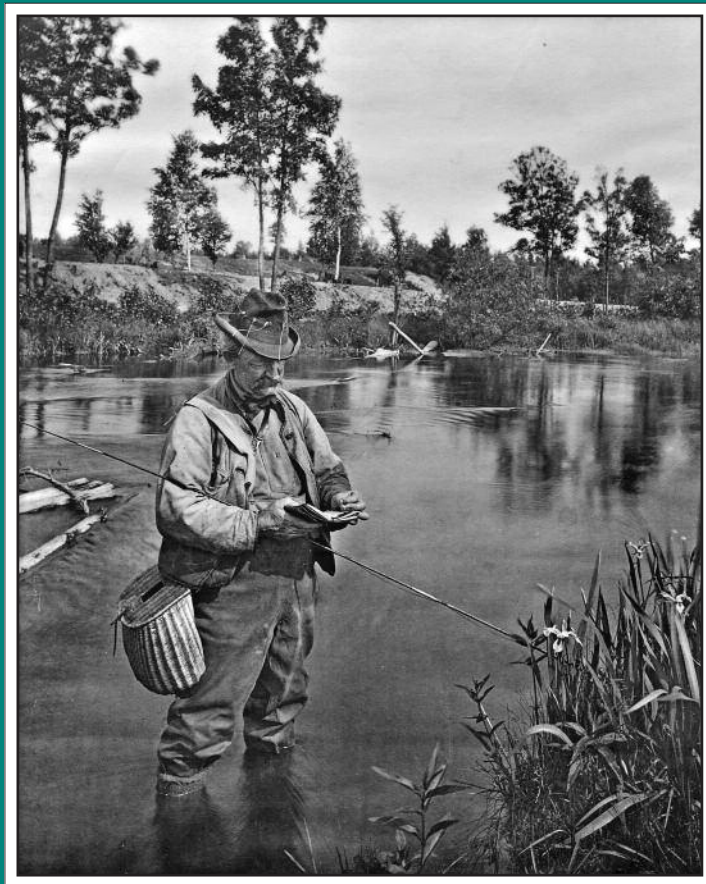


50th Anniversary

# *The* American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

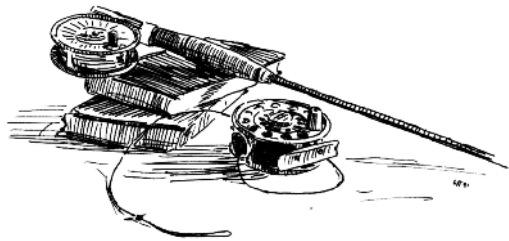


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FALL 2018

VOLUME 44 NUMBER 4

# Still Celebrating



**A**FTER ALL THE WAYS we've celebrated the museum's fiftieth anniversary this year (dinners! receptions! a dedicated issue of the *American Fly Fisher*!), we're basking in the satisfaction of accomplishment, especially after the positive feedback about the summer issue. Many of you took time to tell us how much you enjoyed the museum timeline and our "Fifty Museum Favorites," a showcase of items beloved by staff. We had a great time putting those pieces together, and we're thankful to good museum friends who contributed to our special anniversary edition.

And now back to our authors, who have been waiting patiently for publication while we were off celebrating ourselves for an entire issue.

The name A. J. Bradford isn't widely recognized in the world of angling history, but because of two well-known fly-fishing photos—widely distributed through turn-of-the-twentieth-century promotional Michigan railroad materials, *Field & Stream*, and *Forest and Stream*—his face was famous. Over the years, few publications identified the angler at all, and some misidentified him (e.g., as Michigan conservationist William B. Mershon or President Grover Cleveland). We at the *American Fly Fisher*, it turns out, are among those who got it wrong when we assumed that a photo in the museum's collection was labeled correctly. Robert E. Kohrman sets the record straight in "Old Brad: The Best-Known Fishing Guide in the Country," giving a thorough history of the photos, the angler they capture, and the photographer. Head to the Pere Marquette with us on page 2.

Some of you may already be familiar with the who-invented-it controversy starring Ed Shenk and Ernie Schwiebert. In "The Letort Hoppers," John Capowski notes that within the controversy are bigger questions that are "easy to ask but difficult to answer." What importance does the name of a pattern have in making it the original? How different do a pattern's materials need to be from an existing fly to make it a new one? To what degree does a fly with the same materials fastened in a different fashion make it a dif-

ferent one? Who is the originator of a fly if two very similar or same flies are designed contemporaneously by two creators? Enjoy this history of a hopper fight, beginning on page 13.

"Even very experienced guides do not see this often: a fine fisherman, an Atlantic salmon, a bamboo fly rod, and a Bogdan reel all doing what they were made to do." So writes Robert Sohrweide in a reminiscence of his first salmon-fishing trip with his friend Rob. This Telling Tails piece, "Bamboo and Bogdan," can be found on page 16.

In March, the fly-fishing world lost the legendary Lefty Kreh, a good friend to the museum. We were grateful to receive items from his tying room for our collection, including his tying desk, which Digital Marketing Coordinator Alex Ford describes in detail in "Inside Lefty's Tying Room" (page 18). Take a look.

I'm sad to say that we've lost other museum friends this year, including two in July: Leon Martuch of Scientific Anglers fame, who was a longtime museum trustee and past president, and the writer Art Lee. When Martuch was honored with the museum's Heritage Award in 2013, former executive director Paul Schullery wrote a tribute for the occasion; we share it with you on page 23. Then, on page 24, Galen Mercer memorializes his good friend in "Riverman: Remembering Art Lee."

Summer brought with it our weekly kids clinic in July (page 26) and our annual fly-fishing festival in August (page 20). We're happy to welcome so many friends to the museum grounds.

And speaking of the kids clinics and the festival, I should mention that the museum is lucky to have a posse of dedicated tiers who help us out with demonstrations and teaching events. In the spirit of thanking people who helped us make it to fifty, we'd like to thank our tiers publicly, especially those who have been tirelessly volunteering over the last decade (page 22).

Yes, we're still celebrating. On to fifty-one!

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
EDITOR



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# The American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

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ON THE COVER: *Andrew J. "Old Brad" Bradford standing in the Baldwin River in Michigan. From the collection of Robert E. Kohrman.*

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# Old Brad: The Best-Known Fishing Guide in the Country

by Robert E. Kohrman

Shortly after the end of the nineteenth century, a seemingly obscure angler from rural west Michigan was described as the “best-known fishing guide in the country.”<sup>1</sup> The fisherman, Andrew J. Bradford, also known as A. J. Bradford, often referred to himself as “Brad” and in later years as “Old Brad.” He was from Baldwin, a small community, located astride the upper reaches of the Pere Marquette River and its various branches, a watershed recognized then and now for its fine trout fishing. However, from a national perspective and in an apparent contradiction to the above laudatory description, Old Brad was a relatively anonymous fly fisher. Moreover, in the world of angling history, his name evokes no recognition today. This seeming paradox arises from the means by which Old Brad rose to prominence. He was the nameless subject of two iconic and well-known American piscatorial images.

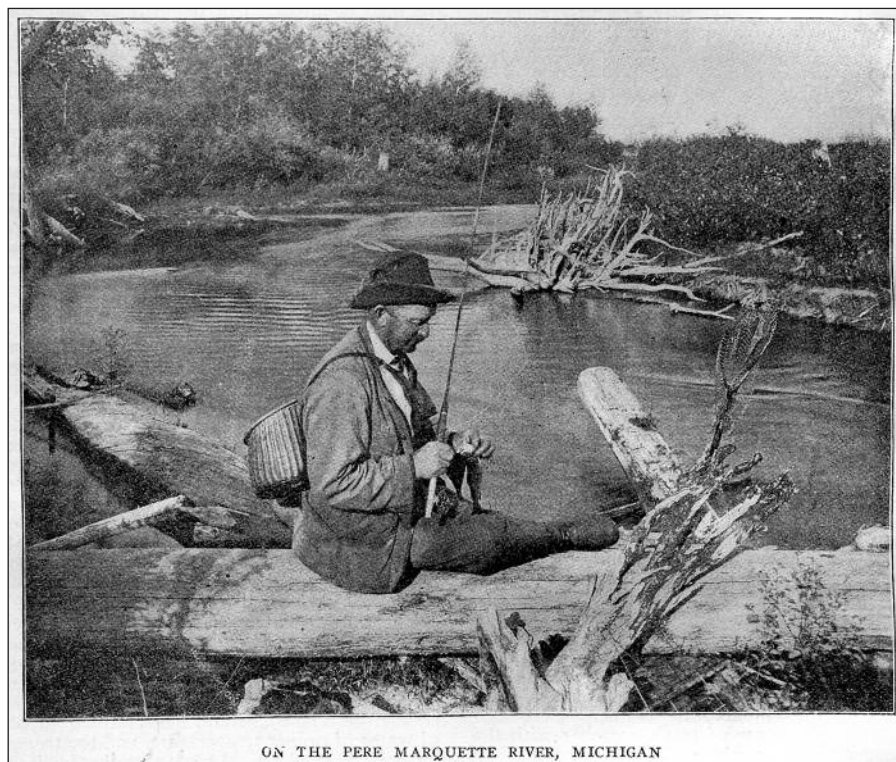
## A Sitting Angler: Old Brad Removing a Fly from a Brook Trout

In early 1902, in what was a major advertising effort, the Pere Marquette Railroad (PMRR) printed many copies of a large-format photo of Old Brad sitting on a log beside a stream and, in a unique promotional venture, distributed them to railroad agents and interested sportsmen throughout the country. The first published advertisement of the photograph appeared in the February 1902 issue of *Field & Stream*, wherein the stream was identified as Michigan’s Pere Marquette River. The magazine noted that a reader could “send 25 cents in stamps (to cover cost of packing and postage) to H. F. Moeller, G.P.A., Pere Marquette Railroad Co., Detroit, Mich., and a copy will be sent to any address.”<sup>2</sup> The copy was described as a 16-by-20-inch platinum print. It appeared that the railroad was effectively giving away these delightful

photographs. The image was captivating: an elderly angler in repose, carefully extracting a fly from the lip of a brook trout—an act to which every sportsman might aspire. At the time, this compelling scene was perhaps the largest and most popular angling photograph ever to receive nationwide distribution.

One of *Field & Stream*’s most important magazine competitors, *Forest and Stream*, apparently took note of this event. Just a few months later, it published a supplementary page with a smaller version of the very same photograph and inserted it unbound into a regular issue of the magazine.<sup>3</sup> Both magazines gave copyright credit to the railroad’s distributor of the image, H. F. Moeller, and identified the stream in the

photo as the Pere Marquette River but offered no additional information regarding the angler or the photographer.<sup>4</sup> The poster size of the photograph as distributed by the railroad allowed it to be prominently displayed on the walls of many train stations, cabins, and homes; as a consequence, the attractive print proved to be a sensational promotion.<sup>5</sup> To meet popular demand, the PMRR distributed thousands of copies of the large-format photos in various versions.<sup>6</sup> In subsequent years, the company continued to use the image in its various publications and ultimately identified Old Brad as the fly fisherman. However, his name never appeared in advertisements or directly on the large photographs. To most of the country, he



*Photo of Old Brad taken from the February 1902 Field & Stream magazine.*

was seen as an appealing, but unknown, angler.

#### A Standing Angler: Old Brad and Trout Time in the Pere Marquette Country

Presumably based on the widespread circulation of the 1902 Old Brad photo, the PMRR launched a second marketing campaign in 1904 based on another 16-by-20-inch photograph of Bradford. This promotion, using a different image of Old Brad, appeared in a full-page advertisement for the railroad in the 7 May 1904 issue of *Forest and Stream* and later in similar ads in several 1906 issues of the *National Sportsman*.<sup>7</sup> Again, readers of these sporting periodicals were encouraged to write for a wonderful angling print. This second large-format picture shows a standing angler with his fly wallet—once again a scene with which all fly fishermen might easily identify. The photo reveals an idyllic vista. Irises are blooming nearby, and Old Brad is standing in a stream, presumably the Baldwin River, apparently pondering which fly to use.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, all distributed prints portray Old Brad and surroundings in a reversed image (at right).<sup>9</sup> As in the 1902 advertising effort, the name of the fisherman was not mentioned by the railroad; and once again, this marketing campaign appeared to be very successful as several versions of the new photograph received broad dissemination. Fittingly, the 1906 edition of the photo also included a printed title, *Trout Time in the Pere Marquette Country*.



*Large-format, reversed-image photo of Old Brad standing in the Baldwin River. From the collection of Robert E. Kohrman.*

#### Lack of Identification Continues

Following the initial distribution of the large-format photographs, there were numerous uses of the same images in other publications that continued the visual recognition of an unidentified Old Brad, even into the twenty-first century. In 1904, the *American Fish Culturist* published an image of a nameless Old Brad that was identical to the photo that appeared earlier in *Field & Stream*, as well as two other photos showing him as an unidentified fly fisher.<sup>10</sup> Many years later, in a 1979 history of hunting in the state, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs published the image of Old Brad standing in a stream and misidentified him as William B. Mershon, the famous Michigan conservationist.<sup>11</sup> In 1987, Richard W. Oliver's cataloged auction of fishing tackle and related items described a large print of Old Brad sitting as "an old fly fisherman at streamside gently removing the fly from a little brook

trout."<sup>12</sup> An article in a 2000 issue of the *American Fly Fisher* labeled the standing photo of Old Brad as President Grover Cleveland.<sup>13</sup> In 2012, Lang's Tackle Auctions mistakenly described the sitting image of Old Brad as "William B. Mershon on the Pine River"—also misidentifying the stream in the photo.<sup>14</sup> As recently as 1987, a poster-sized photograph of Old Brad that today hangs on the walls of the Chamber of Commerce in Baldwin, Michigan—Old Brad's hometown—was misidentified when the item was received as a gift.<sup>15</sup> In 1962, angling historian Harold Smedley named Old Brad as the subject in both large-format photos, but he did not include any images of Old Brad in the article and also incorrectly identified the railroad that published the promotional photographs.<sup>16</sup> Because of this, his conclusions seemingly went unnoticed. Finally, in 2009, Baldwin's own Lake County Historical Society properly rec-

ognized the anonymous angler standing in the Baldwin River as "Andrew Bradford" and placed his image on the cover of their new pictorial publication that became part of the Acadia Publishing Company's series on *Images of America*.<sup>17</sup>

Given the lack of information associated with the original large-format photographs, it is difficult to fault any of the publications for errors in identification. Indeed, how would one know that it was Old Brad shown in the photographs? In the past century, there appears to have been little description of the angler who at one time was supposedly the country's best-known fishing guide. It is a bit of a mystery why the PMRR did not do more to promote Old Brad's identity because his image became an integral part of the railroad's competitive efforts to attract sportsmen.

