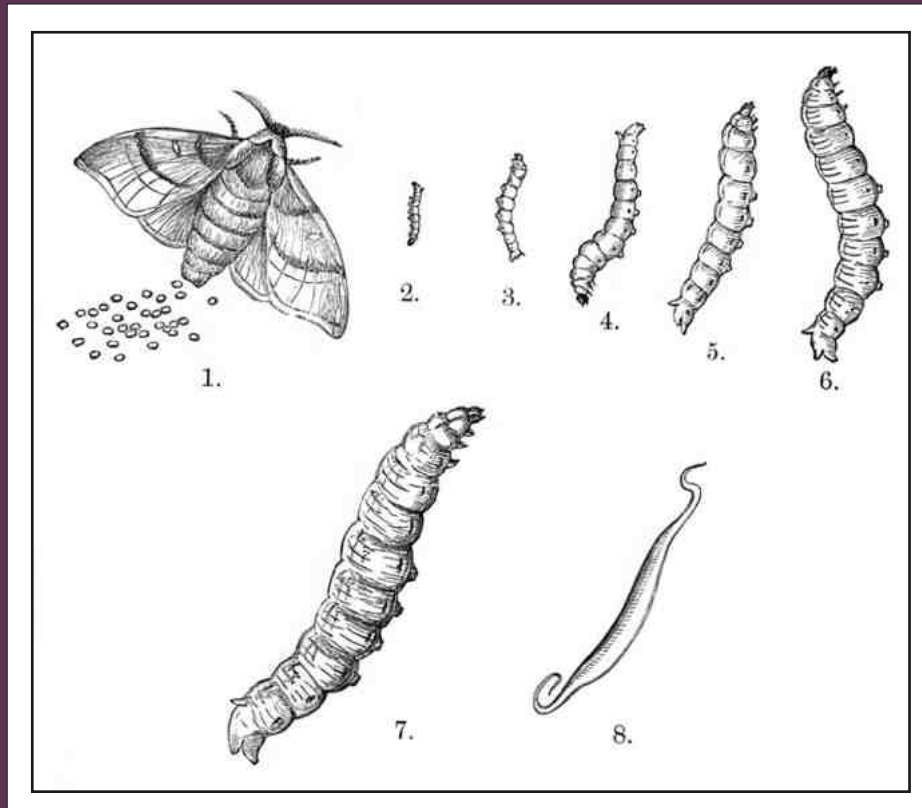


# *The* American Fly Fisher

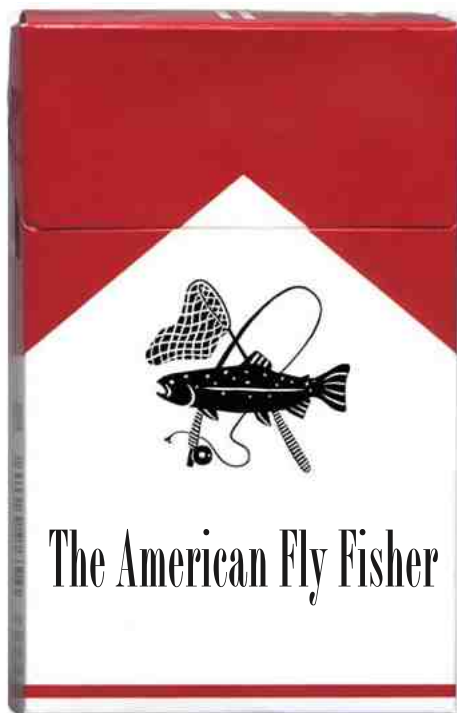
*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*



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SUMMER 2006

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 3



**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:  
THIS ISSUE MAY INDUCE EXCESSIVE  
EXCITEMENT.**

**I** ADMIT IT. The month of May can find my powers of concentration lacking. It's not easy to sit down to tell you what's in the summer issue and why you should get excited about it when the sun is shining, the temperature's rising, and the stream is gurgling. Isn't that exciting enough?

No. There's more excitement in store right here in the pages of a journal devoted to fly-fishing history. Each feature manages to tell a story that connects the past with who we are as fly fishers today. Maybe we're not always aware of these connections, but they have made whatever we're doing possible, regardless of whether we choose to think about them.

Take, for example, Paul Schullery's "Fly Fishing's Three-Century Saga of Silkworm Gut." It's practically mouthwatering. First he sets us up with a brief history of natural materials in flies, rods, and lines. Fur and feathers become imitation bugs. Wood and bamboo become rods that kept anglers happy for centuries. Horsehair was the line of choice until the slow introduction of silkworm gut. And then he gets into gut: where in the silkworm (and at what life stage) you get it. *How* you get it. How it was manufactured. Its history in the market. What it was like to fish with it. That you're holding this journal in your hands is proof that you may find this sort of thing interesting. It *is*. The description of cleaning gut between the teeth, the caterpillar entrails . . . well, that image is going to be with me for awhile. Go ahead. Turn to page 2.

Many have found excitement in belonging to fishing clubs, and even those of us who have not can understand the historical importance of such clubs in the history of our sport. One of the oldest fishing clubs in America, founded in 1891, is "The Old and Dear Tihonet Club," located amidst the Cape Cod cranberry bogs of a major corporation. Gerald Karaska gives us some history and notes some of the club's colorful mem-

bers—such as artists Frank Benson, Ralph Bellows, Charlie Coolidge, and J. L. Little—who adorned clubhouse walls with watercolors and etchings and elaborately illustrated the first page of each year's log. This story begins on page 10.

Last fall, the salmon-fishing tackle of Dean Sage, author of *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing*, was donated to the museum. This is exciting news for all of us. Trustee John Mundt has taken it upon himself to tell you about this important donation: how we got it, some of what's in it, who Dean Sage is, and why it's important. For the inside scoop and historical perspective, go to page 14. For a list of the entire collection, see Recent Donations in Museum News, beginning on page 19.

A couple of extras this time around: Joe Doggett's story of catching an approximately 40-pound salmon on classic tackle (*sans* silkworm gut) appears on page 21. If you have similar stories of fishing classic tackle, we'd like to hear about them. And Gerald Karaska's story about museum volunteer Dick Finlay in the Fall 2005 issue sparked a response from former executive director Paul Schullery (yes, the very Karaska and Schullery previously mentioned!). Schullery describes the early days of the volunteer program and the relationship (both real and imagined on the part of the outside world) between the museum and Orvis, to whom the museum owes a great deal. His letter appears on page 22.

So, you've got a little premonofilament tackle history to mull over, anglers joining together in their love of the sport, an important donation to your museum, and some early history of museum volunteers, the folks who really got this place started. Excited yet? You should be.

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
EDITOR



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM  
OF FLY FISHING  
*Preserving the Heritage  
of Fly Fishing*

# The American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

SPRING 2006

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 2

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ON THE COVER: "The Silk Worm." From George M. Kelson, *The Salmon Fly* (London: Wyman & Sons, Limited, 1895), 436–37. Paul Schullery's article on silkworm gut and its use in fishing begins on page 2.

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# Fly Fishing's Three-Century Saga of Silkworm Gut

by Paul Schullery



Left: A silkworm moth emerging from its cocoon.

Below: Young silkworms feeding on mulberry leaves.



Photos courtesy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Entomology

ONE OF THE MOST amazing things about fly fishing is how often nature has provided us with just the right tool for the job. Sometimes it seems to have taken us forever to finally notice or discover each item, but pretty much all the raw materials we needed were available from the natural world.

## NATURE'S FLY SHOP

For one example, look how many of the colors, textures, and even the shapes needed for tying imitations of stream insects exist ready-made in the furs and feathers of wild or domestic animals. What could possibly be a more perfect match for the iridescence of so many insects than peacock tail fibers? Could anything look buggier than pheasant tail or hare's ear? Early fly tiers, no less savvy and observant than we are today, employed many of these natural resources long ago, even if some of their later needs required special efforts (it took a

seriously dedicated twentieth-century imitationist to notice that the urine-stained belly fur of a female fox was a perfect color match for the body of the mayfly we call the Hendrickson).

The same abundance of natural materials has been a blessing to fly-rod builders. A variety of woods—all the ones I've fished with, in fact—can be tapered into a rod that will cast satisfactorily. Today we're spoiled by the infinite variety of actions that synthetic fibers have given modern rods, but even though wooden rods didn't provide such a rich range of behaviors, they still made countless anglers happy for centuries.

And again, as happened with this or that particular fly-tying material, it took us a long time to discover just the right materials for fly rods. For most of the sport's history, we made our rods from sticks of whole wood (hazel, ash, hickory, greenheart, ironwood, snakewood, lancewood, and many more had their turns), often with a different, more flexible wood (or whalebone) for the upper sections or the tip. But eventually, by the mid-1800s or so, we found our way to split cane, and the fly rod was as versatile

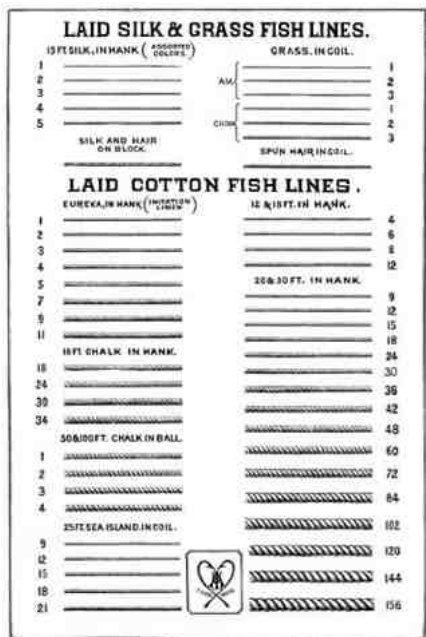
as it would ever need to be for all but our most extreme fly-fishing needs.

It is a testament to the older solid-wood rods, however, that their use continued well into the twentieth century, especially in some parts of England. In my book *Royal Coachman* (1999), I describe my experiences using a limited-edition greenheart rod that Orvis produced in the late 1970s, which convinced me that I could be a contented fly fisher casting a solid wood rod, much less a bamboo one.<sup>1</sup> But tradition and hangers-on aside, by the 1880s, cane ruled among serious fly casters until the quick popularity of synthetic fibers, starting in the mid-1900s. And I think it's safe to say that if fiberglass and graphite had never come along, today most of us would be fishing quite happily with rods built of the incredibly dense fibers of Tonkin cane. Natural fibers make perfectly reasonable and sometimes even great fly rods.

## LINES

Natural fibers also made surprisingly good lines. As near as we can tell from a pitifully faint historical record, for more

A shorter version of this article, titled "Fishing with Guts," originally appeared in *American Angler* (Fall 2005, vol. 28, no. 5).



A page from *Abbey and Imbrie's Illustrated Catalogue of Fine Fishing Tackle, 1882, plate 28.*

than a thousand years fly fishers relied most heavily on horsehair for their lines and leaders. Other fibers (a hemplike material known as “sea grass” had some popularity in the eighteenth century) also had their advocates, but hair seemed to dominate, at least among the fly fishers who bothered to write about the sport until the early 1800s.<sup>2</sup>

The horsehair fly line differed substantially from a modern line in much more than its material. A number of hairs were twisted or “plaited” together, and these sections were then knotted to one another to produce a line of whatever length was needed. You can probably imagine the imperfections and coarseness of such a line. Besides the knots, the line also featured the errant ends of individual hairs sticking out here and there, as well as the occasional hair that somehow pulled loose or otherwise went astray from the main bunch. If this sounds like an impossible rig to pull through the guides on your rod, that’s because it was. Fly fishers rarely used reels (or guides) before about 1800. The top end of the line was secured to the tip of the rod, and fly fishing was conducted entirely without the retrieval or release of line. The longer rods of those days, often 14 to 18 feet in length, gave anglers all the means necessary to shorten or lengthen the reach of their cast, simply by holding the rod higher or dropping it lower.

Naturally, the most savvy anglers, wanting longer, more precise, and more delicate casts—and being surrounded by such good examples of how to extend the

reach of a thrown line as provided by the buggy whip and the horse whip—learned to taper the hair, using progressively fewer strands in each section, down to one or a few strands where the fly was attached. It was here, at the end of the line so to speak, that the qualities of the line material became most especially important, and these horsehair fishermen understood how to make the most of their proto-leaders. They knew from long experience everything about hair’s qualities (stallion tail hair was preferred because mare tail hair was too often weakened by repeated urine saturation).<sup>3</sup> They even saw and exploited the advantages of using different-colored hair for different stream conditions. Colonel Robert Venables, in *The Experienced Angler, or Angling Improv’d* (1662), said, “I like sorrel, white, and grey best; sorrel in muddy and boggy rivers, and both the latter for clear waters.”<sup>4</sup>

The old books contain many quirky recipes for dyes to color the hair as needed. The question of line and leader color is a debated issue almost as old as the written record of fly fishing, and it would remain so long after horsehair disappeared from the scene; but only with horsehair did nature give us a leader material with so many color choices built in. Venables, for example, though reasonably content with the natural colors of hair provided by horses, did think that one other color that might be worth bothering with was a “pale or watery green.”<sup>5</sup> As England lacked the green horses of Oz, Venables gave readers the proper method for dyeing natural horsehair to that shade.

Horsehair, though it seems a nuisance and a feeble match for modern monofilaments, worked well. Our most enduring names in early fishing writing may have used nothing else their whole lives and managed to make significant theoretical contributions to the sport while having a terrific time.

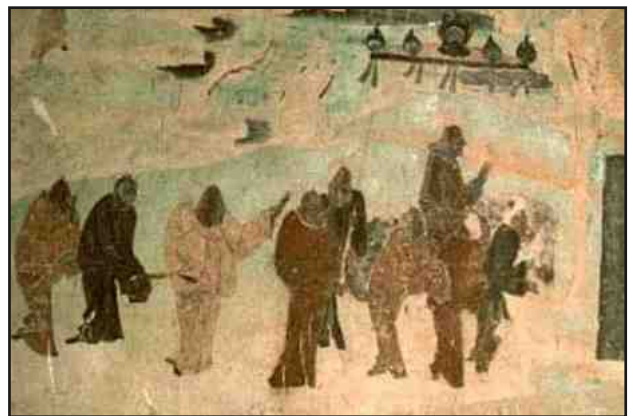
The horsehair fly line was not typically differentiated from its leader by anything except diameter. A horsehair line, with its steady stepping-down in the number of hairs from “top” (rod end) to “bottom” (tip), was all of a kind. Angling writers didn’t refer to the “leader” as a separate thing until it actually was a separate thing. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-

turies, as angling, like pretty much everything else, was subjected to the attention and commerce of an increasingly industrialized society, fly lines changed. As silk itself (not the gut but the actual line product of the silkworm moth’s production) became readily available, anglers and commercial manufacturers experimented with a variety of lines, perhaps most common being the mixed silk and horsehair line, and were well on their way to an all-silk line (with continued digressions, such as silk-and-wire, which must have been as awful as it sounds).

And that was how things stood in lines and leaders when again nature yielded a better idea. It was a natural leader material that, by comparison with horsehair, was so remarkable for translucence, size, and strength that it would eventually dominate the field and the preference of anglers to as great an extent as bamboo dominated rodbuilding. It was silkworm gut.

