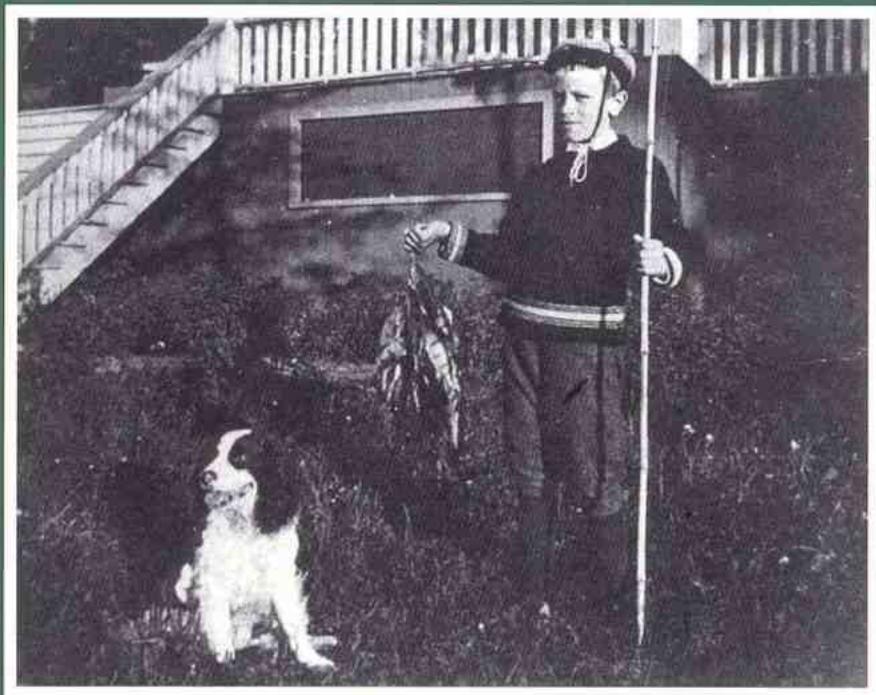


35th Anniversary Issue
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING



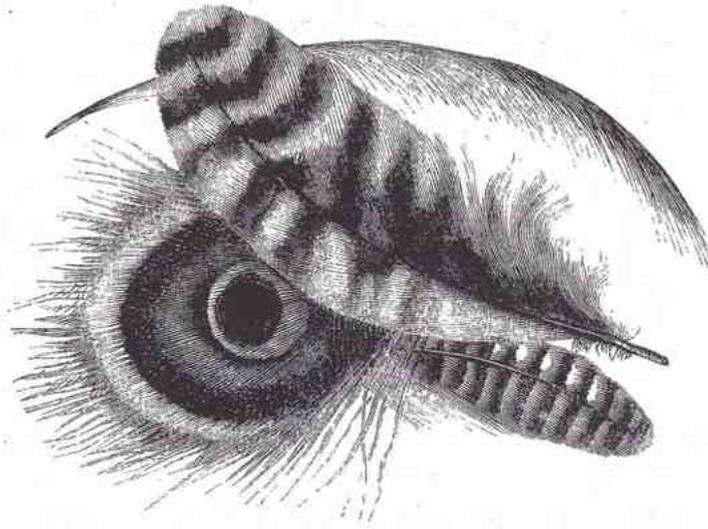
The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

FALL 2003

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 4

Streams, Sportsmen, Forks, and Hooks



Feathers, drawn by Miss Sambourne, in T. C. Hofland, Esq., The British Angler's Manual (London: H. B. Bond, 1848, new edition, p. 235).

THE LETTER CAME in the spring. About twenty years ago, Harry L. Peterson, now a retired college president living in Wisconsin, heard about a short article written by Aldo Leopold called "Sick Trout Streams." In this article, Leopold gave advice to a group of fly fishers about how to improve and restore Mt. Vernon Creek, a spring creek near Madison, Wisconsin. But Peterson couldn't manage to lay his hands on the article, and neither Leopold's daughter nor biographer had ever heard of it.

Upon retirement, Peterson could finally pursue the matter further. He spent time in the Leopold Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Library. Much to his own—and other Leopold scholars'—surprise, he found the article there, as well as a draft document called "What Is a Sportsman?," which in all his studies he had never seen quoted or even referenced.

Would the American Museum of Fly Fishing be interested in an article about Leopold, one of the most important conservationists of the twentieth century, that included these previously unpublished pieces? After all, we acquired one of Leopold's rods from his son Carl in January 1983, and it has since been a staple of our exhibit "Anglers All." The answer was yes, and "Aldo Leopold's Contribution to Fly Fishing" begins on page 2. In it, Peterson offers an excellent summation of Leopold's background and his efforts to help others see the interdependence and connections within the natural world. Peterson points out that anglers are the direct beneficiaries of Leopold's contributions to preservation, restoration, and wildlife conservation and management.

Included with the article are both "Sick Trout Streams" and "What Is a Sportsman?," the latter being handwritten notes

applying Leopold's land-ethic concept to the responsibilities of anglers and hunters. We're also thrilled to include the full text of Leopold's "The Alder Fork—A Fishing Idyl" from *A Sand County Almanac* (page 11). Thanks go to Buddy Huffaker, executive director of the Aldo Leopold Foundation, for his assistance with this article.

This issue offers not only a bit of twentieth-century history, but some from the seventeenth. John Betts calls Robert Venables "a realist and a keen and precise observer of what was actually happening in front of him." Venables, whose *The Experienced Angler* was published in 1662, boasted a rather colorful place in history, and some think he may have begun work on his book while serving time in the Tower. In this article, Betts pays particular attention to Venables's ideas on hooks and their relationship to his fly designs. Pulling from a particular passage of just 145 words, Betts analyzes line by line what Venables—a man who never knew modern hookeyes or silk-worm gut—may have been thinking. The article includes lots of illustrations of hooks, including the author's own interpretations. Don't miss the lamb-chop action sequence. "Robert Venables's Experience as an Angler" begins on page 12.

Summer at the Museum got off to a busy start with our annual trustee meeting in June, which coincided with our first Sporting Collectibles and Antique Show. For details, see *Museum News*, which begins on page 25. By the time this journal reaches you, our fall dinner/auctions will be in full swing (Gary and Diana hope to see many of you there!), and the new Museum will be under construction. These are busy and exciting times.

KATHLEEN ACHOR
EDITOR



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*Preserving the Heritage
of Fly Fishing*

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ON THE COVER: *Aldo Leopold with dog Spud and fish, Les Cheneaux, circa 1890s. Courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.*

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Aldo Leopold's Contribution to Fly Fishing

by Harry L. Peterson



Aldo Leopold, 1928. Photo courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

—Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

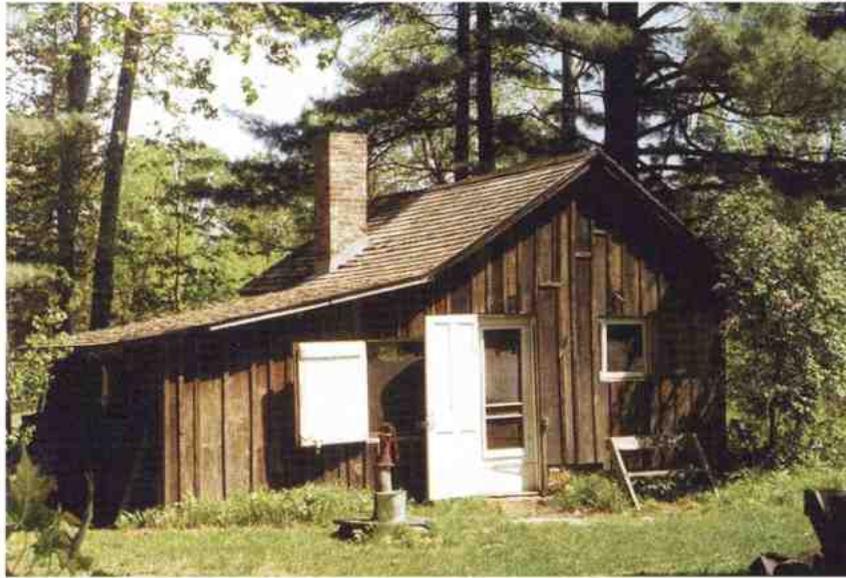
FLY FISHING HAS A LONG and well-documented history. Some of our country's best-regarded novelists and essayists have been part of our sport and have written about it eloquently. Others have written about the technical aspects of fly fishing and fly tying. Such texts give us a way to learn and to remember those who have contributed so much to our sport.

In spite of this profusion of writing on fly fishing, there is little recognition of the work of an individual who may have contributed the most: Aldo Leopold, arguably the most important conservationist of the twentieth century. Leopold's writings and teachings are responsible for helping preserve and restore many of our favorite and most beautiful places to fish. Reading Aldo Leopold enhances our appreciation of our sport and of those beautiful places.

Aldo Leopold (1887–1948) was born and grew up in the small town of Burlington, Iowa. In 1909, he received his master's degree from the Yale School of Forestry. He began his pro-

fessional career in the U.S. Forest Service, where he was instrumental in the establishment of New Mexico's Gila Wilderness Area, the first in the nation. In 1933, Leopold became the first professor of wildlife management at the University of Wisconsin and established the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units, institutions that bring research scientists to our states' land-grant universities. He was also a founder of both the Wilderness and Wildlife Societies. But most people know him best for a collection of his thoughts and observations on the environment. His book, *A Sand County Almanac*, published in 1949 shortly after his death, is an enduring contribution to conservation and environmental literature.

In prescribing a dramatically different relationship between people and land, Leopold challenged assumptions American settlers brought from Europe that land, plants, and animals were on earth solely to serve people, and that their value should be measured only in economic terms. His writings continue to challenge our long-held assumptions about our rela-



Aldo Leopold's now-famous "shack" continues to serve as a symbol for his land ethic. Courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.

tionship with the land, assigning to us an ethical responsibility to use the land wisely. Leopold wrote:

All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for). . . . The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively: the land.¹

Leopold asked us to consider our relationship to the land: "It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense."²

We might compare Aldo Leopold's contribution to our views of the world with Copernicus's view of the universe, for they are of a similar magnitude. Before Copernicus, everyone thought the sun revolved around the earth. Copernicus discovered and declared that, in fact, the earth revolved around the sun. After Copernicus, the sun and the earth continued to behave as they have for all time, but we could never view the universe in the same way.

Wallace Stegner, one of the most respected writers on the environment in the twentieth century, said of Leopold's work: "When this forming civilization assembles its Bible, its record of the physical and spiritual pilgrimage of the American people, the account of its stewardship in the Land of Canaan, *A Sand County Almanac* will belong in it, one of the prophetic books, the utterance of an American Isaiah."³ Leopold contributes to people who devote their professional lives to understanding the environment and conservation, as well as those, like this author, for whom experiences in fields and streams are an essential part of our lives.

We cannot understand a stream or lake without understanding the environment in which it exists. If we understand and accept Leopold's ideas, we can never see the land in the same way again. We also understand that we cannot improve the fishery without considering the ecosystem. Because Leopold is responsible for much of the development of the

concept of conservation—as well as the concept of the interdependence and connectedness of plants, animals, water, and people—he brought together issues that were formerly viewed as separate and disparate. If today this idea seems obvious, it is because the ideas of Aldo Leopold helped us acquire that understanding. He wrote at a time when these connections were not well understood or accepted.

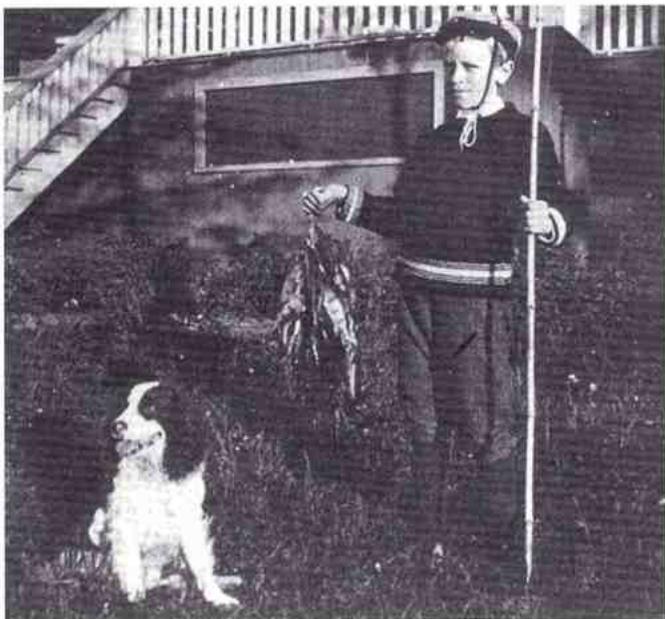
RESTORATION AND PROTECTION

Aldo Leopold developed ways to restore damaged land, which he tested in several places in Wisconsin. These restoration projects are models that have utility everywhere and are being applied throughout the world.

In 1934, at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, Leopold began to restore 500 acres of former farmland to its original prairies. The experiment continues today, with a flourishing prairie within the urban area of Madison, Wisconsin. This seminal experiment has had an enormous impact on our understanding of plant communities and ecological restoration, inspiring similar restorations around the country. Governments, individuals, and even churches have undertaken prairie restoration, and remnant virgin prairies are being preserved through purchases and protective covenants.

Leopold bought a farm that was abused and worn out in the Central Sands area of Wisconsin. He and his family began the slow, arduous reclaiming of the land through the planting of trees and native grasses. Today the farm and what he referred to as "the shack"—a chicken coop on the property that he converted to a weekend cabin—is visited by thousands of people from throughout the world and serves as a continuing experiment and study of restoration.

In 1931, Leopold organized a group of fellow hunters and, in cooperation with some farmers in south-central Wisconsin, organized the Riley Game Cooperative. The farmers made their land available, and the hunters contributed labor and increased plantings to provide pheasant food and winter cover. The number of wild pheasants increased because of the improved habitat. When Leopold became a professor at the University of Wisconsin, the Riley Game Cooperative provided a place for research by him and his students.⁴



Aldo Leopold with dog Spud and fish, Les Cheneaux, circa 1890s. Courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.

Several projects in which Leopold was involved improved trout streams. In the early 1930s, Leopold was an advisor on a project to restore the Coon Valley watershed in southwestern Wisconsin. This area, one of the most beautiful in Wisconsin, is unglaciated, or "driftless." Its hills and valleys were eroding from intensive tilling and dairy herd grazing, and its forests were eroding from indiscriminate cutting. The federal Soil Erosion Service, now the National Resources Conservation Service, undertook projects to restore the area and to advise cooperating farmers on practices to protect the land. In reflecting on this project, Leopold wrote: "A diagnostic policy of the Coon Valley staff is its steadfast refusal to straighten streams. To those who know the speech of the hills and rivers, straightening a stream is like shipping vagrants—a very successful method of passing trouble from one place to the next."⁵ Today Coon Valley is a model of early restoration efforts, and its spring creeks are among the best trout streams in the state.⁶

In the 1940s, a private group of fly fishermen asked Leopold for advice on improving Mt. Vernon Creek. Located about 20 miles southwest of Madison, Wisconsin, this stream has received national attention because of its quality.⁷ It was created by the confluence of two small creeks, and the main stream is fed by a spring producing about 3,000 gallons of water per minute. The roughly 8-mile stream consists of a variety of runs and pools, providing good holding water for trout. In the fall, trout create redds for spawning in the numerous gravel riffles. Like most midwestern spring creeks, its native fish were brook trout. Brown trout were introduced from Germany in the 1880s. Browns, rainbows, and brook trout were stocked from about 1905 until 1979. The creek has not been stocked since that time; brown trout are naturally reproducing at present. During the last several years, wild brook trout were reintroduced in the feeder streams and are flourishing. Catch-and-release restrictions are in effect for a 2-mile stretch.

Almost all of the property through which Mt. Vernon Creek flows is owned or leased by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Because of its high quality, the stream has received special attention from this state agency and private conservation groups. Since 1953, it has been improved by the

Department of Natural Resources, Madison school groups, and private conservation organizations (including the Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited chapter), all under the review and approval of the Department of Natural Resources.⁸ Leopold advised the anglers:

In the Southwest I have seen many a mountain stream which carried trout when stockmen arrived in the 1880s, become a dry rock-pile, wet only during floods, at the present time.

Our Wisconsin trout streams will never experience so radical a change because our rains and our soils are gentler. But all streams, including ours, deteriorate for the same causes:

1. Overgrazing, especially of steep slopes.
2. Exhaustion of organic matter in the soil.

Both have the same effect: They allow the rain to run off instead of sinking in.

It is not within the power of fishermen to rebuild the soils of Wisconsin, but they can do a lot of good by rebuilding the stream-bank itself. At least they can show the public a few samples of what a "civilized" streambank ought to look like.

My advice is: let's build our samples on headwaters, for floods are less severe there, and there is less chance of their washing out plantings and fences. Plantings in plowland need not be fenced, but plantings in pastures must be. Stick to native trees and shrubs, especially those found elsewhere on the same stream. Be careful not to choke the flood channel with tall trees on both banks; this may cause the creek to move elsewhere. Do not plant tall trees on banks which undercut; they may pry off chunks of bank and thus accelerate erosion. Do not put expensive plantings vulnerable to rabbits near rabbit cover.⁹

In Wisconsin, through the restoration of watersheds and stream habitat, the number of streams where wild trout thrive and reproduce has steadily increased. These improvements have replaced artificial propagation and annual fish stocking with stream and habitat protection and restoration.

Don Gray



Aldo Leopold's E. C. Powell 8½-foot 3-piece rod—pictured here with other artifacts, including General George S. Patton Jr.'s creel—is part of the Museum's permanent collection.

SICK TROUTSTREAMS

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I heartily commend the Association for its courageous attack on this difficult problem.

Aldo Leopold

"Sick Trout Streams," written and typed by Aldo Leopold (Aldo Leopold Papers Series 9/25/10). Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives and the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Leopold brought a scientific perspective to what had been until then a haphazard, mostly guesswork approach to hunting and fishing regulation and management. He insisted on the same standards for his students to which he held himself. They first acquired facts and then applied those facts to develop understanding and plans of action. These early graduates of the University of Wisconsin's wildlife management program did not forget those lessons, and many made major contributions to their fields during their careers.

