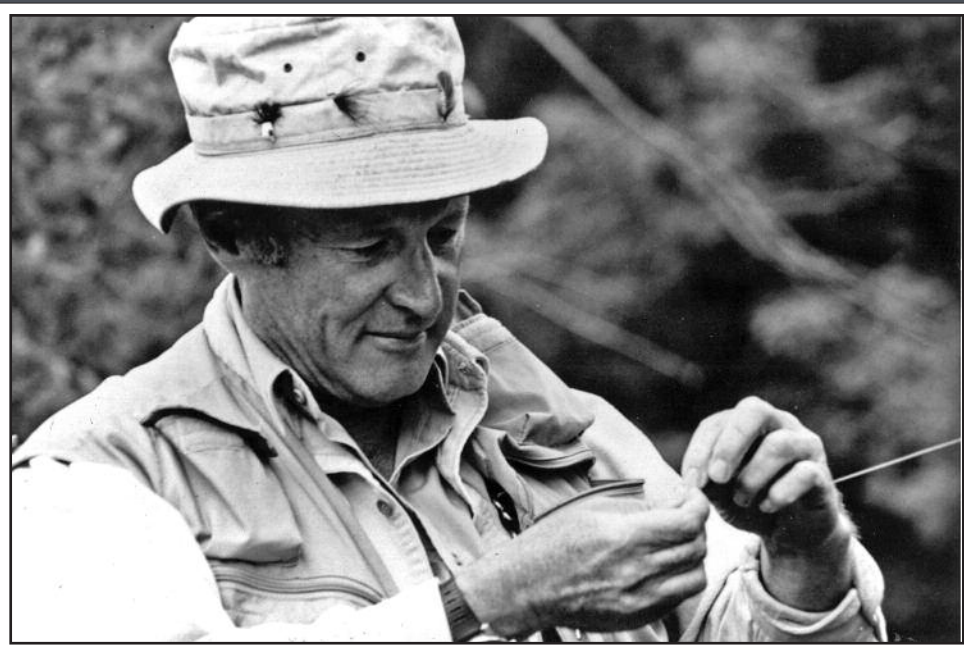


*The* American  
Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*



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SUMMER 2021

VOLUME 47 NUMBER 3

# From Here to There (and Vice Versa)



Margot Page



*Leigh Perkins toasts the museum's 25th anniversary during a celebration held at Hildene in 1993. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

OUR EXPERIENCE OF fly fishing—like most anything—is the result of moving and migrating parts. Certain species migrate between home waters or are moved and introduced into new ones. Tackle evolves and word spreads. A book is written and makes its way into the hands of a reader in another country, perhaps in another century. Stories spread from person to person, verbally and visually. We travel to water, step in, and watch as it moves around us.

This issue is filled with stories of moving from here to there, and there to here.

In the last issue, R. W. Hafer began his three-part series, “How Rainbow Trout Came to Missouri (and Your State Too).” “Part I: The Beginnings” set the stage with an overview of the mid-nineteenth-century conservation and the early fish culturist movements. “Part II: The Great Experiment” (page 2 of this issue) takes us to the 1870s and 1880s, when it was decided to address a declining Atlantic salmon population by sending fertilized Pacific salmon eggs to the East Coast. As Hafer notes, “In terms of achieving its objective, the Great Experiment was a bust.” But much was learned about transporting fish eggs and the spawning habits of Pacific salmon, which paved the way for the attempt to transplant another California native: the rainbow trout.

When Andrew Herd traveled to the United States in 2017, he visited a tiny fly shop in rural Montana. With a selection of flies designed to work on approximately a half mile of water, the shop was the most specialized he’d ever been in, but most striking was the number of soft hackles available. In “Hands Across the Ocean: Sylvester Nemes and the North Country Soft Hackle,” Herd tells the story of the American who not only made soft hackles popular in the States, but played a significant role in rescuing the traditional North Country fly from obscurity in Britain. To learn about Nemes and his pivotal place in history, turn to page 12.

Robert DeMott loves a good literary tour, visiting the places of books and paintings. It is with enthusiasm that he reviews David Van Wie’s *Storied Waters: 35 Fabled Fly-Fishing Destinations and the Writers and Artists Who Made Them Famous*, an account of a six-week trip from Maine to Wisconsin and back. The

American Museum of Fly Fishing was a stop on Van Wie’s tour, and in Spring 2018 we published an early version of his chapter about Louise Dickinson Rich and Maine’s Rapid River. That trip also led—through Van Wie—to the revival of the Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award, as Van Wie brought together friends made at the museum with those he met at the John Voelker Foundation. For DeMott’s take on Van Wie’s book, turn to page 23.