Michigan Railroads and the Fishing



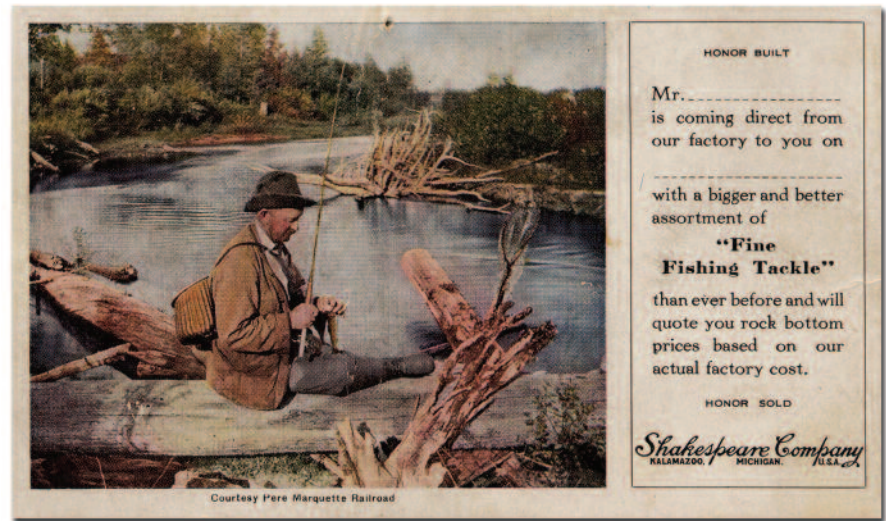
## Tourist

Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, railroad networks in Michigan, as in much of the rest of the country, saw considerable growth stemming from enormous public land grants coupled with later development of the timber and mining industries. During the late 1800s, the miles of track in Michigan doubled, redoubled, and kept on expanding. Encouraged by the growth of railroad transportation, the northern Lower Peninsula of the state became a prime tourist destination as travelers were attracted to the pure air, bucolic countryside, and splendid resorts found in Traverse City, Charlevoix, Petoskey, Harbor Springs, Mackinac Island, and many other locations.

All Michigan railroad companies aggressively vied for the business of tourists, fishermen, and hunters with advertising brochures. Beginning in 1892, a precursor to the PMRR, the Chicago & West Michigan Railway (C&WM), jumped into the advertising fray. The railroad especially catered to travelers from Chicago who could board a train in early morning and arrive in Petoskey by evening with stops in Grand Rapids and Traverse City along the way.

A tourist booklet published by C&WM in 1897 was particularly attractive because it contained two different full-page photographs of a middle-aged and bewhiskered fly fisherman unhooking trout; in one photo he is standing, and in the other he is sitting.<sup>18</sup> It was this latter photo that was made into the large-format print by the Pere Marquette Railroad in 1902. An 1899 merger of several companies, including the C&WM, created the new PMRR. In 1902, the PMRR noted, “the fishing and hunting territory tributary to the Pere Marquette Railroad is the best in the state, and for some kinds of sport there is no better country anywhere than the lower peninsula of Michigan.”<sup>19</sup> This bit of puffery was typical for such promotional literature, and as Paul Schullery put it, “in prose at least as ecstatic and beckoning as the ads for any modern fishing lodge in any modern fly-fishing magazine, the railroads promised us heaven.”<sup>20</sup> In reality, at the turn of the century, the Pere Marquette River was indeed a wonderful trout stream.

After the formation of the Pere Marquette Railroad, the new company annually printed two brochures: *Fishing and Hunting in Michigan* and *Michigan Summer Resorts*, each with a different emphasis, but both catering to the

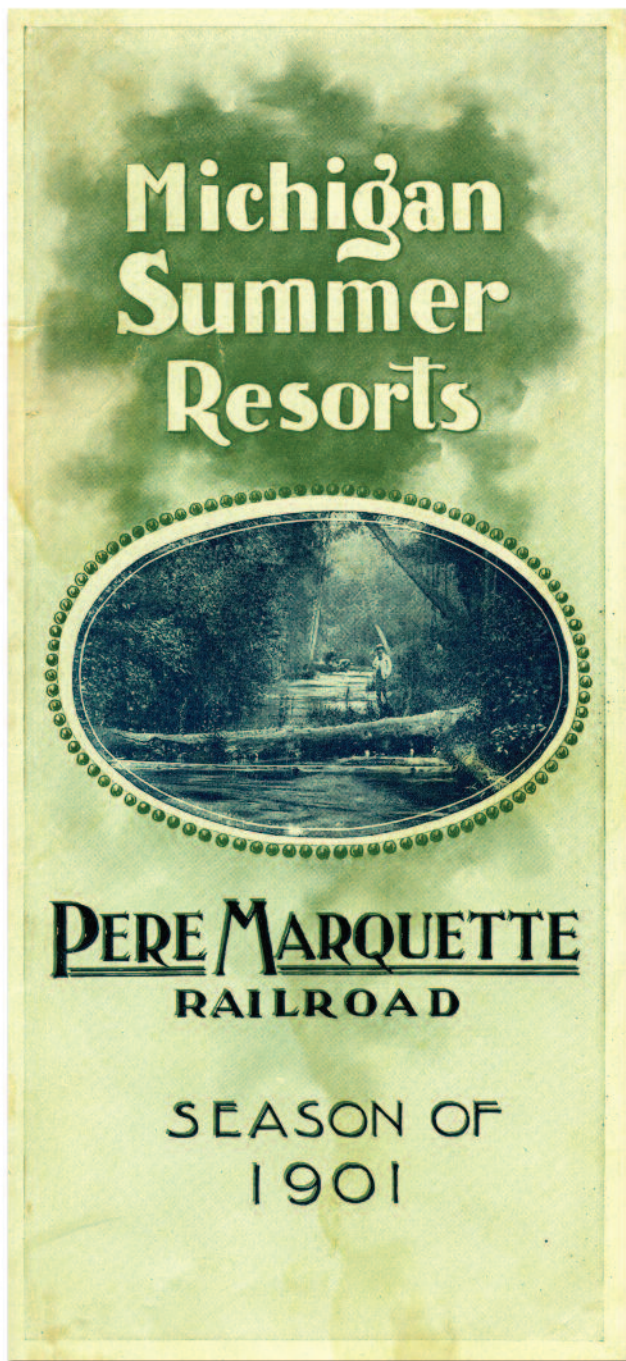


Old Brad pictured on a Shakespeare advertising postcard—unidentified. Used with permission of Bonnye Woods, granddaughter of Old Brad.

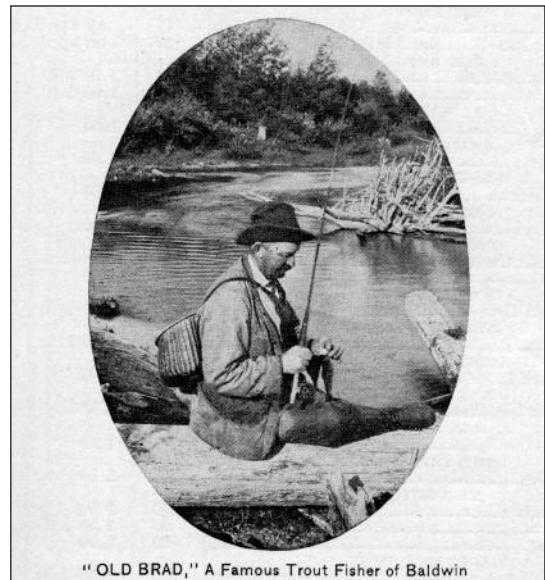


Map of the Pere Marquette Railroad system taken from the inside cover of *Fishing and Hunting in Michigan* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1908). As illustrated, the major south-north track for the PMRR extended from Chicago via Grand Rapids to Traverse City and Petoskey. In parallel fashion, the highlighted blue line represents the main track of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad (GR&IRR), which extended from Cincinnati via Fort Wayne to Grand Rapids and Petoskey and ultimately to Mackinaw City. The GR&IRR was a fierce competitor for potential tourists and was commonly referred to as “The Fishing Line.”





*The cover of the 1901 edition of Michigan Summer Resorts, a booklet that included the same image as seen in the large-format photograph later advertised in Field & Stream. From the collection of Robert E. Kohrman.*



*This image appeared in the 1901 edition of Michigan Summer Resorts and provided the first published identification of Old Brad as the subject in the earlier and larger photograph of the sitting angler. From the collection of Robert E. Kohrman.*

sportsman tourist. The publications were printed in ephemeral paperbound editions, and few copies have survived to the present day. These brochures became the means by which the PMRR finally identified Old Brad.<sup>21</sup> The railroad first included an unidentified photo of Old Brad sitting in its 1900 edition of Michigan Summer Resorts; his identity was then revealed in the 1901 edition of the same title, when a portion of the photo of the angler was titled "Old Brad, A Famous Trout Fisher of Baldwin."<sup>22</sup> Old Brad was now known by his nickname, and his formal identity as A. J. Bradford was shortly thereafter revealed

by the railroad in its 1903 publication of Fishing and Hunting in Michigan.<sup>23</sup> The secret was out to a limited national audience; the anonymous angler in the sitting photo was A. J. Bradford or Old Brad!

The photographic image of Old Brad standing in a stream first appeared in the Forest and Stream advertisement and in the 1904 edition of the PMRR's Fishing and Hunting in Michigan.<sup>24</sup> The PMRR used the picture many times in advertising, but it never directly identified Old Brad as the standing angler in any annual publications. In like fashion, these booklets never identified the photogra-

pher who took the photos of Old Brad. William F. Sesser: Angling Photographer

On some versions of the two large-format angling photographs are found, in very small print, the words copyright and W. F. Sesser, accompanied by different dates. These clues provide the link to the photographer whose artistry yielded the iconic images of Old Brad. William F. Sesser, a studio photographer from St. Joseph, Michigan, followed a professional path that took him increasingly far afield. He was described in the 1880 village directory as having "a reputation for

producing fine work which few artists in the state enjoy.”<sup>25</sup> In addition to the usual studio work centered on people in the community, he aspired to more worldly opportunities and ultimately developed a national reputation for photography associated with transportation and tourism. In 1886 and 1887, he was one of the first photographers to publish cabinet card photographs of scenes from Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. In 1889, he taught photography at the famed Chautauqua program held at the Bay View Assembly in Petoskey, Michigan.<sup>26</sup> In 1890, he visited Mexico City and later published *Vistas of the City of Mexico*, a tourist photo-booklet that partly inspired his accomplishments in Hawaii during the 1890s.<sup>27</sup>

In early 1891, Sesser developed a plan for obtaining large-format photographs of Hawaiian scenery. He proposed an all-expenses-paid trip to Hawaii and sent his scheme to Lorin A. Thurston, a prominent citizen of Hawaii, who was very active in promoting the islands’ potential annexation by the United States. Thurston, together with the Volcano House Hotel and the Oahu Railway and Land Company, commissioned Sesser to come to Hawaii. On the islands, Sesser took 150 photographs with an 8-by-10-

inch camera and about fifty photographs with a 14-by-17-inch view camera.<sup>28</sup> Sesser’s work in Hawaii resulted in three view books and a series of twenty large 14-by-17-inch photogravures that today are quite rare and valuable. These prints confirmed his ability as an outstanding creator of large-format photographic images.

Notably, upon his return to Michigan, he also self-published a rare booklet describing the Punahou School in Honolulu—an institution from which former President Obama graduated.<sup>29</sup> In 1893, Sesser, together with Thurston, used many of the Hawaiian photographs to create a large cyclorama for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Later, Sesser accompanied this display to both Boston and San Francisco and even traveled to Hawaii, Australia, and London attempting to further market the exhibit. By the end of the nineteenth century, he was a global traveler as well as an accomplished photographic artist.

