

The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



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A Mess of Hoppers, Some Categorization, and a Little Salt

Sara Wilcox



THERE'S A SPOT along the Ausable River that I fished each year, for a couple of decades, in late summer, until the lodge I frequented closed its doors for good. The mere thought of that place brings to mind its sandy roadside approach before a steep descent to the river—an approach full of grasshoppers dodging the underside of my boots as I made my wader-laden way to the water.

I love grasshoppers.

I've been wanting to include Paul Schullery's "Grasshopper Country" in the pages of this journal for a long time—from days even before it appeared in his book of essays, *Fly-Fishing Secrets of the Ancients*—but commitments to other authors and space limitations had me putting it off again and again. I kept thinking about the piece, though, no doubt because of what the word *hopper* evokes for me: those late-summer days, a big buggy fly I can see, and given the right circumstances, some aggressive takes. *Hopper* (of course) suggests even a certain quality of light. I don't get to the river nearly enough ever, and not nearly enough during times when hoppers drop in from the bank, flailing. At long last, I'm pleased to present "Grasshopper Country" on page 2.

Gordon Wickstrom began fly fishing in 1938, during "what authorities have called the Golden Age of Fly Fishing in America." While acknowledging his presumption in doing so, he has ventured to name six periods of American fly fishing, from 1845 (The Beginning) to the recently begun New Period. Wickstrom's own categorization of the sport's history, "A Modest Proposal for a Speech: The Six Periods of American Fly

Fishing," along with its accompanying chart, can be found beginning on page 18.

The museum is gearing up for a future exhibit of saltwater fly fishing and its history. As we do, writer Jerry Gibbs will offer a series of articles that explore little-known early history, equipment development, and more recent events. In his first installment, "Pioneers and Pioneering: The Allure and Early Days of Saltwater Fly Fishing" (page 14), Gibbs highlights A. W. Dimock's adventures in Florida, particularly a fifty-two day trip with his photographer son Julian, which resulted in *The Book of the Tarpon* (1911). For more about our saltwater projects, see Gibbs's introduction on page 13 and Executive Director Cathi Comar's message on the inside back cover.

In March, we lost a man who's been with the museum since its earliest days, whose name appears on the list of trustees in volume 1, number 1 of this very journal: Gardner Grant. On page 21, Trustee Richard Tisch offers a remembrance of his friend and fellow trustee, for whom our library is named.

And as both temperatures and fish rise here in the northern hemisphere, it's only fitting that John Mundt return with a fresh installment of *Keepers of the Flame* (page 20), this time profiling Bill Archuleta, who not only repairs antique and high-end fly reels, but also offers his own custom-made models. Finally, look to Museum News to see who we've been honoring, what we've been doing, and which events you might like to attend. We'd be happy to see you.

KATHLEEN ACHOR
EDITOR



CATCH AND RELEASE
THE SPIRIT OF FLY FISHING

Our Mission:

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is the steward of the history, traditions, and practices of the sport of fly fishing and promotes the conservation of its waters. The museum collects, preserves, exhibits, studies, and interprets the artifacts, art, and literature of the sport and uses these resources to engage, educate, and benefit all.

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The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

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ON THE COVER: *Author A. W. Dimock takes a turn paddling while his captain fights with a tarpon caught by Dimock, giving both of them a chance to rest sore muscles while exercising new ones. From A. W. Dimock, The Book of the Tarpon (London: Frank Palmer, Red Lion Court, 1912), 129.*

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Grasshopper Country

by Paul Schullery

Sara Wilcox



A Joe's Hopper, tied by Charles Krom. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

ON 28 AUGUST 1972, which seems like both a long time ago and only yesterday, I caught my first bragging-size brown trout. “Bragging-size” is a context-driven notion, of course, and the salient context that day included my then-brief two-month career as a fly fisher and the modest size and reputation of the stream I was fishing. Under those circumstances, my 15-inch brown, caught on a Joe’s Hopper, was worth the accolades it received when I took it back to the bunkhouse and showed it off to my fellow Yellowstone seasonals, most of whom were probably just hoping that by being nice to me they’d get to eat the fish.

But there is even more context. Every fish we catch is a story reaching backward and forward in our experience that reveals more the harder we think about it. At the time I caught that fish, I owned about six flies. Seasonal park ranger

salaries were not only small, they were, well, seasonal. Lucky for me I had seen only a few fishermen’s vests and fly boxes, so I had no idea how many flies one was “supposed” to have to do this right. I only needed one at a time, right?

But I can say for certain that among that first little crew of flies, the Joe’s Hopper I caught the brown on was, without question, the star. According to the primitive fishing log I kept that summer, I used the hopper more than all the others combined. I had been using it almost exclusively for a month when I caught the brown and would have seen no reason to change my ways after such a triumph.

I say using “it,” although it could be not all my hopper fishing was done with the very same fly. For all I know now, I might have lost one hopper in a fish, bought a new one, eventually lost it too, and bought yet another (I bought flies one at a time, with almost as much soul-searching and deliberation as other people put into buying cars). But considering the chewed-back leaders I used those first couple years, on which the finer diameter tippet was quickly gone, I probably didn’t break off many flies. The

point is that I was from my start as a fly fisher a hard-core hopper fisherman.

At the time, Joe’s Hopper seemed to me the gold standard for grasshopper imitation, but then it was the only standard I knew. Some said that a Muddler Minnow could be greased with flotant (ChapStick worked well) and used for hopper fishing. Some even said it worked as well as Joe’s Hopper (not for me). It was also known, at least among the *literati* I had not yet met, that other parts of the country had their own distinct answers to the grasshopper question. If you talked to well-traveled anglers, you might hear of the Letort Hopper, the Pontoon Hopper, the Whitlock Hopper, and others.

But if you dropped by your typical dusty little fly shop in Montana or Wyoming in those days, what you’d get if you asked for a hopper was Joe’s. If they were out of Joe’s Hopper, they’d probably suggest the Muddler, or a Humpy. I eventually considered the Sofa Pillow—although formally intended to imitate a very large stonefly—a reasonable hopper alternative, too, but I always fished Joe’s Hopper with more confidence.

This article appeared in slightly different form as a chapter in Paul Schullery’s *Fly-Fishing Secrets of the Ancients: A Celebration of Five Centuries of Lore and Wisdom* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009).



Modern fly shops routinely feature dozens of hopper patterns, typically with foam bodies, rubber legs, and other elements far removed from earlier generations of grasshopper imitations. This photograph by the author shows a case at George Anderson's Yellowstone Angler in Livingston, Montana.

JOE WHO?

Nobody seemed to know for sure who Joe was.¹ George Grant, one of the West's original fly historians, tried to find out and was never able to learn more than that as a western fly pattern, Joe's Hopper was "evidently first used with success by a 'guy named Joe.'"²

Perhaps more important, Grant did discover that as you traveled around the West, you could "find this same pattern assuming the name of 'Jack's Hopper' or 'Jim's Hopper,'" leading us to the conjecture that the name "Joe" really was just the market's way of saying "some guy." After all, would you buy a fly called "Some Guy's Hopper?"

Not that the real Joe, if there was one, had any right to feel deprived of historical glory when we lost track of him. As Grant also pointed out, Joe didn't invent the fly anyway, and it wasn't even western.

It would be difficult for most Montana fly fishermen to concede that "Joe's Hopper" did not ride the riffles of the Madison or the Big Hole before it was used elsewhere, but the original of this fly was known as the "Michigan Hopper" and was created by Art Winnie of Traverse City, Michigan.

It is consoling to realize that we adopted another's child, gave it a new name, dressed it quite well, provided it

with an exciting place to live, and proudly presented it as though it was our own.⁴

Although I imagine that George was right about all this, I still must inject some doubt and even confusion here. It comes to us courtesy of another George, George Leonard Herter, whose writings constitute the foremost loose cannon in the study of American fishing history. Herter's once-world-famous fishing-tackle catalog business prospered well into the 1970s as a sort of proto-Cabela's, and Herter himself wrote an outrageously entertaining series of books on the outdoors, cooking, and life. His self-published *Professional Fly Tying, Spinning and Tackle Making Manual and Manufacturers' Guide* first appeared in 1941 and was, according to the fine print in the front of my copy, in its revised nineteenth edition by 1971. Almost 600 pages long by 1971, Herter's book was enormously detailed and helpful, was praised by some very prominent outdoorsmen, and has been conspicuously ignored by the fly-fishing establishment's *literati*.

Like Herter's famous catalogs, his fly-tying book was notorious for his generous self-promotion and what amounted to an alternative American history in which Herter and his friends were the

center of the universe. Still, it's worth checking in with Herter now and then, just to keep us from ever being too sure of ourselves. He certainly had a different view of the Joe's Hopper story:

JOE HOPPER: Invented in 1929 by George Leonard Herter and named for Joseph McLin. This hopper has proved itself to be one of the great stream trout and panfish killers. It is widely used throughout North America.⁵

Joe McLin's name figured in several Herter patterns, so I assume he was a friend or possibly a guide whom Herter knew and respected.

Although it would be easy enough to simply ignore Herter—at least that's the approach taken by most popular writers on fly-fishing history—we would be wise to hear him out now and then, if only because mixed in with all the guff and chaff of his version of history, there may well be some truth. The problem is that it is very hard to identify it. Perhaps, as George Grant suggested, Herter's Joe was just one of the Joes invoked by the fly pattern's various popularizers over the years.

Lost in the happy provincialism that was still possible along a western trout stream in 1972, my universe was uncomplicated by any knowledge of this history, much less by choices of various hopper patterns. Other hopper patterns did exist in faraway places I had either not heard of yet or barely could imagine, but they didn't matter. Joe's Hopper was it— whoever Joe was, or were.

But over the next thirty or so years, hopper patterns would come into their own. Before sitting down to write this, I stopped by one of Bozeman's four hundred and eleven fly shops and looked through their generous bin-bank of hoppers—herds of hair, acres of foam, miles of rubber legs, battalions of parachutes, rainbows of fluorescents. One or two patterns looked so good I wanted to eat them myself. The hopper has clearly arrived.

But why did it take so long to get here?

PRETTY MUCH OUR FLY

As I've pointed out a number of times, many of the things American anglers have convinced ourselves we invented—streamers, for example, or saltwater fly fishing—were actually done earlier in England. The use of grasshopper imitations is, at first glance, a good example. Many of the earliest British fishing books mentioned this or that grasshopper pattern, just as they routinely mentioned using live grasshoppers for bait.

Naturalist John Taverner, writing in 1600, favored the grasshopper among his baits for several fish species.⁶ In 1614, Gervase Markham, probably because he read Taverner, made the same recommendation.⁷ In 1659, Thomas Barker recommended, among his fly patterns, “The Graffe-hopper which is green, imitate that. The fmaller thefe flies be made, and of indifferent fmall hooks, they are better.”⁸ For the bait fishermen he added, “your graffe-hopper which is green is to be had in any meadow or grafs in June or July.”⁹ James Chetham, in 1689, recommended two hopper patterns, the “Green Grafhopper,” which had “Dubbing of Green and Yellow Wooll mix’d, rib’d over with Green Silk, and a Red Capons Feather over all,” and the “Dun Grafhopper,” which had “the Body flender, made of Dun Camlet, and a Dun Hackle at top.”¹⁰ But when I checked Charles Cotton’s great 1676 masterpiece essay on fly fishing, I was reminded that Chetham was often not original; these two hopper patterns were obviously lifted by him nearly verbatim from Cotton’s fly list for June.¹¹ Walton himself recommended both artificial hoppers and live ones, and said the latter were especially good for dapping “behind a tree, or in any deep hole.”¹²

And yet even with the enthusiasm for hoppers displayed by all these authorities, grasshoppers seem not to be a significant element of modern fly fishing in the U.K. At least that’s how my British friend and fly-fishing historian Andrew Herd sees it:

The one really, really sad thing about living in the U.K. is that there is no opportunity to use hopper patterns. We do have grasshoppers, but they are small, live in low densities, and rarely seem to fall in rivers. No doubt they do once in a blue moon, and fish will take them because they make a good meal, but never in my wildest dreams would I actually go fishing with a hopper in the expectation of catching a fish rising to them.