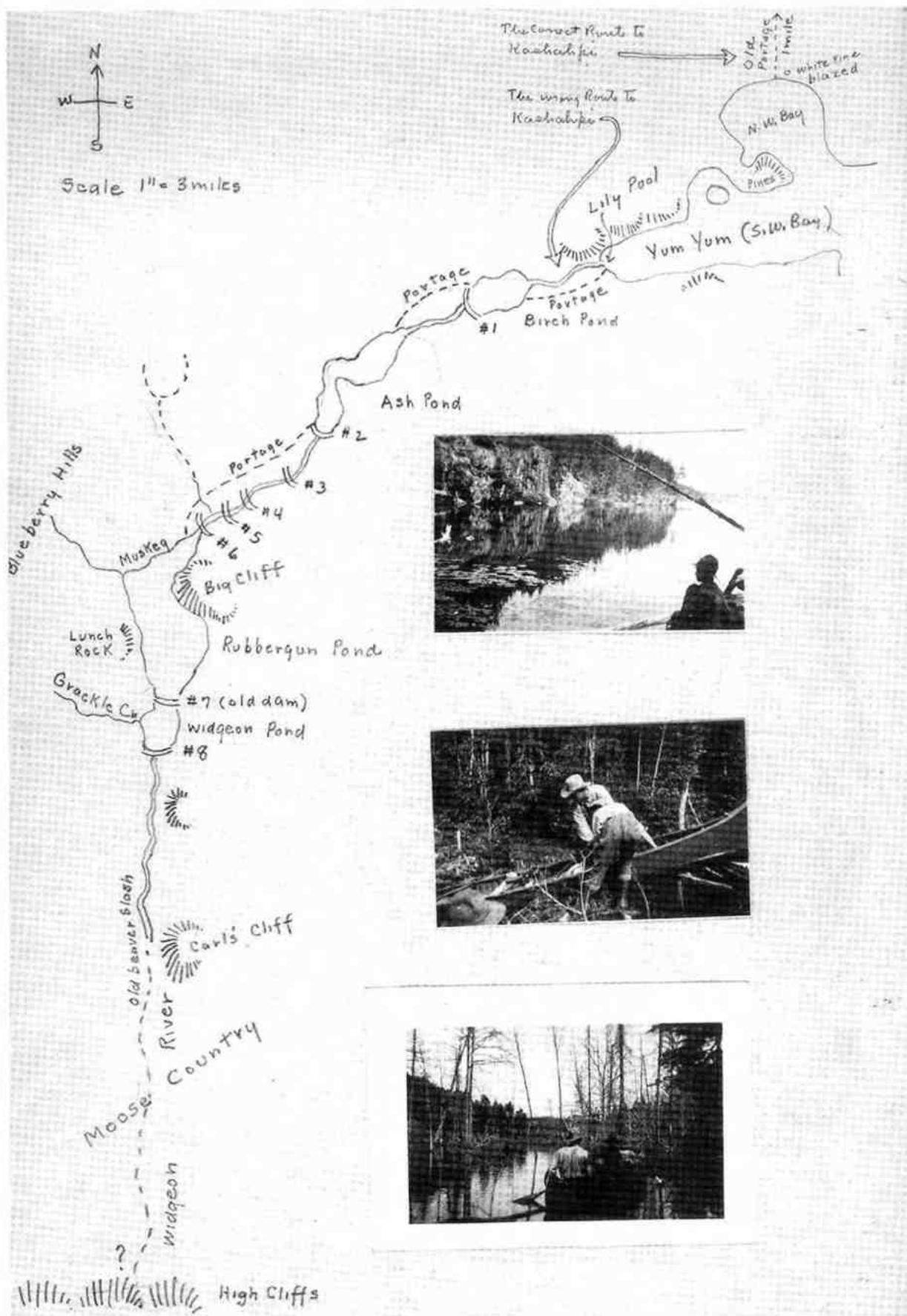
As the University of Wisconsin's first professor of wildlife management, Leopold helped to establish and apply scientific understanding to the profession of game management. His book, *Game Management*, published in 1933, is the seminal work in the field.¹⁰ It is a benchmark contribution, still in print, and used today both in the classroom and in the field.

Stanley Temple, a professor in the department of wildlife

ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which succeeded the department of wildlife management that Leopold founded, writes:

The science of wildlife management was just beginning to take shape under Leopold's intellectual leadership, and no trained professionals worked yet in the field. That is, there were no professionals in the field until 1933, when Leopold began training them in his revolutionary program at the University of Wisconsin, using as a text his just published *Game Management*, the world's first book on the subject. . . . In the conservation world of the day, a niche was open for Leopold to occupy, and he stepped into it with authority.¹¹

Fly fishers owe a great debt to the professionalizing of the state and federal agencies that regulate our sport. Increasingly, these agencies are staffed with college-trained professionals who understand that the focus should be on maintaining and restoring ecosystems, rather than simply stocking fields with



Aldo Leopold's map of his 1925 Boundary Waters trip. Courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.



Aldo Leopold's fly reel and carrying case, which are owned by the Department of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

more birds and streams with more fish. Leopold's influence was deep and is continuing. Natural resources managers were asked to identify the three most important sources of information for their careers. Ninety percent of them named *A Sand County Almanac*.¹²

BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE

Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*—especially its “Land Ethic” section—as well as his other writings are, in the best sense of the word, political. They not only afford us an understanding of our natural world, but they are also calls to individual and collective action. Because his insights are deep and enduring, as well as clear and understandable, Leopold's teachings have been used to advance his ideas of land health, which he defined as the land's capacity for “self renewal.”

A Sand County Almanac is Leopold's most celebrated and widely read work, and more than two million copies have been sold. Leopold also wrote many publications for farmers, foresters, landowners, game management professionals, and conservationists. But writing was not the only way in which he made an impact. His most public, political contribution was his service as a board member on Wisconsin's Conservation Commission from 1943 until his death in 1948.

During the time he was a member of that commission, regulation of deer hunting and the number of deer that could be harvested by Wisconsin hunters was a major issue—as it sometimes is today—there and in other states. Leopold conducted research in northern Wisconsin and saw deer in that part of the state that were underweight and starving because there were more deer than the forage could support. Wolves, the natural predators of deer, had been eliminated from Wisconsin, the result of hunting and a bounty for their removal. Mild winters resulting in an increase in the deer herd, followed by severe winters reducing the availability of forage, caused starvation. Leopold saw hunting as a way to regulate the number of deer and to keep the herd healthy.

Leopold argued for an increase in the number of deer that hunters could kill to address the reduced availability of food. He faced strong opposition from the staff within the Conservation Commission, other commissioners, news media, and deer hunters who were concerned that the deer herd would be depleted. He regularly lost those efforts on 5 to 2



Aldo Leopold with fish, Flathead River, Oregon, 1926. Courtesy of the Aldo Leopold Foundation Archives.

votes, having persuaded only one other commissioner that increasing the harvest of deer would be effective. Although these issues continue to be of concern among deer hunters, regulating deer hunting to modify the herd is now universally accepted among professional game managers.¹³

Although conflicts continue between anglers and hunters and professional fish and game managers over the management of fish and wildlife, managers have become more sophisticated in their efforts and hunters have become more accepting of their recommendations. Fishery management by state and federal fish and game agencies has evolved from an exclusive focus on hatcheries and stocking to an emphasis on understanding stream and lake habitat and ecosystems to foster natural reproduction of native and wild species. Leopold offered sophisticated, informed choices for policy makers through his writing and his courses, and through his personal involvement in developing and enacting natural resource policy.

A WAY OF SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING

Virtually every dedicated fly fisher has said that catching fish, and as many as possible, was the initial goal, but that over the years fishing became something more. Describing that experience is difficult, and only a few succeed. Most writings

What is a Sportsman?

A Sportsman is a hunter or fisherman who
 combines his interest enthusiasm for ^(the finest) game
 with things ^{the chase}
 as decent respect for man and nature.
 as ^{his} skill ^{increases} ^{with it} the responsibility to conserve.
 he reduces his ornament rather than ^{enlarge} ~~enlarge~~
 his bag.
~~The bag is not his daily objective, but rather~~
~~the means beyond which~~
 as his equipment becomes more deadly, the
 as his skills increase, his hunts are made more
 as his equipment becomes more perfect
 The game is as the conclusion on which he would like
 over care of ethics, rather than

"What Is a Sportsman?" Aldo Leopold's handwritten notes. Aldo Leopold Papers Series 9/25/10. Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives.

are overwrought and sentimental, and their meanings, while earnest, are often significant only to the writer. By contrast, science writing is precise, rigorous, and unambiguous. Rarely can the same author write well about both science and personal experience. Aldo Leopold accomplished this difficult task, perhaps better than anyone else.

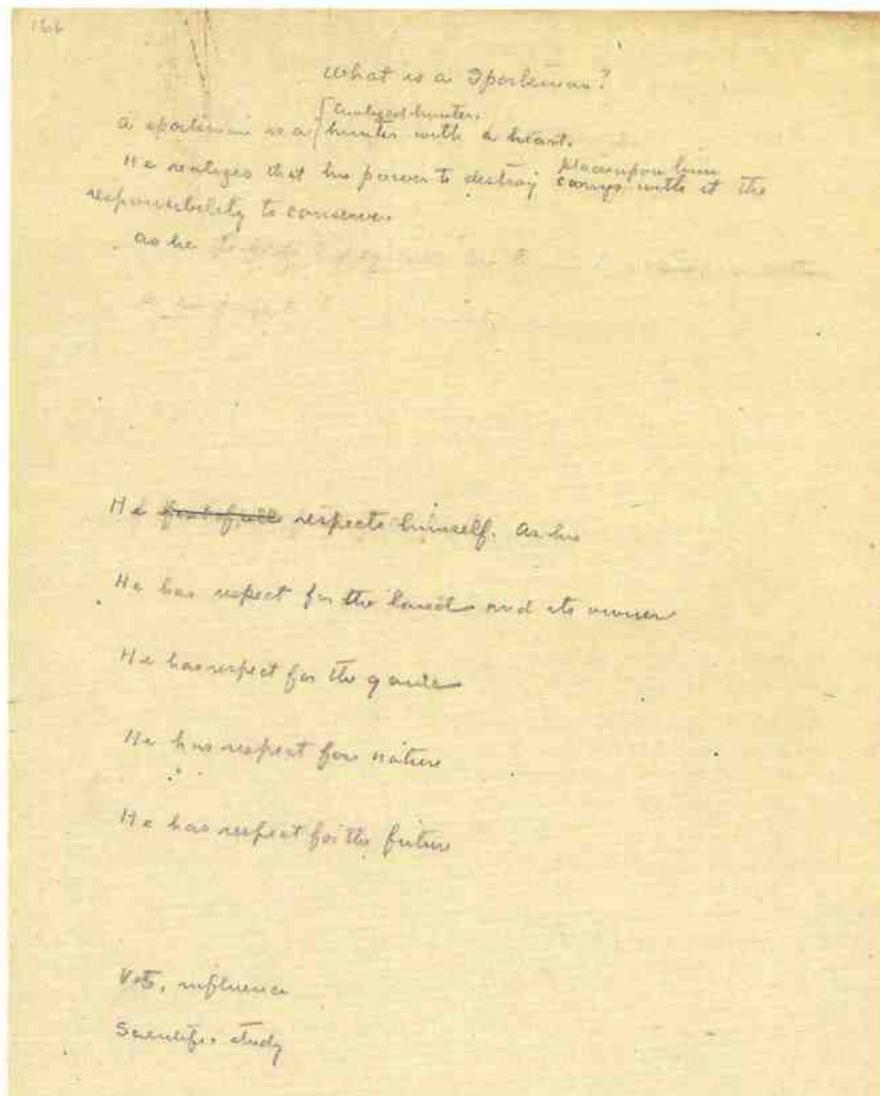
He knew that an experience with nature is at once intellectual, scientific, aesthetic, and emotional. The best writing involves all of those senses and is evocative and intuitive. Just as an experience in nature is unique, reading about nature should provide its own experience and be evocative and personal. Leopold wrote about his deep love of the outdoors and nature in a way that is compelling without being sentimental.

A few of our best contemporary fly-fishing writers, in describing the complexity of what it means to fish, convey the challenge for angling writers. John Gierach observed: "... fly-fishing is solitary, contemplative, misanthropic, scientific in some hands, poetic in others, and laced with conflicting aesthetic considerations. It is not even clear if catching fish is actually the point."¹⁴ And Paul Schullery says: "Fishing is a

quest for knowledge and wonder as much as a pursuit of fish; it is as much an acquaintance with beavers, dippers, and other fishermen as it is the challenge of catching trout."¹⁵ For me, fishing connects the present with what sometimes seems like a distant past. The change has been from worms to flies and from an old steel casting rod on lakes and little brook trout streams in northern Minnesota to expensive graphite rods on famous rivers. What has not changed, fifty years later, is the feeling at the moment that I have fooled the fish into striking.

Leopold made a significant contribution to the literature of fly fishing with "The Alder Fork," a short essay in *A Sand County Almanac*, his only published writing on fly fishing (see page 11 for the full text of this piece).¹⁶

In the fresh of the morning, when a hundred whitethroats had forgotten it would ever again be anything but sweet and cool, I climbed down the dewy bank and stepped into the Alder Fork. A trout was rising just upstream. I paid out some line—wishing it would always stay thus soft and dry and, measuring the distance with a false cast or two, laid down a spent gnat exactly a foot above his last swirl. Forgotten now were the hot miles, the mosquitoes,



"What Is a Sportsman?" Aldo Leopold's handwritten notes. Aldo Leopold Papers Series 9/25/10. Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives.

the ignominious chub. He took it with one great gulp, and shortly I could hear him kicking in the bed of wet alder leaves at the bottom of the creel. . . .

I shall now confess to you that none of those three trout had to be beheaded, or folded double, to fit their casket. What was big was not the trout, but the chance. What was full was not my creel, but my memory.¹⁷

AN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SPORT

Leopold's completed writings were eloquent documents with an economy of style. The Leopold archives contain records of his meticulous data collection, observations, and research. Drafts in progress reveal repeated rewriting. In an unpublished essay that was still being reworked, Leopold applied the concept of the land ethic to the responsibilities of anglers and hunters. He anticipated the evolving role of the sportsman as more than a food gatherer, an idea that continues to develop. This unpublished essay is titled "What Is a Sportsman?". In fragments of this early draft, he says: "A sportsman is a hunter or fisherman

who combines his intense enthusiasm for the hunt,¹⁸ with decent respect for man and nature. As his skill increases, he realizes that the power to destroy carries with it the responsibility to conserve. As his skill increases, he reduces his armament rather than enlarge his bag."¹⁹ And in another draft:

He respects himself
He has respect for the land and its owner
He has respect for the game
He has respect for nature
He has respect for the future²⁰

Aldo Leopold's writings are a call to action and an invitation to contemplation. They have meaning for fly fishers because in describing what he experienced in nature, Leopold evokes insights into our own experiences. Leopold lived most of his life in the first half of the twentieth century. He offered advice, insights, and scientific understandings that continue to be important for those of us who live in the twenty-first.

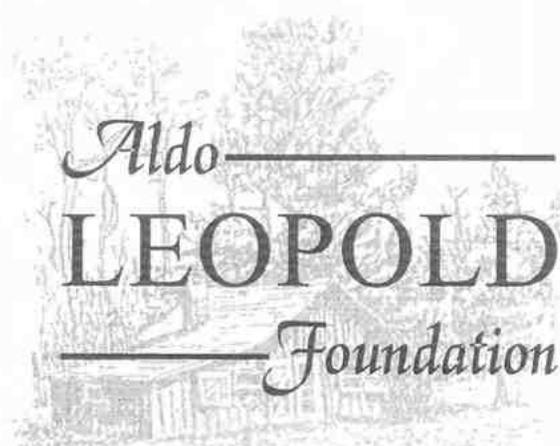
ENDNOTES

1. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 203–04, 204.
2. *Ibid.*, 223. For an examination of the philosophical roots of Leopold's ideas, see Roderick Nash, "Aldo Leopold's Intellectual Heritage," in J. Baird Callicott, ed., *A Companion to A Sand County Almanac* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 63–88.
3. Wallace Stegner, "The Legacy of Aldo Leopold," *A Companion to A Sand County Almanac*, 233.
4. Aldo Leopold, "History of the Riley Game Cooperative 1931–1939," *Journal of Wildlife Management* (July 1940, vol. 4, no. 3), 291–302.
5. Aldo Leopold, "Coon Valley: An Adventure in Cooperative Conservation," *American Forests* (May 1935, vol. 41, no. 5), 205–08, 208.
6. Malcolm Clark, "America's 100 Best Trout Streams," *Trout* (Spring 1989, vol. 30, no. 2), 68–69.
7. Mt. Vernon Creek was featured on the cover of *Fly Fisherman* (July/August 1979, vol. 10, no. 7) and is included in J. R. Humphrey, "Wisconsin's Unknown Spring Creeks," *Fly Fisherman* (September 1987, vol. 18, no. 6), 31–36, 66–68.
8. South Central Region, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Fitchburg, Wisconsin, Mt. Vernon Creek files.
9. Aldo Leopold, "Sick Trout Streams," 14 April 1944, Leopold Archives, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Steenbock Library, 9/25/10-6, Box 16.
10. Aldo Leopold, *Game Management* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933).
11. Stanley Temple, "Afterword," in Leopold, *For the Health of the Land*, 228.
12. Richard L. Knight and Suzanne Reidel, "Introduction," in Richard L. Knight and Suzanne Reidel, eds., *Aldo Leopold and the Ecological Conscience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.
13. Susan Flader, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974). For a review of this issue from a long-term perspective, see Dale McCullough, "North American Deer Ecology: Fifty Years Later," in Thomas Tanner, ed., *Aldo Leopold: The Man and His Legacy* (Ankeny, Iowa: Soil and Water Conservation Society, 1995), 115–22.
14. John Gierach, *Dances with Trout* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 178.
15. Paul Schullery, *Mountain Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 30.
16. Leopold's only other writing about trout was an unpublished presentation in 1917, advising game managers to stock only one species of trout in a stream. "Mixing Trout in Western Waters," paper for American Fisheries Society, 47th Annual Meeting, St. Paul, Minnesota, 29 August 1917, Leopold Archives, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Steenbock Library, 9/25/10-6, Box 16.
17. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 37–38, 40. Aldo Leopold's bamboo rod is owned by the American Museum of Fly Fishing, and his reel is owned by the Department of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. "The Alder Fork" was written in the early 1930s, and Leopold was using a silk line.
18. Leopold's draft included several other word choices—"game, wild things, the chase"—making clear he had not yet made a decision.
19. Aldo Leopold, "What Is a Sportsman?," undated draft, Leopold Archives, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Steenbock Library, 9/25/10-6, Box 16.
20. *Ibid.*

SUGGESTED READING

All of the following titles are available for purchase through the Aldo Leopold Foundation.