## SILKWORM GUT

The saga of silk is itself a magical tale, of secrets guarded fanatically for centuries, of deadly intrigue, and of amazing persistence on the part of non-Asians who wanted to break China’s monopoly on the exotic fiber that made such elegant, regal fabrics. The Silk Road, which ultimately connected the empires of China, Rome, and any number of in-between kingdoms, became a viable trade route perhaps 1,800 years ago, greatly increasing the flow of silk products to the West, where wealthy consumers had for many centuries been occasionally tantalized by the beautiful fabric that arrived intermittently by sea trade. Once the flow of traffic increased, it was probably only a matter of time before someone smuggled the secret of silk production out (this despite a death



An image of Zhang Qian (138–126 B.C.), whose expeditions to the West during the Han dynasty were integral to the establishment of the Silk Road. Mogao caves, Dunhuang, China, 618–712 A.D.

penalty imposed on anyone in China who attempted to do so). It may have happened as early as 500 A.D. Just as predictably, it isn't known for certain who achieved the first successful espionage and brought silkworms, their food (mulberry trees), and the necessary knowledge to make silk to the West. Silkworm gut serves as the symbol of the first stage in fly fishing's globalization; from the time of its arrival in Europe, the crafts that supported fly fishing could no longer be said to be truly local, or even just continental.<sup>6</sup>

Of course when it came to leaders, it wasn't the actual silk that would be of such interest to anglers. It was the "gut," or more precisely the raw material from which the silkworm spun its silk, that was the great treasure of the Orient for fishermen. The silkworm, just when it reached the growth stage at which it would start spinning its cocoon, contained two long, thin sacs or envelopes, each holding a tightly bundled mass that when unwound, stretched, and properly treated would make a single strand usually about 12 to 15 inches in length—just right for a leader tippet, or, knotted together, a tapered leader.

## OTHER GUTS

There is a necessary digression here because of the informality of the language used to describe gut filaments. Silkworm gut is often confused, in casual conversation at least, with a very different material generally known as *catgut*. Catgut is an almost complete misnomer itself, for it refers most often to strands made from the sinews or gut of animals other than cats. The most common historical usage of these strands has of course been in the stringing of musical instruments, though they served widely in any society that needed sturdy string, thread, or cord. Sinews from waterfowl were among the stringing material used in some instruments (in China toward the end of the first millennia B.C.). But in various other nations that built fine musical instruments, the actual gut of various mammals, most commonly young sheep, was the foundation of this craft.

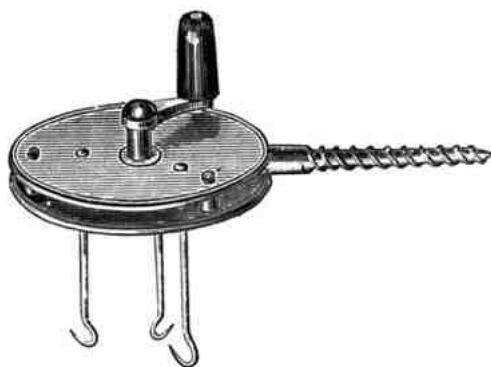
According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2002), wolf (fourteenth-century English) and lion (ninth-century Arab) are the most charismatic species mentioned in the histori-



Although mammal gut strings never caught on with anglers, they were essential to the crafting of stringed instruments for centuries. Caravaggio, *Lute Player*, c. 1596, *The Hermitage*, St. Petersburg.

cal record as providing strings for musical instruments.<sup>7</sup> The use of lion intestinal material must qualify as the most ambitious possible employment of catgut. But speaking as a sometime musician, I find the idea of music played on carnivore gut enchanting. The knowledge among an audience that the music being heard was coming from, literally, the very fiber of the being of such powerful predators—animals that at that time maintained at least some of their being's fiber by consuming the fiber of human beings—must have lent a certain heroic or even mystic quality to a musician's presence and performance.

Making strings of mammal gut was a messy process. It was, in effect, the absolute opposite of sausage making, emptying the gut of everything rather than stuffing it with something else. Depending on the craftsmen and their local practices, it involved a varying series of lye, water, and alcohol baths that soaked away everything from the animal's intestine except the actual membrane, which was then stretched tight and twisted, either alone or in groups,



GUT TWISTING ENGINE.

A gut twisting engine.

From George M. Kelson, *The Salmon Fly* (London: Wyman & Sons, Limited, 1895), 443.

depending on the size of string and depth of pitch required. The finest mandolin string may have used only two such membranes twisted together, whereas the deepest bass cord on a double bass viol may have required as many as 120.

Mammal gut strings seem never to have impressed anglers with their possibilities. The strings swelled when wet, soaking up more and more water, and varnishing them to waterproof them seemed to cause other problems. But there was occasional interest. The great London diarist (apparently an ardent angler as well) Samuel Pepys, confided to his diary in March 1667 that "This day Mr. Caesar told me a pretty experiment of his angling with a minikin [a lute string], a gut-string varnished over, which keeps it from swelling, and is beyond any hair for strength and smallness."<sup>8</sup> But at about the same time, Robert Venables, mentioned earlier, was less enthusiastic, having tried "the lowest part of the smallest lute or viol strings," which he found to be "very strong, but will quickly rot in the water."<sup>9</sup> Apparently that was the common judgment; few other anglers left us any mention of using them.

## DISGUSTING SPECTACLE

Silkworm gut production was not much less involved and was probably even more unpleasant than that of mammal gut strings. Silkworm gut was already the preferred leader material among many American anglers by the time Thaddeus Norris described its creation in his monumental *American Angler's Book* in 1864.

Silk-worm gut, which forms so important a part of the angler's outfit, is the substance of the worm in an immature state, and is made by steeping the insect in vinegar or some other acid, a short time before it is ready to commence spinning its cocoon, stretching it to the required length, and securing the ends until the strand is dry. It is then divested of any extraneous substance by rubbing. It is imported from China, Spain, and Italy, in hanks of a hundred strands, and sold by all the tackle stores, the price varying according to its size, length, and roundness.<sup>10</sup>

For many years, probably up until the early 1800s at least, the production of the gut was a nasty little cottage industry that I am sure consumers were just as happy

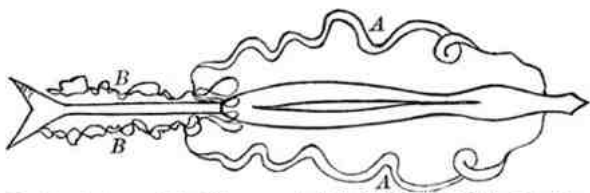


Fig. 18.—Anatomy of the Silk-worm: A A, the Silk Sacks, B B, the Intestines. (From the "Encyclopædia Britannica.")

From Henry P. Wells, *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1885), 55.

not to know much about. H. P. Wells, in *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle* (1885), was about the only writer of his day with the temerity (or maybe just with the actual information) to describe how silkworm gut was prepared for sale. He reported on an eyewitness account of how each gut strand was handled and processed.

This manufacture is carried on mainly in Spain, by the peasantry at their own homes, one producing perhaps half a pound, another possibly fifty, according to the extent of the mulberry orchard the maker may possess [the worms fed only on mulberry leaves]. With the remains of the envelope still adhering to the dried gut, it is brought in, and sold to the factors.

Their first step is to free the gut from such portions of the ruptured envelope as may adhere to it. Formerly this was done by drawing the gut between the teeth, and thus stripping off this refuse, but chemical processes are said now largely to have superseded this. The eyewitness, to whom I am indebted for this information, describes the old method as a most disgusting spectacle. The rows of women and girls drawing the entrails of this caterpillar through their teeth, their mouths smeared with blood from the cuts inflicted by the thin gut, mingled with the offal scraped from it by their teeth—spitting and drawing, and spitting again—must indeed be far from a pleasant sight.

I would much rather go a-fishing.<sup>11</sup>

Wouldn't we all?

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, then, the silkworm industry was apparently thriving in parts of Europe. Though naturally almost all of its production was aimed at real silk—which required letting the worms survive and draw on their gut sacs to create cocoons of fine fibers that were then unwrapped and made into silk—it wouldn't have taken long for at least a few growers to recognize this other market and start paying more attention to the needs of anglers, such as those in England. Perhaps some of the silkworm growers were anglers themselves (though nobody knows precisely when, the Chinese had

been using silkworm gut for many centuries for their own fishing).

## THE BRITISH GET GUT

The arrival of silkworm gut on the British fly-fishing scene must be one of the quietest, slowest technological revolutions in history, but a revolution it was.

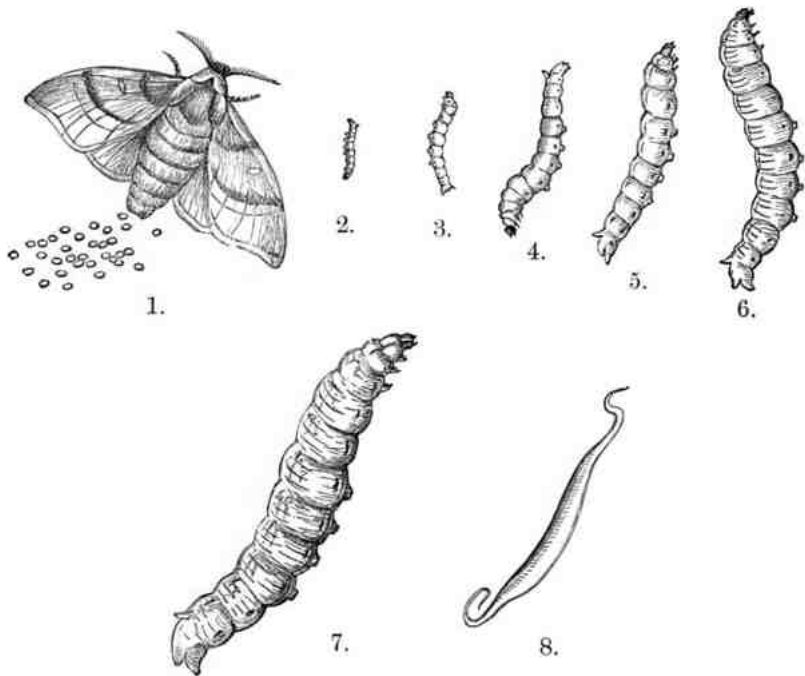
After who knows how many centuries—maybe fifteen, maybe more?—in which horsehair was the most popular material for lines and leaders, change came slowly. Today's fly fishers, conditioned by a worldwide Internet-energized market to crave and instantly acquire the newest thing, might find it hard to imagine how stodgy and unreceptive earlier anglers could be to any change in their comfortable traditions, even changes that were obviously a big advantage.

By the early 1700s, British anglers started to hear about this wondrous new leader material. It was for sale in England by 1722, but had become popular in Europe well before that. James Saunders, in *The Compleat Fisherman* (1724), while

praising the fishing skills of some of his European counterparts, gave partial credit for their success to an unfamiliar (to him, anyway) leader material. He said that the Swiss and northern Italians "make a fine and exceedingly strong hair or line, resembling a single hair, which is drawn from the bowels of the silkworm, the glutinous substance of which is such, that like the cat's gut which makes the strings for the viol or violin, of an unaccountable strength, for this silkworm gut will be so strong, that nothing of so small a size will equal it in nature."<sup>12</sup>

And that was true enough. It would finally be something synthetic—in other words something not "in nature"—that would replace gut more than two centuries later: nylon monofilament.

Gut struggled in the eighteenth-century marketplace. As late as 1760, London tacklemaker George Bowness was still able to offer gut to his customers as a new thing.<sup>13</sup> In 1770, another London tackle maker and dealer, Onesimus Ustonson, was selling "superfine Silk Worm Gut, no better ever seen in England, as fine as Hair, and as strong as Six, the only thing for Trout Carp and Salmon."<sup>14</sup> (I always thought that *superfine* was a modern term applied first to certain controlled substances in the 1960s, but no.) Accolades




1. Female moth, which lays about 200 eggs.
2. Grub—three days old.
3. Worm—seven days old.
4. Worm—fourteen days old.
5. Worm—twenty-one days old.
6. Worm—Thirty days old.
7. Worm—Forty-two days old, and ripe for drawing or spinning.
8. Gut sack, there being two in each worm.

"The Silk Worm." From George M. Kelson, *The Salmon Fly* (London: Wyman & Sons, Limited, 1895), 436–37.

LONDON AND NORTH BRITISH WORKS, ALNWICK. 107

## Silkworm Gut Department



Guaranteed Pure Spanish "Selecto" Gut.

### Diagram showing the actual Thicknesses of NATURAL GUT.

DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS	STRENGTH
REFINA	0.011	2.8
FINA	0.012	3.0
REGULAR	0.013	3.2
PADRON 2 <sup>nd</sup>	0.014	3.4
PADRON 1 <sup>st</sup>	0.015	3.6
MARANA 2 <sup>nd</sup>	0.016	3.8
MARANA 1 <sup>st</sup>	0.017	4.0
IMPERIAL	0.018	4.2
ROYAL	0.019	4.4

As the largest retail importers of Spanish gut in Europe, and the actual gut workers in drawing, twisting, plaiting, cast making, etc., we fear no competition either in price or quality. This is at once in evidence, if our prices are considered, and in doing this it is well to remember that nothing but finest Spanish "Selecto" is offered. As to casts and drawn gut, quality is our object. We cannot make better. We guarantee that only Spanish gut is used in our works, and that of the highest quality only.

FOR "INDIAN" SECTION, SEE PAGES 286 TO 295.

From the Hardy Brothers Ltd. catalog, 36th edition, 1909, 107.

for silkworm gut from the fishing writers were slow in coming, and well into the 1800s many anglers continued to use their horsehair lines (or mixed lines of horsehair, silk, or grass) in the best tradition of Walton and Cotton. Though he did loop his flies to a long tapered "Gut-line" or leader, the always entertaining and uniquely opinionated David Webster was still attaching that gut line to a horsehair fly line in 1885.<sup>15</sup>

No doubt traditionalism played a part in this very slow transition from hair to gut, but there would have been other factors at work. For one, early gut availability depended on a scattered cottage industry. Until well-established corporations got into the act, the standardizing of quality and distribution that the better-off anglers wanted simply didn't exist.

For another, the gut you got varied wildly in quality and condition.

For another, the stuff probably seemed absurdly expensive at any price to those many anglers who were used to clipping all the line and leader material they needed from the tails of their neighborhood stallions.

Finally, gut was different—it looked different, it cast different, and it had to be treated differently, requiring soaking

to soften it before each use.<sup>16</sup> It wouldn't have been the first time people decided not to do something just because it was too much bother to change.

## GUT ASCENDANT

But once accepted, gut became like every other deeply entrenched element of the fly fisher's equipment and practice. It became what you had to have. The market flourished, and commerce enforced on the manufacturers at least a minimum set of standards. Spanish gut became, in the opinion of most anglers, the gold standard. The amusing irony of this is revealed in a footnote in the American fishing writer John Brown's *American Angler's Guide* (1845), which warned the gut-shopper that "inferior qualities of this article are manufactured in China and Italy, but the best is imported from Alicant, in Spain."<sup>17</sup> China, the native land of the silkworm, was thus disinherited from this important use of gut in the West.