It is possible that in the past, when farm chemicals were less ubiquitous and grasshopper counts were higher, that these insects did form a greater part of trout diets, but the trouble is that terrestrials became deeply unfashionable from the mid-eighteenth to the early-twentieth century, and so the literature isn’t very helpful on the subject. But I have my doubts that hopper-fests ever were that common.¹³

I have also wondered if some of the insects that the early British authors described as “grasshoppers” belonged to other insect families that we might now call leaf-hoppers or know by some other name. The U.K. has at least a couple

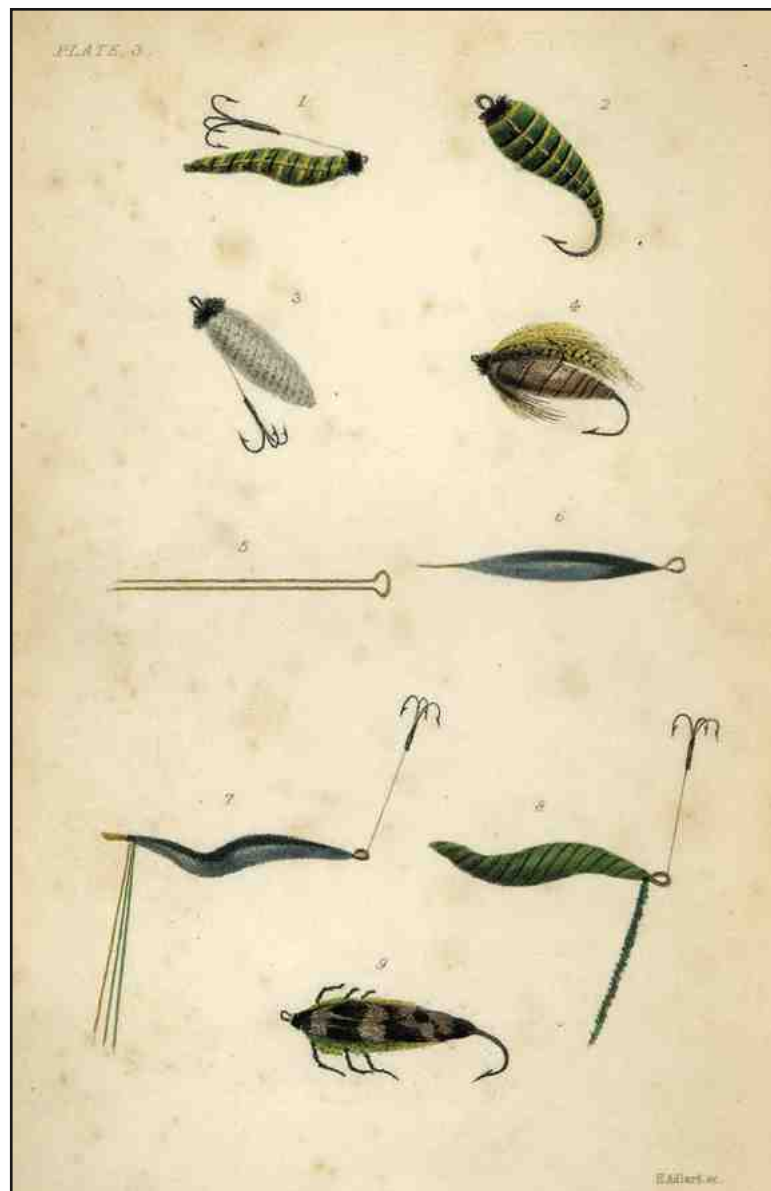
dozen species of genuine grasshoppers, but as Herd notes, they have not played the role in U.K. fishing that their American counterparts have. So it turns out that grasshopper imitation is, in fact, an area of fly development and theory in which we Americans may have launched our own original and largely uninherited inquiry.

THE VICTORIAN HOPPER

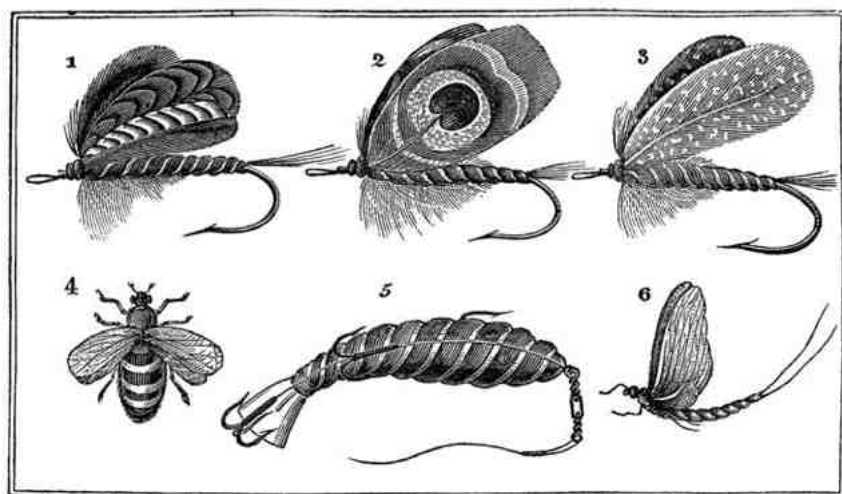
But before crossing the Atlantic, we need to consider the combination of whimsy and mystery that characterized grasshopper imitations in British fishing circles in the late 1800s, because some of the same characteristics appear in American hopper development of that period.

For me, the imitations that most perfectly capture the odd charm of this era in hopper fishing appear in Hewett Wheatley’s extraordinary book, *The Rod and Line* (1849), which prescribes the creation of an “artificial bait” to be cast with a fly rod. He calls it a grasshopper, but it is in shape a tapered worm, green with yellow ribbing, tied on a leaded, eyed hook. It has no wings or legs, just the steeply tapered body (an alternative version has a treble hook as an outrigger on a short leader, dangling alongside the body).¹⁴

The eminent British angling authority Francis Francis, writing in 1867, provided a description and illustration of Wheatley’s grasshopper, and then expressed both admiration and vexation at this oddly shaped and even more oddly named fly.



Hewett Wheatley’s take on a grasshopper fly, as depicted at the top of this plate, is shaped like a tapered worm and lacks both wings and legs. From *The Rod and Line* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1849), facing page 57.



- Three artificial Salmon Flies.
1. Jay Fly for Salmon.
 2. Peacock Fly for Salmon.
 3. Silver Pheasant for Salmon.
4. Bee, a natural Bait for a Chub.
5. Devil, an artificial Bait for Trout.
6. A natural May Fly, or Green Drake, a killing Bait in Dapping for Trout.

An illustration from the ninth edition of Thomas Salter's The Angler's Guide (London: James Maynard, 1841, facing page 1) includes a fly labeled "Devil," which is similar in shape and design to Wheatley's grasshopper.

The most slaughtering way of fishing for grayling is with the grasshopper. The grasshopper, so-called, is not a grasshopper at all, though actually an artificial bait, in nowise resembles a grasshopper; why it should have been called a grasshopper any more than a gooseberry, which it much more resembles, I cannot conceive. No matter; this is the grasshopper.¹⁵

The only theory I can offer about why a wingless, legless, green-and-yellow, tapered, wormlike thing should be called a grasshopper is that for at least two and a half centuries before Wheatley's time, angling writers had recommended that anglers using live grasshoppers as bait should cut off the wings and legs.¹⁶ Wheatley's grasshopper wouldn't be that improbable if it had a grasshopper's wings and legs. It remains a mystery to me why all these authoritative earlier angling writers should have so strongly insisted on removing the wings and legs of grasshoppers when modern fly theorists have for many years puzzled over how to imitate the actions of swimming grasshoppers, whose frantically thrashing wings and legs are thought to provide the very motions that attract trout.

However, as British fishing historian Frederick Buller has pointed out, the Wheatley "grasshoppers" also shared a similarity of shape with the category of lures known as "Devil Baits," which were illustrated in Thomas Salter's *The Angler's Guide* (sixth edition, 1825) and other works of the period.¹⁷ So the Wheatley grasshopper's actual category of definition remains a little unclear.

I bet it would work great on the Madison, though.

THE AMERICAN REVELATION

Whatever may have been the status of grasshoppers in England, we had lots of them. Especially on the Great Plains, appropriate habitats in the intermountain west, and the Pacific coast, the grasshopper was among the species that met ecologist Aldo Leopold's definition of a biological storm. Like the bison, the passenger pigeon, several species of salmon, and any number of other now sadly reduced species, the grasshopper was not so much an animal as it was a spectacle.

A few miles east of my neighborhood here in Montana, traveling along the Yellowstone River on 16 July 1806, Captain William Clark was among the very first Euro-American commentators to try to comprehend the abundance of grasshoppers in the American West: "It may be proper to observe that the emence Swarms of Grass hoppers have destroyed every Sprig of Grass for maney miles on this Side of the river, and appear to be progressing upwards."¹⁸ Not coincidentally, it is thanks to Clark's expedition that we know that at least one American tackle shop was selling grasshopper imitations in his day. Attached to a receipt for various basic supplies (including lots of fish hooks) purchased by Clark from George Lawton's shop in Philadelphia was a one-page circular that described and promoted Lawton's full line of tackle. This included, among many other artifi-

cial baits, lures, or flies, "Grafshoppers."¹⁹ Judging from his invoice, Clark appears not to have bought any, and as long as his supply of hooks held out he wouldn't have needed them anyway, considering how many live grasshoppers were handy for his use.

Awed mentions of grasshopper plagues recur regularly in nineteenth-century western narratives. The most famous in American history textbooks must be the saga of the "Mormon Crickets" that threatened the early Mormon settlers' crops in Utah in 1848 and were destroyed by the timely and evidently divine intervention of seagulls.²⁰ But other similar visitations by grasshoppers were not so successfully met. Environmental historian Richard White described a much more widespread and economically disastrous grasshopper irruption a quarter century later:

In a bad year, such as 1874, the grasshoppers swarmed into the northern prairies in such numbers that farmers mistook them for storm clouds massing on the horizon. When the insects alighted, they sounded like hail. They fell from the skies until they lay four to six inches deep on the ground. Their weight on trees snapped off limbs, and when trains tried to move over them on the tracks, their crushed bodies greased the tracks and left the engine's wheels spinning uselessly. Grasshoppers ate the crops; they fouled the water. Attracted by the salt left from human sweat, they even ate tool handles.²¹

Although the West owned the greatest grasshopper legends, they were sufficiently abundant in many parts of the East to justify the creation by anglers of a variety of imitations. Early nineteenth-century fly-fishing tracts in America were heavily derivative of British works, of course, and British works were also available, but before long, American anglers were taking a hard look at grasshoppers and developing their own imitations.

Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, one of fly fishing's more critical yet open-minded thinkers of the mid-nineteenth century, expressed great skepticism about the whole mass of exact-imitation bug replicas that were apparently on the market in the 1860s. I don't know this for sure because so few of the original assortment of commercial lures from that day have survived, but I suspect he was talking about things quite similar to what George Lawton claimed to be offering in his shop half a century earlier.

In addition to the imitations of the natural fly, efforts have been continually made to use artificial representations of the other food and baits for fish; exact and beautiful copies of grasshoppers

and frogs have been constructed, and painted of the proper color, but either from the nature of the composition or some other cause, entirely in vain. Indeed it is doubtful whether any fish was ever captured with such delusions as grasshoppers, crickets, or frogs, and although they are still retained in the shops, they no longer find a place amid the angler's paraphernalia.²²

Tackle historian and fly-rod-lure authority Jim Brown has suggested a reason for the perceived and real shortcomings of these exact-model grasshoppers:

We may never know for sure but I bet Roosevelt, and others that took offense at molded rubber grasshoppers, were at least in part expressing a taste for personal craft rather than manufactured product. Plus, I'm convinced that the old hard rubber bugs were easily damaged. I don't think the rubber that they used back then is like the soft kind that they use in rubber worms today.²³

Whether or not anglers continued to buy them, the lures/baits/flyes did continue to show up in both catalogs and

books. A. B. Shipley and Son, a well-known Philadelphia tackle dealer, advertised and illustrated an apparently life-like grasshopper in *Forest and Stream* in 1881, the year the same illustration was used in James Henshall's *Book of the Black Bass*.²⁴

Paralleling and in opposition to these lurelike flies, professional fly tiers were trying to develop more conventional patterns, which is to say flies in the manner of traditional flies, made of furs and feathers. Orvis championed one such pattern, both in Charles Orvis and A. Nelson Cheney's 1883 fly-fishing classic *Fishing with the Fly* and in the much grander Mary Orvis Marbury book, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*, published in 1892.

Not everybody was impressed. Writing in 1892, the British fly theorist John Harrington Keene, who moved to the United States in the 1880s and tried his best to interest American anglers in modern imitative theory, Halford-style dry flies, and his own distinctive fly innovations, found nothing grasshopper-like in the Orvis pattern:

Why this is so called I do not know. Orvis & Co. (tackle-makers), figure it in their elaborate catalogue, "Fishing With the Fly," but it certainly resembles no grasshopper of this sublunary sphere. All the same, it is a good Trout-fly, and with it I have taken some big fish. It is thus dressed: Tag, silver tinsel and green silk; tail, yellow swan and wood-duck (the black-and-white tipped feather); body, brown silk; hackle, cardinal; wing jungle-cock feather, with over-wing of red ibis and yellow swan (dyed); head, peacock herl.²⁵

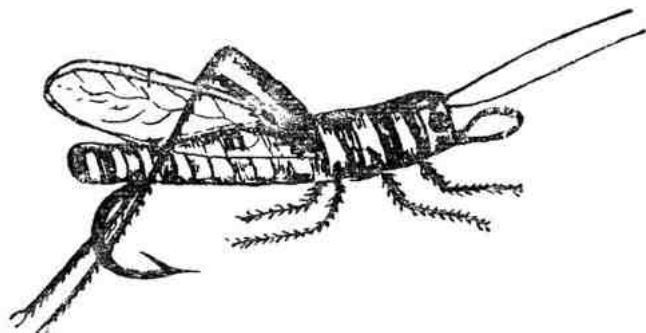
By contrast, Marbury defended the fly as among the best in the large crop of grasshopper flies then being offered. Notice especially that she, like Roosevelt, rejected the more rigid, "exact-imitation" style of grasshoppers:

Every one who attempts artificial insects sooner or later undertakes an imitation of the grasshopper. Some of these imitations bear close resemblance to the originals, and have been made with bodies of wood, cork, or quills, and covered with silk, wool, rubber, and silkworm gut; but they are apt to be

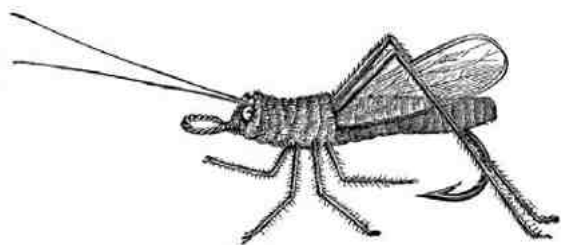


Above: From James A. Henshall's *Book of the Black Bass* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1881), 316.

