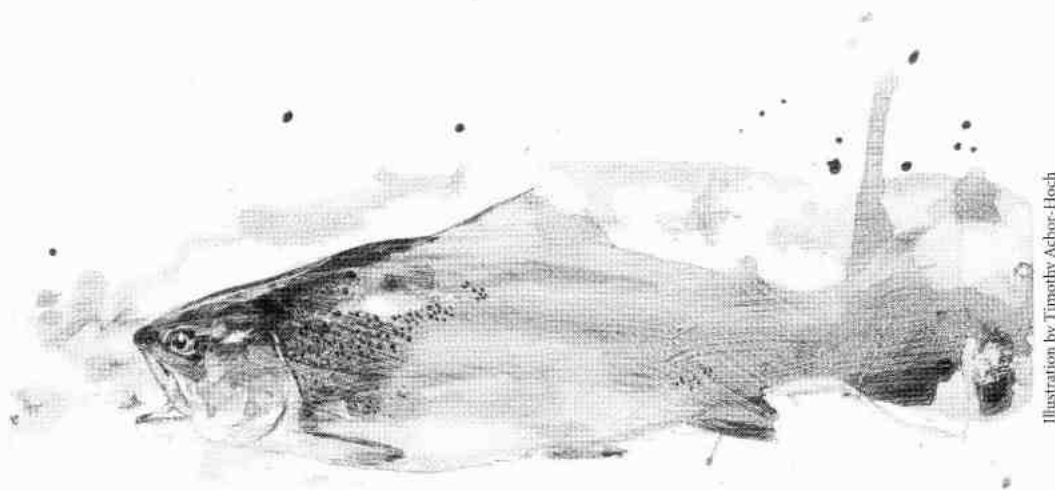


The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SPRING 1997

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 2



Thaw

THE FEBRUARY THAW comes to Vermont. The ice melts, the earth loosens. I splash my way to the post office ankle deep in puddles and mud, dreaming of being waist deep in water. It is so warm I can smell things. The other day I glimpsed a snow flurry that turned out to be an insect. (As most anglers can attest, one often needs to *expect* to see something in order to see it at all.) Seductive, a tease, the thaw stays long enough to infect us with the fever, then leaves, laughing as we exhibit the appropriate withdrawal symptoms.

By the time these words are printed and distributed, I hope the true thaw will be upon us here and that those (perhaps few) of us who retire our gear for the winter will once again be on the water. For those moments during which you are not out fulfilling your fly-fishing destiny, we've prepared the spring issue of *The American Fly Fisher* to occupy your mind and perhaps fuel your fantasy life.

In "Western Fly Fishing: The Discovery of a Great Tradition," historian and former executive director Paul Schullery praises recent advances in the written history of western fly fishing. He highlights ten books of particular importance to the field that have appeared since the mid-1980s.

"From the Old to the New in Salmon Flies" is our excerpt from *Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and the Patterns* (reviewed by Bill Hunter in the Winter 1997 issue). When Joseph D. Bates Jr. died in 1988, he left this work in progress. Pamela Bates Richards, his daughter, added significant material to the text and spearheaded its publication, working closely with Museum staff during her research. The book, released late last year by Stackpole Books, includes more than 160 striking color plates by photographer Michael D. Radencich. We are pleased to reproduce eight of these.

Spring fever finds its expression in fishing and romance in Gordon M. Wickstrom's reminiscence of "A Memoir of Trout and Eros or Following L. B. France into Colorado's Middle Park." In this issue's Notes & Comment, Richard C. Hoffmann adds information to Frederick Buller's "The Macedonian Fly" (Fall 1996), and M. R. Montgomery relates a rather unfortunate incident that occurred during an attempt to pursue Macedonian trout.

Be careful out there.

KATHLEEN ACHOR
EDITOR



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ON THE COVER: *Joseph D. Bates Jr. and Bruce Bates on the Rangeley Lakes in 1946. From Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and the Patterns, by Joseph D. Bates Jr. and Pamela Bates Richards (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1996). Our excerpt from this book begins on page 6.*

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Western Fly Fishing: The Discovery of a Great Tradition

by Paul Schullery

I FIRST BECAME INTERESTED in fishing history twenty years ago. I was living in Wyoming, so naturally I was curious about early western fly fishing. As a historian, I was already familiar with some of the sporting literature of the west from the late 1800s and knew that back then a lot of people were out here fishing and having a good time with the native trout. But I soon discovered that these adventurous anglers had been pretty much forgotten by modern western fly fishermen. With a few notable exceptions, western fly fishing was without a written history.

It was widely assumed, in fact, that western fly fishing *had* no history. I can remember more than one person firmly asserting in the 1970s, "We western fishermen don't have a history; we're making it today." This credo was a matter of pride and did indicate an appreciation for the dynamic nature of western fly fishing, but it was sadly misinformed. Being ignorant of their own traditions didn't make these people any worse than most fishermen, of course; few anglers anywhere have more than a sketchy idea of where their tackle, techniques, and attitudes come from. But because I lived out here, and because what little western fishing history I'd learned was so interesting, I was especially bothered by the general ignorance of the long and exciting western fly-fishing experience.

I'm especially pleased, only twenty years later, to be able to write an article in which I consider a few of the many books that now deal with western fly-fishing history. I won't mention them all, and I apologize in advance to anyone who has a favorite not mentioned here. If we play our cards right, perhaps we western anglers can generate enough interest in western fly-fishing history to make it a major subject of attention in *The American Fly Fisher*. In the meantime, let me introduce some of the noteworthy titles of the past ten years or so.

I must start with a book that I suspect most history-minded fly fishers have missed, but shouldn't: John Monnett's *Cutthroat & Campfire Tales: The Fly-Fishing Heritage of the West*. Mr. Monnett is a fisherman first, a historical tale-teller second, and he combines the two avocations to create a personal reminiscence and historical narrative. Through descriptions of his own fishing trips, the author takes us into the history of fishing in California, Colorado, Wyoming, and other places, including Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming/Montana/Idaho. There's a nice discussion of western fly patterns with some enjoyable notes on the development of western grasshopper patterns. The author uses his own experiences to launch into stories about a river's past and to



reflect on the additional satisfactions a modern fly fisher can find when knowing even a little about those who have fished the water earlier. Mr. Monnett has spent a lot of time gathering up local lore, doing historical research in a subject where the word "research" is almost meaningless. In doing so, he has found his way to some of the serious

historian's real sources: journals, newspapers, and all manner of other material.

I am tempted to say that *Cutthroat & Campfire Tales* is full of digressions—sometimes it's a long way between fishing stories—but it might be better to say that the whole book is a digression, a very pleasant one, from an angler's crowded life. When we walk a stream, we don't share its history just with earlier fishermen, but with campers, explorers, grizzly bears, and all sorts of other characters, many of whom Mr. Monnett happily introduces us to.

Robert Behnke, for many years one of this country's leading cold-water fisheries authorities, approaches the whole subject of western trout from a formal, scientifically disciplined direction in *Native Trout of Western North America*, which must stand as the single most complete and authoritative source on the taxonomy, natural history, and human history of our western trouts. The publication of this book is something of a historical event itself: it drifted around various scientific institutions and agency management offices in manuscript form for many years before finally appearing as a handsome monograph in 1992. It must have been about ten years before publication that Behnke's manuscript first crossed my desk. Long before it came out officially, *Native Trout of Western North America* was almost a standard reference work merely through energetic photocopying.

What Mr. Behnke, who writes an informative and thoughtful column on trout for *Trout* magazine, has achieved here is both a family tree of the native western trout and a powerful appeal for its protection. During the long hatchery-dominance era in western fishing, when overfishing threatened many distinct types of fish, western trout took heavy losses. Mr. Behnke's appeal for the protection of these wonderful, unique, and often stunningly beautiful strains of fish is as important as his pioneering

work in developing a reasonable taxonomic arrangement of them. With recent developments in DNA technology, Mr. Behnke's system of classification may not last, but the inquiring spirit of his book and his passionate defense of native fishes and their habitats can never become outdated.

Why all this matters so much to history students is that again and again, Mr. Behnke leads us into neglected corners of our own history to track down the first mention and descriptions of these great fish. He has conducted a lifelong, professional version of the search conducted informally in *Cutthroat & Campfire Tales*, visiting countless waters and museum collections to examine early specimens and their remaining habitats. As important, he has examined far more early western fishing literature, much of it quite obscure, than any fishing historian to date. Through his research, for example, we catch a glimpse of what it must have been like to catch

must do right to protect these important resources. Although *Native Trout of Western North America* is written quite formally, it is an exciting book, full of the promise and wonder of good fishing stories, if only because it tells us so much more than we thought to be knowable about the fish we pursue so avidly. And the color plates of trout are outstanding.

An even more focused book, though also more popularly written, is Patrick Trotter's *Cutthroat: Native Trout of the West* (with a foreword, appropriately, by Bob Behnke). Mr. Trotter has produced a superb biography of the inland west's most distinctive sport fish, and the book is rich in history and lore of a sort that should be of great interest to history-minded anglers. His style is much more conversational than scientific, though the book's publication by a respected western university press suggests the quality of its scholarship. Each of the recognized subspecies of the cutthroat gets a chapter, with lengthy discussion of its range and that area's human history. As in Behnke's monograph, the trout's many human associations are showcased, as are many local stories and traditions surrounding them. And, as in Monnett's book, the author takes you along on his own explorations of many waters in which he compares notes with earlier anglers.

THESE THREE BOOKS would have to be cornerstones of a good western fishing history library. After them come more specialized books dealing with a specific area or fish. The broadest of these is, in fact, just about as far-ranging as the above titles, but it deals with only one type of fish, the spectacular and evermore threatened anadromous trout known as the steelhead. The leading author of steelhead books has for many years been Trey Combs, whose *Steelhead Fly Fishing: Tackle and Techniques, the Great Rivers, the Anglers and Their Fly Patterns* is his third book on the subject, each one being larger than its predecessor by a couple orders of magnitude. This huge work is probably as exhaustive a catalog of everything mentioned in its near-Victorian subtitle as will ever be produced, because, as with other regions of the country, writers are now turning their attention to single river drainages as worthy of book-length consideration.

What makes Mr. Combs's book of such value to historians is the richness

of its asides and background. He introduces many of the modern leading steelheaders, and through them and their experiences takes us on many small tours of the steelheading tradition. This is largely post-Depression history focusing on the last few generations



of steelheaders and how swiftly they developed a whole horde of techniques and flies. It reminds me of a compressed version of what Atlantic salmon anglers achieved over the past few hundred years, a comparison made even more apt by the extent to which modern steelheaders follow the literature of Atlantic salmon fishing and apply those techniques to their own rivers.

What Mr. Combs accomplishes on behalf of steelhead fishing, Bruce Ferguson, Les Johnson, and Pat Trotter accomplish on a smaller but thorough scale for Pacific salmon in *Fly Fishing for Pacific Salmon*. This book flies in the face of all the regional "common knowledge," still thriving only a few years ago, which held that none of the Pacific salmons would take a fly. Despite many years of successful fly fishing on some salmon streams, it remained a matter of almost religious conviction among many westerners that it could not be done. I suppose the many articles and stories written about fly fishing for Alaskan salmon have done as much as anything else to quiet this misguided opinion. The authors of this important manual devote a lengthy chapter to some early salmon fly fishers on the West Coast, including much information on the exciting saltwater salmon fly fishing found in the 1930s by Letcher Lambuth and other skilled anglers in the Puget Sound area; remember that this was twenty years before Joe Brooks and others would "discover" saltwater fly fishing in Florida (though it had been done there since at least the 1880s and had been locally forgotten).



the massive Lahontan cutthroats of Pyramid Lake (Nevada), described by explorer John Fremont in 1843 as "of extraordinary size—about as large as the Columbia River salmon—generally from 2 to 4 feet in length." Alas, we also get to witness their destruction when irrigation projects dried up their spawning stream. One of the many values of Mr. Behnke's book is showing us what we have done wrong, and what we now

I have long been grateful to Frank Amato, publisher of *Fly Fishing for Pacific Salmon*, who has produced dozens of books about western fishing during the years when other publishers were apparently uninterested; his books were often exhaustive, and if their cosmetics left something to be desired, the simple layouts did accommodate as much information as possible per page. That just about sums up the appearance of this book, except to say that like many other Frank Amato books, it has excellent color pictures of many flies.

A far more personal look, in fact a firsthand account, of the modern development of salmon fly fishing on the West Coast appears in Russell Chatham's vastly entertaining book *The Angler's Coast*. Originally published in the 1970s as a small book, a new larger edition was beautifully produced in 1991. This new edition is the one of greatest interest to fishing historians. The text is essentially the same—being the author's chronicle of the rise of salmon fishing in northern California in the 1950s and 1960s, with no end of delightful asides on other fishing—except for the addition of dozens of superb black-and-white photographs of the fish and fishermen of that era. Mr. Chatham is part of the legend of that era and place, and many of the pictures show him holding up immense Pacific salmon, steelhead, and striped bass taken on flies. The book is also the best telling of the tale of Bill Schaadt, acknowledged dean, if not father, of modern, west-coast salmon fly fishing, whose amazing exploits with a fly rod are convincingly described with abundant photographic evidence to support them.

I read the first published edition of this book about twenty years ago and even then regarded it as one of my favorite fishing books, but it was many years before I realized that the people being described in it were part of an important historic movement: these guys, Chatham included, were pioneering fly-fishing frontiers and catching world-record fish in the process. Chatham's 36-pound striped bass on a fly broke a record Joe Brooks had held for eighteen years. But even with all the athletics and huge fish, I have always admired this book most because Chatham is a wonderful storyteller—one of the best writers fishing has produced. He's funny (I would have to buy the book just for the story called "Wading for Godot"), he's eloquent, and he has a great eye for

the moments that make a day of fishing so important to us. I will succumb to the formulaic assertion of If-you're-only-going-to-buy-one-book-on-this-subject and say that if you want a glimpse at what west coast fishing has been, which is to say a glimpse at what we could make it again if only we cared enough, you mustn't miss *The Angler's Coast*.

BUT THEN, *The Angler's Coast* is hardly the only great fishing book to get less attention than it deserved. Among the others is the amazing little memoir written by veteran steelhead fisherman and photographer Ralph Wahl, *One Man's Steelhead Shangri-La*. This slender volume would never have been written except that the little stretch of water it describes, where Mr. Wahl had several decades of incredible fishing, was lost to the changing shape of his river (the Skagit, in Washington), so there was no longer a reason to withhold the tale. Illustrated by Wahl's unforgettable black-and-white photographs (which graced many issues of the Federation of Fly Fishermen magazine *The Flyfisher* in its early years), the book is a series of episodes in an enviable life of angling that could not now be repeated so close to Seattle or any other city. It is more than the story of great fishing—it is the story of great fishermen and the lessons they learned from a great river.

