

The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



FALL 2009

VOLUME 35 NUMBER 4



THERE'S A RELIC attached to my television set: a VCR. I still use it to record TV shows. I've added a DVD player to the setup, but I don't have a DVR. I don't have an iPod either. I don't have time (or much interest) to turn all those CDs into a new format. Only recently did my husband and I get pay-as-you-go cell phones, and only because we were both traveling without regular contact points. These cell phones don't work anywhere near our house, of course.

I just put enough money into my five-year-old iBook to commit to preserving its life for another year or two. My computer guy, though, warns me that when the new operating system is released—to which I likely won't need to upgrade immediately—it will not run on this machine. I have been warned.

Clearly, when something's working for me, I don't rush right out to make changes. In fact, I bet I would have been one of those anglers who saw no reason to give up her perfectly serviceable snelled flies.

In "This Most Salutary Reform: The Slow Rise of the Eyed Hook," Paul Schullery acknowledges the lengthy history of this essential fishing tool, but points out how long it took for eyed hooks to overtake the use of convenient snells in the fly-fishing world. "Just as it took anglers a long time to abandon horsehair lines in favor of silk lines and gut leaders, it took a long time to let go of the snelled hook," he states. "Even the most progressive professional fly fishers and fly tiers struggled to adjust and break old habits." After all, using the loops was a faster way to change flies than learning knots and threading line through a small eye. Some important and powerful fisherfolk thought that snelled hooks might not only *never* be completely replaced, but that they would continue to dominate the market. This resistance to change sounds vaguely familiar. If you love a good tackle story as much as I do, turn to page 8.

The *American Fly Fisher* doesn't publish travelogue pieces. We leave that to the mainstream fly-fishing magazines. As much as possible, we try to keep a clear historical bent to our articles. But Graydon R. Hilyard has written a travelogue that's not really a travelogue. I mean, it *is* a travelogue in that he's taking us on a fishing trip to two sites in Maine: Bosebuck Camps on the Aziscohos

Lake and nearby Upper Dam separating Mooselookmeguntic Lake from Richardson Lake below. He's taking this trip, though, in the context of following a particular historical figure: Charles Edward "Shang" Wheeler, a premier waterfowl decoy carver who was also known to have carved a fish or two (or maybe a dozen). According to Hilyard, "It is a little known fact that each of these fisheries spawned a Shang fish carving, bringing the confirmed body count up to twelve." Join Hilyard over bumpy dirt roads as he tracks Shang's ties to the area and to fellow historical figures Carrie and Wallace Stevens. Sit back and listen to the story of White Nose Pete. "Tracking Shang" begins on page 2.

In this issue's Gallery feature, "The Eisenhower Rod and Reel," Nathan George offers us some of the history behind one of the presidential rods in our collection (page 16). Trustee John Mundt is back with another installment of *Keepers of the Flame* (page 18), a new feature that highlights the contributions of contemporary artisans and craftsmen to the sport of fly fishing. This time Mundt features Carolyn Chadwick, a bookbinder and conservator who has done preservation work for the New York Anglers' Club for the last twenty years.

The fly-fishing community lost one its jacks-of-all-trade in June when Jim Repine left this world. Through his writing/photo-journalism career and his lodge in Chile, Jim was connected to a lot of people. I had opportunity to work with him when he contributed articles to this journal in 1999 and 2001. I was also the recipient of one of his generous invitations to visit the lodge, something I never managed to do. Harry Briscoe, president of the Hexagraph Fly Rod Company, sent us an obituary when Jim died (page 19); he also wrote a personal remembrance piece that is a lovely reflection of the experiences and bonds we make in this fly-fishing world. "Jimito" can be found on page 20.

Our news section (page 24) will bring you up to date on recent happenings. Read all about our casting pond project on page 26, and see page 22 for some highlights from our annual Fly-Fishing Festival, one of our favorite events of the year.


KATHLEEN ACHOR
EDITOR



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ON THE COVER: *Wallace Stevens on the steps of Camp Midway at Upper Dam with White Nose Pete and his Ode, ca. 1942. Photo by Col. Joseph D. Bates Jr.*

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Tracking Shang

by Graydon R. Hilyard

Col. Joseph D. Bates Jr.



Shang Wheeler (left) and Wallace Stevens (right)
with the "Ode to White Nose Pete," ca. 1942.

SO, WHAT'S A DAD TO DO? There they are, your twelve-year-old son and his ten-year-old sister, their brightly beaming upturned faces pleading for "a really awesome fishing trip, Dad."

Despite your ignoring the collected wisdom of doctors Spock, Ruth, and Phil and the religious right, the kids are okay. At least according to you. Their mother, she's not so sure. Only reluctantly has she agreed to this fly-fishing business as one more hopeful brake on anything like their father's youthful dalliance with adult beverages and drugs du jour. The joy at your young bride's interest in your fly-tying bench and her enlightened questions concerning polar bear, jungle cock, and blue chatterer paled early on. Finding a canceled check made out to PETA will do that.

Admittedly, you are grateful that the offspring's DNA was not breached at birth and that their IQs appear intact. Ironically, all of this good health and smarts creates its own set of problems. Not that you are complaining, mind you. It's just that unless you are a well-heeled Republican or someone content on getting his rewards card punched in heaven,

you got problems—namely, an orthodontist who needs a new garage for the three Mercedes, college tuition at \$40,000-plus a year and rising, and a future wedding divorcing you from any pittance left over. No need for election-year politicians to fret about the Social Security system crashing. You are going to have to work until age seventy-five just to break even, which just so happens to be the life span of the average American male these days. How's that for social engineering?

But back to the problem at hand: those beaming faces all decked out in waders and vests (no sheepskin patch, of course) pleading for "a really awesome fishing trip, Dad."

Although Bogdans and bamboo retain their charm, thanks to the resumption of the China trade, you no longer have to miss house payments to outfit the kids. As to "a really awesome fishing trip," that's another matter. Maybe you came of age on a diet of *Tap's Tips* and dreams of the Northwest Taxidermy School, but for these kids, after school to the local pond armed with a steel pole, bobber, and bent pin in search of a sunfish to

stuff just will not do. Brought up on splashy catalogs and exotic journals requiring a passport just to subscribe, the damage has been done.

So, what's a Dad to do?

Clearly, a plan is needed. Wait much longer, and boys and girls will be discovered and any parental influence will be on the wane. Soon, even a trip within the lower forty-eight may not do as Patagonia and Russian rivers seduce young dreamers oblivious to the falling dollar and rising price of Mideast oil. With today's costs spiraling and tomorrow's income plateauing, looking to bygone days, as we do while tracking Shang, may be your only direction left to go. (Nice segue, huh?)

~

Unless your education has been sadly neglected, you already know that Charles Edward Wheeler (1872–1949), better known as Shang, was the premier waterfowl decoy carver working in the Stratford School tradition. Proof of past stature was his winning first prize in the amateur category of the International



"Ode to Perley Flint": camp humor at its best.
From the collection of Charles McLaughlin.

Ode to Perley Flint

He got fish when others couldn't
But tell the trick, he simply wouldn't
He gets up early—so 'tis said,
While other anglers lie abed.
Of course this claim he just denies.
Another says "It's in his wrist,"
With which he adds a special twist.
As most of us were still in doubt,
To get the truth—we set about.

We gathered at the camp one morn
A bit before the breakfast horn,
And looking north we saw a man
With shovel and tomato can,
Trip softly to the garden plot
And pick a soft and likely spot,
From which to dig some "garden hackle"
For use with modern fly-rod tackle.
We saw him grab a lusty worm,
We saw it wiggle, twist and squirm.

We saw him drop it in the can,
Then back to camp we quickly ran,
To call both guests and guides to see
This fisherman of mystery
Select the stock and tie the flies
Right there before our very eyes.
Most flies are made with greatest care
From feathers, silk and buck-tail hair,
But some that Perley Flint has made
Were made of worms, tin can and spade.

—"Shang"
May 1939

Decoy Makers Contest held annually at the National Sportsmen Show in New York City twelve years in a row, beginning in 1937.¹ Proof of present stature is contemporary auction houses hammering down prices in excess of \$75,000 per bird.² Enough said.

What you may not know is that he was the absolute best fish carver of his day. There is good reason for not knowing. Until recently, only ten fish carvings were known to exist, all locked from view in private collections.³ As companion pieces to some of these rare carvings, Shang would compose rhymed verse of sorts, lampooning the fisher while casting the fish in the role of hero.

Neither were his pen-and-colored-ink drawings sometimes remarking Christmas cards and correspondence too shabby either. Nor were his political cartoons drawn for the *Bridgeport* (Connecticut) *Herald*. Nor were his rare landscapes done in oil. Nor were his other minutiae, such as fishing flies, lures, and woven baskets in the form of creels. Shang wasn't content to simply live the sporting life, either. Three tours of duty were spent in

the Connecticut Senate and House of Representatives defending the environment that made it all possible.

All told, Shang's life work output probably totals fewer than a thousand pieces, a fact not lost on collectors, particularly as decoy carving has become an important form of American folk art. However, economics were not in Shang's equation. Every piece of carving, artwork, and ephemera was freely given away, with friendship the only price realized.

Of the few aware of Shang's passion for sport, fewer still will know that two of his preferred sporting destinations were in the mountains of western Maine: Bosebuck Camps on Aziscohos Lake and nearby Upper Dam separating Mooselookmeguntic Lake from Upper Richardson Lake below. It is a little-known fact that each of these fisheries spawned a Shang fish carving, bringing the confirmed body count up to twelve. Both of these locales still offer quality brook trout and landlocked salmon in a wilderness setting at affordable prices. And, if they were good enough for Shang, they should be good enough for you.

So, here's the plan, Dad.

First, you convince your Ivy League-prone wife that no normal kid ever learned anything in school during early June and September. Any rational teacher will tell you that. If that is not enough, explain to her that Aziscohos Lake is home to a Paleo-Indian site dating from the Paleo Indian Period, 11,000 to 9,000 B.P.⁴ Babble on about Ledge Ridge chert and fluted projectiles dating back to the sixth millennium. Let such talk flow glibly from your tongue. Surely, she will be impressed by your archaeological prowess and commitment to hands-on education. (No need to tell her that most of the Vail Site is now in the Maine State Museum at Augusta and the rest of it is under 20 feet of water.)

Next step is to persuade her that this would be the ideal time to visit her parents. Quality time and all that. Managing social arrangements is key here. No good ever came from an urban wife waiting back in camp staring back at the glassy-eyed deadheads on the wall while everyone else frolics in the forest primeval. All that under control, now you get to

decide which it is going to be: Bosebuck Camps or Upper Dam. Unless you suffer from some undiagnosed form of mania, you do not want to combine these trips, although, given their proximity, it could be done.

Bosebuck lies near the hamlet of Wilson Mills, Maine, and is surrounded by 250,000 acres of pristine wilderness. It sits on the northwestern shore of Aziscohos, a lake created by dam building in 1911. In the 1920s, Shang would have arrived by steamboat from the foot of the lake. Today, you will arrive by 10 miles of dirt road marked by fields, forest, and the occasional out-of-control logging truck. Consider it part of the adventure.

Assuming the ruffed grouse (pronounced *paah-tridge* in Maine) season is on and you can swear the kids to secrecy, you might revert to early behavior, as Bosebuck supplies both guns and dogs to hunt over.

Established in 1912 by Roland Ripley, son of the first Aziscohos dam keeper, Bosebuck consisted of only two camps until taken over by F. Perley Flint in 1919.⁵ Something of an entrepreneur, Flint rapidly expanded by convincing sports-

men to build their own camps at their expense on his donated land with his only profit coming from board and guiding.⁶ Eventually, he bought out all of the owners and assumed full control. Should you find yourself renting Shang's camp, you will regret that recent insulation and interior walls now cover his notations and tracings of trophy fish. Then again, if it's September, maybe you won't.

Although Aziscohos Lake offers reasonable fishing and an opportunity to test young canoe skills, this is not why you are here. What Bosebuck really offers is miles of brook trout streams and guided access to the privately controlled Parmachenee watershed and the upper reaches of the Magalloway River. Not for nothing did President Eisenhower fish them both on his only trip to Maine in 1955, the event now marked by a bronze plaque at Little Boy Falls on the Magalloway. And, if it was good enough for Ike (you guessed it), it should be good enough for you.

The main lodge was built in 1919 and housed, until he slipped into private collection, *Salmo Polaris*, a classic example of Shang's fish carving and sense of humor.

