

# The American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

FALL 1997

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 4



## Travels

AS THE SHORT Vermont summer draws to a close, I find myself putting the final touches on this issue between two trips—one during which I did not fish, and one during which I will.

Many of you will find it incredible that I could spend more than two weeks in Scotland without fishing, but that is what happened in August. I was traveling with a nonfishing companion (my sister). We were pursuing many of our other interests: birdwatching, hiking, history. We saw puffins, and some were successfully fishing. But we were not.

Alison did indulge me in a couple of stops on the Spey, however, if only to get my feet wet. She seemed generally amused to stop at a local fly shop with me, where a passerby fetched the proprietor from the pub in order to open the shop for us. I bought a couple of salmon flies, and the owner demonstrated as best he could within the confines of his shop just how one casts one of those 15-foot rods. He gave us a rough idea of advance booking time for beats on the Spey and then, as we were in search of lunch, took us back to the pub with him.

Coincidentally, two short pieces in this issue are Scotland-specific. Jürgen F. Preylowski in Notes & Comment describes his search for information about the Delfur Fancy, a Spey salmon fly. He's included some beautiful photographs with this piece. Then Ray Salminen, a longtime friend of the Museum, shares memories of his visit to Brora in a brief first-person account, "A Visit with Megan Boyd."

As a follow-up to his Fall 1996 photo essay, "Getting There" (vol. 22, no. 4), Curator Jon Mathewson gives us "Staying There." From camping to private fishing clubs to great camps, he describes ways of staying there while fishing. During the trip that I *do* fish, I will be staying in one of those Adirondack great camps he mentions—not actually living in the lap of luxury, but not exactly roughing it either.

In "Fly Fishing and World War II: Retreat, Advance, and Democracy," Gordon Wickstrom discusses how World War II "interrupted and profoundly changed the course of American fly fishing." He argues that the advance of materials and sudden popularity of spin fishing led to a democratization of the sport that made its phenomenal growth possible.

We're pleased to present an excerpt from *The Golden Age of Fly Fishing*, a fall title from Countryman Press. Ralf Coykendall Jr. edited this collection of angling articles published in *The Sportsman*, a periodical that ran under that title from 1927 to 1937. We chose "The Riddle in the Fly Book" by Eugene V. Connett III and "Dry-Fly Fishing—Now and Then," by Samuel G. Camp for your reading pleasure.

Finally, in addition to our regular Gallery feature, we're highlighting a few more Museum treasures in Museum Exhibits. We hope this will further entice you to stop by for a visit during your travels.

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
EDITOR



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*Preserving the Heritage  
of Fly Fishing*

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ON THE COVER: "Going A-Fishing: A Dry Camp." This Montana scene was photographed by William H. DeWitt of Helena. It is displayed as part of the 1893 Mary Orvis Marbury panels in the Museum's collection.

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*THE CAMP AND OUTLOOK, Binnewater Lake, New York, October 1909.  
Matte collodian print, George Parker Holden photo album.*

## Staying There

*by Jon C. Mathewson*

ONCE HUMAN CIVILIZATION developed so that it was (mostly) safe from natural predators, people tended to rush back to the forests in search of a simpler, more primal time. How comfortable that “primal time” should be was, and is, a matter of constant debate, and it has changed over time. For example, all Cicero needed (apart from his entourage) at his country villa were “my books and sundial.” In today’s world, that modest list could easily translate to “my laptop and digital watch.”

The accommodations used by campers over the cen-

turies have varied, usually according to the level of primitiveness desired and the cost. Ranging from isolated private clubs or estates costing thousands of dollars in upkeep annually to handmade lean-tos, the methods of staying there cover a great and varied range. Fly fishers traveling to distant streams have always had to seek some kind of shelter: one angler might be a rugged individualist forcefully escaping the trappings of civilization; another might think the notion of going to faraway places is simply wonderful but the journey or accommodations must not be inconvenient. This article



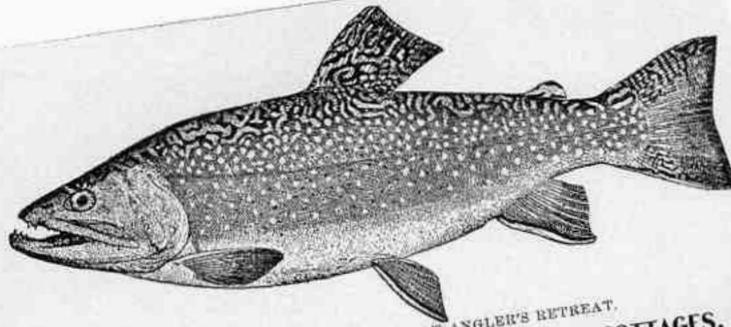
*THE JUMPER, the railroad car that served as the original Fontinalis Clubhouse, c. 1890.  
From Mark C. Dilts, The Fontinalis Club: A History, 1986.*

is intended as a quick overview of how, once people got to the wild places, they would set about staying there.

Most of the early anglers would stay in hotels near streams when traveling far from home. These inns dotted the countryside, especially along the stagecoach routes. Many of the larger inns advertised nationally, specifically to the angling audience. Some also, it should be noted, found their rooms filled with fishers quite unexpectedly. In an often-told story, for example, hotelier Charles Orvis began making rods and reels to sell to his clientele. His eponymous company is still in

business, known today primarily as a mail-order clothing outfitter. Many other angling hotels became famous for their *après-stream* gatherings of anglers telling their tales. Many similar lodges still exist, dotting streams from Alaska to Patagonia.

Some anglers wanted more exclusive company streamside, so they started their own private hotels or clubs. Sometime soon after the Civil War, groups of anglers began building remote streamside houses. There had been clubs and streamside angling houses before this time, but they were intended for eating and meet-



PLENTY OF THESE TO BE CAUGHT AT ANGLER'S RETREAT.

### ANGLER'S RETREAT HOUSE ...AND LOG COTTAGES.

SITUATED at the outlet of Wolokennebacock or Lower Richardson Lake, is one of the best fishing resorts in Maine. Here the lover of rod and gun can always find plenty of sport. Those who do not care for the spring trolling will always find splendid fly fishing at B Pond. The house is pleasantly located and is supplied with pure spring water. The table is first-class and is supplied with fruit, berries, fresh vegetables and game in their season. The dining room is large, cool, and very pleasant, having been enlarged to twice its former size, and now seats 70 people. There are five log cottages in connection with the house, overlooking the lake, and a more pleasant view of the lake and mountains can not be found.

Capt. E. F. COBURN, Proprietor,  
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Advertisements from American Scenic Magazine, July 1901.

ing, not for residence. One of the earliest of the river houses to accommodate anglers was built by none other than Charles Cotton, author of the interesting (i.e., the fly-fishing) part of *The Compleat Angler*. In March 1676, Cotton wrote: "My house stands upon the margin of one of the finest rivers for Trouts and graylings in England . . . I have lately built a little fishing house upon it, dedicated to anglers . . ." According to local legend, however, Cotton would stay in neither house nor fishing house when avoiding his creditors. On those occasions, he fled to the limestone caves just across the Dove from his home.

Generally, these new clubs bought up long stretches of trout and salmon streams. They then built large encampments, sometimes with numerous buildings, sometimes just renovating existing structures, but always bringing more civilization to the wilderness. Because transporting supplies was an arduous task, some of the clubs started with very temporary clubhouses. My favorite example of starting rustic was the Fontinalis Club, formed by Detroit businessmen in northern Michigan. Their first "clubhouse" was actually an old train car, complete with cooking, dining, and sleeping facilities, parked by the stream. Later, the club built



*Lorne's Fishing Cottage on the Cascapedia River, 1886.*

larger and more permanent accommodations, which included a clubhouse, a house for women, and the groundskeeper's house.

People with more money, or those who were content to live with more people around, built their own camps. The Adirondacks saw the arrival of the "great camps" during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Rivers and lakeshores are these days crowded with private residences built primarily to be close to the water. These second homes make some out-of-the-way places among the most densely populated areas around.

More popular has been the temporary shelter.

Camping became an extraordinarily popular leisure-time activity around the turn of this century. As with most activities, camping—and the outdoor life in general—became romanticized. In many writings, one was not merely creating temporary shelter in the wilderness: the camper was entering a simpler, more primitive time, which was, in some ways, more "pure" than the lifestyle he or she left behind. The necessity of simplifying one's gear became a positive aspect of camping—it was more "rugged" to do without the comforts of home.

This sentiment was not shared by all campers, how-



*George Parker Holden with bread, 1917.*

ever. By the 1920s, with the rise of “car camping,” more and more personal gear could be brought to the riverside. One proponent of “Finding Comfort in Camp,” F. E. Brimmer, wrote in 1924:

I am persuaded that a good many camping trips might better be called “tramping trips,” for the reason that the so-called campers appear more like tattered tramps than anything else. The practice of wearing any old clothes is an abomination. Years ago our forefathers used tallow dips and ox carts—and homespun clothing. But times have changed . . . I contend that the days of roughing it are about past. Today we ought to camp in as civilized manner as we live at home . . . Is camping a fling at savagery? We think not.

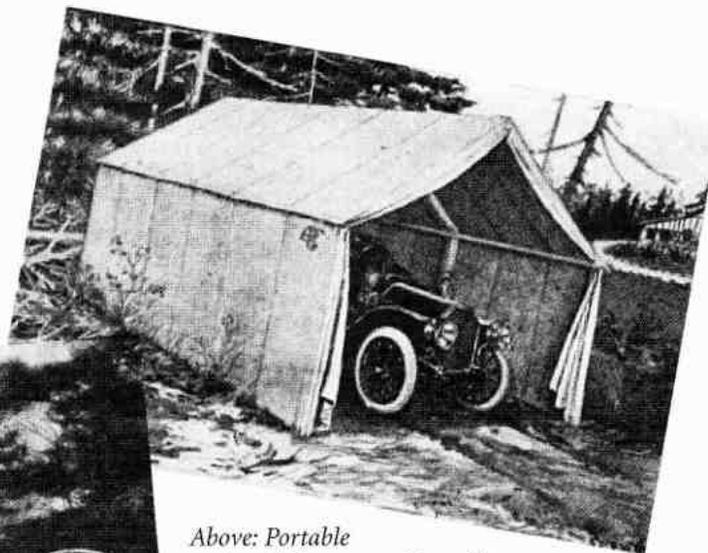
Of course, the term *civilized* is derived from the same root as *city*, and indeed means *urbanized*, the very thing

most campers were consciously fleeing. Brimmer’s comments fell, no doubt, on many deaf ears.