- Callicott, J. Baird, ed. *A Companion to A Sand County Almanac*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987. Articles by various authors on the writing and compiling of *A Sand County Almanac*, and discussion of Leopold's philosophy and his impact.
- Flader, Susan. *Thinking Like a Mountain: Aldo Leopold and the Evolution of an Ecological Attitude toward Deer, Wolves, and Forests*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974. Description and analysis of the evolution of Leopold's thinking over the course of his career.
- Knight, Richard A., and Suzanne Riedel, eds. *Aldo Leopold and the Ecological Conscience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Analysis of Leopold's thinking and application of his ideas to contemporary issues.
- Leopold, Aldo, and Susan Flader and J. Baird Callicott, eds. *The River of the Mother of God*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. Articles and essays by Leopold, written from 1904 to 1947, arranged chronologically.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Lorbiecki, Marybeth. *Aldo Leopold: A Fierce Green Fire*. Helena and Billings, Mont.: Falcon Publishing Company, 1996. A short, illustrated biography of Leopold.
- Meine, Curt. *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. A definitive, scholarly biography of Leopold.



The Aldo Leopold Foundation: Fostering the Land Ethic through the Legacy of Aldo Leopold

Building upon the vision Aldo Leopold set forth in *A Sand County Almanac* and other works, the Aldo Leopold Foundation strives to foster an ethical relationship between people and land.

Founded in 1982 by Leopold's children, the foundation serves as the executor and steward of Leopold's sand country farm and literary estate. As the definitive advocate and interpreter of the emotional and intellectual dimensions of Leopold's legacy, the Aldo Leopold Foundation continues to share the elegance of his words and the landscapes that inspired them with an ever-growing audience.

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The Alder Fork—A *Fishing Idyl*

by Aldo Leopold

We found the main stream so low that the teeter-snipe pattered about in what last year were trout riffles, and so warm that we could duck in its deepest pool without a shout. Even after our cooling swim, waders felt like hot tar paper in the sun.

The evening's fishing proved as disappointing as its auguries. We asked that stream for trout, and it gave us a chub. That night we sat under a mosquito smudge and debated the morrow's plan. Two hundred miles of hot, dusty road we had come, to feel again the impetuous tug of a disillusioned brook or rainbow. There were no trout.

But this, we now remembered, was a stream of parts. High up near the headwaters we had once seen a fork, narrow, deep, and fed by cold springs that gurgled under its close-hemmed walls of alder. What would a self-respecting trout do in such weather? Just what we did: go up.

In the fresh of the morning, when a hundred whitethroats had forgotten it would ever again be anything but sweet and cool, I climbed down the dewy bank and stepped into the Alder Fork. A trout was rising just upstream. I paid out some line—wishing it would always stay thus soft and dry—and, measuring the distance with a false cast or two, laid down a spent gnat exactly a foot above his last swirl. Forgotten now were the hot miles, the mosquitoes, the ignominious chub. He took it with one great gulp, and shortly I could hear him kicking in the bed of wet alder leaves at the bottom of the creel.

Another, albeit larger, fish had meanwhile risen in next pool, which lay at the very "head of navigation," for at its upper end the alders closed in solid phalanx. One bush, with its brown stem laved in the middle current, shook with a perpetual silent laughter, as if to mock at any fly that gods or men might cast one inch beyond its outermost leaf.



For the duration of a cigarette I sit on a rock midstream—and watch my trout rise under his guardian bush, while my rod and line hang drying on the alders of the sunny bank. Then—for prudence' sake—a little longer. That pool is too smooth up there. A breeze is stirring and may shortly ruffle it for an instant, and thus make more deadly that perfect cast I shall shortly lay upon its bosom.

It will come—a puff strong enough to shake a brown miller off the laughing alder, and cast it upon the pool.

Ready now! Coil up the dry line and stand midstream, rod in instant readiness. It's coming—a little premonitory shiver in that aspen on the hill lets me get out half a cast, and swish it gently back and forth, ready for the main puff to hit the pool. No more than half a line, mind you! The sun is high now, and any flicking shadow overhead would forewarn my hunker of his impending fate. Now! The last three yards shoot out, the fly

falls gracefully at the feet of the laughing alder—he has it! I set hard to hold him out of the jungle beyond. He rushes downstream. In a few minutes he, too, is kicking in the creel.

I sit in happy meditation on my rock, pondering, while my line dries again, upon the ways of trout and men. How like fish we are: ready, nay eager, to seize upon whatever new thing some wind of circumstance shakes down upon the river of time! And how we rue our haste, finding the gilded morsel to contain a hook. Even so, I think there is some virtue in eagerness, whether its object prove true or false. How utterly dull would be a wholly prudent man, or trout, or world! Did I say a while ago that I waited "for prudence' sake"? That was not so. The only prudence in fishermen is that designed to set the stage for taking yet another, and perhaps a longer, chance.

Time to be at it now—they will soon stop rising. I wade waist deep to head of navigation, poke my head insolently into the shaking alder, and look within. Jungle is right! A coal-black hole above, so canopied in greenness you could not wave a fern, much less a rod, above its rushing depths. And there, almost rubbing his ribs against the dark bank, a great trout rolls lazily over as he sucks down a passing bug.

Not a chance to stalk him, even with the lowly worm. But twenty yards above I see bright sunshine on the water—another opening. Fish a dry fly downstream? It cannot, but it must, be done.

I retreat and climb the bank. Neck deep in jewel-weed and nettles, I detour through the alder thicket to the opening above. With cat-like care not to roil his majesty's bath, I step in, and stand stock-still for five minutes to let things calm down. The while, I strip out, oil, dry, and coil upon my left hand thirty feet of line. I am that far above the portal to the jungle.

Now for the long chance! I blow upon my fly to give it one last fluff, lay it on the stream at my feet, and quickly pay out coil after coil. Then, just as the line straightens out and the fly is sucked into the jungle, I walk quickly downstream, straining my eyes into the dark vault to follow its fortunes. A fleeting glimpse or two as it passes a speck of sunlight shows it still rides clear. It rounds the bend. In no time—long before the roil of my walking has betrayed the ruse—it reaches the black pool. I hear, rather than see, the rush of the great fish; I set hard, and the battle is on.

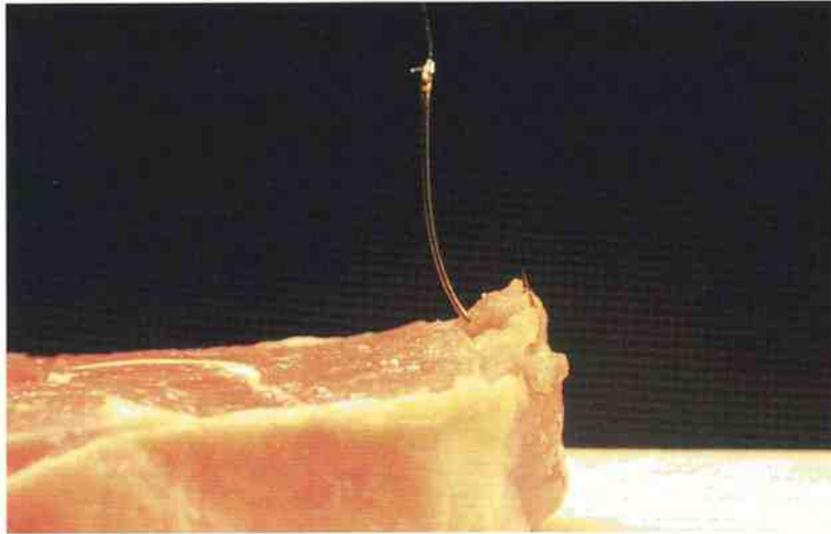
No prudent man would risk a dollar's worth of fly and leader pulling a trout upstream through the giant toothbrush of alder stems comprising the bend of that creek. But, as I said, no prudent man is a fisherman. By and by, with much cautious unraveling, I got him up into open water, and finally aboard the creel.

I shall now confess to you that none of those three trout had to be beheaded, or folded double, to fit their casket. What was big was not the trout, but the chance. What was full was not my creel, but my memory. Like the whitethroats, I had forgotten it would ever again be aught but morning on the Fork.



Robert Venables's Experience as an Angler

by John Betts



A straight-pointed, straight-shanked TMC 101 pulling a lamb chop. The full action sequence begins on page 20.

Let your hooks be long in the shank, and of a compass somewhat inclining to roundness, but the point must stand even and streight, and the bending must be in the shank, for if the shank be streight, the point will hang outward, though when set on it stand right. Yet it will after the taking of a few Fish, cause the leader to stand bent, and so (by consequence) the point of the hook to hang directly upwards. When you set on your hook, do it with strong but small silk, and lay your hair on the inside of the hook, for if on the outside the silk will cut and fret it asunder, and to avoid the fretting of the hair by the hook on the inside, smooth your hook upon a whetstone, from the inside to the back of the hook slope-ways.

—Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler*, 1662

WITH THIS PARAGRAPH OF ONLY 145 WORDS, Colonel Robert Venables provided insight into his considerable ability as an angler. It's a quality that is constantly present in his book *The Experienced Angler*, published in 1662. His writings show him to be a realist and a keen and precise observer of what was actually happening in front of him. Many writers before and after have improved on existing practices. Few, however, came down as accurately on real circumstances and advanced something by incorporating, to advantage, things that had previously been detrimental. The pages that follow will look at how Venables might have arrived at some of his ideas on hooks and their relationship to his fly designs.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Robert Venables was born in 1612 or 1613 to a family descended from the head huntsman to the dukes of Normandy: one Gislebertus (Gilbert) de Venable was present

Photographs by the author except where noted

at Hastings in 1066 and was rewarded by William for his participation in the victory. Around six hundred years later, Gilbert's descendant Robert switched sides and joined Oliver Cromwell. Under the Protector he was a brave, savage, and successful military commander against generally poor competition. He distinguished himself in the awful massacre at Drogheda, Ireland. In appreciation for his efforts there, Cromwell gave him important administrative assignments. Three hundred and fifty years later, Venables's tenure is remembered as the most brutal in the history of Ulster.

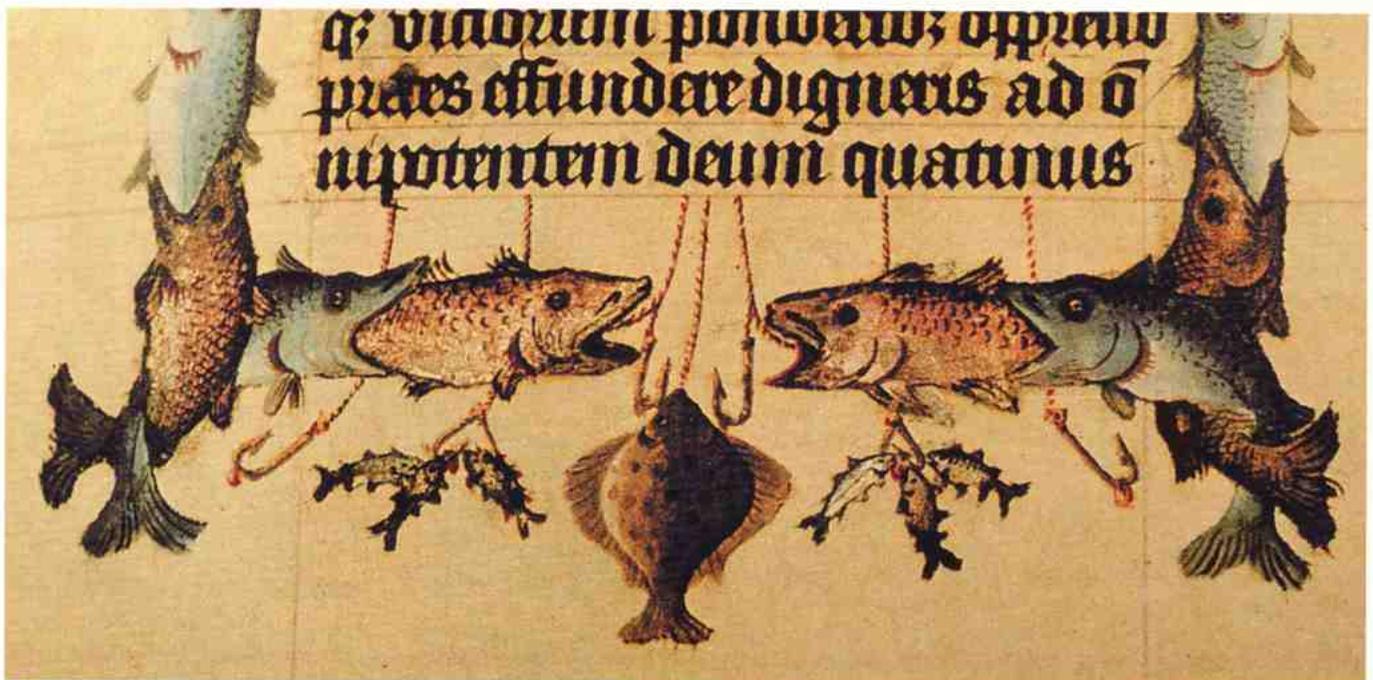
In 1654, he was sent with Admiral Penn, the father of William Penn of Pennsylvania, to the West Indies. Part of the reason for getting them both out of the country may have been Cromwell's suspicion that they were potential troublemakers. The expedition was a disaster. Venables and Penn eventually sailed back to England without permission. They left behind thousands of their men, dead from dysentery and disease, as well as hundreds of others who would soon join their comrades. Venables himself nearly perished from the same causes.

Upon their arrival back home, Cromwell threw the pair of



Figure 1. The illumination of the martyr St. Lawrence in the Braziller reproduction of *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*. Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.917, p. 266.

Figure 2. Detail from the illumination of the martyr St. Lawrence in the Braziller reproduction of *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*. Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M.917, p. 266.



them into the Tower and released them a month later. Venables is said to have complained that it was cold and drafty. Sometime after gaining his freedom, Venables was part of a small rebellion against Cromwell that was immediately thrashed. He escaped and disappeared from view. He reappears after the Restoration as the author of *The Experienced Angler*, published in 1662. Some think that he sketched the book out while in the Tower, showing him to be a man made of stern stuff. By 1662 the monarchy had been successfully reestablished, and Charles II, who liked to fish, helped set Venables up for the rest of his life.

There is another note late in Venables's life concerning his grandson. Venables's daughter Anne had married Thomas Parker very much against her father's will. Parker was a country lawyer of modest means. Their son, young Thomas, showed academic potential, and on his son's behalf, the senior Parker asked Venables for some help with tuition. The old grouse refused, complaining that he was too deeply in debt to do anything. Rubbish. The fact is that he was the governor of Chester castle, one among several of his income-producing holdings. Actually, he was just plain stingy. Somehow young Tom finished his education and in time became Lord Chief Justice, Lord Chancellor in the reign of George I, and the first Earl of Macclesfield.

Venables's burial notice of July 1687 reads: "Col. Robert Venables of Chester buried July 26 famous in his day, abt. 70."¹

EARLIER REPORTS

For an appreciation of what Venables did, we need to look at what preceded him in terms of angling techniques and literature.

In the George Braziller facsimile of *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, there is an illumination of the martyr St. Lawrence (page 266). As with many of the pages in this volume, the borders hold unusual decorations. Shown in this example are eels, fish (both large and small, including a well-drawn flounder), and hooks of different sizes. These hooks seem to be attached to what look like twisted leaders or snells. On some hooks, there appears to be a small loose(?) gold(?) tag. The hooks are well proportioned with straight shanks and points. Given the quality of the rest of the illustrations in this book, these representations are probably accurate (Figures 1 and 2). The manuscript likely dates between 1428 and 1445.² At the end of this century, hooks are

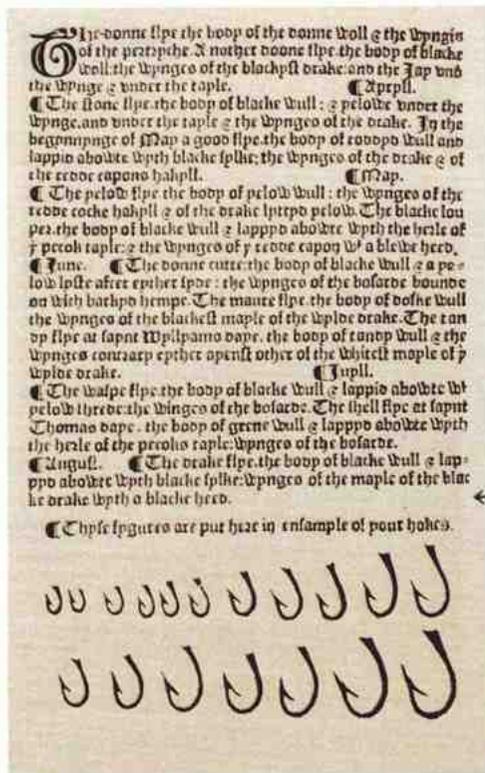


Figure 3. Hook shapes and sizes in *A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*. There is not only a wide variety of sizes but also wire diameters, which are mentioned in the text.

mentioned in *A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, printed in 1496. The text is accompanied by a woodcut of hooks that appear to have shanks shorter than the ones in *The Hours*. Whether the shanks of these hooks are straight is uncertain, because the shanks don't seem long enough to determine that (Figure 3).