Carved in 1945, this 26-inch wooden salmon wears a coat of red fox, presumably to ward off the deathly chill brought on by the Aurora Borealis. No, not *that* aurora borealis—instead, a blind-eyed fly originated by Shang and found festooning the mouth of the deceased. Sensing resistance to the concept of a fur-bearing salmon, on the mount's backboard Shang wisely provided a list of solemn witnesses attesting to the events of 11 May 1945.

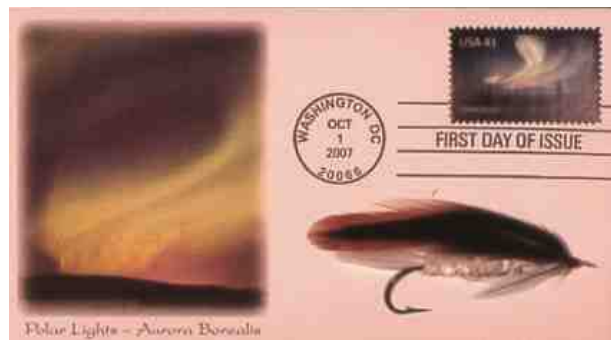
Beguiled by Shang's penchant for the tongue in cheek, this writer never questioned the fantasy nature of *Salmo Polaris*. But over time, the new owner wisely did, finding the blizzard reference on the backboard to be just a bit too specific. So, a meteorologic background check for the region ensued and, what do you know? On 11 May 1945, a massive blizzard roared out of the Berkshires in Massachusetts, then swept across Vermont and New Hampshire on its way to western Maine, leaving up to 26 inches of snow in its wake.⁷

Now, if you were Shang fishing the Magalloway on that day, just maybe, a fur-coated salmon was not really so far-fetched.

Photos by Bob Warren



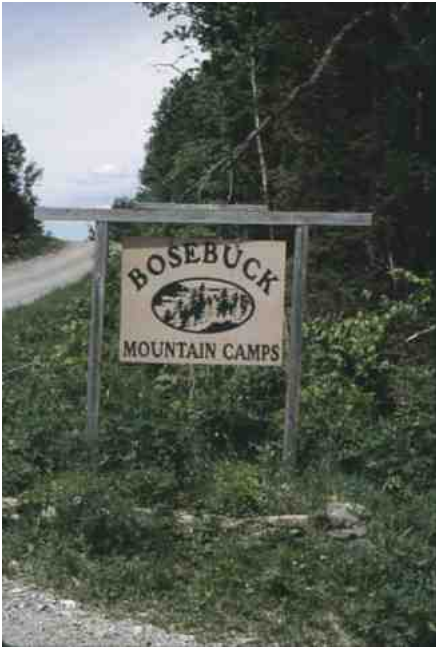
Salmo Polaris: perhaps the only taxidermy fish mount to require mothballs. From the collection of Charles McLaughlin.



*Aurora Borealis tied by Leslie K. Hilyard.
From the collection of Graydon R. Hilyard.*

Pattern Name: Aurora Borealis
 Originated by: Shang Wheeler, circa 1945
 Pattern source: *Salmo Polaris* carving
 Hook: Number 4 sproat, blind eye, gut
 Tail: A slip of white goose
 Body: White chenille
 Wing: Four ginger furnace hackles
 Throat: Two silver badger tips dyed light blue
 Head: Red

Bob Warren



The road to Bosebuck.

Though it offers fair value, should Bosebuck's American Plan prove too costly, do not despair just yet, maxed-out Dad. Shang has a backup plan for you just down Route 16 east, a scant 5.5 miles from the Bosebuck entry sign. Do not bother to look for the entrance sign marking Upper Dam Road; the state long ago gave up supplying them to thieving fishers. Instead, consult your trip meter and take a right onto a dirt road, following it about 3 miles to a locked gate sug-

gesting that you walk the final mile or so. You will know when you get there.

But first there is the practical matter of attending to lodging. Sadly, the Upper Dam House overlooking the Upper Dam Pool where Shang stayed was torn down in 1955 and its contents auctioned off. Instead, you will call Mooselookmeguntic Cabin Rentals in Oquossoc, who will fix you up in a century-old log cabin on the waterfront for a paltry \$135 a night. For everybody. You bring the food; they supply everything else. With a little effort, you can convince your wife that you cannot afford to stay home. (And should you happen to rent this writer's cabin, there is the added bonus of your defraying the cost of his writing this article gratis.)

All that in place, saddle up and retrace Route 16 west approximately 11.5 miles, turning left onto that unmarked dirt road that Shang would have traveled by buckboard. If you value your car's suspension, you will arrive in about the same amount of time as that buckboard. Consider it part of the adventure. Granted, the ideal path from your camp to Upper Dam winds across 7 miles of sprawling Mooselookmeguntic, but that involves the considerable expense of a boat and guide. Then there are the additional problems of early morning fog, perpetual wind, and sudden storms. You may be content to hunker down and admire the century-old ambience, but your two kids will most assuredly not.

From time immemorial, until the combined effects of salmon and lake

trout plantings collided, brook trout ruled at Upper Dam. Starting in 1842, with the arrival of fly fishers Crawford Allen, Phillip Allen, and Sullivan Dorr out of Providence, Rhode Island, fishers have flocked from the metropolitan East Coast and Europe to Upper Dam seduced by visions of 10- to 12-pound brook trout.⁸ In 1875, landlocked salmon became the hot new species, and everybody had to have them. So in they went with no hesitation, as no one realized how passive even large brook trout could be. Rather than misguided, the single lake trout planting in the 1950s was moronic. It seems that the pilot of the state stocking plane loaded with salmon for the Richardsons and lake trout for Moosehead got confused and pulled the wrong lever.⁹

During Shang's heyday, large brook trout still lingered at Upper Dam, and he made frequent trips visiting his many friends, including Wallace and Carrie Stevens. Wallace was one of Maine's premier guides whose prominence has since been eclipsed by his wife and her legendary Gray Ghost streamer. Originated circa 1934, L. L. Bean reports that it is still their best-selling streamer, followed closely by Herbie Welch's Black Ghost, originated in 1927. But no matter the patterns used, nothing could seduce that wily mammoth brook trout named White Nose Pete, lurking beneath the sawmill at Upper Dam. Blessed with an atypical genetic code, he may still be in residence, as his capture has never been confirmed.

Bob Warren



Three of the twelve rustic camps at Bosebuck.



A view of the Upper Dam at its zenith, ca. 1930. Maine Publicity Photo.



Col. Joseph D. Bates Jr.



Clockwise from above left: White Nose Pete's flybook. The carved epitaph reads: "Here's all that's left of White Nose Pete. His mouth contained most every fly, so there was naught to do but die. — Shang." From the collection of the Rangeley Outdoor Sporting Heritage Museum.

Shang's Ode to White Nose Pete.

Wallace Stevens on the steps of Camp Midway at Upper Dam with White Nose Pete and his Ode, ca. 1942.

Not much choice, really, but for Shang to chisel out his most famous of all fish carvings, compose an ode eulogizing the failed Upper Dam elite, and present the tribute to Wallace Stevens. Lost for decades, *White Nose Pete* has recently surfaced and will rejoin the community upon the 2009 completion of the Rangeley Outdoor Sporting Heritage Museum in Oquossoc, Maine.

Everything that Shang touched smacks of museum quality, but *White Nose Pete* even more so. This is the only known example of a three-dimensional fish carving by Shang, and the only known example of a Carrie Stevens-tied Reverse-Tied Bucktail is among the many flies littering his kipe.

Unlike Flint's 1945 *Salmo Polaris*, there is no firm origination date for Stevens's

White Nose Pete. However, the 1923 date on the *White Nose Pete* artwork dovetails with Carrie's 1949 correspondence with Colonel Joseph D. Bates Jr., stating, "Mr. Wheeler did not come to the dam that year [1922] or in 1924—he was there in 1923." And certainly, the rustic tying of the Reverse-Tied Bucktail found in the kipe is in keeping with her observed tying skills of the early 1920s. Additionally, we have the eyewitness account of Archer Poor, who saw *White Nose Pete* hanging in Camp Midway as early as 1933.¹⁰

Despite years of consistently unenlightened state fishery policies, good fishing prevails at Upper Dam. Your kids will have at least a chance at 3- to 5-pound brook trout without the cost of Labrador and an even better chance of a 3- to 6-pound landlocked salmon tail-

walking across the pool. Brook trout purists will lament the landlocks, but not those who like their fish hyperkinetic. Admittedly, the chances of a 5-pound brook trout improve dramatically downstream, but that trip will cost you. And do not even think of trying to bushwhack in to the Rapid River from Route 16 with two small kids.

Fishing being fishing, the kids may very well not catch anything at all. But if fishing from the piers, they will at least see fish, as the salmon routinely hurl themselves up the sluiceways trying to reach Mooselookmeguntic Lake above. Kids tend to like that up-close-and-personal stuff.

About those piers: although they offer inexperienced anglers good fishing, with no trees to prune and turbulent water to

work the streamer, they are extremely dangerous, particularly on frozen mornings. Lecture your kids and stay nearby. Water thundering past them at 500 cubic feet per second would seem to make the point, but with kids, you never know. (Probably best not to regard this as a photo op, as your next wifely contact will be in the form of a restraining order.) Wading the edges of the pool is somewhat safer, but the bottom tends to fall out quickly at times. Hanging on the dam catwalk is a battered float ring, reminiscent of the *Titanic*, that is probably not going to do much good.

As for you, don't even think of "boring" one of those boats pulled up on shore. They belong to well-trained campers who have grown up on the pool and require no locks for good reasons. Surviving the conflicting crosscurrents and whirlpools is beyond your scope. Do not feel bad, as even area guides are reluctant to shove off into such chaos.

Come noontime, a shore lunch with the kids. Then a walk down the Carry Road leading to the Upper Richardson, passing by Camp Midway, once the home of Carrie Stevens. Pause there a moment and have the kids read aloud from the plaque memorializing her and her Gray Ghost. Tell them how she orig-

inated at least ninety-two streamer patterns, naming some after close friends such as G. Donald and Theresa Bartlett and Ben and Ruth Pearson, husbands and wives who faithfully fished Upper Dam. Tell them that later on today, they will visit the local fly shop, and they can buy a Gray Ghost and some patterns named after Shang. Tell them that tomorrow their luck will definitely improve. Instill hope. Do this, and you will have given your children a gift beyond price.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Additional thanks are due to John Monahan of Dedham, Massachusetts, for his consummate research skills.

ENDNOTES

1. Graydon R. Hilyard and Leslie K. Hilyard, *Carrie Stevens: Maker of Rangeley Favorite Trout and Salmon Flies* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2000), 7.

2. Because of space limitations, this article does not include a table listing Shang Wheeler auction prices for decoys (1991–2007). Prices ranged from a pintail sold in 1995 for

\$1,000 to a standing gull sold in 2005 for \$80,000. Per Jamie Sayers of Guyette & Schmidt, Saint Michaels, Maryland, the nation's leading decoy auction house: "Since our founding in 1984, we have auctioned approximately ninety-six Shang Wheeler birds, but only one fish carving: White Nose Pete in 1995 for \$10,750 plus buyer's premium" (interview with author, August 2008).

3. Dixon MacD. Merkt and Mark H. Lytle, *Shang* (Spanish Fork, Utah: Hillcrest Publications, 1984), 103.

4. Bruce J. Bourque, Steven L. Cox, and Ruth Holmes Whitehead, *Twelve Thousand Years: American Indians in Maine* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 22–27.

5. Edward Ellis, *Chronological History of the Rangeley Lakes Region* (Traverse, Pa.: Brook Trout Press, 1983), 60.

6. Tom Rideout (early owner of Bose-buck Camps), interview with author, February 2007.

7. David McWilliams Ludlum, *The Country Journal New England Weather Book* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), 21.

8. Zenas T. Haines, *Rangeley Lakes* (newspaper), 1895 (vol. 2, no. 45).

9. Archer Poor Jr. (manager of Camp Bellevue, Upper Richardson Lake), interview with author, 26 September 1995.

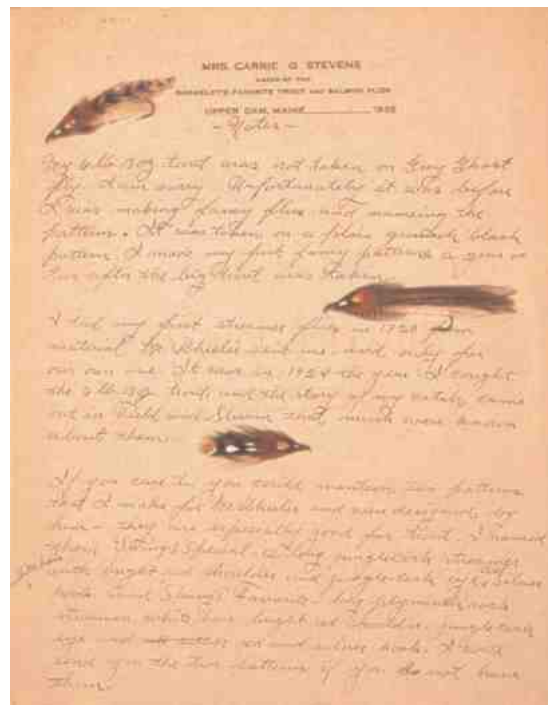
10. Hilyard and Hilyard, *Carrie Stevens*, 25.