Compared with his international experiences, it might seem that taking pictures of Old Brad in rural Baldwin, Michigan, would be anticlimactic for this worldly photographer. However, W. F. Sesser started taking pictures for the Chicago & West Michigan Railway in

1892; and, after the later railroad merger, he became the official photographer for the Pere Marquette Railroad. Indeed, by 1901, the railroad outfitted a baggage car for Sesser’s use that served as both a photography studio as well as his office.<sup>30</sup> Thus, he appeared to enjoy enormous professional flexibility and was able to coordinate his many railroad-related assignments with other initiatives. He provided photographs for the PMRR and its predecessor C&WM for almost twenty years and captured many scenes of hotels, tourist vistas, steamships, and sporting excursions that filled the firm’s brochures with attractive images to lure future travelers.<sup>31</sup> The publications of the PMRR contained many angling photos by Sesser, as did a circa 1900 view book for his hometown of St. Joseph.<sup>32</sup> Sesser’s photos may be generally characterized as pastoral views of the sport of fishing—scenes of an angler rowing a boat, netting and releasing fish, or even more contemplative images of sportsmen just waiting patiently for a bite or watching ripples in a stream. Based on the positive public reception to the superb photos showing Old Brad the angler, both sitting and standing, there is little doubt that Sesser’s prior experience with large-format photography and



*Photographer W. F. Sesser used burning magnesium as a source of illumination in his early cave photographs. Cabinet card is from the collection of Robert E. Kohnman.*

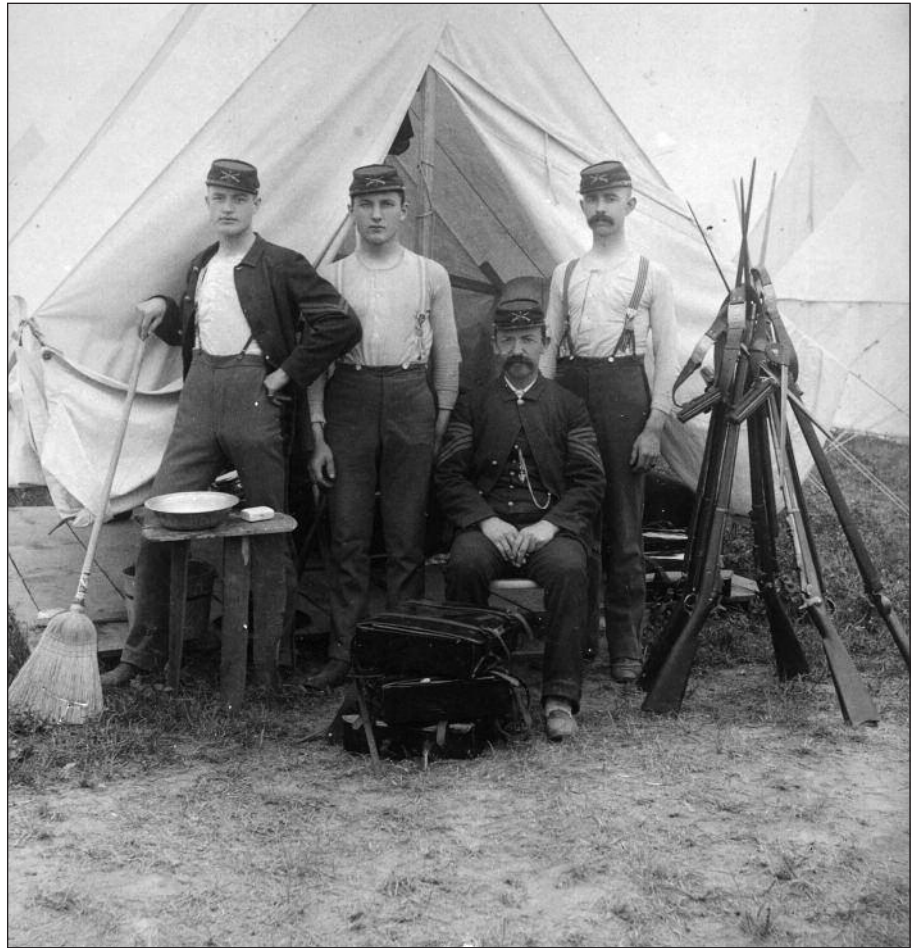


artistic composition paid significant dividends for the railroad.

#### A. J. Bradford: Early Life and Role in the Civil War

How did Old Brad end up in front of W. F. Sesser's camera? An examination of the early life of A. J. Bradford, his career, and his ultimate evolution as Old Brad the angler is instructive.

Bradford was born on 18 September 1842 in Oakland County, Michigan. When he was ten years old, his father moved the family first to Grand Rapids and then later to Ravenna, a community near Muskegon, Michigan. At the age of nineteen, young Bradford enlisted in the Union Army and served for almost three years in Company F of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry, led by Colonel Philip H. Sheridan.<sup>33</sup> He was involved in many significant actions, including Perryville, the Battle of Nashville, and numerous other engagements—Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Resaca, New Hope Church, and Kennesaw Mountain—all part of General Sherman's famous march on Atlanta. From his war experiences, Bradford developed an interest in writing, an avocation that he pursued for the rest of his life. In a local newspaper, he published a serialized, comprehensive account of his war memories and also wrote a two-part summary of the Battle of Nashville that was published in a national publication.<sup>34</sup> He was active in veterans' organizations and, in 1899, served as president of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry veterans' group.<sup>35</sup>

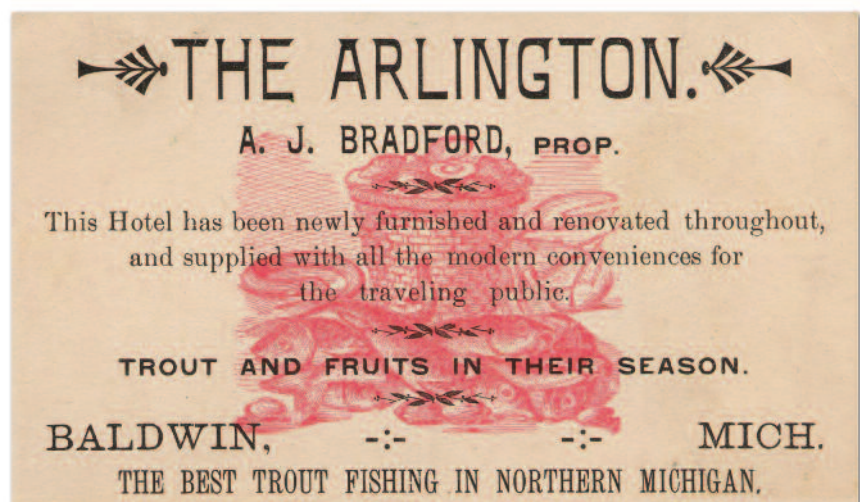


*In an undated photograph, Brad, as he called himself during his younger days, may be seen sitting in front of a Civil War-era tent. Oddly, the insignia on his sleeve appears to be that of a sergeant although he was a corporal during the war. This photo may be from a postwar reunion of his 2nd Michigan Cavalry unit, for which he borrowed the jacket. Photo used with permission of Bonnie Woods.*

#### Hotel Manager and Early Life in Baldwin

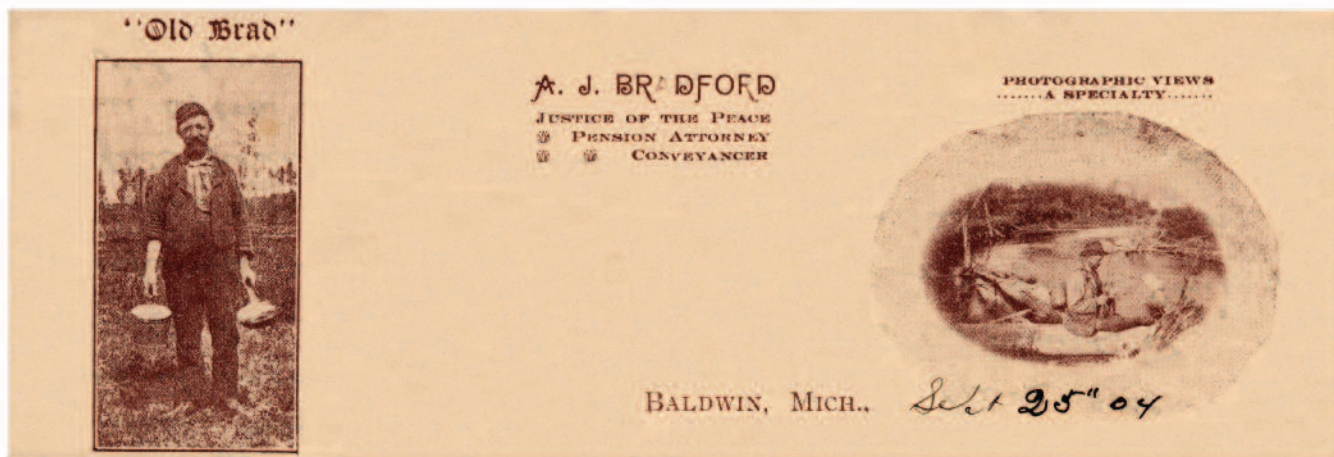
Immediately after the war, Bradford returned to Ravenna and, in 1866, married local resident Mary Eckles. He apparently explored several careers for the next few years and, in the late 1870s, briefly edited a newspaper, the Muskegon Times. In partnership with his father-in-law, he managed the Occidental Hotel in Muskegon for more than a decade before he and his wife opened the Bradford Hotel in 1887.

After the death of his wife in 1889, Bradford moved to Baldwin, Michigan; and, shortly thereafter, his daughter Aimee married and left for California. In retrospect, it appears that angling filled a void in his life and ultimately coupled well with his experiences in writing and hotel management. He operated first the Occidental Hotel and then the Arlington Hotel in Baldwin where his berries, steak, and fries became famous.<sup>36</sup> In



*Old Brad's business card emphasizes the interconnection of trout fishing, berry picking, and his hotel business. Image used with permission of Bonnie Woods.*





Letterhead from Old Brad's business stationery illustrating many of his livelihoods. Note in the insert photo his right hand is holding a berry pail while the other hand holds a frying pan for trout. Image used with permission of Bonnye Woods.



Old Brad shown wearing his deputy sheriff badge. Used with permission of Bonnye Woods.



In this photograph of his new baby son George, Old Brad appears to have the same hat and creel seen in the earlier large-format angling photographs. Photo used with permission of Bonnye Woods.

1892, he was elected as justice of the peace in Baldwin and, with the exception of one year, served continuously in that role until his death. For at least two years in the early 1890s, he worked on agricultural issues for the Michigan Department of State. He picked berries in season and was a professional photographer, United States pension attorney, and "conveyancer" or dealer in real estate. For a few years after 1901, he also managed the new eighty-eight-room Marlborough Hotel located just south of Baldwin and was the official photographer for both the hotel and the new cement factory in Marlborough.<sup>37</sup> Bradford pursued several other endeavors to supplement his income. In 1906, his name was even used in numerous advertisements for a possible treatment for hemorrhoids!<sup>38</sup> He wrote for the Lake County Star, the local newspaper, and in 1910 was elected village president of Baldwin. In the 1900 census, he listed his occupation as "deputy sheriff," whereas his response to a similar question in the 1910 census was "carpenter, odd jobs."<sup>39</sup> Despite his many disparate professions, there is no doubt that his work was of high quality, and he was a highly respected, prominent citizen of Baldwin, Michigan.

After fourteen years of life as a widower, Old Brad courted Clara Bonney of Thompsonville, Michigan, a former resident of Baldwin.<sup>40</sup> The couple was ultimately married on 21 December 1904. Shortly thereafter, Old Brad bought a lot on the main street of Baldwin not far from the Baldwin River, where he built their new home. In 1907, at the age of sixty-five, Old Brad became



the father of a baby son, George.

A. J. Bradford:  
The Fisherman

The hardscrabble life of Bradford ultimately led to his recognition as a well-known fisherman and guide. Soon after moving to Baldwin, he found himself living near the Pere Marquette River system, one of America's premier trout streams and a potential source of food for the table and income for him. Perhaps for these practical reasons, he began his angling career as a bait fisherman. Indeed, in the Lake County Star, he wrote this account of his fishing roots and introduction to fly fishing.

Was I ever a tenderfoot? Well yes I should say I was. When I first came to Lake County I had fished for bass, pickerel, siscos and bullheads with success, and as my head was somewhat swelled I just knew that I could gobble up the speckled trout as well as any of the old residents.

I became the owner of a 14 oz. bait rod, a brass reel, a five-cent line and a half dozen hooks, and I thought I was as well fixed up with fishing tackle as most of the fishermen residing in Baldwin.

Well, to begin with, I went to plunking, or using the barnyard hackle, and finally bought two flies and a three-foot leader, and started out to show the natives how easy it was to catch trout. I progressed finely, and in 1890, when Frank Nixon, Dick Bloomrich and one or two others came up from Grand Rapids the next year, I just told them that fly fishing was no good, and that they had better hire some of the boys to dig them some worms as plunking was the only thing that would win.

Nixon and Dick refused to take my advice and caught 110 and 80 the first day. The third day of their stay Nixon took me in hand and made me cast a leader of flies with the 14 oz bait rod all day long. I was tired and Nixon jawed because I made so much noise with my rod. However, I lived through it and brought in 46 trout to Nixon's 120. When Nixon went home he had money of mine to buy me a whole fly fishing outfit, and I have been pounding the streams ever since.<sup>41</sup>

Bradford evidently was successful in quickly adapting his skills to fly fishing, for in July 1890 he wrote, "The Pere Marquette River is the finest trout and grayling stream I ever chanced to meet. On times-out a little each day I have taken 460 speckled trout and 10 grayling

7-15 inches and up to 24 ounces. On May 23, I took 83 trout on [a] fly in less than 4 hours, all nearly of a size, three on one case, two 10 inches and one 9 inches weighing 3¼ pounds."<sup>42</sup> In 1893, Bradford was part of a group who caught 165 speckled trout with flies on the Little Manistee River. The anglers also landed fifteen grayling, but these were caught using bait.<sup>43</sup> It was later reported in Forest and Stream that while using a variety of fly patterns, he caught sixty trout on the Middle Branch of the Pere Marquette River.<sup>44</sup>

By 1899, Bradford's conversion to fly fishing appeared to be complete. He had become an expert in the art, and angling was a very satisfying activity as well as means to provide for his livelihood.

Just imagine yourself on the Pere Marquette River at the close of a hot summer's day, the mosquitoes have already begun their sweet music about your ears, the fish begin to rise for their evening meal and you make a cast of flies upon the clear waters with a careful calculation of luring one of those rainbows from their hiding place. You make two or three casts, there is a commotion in the water, a rush for the fly and with a simple turn of the wrist you have hooked a three-pound rainbow. Carefully, you handle your rod and line with the skill of an old angler; a step down the stream to ease the strain on your line, a coaxing pull to keep your prey from snags and roots, in fact a fight for supremacy for ten minutes and then Mr. Rainbows rolls up on his side and the victory is won. But what are you going to do now? Your already half-filled basket will not hold your latest catch, and you do not want to leave the river yet. You look around and finally string him on your basket strap and again begin to cast your flies for his mate. The rainbow trout is game every time, and if you do not believe my story ask John Waddell, A. D. Porter, Frank Nixon of Grand Rapids and any other old fisherman you run across.<sup>45</sup>

This newspaper column was signed "Old Brad," the first appearance of a name with which he increasingly identified.