By the 1880s, when H. P. Wells was writing and when gut was playing its role in related angling revolutions, such as the popularization of the dry fly, the discriminating shopper choosing among the grades of Spanish gut had many choices: "Gut is named in the trade according to thickness, as follows, beginning with the thinnest: Refina, Fina, Regular, Padrona Second, Padrona First, Marana, Double Thick Marana, Imperial, and Hera. Flat, irregular gut is known as Estriada."<sup>18</sup>

Leon Martuch, one of our most experienced modern line and leader authorities, has written that Refina at ox (0.011-inch diameter) had a strength of 2.8 pounds.<sup>19</sup> Rummaging through my fishing vest, I find that my current nylon monofilament at 6x is 3.2-pound test,

and my ox is 15 pounds. Whatever we may feel about it as a sporting advantage or disadvantage, and whatever we might prefer for our own fishing, it is pretty plain that by comparison with modern monofilaments, silkworm gut would make it harder to catch fish and would require anglers to have a considerably more delicate touch.

Wells also warned his readers that all was not aboveboard in the classification system, a sentiment that every subsequent generation of gut users would echo.

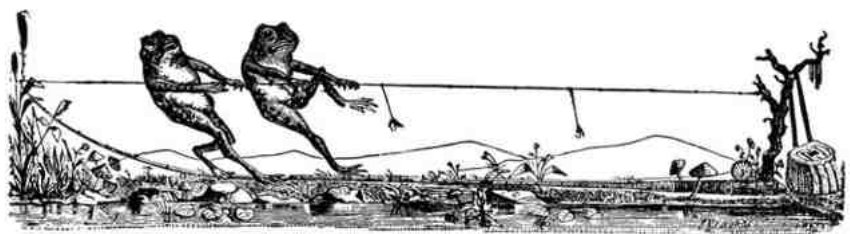
Since the purchaser from the original producer buys by weight, paying the same price for the good, the bad, and the indifferent, it is no easy matter to pre-estimate the prospective profit or loss on his purchase. The larger sizes afford a large profit, while the inferior qualities will not pay cost; so, after the manner of merchants in all trades but that, if any, to which my reader belongs, it is not uncommon to work off the Estriadas, etc., by smuggling a few such strands into each bundle of good gut.<sup>20</sup>

Thirty years after Wells wrote, J. C. Mottram, in *Fly Fishing, Some New Arts and Mysteries* (1915), complained more specifically, and hopelessly, of the treachery or inefficiency of the manufacturers. He said that "one tackle-maker's 3x gut equals another's 2x and another's 4x," a problem that survived long after gut was no longer in use and synthetic monofilaments were inexplicably subject to the very same unreliability of advertisement and labeling.<sup>21</sup>

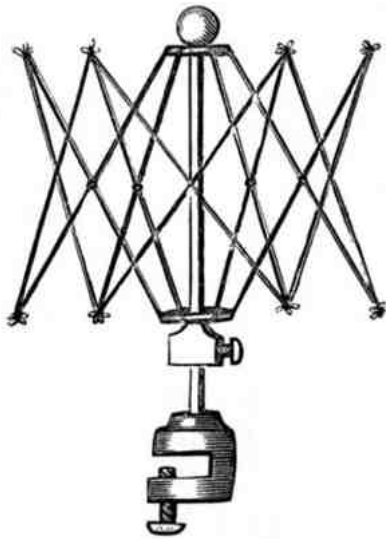
## GUT ASTREAM

So what was it like to fish with gut? The short answer is that for many purposes it wasn't all that different from using modern synthetics. The differences were matters of degree.

It started when you geared up. All anglers were necessarily in the habit of soaking the felt pads in their leader tins and placing the day's extra leader and snelled flies in the tin to soak and soften until needed. But that was a matter of form, just as was drying and dressing one's silk fly lines after each day's fishing.



From the Charles F. Orvis Co. catalog, no. 99, 1955, 29.



A collapsible line dryer, designed primarily for travel. From Genio C. Scott, *Fishing in American Waters* (New York: The American News Company, 1875), 517.

It gave the days a more measured pace, perhaps, and maybe also enforced a little additional deliberation or meditation on the angler. Once the fishing began, the differences were more subtle.

As I've already suggested, by comparison with today's techno-miracle leader materials, gut was far less strong. It was more easily damaged and thus weakened, and it had a shorter life expectancy (monofilaments don't rot, for one thing).

On the other hand, once it was wet and ready for use, it tied some great knots. That was the most interesting thing I noticed the first time I tried it myself. Knots seem to cinch down with a comforting finality that I rarely sense even with my favorite nylon monofilaments.<sup>22</sup> Though some nineteenth-century users of gut thought it treacherously slippery, its ability to hold a knot well was one of the attractions that allowed it to compete with early nylons for quite a few years. In 1952, Ray Bergman attributed gut's superiority over the nylons he used at mid-century to its absorbency; even after it was soft and ready for use, gut continued to soak up a little more water, thus making its knots more secure. Bergman still preferred gut for dry-fly fishing at that point because nylon was not yet available with the relaxed suppleness that even heavier gut had.<sup>23</sup>

Attentive readers will already notice that gut, like everything else to do with fishing, functioned or failed in light of individual opinion and the quagmire of angling fashions. Reading accounts of gut as it slowly became accepted, or in its heyday, or in reminiscences of it now, is like reading a hundred different eyewitness accounts of a pivotal World Series

game; everybody saw it differently. Roderick Haig-Brown, writing as late as 1964, accurately predicted that gut was in its last commercial years, but also admitted somewhat wistfully that "silkworm gut casts much better than nylon and I believe it is less visible to the fish than nylon of equal diameter, two very important advantages."<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Leigh Perkins, retired chief executive officer of Orvis and a fly fisher for upward of seventy years, says that the 3x gut they had to use when he started "had the strength of wet toilet paper."<sup>25</sup>

It was, at last, not just the inadequacies of the material that did it in. Horsehair would seem pretty miserable as a fishing line today, but it was good in its time, and that time lasted more than a millennium. A tool is good as long as its users are patient and believe in it, and aren't compelled to desire ever better tools.

No, it was more even than its physical limitations that made gut easy prey for synthetic substitutes. It was also the pace at which the sport of fly fishing was changing, and the pace at which our ever more technological culture was racing toward new things.

Nature didn't design the silkworm's gut bundle for fly fishers; it only worked for anglers using larger-sized flies. An angler using 0x or 1x silkworm gut could have reasonable confidence in controlling most trout. Keep in mind that little more than half a century ago, before the small-fly revolution that was symbolically launched by Vincent Marinaro's *A Modern Dry Fly Code* (1950), 1x was a respectably fine leader size. Gut strands could also be twisted or braided together into industrial-strength lines that would handle very heavy fish.

The problem was on the finer end of the spectrum. No amount of searching through the silkworms' immense mileage of natural production was going to reveal commercial quantities of gut that combined the fineness of diameter and strength that fly fishers increasingly required to handle the progressively smaller flies that seemed nec-

essary under twentieth-century fly-fishing conditions. Just as changes in fly theory, especially the rise of the dry fly as a separate school of angling, had helped bring silkworm gut to full popularity, continuing changes in that same school of angling would help push it off the stage.

## THE END

First, there is an amazing larger story here, of which the silkworm gut saga is only a small part. It is extraordinary, if rarely noted, the extent to which modern American fly fishers have depended on Asia. From 1890 to 1960, say from the time of Theodore Gordon to the time of Vincent Marinaro, our most highly regarded fly rods were made of bamboo from China. Our leaders were silkworm gut, again from both a biological source and a practical application originating in China. Our best fly lines were silk, with the same brilliant cultural source. And we hackled many of our most popular wet flies, and virtually all of our dry flies, with the feathers of long-transplanted Asian jungle fowl. There's no question that all of these contributions to our fly fishing passed through the hands, industries, and theoretical filters of quite a few other nations and cultures before our

**Leaders.**

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1 shows our improved method of carding leaders so that they may be removed without injury.

Fig. 2 shows the proper way to attach a "dropper" fly in the sliding loops of the 6 and 6-foot leaders which are made by looping 3 ft. leaders together. The tension on the leader will maintain the fly securely in position; yet flies may be instantly changed when desired.

**Single Gut Leaders. (Prices are for 6-ft. Leaders.)**

Used with Flies on Hooks Nos.	Highest Quality	Good Quality	Regular Quality	Empire Quality	Cricket Quality
Drawn Gut (12 and 14)	\$4.50	3.00	2.50	2.00	1.50
Ex. Light Trout (10)	4.00	3.00	2.40	1.80	1.20
Light Trout (8)	3.00	2.40	1.80	1.20	.90
Heavy Trout (6)	4.00	3.00	2.40	1.80	1.20
Bass (4)	5.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	1.40
Ex. Heavy Bass (2)	6.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Heavy Salmon (2)	8.00	7.20			

Three-foot Leaders are one-half of the above prices.

**Double Gut Leaders (all 3 ft. long.)**

	Highest Quality	Good Quality	Regular Quality	Empire Quality	Cricket Quality
Double	\$3.00	2.40	1.80	1.44	.96
Heavy Double	4.00	3.60	2.40		
Extra Heavy Double	6.00	4.80	3.60		

We also carry in stock all weights with "dropper loops" tied on. Three-foot leaders have one "dropper loop." Six and nine foot leaders have two "dropper loops." Prices are the same as without droppers in Highest Quality. In other qualities, 25 per cent. extra.

**Leaders for Salt Water Fishing.**

(Illustration shows 6-ply leaders in 1, 2 and 3 lengths.)

Inches long (approximate)	1 Length	2 Length	3 Length	4 Length
2 ply Gut	\$ .36	.54	.72	1.08
4 ply Gut	.72	1.08	1.44	2.16
6 ply Gut	1.08	1.62	2.16	3.24

famed and anonymous anglers could make their casts on American waters. But a startling amount of what made up American fly-fishing technology originated in the Far East.

Silkworm gut manufacturers had long recognized that the raw product simply couldn't deliver the fine diameters desired by some anglers. By 1900, they developed a simple and efficient means for "drawing" gut by pulling it through progressively finer diamond-edged holes in metal plates. They could thus scrape a strand of gut down to 5x and even 6x. But the strength of such fine strands were measured in small fractions of a pound, and some anglers complained that shaving gut down removed some of its strongest outer layers or reduced the gut's translucency, or otherwise compromised its fishability. Not all the opinions were justified, of course, but many weighed against the process. As early as 1913, Samuel Camp, in *Fishing with Floating Flies*, said that "drawn gut was at one time extensively used by dry-fly fishermen, but it is now generally recognized that fine undrawn gut is quite as efficient and the additional strength gained by its use is a distinct advantage."<sup>26</sup>

That pronouncement proved to be spectacularly wrong, though. By 1940, most commercially available gut (Spain was the leading producer even then) was drawn.<sup>27</sup> Drawn gut, for all its shortcomings, was still the best thing there was.

But not for long. Dupont patented nylon in 1938, and though its introductory years were plagued with complications and failures on a scale that the birth of the silkworm gut industry hadn't even approached, the new lines and leaders that soon began to appear showed incredible promise, and gut's days were numbered. These days, aside from a few traditionalists and obsessed re-enactors out there trying to reconstruct earlier fishing experiences for one reason or another, and tiers of traditional fly patterns that require either gut snells or twisted gut eyes, fishermen have forgotten gut and have no interest in remembering it.

I suppose that's okay, and I'm certainly not going to propose bringing it back. Still, of the elements of older angling times that we've left behind—solid wood rods, silk fly lines, eyeless hooks, and the rest—silkworm gut is one of the most charming. It brought yet one more little piece of the natural world, a piece with a remarkably exotic history, to the game. Like wooden rods, whether solid wood or split cane, it gave the act of preparing to fish and of casting a fly a slightly different feel. Watching that first knot I tied in silkworm gut as it snugged down into itself isn't an experience I will soon forget. I had never tied a knot in a formerly living thing before, and it's different. The needs of the gut, like the needs of the

all accounts they had the fulfillment of a lifetime of fun doing it. Perhaps that should heighten our respect for what they accomplished, but shouldn't it give us a somewhat higher opinion of gut, too? After all, if the stuff was so awful, how could it have connected so many great fly fishers so productively to their flies and to the trout they sought?



#### ENDNOTES

1. Paul Schullery, *Royal Coachman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 107–11.

2. For more on the history of fishing lines and fly lines, see William Radcliffe, *Fishing from the Earliest Times* (London:

Murray, 1921), which contains many brief discussions of various kinds of lines; John Waller Hills, *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout* (London: Allan, 1921), 20, 21, 48, 68, 70, 87; Paul Schullery, *American Fly Fishing: A History* (New York: The Lyons Press, 1987), 72–73, 205–06, 209–11, and 252; and Andrew Herd, *The Fly* (Shropshire, U.K.: The Medlar Press, Ltd., 2003), throughout. Among older works, Henry P. Wells's *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1885), 40–89, is a splendid summary of the state of lines and leaders in the late nineteenth century. Just for fun, to get a modern, practical perspective on how a horsehair line is made, see Charles Brooks, "Making and Fishing the Horsehair Fly Line," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 3, no. 4 (Fall 1976), 28–29.

3. According to Radcliffe, *Fishing from the Earliest Times*, 237, this avoidance of urine-weakened mare's tail hair dates back at least as far as Plutarch. Gervase Markham, *The Pleasures of Princes, or Good Mens Recreation* (London: John Browne, 1614), 7, typified the preferences of many later writers in selecting the best horsehair. He specified that not only must it be hair from a large, healthy male horse tail (not from the mane), but also that it be "that which groweth from the middle and inmost part of his back."

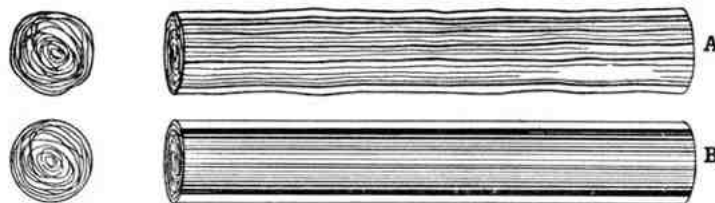
4. Robert Venables, *The Experience'd Angler* (London: Richard Marriot, 1662), 5.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Radcliffe, *Fishing from the Earliest Times*, 449–68, is a fascinating summary of fishing tackle and techniques, with numerous mentions of silk or gut. Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout*, vol. 1 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 11–14, 762, adds additional notes on more

## "DIAMOND" Drawn Gut

As perfectly round and level natural gut is only produced in the finer sizes, i.e., "Refina," "Fina," etc., in very limited quantities, it is necessary for fine work to use gut which is drawn through a jewelled plate. Drawn gut we make in Sizes 1x to 6x, see page 81.



These illustrations are given to help to define the difference between natural and drawn gut. The longitudinal drawings A and B, give a clear impression of the external difference between the two in outline.