Photos by Bob Warren



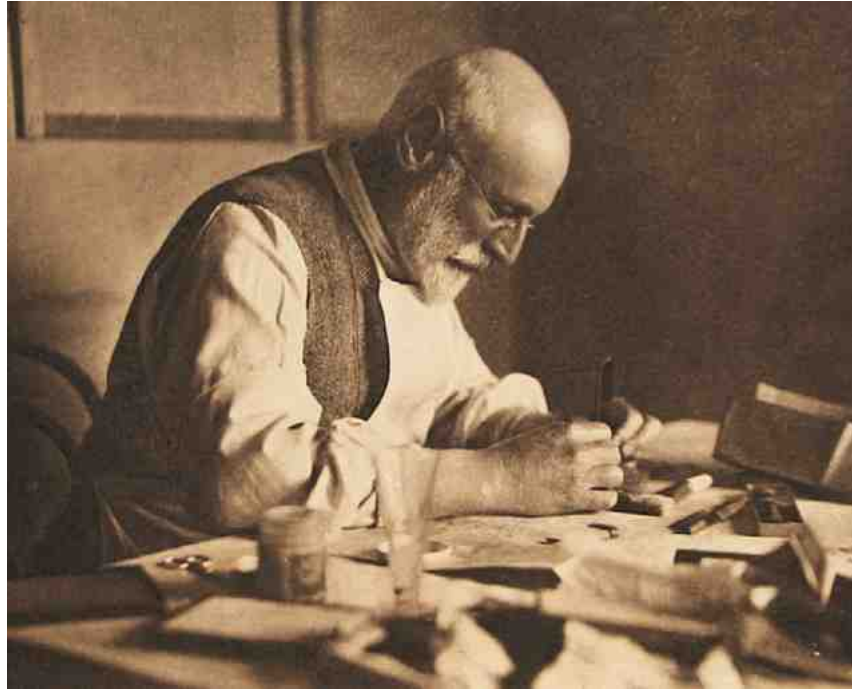
Above: The only known example of a Reverse-Tied Bucktail streamer, originated and tied by Carrie Stevens.

Right: Carrie Stevens on her Wheeler patterns and other matters. From the collection of the Rangeley Outdoor Sporting Heritage Museum.



“This Most Salutary Reform”: The Slow Rise of the Eyed Hook

by Paul Schullery



*Frederic Halford at his bench. Halford's series of books on dry flies, commencing with *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them* (1886), became the leading advocate of eyed hooks in a fly-fishing culture that was accustomed to many centuries of flies tied on snelled hooks. From Martin Mosely's *The Dry-Fly Fisherman's Entomology* (1921).*

ONE OF MY PROUDEST possessions as a fly fisher is a copy of the second edition (1886, same year as the first edition) of Frederic M. Halford's *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them*. I acquired it some years ago during a flush-feeling period when I had accumulated an unseemly volume of credit with a favorite out-of-print book dealer. From the two-color (red and black) type on its title page, to its dozens of delicately precise engravings of fly-tying methods, to its ten “hand-coloured” plates of flies, it is a joy to own—and to gently read.

Because I tend to make a lot of marginal notes in my books, I more typically

prefer either cheap later facsimile reprints or simple photocopies of older books. I can carry on my conversation with the authors with no guilt in these newer, cheaper books, scrawling comments here and there, underlining curious points, and otherwise doing the sorts of things that would make librarians weep if I did them in a valuable book.

I would never dream of marking the pages of an older book (some previous owner did mark up my Halford a little). I enjoy having these few inviolate books, the ones that were printed when the author was alive and his words were fresh in anglers' minds.

And make no mistake about it: though today we may see Halford as a rather hidebound fisherman, intolerant of any way but his own, he must not be read that way. He must be read for the excitement of the day the book was published, when he, George Selwyn Marryat, and their associates were just developing

their vision of the dry fly. He must be read for the clarity, confidence, and graciousness of his prose, and the handsomeness of his books. He must be read for the obvious fun his crowd was having, 120 years ago, as they launched this new and rigorously formal style of fly fishing on a largely unsuspecting world.

It might seem odd to us today, considering the momentous nature of their enterprise, that Halford's book did not begin as, say, Vincent Marinaro's *A Modern Dry Fly Code* would some sixty-four years later—with an eloquent literary flourish, invoking mythic imagery to celebrate what was to come. Instead, and as an indication to us of how much things have changed since Halford's time, his opening chapter had the mundane title of “On Eyed-Hooks.” This was because Halford's work was part of a revolution founded on what to us would seem the most trivial of details, but to his readers was a factor of immense propor-

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tions: "Before many years are past the old-fashioned fly, dressed on a hook attached to a length of gut, will be practically obsolete, the advantages of the eyed-hook being so manifest that even the most conservative adherents of the old school, must, in time, be imbued with this most salutary reform."¹ Although this was concisely put, it was in fact more an expression of his determination to advance the angling community's slow transition to eyed hooks than on any real certainty that such a transition was inevitable. Anglers, especially fly fishers, had known about eyed hooks for a very long time. What seemed to Halford, and to us today, as simply common sense looked quite different to most anglers before and during his time. The eyed hook was only an idea whose time had come if you were among the few anglers not perfectly comfortable with the older way of doing things.

SNELLS

Through most of written fly-fishing history, flies were almost always tied on hooks without eyes. At least from the 1200s until the late 1800s (that being the portion of our history for which we have much written record), the fly tier began by first lashing a section of horsehair or, later, silkworm gut, to the shank of the hook. Often these hooks (known, aptly, as "blind" hooks) had a "spade" or flattened end where the eye would be on a modern hook in order to further facilitate and stabilize the placement of the line.²

Typically, this short section of line—which roughly equated with the modern tippet—was looped at its other end, so that it could be easily attached to a corresponding loop on the end of the fly line, which was also composed of hair, grass, silk, or some combination of those. Anglers carried as many flies as they wanted, usually in some type of "book" whose pages would accommodate the "snelled flies."

Many anglers carried whole leaders, each already rigged with two, three, or more snelled flies, ready for use. Unlike modern anglers, who most often change from one fly to another, an angler a hundred or more years ago often saw his flies in sets that were routinely fished together—perhaps one set of flies for the afternoon of a certain season, and another for the evening of that same season, or one set for certain water conditions and another for other conditions. At any time, of course, one could change just one fly in the set, but I have been impressed with how often earlier fishing writers thought in terms of changing the whole leader.

With a few centuries of practice behind it, the nineteenth-century snell was undeniably a very efficient way to manage the construction, use, and changeability of flies. Once the hair or gut was securely wedged to the hook shank with a good wrapping of silk, the fly was tied over it in the conventional manner. The hair or gut extended straight out from the fly, a much tidier visual transition

from fly to line than could easily be accomplished with a leader knotted to an eyed hook. Champions of the snell over the eyed fly said that having the gut come straight out from the hook also made the fly "swim" more truly lined up with the fly line, and that flies with eyed hooks were more likely to swing this way and that on the "hinge" provided by the knot.³

Though some of us still remember seeing snelled flies for sale somewhere—usually in a dusty corner of an old hardware store that dated from that era when hardware stores carried almost everything you needed—we were more likely to see snelled bait hooks than snelled flies. These are still readily available in many tackle shops. And in almost all cases, at least since the 1920s or so, such hooks have had both eyes *and* snells. In American angling's most traditional and practical circles, snelling is still dying a very slow death.

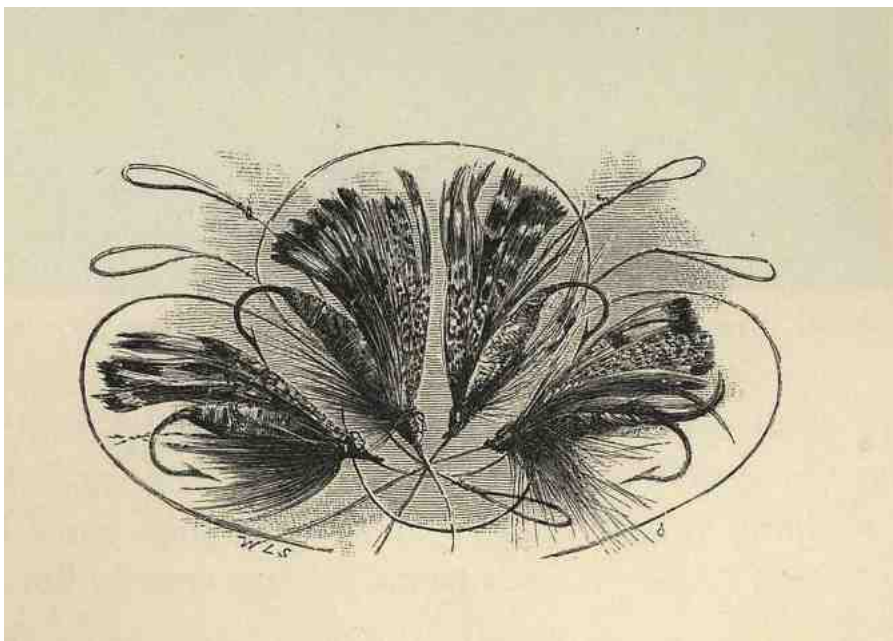
And for good reason. Once you got the hang of using the loops (which many modern anglers still use to attach their fly line to the butt of the leader, or their tippet to the leader), it was a faster way to change flies than learning to tie some annoying knot that involved first threading the line through the eye of a small fly.

It was a mighty secure way, too, at least when the snell was put on properly. Snells were no more likely to fail than are modern knots. Pre-1900 fly-tying instructions sometimes included the advice that you should gently bite down on the end of the gut snell a few times along the section that would be lashed to the hook shank. This would leave a series of nice grooves for the tying silk to nestle into as you wrapped it around the gut and the hook shank, ensuring a secure grip, and making most fishermen's knots seem treacherous and unreliable by comparison. Or so it apparently seemed to almost all anglers until the late 1800s.

What troubles a lot of modern anglers when they learn about historic snelled flies is the thought that when the leader on a snelled fly grows frayed or weak, the fly is more or less useless. By contrast, if the tippet attached to an eyed fly should begin to wear, we simply clip off the fly, replace the tippet with a new one, and retie the fly to it. Once a snelled fly had lost its hair or gut loop, it could not so easily be put back to use.

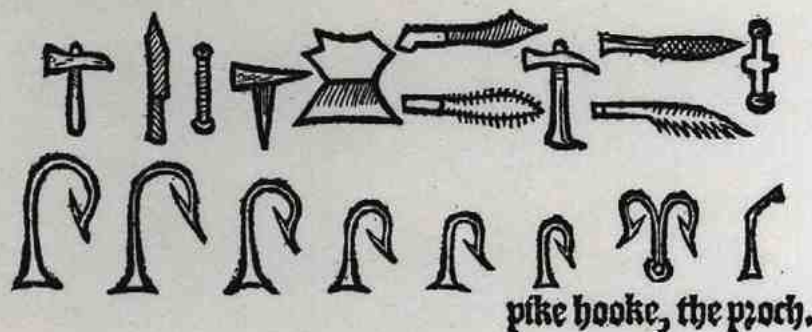
EARLY EYES

In the greater history of the fish hook, eyes of one sort or another are genuinely ancient, dating back thousands of years and showing up here and there in the archaeological record among the countless hooks made by resourceful people



The often ornate and unrealistic snelled wet flies (such as those shown here) favored by most American fly fishers in the late 1800s were too effective to simply vanish when angling fashions changed; the transition to the new, more imitative patterns inspired by Halford and others would take several decades. From Alfred M. Mayer, Sport with Gun and Rod in American Woods and Waters, 1883.

be for euerie fish, here may ye see the figures of your instru-
ments and hookes.