Old Brad: The Best-Known Fishing  
Guide in the Country

Unfortunately, evidence of Old Brad's experiences with clients on the Pere Marquette River and other streams is severely limited by the absence of back files of the local newspaper, the Lake

County Star.<sup>46</sup> No written records survive that give names of individuals whom he guided or experiences they might have enjoyed. No authors are known to have written about his guiding services. Prominent fly fishers such as John Waddell and Frank Nixon appear to have fished with him as friends and not as clients. Nonetheless, his career lasted almost twenty years until he died of heart trouble on 8 June 1911. He was serving as village president of Baldwin at the time.

His obituary noted, "with his many years in hotels and as a fishing guide he made hosts of friends and these responded with a host of floral offerings that heaped the brier [sic] and fairly filled the home where he spent the later years of his life. Messages of condolence poured in from all parts of the state . . . it was he who furnished the subject for the famous Pere Marquette angling picture[s] of which more than 10,000 were sold. He was noted as a fly fisherman and guide and numbered among his friends, residents of nearly every state of the union."<sup>47</sup>

In retrospect, one can hypothesize how Old Brad was selected by the PMRR as the object of a photographic promotional campaign. He was the most prominent fishing guide in Baldwin and on the Pere Marquette River, a stream that had a name in common with that of the railroad. His genial demeanor and varied occupations brought him in touch with many people and made him quite popular with both local townspeople and tourists alike. His avuncular appearance coupled with the classic, well-worn garb of fishing jacket, creel, fishing net, and hat covered with snelled flies obviously was one that photographer W. F. Sesser found attractive; it also provided an irresistible icon to use as marketing symbol. His overall countenance was one with which the common man could easily identify. In a reference to Old Brad's photo, an unknown newspaper editor, under the headline "Fishing Styles Don't Change," mentioned that, "Styles may come and go and women's hats may never be alike two seasons in succession, but the style in trout fishing outfits varies little through the years. If you doubt it, look at this picture, one of the most famous old time fishing photographs ever made."<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the advertising people in the PMRR felt that naming him would detract from their promotional message that everyone should ride the Pere Marquette Railroad!

Ultimately, through his guiding and fishing experiences and despite the railroad's efforts to somewhat shield his identity, Old Brad's name became more

widely known. In 1904, a Chicago Chronicle newspaper article publically revealed him to a larger audience. It described him as “Michigan’s Grand Old Man of the Rod and Reel, and . . . one of the most noted fishermen in Michigan, if not the whole west . . . he is known far and wide because of the vast number of his pictures, which have been sold throughout the United States. He is a genial and mellow character and takes more pride in his piscatorial adventures than he does in anything else in the whole world . . . he has a great fund of anecdotes and is fond of telling stories of fishing excursions.”<sup>49</sup>

Despite his lack of broad personal recognition, the pictures of Old Brad provided a compelling and continuing appeal to sporting magazine publishers and readers who empathized with his iconic images. Even after his death, Forest and Stream magazine used Old Brad’s picture—unidentified—on covers of March issues in both 1913 and 1914 (at right).<sup>50</sup> For those who did know Old Brad, his kindly nature and love for angling were universal attributes that were captured in these photos. Was he the best-known fishing guide in the country? Probably not, but his images provided a visual appreciation of fly fishing and were exceptionally familiar to the national angling public.

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## endnotes

1. Passenger Department, Pere Marquette Railroad, Fishing and Hunting in Michigan (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1908), 21. This quotation continued to appear in booklets of the same title for the next several years.

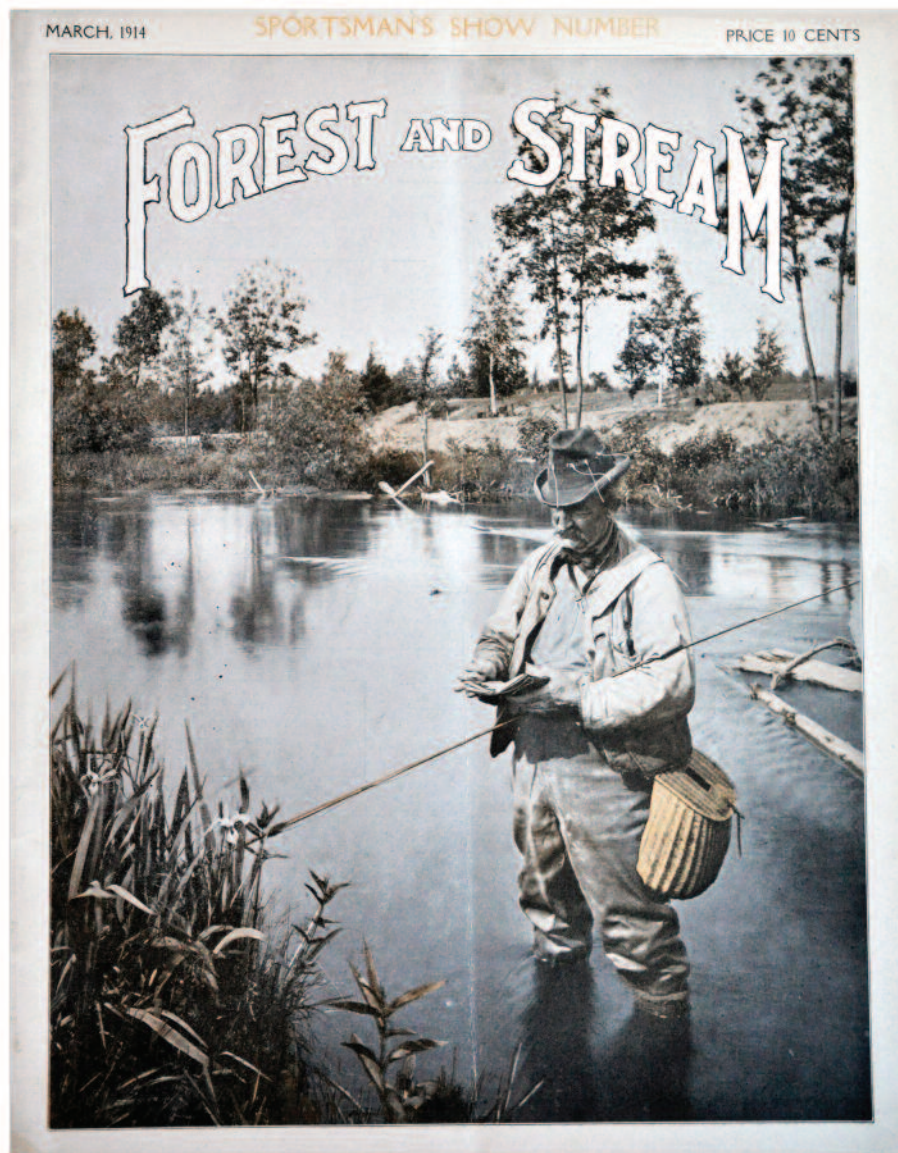
2. Field & Stream (February 1902, vol. 6, no. 12), 773. The text describing how to order the print is found on page 773, although the photo itself is shown on page 731.

3. Forest and Stream (10 May 1902, vol. 58, no. 19), [np], 101/2-by-15-inch sheet, with 8-by-10-inch image, laid in as supplement.

4. H. F. Moeller was the general passenger agent for the Pere Marquette Railroad from 1899 to 1912.

5. Harold Smedley, “The Michigan Brook Trout,” Trout (July–August 1962, vol. 3, no. 4), 8–9.

6. At least four versions of this photograph are known, and all are in an approximately 16-by-20-inch format. One version of the photograph is found within a printed matte border. The printing on the matte states on the pere marquette river with the phrase copyrighted 1902 by h. f. moeller. Another



*In contrast to the large-format image, Forest and Stream printed Old Brad’s picture in the correct orientation on its magazine cover. He was right-handed, and the vest buttons are shown on the right, or proper, side.*

edition of the photograph contains the words copyright 1901 by w. f. sesser in the lower left-hand corner identifying the photographer; the same large black-and-white photograph is also found with no printed lettering. Finally, several versions of this black-and-white photo appear to have been color tinted.

7. Forest and Stream (7 May 1904, vol. 62, no. 19), 390. Interestingly, as compared with the rest of the issue, a higher-quality grade of paper was used for the single page on which the ad appeared—most certainly to better reproduce the large photograph. The Forest and Stream advertisement indicated that a 1904 brochure titled “Fishing and Hunting in Michigan” was available by writing H. F. Moeller, G.P.A. of the Pere Marquette Railroad. Ads in the National Sportsman magazine offering large-format prints of Old Brad

standing in the stream later appeared in its June, July, August, and September 1906 issues.

8. The background of the photo shows a long and straight alteration in the hillside and suggests the roadbed of today’s M-37 adjacent to the Baldwin River, just south of the town of Baldwin. Harold Smedley stated that the site for the photograph was adjacent to the road. See Smedley, “The Michigan Brook Trout,” 8. See also “Mrs. Clara Bradford Is Oldest Citizen Here,” Lake County Star (30 March 1967), 7.

9. Unlike the large-format prints, the picture of Old Brad standing in the 1904 Forest and Stream advertisement is correctly oriented. All large-format prints of Old Brad standing in the stream show him using his left hand to select a fly and with the buttons located on the wrong side of his vest—evidence that the nega-



tive was reversed in the production process.

10. "Benefits of the Propagation of Game Fish to the State of Michigan," *The American Fish Culturist* (June 1904, vol. 1, no. 6), 4; other unnamed images of Old Brad are found on page 7 of the same issue and in the *American Fish Culturist* (August 1904, vol. 1, no. 8), 23.

11. Eugene T. Peterson, *Hunter's Heritage: A History of Hunting in Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan United Conservation Clubs, 1979), 31.

12. Richard W. Oliver Auction Gallery, Third Annual Auction of Fishing Tackle and Related Items, July 2–3, 1987, lot no. 501.

13. Bill Mares, "Fishing and Escape," *The American Fly Fisher* (Winter 2000, vol. 26, no. 1), 15.

14. Lang's Auction Catalog, October 2012, part 1, lot no. 769. Printing on the real photo postcard wrongly stated that the stream in the photo was the Pine River and appears to be partially responsible for Lang's incorrect description.

15. *Lake County Star* (16 June 1987), 1.

16. Smedley, "The Michigan Brook Trout," 8.

17. Bruce T. Micinski et al., eds., *Lake County [Michigan] Historical Society, Lake County: 1871–1960, Images of America* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing Co., 2009).

18. Passenger Department, Chicago & West Michigan Railway and the Detroit, Grand Rapids & Western Railroad, *Summer Tours 1897* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Dean Publishing Company, 1897), 64. This rare (only two copies found on WorldCat) brochure contains the first two photos of Old Brad—unidentified—to appear in any railroad publication. One photo of him standing is found on page 2; one of him sitting appears on page 57. In each image, he is removing a fly from a brook trout.

19. Passenger Department, Pere Marquette Railroad, *Fishing and Hunting in Michigan* (Detroit: The Richmond & Backus Co., 1902), 2.

20. Paul Schullery, *If Fish Could Scream* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2008), 22.

21. WorldCat locates only one copy each of the 1900 and the 1901 editions of *Michigan Summer Resorts*, both booklets containing the same photo of Old Brad sitting on a log. WorldCat also shows only one copy of the 1904 edition of *Fishing and Hunting in Michigan*, which introduces the nameless photo of Old Brad standing in a stream. Although the publication date of the booklet is not known, the railroad likely published the booklet before the season, or at least earlier in the season than 7 May 1904, when it appeared in an advertisement in *Forest and Stream* (see reference 7).

22. *Pere Marquette Railroad, Michigan Summer Resorts, Season of 1901* (Detroit: Richmond & Backus Co., 1901), 45.

23. Passenger Department, Pere Marquette Railroad, *Fishing and Hunting in Michigan, Season of 1903* (Detroit: Pere Marquette Railroad, 1903), 21.

24. Passenger Department, Pere Marquette Railroad, *Fishing and Hunting in Michigan, Season of 1904* (Chicago: R. L. Polk Printing Co., 1904), 7.

25. *The Daily News St. Joseph Directory for 1880* (St. Joseph, Mich.: Dudley, Jennings & Skinner, 1880), 77.

26. Frances J. Baker, "Bay View Assembly," *Michigan School Moderator* (5 September 1889, vol. 10, no. 1), 12.

27. *The St. Joseph Saturday Herald* (24 January 1891), 5; [W. F. Sesser], *Vistas of the City of Mexico, Illustrated by Photo-Gravures from the Original Photographs* (St. Joseph, Mich.: A. B. Morse Printer, 1891).

28. "Advertising the Islands," *Hawaiian Gazette* (10 November 1891), 6.

29. [W. F. Sesser], *A Souvenir of Punahou (Oahu College)* (Honolulu, H.I. (St. Joseph, Mich.: W. F. Sesser, 1892); *Honolulu Daily Bulletin* (14 January 1892), 3.

30. *The News-Palladium* [Benton Harbor, Mich.] (18 July 1901), 5.

31. In addition to providing images for the annual brochures, Sesser produced photos for several other railroad-related view books and at least one portfolio of prints.

32. Burkhard Bros., *Camera Stories In and About St. Joseph, Michigan* (St. Joseph, Mich.: A. B. Morse Co., 1900).

33. According to his obituary published in the local newspaper, when A. J. Bradford presented himself in Grand Rapids for enlistment in the Union army, he was so short that the recruiting officer asked him to stand on a sheet of paper so as to raise him to the required height. See "A. J. Bradford Passes Away," *Lake County Star* (8 June 1911), 1.

34. Bradford authored in serial form "My Story of the War" in the *Lake County Star* in the early 1890s. Regrettably, back files of this newspaper have not survived for this period, and his account is lost to history. His memories of the Battle of Nashville were initially published in the *National Tribune* (9 April 1896, vol. 15, no. 26), 1, and concluded in the next issue.

35. "A Very Happy Reunion," *Jackson Daily Citizen* (10 December 1899), 6.

36. "A. J. Bradford Passes Away," *Lake County Star*, 1.

37. Marlborough is now a ghost town located just south of Baldwin.

During the period of 1901–1907, the town was the location for manufacturing cement derived from the marl found in nearby lakes. At its inception, the factory was proposed to produce 12,000 barrels of cement daily. Ultimately, inadequate financing and planning forced closure of the facility. See "Building a Big Plant along the Marl Lakes," *Grand Rapids Press* (15 June 1901), 5.

