by the liberal stocking of these waters by the wise management of the Ontario & Western R.R., but there is another cause which has helped the brooks, and that is the headwaters of the two streams [Beaverkill and Neversink] are controlled by clubs and private parties who limit the fish caught both in size and numbers, and absolutely prohibit fishing in the little side streams where the fingerlings seek shelter from their larger brethren, thus assuring a constant source of supply. Reasonable people begin to see the advantages of having parts of streams controlled in this way, as it certainly improves the whole of the waters. They cannot lock up their fish, and they naturally will drop down stream, particularly as they grow large.[24]

Once posting began, it spread quickly. Undoubtedly it became a case of self-preservation; as water became posted, it placed an even greater burden on that which remained open. Commenting on the increase in posting, the Livingston Manor correspondent to the *Walton Reporter* wrote: "Fishing is very poor around here this season. The primary causes are undoubtedly excessive legislation and the profusion of notices posted on the banks of the stream in endless variety of form and nearly every language from Hebrew to Choctaw, which has so bewildered the trout that they know not what to do."[25]

Excerpted with permission from The Beaverkill, *by Ed Van Put (New York: Lyons & Burford, Publishers, 1996).*

ENDNOTES

1. *Walton Weekly Chronicle,* 2 April 1874, p. 1.
2. *Forest and Stream,* 2 April 1885, p. 188.
3. *Liber 71,* Sullivan County Clerk's Office, p. 364.
4. *Misc. Book No.* 2, Sullivan County Clerk's Office, p. 603.
5. *Liberty Register,* 7 February 1879, p. 2.
6. *Forest and Stream,* 4 April 1878, p. 162.
7. *Ellenville Journal,* 20 July 1877, p. 1.
8. *Kingston Weekly Freeman & Journal,* 2 May 1879, p. 1.
9. *Forest and Stream,* 27 October 1881, p. 252.
10. *Liberty Register,* 7 February 1879, p. 7.
11. *Kingston Weekly Leader,* 7 June 1889, p. 7.
12. In Charles F .Orvis and A. Nelson Cheney, eds., *Fishing with the Fly* (Troy, New York: H.B. Nims & Company, 1885), p. 237.
13. *Kingston Weekly Freeman & Journal,* 30 April 1885, p. 5.
14. *The American Angler,* March 1892, p. 288.
15. *Kingston Weekly Freeman & Journal,* 26 March 1885, p. 3.
16. *Kingston Weekly Freeman & Journal,* 30 April 1885, p. 1.
17. *Forest and Stream,* 9 April 1885, p. 201.
18. *Ellenville Journal,* 17 May 1889, p. 1.
19. *The American Angler,* 5 November 1887, p. 1.
20. *Forest and Stream,* 9 April 1885, p. 207.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Forest and Stream,* 8 December 1900, p. 453.
23. *Walton Reporter,* 28 April 1900, p. 8.
24. *Forest and Stream,* 15 January 1891, p. 517.
25. *Walton Reporter,* 14 May 1892, p. 8.



"THEY ARE TROUT! They are the fishes that have moved men's souls for thousands of years, that have inspired a glorious literature and a mystique as astonishing as it is viable."

So wrote Frank Woolner (1916–1994), a great popularizer of fly fishing. As the editor of *Salt Water Sportsman* from 1950 to 1982 (then senior editor until 1990 and editor emeritus until his death), and as a columnist for the *Worcester* (Mass.) *Telegram & Gazette,* Woolner described the beauty of saltwater angling so magnificently that thousands experimented with the sport, just on his say-so.

With his coeditor Henry Lyman, Woolner wrote the classic books *Complete Book of Striped Bass Fishing* (1954) and *Tackle Talk* (1971). As sole author, his books included *Modern Saltwater Sportfishing* (1972) and the amazingly titled *Trout Hunting* (1977).