Now when ye haue made thus your hookes of al sorts,
then must wee set them to your lines - according in

A simple double hook, with its bend serving as an eye, was illustrated in Leonard Mascall's *A Booke of Fishing with Hooke & Line* (1590), 22.

around the world, whether of bronze, bone, ivory, or wood. There has been nothing novel in the idea of putting some kind of hole, or notch, or other contrivance on the end of your hook shank to enable you to run a line—hide, sinew, thread, grass, hair, whatever—through it or around it.⁴

Nor was the eyed hook new to fly fishing at Halford's time. Every now and then during the past three or four centuries, literate fly fishers were exposed to eyed hooks. John Waller Hills, in *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout* (1921), reported that Frère François Fortin's *Les Ruses Innocentes* (1660) contained the "first illustration I know of an eyed hook."⁵ I have never seen this book, or a copy of this illustration, and unfortunately Hills's very interesting book is not illustrated, so I don't suppose many other people have, either.

But even earlier, a British fishing writer had revealed, at least in a general way, an awareness of the eyed hook. Leonard Mascall's *A Booke of Fishing with Hooke & Line* (1590), though now often disregarded because Mascall copied so much of his text from the more affectionately remembered *Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* (1496), contained a simple woodcut of a double hook with an eye, apparently used for pike. Like modern Atlantic-salmon double hooks, this one involved a single piece of wire, bent back double on itself, then bent into hook shape on both ends. The "eye" was just the natural result of the doubling over of the wire. In modern parlance, it would be called a "loose double," because the shanks, though side by side, were apparently not soldered together.⁶ Mascall gives us no reason to

think that this hook was ever used for fly fishing, but there it sits in plain view of thinking readers—right next to a few coarse woodcuts of fly-type hooks like those in the *Treatyse*—with its nice circular metal eye.⁷

By far the most notable, even famous, eyed hooks in the early British fly-fishing literature must be those that appeared first in the 1760 edition of Walton's *The Compleat Angler*, edited by John Hawkins.⁸ Hawkins provided a series of wonderful engravings by H. Roberts (the artist is not named), certainly the highest quality and most helpful such illustrations yet to appear in a fly-fishing book. Among other things, these engravings showed a

fly tier at work, an angler's hands splicing rod sections together, several excellent insect illustrations (including some drawings of caddis cases that would have as long a life when copied in later publications as would the artificial flies), and an impressive array of other tackle, including the best illustration of a reel to that date. The flies shown are "the first six believable illustrations of artificial flies to be found anywhere in angling literature."⁹

The eyed-hook flies in the Hawkins edition of Walton, apparently a Great Dun and a Green Drake, were both shown with straight-eyed hooks. At least one of Hawkins's engravings, showing the Great Dun with a strand of line coming through the eye, seems almost certainly to depict a metal-eyed hook.¹⁰ But Hawkins himself seemed to favor hog bristle as the best material to construct the eye on the blind hooks of the time, so I assume that most of these early eyed fly hooks had a nonmetal eye.

A question remains: Even if it was a hair-loop or gut-loop eye on the hooks, rather than a metal eye, why didn't it become more popular among anglers? Wouldn't even a gut-loop eye be a big improvement over a snelled hook?

THE RISE OF THE EYES

Whether it was the influence of the nearly incessant copying and reprinting of the Hawkins engraving of flies, the use of eyed hooks in other kinds of fishing, the independent innovation of new generations of anglers, or some combination of these factors, by the mid-1800s the eyed hook was a coming idea. Hewett



Eyes made of multiple strands of silkworm gut became the standard on full-dress Atlantic salmon flies by the 1880s. Curiously, these gut eyes persisted on professionally dressed salmon flies well into the 1900s, long after metal-eyed hooks were readily available—an apparent indication of the fierce loyalty of many anglers to a preferred type of tackle once it was established. This fly was tied c. 1920 and is part of a collection from the New England Aquarium donated to the museum in 1976.

Sara Wilcox

Wheatley, whose *The Rod and Line* (1849) perfectly exemplifies the very notion of independent innovation, was obviously already a regular user of eyed hooks (of what material the eyes were made is not necessarily clear in the illustrations) by the middle of the century, illustrating several of his beetle and moth patterns tied on them.¹¹

A few years later, in 1862, the prominent American fisheries authority and fishing writer Robert Barnwell Roosevelt (who was known among fishing readers as "Barnwell") made it sound like eyed hooks were already pretty common things in the United States.

There is a Limerick hook now made with the shank turned over so as to form a loop into which the gut is inserted and the trouble of tying the gut is avoided. They have come into general use among the Irish and Scotch fishermen, and are a great aid to the man that ties his own flies. The gut in ordinary fly fishing wears out just above the hook, a difficulty that is entirely removed by this improvement, and it is by no means ugly or ungainly as might be supposed. This is no new discovery, but has been practiced with common American hooks for a considerable period, and might be advantageously used in many kinds of fishing, and applied to all hooks.¹²

It is a little difficult to tell what Barnwell meant by some of this. It sounds as if he was saying that American anglers often independently bent an eye onto the shank of a hook that didn't have one when they bought it. In any case, the novelty was wearing off the idea of the eyed hook by the 1860s, though I suspect that Barnwell was overstating the abundance of eyed hooks at that time.

A parallel development among Atlantic-salmon fly fishers demands attention here. While Wheatley, Roosevelt, and apparently others were discussing eyed hooks for trout, more and more Atlantic-salmon flies were being tied not with eyed hooks but with blind hooks with gut-loop eyes (usually multiple strands of gut were used, for greater strength). Angling historian Andrew Herd says that this method arose in the "first quarter of the nineteenth century."¹³ Unlike the eyed metal hook, the gut-looped Atlantic-salmon fly seemed to become quite popular very quickly, although, as Herd amusingly explained, it was not unanimously accepted.

Naturally, it was seen as a great threat to world order and some fishermen fought a rearguard action against such a perversion of nature's laws for almost another thirty years. Despite this, the gut loop became standard on salmon flies by the end of the third quarter of the century. Gut eyed salmon flies persisted long after it became the rule to tie trout flies on eyed hooks, and they only started to become difficult to find in the 1920s.¹⁴

My own experiences in cataloging and caring for large numbers of flies during my five years as director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing reinforces my impression that Herd has the timing of this right. Just as the Halfordian dry fly moved from being the latest thing to being the correct traditional thing in a very short time, the full-glory Victorian Atlantic-salmon fly, replete with a great complex mass of unusual materials and colors, became firmly entrenched as the "right" and even "traditional" style of

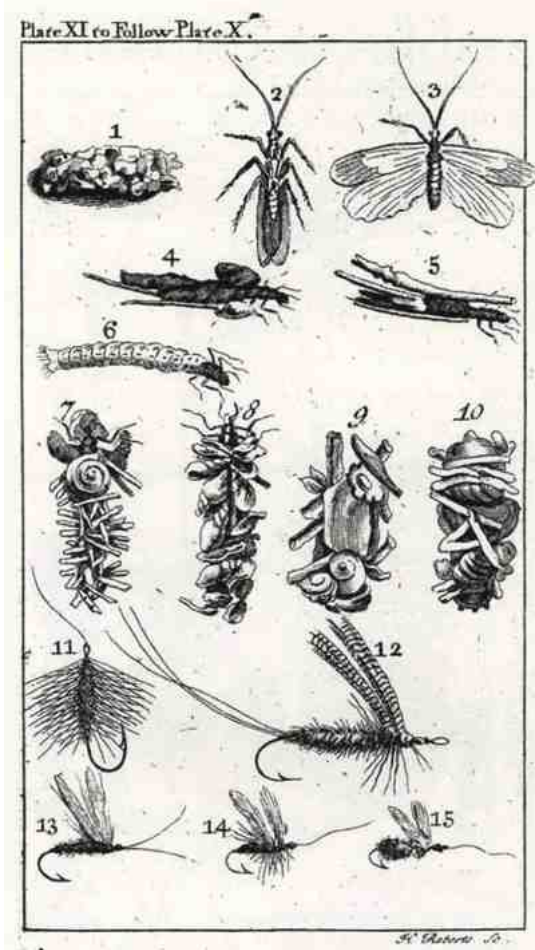
fly for salmon anglers very quickly, and there was substantial resistance to anything that might threaten its preeminence. I remember wondering, as I worked with the museum's fly collection, how these beautiful gut-loop-eyed patterns remained popular for so long when the rest of the fly-fishing world had long switched to eyed hooks. It is a telling example of how individual traditions, styles, and habits *within* the fly-fishing culture can change at significantly differing rates.¹⁵

HENRY HALL'S HOOK

In his fascinating biography of Frederic Halford, Tony Hayter says that when Halford first fished the Test, in 1877, he would not have used eyed hooks, but that they were already on the minds of some very influential anglers of the generation following Wheatley's. Halford's great mentor and silent partner in his early dry-fly theorizing, George Selwyn Marryat, was already using them when Halford came to the Test. Farlow, a prominent British tackle maker, later said they had been offering eyed hooks to anglers since the 1850s.¹⁶

But according to Hayter, these were still early stirrings and weren't the impetus behind the hooks that Halford, Marryat, and others finally took to their hearts and built their new dry-fly passion upon. In 1876, a circa-1800 manuscript by W. H. Aldam was published as *A Quaint Treatise on "Flees, and the Art of Art-fichall Flee Making."* The book contained a set of actual flies mounted on special pages, and two of those flies were "tied on eyed limericks specially made by Bartleet of Redditch."¹⁷ Two thoughtful fly fishers, Henry Sinclair Hall and George Bankart, impressed by these well-made hooks, recognized the possibilities and spent the next three years developing a reasonably fine-weight and necessarily small fly hook. Commissioning Hutchinson of Kendal to produce the final version, they took delivery of their first acceptable order in March 1879. Hall, a schoolmaster and textbook author, has been credited as the leading light in this development, earning himself a comfortable and permanent place among fly fishing's important historical innovators.

In 1760, John Hawkins published a new edition of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* with several remarkable illustrations, including this "plate" of natural insects (including caddis cases) and artificial flies. The earliest clear depiction of British trout flies, this plate showed two flies with eyed hooks. Number 11, the Palmer, and number 12, the Green Drake, both featured eyes (as did another palmer in a separate plate elsewhere in the book). The eyes were not usually made of metal; Hawkins made the eyes from a loop of hog's bristle. From Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* (1760).



Serious students of the dry fly in the next few decades would look back on the development of an eyed hook that was small and light enough for dry-fly fishing as, in the words of one commentator in 1900, one of “the two biggest advances of the nineteenth century in trout fishing,”¹⁸ the other being the dry fly itself. But, as I suggested at the beginning of this story, it wasn’t that simple in the minds of anglers. One man’s technological miracle was another man’s unnecessary nuisance.

THE CONVERSION

Just as it took anglers a long time to abandon horsehair lines in favor of silk lines and gut leaders, it took a long time to let go of the snelled hook. Even the most progressive professional fly fishers and fly tiers struggled to adjust and break old habits. In the United States, no less an angling theorist and fly-tying pioneer than Theodore Gordon—an ardent proponent of the new dry-fly fishing ideas of Halford and his chalk-stream friends—made the transition slowly. Writing to the British *Fishing Gazette* in 1904, he predicted that “the eyed *versus* plain hook controversy will never be settled. Many anglers dislike exceedingly the business of knotting, and cling to the old short snell and gut loops. This is not neat, but it is certainly convenient.”¹⁹ A full twenty years after Halford’s first book was published, Gordon wrote in *Forest and Stream* that he now used “eyed hooks as often as hooks tied on snells.”²⁰ Like others, he continued to struggle with the adjustment, and said so.

Perhaps even more revealing is the view from Vermont, where Charles F. Orvis was running what was perhaps America’s most respected and prestigious mail-order fly business. Charles’s son Albert, responding to a letter from a customer in 1910 about the rationale behind eyed hooks on trout flies, pondered the pros and cons at some length.

In regard to the use of the flies tied on the Eyed hooks the advantage over the snells is that when a fly gets worn at the point of contact with the hook the snell may be retied to the hook and then the fly will be as strong as ever. Another advantage is that the leader may be made without the loops and have just drop snell attached so that there will be less ripple when drawing the snell or leader through the water. This is a point in favor of eyed hooks when the water is very still and clear.

We can make the leaders with the drop snells for use with eyed hooks when so ordered or a gut snell for drop-pers can be adjusted to looped leaders and the eyed fly attached to this snell.

If one has their flies reinforced as you have had some of yours I think they will wear as long as the material of the fly and there is no advantage in using eyed flies.