A different kind of personal memoir is the angling biography of another



memorable western fishing character, the Montana shop owner/conservationist Dan Bailey. Bailey came west from New York for the first time in 1936 and later settled in Livingston, Montana, where he established the famous fly shop bearing his name, now run by his

son, John. Their good friend Charles F. (Charley) Waterman, one of the best modern outdoor writers, has written *Mist on the River: Remembrances of Dan Bailey*. The book also features an introductory tribute by the late Lee Wulff.

Part I is a biography of the Bailey family, full of historical details about the creation of the shop and the clientele who made it the most famous of western fly shops and made Dan Bailey a household name among traveling anglers. There are stories of the famous fly-tying room where visiting anglers could see the Bailey tyers hard at work and of hunting and fishing trips around the country. Part II is a river-by-river visit to Dan Bailey's home country, the region of southwestern Montana and northwestern Wyoming that he worked so hard to promote and protect. Much of this has little to say about Bailey himself, but it never fails to evoke the mood of the country he loved. I don't know who was the more fortunate: Charley Waterman, to have spent so much time in Dan Bailey's world, or Dan Bailey, to have had such a gifted chronicler as Charley Waterman. Like the Chatham book, this one contains many fine black-and-white photographs from both past and present.

Very rarely, a publisher does us all a favor and opens a window on a more remote time of great interest to us. The recent republication of Lewis B. France's regional classic, *With Rod and Line in Colorado Waters*, with an informative foreword by John Monnett, is such a service. France's book is a fascinating account of an angler's life in the Rocky Mountain west more than a century ago in a style and tone similar to a volume that might be called its eastern equivalent, George Dawson's *The Pleasures of Angling*. The two books, published within a few years of each other, describe very different angling experiences in very different worlds, but share the rambling, conversational quality that characterized so much of sporting travel writing in the late 1800s. The book is published "warts and all"—that is, with all its period attitudes (some of which are quite troubling today, such as the racist caricatures of minorities) in place, which I think are all the more reason to read it. If we're ever going to understand how our ancestors enjoyed fishing, we're going to have to understand a lot of other things about them as well.

I will take my fishing history more or less anywhere I can get it, and I have found some excellent material in unexpected places. One of the most delightful of these involves the North Umpqua, a tradition-rich Oregon coastal steelhead stream, which Zane Grey, Ray Bergman, Ernest Schwiebert, and many others have written about. But perhaps the best short history of the river appears not in a fishing book, but in beautifully produced cookbook, *Thyme and the River: Recipes from Oregon's Steamboat Inn*, by Sharon Van Loan and Patricia Lee. Sharon and Jim Van Loan acquired the inn from its famous previous owners, Jeanne and Frank Moore, in 1975 and have made it as renowned for fine cuisine as it has long been for hearty hospitality, spectacular scenery, and challenging fishing. This book begins with an extended "History of the Steamboat Inn & the Fly-Fishing Tradition on the North Umpqua River," by Oregon writer Mark Hoy. If, as I hope some day happens, a large book of the best writings about the North Umpqua were compiled and published, this would make a great opening chapter. In the meantime, you can't go wrong getting this book for its history, and when you've read the history you can move right along to learn some of the best recipes ever created within casting distance of a trout stream.

PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE the writing of western fishing history has lagged so far behind, but I am generally inclined to like most of what's been done so far. I've been harder on some of the eastern writers, especially when they get a little too proud of their local traditions (the older our neighborhood, the more likely we are to consider it the center of the universe). On the other hand, I've intentionally left some western titles out of this little essay because they were just too inaccurate or otherwise lacking to include. At any rate, in a very short time western fishing history as a specialty area has progressed



from being unknown and unavailable to being the topic of many books and articles, with every sign that more will appear soon (another bow to Frank Amato is in order here because his magazines have also published countless little historical tidbits over the years).

There are some fine, older western books, long out of print, that could stand a new audience, even if only in a limited edition. I've seen a number of them appear in the past few years and hope to see more. I'd like to see Howard Back's charming little book, *The Waters of Yellowstone with Rod and Fly* (1938), brought back in a modest paperback edition, and there are several other titles that await a new edition.

More important from a historian's perspective, I look forward to the continued study and publication of the west's early angling history, especially the turn-of-the-century period when so many waters were undergoing serious use by inquisitive, inventive fishermen who were modifying old flies and testing new ones. I'm confident that a search of early California periodicals, newspapers, and journals, for example, would flesh out the stories of many great and lamented trout and salmon rivers in that once-glorious sportsman's region. However that pursuit may develop, we have a lot to look forward to as we discover the angling heritage of the American West. ~

Books Reviewed in This Article

Robert J. Behnke. *Native Trout of Western North America*. Bethesda, Maryland: American Fisheries Society Monograph 6, 1992. 275 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations and photographs. \$36.

Russell Chatham. *The Angler's Coast*. Livingston, Montana: Clark City Press, 1991. 163 pages, black-and-white photographs, foreword by Thomas McGuane. \$34.95.

Trey Combs. *Steelhead Fly Fishing: Tackle and Techniques, the Great Rivers, the Anglers and Their Fly Patterns*. New York: Lyons & Burford, Publishers, 1991. 494 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations. \$45.

Bruce Ferguson, Les Johnson, and Pat Trotter. *Fly Fishing for Pacific Salmon*. Portland, Oregon: Frank Amato Publications, 1985. 118 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations. \$19.95.

Lewis B. France. *With Rod and Line in Colorado Waters*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1996. 162 pages, black-and-white illustrations, foreword by John H. Monnett. \$12.95.

John H. Monnett. *Cutthroat & Campfire Tales: The Fly-Fishing Heritage of the West*. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1988. 170 pages, black-and-white illustrations. \$16.95. Out of print.

Patrick C. Trotter. *Cutthroat: Native Trout of the West*. Boulder, Colorado: Colorado Associated University Press, 1987. 219 pages, black-and-white and color illustrations and photographs, foreword by Robert J. Behnke. \$19.95.

Sharon Van Loan and Patricia Lee, with Mark Hoy. *Thyme and the River: Recipes from Oregon's Steamboat Inn*. Portland, Oregon: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 1988. 144 pages, color photographs. \$14.95. Out of print.

Ralph Wahl. *One Man's Steelhead Shangri-La*. Portland, Oregon: Frank Amato Publications, 1989. 119 pages, black-and-white photographs, foreword by Steve Raymond. \$19.95. Out of print.

Charles F. Waterman. *Mist on the River: Remembrances of Dan Bailey*. Livingston, Montana: Yellowstone Press, 1986. 193 pages, black-and-white photographs, tribute by Lee Wulff. \$19.95.

From the Old to the New in Salmon Flies

by Joseph D. Bates Jr. and Pamela Bates Richards

FISHING ATLANTIC SALMON: The Flies and the Patterns (*Stackpole Books*, 1996) was a work in progress when Joe Bates died in 1988. His daughter, Pamela Bates Richards, spearheaded its publication, working with editor Bob Warren and other master tyers and artists. Ms. Richards added a significant number of patterns and historical material to the original manuscript. She worked closely with Museum staff during much of her research. With access to the fishing diaries of Joseph Pulitzer II, she was able to qualify and document the origins of the Rusty Rat and the Cosseboom. In the case of the Rusty Rat, she reached a conclusion that was, in fact, different from her father's (see sidebar).

We are pleased to excerpt the fourth chapter of this impressively illustrated work.

—EDITOR

WE WHO ENJOY collecting and fishing Atlantic salmon flies can learn much about how to select appropriate patterns for various conditions and how to use them properly if we know something of the ancient and honorable history of the most beautiful fishing flies in the world. It begins with the simple, expands to the sublime, and then reverts to the simple.

The first definitive book on fly fishing is the *Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, printed in 1496 from an old manuscript dated 1406 or thereabouts. The origins and authorship of this treatise have been the subject of debate and conjecture among angling historians for almost five centuries. The controversy revolves around the mystique of Dame Juliana Berners, nun and noblewoman.

Eminent angling historians of several generations have gone to painstaking efforts to verify or refute not only the authorship but the very existence of Dame Juliana. None has succeeded. Biographical notes referencing her life and lifestyle give credence to the fact of her existence, but none verifies her actual connection to the "treatyse of fysshynge wyth an Angle." In spite of the scrutiny of historians, the legend of the "Dame of Dubbes" survives as a viable predecessor to all fine fish stories.

Ancient spelling and obsolete words make reading difficult, but Berners's book has been translated into modern English by John McDonald in his masterly volume *The Origins of Angling*, published in 1963 by Doubleday and Company, Inc., of New York. McDonald's translation makes fascinating reading because it describes the beginning of modern tackle and tactics, including rods, lines, hooks, and flies. Although dressing instructions leave much to interpretation, twelve seasonal flies are described, some evidently having been used for salmon. However drab and crude these flies may appear, their influence on modern favorites, such as the March Brown, is obvious.

The book tells how ancient hooks were made from needles, large or small, and even from a shoemaker's awl. These were heated to remove the temper so that the barb could be notched with a knife and the point sharpened. After reheating, the hook was bent, then reheated and quenched to restore the temper. This process had to be repeated if the hook seemed too soft or too brittle. Hooks then were whipped to plaited horsehair "snoods," looped at their ends for attachment to lines. There are

records of commercial hook making as early as 1560, in Redditch, England.

In 1725, this method gave way to the attachment of eyes made of loops of twisted silkworm gut. Metal-eyed salmon hooks were not known until 1845, when hook machinery was invented. Like the zipper and the wristwatch, it took time for metal-eyed hooks to become popular, and they weren't fully accepted until the turn of the century. Some anglers thought metal-eyed hooks sank too quickly or gave too stiff action between fly and leader.

Between 1496 and 1676, a few notable angling books were published. Izaak Walton wrote *The Compleat Angler* in 1676, but since he was a bait fisherman, he asked Charles Cotton and Colonel Robert Venables to help him (in the fifth edition and hence) with the fly-fishing parts by combining their books, also published in 1676, with his. In it, Venables says, "The salmon taketh the artificial fly very well." He describes fly types and recommends, "Use the most gaudy and Orient colors you can choose." Cotton explains fly-dressing methods of the day and gives dressings for sixty-eight patterns, mostly for trout and other fish, but some for salmon. Walton's book was revered mainly because of its style, a dialogue between "Piscator" and "Venator," teacher and pupil. Walton borrowed extensively from previous books, and just prior to 1956, the only known copy of W. Samuel's *The Arte of Angling* was discovered. Printed in 1577, it contained nearly identical dialogue between the same two contributors. Of course, Walton knew about it, because he "adopted" so much of it.

In 1700, a book by James Chetham



Blacker patterns dressed by Syd Glasso. From top: a Brown Fly, a Gaudy Fly, the Ballyshannon, the Spirit Fly, another Spirit Fly.

describes the first named salmon fly, the Horseleech, with four to six wings and a contrasting body color embellished with silver and gold twist. In 1746, a book by Charles Bowlker mentions two salmon flies by name, the Peacock Fly and the Dragon Fly. The first (hand-colored) plate of salmon flies, by George Bainbridge, appeared in 1816. It showed the Spring Fly, the Quaker Fly, the Gaudy Fly, the Summer Fly, and the Wasp Fly. Popular flies were generally somber patterns until the closing years of the century. Wings usually were of turkey feathers from birds raised for the purpose. These flies were known as the Dun Turkey, Gray Turkey, and so forth.

In the second edition of *The Art of Angling* (1774), Charles Bowlker says, "It is needless to treat of any more salmon

flies; for salmon flies, in general, are made just as the painter pleases. Salmon, being fond of anything that is gaudy . . . will rise at almost any of the trout flies, where salmon are plenty." (The first edition was written in 1746 by Richard and Charles Bowlker, but all later editions were written by Charles only.)

In 1842, William Blacker's *Art of Angling* (revised as *Blacker's Art of Fly Making* in 1843 and 1855) combined practicality with extravagance and established a principal standard in the style and character of salmon flies. Blacker's book in any edition is a cherished angling classic. His many "extravagant" patterns challenge even the greatest artists to properly reproduce these "jewels among salmon flies." This

era featured intense competition between the local plain and simple patterns and the Irish (and other) gaudy and complicated ones. In every instance, the latter won.

FLIES RIOTOUS WITH COLOR AND DETAIL

Then, in the last half of the nineteenth century, everything seemed to break loose with the development of flies riotous with color and intricate detail. First in British publications (the *Fishing Gazette* and *Land and Water*), George Kelson served as scribe for Major John Popkin Traherne (1826–1901), described by Kelson as a "master of infinite elaboration." Although Kelson transcribed Traherne's patterns, he did not always credit them as such, and many remain relatively obscure. Those that are known exhibit the epitome of Victorian opulence and are a celebration of the use of materials available during this period. Traherne's dressings are some of the most intricate and brilliant patterns known today.

George Mortimer Kelson (1836–1920) personifies the peak of the golden age of the Atlantic salmon fly. His definitive book, *The Salmon Fly* (1895), is one of the most important works on the subject. Its 510 pages contain eight chapters on salmon flies and tackle, including about three hundred clearly described fly patterns of the time, of which fifty-two are shown in eight stone-lithographed color plates.

Kelson and his book brought order and system (particularly as pertains to wing types) to the classification of salmon flies and the techniques of their dressings. Kelson has been called the

Antique Jock Scotts

“grand old man of salmon fishing” and the “high priest of the salmon fly,” but he was a highly controversial figure who was as maligned as he was applauded. His reputation suffered irreparable damage with the publicized feud he had with his editor and former friend and fishing companion, R. B. Marston, who took exception to the credit Kelson readily claimed or misappropriated regarding the origins of numerous patterns and the techniques used to tie them. Regardless of disputes and evidence of character flaws, one thing is clear: Kelson’s masterful work, *The Salmon Fly*, remains a standard fly-tying reference and a cherished collector’s classic. Favoring the simpler Summer patterns, Kelson was not a proponent of actually using many of the complicated dressings and regarded them as historical more than practical. On this point I might concur; although I am appreciative of the history and details of the handsome classics, I tend to use their hairwing counterparts when on the stream.

Kelson shared his father’s belief that salmon most avidly took moths or butterflies, and the gaudy patterns of his era reflected this. Famous ones, still in use, include the Thunder and Lightning, Green Highlander, Black Dose, and the Blue, Silver, Black, White, Red, and Helmsdale Doctors. He was one of the first writers to give detailed instructions and to offer a system for tying salmon flies. These are nearly identical in style or shape, and they feature mixed (married) wing components, compound (built) wings, and often several butts with veilings of toucan, as in the Jock Scott (when properly dressed), or Indian crow, as in the very fancy Popham.



The developing salmon fly reached a burgeoning intensity during the days of Queen Victoria (1819–1901), ruler of the United Kingdom, empress of India (from 1876), and monarch of other lands beyond the seas. These were the days when British warships and merchantmen roamed the oceans, and when British regiments guarded the queen’s domains in far-flung places. British officers, hunting and trading in these exotic regions, sent home the skins of beautiful birds so that the gillies and their families could while away dreary winter evenings dressing flies for their lords and masters to use when they returned home. It is not surprising that intense competition rapidly spread to see who could create the most gorgeous and fruitful patterns.