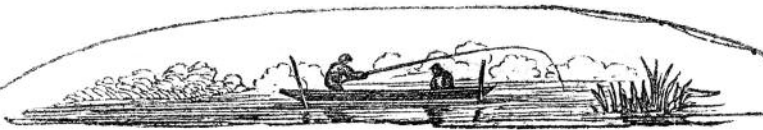
38. "Just as Young as He Used to Be," *Grand Rapids Press* (1 February 1906), 7; the same advertisement appeared in *Grand Rapids Press* issues of 2 April and 30 June 1906. The full-page advertisement is titled "Piles-Fistulae Cured" by Willard M. Burleson, M.D., and includes many individual supporting letters. Included is a 10 December 1903 testimonial letter from Bradford to Dr. Burleson and given the advertising title "Just as Young as He Used to Be," in which Andrew J. Bradford describes, in fulsome detail, the benefits of Burleson's treatment. It is not clear that the authors of the letters were paid for their correspondence, but the similar language that appears in all of them is suggestive that there was at least some degree of quid pro quo and much editing by the good doctor.

39. 1900 U.S. Census, *Lake County, Michigan, Population Schedule*, ED 15, Sheet 1, Line 80; 1910 U.S. Census, *Lake County, Michigan, Population Schedule*, ED 13, Sheet 5, Line 67.

40. Old Brad's second wife, Clara, referred to herself as "Mrs. Brad" and continued to live in the home that he built for more than fifty years after his death. See "Mrs. Clara Bradford Is Oldest Citizen Here," *Lake County Star* (30 March 1967), 7.

41. Old Brad [A. J. Bradford], *Lake County Star* (12 May 1899). This reference is to an unpaginated newspaper clipping found in a scrapbook owned by A. J. Bradford's granddaughter, Bonnye Woods. Frank Nixon was an angler, as well as a machinist who worked at a brush factory in Grand Rapids. While he apparently was an expert fly fisherman on the Pere Marquette River, he is recognized today for inventing an underwater casting and trolling bait named "The Aristocrat" used for bass fishing. This bait was described as made of "Persian ivory" or celluloid and is a highly sought-after fishing-lure collectible. See Carl F.





## Time to Dream

by George Jacobi

I wish I could fish the Neversink in 1891,  
Use silken line and catgut, Royal Coachman and Blue Dun.  
With cane and tweed and pipe smoke beneath a tall elm tree,  
We'd talk of quills and wood-duck wings,  
Theodore Gordon and me.

I wish I could fish the Batten Kill in 1942,  
learn from Wesley Jordan the craft of split bamboo.  
I'd argue with Jack Atherton about abstract art and such.  
And those brookies in the Gunsmith Pool?  
We'd never get a touch.

I wish I could fish Spring Creek just once in May of '53  
Down in that misty valley where it flows melodiously.  
The sky is all green drakes tonight, as Brown and I go back  
To a time before the poison.  
Yeah, I wish we had the knack.

I wish I could fish the Hous again about 1985  
With Pete and Jay and all those boys  
When they were all alive.  
Those golden April afternoons pass by in memory.  
We didn't know back then  
It was as good as it would be.

I get to play the Old Man now, pretend to know it all.  
I've seen the glory of the spring,  
Watched the last leaf fall.  
An old man has to pick and choose  
his times to go astream.  
It was always time for fishing.  
Now it's time to dream.

I wish I could fish in Lobsterville just one more night in June,  
Where skunks patrol and stripers roll under the Vineyard moon,  
Or Firehole, or Grand Lake Stream, down in the Evening Pool.  
Do landlocked salmon jump for joy  
Or is life just cruel?

*George Jacobi is a fly fisher, artist, writer,  
and musician living in Connecticut.*

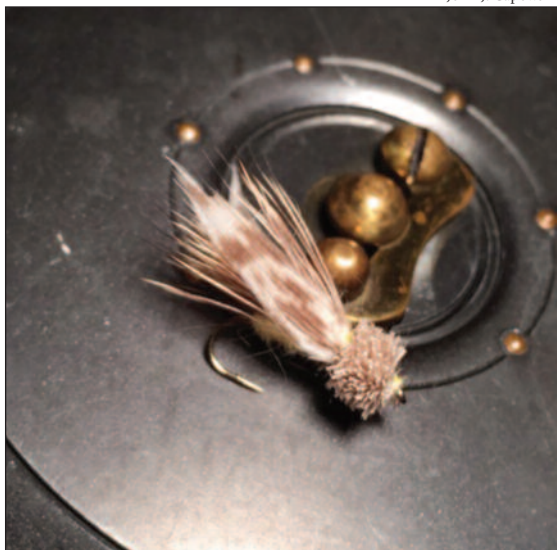




# The Letort Hoppers

by John J. Capowski

John J. Capowski



*A Schwiebert-style Letort Hopper tied by the author.*

John J. Capowski



*A Shenk Letort Hopper tied by Ed Shenk.*

ALTHOUGH WALTON DESCRIBED fishing as the contemplative person's recreation<sup>1</sup> and fly fishing is known as the quiet sport,<sup>2</sup> it is not without controversy. Fly-fishing controversies are minor compared with those in the larger world, but some have treated them with similar seriousness. Perhaps the best known fly-fishing conflict was the one between Frederick Halford, George Marryat, and their dry-fly adherents<sup>3</sup> and G. E. M. Skues,<sup>4</sup> who advocated the use of the upstream nymph. Another well-known conflict is between those who endorse the importance of imitative flies<sup>5</sup> and those who emphasize the presentation of an artificial fly.<sup>6</sup>

The focus of this article is on the controversy around the development of the Letort Hopper or, perhaps, the Letort Hoppers. The Letort Hopper most familiar to fly fishers is the one associated with Ed Shenk.<sup>7</sup> Shenk's Letort Hopper has a spun deer-hair head, dubbed yellow

body, and a flat wing made from turkey wing feathers.<sup>8</sup> It may be best known because although Shenk's career was with the Geological Survey,<sup>9</sup> he has been a commercial fly tier, and his Letort Hopper is and has been sold through many fly-fishing catalogs.<sup>10</sup> He also has been a guide and author who is most associated with Letort Spring Creek, a stream he has fished since childhood.<sup>11</sup>

The other Letort Hopper was designed by the late Ernest Schwiebert, the prolific fly-fishing author and lecturer.<sup>12</sup> Schwiebert's Letort Hopper also has a clipped deer-hair head and a yellow body, but instead of a flat wing, it has two slips of turkey feather, each one on opposite sides of the fly.<sup>13</sup>

The obvious question is: "Who invented the Letort Hopper?" Within the controversy are questions that are easy to ask but difficult to answer. What importance does the name of a pattern have in making it the original? For example, the

Purple Haze comes in a range of styles that include parachute, comparadun, and spider. Are all these flies the Purple Haze? How different do a pattern's materials need to be from an existing fly to make it a new one? Traditional Catskill dry flies generally are made with similar materials—for example, rolled wood duck wings, cock hackles, and a fur body—but slight variations in the color of the materials make them different flies with different originators.<sup>14</sup> A salient example is the Light Hendrickson, created by Roy Steenrod and named for his friend, A. E. Hendrickson,<sup>15</sup> which shares the same structure as the Dark Cahill, Light Cahill, and others, but varies only in body fur and hackle color. To what degree does a fly with the same materials fastened in a different fashion make it a different one? And who is the originator of a fly if two very similar or same flies are designed contemporaneously by two creators?



*"Autumn Stillness at Bonny Brook," photographed by James Steinmetz, circa 1950. Courtesy of Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Photo #PC-660.02.*

Because there are two Letort Hoppers, there are two histories. Shenk's history is straightforward. In *Ed Shenk's Fly Rod Trouting*, he sets out the structure and development of his Letort Hopper and briefly describes Schwiebert's hopper and its genesis.<sup>16</sup> After mentioning that "[g]rasshoppers are a must in any terrestrial fisherman's fly box," he tells us that he favors "the flat-winged Shenk Hopper, which I also call the Letort Hopper,"<sup>17</sup> and goes on to say:

Coincidentally, Ernie Schwiebert contrived a terrific hopper pattern also called the Letort Hopper. Ernie's pattern started with a yellow-nylon-yarn body, matched but divided mottled turkey-quill wings (like the Joe's Hopper), and a clipped deer-hair head with tips extending to the rear. My pattern started with a pale yellow dubbed spun-fur-body, and a mottled turkey wing with the feather folded, tied flat, and trimmed in a broad "V." The head is naturally tan deer hair, tied and clipped the same way as in Ernie's pattern. So, while I was tying and fishing my Shenk Hopper on the upper Letort and showing it to very few other fisherman, Ernie made a few visits to Charlie Fox's meadow and showed the Schwiebert Hopper to Ross Trimmer and Charlie. They promptly named his hopper the Letort Hopper.<sup>18</sup>

Shenk then tells us that the development and naming of the hoppers "was a series of coincidences, and neither of us knew that our similar patterns had identical names."<sup>19</sup> To differentiate the two Letort Hoppers, Shenk added his name to his hopper<sup>20</sup> and occasionally adds the descriptive phrase "flat-winged."<sup>21</sup>

During an oral history interview, Shenk explains that he tied and used size 12 Muddler Minnows as hopper imitations and derived his Letort Hopper from those Muddlers.<sup>22</sup> He suggests that Schwiebert's hopper, with its paired and upright wings, is more like the Joe's Hopper.<sup>23</sup>

In *Terrestrial Fishing*, Ed Koch sets out the evolution of hopper patterns on the Letort and writes that to charm the hopper-feeding Letort browns, Charlie Fox, Vince Marinaro, Ross Trimmer, Norm Lightner, Ed Shenk, and others "concocted hopper imitations, the likes of which I had never even dreamed about."<sup>24</sup> Koch recalled sitting with Charlie Fox, who had laid out on a bench a significant number of hoppers, while Fox described the various hoppers, who had tied them, and in some cases mentioned letters that accompanied some and extolled their virtues.<sup>25</sup> Fox's favorite had been from the Phillips Fly Company in Alexandria, Pennsylvania. This hopper pattern predated the efforts to make more effective patterns specifically for the Letort and had a body of "yellow deer hair clipped top, bottom, and sides, and a turkey-feather and deer hair wing."<sup>26</sup> With some variations, these are components of both Shenk's and Schwiebert's Letort Hoppers.

Koch, after mentioning the development and fishing of Marinaro's Pontoon Hopper,<sup>27</sup> talks about watching Ernie Schwiebert, with extraordinary skill, land a series of hopper-feeding Letort browns with his own hopper pattern. Koch describes the fly (the description closely matches Schwiebert's Letort Hopper) and then mentions "that everyone started tying Ernie's imitation."<sup>28</sup>

He follows this story by describing a Saturday morning when he and Shenk were fishing the Letort with hopper patterns and Shenk outfished him five or six fish to one. They compared flies, and Shenk was fishing his flat-wing Letort Hopper (which Shenk explained presented a more specific silhouette), while Koch fished a variation of Schwiebert's pattern.<sup>29</sup> Fishing one of Shenk's Letort Hoppers, "[t]he last half of the morning was the exact opposite of what had happened to me in the previous two hours. Shenk's Hopper really worked."<sup>30</sup>

In his article "Grasshopper Country," Paul Schullery provides a general history of the development of hopper patterns and briefly discusses both Schwiebert's and Shenk's hoppers.<sup>31</sup> Schullery, after describing Schwiebert's Letort Hopper, says that "in the matter of influence, Ernie must share the credit with veteran limestoner Ed Shenk, who, recognizing the conflict and confusion to be caused by there being two competing Letort Hoppers, chose to name his the Shenk Letort Hopper, even though it originated at roughly the same time as the Schwiebert version."<sup>32</sup> Schullery prefaces his discussion of the Letort Hoppers by writing that while recognizing "there was some confusion over the pattern and its origin for [a]while, the parties seem to have settled the question amicably and with clarity."<sup>33</sup>

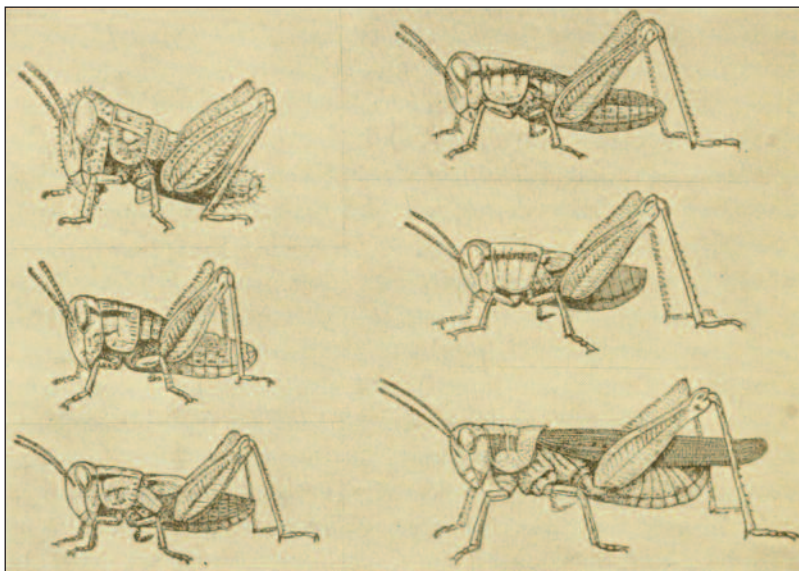
In Schwiebert's 1999 letter to me, because of his tone and vociferous defense of his position as the creator of the Letort Hopper, I doubt that ever was so. In that letter, he wrote, "I simply cannot share credit for the Letort Hopper, since its conception and development



were entirely mine.”<sup>34</sup> In this letter, Schwiebert references his writings and those of others that establish the development of his Letort Hopper back to 1960.<sup>35</sup> For example, in Schwiebert’s 1961 article, “Legend and the Letort,” he includes both the recipe for dressing his Letort Hopper and a photograph of the fly.<sup>36</sup>

Schwiebert’s references to his Letort Hopper establish that he tied them as early as 1960, but the various references to his hopper do not preclude the possibility that another was developing a similar fly with the same name and on the same stream. And some of Schwiebert’s references may be read to imply either that there were two Letort Hoppers or that Schwiebert was the creator of the fly. For example, Charlie Fox, in *This Wonderful World of Trout*, refers to Schwiebert’s hopper as “the Schwiebert Letort Hopper”<sup>37</sup> and later writes that “Ernie switched to his Letort Hopper.”<sup>38</sup>

There is no controversy that Schwiebert developed a Letort Hopper with wings that flared out from the body and Shenk developed a Letort Hopper with a flat wing. Whether Schwiebert or Shenk can be credited with being the originator of the first Letort Hopper seems unresolved, and the question is clouded by the questions posed earlier in the article. What does it mean to create a pattern, and how important is a fly’s name in establishing its separate identity? These questions defy clear resolution, and so may the answer to who invented the Letort Hopper.