It would have helped a lot if the hooks had been drawn from the side, as this would show their true configuration. However, from the side the spade ends—usually set in a horizontal plane—would appear only as a thin line. There would be no indication of their width in a horizontal view. In this illustration, the hooks seem to have been depicted from a bit to the rear and above the bend. This allows the width of the spade and the bend to be shown at the same time.³

Nearly one hundred years after *A Treatyse*, Leonard Mascall wrote *A Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line*, published by John Wolfe in 1590, with illustrations of hooks (Figure 4). The point, barb, bend, and shank are shown in a true side view, but the spade is once again vertical. Is artistic license employed a second time to show the shape of the spade, even if it's out of its proper plane, or did the work in *A Treatyse* inspire the block cutter to simply copy what he saw without thinking how it would actually work in the field?⁴

A vertical spade will quickly sever the line snelled to the hook regardless of whether the line is snelled to the top, bottom, or either side of the shank. The spades on four out of the five snelled hooks in *A Treatyse* are also vertical (Figure 5), whereas those in Mascall are obviously horizontal. My guess is that the vertical spades are the result of the artist trying to have it both ways by showing the spade width, bend, and point

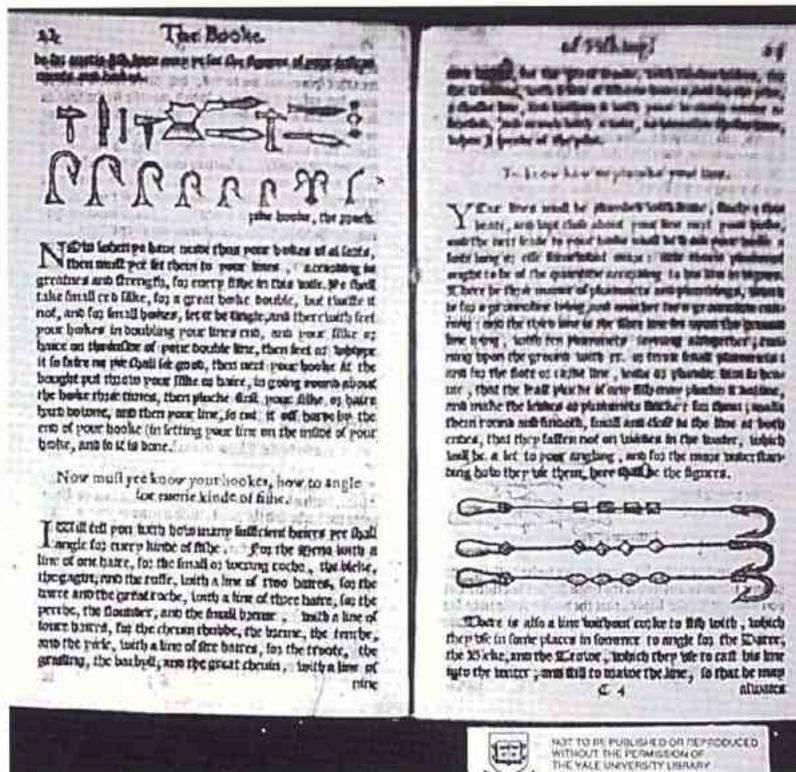


Figure 4. Pages 22 and 23 in *Mascall's A Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line* (1590), showing loose hooks as well as snelled ones. The leap from a prehistoric gorge to the double hook is an easy one to make. With appreciation to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

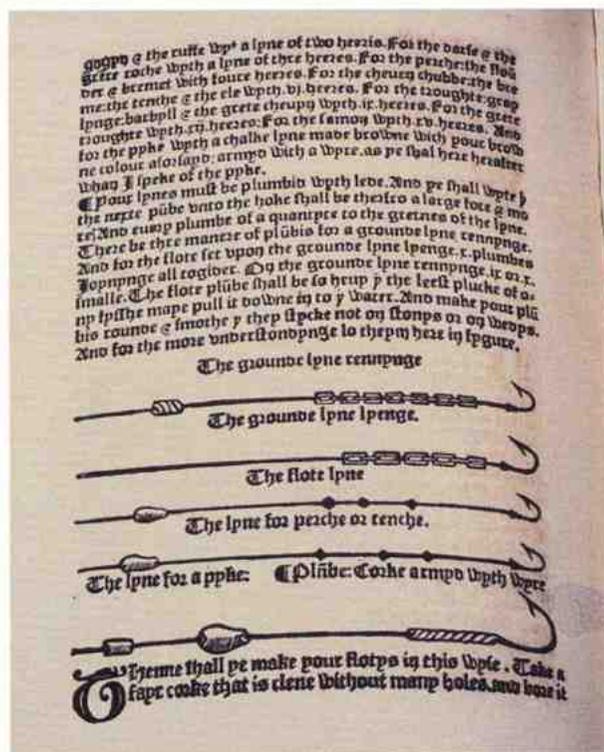


Figure 5. Snelled hooks from *A Treatyse* all show a vertical spade except the one at the bottom.

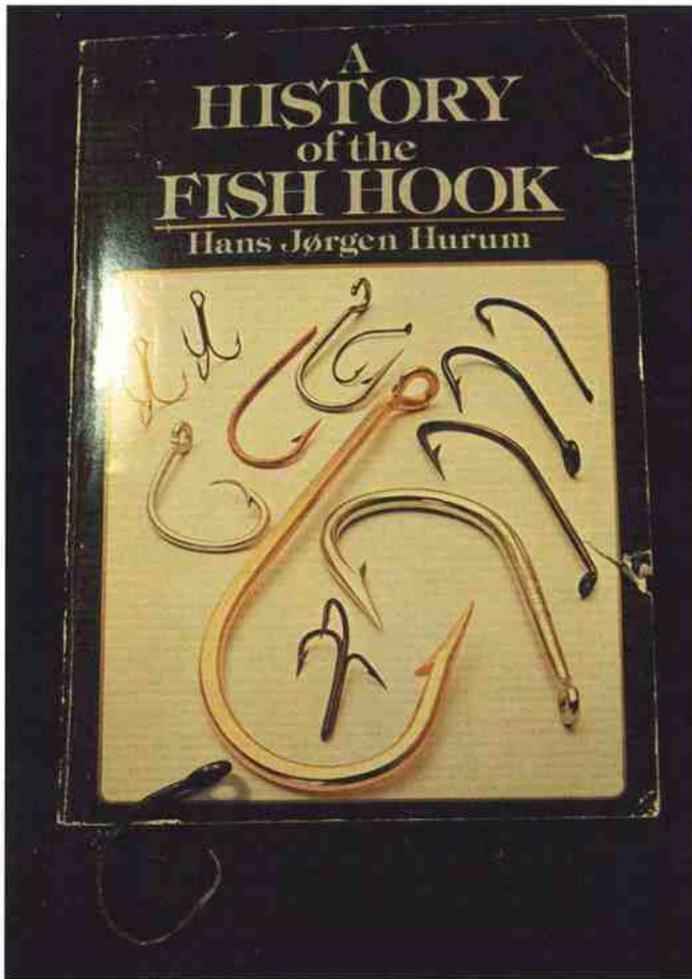
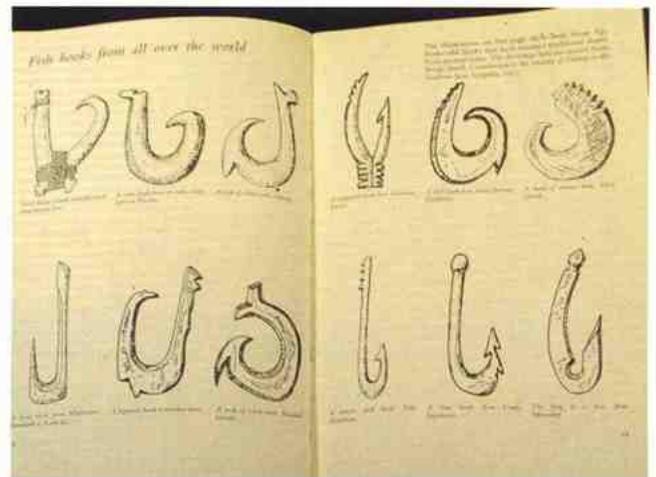
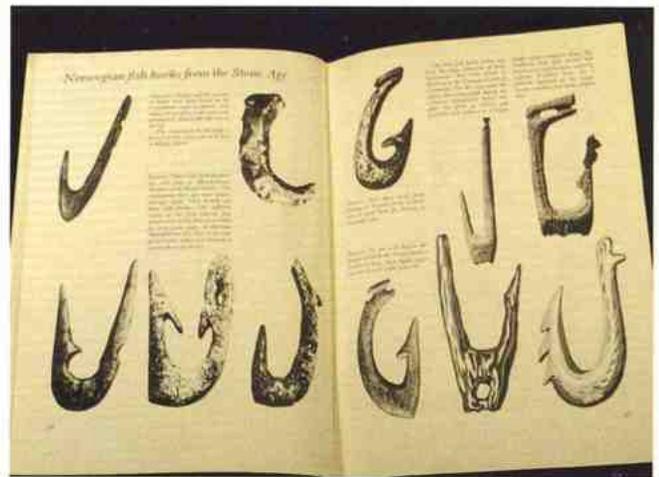


Figure 6. The cover of H. J. Hurum's *The History of the Fish Hook*, showing various Mustad designs. A circle hook made in 1992 is also seen on the cover (left center). The first Norwegian edition was published by Grondahl & Son, Forlag A/S, Norway, 1976. This one is a copy of the first U.S. edition (New York: Winchester Press, 1977). Reprinted through the kindness and generosity of O. Mustad Oslo and Mustad USA.



Figures 7 and 8. Hooks made from stone, bone, wood, shell, and metal. Their ages range from old to within the last few centuries. Some are eyed and some have barbs on the outside of the bend. From Hurum's *The History of the Fish Hook*. Reprinted through the kindness and generosity of O. Mustad Oslo and Mustad USA.

in the same image. Distortions of proper orthographic projection and perspective are commonly found in illustrations of this period. If this is so, then he—the printer—and the author knew that the viewer could make the “corrections” in his head and orient the hook bend and spade in their proper planes. The spade end was an early method used to keep the hook attached to the line. It keeps the line in place on the shank by preventing the winds from being pulled off. It is still used today on tiny hooks or ones on exceptionally fine wire that are too small to be eyed and successfully hidden in fragile baits.

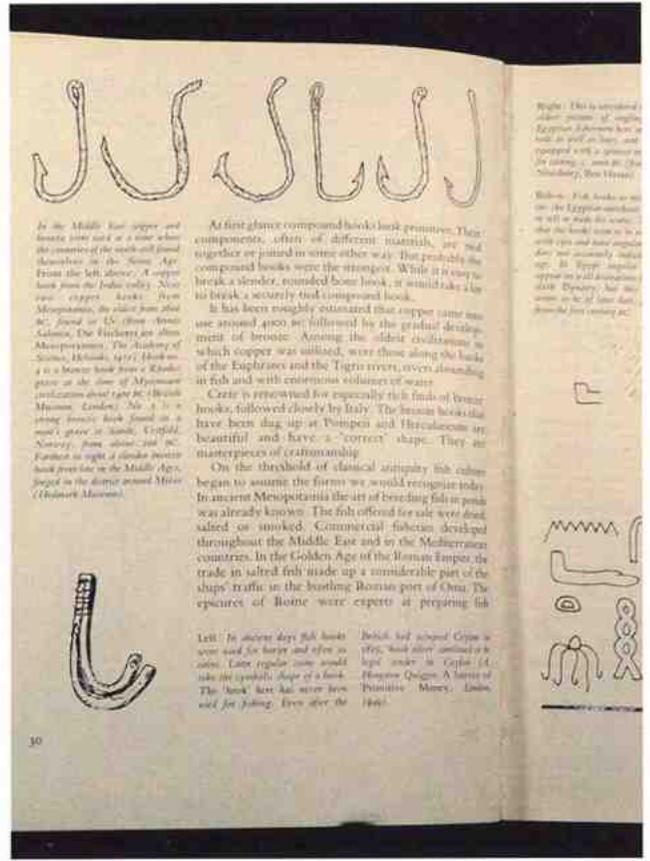
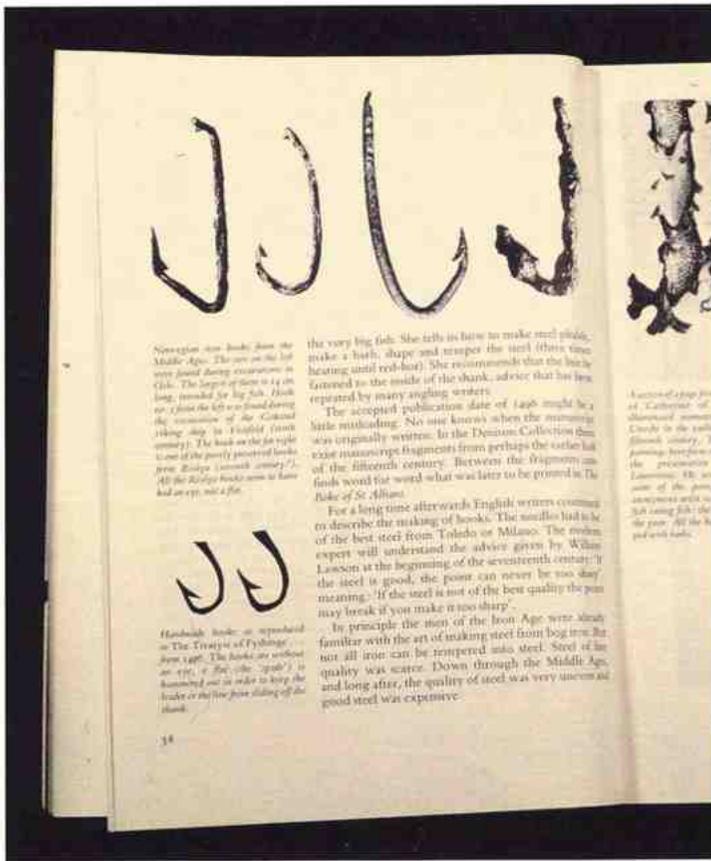
Long-shanked hooks existed thousands of years before *A Treatyse*, and Mascall is probably the first to suggest that we cut the shank to the lengths we want. The shank lengths illustrated in his book and *A Treatyse* may either have been that short or adjusted by the carver to fit into their space on the page. I have a sense that it's a little bit of both.

The points of the hooks in *The Hours* are virtually straight, whereas those in *A Treatyse* are straight, in-curve, or out points. Mascall's are out points that are much more exaggerated than those in *A Treatyse*, but some of this could be due to

the different angles they were drawn from. Is this more license? It's hard to say—out points have been popular for centuries. They catch easily, but on large hooks are much more difficult to set than a straight point. Under strain, an out point will tend to dive in at an angle, and then plow through the tissue. Greater angles of strain away from the line of the shank compound the problem. Straight points tend to go in straight, penetrating with much greater efficiency.

With regard to artistic license, we often ignore less than photographic images; our thinking is that they should be more accurate. People drawing at all levels of expertise tend to draw what they see, unless there is pressure to do otherwise. We should begin with the thought that less than perfect execution should never automatically be considered the product of flawed observation.

For thousands of years, the shape of hook shanks has varied from straight to curved in all directions (Figure 6). The “revolutionary” new circle hooks are nothing more than the reintroduction of an old widespread idea (Figures 7 to 10). Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, there is nothing



Figures 9 and 10. At the top of the pages are metal hooks with various bends and means of attachment to the lines. From Hurum's *The History of the Fish Hook*. Reprinted through the kindness and generosity of O. Mustad Oslo and Mustad USA. Figure 9 (left): Sharply angled bends like these are still used in salt water for fish feeding on the bottom. These hooks are between eleven and thirteen hundred years old. One of them is almost 7 inches long. The hook on the right is eyed and not spade ended like the one next to it. Here the spade is seen as a thin line when viewed from the side. Figure 10 (right): From left to right, these metal hooks range in age from about 2600 B.C. to the late Middle Ages. The first four hooks are from the Near East and Mediterranean. The last two are from Europe. All but the hook on the far right would hang "directly upwards." Notice the eye on the hook fourth from the left—it's a self-wrapping metal snell, a safe, solid idea that is easily made.

readily available in English angling literature, except pictures, that addresses the configuration of the hook. Finally, in 1613, someone says something. That person is John Dennys, who wrote his book, *The Secrets of Angling*, entirely in verse. In it we find:

That Hooke I loue [love] that is in a compasse round,
Like to the print that Pegasus did make,
With horned hoove upon Thessalian ground . . . 5 (Figure 11)

Dennys is likening his favorite hook shape, its "compasse" or bend, to the hoof print of Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek myth. Is Dennys describing only the bend of his hook or an extension of that bend out onto the shank or point as well? We don't know.

"Compass" is an important word, as it provides a connection from Dennys to the writers who follow him. A "compass(e)" or "compass(e) bend" has not always referred to the line made by the drafting instrument we're familiar with. Years ago, it enjoyed much broader application when it included arcs whose ends may or may not have been able to be extended to form a complete or perfect circle. These arcs could be

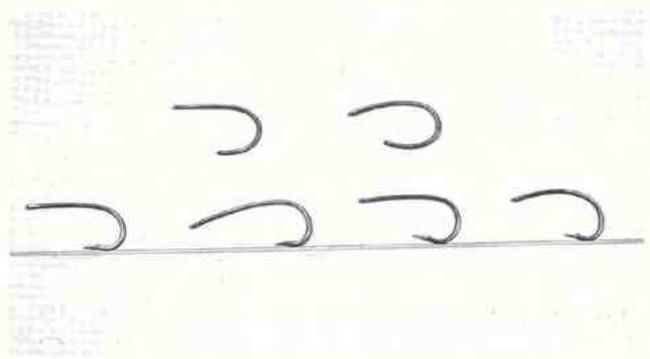


Figure 11. These are possible interpretations of Dennys's ideas. The bend on the top right is more like a "hoofe print" than the one on the left. The hooks on the bottom row are conversions of the top row into hook shapes. The one on the far left is an adaptation of the unhooflike bend on the left of the row above it. Hooks made by the author.

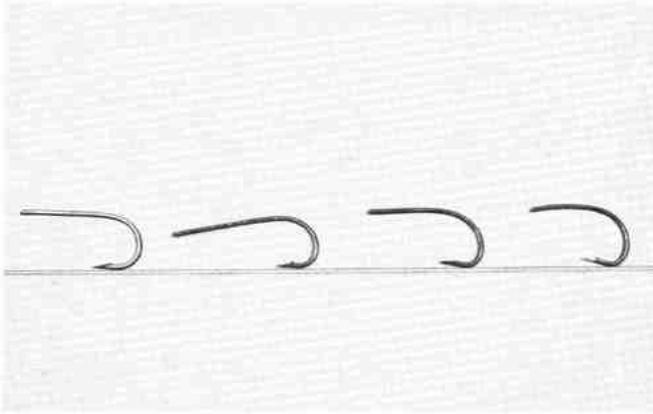


Figure 12. These hooks were made to illustrate some of Markham's thoughts. The hook on the far left is just a semicircle. Those to the right extend the bend into the point and/or shank. Hooks made by the author.