In addition to the feathers of birds of almost every imaginable exotic species,

these patterns were composed of mohair, camlet, and Berlin wools; chenille; fur from seal, rabbit, monkey, pig, and other animals; gold beater’s skin; threads and silks of every conceivable color, embossed with gold and silver; round, oval, and flat tinsels; wire; and lace. Many of the fur and feathers were dyed in a complexity of shades and colors. These components, both common and exotic, were readily available to both professional and amateur tackle dealers and fly dressers. Today, many of the feathers called for in the grand old patterns are difficult to find, expensive, or even illegal, but substitutes can work just as well.

The classic patterns can be divided into two main groups. One is those dressed to hook salmon—which, after all, is really what this is all about. This group is composed of many popular fa-

avorites still used today: the Doctors, the Rangers, Thunder and Lightning, Green Highlander, and Silver Gray. The other is those dressed as exhibition flies, sometimes called "vanity patterns," often composed of rare feathers and complex in design. Although these patterns weren't necessarily intended to hook salmon, many of them did. To put things into perspective, in this country around the turn of the century a number of the most complicated patterns, including John Traherne's, were offered for sale in fly shops by the dozen for a little more than sixty cents each.

Another purpose of the more intricate patterns was to demonstrate prowess in fly dressing, and many of them were named for people their originators wanted to honor. Regardless of whether the flies were intended to catch fish or to catch the favor of *Homo sapiens*, nowadays they catch collectors, who treasure them for their history, their beauty, and their intricate construction.

One cannot dismiss the butterfly patterns of the Victorian era without paying tribute to the noted gillie Jock Scott, who originated the most successful perennial favorite of all time: the beautiful classic that bears his name and, ironically, that of his employer, Lord John Scott. Experience and legend tell us that the Jock Scott is a practical pattern as well as an honorary one.

Many accounts of Jock Scott, both the man and the fly, have appeared in angling literature, and the challenge, more than a century and a half later, is trying to separate fact from fancy. The most popular version of how the fly originated, the "boat to Norway theory," was initially written by Charles H. Alston in the *Fishing Gazette* in 1895 and was subsequently repeated by Sir Her-

bert Maxwell in his 1898 book, *Salmon and Sea Trout*. Also mentioned by Lee Wulff in *The Atlantic Salmon*, this account dates the origin of the fly as 1845. Gillie Jock Scott, accompanying his master Lord Scott on a stormy voyage to Norway, "to wile away the tedium . . . occupied himself with dressing flies for the approaching campaign; one result of his labours was the fly which has made his name famous among salmon fishers the world over."

Jock Scott's obituary, written in February 1893 under the pen name of Punt Gun, states, "It was while acting as fisherman to Lord John at Mackerston in 1850 that he set himself to devise something new and taking; the Jock Scott was the result." It has been generally accepted that the fly remained nameless for several years until Jock took it to John Forest of Kelso after his master's death. At that time, John Forest "thereupon named it after the inventor and, as 'Jock Scott,' it will remain while salmon swim in the Tweed."

The legend of the pedigree of this famous fly continues with a fascinating account of its origin by R. T. Simpson in a publication titled *The Collection of Wroth Silver*. First published in 1884, expanded in 1910, and reprinted in 1927, it is a detailed chronicle of the history and customs of "The Lordship of the Hundred" (an old English term used before areas were split into parishes and districts) of Knightlow County, Waswick—and the only account of the fly I know of written before Jock Scott's death in 1893. This little volume states that "Lord John Scott greatly endeared himself to rich and poor alike on his estates and in the neighbourhood, as the monument to him at Dunchurch testifies. His tastes induced him to revive and continue the

old customs and ceremonies connected with the estate, and he and Lady John repeatedly attended the collection of Wroth Silver, and did much to ensure the continuance of its observance." Hence, we can deduce that "Wroth Silver" was a ceremony and not a service in need of protection from tarnishing. Furthering the lore, and in its only reference to angling, Simpson states, "Lady John at the time of her marriage was a noted beauty, and had glorious Titian hair, from a strand of which on one occasion a salmon fly was made, now celebrated amongst fishermen under the name of 'Jock Scott' fly, an enlarged model of which was presented by the writer, to the Reading Room at Dunchurch, given by her Ladyship while resident at Cawston."

No mention is made of the gillie Jock, and there is no further description of the fly; however, it is fun to speculate that Lord Scott might have requested that this fly be dressed to honor his bride and that the gillie accommodated the request. Simpson's phrase "on one occasion a salmon fly was made" could indicate that the hair episode was brief and confined largely to the Scott family. Whether Jock adapted his pattern before or after the celebration of the "glorious Titian hair" is not possible to determine. It does seem logical, however, that the body of the fly would be the most obvious place to incorporate a strand of hair. Body descriptions in dressings written for the Jock Scott differ among resources, including Francis, Kelson, and Pryce-Tannatt, and all accounts of the fly (except Simpson's) were written after the death of both Lord Scott and his gillie, Jock. Some call for the rear half of the body to be gold, yellow, or buttercup silk—all shades that

From the top: Helmsdale Doctor dressed by Megan Boyd; Red Doctor dressed by Belarmino Martinez; White Doctor dressed by Bob Veverka; Blue Doctor dressed by Bill Wilbur; Black Doctor dressed by William Wilsey; Black Doctor (antique); Silver Doctor dressed by Ted Kantner; Silver Doctor dressed by P. D. Malloch.



can vary from golden yellow to golden orange to golden red. This charming addition to the lore of such an important fly intrigued me enough to try to substantiate it. I studied a few dozen early Jock Scotts in my collection and found that in several the rear half of the body was orange, or more so than yellow.

The use of hair in fly bodies is rare, but not unknown. For example, Kelson caused himself trouble by claiming to have originated the Little Inky Boy, an almost forgotten pattern with a body of black horse hair, closely coiled. James Wright's Garry or Yellow Dog and the Collie Dog are examples requiring canine assistance, and Megan Boyd reported to me that she had been requested to dress a fly using a portion of a customer's ample eyebrow! At any rate, the lore continues and will perpetuate itself. We cannot, at this point, determine if the Jock Scott was in fact originated in 1845 or in 1850, if the body was originally more or less than orange, and if, indeed, the young water bailiff was inspired by the glorious tresses of Lady Scott. By chance or by design, however, Jock Scott originated a fly Kelson rightfully referenced as "the utmost triumph in harmony and proportion." The choice of lore is left to the reader.

FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE SENSIBLE

When styles of most any sort seem to be reaching their peak, the pendulum swings the other way. The change in outlook from the sublime to the sensible began around the turn of the century, and the return to simplicity in salmon flies had ups and downs that still exist into the present day. We enjoy

collecting, admiring, and often using exotic and complicated patterns, even though most of us know full well that simpler ones are as useful for enticing salmon, and perhaps even more so.

In the early part of the twentieth century, two men in particular were responsible for the developing road to simplicity. They were A. H. Chaytor, author of *Letters to a Salmon Fisher's Sons* (1910), and Ernest M. Crosfield, who wrote articles for magazines under the pen name of Poacher. This move to eliminate ornamentation that had no fishing value was taking place about fifteen years after Kelson's book was published—that is, about 1910. Examples of the new style include the Blue Charm, Silver Blue, and Logie.

Chaytor's return to simplicity bordered on the parsimonious, even to the extent of advocating, on occasion, the

use of a bare, lacquered hook. Lacking his predecessors' reverence for extravagance, Chaytor discarded all parts of the salmon fly for which he could find no reason—tags, tails, butts, and horns. His 285-page book is both practical and readable, and is recommended for even advanced modern anglers.

Ernest Crosfield, acclaimed as the greatest salmon fly dresser of his day, was another disciple of simplicity. Crosfield followed some of Irish master tyer Michael Rogan's (1833–1905) tenets; for example, he too believed that a fly's wings should show all the fibers given to it, because every fiber had a purpose and should fulfill it. Crosfield's flies and patterns exhibit an elegant simplicity, combining the beauty of the Victorian era with the innovative practicality of the twentieth century.

Crosfield's flies characteristically fea-



The Yellowstone Creeper and Dark Iris, originated and dressed by Preston Jennings, with pages from his notebooks.

ture economy of material, intentional translucence, and slimness of dressing. Most notable, perhaps, is his technique of tying in his wing materials in tiny groups, separating one from another by a turn or two of thread to aid in giving translucence to the fly and reducing bulk. This method is discussed at some length in both of Eric Taverner's fine books, *Salmon Fishing* (London, 1931) and *Fly Tying for Salmon* (London, 1942) and was Crosfield's legacy to future generations of tyers, including the revered Sydney Glasso (1906–1983), from Forks, Washington, who took his rightful turn in establishing a new tradition in fly-tying excellence.

For several years before Syd's death in 1983, I was privileged to share a correspondence with him. His letters were humorous, self-effacing, and full of "good stuff." Mystified by the tiny heads of his flies, I asked him to divulge his secret. He replied, "I followed Ernest Crosfield's style, where much of the wing is tied in before the throat hackle, and therefore there is less material to tie in at the head. It is a legitimate construction, and what is good enough for Crosfield is certainly good enough for me. I think he was the greatest."

Syd never sold his flies for fear it

would "spoil the fun" and usually turned down requests for flies. In 1981, Syd wrote:

Got a real winner about a month ago from a fellow in New Jersey which went as follows:

Dear Sir,

Please forward to me a dozen or so of your select salmon flies. I would like a couple for me to keep, the rest I will use for fishing.

Sincerely yours,

My reply, on the same sheet of paper, went like this:

Dear Sir,

Mr. Glasso is hunting in Africa and from there goes to Egypt to fish for Nile perch in, of course, the Nile. With barbless hooks, he says, "Who cares?" Hasn't tied a fly for months—says he has run out of glue. Anyway he doesn't sell flies—gives them to friends to hang on the wall. I am his housekeeper and believe me he needs one—feathers and beer cans all over hell and every morning moths coming in to look for his toucan feathers. Sorry.

Lola Willing

As we bartered back and forth, Syd admitted to "a pitiful weakness for Indian crow," saying, "It's good for my soul to just look at these feathers." In 1980,

Syd wrote that "they're making the rivers more slippery nowadays"; however, in 1981, he graciously agreed to tie the William Blacker patterns for *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*. In acknowledging this request, Syd said, "Thanks for your faith in my ability to do the Blacker flies. They make Kelson patterns look like child's play. Blacker was an expert in thinking up torture tactics!" We are privileged that Syd chose to dress these flies for others to appreciate; in doing so, he rejuvenated the honored tradition of Atlantic salmon flies, about which he commented, "Old flies, besides being truly beautiful, recall a time and a way of life that is gone for all time."

The exemplary style and elegance of Syd Glasso's full-dressed classics make each a treasure and an inspiration. He was a pioneer in the development of Scotland's Spey flies for fishing steelhead, adding to their somewhat somber appearance brilliant colors and his distinguished style. Possessing a modesty that excluded any ambition for fame, Syd was an innovative angler, ardent conservationist, and fine friend. He was a peer of the best who mastered the fine art of dressing Atlantic salmon flies—indeed, it is rare individuals such as he who are responsible for elevating the craft of tying flies to the art of dressing them.

The most lucid, concise, complete and authoritative book on dressing classic patterns is, in my estimation, Dr. T. E. Pryce-Tannatt's *How to Dress Salmon Flies* (1914). It tells nothing about tackle, tactics, or fly selection, but its precise instructions on fly dressing denote the best practices of the time. Historically, it is the final touch of Victorian splendor and about the last we will hear of the

Salmon flies dressed by Charlie DeFeo. From top: Black Cosseboom; Silver Doctor; Silver Satan; Purple, Red, and White Spey; Torrish; Black Heron; Jock Scott; Thunder and Lightning; Copper Killer; Silver Spey.



complicated classics, even though their influences extend into American salmon fly tying and fishing. Pryce-Tannatt's book, then, is a reversion from simplicity; the last gasp, so to speak, of Victorianism. Although Pryce-Tannatt may have been old-fashioned, his love for the beautiful classics is shared by many connoisseurs today. A Pryce-Tannatt statement sums up the very essence of salmon flies: "There is an indescribable something about a fly dressed by an expert amateur who is a practical salmon fisherman which the fly dressed by a nonangling professional frequently lacks. I have heard this peculiar quality rather neatly referred to as 'soul.' The term is incomprehensible to the uninitiated, but is completely understood by the experienced man."

We regret the passing of the complicated classics as fishing flies partly on account of tradition; however, the resurgence of interest among fly tyers during the past few years is heartening. The renaissance of the classic salmon fly and its popularity as an art form may well result in its revival on the rivers, but more importantly, respect for the art of the Atlantic salmon fly assures its preservation. Joe Hubert, author of *Salmon—Salmon*, is one of the few modern anglers still wedded to the classics. His ambition is to hook a salmon on at least a hundred patterns given in Kelson's *The Salmon Fly*, and he is well on his way to that goal! During the 1970s, my very good friend Bill Cushner shadow-boxed many of my favorite classics in protective frames. Often combining the flies with angling art or artifacts, Bill developed a style in framing flies that is often emulated today. The American Museum of Fly Fishing is fortunate to have in its collection a great many of

these beautiful framings, and others can be seen at the Fly Fishing Museum/William Cushner Collection, which Bill founded in Florence, Oregon.

After the early 1900s, with tradition thriving, few advances in salmon flies were made in the British Isles. In North America, other innovations were taking place.

Not wishing to give up the classic favorites entirely, but also not wishing to bother with their complicated built wings and mixed wings, fly dressers began to look for a way to retain all or nearly all of the classics' components except for the multifathered wing. In trying to maintain an effect similar to the original, simplification was one answer. Examples of these "reduced" classics are the Black Dose (reduced) and the Dusty Miller (reduced), which are from the bench of celebrated American

angler and fly dresser Harry A. Darbee of Livingston Manor, New York. These are pretty flies and relatively simple to put together. As adaptations, they have no standard pattern, and each dressing depends on whatever its dresser wants to put into it.

Each generation has its individuals whose contributions to the development of tying are unmistakable. Two such gentlemen of the mid-twentieth century are Preston Jennings and Charlie DeFeo. Both were as prolific as they were innovative, and their flies exhibit a multitude of ingenious applications of color and materials.

As an academic, Jennings pursued a tireless study of the theories of reflection and refraction of light through a prism. His research into "how the fish see it" resulted in minnow imitations dressed in a spectrum of colors. In addi-



Early nineteenth-century hairwing

tion to using hackle tips in the wings of his flies, he also dyed golden pheasant crests brilliant colors and incorporated them in the wing. Keeping accurate accounts of his research, he amassed a tremendous collection of patterns, photography, paintings, and flies that is now housed at the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Another first in the wings of flies was Charlie DeFeo's use of floss with combinations of hair and feathers. With the eye of an artist, Charlie DeFeo knew no bounds when applying materials to hooks—the hook was simply another palette. Seldom tying a fly the same way twice, Charlie is remembered for his style of tying rather than for actual patterns. Frequently he would add to the body of a standard pattern a wing of jungle cock body tips, thus creating the nymphs that many associate with him. His creative combinations of floss, feathers, hair, and hooks produced a multitude of unrecorded patterns and provide a superb model for the innovative tyer of today.