From H. T. Fernald, *Applied Entomology: An Introductory Text-book of Insects in Their Relations to Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1921), 28.

safe to say that a fly or a promise is seldom the root of its own rejection, but that rejection of the fly or promise instead represents a product of the flaws to be found in the mechanics of its delivery.”

7. Ed Shenk, *Ed Shenk’s Fly Rod Trouting* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1989), 153.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Ed Koch, *Terrestrial Fishing* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1990), 89.

10. See, for example, *Leonard’s 1975 Spring Catalog*, 22, and *The 1974 Angler’s Catalogue from Angler’s Mail*, 14.

11. Shenk, *Ed Shenk’s Fly Rod Trouting*, 18.

12. Gardner Grant, “Ernest G. Schwiebert, 1931–2005,” *The American Fly Fisher* (Spring 2006, vol. 32, no. 2), 22.

13. See Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout*, 2nd ed. (New York: Truman Talley Books, 1984), 742–43. See also the drawings of miscellaneous dry flies on facing page 1131.

14. See Austin McK. Francis, *Land of Little Rivers: A Story in Photos of Catskill Fly Fishing* (New York: The Beaverkill Press, 1999), 173–91.

15. See, for example, Mike Valla, *Tying Catskill Dry Flies* (New Cumberland, Pa.: Headwater Books, 2009), 47, 51, 58, and 76. Now, when flies are so often named after their creators, trademarked, and frequently changed only slightly from a preexisting pattern, one is buoyed by Steenrod’s gesture and its symbolic humility.

16. Shenk, *Ed Shenk’s Fly Rod Trouting*, 127–28. Because I know Ed Shenk and knew Ernest Schwiebert well, I was tempted to use their first names in this article. Ed and I both live in the Cumberland Valley, and I have met him at various fly-fishing events in the area. As a founding director of the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum Association, I invited Ernie to become an honorary board member and hosted him when he attended our annual banquet, which he regularly did.

17. *Ibid.*, 127.

18. *Ibid.*, 127–28. The fly that became known as the Joe’s Hopper was designed by Art

Winnie in the 1920s and named the Michigan Hopper. See Paul Schullery, “Grasshopper Country,” *The American Fly Fisher* (Summer 2012, vol. 38, no. 3), 8. Schullery provides a history of the development of various hopper patterns and includes a discussion of both Schwiebert’s and Shenk’s Letort Hoppers.

19. Shenk, *Ed Shenk’s Fly Rod Trouting*, 128.

20. *Ibid.*, 128, 153.

21. *Ibid.*, 127.

22. Ed Jarorowski and Charles Knight, Ed Shenk interview, 4 March 2004. An oral history by the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum Association. CD on file with the author.

23. Shenk, *Ed Shenk’s Fly Rod Trouting*, 127.

24. Ed Koch, *Terrestrial Fishing: The History and Development of the Jassid, Beetle, Cricket, Hopper, Ant and Inchworm on Pennsylvania’s Legendary Letort* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1990), 84–91.

25. *Ibid.*, 84.

26. *Ibid.*, 84–85.

27. *Ibid.*, 86–88.

28. *Ibid.*, 89.

29. *Ibid.*, 90.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Schullery, “Grasshopper Country,” 9.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. Letter from Ernest Schwiebert to author, 1 October 1999. Archive, the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Ernest G. Schwiebert, “Legend and the Letort,” *Esquire* (May 1961), 89. In his letter to me (note 34), Schwiebert states that the first published reference to the Letort Hopper was in his 1960 article in *True’s Fishing Yearbook*, “One Step Ahead of the Trout.”

37. Charles K. Fox, *This Wonderful World of Trout*, rev. ed., (Rockville Centre, N.Y.: Freshet Press, 1963), 27.

38. *Ibid.*, 82.

## ENDNOTES

1. Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler; or, the Contemplative Man’s Recreation* (Norwalk, Conn.: Easton Press, 1976, collector’s edition).

2. See, for example, Richard Landerman, *The Fly Rod Chronicles: A Collection of Essays on the Quiet Sport of Fly Fishing* (Gilbert, Ariz.: Sortis Publishing, 2007).

3. Gordon M. Wickstrom, *The History of Fishing for Trout with Artificial Flies in Britain and America: A Chronology of Five Hundred Years, 1496 to 2000* (Boulder, Colo.: Millennial Edition, D & K Printing, 1999). See also F. M. Halford, *Dry-Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice* (Reading, England: Barry Shurlock & Co., 1973, reprinted from the 1889 first edition, Field and Stream Club Edition).

4. G. E. M. Skues, *Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream* (London: A. and C. Black, 1974).

5. See, for example, Ernest Schwiebert, *Nymphs: A Complete Guide to Naturals and Imitations* (New York: Winchester Press, 1973).

6. See Art Lee, *Fishing Dry Flies for Trout on Rivers and Streams*, 2nd ed. (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics, 1998), 140: “Thus it’s

# Bamboo and Bogdan

*by Robert Sohrweide*

SOME YEARS AGO, I was showing a fly-fishing friend pictures of my first Atlantic salmon trip. He stopped dead at one and said, “My god, Bob, is that a Bogdan reel? And that rod is bamboo. Who made it?”

“It’s a Payne rod,” I replied. “My friend, Rob, likes to fish a bamboo rod for Atlantic salmon. And that *is* a Bogdan salmon reel on it. What better way to complete the outfit?” I then showed him a picture of one of the Atlantic salmon Rob had caught using that rig. “He believes that they were made to be used.”

Rob is not a total classicist. He does use graphite rods and newer reels. But he loves to trot his old rods out and exercise them. This year he brought a Winston bamboo rod along with the two graphites to New Brunswick’s Atlantic salmon waters—and the Bogdan. The Winston is 9 feet long and casts an 8-weight line. The Bogdan is, of course, a Bogdan salmon reel. Enough said.

We’d spent eight days salmon fishing on the Northwest Miramichi: four days of heat and low water, then a soaking overnight rain that gave the river a 5-inch bump and three days of good fishing conditions in seven of “our” pools. That day Rob trotted out his bamboo rod and rigged it with the Bogdan. They made a beautiful pair, and with Rob, a handsome trio.

Very sensibly—for he is not too casual with bamboo—when Rob has to walk through the woods any distance to get to his assigned pools, he fishes graphite. But the nearby pools are for bamboo. Corner Pool is a bamboo pool just a hundred yards from Adams Camp—a beautiful spot. Even more beautiful to Rob’s eyes were the four salmon that he and his guide, Steven, saw while getting in position.

Bright day, bright fly. Rob put on an Ally’s Shrimp, one that he had tied himself one very hot afternoon in Dam Camp while we were waiting for conditions to improve. Five feet of line, cast and drift. Another foot, cast and drift. Again, and again. Eventually Rob was casting 40 feet of line, and his Winston was handling the line easily. Forty-five, fifty, and wham! Fish on! A running, jumping, strong Atlantic salmon, one that this trio had been forged to fight: Rob by knowledge and experience, the Winston and Bogdan by skill and craftsmanship. Oh, and let’s not forget Rob’s Ally’s Shrimp. They all had quite a time.

Photos by Robert Sohrweide



*Rob, with his Winston bamboo rod and Bogdan reel, tying on an Ally’s Shrimp.*





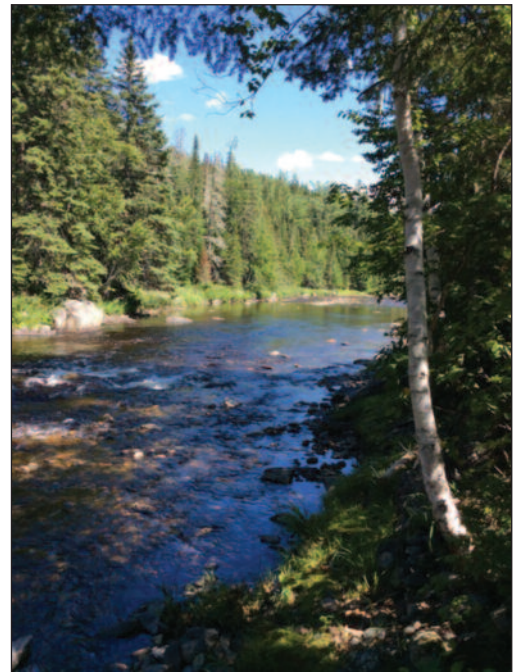
*The author's guide, Danny, looking over a pool at Dam Camp.*



*Rob at makeshift bench using natural light to tie the Ally's Shrimp.*



*Rob fishing the Corner Pool at Adams Camp.*



*The Northwest Miramichi is grand Atlantic salmon water.*

No one likes to muscle an Atlantic salmon to the net. It's a beginner's mistake and one that would be especially risky to the bamboo Winston. It takes time and space to land a salmon with bamboo. Rob let it run and watched as the salmon took line.

"Lots of room, Rob. No rocks to worry about. Play him! Tire him out!" Steven had the net ready, but was in no hurry to use it. He was enjoying the show. Even very experienced guides do not see this often: a fine fisherman, an Atlantic salmon, a bamboo fly rod, and a Bogdan reel all doing what they were made to do.

Rob managed to get some line in, then watched as the salmon took it back with a fast run. Rob bowed to the salmon as it left the water and shaking, danced on its tail. Then another run. More line in on the Bogdan. Another leap, bow, and run. Line out.

This salmon was silver and strong, fresh from the sea. It had come into the river with the 5-inch rise and had ridden the rise to us. And Rob had a shrimp tied and ready, just for him. Another jump. More line out.

Now the line came in a few feet. The Bogdan was working on the tired fish, and more feet came on the reel. Another run, but not as strong. More feet in.

"Get ready, Steven. He's coming in."

Steven was balanced, one foot on a rock, another in 6 inches of water. The large net had a 4-foot handle. He was ready. Rob brought the salmon close. It sensed Steven, and 15 feet of line ran off the Bogdan. Rob let it go a bit and then tried again. This time in the net! And then carefully out, as it was released back into the river. Strong and bright, a 10-pound fish, it swam away.

~

*Robert Sohrweide is a retired instructor of Greek and Latin at the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut. He now lives in Lyme, New Hampshire, just a day's drive from New Brunswick Atlantic salmon waters.*

# Inside Lefty's Tying Room

by Alex Ford

On 14 March 2018, the angling community lost one of its greatest influencers. Bernard "Lefty" Kreh was born 26 February 1925 in Frederick, Maryland, and by 1950 he had taken the fishing world by storm. The contributions he made to the sport are unmatched and will never be forgotten.

At the American Museum of Fly Fishing, we love everything associated with fly-fishing history—especially the stories. Lefty was a storyteller in his own right. Back in 2012, when the museum filmed interviews with some fly-fishing legends, Lefty told us, "The thing I get the most fun out of is to put someone on the front end of a boat, help them with their casting, teach them to retrieve, stand up there beside them, and have them catch their first fish . . . it's almost like me catching my first one all over again."

As we remember Lefty, I invite you to take a look at his personal space—a place where Lefty worked, relaxed, and reflected.

—Sarah Foster  
Executive Director

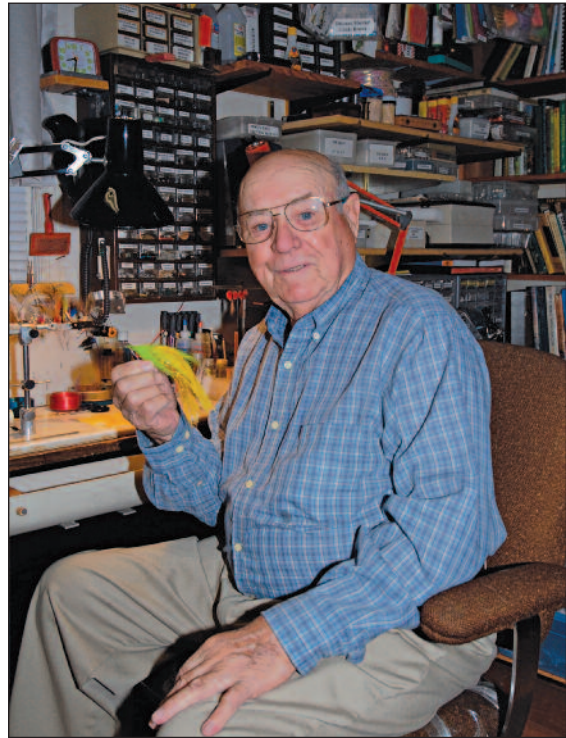
IN THE BASEMENT of Lefty's Maryland home lies more fishing gear than most fly shops keep in stock. It's a treasure of fly-fishing paraphernalia: cases of materials, hooks, flies, rods, reels, vises, and tools. Amidst all the travels, speaking engagements, classes, and film shoots, Lefty returned here, to this basement, to relax and tie flies. It was from this collection of materials and gear that Lefty's Deceiver was conceived, as well as countless other contributions to our sport.

His tying desk is a simple thing. It's not made of mahogany or drilled with specific holes for specific tools. At a glance, it seems more suitable for a classroom or an interrogation room. A closer look reveals its nuances. Two architect lamps are mounted on the far corners. You can picture him swinging one closer to better light a stack of bucktail or a tricky wrap of flash. The legroom is minimal, blocked by the sheet of metal that covers the desk's front side. It's made for the tier to lean forward, not sit back.