Woolner also fished with many of his contemporary fly-fishing professionals, most of whom gave him some of their flies. Most famous of these were Bill Gallasch, Joe Bates, John Fabian, Mark Sosin, Harold Gibbs, Homer Rhodes, and Bill Catherwood. Woolner was fortunate enough to receive flies tied by all of these exceptional, innovative dressers. In fact, he kept many of these flies in his desk in a bag, which was offered at auction last year. The bag was bought by Ed Mitchell of Weathersfield, Connecticut, who proceeded to sort and inventory the flies. Then, last spring, Mr. Mitchell gave all 237 flies to the American Museum of Fly Fishing. The Woolner collection greatly enhances our selection of saltwater flies.

The collection includes twelve eel flies of Woolner's own design, several variations of poppers by Bill Gallasch, various sizes and styles of Harold Gibbs's Striper Bucktail, and other gems.

The collection reflects the innovative, pioneering, and exploring spirit of fly fishing, as well as the generosity of sharing that fly fishers often radiate. This collection of flies, most decades old, was never bought or sold, except once at Woolner's estate sale. Tyers gave flies to Frank Woolner, perhaps to experiment with or to write about, and Ed Mitchell, in his turn, gave them to the Museum.

Woolner summed up this generous fly fisher ethic best in a 1977 memo to a new employee at *Salt Water Sportsman:* "*SWS* is respected by writers. Although we do not pay with the big slicks, we've been honest and have helped to build some of the current big guns. So far as we're concerned, it is in our best interest to respect the writers. Never go holier-than-thou, and offer help or a pat on the head where possible. Remember that all are sensitive, else they would not be aspiring writers. You build loyalty by square dealing."

So, although the fly collection of a great popularizer of fly fishing is now housed here, included in the collection is a great deal of the nonmaterial culture of the sport.

JON MATHEWSON, CURATOR

Photograph by Cook Neilson

On the Question of Dapping

R. Patrick Simes's claim in the Summer 1996 Notes & Comment that William Bartram documented one of the first occurrences of dapping in the New World, where he was among the first known Europeans to sport fish, prompted this response from Paul Schullery, former editor of The American Fly Fisher *and director of the Museum, and author of* American Fly Fishing: A History.

Editor

When my book *American Fly Fishing: A History* was published in 1987, I had high hopes that it would stimulate something more than discussion—that it would interest some research-minded readers to pursue some of the tantalizing questions our sport's history has raised. R. Patrick Simes, in his article "Dapping in the New World" (*The American Fly Fisher,* Summer 1996), has launched just such an inquiry, and in the spirit of scholarship and sportsmanship I would like to participate in it.

Mr. Simes argues that William Bartram, during his travels in the southeastern United States in the 1770s, observed his companions using a technique known as "dapping," and apparently used it himself to catch bass there. Mr. Simes correctly points out that in my book, I attributed this fishing activity to Native Americans, but Mr. Simes's careful reading of Bartram's narrative suggests that Bartram was seeing his Euramerican companions use this fishing technique. I must have had that wrong. I also had the date wrong, by the way, stating incorrectly that the dapping took place in the 1760s rather than the 1770s.

From this necessary correction of my error, Mr. Simes moves on to bigger game, and I must disagree with some of his conclusions or at least offer serious cautions to his interpretations.

First, dapping. In my book, I do not, as Mr. Simes states, acknowledge "that Bartram's written account is one of the first known references to sportfishing (dapping) in colonial America." I am especially disappointed he should think this, because I spend considerable energy in the previous chapter (pages 13–17) pointing out and proving that sportfishing was common in America long before the 1770s, and I do not at any time "acknowledge" that the method Bartram described was dapping. Among many other things, I argue that by the 1630s sportfishing was common on Manhattan and that by 1767 Philadelphia had five fishing clubs, composed, one must assume, of sportfishermen (the first of these was founded in 1732, and its membership was and is well known). I can't seem to make this point too often: leisure existed in the colonies well before the American Revolution and was exercised in many ways, including fishing.

Next, I am concerned with Mr. Simes's enthusiastic leap from the delicate technique of dapping described by various Old World writers to the rather less delicate practice described by Bartram. In my book, I did not say that Bartram described fly fishing. I said only that though the fishing he described was primitive by modern standards, it sounded like a lot of fun. I then went on to wonder if somehow from this early practice there developed modern bass bugs and other wonderful contrivances that, even today, many people believe strain all definitions of fly fishing. I pointed out that everybody who writes about the history of American fishing feels compelled to mention Bartram and his "bob," but I wondered why they did so, considering that we were hard pressed to establish any direct connection between what he described and later practices.

