The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

FALL 2002 VOLUME 28 NUMBER 4

At a Time Like This . . .

In 1914, the Hardy Brothers were publishing ads like this one in the *Fishing Gazette.* The economic and emotional turmoil of wartime left leisurely pursuits in limbo. How could citizens think of fishing at a time like this?

John Mundt Jr. began asking himself this question in the aftermath of September 11. His subsequently dug up quite a few interesting stories about angling during wartime and summarizes these in "Anglers at War," which begins on page 2. Mundt focuses primarily on World War I and discusses the experiences of Henry van Dyke, the Hardy family, Ernest Hemingway, and R. B. Marston and the letters from the front that Marston published in the *Fishing Gazette.* A few of Jack Hemingway's World War II stories are included as well.

George La Branche is another important angling figure of the early twentieth century. His book, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water,* was published in 1914. World events during his 1915 salmon fishing trip to Canada ended up making him a rich man. John Betts briefly mentions this event in "George La Branche: 'A Very Beautiful Fisherman.'" The article, however, focuses not on La Branche's financial luck during wartime, but on his contribution to the sport and the evolution of the dry fly. Betts notes that the ideas described in the book created "an American style of dry fly that is completely distinct from its English origins." He also refutes the ideas that La Branche was a dogmatic dry-fly purist and that his favorite fly was the Pink Lady. The article begins on page 12.

An important addition to fly-fishing literature is Andrew Herd's *The Fly,* recently published in a limited edition by the Medlar Press. Beginning on page 22, we are pleased to include two reviews of the book by David B. Ledlie and Paul Schullery, two former editors of *The American Fly Fisher.*

Sam Carlson, former owner of the F. E. Thomas Rod Company and builder of bamboo rods, passed away in May. Another bamboo rodmaker, Fred Kretchman, pays him tribute on page 26. And Special Projects Coordinator Sara Wilcox notes the passing of baseball great Ted Williams in July (page 30).

With our moves into temporary and then permanent quarters, the last half year at the Museum has been rather . . . hectic. For an on-the-scene look at what we've been going through, check out Sara Wilcox's "Much Ado about a Move" on page 20. We all look forward to resuming our regularly scheduled activities.

Kathleen Achor
Editor

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ON THE COVER: *An elated Jack Hemingway in mufti enjoying the sport he loved most. John Mundt Jr.'s article, "Anglers at War," begins on page 2. Photo courtesy of Angela H. Hemingway.*

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Anglers at War

by John Mundt Jr.

John Mundt Jr.

Circa 1918 Hardy Uniqua 3⅛-inch trout reel and an L. F. & C. U.S. Model 1917 trench knife set upon a World War I soldier's puttee. From the author's collection.

. . . This momentous and noble decision, in which the hearts of the immense majority of Americans are with the President, there are undoubtedly many strong and righteous reasons . . . But we must never forget that the specific reason given by the President, the definite cause which forced us into the war . . . which he has repeatedly denounced as illegal, immoral, inhuman—a direct and brutal attack upon us and all mankind. These words cannot be forgotten, nor is it likely the President will retract them.

They set up at least one steadfast mark in the midst of the present flood of peace talk. There can be no parley with a criminal who is in the full and exultant practice of his crime . . . an honorable peace is unattainable except by fighting for it and winning it.[1]

READING THESE grave words evoked in me a lucid image of United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in a well-tailored Brooks Brothers suit addressing the White House press corps about America's ongoing war on terror. An all-too-familiar image of the troubled times we live in quickly spirited away when I realized that the words came from the book in my hands, written by the esteemed angling statesman Henry van Dyke in the year 1917; the volume was produced at a time when our world was burdened by the most wide-scale war ever waged. There are stark similarities between the catastrophic events of that era and our own terror-laden world.

At first glance, it might appear that the ancient arts of angling and war would be wholly incompatible, with the former historically being practiced under calm and peace-filled skies. Ironically, the historic record cites numerous accounts of brave men who assumed great risks in pursuit of the sport they loved while trapped in the throes of bloody conflict.

Statesmen, tournament casters, and others chose to fish as well as fight.

STORM CLOUDS

At the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, Henry van Dyke (HvD) had been living a charmed life. He was a prominent member of the Presbyterian clergy, a respected Princeton professor, and a widely read author whose fifty-second book, *Fighting for Peace,* was the aforementioned volume in my possession. He would go on to publish a total of seventy-five books and twenty-two leaflets to his own credit and assist with thirty others. His famous angling titles, *Little Rivers* (1895), *Fisherman's Luck* (1899), and *A Creelful of Fishing Stories* (1932), earned him an honored position among America's great angling writers.

In 1913, at the age of sixty-one, HvD had been awarded an ambassadorship to the Netherlands and Luxembourg from former Princeton colleague and then U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. After a few weeks of salmon fishing on Canada's Ste. Marguerite River, he sailed forth with his family and soon settled into a new home at The Hague during the autumnal

Original pen and ink drawing by Charles De Feo for Sparse Grey Hackle's 1954 private publication of Fishless Days *by the Anglers' Club of New York. With permission from the Anglers' Club of New York Library Collection.*

splendor of that year. He enjoyed the civility of state affairs, was received by European royalty and other dignitaries, and settled into a well-organized and dutiful routine. President Wilson had charged him with assisting in any way he could with preserving the tenuous state of peace that existed at the time. HvD wrote that "[t]he international sky was clear except for one big cloud, which had been there so long that the world had grown used to it. The Great Powers kept up the mad race of armaments, purchasing mutual terror at the price of billions of dollars every year."[2]

In the early summer of 1914, diplomatic affairs brought HvD to Luxembourg, where he also reserved some free time for fishing the tranquil streams of the region.

> Having just gone just over the German border for a bit of angling, I was following a very lovely river full of trout and grayling. With me were two or three Luxembourgers and as many Germans, to whom fishing with the fly—fine and far off—was a new and curious sight. Along the east bank of the stream ran one of the strategic railways of Germany from Koln to Trier. All day long innumerable trains rolled southward along that line, and every train was packed with soldiers in field-gray—their cheerful stolid bullet heads stuck out of all the windows. "Why so many soldiers," I asked, "and where are they all going?" "Ach" replied my German companions, "it is Pfingstferien (Pentecost vacation) and they are sent a changing of scene and air to get." My Luxembourger friends laughed. "Yes, yes," they said. "That is it. Trier has a splendid climate for soldiers. The situation is kolossal for that!"
>
> When we passed through the hot and dusty little city, it was simply swarming with the field-gray ones—thousands upon thousands of them—new barracks everywhere; parks of artillery; mountains of munitions and military stores. It was a veritable base of operation, ready for war.
>
> Now the point is that Trier is just seven miles from Wasserbillig on the Luxembourg frontier, the place where the German forces entered the neutral land on August 2, 1914.[3]

During that one fateful day astream, HvD experienced a dark premonition of the events that soon transpired. He was inspired to commit the vision to stirring verse under the title "The Red Flower," which was published in his 1917 book *The Red Flower: Poems Written in War Time* (see sidebar page 4).

Henry van Dyke and his family were now thrust center stage into a war that was supposed to end all wars. Diplomatic duties grew exponentially as masses of stranded Americans sought refuge and the safety of U.S. soil. HvD wrote:

> We were benumbed and terrified. There was nothing that we could do. The monstrous thing advanced, but even while we shuddered we could not make ourselves feel it was real. It had the vagueness and horrid pressure of a bad dream.
>
> If it seemed dreamlike to us, so near at hand, how could the people in America, three thousand miles away, feel its reality or grasp its meaning? They could not do it then, and many of them have not done it yet . . .
>
> So the storm signs foreshadowed in fair weather, were fulfilled in tempest, more vast and cruel than the world had ever known . . . Those who loved true peace—peace with equal security for small and great nations, peace with law protecting the liberties of the people, peace with power to defend itself against assault—were forced to fight for it or give it up forever.[4]

Anglers in the Trenches

The European nations and their allies understood what was at stake, and battle lines were expeditiously drawn. In the midst of such chaos, a host of anglers went to war.

The Hardy Brothers factory of Alnwick, England, immediately sent eleven men from their reel shop to various regiments. James Leighton Hardy wrote in *The House the Hardy Brothers Built* that "by March, 1915, forty-two men had left to put on uniform and by January, 1917, eighty-five out of eighty-eight eligible men had been called up."[5] While those valiant Hardy employees were fighting on the front—where five lost

Henry van Dyke had a premonition that inspired this chilling verse while angling in the tranquil waters of the River Kyll in pre–World War I Germany.

The Red Flower
June 1914

In the pleasant time of Pentecost,
By the little river Kyll,
I followed the angler's winding path
Or waded the stream at will,
And the friendly fertile German land
Lay round me green and still.

But all day long on the eastern bank,
Of the river cool and clear,
Where the curving track of double rails
Was hardly seen though near,
The endless trains of German troops
Went rolling down to Trier.

They packed the windows with bullet heads
And caps of hodden gray;
They laughed and sang and shouted loud
When the trains were brought to a stay;
They waved their hands and sang again
As they went on their iron way.

No shadow fell on the smiling land,
No cloud arose in the sky;
I could hear the river's quiet tune
When the trains had rattled by;
But my heart sank low with a heavy sense
Of trouble,—I knew not why.

Then came I into a certain field
Where the devil's paint-brush spread
'Mid the gray and green of the rolling hills
A flaring splotch of red,—
An evil omen, a bloody sign,
And a token of many dead.

I saw in a vision the field-gray hourde
Break forth at the devil's hour,
And trample the earth into crimson mud
In the rage of the Will to Power,—
All this I dreamed in the valley of the Kyll,
At the sign of the blood-red flower.

Henry van Dyke, *The Red Flower: Poems Written in War Time* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), 3–4.

their lives in 1915—the factory commenced production of various armamentaria that included the precious primers that enabled the legendary Vickers machine gunners to maintain their steady hail of lead over no-man's land.

William J. Hardy, son of Hardy Brothers founder William Hardy, served in the machine gun corps. He was wounded after having his horse shot from under him in April 1918 and became a German prisoner of war. He and his fellow soldiers were treated harshly at the hands of their captors, and William once received a vicious blow to the head from the rifle butt of a guard. He later died of an illness, which may or may not have been brought on as a result of lingering effects suffered as a prisoner of war, on 7 February 1928, one month before his son James Leighton Hardy's first birthday.

William's cousin Leslie, who "was a keen angler and, before he joined the colours, had been employed at Hardy's" fared no better.[6] He was struck by a bullet in the head and lost an eye. His World War I experiences haunted him until his death in 1940.

Great Britain's leading angling publication, the *Fishing Gazette*, remained in production throughout the war. They established and administered a popular tobacco fund that would provide cigarettes for wounded soldiers. Sadly, their famous publisher, R. B. Marston, would lose a son in the trenches.

The continued publication of that widely read British journal was even lauded on our side of the Atlantic by angling luminary Theodore Gordon: "Notes on the War, etc., from an American Angler.—Mr. Theodore Gordon, one of the best known anglers and angling writers in America, writes to me on Aug. 31, 1914: 'In spite of the greatest war in history and the complete disorganization of commerce the English mails have been arriving regularly and the *Fishing Gazette* has been delivered to American subscribers.'"[7]

Other *Fishing Gazette* headlines and submissions from 1914 give today's reader a glimpse into the war effort from an anglers' point of view.

> One horrid result of this war is that one has to think of so many old friends and good sportsmen as enemies because they are Germans or Austrians. If we met on a trout stream now, instead of exchanging flies and drinks, we should have to exchange shots.[8]

> The Belgians and the War. A great many British anglers know trout-fishing in the Belgian Ardennes and have friends in Belgium. They must have felt a double sense of relief when the fact that our Expeditionary Force was safely landed at Boulogne was published to the world last Monday, because they know how eagerly the Belgians were looking to Britain and how worthy they are of the best we can do for them.[9]

> The Rifle for the Rod. Mr. G. E. M. Skues writes: "My Dear Marston, It may be of interest to readers of the *Fishing Gazette* to know that their friend Louis Bouglé, one of the founders of the Casting Club de France and member of the Fly Fishers' Club, though just past fifty years of age, and consequently not called up in French mobilisation, thinks in the circumstances, it is the positive duty of every man still capable of marching and firing a rifle to offer his services, so he has enrolled himself as a simple private, volunteering for the period of the war in a regiment of Infantry of the Line in the active army. I am sure we shall all wish him the best of luck and genuine triumph for the French arms."[10]

In many instances letters would be sent to the *Fishing Gazette* directly from the front. Geoffrey Bucknall selected this fascinating letter by tournament caster M. A. P. Decantelle, who was serving in the French army, for inclusion in his 1997 book, *The Bright Stream of Memory.*

> The first couple of months I did not think of fishing. War was a new sport to me, and besides, the Huns were keeping us too busy. The district I was in was thick forest; there was just enough water to drink, so that not only fishing but washing was out of the question.
>
> When we had stopped the German rush, we slowly moved forward again and at last came across the river, a typical trout river. I never want-

William Hardy Jr. ("Mr. Willie," far right) with fellow inmates at Schweidnitz German prisoner of war camp. Photo courtesy of James Leighton Hardy.

ed to fish so badly. As you are aware, we take turns in the trenches. When the infantry goes to rest some eight to ten miles to the rear of the fighting line, the engineers are always kept in reserve one or two miles from the trenches. The question is to find a beat from which you are not seen by the enemy and not much to attract the gun fire. The river is running almost parallel to our trenches and about two miles from the German trenches. Along the bank are the remains of old German shelters which are handy when the shells come along.