On the right side there are two drawers, the deeper one originally designed for manila files, but you can picture Lefty's filled with fur and feathers. The top drawer is made for pens, staples, and paperclips. Instead, it was filled with bobbins, thread, scraps of colored feathers, and half-empty tubes of head cement. At the front is a PVC pipe, cut in half and secured to the desk to collect the scraps brushed into it. Lefty was no stranger to repurposing items, to creating and customizing.

A look up from the desk would show walls filled with gear. Rod cases hang from the ceiling and line the walls like stalactites. There are towers of materials, each labeled carefully: calf tails, squirrel, peacock herl, wig hair, Zonker strips. There is a bag of flashy tape rolls from a party store hanging off the stack of materials. You can picture Lefty freestyling on a fly, reading and rereading the labels on materials until one inspires him to lash it onto whatever creation he has going on at the moment. The setup facilitates innovation.

Another wall has completed flies in labeled drawers. The top three are labeled "Deceivers." They're still there. Lefty was tying at a rate faster than anyone could lose flies.



Bernard "Lefty" Kreh (26 February 1925–14 March 2018) seated at his tying desk. Visible by his right forearm is the halved PVC pipe he attached to the desk to collect tying scraps. Photo from the Lefty Kreh collection.

Sara Wilcox



Lefty was not afraid to get his hands dirty, and his tying room often turned into a chop shop. With the help of his first mentor, fly-fishing legend Joe Brooks, Lefty's first fly reel was a Pflueger Medalist. Unimpressed by its drag, he cut a thumb-sized hole in the side of it to put additional pressure on the line. This constant tinkering with fly equipment later became evident in the collection of Tibor reels he designed with Flip Pallot and Ted Juracsik.



Sarah Foster



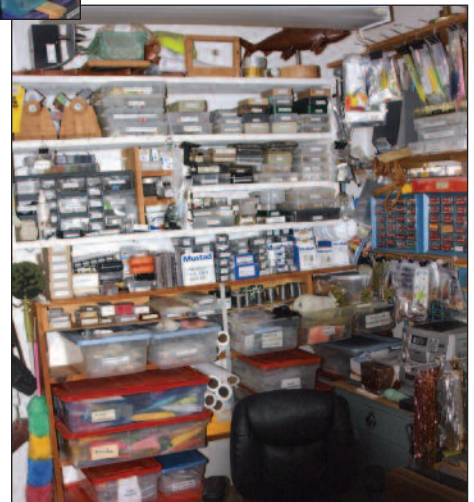
*Lefty's specialty vise is, quite literally, a vise grip mounted on a solid base. Lefty's frustration with earlier vises made for size 16 trout flies must have been exhausting. Tiny clamps were simply not an option for a hefty 2/0 hook he was turning into tarpon food. His solution was elegant but simple.*

Mark Lamos



*A trio of images providing a peek into Lefty's inner sanctum, including his rods, reels, gear, and tying supplies.*

Mark Lamos



There is a noticeable mass of conventional gear as well. Offshore rods sit next to bass spinners, rubber-banded together in two pieces. The reel wall is mostly fly reels, but there are a few dozen conventional reels too, all rigged up and ready to go. You get the sense that he never had to bother switching spools.

There is no shortage of anything here. It is a fly fisher's paradise—a perfectly feathered nest of fly-fishing design and development and virtual documentary of the progression of gear during fly fishing's golden years.

Lefty's constant improvement, instruction, and ambassadorship to the sport of fly fishing is clearly woven through the walls of this room and stand as a symbol of the all-encompassing effect he had on the angling community as a whole.

We were proud to accept a variety of items from Lefty's tying room as a donation to the American Museum of Fly Fishing's permanent collection. They provide a unique look into his personal space, where many of fly fishing's innovations and advances were made. Whether he knew it or not at the time, the work done in his tying room would influence generations of fly fishers. Lefty's tying desk—along with photographs, equipment, and other paraphernalia—will be on display at the museum in 2019, allowing members and visitors to get a little bit closer to the mind of the man who changed fly-fishing history forever.

—ALEX FORD  
DIGITAL MARKETING COORDINATOR

# Fly-Fishing Festival

ON AUGUST 11, AMFF celebrated its eleventh annual Fly-Fishing Festival. Despite the clouds and a smattering of rain, more than 650 visitors stopped by to enjoy the wares and expertise on offer from a host of talented vendors and take a look at the museum, including the newly opened saltwater exhibit. Angling enthusiasts were treated to casting clinics under the adept tutelage of AMFF Ambassadors Rachel Finn and Drew Chicone. Orvis was on hand to oversee the casting competition, which is always a festival favorite. The contest was very close, with a tie for second and third place. This year AMFF Trustee Jamie Woods put together a booth about the lives of John and Maxine Atherton, featuring a wonderful collection of photographs and flies.

We welcomed Why Knot Fishing to the festival this year, who raffled off items including a Yeti cooler, a Traeger grill, and Costa sunglasses, all donated for this event. We were grateful for additional auction items, such as the Lefty's Deceiver belt buckle from Taf Schaefer Designs and a box of beautiful Mud Dog saltwater flies from AMFF Ambassador Mike Rice. The raffle, which included participation via Facebook Live, was a great hit.

A special thanks to our sponsors and additional donors for making this festival a success: the Aspen, Buff, Express Copy, Finn and Stone, Grateful Dog, the Image Loft, Johnson Outdoors, the McBride Company, Mulligans of Manchester, Northshire Bookstore, the Orvis Company, Pets Etc., rk Miles, Vermont Kitchen Supply, Wild River Press, and the Works Bakery Café. We are also grateful to all of the vendors who participated in this wonderful summer event, and we look forward to seeing everyone next year on August 10!



Alex Ford



*Brook trout keep an eye on festival visitors from the U.S. Forest Service table.*

Sara Wilcox



*AMFF Ambassador Rachel Finn teaches a young visitor how to cast a fly rod.*

Sara Wilcox



*Author Mike Valla (left) signs a book for artist George Van Hook.*



Sara Wilcox



*Learning how to tie a clown fly.*

Alex Ford



*Attendees survey what festival vendors have to offer.*

Sara Wilcox



*AMFF Ambassador Drew Chicone discusses saltwater fly fishing dos and don'ts.*

Sara Wilcox



*Trustee Jamie Woods shares stories of John and Maxine Atherton with visitors to his table.*

Sara Wilcox



*A participant in the Orvis casting competition tests her skill.*

Sara Wilcox



*AMFF Ambassador Mike Rice (left) selects the raffle winner of his donated saltwater flies while Beau Thebault of Why Knot Fishing looks on.*



# Our Tireless Tiers

AS WE REFLECT on this past decade of public programming, we would like to thank the many fly tiers who have volunteered their time to make the Fly-Fishing Festival, Frequent Fly Tier, Tie One On, Iron Fly, and other tying clinics so successful. Without their dedication, expertise, and guidance, these programs simply would not be possible.

To the following past and present fly tiers, our appreciation is greater than you know—thank you!

Cheers!

Jim Becker  
Kelly Bedford  
Peggy Brenner  
Greg Brown  
George Butts  
Henry Hall  
Mike Hulvey  
Gloria Jordan  
Sean Martin  
Barry Mayer  
Bill Newcomb  
Rhey Plumley  
Brian Price  
Kevin Ramirez  
Mike Rice  
Chris Samson  
Paul Sinicki  
Bill Sylvester  
Ryan Whitney

All photos from the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



*Clockwise from above: George Butts teaching an aspiring young tier at a 2009 museum event.*

*Bill Newcomb at the Fly-Fishing Festival in 2009.*

*Kelly Bedford and Paul Sinicki during the museum's Fit to Be Tied event in 2017.*

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





# Leon Martuch

## 30 April 1928–14 July 2018

*Leon Martuch, a member of our first board of trustees, passed away this summer. Martuch sat on the board from 1974 to 1985, serving as president from 1978 to 1981 and chairman of the board from 1981 to 1984. He was named trustee emeritus in 1992.*

*Martuch, a legend in the sport of fly fishing, was the museum's Heritage Award recipient in 2013. He worked alongside his father, Leon P. Martuch, to revolutionize fly-fishing equipment and helped to make their company, Scientific Anglers, an industry leader. Martuch used his background as a chemist to develop, produce, and patent fly-fishing equipment throughout his career, and he was a pivotal part of standardizing fly line—an innovation many historians consider one of the top-five most significant contributions to the sport. After retirement, Martuch devoted much of his time to serving on the boards of Trout Unlimited and the American Museum of Fly Fishing to preserve and promote the sport and its environment for future generations.*

*Paul Schullery, the museum's first executive director, wrote a tribute to Leon Martuch for the Heritage Award presentation. We'd like to share that with you.*

—Editor

I FIRST BECAME ACQUAINTED with Leon—what kind of person he was, I mean—long before I actually met him. One early spring day about forty years ago, while fishing the Pere Marquette (Michigan) for steelhead, my brother Steve broke the last few inches from the tip of my Scientific Anglers System Seven fly rod, the only decent fly rod I'd ever owned. I needed a replacement before returning to Yellowstone for my summer work, so I sent the rod to the Scientific Anglers factory in Midland for repair. A few weeks later, as Steve and I were on our way to the Au Sable for some trout fishing, we stopped in Midland. I explained to some nice person that I was there to pick up the rod, and in a moment some other nice person brought it out and handed it to me—no charge. Not only was there a brand-new tip section, there was also the old broken tip section, a few inches shorter, with a brand new tip-top guide installed (I would later discover that I liked the shorter tip better; a little faster action). I was impressed and, on a seasonal ranger's salary, more than a little relieved that it was all free. Scientific Anglers was obviously a class act, and whoever was in charge had to be the nicest of these nice people I'd just met.

It was only a few years later that I moved to Manchester, Vermont, to become the first executive director of what was then called the Museum of American Fly Fishing. Not long after that Leon became the museum's president, and I finally met that nice person.

In light of the recent purchase of Scientific Anglers by Orvis, it is both entertaining and illuminating to remember how very different the fly-fishing world was only forty years ago. When I arrived at the museum in 1977, it was widely thought of as "that Orvis museum." This was absurd, of course; even then, the museum interpreted the entire history of fly fishing and exhibited the best work of dozens of tackle manufacturers. In fact, we were incredibly lucky to have Orvis as our foremost benefactor.



*Leon Martuch. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

Still, the Orvis role in the museum did provide some people with a willfully misinformed conviction that somehow Orvis attracted customers to its store by having the museum renting exhibit space in rooms off one end of the Orvis building. (Actually the opposite was true; if the museum had left the Orvis building and moved across the street, our visitation would have plummeted; people came to the Orvis store and then discovered the museum and wandered in for a look.)

Then came Leon. When Leon became president of the museum, we turned an institutional corner that I don't think any of us could fully discern at the time but that was monumentally important. Leon was a leading figure in the tackle industry, until recently the owner of one of Orvis's chief competitors, and his enthusiastic presidency of the museum made it clear to all but the least reasonable that this was indeed a museum for the whole sport and the whole industry.

For me, the entire time working for Leon was a treat and an education. It was a great partnership (for me at least), and I picked up all sorts of lessons about how things really work in organizations, as well as in any large group of opinionated people like fly fishers.

I have no idea how many times during those years I called up Leon and started to fuss or gripe or whine about this or that

problem the museum was having. Each time, as soon as I paused for breath, Leon would always say, with a forceful yet patient voice, "Paul . . ." (I could actually hear the ellipsis).

And I would respond, "Yes, Leon? . . ." He would then impart some brief, pungent bit of wisdom, just a few words that always made me laugh and think at the same time, and that would give me a better idea of what to do next. (My favorite of these pithy little gems was "What you have to remember is that most people are stupid," but let's not go into that.)

Looking back after all these years, though, it isn't the specifics of his advice that has stuck. What has stuck has been the tone of his words. Whatever he said, it was offered with a good humor—a stand-back-and-look-at-it-this-way cheerfulness—so contagious that I couldn't help relaxing and seeing whatever bigger picture I'd lost track of. Things became fun again. You couldn't ask for more than that from a boss.

PAUL SCHULLERY  
BOZEMAN, MONTANA

*Paul Schullery was executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing from 1977 until 1982.*

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## IN MEMORIAM

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# Riverman: Remembering Art Lee

## 4 May 1942–25 July 2018

A NOTION THAT TICKLES nearly every serious angler is the fantasy of quitting a job, relocating to the banks of a marvelous trout stream, and being devoted to nothing but water and the pursuit of sport. Unfortunately, many harsh and awkward realities prevent the realization of this ideal existence: spouses and children, the need to make a living, the toll of isolation (to name but a few). For the vast majority who ponder such a move, the thought dies as quickly as a mayfly. Yet, every once in a great while, someone comes along for whom this notion seems neither whimsical nor unreasonable, but rather a practical necessity, one that rises almost to the level of unavoidable destiny. Such a person was Art Lee.

Making one of the best lives of anyone I've ever known, in the 1970s Art took his new bride Kris (who doubled brilliantly as his photographer) and left both an established career in journalism and gainful employment in Washington, D.C., to pile a few worldly possessions into a rusty Chevy and depart in search of trout and salmon and rivers and dreams. He would find the majority of them.

The Catskill Mountains, traditional home of American fly fishing, serve as magnetic north to anyone truly touched by the sport, and so it was to a tiny, unheated cottage in Roscoe, New York, that Art and Kris first moved. By winter, they burned fire-

wood, often gathered streamside, in a porous, pot-bellied chunk stove. In summer, surrounded by a menagerie of cats and stray dogs, Art penned articles from a rickety table adjacent to Willowemoc Creek. Their existence during these early years was tenuous, if also exceptionally full. To make ends meet, Art and Kris frequently resorted to guiding visiting anglers, and I still encounter people who recall enjoying both the benefit of Art's expertise astream and the grilled lamb chops Kris prepared streamside.