Below: John Harrington Keene was one of many tiers to attempt an exact imitation of a grasshopper. His pattern featured fish-scale wings and, apparently, a cork body. From John Harrington Keene, *Fly-Fishing and Fly-Making*, 2d ed. (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1891), 132.



Mary Orvis Marbury's preferred pattern for a grasshopper, as published in 1892, drew criticism from advocates of more precise imitations. Her grasshopper was just a large, colorful wet fly; neither its shape nor its colors were reminiscent of a grasshopper. Writer John Harrington Keene complained that "it certainly resembles no grasshopper of this sublunary sphere." From Mary Orvis Marbury, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1892), facing page 113.



Vermont tackle manufacturer Thomas Chubb offered this reasonably realistic grasshopper pattern in his 1893 catalog. It featured fish-scale wings and came in both green and yellow. The body appears to be made of chenille or some similar material. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.



Louis Rhead's version of a grasshopper pattern.
From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

clumsy, lacking as they do the spring and softness of the real insect. Any one who will invent a grasshopper with the natural "kick" in it has a fortune in his hands. That pictured in the plate [i.e., the pattern that Keene criticized as not looking at all like a grasshopper] can claim semblance only because of colors that in the water may suggest the red-legged grasshopper, so successful as bait. This pattern came to us ten or twelve years ago from Mr. Harry Pritchard, of New York, who for a time made the only flies sold of the combination; they were in great demand with his customers. Since then this fly has become generally known, and has proved excellent for large trout and bass, as well as small trout.²⁶

Keene, who had lived in Manchester and worked with the Orvis family for a while but had a falling-out of unknown cause, probably disapproved of their grasshopper for several reasons: first, because he was right and it didn't look much like a real grasshopper; second, because he was on the outs with them for whatever reason; and third, because he had his own much more realistic pattern, which was pictured in the 1892 book containing his criticism of the Orvis fly.

Red-legged Grasshopper.—Body, yellowish green chenille; legs, mid-rib of hackle, fibers clipped close; wings, sparrow small quill-feathers; head, peacock heel [sp.]. As will be observed, this is an imitation of nature. I have tried all kinds of imitations, and this is the one with which to best fool Trout, in a clear stream, in the grasshopper season. Of course the natur-

al insect is more killing, but this is very effectual, even in comparison.²⁷

Keene's grasshopper used trimmed hackle stems, bent to create the leg joints, and it attempted to match the long, thick body of real grasshoppers with chenille. With such materials, it must have been a wet fly after the first couple casts.

American fly theorists continued to experiment. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, not only tackle companies as well-known as William Mills and Thomas Chubb, but writers as prominent as Louis Rhead offered their own versions of the hopper, as did any number of lesser-known tiers and writers.²⁸ By contrast, the extensive writings of Catskill dry-fly advocate Theodore Gordon are almost devoid of mentions of grasshoppers, as are the writings of some of American dry-fly fishing's other pioneers.²⁹

THE LOYAL OPPOSITION

The reasons that some people ignored grasshoppers were complicated. As Andrew Herd, quoted earlier, suggested, aquatic insects, especially mayflies, were widely regarded among the best-read anglers as the true "flies" in fly fishing. A combination of fashion and a growing literature on mayfly imitation certainly would have inclined fishermen to focus on them. Vincent Marinaro, writing in the mid-twentieth century, suggested that grasshoppers were just too large and aesthetically inappropriate to appeal to many anglers in Halford's day and

mood. In fact, Marinaro admitted that even at the time his first book, *A Modern Dry Fly Code*, was published, there were probably still many anglers (himself included) with serious doubts about hopper fishing. Marinaro's observations on grasshoppers are among the most important ever published about hopper fishing because they suggest the complexities of the fly-fishing aesthetics and ethics that prevailed by Halford's time—and that endured well past Marinaro's time among at least some anglers. This is Marinaro, writing in 1950.

It is with some diffidence that the grasshopper (*Melanoplus differentialis*) is accorded a prominent position in formal dry-fly practice. The size of this creature and the attendant difficulty of using a comparable imitation on ordinary tackle ally its use more closely to the art of bass bugging than to that of dry-fly fishing. It must be admitted too that it lacks a great deal of the grace and refinement which accompanies the employment of dry flies in the 16, 18, and 20 sizes. Aesthetic values are rather low where the use of *Melanoplus* is concerned, and its ungracefulness is somewhat aggravated by its terrestrial origin and lineage. In all likelihood an imitation of this animal would have not have agreed with the fine sensibilities of a man like Frederic Halford, who would have complained, no doubt, that it was at variance with true dry-fly practice. His deprecation of so large an imitation as the Green Drake [a mayfly] is indicative of his philosophy on this subject. I am in complete sympathy with his views, and would gladly trade the

opportunity to fish to the grasshopper for that of fishing to the pale wateries, for example. Then, too, there is always a jarring note, a lack of harmony, associated with the ungainly efforts of even the most proficient caster in his attempts to make a smooth delivery of this cumbersome artificial. There must be many people, acutely aware of these differences, to whom the prospect of such fishing would be offensive, partic-

ularly those who delight in the oblique approach to the art of fly-fishing—the flashing elegance of the slender rod, the graceful curving movement of the line, and the fly falling like thistledown.³⁰

What makes Marinaro's comments all the more interesting is that he then confessed that the opportunity to raise and hook really large trout overrode his own

prejudices and tastes, and he introduced one of the most intriguing and visually convincing hopper imitations to come out of American angling history, his friend Bill Bennett's Pontoon Hopper, the body of which was made of a hollow and therefore buoyant goose or turkey quill.³¹

THE FIRST GREAT AMERICAN HOPPERS

Like almost all fly patterns, virtually none of these American hoppers endured. Many didn't outlive their originators, or even the second or third season of their careers. Eventually, though, for mysterious reasons of quality and charisma, if enough people take part in this sort of informal fly-making sweepstakes, a pattern or two will stick and make its way into the greater, longer-lasting national fly box. That is what happened with the Michigan Hopper.

Apparently some time in the 1930s, Art Winnie, a well-known Michigan fly tier who was also known for developing the Michigan Caddis (an imitation of the big and generally misnamed *Hexagenia* mayflies so famous on many midwestern streams), came upon the right combination of simple materials and visual appeal in the Michigan Hopper.³² The original specimen of the Michigan Hopper in the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing is tied on a conventionally proportioned dry-fly hook. The fly has the shorter proportions of a regular dry fly rather than the extended lines of a modern hopper pattern. Its yellow chenille body, mottled turkey-feather wings, and brown dry-fly hackle were easy to duplicate and easy to rename; not only did it become the Joe's (and Jack's and Jim's) Hopper in the West, by 1950 even as thorough and authoritative a reference work as J. Edson Leonard's *Flies* listed Joe's Hopper but seemed unaware of Winnie's original.³³ So soon we forget.

One of the highly praised hoppers at midcentury was the Western Grasshopper, an all-hair pattern tied by Paul Stroud of Arlington Heights, Illinois.³⁴ I have not yet seen an example or a picture of this pattern, but the idea of a hopper at this time made entirely of hair, presumably but not necessarily deer hair, is intriguing.

Just why Winnie's Michigan Hopper and its various regional counterparts should have taken hold while so many other patterns didn't is hard to say, but based on what we now know about subsequent successful patterns, I'd guess it had to do with the mottled turkey feather he used as a wing. Although he tied the fly on a conventional (rather than extra-long) hook, the rather caddis-

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Art Winnie first popularized his Michigan Hopper in the 1920s; this version has the traditional dry-fly proportions that prevailed among almost all floating trout flies at that time. Courtesy of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Like many fly tiers, Art Winnie apparently varied his patterns. This original interpretation of the Michigan Hopper features an elongated body and extended tail as well as a gold hook. Courtesy of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

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shaped feather wing reached back over the bend of the hook. It captured the imagination of anglers and, presumably, of trout. It “worked” in every sense of the word—practically, aesthetically, and commercially—and most of the subsequent successful hoppers before the foam-and-rubber-band era employed the same feather.

While the first enduring American hopper imitation, the Michigan/Joe’s pattern, became best known for its use on freestone streams in the Midwest and West, a different style of hopper fishing developed in the East, especially along the limestone streams of Pennsylvania.

Again, there was some confusion over the pattern and its origin for while, although the involved parties seem to have settled the question amicably and with clarity. In short, in the years following the publication of his book *Matching the Hatch* (1955), which said only a few words about grasshoppers in preference to aquatic insects, Ernest Schwiebert developed his Letort Hopper, a low-profile, unhackled, and proportionately long-floating fly, which he designed in cooperation with Letort regular Ross Trimmer. This fly had a yellow nylon-wool body, a combination of turkey-feather and deer-hair wing, and a trimmed, vaguely Muddler-style head:

The absence of hackle permitted the bulk of the imitation grasshopper and its yellowish body to float flush in the surface film. The principal character of a natural grasshopper is rectilinear and slender, while the hackles of conventional imitations [i.e., the Michigan Hopper] are indistinct and caddislike in form. The flaring deer-hair filaments were trimmed away under the throat of the fly to make sure the yellowish dubbing of the body rode awash, just the way the trout would observe a live grasshopper.³⁵

Well-known fly-fishing and fly-tying master Gary Borger has described Schwiebert’s Letort Hopper as “the first fly to effectively imitate the low-slung silhouette of these big insects,”³⁶ but if even some of the illustrations that survive of prototypical hopper patterns from the late 1800s and early 1900s are even vaguely accurate, they all would precede Ernie’s pattern. The big difference, of course, is that Ernie’s pattern took, and those others faded away. The Letort Hopper has no doubt influenced many hopper patterns since.

And in the matter of influence, Ernie must share the credit with veteran limestone Ed Shenk, who, recognizing the conflict and confusion to be caused by there being two competing Letort Hoppers, chose to name his the Shenk



The Letort Hopper, developed for the “limestoner” trout streams of southeastern Pennsylvania, presented a different profile than the often heavily hackled grasshopper imitations that preceded it. This version was tied by noted spring creek authority Ed Koch in 1988. Photograph by the author.

*A Shenk Letort Hopper tied by its creator, Ed Shenk.
From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*



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Letort Hopper, even though it originated at roughly the same time as the Schwiebert version. While Ernie’s hopper had a yellow nylon yarn body with divided turkey wings, Ed’s had a dubbed spun-fur yellow body and “a mottled turkey wing with the feather folded, tied flat, and trimmed in a broad ‘V.’”³⁷ Both had trimmed deer-hair heads, and both have proven very effective on many waters. I’ve carried a small and alarmingly dwindling stock of them, acquired from Ed Koch about twenty years ago, all

over the country, taking trout on them with no regard for the presence or absence of real grasshoppers.

STYLES ESTABLISHED, BLENDED, AND ENRICHED

I end this saga perhaps early, about forty years ago, because after that there is a proliferation of grasshopper models that build on both of the older themes—the upright, bushy, indistinctly silhouetted



Dave's Hopper, the durable and enduring pattern created by the great American angling artist and pattern innovator Dave Whitlock, was originally tied without legs but grew them as the pattern evolved. Courtesy of George Anderson's Yellowstone Angler, Livingston, Montana, photograph by the author.

Michigan Hopper style and the low, flush-riding Letort Hopper style—and I see no need to recite them all, even the ones I like best.

It does appear to me that the best of the two styles were more or less combined again in Dave Whitlock's great and enduring Dave's Hopper. Writing in 1972, Dave described and beautifully illustrated this fly as a "hybrid grasshopper imitation that I designed out of a dissatisfaction with the older standard hopper patterns."³⁸ It used the down-wing curled turkey wing, an underwing of pale yellow deer hair, and long untrimmed fibers from the head that extend to the sides for stability and to imitate legs.

In the explosion of hopper patterns created since Dave's Hopper appeared, we've created some wonderful patterns that, I suspect, are often more effective than anything in existence before 1970. We've fulfilled the dreams of the early hopper pioneers and created patterns that successfully emphasize behavior, the big splat, and the rubber-legged action of real grasshoppers. But the two basic styles, the high/loose and the low/constrained, are

still the prevailing blueprints for most construction of hopper imitations.