Whether the fishing was preserved before the war I know not. The river is a fine trout stream with every hundred yards a rapid and a pool. Almost every tree has been cut by shells or rifle bullets during the fierce fighting which took place along the river. Most of the branches have fallen across in which have also been thrown vast quantities of barbed wire. As a result, the fishing consists of casting with great accuracy to prevent the trout from getting the line under the wire or sunk branches. I have hooked several beauties on the May Fly, but in every case the result was the loss of the fish, plus fly and part of the cast.

When I do fish it is never more than two or three hours. Where I was fishing the Germans have shelled the river and I was able to make some remarks about the effects of this shelling on the trout. They do not mind shrapnel a bit. One day some newly arrived infantry were playing the fool on the top of the hill and the shrapnel came along on the hill and the river behind. I got under a big stump and from there I could see several trout rising. In spite of the repeated whizz [*sic*] they kept on rising and when I came out from under my shelter I landed one of them.

As for the heavy (shells) which make fairly large holes in the ground, they give the trout a nasty shock for all instantly go down. The chances of a single man being hit by one of these shells is very small indeed if he lies flat when he hears them coming. I used to remain by the riverside, but found that within 300 yards from the falling point of a heavy shell I was never able to get a bite for a couple of hours, a bit of hard luck for the man who expects to eat fish for supper.

It is surprising to notice the number of men who have never seen fly fishing before. One of them made a funny remark today. As he was staring at my catch I asked him what he thought of it. He replied: "I was thinking you must have been a famous poacher before you joined the army."

No more fishing for the present. We have moved forward and I am in the forest. The river where I expect to catch my trout is behind the German lines—not for long I hope.[11]

Bucknall goes on to inform us that Decantelle would later be wounded and eventually receive the prestigious Croix de Guerre for bravery.

R. B. Marston referred to the following letter as "one of the most interesting accounts of fishing at the Front that I have received."[12]

STALKING A TROUT FROM A SHELL HOLE ON THE ANCRE. Dear Mr. Marston,—Am just writing to let you know of a little fishing experience I had on the Ancre. Last autumn our regiment did a lot of collecting the dead and burying them on the field, in my opinion the worst job in the war. One day I was sitting under the bank of the river (a clear, fast-running stream about 2 ft. deep generally) eating a bit of bully and biscuit when, ye gods! I saw a trout rise, apparently not worrying about the high explosive that was coming over at the time. Now rations were rather hard and square just then, and as I watched that fish rising I was sorely tempted to sling a bomb at him and get a change of diet, but sportsmanship prevailed, and I devised a way of getting him on the bank. That night, when back at camp, I made a line out of my horses's tail plaited three thicknesses until I had about 12 ft., and being a very keen fly-fisher, there were some old flies inside my cap, relics of happier days. The next day we were on the same work, and saw that he was rising again. I cut a branch out of one of the ash trees still standing in Blighty Wood, and made a rod about 7 ft. long. Armed with this, the line (about which I had my doubts), and a much-worn Hare's Ear, I stalked that trout as man never did before, worming my way

The
Fishing Gazette
SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 1914.

From the collection of Tony Hayter

Would Like Some Tackle.

DEAR SIR,—As an old reader of your journal, and, of course, a disciple of Izaak Walton, I—somewhat shamefacedly, I must confess—venture to ask if you know of anyone who has an old trout rod or tackle to spare. My own rod went "west" in 1914, and now, through the fortunes of war, after being wounded and gassed, am attached to headquarters staff in a place where some decent trout-fishing is available. Unfortunately, I am unable to afford on my present rate of pay (8½d. per day) to purchase any tackle, and if I were able to, could not procure it here; hence my request.

Trusting you will pardon the liberty I have taken in thus addressing you, and hoping you will be able to assist me in obtaining a little health-giving pleasurable recreation following my favourite pastime.—Yours faithfully,

GUNNER P. C. HOWARD
102,798 R.G.A.,
c/o Administrative Commandant,
3rd Army Railheads, B.E.F., France.

From the collection of David Zincavage

Thanks from the B.E.F.

DEAR MR. MARSTON,—Once more I am deeply indebted to you for your help in making my request for a fly-rod and reel known. Through the widespread publicity of your paper I have been able to get into touch with a gentleman in Chelmsford, who no doubt is an angler himself (he is undoubtedly a thorough sportsman). He has very kindly sent me a fine fly-reel by Hardy, of Alnwick, and informs me that a rod is on its way. It is not easy to express one's gratitude for such a sporting action, but I have written to thank him to the best of my ability. You may be assured that I am on tenterhooks pending the arrival of the rod, and although the season for the fly is well advanced, I have visions of hefty chub and 12oz. dace looming in the distance.

What a left and right our boys are giving Fritz now, eh! The wounded coming down to us are smiling all over their faces. Field-Marshal Foch is certainly proving his mettle. Trust your sons are both well, and that you are feeling O.K.—With best wishes, yours very sincerely,

SERGT. A. W. JONES, R.E.

(Several letters are held over.)

Soldiers often sent letters from the field appealing to fellow subscribers of the Fishing Gazette *for tackle and other relief.*

FISHING GAZETTE *Tobacco Fund for our Wounded Soldiers and Sailors.*

R. B. MARSTON,
Editor *Fishing Gazette*,
19, Adam-street, Strand,
London, W.C.

The Fishing Gazette *Tobacco Fund provided a welcomed commodity to recovering soldiers.*

to him through shell holes and debris until I got in a shell hole right on the edge of the stream and about a yard below the fish. A hefty swish in the water told me I had managed to get there without putting him down, so I started to work the rod, and raising my head until I could just see the spot, I lowered the fly. He took it, and I shot out of that shell hole quicker than I went in, and began to play that fish. Luckily for me the stream was only about three yards wide. As he went up the stream I went with him, the ash stick bending to him like a split cane. Up and down we went for about five minutes, until I was able to bring him to the bank. He was a beauty, 15½ in., and in good condition. I put him in my haversack; then rolling the cast, that went as usual inside my cap, I left the rod stuck in the ground just where the capture took place, then went and joined my chums, who were just getting ready to resume the gruesome work. The officer asked me where I had been, and when I said fishing, they all burst out laughing, which of course anyone would have done. However, when I pulled out the fish they were surprised, and used some expressions for which our army is noted, the officer at once proclaiming himself anything but a fly-fisher by wanting to buy it. Needless to say I let him want. When we got back that night there was good news for us. Bread rations had come up, and as I sat frying my trout in a mess tin I wondered if anyone else had done any fishing like that on the Ancre. When I come out of hospital I should like to do a little fishing while convalescent, but army pay is not productive of trout rods and flies—but, well, war is war. I always get the *Fishing Gazette*, for if one is not able to fish himself it is very interesting to hear how the sport is going on. Wishing you the best of luck and continued success with your appreciated paper,—I beg to remain, yours sincerely,

Alan Pye
1154 Trooper A. Pye
1st King Edward's Horse, K.O.D.R.
A3 Ward, Stoke War Hospital
Stoke-on-Trent, North Staffs[13]

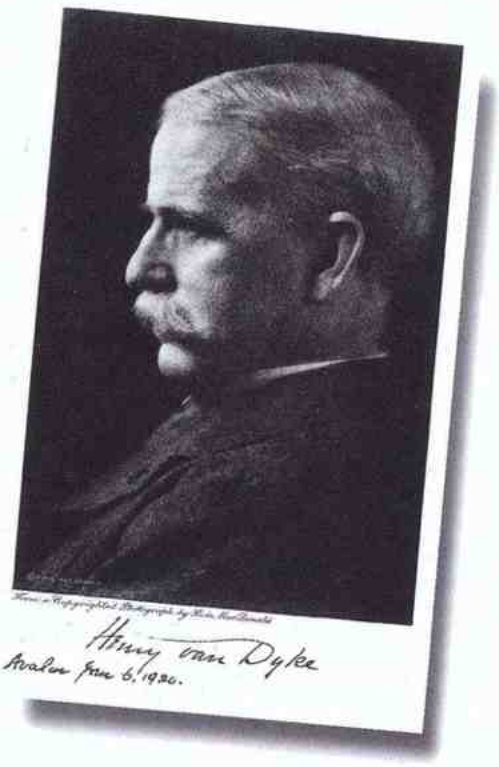
Not all soldiers and civilians were as sporting as Mssr. Decantelle or Trooper Pye had been. Naturalist Major Anthony Buxton wrote in his 1920 memoir *Sport in Peace and War:*

> Fishing was the only form of sport not discouraged by the authorities on the Western Front. Regulations, often disregarded, were issued against the use of illegal means, such as bombs, nets, and explosives for destroying fish. All the combatants were equally to blame for their destruction of fish by these means, and the rivers of France and Belgium suffered and deteriorated from indiscriminate bombing and netting on both sides of the line by civilians and military during the war.
>
> The legitimate means of fishing, however much employed, did not do very much harm, for trout become quickly educated to a sufficiently high standard to escape destruction.[14]

Buxton's personal angling tactics were of the more sporting type.

> Military duties when not in the line seldom entailed work after 4 P.M., and though they often interfered with the morning rise, the evening was ours to give to the trout.
>
> If a trout stream was reasonably near, there were few evenings in the summer on which I did not "warn out" for mess; perhaps it

Section of a military map titled "Northwest Europe 1914, The Stabilized Front, Major Offensives and Changes, January 1915–December 1916." Note the close proximity of Luxembourg to Trier and Verdun. The Grand Duchy was a small country caught in the eye of the storm. Courtesy of United States Military Academy, website www.usma.edu.



Henry van Dyke. From the author's collection.

would be better to say there were few evenings on which I "warned in." The first occasion on which I went fishing at the war was in the early spring of 1915 . . . we reached the charming valley of the Course, with its rich meadows, quiet woods, and sparkling clear stream. It was too early in the season for the trout to be very evident, but we did not go back quite empty-handed, or without discovering where to come on a later visit . . .

A second visit to the Course with my Second-in-Command in May was more productive. We slept at Beussent, and had two delightful days, in which twenty-eight trout were caught and an appetite for fishing, not yet appeased, was aroused in my friend.

The trout rose freely to a fine hatch of small duns all over the river, which was much faster than most chalk streams, and presents great difficulties in the matter of 'drag,' owing to the pace and the sudden turns of the stream. The fish were not very large, but their appearance and their flavour as presented by our very kind hostess at the inn were altogether excellent.[15]

Buxton foresaw the day when it would be likely "that many Englishmen who have discovered pleasant streams during the war will go with their friends to re-visit old haunts in times of peace. They will find a pleasant welcome in a delightful country, and if they go to the right places at the right time, they will have fine sport."[16]

Wading on the Diplomatic Front

In July 1914, Sir Edward Grey, a member of the London Flyfishers' Club, and then British secretary for foreign affairs, made several worthy attempts to slow the tide of the ever-expanding war. His ideas were embraced by King George V, who made a direct appeal to Prince Henry of Prussia, but to no avail.

Henry van Dyke's wartime diplomatic duties required him to return to Luxembourg in April 1915. He wrote an account of the event in an essay titled "Fishing in Strange Waters."

The second trip was in 1915, after Germany's long crime had begun. It was necessary for the American Minister to go down to take charge of certain British interests in Luxembourg—a few poor people who had been stranded there and who sorely needed money and help. (What a damned inhuman thing war is, no one knows who has not been in the midst of it) . . . The journey was interesting. The German Minister at The Hague was most polite and obliging in the matter of providing a *visé* for the passports and giving the needful papers with big seals to pass the guards in what was euphemistically called "German-occupied territory." It grated on my nerves, but it was the only way . . .

One day was passed with my friend the notary Charles Klein, of the old town of *Wiltz*, a reputable lawyer and a renowned, impassioned fisher. He led us, with many halts for refreshment at wayside inns, to the little river *Sure*, which runs through a deep flowery vale from west to east, across the Grand Duchy.

Our stretch of water was between the high-arched *Pont de Misére* and the abandoned slate-quarry of *Bigonville*. The stream was clear and lively, with many rapids but no falls. It was about the size of the Neversink below Claryville, but more open. The woods crept down the steep, enfolding hills, now on this side, now on that, but never on both. One bank was always open for long casting, which is a delight. The brown trout (*Salmo fario*), were plentiful and plump, running from a quarter of a pound to a pound weight. Larger ones there must have been, but we did not see them. They accepted our tiny American flies—Beaverkill, Cahill, Queen of the Water, Royal Coachman, and so on—at par value without discount for exchange. It was easy, but not too easy, to fill our creels . . .