Later in *American Fly Fishing,* I spent a lot of time in the murky waters of definition. We fly fishers have never agreed on what constitutes "true" fly fishing, and today there are those who think that anything less than upstream dry-fly fishing is barbaric, just as there are those who happily take sailfish on "flies" the size of squirrels. I don't intend to get into that here, and I intentionally didn't get into it when discussing Bartram in my book. What I do intend to do is propose that Mr. Simes is perhaps reaching a bit too far in his comparison of Bartram's use of a "bob" ("nearly as large as one's fist" and armed with three large hooks) with what John Dennys and others did when they dapped delicate little trout flies on British streams. I think he is on shaky ground here, certainly too shaky for the confidence of his unqualified announcement that this was, indeed, fly fishing.

For example, Mr. Simes goes on at some length about the nature of the tapered horsehair line used in dapping in the 1700s, but there is no suggestion at all in Bartram's narrative that the extremely short line Bartram's friends used (20 inches) was tapered, or horsehair, or in any other way similar to a dapping line. Yet Mr. Simes apparently feels that his own description of a tapered line somehow strengthens his case that Bartram was dapping.

As well, the weight and bulk of the "bob" that Bartram described could just as easily have been swung from a lure-casting rod or a cane pole as from a fly rod; it was swung, not cast, and indeed, it almost certainly would have been heavy enough to be cast with a modern spinning rod. Such was not the case with the flies used for dapping in England. Today, of course, I routinely use large, heavily weighted "flies" of which the same is true, but that is exactly the point—a segment of the fly-fish-

ing intelligentsia do not regard these as flies at all. Mr. Simes owes it to the complexity of his subject to acknowledge that this is a gray area, in which definitions must be couched more cautiously because they simply are not settled matters.

There are, then, important differences in scale and in tackle between what Old World dappers employed and what Bartram described, and they seem to me to play seriously enough in this discussion to require a more cautious assertion than Mr. Simes has offered. There are also differences of technique: I think that dapping was accomplished by always bringing the fly into contact with the water, while, according to Bartram, bob-fishing was mostly a matter of swinging the bob above the surface and only occasionally letting it touch the water. My impression of dapping is that it imitated a fly coming down and lighting on the surface, possibly repeatedly. That is not my impression of bob-fishing.

In my book, the contextual issue with which I was primarily concerned in even referring to Bartram's narrative was that the fly-fishing tradition, which we received from the Old World, did not (at least as far as we know) include the gear that Bartram described. Besides the robin-sized fly, I seriously doubt that the bob was suspended from the whippy sort of light trout rod of British practice; I suspect it was a stout pole, with guts enough to drag a 15-pound bass across the surface to the boat with no ceremony. The really interesting thing in all this is that we are left with some fun questions. For example, did Bartram's companions, assuming they originated this technique (I doubt it), try it because they were familiar with dapping on English streams? If so, then what Bartram described was a nice early episode of Old World fishing methods undergoing modification and adaptation to New World conditions. That, I think, is a more stimulating avenue of consideration than the more or less hopeless debate over what is, or is not, fly fishing.

Last, I must again disagree with Mr. Simes's assertion, repeated again in his closing paragraph, that Bartram and his companions "were some of the first known Europeans to sport fish in the New World." All I can do is refer him, and other readers, to chapter 2 of my book, where I lay out the overwhelming evidence that sportfishing was common in America long before the 1770s.

PAUL SCHULLERY

Director of Development Named

Eric Brown began work as the Museum's new director of development on July 1. He joins the Museum staff after five years as director of alumni relations at Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont, where he worked on both alumni relations and fund-raising.

After graduating from Green Mountain College in 1990 with a B.S. in business administration and a minor in marketing, Eric worked as an assistant project supervisor with the Kaswell Company in Framingham, Massachusetts, and as a management trainee with Trustco Bank in Schenectady, New York.