The amazing profusion of modern commercial grasshopper patterns available today indicates the extent to which this element of the fly-fishing aesthetic has changed in only a few decades. For a long time, many hard-core fly fishers didn't want to use hopper imitations because hoppers were so different from mayflies. Now, people enjoy using grasshoppers precisely because they *are* different from mayflies. Grasshoppers broaden the variety of experience in the sport.

And yet I still admire the decision of those earlier anglers who chose to ignore the grasshopper. For them, a grasshopper was much like a bass bug, an artificial mouse, or some other perfectly acceptable lure that just fell outside the realm of their idea of fly fishing. Many of those anglers refused to use hoppers for reasons that suited them and that gave their sport a definition and scope that suited the times and their personal preferences. Good for them for thinking that hard about what fly fishing meant and how they wanted to play the game. When it came to hoppers, they just said no.

Or perhaps it would be more accurate to put it this way. Many of those anglers refused to use grasshopper imitations until they got their first startled glimpse of the caliber of trout that these unorthodox fly patterns can coax to the surface. Then, as the splash echoed in their ears and the waves washed against the bank, each angler's real commitment to convention, tradition, and aesthetics would be put to the test. Hopper fishing does that to us.



ENDNOTES

1. Perhaps he was the same "Joe" with whom "me" was said to have gone fishing in the archetypal outdoor story opening ("Me and Joe went fishin'") we used to hear about so often.
2. George Grant, *Montana Trout Flies* (Portland, Ore.: Champoege Press, 1981), 123.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. George Leonard Herter, *Professional Fly Tying, Spinning and Tackle Making Manual and Manufacturers' Guide* (Waseca, Minn.: Herter's, revised nineteenth edition, 1971), 466.

6. John Taverner, *Certain Experiments Concerning Fish and Fruite* (London: William Ponsonby, 1600), 21.
7. Gervase Markham, *The Pleasure of Princes* (London: John Browne, 1614), 30.
8. Thomas Barker, *Barker's Delight: Or, The Art of Angling* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1659), 9.
9. *Ibid.*, 10.
10. James Chetham, *The Angler's Vade Mecum* (London: T. Bassett, 2nd ed., 1689), 220.
11. Charles Cotton, "Directions How to Angle for Trout or Grayling in a Clear Stream," Part II of *The Compleat Angler*, by Izaak Walton (London: John Lane, 1897 edition), 338. Cotton's essay was first added to Walton's book in the 1676 edition.
12. *Ibid.*, 122.
13. Andrew Herd, e-mail to the author, 16 July 2006.
14. Hewett Wheatley, *The Rod and Line* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1849), 60–61.
15. Francis Francis, *A Book on Angling* (London: Longmans, Green, 1867), 281. Both Wheatley and Francis illustrate this wormlike "bait."
16. Paul Schullery, *If Fish Could Scream: An Angler's Search for the Future of Fly Fishing* (Mechanicsburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 2008), 137, 184.
17. Frederick Buller, "A Hoard of Mysterious Salmon Flies," *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 2004, vol. 30, no. 4), 13–15. And John Betts, exercising his uncanny eye for the curious detail in historical literature, has pointed out that in 1856, the catalog of British tackle firm of Milward's contained a drawing of a remarkably modern, gut-loop-eyed grasshopper-like lure or fly, and that among the flies that Buller illustrated in his article is very likely an example of that very grasshopper imitation. See

"Some Notes and Comment," by John Betts, *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 2004, vol. 30, no. 4), 16. John has, I suspect, identified the earliest known-age attempt at a precise imitation of a grasshopper in the U.K., which is considerably earlier than any known in the U.S.

18. Gary F. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, June 10–September 26, 1806* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 205.

19. The circular was reprinted in Paul Schullery, *American Fly Fishing: A History* (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1987), 38. The invoice to which it was attached was from an 1803 shopping trip Clark made while provisioning the expedition.

20. "Fishing Grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets for Nearly 100 Years," Utah State University Extension information paper, www.sidney.ars.usda.gov/Research/gh_crweb.pdf; accessed 4 August 2006. Although the title of this very informative paper makes a distinction between them, it and other sources indicate that the species in question, *Anabrus simplex*, is not a cricket but a grasshopper.

21. Richard White, "It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": *A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 229. My research in early travel accounts of the greater Yellowstone area has turned up many accounts of tremendous flights of grasshoppers that disturbed, inconvenienced, or shocked writers of nineteenth-century narratives. Mentions of grasshoppers as bait are also common among early western travel and adventure writers. Two of many such statements follow as examples.

In 1860, J. G. Cooper, while near Fort Benton, Montana, described the fishing for cutthroats on the Missouri River. "They bite

readily at almost any artificial fly; also at insects, meat, pork, and even leaves and flowers, after they had been tempted with grasshoppers." J. G. Cooper, "The Fauna of Montana Territory," *American Naturalist* (May 1869, vol. 3, no. 3), 125.

In Charles Orvis and A. Nelson Cheney, eds., *Fishing with the Fly* (Manchester, Vt.: Orvis, 1883), 157, Lieut. Col. R. I. Dodge was quoted as saying that "the Western trout takes the fly well, but not so greedily as the Eastern fish. The reason is, that they are from early spring gorged with food in the myriads of young grasshoppers that fall into the streams before getting their wings. The best months for trout fishing in the Rocky Mountains are August and September, although good sport may be had in July and October."

John Monnett, *Cutthroat & Campfire Tales* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1988), 62–66, has a nice summary of some of the historical details of western hopper fishing, both with artificials and live grasshoppers.

22. Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, *Superior Fishing* (New York: Carleton, 1865), 272–73.

23. Jim Brown, e-mail message to the author, 11 August 2006.

24. The Shipley advertisement appeared on 13 January 1881, and possibly other dates even earlier, in *Forest and Stream*, and in James Henshall, *Book of the Black Bass* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1881), 316. The Shipley grasshopper was made on a rather loosely loop-eyed hook. According to Henshall's text, it was an artificial bait, rather than a fly.

25. John Harrington Keene, "Fishing Tackle and How to Make It," in George Oliver Shields, ed., *American Game Fishes* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, 1892), 479.

26. Mary Orvis Marbury, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1892), 118. The fly is pictured on plate F, Number 47. Its predominant coloring is brownish-red and does not, indeed, have anything to particularly recommend it as a grasshopper imitation. It seems safe to presume, though, that in many waters that were still inhabited solely by native brook trout, if grasshoppers were prevalent, this fly would work as well as an imitation as many others.

27. Keene, "Fishing Tackle and How to Make It," 481.

28. Here is a sampling of grasshopper patterns, illustrations, and ideas from the 1880s into the early 1900s:

Thomas Chubb, *Angling Papers, Accompanying Catalogue, Angler's Supplies* (presumably Post Mills, Vermont, 1888), 71, lists "green grasshopper, yellow grasshopper" and several other nonaquatic insects, including beetle, bee, cricket, and hornet. In the William Mills Catalog (New York, 1894) page 45 looks like a grasshopper imitation with the turkey wing, whereas page 43 has another variation on the Shipley grasshopper theme.

Louis Rhead, *American Trout Stream Insects* (New York: Frederick Stokes, 1916), opposite 144, included a photograph of a fly in his "Nature Lure" series that was an

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A grasshopper pattern created and tied by the late Jack Gartside. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

attempt at precise imitation of a grasshopper. On 149, he described “the June green grasshopper, made of solid cork wound in vivid green raffia. It floats upright, and the quivering back wings of red cock’s hackle make it a choice irresistible lure.” For fishing this hopper, Rhead recommended “playing the rod-tip so that the bait skips along in short jumps, to imitate the natural insect when by accident it falls on the water. Strike instantly the bait is taken; for the fish can immediately tell the difference between the artificial and live bait” (147).

Much later, George Leonard Herter would offer a drawing in this same spirit but said to be made of deer hair. In *Professional Fly Tying, Spinning and Tackle Making*, 345, Herter illustrated a deer-hair hopper drawn to appear very realistic.

Harold Smedley, in his often very helpful little book, *Fly Patterns and Their Origins* (Muskegon, Mich.: Westshore, 1940), 88, listed a Palmer Grasshopper and said that “this cork-bodied, floating imitation grasshopper was the idea of and made by Mr. M. Palmer of Pasadena, California. It dates about 1915.”

Forest and Stream (February 1921), 74, in the department titled “Nessmuk’s Camp Fire,” featured “Further Notes on the Grasshopper Fly,” written by R. L. Montagu of California. This feature showed a variety of patterns and discussed experiences with several, following up on an earlier article in August 1917. Montagu fished both wet and dry for hoppers. Speaking of the 1918 season, when he saw more hoppers than usual and noted that they reduced crops in his area, Montagu said, “It is not much good putting one’s fly into a mass of grasshoppers where possibly none are more than eight or nine inches away from each other. About the only thing to do when conditions are so bad, is to watch out upstream for an open space in the floating insects and then put one’s fly in this place as it comes over the feeding fish. Fortunately, however, it was not quite so bad as this all the time; if it had been, very few trout would have been caught” (74).

Montagu gave the following pattern for his successful fly:

Body—Quill dyed Naples yellow (No. 29, shade 3).
Body Hackle—Same color but a shade lighter.
Tail—Mallard (barred feather).
Wings—Pheasant.
Cheeks—Primrose yellow pale (No. 19, shade 1).
Neck Hackle—A few turns of ginger. (74)

For hooks he used “Nos. 8, 9 and 10 Pennell limerick eyed hooks” (74).

The drawing accompanying his discussion showed a down-wing, palmer-bodied fly, with a wing seeming almost like a tent over the body. There are several other drawings that he said were stages in the fly’s construction, but they don’t look like it. It appears that the editors somehow fouled up the series, which seem to have nothing to do with the final fly pattern.

29. Gordon, George LaBranche, Emlyn Gill, Samuel Camp, and other early dry-fly writers all had little or nothing to say about grasshopper imitations, although some without question fished waters where hoppers might have been useful. Perhaps hopper season came after the mayfly hatches were over and were not noticed.

30. Vincent Marinaro, *A Modern Dry-Fly Code* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s, 1950), 195–96. In the foreword to the 1970 edition of this book (New York: Crown, ix), Marinaro softened his earlier hesitation even further, saying, “The unreasonable scorn for anything but mayfly imitations never made any sense to me. The established ethics for dry-fly fishing have not been changed by the use of terrestrial imitations. You must still find a surface-feeding trout; you must use an imitation of an insect that he is taking from the surface. You must cast accurately and delicately, and you must continue to dry your fly in the approved fashion.”

31. Marinaro and Bennett credited Pennsylvania angler Charlie Craighead with originating the pontoon-style body.

32. See Smedley, *Fly Patterns and Their Origins*, 78, William Blades, *Fishing Flies and Fly Tying* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole & Heck, 1951), 126, for the pattern for a Michigan Hopper. Paul Schullery, “Michigan Originals,” *The American Fly Fisher* (Summer 1980, vol. 7, no. 3), 12–13, for photograph of the fly and additional discussion.

I am not sure where Cooper’s Hopper, a Michigan pattern mentioned by Ray Bergman in *Trout* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 195–96, fits into this genealogy, but with its turkey-feather wing, it is quite similar to Winnie’s Michigan Hopper.

One of the most famous of all American fishing stories, Ernest Hemingway’s “Big Two-Hearted River,” is a tale of grasshopper fishing, using live grasshoppers cast gently on a fly rod. Between that story and a less lengthy description of how to capture live grasshoppers in another Nick Adams story, “A Way You’ll Never Be,” Ernest Hemingway provided the live-grasshopper fisherman—

and to a lesser extent, the fly fisher—with the essentials for this sport. Both stories were included in Ernest Hemingway, *The Nick Adams Stories* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1972).

33. J. Edson Leonard, *Flies* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1950), 197.

34. Smedley, *Fly Patterns and Their Origins*, 128, said of the Western Grasshopper, “This all hair fly is the product of Mr. Paul D. Stroud, of Arlington Heights, Illinois. It is an excellent floater and very realistic. It is easy to cast, durable—a good point for fishermen—and effective—a good point for fish. As Mr. Stroud is an expert fisherman, and a naturalist, he is an adept fly-tier.”

Bill Blades, *Fishing Flies and Fly Tying*, 254, also mentioned Paul Stroud’s deer-hair hopper. The Blades’ Hopper, 240, had a shaped-cork body.

35. Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout* (New York: Dutton, 1978), vol. II, 1467. This story was also told by Schwiebert in different form but with the same essentials in Arnold Gingrich, ed., *The Gordon Garland* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 137–38. Schwiebert mentioned the Michigan Hopper, Joe’s Hopper, Fore-and-Aft Hopper, and Muddler Minnow as influences.

Ed Koch, *Terrestrials* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 1990), 83–96, gives a nice history of the Letort Hopper variations.

Datus Proper, *What the Trout Said* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), offers a variation on the low style, a simple yellow, deer-hair body tied lengthwise and doubled back on itself, with a hair wing. Proper, 226, said that “in my experience, trout have not been very selective when feeding on grasshoppers.”