HAIRWINGS: QUEST FOR SIMPLICITY AND PRACTICALITY

Substituting hair for feathers was another step in the quest for simplicity and practicality. There are many theories and suppositions as to where and

when the popular hairwing salmon fly patterns originated. Whatever authentic documentation may have existed seems to have been lost.

Part of the lore involves a story that is interesting regardless of its authenticity; it is the story of immigrants who came from the British Isles to Newfoundland in the eighteenth century, very early in the history of fly fishing. They brought with them cattle, sheep, and dogs, as well as other essentials of colonial life, including fishhooks. Although fishing then was mainly done with nets, the colonists occasionally fished with long fly rods for sport. Fancy flies were unknown: people used what they had, and they quite sensibly named each fly for its ingredients, so its name told the neighbors exactly what was used to catch the "big one" of the day. Flies bore names that left little question about their composition: the Red Cow, the Ten Bear, the Ordinary Bear, and so on.

We do know that bucktail flies were commercially available as early as the 1880s. In a monumental work, *The Complete Fly Fisherman* (1947), John McDonald endows us with the notes and letters of Theodore Gordon, fondly considered America's patron saint of fly fishermen, which include some interesting remarks about a special fly. Gordon wrote on 24 January 1903:

Some years ago we tried some flies on an entirely different principle, our notion

being to turn out something that would have real life and movement and resemble a small bright fish in colouring. If you could see one of these large flies played, salmon-fly fashion, by a series of short jerks of the rod top, and notice how the long fibres expand and contract, how the jungle fowl feathers (in a line with the hook) open and shut, you would see at once that it must be very attractive to any large game fish. White and silver predominate, but are toned down by long badger hackles and jungle fowl feathers. . . . They will kill all kinds of game fish, salmon included.

This fly, which Gordon said was tried some years earlier than 1903, was called by him the Bumblepuppy. Literally translated "whist without rules," the Bumblepuppy was dressed in many variations, one of which was often enclosed in Gordon's fly orders. The reference to salmon may have been to landlocked salmon rather than to Atlantic salmon, and the pattern has fallen into obscurity. It is, however, an early, authenticated, and named example of the use of a hairwing and thus is important historically.

Although I state in *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing* that a bucktail fly for bass was in use in the United States as early as 1886, and that a rancher in Idaho named A. S. Trude tied hairwing flies for trout in 1901, this date may be open to question. The June 1948 issue of *Fortune* quotes an article previously published in the *Bulletin* of the Anglers' Club of New York: "While trout fishing in . . . Idaho back around 1890 the late Colonel Lewis S. Thompson met a fellow fisherman, one A. S. Trude. . . . Trude tied his own flies, and used hair instead of feathers. So far as is known, he was the father of the hair fly, which in the form of the 'bucktail' is known to

The Cosseboom as originated on the S.S. Fleuris, dressed by Keith Fulsher. It appears with a photograph of the first Cosseboom dressed by John Cosseboom (courtesy of Peter G. Walker).



most anglers. Colonel Thompson saved some of the flies Trude gave him, and later had other flies tied. These were all trout flies. At least he thought so until he tried them on salmon, on the Restigouche about twenty years ago (1928 or before)."

Undoubtedly the colonel didn't mean to imply that he initiated hairwing fly fishing for salmon. The important thing is not when or where or by whom hairwings were first conceived, but rather that they have helped revolutionize modern concepts in salmon fishing.

Experimentation with modern hairwing flies went on independently in many different regions. On the Miramichi, for example, men such as Everett Price, Bert Miner, and Ira Gruber developed a simplified style in both featherwings and hairwings, but seemed to favor the hairwing. In *Atlantic Salmon Fishing* (1937), Charles Phair stated, "Hair flies have been fished with conspicuous success by some salmon fishermen, notably Colonel Edmund P. Rogers, Walter C. Teagle and the late Lewis Thompson."

About 1920, Harry Smith, of Cherryfield, Maine, devised a simple all-black pattern with a bear hair wing appropriately called the Black Bear fly, evidently one of the first used for Maine rivers. This fly and others, such as the Squirrel Tail, are designated as types of flies and named for the materials in them; examples are the Black Bear-Red Butt and the Squirrel Tail-Orange Butt.

The rudimentary Black Bear is famous for hooking salmon, and there now are countless patterns that have evolved from it. Dressers elaborate by adding ribbing, hackles, colorful butts, and synthetic materials. Charles "Chuck" Conrad added a tinsel tag and green flu-

orescent butt, thus creating the variation known as the Conrad that is popular on the Miramichi River. Other examples are the Black Bear-Green Butt, Undertaker, and Preacher. Decades later, the simple hairwing has flourished, and the popularity of tube flies in some regions has opened new frontiers for its use.

It is one thing to learn that hairwing flies will take salmon, and quite another to know what types and sizes will do it best. Whether or not they take salmon better than featherwings may be a matter of opinion. Many of us have chosen to fish hairwings almost exclusively. They are more available to the fisherman largely because the materials are more accessible and are easier for tyers, both independent and commercial, to deal with.

When hairwing patterns were first developed, they were large and bulky. Experience proved that they should be smaller and dressed more sparsely, with the wing hugging the hook shank. I cringe when I see the hairwings often sold in stores. The hair employed on a conventional hairwing should be fine enough to give the fly proper action in the water, reasonably straight and bright, with a natural gloss to yield translucency and brilliance to the fly.

The desire for beauty in hairwings

and the nostalgic reverence for classic patterns led to dressing many classics with hair instead of feathers. The basis of these adaptations, sometimes referred to as *conversions*, is in the wing structure of the feathered predecessor, and the wing approximates in hair the colors of the pertinent classic. A well-executed conversion can be as strikingly beautiful as its classic counterpart. Countless patterns and their variations have resulted in the reform to hairwing flies, and simplifications can be made at the discretion of the dresser. An excellent reference on this subject is *Hair-Wing Atlantic Salmon Flies* (1981), by Keith Fulsher and Charles Krom.

The New Testament passage "many are called but few are chosen" could be applied to salmon flies. It is natural for fly tyers to make up new patterns or variations in hopes that theirs will prove successful. One of the chosen few is the famous Cosseboom. Its originator, John C. Cosseboom, of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, was a fascinating gentleman endowed with multiple talents. Not only a champion fly caster, he was also a poet, newspaper writer, and insurance agent.

In July 1935, John Cosseboom and Ai Ballou, originator of the Ballou Special, were aboard the S.S. *Fleuris* making the twenty-four-hour passage from Quebec to Anticosti Island. To pass the time, fly-

tying gear was brought out, and Ai's wife, Annie, challenged Cosseboom to create a fly using a spool of olive green silk floss she had selected. He met the challenge, incorporating the floss for both the body and the tail, and hooked it in Mrs. Ballou's lapel. Later, Ai Ballou attached a note to the fly, "This is the original Cosseboom dressed by John Cosseboom on the S.S. *Fleuris*, July 1935, and given to Annie Ballou." The fly is still in existence and exhibits a throat hackle rather than the collar that is usual on the pattern today.

The success of the Cosseboom led to considerable experimentation and many variations, including the Cosseboom that is dressed as a streamer or bucktail. The Miramichi Cosseboom, with its dark green body rather than the olive green of the original, is one of the most popular flies on that river.

Two other significant names in North American salmon fly development are Ira Gruber and Everett Price. Gruber was a cotton knitting mill owner from Spring Valley, Pennsylvania, who fished New Brunswick's Miramichi River in the Doaktown-Blackville area almost daily during every season from 1915 until his death in 1963. In 1930, Wilson "Bing" Russell became his guide and caretaker. Ira usually used two fly rods. When he hooked a salmon with one, he would hand that rod to Bing, who played the fish while Ira tried to hook another with a different fly on the other rod. Ira was more interested in the fish-taking abilities of fly patterns and fly sizes than in landing fish. He kept accurate records.

Gruber started dressing his own flies in 1935 under the tutelage of a local expert named Everett Price. Together they recorded more than twenty patterns,

many of which are Gruber originations or adaptations. Hairwings eventually became more favored because they seemed more interesting to the fish and were easier to tie. Ira's son, Edward, sent me nineteen of Ira's flies dressed in the 1930s that clearly exhibit Gruber and Price's influence on the popular Miramichi "butt patterns." The Black Spider in particular, with its burnt orange butt, has led many anglers to believe that Gruber fathered the black bear-butted patterns; others insist that Harry Smith should have that credit. The Black Spider is evidence that "butt" flies were tied before they were called that. We now know it as the Orange Butt, and it may well have been the first of this type of pattern.

More than anyone else, Gruber was responsible for establishing the general conformation of the Miramichi-type salmon fly: a short, cigar-shaped body ribbed with close-turned fine tinsel and with a short wing that hugs the body. In addition to the simple methods and materials, another feature is the care with which throat hackle is tied or wound on.

Ira Gruber also was among the first to use bronzed straight or offset hooks for salmon fishing. Almost all of his flies were tied on Allcock Model Perfect hooks, and he seemed to prefer singles to doubles. He favored offset hooks because of their improved hooking and holding advantages and was an early proponent of this type of hook popular on salmon rivers in Maine and Canada.

Bing Russell, who also guided me before his death in 1970, claimed that in the early years anglers gave up fishing when the water became low and bright because salmon were too hard to catch although many could be seen. During

these years, big flies in sizes 4 and 6 (usually doubles) were thought necessary. Ira Gruber's experiments proved that salmon could be taken in warm, low-water conditions on flies as small as size 12. No mention is made of his using dry flies, although they were then becoming well known.

FISHING THE DRY FLY

Taking Atlantic salmon on the dry fly has become a standard and successful practice in North America, especially under low-water and warm-water conditions, although we have had quite a time convincing our friends across the sea of the fact. Adherents of the dry fly also now know that they can usually take salmon with the dry fly under the same conditions as are ideal for wet-fly fishing.

The history of catching salmon with the dry fly goes back farther than some may think. John McDonald tells us that "Pulman (*Vade Mecum of Fly Fishing for Trout*) pulled the dry fly out of his hat, complete, in 1841, though for all anyone knew it might as well have been a rabbit." During the latter half of the nineteenth century, other references to the revolutionary practice of fishing the fly dry surfaced in the literature, and in 1890, Theodore Gordon wrote to F. M. Halford inquiring about the practice. Halford replied, "I can quite imagine that in some parts of your country fish could be taken on the dry fly where the more usual sunk fly would be of no avail." In an April 1906 letter, Gordon wrote: "A friend of mine took a 14-pound salmon on a dry fly tied like a Coachman but dry-fly style on a big Pennell hook. The line was slack, he broke his rod in striking the fish and

was a long time killing it. This was on the Restigouche and he got two more, a grilse and a small salmon, in the same way out of the same pools in three days."

George M. L. LaBranche, in *The Salmon and the Dry Fly* (1924), gives credit to Colonel Ambrose Monell for being the first angler in North America to take a salmon on a dry fly (which may be incorrect in view of the foregoing):

Believing, as I did, that salmon do not feed in fresh water, I hesitated to introduce the subject of fishing for them with a floating fly. Divining, perhaps, what was in my mind, my friend (Colonel Monell) calmly announced that he had killed a fifteen-pound salmon two years before on a dry fly, and assured me that it was not an accident. He had seen the fish rising just as a trout would rise and, having failed to interest the fish with any of the wet flies in his box, he had deliberately cast across and upstream with a No. 12 Whirling Dun, floating it down over the fish, which took it at once. It was the taking of this fish, and the rising of six or seven others which he did not hook, that convinced him it would be possible to kill fish with the dry fly when the water was low.

In the book, LaBranche gives four favorite dressings of dry flies that are heavily palmered over silk or dubbing.

The greatest exponent of dry-fly fishing for salmon is Lee Wulff, author of *The Atlantic Salmon* (1958), who designed the Gray Wulff and the White Wulff in 1929. He says, "In the early thirties, it was unusual to meet another dry-fly angler and it was quite common when moving to a new river to find guides and fishermen who had never seen a dry fly fished and who were frankly doubtful that a floating fly would have any attraction for salmon."

In 1962, Lee fished Scotland's Aberdeenshire Dee and demonstrated his ability to catch salmon on the dry fly. He caught only one, but proved it could be done. Either salmon are much harder to take on the dry fly in the British Isles than in North America or British anglers are much harder to convince that it can be done consistently under favorable conditions. Could it be that the presumed reluctance of salmon across the Atlantic to take dry flies is in reality a reluctance on the part of anglers to use them because of the misconception that dry flies are ineffective?

In 1977, Angus Cameron, Bob Kuhn, Lewis Stone, and I were fishing Iceland's beautiful and productive Laxá í Kós. Because of the weather conditions, the fish were less cooperative than usual. I was teamed with Angus and had fished down a pool without result. On Angus's turn at the rod, he gave me a sly look and dangled a size 4 Gray Wulff to his leader.

"You can't do worse than I did," I said. "Go ahead and try it."

On the third cast or so, a salmon rose to the fly and took it solidly. The fish took Angus downriver about a hundred yards before being tailed. It weighed 14½ pounds.

To make the story short, we both took salmon on dry flies that day. Returning to the lodge, we met up with Bob Kuhn, who proudly exhibited two big salmon.

"Guess what I hooked them with," he asked.

"Dry fly," said Angus.

"Dry fly," I repeated.

"Dry fly," confirmed Bob proudly. "How did you guess that?"

The following July, Angus and I took salmon regularly on dry flies on the same river. It wasn't a coincidence. On

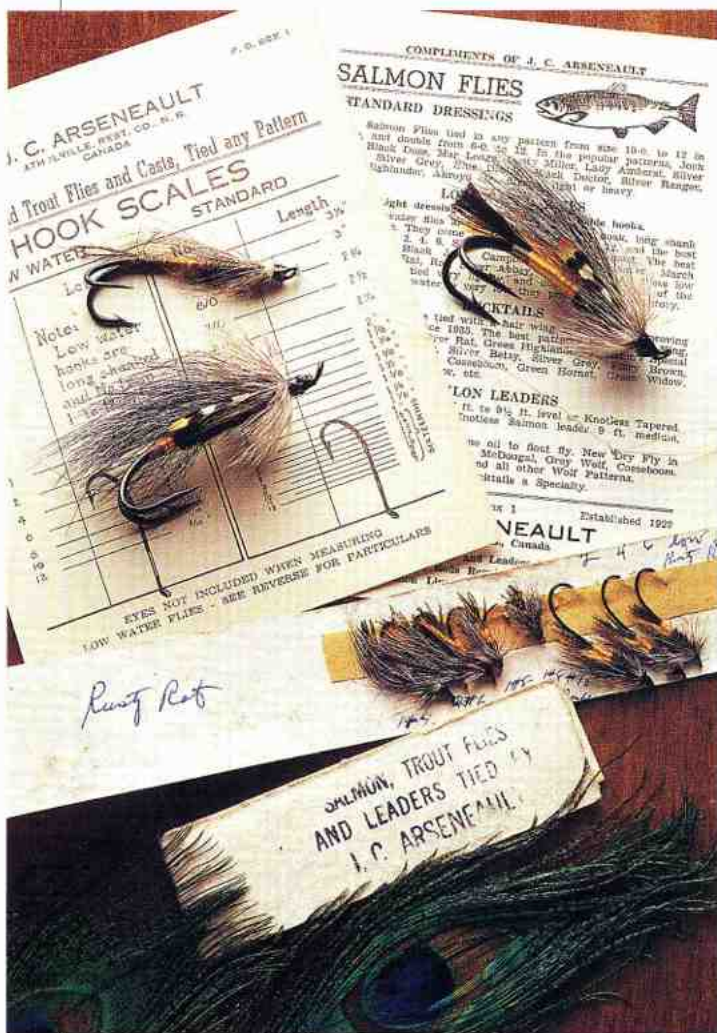
some days the fish came to dry flies better than to the wet ones usually used on the river.