A.—Natural gut. B.—Drawn gut. B is more regular in outline and position of fibre. A.—Rough, wavy, flat and tapering. Drawing gut does not reduce strength, but slightly reduces size, straightens fibres and regulates uniformity so that stress is more easily resisted.

Prices 1x to 4x:

10 in. long	9/-	per 100 strands.	16 in. long	15/6	per 100 strands.
12 "	10/6	" "	17 "	18/-	" "
14 "	13/-	" "	5x and 6x,	1/6	per 100 extra.

Made up in bundles of 25, 50 and 100 strands dyed our mist green colour. Prices quoted are for 100 strands, 25 and 50 pro rata, smaller quantities not supplied.

*From the Hardy Brothers Ltd. catalog, 50th edition, 1926, 82.*

bamboo fly rod, give the fishing just different enough a feel and pace to remind me how subtle this sport is, and how susceptible to our moods is its essential authenticity.

From our supposed eminence among the earth-orbit tools of modern angling, we might tend to condescend to earlier fly-fishing technologies, but we should also find them inspiring. Some of fly fishing's most renowned theorists and commentators, including Roderick Haig-Brown, Thaddeus Norris, G. E. M. Skues, Alfred Ronalds, Frederic Halford, William Stewart, Theodore Gordon, Odell Shepard, George LaBranche, Ray Bergman, and Preston Jennings, to name only a few, did most or all of their milestone work casting nothing but silkworm gut leaders. By

recent scholarly findings relating to early Chinese angling. As helpful is John Orelle, "Evolution of the Fishing Reel," *The Flyfisher*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1976), 3–6. But the real historical mother lode of historical background on silkworm culture as it relates to fly fishing is found in a series of articles in the *American Fly Fisher*, as follows: Lothar H. H. Martin, "The History of Silkworm Gut," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 3–7; John Mundt, "Silk Fly Line Manufacturing: A Brief History," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Fall 1991), 8–13; and Richard C. Hoffmann, "The Oldest Silk in Fly Fishing," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Winter 1993), 16–19.

7. Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2002), 580–82. This is the primary source for the following discussion of animal sinew and "gut."

8. Quoted in Alfred M. Mayer, *Sport with Gun and Rod* (New York: The Century Company, 1883), 605.

9. Venables, *The Experience'd Angler*, 5.

10. Thaddeus Norris, *The American Angler's Book*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler and Company, 1864), 68–69.

11. Wells, *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle*, 56.

12. Mayer, *Sport with Gun and Rod*, 605, and Herd, *The Fly*, 184, both cite Saunders.

13. Mayer, *Sport with Gun and Rod*, 605.

14. Hills, *A History*, 95.

15. David Webster, *The Angler and the Loop Rod* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1885). Webster's line and "gut-line" were attached, or looped, directly to the end of the fly rod. He did not use a reel. He did, however, use a cast of nine flies.

16. Herd, *The Fly*, 183–88.

17. John Brown, *The American Angler's Guide* (New York: Burgess, Stringer, 1845), 31.

18. Wells, *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle*, 55–89, offers a very detailed discussion of the leaders of the day (1885), with digressions into the then-hopeful but eventually unsuccessful attempts by various Americans to produce gut domestically from native insects. The quote is from the 1901 edition of Wells's book (New York: Harper Brothers), portions of which were reprinted in facsimile without original pagination in Cliff Netherton, *History of the Sport of Casting: People, Events, Records, Tackle and Literature, Early Times* (Lakeland, Fla.: American Casting Educational Foundation, Inc., 1981), 192.

19. Leon L. Martuch, "Fly Leader," in A. J. McClane, ed., *McClane's New Standard Fishing Encyclopedia and International Angling Guide* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), 382. The name designations did not signify precise diameter. For example, according to the *Hardy Brothers* catalog (Alnwick, England, 1914), 111, Refina varied

from 0.007 to 0.009 inch in diameter, and Fina varied from 0.011 to 0.013 inch in diameter. Note that the Refina measured by Martuch (manufacturer unspecified) was 0.011. Cynical observers of these numbers pointed out that for all the advertised precision, the reality was much less consistent, and usually the advertised diameters were less than the real diameters.

20. Wells, *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle*, 1901, as reproduced in Netherton, *History of the Sport of Casting*, 192.

21. J. C. Mottram, *Fly Fishing: Some New Arts and Mysteries* (London: The Field & Queen, Horace Cox, Ltd., 1915), 223.

22. I have tried a few times, but always with disappointing results, to graduate to the new fluorocarbons and their ilk. Perhaps I'll stick with regular old mono for another generation or so, and then maybe try again.

23. Ray Bergman, *Trout* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976 reprint with revisions by Edward C. Janes), 157–58.

24. Roderick Haig-Brown, *A Primer of Fly-Fishing* (New York: Morrow, 1964), 41.

25. Leigh Perkins, "Notes and Comment," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Spring 2005), 24.

26. Samuel Camp, *Fishing with Floating Flies* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1913), 44.

27. Herd, *The Fly*, 327.



Feeding silkworms. Photo courtesy of image\*after.



The sign that hung over the clubhouse commode.

# The Old and Dear Tihonet Club

by Gerald J. Karaska



The Tihonet clubhouse, circa 1892.

WHAT IS UNUSUAL about the Tihonet Club is that it has provided exclusive trout fishing for more than one hundred years for a small group within 40 miles of Boston. Moreover, it is only a few miles from the Cape Cod Canal and Buzzards Bay, located among the cranberry bogs of a major corporation. Numerous spring-fed reservoirs regulate cold-water flow so that trout thrive in pools along small streams—less than 10 feet in width—connecting the reservoirs. Trout are also found along the main ditches of the cranberry bogs, within the deep reservoirs, and even in some wild streams winding under trees and between dense bushes whose branches catch everything but a roll cast. This club setting may be vastly different in appearance from the wilderness camps of the Adirondacks, Cat-

skills, and Maine lakes, but the ambience, camaraderie, and fly fishing cannot be any better or more special to a small group of men.

The Cape Cod streams were once viable trout fisheries. John C. Phillips, a prominent New England author, reminisces in *A Sportsman's Scrapbook* about his boyhood enjoyment in the late nineteenth century fishing these little streams flowing southward into saltwater marshes.

No one who has been there can quite forget the thrill of the first April day upon the Agawam, the Mashpee, or the Slug [a part of the Tihonet Club waters]. There was something so entirely different about the surroundings of these streams, and their waters were so clean and pure, so even bank-full and so seldom in flood that they had a more permanent, a more perfect look than many other more famous. They never shrank to a greasy trickle in summer, or hid away amid rank tussock grass so that you could scarce follow their wind-

ings. These Cape streams were gentlemen streams for all their short miles. Their beds were hard sand or bright beautiful gravel and the water flowed along under lovely clumps of andromeda, sheep laurel, or thickets of wild roses, dwarf alders, and little stunted birches. . . . They did not rage around slippery boulders or roam down in troublesome falls, but their courses led them from gentle rapids and sparkling ripples into great pools that hollowed out caverns under fantastic roots. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The watershed for the club comprises small, cold, spring-fed streams flowing from the Myles Standish State Forest. The flow of water is controlled by numerous reservoirs that regulate the water levels of the bogs so that cranberry cultivation and harvesting can be effectively managed. The bogs are flooded in early fall, then drained in late February. The trout are strongly influenced by this seasonality as their food supply is affected, both positively and negatively, by the

All illustrations are from Reed Austin's *The Old and Dear Tihonet Club* (Rip Cunningham, privately published, 1997).

water's agitation. Interestingly, the club's members cannot agree that the fish, especially the rainbows and brookies, will move with the water as it leaves the reservoirs into the streams.

In the prime fishing season, with the bogs drained, wading is possible within the bogs' ditches. The rule is that no trespassing is allowed *on* the bogs to prevent trampling the cranberry plants. Obviously, this is "heaven" to a fly fisherman with a sloppy back cast.

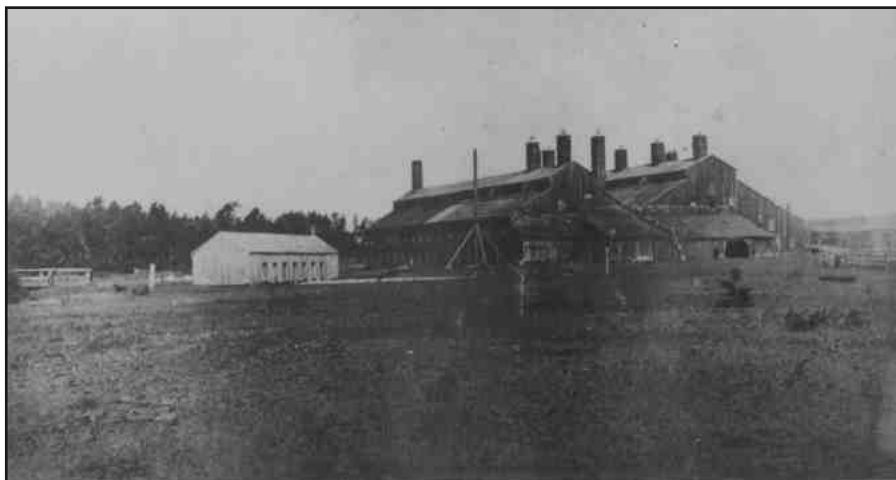
The ecology of the system is "effective open space." Frank Caruso, a plant pathologist at a University of Massachusetts research station in the area, comments, "On average, every planted acre of cranberries is supported by three to four acres of surrounding wetlands and uplands, providing open space, wildlife habitat, and groundwater recharge in an area otherwise stressed from urbanization. . . . Development is the biggest threat to the industry . . . it's my biggest fear. Once it's gone, it's gone."<sup>2</sup>

## THEN AND NOW

The Tihonet Club was organized in 1891 by eleven avid trout fishermen from the Boston area who entered into an informal agreement with the A. D. Makepeace Company, leasing the fishing rights for three watersheds comprising about 6 miles of fishable water. The lease was last renewed in 1978 for a period of ten years and thereafter until either party notified the other that it wanted to terminate the relationship. The following regulations were originally established as bylaws:

Only fifteen days of fishing for any member.

No member shall take more than 10 pounds of fish in weight nor more than thirty in number in one day.



*Tihonet Iron Works (1828) had one of the largest and best rolling mills in the country.*



*An original pencil sketch of the President Pool headwaters by John Boit (Tihonet member 1956–1977).*

The nonpayment of dues (\$13) within thirty days of the assessment shall result in the forfeiture of membership.

The last item had an interesting footnote in the history of the club. During World War I:

The diligent Club Secretary lost no time in reminding Major Farley that his obligations to the Club were undiminished by patriotic duty:

*Dear Madam,  
The Tihonet Club cannot remit the dues for service in the Army. I suppose the only thing for Major Farley to do will be to resign from the Club. . . .*

Regrettably, Major Farley appears to have resigned, and in so doing caused some considerable consternation among

the less zealous members of the club. The ensuing outcry led to a revision of policy, whereby members in military service might pay only half of the regular dues.<sup>3</sup>

The trip to Tihonet in the early years of the century was an undertaking of considerable effort. From Boston it was a train ride, then a horse-drawn wagon, requiring most of a day. Thus, expeditions of a week were commonplace; and with a short season, usually beginning in April and closing in June, this meant that the members were truly dedicated to their fly fishing. The club leased a house just outside their waters so that the members had a place to stay, and a local family served as cooks and caretakers for most of the twentieth century.

The fishing all through the century was remarkable. The original native brook trout were supplemented each year with about 1,700 brookies and browns, and more recently with rainbows. The deep waters of the reservoirs and some pools allowed the growth of really large trout. The following is an entry in the club's log for 6 May 1928.

The bogs when flooded are perfect for fly fishing, as are the reservoirs, where fish as large as 4 lbs have been caught (Frank Benson caught one 4 lb. 26" trout). The streams are perfect for brook trout fishing, and although the trout are smaller, the pools are deep and the fish are plentiful.

Bill and I started fishing from a canoe on the A.D.M. bog, using a bumblebee fly. The idea was to place the canoe upwind and about five to ten yards from a pool in the channel of the bog. . . .



*An early gathering at Tihonet's clubhouse.*

Bill caught just twice the number I did—16. Of my eight trout one was the largest caught that day, 1¼ lbs. and 13¼ inches.<sup>4</sup>

On the fish-room wall in the clubhouse, there are outlines of some of the trophy fish: several 3-pound-plus browns and rainbows and numerous fish of more than 2 pounds. In the den of the clubhouse is a map of the club's waters with annotations by Frank Benson of some of the trophy fish and their locations. "The Painter-Man Benson caught a 2 lb. 13 oz. trout at 'A,' a 3 lb. 6 oz. fish caught by Benson at 'C.'"<sup>5</sup> The record fish were caught in the Frogfoot Reservoir a few years ago: a 10-pound rainbow by Rip Cunningham and a 7-pound brown trout by Reed Austin.

The club was especially proud of the character of its membership, including some well-known artists: Frank Benson, Ralph Bellows, Charlie Coolidge, and J. L. Little. The walls of the clubhouse were adorned with watercolors and etchings, and the first page of each year's log was elaborately illustrated. Even the woodwork of the doors was covered with drawings by the talented members.

The club is clearly defined by its members' passion for and reverence of fly fishing. This can be attested to by their tenure on the membership roles. The Austins have been members since 1900, with Bill Austin having the record of forty-eight years of active fishing. Three generations of Lees have, so far, spent a total of forty-seven years at Tihonet, three generations of Cunninghams sixty-eight years, four generations of Boits eighty-five years, and the Austins

133 years. The artist Frank Benson was an active member from 1900 to 1941, having first fished the waters in 1893. One year's log reveals that Benson invited Roderick Haig-Brown to fish with him.

### A GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

A theme that appears often in the story of Tihonet is that it was a gentlemen's club first and only secondarily a fishing club, reflecting a camaraderie that exists even today. The following is an example of the assiduous care with which the members protected their obscure hideaway as related by one member in a 1942 letter:

I quite agree that it be very difficult to form any letter about bringing wives to the Club. It had not occurred to me that it would be appropriate at any time to take wives to spend the night. My thought concerned only having them to a meal during daytime. I suppose that some members might not object, but I have a sort of notion that others would object and we don't want to spoil the very delightful meeting place we have by bringing in female innovations. Your letter clears the matter up in my own mind. I had been all set to take my wife down there on Saturday and had been scared off by a certain remark of a certain member. It was probably said in fun and I took it too seriously, but no one wants to live other than within the rules of the Club, or let's say customs rather than rules.<sup>6</sup>

By the end of the twentieth century, the cranberry industry, including the Makepeace Company, had changed from family businesses that were labor intensive to highly automated firms. Especially relevant to trout fishing, the firms considered weeds and insects as enemies. Further, the Tihonet Club has seen a considerable loss of fishable waters: the Lower Reservoir and its outflow brook have succumbed to pollution from a municipal landfill, the Upper Reservoir has been lost to eutrophication, the East Reservoir has been subjected to extreme poaching, and the miles of streams and ditches that were once deep and lush streambeds have become shallow runoff gullies. The clubhouse is now an office of the Makepeace Company, and camping is forbidden to the club members.