"The Museum has a lot of untapped potential in the area of fund-raising," Eric says. "The next several years will be a time of growth. For this growth to be realized, though, everyone connected with the Museum—trustees, members, and friends—will have to take an active role in fund-raising. Success in fund-raising cannot be achieved through the efforts of one person, but through a concerted team effort."

Eric lives in Poultney with his wife Maureen. His spare time is filled with activities such as scuba diving, mountain biking, golf, and skiing. He invites everyone to call him and share his or her ideas for the Museum, to pass along names of potential members or donors, or simply to say hello.

Kathleen Achor

Director of Development Eric Brown

Salmon Fly Exhibit

Currently on display at the Museum is a salmon fly exhibit developed by Museum Trustee Pamela Bates Richards. The exhibit includes seven oak display cases filled with important historical flies. The first display, "Colonel Bates Fly Variations," boasts more than thirty flies tied by such noted anglers as Carrie Stevens, Megan Boyd, Charles DeFeo, Michael Martinek, Paul Schmookler, Michael D. Radencich, Ron Alcott, Mark Waslick, Jimmy Younger, Bob Veverka, John Wildermuth, Bob Warren, and Belarmino Martinez. The second display, "The Salmon Fly: A Century and a Half of Innovations," includes flies originated and dressed by Lee Wulff, Maurice Ingalls, Harry Smith, Ira Gruber, Poul Jorgenson, J. Clovis Arseneault (Rusty Rat), Esmond Drury, George LaBranche, Preston Jennings, Charles DeFeo, and Edward Hewitt.

The third display, "North American Streamer Fly Patterns," includes flies dressed by their originators, including Carrie Stevens, Preston Jennings, Chief Needabeh, Edgar Burke, Bill Edson, John Alden Knight, Herbie Welch, Don Gapen, Herb Johnson, and Ai Ballou.

The remaining displays hold "Green Highlander Variations," "North American Classic Atlantic Salmon Featherwings," "Atlantic Salmon Flies of the Penobscot River Region," and "Salmon Fly Patterns Dressed According to Established References, 1816–1931."

Accompanying the fly boxes are six full-color Michael D. Radencich photographs of salmon flies from Richards's recently published book, *Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and Their Patterns* (Stackpole, 1996). The photos showcase salmon flies originated and dressed by Preston Jennings; the Shannon, dressed by Bob Veverka; the Colonel Bates, dressed by Bob Warren; the Evening Star, dressed by Mark Waslick; Antique Popham, formerly belonging to Megan Boyd; patterns by John Popkin Traherne; British Classics,

dressed by Syd Glasso; and various Doctors, dressed by various tyers.

The exhibit greatly adds to the Museum visitor's knowledge of the variety and development of salmon flies through the centuries.

Schaldach Search

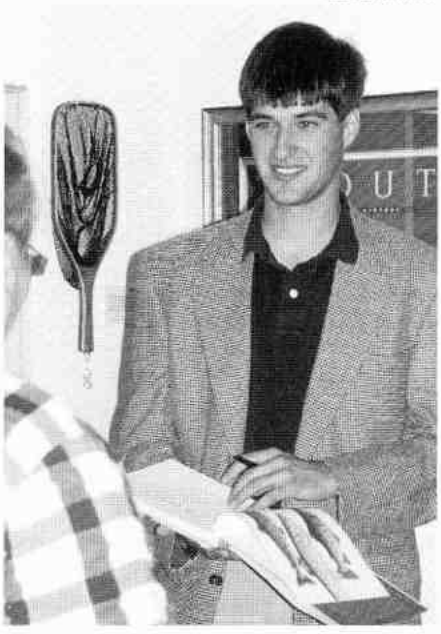
The Museum is hoping to present an exhibition sometime in the not-too-distant future of the life, times, acquaintances, and work of fly-fishing artist William Schaldach. As such, we would welcome any information regarding this remarkable man, as well as the location of any of his original works or personal effects that might be loaned to the Museum for the exhibit. If you have any information, please contact Curator Jon Mathewson at the Museum.