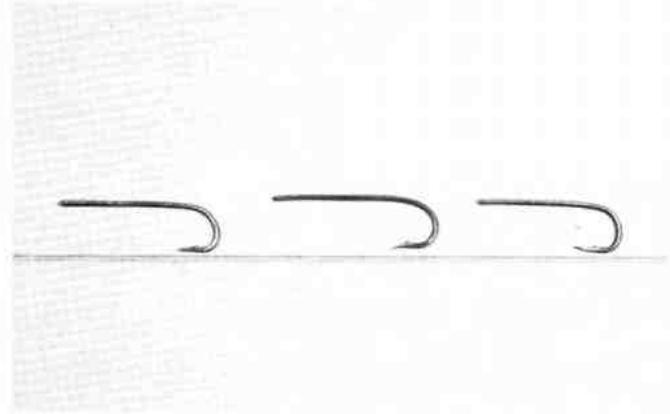


Figure 13. Straight-shanked hooks with straight-, out-, and in-curve points. Hooks made by the author.

part of a circle, or the path of the sun, or an archer's bow, or a horse's "hoofe." *The Secrets of Angling* was later edited with additions by William Lawson. I have no idea what the additions were, as this book is hard to find.

Also in 1613, the much-maligned Gervase Markham authored *The Booke of the English Husbandman*. It contained a "Discourse on the Gentle Art of Fishing with an Angle," which was reissued a year later, in 1614, as *The Pleasures of Princes*. In that text he describes the making of a hook: "When the poynt and beard is made, you shall with a fine payre of round Plyers turne and compasse the hook about making it round, circular wise, being somewhat more than a semi-circle, and ever observe that the rounder the compasse or bought cometh in, so much better proportioned the hook is."⁶ Markham is clear that the shape of the hook bend should be "round" and "circular" and "somewhat more than a semi-circle." "[M]ore than a semi-circle" could mean that (a) the bend was a round semi-circular bend between the straight parts of the point and shank creating something U-shaped to be "more than a semi-circle," or (b) that the bend continued bending past its limits as a semicircle to include part of the point and/or shank. I'd bet on the latter.

"[T]he rounder the compasse or bought cometh in, so much better proportioned the hook is." This could also indicate two different ideas. "Cometh in" might mean "ends up," as in the rounder it ends up, the better. On the other hand, "cometh in" could indicate that the bend bends back in to form more than a semicircle. My vote here is again for the latter. When the bend comes back in, it forms more than a semicircle and is a hook with an in-curve in the shank, point, or both. This fits better with Dennys's "hoofe" shape and Venables's designs later on (Figure 12).⁷

THE EXPERIENCED ANGLER

In 1662, Richard Marriot released the first edition of Robert Venables's *The Experienced Angler*. There are supposed to have been five editions in Venables's lifetime, but only four have been found. Although each edition has some changes, the section on hooks (page 8 in the Scholar Press facsimile of the 1676

edition) is virtually identical to the same section in the editions of 1662, 1668, and 1683. The section on page 8, Part III, of *The Experienced Angler*, reads:

3. Let your hooks be long in the shank, and of a compass somewhat inclining to roundness, but the point must stand even and streight, and the bending must be in the shank, for if the shank be streight, the point will hang outward, though when set on it stand right. Yet it will after the taking of a few Fish, cause the leader to stand bent, and so (by consequence) the point of the hook to hang directly upwards.⁸

"Let your hooks be long in the shank . . ."⁹ At the outset Venables suggests that the hook have a long shank. We don't know what "long" was, but it was probably longer than the ones in Mascal or *A Treatyse*. This length would protect the snell from the fish's teeth, but there may also have been other equally important reasons for his recommendation.

"[A]nd a compass somewhat inclining toward roundness" is commonly interpreted to be limited to the hook bend. To some extent this is correct, but it may not go far enough. Venables also states that there should be some kind of "bending" in the shank. The word "compass" has reappeared in the same location as in the earlier texts.

"[B]ut the point must stand even and streight . . ." Venables was not interested in out or drop points or ones that curved in. This differs from the information shown in the woodcuts and in the absence of something similar in previous writing. For him the configuration of the point is a critical part of his overall hook design (Figure 13).

"[A]nd the bending must be in the shank . . ." This clause could have been extended by "as well": "and the bending must be in the shank as well." Further evidence indicates that the hook bend is extended in a modified form out onto the shank. We know it was restricted to this area because the point was to be "even and streight."

Recently a number of modern hooks with bent shanks have been made for emerger and nymph patterns. Flies dressed on them are wonderful looking, but the eye is much too close to the point, nearly blocking it. Hooks like these can also tend to ride upside down because of the amount of weight held in the

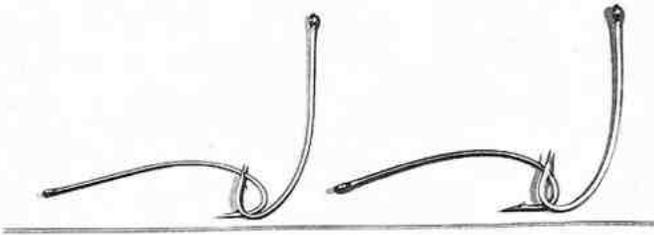


Figure 14. Old (left) and new (right) TMC 200 and TMC 200R rotated from a line of strain through 90 degrees to vertical. The point on the older one curves in more than on the new one. The old one will encircle more tissue but does not catch as easily as the new one. The redesign of the hook point had little if any effect on the efficiency of the eye/point direction or line of strain unit.

shank. This inverted position and the short distance between the eye and the point makes these hooks inefficient. On the other hand, longer hooks, such as the TMC 200 (Figure 14), that stretch this interval out are very effective, even when weighted to swim upside down. A lot of this is due to the long shank providing clearance between the eye and the point (Figures 15 and 16).

"[A]nd the bending must be in the shank, for if the shank be streight, the point will hang outwards, though when set on it stand right. Yet it will after the taking of a few Fish, cause the hair at the end of the shank to stand bent, and so (by consequence) the point of the hook to hang directly upwards." With some help, this passage makes perfect sense (Figure 17). When the snell is first "set on" or secured to a straight-shanked hook, it will hang "right" just as we'd expect it to. However, after taking a few fish, the generally upward strain on the snell will cause a bend or set to develop where the snell emerges from the winds holding it at the tip of the shank. This bend will cause the point of a straight-shanked hook to "hang outwards." If, on the other hand, a bend in the shank is coordinated with the hook bend and point, the set that develops will be compensated for, and the hook point will end up hanging "directly upwards" (Figure 18).

The long-shanked hook's weight is greater than that of a short-shanked hook with the same size bend and will help the point end up hanging "directly upwards." A short-shanked hook, even with the proper bend, could end up hanging as an out point.

While fishing, Venables must have noticed how straight-shanked hooks looked suspended in the air "after the taking of a few fish." He may have thought that the point "hanging outwards," developed from a bend in the snell, was a possible cause for missing or losing fish. He may also have felt that what had become a sort of out point could open still farther under

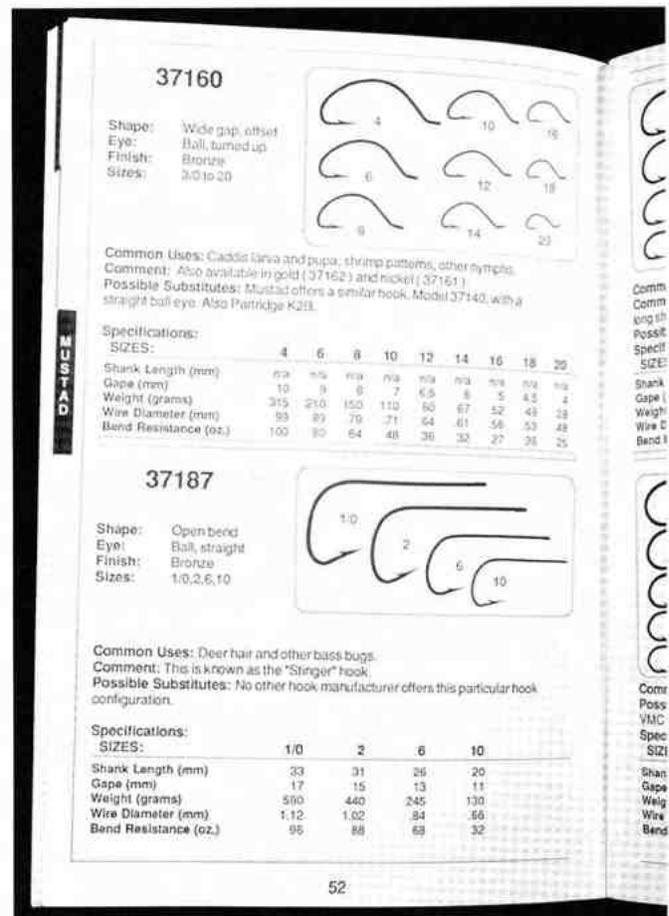


Figure 15. At the top of the page are hooks in which the distance between the point and the eye is short and could interfere with the point. At the bottom is a stinger hook, which is actually a humped-shank hook. From Richard Stewart, *The Hook Book* (Intervale, N.H.: Northland Press, 1986), 52. With appreciation to Richard Stewart, Northland Press.

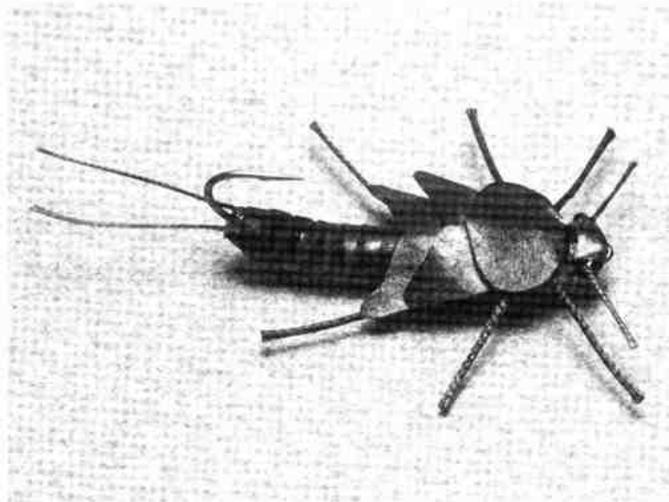


Figure 16. A stonefly nymph on a TMC 200R weighted to swim with the point "upwards." The eye almost sits on the line of strain to the point. The point is the first thing in the fish's mouth when the fly is picked up close to or on the bottom.



Figure 17. Three possible "bendings" in the shank. Left: It could be sway-backed where the point is forced outward. Pushing it back into straight would close the gape. Middle: The humped-shank hook will bring the point back in and also close the gape. Right: The humped shank here is coordinated with the bend. The end of the shank is on the same line as the direction of the point, and for that reason is the only one that will hang "directly upwards." Hooks made by the author.

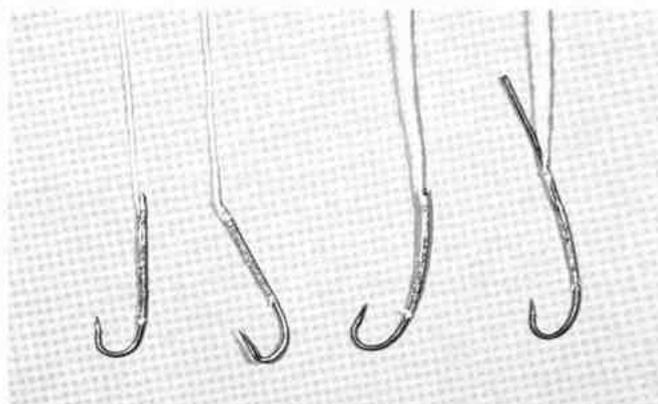


Figure 18. These four hooks are each snelled with four twisted horsehairs. The first two on the left are straight shanked and pointed. When the snell is first "set on" or installed, the point on the left-hand hook will "stand right." "After the taking of a few fish," a set or bend develops in the snell, causing the point to "hang outwards" (second from the left). Of the two humped-shanked hooks, the third from the left has "set on" and had no strain applied to it. The point curves slightly inward. The hook on the far right has been put under strain; the set or bend developed, and now the point hangs "directly upwards." The wire extension on this hook was left to show the angle between the shank and the set in the snell created by the bend. These sets took only a short time in wet horsehair strained with less than about a half pound of weight. Hooks made by the author.

pressure. From our own experience, and I'm sure his, hooks that open just a little are insecure. An opened hook, even if the distortion is slight, becomes an out point hook that is not only uncertain, but harder to set and keep in place.

His method of resolving this issue indicates that he didn't ignore what he observed. His level of attention to whatever he was doing was unique in angling literature in 1662 and remains rare today. Venables knew that when the artificial fly or bait was lowered to the water that the tail or back of the bend would touch the surface first. After this came the lower part of the shank and the point. He apparently reasoned that at this moment, the most efficient position for the point to be in was "directly upwards" and often in line with the initial stroke to set the hook. We still move the rod vertically today.

Throughout angling literature, we are advised to keep as much of the line off the water as often as we can and for as long as we're able to do it. Venables's "directly upwards" hook point fitted this philosophy perfectly.

We read a good deal about the line-of-pull in recent writing. Much of it is fanciful and seems to be unaware (1) of the effect of the hinge between the leader knot and the eye, (2) that virtually every hook tested is straight shanked, and (3) that the tests are made with the point in the side or end of a board—and not in a piece of meat (Figures 19A to 19F).

Determining the line-of-pull (pulling the point in) on hooks whose points are stuck in a board is a corruption of the original purpose of the exercise. It was originally done, well up into the 1960s, under moderate strain, to make sure that the hook would neither open nor break. The first hooks examined this way were blind eye, thus rendering the up- or downness of the eye and its effect on the line-of-pull a moot question—indeed one that, until the eyed hook, was rarely, if ever, considered.

Line-of-pull discussions by modern writers are fabrications whose value is undermined in three places. First, they deal with

a hook that hadn't been invented when the test was first devised for a different reason; second, they do not fully account for the shape of the hook's shank, bend, and point and their relationships to one another; and third, the hardness of the board causes the hook to pivot on its point more than it does going into tissue. Venables explored and explains all of this in the passage on page 12.

At O. Mustad in Norway, hook strength is tested with a wire tether that seats itself in the bend when strain is applied to the eye. Resistance to the test strain naturally seats the wire tether in the bend. This location is up closer to the shank than the point and therefore closer to the line of strain for up-, down-, or straight-eyed hooks than when their point is embedded in a board. In the field, penetration of the hook point is stopped when tissue is jammed up against the bend or the point rests on solid bone—which is rarely does for any length of time. Once penetration is arrested by the bend, there is no longer any load on the point—just like in the Mustad test. Line-of-pull under these circumstances is on everything but the point.

The few hooks available with longish humped shanks are among the most lethal ever offered. When setting one of these, regardless of whether it's horizontal, at an angle, or "directly upwards," the bent shank brings its tip and the eye, or beginning of the snell, down close to or on the point's line of penetration, and resistance seated in the bend. This insures that a maximum amount of energy is transferred to pulling the point through its most efficient path. I'm sure Venables understood this.

HOOK EYES AND GUT

Venables was never to know of modern hook eyes (Figure 20), silkworm gut, nor of their relationship. Horsehair and gut competed on fairly equal footing for a century or so after the introduction of gut in the early 1700s. By the early 1800s, knot-

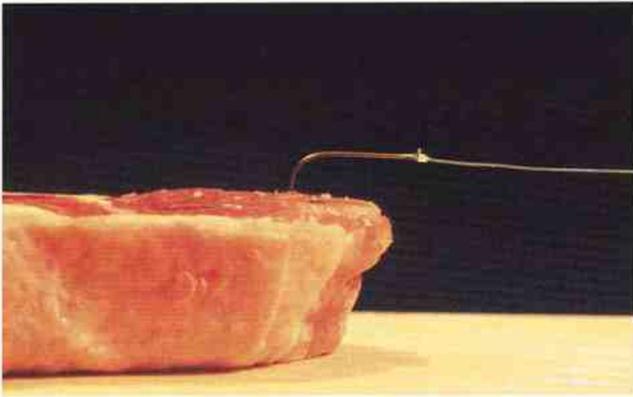


Figure 19A. A straight-pointed, straight-shanked TMC 101 before being pulled into a lamb chop.

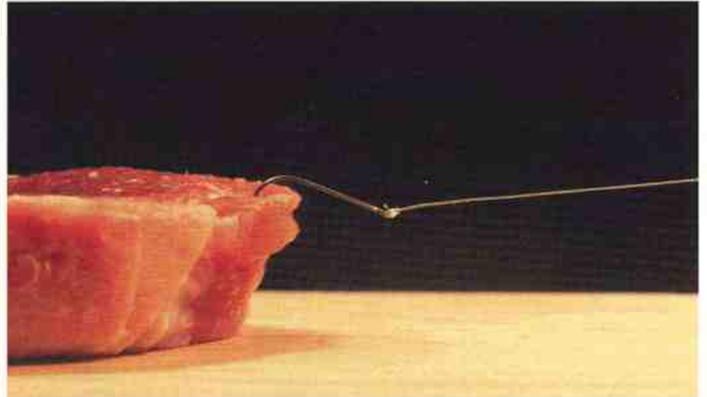


Figure 19B. As it is pulled in, the eye is pulled down and forces the point parallel to it to go in as an out point. The angle between the shank and the leader indicates the amount of deflection as the leader approaches a line parallel to the board.

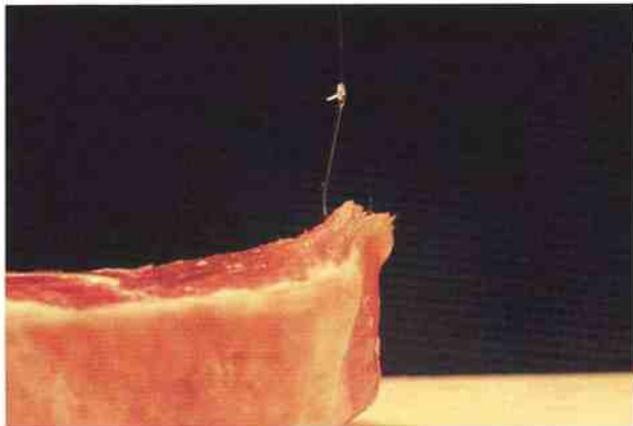


Figure 19C. Vertical strain lifting the chop returns the line of strain back to the line of the point.