Some of those deaf ears belonged to the people living in the wild areas. In *Fishing in Maine Lakes; or Camp Life in the Wilderness* (1881), Charles W. Stevens relates this story:

We explained that our fishing-outfit was quite different from our present dress, and that we were accustomed to roughing it. The idea of our “cummin’ all the way from Boston to go a-fishin’, and she goin’ too,” so impressed the old gentleman that he lapsed into profound meditation, and we heard nothing more from him till we stepped from the car at Bryant’s Pond, when I overheard him say to an old lady opposite,—

“Jess think of it! he said they’d come all the way from Boston to go a-fishin!”



Above: Portable automobile garage pictured in the 1910 Abercrombie & Fitch catalog. Depending on size and strength, these tents ran from \$24.70 to \$90.40, and "Prices don't include frames, these should be made by a local carpenter."



Left: Advertisement from the Field & Stream Vacation Manual, Summer 1923.

Looking through the old catalogs in the Museum's collections, one is struck by the variety and diversity of gadgets intended to civilize the wild places. These include remedies for mosquitoes and blackflies, different light sources, a tremendous variety of tents and trailers; I've even heard rumors of left-handed smoke shifters. Of course, the gadgets also targeted the different forms of camping. An Abercrombie & Fitch catalog article from 1910 listed four types of nomadic camps, all based on how they were packed and carried: "Canoe, Pack-Horse, Tramping and Cruising By Automobile." Each, not surprisingly, had its own peculiarities, and hence its own specially needed products.

The advice given to campers changed considerably

over the decades. Early guides, such as John Gould in 1877, talked about tents without floors and how "a floor to the tent is a luxury in which some indulge when in permanent camp. It is not a necessity, of course,—but in a tent occupied by ladies or children, it adds much to their comfort to have a few boards, an old door, or something of that sort, to step on when dressing." Fifty years later, the novelty of floored tents, and of women and children camping out, had all long worn off. Gould also gave advice as pertinent today as 120 years ago: "A hammock is a good thing to have in a permanent camp, but do not try to swing it between two tent poles: it needs a firmer support."

Like most things, camping equipment has gotten

Right: Toilet tent from the 1910 Abercrombie & Fitch catalog. These were 5 feet high, weighed 10 pounds, and required 13 stakes.



JULY 28—LUNCH AT OXBOW SKY, HILDA.  
From a 1922 fishing trip to the Tobique River in New Brunswick, Canada.

smaller, more compact, and, in most cases, better. Even in my own lifetime, there have been major changes in temporary shelter. The heavy and complicated canvas tents I grew up with have been replaced by lightweight nylon tents. The tent I use now even has a transparent sky roof, enabling me to look at the stars (or raindrops) from the comfort of my sleeping bag. On the other hand, car camping has evolved to the point of entire houses on wheels. Recreational vehicles and their special hook-up campgrounds are everywhere now. This underscores the old debate over how comfortable campers need to be in the great outdoors.

But no matter what they were and are made of, these

have always been temporary shelters, way stations set up amidst the dark and ferocious creatures of the forests surrounding trout and salmon streams. Tents and cabins made the camps comfortable enough, but were not so sturdy and permanent as to make an adventurer in the wilderness think that actually *living there* was an acceptable option.

Again, Gould gave good advice for the journey: "Be social and agreeable to all fellow-travellers you meet. It is a received rule, now, I believe, that you are under no obligations to consider travelling-acquaintances as permanent: so you are in duty bound to be friendly to all thrown in your way." ~



Log cabin with bark roof. The guide's lean-to is at left. New Brunswick, 1918.

## FURTHER READING

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Plus, most outdoor magazines are filled with experiences of staying there. J.M.

# Fly Fishing and World War II: Retreat, Advance, and Democracy

by Gordon M. Wickstrom

THE SECOND WORLD WAR violently interrupted and profoundly changed the course of American fly fishing. Three generations of fly fishermen had to put away their tackle for "the duration" and go off to war. In Europe, the South Pacific, and at sea, angler soldiers and sailors somehow had to sustain themselves with dreams of home—and fly rod. No one can know how many of those rods were put away forever.

Those who returned as veterans in 1945, the war over at last, found nearly everything about their old, prewar lives changing fast. The fly fishing that they

had left behind, traditional and rather exclusive, was on the brink of immense development. A *democratization* of the sport was happening that would allow it to grow—after the compromising advent of spin fishing—into the wildly popular phenomenon it is today.

The vets came home to find new cane rods glued with war industry-developed marine glues that were impervious to almost everything. No longer did anglers need fear that the bamboo strips of a rod might at any time sweat loose. Nylon was set to replace silk in their lines, and perhaps most important of all, nylon monofilament would transform their leaders. The new nylon terminal tackle—efficient, inexpensive, durable, without need of constant attention—would be the great new democratizer of fly fishing, to say nothing of providing fine diameter tippets suitable for flies much smaller than were ever practical before. Nylon was *the* foundation of fly fishing's popularity to come. Anyone and everyone could now fish the fly.

At the same time, the development of limp nylon in hundred-yard spools made practical the use of the European spinning (fixed-spool) reel. The French sent over spools of the best stuff, of which .008-inch diameter tested a full 3 pounds.

Before nylon monofilament, all manner of material had been used with less than success for lines on the fixed-spool reel, which had lain doggo in Europe as though waiting only for postwar nylon to appear. Quite suddenly, spinning reels, for what the English called "threadline fishing," came to the United States from England, France, Italy, and Switzerland and got the revolution going full blast. The French Luxor appeared on these shores, accompanied by the likes of the Swiss Fix, the Hardy, and the Young Beaudex—all the open-faced "coffee grinders." American entrepreneur Bache Brown would take the Luxor and make it a United States citizen, call-

ing it the Airex and later the Mastereel. The Mitchell came from France, and so it went. The market boomed. Spinning tackle and its technique would seriously dislocate and distract countless anglers from their fly fishing.



The United States moved quickly for its share of the new market by producing the enclosed-spool type spinning reel. The I. V. Humphrey reel, the stainless steel "tin can" from Denver, was the first of this kind that would prove popular with a sector of the angling public.

At first there were no lures specifically for spinning. Pioneer spinning fishermen had to fall back on the heavier bait-casting spoons, spinners, and plugs in their bass tackle boxes. Most of a year passed before the European lures appeared, followed hard upon by Bache Brown's American models. The metal lure market exploded in its turn with every variety of "hardware" imaginable.

The spinning boom appeared to bury fly fishing. Few could resist the new enthusiasm. Certainly trout could not. They fell readily, even greedily, to the hardware thrown to amazing distances at them. Any angler, after fifteen minutes of instruction, could master the fixed-spool reel and cast a quarter-ounce wobbler 150 feet. With small lures on the new light lines so effective, why bother with that difficult old fly tackle?

Many of those who had fished the fly before the war were quickly seduced by

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spinning. The postwar generation that had never fished flies were pushovers for spinning. Many, when they thought of flies, merely tied on a plastic ball or "bubble," partly filled with water for weight, attached 4 or 5 feet of monofilament and any old fly, and spun this rig more than a hundred feet cast after cast, covering a vast expanse of water. Stocked trout, especially, just could not resist and so met their end.

What then came to the rescue of fly fishing? What was it that restored fly fishermen to their senses and their flies? Several things happened.

Highly efficient, inexpensive, durable fly rods of fiberglass cloth appeared, making casting the fly easier and less arcane. These new rods were part of the same process of democratization of fly fishing that nylon terminal tackle began. Also, to the delight of those who wanted to be expert, the development in San Francisco of the shooting head fly line (30 feet of fly line attached to 100 yards or so of monofilament shooting line) came as a boon. Suddenly a fly fisher could throw a fly nearly as far as a spin fisherman could his quarter-ounce lure. Everybody seemed to want to realize Charles Cotton's ancient advice in Walton's *The Compleat Angler*: to fish "fine and far off."

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Then too, there was sudden development in flies, fly-tying, and general at-home tackle making, which was greatly influenced by the work of the George Leonard Herter Company in Waseca, Minnesota. Herter's supplied an inclusive line of fly-tying materials and rod and general tackle-making supplies. It is

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 Manufacturers-Importers-Exporters

**FLY TYING, ROD MAKING MATERIALS AND TOOLS**



*Wholesale Catalog No. 56*

**WASECA, MINN., U. S. A.**

fair to say that Herter's demystified both the definition and the supply of all the materials a serious angler needed. The famous Herter catalog read like an encyclopedia, but not without the chuckles induced by George Herter's eccentric style. In any case, Herter's was an important further extension of the steady democratization of postwar fly fishing.

In the West, a new genre of attractor fly dressings for big water was exciting to tie and to fish. In the East, innovative angling theorists such as Vincent Marinaro and Charles Fox were opening up a new world of terrestrial insect representation for trout. With the new light terminal tackle, these flies took fish almost as fast as hardware.

One writer, perhaps more than the rest, summoned his readers to fly fishing's new day. He was A. J. McClane. His columns in *Field & Stream* discussed fly fishing with a new sophistication and technical detail more than adequate to satisfy the most demanding angler, especially the new, young, ambitious angler who, as often as not, suffered from an unrelieved craving for new angling lore and technology. To satisfy this craving, serious and innovative fly tackle and technique became widely available to all.