*A good day in the old days at Tihonet, circa 1892.*



A Tihonet member, possibly Otto Zerrahn, prepares to embark for a day of sport.

The most serious threat not only to the club but also to the fishing is that the Makepeace Company currently has proposed a plan for residential development (1½-acre plots) on its property. The older executives of the company have been replaced by new management, and the cranberry industry has experienced financial difficulties. Further, mechanization is not the only innovation; water regulation systems have been considerably changed, such that all but one of the reservoirs are no longer being used, and current irrigation practices have reduced the formerly deep and lush streambeds to shallow runoff gutters. Thus, the symbiotic relationship between the company and the club over the years

that once limited pressures on the ecosystem, providing sound conservation, is now dramatically altered.

A club member recently lamented that it would seem the future of fishing at Tihonet may be increasingly diminished. Reed Austin suggested that the answer to the future may be found in a recent outing in which his four-year-old daughter Katey “barreled up to the picnic cooler, towing all six-and-a-half feet of the Honorable George Hurd . . . Dad! Dad! He hasn’t seen my fish yet . . . flesh pressed grotesquely into the zip lock baggie, fins worn down to stubs, ten inches long if stretched, a Massachusetts hatchery special reduced to possession in the Frogfoot Reservoir. . . a brook trout.”<sup>7</sup>



An original illustration from the 1940 Tihonet logbook.

Katey “is a fisherman and there are still trout at Tihonet. That’s really all there is to it.”<sup>8</sup>

Imagine fly fishers at the beginning of the twenty-first century who travel to the wildernesses of the Kola and Kamchatka peninsulas of Russia for salmon, the rivers of British Columbia for steelhead, to New Zealand and southern Chile and Argentina for trout, and the Indian Ocean and Caribbean for bonefish and permit. Now imagine the horrific traffic on the highways leading to the two bridges across Cape Cod Canal on a Friday or Sunday afternoon in spring, summer, and fall (would you believe two to three hours to drive a mile?).

In the midst of this multitude of cars, people, and stores lies a tiny bit of land with secluded fly fishing. One of the oldest fishing clubs in America still allows a few ardent fishers to cast a fly over some large and many small trout. They relish the thought that their fathers, grandfathers, and uncles sat in the same canoes or on the same shores and joyously revered their situation. In no small way, they are a part of a small group of dedicated fishermen whose relationship with the landowners for more than one hundred years protected their wilderness and enriched their lives.



#### ENDNOTES

1. John C. Phillips. *A Sportsman’s Scrapbook* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), 122–23.
2. Quoted in Karen Skolfield, “Cranberry Culture: For Its Researchers, the Tart State Fruit Has Become a Way of Life,” *UMass Amherst* (vol. 9, no. 1, Winter 2005), 49.
3. Elisha Lee Jr., “The Early Years,” in Reed Austin, ed., *The Old and Dear Tihonet Club* (Rip Cunningham, privately published, 1997), 15–16.
4. Nim Marsh, “Culvert Pete,” in Reed Austin, ed., *The Old and Dear Tihonet Club*, 66.
5. Edward Weeks, “Closer to Home,” in Reed Austin, ed., *The Old and Dear Tihonet Club*, 42–43.
6. Elisha Lee Jr., “The Early Years,” 18–19.
7. Reed Austin, “Grousing about Trout,” in Reed Austin, ed., *The Old and Dear Tihonet Club*, 91.
8. *Ibid.*, 104.



# The Dean Sage Collection Finds A Home

by John Mundt Jr.

**I**N THE EVE OF the trustee meeting this past November, Peter Corbin asked me if I would step outside and give him a hand carrying some things into the museum. As we walked out together, I casually assumed it was copies of Peter's recently published book and artwork that he was donating to the museum.<sup>1</sup> Instead, Peter explained that we were unloading two wooden crates containing Dean Sage's salmon-fishing tackle. "Really?" was my surprised reaction. It was true. A cousin of Peter's had married a Sage, and all involved wanted to make certain that these angling treasures would reside where they could be appreciated and properly preserved for posterity.

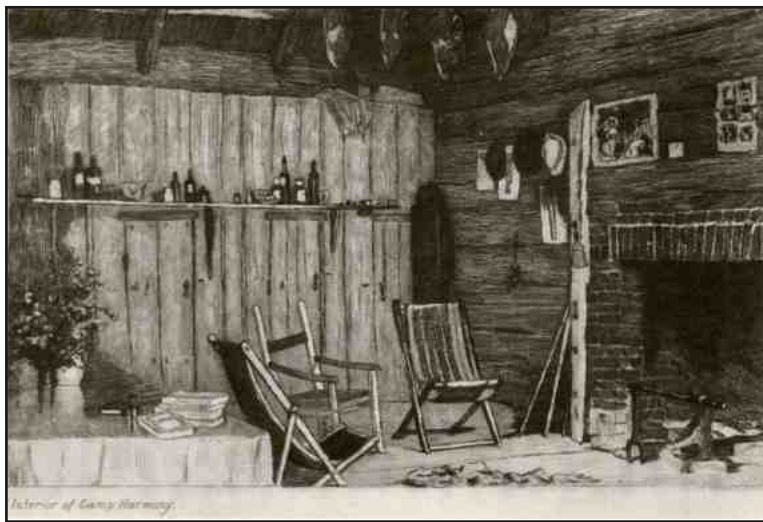
After carefully loosing the old leather straps from the crates, Peter, Collections Manager Yoshi Akiyama, and I became some of the first anglers in generations to handle the old greenheart and bamboo rods, Vom Hofe reels, and assorted tackle that had sat motionless for decades in a Sage family attic. It had been more than a century since Dean Sage's passing, and it was exciting to ponder that these very rods and reels had once been alive with the pulses of *Salmo salar* tearing silk line across Canada's Restigouche River during the golden age of Atlantic salmon fishing in North America.

Dean Sage was without question one of the grandest characters in the sport of Atlantic salmon fishing. His famous



Dean Sage.

Photo courtesy of the Cornell University Library.

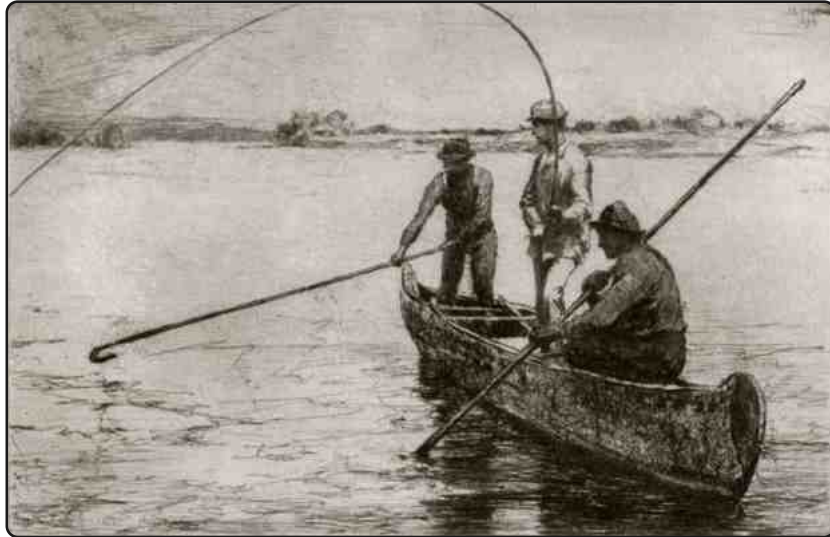


"Interior of Camp Harmony" etching by Geo. Aikman. From Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler's and Shooter's Press, 1973), facing page 46.

Camp Harmony was designed by Stanford White and still sits majestically on its plateau overlooking the confluence of the Restigouche and Upsalquitch rivers.<sup>2</sup> A first edition of his coveted 1888 volume, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing*, will set you back \$10,000 to \$20,000 on the rare occasion when one of the 105 original copies makes its way to the auction block.<sup>3</sup> His now widely scattered angling library had once been considered the greatest collection of its type ever assembled in America.

As the son of a prosperous shipping and timber magnate, Dean lived a charmed life.<sup>4</sup> He appeared to be a grateful son, as his dedication to *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* reads: "To My Father—To Whom I Owe The Leisure Which Has Enabled Me To Write It—I Dedicate This Book." Sage succeeded his father as president of the Sage Lumber Company and continued to live a life immersed in sport, book collecting, philanthropy, and entertaining. His close friends included Mark Twain, Theodore Roosevelt, the eighth Duke of Beaufort, Colonel Oliver H. Payne (whom Sage persuaded to donate \$5 million dollars to build the Cornell Medical School in New York), and Civil War veteran Reverend Joseph Twichell of Hartford, Connecticut, whose wife Harmony was the inspiration for the naming of Sage's camp.<sup>5</sup>

Sage was a complex personality who was known to exhibit a temper that earned him the family nickname "Fierce Dean" while also being a confirmed practical joker. One of his more famous pranks involved a dinner guest of British nobility. Sage wanted to deride the prevailing British sentiment of that time, which held that North America was a land inhabited primarily by barbarian types. He hired a contortionist to join their dinner party who, when seated at table in formal dress, proceeded to place both feet behind his head and began lapping soup directly from his bowl. The other dinner guests were in on the ruse and continued to dine as if nothing were the matter.<sup>6</sup>



*"Almost Landed," etching by C. A. Platt. From Dean Sage, The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler's and Shooter's Press, 1973), facing page 18.*

The breadth of his writing illustrates that Sage was an ardent and well-studied angler. In *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing*, he writes matter-of-factly, "The requisites for success in salmon-fishing I should enumerate in the following order: - 1st. To be where there are fish. 2nd. Angling with proper tackle. 3rd. Industry and perseverance in using it. 4th. Skill in knowing when and where to angle, in casting, and in handling the fish after they are hooked."<sup>7</sup> The same hold true today.

Concerning tackle, Sage had an initial preference for green-heart over the cane rods of the day. He wrote in 1888 that although cane rods performed better than those made of wood, they were not as durable.<sup>8</sup> (There were several Leonard

cane rods included with the donation, so he must have gained confidence in the cane implement as the craft evolved). He stated that two of his favorite makers were Messrs. Scribner and Baillie of St. John, New Brunswick.

Both affect the three-length spliced ones constructed of green-heart, and one of the best of either of these will do good service for years. I have a Scribner rod that I have used more or less for thirteen seasons, which is as good as ever—though not nearly perfect to cast with—and will probably last as long as I do. Baillie makes a lighter rod, a modification of the "Castle Connell" pattern. It casts easily and with accuracy, and is delightful to handle a fish.<sup>9</sup>

*Dean Sage's prized Baillie salmon rod, weighing in at 1 pound, 4.9 ounces and a towering 15 feet in length.*



Photographs by Yoshi Akiyama



Dean Sage's Vom Hofe reel and leather reel case.



Photographs by Yoshi Akiyama

He adds later:

I have found a good reel much harder to get than a good rod. The reel, especially in fishing from a canoe, has more work than the rod, besides having to bear it on some rather sensitive machinery which cannot be seen, and may become far gone towards uselessness without the angler's knowledge. Probably the best American reels are equal to any in strength and durability, but they are so expensive (costing from thirty to forty-five dollars) as to make it seem almost a sin to use them.<sup>10</sup>

Judging from the quality and quantity of his Vom Hofe reels, necessity surely helped him overcome any lasting symptoms of buyer's remorse.

Dean Sage spent a quarter of a century on the Restigouche before quietly departing this world from there on 23 June 1902. An entry in the Camp Harmony record book for that day reads, "Dean Sage, President of this association, died suddenly of Angina Pectoris at five o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, June 23rd. He took three salmon in the morning, averaging twenty-one pounds, and was apparently in his usual health until four o'clock in the afternoon. An hour thereafter he calmly passed to his long sleep."<sup>11</sup> He was sixty-one. As a nod to the vagaries of fate, Dean Sage Jr. followed almost the exact same path as his father on 1 July 1943. The Camp Harmony record book for that date reads, "On his last day he hooked a large fish that gave him trouble from the outset. His guide, seeing he was tired, asked for the rod. He replied, 'I'll kill this fish if it is the last thing I ever do.' These may have been his last words—they certainly marked his last act. He beached his fish unassisted and then lay down not to waken."<sup>12</sup> One could think of worse ways to go.

The legacy of Dean Sage lives on. Today you can find his name fixed on the Cornell University campus.<sup>13</sup> One might chance upon his bookplate pasted onto the front endpaper of a classic sporting title he once owned or read his various writings, some of which have been reissued by several publishers over the years.<sup>14</sup> And now, by visiting the American Museum of Fly Fishing, you can grasp one of his greenheart rods, turn the handle on its Vom Hofe reel, and maybe find yourself wishing you could travel back in time.



For further reading about Dean Sage, the author recommends David Ledlie's comprehensive study, which appeared in the *American Fly Fisher* over six consecutive issues, Fall 1975 through Winter 1977.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Tom Davis, *Peter Corbin: An Artist's Creel* (Manchester, Vt.: Hudson Hills Press, 2005).
2. Stanford White (11 September 1853–25 June 1906) was an American architect and the "celebrity" partner in the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White. He designed a series of formal and informal houses for wealthy clients, as well as various public, institutional, and religious buildings. He also designed several famous salmon camps for his exclusive clientele. An angler himself, he is credited with originating the Nighthawk salmon-fly pattern. White was known to have led a scandalous sex life and was murdered by millionaire Harry K. Thaw in New York City in 1906.

3. “The folio first edition of *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* by Dean Sage is one of the most highly sought of angling titles. Just 105 copies were published in 1888 (this is number 19) of this exquisite book. The Ristigouche (or Restigouche) is a river which runs through the northwestern portion of Canada’s New Brunswick province, and then forms the border between New Brunswick and Québec. French colonial ambitions in the New World came to an end in the Battle of the Ristigouche in 1760. It was the last naval battle of the French and Indian War. Today, fish are the major adversaries. Item 131. \$20,000” (James S. Cummins, Bookseller, Catalog Number 94, cover and page 64). I am also aware of a private transaction in 2003 in which an acquaintance paid \$9,000 for a copy. For comparison purposes, Mark Twain’s personal copy was purchased at auction by the Union Club of New York City for \$105 when his library was sold in 1911.

4. Dean Sage’s father was Henry Williams Sage, born in Middletown, Connecticut, 31 January 1814.

5. “Camp Harmony,—so named partly, as might be guessed, from the spirit we desired should always remain there, and partly in honour of a gentle woman whose whole life showed how rightly this quaint nomenclature had been given her.” Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler’s and Shooter’s Press, 1978), 44.

6. DeWitt L. Sage, “A Notice of Dean Sage” in Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler’s and Shooter’s Press, 1978), xxix.

7. Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler’s and Shooter’s Press, 1978), 87.

8. *Ibid.*, 88: “The American split bamboo is the most expensive, and as long as it holds together is as delightful a rod for casting either a long or short line and killing a fish as can be found. It is quicker in recovery than any rod I have ever handled, and retains its straightness

and springiness far better than rods of which each joint is made from a single piece of wood. It is probable that these rods, if taken as much care of as a fine gun, will last as long as others; but my experience with them has been unfortunate, and I have given up their use. The wood appears to become, after a year or two, brittle about the joints, and will break short off there on very slight provocation, and with no warning. Proper care and attention would perhaps keep these weak tendencies from showing themselves; but a salmon rod should not take harm by being exposed to the weather without care for a few weeks each year.”