The second day of this series that I remember clearly was spent on a smaller stream, north of the Sure, with Mr. Le G., the son of the British Consul, and other pleasant companions. The name of the stream is forgotten, but the clear water and the pleasant banks of it are "in my mind's eye Horatio." It was a meadow-brook very like the one that I know not far from Norfolk, Connecticut, whither I have often gone to fish with my good friend the village storekeeper, S. Cone.

Now there is in all the world no water more pleasant to fish than a meadow-brook, provided the trout are there. The casting is easy, the wading is light, the fish are fat, the flowers of the field are plenteous, and the birds are abundant and songful. We filled our baskets, dined at the wayside inn, a jolly company, and motored back by moonlight to the city of Luxembourg.[17]

In May of 1916, HvD returned to his "outlying post" of Luxembourg and once again traveled through the German town of Trier where "hundreds of thousands of green-gray soldiers were rushing on their way to the Battle at *Verdun*."[18] In Luxembourg he mentioned that "[n]o longer did the field-gray ones sing when they marched, as they used to do in 1915. They plodded silent, evidently depressed. The war which they had begun so gayly [*sic*] was sinking into their souls. The first shadows of the Great Fatigue were falling upon them; but lightly as yet."[19]

With the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg away at her summer castle, HvD addressed some local affairs and then "was free to turn to the streams" with his host, Emile Meyrisch, an ironmaster and "an angler of the most confirmed sect."[20]

He took me to the valley of the *Clerf*, the loveliest little river in Luxembourg. By ruined castles and picturesque villages, among high-shouldered hills and smooth green meadows and hanging woods it runs with dancing ripples, long curves, and eddying pools where the trout lurk close to the bank . . . The *Clerf* runs from north to south. I suppose that was why the south wind, on that quiet sunny morning, carried into the placid valley a strange continuous rumbling like very distant thunder . . . Undoubtedly it was the noise of the guns in the offensive Crown Prince's "Great Offensive" at *Verdun*, a hundred kilometers away.

Strange that a sound could travel so far! Dreadful to think what it meant! It crossed the beauty of the day. But what could one do? Only fish on, and wait, and work quietly for a better day when America should come into the war and help to end it right.

A very fat and red-faced Major, whom I had met before at Clerveaux, rode by in a bridle path through the meadow. He stopped to salute and exchange greetings.

"How goes it?" I asked.

"*Verdamt schlecht*," he replied. "This is a dull country. The people simply won't like us. I wish I was at home."

"I too!" I answered.[21]

After America's eventual entry into the Great War, Germany would be subdued and the League of Nations established to enforce a lasting peace. The world had survived the war to end all wars. Henry van Dyke viewed the events pragmatically when he asked "would the organization of such a league of nations to defend peace make war henceforward impossible? No sane man, who knows the ignorance, the imperfection, the passionate frailty of human nature entertains such a wild dream or makes such an extravagant claim. All that the league can hope to do is to make an aggressive war, such as Germany thrust upon the world in 1914, *more difficult and more dangerous.*"[22]

An American Hero

In April 1918, one year after America had declared war on Germany, an eighteen-year-old outdoorsman and fledgling newspaper reporter named Ernest Hemingway volunteered his services to the American Red Cross. He was brevetted an honorary second lieutenant. A defective left eye had barred him from regular enlistment as a combatant, but the Red Cross provided a ready opportunity to serve in Europe as an ambulance driver (they did request that he wear eyeglasses, but he discarded them once he left the United States). Taking pleasant memories of innocent days spent in the woods and streams of his beloved Michigan wilderness with him, he embarked on a distant life-changing journey. After a brief stopover in Paris, he reported for orders in Milan.

The action young Ernest coveted came brutally swift. On the day of his arrival, he and fellow ambulance drivers of American Red Cross Section 4 were deployed to recover the remains of workers who had perished in a munitions factory explosion. From that horrific scene he would later move on to lend support to the front lines in the heavily bombarded village of Fossalta. It would be here that this future American icon would be tested under fire and stain a battlefield with his own blood.

When sifting through the volumes of writing that have supported, embellished, or refuted what has become the mammoth Hemingway legend, evidence of bravery under fire remains. Lieutenant Hemingway was performing the dangerous duty of delivering provisions to a front command post one dark sweat-filled night when shrapnel from an Austrian bomb ripped into those near him. He became quickly engaged in the commendable act of rescuing a downed Italian soldier from the field when he was struck in the legs by Austrian machine gun fire. Though wounded himself, he managed to carry the incapacitated soldier to safety before collapsing unconscious amongst the dead and injured. As Hemingway biographer Anthony Burgess wrote "he had been tested under fire and not found wanting."*

That war was over for Ernest Hemingway. He recovered in a Milan hospital, had his heart broken by a compassionate nurse he had fallen for while recuperating, and returned to Oak Park, Illinois, a hero. He was decorated for bravery under fire by the U.S. and Italian governments.

After gaining worldwide acclaim through the prolific output of his pen, Ernest Hemingway would return to the fields of battle as a war correspondent for *Collier's* magazine during the Second World War. The author's reputation loomed large with the American troops, and he accompanied them on the Normandy invasion. He was in the vanguard of the liberation of Paris and moved on to other bold campaigns with General Patton's armored division and General Barton's 4th infantry division. In the face of controversial accusations of fighting with the resistance or violating the Geneva Convention by dropping several grenades into a cellar where German SS members were hiding, he testified under oath, was exonerated, and eventually awarded a Bronze Star for heroic and meritorious achievement in service to his country.

*Anthony Burgess, *Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 24.

Item number EH2723P from the Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, with permission

American Red Cross Honorary Second Lieutenant Ernest Hemingway, ready for war at age 18.

Item number EH2532P from the Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, with permission

A brief stopover in Paris on his way to Milan.

Item number EH10042P from the Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, with permission

Behind the wheel of an American Red Cross Section 4 ambulance.

Item number EH8050P from the Ernest Hemingway Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts, with permission

And the young war hero recovering outside a Milan hospital.

Captain John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway (Hadley was his mother's maiden name and Nicanor was given as a tribute to the famous Spanish bullfighter, Nicanor Villalta, who was greatly admired by his father) in World War II Italy. Photo courtesy of Angela H. Hemingway.

A *Return* to Arms

The League of Nations may have been a noble concept but sadly, fewer than twenty-five years after the armistice, Ernest Hemingway's twenty-year-old son, Jack, was awaiting the order that would launch him out into the dark wartime skies over France. Their airborne mission was being carried out in part to set up a communications network, track the movements of the 11th Panzer Division, and provide training for the local resistance. In his 1986 autobiography, *Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman,* he describes a unique aspect of his premission anxiety: "I began to fret about how I was going to get away with bringing my fly rod, reel, and box of flies. I had managed to keep them with me ever since I became an officer and I was damned if I was going to leave them behind. It might even be bad luck."[23] When his rod was spotted by a British officer he was told, "You can't bring THAT with you, you know." The cool-headed Hemingway replied, "Oh, it's only a special antenna. Just looks like a fly rod."[24]

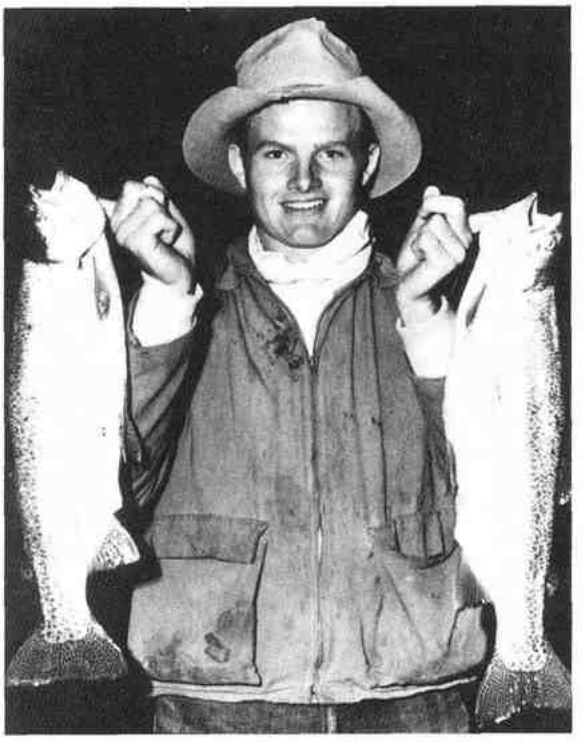
When it finally came time to jump, Hemingway recalled the moment:

> I grasped my fly rod by the center in my right hand, prepared to bring it parallel to my rigid body as I readied myself to stand at attention going out the hole. The red light was on and I couldn't help tensing. It switched to green and the dispatcher hit Jim's shoulder and, as soon as he was out, mine, and I was gone.
>
> Never have I felt a greater sense of jubilation. After a short moment of total disorientation, the chute had opened with a snap and I was alive in what seemed total silence as the sound of the engines faded away.[25]

After moving off into the French countryside, Captain Hemingway would soon learn of the successful D-Day landings via BBC radio. His first opportunity, or perhaps impulse, to go fishing came immediately after wiping tears of sorrow from his eyes: he had just viewed the brutally massacred and mutilated corpses of more than a dozen French teenage resistance fighters who had been trapped in a railroad tunnel by the Nazis and were afforded no rights under the Geneva Convention. Any physical or emotional escape that the river may have provided the traumatized captain was to be short-lived.

> I was in khaki, a civilian garb not uncommon at the time, but wore no cap and there was a U.S. flag sewn to my right soldier, but no insignia on the left. I wore the shoulder holster and a .38 inside my OD shirt. I fastened the reel onto the rod butt, left the rod case behind, and stuck the fly box and leader damping case inside my shirt beneath the pistol . . . Nervous at first, I had finally been overcome by the joy of going fishing. Despite the incongruity of the circumstances, I broke into a wild, leaping run down the mountainside, totally oblivious of the risk of life and limb . . .
>
> I hunkered down and kept my casts horizontal, to fish out the tail of the pool where the water roughened a bit before leaving the pool for a short series of chutes down to the next steep water. I had become totally concentrated on thoroughly covering the last few yards of possible holding water when I heard a most unwelcome and frightening sound, that of marching boots close by. With the sound of the stream through the nearby riffles, I had been caught completely unaware. I looked up and, marching at route step with rifles and machine pistols at sling arms, was a patrol in German uniform. They were all looking toward me and making what sounded like derisive, joking comments as they went along.
>
> For the first time in my life I made a silent wish that came as close to a real prayer as I had ever come. Above all, I wished not to hook a fish at that moment. If I had, the whole patrol would have halted to watch. Then there would have been a conversation and, if I had turned to any degree, the U.S. flag would have been visible. The powers above were with me; I hooked nothing, and the Germans kept marching down the track.[26]

Captain Jack would return from the war and lead an active sporting life right up until his death in 2000. I had the pleasure of sitting next to him for lunch one afternoon during the holiday season of 1999 and count myself truly fortunate to have met him.



An elated Jack Hemingway in mufti enjoying the sport he loved most. Photo courtesy of Angela H. Hemingway.

Conflicting Emotions

In the lingering aftermath of the September 11th tragedy, I found myself in a numbed state of confusion and dismay. Realizing that similar emotions were being felt throughout North America and abroad, I could not find solace on my favorite stream or in my cherished sporting books. "How could I think of fishing at a time like this?" echoed over and over again in my thoughts. I later discovered that these very thoughts have been examined by others.

Jack Hemingway obviously had no trouble reconciling his thoughts about fishing and fighting. He did both very well.

Henry van Dyke anticipated the question when he asked, "Why does this foolish writer talk about silly things like fishing while the world-war was going on, and especially now that the great social problems of the new era must be solved at once? He is a trifler, a hedonist, a man devoid of serious purpose and strenuous effort . . ."[27]

But rather than wallow in self-guilt, HvD embraced the idea of going fishing in times of trial: "I hold by the advice of the Divine Master who told his disciples to go a-fishing; and said to them when they were weary, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile.'"[28] He had been to the front lines to "taste the cup of danger" and recalled "soldiers whom I saw deliberately fishing on the banks of the *Marne* and *Meuse* while the guns roared around us."[29] He believed "that the most serious men are not the most solemn" and "that a normal human being needs relaxation and pleasure to keep him from strained nerves and a temper of fanatical insanity."[30] He chose the recreation of angling for four reasons: "First because I like it; second, because it does no harm to anybody; third, because it brings me in touch with Nature, and with all sorts and conditions of men; fourth, because it helps me to keep fit for work and duty."[31]

The debate was also carried out in the pages of the *Fishing Gazette* as well. "Is it unpatriotic to Fish, Hunt or Shoot in Wartime?—Providing that doing so does not militate against military or other duty, then it is quite certain to fish, or hunt, or shoot, or to engage in outdoor sports is neither unpatriotic or undesirable."[32] They added that Wellington hunted during the war with France in 1813, and that Izaak Walton "was faithful to angling through long times of trouble."[33]

Sir Edward Grey would go on to become Viscount Grey of Fallodon, and author of the famous *Fallodon Papers* of 1926, in which his timeless essays on fly fishing and recreation have been preserved for posterity. He wrote:

> In those dark days I found some support in the steady progress unchanged of the beauty of the seasons. Every year, as spring came back unfailing and unfaltering, the leaves came out with the same tender green, the birds sang, the flowers came up and opened, and I felt that a great power of Nature for beauty was not affected by the war. It was like a great sanctuary into which we could go and find refuge for a time from even the greatest trouble of the world, finding there not enervating ease, but something which gave optimism, confidence, and security.[34]

These words ring true several wars later.