36. Gary Borger, *Naturals* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 1980), 162–63, but he preferred the wing of Dave’s Hopper.

37. Ed Shenk, *Ed Shenk’s Fly Rod Trouting* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 1989), 127.

38. Dave Whitlock, “Western Fly Patterns,” in Art Flick, editor, *Art Flick’s Master Fly-Tying Guide* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1972), 115.



A grasshopper tied by Ted Niemeyer. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Sara Wilcox

Salt

Irv Swope



THE MUSEUM IS currently planning a new exhibit for next spring that will have a saltwater fly-fishing component. This exhibit will be a prelude to a much grander saltwater exhibit set to open in 2014, one that breaks exciting new ground and is bound to attract new friends and visitors to the museum.

The decision to focus on salt water is a natural extension of the museum's mandate to document the evolution of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry. Visitors will enjoy tracing the history of saltwater fly fishing through displays of evolving tackle, ranging from fascinating home improvements on early equipment to the incredibly efficient gear that today has saltwater anglers successfully targeting fish species of size and power inconceivable not long ago. Displays will also include a remarkable photographic record from the earliest days of the sport and some of the finest contemporary artwork that, in depicting saltwater fly fishing's coveted species and their environment, spans styles such as realism to impressionism and eclectic pop art. Additionally, visitors will be treated to exclusive and entertaining video footage of the living legends of the sport—anglers who pioneered and made possible what we enjoy today as saltwater fly fishers.

“Pioneers and Pioneering: The Allure and Early Days of Saltwater Fly Fishing” is the first of a series of articles that will explore little-known early historical highlights, equipment development, and more recent events related to fly fishing in salt waters with the kaleidoscope of colorful, predictably independent characters who helped the sport to evolve.

—JERRY GIBBS

Lefty Kreh gives a casting demonstration on the waters of Maryland's Eastern Shore during the annual gathering of the Saltwater Fly Rodders of America in 1968.

Pioneers and Pioneering: The Allure and Early Days of Saltwater Fly Fishing

by Jerry Gibbs



Captioned "Fish-rocks at mouth of Columbia River photographed by B. C. Towne," this photo from the display panels that Mary Orvis Marbury brought to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago is one of the only images in those panels that features a saltwater setting. Although it's difficult to tell for sure, it appears as if a few of the figures standing on the large rocks on the right are holding fishing rods. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

FOR MANY, saltwater fly fishing has seemed a relatively recent phenomenon that burst onto the angling stage between the late 1950s and the 1970s and has continued to expand influence since. In fact, it is quite ancient. Listen to angling historian Dr. Andrew N. Herd:

Saltwater fly fishing has gone through so many renaissances that it is easy to assume that every generation sets out with the perverse intention of reinventing it. There's a great deal of dispute about who dipped the first fly in the sea, but it happened at least two thousand years ago, because Aelian [Roman author-teacher Claudius Aelianus] describes it quite clearly: "One of the crew sitting at the stern lets down . . . lines with hooks. On each hook he ties a bait wrapped in wool of Laconian red, and to each hook attaches the feather of a seamew."¹

In North America, the earliest documented date for saltwater fly angling was recently uncovered in a letter of 28 October 1764. The writer, Rodney Home, a subaltern of the then-recently appointed governor of the West Florida Colony,

quickly and successfully swam his flies in his newfound local waters. "We have plenty of salt [?] water trout & fine fishing with fly . . ." he happily reports.

By the 1800s, pioneering anglers on both the east and west coasts were taking their freshwater trout and salmon tackle to bays, coves, and estuaries—even surf—to discover the effectiveness of bright, sometimes well-gnawed salmon flies and learn the limitations of tackle built for fresh waters. Sea-run brook trout (salters) and striped bass were popular as early as 1833, as reported in *Natural History of the Fishes of Massachusetts* by Jerome V. C. Smith, who regularly fished for those salters from points extending off Cape Cod's south shore.³ On the West Coast, saltwater bays—the Columbia River's mouth was prime—were giving up returning Pacific Ocean salmon to the long rod, as colorfully described by artist-engineer Cleveland Rockwell,⁴ and there was even quite limited fly fishing on the Texas Gulf Coast.⁵ More activity in the sport was seen as pioneering anglers explored the East Coast, sampling the great species variety around Florida's still

little-developed shores, especially those on the state's western side. Dr. James Henshall was catching redfish, sea trout, snook, jack crevalle, bluefish, ladyfish, and tarpon to 10 pounds on the fly along both lower Florida coasts in 1878, publishing an account of his adventures in *Camping and Cruising in Florida*, 1884.⁶ The work appears to be the first to include accounts of tarpon fishing using freshwater fly tackle. Ten years later, author Frank S. Pinckney, in *The Tarpon or "Silver King,"* credits New York physician George Trowbridge as landing a 1-pound, 3-ounce baby tarpon on a fly.⁷ Trowbridge fished for multiple Floridian species, enjoying night forays for channel bass in Sarasota Pass. A. W. Dimock, whom we'll focus on shortly, reports viewing Trowbridge in Sarasota Bay fishing alone and "capturing from his light canoe . . . a twenty-two-pound channel bass and a sixteen-pound cavally [jack crevalle], all on light fly-rods."⁸

Pickney's slim volume (today a collector's item), a delightfully opinionated work in which the author quotes a learned judge commenting that any



Left: A. W. Dimock frontispiece from *Wall St. & The Wilds*. Dimock was a trout angler as well as saltwater fisherman. Photo from original book in the Cornell University Library, published 1915, New York, Outing Publishing Co. Photo by Emlyn M. Gill.

Below: Dimock enjoying swim with Florida manatee friend. Used with permission from Florida Photographic Collection. Photo by Julian Dimock; used in their book *Florida's Enchantments*, published in 1908.



maker of faulty tarpon tackle ought to be “drawn and quartered,”⁹ fired the growing popularity of tarpon hunting, although it was merely one factor. Rail lines and steamship routes were opening the Florida wilderness at a fast rate. Florida angler and conservationist J. P. Wilson describes the inroads thusly:

Fishing destinations at the Halifax River, Indian River, Charlotte Harbor, Lake Worth Inlet, Jupiter Inlet and Indian River were now accessible through rail heads at Punta Gorda, Titusville and Daytona. These rail spurs had pushed through the wilderness from the Florida Tropical Trunk Line’s terminal in Jacksonville. By 1889 there were over 650 miles of railways and 250 miles of connecting steamship lines advancing toward remote Florida coastal destinations. Punta Gorda on Charlotte Harbor was the end of the rail line for Southwest Florida. A short boat ride through the inside passage of Pine Island down to Punta Rassa took one to The Tarpon House, believed to be the oldest tarpon fishing resort in America, and for that matter, probably the world.¹⁰

A. W. [Anthony Weston] Dimock’s saltwater fly sport included both tranquil wade fishing and physically rough

encounters with any large specimen that would eat his flies, the latter experience paralleling his volatile business career. Accepted as a member of the New York Stock Exchange before he was twenty-one, Dimock quickly dominated gold markets. At thirty, he was president of several steamship lines, controlled a telegraph company (the Bankers and Merchants Telegraph Company), and became a partner of Maquand & Dimock, bankers and brokers (which eventually became A. W. Dimock & Company). Then, suddenly, he fled the city, headed west, and for several years simply hung out with both ranchers and Indians, hunting and fishing. He thrice made and lost millions on Wall Street. He was \$4 million in debt, though living in fine style at the Peakamoose Clubhouse in the Catskills, where in September 1894 he and his family were physically evicted in the driving rain.¹¹ The man continued to pull releases from creditors, write youth adventure books, and finance fishing safaris before dying suddenly in his Happy Valley country home in the Catskills on 13 September 1918.¹²

Some of Dimock’s adventures could have been plucked from a Teddy Roosevelt journal. His recollections in articles and

books are arguably the best in capturing the zeitgeist of this early period of saltwater fly fishing; certainly, they are entertaining. Dimock launched numerous saltwater fishing safaris along Florida’s coasts beginning at least in 1882, three years before tarpon were declared a game fish. He fished and explored from Homosassa down to Boca Grande, south to Cape Sable, poking up numerous Everglades rivers and even making a foray over to Bahia Honda in the Keys. To a great extent, he lived off the sea and land, camping, enduring horrendous storms, and encountering Florida panthers, bear, moonshiners, sharks, and, of course, tarpon. During a trip that resulted in the 1911 publication of *The Book of the Tarpon*, he also employed a motorized coastal sailing vessel, the *Irene*, as a mother ship to augment shore camping.

Although Dimock used all manner of tackle—from hand lines to heavy rod and reel and occasionally harpoon—a great deal of his sport was with an 8-ounce fly rod, with which he took the usual grab bag of inshore species. In an article titled “Saltwater Fly Fishing,” he brands 2-pound ladyfish as the “Ultima Thule” of fly-rod sport; by the time his next tarpon safari is done, three years later, he has changed his mind.¹³ Here’s Dimock from *The Book of the Tarpon*:

The tarpon meets every demand the sport of fishing can make. He fits the light fly-rod as no trout ever dreamed of doing and leaps high . . . a hundred times for every once that a brook trout clears the surface. . . . When grown to the size of the average man he is no less active. . . . To one who has known the tarpon, the feeble efforts of the salmon to live up to its own reputation are sad-denying. . . . Time would be wasted in seeking for comparison among lesser fish than salmon. . . . Played gently from a smooth-running reel . . . his capture is not beyond . . . a robust child . . . or the great fish can be fought furiously . . . they have landed on my head, caromed on my shoulders, swamped my canoe, and one big slippery form dropped squarely into my arms.¹⁴

Note Dimock’s canoe reference. Virtually all of his tarpon fishing took place from a light Canadian Peterborough canoe, usually paddled by a hired captain while Dimock fished. Occasionally he took over paddling duties, letting his captain fish simply to vary the strain on his muscles following successive tarpon battles. The ninety-three photographs illustrating *The Book of the Tarpon* were made by Dimock’s son, Julian. They are remarkable considering that they were taken using glass-plate technology, his equipment a 17-pound view camera and



*Left: Dimock's tarpon was at the time the largest ever taken using a fly and properly casting. His son Julian, however, finished the fight. From A. W. Dimock, *The Book of the Tarpon* (London: Frank Palmer, Red Lion Court, 1912), 189.*



*Right: After an hour fighting his largest fly-rod tarpon up and down Turner's River, Dimock's fish was now well out into Chokoloskee Bay and still not ready to quit. From A. W. Dimock, *The Book of the Tarpon* (London: Frank Palmer, Red Lion Court, 1912), 140.*

a 6½-by-8½ reflex. Julian followed his father in the *Green Pea*, a short, wide skiff with tiny motor run by a young assistant named Joe. The verbal altercations between father and son—and sometimes even A.W.'s captain—smack of a contemporary high-maintenance film director bullying his actors to get a scene down; in this case, boat-angler-plus-leaping-tarpon positioned within the window of best light. When Julian had run out of plates for the day, Dimock generally quit fishing while the younger retired to shore with “tent and blanket piled over me to shut out light and air, while they kept mosquitoes and deadly heat in. I’d do it again . . .”¹⁵

On more than a few occasions, attempts at keeping the separation of the angler and leaping tarpon at a minimum for the camera resulted in canoe cap-sizes, sending both angler and captain into the water. Several times sharks severed in two the tarpon A.W. was fighting,

at least once catapulting the captain from the canoe, whereupon Dimock frantically paddled for the shallows, towing his captain who, though still of the belief that sharks would not attack a human in local waters, admitted that he was “scared blue.”¹⁶ Dimock’s observation of high shark numbers along the outer Keys led him to recommend passing up this area for the sake of avoiding attacks on hooked tarpon.