The old tempter spinning began to seem too simple, too easy, no longer as satisfying as it had been; and by the close of the fifties, trout

had begun to wise up. They were no longer to be duped by just any old wobbler hurled out there a country mile and dragged back past them time after time. The revival of many a lapsed fly fisher came with the discovery that even though a given trout could now watch a spoon wobble by any number of times and turn away in boredom, a size 22 fur ant could make the same fish jump through the hoops of the fly angler's technique and into his net.

## Fishing

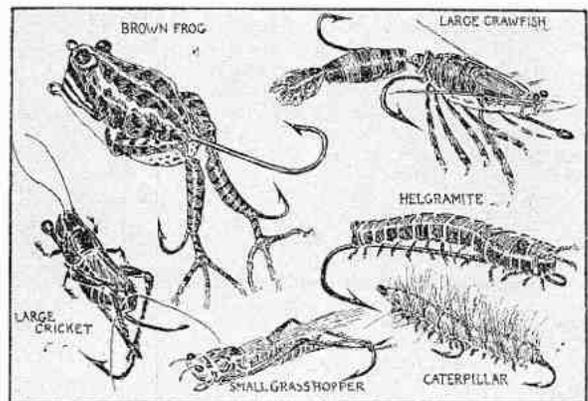


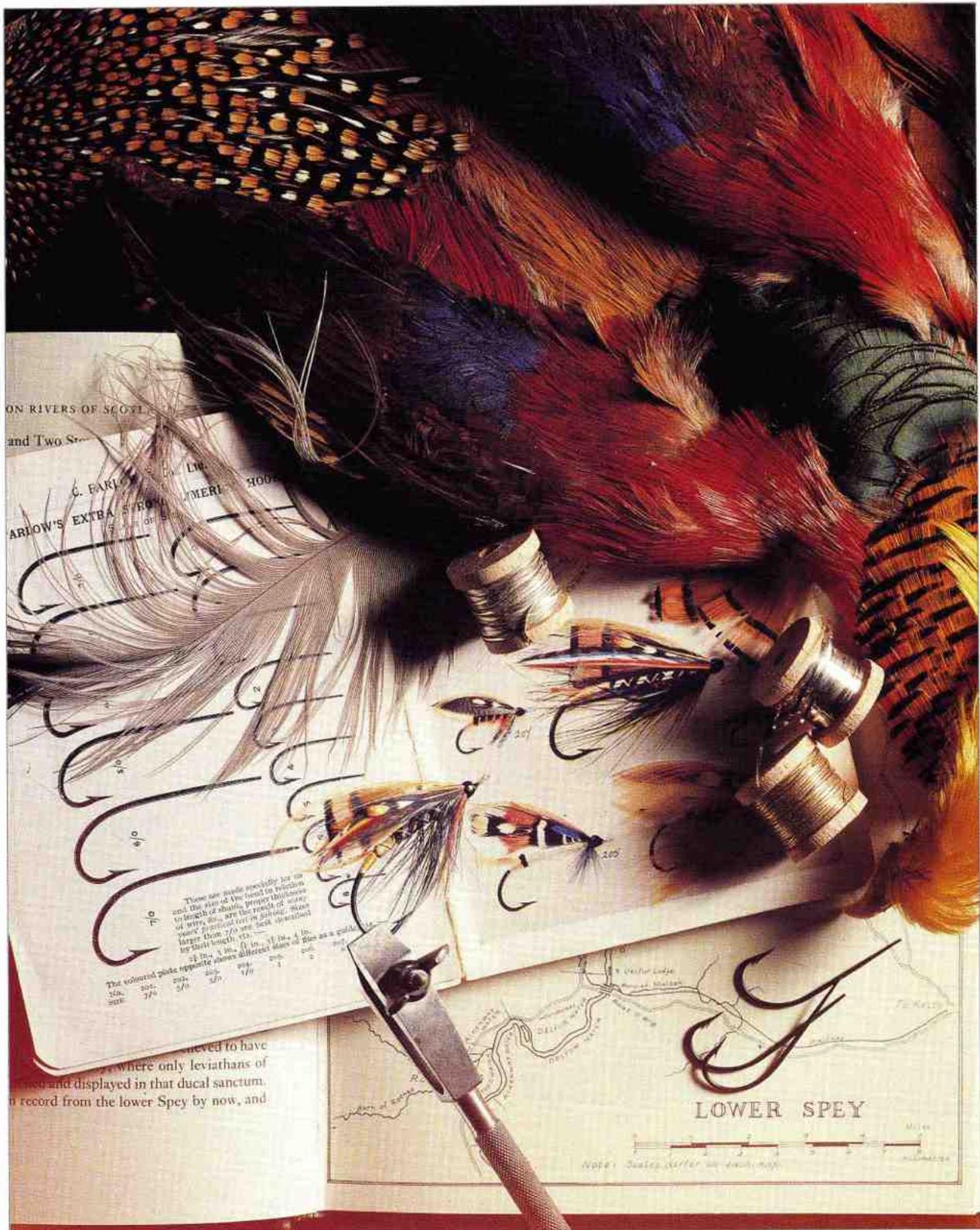
**A. J. McCLANE**  
 Editor

## Shoot That Line!

Finally, crucial to the expansion of fishing—of all sports—was the rapid development of transportation. Interstate highways, better automobiles, and airlines made it possible for American anglers to get to the best, even the most remote, fishing quickly and easily. It was the modern version of the old American Dream of going anywhere, anytime—the democracy of the road.

So, between 1945 and 1955, fly fishing culture was not only restored, but greatly enhanced and democratized. The foundation was laid for what would be the immense and surprising burst of popularity of fly fishing in the 1980s—its becoming fashionable, almost a craze—especially among the "boomer" population. The reason and causes of that event are another story.





# The Delfur Fancy

*by Jürgen F. Preylowski*

**I**N 1981, *Trout & Salmon* published a letter by Nigel J. Edmondson, a British professional fly tyer. Edmondson wrote that he got an order from a client to tie a salmon fly named the Delfur Fancy. He did not have the pattern of this fly and asked if any reader could help him with the dressing.

I was sure that I had seen and read about a fly called the Delfur Fancy in one of the books in my collection. I searched first in the classics by Geo. M. Kelson, T. E. Pryce-Tannatt, and Poul Jorgensen, but with no success. (This was no surprise; of course Mr. Edmondson had tried these sources as well.) But soon after this unsuccessful research, I found the fly in John Ashley Cooper's *The Great Salmon Rivers of Scotland*, published in 1980. There was a color drawing and the following description:

**THE DELFUR FANCY.** This handsome fly, named after one of the best and most prolific Spey beats, was invented in the late Victorian era. It was one of the first built-wing flamboyant patterns to challenge on the Spey the supremacy of the former traditional and more sombre dressings. Of these latter there were many, such as the Black Heron, the Lady Caroline, the Gold Riach, the Purple King . . . the Gold and Silver Speal, the Green and Black King, the Dallas, the Lord March, the Miss Grant, the Elchies Fancy, and the Carron Fly, to name some of them.

Additionally, I found a black-and-white wood engraving of the Delfur

~ *The Delfur Fancy was illustrated in the 1912 Farlow catalog (large, central fly). The map of the lower Spey depicting the Delfur water is featured in John Ashley Cooper's The Great Salmon Rivers of Scotland. Rudolf Reichel tied the Delfur Fancy pictured at left. Photograph by Ulli Klaas.*



Fancy in the 1934 edition of *Fly Fishing* by Viscount Grey of Fallodon. Both illustrations I found looked to be difficult patterns to reproduce.

I sent my information to Mr. Edmondson and Mr. Cooper. Both were hesitant to commit to the dressing of this Spey salmon fly. During this correspondence (which occurred over the years from 1981 to 1985), while helping a collector to research a Farlow salmon greenheart rod, I had a look in an early Farlow catalog from 1912. In it I found a detailed, colored illustration of the Delfur Fancy.\* Based on this illustration, John Ashley Cooper sent me this dressing:

<i>Tag:</i>	Silver tinsel
<i>Tail:</i>	Golden pheasant topping and Indian crow, no butt
<i>Body:</i>	First third lemon yellow wool, followed by black wool
<i>Ribs:</i>	Flat silver tinsel—round gold and silver tinsel tied in opposite direction
<i>Hackle:</i>	Gray and black heron
<i>Throat hackle:</i>	Gold pheasant red breast feather
<i>Wing:</i>	Two gold pheasant tippets, back to back in center married; yellow swan (as bottom), turkey (mottled), red swan, Amherst pheasant tail (at top)
<i>Cheeks:</i>	Jungle cock—a golden pheasant topping over all

In the years following, I have corresponded with collectors and fly tyers all over the world. Nobody has ever heard of this fly. As a fly fisher from a country where salmon flies were never used, I am proud to help to close this gap. I hope that the identity of the designer of this fly is one day brought to light as well. 

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\*The Museum's curator found that the Delfur Fancy was also advertised in the 1908 Farlow catalog, as well as in one published c. 1924. Both catalogs are part of the Museum's collection. —ED.

 A collection of antique tackle surrounds a fly box containing eleven Delfur Fancies tied by, from top, left to right: Hans Weilenmann, Hans De Groot, Rudolf Reichel, Bill Costello, Steve Illingworth, Dave Riding, Jürgen F. Preylowski, Nigel J. Edmondson, Herbert Pohl, Maxwell McRherson, and Frank McPhillips. Tackle includes a brass 4-inch Perfect salmon reel; 13-foot, 3-piece, split-cane salmon rod with 19-inch straight grip made of alternating strips of cane and red cedar; salmon gaff; and leather wallet with gut salmon traces, all manufactured by Hardy Bros. Ltd. of Alnwick, England. A brass cleaning ring appears at the top right. Photograph by the author.