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 90. In Jim Brown’s *A Treasury of Reels* (Manchester, Vt.: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, 1990, 67–70), his research demonstrates that by 1882, Vom Hofe & Co. were well-established reel-makers in New York.

11. DeWitt L. Sage, “A Notice of Dean Sage” in Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler’s and Shooter’s Press, 1978), xxxv.

12. *Ibid.*, xxvi.

13. The stone pulpit in Cornell University’s Sage Chapel was a gift from the family of Dean Sage. Around its base is inscribed: “In memory of Dean Sage, Founder of the Preachership in this Chapel.”

14. Selected Dean Sage angling publications: *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1888), 105 copies (25 copies for sale in the United States, 25 copies for sale in Great Britain, 50 copies for private presentation, 5 copies for public libraries; later editions were issued by the Angler’s and Shooter’s Press of Goshen, Connecticut, in 1978 in a limited edition of 250 deluxe copies and by John Culler & Sons of Camden, South Carolina, in 1993 in a limited edition of 500 copies); *Salmon and Trout* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1902); “Ten Days’ Sport on Salmon Rivers” (*Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 36, no. 214, 1875), reissued privately in 1997 in a deluxe edition of 55 copies by Charles B. Wood III of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Yoshi Akiyama



Dean Sage’s fly box.

Fly illustrations from Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1888), ed. Col. Henry A. Siegel (Goshen, Conn.: The Angler’s and Shooter’s Press, 1973), 100–07.



# Museum News

## Anglers' Club Dinner/Auction

The museum held its annual Anglers' Club of New York Dinner and Sporting Auction on March 9. The evening was a great success with a packed house full of enthusiastic members and friends.

This event was our most successful to date, with significant dollars being raised for our archival and collections work. After a lively social hour and auction preview, the crowd was treated to a wonderful culinary experience from Mary O'Malley and her professional staff. Dinner was complemented by fantastic wines donated by museum Trustee Roger Riccardi and Gallo Wines.

Lyman Foss returned after a ten-year hiatus to serve as the evening's auctioneer. His entertaining auction style, combined with his hilarious anecdotes, produced some lively bidding and several heated battles.

The museum would like to thank the Anglers' Club of New York for offering their venue for this event. A huge round of applause goes to dinner Chair John Mundt and his committee—James Baker, Jim and Judith Bowman, Bob Johnson, John Larkin, Carmine Lisella, Pamela Murray, Michael Osborne, Stephen Peet, David Sgorbati, and Richard Tisch—for their tireless efforts to make the dinner such a success.

We would also like to thank event sponsors Jace Day, Ralph Peters, Kris Rollenhagen, and Jeffrey Williams for their generous support.

Finally, we would like to thank our auction donors, whose wonderful gifts generated tremendous support for the museum: Rick Bannerot, Robert Cochrane, Jim Collins, Peter Corbin, Bill Greiner and Malbaie River Outfitters, Hexagraph Rod Company, Nick Karas, Carmine Lisella and the Jordan Mills Rod Company, John Mundt Jr., the Orvis Company, Roberto Pandolfi and the Rio Mansa Lodge, Roger Riccardi and Gallo Wines, Kris Rollenhagen, Dr. Gary Sherman, Dr. Mark Sherman, Richard Tisch and the Potatuck Club, and the Winston Rod Company.

## Cleveland Dinner/Auction

The museum was pleased to return to the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club for our annual Cleveland dinner and sporting auction. A record turnout of ninety-seven members, trustees, and friends came together on Thursday, April 13, to enjoy great food and lively conversation. Under the tutelage of auctioneer Mark Schroeder, guests enjoyed some friendly bidding on some great auction items as well.

Some notable and different items in the auction this year included two Orvis shooting schools, a saltwater fly-fishing school in Florida, and a weekend for two at the internationally acclaimed Glendorn property in Bradford, Pennsylvania. And our returning favorite at the auction was a trip to Key Biscayne, Florida, generously donated by Brent Buckley. All attendees were very giving in their support of the museum. In addition to our veteran guests, there were many new faces at the dinner who said they'd be back next year.

We are indebted to many individuals, all of whom deserve kudos for their efforts on our behalf. Thanks go to our dinner

chair, museum Trustee Woods King III; the dinner committee of George McCabe, Jim Sanfilippo, and J. D. Wagner; and our hosts, Frank I. Harding and the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club. Last, but not least, we thank our contributing sponsors: Baker & Hostetler LLP, Stan Bazan, Richard and Gail Bowen, Leigh Perkins, Grant Thornton LLP, Warren and Young PLL, Mr. and Mrs. Alton Whitehouse, Brent M. Buckley, Florida Fishing & Hunting Adventures, Glendorn, Gray Drake Lodge & Outfitters, the Homestead Resort, Damon Newpher, Streamside Orvis (Michigan), Orvis Shooting School, and museum Trustee Roger Riccardi and Gallo Wines.

## Marketing/Program News

As part of our outreach efforts, a new ad campaign is under way in several fly-fishing publications. Ads recently appeared in *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *Fly Rod & Reel*, *Fly Fisherman*, and *American Angler*. The ads prompt readers to call or e-mail the museum for a free copy of the spring issue of the *American Fly Fisher*. Our goal is to introduce potential new members to the museum. The response has been favorable so far, with about one hundred inquiries. Ads will continue to run throughout the summer.

Yoshi Akiyama



Members of the Old Reel Collectors Association visited the museum in May, enjoying the opportunity to examine some of the rarer items in the museum's extensive collection.

The museum is also participating in a summer promotion in conjunction with *Vermont Life* magazine. The program, Passport to Summer Fun and Adventure, entitles anyone who presents a passport a two-for-one museum admission. The passport is tipped into the *Vermont Life* summer issue, and participants can use the passport to visit various destinations around the state at a discount.

A Battenkill-themed festival is planned for Saturday, August 19, on the museum grounds. The town of Manchester is a whirlwind of activity on that weekend, and the event will take place in conjunction with Orvis's 150th anniversary celebration. Much like our grand opening, a tented area on site will exhibit a diverse group of fly-fishing vendors and local craftsmen, including rodmakers, art exhibits, demonstrations, fly tiers, and more. Activities will include casting on the pond with antique rods, a speaker on the topic of the history of fly fishing, food, fun games and art projects for kids, and a guided tour of the current exhibit.

The celebration will continue into the evening with a casual barbecue that will coincide with music and fireworks provided by Orvis.

## Upcoming Events

### August 19

Festival Weekend and Dinner  
Manchester, Vermont

### September

Date TBD  
One-Fly Event  
Jackson Hole, Wyoming (tentative)

### October 7

Winery Dinner  
Paraduxx Vineyard  
Napa Valley, California

### October 17

Friends of Museum Shoot  
Sandanona and Tamarack  
Millbrook, New York

### October 28

Membership/Board Meeting  
Manchester, Vermont

### November

Date TBD  
Hartford Dinner and Sporting Auction  
Farmington, Connecticut

For more information, contact Lori Pinkowski at  
(802) 362-3300 or via e-mail at amff2@amff.com.

We are working on our fall events (see the Upcoming Events box above) with plans to expand our California dinner. This year the event will take place at Duckhorn's Paraduxx winery on Saturday, October 7. Tours of the winery, interactive stations, blind wine tastings, and more will be part of the goal toward increasing attendance. In addition, California-based Trustee Roger Riccardi is working on organizing tours of various wineries on Sunday, October 8, for those in attendance on Saturday. It is sure to be a spectacular weekend.

## A Volunteer Story

The American Museum of Fly Fishing has one volunteer who stands out. This isn't because of her stature (she is 5 feet tall), but because of what she has accomplished.

Sandra Read of Dorset, Vermont, has sorted and cataloged more than 650 antique fly rods in a few short months. Her job was to unpack each fly rod, place it in chronological order, and make sure it was correctly catalogued and recorded in our archives. She then placed each rod in our new rod fixture, which was built for optimum preservation of our collection.

Although she had envisioned the task as tedious and boring, Sandy found the project fascinating. She handled fly rods that have been donated since the museum's inception in 1968. These rods date from 1832 to the present and are made from a variety of materials, including bamboo, graphite, fiberglass, and ash. Sandy also found that the rod cases are often one of a kind and just as fascinating as the rods they hold.

Sandy finds her work at the American Museum of Fly Fishing very gratifying, as every day brings variety. This job calls on her sense of order, perfectionism (her own words), and love for the art of fly fishing. An added bonus is working with Collections Manager Yoshi Akiyama and the museum's office crew.

—REBECCA NAWRATH

## Recent Donations

**Robert H. Boyle** of Cooperstown, New York, donated a number of letters written to him, including one from John McDonald (21 October 1989) and two from R. Monty Montplaisir (one about an adult stonefly imitation and one to both him and Eric Leiser about stonefly imitation). Four letters and one Christmas card came from Charles E. "Charlie" Brooks, a fly-fishing writer in Yellowstone, Montana, whose work focused on stoneflies. (A printed "For Charlie" list for the Charles E. Brooks Memorial Award was included in the donation as well.) Another letter from Craig Mathews, Blue Ribbon Flies, West Yellowstone, spoke of flies and seeing Charlie Brooks. Finally, Boyle also donated an envelope of silkworm gut leader by William Mills & Son.

**Bob Murphy** of Manchester, Vermont, donated the first prototype antireverse fly reel developed by Harry Wilson of Scott. **Louis Cornick** of Flemington, New Jersey, donated a Form Fit creel, patent no. 55289, ca. 1930. **Seth Harvey** of East Falmouth, Massachusetts, donated a 14-foot, three-piece John Forrest (Kelso, Scotland) salmon rod and a 12-foot, 6-inch, three-piece bamboo salmon fly rod, maker unknown.

**Bernard Lefty Kreh** of Hunt Valley, Maryland, donated the two-piece rod and Taurus Airex saltwater fly reel used by Lee Cubby to catch the first Atlantic sailfish on fly. Lee Cubby was a good friend of Lefty and pioneer in saltwater fly fishing in the 1960s and 1970s. Kreh also sent a copy of Judith Dunham's *The Atlantic Salmon Fly* (Chronicle Books, 1991), donated through him by Mrs. Jay Jefferson Miller of Ruxton, Maryland.

**Brooks Bouldin** of Georgetown, Texas, donated a collection of Jim Payne pieces: a shadowbox frame containing a black-and-white photograph of Jim Payne along with 4¼-inch-long section of Payne rod; a 12¼ x 11½-inch photo album (which contains a sketch showing the floor layout plan of the Payne rod shop; thirty-six photographs of the interior and exterior of the Payne shop and rodmakers, layout of their rooms and machinery, headstones of H. L. Leonard and E. F. Payne's, and Jim Payne's resting place; a group of five photos in the inside rear cover; and a collection of sixteen 5x7-inch black-and-white photos showing workmen in the Payne rod shop); and a folder containing a three-fold Payne catalog, another small Payne catalog, the formula for Payne oxidation treatment, a small cutout of a Payne magazine ad, a four-page newspaper (the *Sunday Record*, 25 June 1978) stating that the Payne rod shop was being offered for sale, and a folder that contains thirty-two pages of tapers of Payne rods.

**Julie Sage Day** of West Orange, New Jersey, donated fly-fishing tackle belonging to the late Dean Sage: six wooden line



Yoshi Akiyama

Sandra Read stands among the many archival rods she helped sort and catalog this winter.

winders with line; a fish scale in a leather holder; a brass fish scale; a silver-plated fish scale; six gaffs; a metal fly box (painted black) containing thirty-one salmon flies; a tin box containing a collection of fly-tying materials; a can of waterproof paste; a spool of 100 yards of braided silk line; a broken wooden spool for braided silk line; one paper-wrapped white hackle; three insect-damaged salmon flies at bottom of the box; one rod tip (maker unknown); a William Mills & Son bait casting/bass reel; a small Abbey & Imbrie trout reel; a Patent Lever no. 597 Charles Farlow & Co. brass salmon reel; a Mallock's patent salmon reel; three boxes of large trout flies with three strands of silk leaders in wood box marked "Rubber salmon reel"; an Edward Vom Hofe salmon reel, patent 23 January 1883; a leather fly wallet; an Edward Vom Hofe salmon reel, 6/0, patent 23 January 1883; an Edward Vom Hofe saltwater/salmon reel, 484 1-0, patent 23 July 1883; an Edward Vom Hofe salmon reel, 423 4-0; an Edward Vom Hofe salmon reel, 504 2-0, E 201; an Edward Vom Hofe salmon reel, 504 2-0, D 208; an Edward Vom Hofe salmon reel, 504 6-0; a Julius Vom Hofe salmon reel, 44/1; a Julius Vom Hofe salmon reel, 41/4; one tool; one ferrule cap (wood and cork); a "Conroy" leather fly wallet; a leather rod carrying case containing a three-piece, 13-foot S. Allcock & Co. Ltd. hardwood fly rod; two-tip section of rod in cloth and aluminum case (small), maker unknown; four rod tips of different makers in brown canvas bag, two in an aluminum tube case; one greenheart and lancewood three-piece, 14-foot salmon rod with whipped splice joint and an extra tip in form-fit wood case, maker unknown; one lancewood three-piece, 8-foot trout fly rod (possibly made by Charles Wheeler); a John Forrest 14-foot greenheart grilse rod, butt and midsection, tip missing, with two tips and one midsection by an unknown maker for salmon/grilse rod in same rod case, bag marked "F. H. Ellis, Philada"; an H. L. Leonard bamboo salmon rod, patent 31 May 1880, in brown canvas case with marking "F. H. Ellis, Philada"; an H. L. Leonard three-piece bamboo salmon rod with two different-length tips to fish the rod at 13 or 14 feet; an

### Orvis Traveling Exhibit

In conjunction with the Orvis Company's 150th anniversary, the American Museum of Fly Fishing has put together an exhibit that will be appearing at an Orvis store near you. This exhibit features three separate displays. The first features the historic fly rods and photographs of Babe Ruth and Ted Williams. These National Baseball Hall of Famers were also avid fly fishermen. The second details the history of the Jock Scott Atlantic salmon fly, chronicling eleven unique fly-tying materials from all over the world. The third highlights the rich history of the sport, with examples of fly reels from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. For more information about this traveling exhibit, call the museum at (802) 362-3300, or e-mail us at amff3@amff.com.

July 13–16	New York, New York
July 19–23	Carmel, California
July 27–30	Deerfield, Illinois
August 3–6	Cherry Creek, Colorado
August 10–13	Pasadena, California
August 17–20	Palo Alto, California
August 24–27	Tysons Corner, Virginia
August 31–September 4	Scottsdale, Arizona
September 7–10	Jackson Hole, Wyoming
October 26–29	Seattle, Washington
November 2–5	Chicago, Illinois
November 9–12	Buffalo, New York

## BACK ISSUES!

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Volume 8:	Number 3
Volume 9:	Numbers 1, 2, 3
Volume 10:	Number 2
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Volume 31:	Numbers 1, 2, 3
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To order, please contact Rebecca Nawrath at (802) 362-3300 or via e-mail at amff3@amff.com.