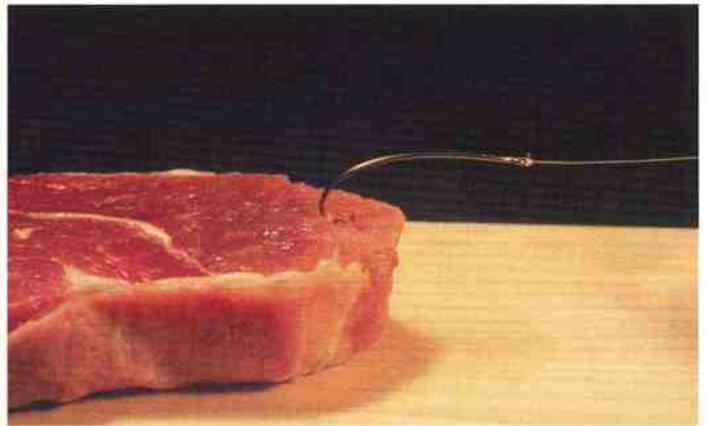


Figure 19D. A TMC 200R just before it's pulled into the chop.

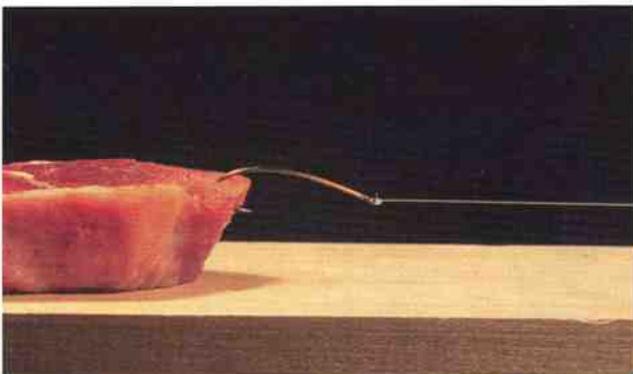


Figure 19E. As it is pulled in, the eye is forced down first as it is in the straight-shanked hook. However, because of the "bending" in the shank and coordination of the bend and point with it, the point goes in straight. Notice that the line of strain on the different hooks as they're pulled into the meat is not the same. If the line for the straight-shanked hook came down even farther, the out point effect in this hook would be even greater.

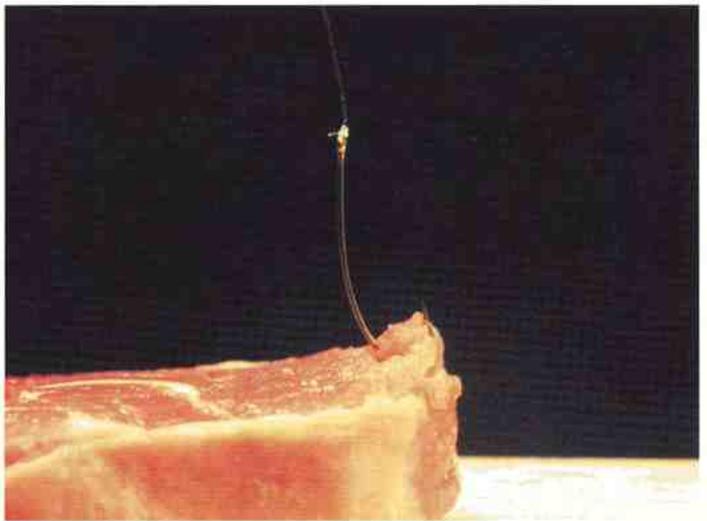


Figure 19F. When pulled vertically, the strain causes the slight in curve in the point and heel to begin to encircle the tissue. After this photo, we cooked the chop and ate it.

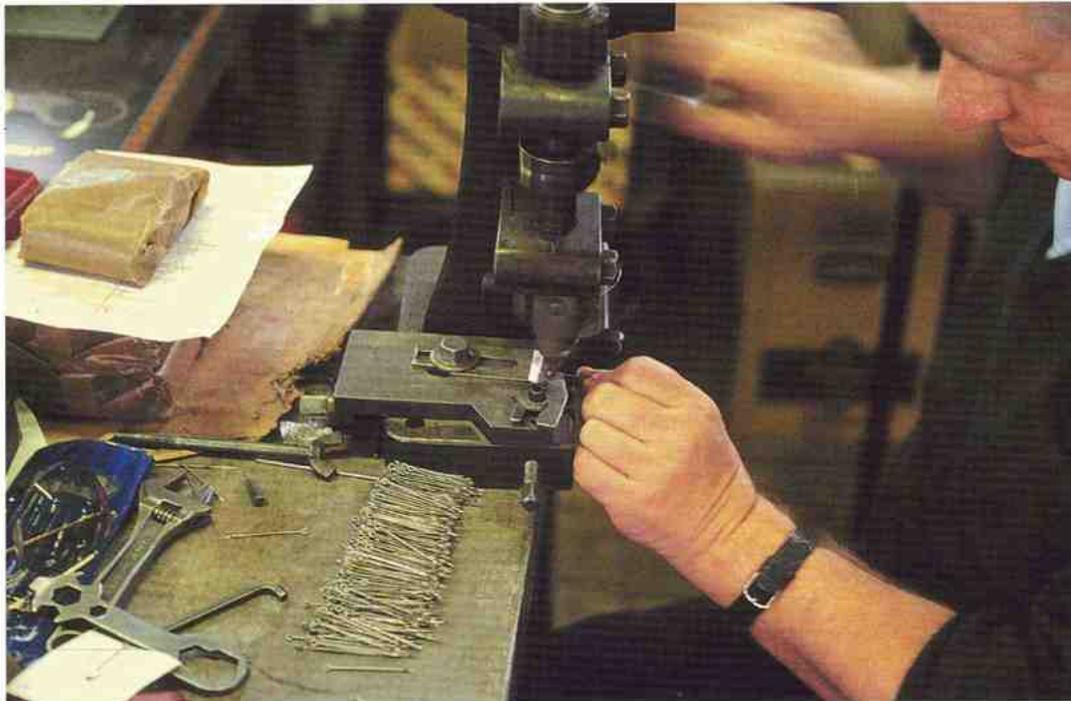


Figure 20. Bending eyes at Partridge in England in the late 1990s. This machine is about a century old. Even very small eyes need something this sturdy because a lot of force is required to precisely bend a small, closed ring.

less tapered lines were coming into common use. They could be cast at speeds that exceeded the strength of the hair snells, giving gut a leg up. Within another fifty years, the process of making small, smooth, profitable closed rings at the end of thin wire shanks had been perfected. Horsehair can be twisted and braided easily, but does not knot well around anything, especially fine wire. It's slippery, stiff, capricious, and comes in only one size. Trying to safely secure one or more hairs with a Turle knot or the knots we now use in hook eyes was and is impossible. Snelling was the only practical way to secure horsehair to the hook shank. Gut, on the other hand, knots well, is stronger than hair, is manageable and dependable, and comes in different sizes. If gut had come along in Venables's lifetime, what would he have had to do with his hook? Probably very little, because a gut snell will take a set or bend just as hair did.

The modern hook eye brought with it the Turle knot. This clever removable snell requires an up- or down-eyed hook for its installation. The Turle knot looks like a last-gasp attempt to maintain a good grip on the devil you know—the snell—while reaching cautiously out to touch the one you don't—the eye. Basically, it's trying to keep one foot on the dock and the other on the boat that is drifting away. Sooner or later, you're going to have to commit. After what anglers had been going through for centuries, to suddenly be able to knot right into an eye must have been an awful lot to handle all at once in spite of the advantages it offered.

Aside from the obvious benefits of gut in both changing flies and the reduced loss of flies through reknottng, it brings something else that is rarely commented on. When gut is tied to the eye, a hinge develops between them. It helps reduce the possibility of a set or the effects of a set, if one appears, and allows the hook to self-adjust instantly to resistance.

Regardless of the type of eye or what the point is pressing

against, a strain in line with a straight-shanked, straight-pointed hook will cause the eye to be pulled downward, depressing the point into the position of an out point. On a straight-pointed, humped-shank hook, the eye is already down and more in line with the point and the line of force pulling it into place. Its straight point will not only go in straight, but hang "directly upwards" (Figure 21).

Nothing in the relationship between gut snells and blind-eyed hooks would have made a change in Venables's hook shape necessary. The knot hinge between gut and the eyed hook eliminated any need for modification altogether. Silkworm gut and the eyed hook were made for each other, and the marriage was not going to be denied. Their compatibility gave them each the boost they needed for a firm seat in anglers' tackle.

Venables's extension of the bend out onto the shank had in it the seeds of a problem. If the shank is bent enough, and the point and hook bend are not overly large, the hook may tend to swim inverted or on its side. If it carries an artificial tied in the normal way, the wings will end up underneath the fly after it flips over. On straight-shanked hooks, the bend and point weigh enough to swing below the shank, keeping the hook right side up and the wing on top (Figure 22). Venables may have watched as his flies, tied on humped-shank hooks, inverted, partially or completely, and put the wings out of the position he wanted them in—"the posture of one flying." Rather than abandon his hook with the "directly upwards" point, he redesigned the fly.

IN THE POSTURE OF ONE FLYING

As far as we know, no flies exist from the 1600s, but enough tracks have been left to show that their flies were not all that different from what we see and make today. Venables, though,

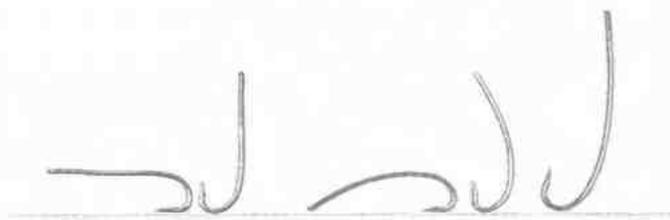


Figure 21. Straight-shanked and humped-shanked hooks being rotated from horizontal to vertical and beyond. With the black line as the strain line, notice the vertical distance between the shank and point on the straight-shanked hook. This distance reduces the efficiency of the hook. On the humped-shanked hook, the tip of the shank is on the line and in line with the point—virtually no energy is lost. When the point on the humped-shanked hook is directly upward, the shank still has a way to go to get to vertical. When it gets there, the point and heel will have begun to encircle the tissue, creating a very secure hold. This does not happen on the straight-shanked hook until the shank is well past vertical and causes the hook to try to rotate on its heel off to one side or the other, possibly loosening its hold. Hooks made by the author.

adds a wrinkle that would not reappear for more than three hundred years. It is further testimony to his way of seeing things and acting on what he saw.

[A]nd when I come to the place which I conceive most proportional for the Wings, then I place such colored feathers there, as I apprehend most resemble the Wings of the Flie, and set the points of the wings towards the Head, or else I run the feathers (and those must be stript from the Quill or Pen, with part of it still cleaving to the feathers) round the hook, and so make them fast, if I turn the feathers round the hook, then I clip away those that are upon the back of the hook, that so (if it be possible) the point of the hook may be forced by the feathers (left inside of the hook) to swim upwards; and by this means I conceive the stream will carry your Flies wings in the posture of one flying; whereas if you set the points of the wings backwards, towards the bending of the hook, the stream (if the feathers be as gentle as they ought) will fold the points of the wings in the bending of the hook, as I have often found by experience.¹⁰

Venables is telling us a number of things, among which are (1) the positions for the wings could be anywhere between “towards the head” or advanced, and “backwards towards the bending of the hook,” and (2) at this time, fly wings were for the most part tied in advanced, and either fully or partially reversed into our familiar upwing and wet fly positions. Venables seems to be alone in leaving them advanced.

We have always assumed that the wings “folded into the bending of the hook” on his inverted hook meant that the wings fouled the hook. I think that although this interpretation may be legitimate, it may also be simplistic. Fly dressers certainly knew enough that wings could be tied in at a length that did not foul the bend. It could also mean that wings tied in with their points toward the bend of the hook start out at a shallow angle and are quickly flattened out by the current to lay back along the shank. Their tips may be “folded into the” bend, but may not necessarily touch or foul it. In this position, they would not be upright enough to be in “the posture of one flying.”

When tying in your fingers, as he did, wings tied in on the inside of the shank are no harder to mount than those put on the top of it, no matter which way they’re pointed. However, forcing wings that start out pointed to the rear into a permanent upright or forward position is an awkward and difficult way to do something that can end up being unattractive and not in “the posture of one flying.”

If he was going to eventually remove material from the back

of the hook after the fly was complete, he could have avoided the step entirely just by tying a bunch of advanced feathers in on the inside of the shank. Why did he go to the trouble of winding a split feather? Because the material left after trimming will be spread in a semicircle under the shank at the head of what will become, when the fly inverts, the top of the fly. The amount of material and the way it’s displayed offers much greater resistance to the water than a single group of the same number of fibers would. The location of the resistance, starting on the underside of the hook, will help turn the fly over. A split hackle is easier to wind than a whole feather and allows the tyer to choose the side that will automatically lay down advanced or pointing to the rear.

The advanced wing Venables chose could be any reasonable length because it could never be forced back far enough to foul the bend or lay down along the shank. He says he finished his flies at the head, which has traditionally meant in front of the wings. These winds could also be used to help fan out the wing fibers. There is nothing in Venables’s book that suggests reversing or dividing the wing. He seems to be alone among other writers in this area. His fly hanging in the air right at the water’s surface with its wing fan above a body upswept by “the bending in the shank” must have looked very much like the real thing—no wonder he wrote about it. Venables’s idea of using a wound split hackle to invert his fly and enhance its effectiveness on his thoughtful hook is an original design of extraordinary clarity and quality.

There is an inconsistency here, however, that may have escaped Venables.

When you set on your hook, do it with strong but small silk, and lay your hair on the inside of the hook, for if on the outside the silk will cut and fret it asunder, and to avoid the fretting of the hair by the hook on the inside, smooth your hook upon a whetstone, from the inside to the back of the hook slope-ways.¹¹

When he tied flies, Venables probably held the hook in what became known as the normal position, i.e., with the bend between his thumb and forefinger and the point below the shank. His wrapping the snell to the underside of the shank was, and remained, standard practice until the snell disappeared in the early 1900s. He talks about filing the shank smooth in a specific manner. It may have been that his hook wire was square in cross-section. This was not uncommon and is mentioned in other texts. Some of the wire used in hooks

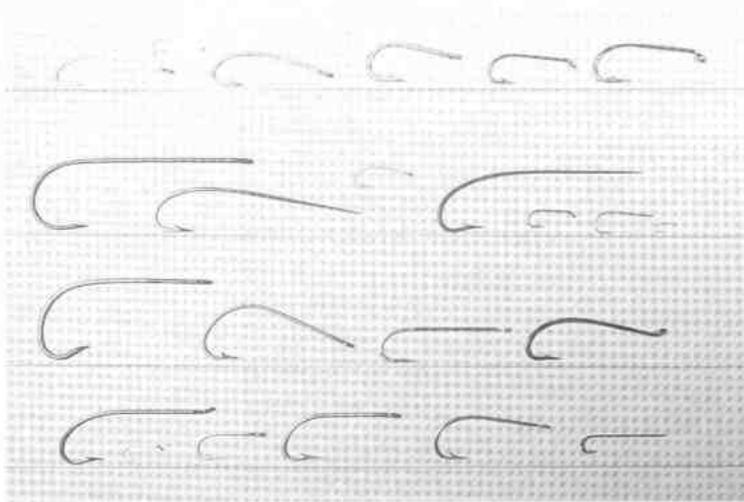


Figure 22. Assorted hooks showing the predominance of shanks and points we think are straight. Most bend down toward a horizontal line of strain. First row, left, first three hooks are TMC 200 large and small and TMC 200R. Second row, two small hooks on right are Mustad; larger one is 94840. Third row, second from the left is a Mustad stinger hook, a humped-shanked hook with the hump in the bend. Fourth row, next to last on the right is a sproat bend.

started out square and was filed round. This was still true long after Venables's death. With the snell on the underside of the hook, strain, which is usually upward, will bring the hair up along the sides of the tip of the shank. Unless the corners of the wire are removed, they would present a hazard to the snell pressing against them. In this position, the snell will not usually come directly back against the wraps holding it. The same strain applied to a snell that is on top of the shank will bring the hair right against the silk and "fret it asunder." Given what he says about snelling the hook, how does he handle snelling on the inside of the shank on a fly designed to swim upside down?

When he starts out, Venables is apparently still putting the snell on the underside of the shank. After trimming "the back of the hook," the fly inverts, rotating 180 degrees—putting the unclipped part of the wing on top and converting what was the underside of the shank to its top side. In this new position, the snell is now on top, and under normal upward strain will bear right up against the silk wraps. One would think that this hair would be fretted "asunder" just as easily as it would have been previously.

He never tells us to rotate the attachment of the snell on a fly that will be trimmed to swim inverted. If he had, the snell would have been wrapped to the top of the shank in order to end up on its underside, where it would not be fretted "asunder." I wonder if he used this fly much, or did it spend the bulk of its life as an idea? We've all tried things like this, which are fine until they're transferred from a sure thing in our heads to an object in the field that behaves according to rules that never occurred to us.

Visual evidence to support Venables's fly design can be found in the frontispiece of his book. It is a clear representation of seventeenth-century fishing tackle. The frontispiece includes a reel, float, weights, ferruled rods, bait-horns, a pike with a misplaced or extra anal fin, and two flies that are shown inverted. We can't just chalk them off to a mistake or license like the pike's fin, because that won't square with the text. What counts here is that *both* flies are inverted (Figure 23).

Flies were well known by 1676. Marriot had printed Walton five times, Venables twice or more by the 1676 edition, and had kept the same frontis in Venables each time. Walton's high praise for *The Experienced Angler* means that he saw the illustrations and allowed Marriot to publish them along with *The Compleat Angler* in 1676.

Concerns about the authorized and unauthorized reproduction of material were grounded in the fear that really important information such as history, property, the law, natural sciences, and religious doctrines would be altered or exposed. Keeping track of ideas and maintaining consistency was a fairly simple task while the only permanent form of transmission was handwritten.

When it came, the printing press was a mixed blessing by making information—and its consistency, adulteration, and theft—widely available at affordable prices. The commerce of books and what they could contain gave rise to statutes regarding the right to copy and the income produced from it. The legal framework that made books a good economic opportunity developed during Venables's lifetime.