Establishing himself as a freelance sporting writer, Art began a nearly four-decade stream of thoughtful, articulate, and exceptionally personal articles that quickly caught the fancy of both magazines and readers alike. For a certain generation of fly fishers—those recalling a period bracketing the sport's first dedicated magazine to the rise of self-help videos—Art was the writer who perhaps best embodied an approachable, no-nonsense view of the pastime.

Scoffing at elites while joyfully casting shade on the presumptions of science, Art placed a large bet on streamcraft and the mastery of good technique. Drawing on his nearly daily experience fishing at home and abroad, he tutored and inspired hundreds of thousands of readers, offering an authentic and authoritative take on the sport. His first and most widely





*Art Lee plays a good salmon on Iceland's Laxa I Adaldal while Galen Mercer waits with the net.*



*Art Lee being congratulated by his wife, Kris, after she's netted his salmon.*



*Art Lee along a salmon river.*

acclaimed book, *Fishing Dry Flies for Trout on Rivers and Streams* (Atheneum, 1982; a wordy title Art felt was important to his thesis) remains a lucid, disarmingly direct account of the practice and has assumed a deserved place as one of fly fishing's best primers.

With an assured and occasionally provocative writing style, Art's essays always proved galvanizing and frequently drew letters. In 1976, I sat down and wrote him one. To me, his life and work echoed the best of a particular sporting tradition—slotting in perfectly among such consummate rivermen as Gordon, Christian, Flick, Van Put, et al.—and I told him so. Unquestionably, there was a large element of hero worship involved. To my delight and great surprise, he wrote back and invited me to stop in the next time my father and I fished the Beaverkill, an annual rite during my teens. A correspondence soon developed, and within a few years, I'd quit my own job and moved to the Catskills, thus beginning a forty-year odyssey with the Lees. Nothing I saw or experienced during the longest friendship of my life has served to alter that favorable first impression.

Art Lee died this summer at age seventy-six, by his farmhouse above Junction Pool on the Willowemoc. A month after his passing, I'm left with an admixture of intense memories,

some brilliant, others equally sad. Of those that involve angling, many are exotic: discussing complexities of current and drift while enduring punishing rains along Iceland's Laxa I Adaldal; deciphering the feeding rhythms of such large rainbows as we found working daily beneath a high bank on the Chimehuin River in Argentina; flipping a coin for the first pass through an unnamed, possibly unfished sea trout pool in Tierra Del Fuego. More often, however, my recollections involve simpler, far more local pleasures. Things like rehearsing and tying the flies we'd need to cover spring hatches, recounting the idiosyncrasies of some especially large or unusual trout, or perhaps my favorite of all: the postfishing analysis while driving home after each day's sport. Such things make up the essence of a life spent learning from, and living on, rivers. In this capacity, very few were his equal.

GALEN MERCER  
ARLINGTON, VERMONT

*Galen Mercer is a painter and sporting writer. He lives and works within a double-haul of Vermont's Batten Kill.*



# Summer Kids Clinics

OUR SECOND SUMMER outreach program of clinics was a resounding success. We met with kids and their parents on four Thursdays in July to introduce them to fly fishing. Here's what happened.



July 5: Today we learned how to cast and build our own casting rods. It was hot and humid outside, so we split up into two groups. One group visited the museum inside while the other learned to cast outside with Ypshi and Sara. Then we switched. Casting for the first time was a lot of fun.



Photos by Sara Wilcox

July 19: Today we had fly-tying lessons with Kelly Bedford and Paul Sinicki. They taught us how to tie a woolly worm. The first time tying a fly can be tricky. Kelly and Paul had a great time teaching and helping us out. They would laugh and make jokes about tying and made everyone feel comfortable.



July 12: Today we learned about what fish like to eat. Ypshi taught us the life cycle of insects that fish eat, like caddis flies and mayflies. He also taught us the difference between a wet fly and a dry fly. We loved it when Ypshi took out the insects that were in resin so we could see what they looked like in real life. Ypshi then took us to the stream for a bug hunt. He lifted up the rocks to find a small stonefly nymph. Then everybody grabbed a piece of insect origami paper, and we got to make an origami grasshopper.



July 26: Today we did gyotaku, a Japanese method of printing fish. We didn't have a fish, so we used leaves from native trees instead. We put paint on the back side, where the veins of the leaves stick out more. We pressed watercolor paper onto the painted leaf, and the results were really cool! The leaves left a really nice impression, especially when we used two different colors. It was fun using paint and making a mess.





Sara Wilcox

*Yoshi Akiyama accepts a thank-you gift from Jim Heckman as Jerry Gibbs looks on.*

## Summer Celebration

On August 10 we welcomed more than seventy-five guests to a triple-header celebratory reception: our fiftieth anniversary; the launch of our new traveling exhibit, *On Fly in the Salt: American Saltwater Fly Fishing from the Surf to the Flats*; and the opening of the Selch-Bakwin Fly Room. Stemming from knowledge acquired during his many years as fishing editor at *Outdoor Life* magazine, Jerry Gibbs provided insightful remarks on the history of saltwater fly fishing. As project advisor to the exhibition, Jerry was an invaluable resource, and it was a delight to hear from him firsthand. We were grateful to have AMFF Trustee Jim Heckman as our emcee, who presented Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama with a framed photo and commemorative statement of thanks for all his hard work on the exhibit. Also in attendance were several of our ambassadors, all leading professionals in the fly-fishing industry: Rachel Finn, Harry Desmond, Mike Rice, Drew Chicone, Matt Smythe, and Rich Strolis. While enjoying Bucktail Bubbler (a signature cocktail inspired by AMFF Trustee Roger Riccardi), our guests were immersed in the spirit of fly fishing, from the interactive exhibit offering interview clips of saltwater pioneers to the custom tying bench (stocked and open to the public) in the Selch-Bakwin Fly Room. Thank you to all who made this reception a celebration to remember!

## Upcoming Events

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

### October 20

Annual Members Meeting

### November 1

2018 Izaak Walton Award Honoring Rachel Finn  
Boston College Club

### November 8

Members-Only Event  
AMFF Confidential: Behind the Scenes at the Museum  
2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

### December 1

Hooked on the Holidays  
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

### February 2019 (TBD)

Tie One On & Iron Fly Contest  
2:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

### March 9 and 23

Frequent Fly Tier: Fly-Tying Instruction  
10:00 a.m.–noon

### July (Thursdays)

Kids Clinics  
10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

### August 10

12th Annual Fly-Fishing Festival  
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Always check our website ([www.amff.org](http://www.amff.org)) for additions, updates, and more information or contact (802) 362-3300 or [amff@amff.org](mailto:amff@amff.org). 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.



## AMFF Is Coming to Boston

Join us as we celebrate 2018 Izaak Walton Award recipient Rachel Finn at the Boston College Club on Thursday, November 1.

For more information, visit our website at [amff.org/events](http://amff.org/events).



Lucas Young

Alex Ford

## New Staff

The museum welcomed Alex Ford as our digital marketing coordinator earlier this year. Alex is a writer and angler at heart and a marketer by trade. He got his start in outdoor media as a cofounder of Fly Lords. He went on to work as director of

marketing at Amberjack Outfitters and editor of the *Amberjack Fishing Journal*. As a writer, his work has been published several times in the *FlyFish Journal*, as well as a number of other publications. He is a passionate sportsman who has traveled the world in pursuit of fish and birds. He holds a bachelor's degree in international relations from Bucknell University.

## Recent Donations to the Collection

**Joan Wulff** of Livingston Manor, New York, donated thirty-four flies designed and tied by Lee Wulff. **Nick Lyons** of Woodstock, New York, sent us a collection of nine books. For a detailed listing of either of these donations, contact the museum.

**Jim Heckman** of Manchester, Vermont, gave us a copy of Stanley E. Read's *Tommy Brayshaw: The Ardent Angler-Artist* (University of British Columbia Press, 2002), five flies tied by Poul Jorgensen, and three flies tied by Dave Whitlock.

**Andrew Herd** of Brancepeth, England, and **Hermann Dietrich-Troeltsch** of Eberhardzell, Germany, sent us their three-volume Blacker trilogy, *Blacker: Phantom of the Past*, which includes *Volume I: Blacker, Ephemera & Bell's Life*; *Volume II: A Descriptive Bibliography*; and *Volume III: The Flies* (Medlar Press Limited, 2017). **Michael Graybrook** of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, donated a copy of his book *Cutthroat: A Journey through the American West* (Scott & Nix, Inc., 2018). And **Elizabeth Tobey** of Greenbelt, Maryland, gave us a copy of *Backcasts: A Global History of Fly Fishing and Conservation*, which she edited with Samuel Snyder and Bryon Borgelt (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

## CONTRIBUTORS

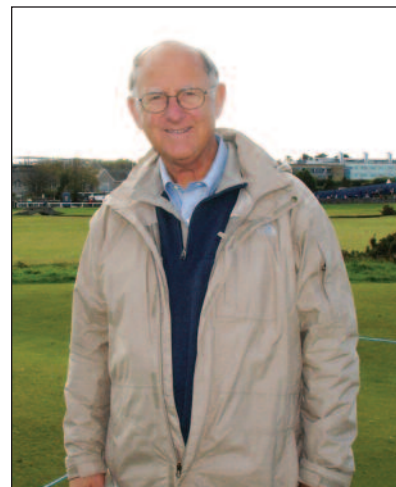


Denver University School of Law

**John J. Capowski** is admitted to practice law in New York and Maryland and is a professor of law emeritus at Widener University Commonwealth Law School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He began his academic career at the Cornell Law School, where he served as director of the school's clinical program, and also has taught at Maryland, New Mexico, West Virginia, and Denver.

While he has focused his scholarship on evidence law, he has published a number of fly-fishing articles, most recently "Trout Under the Tuscan Sun" in *Fly Fishing & Fly Tying*. Primarily a freshwater trout fly fisher, he has taken bonefish, salmon, and a 120-pound Pacific sail on flies. In addition to being a fly fisher, he is landscape painter and has been juried into a number of plein air painting festivals.

**Robert E. Kohrman** is a retired dean and professor of organic chemistry at Central Michigan University who lives in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. He enjoys fishing streams in Michigan and on the north shore of Lake Superior and is an avid collector of nineteenth-century sporting periodicals. He is interested in the history of the Arctic grayling in Michigan and has caught grayling while fly fishing Zimmerman Lake in Colorado, a location where they have since been removed. His most recent contribution to the *American Fly Fisher* was "In Search of the Michigan Grayling," in two parts: "Daniel H. Fitzhugh Jr., The Father of Grayling Fishing" (Fall 2012, vol. 38, no. 4) and "Thaddeus Norris and the Au Sable River Boat" (Winter 2013, vol. 39, no. 1).



Dee Kohrman



# Fast Forward

Harry Desmond



*Executive Director Sarah Foster cradles a beautiful brown trout caught on a fly.*

**M**OST (IF NOT ALL) MUSEUMS incorporate forward thinking in their vision; the American Museum of Fly Fishing is no different. We understand that it takes ambitious goals, bold moves, and innovative projects to make up a dynamic and successful institution.

AMFF is often considered the Mecca of fly-fishing history. Visitors to our Manchester, Vermont, location are immersed in stories, surrounded by artifacts, and awed by the presentation of carefully designed exhibitions. Because so many people are experiencing AMFF in other, remote ways, we are proud to have the following outlets:

- Our respected **ambassadors** are positioned around the world to represent AMFF and share the importance of having an historical resource for the sport we love.
- Our **traveling exhibitions** offer collaboration and access to communities and enthusiasts in unique settings and locales.
- As our generations continue to evolve, we answer to **digital** needs with stories and content through our website, blog, and social channels. With the addition of Alex Ford as digital marketing coordinator (see page 28), our presence will continue to grow and feed digital cravings.

Standing behind our positive, futuristic thinking, we keep pushing forward. As we develop our collections-management program, we are excited to continue taking steps toward providing public access to a fully cataloged and searchable database

of AMFF's permanent collection. Are you eager to learn more about a modest box of flies tied by someone associated with the film *A River Runs Through It*? Our database will offer answers to this question and others through photos, videos, and remarks associated with the hidden treasures of our collection.

I've had several experiences over the summer months sewn together with this common thread of forward thinking. Harry Desmond, owner of Berkshire Rivers Fly Fishing and AMFF ambassador, invited me for a day of fishing. Up against a temperatures-in-the-high-90s forecast, we hit the river early—after all, we were hoping for tight lines. After adjusting my cast, my position, and then adjusting my cast again, the magic happened. I hooked a fish and instantly felt the rush of him pulling my line. As I landed a beautiful brown trout, Harry said, “We need a picture of this!” And though I had already learned so much in our few short hours on the river, the most important thing I learned was how to care for the fish. “Wet your hands before holding it!” “Keep him in the water until the last second!” This message, though it rings loud for many people, still needs to be delivered. It is our responsibility to protect the fish, and it's this type of progressive thinking that will preserve the fish and the sport—and our museum—for generations to come.

Whether it's furthering the conservation message or preserving the history of fly fishing, it's forward thinking that will drive us into the future.

SARAH FOSTER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Catch and Release the Spirit of Fly Fishing!

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### 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, through a variety of outreach platforms, uses these resources to engage, educate, and benefit all.

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 [amff@amff.org](mailto:amff@amff.org) 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 Samantha Pitcher at [spitcher@amff.org](mailto:spitcher@amff.org) to tell us how we would benefit from your skills and talents.

### SUPPORT

The American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. If you wish to contribute funding to a specific program, donate an item for fund-raising purposes, or place an advertisement in this journal, contact Sarah Foster at [sfoster@amff.org](mailto:sfoster@amff.org). We encourage you to give the museum consideration when planning for gifts, bequests, and memorials.

### JOIN

Membership Dues (per annum)

Patron	\$1,000
Sustainer	\$500
Contributor	\$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 Samantha Pitcher at [spitcher@amff.org](mailto:spitcher@amff.org).

We welcome contributions to the *American Fly Fisher*. Before making a submission, please review our Contributor's Guidelines on our website ([www.amff.org](http://www.amff.org)), or write to request a copy. The museum cannot accept responsibility for statements and interpretations that are wholly the author's.



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