Anderson & Sons "The Dunkelo" 207, three-piece, 14-foot ash salmon rod, no. 98653, tip section with no line guide, ferrule broken into midsection, marking on the rod case (canvas) "F. H. Ellis 1901"; an H. L. Leonard three-piece, 12-foot bamboo salmon rod with one extra tip; a rod case (cloth) marked "Dean Sage Albany NY"; a three-piece, 15-foot ash salmon rod, maker unknown, with whipped splice joint in form-fit wood case, one midsection missing, rod case (cloth) marked "Baillie C.E.L."; a Charles Farlow & Co. lancewood salmon rod, in dark brown rod case (cloth) marked "D. Sage Albany NY"; and one photocopy of the typed manuscript *Ten Days' Sport on Salmon Rivers* by Dean Sage.

### 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 2006, unless otherwise noted):

Montana Historical Society Press sent us Paul Schullery's *Cowboy Trout: Western Fly Fishing as It Matters*.

Callahan & Company, Booksellers, donated R. C. Dales's *Fly Fishing in Herriot Country* (Medlar Press, 2005) and the Spring 2006 issue of *Waterlog*.

Frank Amato Publications, Inc., sent us Andrew Williams's *Cannibal Trout: Tying and Fishing Flesh, Fry and Egg Flies* (2005); Gary Soucie's *Woolly Wisdom: How to Tie and Fish Woolly Worms, Woolly Buggers, and Their Fish-Catching Kin* (2005); *Washington River Maps and Fishing Guide*; Greg Thomas's *Fly Fisher's Bible: Montana*; Richard R. Twarog's *San Juan River: A Fly-Angler's Journal*; Ted Leeson and Jim Schollmeyer's *The Benchside Introduction to Fly Tying*; Blaine Hallock's *Early Northwest Fly-Fishing*; Art Lingren's *Contemporary Fly Patterns of British Columbia*; and Dan Landeen's *Steelhead Fly Fishing Nez Perce Country: Snake River Tributaries*.

# Fishing Classic Tackle: A Museum Friend Reports



Left: Joe Doggett uses butt section of Payne Model 410 cane rod to lift and turn tiring salmon in Gourmet Club's Home Pool.

Below: Gourmet Club guide Norbert Patterson, left, and angler Joe Doggett admire big salmon caught on classic tackle. Moments later the fish was released.

Photos by Ed Cappel



*Joe Doggett is an outdoor writer for the Houston Chronicle and a contributing editor for Field & Stream. In September 2005, on a trip arranged by Bill Greiner of Malbaie River Outfitters, Doggett fished the Gaspé's York River with classic tackle. This is his account.*

The 9-foot, 6-inch E. F. Payne Model 410 salmon rod flexed in the morning light on Gaspé's York River. Fitted to the uplocking reel seat was a 2/0 Otto Zwarg Model 300 filled with 30-pound backing and a 9-weight floater. The German silver reel and rich bamboo shaft gleamed with a forgotten correctness, adding greatly to the pleasure of the fishing. My hope was to hook and land a legitimate 10- or 12-pound salmon on the classic tackle.

I stood in knee-deep current at the top of the Gourmet Club's famed Home Pool and felt the smooth power as rod turned the loop and dropped the 6-pound leader and #10 Royal Coachman double in a straight extension. The swing of the small wet fly felt exactly, perfectly right. Gourmet Club guide Norbert Patterson watched the cast and nodded approval.

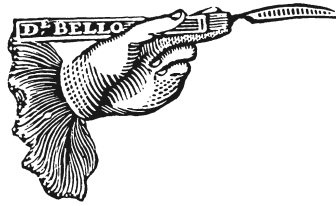
The dark head and shoulders of a huge September hookbill rose, and the swinging line came tight against the turning

weight. The surface boiled and bucked, then the salmon lumbered out in a full-body leap.

Patterson yelled, and my first reaction was: *I'll never land this fish. Just be grateful you raised him.* The salmon made a run into the backing, nudging the far bank. The reel spun smoothly and the cane dipped cleanly. The fish remained in the slow water of the long pool—a major mistake for *salar* and a huge advantage for Payne. The 6-inch rubber-button extension provided ample leverage and, by pumping with the butt of the blank rather than the tip, I was able to exert growing control. The tiring salmon made another clean jump then plodded upstream.

Patterson waded thigh-deep with the big net and waited until I turned the fish downstream. He dipped as it swung, and the mesh thrashed. The fight was finished in approximately thirty minutes. The hookbill measured 42½ inches by approximately 28 inches. Patterson estimated the weight at 40 pounds. I may never catch a better fish than I did with that classic rod and reel.

—JOE DOGGETT  
HOUSTON, TEXAS



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## LETTER

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Thanks so much for publishing the wonderful profile of Dick Finlay, volunteer extraordinaire for so much of the museum's history (Fall 2005, vol. 31, no. 4). Through his hard work, his knowledge about such a startling array of things, and the force of his affirmative personality and great sense of humor, he has been one of the great heroes of our little institution. Nonprofit institutions survive mostly on good will, and nobody generated good will like Dick Finlay.

When I arrived in Manchester in late 1977 to become the first executive director, I was amazed at the amount of work that Dick and several other key volunteers had achieved in putting together a credible museum administration. They all knew so much more about the place, the collection, and the history of fly fishing that, as the new kid on the block, I wasn't even sure how I was supposed to fit in the operation.

In fact, now that I look back on it, I don't think any of us had really anticipated what it would mean to the museum's volunteer program to suddenly have a paid full-time person in charge of things. And frankly, I think that it took the volunteer program a long time to recover. Dick, Ben and Ruth Upson, and quite a few other people either in town or at some distance (David Ledlie, Martin Keane, Richard Kress, and Ken Cameron always come to mind first) were more than willing to continue to help. But I'm not sure any of us knew quite how to blend the old volunteer program (them) with the new paid-employee program (me). I often felt that I wasn't providing enough opportunities for them, or accommodating all the energy they so obviously had, or taking full advantage of everything they had to offer. It was just one of the elements of the job where my lack of experience probably did set us back.

I do know, however, that the volunteers continued to do important work and were always handy and helpful if I called them. They were also an impor-

tant part of the warm welcome I received from almost everyone involved. (Some people who remember my years at the museum will immediately smile when they read that "almost" because they will remember that I was quickly at odds with the museum's former volunteer curator, Austin Hogan, who approved of virtually nothing I did for five years.)

It is in describing that warm welcome that I can perhaps add some detail or tone to Mr. Karaska's article, especially the discussion about the relationship between the museum and Orvis.

When I arrived in 1977, it took me only a short time to realize how thoroughly the Orvis folks were committed to the museum. Whether or not Orvis President Leigh Perkins ever directed any of his staff to help the museum, I was constantly made to feel that the word had somehow gotten around that they should "be nice to that boy."

And they were. Next to the Orvis/Perkins financial commitment to the museum, the "unofficial" support of the Orvis team was the most important thing that kept the institution viable and allowed it to flourish. I would go a step further than Mr. Karaska, who said that Leigh never commented on or criticized the time that Orvis staff spent on the museum. While it is true that Leigh gave the staff great and generous leeway in helping the museum, the actual lengths to which the staff went in that help was even more than Leigh would have imagined (though I don't think he would have minded).

I was especially pleased that Mr. Karaska addressed the sensitive issue of the museum being somehow just "an Orvis museum." It quickly became clear to me that for those people in the fly-fishing world who were skeptical about the museum as an institution, the Orvis involvement was just an excuse not to help. They could pretend that somehow Orvis was taking unfair advantage.

For example, some people actually believed that Orvis was just using the

museum to draw customers into their store. This was certainly the silliest of criticisms, because it assumed that anyone had even heard of the museum, which very few people had back then. During my five years at the museum (1977-1982), I spent great amounts of time in the exhibits, which were in three nice rooms we rented from Orvis, off one end of the main Orvis store on Route 7. I can say without question that virtually every visitor who came into the exhibits really just fell out of the Orvis store. Orvis was the reason people stopped there at all. It was entirely to the advantage of the museum to have its exhibit spaces so fortuitously located. If, in those early days, we had moved the exhibits just a block down the street, our visitation would probably have dropped by ninety percent.

And let me be a little more specific about the finances, too, again just to suggest the magnitude of the unheralded support Orvis provided. I'm relying on shaky memory here, but as I recall, when I arrived in 1977, roughly ninety percent of the museum's budget was donated by Orvis and the Perkins family. They had been funneling money and resources into this little enterprise for almost a decade, and sometimes it must have seemed not only thankless but also pointless, because so few other "powers" in the fly-fishing business were willing to kick in at all, even though the museum was truly an independent educational institution. In those years, I often paused to realize that if the museum had to depend upon any company in the fly-fishing trade, they'd somehow lucked into the only one that had the substance, the sense of tradition, and the generosity to get the job done.

And let me reinforce an earlier point here. Orvis really laid low when it came to how the museum actually did its educational business. In my five years at the museum, even though some of our finest and most publicly popular artifacts were

## CONTRIBUTORS

Orvis related, I never received the slightest pressure to in any way slant the exhibits toward an Orvis emphasis. As the collection grew, the Orvis people were as excited about the acquisition of historic tackle from other manufacturers as I was. In fact, I don't know what I would have done without their expertise in the history of those other manufacturers.

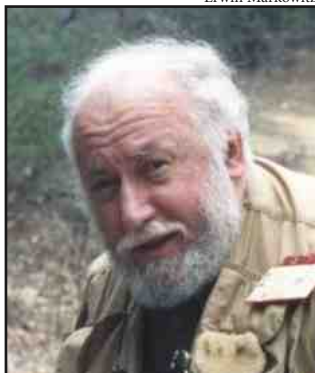
By the time I left the museum, in 1982, we had launched the fund-raising auction program that Mr. Karaska mentions. Thanks in good part to the volunteers (the ever-present Mr. Finlay, joined by Richard Kress, Ben Upson, and others in several cities, made this possible) and the growing generosity of other fly-fishing businesses and individuals, this program dramatically shifted our support base. I would guess, again relying on ancient memories, that by 1982, Orvis and the Perkins family only had to provide about twenty percent of our now considerably larger budget. The rest was coming in from a variety of other sources.

The great point here, and one that I hope we who care about the museum never forget, is this: the Perkins family and Orvis stuck with this struggling young institution through those formative years, and still do. I am sure it was as true for my successors as it was for me that whenever the museum came up a little short, whether in money, other resources, or just a helping hand with some grunt work, these amazingly good friends were always there. Leigh, Romi, Dave, and Perk Perkins, and Randall Rives Perkins were unfailingly helpful with advice and direction. I could always turn to Arnie Abramson to build me a new exhibit, or Anne Secor to guide me through the finer points of publication, or Howard Steere to sneak a presentation-grade rod from the inventory for an auction prize, or John Harder, Tony Skilton, Bill Cass, and Tom Rosenbauer to lessen my ignorance about fly fishing, or Laura Towslee (whom I relied on most of all) to reach deep into any of several Orvis operations for whatever help I needed. These people brought enthusiasm and a rare wisdom to the museum's operation just because they cared.

I hope that some day there will be a way to adequately celebrate the museum's early friends, the people who got it all started and kept it all running until the rest of the world finally caught on and realized what a precious little institution this is.

*Paul Schullery*  
Trustee Emeritus  
Bozeman, Montana

Erwin Markowitz

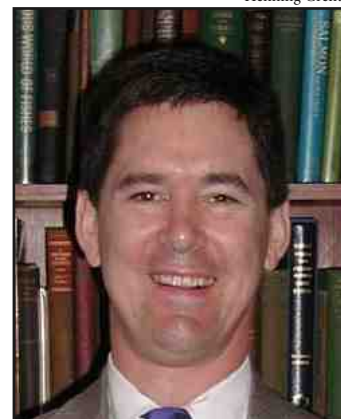


Gerald Karaska is a retired professor of geography from Clark University. For the last seven years, he has been a volunteer at the museum, where he essentially functions as the librarian. Residing in Worcester, Massachusetts, he spends considerable time fishing the trout streams of Massachusetts and Connecticut as well as the salmon rivers of Québec and New Brunswick. Like other volunteers, he finds the museum to be the closest thing to being on the water.

John Mundt has been a periodic contributor to the pages of the *American Fly Fisher* since 1991. He was a recipient of the museum's Austin M. Hogan award for his Summer 1996 effort, *The Historic Penobscot: America's Atlantic Salmon Fishing Legacy*. John serves on the museum's Board of Trustees and is chair of the Hartford and New York City Dinner Auction Committees. He enjoys visiting the historic places associated with fly fishing and is an active member of Limestone Trout Club and the Anglers' Club of New York.

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

Henning Greutz



Paul Schullery was executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing from 1977 to 1982. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of about thirty-five books, including several relating to fly fishing and fly-fishing history: *American Fly Fishing: A History* (1987), *Shuption's Fancy: A Tale of the Fly-Fishing Obsession* (1996), and *Royal Coachman: The Lore and Legends of Fly Fishing* (1999). He is coauthor, with Bud Lilly, of three books on western fly fishing, the most recent being *Bud Lilly's Guide to Fly Fishing the New West* (2000). He was scriptwriter and narrator of the award-winning PBS film *Living Edens: Yellowstone* (2000). For his work as an historian and nature writer, he is recipient of an honorary doctorate of letters from Montana State University and the Wallace Stegner Award from the University of Colorado Center of the American West. His book, *Cowboy Trout: Western Fly Fishing as if It Matters*, was just published by the Montana Historical Society.

# Announcement of Annual Meeting



The annual meeting of the members of the American Museum of Fly Fishing will take place in Manchester, Vermont, at Hildene on Saturday, October 28th, 2006, at 9:00 A.M.

Members will vote on the election of new trustees, officers and any other matters that may be presented. Members should contact the American Museum of Fly Fishing for a copy of the agenda any time after October 15th, 2006, at (802) 362-3300.

The annual trustees' meeting will follow the membership meeting at the same location

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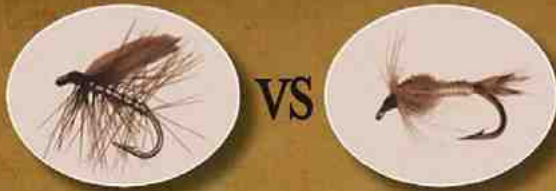
## MONTANA'S NORTH FORK CROSSING LODGE

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Although we provide a unique Montana "rustic" experience — we have not forgotten the amenities. Feather beds, plush terry cloth bath robes, private bath houses and attention to detail will leave you refreshed and rested after a day on the water. Take a walk with our chef through the beautiful organic garden and help select salad greens for the evening meal. At the table, you'll be treated to culinary events that celebrate Montana, our love of fresh organic produce, and our desire to present it all in a way that is comfortable yet refined. Save room for dessert. We make our own ice cream and sorbets. You'll fall asleep wondering if the highlight of the day was the fishing or the food!