Art Openings

On July 12, the Museum held an art opening and book signing for the artist James Prosek. Prosek, a Yale University undergraduate from Easton, Connecticut, authored and illustrated the recently published *Trout: An Illustrated History* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). The book documents more than seventy species of trout, including rare and extinct species, subspecies, and strains. A selection of the original paintings made up most of the eighteen-piece show. The opening was well attended, and Prosek spent the evening signing books and talking at length with guests.

The Museum kicked off the Labor Day weekend August 30 with an artist's reception and opening of "Casting Light on Waters: The Paintings of George Thomas." The seventeen-piece show featured Thomas's pastels of fishing and river scenes in places such as Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Maine, and Nantucket. "Capturing light in sky and water is the prime focus of my paintings, and the love of sailing, fishing, and canoeing has provided me the subject world of rivers, lakes, and the sea," says Thomas, who lives in Nantucket and Novia Scotia. "In pastel I seek to create reflected light by the heavier application of opaque color in an impressionistic technique." The paintings were on exhibit until October 15.

Kathleen Achor



James Prosek signs a copy of his book at the July 12 opening.

Craig Gilborn

George Thomas discusses his work at the August 30 art opening.

New Membership Categories

The Museum has introduced two new membership categories. A Club Membership is now available for volunteer organizations such as fishing and fly-tying clubs and local chapters of national organizations. A Trade Membership is available for businesses. Dues for both membership categories are $50 per year. For more information, contact Eric Brown, Director of Development.

Festival for Women Anglers

The Golden West Women Flyfishers are launching a new event in the world of fly fishing: the first International Festival of Women Fly Fishers, to be held December 6 to 8 in San Francisco. The weekend will feature panels and workshops, conservation activities, skill-building sessions, demonstrations, tournament casting lessons with Joan Wulff and Mel Krieger, social events, and an auction. Registration is $95 for all activities, including meals. For more information, call Fanny Krieger (415-752-0192) or Pat Magnuson (510-934-2461), or send e-mail to susan@2468.com. (Mike Fong and Mel Krieger have planned some activities for the men.)

Recent Donations

Robert H. Miller of Chicago, Illinois, responded to our call for photographs with a selection of thirteen from his youth. Included in the collection was a picture of Joe Brooks and a letter from Mary Brooks.

Wallace Murray of Manchester, Vermont, presented the Museum with a copy of *Rare and Unusual Fly Tying Materials: A Natural History, Volume 1: Birds* by Paul Schmookler and Ingrid Sils. **Anne and Frank Whitesell** sent along a copy of Ken Reniard's book, *The Colonial Angler,* which features an in-depth look at the intricacies of angling in America two centuries ago. During Executive Director Craig Gilborn's recent trip to Colorado, he met **Ed Dentry**, who gave the Museum a copy of his book, *Blue Ribbon Rivers of the Rockies.*

Thanks to longtime Museum friend **Chat Lee**, **Duffield Ashmead III** of Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, stopped in on his way through town to see the Museum's new exhibits and drop off two books: *Memoirs of the Old Schuylkill Fishing Company* (1830) and *History of the Schuylkill Company* (1880). These two are books the Museum has very much needed because they tell the story of the nation's first and oldest fishing club.

John M. Robson of Lakefield, Ontario, formerly of Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, sent a copy of his article "The Physics of Fly Casting," which appeared in the *American Journal of Physics* (March 1990, vol. 58, no. 3). Robert M. Young of the Fly Shop in Hollis, New Hampshire, sent us a copy of his pamphlet *Tandem Streamers.*

The people at ***Field & Stream*** are

moving into new offices, so they sent us several nearly complete bound sets of their magazine (1960 to present). **Stan Bazan** of Cleveland, Ohio (through Leigh Perkins of Manchester, Vermont), sent us a January 1947 issue (vol. 51, no. 9).

Don Phillips of Marco Island, Florida, sent us not only a complete run of *The Rodcrafters Journal* (1976–1996), but included a computerized index as well, which greatly increases the magazine's usefulness.

Nick Lyons, of fly-fishing publishing fame, sent us a marvelous selection of recent prints by Rod Walinchus, Dave Whitlock, Alan James Robinson, Adriano Mannochia, John Troy, John Lane, and Gordon Allen.