It is certainly much easier to attach regular snelled flies than the eyed hooks and this is the reason that the regular snelled flies will be largely used. When we who can get out fishing but seldom we do not want to stop to “putter” with that eyed hook and when a fly gets weak we just pull it off and attach another and say to ourself that we will economize on something else when the fish are not rising.²¹

That both Gordon and Orvis—two of the day’s savviest and commerce-wise fly fishers—thought that snelled hooks might not ever be totally replaced and might even continue to dominate the market suggests how devoted many anglers were to their comfortable old ways and how powerful a hold the eyeless hook had on fly fishers even when confronted with such an excellent and versatile alternative.

WHY SO SLOW TO CATCH ON?

We’ve already seen some of the reasons the eyed hook had such an uphill struggle among fly fishers. Practically speaking, many anglers weren’t sure the eyed hook was even an improvement. Whether gut or hair, the line was no stronger on an eyed hook than on a snelled one. Sure, you could keep using the eyed hook after the gut or hair got frayed, but how many people really cared about that? Apparently not very many, or at least not enough to force the change.

There were legitimate questions about the eyed hook that implied it might not even be as good as the snelled hook. As already mentioned, there was a conviction that the snelled fly swam better and that eyed hooks tended to swing around too much on the leader. True or not, such received wisdoms quickly take on a life of their own and become part of the sport’s common knowledge.

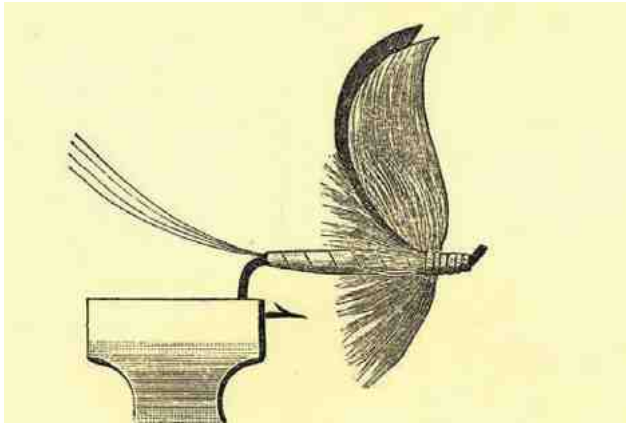
But I think there was a lot more going on than these practical fishing matters. For one thing, people are comfortable with what they know. When fly fishers weren’t yet swept along in the modern tides of commerce, constantly confronted with beautiful new rods, reels, lines, and fly patterns every few months in the pages of gorgeous catalogs, they were a considerably more stodgy crowd than they are today.

There was also the matter of personal taste. I haven’t seen clear proof of this in the literature, but I suspect that some eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anglers, getting their first look at an eyed-hook fly, were probably offended by the ungainly mass of metal eye and gut knot where the snelled fly had only the smooth emergence of the gut from the body of the fly. Just as the bead in a modern bead-head nymph seems to some anglers a violation of the aesthetics, proportions, and realism of a fly pattern, some of fly fishing’s more serious imitationists back then must have been troubled by all this new hardware sticking out the front end of their favorite fly pattern.

There is also a bigger and even more basic issue to do with the eyed hook’s



The great American fly theorist Theodore Gordon, shown here in the famous photograph with his mysterious and unknown female fishing companion, was representative of many late-nineteenth-century American anglers who displayed allegiance both to traditional snelled hooks and the newer and increasingly more fashionable eyed hooks. Photo/image property of Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum, Livingston Manor, New York.



Above: A Halford dry fly tied on an eyed hook, as pictured in his first book, *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them* (1886), 60.

Right: Perhaps the earliest widely distributed illustration of eyed hooks for an American audience was the chromolithograph of a set of Halford-style dry flies that appeared in Mary Orvis Marbury's enormously popular *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*. The book was originally published in 1892 and went through several editions before 1900, potentially exposing many thousands of fly fishers not only to eyed hooks on flies, but eyed hooks as a key element of the "dry-fly revolution" led by Frederic Halford in England. The photograph shows the original Marbury-tied dry flies that served as the models for the corresponding chromolithograph published in her book. The first four rows of patterns were presumably based on Halford's illustrations and instructions in his first books; the fifth row were scale-wing dry flies also marketed by Orvis at the time. British angling historian Andrew Herd, when shown this photograph, pointed out that Marbury departed from the true Halford dry-fly style; she chose to mount the wings slanting back over the body, more like traditional wet-fly wings than like the upright wings on the newer style of dry flies championed by Halford and his associates.



actual availability to anglers before 1879. During the first couple centuries that eyed hooks were occasionally shown to fly fishers in early fishing books, those hooks were still out of reach. For most of the time that the eyed hook was known but had not yet become popular among fly fishers, its limited acceptance probably had a lot to do with the difficulty of manufacture.²² As long as many fly fishers either made their own tackle or relied on some local craftsman to do so, the making of a hook was a more personal matter, subject to problems of the quality of the materials, the skills of the craftsmen, and the demands of the market. If fly fishers, or other fishers, were predisposed to skepticism over the eyed hook, there would be little incentive for the hook maker to go out on a limb and try to push a new and largely untested (either in actual fishing or in the market) kind of hook. Simply, even if you could get it right, it took a lot more work to make one. Adding an eye—not an easy task, especially in the smaller sizes—to each hand-bent, hand-sharpened, hand-barbed, and hand-finished hook would have been an iffy proposition even for an adventurous small businessman, especially when anglers were not disposed to try new things

anyway. You didn't add such a thing to your inventory without substantial reason and high expectations of sales.

This circumstance also reveals a significant difference between the fly fisher of, say, 1500 or 1700 from the fly fisher of Halford's time. When people fished using techniques and tackle inherited from their parents, they were using tools rather like the other tools in their lives, which is to say tools that nobody saw any need to change. Unlike us, these people did not live in a scientific and technologically sophisticated world where a high premium is placed on innovation and "improvement." In the less fevered commercial atmosphere of previous centuries, it was more likely that the rare new product had first to prove itself, angler by angler, before earning a guarded acceptance.

It also should be no surprise, in fact it was most predictable, that the eyed fly "took" most firmly among the anglers who could afford the sport's finer touches. Once this market demanded eyed hooks, eyed hooks came out of their long dormancy and took over.

This is not to say that in Halford's time fly fishing suddenly left the poorer classes and became solely the province of the wealthy. Remember that Charles

Cotton and some other sixteenth-century anglers could afford not only a hired boy to carry their stuff and help land their fish, but also the leisure to fish recreationally and hang out in the local taverns for extended bouts of drinking and swapping fishing stories.

It is to say, though, that over the past few centuries, fly fishing has gravitated more and more toward the top end of the available market—a movement that modern fly-fishing magazines would seem to prove has continued to today. It is to say, in other words, that the higher degree of dependence on technology, information, and privilege required by the Halfordian dry fly—in terms of rod construction, line construction, hook construction, entomological study, access to the "right" sorts of water, and so on—required a fly fisher with the resources to support the habit.

If you want to see how this worked in angling society, take a quick reading tour through angling writing when Halford was becoming England's most famous fly fisher and was even being celebrated as a great new angling pioneer in America. On that tour, you will notice the sizeable number of non-chalk-stream fishermen who viewed his celebrity and his methods

with a mixture of amusement and disregard, and who continued happily fishing with snelled flies on, in, or right beneath the surface. Read, for example, E. M. Tod's *The Wet-Fly Treated Methodically* (1903) or, in American writing, James Henshall's *Favorite Fish and Fishing* (1908) for skeptical antidotes to the self-congratulatory mood of the dry-fly enthusiasts.

Though it never devolved into actual class warfare, the emergence of the dry-fly-versus-every-other-kind-of-fly rivalry in fly fishing was in part a social movement on both sides of the Atlantic. In our desire to think of ourselves as "just regular fishermen," we fly fishers still like to invoke images of fly-fishing heroes among the common folk: an impoverished Theodore Gordon tying his flies through the cold Catskill winters or the humble lifestyles of the great bamboo rodbuilders of the late 1800s and early 1900s. But those gifted people weren't the operational center of the dry-fly movement in America. Instead, they were the often brilliant artisans whose existence was justified and supported by well-heeled customers in the city, men who identified and enjoyed the exclusivity of the dry-fly school. There may be nothing bad in all this, but there is surely nothing simple in it, either.

More than anything else, the dry fly symbolizes the growing compartmentalization and specialization that has since taken place among that large group of people who once were all just thought of as anglers. We live in an age when the compartments have become so locked apart that it's easy to go through an entire angling life, say as a fly fisher, with virtually no meaningful contact with the several other concurrently flourishing angling traditions on American fresh waters. Indeed, it's even become possible to be one type of fly fisher and have little or no contact with the other types.

With such powerful commercial and social forces at work, it surprises me that snelled hooks didn't last longer than they did.

ENDNOTES

1. Frederic Halford, *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 2nd ed., 1886), 1.

2. Any discussion of the history of fly hooks will be advantaged by Darrel Martin's *The Fly-Fisher's Craft* (Guilford, Conn.: The Lyons Press, 2006), especially the chapter titled "The Hook," pages 197–215. Whether you ever decide to make your own hooks or not, reading this chapter will give you an infinitely improved idea of what was involved in the process for countless generations of anglers who made their own. I for one am really glad I don't have to.



In some specialized markets, snelled flies persisted almost to the present. These Montana-tied woven-hair trout flies were purchased by the author in the 1980s in a small Montana shop. Note that the flies have both snells and eyed hooks.

3. G.E.M. Skues, in the posthumously published *Silk, Fur and Feather* (Beckenham, Kent, England: The Fishing Gazette, 1950, 46–47), resisted using eyed hooks for wet flies because the eyed hooks "have a tendency to skirt or make a wake on the water, and, moreover, take down bubbles." This book was based on articles written much earlier in the twentieth century, perhaps in the late teens. Apparently, Skues made the adjustment to eyed hooks not long after the articles were published, but it is still significant that as late as the early 1900s, a writer and angler as perceptive as Skues still had serious doubts about eyed hooks.

4. The easiest reading—and still among the most helpful, popularly written books on hooks—is Hans Jorgen Hurum's charming and thoroughly illustrated little book, *A History of the Fish Hook*, and the story of Mustad, the hook maker (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1977). That this book is dominated by the story of one distinguished hook-making firm doesn't detract much from the greater story. Fishing writers have for many years taken a special interest in this same history as well. See, for example, Barnet Phillips, "The Primitive Fish-Hook," pages 337–50 in Alfred M. Mayer, ed., *Sport with Gun and Rod in American Woods and Waters* (New York: The Century Company, 1883). Phillips illustrates a number of early eyed hooks and equivalents. The handiest modern historical fly-fishing-related commentary on hooks appears here and there throughout Andrew Herd, *The Fly* (Ellesmere, Shropshire, U.K.: The Medlar Press Ltd., 2003). For a short but very full account of the development of the manufacture of fly hooks, see Charles Brooks, "From Drawing Room to Dry Fly," *The Flyfisher* (1974, vol. 7, no. 4), 10–11. And for a penetrating and intriguing consideration of just about everything interesting to do with seventeenth-century hooks, flies, and the lines that connected them to the fisherman, see John Betts, "Robert Venables's Experience as an Angler," *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 2003, vol. 29, no. 4), 12–24.

5. John Waller Hills, *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout* (London: Philip Allan & Co., 1921), 53.

6. Hurum, *A History of the Fish Hook*, 73.

7. Leonard Mascall, *A Booke of Fishing with Hooke & Line* (London: John Wolfe, 1590), Da Capo Press, New York, 1973 facsimile, 22.

8. Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, ed. John Hawkins (London: Thomas Hope, 1760). The foremost source on the amazing postpublication life of the beautiful engravings in this edition of Walton's book is Ken Cameron and Andrew Herd, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants," *The American Fly Fisher* (Summer 2001, vol. 27, no. 3), 12–17. It is also my primary source for this discussion.

9. Cameron and Herd, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants," 13.

10. The easiest place to see these engravings, considering the age and rareness of the many editions of Hawkins that were published in the 1700s and 1800s, is in the Cameron and Herd article, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants," 13–14. The article also shows several examples of later versions of the flies in the books of authors who copied them from the Hawkins edition.

I am curious about the engraving of the Great Dun because of the way the line is depicted. It seems that although the line is shown passing through the eye of the hook, the engraving could also be interpreted as showing the line (I call it a line for want of a better term; it is the "tippet" of modern terminology) emerging from the "head" of the fly and then looping up to pass through the eye. Perhaps this was meant to suggest that the fly was still tied snelled when new, and then the eye was available for attaching a new line when the original line began to fray, so that the fly would still be useful.