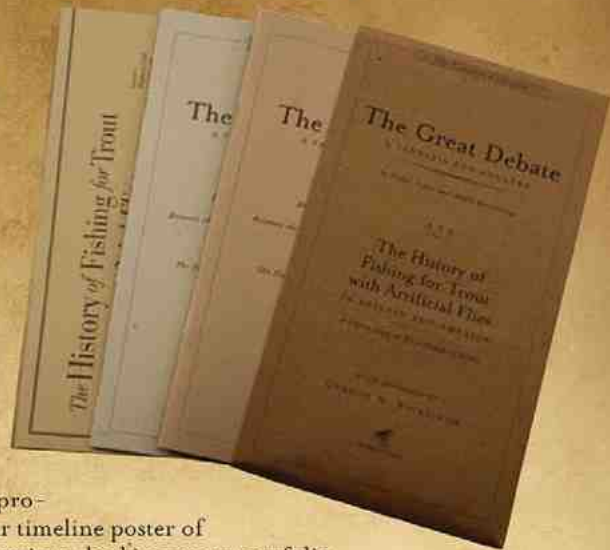
# The Great Debate Portfolio

*Sell this unique DVD/CD portfolio in your shop and support The American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

Imagine if you will a debate, in the hallowed halls of The Fly Fishers' Club of London in the year 1912, between the two leading British anglers of their day – Frederic M. Halford and G.E.M. Skues – on the matter of the floating versus the sunk trout fly. It never really happened except in the fertile mind of angling's man-of-letters Gordon Wickstrom. First produced live by The American Museum of Fly Fishing and the Whole and Ancient Company of Anglers on November 6, 2005 in Boulder, Colorado, this fly fishers' fantasia was professionally recorded and videotaped, and is now available in a special collector's portfolio.

The artfully designed pack includes a video DVD, an audio CD, a script booklet with the complete text and production notes of the performance, and a fascinating linear timeline poster of the chronology of fly fishing, all packaged together in an antique-looking paper portfolio. Early fly fishing history enthusiasts will be thrilled, and any angler who has ever indulged in that age-old "discussion" on the merits of dry fly fishing over nymph fishing will watch and listen to this performance over and over again.

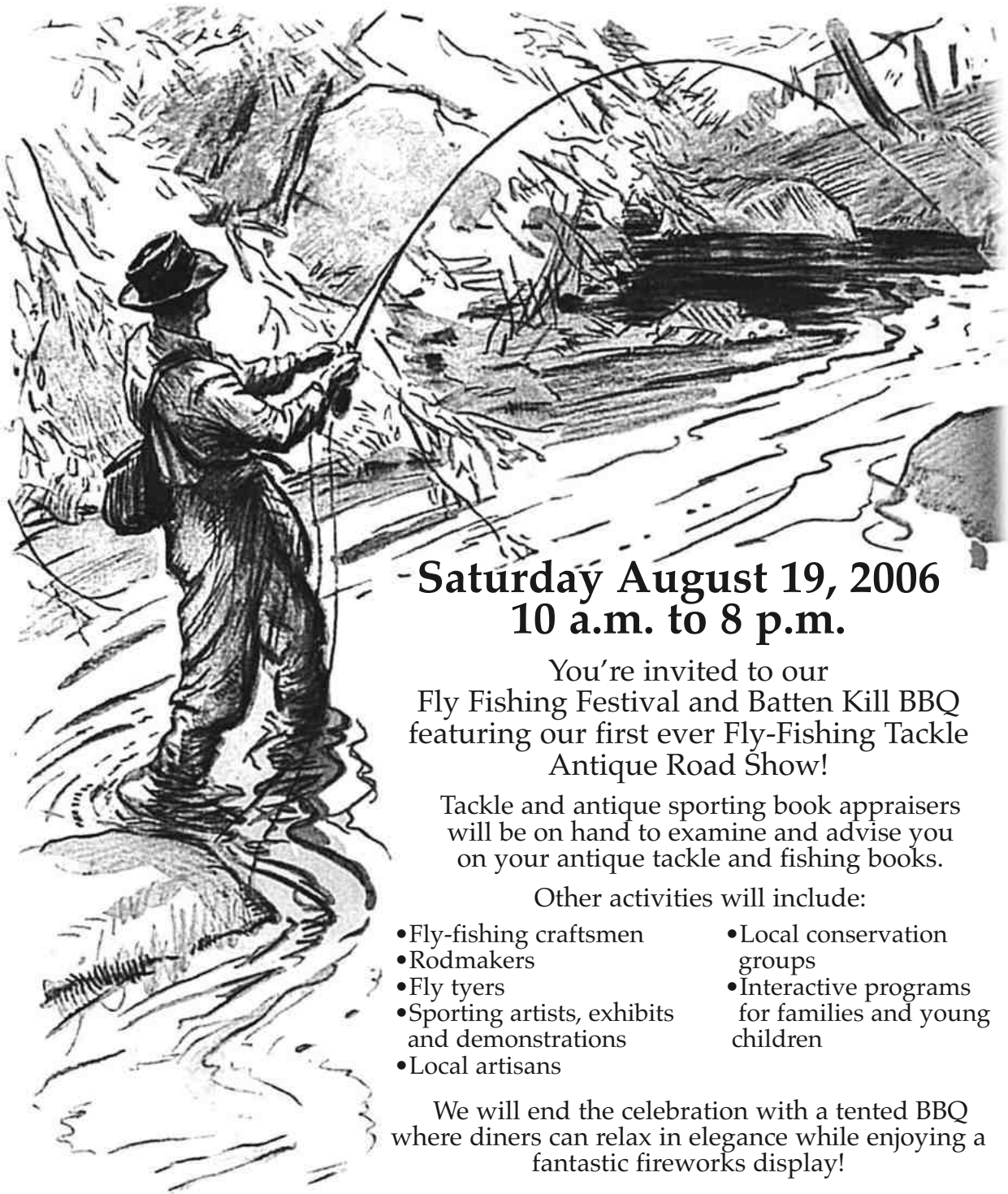
The Great Debate portfolio has a suggested retail price of \$40 and is truly an original product for your customers. The portfolio is available now and can be shipped to your shop immediately. Call The American Museum of Fly Fishing at (802) 362-3300 for wholesale pricing and to place your order. And thank you for your support, all sales proceeds directly benefit the continued growth of the Museum.



Actual poster size is 11" high by 34" wide.



# You're Invited to our Batten Kill Bash!



**Saturday August 19, 2006  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

You're invited to our  
Fly Fishing Festival and Batten Kill BBQ  
featuring our first ever Fly-Fishing Tackle  
Antique Road Show!

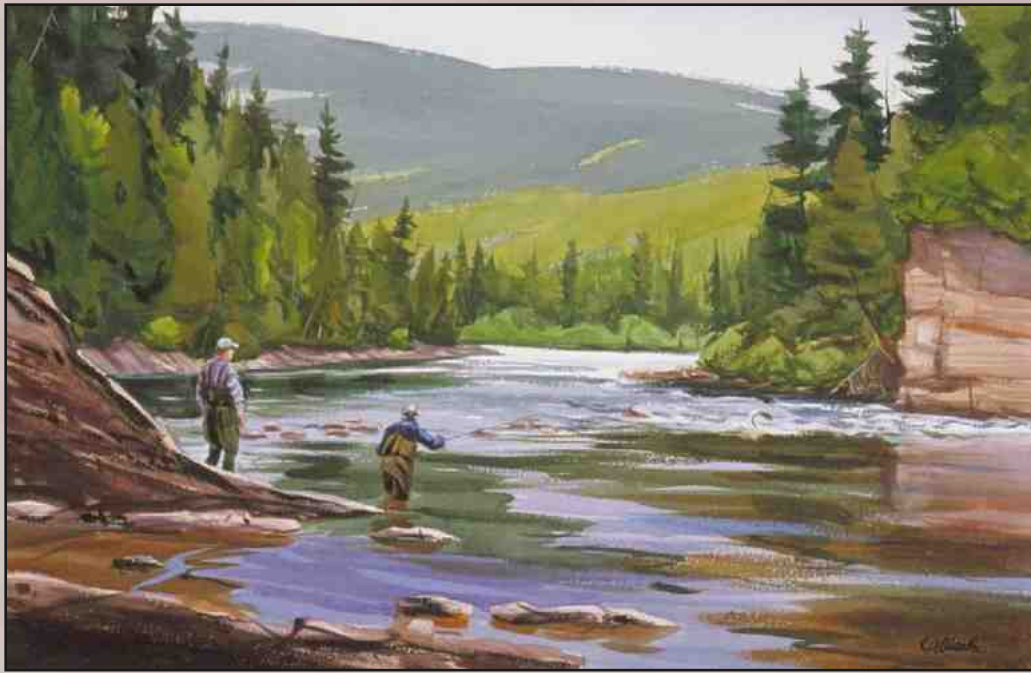
Tackle and antique sporting book appraisers  
will be on hand to examine and advise you  
on your antique tackle and fishing books.

Other activities will include:

- Fly-fishing craftsmen
- Rodmakers
- Fly tyers
- Sporting artists, exhibits  
and demonstrations
- Local artisans
- Local conservation  
groups
- Interactive programs  
for families and young  
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We will end the celebration with a tented BBQ  
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The Brookside Angler Gift Shop at the American Museum of Fly Fishing offers an extensive collection of fly fishing gifts and collectibles. The store is a wonderful complement to the gallery and gives the shopper the opportunity to bring home remembrances of their trip to the museum. Customers are tempted by an assortment of fine art, antique and contemporary home décor, quality books and stationery as well as exclusive AMFF logo merchandise.



AMFF logo tee shirts fly out the door of the museum shop. This shirts are constructed of 6.2 ounce 100% cotton jersey which is reinforced from shoulder to shoulder with self taping. Offered in many colors with contrasting ink on the museum logo which is on the front left, and the text 'The American Museum of Fly Fishing' is on the center back. (size s-xxl, \$19.95)



Rolf Cut Crystal School of Fish design is our most popular item in the shop! Made in the USA and diamond wheel engraved, every glass is dishwasher safe. We carry 9 designs of this pattern, and if you look closely, you will see one fish swimming in the opposite direction!



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# The Historic Batten Kill

AS I WRITE MY COLUMN for the summer issue of the journal, I am distracted by the Hendrickson duns clinging to the screen of my office window. Spring in Vermont is always unpredictable, the roulette wheel spinning somewhere between snow and mud. Despite this agony, local fly fishermen know that when the first week of May rolls around, nothing can deny the appearance of the *Ephemerella* clan. This hatch is famous throughout the Northeast, but there is nothing like the Hendrickson hatch on the Batten Kill.

Certainly, our Catskill brethren might object to this statement. Roy Steenrod named the fly for his friend Albert Everett Hendrickson as they fished the Junction Pool on the Beaverkill. But before we start waxing poetic about the Beaverkill, I would like to share my thoughts on the *Other Kill* over in Vermont.

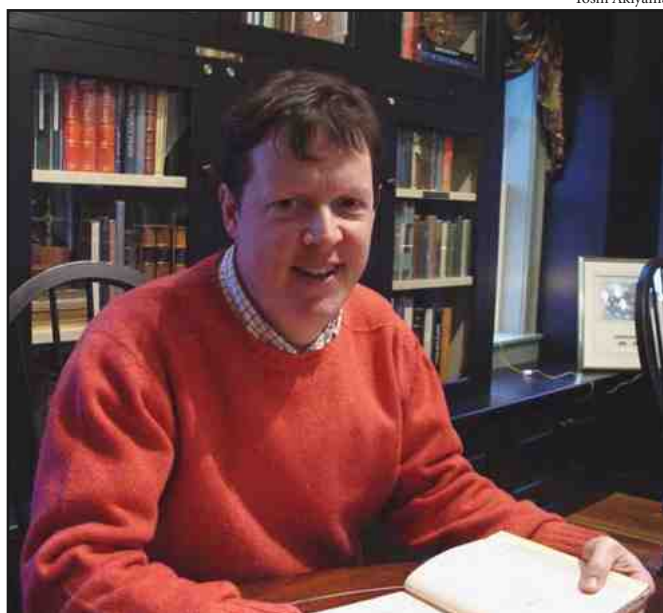
We often affix human characteristics and personalities to our rivers, and the Batten Kill is no different. In fact, the names of the pools themselves add to the legend of this river: the Pig Farm, Wulff's Pool, the Bat Hole, Atherton's Pool, Dutchman's Hole, Benedict's Crossing. It almost sounds dangerous!

The Batten Kill is renowned for its complex hatches, its finicky fish, and its frustratingly clear water. I am proud to say that I affix a greater sense of accomplishment and conquest to releasing an 8-inch wild brook trout on the Batten Kill than I do a leviathan on the Madison or Big Hole!

Cast your flies into these storied waters, and you will be taken by the vibrant history that remains relevant to the many fly anglers who still come to fish this river today.

Certainly, the Batten Kill's reputation has grown from the personalities who have tested its mettle. A virtual *Who's Who* of fly fishing, the Batten Kill's legend usually starts with Charles F. Orvis, who was making rods and fishing these pools before the Republican Party was founded. You will recognize many more names that are often associated with the Batten Kill: Wes Jordan, Lee Wulff, Joan Wulff, Lew Oatman, John Atherton, Ogden Pleissner, Norman Rockwell, John Merwin, and Tom Rosenbauer.

Although we may recognize those names, I am intrigued by the many nameless people who journey from all over the world to wet their flies in this river. Last Sunday I was creeping up River Road in Arlington with my head halfway out the window looking for bugs in the air and the cedar waxwings that chase them. With three kids in the back and a list of yard chores, I had to fight the gravitational pull of the water to keep the car on the road. I counted cars from eleven states and two provinces. And although the eleven states were heavily represented by those *yellow plates* (you know the ones I am talking



Yoshi Akiyama

about!), I was impressed to see that some of these anglers came from states that boasted their own great fisheries (Maine, Pennsylvania, Montana, North Carolina). Something is drawing these anglers here—something more than the trout.

Perhaps it's the tapers that Charles Orvis started and Wes Jordan perfected to help anglers chase these wily trout. Or maybe it's the elegant simplicity of Lew Oatman's Shushan Postmaster, a pattern that still catches fish when other patterns fail. Or the way that Pleissner captured the fading light at the southpaw angler's back as he fishes Lye Brook Pool. Maybe it's the eloquent frustration and respect for the river that John Atherton recounts in his book, *The Fly and the Fish*.

I think it is all of these things and more. The same wild brook trout that tempted Charles Orvis and Robert Todd Lincoln are still swimming wild in this river. Our brown trout, wild since the late 1960s, share the same genetic structure as those that battled Lee and Joan Wulff and John Atherton.

Come visit your American Museum of Fly Fishing and walk through our exhibit celebrating the history of our sport. Then wet a fly on the Batten Kill and experience for yourself its rich tapestry of history.

BILL BULLOCK  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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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.

### JOIN!

Membership Dues (per annum)

Associate	\$40
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The museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. Membership dues include four issues of the *American Fly Fisher*. Please send your payment to the membership director and include your mailing address. The museum is a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, the New England Association of Museums, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, and the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame.

### SUPPORT!

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