Leon Martuch of Traverse City, Michigan, sent us four Scientific Anglers System rods (thus completing our collection), along with rods by Shakespeare, St. Croix, and a custom-made rod by "Al" Ellis of Phoenix, Arizona. A week later, another box appeared from Mr. Martuch, which included flies, leaders, and a nice selection of Scientific Anglers reels.

Fall Dinner/Auctions

OCTOBER 3 TO 6
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Comfort Inn, Bozeman, Montana

OCTOBER 4
Trustee Dinner/Auction
Riverside Country Club, Bozeman, Montana

OCTOBER 25
Boston Dinner/Auction
Towne Lyne House, Lynnfield, Massachusetts

NOVEMBER 7
Hartford Dinner/Auction
The Country Club, Farmington, Connecticut

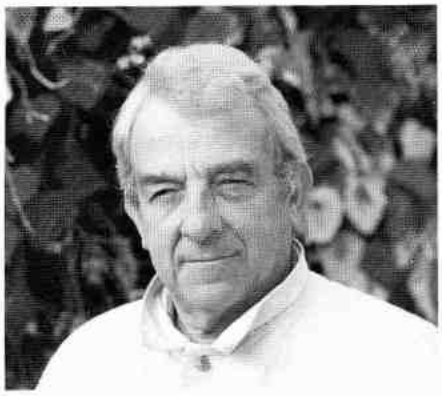
TO BE ANNOUNCED
Philadelphia Dinner/Auction
San Francisco Dinner/Auction
For details, please phone the Museum at (802) 362-3300.

Bruce Richards of Traverse City, Michigan, presented the Museum with an original Paul Young tabletop fly-tying vise. **Todd O. Young**, also of Traverse City, kindly sent us papers that belonged to his grandparents, including a stack of letters from John Voelker and Arnold Gingrich, a selection of Paul Young catalogs and books, and some related tackle.

John Farnum of Manchester, Vermont, gave us a Bristol steel rod advertisement, c. 1919, reproduced on a steel sign. **James Prosek** of Easton, Connecticut, and Yale University, author of *Trout: An Illustrated History* and a featured artist at the Museum this past summer, sent us his old Powell graphite fly rod.

Ray Salminen paid us a visit on the first of July. He left us with a Don Leyden framing of some Salminen flies, a first edition of Halford's *Dry Fly Entomology,* a Kosmic rod, and, of course, fond memories of his visit.

CONTRIBUTORS



Frederick Buller is one of England's finest all-round anglers and is the author of the highly acclaimed book, *Pike.* He founded the gunmaking and fishing tackle company of Chubbs in London and is now the managing director of the famous London gunmaking firm of Charles Hellis, Frederick Beesley and Watson Bros. He is the author of four books and coauthor of two more. Buller is happiest when fishing for trout and sea trout in the Irish loughs of Mayo and Galway. Buller's article, "The Earliest English Illustrations of an Angler," appeared in the Summer 1993 issue of *The American Fly Fisher.* "Origin of the Reel" from *Falkus & Buller's Freshwater Fishing* was recently excerpted (Notes & Comment, Fall 1995).

Ed Van Put has written articles for such publications as *Trout, Fly Fisherman, Fly Rod and Reel, The Conservationist,* and others. He was a contributing author to A. J. McClane's *McClane's Game Fish of North America* (1985). For the past eleven years, he has provided the historical notes for the Catskill Fly Fishing Center's monthly activities calendar. *The Beaverkill* is his first book.

Ed has worked as a fisheries professional with New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation in the Bureau of Fish for the past twenty-seven years. As a principal fish and wildlife technician, he spends a great deal of time along trout streams, purchasing public fishing easements, participating in stream surveys, estimating trout populations, and working at age/growth analysis of trout. He is also involved in developing access for handicapped or elderly/infirm anglers along trout streams. In addition to his full-time employment, Ed has worked as a professional fly tyer, stream watcher (patrolling club water), stream consultant, licensed guide, and instructor at the Joan and Lee Wulff Fly Fishing School.