The author wishes to thank J. David Zincavage of San Carlos, California; Angela H. Hemingway of Sun Valley, Idaho; and James Leighton Hardy, Dr. Tony Hayter, and Frederick Buller of Great Britain for their very generous assistance.

Endnotes

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George La Branche: "A Very Beautiful Fisherman"

by John Betts

An early portrait of George La Branche. Museum collection.

While exhibiting an admirable filial loyalty, many of us have been prone to be governed by tradition, and the education we received in the beginning from our fathers. With few exceptions we have trudged along the beaten path, looking rarely to the right or left, but backwards a great deal, using the same flies our fathers used before us, emulating their methods and admiring their successes. We have overlooked the fact that we are contending with conditions that have decreased the number of native trout and that would have taxed even the great skill with which we have endowed those of loving memory. I remember that one of my father's favorite flies was the Queen-of-the-Waters. Naturally it became mine, and I used it religiously, remembering its successes, forgetting its failures.

—George M. L. La Branche
The Dry Fly and Fast Water

In American angling literature there are probably not a dozen books that have equaled the quality and contribution of George La Branche's *The Dry Fly and Fast Water,* published in 1914. The first edition of the book contains neither pictures nor a line of fly-tying instruction, yet it stands nearly alone in importance. Why?

In the United States and Canada, only a few places share the characteristics of the chalk streams of southern England. The moving trout water of North America is predominantly made up of what La Branche described as "brawling, impetuous, tumbling streams."[1] Effective dry flies for such water are an American tradition in which there are thousands of patterns, nearly all of them designed to float well. They have names such as Skater, Bivisible, Hair-Wing Royal Coachman, and Wulff. Beyond them is an entirely new school that uses deer or similar hair in various ways to make Irresistibles, Humpies, Bombers, Paradrakes, Comparaduns, and Elk Hair Caddis. Most of these flies required new ideas, materials, and techniques. A glance at the illustrations in any contemporary catalog reveals the transformations that have led away from the sparser designs of Great Britain to the well-fed dry flies now purchased without question by anglers. The ideas described in La Branche's book created an American style of dry

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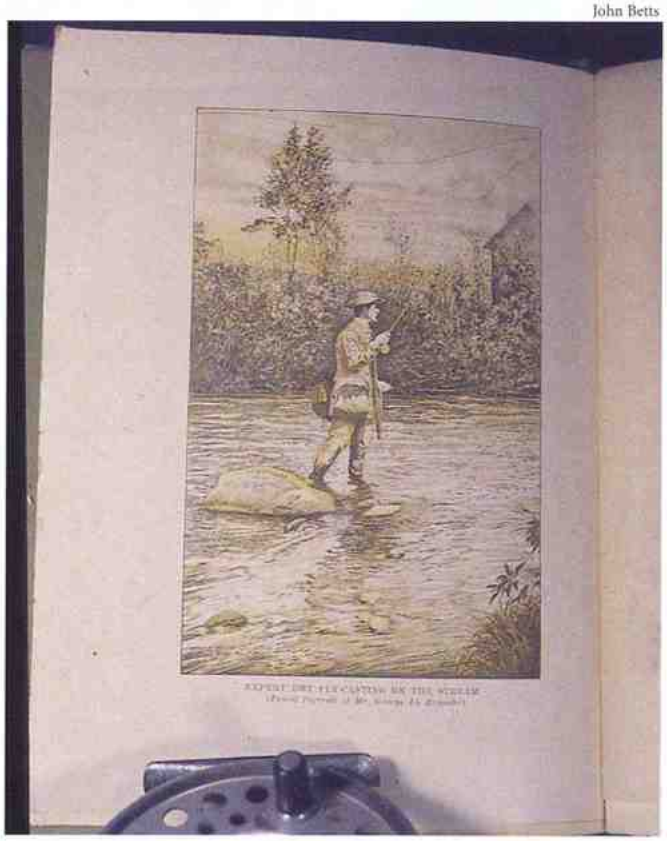
John Betts



The frontispiece of Louis Rhead's American Trout Stream Insects *(New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1914 [3rd ed.]) depicts George La Branche fishing a dry fly. A renowned tournament caster, La Branche won a competition in 1911 with a cast of ninety-four feet, which he made with a bamboo rod, silk line, and gut leader—and while attired in a suit. La Branche fished at more moderate distances, though with uncanny accuracy and finesse. By stressing presentation over fly pattern, he diverged from the growing emphasis on precise imitation of natural insects. By broadening the scope of dry-fly fishing to include fast water, La Branche changed the course of American fly tying.*

fly that is completely distinct from its English origins.

> This remarkable caster cast the dry fly in places in which it would be extremely difficult to drop a worm, under overhanging alders and blackberries, around trunks of trees, casting at will to particular leaves that the fly might drop thence like a caterpillar from an oak leaf. His fishing is smooth and effortless. . . . His flies go where he wishes them to and act as he directs them when they get there. Briefly, Mr. La Branche is a very beautiful fisherman.[2]

That passage, printed decades ago in the *Fishing Gazette,* can be found in an article by Arnold Gingrich in *McClane's New Standard Fishing Encyclopedia.* It forms the core of La Branche's approach to fly fishing and is as well a cause and effect of his reputation as a caster. His ability in this area was critical to the success of his approach.

A Businessman

George Michel Lucien La Branche was born on 25 May 1875 in New York City. Paul Schullery cites the following from the *National Cyclopedia of American Biography.*

> His father was an accountant. After attending public schools of his native city, George M. L. La Branche went to work in 1897 for James R. Keene, a stock broker. Later he became Keene's personal secretary, continuing in that capacity until 1912. Having learned the operations of the purchase and sale of securities, La Branche established himself as a member of the New York Club Market in 1912. Five years later he purchased a seat on the New York Exchange, and in 1924 he organized La Branche & Co., New York City, with which he was associated until his retirement in 1946.[3]

In the spring 1992 issue of *The American Fly Fisher,* there is a wonderful article by Timothy Belknap titled "George La Branche's High Holt: A Place in His Life and Work."[4] It deals with the life and person of La Branche. From beginning to end, it is a fascinating piece that indicates La Branche had the best of all possible worlds.

According to Belknap, La Branche's first employer, James Keene, had gone to California in the Gold Rush of the mid-1800s, eventually becoming president of the San Francisco Stock Exchange and later returning to New York. He was, at the very least, sharp and "became known on the street as the Silver Fox."[5] One technique that he and others used was to "create real trading fever"[6] by buying and selling shares simultaneously to drive the price of selected stocks up or down. Sounds familiar. La Branche learned quickly and became a "market maker, commonly known as a specialist, for AT&T."[7]

Henry Davis

George La Branche in the 1930s. Museum collection.

In 1915, La Branche had gone on a salmon-fishing trip to Canada, and because of the weather ended up being stranded there for longer than he had planned. His office was under strict instructions not to try to contact him. On May 15, the liner *Lusitania* was sunk by German U-boats. More than 1,100 people, including 128 Americans, lost their lives. This terrible event contributed much to public sentiment advocating our entry into World War I.

La Branche owned a block of stock in the Electric Boat Co., which had a contract with the Navy to build submarines. Electric Boat doubled, doubled again, and redoubled in just a few weeks. It became the hottest item in the market. War fever mounted, and when La Branche got back and was finally able to sell, the stock had gone from below 80 to 190 to 400. La Branche had gone from rich to very rich, with a "ten million dollar line of credit."[8] A part of his fortune went to High Holt, his 1,800-acre country estate and retreat north of New York City. In 1920 dollars, it cost about $750,000. The style he enjoyed was now easily within his reach. Electric Boat eventually became General Dynamics.

Distinctly an Art

La Branche was urbane and attractive, and Gingrich (in *McClane's*) indicates that he was always well dressed for every occasion. A coat, tie, and soft-brimmed hat were the normal angling attire. Gingrich continues that La Branche was also an enthusiastic golfer, bird hunter, and yachtsman. Quoted in the same *McClane's* piece is this reply from La Branche when he was asked if fly fishing was an art or a science.

> Distinctly an art. Fly fishing is closely related in my mind to music. I think that to cast a fly properly one must possess a sense of rhythm. A cast should be made in time to a rhythmic beat, and the fly could easily be allowed to float on the water for the length of certain notes, withdrawn and the line straightened out and cast again all to musical measure and cadence.[9]

La Branche's father was a champion caster and was often accompanied by his son to tournaments in which they both competed. Casting competitions were quite common in the early part of this century. Rules developed around the tackle that was then used in the field, and there were numerous casting clubs. No longer local affairs, the few that take place nowadays usually involve people with rare ability who are often sponsored to some degree by members of the tackle business. In La Branche's time competition tackle was actual fishing tackle, and the participants were amateurs.

Normal tackle included gut leaders, which were quite different from what we have now. They were thicker and stiffer and, because they had to soak up water to become flexible, heavier and more likely to hold the direction of the cast. This meant great accuracy. The braided and enameled silk lines had much more life in them than the modern synthetics. Grease was needed to float the old lines. Even when dressed, they sat lower in the water than modern ones. The grease increased the weight of the lines and did not create a surface as slick as plastic. The dressed surface had greater resistance to movement. As a result, the older lines were heavier for their diameters and more resistant to being slid off the surface at the beginning of the backcast. Cane rods were not as "sudden" as

These dry flies of George LaBranche are in the museum's collection. The large advanced wing mayfly in the center of the plate resembles the mayfly imitations of Frederick Halford and others. These were appearing in print by the late 1800s.

More important are the four dry flies in the corners. These are Bivisibles. Their success in "impetuous" water relies on their full, bushy form. Dressed with floatant, they would ride continuously over rough surfaces through repeated casts and inundations.

Their "form"—actually formlessness—created for LaBranche his most important criterion of "position." As objects of blurred light and silhouette, vague colors, and indistinct shapes, trout could easily refuse them in slower, clearer conditions. However, in fast water, there was enough of the right image to satisfy judgments fully compromised by higher current speeds and irregular surfaces.

In the case of Bivisibles then, their "form" is synonymous with "position." No matter how they landed, they were always in the right "position" of right side up. For Bivisibles, "position" and "form" are coincident and should both be in first place, not in first and fourth place, respectively.

John Price

graphite, and loading them was a slower and more gradual process. The weight of the cane itself slowed the process even further but gave all of the pieces time to work together.

These older systems can be unforgiving of thoughtless or uneven timing. In practiced hands, though, the slower, smoother synchronization of gut, braided silk, and split bamboo fit easily into the analogy to music, allowing the threads of melodies to be woven into a unified composition. La Branche is not alone in likening fly casting to music; Joan Wulff has said for years that the rhythms of casting are very much like those found in ballet. With equipment that allowed him to perform at his best, the handsome, slender, well-dressed, and graceful La Branche must certainly have been beautiful to watch.

Graphite rods, which become fully loaded much faster than cane, must have lines that can slide off the surface very quickly in order to keep the action of the rod awake and alive. Graphite rods and modern fly line tapers and finishes are natural products of each other's characteristics and evolution.

In his lifetime, George M. L. La Branche was very well known among America's foremost fly fishers. He had apparently met Theodore Gordon only once, but corresponded with him on several occasions. He considered Gordon to be "the best fly tier I have ever known."[10] Gordon was an early disciple of Frederic Halford. Halford's patterns were developed on the smooth waters of Hampshire, and Gordon, following the Englishman's lead, fished his Halford-inspired flies on sections of his Catskill rivers, where their delicacy was perfectly suited for the task. Early on, La Branche followed Gordon's and Halford's advice. Over time, however, La Branche, by recognizing the predominant characteristic of streams in the Northeast, faced a dilemma. Gordon's style of tying was not suitable for choppy water, and La Branche had learned from his wet-fly experience that fish were just as plentiful in the swifter sections as they were elsewhere.

La Branche also knew and fished with Colonel Ambrose Monell. After Monell's initial efforts, he and La Branche launched dry-fly fishing for Atlantic salmon. Certainly others had caught salmon on flies floating on the surface by accident and perhaps even on purpose. However, La Branche, Edward R. Hewitt, and Monell were the first to create widespread acceptance of the idea that it could be done on purpose. The fruits of their efforts and Hewitt's fly designs resulted in the publication of La Branche's *Salmon and the Dry Fly* in 1924.