11. Hewett Wheatley, *The Rod and Line* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1849). Plate 3, used as Wheatley's frontispiece, shows four or five apparently eyed-hook imitations, though it is not always possible to distinguish in his engravings between a metal eye and a gut, twisted gut, or hair eye. Plate 4, opposite page 74, seems to show at least two beetle imitations with eyed hooks; again, they look like metal eyes but may be made of some other material. Plate 6, opposite page 113, shows five moth patterns, all of which have eyes of either metal or some other material.

Some look more like twisted gut.

12. Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, *Game Fish of the Northern States of America, and British Provinces* (New York: Carleton, Publisher, 1862), 270.

13. Herd, *The Fly*, 188.

14. Herd, *The Fly*, 188–89.

15. Herd, *The Fly*, 189, also suggests that the reason gut-loop eyes were more popular on salmon flies than on trout flies may be that such eyes, made of twisted multiple strands of gut, were “impractical to construct” on smaller hooks. But it still seems to me that a sturdy single strand of gut could have been easily employed to provide a fair variety of trout hooks with a usable eye. For that matter, so could a variety of softer wires and other materials.

16. Tony Hayter, *F. M. Halford and the Dry-Fly Revolution* (London: Robert Hale, 2002), 59.

17. Hayter, *F. M. Halford and the Dry-Fly Revolution*, 58. Next to the firsthand accounts written by Halford himself and by a few of his contemporaries and adversaries, especially G.E.M. Skues, Hayter’s book is the best source on the historical complications of the Halford legacy.

18. Hayter, *F. M. Halford and the Dry-Fly Revolution*, 59, quoting an unnamed corre-

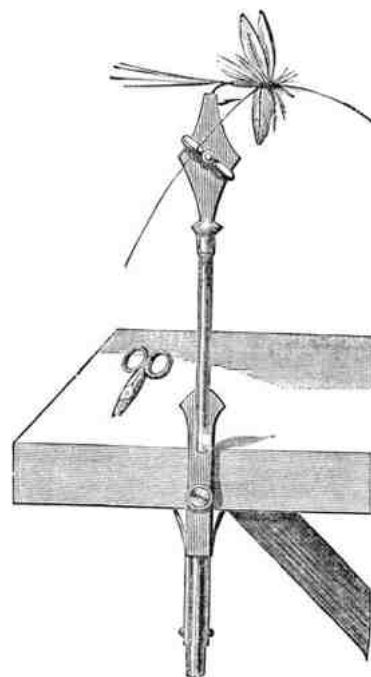
spondent in the *Field* in 1900.

19. Theodore Gordon, *The Complete Fly Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon*, ed. John McDonald (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1989), 50.

20. Gordon, *The Complete Fly Fisherman*, 99. Gordon is pretty clearly talking about his own fishing here, rather than about the flies he tied for his customers. That the man now most closely identified with the popularization of the dry fly in the United States (though that identification is simplistic and partly erroneous) should have still been using snelled hooks half of the time after nearly fifteen years of serious dry-fly fishing suggests how deeply ingrained the snelled-fly habit was. We can apparently assume that any number of dry-fly fishermen probably used snelled dry flies.

21. Albert C. Orvis, letter to Dr. Arthur Holbrook, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 7 March 1910. Orvis collection, the American Museum of Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont.

22. Herd, *The Fly*, 147, makes this point, but also adds that the eyed hook “saga is probably the best example I know of why it is dangerous to assume that just because a thing has been invented, it would be widely used” (147).



From J. Harrington Keene, *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making* (New York: O. Judd Co., 1887), 65.

FIVE RIVERS LODGE

Hosts Jay Burgin and Mary Jacques offer access to Montana’s Big Five: the Beaverhead, the Ruby, the Madison, the Big Hole, and the Jefferson. Jay also provides private access to three ranches, and the home ponds at the Lodge feature monster rainbows

you can cast to from the dock while sipping chardonnay. Jay has also put together one of the most amazing private fly shops on earth—if the pattern exists, he stocks it. Enjoy fine dining, deluxe accommodations, and all of the amenities during your stay at this jewel of Montana’s Beaverhead County.

Photos by Brian O’Keefe



For more information on Five Rivers Lodge please contact:
Jay Burgin • 12530 Highway 41 • Dillon, MT • 59725
800.378.5006 • www.fiveriverslodge.com

Use the code AMFF to book your accommodations and 10% of your lodging charge will be donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

The Eisenhower Rod and Reel

FEW PRESIDENTS are more closely associated with fishing than Dwight Eisenhower. He got started at a young age, fishing Mud Creek in Abilene, Kansas. As he grew up, he graduated from a simple pole to more sophisticated tackle. By the time he was serving his first term as president of the United States, he had a dizzying array of equipment, mostly contributions from admirers and colleagues. By the mid-1950s, he had received between 800 and 1,000 gifts of rods, reels, flies, and other tackle.¹

In June 1955, Eisenhower received a rod and reel set from the state of Vermont. The rod was a split-cane Orvis and the reel a Hardy St. George. Eisenhower spent the next few days fishing in the southern part of Vermont. The president's companions were Ben Schley, manager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department's Pittsford fish hatchery and future American Museum of Fly Fishing trustee, and Milford Smith, a lawyer and outdoor writer. The trio fished Furnace Brook and High Pond in the town of Pittsford, northeast of Rutland.²

There is some discrepancy as to what model of Orvis rod was presented to President Eisenhower. In various museum correspondences, Schley states it was a "deluxe" model.³ A more credible source is Milford Smith, who, in a letter to Leigh Perkins, notes that he was charged by Governor Joe Johnson to select an appropriate fly rod for the president. Smith plainly states that the rod he selected was an Orvis Rocky Mountain.⁴ Sadly, from the museum's perspective, this detail is largely irrelevant. In 1969, after exchanging several letters with Eisenhower's associates and family, Schley was able to secure a donation of rod and reel from Mamie Eisenhower. There was, however, some confusion as to which rod was being requested, no doubt a result of several people being involved in several different stages of the donation process. The rod the museum sought to acquire was the Rocky Mountain rod presented by the state of Vermont. The rod that was ultimately donated was a split-cane Orvis Manchester. A 1972 letter from the personal secretary of Mrs. Eisenhower indicates that the "Vermont" fly rod was not found among the president's fishing equipment and that it was most likely donated to the Eisenhower Museum in Abilene, Kansas.⁵ Unfortunately, the Eisenhower Museum confirmed that it does not have this particular fly rod in its collection and that there is no record of its current whereabouts. The Manchester rod measures 8 feet, 6 inches and weighs 5.75 ounces. It is prominently marked GENERAL DWIGHT DAVID EISENHOWER'S ROD/AS PRESENTED BY MAMIE DOUD EISENHOWER. This rod was purchased at Alex Taylor's in New York City.⁶

The reel Mrs. Eisenhower donated was, however, the same reel received by the president from the state of Vermont. This Hardy St. George is 2½ inches in diameter and is commonly known as the St. George Jr. It is a three-screw model, constructed from cast aluminum with a black oxide finish. The St. George Jr. was introduced about 1930 and was discontinued in 1963.⁷ At the time of donation, this reel had a pressure-sensitive label that read D.E. Unfortunately, this label has come off and was lost. The outline of the label is clearly visible on the reel face.

The Eisenhower rod and reel are testament to the necessity of leisure and relaxation for the president of the United States.



President Dwight D. Eisenhower unhooks a rainbow trout during a one-day trip to Colorado's South Platte River, 6 October 1954. Image from the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

They represent a small sample of presidential memorabilia owned by the museum and are an example of the dedication of the museum's trustees, employees, and volunteers to acquiring significant and unique items for the collection.

—NATHAN GEORGE

ENDNOTES

1. Bill Mares, *Fishing with the Presidents* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1999), 16.
2. Letter, Milford Smith to Leigh Perkins, 20 September 1969, museum collection.
3. Letter, Ben Schley to Austin Hogan, 28 March 1975, museum collection.
4. Letter, Milford Smith to Leigh Perkins, 20 September 1969, museum collection.
5. Letter, Ethel Wetzel to Ben Schley, 20 April 1972, museum collection.
6. Letter, G. Dick Finlay to Robert C. Finley, 9 January 1970, museum collection.
7. Jim Brown, *A Treasury of Reels* (Manchester, Vt.: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, 1990), 158.



President Eisenhower's Hardy St. George fly reel, given to him by the state of Vermont.



At left, above the reel foot, is the mark left by a label reading D.E. This label has since fallen off.

Photos by Nathan George



This Orvis Manchester rod was given to Eisenhower by his wife, Mamie.



"General Dwight D. Eisenhower's rod as presented by Mamie Doud Eisenhower"



Carolyn Chadwick: Bookbinder and Conservator

by John Mundt

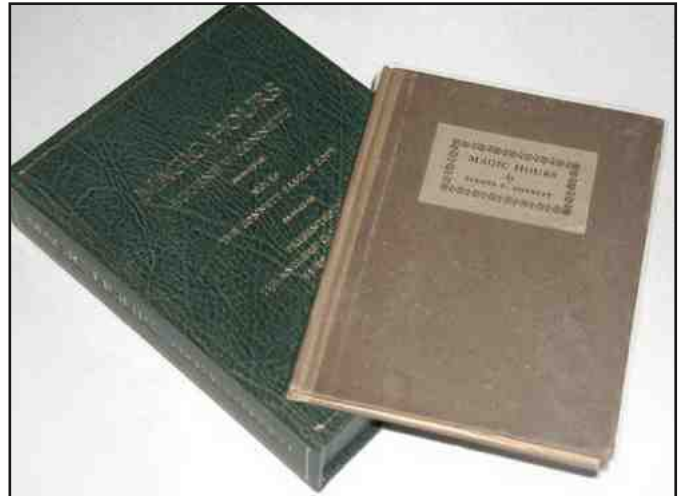
Debbie Li



Above: Carolyn Chadwick at work in the Anglers' Club Library.

Right: The rarest of the rare: The Connett family's personally inscribed copy of Eugene V. Connett's *Magic Hours*, restored and housed in a Chadwick custom goatskin clamshell box.

John Mundt



IT'S AN IRREFUTABLE fact that more books have been published on fishing than any other sport. Some even argue that there have been more books published on this sport than all other sports combined, although that remains open to debate. When one considers the breadth of angling titles, it's certainly possible. In Charles Thacher's 620-page volume, *Angling Books: A Guide for Collectors*, reference data are listed on more than 15,000 "collectible" American and international angling books sold or listed during the seven-year period from 1999 to 2006. Furthermore, there have been more than 400 editions of Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* since it was first published in 1653, and this reportedly ranks a respectable third behind only *The Holy Bible* and *The Works of William Shakespeare* for works published in English. Despite our recent economic woes, a look at recent auction results clearly demonstrates that the demand for great angling titles has not slowed.

Demand aside, the printed page is a delicate medium, and the care and the preservation of rare and collectible angling books requires the skilled hands and quiet diligence of professionals such as Carolyn Chadwick. As a 1974 graduate of Connecticut College, Chadwick trained under preeminent bookbinder Mark Tomsett, whose bindery did much of the work for the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University. She considers Tomsett to be the best binder in North America, and her style is rooted in the same English traditions that he employs. From there, Chadwick's career path

led her to the conservation lab at the New York Public Library, where she had the privilege of restoring more than 8,000 pages of the second most complete edition of Ben Franklin's newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette 1729–1799*. During that assignment, she had the honor of reading one of the first public printings of the Declaration of Independence.

Chadwick's entrée to the world of angling books came approximately twenty years ago when she met renowned author and historian Austin McK. Francis. Francis knew that Chadwick had worked with Mark Tomsett and asked if she would be interested in performing preservation work for the Anglers' Club of New York. Chadwick accepted that assignment and has been working for the club ever since. Working from her own studio, she has developed a loyal clientele that includes publishers, institutions, and private collectors. Many of the great treasures of angling literature have found their way onto her bench and departed in much better shape than when they arrived.

Carolyn Chadwick is a true keeper of the flame, and the heritage of our sport continues to be preserved and enriched by those like her. For more information about Chadwick's work, please feel free to contact her at chadwickbb@gmail.com.



John Mundt is a trustee of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

I N M E M O R I A M

Jim Repine

3 December 1933–7 June 2009

Tom Prettyman



JIM REPINE, AGE SEVENTY-FIVE, author, photojournalist, guide, lodge owner, and friend to many in the fly-fishing industry, died 7 June 2009 at his home in Santiago, Chile. Jim succumbed to a brain tumor that was diagnosed in December 2008.