Ed lives with his wife, Judy, and sons, Lee and Tyler, along the Willowemoc Creek in the Catskill Mountains of New York.

Margot Page

Collections: Hoard or Trove?

Contrary to popular impression, museums are not hoarders. The public can be forgiven that conclusion when curators admit that a tiny fraction of their collections can be displayed. If the curator adds that some things may never be exhibited, a silent alarm may go off. Valuables locked in a remote place looks like a hoard to the public.

Museum workers are uncomfortable with this embarrassment of riches, though they know there are reasons for it—one being that the majority of museums, especially in their formative years, accumulate artifacts less by plan than by luck. Museums are choosier today than they once were, but collecting by inadvertence, the old-fashioned approach, has been the start of dozens of important museum collections in America.

A recent solution to surplus holdings is open storage, in which, say, a collection of furniture is placed in floor-to-ceiling glass cases where it can be seen but not touched. This approach takes money and space, which is why few institutions (the Metropolitan Museum of Art being one) have adopted it.

Just as there cannot be too much fly fishing, so, by the same logic, fly fishers may cast a benign eye on estimates like the following supplied by Museum Curator Jon Mathewson:

Fly rods	1,176
Reels	1,000
Flies	27,000
Miscellany	1,498
Books	2,567

As they have each year since the Museum's founding in 1968, these numbers grow, mostly from gifts but occasionally through purchases by the board, as with the acquisition of the magnificent Cushner collection of more than 200 framings of flies and artwork in 1985.

To some, the numbers exceed what the Museum reasonably needs to do its job. Doubters will concede that the Museum's small exhibit space limits the number of rods that can be displayed at one time; still, they wonder about a collection of 1,176 rods. At this point, I must reveal my bias: collections are the heartwood of a good museum and collecting is the sapwood. A healthy museum is a museum that is collecting.

Let's look behind the numbers. Hiram Leonard was one of the earliest rodmakers and certainly the most influential of his time. His shop (which started in 1869 and did business for a century, first in Bangor, Maine, then in Central Valley, New York) spun off a second generation of makers who, leaving Leonard, produced rods in shops of their own.

The Museum owns ninety-three Hiram Leonard and Leonard & Leonard Company rods, the earliest signed and dated 1873. In 1889, an exodus of Leonard workers led to the establishment of the Kosmic Company in Brooklyn, New York. Kosmic, which is represented by five numbered and signed rods in our collection, was the rod of choice among New York's fashionable fly-fishing set, according to Mathewson. Other firms traceable to Leonard were F. E. Thomas Rod Company, Payne Rod Company, and Edwards Rod Company, of which the Museum has thirty-one, fifteen, and fourteen specimens, respectively.

I hear the reader thinking, "OK, I'll grant the Museum its ninety-three Leonards, but does it need a ninety-fourth?" The reply, "It depends," is equivocal, but museums never know what might turn up tomorrow. Mathewson concedes, however, that the Leonard collection is largely complete, which is to say that it comprises a "study collection."

Collections acquire importance as they grow because fresh inferences can be drawn from the larger pool of features or attributes. They become study collections and are important even if they're never exhibited. Discerning differences among rods, reels, and flies is what separates curators and serious collectors from everybody else. Their findings are disseminated in publications—in periodicals like the one you're holding now and in books and collection catalogs (such as *A Treasury of Reels* by Jim Brown, which the Museum published in 1990).

The notion of a museum having too many artifacts arises from the belief that collections exist to be exhibited. But museums are more than vehicles for exhibits. This Museum is repository for a sport having a world stage, a history as old as society, and printed literature that is 500 years old this year. The American Museum of Fly Fishing is the memory of fly fishing. It cannot collect or remember everything, and it has no monopoly on knowledge. But it must be vigilant and open minded because it is accountable to the heritage of fly fishing.

In principle, this puts museums in a category with research institutions such as universities, places where information and knowledge are facilitated. Small as this museum is, it goes where fly fishing has gone. This means having collections for which there may be no immediate application. They're troves, perhaps, but not hoards, because they contain answers to questions not yet formulated.

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.

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