Most anglers admit to humble—if not humbling—beginnings. AMFF’s Board of Trustees President Fred Polhemus places his first fly-fishing forays firmly in the mid-1970s, beginning with his godfather on the Housatonic River, then with his cousin Fritz. Full disclosure: I completely relate to his pop-culture references. For a friendly introduction to our fearless leader, turn to page 17, “Fishing Cousins: The Story of Picket Pin.”

And it’s with great sadness that we note the passing of the man Executive Director Sarah Foster calls our founder, our visionary, and our greatest supporter: Leigh H. Perkins. Beginning on page 20, Trustee Emeritus Walt Matia shares memories of his longtime friend. It’s hard to imagine where I’d be right now—where I’d be living, what I’d be doing—in a world that hadn’t had LHP in it, shaping the fly-fishing industry and founding a fly-fishing museum. What’s more, he was awfully fun to be around. I will miss him.

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
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ON THE COVER: *Leigh Perkins tying on a no. 22 trico on the Batten Kill.*  
*From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

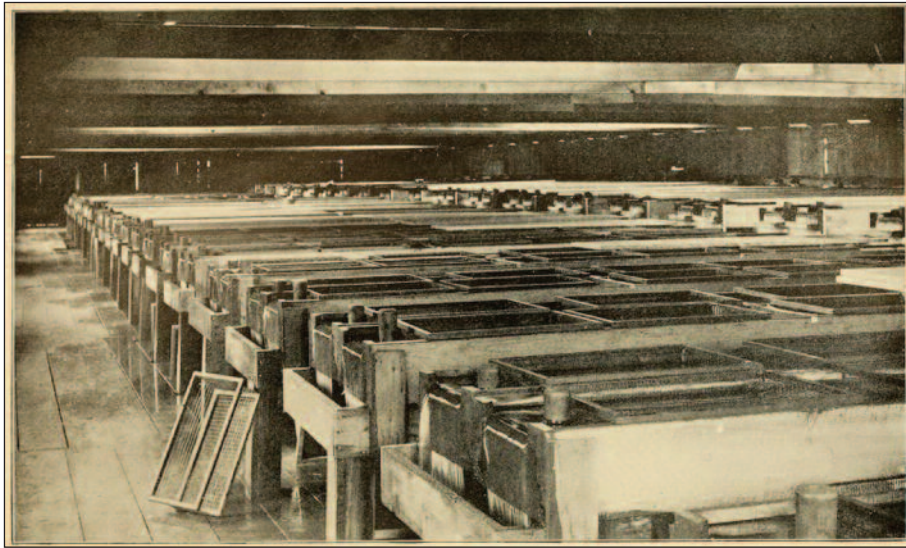
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# How Rainbow Trout Came to Missouri (and Your State Too)

## Part II: The Great Experiment

by R. W. Hafer



*Salmon baskets at Battle Creek Hatchery in California in 1896. From A Manual of Fish-Culture, Based on the Methods of the United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1897), facing page 23.*

*This article is the second in a three-part series that explores how rainbow trout found their way from Northern California to nearly every one of the contiguous forty-eight states. Part I, “The Beginnings,” appeared in the Spring 2021 issue.*

ONE YEAR AFTER Joint Resolution No. 22 passed, the work of the U.S. Fish Commission began in earnest. In early February 1872, Commissioner Spencer Baird asked members of the American Fish Culturists Association to meet with him in an undoubtedly chilly Albany, New York. Ideas about how to manage the populations of valuable food fishes were discussed. It also was decided that whatever was done, the government should pay for it. Passing the resolution got the ball rolling, but this meeting marked the beginning of what I call the Great Experiment.

My focus is on one of the topics on the meeting agenda: collecting eggs from Pacific salmon, fertilizing them, and sending them to the East Coast, where the resulting fry would be released into rivers and streams that eventually flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The idea was to replenish or even replace a declining Atlantic salmon population. As dubious as that undertaking may seem, during the course of events the salmon also were stocked into even more questionable locations: streams of interior states like Missouri.