Exaggeration

Considering the company La Branche kept, and his own reputation as a fly caster and fisherman, it is hardly surprising that his life and ideas have been subjects of exaggeration. Perhaps two of the most often heard allegations are that he was a dogmatic dry-fly purist and that his favorite fly was the Pink Lady, which he used to the exclusion of others over many entire seasons. Neither statement is true. La Branche learned from his father to fish with wet flies. He became a dry-fly fisherman on the Junction Pool near Roscoe, New York, where the Mongaup and Willowemoc come together to form the Beaverkill.

One evening in 1899, La Branche saw

John Betts

The King-of-the-Waters, another popular nineteenth-century fly, accidentally became the father of the Pink Lady dressing. When a tackle dealer could not supply him with any Queen-of-the-Waters flies, La Branche purchased several Kings. He put them away wet, and their red floss bodies bled onto the leaves of his fly book, turning pink. La Branche fished the faded Kings the next day and did very well. Fly tied by the author.

John Betts

The Queen-of-the-Waters was George La Branche's favorite wet fly, a preference he acquired from his father, himself a well-known angler. La Branche's first success with a dry fly came in 1899, when he used a "doctored" Queen-of-the-Waters to catch four trout on four casts. This version is tied on one of the author's handmade hooks. Fly tied by the author.

several good fish feeding on the Junction Pool's surface. They refused everything he presented to them. As the story goes, his fly wallet held a clipping from the *Fishing Gazette* titled "Casting to Rising Fish." The piece told him that he needed a floating fly that matched the insects being taken. Here is La Branche's account of what followed.

> I "doctored" some wet flies into what I thought to be a fair imitation of the dry fly by tying the wings forward so that they stood at right angles to the body, and then sallied off to the pool. On my way to the stream I went alternately hot and cold betwixt hope and fear. I rehearsed in my mind all the things I had to do, and I think I was coldest when I thought of having to float the fly. The writer had recommended the use of paraffin oil as an aid to buoyancy, and this commodity was about as easily procurable in Sullivan County as the philosopher's stone; and in my then frame of mind would probably have proven as good a buoyant.[11]

Paraffin (also paraffine or paraffene) is a common term in Europe for a distillate of petroleum (coal oil is a similar product and is on occasion also called paraffin, -ine, -ene). In the United States it is called kerosene. It is used in diesel and jet fuel, heating oil, and wood protection. Light grades have been available since the mid-1850s as lamp oil. It is still easily purchased today in odorless forms from hardware and farm supply stores and supermarkets. In the early 1900s it was in worldwide use, which would have included La Branche's Sullivan County, New York, and it's odd that La Branche couldn't find any. It is still the best of all dry-fly floatants. Easily applied from a small brush bottle, it will not only waterproof flies but will add luster and depth to their colors that is not possible with any other material. It imparts to silk floss and wrapped mohair bodies a unique translucence.

Even without floatant, La Branche did pretty well with his "doctored" Queen-of-the Waters.

> I waded boldly out to a position some forty feet below and to the right of the pool. My first cast amazed me. The fly alighted as gently as a natural insect upon the surface, and watching it as it floated down toward the spot where the fish had been rising, I saw it disappear, a little bubble being left in its place. Instinctively I struck and to my astonishment was fast in a solid fish that leaped clear of the water. The leaping of this fish was a new experience as I had never seen a trout jump as cleanly from the water. After a few flights and a determined rush or two I netted him—a rainbow trout just over a foot long and the first I had ever taken.[12]

La Branche took four good fish that evening on four consecutive casts. He goes on to say, "If such had not been the case I doubt very much if I should have succeeded because I am certain that my confidence would have been much weakened had I failed to take the first fish, and my subsequent attempts might not have been made at all, or if made would probably have ended in failure."[13] Are any of us that much different?

And yet La Branche never became dogmatic. "It is not my purpose," he wrote, "to contend that the dry fly is more effective than the wet . . . [though] under certain conditions the dry fly will take fish that may not be taken by any other manner. I do contend, however, that a greater fascination attends its use. . . ."[14] That, of course, is the very reason so many find dry-fly fishing so alluring.

John Betts

This modern Quill Gordon tied by David Brandt of Oneonta, New York, exemplifies the Catskill style generally associated with Theodore Gordon and Rube Cross. But modern dressings bear little resemblance to flies actually tied by Gordon, and the modern American styles of tying, even of classic Catskill dressings, owe as much to La Branche as to any of the famous tyers of his era. By showing that dry flies could be used in fast water, La Branche created a need for patterns that would float well on rough currents. Many patterns were modified to take advantage of the new possibilities, and thousands more have been created for fast-water fishing.

John Betts

The best-known of La Branche's flies is the Pink Lady. He often used the fly only to demonstrate the importance of presentation. The Pink Lady is an elegant dressing that still takes fish. Its profile is classic. Fly tied by the author.

John Betts

The Pink Lady has also been tied in a palmered or Bivisible version. Bivisibles were introduced by La Branche's friend Edward Hewitt, who also invented the famous Neversink Skater. After their introduction, Bivisibles came to be faced with yellow or white hackles to make them easier to see on fast, choppy water. Fly tied by the author.

At a later date, in response to an interviewer's question about his being a purist, La Branche answered, "Not in the broad sense of the term. I consider that the real purist wastes countless joyous and active hours waiting, according to theory, for the fish to rise before he starts."[15] That was standard behavior in England. La Branche, not one to waste minutes, let alone hours, learned to fish dry flies in fast water, casting to trout he knew were there, but which had not revealed themselves by rising.

The second misconception involves La Branche's exclusive use of the Pink Lady. His father's favorite fly, and for a while his, was the old Scottish wet fly the Queen-of-the-Waters. On one occasion La Branche was without these flies and had to purchase some. The dealer had no Queens and supplied La Branche with some King-of-the-Waters. That night, having caught no fish on them, he put the soggy flies in his wallet. After opening it the next day, La Branche noticed that the red dye in the silk bodies had bled out onto the felt leaves of the fly wallet. The bodies were now pink. The next thing La Branche noticed was how many fish he caught on the faded flies. A happy accident had produced his first Pink Ladies.

On the Pink Ladies and later flies, La Branche used starling quill as well as mallard for the wings. Starling is not found on many American patterns, but La Branche knew of the qualities of the feather. It is fine textured, translucent, and very light. The standard, and heavier, mallard quill could, if too much is used, tip a fly over on its side, spoiling its position on the water.

There were occasions, but not entire seasons, when La Branche used the Pink Lady to the exclusion of other flies, but in those instances it was to prove his point that presentation matters more than the pattern being presented. Given the kind of water La Branche fished, this is probably true.

La Branche's favorite fly was actually the Whirling Dun, about which he had this to say: "I give the dressings of eight patterns, although I rarely use over six. If I were compelled to do so I could get along very well with one—the Whirling Dun."[16] He was also partial to the Silver Sedge and the Mole as well as the Pink Lady.

Presentation

La Branche listed the priorities for his flies as follows: "1st: Position of the fly on the water; 2nd: Its action; 3rd: Size; 4th: Form; 5th: Color."[17] Although this order of priorities might not be the same on smooth water, it was excellent for conditions that were "impetuous," in which a fish has little time to decide whether to eat the thing floating overhead.

For a trout in six inches of water, the

John Betts

Page from an old Umpqua Feather Merchants catalog showing typical commercial dry flies. Note the heavy dress—body, wings, hackle, and tail. The wings are mounted backward, which is now the accepted way. The feather flow of the quill segments is forward and will cause the wings to split. In the Pink Lady (see photo, page 17), the feather flow is to the rear, and the quill will not split. This is the old style.

window above him is twelve inches across. Slow water moves at one foot or less per second; fast water at about four feet or more in the same period of time. In the swifter currents a fly will cross the front half (six inches) of the window in one-eighth of a second or less, depending on the speed of the water. Even for an animal conditioned to these circumstances over millions of years, a tiny fraction of a second is not much time to go through everything needed to discriminate and decide whether to intercept or refuse an object. So the trout has to make the best guess he can.

"Position" refers to the way the fly sat on the surface. La Branche's ideas on this—that it should sit upright—were nothing new and continue today. He was no more successful at accomplishing right-side-up drifts than others and comments on this.

La Branche understood the importance of the action of a fly. If it was supposed to be still, it had better be that way. If it should move then it should be *made* to do so in an appropriate manner. In my experience, a loose loop connection to any fly will double or triple its effectiveness. The loop allows twitches and curls to occur that cannot be seen or imparted by the angler. These may be caused by tiny breezes, currents, or changes in surface configuration that the fly has encountered.

"Size" might only need to be fairly close because of the need for quick decisions on the part of the trout. This placement of size in third position might indicate that there could be some leeway on either side of optimal.

"Form," which I am taking to mean the configuration of the fly, ended up farther down the list than it might have. If La Branche considered that the form of the traditional dry fly was acceptable, then fourth place is understandable. However, his change to a fuller hackle is directly related to function. La Branche wanted them to float in fast water, which means that their form had to be different from those that didn't float well under those conditions. Flies that floated better could have a better "position" than those that didn't. If "position" was at the top of the list, perhaps "form" should be closer to it.

La Branche's thoughts on color were extensions of angling writers going all the way back to Robert Venables, who died in 1682. He understood that the underside of a fly is important; it is what the fish see, and it is illuminated by light reflected off the bottom and through the water, the color of which can vary. For instance, a fly with a reddish body passing over green weeds will have, when viewed from underneath, an olive tint. The same conditions can produce a slightly different shade if the reddish body is made of a different material.

In his early days La Branche followed,

George La Branche. Museum collection.

to some extent, the English practice of making a few casts to a fish or likely spot and then moving on. Later on he changed and began making dozens of casts to the same fish, a sound practice in fast water where there is much to interfere with the image of the fly. Some have called this creating a hatch, and it is used in both fast and slow water. In principle it's not all that different from creating a market for a stock—something La Branche was quite good at.

By 1914 and the publication of his book, La Branche explains that he had "abandoned the wet fly for all time"[18] and expanded the use of the dry fly in fast water. In doing so, he laid the groundwork for new schools of fly design in which flotation in the right "position" gained increasing importance. Split-tails and parachutes are extensions of those ideas.

His early success on the Junction Pool produced a wonderful, bright, and permanent memory that influenced George La Branche for the rest of his life. He invented his game for the sheer joy of it, and not to create or maintain a dogma. He was securely hooked in 1899 at the age of twenty-four, and remained happily so until his death in 1961. Our American dry-fly tradition owes a good deal to this "very beautiful fisherman."

≈

ENDNOTES

1. George M. L. La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914 [reprinted 1929]), 13.
2. Arnold Gingrich, "La Branche, George Michel Lucien," in A. J. McClane, ed., *McClane's New Standard Fishing Encyclopedia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965 [enlarged and revised, 1974]), 526.
3. Introduction by Paul Schullery in the reprint of George M. L. La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (Helena, Mont.: Greycliff Publishing, 1998), xiv–xv.
4. Timothy Belknap, "George La Branche's High Holt: A Place in His Life and Work," *The American Fly Fisher* (spring 1992), vol. 18, no. 2, 4–8.
5. Ibid., 5.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Gingrich, "La Branche, George Michel Lucien," 526.
10. Schullery in the reprint of La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (Helena, Mont.: Greycliff Publishing, 1998), xxxi.
11. La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914 [reprinted 1929]), 10.
12. Ibid., 11.
13. Ibid., 12.
14. Ibid., 8.
15. Gingrich, "La Branche, George Michel Lucien," 526.
16. La Branche, *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914 [reprinted 1929]), 214.
17. Ibid., 164–65.
18. Ibid., 13.

Much Ado about a Move

by Sara Wilcox

Sara Wilcox

Clear evidence of what caused the severe shortage of cardboard and mailing tape in the Northeast this past summer. The Museum staff all experienced symptoms of "magic marker smell" withdrawal shortly after the packing was completed, but everyone recovered nicely.

In July, all the excitement about our new building and what our planned expansion would mean to the Museum gave way to the harsh reality of packing up and moving everything out. Talk about a rude awakening.

I'm sure anyone who has visited the Museum or seen the archives upstairs can imagine what a monumental task moving the contents of the entire building promised to be. For those of you who haven't, some numbers to help illuminate matters: 1,000 rods, 900 reels, and 3,000 books, not to mention flies, creels, nets, artwork, magazines, papers, and boxes upon boxes of artifacts. And that doesn't even include the gift shop, auction room, or staff offices.

So, where do you start? In our case, once the Museum was closed, we decided to begin by packing "Anglers All" for its eventual journey to Cleveland. Not only did we already have everything we needed for crating and transporting the exhibit, but emptying the galleries as much as possible allowed us to stack packed boxes in those rooms. This cleared out space upstairs in the collection areas so we could continue working.