Jim Repine was born in Virginia, served in the Marines, and then followed his wanderlust to Alaska in 1968. To support a young family, he took a job selling television sets and refrigerators at Sears, but his work evolved quickly to follow his passion. He became a noted photographer, journalist, author, and professional guide. He produced and starred in a twice-weekly TV show featuring his young daughter and a Rhodesian Ridgeback named Jubal. The show's twelve-year run earned him the nickname of "Mr. Alaska," although he often noted that both the daughter and the dog were the more popular stars when folks saw them on the streets. Jim's work grew to include associations and consultancies with several of the most prestigious lodges of the then-developing frontier of fly-fishing travel.

In the 1980s, Jim accepted a writing assignment to visit Chile and describe the trout fishing in this destination of emerging popularity among traveling fly fishers. After discovering Patagonia, he relocated permanently in 1987. He found his nirvana and purchased an idyllic piece of heaven on the Futaleufu River, just outside the small town of the same name near the Chile–Argentina border. From 1989 to 2004, Jim and his wife

Sonia owned and operated the Futaleufu Lodge as an intimate and unique introduction to the exceptional wonders of Patagonia. Those lucky enough to experience a week's visit at Futa found themselves captivated by the area, by Jim Repine's charm and wit, and by intense passion for respect, understanding, and conservation of the trout fishing there and all natural resources.

During the off-seasons, Jim and Sonia traveled extensively. In addition to his home waters in Alaska, Chile, and Argentina, Jim particularly loved Ireland, England, Japan, and the Atlantic salmon venues of northeastern Canada. Over the years, hundreds of his works have appeared in almost every significant fly-fishing and travel journal in the world. Among his books, *Pacific Rim Fly Fishing: The Unrepentant Predator* (Frank Amato Publications, 1995) is a good compendium of Jim's philosophies and life stories.

Jim Repine's life work created a list of friends, colleagues, and clientele from all walks of life. It includes a who's who of the recognizable names of the fly-fishing industry, all of whom counted Jim as a good friend and valued confidant. Jim is survived by his wife Sonia, four children, and five grandchildren.

—HARRY J. BRISCOE
HEXAGRAPH FLY ROD COMPANY

Jimito

by Harry J. Briscoe

HE JUST MATERIALIZED out of the show crowd that first day. Wearing a heavy Irish fisherman's sweater, a photographer's vest, and a little black hat that wasn't exactly a beret, he looked only slightly out of place among the fly shop owners and buyers, but enough that I noticed. My first guess was that he was a civilian who had sneaked in with someone else's badge, but then I saw his own that said PRESS. He hunched forward just a bit, stuck out his hand, peered through the small space between the top of his glasses and the brim of that little black hat, and said, "Hi, I'm Jim Repine. I own a lodge in Chile, and I think you should come down and see me." And with that, a magical and wondrous new chapter of my fly-fishing life began. It's funny how things happen—things that can change your whole life. Meeting Jim Repine did that for me.

Five months later, three friends and I had stuffed ourselves and more gear than we needed into a small plane leaving Chaiten, in southern Chile. Chaiten is an air-hour south of Puerto Montt, and Puerto Montt is 500 miles south of Santiago, and Santiago is a long ways from Texas. An hour later, we had survived a white-knuckled, breathtaking crossing of the Andes and a landing adventure at the tiny Futaleufu airstrip. We loaded our weak knees into a four-wheel-drive wagon and found ourselves on a rocky ox-cart trail traversing a steep hill known locally as Suicide Pass. The same quiet man from the show, with the same little hat, sat in the front seat. I detected a smirky little smile on his face as he caught our nervous glances with each bump and turn in the trail, and he laughed at our cringes as we glimpsed the thousand-foot drop to the river below. Across the pass, we entered the Valle de Escala (the Valley of the Stairs) and, for effect, left the vehicle to complete the journey to a small farmhouse on horseback. The transition was complete. By magic, we had been dropped into a hidden corner of the outback of Montana or British Columbia or New Zealand, and it was suddenly 1945—or so it seemed.

What I came to learn in the days (and now the years) that followed was that this Jim Repine was not the simple lodge owner he'd made himself out to be. True, he and Sonia owned the lodge at Futaleufu, but Jim was not just a proprietor on a commercial mission—he was a producer and director. A lodge owner counts on the fishing and the service to justify the customer's investment in his week's run. Jim, on the other hand, worked to deliver something else. He created an *experience* for his clients: a unique, carefully crafted, and unforgettable experience. His creation would last far beyond the recollection of any specific fish, vista, dinner, or splash of *pisco-sour* on the porch. The trek of arrival was the just opening act.

A week with Jim and Sonia was full of surprises. The first morning, you were coaxed into consciousness as softly increasing volumes of classical music erased your travel-induced deep sleep (a trick Jim said he learned in Japan). You'd then discover a surprise cup of coffee on your bed stand and the magical



David Briscoe

Jim Repine (left) on his lawn in front of Futaleufu Lodge, casting a 6-foot Lee Wulff cane rod given to him by the author (right).

appearance of a fresh fire in your wood-burning stove. You were waking into Paradise.

Jim revealed the secrets of the little valley carefully. He took great delight in protecting those secrets until just the right moment, their eventual revelation creating surprises all week long. An innocent question some evening, met with the correct response from one of us, would confirm that we had yet again "discovered" something intended. The revelations of the week, of course, included daily adventures on his fish-filled waters, but they were just an integrated part of the whole. The charm of that little farm and the valley grew day by day, and then planted itself so firmly in your memory that it became a permanent gift. Actually, I think Jim Repine was a leprechaun. He always had the Irish twinkle in his eye, and a "wee nip" of Jameson's was almost necessary to bring an appropriate end to a day well spent.

True to the production, the grand surprise at Futa was saved for the last night of a client's week. On return from the waters that evening, we'd discover an elevated level of activity as the barn was prepared for a fiesta. Jim and Sonia invited the entire population of the Valle de Escala—forty or so folks ranging from babes in arms to eighty-plus-year-old seniors—to dine with us, dance, and then see us off, before we headed back to our other world. It was a masterful exhibition, created to reinforce in all of us just what a special delight had been produced, directed, and delivered! I did about eight of these trips before Jim retired, and I've not forgotten a single detail of any of them. I considered it a great gift, but now, on later reflection, I realize that the intent was to create a painting of sorts: a canvas that included the simple and elegant people, their culture and dignified serenity, and the ways in which it all worked together. It was to learn and acknowledge an alternative to what we thought normal.

Jim and Sonia sold the lodge a few years back, giving him more time to work on his photography and writing. It also gave him a chance to think and to wax philosophic about his career. He recently described to me just what it was that he was trying to accomplish with the experience at Futaleufu.

I was trying to get folks to discover the connection between themselves, their world and other living elements within it, be they man or beast, animal or plant, or even with the mountains and the water. I wanted them to really understand that link. I wanted them to find their own answer to the "Why do I fish?" question, and I hoped they'd see that it was deeper than even they might have thought.

There's a connection of many rhythms in the world. Moving waters are part of that. If you surrender yourself to the rhythms,

you assume an elevated state and you develop a spirit of love for it, beyond just the superficial self-serving enjoyment of it. I hoped that each guest ended up with a lot more than "just a fishing trip." I mean, what could be more beautiful than a trout? Look at one, carefully, in detail; every scale different, every hue of color imaginable. What created that? What brought it to your hand? And then you realize that you hold the power of the eternal predator, but you've developed the choice to use your power to release it. My clients were my fish. I released them all so they'd come back again someday.

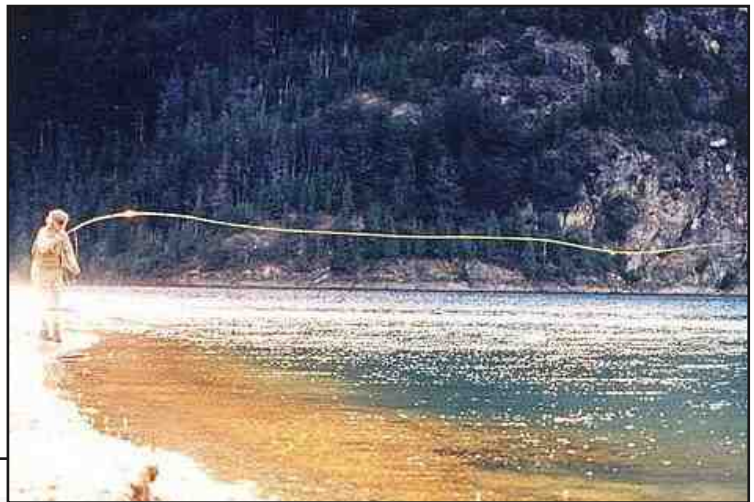
Jim's gone now. Mother Nature finally took him home. Her relentless attacks on his physical body wore him out, and he passed on 7 June 2009. I'll remember Jim as he was each time "change day" came at Futa Lodge. Still groggy from the fiesta, they'd pack us up for the trip back to today. He and Soni would be standing there on the porch, he in his little hat and sweater, both with a big smile and wave—Jim ever the leprechaun with his wry little grin, knowing that he was sending lifelong memories and lessons back with us.

In his last weeks, we talked via e-mail. He told me he was headed to a new adventure, but he was sure there'd be a boat waiting there. Yet another frontier to explore awaited him. He was planning to see his friends—Lee, Mel, Dan, Leon, and the many others who had left us in recent years—and he assured me it would be okay. He said he'd save room in the boat for me. He told some other friends the same thing. I told him he was going to need a very big boat.

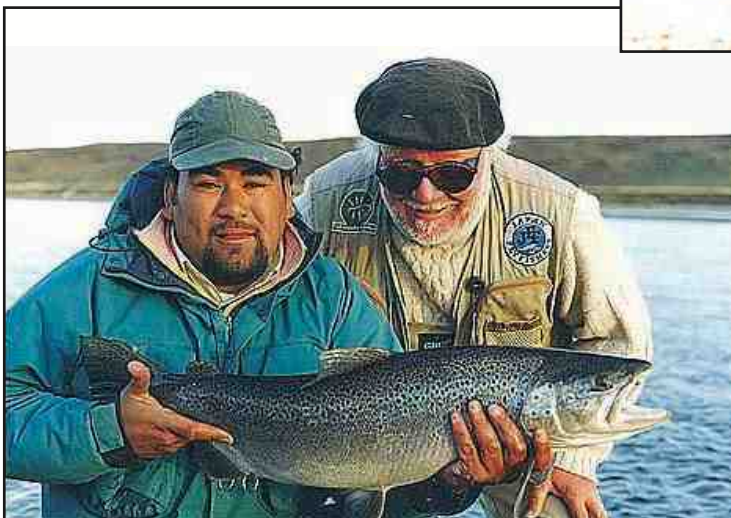
~

Harry J. Briscoe is president of the Hexagraph Fly Rod Company.

Right: Jim Repine casting on a favorite pool near his lodge.



Below: Jim Repine (right), his guide, and a sea trout in Tierra del Fuego.



Fly-Fishing Festival

It's no surprise that 350 people visited the museum grounds on Saturday, August 15, to partake in the museum's 2009 Fly-Fishing Festival. It's our biggest community event of the year, and it's the only one of its kind in the area. An event of this size takes months to organize and couldn't happen without the volunteers who forgo a Saturday on the river to help keep it running. A special thanks to Bill Cosgrove, Tim Delisle, Steve Murphy, Rose Napolitano, and Ron Wilcox, who set up, tore down, flipped burgers, and manned the entrance booth. Thank you also to our corporate sponsors: Berkshire Bank, Finn & Stone Insurance, Manchester Discount Beverages, Mrs. Murphy's Donuts, Mulligan's of Manchester, the Orvis Company, rk Miles, and the Vermont Country Store. Without your financial and in-kind support, this would not be possible.

Kim Murphy



Clockwise from above: An array of vendors set up on the museum grounds on a beautiful summer day.

Gloria Jordan shows off her wares.

Museum Trustee Jim Heckman awaits visitors interested in casting classic bamboo rods.

A look inside one of the two vendor tents.

Kim Murphy



Jim Hardman



Kim Murphy





Kim Murphy

Carmine Lisella offers his expert opinion on tackle brought in for appraisal.



Kim Murphy

A youngster shows off his handiwork after tying a clown fly.



Jim Hardman

A visitor examines a reel.

Michael Vermouth of the Newfound Woodworks, Inc. demonstrates how he builds his cedar strip canoes.



Kim Murphy

Museum News



Kim Murphy



It has been a cool and wet Vermont summer this year, but the clouds parted and the sun shone down on July 18, the day of our annual Ice Cream Social. Both young and old, new and returning visitors all enjoyed the sun, ice cream, and chance to participate in the family-friendly activities planned for the day. Here, a young visitor finishes her ice cream while awaiting instruction on making a clown fly, a big colorful fly for beginners.