Lee Wulff's series of flies were a valuable contribution to dry-fly salmon fishing, as their bushy hair wing dressings make them excellent floaters, even in fast currents. Many other floaters such as spiders, skaters, bombers, bugs, and heavily palmered patterns have since been developed.

Word of successful flies spreads quickly on the rivers and in the shops, and, as patterns become established, they are often modified. Some changes are quite by chance while others are made by the determined efforts of hopeful anglers. Combining the old with the new, innovative tyers alter tags, butts, bodies, and wings. With new techniques and new materials, variations of proved patterns are developed, thus creating another generation of productive flies.

Throughout the history of the salmon fly there are countless examples of flies influenced by previously documented patterns, and elements of classics such as the Doctors, the Parsons, the Jock Scott, and the Thunder and Lightning can be recognized in many patterns that appear in this book. Modern examples of flies and styles of flies often emulated are the Black Bears, Rats, Cossebooms, Buck Bugs, Mudglers, and Wulffs. ~

This chapter is excerpted from *Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and the Patterns*, by Joseph D. Bates Jr. and Pamela Bates Richards, which was published in 1996 by Stackpole Books (800-732-3669); \$75, hardcover, 416 pages, 206 color photos, fifty black-and-white photographs, thirty drawings.



Top left: Joseph Pulitzer's 5/0 "old worn-out Black Rat" from which the original Rusty Rat was modeled. This fly was stuck on the wall of Pulitzer's Grog Island camp from 1949 to 1984 when reelmaker Stanley Bogden made arrangements for it to be given to the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Below it, the Black Rat and, right, the Rusty Rat, both tied by J. Clovis Arseneault.

while, I am happy to extend to the editors of FORTUNE the privilege of using it for the next ninety-nine years to their hearts' content.

Arseneault's own version of the story of the Rusty Rat parallels Pulitzer's. Sam Day, in his article "A Salute to Three Rats" (*The Atlantic Salmon Journal*, Winter 1965) quotes "Clovie":

It was in 1949, and the late Joseph Pulitzer had been fishing with one of my large Black Rats. It happened that I had used a rusty floss for the under binding and after he'd taken a salmon or two the fly was pretty well chewed up, the body torn and the rusty tying thread had been cut and came through. But as is often the case, the more disreputable the fly became in appearance the more alluring it must have been to the salmon for Mr. Pulitzer wound up with a 41-pounder.

He came back to me excited about its performance and enthusiastic about its possibilities. He handed me what remained of the fly and told me he wanted it copied exactly. I got to work and after several tries produced a fly that pleased him, and immediately he named it the Rusty Rat.

Further documentation of the origin of the Rusty Rat can be found in Pulitzer's diaries that contain detailed fishing logs recorded at Grog Island and Brandy Brook on the Restigouche. The logs tell us that Pulitzer caught his 41-pound salmon on June 24, 1949, and his wife Liz took the first salmon, as well as three others, with the new pattern on July 6. The following day the Rusty Rat yielded four fish to the Pulitzers, ranging in size from 11 to 22 pounds.

Letters included in the diary also repeat the story of the 41-pound salmon, the 5/0 dilapidated Black Rat (or Rat), and the subsequent visit to Arseneault, one letter ending with: "I got a good deal of satisfaction out of the success of my last year's invention, the Rusty Rat fly. Liz and I together took 76 fish and of those 39 were taken on the Rusty Rat. Arseneault, the local fly tyer, is selling a good many of them on the Restigouche and on other rivers."

Thus, at last, it is clear to us that the venerable Rusty Rat was originated through the collaborative efforts of Joseph Pulitzer II and J. Clovis Arseneault in the summer of 1949.

—P.B.R.

The Origin of the Rusty Rat

MOST RENOWNED OF ALL the North American hairwings is the Rusty Rat, and the story of its origin was first published in October 1949 in *Fortune* magazine's column, "Fortune's Wheel." In an effort to patent his newly successful pattern, American publisher Joseph Pulitzer II wrote to the sports editor of that magazine, saying:

Having devised a new salmon fly on the Restigouche River this summer, I took it to J. Arseneault, the local fly tyer at Atholville, N.B., and had him tie a number for me and others and told him to name it the RUSTY RAT. He informed me that to have this name officially adopted I should write to FORTUNE MAGAZINE. Whether this information is correct I have no means of knowing, but I do recall with great pleasure the fine color feature on salmon flies which you ran in June 1948.

For your information this fly is an imitation of an old, worn-out Black Rat Bucktail, on which I took a 41-pounder, and from which the black body had disappeared, leaving the rusty colored dental floss wrapped around the body of the fly. RUSTY RAT proved quite effective and I hereby make formal application to have the name officially adopted. . . . Mean-

A Memoir of Trout and Eros *or* Following L. B. France into Colorado's Middle Park

by Gordon M. Wickstrom



AMONG THE FIRST WRITERS about trout fishing in Colorado was nineteenth-century Denver attorney L. B. France. With wit and grace, he sang the state's praises and did much to spread the good news eastward and bring myriad anglers to the western wildernesses. When I recently read France's *With Rod and Line in Colorado Waters* (1884) and his accounts of fishing adventures of more than a century ago in Middle Park on Colorado's Western Slope, I recalled my own foray to the tiny town of Fraser in Middle Park in the summer of 1940.* My pharmacist uncle and aunt, the Murrins, operated the drug and general store in that town, and they invited me to spend a week with them fishing the Fraser Valley's subalpine and still-pristine waters. After reading France's book, I now see that it

was my first real, honest-to-God, away-from-home fishing trip—a heady experience for a boy of fourteen obsessed with both trout and the tackle to catch them.

And I recall how that first big fishing trip had about it another dimension, an event at its conclusion of enough power to make a boy into a new creature, one suddenly faced with the anguish of growing up. Now, through the lenses of that pioneer Colorado fly fisherman, I can see and feel that week of mine in all the richness and heartbreak of refreshed memory. It went like this.

THE TROUT

Dad and Mother were to drive me from Boulder over Berthoud Pass and down to Fraser one weekend and return for me the next. It was a long, tough

drive in those days, and my excited expectation of great fishing made the trip seem to take forever. Mother's cold fried chicken provided sustenance along the way and helped to make the trip in some degree bearable. At last we were coasting easily down that long canyon corridor past West Portal on the Western Slope into Middle Park and then Fraser. Streams of living water seemed to flow everywhere along the canyon floor; there were even more when we burst out into the park and onto the vast and beautiful prairies of superb wild hay. I was out of my head with excitement: each little run of water through the grass, I thought, must surely be full of waiting and hungry trout. All was trout, the possibility of trout everywhere, and I was a boy besotted with the very idea of trout. All the ele-

ments of air and earth sang to me of trout.

Those enchanted, lush, and limitless meadows of Middle Park had to have been much as France had known them sixty years earlier, but now they were the stomping ground of lumbering and ranching Swedes and workers on the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad that bisected the park on its way down into Utah.

Anyhow, we soon pulled off the main road immediately into Fraser: six or seven unadorned, white clapboard buildings set down seemingly at random on perhaps two acres, all of them with low, uncovered plank porches. Fraser had no discernible street or walkways—certainly nothing like a main street—only the irregular dirt spaces between buildings that were dust when dry and mud when wet. Everything man-made seemed to have just grown up or been dumped there arbitrarily. Around the small core of buildings, here and there out in the meadows, were low-lying rough log cabins, lean-tos, little corrals, sheds, ricks of lumber and hay, a barn or two, wagons in various states of disrepair, and a few livestock. The scene was hushed and still, caressingly cool, moist and yet dry, and sun-drenched; the sky was intensely blue, and every kind of green was in the yellow-flowered meadows. The white buildings seemed lonesome, the outlying cabins more lonesome yet. The entire prospect was contained in a crystal of intoxicating air.

Right in the center of town stood Fraser Drug, only slightly more imposing, as I remember, than the other structures with its old, roughly painted sign over the door. It was my own Uncle Les and Aunt Irmogene's enterprise, boasting a soda fountain and, to galvanize my consciousness, a small counter full of fishing tackle. I felt proprietary about it.

Rough but cozy living quarters were attached to the drugstore on the south side and were entered just behind the soda fountain by the fishing tackle. Never before had I enjoyed free access to study and memorize so much fishing tackle—boxes of snelled wet flies, two or three dozen dry flies, three or four automatic fly reels, assorted leaders (some of

them tapered), packets of snelled hooks, sinkers, and the obligatory cards of spinners: Colorado, Bear Valley, and Aeroplane. The purest of fly fishermen were not without a couple of spinners—just in case. There were the necessary creels for a legal limit of twenty-five trout and, of course, a half-dozen 9-foot bamboo fly rods on a rack nearby—rods that today we call "production grade"—and priced around twelve to twenty dollars. There were also a few pairs of hip boots. I hesitate to think how much time I spent poring over and handling this stock of tackle in terrible rushes of angling fantasy.

My uncle and aunt got me fishing on streams around Fraser the first two days—fishing that didn't come to much. Accustomed to the free-stone creeks of Colorado's Front Range, I hardly knew how to handle those meandering but fast willow-bound, high-meadow streams. My flies and spinners just didn't work. Probably my flies were too big, coarse, and ill chosen (I had no entomology at all). My presentation would have been clunky and ruined by drag, sufficient to keep me fishless in any such paradise.

After those disappointments, I decided to take my angling fortunes into my own hands. Next day, I simply struck out walking up the highway south, half a mile out of town, until I cut a little dirt track of a road going off into the meadow where it crossed the Fraser River itself. There, I hoped, I would fish to my heart's content and just maybe accomplish something.

But the Fraser was just like the other Middle Park creeks I'd been fishing—only bigger. At first there were the same frustrations and failures. But only at first. I can't remember why I did what I did next, what may have happened to suggest such an action, but I sat down in the deep grass in the willows and cut the dressing from the no. 14 dry fly of my own tie that I had on the 4x pointed leader. Then, in a moment of truth, I dug in the black wet earth with my pocket knife for a worm—and found one! It must have been from sheerest economy that I decided to fish no more than half an inch of that worm at a time. Impaled on the little light-wire hook, with no sinker, I tossed it straight

up the current ahead of me and close to the overhanging bank—out from under which came a trout that took that little hunk of worm just as though it were a fly. It was a wonderful fight—and it was a wonderful brook trout weighing more than a pound!

Maybe there never was so beautiful a fish or such a prize. With him in the net, I calmed down a little, observed all rightful ceremony over the fish, and got him into my creel. Up and at it again, but still dazzled, I set forth up the Fraser, with yet another little piece of worm—with the same result. Only this time it was a slightly smaller brookie as jewel-like and vibrant as the first.

And so it went, depending only on my finding another worm or two to divide among those willing trout. Such hard fighters they were in that heavy, deep water—just the water that brook trout like best. Using a fly hook and a finely tapered leader, I fished that tiny bit of worm just like a fly, directly upstream and close into the bank, allowing it to drift down as freely as possible in the surface. It brought those trout up out of the depths with utter abandon. I was in triumph. Two of my fish weighed more than 2 pounds. What a fine mess of trout! There'd been nothing in my life like that before.

But then I began to suspect that I'd gone over the legal weight limit of "10 pounds and one fish"—and I had. So, though not overly worried about meeting a game warden, and not too troubled of conscience, I stopped at thirteen, all brook trout, a memorable catch of brooks if there ever was one.

As I walked back up the narrow little road to the highway, those thirteen fish, which back at the drugstore would weigh in at almost 15 pounds gutted, were a serious burden in the creel on my shoulder. Wanting to show off this catch, wanting the world (at least everyone in Middle Park) to know what I'd accomplished, I threaded the fish onto a willow fork and walked the half-mile back to Fraser and the drugstore where I would surely be received in triumph. I made sure that the few cars and trucks that came down that old highway got an eyeful of my fish. I probably swaggered shamelessly.

Back at the store, I was indeed received with high praise. The fish went to the refrigerator in order to go home to Boulder, and I went to the soda fountain. Talk about satisfaction!

Anyhow, I could now coast along during the rest of my Middle Park week, rest on my laurels, and go home to Boulder in glory to tell my story. I stayed close to the soda fountain and that tackle counter and felt like an expert full of useful advice to any tourist who might stop in to ask about the local trout. I was quite certain I'd struck upon a great new light-tackle technique for taking trout with my fragment of worm fished like a fly.

But the euphoria wasn't to last. I was in for a fall. It went like this.

EROS

Uncle Les and Aunt Irmogene were given now and then to enjoy a few drinks at bars and grill, roadhouses with dance halls they found agreeable. So when my parents arrived early Saturday afternoon to fetch me home on Sunday, Uncle and Aunt urged Mother and Dad to go with them down to Granby to a joint they knew and liked that had a good local dance band. It would be perfectly all right for me to come along; in those days, there was no prejudice against children in such places. Besides, I'd be protected by my dotting family.

And so off we went that evening down the Fraser Valley to where that river meets the great Colorado at Granby. I was still awash in self-satisfaction from my fishing success and eager for this new grown-up experience.

The roadhouse bar and grill, a rustic pine log affair, was big enough inside for a few tables and booths, a little bandstand, a dance floor, and a bar swagged in colored lights. An aromatic amalgam of stale beer, tobacco, and hamburgers pervaded the dimly lit room. I'd never been in such a place. It felt faintly illicit, even dangerous. That it was nearly empty made it seem even more so.

The adults ordered highballs and I got a bottle of pop. The little dance band arrived—men of uncertain, well-

used, dour middle age—and began almost grudgingly at first to play the popular swing numbers of the day. It was all very agreeable indeed: Percy, Thelma, Irmogene, and Les relaxing to the measure of the music and the whiskey, dancing, and enjoying themselves in a way I'd not seen in my parents before. They were absorbed, caught up in a secret sensual world all their own and, I realized with some alarm, forbidden me to enter.

Just then, some more people came in, a family of three. They took a booth just beyond us, fully in my view—a mother, a father, and a daughter almost certainly my age, who now sat facing me across maybe twenty feet of charged space. It seemed she sat there in the palpable obscurity of the room in a halo of her own light. Our eyes met, and I was altogether hers. Though I should never in the world back then have understood the words I now attribute to her, she was, nevertheless, exquisitely Pre-Raphaelite in her loveliness.