Taking care of "Anglers All" actually turned out to be the easiest part of the whole process. Yoshi had been there to help take down the exhibit when it left Montana, Utah, and California, so he pretty much had the routine down cold. Meanwhile, I had enough familiarity with the exhibit from setting it up in Manchester and from packing it for its initial trip to Montana that I was able to not be too much of a hindrance to Yoshi. So the most difficult part ended up being getting the exhibit's large wooden shipping crates out of the U-Haul and into the Museum.

While the two of us took care of the exhibit, the rest of the staff got things ready for the main event: ordering cardboard boxes, packing tape, and rolls of bubble wrap the size of small hippos. Our galleries began to resemble a shipping center more than a museum. Finally, "Anglers All" was done and our supplies were in. Taking a deep breath, we started on the rest.

The next few weeks passed in a blur of lifting, toting, boxing, taping, marking, and wrapping. Sometimes the work was relatively easy, a matter of putting boxes within boxes, labeling them, and moving on; we played music, developed a rhythm, and the time flew by. Other days it was more complex and time-consuming as we prepared delicate rods, reels, and artwork to be packed and moved safely. Small rolls of clear plastic, much like Saran Wrap, became our best friends. The stuff was our version of duct tape, used whenever we needed something held together or lashed down.

While Yoshi and I plugged away upstairs, downstairs Gary, Toney, and Diana worked on packing the gift shop and emptying the basement (dynamite would have actually been better for the mess that was our cellar, but we thought the town might frown on that). They also emptied file cabinets and readied staff desks and computers for transport, with Gary unearthing parts of his office that hadn't been seen since he moved in. Diana was the smartest of us all, packing up her auction materials before we'd even begun with "Anglers All"—lucky for us, as it left her free to give everyone else a hand.

Speaking of lending a hand, here we must also take a moment to sing the praises of Museum Trustee Jim Hardman. Despite a busy schedule, he was able to take the time to stop by and box up reels for us. Jim wrapped each one with care and labeled his boxes so neatly and clearly it put the rest of us to shame. Without his help, it's doubtful we'd have been finished by the time the movers came. More important, though, was the warmth and good cheer he exuded, which was like a balm on our weary spirits.

If asked, I probably couldn't give a complete accounting of all I did during those weeks. I know I filled my days, but I'm

Sara Wilcox

Safely ensconced in the collection's new carriage house quarters, these boxes are all waiting to be unpacked.

not sure I could say how. There are some memories, however, that do stick out:

- Yoshi's reaction to seeing the crawl space, and the cartons of magazines that filled its confines, for the first time. I'd quote him, but it would require us to put a parental advisory sticker on the front cover.
- Gary and I crouching at either end of said crawl space on a sweltering hot morning, using a homemade dumb waiter–type system to haul those cartons out. Informative tip of the day: July is a less than ideal month for a move.
- Sliding boxes down the stairs on long pieces of cardboard, a much easier method than lugging them into the galleries.
- Dismantling the wooden framework used to store rods with that most delicate of precision tools: the sledgehammer.
- The therapeutic benefits of taking apart the library shelving, as the most efficient method was a solid kick to where the pieces joined.
- Yoshi and I, dripping with sweat, leaning into the U-Haul to put our faces in front of the air blasting from the vents like dogs with our heads out the windows. See informative tip above.

As we all made slow but steady progress in our labors, a new building emerged in our wake. Familiar contours disappeared as shelving was taken down and boxes stored away, leaving open and airy rooms completely unlike anything we were used to, not to mention revealing nooks and crannies that hadn't seen the light of day in years. In a way it probably made leaving the building easier, as we were no longer saying farewell to a good friend but rather a stranger we'd recently met.

By the time we'd moved into our first temporary home at the Ignition offices in Manchester, we'd filled five storage units (each unit measured 10 by 30 feet) with our stuff, not including the collection itself—that we brought to the Ignition warehouse with us, where it would be in a safer, climate-controlled environment. Our desks were lined up in a space overlooking that warehouse, and we all resumed our work as best we could. The folks at Ignition, a local marketing company, couldn't have been better hosts, welcoming us into their world without hesitation. They were a great bunch of people, and we enjoyed spending the time with them.

When we moved into the carriage house, the smaller of the Museum's two new buildings, in late October, a whole new set of challenges awaited us. Getting the collection and the shelving into its permanent location while leaving ourselves enough room to work was a feat in and of itself, let alone coordinating the placement of boxes so items would end up close to where they would ultimately be stored. Our desks and computers were set up in the space reserved for the board room, a cozy arrangement that ensured we'd all be showering regularly.

It was a daunting sight, those stacks upon stacks of boxes waiting to be unpacked. We went at them the only way we could: one box at a time. This is when another very large benefit of our move became clear, as the unpacking process gave us the opportunity to go through the entire collection piece by piece. As we did, we updated or expanded the item's entry in the computer as the need arose and in this way started bringing our database completely up-to-date.

Above all, it was as exciting a time for the Museum as it was a difficult one, with the promise of the end result keeping us (most of the time) from feeling completely overwhelmed by the challenges of getting there.

BOOK REVIEW

Two Reviews: Andrew Herd's *The Fly*

The Fly, a limited edition of 599 copies (ninety-nine bound in leather) on the history of fly fishing, by Andrew Herd, is certainly a fun read. It is a comprehensive tome that takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the annals of fly fishing—from its earliest beginnings in Macedonia to the present. The text is extensively footnoted, and a perusal of the bibliography speaks to the thoroughness of the author's endeavor at reviewing the extant fly-fishing literature. But *The Fly* is more than just a review. Not only does it document the many important milestones in the development of the gentle art, it carefully juxtaposes these developments with a history of the times—thus giving the reader a perspective on fly-fishing history that is rarely encountered and sorely lacking in most treatments of our fly-fishing heritage.

After a foreword by Fred Buller, a preface by John Betts, and an introduction by the author, seven comprehensive chapters follow: "Beginnings," "The Seventeenth Century," "The Eighteenth Century," "The Early Nineteenth Century," "The Late Nineteenth Century," "The Dry Fly," and "The Twentieth Century." Most chapters begin with an informative, general historical introduction for the period under examination. This is followed by a discussion of the various angling impedimenta of the day (reels, lines, rods, flies) that were either developed or were in wide use at the time. Each chapter is well illustrated, but I was disappointed with the quality of many of the illustrations. Many lack sufficient contrast, and some seem to be out of focus. Although a costly printing expense, color plates would have greatly enhanced the publication—especially for the discussion of fancy flies. But most disturbing and disappointing to me was the lack of an index.* This inadequacy severely impairs the usefulness of Herd's effort as a historical tool. Herd has spent considerable time and effort in compiling an interesting, well-written, informative, and well-researched work. It is particularly unfortunate that a decision was made by the publisher and/or the author to omit such an exceedingly important research aid.

As to the historical content of *The Fly*, Herd has touched essentially all of the bases. There are a few omissions that require comment. The first, albeit very minor (I probably shouldn't even mention it, but for my penchant for the esoteric) relates to Charles Cotton's contribution to Walton's *Complete Angler*. According to an obscure annotation in George Washington Bethune's edition of *Walton's Complete Angler* (1847; see the appended catalog of Bethune's angling books in this edition and *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 14, Winter 1975), Cotton might have cribbed the bulk of the material he published with Walton from a manuscript by a Robert Noble. I have long been fascinated by this reference, and while quite obscure, have been surprised that angling historians have not given it more press. The Noble manuscript was part of Bethune's extensive angling library and was sold at auction after his death; its location at this point in time remains unknown.

Second, and a bit more important, relates to Herd's discussion of Halford, Gordon, and the introduction of the dry fly to North American waters. A name conspicuously absent from this discussion is that of John Harrington Keene, a British emigrant who came to this country in 1885. Through his lengthy articles in the *American Angler*, the *American Field*, and his book, *Fly Fishing and Fly Making*, Keene was probably the first to formally introduce the dry fly to the American angling public (see *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 8, Winter 1986; and *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 9, Spring 1986). I am convinced that he was considerably more influential than Gordon in promulgating the art of fishing with the floating fly on American waters.

Finally, a criticism that relates not only to *The Fly*, but to the majority of angling histories. Angling periodicals, a most important primary historical source, are almost never considered or consulted. Most histories rely solely on published books, simply because they are more readily accessible than periodicals. In Herd's book, there isn't a single mention of the very early British sporting journals—for example, the *Sporting Review* or the *Sporting Magazine*. Perusal of these important early sporting journals, I'm confident, would not only afford considerable insight into our fly-fishing origins, it would make significant inroads in converting soft speculation into hard, irrefutable, historical fact.

—David B. Ledlie

There can be no book of greater potential significance to the American Museum of Fly Fishing, and to readers of this journal, than a new history of fly fishing. As John Betts points out in his preface to *The Fly*, "Of the thousands of books printed on fly fishing, only a handful have been devoted to a discussion of the sport's history" (p. 13).

I prepared to write this review of *The Fly* by rereading, for the third or fourth time, John Waller Hills's *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout* (1921). For decades, Hills's brief history has been viewed by many of our leading writers as the sport's definitive historical reference work. I was enormously grateful for Hills when I began my exploration of fishing literature. True, it is only about fly fishing for salmonids, but its quality has made it the reigning historical work despite that limitation.

But I'm not sure any discipline, sport, or craft can get along on the same text for so long. Even in my earlier readings (the first was almost thirty years ago), it seemed to me the book was showing the strain of changing times. Hills is more an extended literature review than a history; it is mostly a history of fly-fishing books. Hills himself was far too confident in his pronouncements and interpretations, some of which were importantly wrong. And, perhaps his biggest mistake of all, Hills pretty clearly saw his own generation as the final product of several centuries of theoretical progress toward perfection. He obviously regarded that perfection to have been achieved, back there in 1921; it is amazing the extent to which this sort of determinism can mess up one's ability to analyze historical reality.

When I finished my most recent reading of Hills, practically all of my original

*We have learned that *The Fly* is the first volume of a projected two-volume set; the second volume will deal with fly patterns and will contain the index for both volumes.

gratitude had been replaced by annoyance at his errors and exasperating presumptions. Even a quick tour through Conrad Voss Bark's equally brief and engaging *A History of Fly Fishing* (1992), which helpfully recasts many of Hills's points, did not repair my mood; I kept thinking about the Hills book, and wondering how fly fishers ever got so puffed up and self-righteous over such a patently narrow set of accomplishments?

Andrew Herd doesn't try to answer that question, but it's one of very few that he does neglect. *The Fly* is a terrific corrective for the outmoded thinking of the Hills book, but it is far more. At three or four times the length (this is a rough guess; the two books have very different formats) of the Hills book, *The Fly* is far more generous with the meaty details of the story—this alone instantly qualifies it as the new standard reference work in a field that desperately needed one.

But it is the broadly inquiring mood of the thing that makes it so exciting. It is far more integrative a work, displaying an admirable acquaintance with the greater social and technological history behind changes in fly-fishing history and theory. And as far as the fishing, at every turn Herd probes more deeply into the evidence than Hills did (alas, in much of this story, there isn't all that much new information available), and provides quite a few new and entertaining insights. If you're only sort of interested in fishing history, Herd's sense of humor may help you through.

There are sections of the book that I consider enormously important and indicative of just how far we've come since Hills's day in our understanding of our own tradition. Though the reconsideration of floating flies is reasonably momentous, the revision I personally favored most involves the early European history of fly fishing. The boilerplate "origins of fly fishing" story invariably mentions Ælian's two-thousand-year-old account of Macedonian fly fishing and one or two other vagrant references, provides no context for them, then hurries along to the fifteenth century and the comfortable intoning of the known fishing books in a nice, tidy row—the ritual Naming of the Greats.

Herd, on the other hand, starts by giving Ælian's brief account a fresh and revealing look. Then, thanks to the sleuthing of several amateur and professional historians (not the least being Herd's own experiences fishing across Europe and tracking down various local angling traditions), he provides a plausible, even irresistible, framework for tracing fly fishing through those fifteen missing centuries of practice. He portrays the long haul of the sport's history as a widespread folk and craft tradition flourishing here and there in appropriate locations at the hands of savvy local practitioners. The accounts he provides of some of these traditions as they were described at the beginning of the modern era are tantalizing glimpses at millennia of uncelebrated angling. What a wonderful statement about the vitality and flexibility of the sport.

And what a refreshing beginning for a book that all serious fly fishers could learn from. I dearly hope there will be an American edition, perhaps more than one. A paperback would be nice.