Dimock kept scrupulous records of his fifty-two-day photo trip, which resulted in *The Book of the Tarpon*. He reported 334 tarpon taken, 63 of them on an 8-ounce fly rod. He warned that “a stiff, single-action tournament style of fly-rod fits the agile baby tarpon . . . while a withy, double-action article couldn’t follow for a minute the fish’s changes of mind.”¹⁷

Much preferring that his fly-rod fish ranged from 2 to 10 pounds, he nonetheless brought to hand numerous young

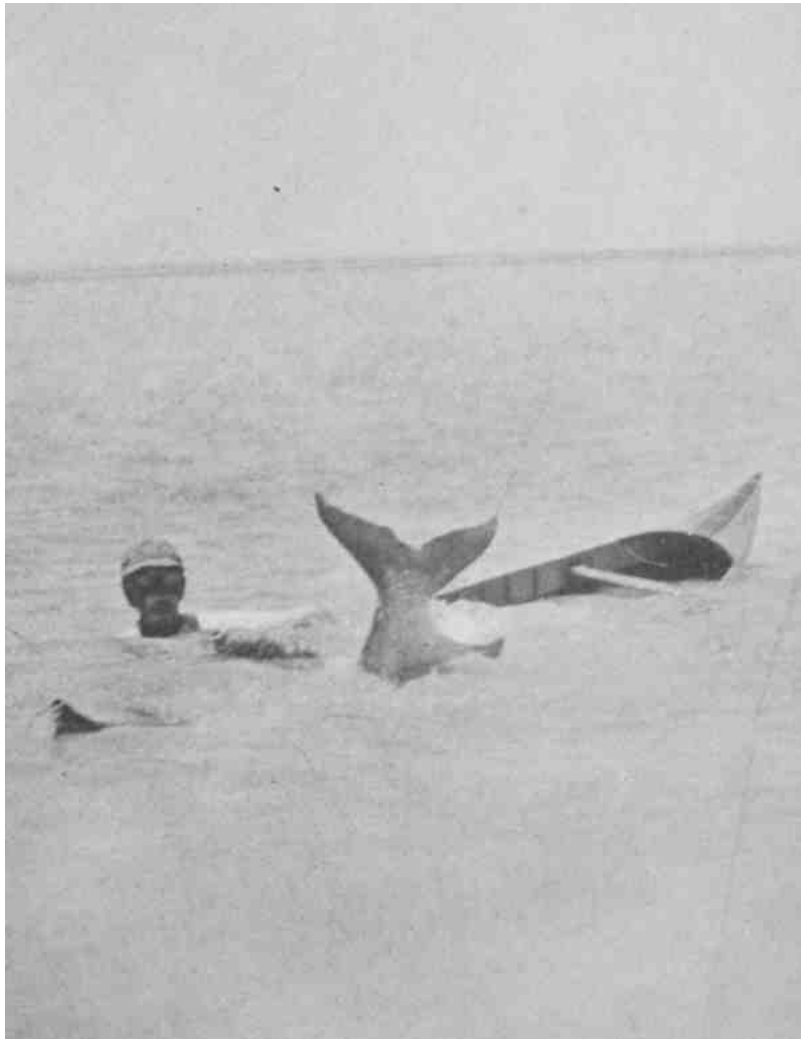
tarpon to 20 pounds and one record-setting Goliath. At the south end of Chokoloskee Bay in the Turner’s River, Dimock had just released a 10-pound fish using his 8-ounce fly rod when he hooked up with a huge tarpon that immediately leaped three times in rapid-fire succession then ran out most of his line: “I needed more yards than I had feet of line to offer a chance of tiring this creature whose length exceeded mine by a foot . . . I yelled to the captain to paddle for his life, regardless of the fact that the man was already putting in licks that endangered it.”¹⁸

An hour into the fight, Dimock and his captain were well out into the bay but always keeping within 200 feet of the tarpon. Because of the inability to apply significant pressure using his outfit, Dimock’s strategy was to have his captain paddle quickly to the fish while line was reeled in, then impart a sharp twitch, which usually caused the fish to

make another leap, tiring it. At one point at close range, the tarpon surged beneath the canoe while Dimock thrust his rod into the water, the rod tip swinging, not breaking, as the captain managed to sweep the canoe into pirouette. Finally, admittedly exhausted, Dimock offered the rod to Julian, who had exposed all his photographic plates. The two changed places. With Julian on the rod, the tarpon shot upriver, under a bank, and back down to the bay, where it finally rolled on the surface. The captain feared a capsize if he tried to boat the fish, to which Julian replied: "Get it in the canoe first and capsize afterward all you want, only don't move till I measure it."¹⁹ Once taped, the captain's attempt at boating the fish failed as the fish surged away. Incredibly, the hook held. The second boating attempt was successful: the fish slid into the canoe but with one more contortion levitated, then pinwheeled out, flipping the canoe and dumping Julian and the captain into the bay. The tarpon measured 6½ feet and was estimated at 140 pounds. Dimock believed it the largest tarpon then taken on the fly rod, despite the double-teaming angling effort. It would remain so for some time.

After A.W.'s death in 1918, Julian gave up photography, having published several successful books on nonsporting subjects. He moved with his wife to Topsham, Vermont, where he became well known for high-quality apples and seed potatoes. The Dimock family publications were housed with the Vermont Historical Society in 1997. Included is the entire magazine collection in which A.W., Julian, and their respective spouses are represented through contributed articles or photographs. The collection includes a variety of travel, recreation, nature, and country living periodicals published from 1903 through 1921.

The stage was set for an acceleration in the development of saltwater fly fishing from the 1930s through the 1950s and beyond. Significant events—including technical breakthroughs in the Northeast, Southeast, and West Coast—will be explored in an issue of the *American Fly Fisher* next year.



Dimock was occasionally knocked from his canoe fighting tarpon. His captain and son were not immune either. From A. W. Dimock, *The Book of the Tarpon* (London: Frank Palmer, Red Lion Court, 1912), 188.

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A Modest Proposal for a Speech: The Six Periods of American Fly Fishing

by Gordon M. Wickstrom

I THINK, DEAR READER, that I should be able to make a rather good twenty-minute, after-dinner speech about the division of the history of American fly fishing into six periods. I suspect, though, that I shall not be asked to make such a speech, even though I should very much like to lecture just one more time. But perhaps it's for the best. Perhaps I could not stand on my feet, at my advanced age, for a full twenty minutes and hold forth in style—especially after an indigestible chunk of desiccated chicken, anticipated with a substantial whiskey.

And so I turn to the paper page, sending this, my hypothetical (a favorite word among politicians lately) speech,

filled with doctrine, out into the world where some editor or other might just pick it up and publish it. In that case, you may come upon it, read it, and perhaps join me in my effort of division and naming. If so, here goes.

AN AFTER-DINNER SPEECH FOR ANGLERS

Ladies and gentlemen, I began fishing in 1938, in the middle of what authorities have called the Golden Age of Fly Fishing in America—significantly the time of the Great Depression. But I was too young and besotted with thoughts of girls and peripheral matters to know or fully under-

stand that immensely important time in which I was growing up as an angler, fly tier, and soon-to-be sailor. But, in spite of every distraction, I got well and permanently hooked on fishing and have never come loose.

Now, at the end of my fishing days, I gird my loins to propose that as of 2009, we have entered the New Period in American fly fishing.

The New Period! It has a ring to it, does it not? The word *new* in a usage like this has considerable rhetorical cachet. Many phenomena in human history have been dubbed “new.” (Think of, for instance, the New Deal, the New Philosophy of the sixteenth century, the New

Six Periods in the History of American Fly Fishing

In the beginning there was:

The Beginning: 1845–1900

- Samuel Phillippe: the split-bamboo rod
- Thaddeus Norris: how an American must fish
- Washington Irving: the first modern fishing story

And then there was:

The Identity Period: 1900–1920

- Theodore Gordon: defined the dry fly
- George La Branche: the dry fly in rough water
- James Leisenring: the wet fly and nymph

Then:

The Golden Age: 1920–1944

- Jim Payne: the fly rod perfected
- Walt Dette: Catskill fly tying
- Ray Bergman: story, lore, and tackle

Illustration from H. Cholmondeley-Pennell, *Fishing* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1895), 34.

Criticism of the twentieth.) Not only that, but I have ventured to name *all* the periods of our sport—six of them. Perhaps, by virtue of having lived in, if not through, four of them, I may possess some bit of senior authority in the matter.

Please have a look at the chart below. I acknowledge its presumption. But it seemed to me a job needing to be done; so I did it. And anyway, I do like such charts. Look at it. Isn't it neat and orderly? I like outlines, displays, maps, abstracts—any way to try to see at a glance the shape of things.

This graphic display of American fly fishing history, for better or worse, is all mine. Only the term *Golden Age* have I borrowed from unimpeachable authorities. You will note that in addition to making up names for and dating the periods, I have tried to suggest representative events and processes influential in each.

That was relatively easy until I came to the Golden Age—the point at which I entered the scene as a kid—when great names, developments, and events began to overwhelm me. It only got worse pass-

ing through the critical Transitional Period, when many fly rods were hung up on garage walls while spinning reels swished.

The effort to choose representatives for the TU (Trout Unlimited) Period, when the fly rod was, as it were, reborn, was maddening. There was no end to representative persons, books, and developments to include here.

As if things were not bad enough, my search for a hero or two for my New Period was even more troublesome. I made a list of those who I knew stood for something new and important who could fill my bill. Although it seemed best to stick with the dead rather than annoy the living, nevertheless I felt I had to mention that woodsman par excellence and master of the tiny fly, Ed Engle. Engle sums up for me the finest of the old and new of trout fishing when he deploys his gear in the simplest of ways. His writing, more and more, hints of a New Period, of its gentleness, good humor, and modesty. And, too, there is Daniel Galhardo in San Francisco, intro-

ducing to these shores the ancient Japanese fly-fishing technique and tackle of Tenkara: a long rod without a reel, a light fixed line, and exquisite flies for small, intimate waters.

Finally, allow me to play the prophet. I think that, in this New Period of angling, we are part of an important and, for many, difficult cultural shift. In spite of all the terrible news of the day, we are struggling toward a finer humanity. We must live better with less and with a greater delicacy, clarity, and balance. We must cultivate a moral atmosphere of benevolent reciprocity. It may be that fishing a fly on a clear, cold stream is an apt metaphor for what we want, demonstrating, as it does, the qualities—environmental, psychological, social, economic, and political—essential to the New Period. We long for the new as we treasure the old and so are enabled to live and fish worthily.

And so I commend my chart to your interest, with that little box of notions at its side. It has been my pleasure.



Followed by:

The Transitional Period: 1945–1960

- War, the spinning reel, and tailwaters
- Ted Trueblood: the beautiful angler
- Vincent Marinaro: the American master
- A. J. McClane: the complete authority

Next:

The TU Period: 1960–2008

- Catch and release—wild fish
- The great expansion—globalism
- Technological advance and rise of synthetics
- Celebrities and guides

And now:

The New Period: 2009–

- The end of expansion
- Reconsideration, reform, and restoration
- Older, simpler methods
- Back to home waters

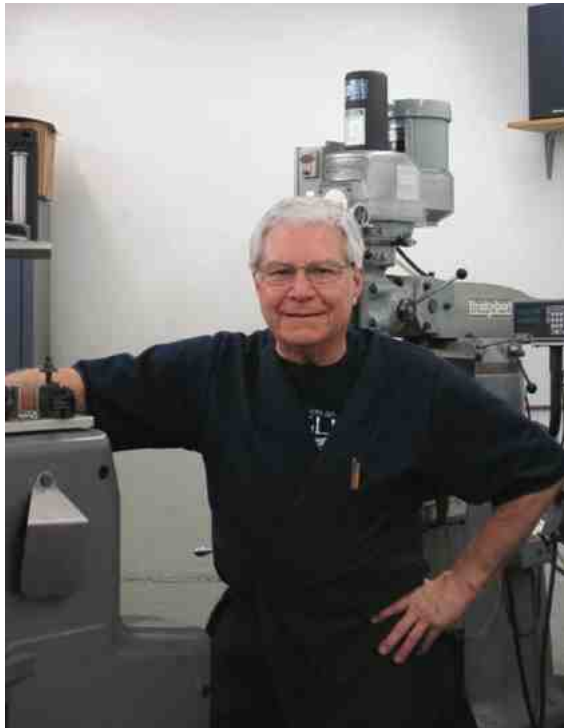
After-Dinner Notions to Take Home

- The Beginning: breaking away from British traditions
- The Identity Period: introduction of brown trout and aquaculture
- The Golden Age: ethical, technical, and geographical definition
- The Transitional Period: war, nylon, transportation
- The TU Period: internationalization, conservation, and specialization; trout art, politics, and the Internet
- The New Period: nativism, privatization, shortened casts—and *restraint*

Bill Archuleta: Archuleta's Reel Works

by John Mundt

Photos courtesy of Bill Archuleta



Above: An Archuleta reel in progress.

Left: Bill Archuleta in his shop.

YEARS AGO I had an antique Hardy trout reel that had parts missing and was in desperate need of repair. To where could an angler turn for such specialized work? My late friend Joe Garman rummaged through his business-card file and suggested I call a man named Bill Archuleta. Bill had a lifelong interest in fly reels and was working at that time as a professional machinist in California, performing reel repairs in his free time. The tired old Hardy was shipped off to Archuleta's Reel Works, and the end result was a perfectly functioning reel that has not made a hiccup since. Bill has retired from professional machining and now devotes his full-time efforts to the repair of fly reels and the custom manufacturing of his own special-order offerings out of his shop in Grants Pass, Oregon.

Such a level of expertise was painstakingly acquired over decades of fly-fishing and professional life. Bill graduated from San José State College with a bachelor of science degree in industrial education and pursued a career in prototype machining. That background enabled him to produce replacement parts that are no longer available for many types of reels. He regularly performs repairs on reels by Hardy, Orvis, Ross, Scientific Anglers, and Streamline, and his shop is the designated national repair station for Marryat.

My personal experience with Bill Archuleta was positive, and the sentiments expressed by others on a Classic Fly Rod

Forum online thread mirrored mine. I had to chuckle at one response to an inquiry that was made regarding Bill's price to replace a worn spindle on an old Meek reel: "\$75. Considering the machining involved, I think that price to be very fair indeed. In contrast, I just had a visit from the local Roto-Rooter guy for a clogged drain pipe at my house. Took him ten minutes to clear, and it cost me \$230." Like great gunsmiths or automobile restorers, it's comforting to know that antique reels can be made whole again for service on the stream.