# The Golden Age of Fly Fishing

Ralf Coykendall Jr., Editor

THIS FALL, Countryman Press released the Golden Age of Fly Fishing, a collection of angling articles published in The Sportsman. The magazine debuted in January 1927 and published 128 issues before merging with Countryman Life in November 1937. Ralf Coykendall Jr., who edited the collection, is the son of the magazine's advertising director and was in fact born during the magazine's run.

The Sportsman was not primarily about fly fishing, however—it covered all sports its wealthy readership held interest in, from speed boating to golf to fox hunting (see “The Sportsman’s Charter,” page 17). The Sportsman could afford to tap the finest sporting writers and artists for contributions, and advertisers eagerly paid for space.

We are pleased to excerpt two chapters from this collection. The first, “The Riddle in the Fly Book,” by Eugene V. Connett III, appeared in the May 1927 issue. Connett founded the Derrydale Press, which produced some of the finest sporting books and art ever published in this country; he was himself an avid sportsman and prolific writer. Samuel G. Camp was an early contributor to fly-fishing lore and literature. His books, *The Fine Art of Fishing*, *Fishing Kits and Equipment*, and *Taking Trout with the Dry Fly*, are in many angling libraries. “Dry-Fly Fishing—Now and Then” appeared in the May 1931 issue of The Sportsman. We are happy to include illustrations by artists Aiden Lassell Ripley and Ralph Boyer as well.

EDITOR



## The Riddle in the Fly Book

by Eugene V. Connett III

ONE OF THE REASONS why I have been able to fight off the complete domination of the dry flies is because they are kept in beautiful boxes full of nice, little glass-covered compartments. At a glance one can see every pattern. Neat and efficient, but leaving much too little to the imagination. Snap up the lid, peek into the divisions, fail to see *the* fly for your present needs, and somehow you are bereft of confidence and hope.

Consider the fly book in which your wet flies are stowed. During the winter you have sorted out all your patterns and carefully placed them among the leaves of the book. By evening of the first fishing day the flies are well mixed

again. Unless your passion for neatness completely eclipses your desire to catch trout—in which case you can hardly consider yourself an angler, particularly on the opening day of the season—you stuffed a March Brown between the leaves which contained Coachmen when you were hastily changing from the former to the latter. Some fortunate angler came along with several fish in his creel; you enviously inspected them, and respectfully inquired on what fly they were killed. In a somewhat superior tone you were informed that they were taken with a Gray Hackle. Not wishing to give the strange angler too much satisfaction, you waited until he had fished a minute or two and then, with hopefully trembling fingers, you opened the fly book to search out the magic hackle. So far as I can discover, no one has ever removed the old fly from the leader before taking the new

one from the fly book. You therefore put the snell in your mouth, clenched the book under your right arm and the rod under your left, and then you removed the old fly from the leader. Depending upon the character of your nervous system, you either dropped the Coachman into the stream while trying to get the Gray Hackle out of your mouth, or you managed somehow to stow it among the pages of your fly book—probably between the leaves reserved for Greenwell’s Glories. Thus your orderly book became a fascinating jumble before the day was out.

Fly-fishing is somewhat of a state of mind: when you are confident, you catch fish; when you don’t catch fish, you begin to lose confidence, and then you catch even fewer. If you have confidence in a fly, it does well by you. I am always confident that I have the right fly somewhere in my fly book, because I never know exactly what is in it. How different with the fly box: it is almost impossible not to remember just what patterns it contains. I have fished along for hours without a rise, but with the conviction in the back of my mind that the right fly would soon find its way to my leader. My state of mind was never for a minute upset by the thought that I had only one more pattern left to try before I must acknowledge defeat.

Excerpted from *The Golden Age of Fly Fishing*. Copyright © 1997 by Ralf Coykendall. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. The Countryman Press/W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 800-233-4830.

On winter evenings, among our books, how easily the subject of trout flies is solved. And how often. After reading Lord Grey, we know that the Red Quill will catch more trout than all the rest put together. Then we read Skues, and the matter is settled all over again, but to our utmost satisfaction. We pick up Rhead, and to our delight find the whole question answered in a most comfortable fashion. Should we be fortunate enough to have a copy of Halford at hand, we imagine that the genus trout must tremble at the very thought of us. It is difficult to see why we should ever have had any doubts as to what fly to choose from our tattered old fly book. Just wait till next spring! We shall have to remember to be moderate and leave a few fish for other less knowing anglers. After an hour of delight with almost any angling author, we go to bed with mind at rest; we have at last discovered the right fly for our pet uncatchable. What a dismal shame that this dream fades when, on the stream, with rod in hand, we prove all angling authors liars.

I know only one contented angler. He has—at least, he says he has—solved the mystery of the trout fly. He uses a pattern that *he* can see when it is on the water: the Whirling Blue Dun. If the rest of us had as much persuasion in our cast as George La Branche, perhaps we could be contented, too. For myself, I should miss the speculative groping among the pages of my fly book, and I should detest having to feel that when the fish would not rise it was *my* fault, instead of the fault of the fly. Contemplate the painful necessity of knowing that the Whirling Blue Dun could do no wrong! Think how we should have to

## The Sportman's Charter

This magazine was founded and is published by a group of amateur sportsmen who have dedicated it to these convictions:

- ◀ That sport is something done for the fun of doing it and that it ceases to be sport when it becomes a business, something done for what there is in it;
- ◀ That amateurism is something of the heart and spirit—not a matter of exact technical qualifications;
- ◀ That the good manners of sport are fundamentally important;
- ◀ That the code must be strictly upheld;
- ◀ That the whole structure of sport is not only preserved from the absurdity of undue importance, but is justified by a kind of romance which animates it, and by the positive virtues of courage, patience, good temper, and unselfishness which are demanded by the code;
- ◀ That the exploitation of sport for profit kills the spirit and retains only the husk and semblance of the thing;
- ◀ That the qualities of frankness, courage, and sincerity which mark the good sportsman in private life shall mark all discussions of his interests in this publication.

malign the trout—for it would be unreasonable to expect us to blame ourselves when the wretched creatures refused to rise to the paragon of duns.

As a matter of fact, not so many years ago I, too, settled the question of the *best* fly. I found that with a Cahill I could catch any fish that swam. But the thing began to be a burden; I felt guilty whenever the desire for a Cahill began to creep through my veins. Sometimes the longing for a well-dressed Pink Lady . . . well, I suppose the thing became like Tup's Indispensable to Mr. Tup: I simply had to give way and change flies. After a

season of this unhappy state of affairs, I decided that there was more safety in numbers. My next circle of best flies embraced a full line of alibis, and if I couldn't catch fish, it wasn't my fault. When the temptation to change patterns became so strong that it interfered with my fishing form, my conscience was quite clear—so long as I did not go beyond the limits of my list of best flies. The idea was that if these were infallible, it showed weakness on my part to fish with something else that was not so good. I looked back on the mental struggles I had endured for the sake of the Cahill, and I was encouraged to increase the circle of infallibles to twice its original size.

Nowadays I have either insufficient mental stamina to wrestle with the question of best flies, or I am beginning to learn some of the rudiments of trout fishing; at any rate, I trudge along on the theory that any fly which will catch a trout is the best fly—for that trout. This idea is responsible for much wear and tear on the old fly book.

I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED, as I watched an angler choose the fly with which to start the day, just what processes of thought have led him to his choice. Is it the recollection of recent success with that particular pattern, or is it a composite picture of a series of



Aiden Lassell Ripley

angling victories extending over his years of stream experience? Does he fondly imagine that he is matching the insect on the water at the time, or does he consider the fly as being especially adapted to the present water? I have asked these questions of an angling companion more than once, but have never received a lucid answer. The best I have been able to do is to search my own mind on various occasions for the most important points to consider, and the answer has been *the weather and the time of day*. Here is the sum of what much self-communing has brought to light:

If the day be bright, let the fly be dark;  
 If the sun be high, let the fly be small.  
 But here is a paradox you must mark:  
 The fly must be darker as shadows fall,  
 Until, when the stars are twinkling  
     bright,  
 The fly must be black as the shades of  
     night.  
 When very few insects are flitting about,  
 The fly may be wet and appeal to a trout;  
 But should *Ephemeridae* be on the wing,  
 It's dollars to doughnuts a dry fly's the  
     thing.  
 Then when, prithee tell me, are light-  
     colored flies  
 The proper creations to make the fish  
     rise?  
 Ah, me! gentle reader, the answer to that  
 Is as broad as the brim on a Congress-  
     man's hat:  
 The most accurate picture of this I can  
     paint  
 Is that sometimes they is and sometimes  
     they ain't!  
 Unfavorable weather for dark flies, you  
     know,  
 Is the thing that makes every last one of  
     us stow  
 'Mongst the leaves of our fly books,  
     heterogeneouswise,  
 A first-class collection of light-colored  
     flies.

Now, if all anglers could only memorize the above lines, there would be less excuse in the future for angling authors to take their pens in hand.

SOME YEARS AGO I was browsing among the sporting books in a second-hand bookshop, when the proprietor approached me with a small volume in his hand. He was anxious that I should buy it at what I considered an exorbitant figure. As an added inducement he fetched out an old, musty, leather fly book, which had come to him with the purchase of a fine library. He offered to "throw in the fly book for nothing." He was an artistic salesman, and he won.



Aiden Lassell Ripley

The volume was a copy of Charles Bowlker's *Art of Angling*, published in 1814, and was particularly interesting because of the parchment leaves bound into that part of the book in which occurred the descriptions of flies. Actual flies had been mounted on these leaves opposite their descriptions, but unfortunately the originals had been removed. The way in which Bowlker approached the subject of trout flies appeals to me as being delightful: "First I shall give you a catalog, more out of curiosity than use, of those flies that are not worth the angler's notice, and so proceed to those that are more useful." Think of the trouble he saved his readers—and the money!