—Paul Schullery

The Fly *(copyright 2001) was published by the Medlar Press Limited, The Grange, Ellesmere, Shropshire, in an edition of 599 (ninety-nine leather-bound). 374 pages. Illustrated. £49 cloth; £120 leather. Order from www.medlar.uk.com.*

David Ledlie is a recently retired professor of organic chemistry from Bates College. He was registrar at the American Museum of Fly Fishing from 1971 to 1977, editor of The American Fly Fisher *from 1983 to 1988, and recipient of this journal's Austin Hogan Award in 1986. When not fly fishing, Ledlie finds time for woodworking and hybridizing daylilies, tree peonies, and rhodendrons.*

Historian Paul Schullery was executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing from 1977 to 1982 and editor of The American Fly Fisher *from 1978 to 1983. He is an affiliate professor of history at Montana State University and an adjunct professor of American Studies at the University of Wyoming.*

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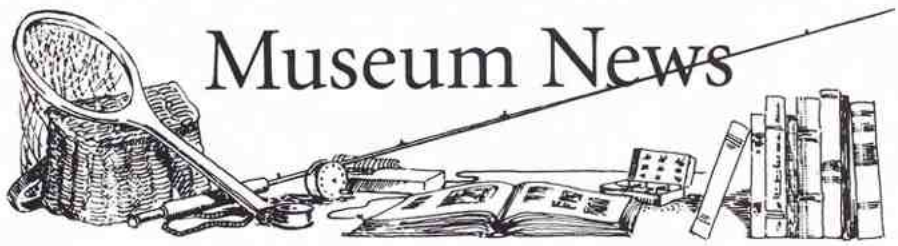

Museum News

Recent Donations

Robert E. Cantara of Manchester, New Hampshire, donated an 1899 Shakespeare steelhead trout reel, model RF. **Joseph W. Cooper** of Kentfield, California, donated a Sanford Springfisher Co. fly reel and Joe Cooper's *Tale of Tarpey's: Cooper's Flyfisherman's Guide to the Tarpey's Cabin.*

Paul Schullery of Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, donated a special fly-fishing issue of *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* (summer 2002). Among its articles is his own "Frontier Fly-Fishing in the New West." **Daniel L. Shields** of Lemont, Pennsylvania, donated a copy of *George Harvey: Memories, Patterns, and Tactics,* autographed by Harvey. Shields is compiler and publisher of the book.

In the Library

Thanks to the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become part of our collection (all were published in 2002):

Pruett Publishing Company sent us John Juracek's *Yellowstone: Photographs of a Fly-Fishing Landscape* and John Huber's *Lessons of Fairsized Creek: 12 Ways to Catch More Trout on the Fly.*

Frank Amato Publications Inc. sent us Barry and Cathy Beck's *Pennsylvania Blue-Ribbon Fly-Fishing Guide;* John Shewey's *Spey Flies & Dee Flies: Their History & Construction;* Lily Tso Wong's *Fly-Fishing Northern California Waters: Roadside, Backcountry, and Wilderness Destinations;* Art Lingren's *Famous British Columbia Fly-Fishing Waters;* Steve Probasco's *Probasco's Favorite Northwest Flies: Tying & Fishing;* Ian Rutter's *Great Smoky Mountains National Park Angler's Companion;* and Poul Jorgensen's *Dry-Fly Patterns for the New Millennium.*

The Lyons Press sent us Ted Leeson's *Jerusalem Creek: Journeys into Driftless Country.* And Stackpole Books sent us Jay "Fishy" Fullum's *Fishy's Flies.*

Upcoming Events (2003)

Annual Dinner and Sporting Auctions

February 6
New York Dinner/Auction
Anglers' Club of New York
New York City

April 23
Heritage Award Dinner honoring Nick Lyons
The Yale Club
New York City

June 21
Annual Trustee Meeting and Dinner
The American Museum of Fly Fishing
Manchester, Vermont

TBA
Cleveland Dinner/Auction
(Watch for details on our website!)

Fly-Fishing Shows

January 3–5
Denver Merchandise Mart
Denver, Colorado

January 17–19
Royal Plaza Trade Center
Marlborough, Massachusetts

January 24–26
Garden State Exhibit Center
Somerset, New Jersey

February 28–March 2
Marin County Convention Center
San Rafael, California

For information, contact Diana Siebold at (802) 362-3300 or via e-mail at amff2@together.net

IN MEMORIAM

Clarence W. "Sam" Carlson

21 December 1914–25 May 2002

Fred Kretchman

Sam Carlson accepted a lifetime achievement award from New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen on April 17. Pictured from left are Sam Carlson, Fred Kretchman, Governor Shaheen, and Stan Bogdan.

Most of us can recall special people who touched our lives in an important way. Clarence "Sam" Carlson was such a man. Although his outward image was quiet and unassuming, behind those blue eyes was a sharp mind filled with incredible knowledge. And wisdom. And bamboo rodmaking history. Sam didn't just talk about it; he *was* history.

I remember entering his shop for the first time in 1996. It was a converted garage, piled high with machines, tools, boxes, books, strips of cane, and bamboo rods in various stages of completion and/or repair. In fact, my first impression when I saw his workbench was that it appeared exactly the way it did in the photograph in Dick Spurr's book, *Classic Bamboo Rodmakers Past and Present* (Centennial Publications, 1992). Some rods were indeed pictured in that earlier photo that were *still* awaiting repair by the master's hand. Sam would talk about his early years in the rod business, starting as a boy of twelve in E. W. Edwards and Sons' rod shop in Mt. Carmel, Connecticut, where he pushed a broom and performed some of the least-skilled tasks, such as removing string from freshly glued blanks of cane. One day, while visiting his shop, he pulled out a well-worn copy of Marty Keane's book *Classic Rods and Rodmakers* (Classic Publishing Company, 1983), opened it to page 104, pointed to the photo of Robert Van Hennick using the Edwards beveler, and proudly declared that was his nineteen-forty-something Chevrolet in the background.

The skills Sam learned early in his life would set the stage for his later years when he became a tool-and-die maker as well as a craftsman of some of the finest four-sided quad rods ever made. He built mostly quad rods, showing the Edwards influence. In 1957, Sam started his own company and the following year purchased the famous F. E. Thomas Rod Company of Bangor, Maine, which he owned until just a few years ago. It was this connection to historic Thomas rods that prompted me to ask Sam one day if I could purchase one of his pieces of "pre-embargo" cane: one with a little history behind it. He thought it was a strange request—after all, this was just old cane that had been around his shop for half a century. The piece chosen was flamed in a spiral fashion, and the nodes had long ago been filed down. As we studied the cane, Sam noted other characteristics that authenticated its pedigree: pure F. E. Thomas. Within minutes, he found an inkwell and a fountain pen with a little "experience." Then he pro-

ceeded to write on the cane its genealogy: "pre-WWII cane from the F. E. Thomas Rod Co. and transferred this day to Fred Kretchman [signed] C. W. 'Sam' Carlson." I treasure that cane as much as any finished rod in my collection—pure and simple Sam Carlson.

Many fly fishers and collectors pay homage to Sam's ultraprecise craftsmanship. Indeed, the few rods of his that I have cast were wonderful in the hand. I've heard experts extol the virtues of his rods, exclaiming they were among the finest quads ever made. Interesting. Sam wasn't a fly fisher. Only once did he try his hand at fly fishing, and never again. You see, he judged how a good rod should cast based on feedback from his customers coupled with his tremendous knowledge of physics, cemented with his skills as a machinist.

Sam belonged to the "old school" when it came to doing business. His promise was as good as his handshake, and they were both as good as gold. When he spoke, you listened out of respect, knowing he was as honest as anyone you'd ever met. Despite his famous reputation among bamboo enthusiasts, Sam shunned the limelight, preferring to let his craftsmanship speak for itself. Perhaps that explains why he was initially reluctant to accept a personal invitation from our governor, Jeanne Shaheen, to be honored with a lifetime achievement award on April 17 this year. With some coaxing from me and reel-maker Stan Bogdan, we convinced Sam to attend. It was one of those days we'll never forget, as Sam sat next to Governor Shaheen at breakfast and later received his award in an elegant room at the statehouse building.

Although a resident of New Hampshire since 1977, Sam faithfully attended church in New Haven, Connecticut, and for more than sixty years sang with a Swedish American choir in Hamden. On May 25, we all lost a friend, one of the last true master rodmakers, but heaven gained a wonderful tenor and craftsman.

—Fred Kretchman

Fred Kretchman is a bamboo rodmaker living in Milford, New Hampshire.

CONTRIBUTORS

John Betts began tying flies for his livelihood in 1976 and published his first article a year later. He is a regular contributor to *American Angler, Fly Tyer, Fy Rod & Reel,* and *Fly Fisherman.* His work has also appeared in *Field & Stream, Outdoor Life,* and *Sports Afield,* as well as the major fly-fishing magazines of Europe and Japan. In 1981, he was featured in *Sports Illustrated* and is one of only a few tyers to be so acknowledged.

Betts was recently a featured artist at the American Crafts Museum in New York. His last contributions to the journal were "Truly Hand-Tied Flies" (Spring 2001) and a book review (Winter 2002).

"Anglers at War" is **John Mundt's** fourth contribution to *The American Fly Fisher.* John currently serves on the Museum's board of trustees and has been an active member of the Hartford Dinner/Auction Committee since 1991. He enjoys researching the history of fly fishing and is co-chair of the library committee of the Anglers' Club of New York.

John is a partner with Sterling Elevator Consultants, LLC, and resides in Simsbury, Connecticut, with his wife, Joyce, and their two young children.

Henning Grentz

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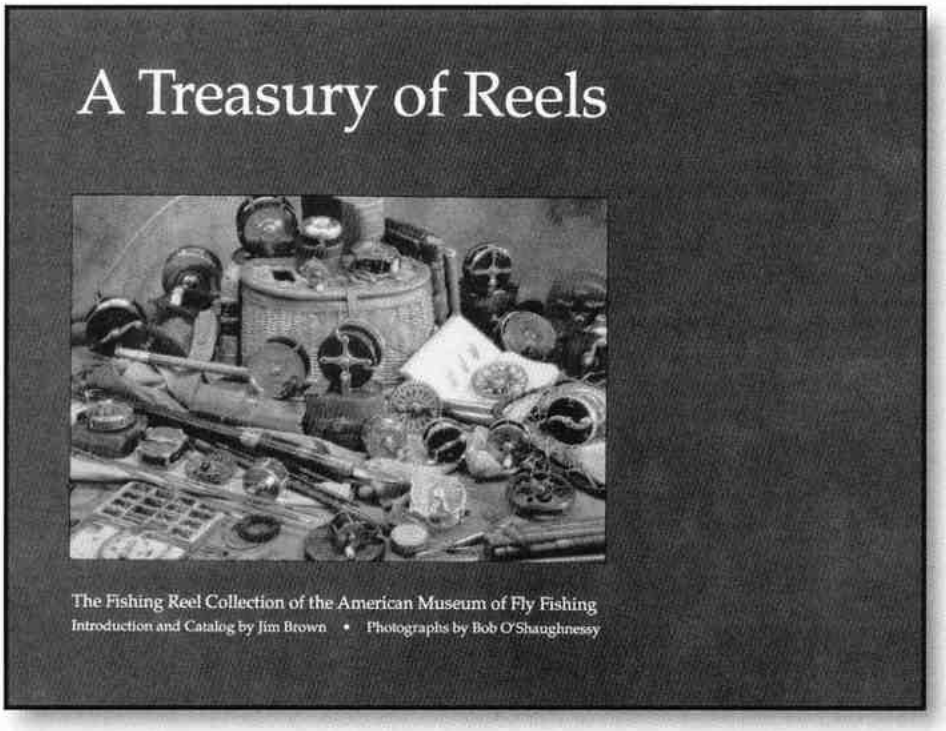

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IN MEMORIAM

Theodore "Ted" Williams

30 August 1918–5 July 2002

Museum collection

Ted Williams with a rod he gave to Maxine Atherton, which she later donated to the Museum's permanent collection.

During his twenty-one years with the Boston Red Sox, Theodore "Ted" Williams earned the nickname "the Splendid Splinter," proving himself one of baseball's best hitters ever. He compiled a lifetime batting average of .344 as a left-handed hitting outfielder and twice won the Triple Crown (best batting average, most home runs, and most runs batted in during a single season). He also hit a total of 521 home runs (despite losing five years of his career to service as a pilot in World War II and the Korean War) and was the last man in the major leagues to bat .400 (.406 in 1941). Hitting was much more than a livelihood to Williams; he studied and worked to perfect his hitting stroke with an intensity that bordered on the obsessive. A former roommate complained of Williams's penchant for using a hairbrush to take practice swings at 7:00 A.M. in front of the hotel mirror (mostly because it also involved growling at an imaginary pitcher), and Williams himself once said, "It was the center of my heart, hitting a baseball."