Kim Murphy



Catching minnows in the minnow pool.

Cleveland Dinner/Auction

It has been awhile since the museum has made the five-hundred-mile trip to Gates Mills, Ohio, but after a three-year hiatus, we were thrilled by the warm reception we received from the supporters and steelhead anglers who fish the waters and streams of Lake Erie.

More than seventy people came to Chagrin Falls Hunt Club on May 21 to be reintroduced to the museum and meet Executive Director Cathi Comar. All enjoyed the fine meal provided by the club and the presentation outlining the current exhibits, programs, and activities hosted by the museum. The highlight of the evening was, by far, the "Fund-a-Need" auction. This was a special fund-raiser that followed the live auction. Our goal was to raise money to refurbish our casting pond to make it handicapped accessible, and, with the help of auctioneer Bob Hale of Benefit Auction Services, we raised more than \$2,300 to initiate the project.

The museum would like to thank Dinner Chairman Woods King III for his help in organizing the dinner, as well as dinner sponsors Richard Bamberger, Stan Bazan Jr., Woods King III, Leigh Perkins Sr., and Jim San Philipo for their sponsorship support. Of course, the auction would not be possible without all the donors and contributors, so we'd like to thank them, too!

AMFF Teams Up with VINS

It isn't everyday that people get excited about bugs, but that is what happened when the museum hosted the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) on June 20 for *It's a Bug's Life*, a day of entomology and ecology. Rick LaDue of VINS is a wellspring of knowledge on insects and stream monitoring, and we can't thank him enough for sharing the day with us and the thirty visitors who attended. We all learned a few new things about the secret life of the macroinvertebrates that inhabit the Batten Kill.

Second Annual Art Auction

Continuing our “Angling and Art” auction series, the museum hosted its second annual *Angling and Art Along . . . the Mettowee* on Saturday, July 11, an event that featured art and artists who live along or highlight the Mettowee River and surrounding valley in their work. Twelve artists and twenty-three pieces of original art transformed our museum library into a cozy gallery for the weeklong preview and auction evening.

An event like this would not be possible without the generous support of all the participating artists. Thank you to Yoshi Akiyama, Jim Becker, Josh Burlette, Philippa Cully, Gary Fifer, Dona Friedman, Thomas Kerr, Erika Schmidt, Brian Sweetland, Virginia McNeice, and George Van Hook. The museum would also like to thank Clark Comollo of Comollo Fine Wines & Antiques for donating his auctioneering services.

Support the Museum While You Shop

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is now part of the Shaw's Community Rewards program. If you live in the Northeast and shop for groceries at Shaw's, you can register the AMFF as a preferred nonprofit organization. By shopping with your Shaw's Rewards Card on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, you can earn money to help fund the museum and our programs! To sign up, go to www.shaws.com/communityrewards. You'll create an account using your Shaw's card. To support AMFF, have our nonprofit ID number ready: 49001021688.

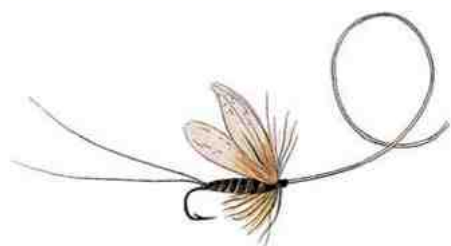
AMFF Receives Grant from Federal Agency

The museum is proud to announce that it has received a conservation bookshelf award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Washington, D.C.). This competitive program, launched in 2006, distributes conservation books and online resources to assist museums with the preservation of their collections. These materials will serve as important resources as AMFF continues to collect the artifacts and art that are part of fly-fishing history.

Recent Donations

Reggie Wallace of Crozier, Virginia, donated a leather fly wallet. **William Cobleigh** of North Fort Myers, Florida, sent us an “Oreb-O-Matic” South Bend automatic reel, Model D.

We have had many donations of books of late. Museum Trustee **Ronald B. Stuckey** of Hopewell Junction, New York, donated a copy of J. W. Dunne's *Dry Flies in the Sunshine* (no. 22 of a limited edition of 25 by Creel Press). **Thomas Laskow** of Somers, Connecticut, sent us Kenneth Bay's *How to Tie Freshwater Flies* (Winchester Press, 1974), William Bayard Sturgis's *Fly Tying* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), and Ed Koch's *Fishing the Midge* (Fresnet Press, 1972). **Marie D. Burger** of Ewing, New Jersey, donated fifty-one books and **Jim Henry** of Waccabuc, New York, donated forty-four books; for detailed lists of these donations, contact the museum.



Upcoming Events

October 17

Annual Board Meeting and Annual Membership Meeting
American Museum of Fly Fishing
Manchester, Vermont

October 29–30

Friends of Peter Corbin Shoot
Location TBA

November 12

Anglers All Dinner
Washington, D.C.

For additions, updates, and more information, contact Kim Murphy at (802) 362-3300 or kmurphy@amff.com. “Casting About,” the museum's new e-mail newsletter, offers up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website, www.amff.com, or call or e-mail Kim Murphy.

BACK ISSUES!

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Volume 34:	Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
Volume 35:	Numbers 1, 2, 3

Back issues are \$10 a copy.
To order, please contact Sarah Moore at
(802) 362-3300 or via e-mail at smoore@amff.com.

Improving Our Facilities

Kim Murphy



Above: The casting pond.

Right: A rendering of the updated vision for the casting pond and its surrounding environment. Concept drawing by Yoshi Akiyama.



Through the generosity of many supporters, our casting pond and its surrounding environment underwent some much-needed improvements this summer.

Directly in back of our administrative building, there are approximately 4 acres of wooded land, a 50-by-100-foot casting pond, a 36-foot walking bridge at the pond's north end, a gazebo, and two small brooks that cross north and south. These grounds are tranquil and especially glorious during the month of June as the yellow irises blossom along the banks.

We encourage the public to access the pond, with the understanding that catch and release is practiced. It is a popular place for adults to bring young children who are learning the art of casting. We also use the pond during our public events, as a quiet escape from the office, and as a scenic backdrop for those renting the lawn space. Over the years, though, the walking bridge has suffered some damage, and the back property has become overgrown with brush. Both the bridge and back lot have been closed to the public since 2007.

At the board of trustees meeting in May, the issue of bridge repairs was discussed. Our desire to build a handicapped-accessible platform was also mentioned, along with our hopes to work with other nonprofit institutions—such as Project Healing Waters, Wounded Warriors, and Casting for Recovery—who may have a need for such a platform. Soon two trustees stepped forward and sponsored the repair work on the walking bridge.

Later in May, the museum hosted a fund-raising dinner at the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club (located in Gates Mills, Ohio), and we presented the handicapped-accessible-platform project as a fund-a-need auction item. Thirteen of the guests stepped forward and, combined, contributed more than \$2,300 for this project. Once completed, our platform will be one of only a few in the state of Vermont built especially with handicapped accessibility and programming as its goal.

We would like to thank Trustees Gardner Grant and Gary Sherman for jump-starting this facility-improvement project and for their donation toward the repairs to the walking bridge. We also wish to acknowledge the following attendees of our Chagrin Valley Hunt Club dinner and thank them for their contributions to the construction of the handicapped-accessible platform: Leigh Perkins, George Klein, Jonathan Grimm, Daniel Carter, Bruce Eckstein, John Mueller, Mike Farrell, Brent Buckley, Ken Callahan, Jim Biggar, Marilyn Best, Thomas Whitlock, and George McCabe.

The museum is continuing to accept contributions for this important project. Additional funding is needed to complete the handicapped-accessible platform as well as the pathway leading to the pond. Please contact Sarah Moore at (802) 362-3300 with your tax-deductible pledge. Thank you for helping to make this project a reality.



CONTRIBUTORS



A River Never Sleeps: Conservation, History, and the Fly Fishing River *A Public Symposium at the National Sporting Library*

**Saturday,
November 21, 2009**

Speakers include:

James Prosek on native trout species,
Hoagy Carmichael on the Grand
Cascapedia River,

Bryon Borgelt on the Au Sable
River (MI), and

John Ross on Rivers of
Restoration. Moderated by
Samuel Snyder

Pre-registration required.
Contact etobey@nsl.org or
540-687-6542 x 11.

"Art of Angling"
exhibit opens Nov. 3, 2009

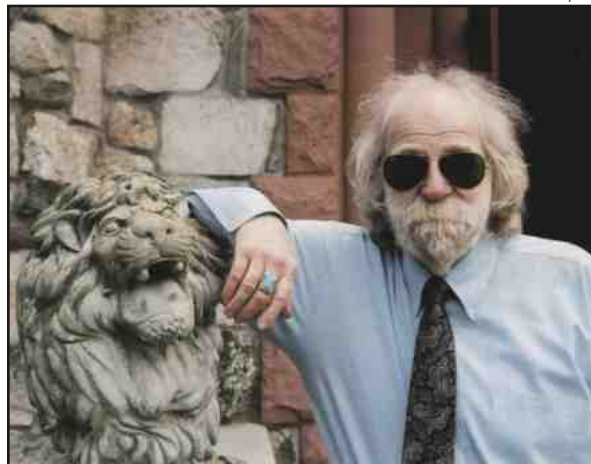


National Sporting Library
P.O. Box 1335
Middleburg, VA 20118
www.nsl.org



Paul Schullery was executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing from 1977 to 1982. He is the author, coauthor, or editor of forty books, including several relating to fly fishing and fly-fishing history. His most recent books include *Cowboy Trout: Western Fly Fishing as If It Matters*; *The Rise: Streamside Observations on Trout, Flies, and Fly Fishing*; and *If Fish Could Scream: An Angler's Search for the Future of Fly Fishing*. In June 2008, he was among those honored by the federal Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee for extraordinary contributions to the recovery of grizzly bear populations in the United States.

Leslie K. Hilyard



Graydon R. Hilyard resides in Massachusetts while wandering around the mental health field. Past projects include the biographies of Carrie Stevens (Stackpole Books, 2000) and Stan Bogdan (Amato Books, 2006), as well as original Stevens research published by the *American Fly Fisher* in Spring 2002. Current projects include book research on Herbert L. Welch (1879–1960), Maine's first celebrity guide, and Alexandre Kouznetsov, a contemporary Russian émigré artist. *Gray's Sporting Journal* published Hilyard's account of Atlantic salmon fishing with Stan Bogdan and legendary guide Richard Adams in April 2009.



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.



Lending a Helping Hand



From *The American Angler Index*, Volume XVIII, July 1, 1890–January 1, 1891 (New York: The Anglers' Publishing Co.), 38.

TIME IS A PRECIOUS commodity. Between work and home, it is often difficult to commit the time to take on one more thing. Therefore, we were delighted that so many of you felt it was important to complete our recent journal survey. More than 25 percent of the membership responded with thoughtful comments, suggestions, and recommendations. Whether you simply circled your answers on the survey or compiled a multiple-page letter, we read each and every response. After tallying all of the answers, 98 percent of our members felt that the *American Fly Fisher* was the most important benefit of their museum membership.

One of the goals of the survey was to find out what types of articles you would like to read in the journal. Answers varied from specifying geographic locations around the world to noting particular objects in our permanent collection. These answers will assist us as we plan future issues and consider placement of articles. But this is where we need your help.

Many of you may know that we do not pay any of the writers who are published in the journal. These writers are dedicated to the subject of fly fishing and are willing to submit their articles for review and—if the article meets our needs—eventual publication. This cooperative effort is the major reason we have been able to keep our annual associate membership fee at such a reasonable level. On the flip side, this is also

the reason that some interesting subjects are not featured on our pages. We can only select and publish from the stock of free-use articles submitted for our consideration.

I encourage every member to take some time to think of an interesting fly-fishing subject you would like to read about. Go to your local library, surf the Internet, and talk with some experts to research your subject. Review our contributor guidelines at www.amff.com/information/taff-contributor-guidelines.html. Take to your computer (or typewriter if you still prefer!), and put your research into words. Then submit your completed work to the *American Fly Fisher*, and wait to hear back from us. We might suggest some revisions that could lead to eventual publication; we might politely decline; but we might find that extraordinary article that we have been waiting to receive and others have been waiting to read!

So please consider lending a helping hand to the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Take the time to contribute to the most important part of your museum membership, as well as to the scholarship of this great sport. In the end, the time commitment might just be an enjoyable endeavor.

CATHI COMAR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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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	\$50
Benefactor	\$100
Business	\$250
Sponsor	\$500
Friend	\$1,000
	\$5,000
	\$10,000

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 AMFF 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.