One day I looked through the old, worn fly book that had come to me with Bowlker. In it I found the story of its owner: the bright patterns—sadly mutilated by moths—told me that he had fished in the northern wilderness, and that he sought large fish was evident from the size of the brittle old leaders which lay coiled among the leaves of his book. He had visited

salmon rivers in his day, said the Black Doses and Durham Rangers. That he loved the uninhabited reaches of the wilderness was proven by the bare hooks to which he undoubtedly resorted when his camp larder needed replenishing. I saw him as a middle-aged sportsman who had spent many years angling, for his selection of flies showed clearly that experience had taught him what he should need in the far-off woods. The fly book of a less experienced man would have contained a more varied range of patterns; he would have feared to go so far away from the tackle dealer with a restricted list of flies. Had our sportsman been one who angled on nearby waters, his small variety of flies might have led us to believe that he was a novice whose limited experience had inveigled him into thinking that he had mastered the riddle of the fly book.

And so we can read our angling companions from an examination of their fly books. We can trace their experiences on the stream by the selection of flies they carry. Stories of fine trout suc-

cessfully creeled are to be read in the dozen Cahills; a lone Yellow Sally tells of disappointed hopes. Four Brown Hackles speak eloquently of the struggle which their owner is undergoing; he has been told about the virtues of this fly, but so far he has not had quite the required faith to prove it a killing one. Let us hope that it will be but a short time before we find a dozen in his book. A furtive split shot, scarred with tooth marks, rolls unblushingly out of a little pocket—how eloquently it tells of nervous moments in the presence of a trout too large to rise to a fly in the daytime! We wonder if it has any connection with the beautiful trophy, bearing a virtuous Coachman so realistically embedded in its lip, which hangs proudly on our friend's wall? Then we come to a

pocket filled to brimming with a snarl of many patterns. If we have time to sort them out, each will tell its tale. The rusty-hooked, moth-eaten old relics are symbols of success; those with knotted snells, whose condition indicates but little use, are tokens of blasted hopes; and those which have never been wet are either emblems of weak moments at the tackle dealer's counter, or a remembrance of pleasant moments by the stream side in the company of chance-met anglers who swapped a fly or two, and made the day seem brighter with a trifling courtesy. An angler's physical stature might be divined from his rod; but if I were called upon to judge his mental qualities, I should try to solve the riddle in his fly book. ~



## Dry-Fly Fishing—Now and Then

by Samuel G. Camp

IN A SMALL advertising folder that I was reading not long ago a new model of what many believe to be the world's best fly rod was briefly described as follows: "New pattern specially desirable Dry Fly Rod, powerful but not too stiff; beautiful sweet action and design; eight feet in length, and four ounces weight."

Now, perhaps that doesn't mean so much to the recent dry-fly recruit who has been well advised in the selection of his tackle, but to some of us who have been in the game since the dry fly had its coming-out party in this country, it means a lot. To me those few words very closely represent the consensus of opinion of expert dry-fly anglers all over the country, after an experimental period of some twenty years, as to the sort of dry-fly rod, all things considered, best adapted to the general run of American trout waters under the conditions usually encountered—and what a different sort of rod it is from the ones which years ago we were led to believe were imperative for best results in cast-

ing and in fishing the floater!

The first book on dry-fly fishing to appear in this country was Emlyn M. Gill's *Practical Dry-Fly Fishing*, published in 1912. It was a notably well-written work as well as a very persuasive brief for the use of the dry fly on American streams, and to it may safely be attributed the beginning of the present popularity of the surface feathers on American waters.\* Prior to the appearance of Mr. Gill's work, dry-fly fishing was little practiced and less written about over here. The few American anglers who did, to a greater or lesser extent, experiment with the floater, were readers and followers of England's famous exponent of the dry fly, Frederic

\*Gill's was probably the first book published in America entirely on dry flies. Many magazine articles on dry-fly fishing had already appeared, and John Harrington Keene published *Fly Fishing and Fly Making* in 1887, which featured a chapter on dry flies. Additionally, Orvis featured dry flies in the mail-order catalog from about 1886 into the 1890s.—CURATOR

M. Halford. In all, Mr. Halford was the author of seven books. The first, *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them*, was published in 1886; the last, *The Dry-Fly Man's Handbook*, appeared in 1913. He was the acknowledged court of last resort in all matters pertaining to the dry fly—and inferentially, at least, he had little use for what, even from the American viewpoint at the time, might by any manner of means be considered light tackle. George La Branche and his book, *The Dry Fly in Fast Water*, were also influential in the development of dry-fly fishing in America.

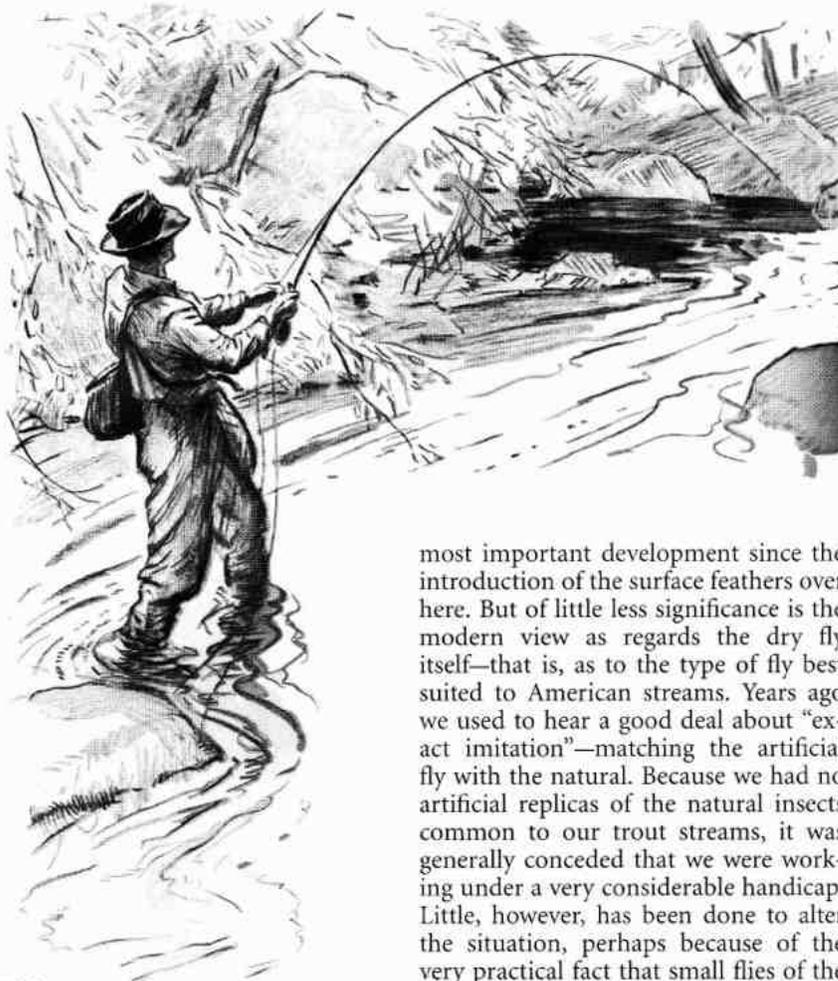
Naturally enough, our pioneer dry-fly anglers were afflicted with what might be termed a heavy-tackle complex. To be sure, Mr. Gill paid his respects in no uncertain terms to the "weapons" suggested by some English angling writers, advising for use on American streams rods from 9 to 10 feet in length. But, doubtless in deference to the Halford tradition, he described the 10-foot rod as being "perhaps the favorite"—the average split-bamboo fly rod in this length weighing 6 ounces or more. Other writers followed suit. There was a fixed belief that at least a moderately heavy and proportionately powerful rod was necessary for dry-fly fishing. As an example of what I mean, I might cite the case of a deservedly popular angling book published in 1919, in which the author advises a rod of "not less than 9½ feet, and with considerable backbone" as necessary for dry-fly fishing\*\*—and I am by no means passing up a certain small volume for which I was personally responsible, and which is open to criticism in the same respect.

It is a matter for regret that back in the dark ages of the dry fly in America we did not pay more heed to the words of that able and thoroughly self-reliant English angling writer, Mr. G. E. M. Skues, who, in his book *Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream*, published in 1910, or some two years prior to Mr. Gill's pioneer American work on the dry fly, came out very strongly for the use of light tackle on British dry-fly waters.

To put it in brief, in *Minor Tactics* Mr. Skues tells the story of how he happened to be "down on the Itchen" the afternoon on which a 2½-pound trout was killed on a very light rod of a famous American make, the rod belonging to one of two American anglers who were fishing the stream on that occasion. One of the American anglers, Mr.

\*\*Probably George Parker Holden's *Streamcraft*. —CURATOR

Skues continues, "was fishing with a 9-foot rod weighing 5 ounces, a delightful tool capable of casting a heavy tapered Halford line with wonderful command. I had the privilege of trying it, and I promptly acquired its duplicate, in addition to the 10-footer of the same make which I already possessed and had used the previous season." And in a footnote, in the third edition of *Minor Tactics*, 1924, Mr. Skues says that this rod, after eighteen years' hard wear, is still his favorite. Now, had more of us, over here, started with the proposition that a 9-foot, 5-ounce rod was fully up to the very exacting requirements of the British dry-fly waters—but that is water under the bridge, after all these years. At any rate, following America's discovery of the dry fly, came a period of use and experiment during which it has become increasingly apparent that, as regards the rods best suited to the game as we play it, the shorter and lighter rods have it all over the longer and heavier articles. In discussing fly rods it is probably necessary to say that I am speaking in terms of split bamboo. In fact, as the situation is described by one of our best-known rodmaking concerns, "It is now only a question of how short and how light a rod can be used and give perfect satisfaction to the dry-fly angler."