In terms of achieving its objective, the Great Experiment was a bust. Pacific salmon are not found in East Coast states, nor do they inhabit interior waterways like the muddy Missouri River. But in failure much was learned, and fish culture in the United States advanced in significant ways. Shipping fish eggs was not new—hatchery owners back East had been

doing this for some years—but doing so on such a large scale and over great distances were formidable hurdles to be cleared. Efforts to transplant salmon from their home waters in Northern California to other locales showed participants how to ship fish eggs thousands of miles without significant damage and loss.<sup>1</sup>

One “success” was the discovery that not all fish could be (should be?) relocated. That, of course, didn’t stop Baird’s commission—singly and in partnership with state commissions—from attempting to manage the country’s stock of fish. After all, if the commission had stopped with salmon, you might not have rainbow trout in your state—or carp for that matter, but that is a different story. Because the lessons learned in the Great Experiment are so important to spreading rainbow trout across the country, it is a story worth telling.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GREAT EXPERIMENT

Following the Albany meeting, the American Fish Culturists Association sent a group headed by George Shepard Page, a prominent New York City stockbroker, to Washington, D.C. He appeared before the U.S. Committee on Appropriations to lobby for federal funding of the association's projects. Robert Roosevelt again played an important role, delivering a speech to the House of Representatives in which he asserted that problems with the national fishery had risen to the status of "a national matter," arguing that the scope of the problem meant that "States alone cannot take charge of it and manage it efficiently."<sup>22</sup> Roosevelt also argued that the commission's original \$5,000 appropriation should be doubled, but that was blocked by a procedural vote. The Senate, however, took a more favorable attitude toward the commission and, after some debate, in June tripled the commission's appropriation to \$15,000, comparable to about \$350,000 in modern terms.<sup>3</sup>

Commissioner Baird was given wide latitude over how to allocate the funds. And he wasted no time doing so. That summer, he arranged a meeting in Boston of representatives of several state fish commissions and members of the American Fish Culturists Association. From this meeting emerged a consensus on how to allocate the funding. One-third funded a project to introduce eastern shad into the Mississippi River and its drainage; Seth Green and Rev. William Cliff would oversee this project. Another third was earmarked to pay for the development of a new salmon hatchery on the Penobscot River in Maine. Charles G. Atkins would oversee this project, continuing work to propagate Atlantic salmon for restocking in eastern rivers.

The third and final project was the most audacious: establish a hatchery somewhere in Northern California (or Oregon) to collect Pacific salmon eggs (which species undecided) and ship the fertilized eggs back East. Livingston Stone championed the plan squarely on economic grounds. "Operating [a hatchery] on the Pacific Coast" made sense, he argued, because "millions of eggs could be taken at the cost of a few hundred thousand obtained on the Atlantic Coast."<sup>4</sup> By introducing these western salmon, the commission could create a spawning run complementary to the Atlantic salmon. Or perhaps those immigrants from the West would interbreed with their Atlantic cousins and thereby increase the stock of salmon. Either way,

the population of salmon on the East Coast would, at a minimum, be stabilized and, fingers crossed, increase. Achieving either outcome would be a major accomplishment for the nascent Fish Commission. It would meet the demands of sport and commercial fishermen alike, it would fulfill the objective of the joint resolution, and it would enhance the likelihood of additional funding from Congress. What was there to lose?

The experts hatching this plan were, to some extent, flying blind. They did not know that the Pacific and Atlantic salmon could not interbreed. They also were uncertain about which species of Pacific salmon they were pinning their hopes on. And they seemed unconcerned that Pacific salmon are *semelparous*—they die after a single spawning—in contrast to the *iteroparous* Atlantic salmon, which often make repeated spawning runs. What was known—at least anecdotally—and what *did* cause apprehension was the rumor that Pacific salmon were not as willing to "take the fly" as their Atlantic cousins. Would this grandiose plan be scuttled if eastern anglers found this new salmon too uncatchable because of its inherent wariness? For the record, no concern over the salmon's willingness to take a worm, the preferred bait of the common man, was raised.

Putting aside the unknowns and concerns, it was agreed to proceed. When it came to choosing the individual who would lead this endeavor, it shouldn't be surprising that upon the recommendation of those present at the meeting, Baird would name none other than the thirty-five-year-old Livingston Stone.