Bill's client base spans the globe, and his coveted custom reels are entirely handmade, down to the machining of the individual screws and engraving. Bill informed me that it takes him approximately sixty hours to craft one of his reels and that some collectors refer to them as pieces of sculpture. He added, "The beauty and love that goes into each reel is just thrown in for good measure." The final prices are in the low thousands, but match the standard going rates of local machine shops.

Bill Archuleta is a true Keeper of the Flame, and the modern angler can be grateful that there is a place to ship hard-fighting reels for some thorough TLC. For more information, please visit www.archuletasreelworks.com.



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

Gardner Grant

(1 October 1926–28 March 2012)

GARDNER GRANT was warm, generous, affable, keenly intelligent, and an exceptional advocate for salmon and trout and their habitats. That he was a gifted fly fisherman in both fresh and salt waters, acutely aware of the behaviors of his favored quarries—brown trout, Atlantic salmon, bonefish, and tarpon—has been recognized for decades by many people, including luminaries in the sport. He counted Joan and Lee Wulff, Lefty Kreh, Leigh Perkins, Stan Bogdan, and Ernie Schwiebert among his many angling companions and, more importantly, as friends. He cast his flies worldwide, and his net of friends extended as far.

Gardner also pioneered trout and salmon conservation for more than fifty years, having served as president of New York's Theodore Gordon Fly Fishers, the Federation of Fly Fishers, and this museum. His leadership in these organizations and sage advice were widely recognized. In addition, he served on the boards of Trout Unlimited, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Hudson River Foundation for Science and Environmental Research, and Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History. As a longtime member of the Anglers' Club of New York, he contributed many articles to the *Bulletin*, its publication chronicling the fishing adventures of the club's members. Last fall's issue included "Tarpon of the Loxahatchee," in which Gardner described his winter-fishing "home" river in Jupiter, Florida, and his travails casting fruitlessly for a couple of years to baby tarpon with a 7-weight rod. Although he wrote that he suffered from a "severely damaged ego and a tired casting arm," I think it likely that only the latter was true. Like many other angling problems he had successfully solved, the close-mouthed silver kings were finally hooked by Gardner's changing his approach: a sink-tip line with slowly retrieved flies at 7- to 10-foot depths replaced the standard floating line.

His contributions to this museum are legion. He received the Heritage Award in 1998 for his decades-long association with the museum, having contributed enormously his time, his advice, and his fortune. The recent award-winning video, *Why Fly Fishing*, released on behalf of the museum, was his inspiration, as were, in part, both the original and modified, extraordinarily successful *Anglers All* traveling exhibits that have been seen by more than a million people in venues from the East Coast, through the Rockies, to the West Coast. During the inevitable and frequent challenges a small nonprofit experiences—and our museum was and is no exception—Gardner often provided fund-raising recommendations and innovative exhibit ideas, nominated new trustees, offered sound policy advice, and provided substantial financial support to ensure that the museum continued to evolve and convey the beauty of the sport to fly fishers and nonanglers. He was instrumental in the museum's move from a small, crowded building in Manchester to the current graceful and ample quarters adjacent to the Orvis Company's flagship store. In recognition of his continuous and substantial contributions to the museum's growth and prosperity, the Board of Trustees dedicated the library in his name.

For more than two decades he caught salmon from the Grimsa, an Icelandic river flowing over wader-tearing volcanic bottoms and through treeless, shimmering grasses. I fished it

Jim Hardman



Gardner Grant at the American Museum of Fly Fishing's grand reopening celebration on 11 June 2005.

with him twice, and we both caught strong-shouldered silver footballs from Strengur, one of his favorite pools. He was using the Lady Ellen Fly, designed by him, named for his wife, and tied by his dear friend Keith Fulsher, and it had been successfully fooling salmon for years.

In recent years, he fished with joy at the Potatuck Club in Newtown, Connecticut. It is a bucolic retreat, full of wily brown trout, leaping rainbows, and head-shaking brookies. He caught and released them all by the hundreds over the years, primarily on the dry fly. I remain happy to have nominated him for membership in the club, as he had nominated me almost twenty-five years ago for membership on the board of this museum.

Gardner, in his work, his fly fishing, and his cold-water conservation efforts, was exceptionally successful. These accomplishments separated him from others; however, his friendship truly elevated him, and us. We enjoyed his company as he savored ours; we cared deeply about him and he reciprocated, expressing his feelings of warmth. He was a friend who will be remembered and always missed.

RICHARD TISCH
VICE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Anglers' Club of New York Dinner Honoring Peter Corbin

ON MARCH 8, the American Museum of Fly Fishing kicked off 2012 with its annual Anglers' Club of New York dinner. The event honored accomplished artist, longtime trustee, and generous museum supporter Peter Corbin. It was an unparalleled success.

The Anglers' Club dinner is always an intimate gathering of loyal museum members, patrons, and new friends who meet for an evening of fellowship and fund-raising. The event pays tribute to the museum's leaders and its mission, and it raises critical funds for the museum's exhibits and programs.

This year, not only did the dinner sell out, but we far surpassed our revenue expectations. The live auction enjoyed spirited bidding, and our paddle raise helped us generate substantial funds for our future goals.

The museum thanks the following supporters who donated and provided auction items for the evening: Tim Bontecou, Robert Cochrane, Jim Collins, Peter Corbin, Henry Cowen, Guy Davies, Estancia Los Chanares, Patrick Ford, George Gibson, Joe Gonzalez, High Adventure Company, William Leary, Arne Mason, John Mundt Jr., Rick Murphy, Joe Mustari, Stacy Orand, the Orvis Company, Dave Pecci, Joe Saracione, Dr. Gary Sherman, Dr. Mark Sherman, Ted Simroe, Richard Tisch, and Joan Wulff.

Thanks, too, to all who participated, and especially to Peter Corbin for, in the words of Walter Matia, "having the courage to follow his passions and for bringing us a wonderful chronicle of our sporting heritage." See you at this event next year!



Yoshi Akiyama



Left: Flanked by his wife and daughter-in-law, honoree Peter Corbin smiles broadly while listening to the tributes given to him by guests Donald Crist and Jace Day.

Kim Murphy



Right: Board of Trustees President Jim Heckman shakes hands with Peter Corbin while presenting him with a token of the museum's appreciation: an inscribed bamboo rod crafted by Vermont rod maker Jim Becker.



Glyn Satterley



Orri Vigfússon attending the opening ceremony celebrating the start of the river year 2011 at the River Helmsdale in Scotland.

Orri Vigfússon to Receive 2012 Heritage Award

For fifteen years, the American Museum of Fly Fishing has, with our Heritage Award, honored individuals and organizations whose commitment to the sport of fly fishing and natural resource conservation sets standards to which we all should aspire. This year we are pleased to announce that Orri Vigfússon is the 2012 recipient of this award. As the founder and chairman of the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF), in an effort to protect the waters of the migratory Atlantic salmon, Vigfússon has worked for more than twenty years to end mixed-stock fishing and the use of fish netting, and has worked with governments to regulate commercial fishing practices.

The success of his conservation efforts is visible by the growing salmon stocks throughout north Atlantic rivers. Vigfússon and NASF have also had recent victories in Iceland (helping to suspend plans for three large hydroelectric dams) and in Dorset, England (establishing regulations to end two hundred years of salmon netting).

We are pleased that Vigfússon will add the Heritage Award to his already long list of recognitions: two knighthoods and a score of environmental prizes, including the 2007 Goldman Prize, which lauds the efforts of grassroots environmentalists worldwide who work to protect the world's natural resources.

Orri Vigfússon will be honored with a dinner at the Yale Club in New York City on October 3.

Gear Up for Summer!



Museum logo merchandise, which includes hats, t-shirts, travel mugs, and a reusable shopping bag, is a great way to show your support.



Romi Perkins (1929–2012)

Longtime museum supporter and former Trustee Romi Myers Perkins passed away on February 13. She was directly involved during the museum's formative years and continued to enthusiastically support our public programs. Romi Perkins was known for her passion for outdoor sports as well as for the fish and game cookbooks that she wrote for the Orvis Company. She will be missed.



Romi Perkins fishing in Argentina, 1971.

Fit to Be “Tyed”

What do anglers do in Vermont when they can't get on the river? Stock their fly boxes, of course! The American Museum of Fly Fishing helped several budding tiers do just that when we hosted our annual Fit to Be “Tyed” event. This year consisted of a series of four Saturday fly-tying sessions in February and March designed to start at the beginner level and lead the tier to more advanced patterns. George Butts began with the Woolly Bugger and Maple Syrup patterns, and Paul Sinicki followed with a black ant and beetle. Kelly Bedford came next, teaching the famed Gartside Sparrow pattern. The series ended with Peggy Brenner, who taught feather-winged streamers. A special thanks to our four featured fly tiers, who explained the proper use of a vise, showed the array of materials used to create flies, and volunteered their time to teach the step-by-step process of creating the perfect fly.

Recent Donations

Jim Pizzagalli of Shelburne, Vermont, donated a rod and reel that belonged to Duckie Corkran: an Orvis Light Salmon fly rod and a J. W. Young & Son (Redditch, England) Beaudex salmon reel. **Patrick Ford** of Miami, Florida, gave us a set of twenty-five Stu Apte saltwater flies, a set of fifty-one Bill Curtis saltwater flies, a set of forty-four Billy Pate saltwater flies, and a collection of photos and DVDs capturing the sport of saltwater fly fishing.

Photos by Kim Murphy



Above: In the Fit to Be “Tyed” introductory session, attendees peer over George Butts's shoulder as he demonstrates the steps to tie a Woolly Bugger.



Above: Fly tiers gather around Kelly Bedford as he describes the history of the Gartside Sparrow.

Below: The final session of Fit to Be “Tyed” was the most advanced. Here Peggy Brenner demonstrates the beginning steps to tie a feather-winged streamer.



The **Florian K. Lawton Foundation** of Aurora, Ohio, sent us *Fly Fishing Scene*, an original watercolor painting by Florian K. Lawton. **Claude Westfall** of Orono, Maine, donated a shadow-box frame titled *Penobscot River Atlantic Salmon Patterns* and photos of the Veazie Salmon Club and the Penobscot River and Atlantic Salmon. And **John Swan** of Portland, Maine, gave us a first edition of his book, *A Painter's Life* (John Swan Fine Art, 2010).

In the Library

Thanks to the following for their donations of titles that have become part of our permanent collection.

Skyhorse Publishing sent us the fortieth anniversary rerelease of *Sparse Grey Hackle's Fishing Days, Angling Nights* (1971, 2011) with a foreword by Nick Lyons; Eric Leiser's *The Book of Fly Patterns* (2012); and Luke Jennings's *Blood Knots: A Memoir of Fathers, Friendship, and Fishing* with a foreword by Thomas McGuane (2012).

Frank Amato Publications, Inc. sent us R. S. Hooton's *Skeena Steelhead: Unknown Past, Uncertain Future* (2011); Skip Morris's *The Art of Tying the Bass Fly: Flies for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Pan Fish*, 2nd ed. (2011); and Ann R. Miller's *Hatch Guide for Upper Midwest Streams* (2011).



Every spring we invite the community to prepare for the opening of Vermont trout season with our annual Spring Training day. On March 31, a group of anglers and future anglers came to the museum for a series of family-friendly activities to loosen up their casting arms and stock up their fly boxes. The museum would like to thank Kelly Bedford and Paul Sinicki for teaching fly tying. Here, Paul helps a young tier through the steps to create a Vermont Caddis.

Upcoming Events

Events take place on the museum grounds in Manchester, Vermont, unless otherwise noted.

August 9–12

"Angling and Art" Benefit Art Sale

Gardner L. Grant Library

Public reception Saturday, August 11, 4:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

September 29

Smithsonian magazine Museum Day Live!

Free admission with ticket, available for download at www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/

October 3

Heritage Award Dinner and Auction

Honoring Orri Vigfússon, North Atlantic Salmon Fund founder and chairman

Yale Club

New York, New York

October 13

Fall Members and Trustees Meeting

October 13

Fly-Fishing Festival

November 10

Free admission all day to honor veterans

December 8

Hooked on the Holidays and Community Open House

Always check our website (www.amff.com) for additions, updates, and more information or contact (802) 362-3300 or events@amff.com. "Casting About," the museum's e-mail newsletter, offers up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.