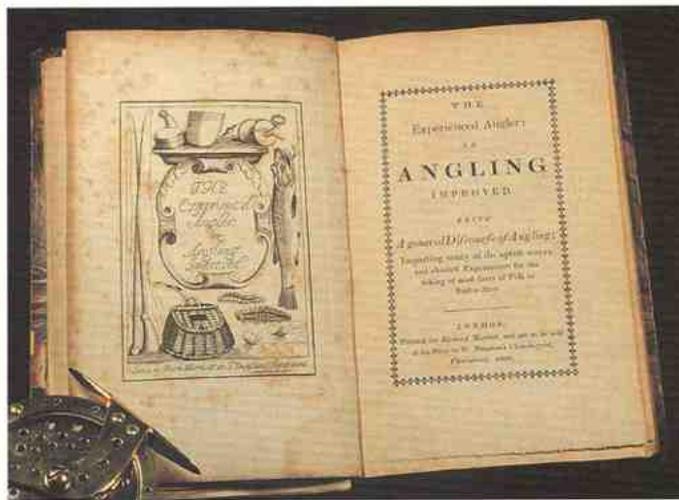
Venables must have known of the success of angling books. By 1662 there were at least fifteen editions of *A Treatyse*, as well as four of Mascal, four of Dennys, ten-plus of Markham, four of Thomas Barker's *Art of Angling* (first published in 1651), and five or so of Walton. Always with an eye to windward, Venables had to have seen a chance for material gain and recognition. He may have known that no one had written a book as technically sound as he had. Walton, who genuinely disliked everything Venables stood for, called *The Experienced Angler* "the Epitome of Angling."¹² Richard Marriot, who had been Barker's and was Walton's publisher, was also Venables's.

The Experienced Angler is a straightforward, no-frills effort by someone who possessed ordinary writing skills but was confident in his ability as an angler. One cannot be as close to the details of fishing as Venables was, provide as much as he left us, and not have been completely fascinated by it. The new guy in the factory is easy to spot because he uses only one hand to run the machine and must look to see where it goes. Veterans can use both hands interchangeably without looking. There is no substitute for the depth of comprehension that comes from regular and sustained practice.

Venables seems to be totally given to observing and thinking with an open mind. He was unrestrained by habit or the order things arrived in. He selected and rearranged the parts he needed so that they served each other and not some preconceived idea. He changed what he could and worked to his advantage what he couldn't. He must have asked himself "I wonder what happens if . . ." a million times.

He is important not only because the contents of his book are unique, but because of the precision and imagination with

Figure 23. Frontispiece of
The Experienced Angler.



which he used to assemble them. The standard he set would not reappear until after the first quarter of the 1800s—nearly two hundred years later.

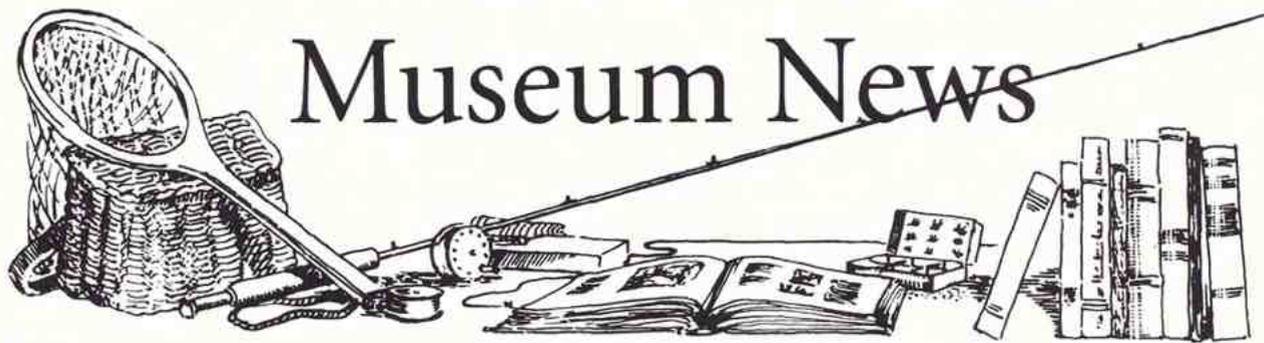
REPETITION IN THE FIELD

Just as I'm sure Markham knew of Dennys, I'm equally certain that Venables knew of them both. The location and use of the word "compass(e)" in such a restricted part of a narrow field is too close to be coincidental. Venables used and transmitted information that he did not originate, and he makes no mention of where he found it. By 1653 and Walton's *Compleat Angler*, there were only about a dozen books in English that mention fishing in much detail. There are only so many ways to express limited knowledge, and with just a few books on something like fishing, the use of existing style and information was unavoidable and acceptable. This repetition may have actually slowed the development of new material. Because the pool they drew from was so small, most angling writers and readers probably knew where the original information came from and may have had contact with the people who provided it. Citing sources was inconvenient (there was no formal system for footnotes or bibliography), redundant (if the source was well known), and unrecorded (if a request to use the information was verbal). Venables's acquisition of information is important in that it indicates he was informed of other work and willing to use whatever he felt would be constructive. He filtered his choices through the screen of experience.

Unlike his contemporaries—the genial Walton, enthusiastic Barker, and the amiable poet, bounder, renowned horseman, horticulturist, and fly fisherman Charles Cotton—Robert Venables was a grind. His joyless attitude even seeps through the pages of a work that's supposed to be about something that's fun to do. Venables's complaints about his mistreatment at the hands of nearly everyone is a common thread that runs through his recorded life. It's sad in a way; his superior work and its contributions to angling for nearly 350 years is overshadowed by the friendly and less informative work of others who come before and succeed him. Perhaps it's the tone of the book, along with his unpleasant, unreliable, and bloody reputation that have constricted his image. When you think about it, it's really not all that odd, as hacking and fly casting are both the same motion.

ENDNOTES

1. Details from Venables's life come from a number of sources: Sir Sidney Lee, ed., *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1903); Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (London: Gosden, 1827); introduction by C. G. A. Parker in Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (London: Antrobus Press, 1969); preface by Horace Hutchinson, in Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (London: Cresset Press, 1927), published along with Gervase Markham, *The Pleasures of Princes*.
2. *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves* (fifteenth century), modern reproduction (New York: Geo. Braziller, n.d., twentieth century), 128. The date of 1428–1445 appears in the introductory text of the Braziller introduction, and they are not positive it is correct.
3. Wynkyn de Worde, *A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* (Westminster, England: 1496; Elliot Stock edition, 1880).
4. Leonard Mascall, *A Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line* (London: John Wolfe, 1590), 22–23 (from a microfilm of the first edition supplied through the kindness of the Beineke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut). It's not much of a leap from the ancient gorge to the double hook in this woodcut.
5. John Dennys, *The Secrets of Angling* (London: Roger Jackson, 1613); introduction by Thomas Westwood from the reprint (London: W. Satchell, 1833), 27.
6. Gervase Markham, *The Pleasures of Princes* (London: John Browne, 1614; Cresset Press edition, 1927), 11. It appears in conjunction with Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (see note 1).
7. Markham may not have known John Dennys by this name. For years, the work was thought to have been written by John Davors. The authorship in the book is attributed to "J.D."—the initials for both Dennys and Davors, and no one had ever heard of Dennys. Izaak Walton apparently assigned it to John Davies and John Donne. The issue finally came to rest in 1811, more than two hundred years later, through records in the stationer's office.
8. Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (London: Richard Marriot, 1676). The quote is from the facsimile of *The Universal Angler*, published by Marriot in 1676 (pages 8 and 9). It contains Parts I and II of *The Compleat Angler* by Walton and Cotton, respectively. The facsimile was produced by the Scolar Press in 1971.
9. From here on, there are a number of words and clauses in quotes that all come from the Scolar Press facsimile. Larger sections are endnoted separately.
10. Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (London: Richard Marriot, 1676), 18–19 (Scolar Press facsimile, see note 9).
11. *Ibid.*, 9.
12. This phrase is from a congratulatory letter written by Izaak Walton to Robert Venables on the publication of *The Experienced Angler*. Given Walton's feelings about Venables's activities, the motives for writing may not have been all that altruistic. The endorsement of newcomers by established parties was and is nothing new. I don't doubt that Walton liked Venables's book; neither do I doubt that both Marriot and Walton knew that the endorsement would help the sales of both Venables and Walton. Further, if *The Experienced Angler* was a hit, Walton was very much on board as having recognized the talent before anyone else. This would serve to enhance his own reputation. Walton's letter is reprinted in all editions of Venables.



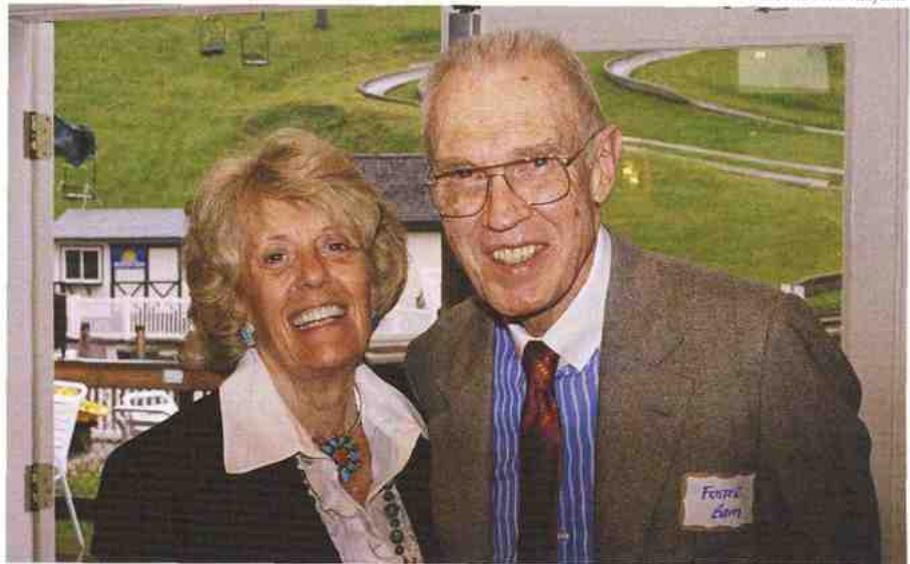
Museum News

Laine and Yoshi Akiyama

Trustee Meeting

Thirty-five trustees gathered on June 21 in Manchester, Vermont, making it the best-attended meeting in years. With all that is happening at the Museum, it was important that the participation be strong. Six new trustees were unanimously elected and welcomed to the board: Mickey Callanen of Rowayton, Connecticut; Blake Drexler of New Canaan, Connecticut; Christopher Garcia of Wilton, Connecticut; Chris Gruseke of New Canaan, Connecticut; Carl Kuehner III of Norwalk, Connecticut; Nancy Mackinnon of Manchester, Vermont; and James Mirenda of Dorset, Vermont.

Recognizing the very northeastern orientation of this new group of trustees, the board is actively seeking trustees from other regions of the country. We were pleased that Trustee Bill McMaster, M.D., elected to the board last November, and his wife Lynn made the trek all the way from their home in Costa Mesa, California, for the weekend's activities.



Sallie Baldwin and Trustee Foster Bam at the Bromley dinner.

The main topic of discussion at the meeting was, of course, the Brookside Project. Building Committee Chair George Gibson, supported by financial reports by President David Walsh, gave a detailed summary of estimated final

project costs and construction timing for the main building.

Other topics of discussion included recognizing the contributions to fly fishing by living persons, the future of our traveling exhibition "Anglers All," and planning for the grand opening of the new museum campus. All told, it was a spirited, enthusiastic meeting, providing great direction for the Museum's staff.

Laine and Yoshi Akiyama



Trustee Leigh Perkins and his wife Romi share a laugh with Trustee George Gibson.

A Manchester Weekend: Sporting Collectibles and Antique Show Meets Manchester Dinner and Sporting Auction

Our busy Manchester, Vermont, trustee weekend began with a preview party for our first Sporting Collectibles and Antique Show on Friday, June 20, at Riley Rink at Hunter Park. Tickets were sold to the public for a sneak preview of the finest in sporting, rustic, camping, and Americana antiques. The preview



Trustee Peter Corbin tells auctioneer Gary Tanner that he is offering a trip to his house on Martha's Vineyard. It brought in \$5,000—fly included.



Our youngest attendee: Trustee Steve Benardete and his wife Judy with their adorable daughter.

was attended by approximately one hundred guests from all over the country.

Saturday, June 21st saw the official opening of the Collectibles Show. Show producers Oliver & Gannon did a tremendous job organizing this event, signing up vendors from across the Northeast, as well as from Ohio, Oregon, Illinois, and Virginia. Manchester's first sunny day in nearly a week kept people from packing the aisles, but we were still very pleased by the show's positive reception and plan to make it a regular event.

On Saturday evening, our annual Manchester Dinner and Sporting Auction was held at Bromley Mountain's Wildboar Restaurant. About seventy-five guests attended this year. It was a very good

night for the Museum, featuring some lively bidding and a complete sellout of all the auction items. This was our second year at Bromley, and Peter Hand and his staff did an excellent job ensuring that our guests went home full and happy.

The Museum wishes to acknowledge our dinner sponsors: Gardner and Ellen Grant, Arthur Kaemmer, MD, Walter and Pam Matia, Wayne Nordberg and Janet Mavec, and Harold and Virginia Williams. A thank you also to donors G. Dick Finlay, Paul Murphy, and Chip Weinberg. We are grateful to our many auction donors: Peter Corbin, Al Ducci's, E. M. Bakwin, Basketville, Battenkill Inn, Battenkill Outfitters, Bill Cairns, Cambridge Hotel, Candeleros

Southwestern Grill, Roy Chapin, Claire Murray, Robert Cochran, Dansk, Decorative Interiors, Gallo of Sonoma, Houseworks, Jenner Graphics, the Lyons Press, Manchester Hot Glass, Adriano Manocchia, Mary's Kitchen, Mulligan's of Manchester, the Orvis Company, Reluctant Panther Inn and Restaurant, Village Florist, George Van Hook, Wilburton Inn Grand Victorian Estate, Women's Golf Shop, and We Got Gear.

—DIANA SIEBOLD

Recent Donations

Trustee Emeritus **Paul Schullery** of Yellowstone Park, Wyoming, donated a copy of *Yellowstone Science* (vol. 11, no. 2, spring 2003). **Gordon Wickstrom** of Boulder, Colorado, sent us a copy of Arthur H. Carhart's *Fishing in the West* (first published in 1950, Sage Books edition 1960). **Perkins Sams** of Midland, Texas, donated two L. L. Bean catalogs: Fall 1935 and Fall 1937.

Nathaniel P. Reed of Hobe Sound, Florida, donated a collection of twenty-six flies tied by Roy Donnelly, including examples of the Light and Dark Variant, Witcomb or Whitfield, Blue Dun, and Tups.

Anne Lively of Falmouth, Maine, gave us a rod and reel that belonged to her late father, Chauncy Lively: a Paul H. Young Parabolic 18 9½-foot, 6-weight, 6.09-ounce, two-piece fly rod with an extra tip and its accompanying Pflueger Medalist no. 1495 fly reel.

Francis M. Barker of Williamstown, Massachusetts, donated an H. L. Leonard, 8½-foot, 4¾-ounce, three-piece bamboo fly rod with one extra tip; a St. Croix 6-foot, 9-inch, three-piece graphite spinning rod; an Actionglass 8-foot, 6-inch, two-piece fiberglass fly rod; an 850 Gator-Tail by Master II 6-foot, 6-inch, two-piece graphite spinning rod; an Orvis Rocky Mountain Series 9-foot, two-piece, 3¾-ounce, 6-weight graphite fly rod; an Orvis Green Mountain Series 9-foot, two-piece, 3¾-ounce, 6-weight graphite fly rod; an Abu Garcia 8-foot, 6-inch, 3½-ounce, two-piece graphite rod, GF 8667/915201; a William Mills/Leonard raised pillar fly reel with hard rubber side plates; a Pflueger Medalist fly reel (Japanese copy); a System 1.678 fly reel; an Orvis Madison III British-made fly reel; an Eagle Claw 5035 spinning reel; a small Wheatley Silmalloy metal fly box containing twenty-six trout flies; a dark-brown leather one-fold fly wallet with brass-snap button containing thirty-five streamer flies; an Orvis red/brown suede zip-up fly wallet

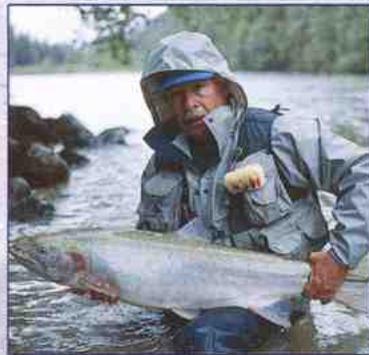
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- Trey Combs

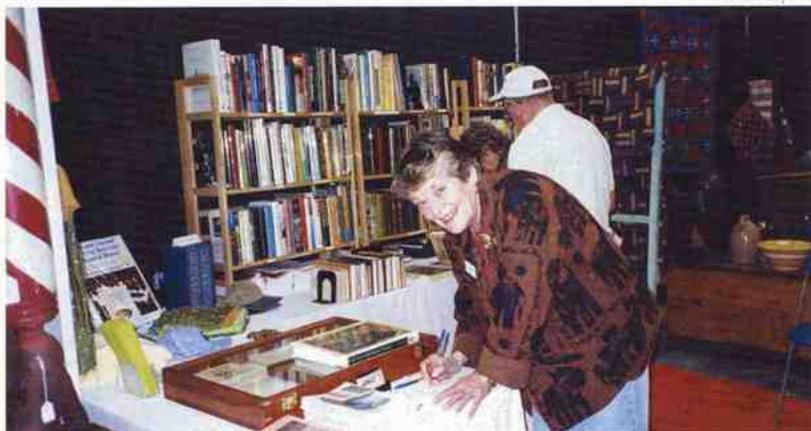


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with sheepskin liner; a tan leather two-fold fly wallet with painted brass-snap button, five-page fly holder, envelopes containing nineteen flies, and a pair of scissors; a pair of fly-tying scissors; an Abercrombie and Fitch Co. plastic fly box containing eighteen flies; a Sears, Roebuck & Co. prepackaged fly set, "Six Assorted Flies" (Irresistibles) no. 32/36; a Moodus Sports Products fly fisherman's tool (knot-tying tool), model no. 621; a South Bend fifty-six-piece trout hook assortment, no. THA-1; Sears, Roebuck & Co. set of six flies in plastic case, no. 3003 (Japanese tied); eight small plastic boxes containing an assortment of flies and lures; Myran fly box, Simlangsdalen, Sweden, a twelve-compartment plastic fly box containing an assortment of dry flies; Myran fly box, Simlangsdalen, Sweden, a four-large-compartment plastic fly box containing an assortment of dry and wet flies; Scientific Anglers DT6F Ultra 3 floating line in original box; collection of five small bags of strike indicators; Seneca Tackle Co. Side-Winder fishing lure; one paper bag containing seven fishing lures; Cortland Precision II 4x tippet line; and Maxima 4-pound, .007-inch leader material.