### STONE TO LEAD SALMON EXPERIMENT

Events moved quickly. In early July 1872, Baird wrote to Stone to both officially designate him deputy fish commissioner and instruct him to proceed to California "at the earliest possible moment."<sup>5</sup> Once in San Francisco, Stone was to "by examination and counsel with those who are familiar with the subject, [fix] upon the species best adapted for the purposes in question."<sup>6</sup> He was to decide not only where to set up his salmon-taking operation, but also which species of Pacific salmon would be best to resettle back East.

Baird made the primary directive of Stone's mission crystal clear. Wherever he set up operations, whether in Northern California or perhaps Oregon, Stone was to "lay the foundation of an arrangement, *on a large scale*, for obtaining eggs of the best varieties of *Salmonida* [salmon]"<sup>7</sup> [emphasis added]. Baird was

not naïve and understood that the odds were stacked against this experiment. He admitted that "the experiment was, of course, uncertain, in the entire absence of any reliable information bearing upon the natural history of the species."<sup>8</sup> But given the dire prospects facing the Atlantic salmon and the available funds to undertake the wholesale movement of one species of fish across the country, wasn't it worth a try?

Stone wasted no time in undertaking his new responsibilities. He put his beloved Cold Springs hatchery up for sale and on 1 August 1872 departed for Boston, where he boarded a train to begin the long journey to California.

### STONE TRAVELS TO CALIFORNIA

A cross-country trip in 1872 was a relatively new adventure. It was, after all, only three years after the Transcontinental Railroad was completed.<sup>9</sup> But getting from Omaha—the eastern terminus of the line—to California wasn't cheap: a first-class, round-trip ticket cost about \$400, equivalent to a little more than \$9,300 today.<sup>10</sup> Although comparably expensive, rail travel offered passengers "a certain splendor to the comfort and speed of their journey."<sup>11</sup> And there were few alternatives if time was of the essence. You could go by stagecoach, but it was much longer, more dangerous, and not that much cheaper.<sup>12</sup> For someone like Stone, sea travel from one coast to the other was an option, but not a good one if time was important. As one advertisement of the day noted, the Union Pacific could get you from the East Coast to San Francisco "in less than four days, avoiding the Dangers of the Sea!"<sup>13</sup>

Getting from Boston to Omaha (where one picked up the Union Pacific's line) and on to San Francisco was anything but luxurious, especially if you did not travel first class.<sup>14</sup> Baird allocated to Stone a total annual budget of \$750 "for expenses traveling and of investigation."<sup>15</sup> Because money was tight, Stone probably opted to ride in the day coach between Omaha and San Francisco, which cost "only" \$80, equivalent to about \$1,800 today.<sup>16</sup> Second-class accommodations afforded passengers a comparatively fast ride to California but lacked the splendor and luxury enjoyed by first-class travelers in other cars.<sup>17</sup>

### THE SEARCH FOR SALMON BEGINS

When Stone finally arrived in San Francisco, he immediately sought out S. R. Throckmorton, a member of the



*Founders of the McCloud Station Hatchery. From left: Myron Green, Livingston Stone, and William T. Perrin. Photograph taken in San Francisco in 1873. From California Fish and Game (July 1941, vol. 27, no. 3), 132.*

California Fish Commission and president of the California Fish Culturists Association. Throckmorton and other locals informed Stone that the best location for taking salmon eggs was up the Sacramento River, although they weren't sure exactly where. The Sacramento, which empties into the San Francisco Bay after running hundreds of miles from Northern California, was a major arterial for salmon on their way to ancestral spawning grounds. The problem was that Stone needed to act quickly: it was already late August and the spawning run would soon be under way. Failure to find a suitable place to collect eggs would delay his operation by a year—an unacceptable option.

Where exactly up the Sacramento should he go? It was suggested that he check out the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. A brief visit by Stone indicated otherwise, however. B. B. Redding, another member of the California Fish Commission, came to Stone's rescue. Redding introduced Stone to the chief engineer of the Southern Pacific Railroad, a Mr. Montague, who shared with Stone railway survey maps of the upper stretches of the Sacramento River. Montague suggested that Stone visit the area at the confluence of the Pitt and McCloud Rivers, where his crews reported seeing local Native Americans spearing salmon during previous spawning runs. At least this was something to go on.

Stone took up Montague on his suggestion, boarded the California and Oregon Railroad in San Francisco, and headed to Red Bluff, California. By this time, two trailing assistants, Myron Green and Stone's nephew William T.

Perrin, had arrived in California. Once in Red Bluff, the trio headed out to find the juncture of the Pitt and McCloud Rivers.