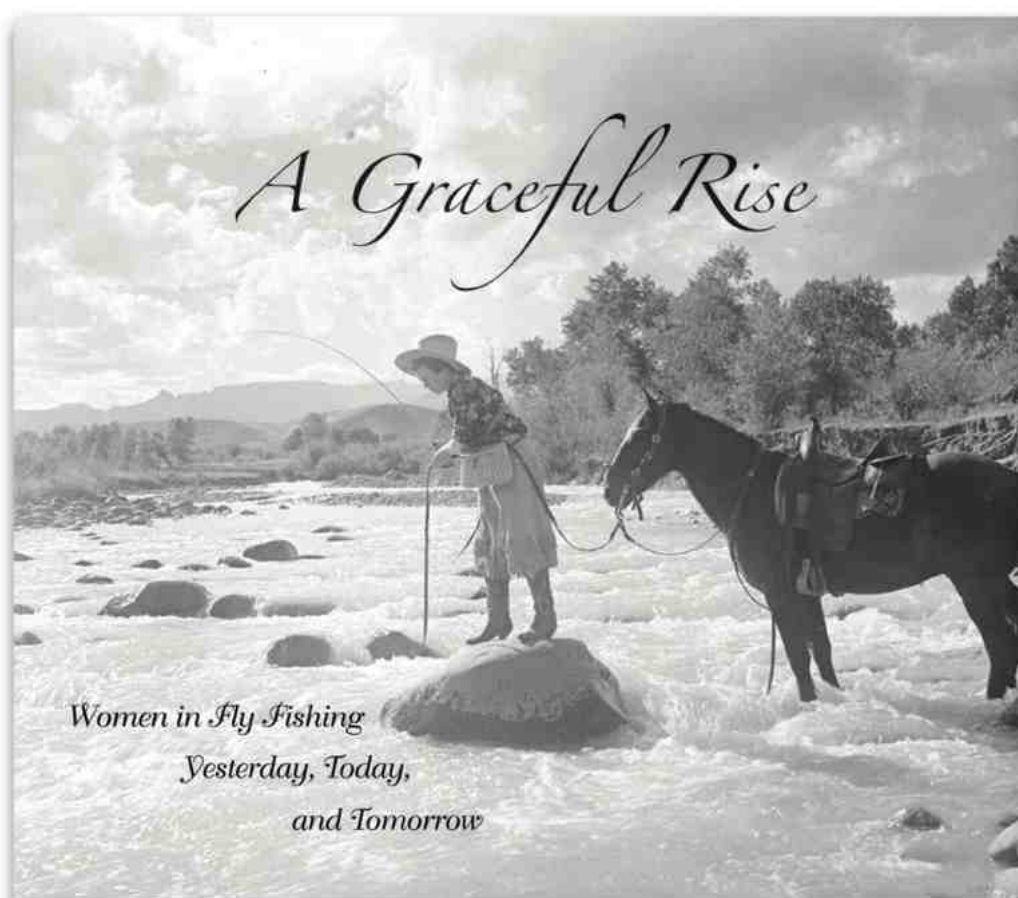
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Back issues are \$10 a copy for nonmembers, \$5 for members.

To order, please contact Laura Napolitano at (802) 362-3300 or via e-mail at lnapolitano@amff.com.



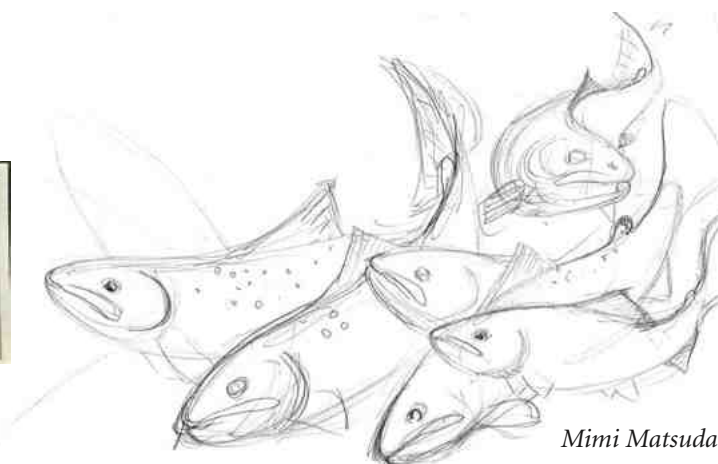


The official catalog for the American Museum of Fly Fishing's groundbreaking exhibition, *A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, is now available for purchase.

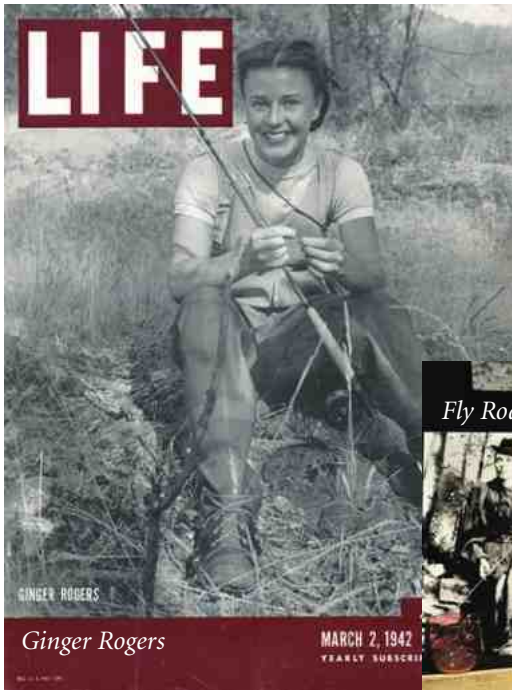
This 105-page book profiles all of the women featured in the exhibit. Hundreds of images, both color and black-and-white, complement their stories, ranging from photographs, mementos, and other items from various personal collections to materials and artifacts from the museum's own archives.

\$19.95 (plus postage and handling)

To order, please visit the museum store online at www.amff.com or call (802) 362-3300.



Catalog cover image courtesy of University of Wyoming, Charles J. Belden photographs and negatives, Collection Number 00598, American Heritage Center. Used with permission.



Maggie Merriman



Kathy Scott



Helen Shaw



Diana Rudolph



Annette Lilly Russ



Diane Michelin



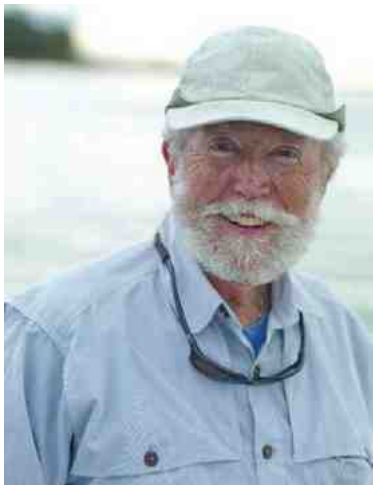
Susan Balch



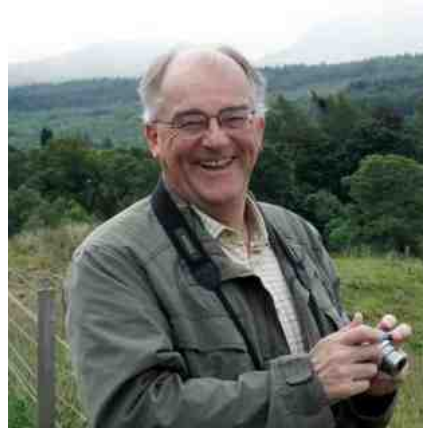
Sisters on the Fly

CONTRIBUTORS

Dennis Welsh



Marsha Karle



Jerry Gibbs served as *Outdoor Life's* fishing editor for thirty-five years, having filled the position in 1973, following the death of Joe Brooks. He is the author of several technical fishing books as well as the award-winning short story collection *Steel Barbs*. He was recipient of the American Sportfishing Association's Lifetime Achievement award in 2005 and Johnson Outdoors' Fishing Journalist of the Year in 2006. He has presented position papers to federal fisheries agencies and state fish and wildlife agencies. His work has won top honors from the Outdoor Writers Association of America, including the prestigious Excellence in Craft award in 2008. His stories and photos have appeared in most of the nation's salt- and freshwater fishing journals, to which he continues to contribute. Gibbs has fished in salt and fresh water across the United States and Canada, and in Europe, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Russia, New Zealand, and Australia. He lives on the Maine coast with his wife Judy and their French Brittany, chasing striped bass and fly rod-manageable bluefins while scheming ways to head south when the fish do.



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 2011, Schullery was named to the "Legends of the Headwaters" honor roll by the Madison-Gallatin Trout Unlimited Chapter, Montana, for his work as a writer and historian of fly fishing. His fly-fishing memoir, *The Fishing Life*, will be published by Skyhorse Publishing in fall 2012.

Todd Hosman



Gordon M. Wickstrom of Boulder, Colorado, holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University and is a professor emeritus of Franklin and Marshall College. He has written for *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *Fly Tyer*, *Anglers' Journal*, the *Art of Angling Journal*, and *Wild on the Fly* and is a regular contributor to the *American Fly Fisher*. He has published a linear display of the chronology of fly fishing and writes and circulates quarterly the *Bouldercreek Angler*, "a gazette for those who fish" and the *Bouldercreek Actor*, "a gazette for those who make theatre." He blogs at bouldercreekangler.blogspot.com.

Wickstrom's *Notes from an Old Fly Book* was published by the University Press of Colorado in 2001. *Late in an Angler's Life* was published by the University of New Mexico Press in 2004. His *The Great Debate: A Fantasia for Anglers* was produced on stage and published in 2006.

Telling the Saltwater Story



The museum had the unique opportunity to interview and film nine of the early pioneers of saltwater fly fishing (seated at table, from left to right): Stu Apte, Flip Pallot, Chico Fernandez, Nat Ragland, Lefty Kreh, Nick Curcione, Joan Wulff, Bill Curtis, and Mark Sosin. This filming is part of an exciting initiative to document the history of American saltwater angling. Photo by Pat Ford.

OVER THE PAST four years, the museum has been expanding its programs to encourage people to learn about fly fishing's past and present and to broaden the audience we reach. Through our exhibitions, publications, community events, gallery programs, and presentations—and through this remarkable journal—our goal is to ensure that our audience is exposed to a great variety of fly-fishing subjects and issues. Our current initiative is no exception, and the museum looks forward to presenting the story of American saltwater fly fishing.

We began our saltwater project in 2011 when Jerry Gibbs, retired fishing editor for *Outdoor Life* magazine, was contracted to compile the long history of American saltwater fly fishing. Within a few months, Jerry submitted an eighty-page report that traced saltwater angling from its first mention in England before 1840 through the current innovations that have enhanced the saltwater fly-fishing experience. Jerry has also put together a timeline of the saltwater story as it relates to other significant American history events and, most recently, a report that documents the development of saltwater fishery conservation. These important reports will assist us as we map out an exhibition for our gallery and a subsequent exhibition that will travel across the country for installation at other venues. Jerry has also agreed to write a few saltwater articles for publication in our journal, the first of which appears in this issue.

Another aspect of this saltwater project is to capture the histories of some of the living pioneers of the sport. This past March the museum brought together nine such pioneers: Mark Sosin, Bill Curtis, Stu Apte, Flip Pallot, Nick Curcione, Joan Wulff, Chico Fernandez, Nat Ragland, and Lefty Kreh. Each

participant was first individually interviewed, then a panel discussion of all nine was convened. Through the talents of producer/director Jeffrey M. Pill (who was also responsible for our award-winning DVD *Why Fly Fishing*), along with his professional crew of cameramen and soundmen, these pioneers were filmed over a three-day period. The raw footage gathered will serve two purposes: first, it is an important document containing the histories of these saltwater pioneers; second, the museum, through postproduction work, can include the interviews in the exhibitions and possibly produce a separate, expanded DVD about saltwater fly-fishing history.

The museum is most appreciative of the project funding we have received through the generosity of the following contributors: Dave Walsh, Mike Bakwin, Pete Bakwin, Brad Mills, Bill Leary, and the late Gardner Grant. Offering guidance throughout this project are several museum trustees, including Jim Heckman, Nancy Zakon, Pat Ford, Gary Sherman, Bill Leary, Andrew Ward, Walter Matia, and George Gibson. We appreciate that the International Game Fish Association hosted the recent saltwater pioneer filming project, waiving all facility fees, and allowed our crew access to its spectacular headquarters building.

Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama is leading the project. Yoshi will be working closely with Jerry Gibbs to bring you an interesting, interactive, and complete look at the saltwater story. If you have some information to share or saltwater artifacts that might be of interest, please e-mail Yoshi at yakiyama@amff.com.

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, exhibitions, and public programs provide documentation of the evolution of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry in the United States and abroad from its origins to the present. Rods, reels, flies, tackle, art, books, manuscripts, and photographs form the basis of the museum's collections.

The museum provides public programs to fulfill its educational mission, including exhibitions, publications, gallery programs, and special events. Research services are available for members, visiting scholars, students, educational organizations, and writers. Contact Yoshi Akiyama at yakiyama@amff.com to schedule a visit.

VOLUNTEER!

Throughout the year, the museum needs volunteers to help with programs, special projects, events, and administrative tasks. You do not have to be an angler to enjoy working with us! Contact Laura Napolitano at lnapolitano@amff.com to tell us how we would benefit from your skills and talents.

JOIN!

Membership Dues (per annum)

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

The museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. Membership dues include four issues of the *American Fly Fisher*; unlimited visits for your entire family to museum exhibitions, gallery programs, and special events; access to our 7,000-volume angling reference library; and a discount on all items sold by the museum on its website and inside the museum store, the Brookside Angler. To join, please contact Laura Napolitano at lnapolitano@amff.com.

SUPPORT!

The American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. Please contact us if you wish to contribute funding to a specific program, donate an item for fund-raising purposes, or place an advertisement in this journal. We encourage you to give the museum consideration when planning for gifts, bequests, and memorials.