Don Phillips of Marco Island, Florida, donated his fishing library of 118 books, including titles related to general fishing, fly fishing, fly tying, saltwater fishing, and rod building. He also donated seventeen two-piece Boron fly rods: a 6-foot, 2-weight (serial no. 271, dated 11/29/79); a 6-foot, 4-weight (serial no. 252, dated 8/21/79); a 7-foot, 3-weight (serial no. 4169, dated 10/24/77); a 7-foot, 4-weight (serial no. 223, dated 1/20/79); a 7½-foot, 3-weight (serial no. 4234, dated 3/1/79); a 7½-foot, 4-weight (serial no. 190, dated 3/6/78); a 7½-foot, 5-weight (serial no. 529, dated 3/16/82); a 7½-foot, 6-weight (serial no. 528, dated 3/16/82); an 8-foot, 3-weight (serial no. 523, dated 4/22/82); an 8-foot, 6-weight (serial no. 522, dated 2/13/82); an 8½-foot, 5-weight (serial no. 545, dated 6/14/82); a 9-foot, 4-weight (serial no. 298, dated 2/16/80); a 9-foot, 5-weight (serial no. 527, dated 5/6/82); an 8-foot, 2-weight (serial no. 086, dated 3/9/76); a 9-foot unknown weight (XH02, dated 10/5/90); a 10-foot, 3-weight (serial no. 319, dated 6/2/80); and a 10-foot unknown weight (XH01, dated 10/15/90). Mr. Phillips also donated a Hardy Palakona 6-foot, 5-weight, two-piece bamboo fly rod; a 4½-foot wading staff; his complete fly-tying bench; and three fly boxes full of his hand-tied trout and saltwater flies.



Bookseller Judith Bowman had a booth at the Sporting Collectibles and Antique Show.

Laine and Yoshi Akiyama



Artisan bamboo rodmaker Fred Kretchman with his guest, Sam Urtz.

In the Library

Thanks to the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become part of our collection (all titles were published in 2003 unless otherwise noted):

Stackpole Books sent us Art Scheck's *A Fishing Life Is Hard Work* and Geoffrey Budworth's *The Book of Practical Fishing Knots*.

Frank Amato Publications, Inc., sent us Michael Fong's *Ten Best Western Flyfishing Destinations from The Inside Angler*, Don Vachini's *A Journey through John Muir Country*, Deke Meyer's *Hot Bass Flies: Patterns & Tactics from the Experts*, and the Flyfishers Club of Oregon and its Flyfishers Foundation's fortieth anniversary McKenzie River edition of *The Creel* (2001).

Upcoming Events

October 31–November 1
Annual Trustee Meeting and Dinner
Annual Members Meeting; November 1
Fall Trustees Meeting; November 1
Manchester, Vermont

November 6
Hartford Dinner and Sporting Auction
Avon Old Farms Inn
Avon, Connecticut

November 15
Annual Winery Dinner
MacMurray Ranch Vineyard
(A Gallo Family Vineyard)
Healdsburg, California

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

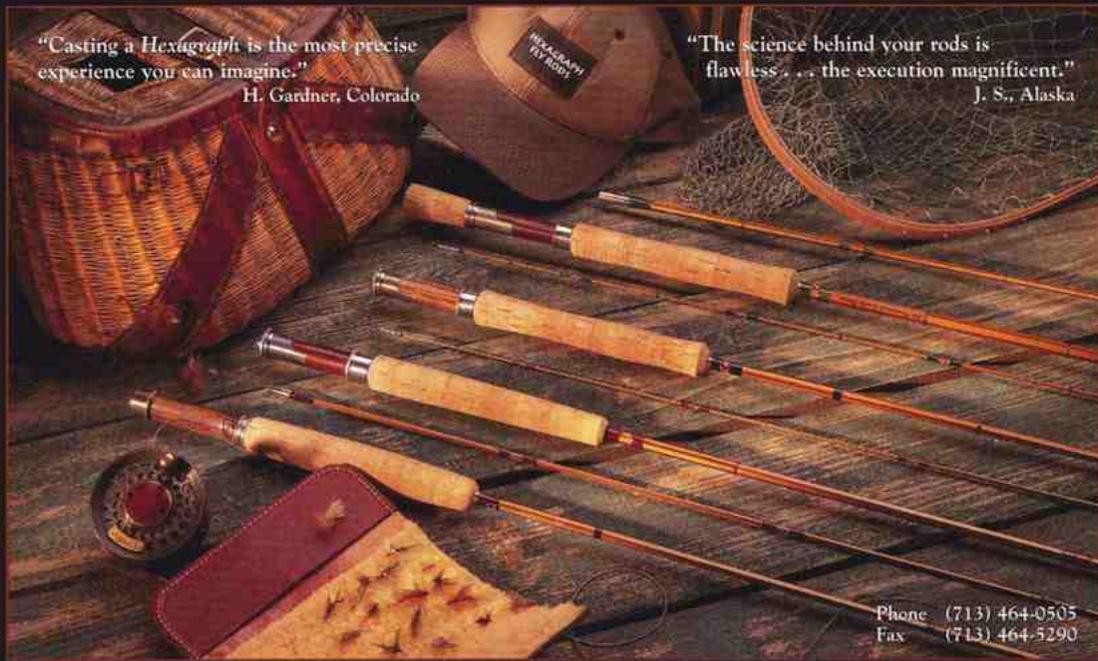


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In *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean wrote -

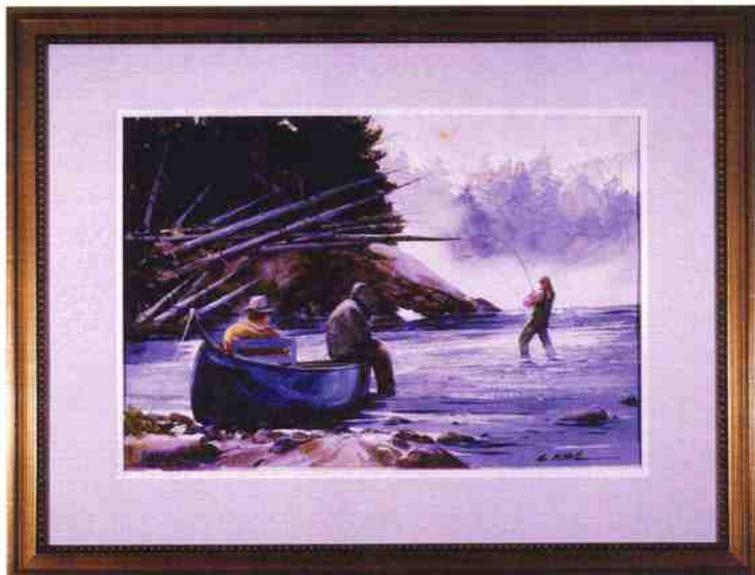
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"The Uncaged Woman"

CONTRIBUTORS

Harry L. Peterson has been a fly fisherman for twenty-five years. Peterson ties flies, makes rods, and collects fishing books, all as an enthusiastic amateur. This article has made it possible for him to bring together two of his greatest passions: fly fishing and Aldo Leopold. Peterson is honored that his essay is appearing with "Alder Fork," Leopold's essay on fly fishing.



David Kindig

Peterson retired last year as president of Western State College of Colorado. He was an administrator in colleges and universities for more than thirty years in Wisconsin, Idaho, Minnesota, and Colorado, states with good fly fishing. With his support, the faculty in the environmental studies major, a program developed while he was at Western State College, present a copy of *A Sand County Almanac* to all students who choose to major in that field. Peterson received his Ph.D. in educational policy studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He continues to be active professionally and provides counsel to college and university presidents.

Peterson agrees with John Gierach that it is not at all clear that fishing is mostly about catching fish, although he is less convinced of that proposition after a fishless day. He welcomes e-mail from readers of this journal (hpeterson@charter.net).



Betsy Betts

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*, *Fly 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 contribution to this journal was "George La Branche: A Very Beautiful Fisherman" (Fall 2002).

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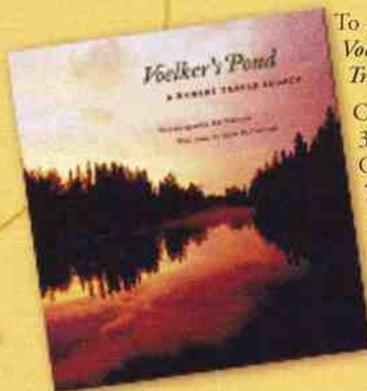
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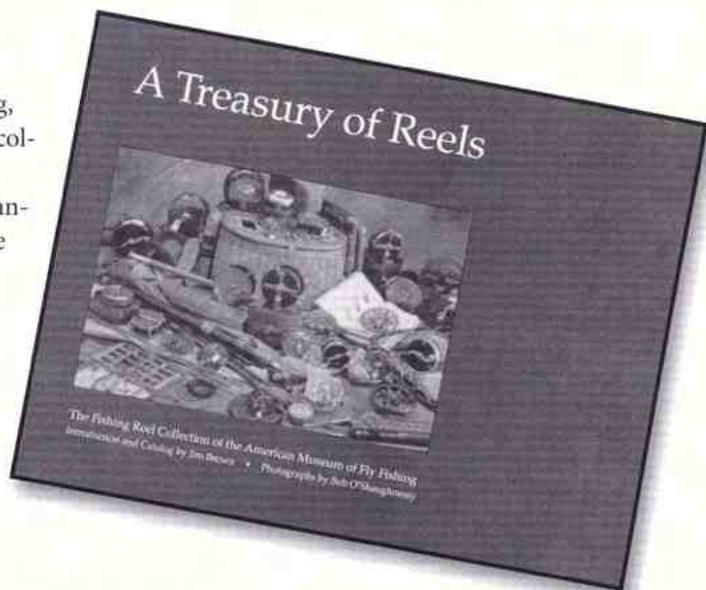
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A Treasury of Reels

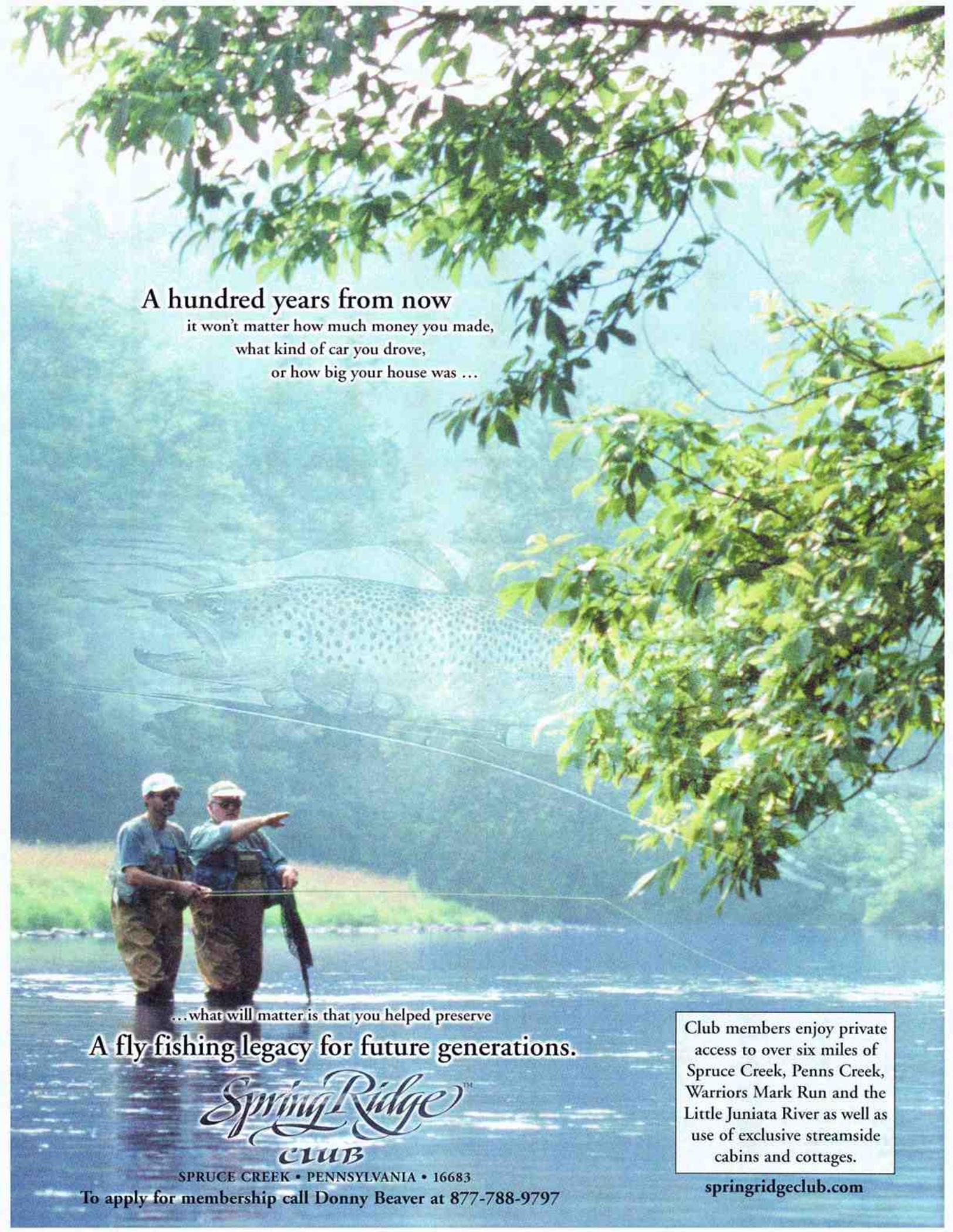
Available once again from the American Museum of Fly Fishing, *A Treasury of Reels* chronicles one of the largest and finest public collections of fly reels in the world. Brought together in this richly diverse and popular book, which includes more than 750 reels spanning nearly two centuries of British and American reelmaking, are antique, classic, and modern reels; those owned by presidents, entertainers, novelists, angling luminaries, and reels owned and used by everyday anglers.

Accompanied by Bob O'Shaughnessy's expert photography, author Jim Brown details the origins of this fascinating piece of technology, from a 13th century Chinese painting depicting a fisherman using a rod and reel to later craftsmen like Vom Hofe, Billingham, and Leonard.

Out of print for almost ten years, *A Treasury of Reels* is a must-have for collectors and enthusiasts alike. It can be ordered for \$29.95, plus postage and handling, either through our website at www.amff.com or by contacting the Museum at (802) 362-3300. Proceeds from the sale of this book directly benefit the Museum.



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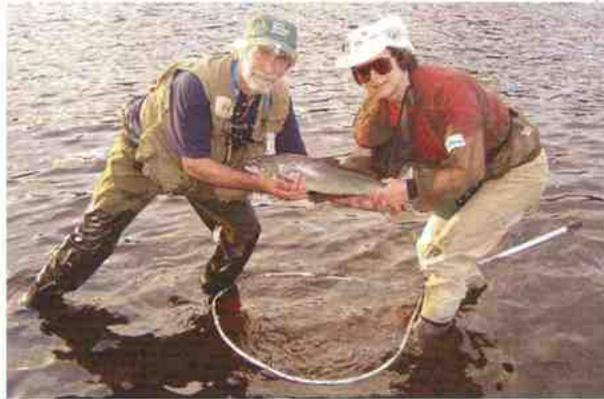
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Teaching Intangibles

Vin Swayze



Renate Bullock (right) helping me land my grilse. She spent hours each day with Sam, helping him understand the basics of fly fishing for Atlantic salmon. For some reason, she always appeared happier guiding Sam than me!

Renate Bullock



Jamie Woods (left) and Sam Woods (center) with Vin Swayze holding the fish Sam landed. Why Sam ended up with the net, Jamie the rod, and Vin the fish is open to some debate.

Renate Bullock



Sam (left), Jamie (right), and I at the end of the last day. I always seemed to end up with the boat paddle instead of a fly rod.

THE TAGLINE on our letterhead logo reads “Preserving our fly-fishing heritage for future generations.” In a phrase, that’s why we are. But of what use is all our hard work, staff and volunteers alike, if future generations don’t care that fly fishing’s past has been preserved for them? Some of us can be excused, perhaps, for not thinking much about that question because we’re so close to it, in the middle, so to speak, of all this “preserving.” We are not a natural history museum nor a nature museum that gives “youth” stream ecology classes to expose children to the wonders of nature as a matter of mission fulfillment, with or without parental or mentor involvement. Rather, we are about art and artifacts, and very much about heritage and traditions. How do you teach concepts like “heritage” and “traditions” in a meaningful fashion?

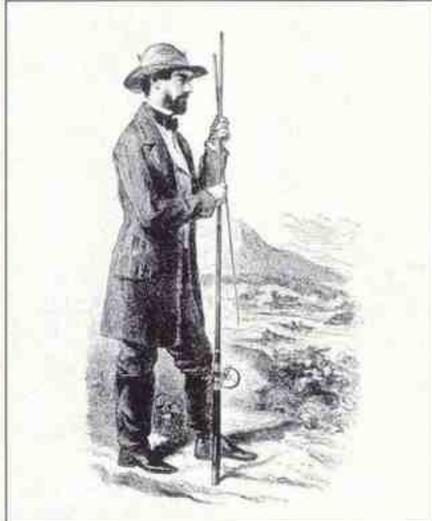
I got a firsthand lesson in how to do it last week (it’s mid-August as I write this) from Museum Trustee Jamie Woods and his fifteen-year-old son Sam, with support from salmon guide Renate Bullock and camp owner Vin Swayze up on the Miramichi River. This was Sam’s second year on the river with his dad, and it’s been my pleasure to be a partner in the enterprise both years. (It should be pointed out that I am fifty-three,

a bachelor, and have no children and no real propensity toward hanging out with them.) Sam has taught me a lot along the way about how cool kids can be, from my perspective. But I digress.

The week that we spend is certainly about fly fishing and learning about how to do it—and do it well (Sam has developed a casting stroke I envy). It is also about defining success in terms not found necessarily in dictionaries. And it is about respect: for each other, the river, the fish, and the eagles and bears we saw. It is about all these things: molding a tradition of Sam’s own (I hope); how he develops an understanding of heritage; how his dad, Renate, Vin, and even I came by our attitudes, values, and skills; and how we’re passing them on to him.

So, fortunately for the Museum, there are those who *do* think about the endgame: that future generations care that their fly-fishing heritage has been preserved for them. I’m sure that many of our members take their sons and daughters as well as other children on trips like I’ve described, at least I sure hope they do—we’ll need those sons and daughters to keep the Museum, as Nick Lyons once said, “momentously alive.”

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.