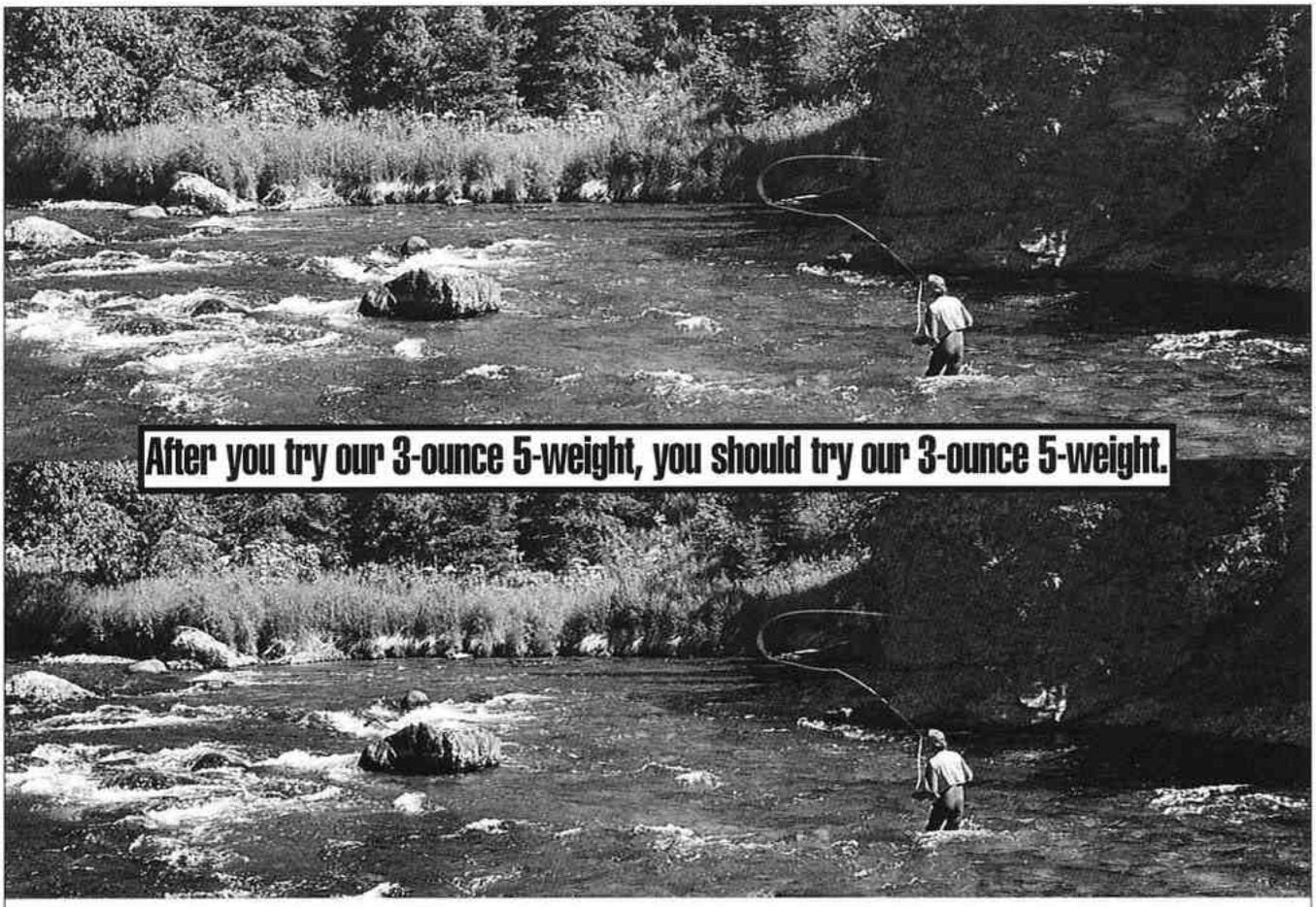
As passionate as Williams was about baseball, he was equally passionate about fishing. Over the course of his lifetime, he landed more than 1,000 bonefish, tarpon, and Atlantic salmon (the fish he considered his "big three"), and he fished for trout, walleye, tarpon, trout, bluegill, and bass all across the United States. One sportswriter noted that Williams, not realizing he was missing a party, spent the evening tying flies for his upcoming fishing trips while his Boston teammates celebrated clinching the 1946 American League pennant. He owned property on the Miramichi River, where he spent many years pursuing salmon, and fished the flats around Florida extensively. He was also a strong advocate for conservation, practicing catch-and-release almost exclusively and giving his support to such organizations as Trout Unlimited, the Atlantic Salmon Association, and the Isaak Walton League of America. He was inducted into the International Game Fish Association's Hall of Fame in 1999.

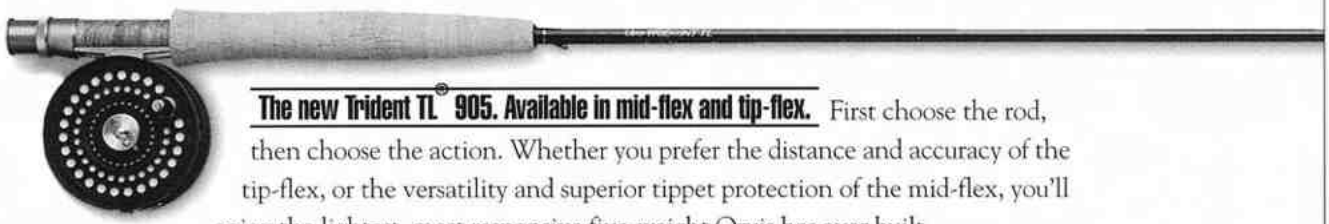
Perhaps the best testament to his love of the sport came from Williams himself, in his autobiography *My Turn at Bat*, written with John Underwood:

> I can stand at the bow of my boat for hours on the Florida keys, hot sun beating down . . . and even as the time slips by the excitement and anticipation never wane. I sit at my tackle bench past midnight *tying flies, making sure they're exactly right. It relaxes me.* I used to tie flies during the season, come in after a game all taut and nervous, tie a few flies and, boom, right to sleep . . .
>
> The fact remains I love to fish, period.

Now that Ted Williams is fishing on the other side of the river (we hope chasing salmon to his heart's content), there's really only one thing left to say: Do what you can to help the Sox win the big one, would you?

—Sara Wilcox





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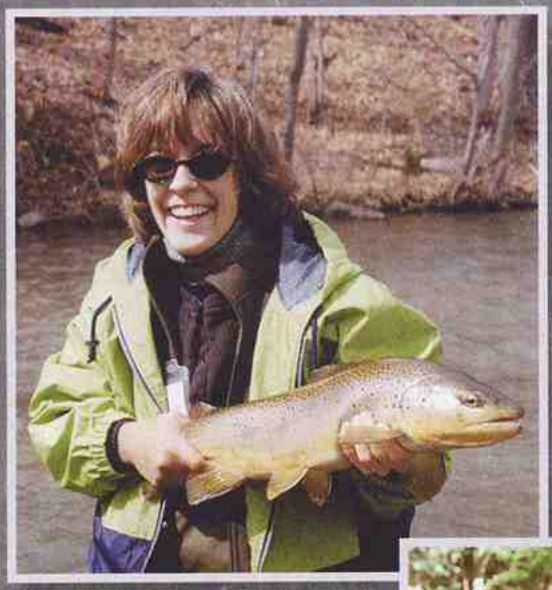

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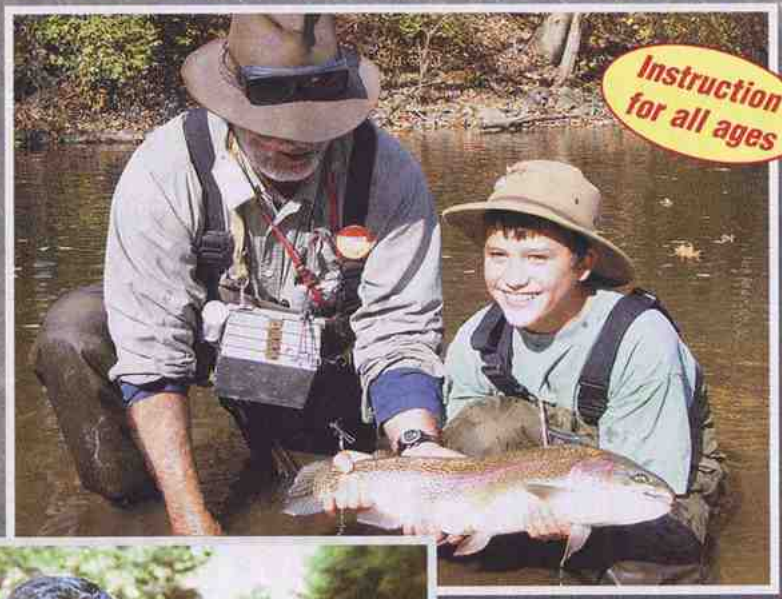

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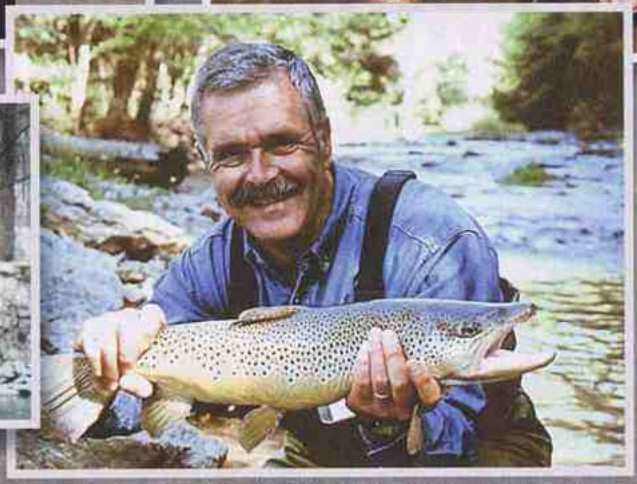

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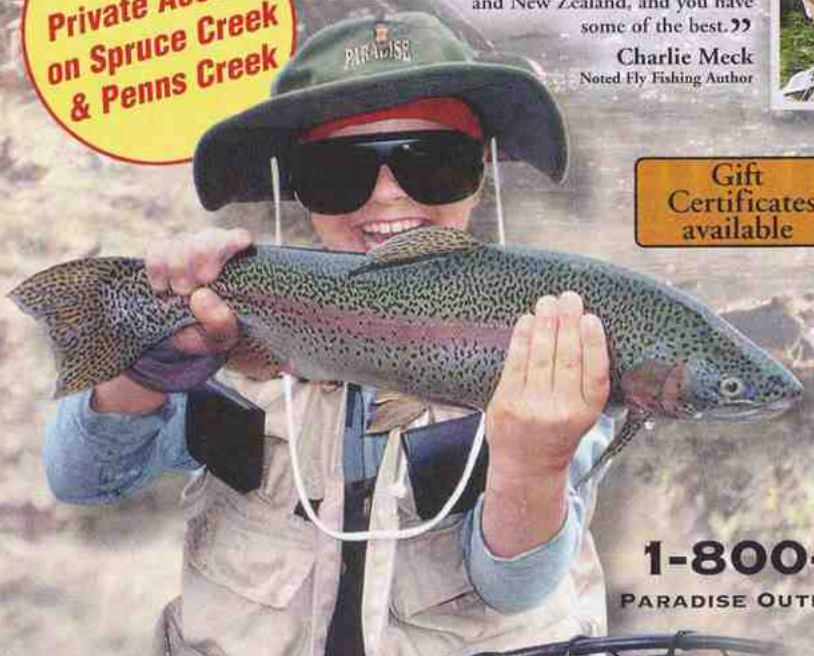

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With Many Twists and Turns

Margot Page

This has been an interesting year for the American Museum of Fly Fishing and its corps of volunteers, its trustees, and especially its staff. We knew at the outset that the process of moving to our new home—a journey with many twists and turns that we are really less than halfway through—was going to be complicated and arduous. The bad news is we were right. The good news is it will all have been worth it when we reopen to the world next year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our trustees and a few close friends of the Museum for pledging the 1.5 million dollars it took *just to get the project off the ground.* Soon all of our members and friends—as well as the fly-fishing industry as a whole—will be given the opportunity to help us make our new home all that it can be as we launch phase II of our capital campaign in early 2003. But it took the vision and understanding of our board to make sure that this wonderful opportunity became a reality.

As well, I want to thank the staff of the Museum for working under often less than ideal conditions, uncertain time lines, and duties far outside their normal routines. Everybody pulled far more than his or her weight, ensuring that our collections were always safe and sound (even in their temporary quarters off site) and that our day-to-day business functions never skipped a beat. Blame the executive director for the lateness of this issue of *The American Fly Fisher;* I've been a little distracted.

Finally, we thank the Ignition Company, Inc., of Manchester, Vermont. They took the staff into their office complex and gave us a home for more than three months, and they did the same for our entire archived collection, palletizing and shrink wrapping more than a thousand cartons of fly tackle, books, and art and storing them safely in their warehouse. Dill Driscoll and Susan McWhorter, principal owners of Ignition: We are deeply grateful and are in your debt.

So we're back home (well, we're back to our *new* home, albeit the smaller of the two buildings), and we are looking forward to seeing all of our friends at our grand opening in 2003, when we'll be celebrating our thirty-fifth anniversary as well. We'll have a fine time.

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.

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