Ralph Boyer

THIS CONCLUSION has been reached through a gradual awakening to the fact that it is quite a long walk, as well as a lengthy swim, from the Beaverkill, let us say, to the Itchen or the Test—that American and English dry-fly fishing are two quite different propositions. It is more a matter of methods than of stream conditions, though, of course, stream conditions give rise to methods. The English dry-fly purist casts only to rising trout, and, consequently, with more or less frequent periods of rest. The American dry-fly artist fishes all the water, casting continually—and if you know the real fly-fishing fanatic, you'll know I mean he casts *continually*. And there you are. The British dry-fly man, if he so chooses, can use quite a hefty fly rod without cracking under the strain. But when, to the casts required in the process of getting the line out, you add the innumerable false casts necessary for keeping the fly in a floating condition—a fly, remember, which is on the water most of the time—it should not be difficult to realize that, for comfort in long continued casting, a light rod is essential for the follower of

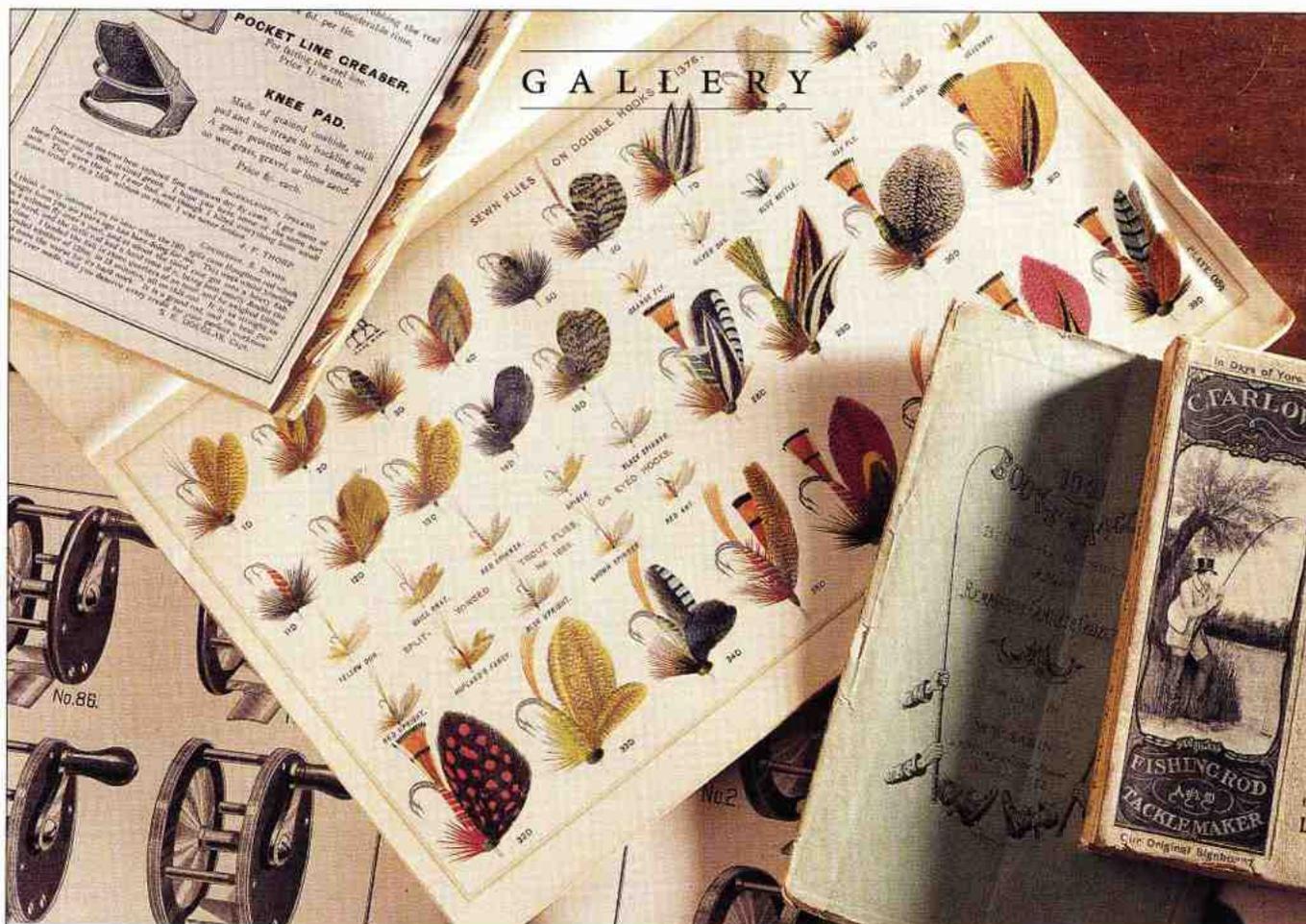
the American dry-fly method.

For general stream fishing, wherever light tackle can be employed with reasonable safety, 8-foot dry-fly rods, weighing 4 ounces or a fraction under, are endorsed by the leading experts. On the smaller streams, rods of 7 to 7½ feet are not uncommon. And such dry-fly rods—the reference is to the higher-grade articles turned out by our best makers—will be found in material and action fully up to the work at hand. For the sake of brevity I have steered clear of the matter of rod action, but I might just repeat for emphasis that the present tendency is away from the excessively stiff models. The dry-fly beginner, who, perhaps, has been reading up on the subject in some of the older angling books, might with some advantage to himself think over the above suggestions regarding the matter of rod selection.

The radical change of view, with regard to the right sort of rod for fishing with a dry fly, would seem to be the

most important development since the introduction of the surface feathers over here. But of little less significance is the modern view as regards the dry fly itself—that is, as to the type of fly best suited to American streams. Years ago we used to hear a good deal about "exact imitation"—matching the artificial fly with the natural. Because we had no artificial replicas of the natural insects common to our trout streams, it was generally conceded that we were working under a very considerable handicap. Little, however, has been done to alter the situation, perhaps because of the very practical fact that small flies of the exact imitation type, when used for fishing all the water, and on the fast water so common to our trout streams, are difficult to keep in a floating condition, and, likewise, hard to see. To be thoroughly adapted to the American dry-fly method, the fly should be easy to float and easy to see.

Thus have we come to the very general use of the bivisible hackle dry flies, the merits of which were so convincingly brought out by Mr. E. R. Hewitt in his book, *Telling on the Trout*, and also the very popular fanwing series of floaters. The bivisible hackles, whether the Brown Bivisible, the Gray Bivisible, or whatever the pattern, have a wisp of white hackle wound at the head of the fly, thus putting the fly, when on the water, in something of the same class as the celebrated Coachman in the matter of visibility. Having no wings, of course, the bivisible hackle dry fly does not have to be "cocked," and, for the same reason, is much more durable than the conventional winged variety of fly. Likewise, the bivisible hackles ride "high and dry" on the surface, and are very easy to keep that way.



AS A HISTORIAN, I have spent countless hours looking through old books and dusty volumes of bound magazines. I've ruined my eyes and wrists scrolling through microfilm, leafed through boxes upon boxes of personal papers, and encountered a wide variety of public record keepers. There was one source of historical record, though, to which I was completely oblivious before coming to the American Museum of Fly Fishing: mail-order price lists and catalogs. Although far from complete, the Museum's collection is amazing.

The earliest catalogs were simply short price lists. Beginning in the 1870s, we have examples of these from rod-makers and dealers S. W. Goodridge, Charles Orvis, and John Krider. By the 1880s, however, the large, fully illustrated mail-order catalogs we know today were beginning to take form. Two early ones in the collection, Abbey & Imbrie (1882) and Allcock's (1887), are wonderful examples. They have no descriptive text and are filled with engravings of products—pages of ferrule, hook, and line guide styles and sizes, and various reels, rods, and flies. Catalogs provide an accurate and fairly complete illustrated record of what exactly was available to anglers in the 1880s. For instance, the Abbey & Imbrie catalog shows that tunnel guides were available at least as early as 1882. At the other end of the temporal spectrum, we find in both the Hardy and Farlow catalogs that new greenheart rods were still being offered as late as the 1930s.

Catalog introductions often featured a short synopsis

of the company's history, making them a good place to confirm this information. An important example of this is provided for us by William Mills, who emigrated from Redditch, England, to New York in the early 1870s. He bought T. H. Bate & Co. in 1875, changed the name to William Mills & Son, and in his catalog included a chronology of the company's various name changes as far back as 1822. The process of sorting through the half-dozen name changes was made much easier by the catalogs and the history they provide.

Catalogs from both contemporary and older used book dealers—some catalogs even dating from the 1800s—are included in the Museum's collection as well. The oldest I could find happens to be historically significant: the 1882 W. W. Sabin catalog of *1001 Books on Angling*. The collection was being offered as a complete collection only, to be sold to the highest bidder—who turned out to be Dean Sage. Sabin's 1882 catalog also featured the first presentation of the often-used, fanciful picture of Dame Juliana Berners in complete nun's habit.

I could go on (for instance: the only known copy of Samuel's *Art of Angling* was offered by Chalmers-Hallam in his 1952 catalog for \$8.82—the 1956 reprint of that very volume is now going for around a hundred dollars), but space will not permit. Suffice it to say that the thousands of catalogs maintained in our collections are just a part of the rich tapestry of fly fishing's long and interesting history.