My mouth dried up on my Orange Crush. My stomach turned over. I felt shaky and must have stared outrageously. And she stared back with a solemn unblinking candor that undid me. The grownups knew at once what was going on and began to tease me a little; Aunt Irmogene egged me on to go ask the girl to dance. Me? Ask her to dance! Me, with my junior high gymnasium dance steps! The prospect was terrifying.

It must have taken a full half-hour of persuasion for me to get up the courage to do it—to go ask a beautiful girl to dance in a public dance hall. But it had to be done, I guessed.

Surely I was shaking in my timbers as I crossed the great gulf of those twenty feet to their booth, to look first at her unresponsive parents and only then at her.

"Would you like to dance?"

"No, thank you."

I heard it as though from far, far away as my world crashed down around me. I felt so ashamed, so certain that I'd done something terrible and had been told, in fact, that there was something absolutely and forever wrong with

me—an indictment that proved indelible.

Somehow, I got back to the bosom of my family, but the rest of the evening was significantly muted and full of self-doubt and heartache for me—just the opposite of my midweek elation and sense of accomplishment on the river.

My grown-ups understood what had happened and treated me carefully, even lovingly, but I suspect that down deep they were amused at this moment in the human comedy that had been played out for them. They may even have been there before me.

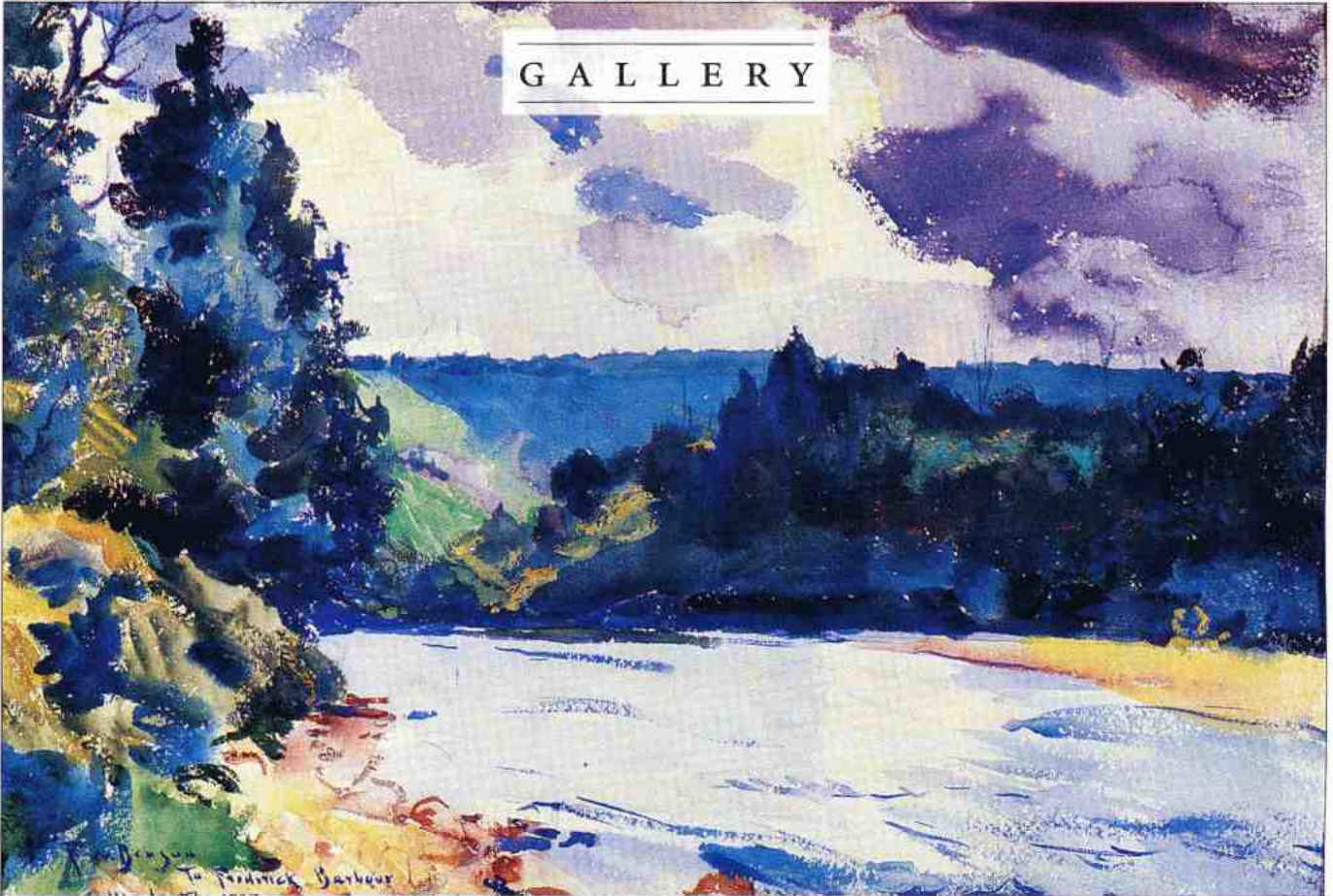
Driving in silence back through the deep mountain night to Fraser, I tried to call up the thrill and happiness of those brook trout of earlier in the week, but ever and again the countenance of that girl rose up to fill me with longing and misery. I was still caught in her gaze, that gaze of yearning and gentle sorrow, utterly still, changeless, dreaming. And I had thought that there might be a place in that dreaming for me! If only I could have caught those fish for her.

Next day with my parents, and like L. B. France before me, I recrossed the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains, back over Berthoud Pass to the realities of home and growing up, leaving Middle Park behind as a sort of abiding mythology of adventure, the crossing of a divide in the heart of a boy which hurts and is desired.

But it's curious now, so many years later, that the most desirable element of that mythology has become not the girl, whose rejection broke the heart I offered her that night, but those fine brook trout and the way they rose to a piece of worm as to a fly. *That was accomplishment.* ~

*L. B. France, *With Rod and Line in Colorado Waters*, first published under the pen name "Bourgeois" in 1884, reprinted by Pruett in Boulder, Colorado, 1996. Two chapters of this book appeared in the Winter 1996 issue of *The American Fly Fisher*.

GALLERY



IN 1977, Thomas Barbour donated a watercolor to the Museum that had belonged to his uncle, Frederick Barbour. The painting is signed “F. W. Benson, 1927” and depicts a stretch of the Upsalquitch River in New Brunswick. This painting is one of the true gems of the Museum’s small collection of original art.

During his lifetime, Frank Weston Benson (1862–1951) enjoyed widespread popular and critical acclaim. He won every award an American artist could win and sold his work as fast as he could produce it. He wrote, “It is my good [fortune] to be doing what people like, but it keeps me on the jump.”

Benson received education as a painter in Boston and Paris and began a career teaching others how to paint. Ironically, he was known to say, “All that I have I got from studying nature, not by studying how other people do it.” Regardless, in 1889, he began teaching at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and, along with his childhood friend Edmund C. Tarbell, turned that small school into one of the nation’s premier art institutions. Also early in his career, the Library of Congress commissioned seven panels from him based on “The Three Graces” and “The Four Seasons.”

In 1895, the focus of his life and art changed. That summer marked his first try at salmon fishing. He immediately wrote to a friend: “Salmon fishing seems to me the finest sport in the world. You feel as if you were

hitched to a railway train when you get one, yet, if you handle him well you are sure to beat him at least. If you make a mistake he will smash you up. If you don’t drop the top of the rod where he leaps, he will break something and you must watch like a cat for the leap.”

Although he was primarily concerned with the rivers of the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec, Benson also fished in New Brunswick. He made trips every year to both fish and paint. At first he took oils with him; then, following his son’s suggestion, found it easier to carry watercolors. His last trip to the provinces was in 1933, but he returned to the subject constantly in his art.

Benson hunted ducks on Cape Cod and painted them as well. He supported Ducks Unlimited from its inception: his art graced their membership certificate, and their publication masthead from 1938 to 1966 was a Benson design. He also designed the second federal duck stamp.

Benson summed up his career desires this way: “A man’s best chance to produce something which will please others is to represent as faithfully as he can what pleases him, in the way he likes it best. Others then identify in it their own experience.”

One part of Benson’s experience is pictured above.

JON MATHEWSON
CURATOR



Maxine Atherton: Grand Lady of Fly Fishing's Golden Age 1904–1997

IT CAN BE ARGUED that the present is truly the Golden Age of fly fishing. Tackle, fly-tying materials, books, guides, and travel that revolve around the sport have never been better or more accessible. However, for many people, especially those who appreciate the history that embellishes our tradition, the period from 1930 through 1960 was the original Golden Age, perhaps because during these years fly fishing was an arcane pastime known to very few, and it was a true insider's club.

Maxine Atherton was one of the last living members of this club. She died on January 6, 1997, at the age of ninety-three, and with her passing the American Museum of Fly Fishing lost one of its best friends.

Maxine lived her last decade in Manchester, where she was a regular guest at Museum functions. When she entered the room, it was always a regal entrance, befitting her nature and her stature in

the fly-fishing world. Maxine was extremely generous to the Museum and donated to it nearly every piece of fly-fishing memorabilia she owned. This was a considerable amount, because not only was Max a serious fly fisher, but she was also married to John Atherton (author of *The Fly and the Fish*) from 1926 until his death in 1953. Included in her donations were hundreds of flies tied by Atherton and a number of extremely rare Gillum bamboo rods.

Max was not a newcomer to Vermont. She and John moved to the banks of the Battenkill in West Arlington just after World War II. While living in Vermont, John Atherton was a commercial artist whose work appeared on the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Holiday*, *True*, and *Fortune*. The Athertons were close friends with Norman Rockwell and Meade Schaeffer, neighbors and fellow artists who also lived in West Arlington at the time. John was felled by

a fatal stroke while playing a salmon on the Miramichi in 1953, and Maxine and Lee Wulff scattered his ashes on his favorite pool on the Battenkill.

Before living in Vermont, the Athertons lived in New York City and later Ridgefield, Connecticut. They were regular fishing companions and correspondents with Lee Wulff, Harry and Elsie Darbee, Alfred and Louise Miller (Sparse Grey Hackle and Lady Beavercill), George La Branche, and especially Edward Hewitt. The Athertons were at Hewitt's cabin on the Neversink when it tragically burned to the ground and, still in their waders, they rushed into the cabin to save Hewitt, who had entered the burning cabin to retrieve some of his possessions.

After her husband died, Maxine continued to fish, especially for her beloved Atlantic salmon. She fished with Ted Williams and was present when Stan Bogdan caught his first salmon. She

traveled to the Rockies to fish for alpine cutthroats and fished her way around Europe, where she especially enjoyed the chalk streams of southern France. She once related a story to me about fishing in Spain, where she happened to wander onto the wrong beat and was suddenly accosted by a group of heavily armed men. It turns out she had been inadvertently poaching on Francisco Franco's private beat, and true to Max's nature, she charmed her way out of the predicament.

Max did not return to Vermont ten years ago to relax and hobnob with the garden club. She had a firm conviction that there was a cover-up by fisheries officials of a widespread epidemic of furunculosis in Canadian salmon stocks, a bacterial disease that ravages the immune system of trout and salmon and is often spread via hatchery fish. Based on recent disclosures about whirling disease in hatchery stocks of rainbow trout, she may have been closer to the truth than many of her friends thought. At the age of eighty-one, Max bought herself a computer and began a book that she completed a year ago. She was constantly rewriting the manuscript, but I had the pleasure of reading it several times, and it was an amazing memoir of a woman who had seen most of the important events in fly fishing for a large part of the twentieth century. Her daughter Mary now has the manuscript and hopes to publish the book, which was Maxine's dream for the past ten years. It is crucial that so much of this firsthand view of the characters associated with fly fishing become part of the public record.

When I was a teenage fly fisher, John Atherton's book was my bible. I can still recite many passages from memory, and never did I think in the middle of my life I would count myself lucky enough to be one of Maxine Atherton's many friends. Besides being a woman fly fisher fifty years before it was fashionable, she was also an environmentalist before many of us were born. Her introduction to the Freshet Press edition of *The Fly and the Fish* is especially poignant, and one paragraph captures the essence of Max's spirit:

And instead of lighting an eternal flame on Jack's grave I have been supporting in every way possible any movement which strives to conserve—or bring back to this Earth all which ruthless pillage destroyed—the magic Jack extolled.

TOM ROSENBAUER

Tom Rosenbauer is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Museum.

On "The Macedonian Fly"

FREDERICK BULLER'S ARTICLE, "The Macedonian Fly" (*The American Fly Fisher*, Fall 1996) sparked this additional comment from Richard C. Hoffmann, professor of history at York University in North York, Ontario. We also include a letter from M. R. Montgomery, who shares with us a tale of adventure on the way to a Macedonian stream.

EDITOR

FREDERICK BULLER has made another thoroughly enjoyable addition to fly-fishing history with his article in *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 1996) about Ælian (ca. 170–230), the Roman essayist whose writings (in fashionable Greek) contain the first written record of the artificial fly now known to us.¹ Buller unearthed an intriguing tale of ancient Macedonian hooks reused in the Salonika campaign of World War I and proposed plausible natural prototypes for the artificial concoction of red wool and wax-colored cock's feathers bound to a hook that Ælian described. This information sets Ælian's report into the ecosystem and the economy (bronze technology) of ancient Macedonia.

The importance of Buller's discoveries grows when we recognize that much more knowledge of early fly fishing has accrued since the writings of W. A. Chatto (a pseudonym for Stephen Oliver, 1834), Osmund Lambert (1881), and even William Radcliffe (1921), the authorities whom Buller cites. Indeed, some new findings have been reported in *The American Fly Fisher* itself, which Buller's paper again confirms as the top journal of record in the field. How might we further contextualize Ælian's report? We can better judge its meaning when we consider what Europeans evidently knew of Ælian's writings and of artificial flies in the millennium and a half after he wrote.

On the first point, knowledgeable Europeans, English among them, were

surely well aware of Ælian's reference long before he was "discovered" in the early nineteenth-century by W. A. Chatto. In fact, shortly after the early sixteenth-century recovery of a manuscript copy of Ælian's Greek original (only two copies survived the intervening 1,300 years), the first printed edition was undertaken, along with a translation into Latin, by the Swiss linguistic and scientific genius Dr. Conrad Gessner, who published the dual-language text at Zürich in 1556 under the title *De animalium natura libri XVII*. Gessner's older fellow ichthyologist Pierre Gilles (Gyllius) had begun the Latin version, which explains why the work later appeared under both names in printings at Geneva in 1611, at Köln in 1616, and thereafter. It remained the authoritative edition until 1858. Hence Chatto must have used a text originally prepared by Conrad Gessner in the 1550s.