JON C. MATHEWSON, CURATOR



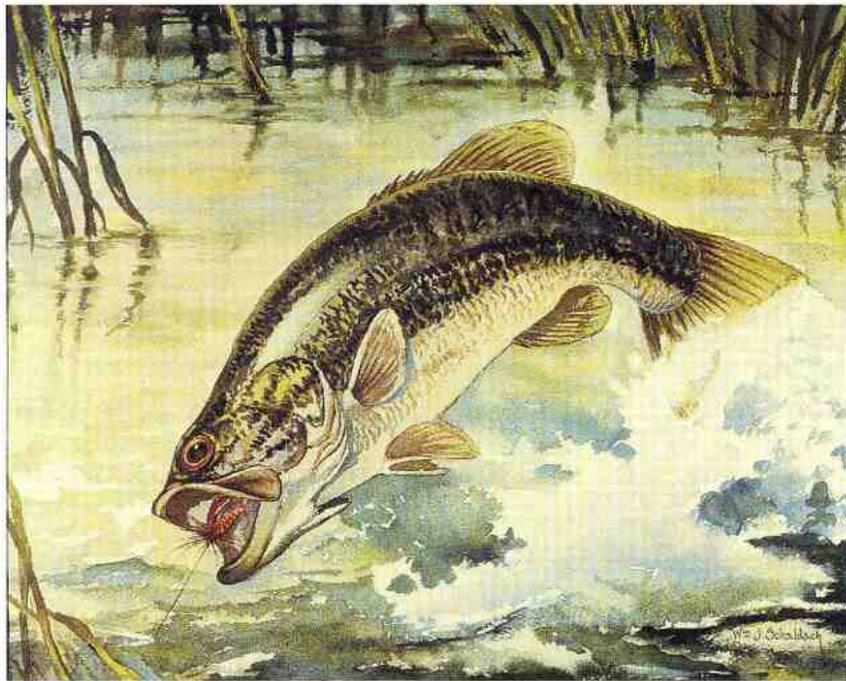
Ogden Pleissner, N. A. (1905–1983), *WIND CLOUDS*, watercolor, 1973.

**T**HE EXHIBIT SPACE at the American Museum of Fly Fishing contains only a tip of the mountain of fly-fishing paraphernalia in our collections—we are always trying to display as much as possible over time. To that end, we have reconfigured the exhibits in the Leigh & Romi Perkins Audio/Visual Room and in the “art hallway.”

Included in the new exhibits are a tribute to reel-seat maker Glenn R. Struble; framed pieces of standard flies from 1836 and 1948; and art from our permanent collection by Ogden Pleissner, Louis Rhead, William Schaldach, Samuel Kilbourne, and S. F. Denton. Pictured here are some of the gems.



Seymour Hayden, untitled, duotone reproduction of etching, 1869.



William J. Schaldach (1896-1982), *LEAPING BASS*, lithograph from stone, c. 1935.



Ogden Pleissner, N. A. (1905–1983), *REFLECTIONS*, dry point  
limited edition of sixty, 1942.

Virginia Salminen



*Jerome Hartke, Megan Boyd and her dog, and the author by the North Sea.*

## A Visit with Megan Boyd

*by Ray Salminen*

WHILE VISITING the late Colonel Joe Bates and his wife, Helen, at their home in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, Joe mentioned to me several times, "On your next trip to Scotland make it a *must* to spend some time with Megan Boyd of Brora. She is world famous. It will be a lasting memory." How correct he was.

My wife and I had made numerous trips to the United Kingdom. I had fished in Scotland and enjoyed browsing through tackle shops galore. I had the great pleasure of fishing in such places as the Arctic region of Scandinavia. Our visit to Brora and our time spent with Megan Boyd was by far my most memorable travel experience.

The trip began when Dr. Jerome Hartke and I, accompanied by our wives, spent several days in Aberdeen visiting our friends, Alex and Colin Simpson (both well-known Scottish fly dressers) and their families. The stay included a trip to Aboyne to fish the famous River Dee. Then it was on to Inverness to fish the Beauly before continuing north through the breathtakingly beautiful

scenery of the Scottish Highlands.

Brora was next for more fishing and our visit with Megan. Brora is a quaint little village of possibly 1,500 friendly Scots. In the middle of Fountain Square is a tall metal structure with a gold profile of Queen Victoria, dedicated in her honor. We were greeted by our friend, Captain Peter Willis, whose great grandfather was Alfred Willis of Alfred Willis & Sons of Redditch, famous hookmakers. Peter was known to be an expert fly fisherman and hunter and was a longtime friend of Megan Boyd.

The following day Peter offered to accompany us to Megan's home. As we started our journey along the road following the edge of the North Sea, Peter suddenly said, "Stop." He pointed to a small red and white cottage perched on the hillside and surrounded by flowers, facing the North Sea. "That's Megan's home," he explained. "It is hard to calculate how many notables may have passed through her doorway." It is difficult to imagine what life in this area must be like: facing the fierce storms of the sea, and with no running water,

electricity, telephone, or television! This is quite what Megan preferred.

On our arrival, Megan greeted us warmly and invited us into her living room to be with her companion, her pet dog. Her usual dress was a man's shirt and tie, sweater, wool skirt, tweed sport jacket, and heavy army-type boots (which she promptly changed on our arrival). Of course, there would be no need of a hairdresser for such a highly skilled fly dresser—Megan preferred to cut her own hair. As we were seated, Megan apologized and excused herself. She said she had an errand to attend to in the village. Peter added, "No doubt to help a resident in need. This is Megan . . . always doing all she can for folks of all ages." She had handed us a letter she received from Queen Elizabeth, which she thought might be of interest. The Queen had invited her to visit Buckingham Palace to attend a ceremony awarding her a British Empire Medal (BEM), the highest British honor to be awarded. We were duly impressed, but Megan later told us, "Of course, I did not go, as I had no one to care for my dog!" She

replied to Queen Elizabeth, informing her of this, and the Queen wrote back that she quite understood. At a later date, she was invited by Prince Charles to visit his fishing lodge on the Helmsdale and was presented with the BEM.

When Megan returned from the village, we were invited into the small shed where she carried on her fly dressing. Walls were covered with pictures of dogs. There were shelves of material neatly stored, but the tools seemed meager for one to tie salmon flies of such masterpiece caliber! Megan's bench was covered with letters from all around the world ordering just one salmon fly. On some letters, the postmark dated back ten years. I noted one letter from my friend, Tom Perp, former editor of *Trout*. Megan remarked, "I feel very bad that I cannot fill the requests of so many nice folks who have ordered flies. The local folks who have contributed to my bread and butter for so many years come first."

The window in Megan's shed faced the North Sea. She told us that she preferred tying her flies by natural daylight. Under the mat at her front door, she explained, was a pad and pencil for the locals to write down their orders.

Though at first she might have appeared stern, it soon became abundantly clear that Megan Boyd was an extremely caring and generous individual, always willing to assist others. Fly dressing could always wait. We invited Megan to join us for dinner the following evening at the Sutherland Arms Hotel, a quaint, small stone building in the square. As we awaited her arrival, we were called to the phone to be informed that she was sorry, but she would be a bit late. "I have to stop at a friend's house and help her with her mousetraps," she said.

Megan no longer dresses flies, and fortunate are they who have one. Megan Boyd has made great contributions both to the world of fly fishing and to the community of Brora.

I later enjoyed another great story of Megan. Late one Saturday afternoon, a well-polished automobile stopped in front of her home. As she opened her door, there stood the special secretary to Prince Charles requesting certain flies to be dressed while he waited. Megan politely replied, "I am sorry that I will not be able to comply at the moment. I have a very important engagement in town." The engagement, it seems, was an assembly of village folks who were to have a dance that evening—the Scottish *ceilidh*.

# Museum News



## Art Openings

An artist's reception was held on June 27 at the Museum to open an exhibit of John Betts's work. "Flies and Images" featured thirty-two pieces by Betts—twenty-eight mixed-media pieces (watercolors and drawings accompanied by tied flies) and four hand-built reels. Betts, a resident of Denver, Colorado, is a writer as well as an artist and has contributed to several fly-fishing magazines. His work was on exhibit until August 4.

The Museum welcomed Don Wynn with an opening reception on August 8. "Selected Adirondack Works" featured eleven paintings by the artist, including oils and watercolor sketches. Wynn lives in the central Adirondacks, a region that continues to provide many of the subjects for his art. His work has been exhibited in galleries across the country and in Japan. The Museum's exhibit continued through September 22.

## Staff Notes

She was executive assistant from 1981 to 1987 and returned in early 1997 as a part-time administrative assistant. Now Paula "Stick" Welch has been named the Museum's membership director and events coordinator. Stick is responsible for membership services and new-member acquisition programs. She will also work with Executive Director Gary

Tanner to ensure that the dinner/auctions are appropriately merchandised and become even more fun-filled and successful.

Stick and her new husband (and Museum volunteer) Dan live in Arlington, Vermont.

## Recent Donations

Judie Darbee Vinciguerra of Roscoe, New York, visited the Museum during the Galen Mercer opening and left us a fly wallet formerly belonging to Harry Darbee, which contains 131 of his flies. William Mapel of Darien, Connecticut, gave us thirty-one Charles DeFeo flies.

Corinne Driver of Verona, New Jersey, brought by a beautiful old wicker pack-basket, filled with a unique creel, two Cumings nets, and five reels. Dr. William Byrnes of Springfield, Massachusetts, dropped off a selection of rods and reels he used back in the 1940s and 1950s. Wallace Murray of Manchester, Vermont, gave us a vintage cardboard Hardy Brothers reel box. Don McKenna of New Milford, Connecticut, dropped off a copy of the Connecticut fishing regulations for 1947.

Leigh Perkins of Manchester, Vermont, gave us a copy of Turhan Tirana's *Fly Fishing: A Life in Mid-Stream* (1996). John Robson of Treasure Island, Florida, presented us with the English translation of Sylvain Gingras's *A Century of Sport: Hunting and Fishing in Quebec*

Kathleen Achor



Jon Mathewson



The Museum hosted opening receptions for artists John Betts (left) and Don Wynn.



THE ANNUAL membership meeting of the American Museum of Fly Fishing will be held at 9:00 AM on Saturday, October 18, 1997, at the Reluctant Panther Conference Center, Manchester, Vermont. The trustees' annual meeting will follow immediately thereafter at the same location.

(1994), an excellent overview of the histories of the various camps throughout Quebec. Frank J. Mikesh of Walnut Creek, California, answered our "Call for Books" with a first edition of T. F. Salter's *The Troller's Guide* (1820).

Museum Special Events Coordinator Paula M. Welch gave us three letters John Voelker wrote to her when she worked at *Fly Fisherman* magazine. Trustee Allan K. Poole sent the Museum a Christmas card he received in 1974 from fly tyer J. C. Arseneault and included one of Mr. Arseneault's fine salmon flies.