During that same decade, Gessner had himself also clearly recognized Ælian's report as an artificial fly and treated this in a widely available angling context, namely the article on trout in Gessner's own monumental *Historia animalium*, volume 4, "On the nature of fishes and aquatic animals," which was published in 1558.² Besides describing the biology of each fish, Gessner told how they were caught. Regarding trout, after detailing in Latin a half-dozen imitative patterns for artificial flies (he called them "semblances . . . which very nearly recall those flies or insects in which all fish take delight") from a German-language manuscript no longer known to survive, Gessner plainly said, "A like manner of fishing for trout Ælian describes in *De Animalibus* 15:1" ("Similem truttas piscandi rationes praescribit Ælianus de animalibus 15.1.") and went on to quote Ælian's statement in full Latin translation from his own edition of 1556.³

Gessner's Latin was the common cultural heritage of all learned Europeans even into the twentieth century. Long before Chatto, English anglers had also

read Gessner. This we know, for instance, from Gessner's close contemporary, the author of *The Arte of Angling*, printed in London by Henry Middleton in 1577.⁴ Whether Huntingdonshire clergyman William Samuel⁵ or some other one-time religious refugee in safely Protestant Geneva, this writer's use of a different passage from the Swiss authority was subsequently cribbed (in garbled form) by Izaak Walton.⁶ Indeed, Walton himself also twice cited Gessner on the very subject of trout fishing.⁷ Since the mid-1500s, then, educated Europeans had good opportunities for access to Ælian's report of ancient Macedonian fly fishing.

As to the second contextual point for understanding Ælian's historic place, namely European knowledge of fly fishing, use of artificial flies to catch certain fishes is well documented in western Europe for centuries and in England for at least decades before 1496, when Wynkyn de Worde printed *The Treatyse of Fysshing wyth an Angle* in the second *Boke of St. Albans*.⁸ Back in 1921, Radcliffe thought this publication the first record since Ælian,⁹ but subsequent discoveries have much narrowed the "gap" between Ælian and a continual record of fishing practice.

Several English manuscripts of late fifteenth-century date, so contemporary with and independent of the *Treatyse* tradition, give explicit advice on making and using the "artificially flye . . . made . . . lyke unto the flys which be on the waters," to quote a tract in British Library Manuscript Harley 2389.¹⁰ After obscure nineteenth-century reference and publication of these texts, Willy L. Braekman newly collected and published all of them in 1980.¹¹ In "A New Treatise on the Treatyse," a review article appearing in the Summer 1982 issue of *The American Fly Fisher*, I drew attention to Braekman's work and analyzed passages like the one just quoted with special relevance to early fly fishing.¹²

Literary references and administrative documents of fishing with what Conrad Gessner, and now we, would call artificial flies are almost common in German-speaking lands (Switzerland, Bavaria, Tirol, Upper Austria, maybe Thuringia) since about 1200. Perhaps the plainest early record is from the writer of chivalric romance Wolfram von Eschenbach, who about 1210 described a (fictive) noble young kinsman of King Arthur named Schionatulander wading barefoot in a clear brook and catching trout and grayling with a "feathered hook" (*vederangel*).¹³ Aiming

to explicate an early fifteenth-century tract that asserted a right of peasants to get food with this technique, German legal historian Hermann Heimpel more than thirty years ago assembled a broad range of evidence for the "feathered hook."¹⁴ Following Heimpel, I discussed this material in English in a 1985 article on medieval sport fishing and here in *The American Fly Fisher* in my 1995 report on Gessner's own fly patterns.¹⁵ A full edition, translation, and analysis of the richest such list of *vederangel* patterns (and much more) from a manuscript compiled about 1500 at the Bavarian monastery of Tegernsee is part of my *Fishers' Craft and Lettered Art: Tracts on Fishing from the End of the Middle Ages*, now in production at the University of Toronto Press for July 1997 publication.

From the third century into the sixteenth, then, the form and contents of all the records indicate that fly fishing, though first known to us in writing by Ælian and later by other learned men, was, as Radcliffe halfway surmised in 1921, an ordinary part of the arsenal of techniques with which illiterate European peasants caught certain of the fishes in their localities and with which, in all likelihood since as long ago as the twelfth century, some of those peasants and their betters may occasionally have fished for fun.

RICHARD C. HOFFMANN

ENDNOTES

1. The best modern edition and translation is now in the Loeb Classical Library as Claudius Ælianus, *On the Characteristics of Animals*, trans. A. F. Schofield, 3 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library, 1958–1959). For the passage in question, see book XV, section 1. The immensely well-read Ælian, a teacher of literature so famous for the quality of his Greek that he wrote only in that language, compiled intentionally unorganized literary epitomes to entertain and inform an educated Roman audience. Ælian never left Italy, so his Macedonian report is certainly hearsay, but he drew on a huge range of classical literary and scientific sources, many of them now lost.

2. *Conradi Gesneri medici Tigurini Historiae animalium liber III, qui est de piscium & aquatiliu animantium nature. Cvm iconibus singulorum ad vivum expressis fere omnibus DCCVI. Continentur in hoc volumine Gvlielmi Rondeletii quoq et Petri Bellonii de Aquatiliu singulis scripta* (Tiguri: apud Chr. Froshovervm, 1558), p. 1208. Readers should be aware that the German version, *Fischbuch. Das ist ein kurze doch vollkommne beschreybung aller Fischen so in dem Meer vnd süessen wassern . . . Erstlich in Latin durch . . . Cuonrat Gefner . . . neuwlich aber durch D. Cuonrat Forer . . . in das*

Teütsch gebracht (Betruckt zü Zürich bey Christoffel Froshower, M.D., LXIII [1563]), though done under Gessner's supervision, was sharply abridged from the original Latin, and that all subsequent editions, including the second Latin edition published at Frankfurt in 1604, appeared long after the author's death and were more or less revised by persons unknown. Gessner had earlier listed Ælian's among the works he used to prepare his first zoological writing, the "Catalogus alphabeticus animalium," in his *Pandectarum sive Partitionum universalium . . . libri XXI* (Tiguri: Christophorus Froshouer, 1548), fols. 219v–221r, and then credited Ælian by name for information on "trocta" (trout), fol. 230r. Hans Wellisch, "Conrad Gessner: A Bio-bibliography," *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History*, vol. 7 (1975), pp. 160 and 209–10, summarizes Gessner's work with Ælian.

3. The original Latin, an English translation, and remarks on what the passage implies about knowledge of Ælian's flies, earlier appeared in Richard C. Hoffmann, "The Evidence for Early European Angling, III: Conrad Gessner's Artificial Flies, 1558," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 4–5 and note 41.

4. Gerald E. Bentley, ed., *The Arte of Angling 1577* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958). Only loss of the title page from the one extant copy makes this work anonymous.

5. As proposed by Thomas P. Harrison, "The Author of 'The Arte of Angling, 1577,'" *Notes and Queries*, new series 7 (October 1960), pp. 373–76, endorsed by Arnold Gingrich, "William Samuel: A New Name to Revere Between Dame Juliana and Izaak Walton," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 4–5, and, to my knowledge, not seriously disputed.

6. Bentley, ed., *Arte 1577*, p. 46. The information (on pike) there at issue first appeared in Gessner's *Historia animalium*, vol. 4 (1558), fol. 5r, and not, as D. E. Rhodes asserted in "A New Line for the Angler, 1577," *The Library*, 5th series 10 (1955), pp. 123–24, only in Gessner's *Nomenclator aquatiliu animantium. Icones animalium aquatiliu* (Tiguri [Zürich]: Christoph. Froshoverus, 1560), p. 316. Gessner's own guest book names several visitors from England (Richard J. Durling, "Conrad Gessner's Liber amicorum, 1555–1565," *Gessnerus*, vol. 22, no. 3/4 [1965], pp. 134–59). The wide impact of Gessner's scientific works received extended discussion in Caroline A. Gmelig-Nijboer, "Conrad Gessner's 'Historia animalium': An inventory of Renaissance zoology," *Communications biohistoricae Ultrajectinae*, vol. 72 (Utrecht, 1977) and in Christa Riedl-Dorn, "Wissenschaft und Fabelwesen: Ein kritischer Versuch über Conrad Gessner und Ulisse Aldrovandi," *Perspektiven der Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 6 (1989), and shorter appreciations in English by E. W. Gudger, "The five great naturalists of the sixteenth century: Belon, Rondelet, Salviani, Gesner [sic], and Aldrovandi. A chapter in the history of ichthyology," *Isis*, vol. 22 (1934/1935), pp. 32–36, and Pamela O. Long, "Humanism and Science," in Albert Rabil, ed., *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, vol. 3

(Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp. 498–500.

7. Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* (1653 edition), "Third Day," chapter 4 (London: Everyman's Library, 1906 and later printings), pp. 60–61. For more seventeenth-century English use of Gessner, see Wellisch, "Bio-bibliography," pp. 197–201.

8. Note that the older, mid-fifteenth-century manuscript of the anonymous *Treatyse*, now a fragment in the Beinecke Library at Yale University (Beinecke MS 171), is missing the section on flies in Wykyn de Worde's printed text. (See John D. McDonald, *The Origins of Angling* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963], chapters 6–9.)

9. William Radcliffe, *Fishing from the Earliest Times* (London: John Murray, 1921), p. 189. "From Ælian until the *Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* (1496) we find no mention of, or allusion to, the Artificial Fly." Quoted in Frederick Buller, "The Macedonian Fly," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 22, no. 4 (Fall 1996), p. 2.

10. British Library Manuscript Harley 2389, fols. 73r–v.

11. Willy L. Braekman, *The Treatise on Angling in the Boke of St. Albans (1496): Background, Context and Text of "The treatyse of fysshynge wyth an Angle,"* Scripta: Mediaevalia and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 1 (Brussels: Scripta, 1980), notably pp. 31, 41, and 56.

12. Richard C. Hoffmann, "A New Treatise on the Treatyse," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer 1982), pp. 2–6.

13. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Titulrel*. Walter J. Schroder and Gisela Hollandt, eds. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), pp. 616–17; Strophe 154, 1–2: "Schionatulander mit einem vederangel/vienc äschen und vörchen. . ." Strophe 159, 1–3: "Schionatulander die grözen und die kleinen/vische mit dem angel vienc, dā er stount uf blözen blanker beinen/durh die küele in lüttersnellem bache."

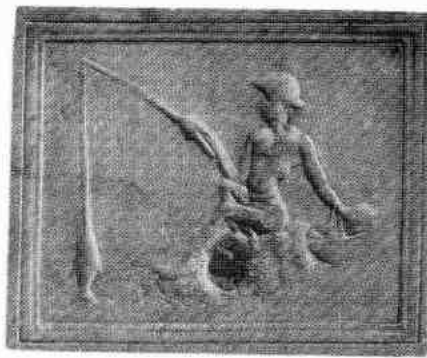
14. Hermann Heimpel, "Die Federschnur. Wasserrecht und Fischrecht in der 'Reformation Kaiser Sigismunds,'" in *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, vol. 19 (1963), pp. 451–88.

15. Richard C. Hoffmann, "Fishing for Sport in Medieval Europe: New Evidence," *Speculum*, vol. 60 (1985), p. 893; and Richard C. Hoffmann, "The Evidence for Early European Angling, III: Conrad Gessner's Artificial Flies, 1558," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 2–11.

A Macedonian Adventure

The informative and speculative article by Frederick Buller on Ælian's "Macedonian Fly" (Fall 1996) might encourage fly fishers to emulate those ancient anglers. That is certainly possible. Whether Buller's suggested ties are useful, I know not. They all sound a bit bumbly; I'd rather try a good-sized Mahogany Spinner, which has Ælian's red wool body and white feather wings.

The "River Astræos" is simply the modern Aliakmon River, and it still



runs to the sea at Thessaloniki. Smaller tributaries yet hold the native fish with speckled skins. Very speckled: the native trout is the large-spotted brown trout, *Salmo trutta macrostigmata*.

While attempting to reach the rural town of Naoussa in Macedonia (Greek Macedonia) where I planned to look for *macrostigmata* in a tributary of the Aliakmon, my automobile trip was canceled by a Mercedes-Benz E-class sedan moving at an estimated 140 to 150 mph—across my bow, so to speak. I would encourage any angler visiting Greece to approach an Ælian trout stream by using public buses which run between Thessaloniki and Naoussa, and then on to the more remote city of Kastoria. Kastoria is also served by a daily commuter airplane service from Athens. Alternatively, one might hire a local driver whose wetware includes a program for estimating the speed of E-class sedans. Naoussa is something of a mountain resort renowned, I hear, for vineyards, orchards, and running water.

I do have two photographs of Macedonian *macrostigmata* kindly sent by a distinguished European angler and field biologist, Johannes Schoffmann of St. Veit, Austria, as souvenirs of the expedition. Schoffmann informs me that all the high mountain streams in Greece, including the Pelopponesus, have small to very small trout in them. The other memento is a left (noncasting arm) clavicle that has knitted in the approximate shape of a mosquito larva in full contraction. So it goes.

M. R. Montgomery
Lincoln, Massachusetts

According to footnote 3 of Buller's article, ". . . 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." —EDITOR

The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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- Volume 23, Number 1



Museum News

Festival Weekend 1997

The Museum's annual festival weekend will be held May 9 to 11 this year. Friday evening will feature an opening reception for the exhibit of wood engravings by artist Alan James Robinson from 5:30 to 7:30. Saturday evening we will host our annual dinner/auction at the Equinox Hotel. The Museum plans to host open house events throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday. Call the Museum for details.

Staff Changes

Craig Gilborn, executive director since August 1995, resigned his position 31 December 1996. During his tenure, he worked closely with the staff and Board of Trustees to prepare a three-year plan for the Museum. He also instituted regular admission fees, oversaw a tasteful makeover of the Museum's interior, and worked to expand the Museum's gift shop. Gilborn left his position to pursue scholarly interests, including his work on a history of the Adirondacks. The staff and trustees wish him success.

Kathleen Achor



Paula "Stick" Morgan

The Museum welcomes Paula "Stick" Morgan back to its staff as part-time administrative assistant. Stick, fondly referred to as "executive assistant emeritus," held the position of executive assistant at the Museum from 1981 to 1987. A graduate of Middlebury College, she has previously worked for *Fly Fisherman*

magazine and has owned two businesses (a Sunoco station and a lawn maintenance business). Stick lives in Arlington, Vermont. Her hobbies include fly fishing, golfing, and motorcycling.

Correction

Arnold Peterson, Jr., of Seymour, Connecticut, has enhanced our knowledge of fly-fishing history. In the Winter 1997 Gallery, we noted that the Bartletts were from Pelham, New York. Apparently, the Ward Rod Company was in Pelham, Massachusetts. Eugene Bartlett was a Ward rodbuilder who married the boss's daughter and took over the business. Pelham, Mr. Peterson writes, is "a small town about a dozen miles east of Amherst, on Rte. 202, not far from what is now Quabbin Reservoir." The original factory was a mill on the Amethyst River, originally a gristmill, later a sawmill, and finally a rod factory. We would like to thank Mr. Peterson for sending us the historical correction.