Juanita Struble sent a framed tribute to her late husband, reel-seat maker Glenn Struble. Mr. Struble owned and ran the Glenn Struble Manufacturing Company of Sutherlin, Oregon, which for decades supplied the trade with fine wooden reel seats. The tribute was framed by Jack Smrekar of Florence, Oregon.

## Dinner/Auction Events

OCTOBER 18

### Trustees

The Reluctant Panther  
Conference Center  
Manchester, Vermont

NOVEMBER 13

### Hartford Area

The Marriott Hotel  
Farmington, Connecticut

NOVEMBER 16

Napa Valley in conjunction with  
an afternoon with Mel Krieger  
Culinary Institute of  
America—Greystone  
St. Helena, California

JANUARY 29

Benefit in honor of  
Joseph F. Cullman III  
The Yale Club  
New York City

## Fall Call

And now a list of twelve titles we'd like to add to our angling library (1835-1841):

Boosey, Thomas. *Piscatorial Reminiscences and Gleanings, by an Old Angler and Bibliophile*. London: Pickering, 1835.

Stoddart, Thomas Tod. *Art of Angling, as Practiced in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Chambers, 1835.

Turton, John. *The Angler's Manual, or Fly-Fisher's Oracle, with a Brief Compendium of Bottom-Fishing*. London: Groombridge, 1836.

Guild, W. A. *Treatise Against Profanation of the Lord's Day, Especially by Salmon-Fishing*. Aberdeen, Scotland, 1837.

Kirkbride, John. *The Northern Angler, or Fly-Fisher's Companion*. Carlisle, England, 1837.

*The Female Angler. A Ballad*. 1838.

Clarke, Captain R. M. *Angler's Desideratum, Containing the Best and Fullest Directions for Dressing the Artificial Fly, with Some New and Valuable Inventions*. Edinburgh, 1839.

Alexander, William. *A Journey to Beresford Hall, the Seat of Charles Cotton, Esq.* London: J. Russell Smith, 1841.

Dougall, James Dalziel. *Salmon and Trout Angling*. Edinburgh: Caldwell, Lloyd and Company, 1841.

Pulman, G. P. R. *Book of the Axe*. London: Longmans, 1841.

Pulman, G. P. R. *Vade Mecum of Fly Fishing For Trout; Being a Complete Practical Treatise on That Branch of the Art of Angling, with Plain and Copious Instructions for the Manufacture of Artificial Flies, &c.* London: Longmans, 1841.

Schreiner, William H. *Schreiner's Sporting Manual: A Complete Treatise on Fishing, Fowling and Hunting, as Applicable to This Country*. Philadelphia: S. Douglas Wyeth, 1841.

## In the Library

Thanks to the following publishers for their generous donations of recent titles that have become part of the Museum's library.

Lyons & Burford sent us Scott Waldie's *Travers Corners* (1997), A. J. Campbell's *Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle: A Guide for Collectors & Anglers* (1997), George Reiger's *The Striped Bass Chronicles: The Sage of America's Great Game Fish* (1997), Luis Marden's *The Angler's Bamboo* (1997), Nick Karas's *Brook Trout: A Thorough Look at North America's Great Native Trout—Its*

## The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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Tel: 802-362-3300. Fax: 802-362-3308

## JOIN!

Membership Dues (per annum)

INDIVIDUAL	
Associate	\$35
Sustaining	\$60
Benefactor	\$125
Patron	\$250
GROUP	
Club	\$50
Trade	\$50

Membership dues include four issues of *The American Fly Fisher*. Please send your payment to the Membership Director and include your mailing address. The Museum is a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, the New England Association of Museums, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, and the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame. We are a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution chartered under the laws of the state of Vermont.

## SUPPORT!

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

## VISIT!

Hours are 10 AM to 4 PM. We are closed on major holidays.

## BACK ISSUES!

Available at \$4 per copy:

- Volume 6, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 7, Numbers 2, 3
- Volume 8, Number 3
- Volume 9, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 10, Number 2
- Volume 11, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 12, Number 3
- Volume 13, Number 3
- Volume 14, Number 1
- Volume 15, Numbers 1, 2
- Volume 16, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 17, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 18, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 19, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 20, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 21, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 22, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 23, Numbers 1, 2, 3

*History, Biology, and Angling Possibilities*, and a new release of John McDonald's *The Origins of Angling*.

Frank Amato Publications sent us *Everyone's Illustrated Guide to Trout on a Fly* (1996) by R. Chris Halla and Michael Streff, Chris J. Francis's *Brown Trout: A Practical Guide* (1996), and Carl Richards and Bob Braendle's *Caddis Super Hatches: Hatch Guide for the United States* (1997).

Bulfinch Press sent us two books by f-stop fitzgerald: *Fly Fishing Logbook* (1995) and *Secrets of the Saltwater Fly: Tips and Tales from the World's Great Anglers* (1997).

Atlantic Monthly Press sent us *Sports Afeld Trout Fisher's Almanac* (1997) edited by Sid Evans.

Stackpole Books sent us Ed Jaworowski and Lefty Kreh's *The Cast* (1992); Charles F. Waterman's *Black Bass & the*

*Fly Rod* (1993); Dave Hughes's *Wet Flies: Tying and Fishing Soft-Hackles, Winged and Wingless Wets, and Fuzzy Nymphs* (1995); Paul Schullery's *Shuption's Fancy: A Tale of the Fly-Fishing Obsession* (1996); Joseph D. Bates Jr. and Pamela Bates Richards's *Fishing Atlantic Salmon* (1996); and *West of Key West: Adventures and Reflections; Fishing the Flats from the Contents to the Marquesas* (1996), edited by John Cole and Hawk Pollard.

## CONTRIBUTORS



Ralf Coykendall Jr. comes by his knowledge of fly fishing and other outdoor sports naturally. He grew up in the twilight of the golden age of American sport and wandered freely hunting and fishing in his native New England. He's a noted bird and decoy carver, award-winning artist, and the author of several books and myriad articles on hunting and fishing, including *You and Your Retriever*, *Wildfowling at a Glance*, and several editions of *Coykendall's Sporting Collectibles Price Guide*. He has served in such diverse capacities as retriever field trial judge and officer, craft society director, and newspaper editor. The father of four girls and a boy, Coykendall lives in Manchester Center, Vermont.

The photo shows Ralf Coykendall Sr. and Jr., circa 1933. Ralf Jr. is the short one. Ralf Sr. served as advertising director of *The Sportsman* magazine through much of its existence.



Jürgen F. Preylowski is a freelance designer and art director living in Düsseldorf, Germany. He recently designed the fly-fishing tackle collection of Rudolf Reichel, one of the most important collections in Europe, for the South Tyrolean Museum of Hunt and Fishery on Castle Wolfsturn. He is a collector of historic tackle, books, and angling art. His passions include fly fishing, golf, and riding his two horses, Mirador and Centeilla.

Daniel P. Marschika



Gordon M. Wickstrom is professor of drama emeritus and was longtime chair of that 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. His "A Memoir of Trout and Eros or Following L. B. France into Colorado's Middle Park" appeared in the Spring 1997 issue.



Ray Salminen is now retired after working more than thirty years in marketing and real estate with the Sun Company. A lifelong collector of firearms and fishing tackle, he has made a number of donations to the Museum, including Babe Ruth's fly rod. Mr. Salminen began tying flies more than sixty years ago, and for the past twenty-eight years he has served as a fly-tying and fly-fishing instructor for community adult education. He served as staff writer of the United Fly Tyers in its beginning years and has also published articles in *Fly Fisherman* and *The Angler's Journal*. He spends his spare time fly fishing and upland bird shooting. In the winter he makes slide presentations and does fly-tying demonstrations. Mr. Salminen lives in Acton, Massachusetts, with his wife Ginnie, his constant companion on these adventures.

Margot Page



**I**T'S IMPORTANT to think about, and confront, changes. Some are pleasing to consider, such as the passage of the Battenkill's tepid, low water of summer to the cooler and fuller pools and runs of autumn. Some are melancholy: this fall I'll enter, for the first time in ten years, my favorite grouse coverts without one of the most incredible bundles of energy and affection setterdom has ever seen, the victim of a wicked but mercifully quick cancer. Other changes are necessary to consider and, for some of us, to carry out for the good of the order. Your Museum is a case in point.

Cover-to-cover readers of *The American Fly Fisher* will note that there are changes to the masthead's listing. The staff is leaner (hopefully not meaner!) than it was last issue, reflecting a change designed to bring staffing more in line with a membership organization of this Museum's size. We're a small team dedicated to two central objectives: 1) working with the Museum's trustees, volunteers, and network of friends to get the Museum's wonderful collections back out on the road for the world to enjoy and 2) developing a diversified, stable funding base that enables us to grow. We remain ever mindful, though, that we need to take great care of the funding sources that are already in place, such as our fund-raising dinner/auc-

## Changes

tions: pretty simple, with straightforward objectives, which is how I like to do things.

While on the subject of dinner/auctions, we will change some aspects of those events, particularly how they are "merchandised." I feel strongly that our dinner/auction committees' most important job is to invite their friends and acquaintances to share an evening of fun to benefit the programs of an institution they hold dear: the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Other than the important auction items best obtained through personal contact, our committees should not have to worry about creating good, solid auctions and raffles they can be proud to present. That's our job here in Manchester, and we've got the networks and expertise to make it happen (I think I hear an audible sigh of relief from our banquet committee chairs everywhere).

One thing that will not change is this staff's commitment to maintaining our reputation as the world's preeminent museum dedicated to fly fishing and its colorful heritage—the only one accredited by the American Association of Museums. Those who have gone before us—staff and volunteers—helped to establish a wonderful institution; we're delighted to have the opportunity to build upon the solid foundation they laid. Please call us with your thoughts, your ideas, opportunities you see. Working together, we'll grow, and we'll get our exhibits back on the road. And that is a change for the better.

GARY TANNER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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

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

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