Annual Fund Drive

As the twentieth century quickly comes to a close with fly fishing gaining worldwide interest and popularity, our role as a Museum becomes even more essential. It is the responsibility of us all—members, friends, and trustees—to educate the public about the sport's rich history. To do this, the Museum has committed itself to a strong development effort that requires everyone's participation.

You can play a part through active participation in the Museum's development effort. If you have not already participated in this year's annual fund, consider doing so. No matter the size of the gift, every dollar is important. When making a donation, check with your employer about a matching gift program. If one exists, your dollars can be doubled or even tripled.

To learn more about the ways that you can help, give the development office a call at 802-362-3300. Eric Brown, our development director, will be delighted to speak with you.

To those who have contributed in the

past, whether it be donating items to our dinner/auction program, donating a piece to our collection, or sending in a monetary gift—thank you.

Holiday Gathering 1996

The Museum opened its doors for a holiday gathering on December 12 to more than sixty-five people who enjoyed exhibits and festivities. Museum Trustee Tom Rosenbauer was on hand signing his new book, *Fly Fishing in America*.

Thanks to Sponsors

The American Museum of Fly Fishing wishes to thank the sponsors of our 1996 dinner/auctions: Baker & Hostetler, Austin Barneyll, the Bay Foundation and Hans Ege, Mr. and Mrs. George Berrey, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Bokor, John Dughi, Erwin and Allis Edelman, William Hazen, Art Kaemmer, Mark and Barbara Mishkin, Mr. and Mrs. Norm Pancoast, Pete and Judy Perdue, Ivan and Susan Popkin, Robert and Karen Scott, Jerry Tone, Dr. and Mrs. Felix Trommer, and Mr. and Mrs. Frederick B. Wells.

Club and Trade Memberships

In 1996, the Museum introduced two new membership categories: a club membership (for volunteer organizations, such as fishing and fly-tying clubs and local chapters of national organizations) and a trade membership (for businesses). The following have supported the Museum by becoming club or trade members: Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; Fontinalis Club, Vanderbilt, Michigan; Cortland Line Company, Cortland, New York; Thomas & Thomas Rod Company, Turners Falls, Massachusetts; Wright & McGill Company, Denver, Colorado; The Bay King Club, Tokyo, Japan; Lang Sporting Collectables, Inc., Raymond, Maine; Hexagraph Fishing Rods, Inc., Houston, Texas; Glenn Struble Manufacturing Company, Sutherlin, Oregon; and United Fly Tyers, Inc., Woburn, Massachusetts.

Membership Questionnaire Winner

Congratulations to Ronald Bean of White River Junction, Vermont, winner of the Orvis Superfine 7-foot, 6-inch 1-weight rod. Mr. Bean was one of more than 300 members who responded to our membership questionnaire mailing.

The mailing gathered valuable information from members all over the world. Thank you to everyone who responded.

In Search of Howard Back . . .

For a biographical essay on Howard Back, author of *The Waters of Yellowstone with Rod & Fly*, please send any available information or knowledge of heirs to Robert Berls, 2751 Unicorn Lane, NW, Washington, DC 20015; 202-244-2944.

Benefit Dinner

Leigh H. Perkins, founder of the American Museum of Fly Fishing and Chairman of the Orvis Company, was honored at a benefit dinner for the American Museum of Fly Fishing on February 25. More than 170 people attended the dinner at the Cosmopolitan Club in New York City. Trustee Janet Mavec chaired the event with the help of Trustee Wayne Nordberg and Museum staff. Trustee Gardner L. Grant acted as master of ceremonies, and Dickson L. Whitney was on hand to share stories.

William F. Ruprecht, managing director of Sotheby's, auctioned off some unique sporting and cultural opportunities donated in honor of Perkins. Trustee Walter Matia orchestrated the centerpieces—original painted silhouettes of game fish—which were commis-

SPRING DINNER/AUCTIONS

March 13	⇒ New York City The Anglers' Club
April 10	⇒ Westford, Massachusetts Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center
April 24	⇒ Cleveland Chagrin Valley Hunt Club
May 10	⇒ Manchester, Vermont The Equinox Hotel & Resort

sioned especially for the event and donated by some of the nation's finest sporting artists. These were sold through silent auction.

It is expected that the benefit raised more than \$70,000, which will be split between an endowment fund and operating expenses.

Recent Donations

Mrs. A. B. (Grace) Wadsworth of Arlington, Vermont, gave us the angling library of her late husband Gus. Via longtime Museum friend and Trustee Roy Chapin, we received an angling library from Thomas E. Armstrong of Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. Sabra Flory of Allentown, Pennsylvania, gave a copy of William D. Boyce's *A Strike* (1894) to Gwenn Perkins of Manchester Center,

Vermont, who then gave it to the Museum. Museum Trustee Jamie Woods also gave us six books. Paul Jones of Austin, Texas, sent a photocopy of Bowlker's *Art of Angling* (1829).

Bill Byrnes of Springfield, Massachusetts, sent us a collection of old angling magazines and pamphlets. Through longtime friend Peter Castagnetti, Sydney Curelop of Nashua, New Hampshire, gave the Museum William Franklin Knox's F. E. Thomas rod. William Knox (1874-1944) was a U.S. newspaper publisher and secretary of the Navy during the Second World War.

Call for Books

Continuing our call for angling titles we'd love to add to our library, here's a list of fifteen books we need dated 1811 to 1825.

Salter, Robert. *The Modern Angler, Being A Practical Treatise on the Art of Fishing, &c., in a Series of Letters To A Friend*. Oswestry: J. Salter, 1811.

Young Angler's Assistant; or, A New and Complete Treatise on the Art of Angling. London: Mason, 1813.

Laschelles, Robert. *A Series of Letters on Angling, Shooting and Coursing. In Three Parts*. London: J. Cornes, 1815.

Carroll, W. *The Angler's Vade Mecum, Containing an Account of the Water Flies, Their Seasons, The Kind of Weather That Brings Them Most On The Water, The Whole Represented in Twelve Coloured Plates; To Which Is Added a Description of the Different Baits Used in Angling, and Where Found*. Edinburgh: Constabler Co., 1818.

Charleton, T. W. *The Art of Fishing, A Poem*. North Shields, 1819.

Lathy, T. P. *The Angler, a Poem in Ten Cantos, comprising Proper Instructions in the Art, Flies, Bait, Pastes, &c. with Upwards of Twenty Beautiful Cuts*. London: W. Wright, 1819.

Irving, Washington. *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. No. VII*. New York: C. S. Van Winkle, 1820.

Kidd's Instructions for the Art of Angling. London: Kidd, 1820.

Salter, Thomas. *Salter's Trolling Guide: Being a Complete Practical Treatise on the Art of Trolling or Fishing for Pike and Jack*. London: Tegg, 1820.

Rules and Regulations of the Walton & Cotton Club, instituted 19th March 1817. London, 1821.



Margot Page

Trustee Gardner L. Grant and benefit dinner honoree Leigh H. Perkins admire a tarpon centerpiece painted by Trustee Peter Corbin.

Adams, John Quincy. *The Duplicate Letters, the Fisheries and the Mississippi*. Washington: Davis & Force, 1822.

Clinton, DeWitt "Hibernicus." *Letters on the Natural History and Internal Resources of the State of New York*. New York: Bliss & White, 1822.

Clinton, DeWitt "Hibernicus." *The Oswego Bass*. New York: C. S. Van Winkle, 1822.

Mitchell, William Andrew. *On the Pleasure and Utility of Angling: A Paper Read to the Waltonian Club of New-*

castle-on-Tyne, July 27, 1824, by William Andrew Mitchell, President for the Year. Newcastle-on-Tyne: Mercury Press, 1824.

Thompson, J. *Handbook of Angling*. Bristol, 1825.

In the Library

We'd like to thank the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become part of our collection. Lyons & Burford sent us Ed Van Put's *The Beaverkill: The History of a*

River and Its People (1996—excerpted in the Fall 1996 issue), Dave Whitlock's *L. L. Bean Fly-Fishing Handbook* (1996), and Dick Talleur's *Talleur's Basic Fly Tying* (1996). Backcountry Publications sent us Jimmy Jacobs's *Tailwater Trout in the South: An Angler's Guide* (1996). Frank Amato Publications sent us R. Chris Halla's and Michael Streff's *Everyone's Illustrated Guide to Trout on a Fly*. The Museum depends on generous donations of books for the expansion of our library.

Bob Warren



Since the death of Joseph D. Bates Jr. in 1988, Pamela Bates Richards has been the self-appointed family curator. She has cataloged fifty years of remarkable correspondence and photographs of noted anglers, writers, and world-famous fly tyers and has cared for and added to the renowned Bates collection of Atlantic salmon flies. In 1995, she reissued two of Bates's most popular classics: *Atlantic Salmon Flies & Fishing* (first published in 1970) and the 1966 edition of *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing* (to which she added twenty-four new color plates and new material to the text). *Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and the Patterns*, excerpted in this issue, was released in 1996. Ms. Richards enjoys salmon fishing on the Miramichi and saltwater fishing in New England. She lives in Newburyport, Massachusetts, with her extended family (her husband, two daughters, and three stepchildren, as well as a menagerie). Ms. Richards is a vice president of the Board of Trustees of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

CONTRIBUTORS

Marsha Karle

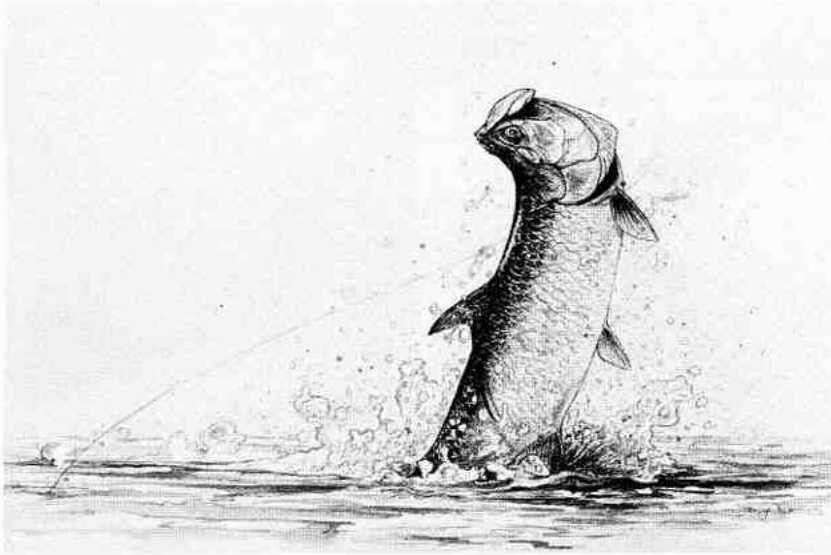


Paul Schullery was executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing from 1977 to 1982. He is the author, co-author, or editor of twenty-five books, including *American Fly Fishing: A History* and *Shupton's Fancy: A Tale of the Fly-Fishing Obsession*. His new environmental history, *Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness*, will be published by Houghton Mifflin in July. He is an affiliate professor of history at Montana State University and an adjunct professor of American studies at the University of Wyoming.

Daniel P. Marschka



Gordon M. Wickstrom is professor of drama emeritus and was longtime chair of the department at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He is now retired to his native Boulder, Colorado, where he fishes, writes, edits, politics on behalf of trout and their waters, produces a theater group, and generally enjoys his old hometown. He is published in various academic and angling journals. His interest in James Leisenring has led to several articles and, for the first time, to one about actually tying flies when he published an article about Leisenring-type wet flies in the Fall 1996 *Fly Tyer*. The American Museum of Fly Fishing awarded him the Austin Hogan Award for his contribution to this journal in 1993.



Alan James Robinson

May 9–June 23

ALAN JAMES ROBINSON, master printmaker and sculptor, specializes in original etchings and wood engravings. His etchings are all hand drawn through an acid-resistant coating and then etched into copper plates. The varying size of lines, their density, and the time a copper plate is left in the acid all contribute to the quality and detail apparent in his prints. Robinson grinds all his own inks from oil and pigment and uses traditional eighteenth-century techniques exclusively.

Robinson's wood engravings are cut on end-grain English boxwood or maple blocks. Each wood engraving is painstakingly worked as he cuts away all the white areas to create the image. Master printer Harold Patrick McGrath then prints each block the old-fashioned way, with very little ink and a lot of impression.

Robinson is the owner, designer, and illustrator for the award-winning Press of the Sea Turtle, formerly Cheloniidae Press, which he established in 1979. He has exhibited all over the country and in Europe, and his work is a permanent part of the collections of prestigious libraries and museums across the United States.

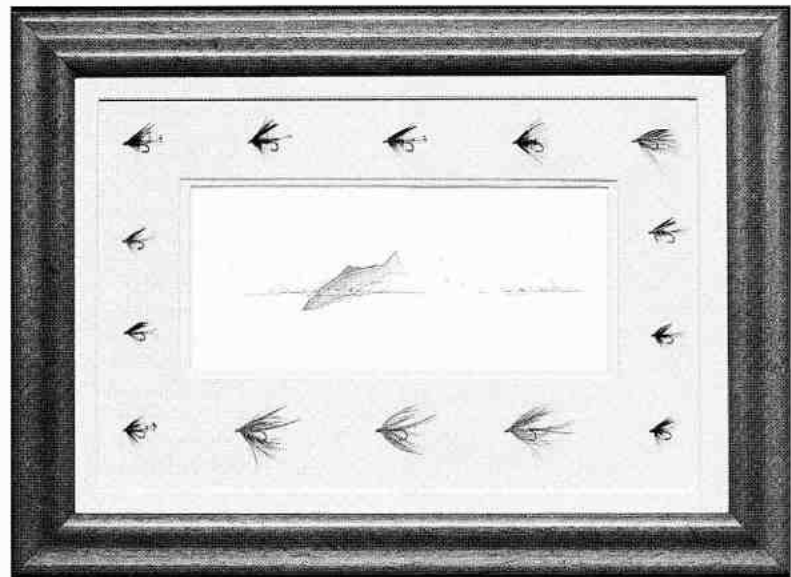
The Museum will host an artist's reception and opening on May 9.

JOHN BETTS, fly tyer, writer, and artist, began tying flies for his livelihood in 1976 and published his first article a year later. He is a regular contributor to several fly-fishing magazines. In 1981, he became one of the few fly tyers to be featured in *Sports Illustrated*.

Despite his coming from a family of artists, Betts did not start painting until 1988. His work—often a mixed media presentation that includes both a painting and tied flies—offers images evoked by his experiences of fly fishing and the flies that he uses. He describes the gestures of the paintings as those of movement: “Some are discreet, careful, and quiet; others are sudden, swift, and electric. There is the flight of line and fluid shape, the intense stillness of precise drift, and the shocking sensation of speed beyond any means of control.”

Betts sees his drawings and paintings as moments that either show a story or present a point from which a story can begin—events that he and others have known and will know again. But he is ever aware of his nonangling audience—people who know little about the subject and may care even less. “I am held to a standard that leaves no room for anything that doesn't feel true,” he says.

The Museum will host an artist's reception and opening on June 27.



John Betts

June 27–August 4



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.