If the Sacramento River was the watery highway that salmon took to reach their spawning grounds, why did Stone feel the need to travel so far upstream? He sought the place where the salmon were spawning, not just passing through. Another reason is that many of the Sacramento's downstream tributaries already had been ravaged by encroaching industries. Logging operations cleared entire mountainsides, which led to erosion and the silting of rivers, then floated their logs down the Sacramento River. In addition, mining companies employed hydraulic mining techniques—concentrating high-pressure jets of water on hillsides to efficiently expose valuable mineral deposits—that sent huge deposits of tailings and runoff into many of the smaller streams where salmon once spawned. The persistent blasting and clearing for new railroad tracks and bridges also generated runoff that fouled rivers and streams. By 1872, significant spawning runs in the Feather, Yuba, and American Rivers—all major salmon streams in the 1850s—were history.<sup>18</sup>

To reach the McCloud River, salmon entered the Sacramento River near San Francisco and traveled upstream past the towns of Red Bluff and Redding. The eventual site of Stone's hatchery was roughly where the modern Baird hatchery is near Lake Shasta.<sup>19</sup> The very fact that salmon could make such an arduous, several-hundred-mile journey to their spawning beds—out of the ocean through San Francisco Bay, up the Sacramento, and all the way to Mount Shasta—was a key reason why it was

thought that Pacific salmon might be the ideal species to introduce in eastern waters. As Baird noted in his annual report, "Taking into consideration the temperature, the turbidity, the volume, the velocity, and the characters of the sources, as well as other physical conditions of the rivers inhabited by the California salmon, it seems probable that a very large number of the rivers of the Eastern United States are equally adapted for the production and growth of this species."<sup>20</sup>

## BUILDING A HATCHERY

After a difficult journey up the McCloud River, Stone and his crew found exactly what they were looking for.<sup>21</sup> On the banks of the river, they found a fishing camp of local Native Americans—members of the Wintu tribe—taking salmon by the hundreds, hanging their harvest on streamside bushes to dry in the late-summer sun. To this point I have intentionally not been specific about what kind of salmon was caught, because Stone was not sure what he would find. It turns out that the salmon taken by the Wintu were Chinook salmon, sometimes referred to as king salmon.

The Wintu had long used this spot. It was as picturesque as it was functional. Mount Persephone's limestone edifice towered over the tree line, with forest covering one bank of the river down to the water's edge. A sandy-bottomed cove dominated the other. Not only did this location have the desired physical characteristics for a hatchery, but the water temperature in a feeder creek varied little, remaining between 53 and 57 degrees Fahrenheit.

Over the next few weeks Stone and his crew set about to construct the buildings needed to carry out their mission. Although he tried to enlist the Wintus in building the hatchery, language barriers proved too difficult to overcome. So the crew constructed a rudimentary hatching house using material sent up from Red Bluff. The building measured only 10 by 14 feet, big enough for the holding tanks. A flume through which cold river water was channeled would keep the eggs at the proper temperature. Twenty-four hatching troughs also were built. Because the troughs were outside, they were placed under tents and required net covers to keep out predators (e.g., birds and foxes). The crew built no structure for themselves but slept outside under the stars. In characteristic understatement, Stone referred to the hatchery as "a very modest affair."<sup>22</sup>

With the hatchery in place, the crew started capturing spawning salmon to

collect eggs and milt. The harvest did not begin until late in the spawning run (September), so the modest arrangement was matched by modest production that first season: about 30,000 eggs. Once fertilized and aged, the eggs were ready to be shipped to the East. The initial batch went out on 25 October 1872, just two months after Stone arrived in California.

A critical obstacle of the Great Experiment had been overcome: finding and taking salmon eggs. Now another important aspect of the experiment was about to begin: getting the eggs to the East Coast.

### SHIPPING SALMON EGGS

Although it probably deserves its own article, here I'll briefly describe how the eggs were collected and shipped. Once a salmon was caught, it was clubbed in the head to make it easy to handle. Eggs were stripped from females—basically by pressing down their sides—into a bucket. Milt was similarly extracted from the males and mixed in with the eggs. After a brief time, the now-fertilized eggs were transferred to trays and stored in the hatching troughs for a couple weeks to “age.” Timing was important: you did not want the eggs to mature before they

reached their destinations, where they were hatched into the fry that were then deposited into their new home.

The weather conditions encountered over such a long train ride were major sources of uncertainty. Given the time of year and the geography over which the train would travel, it could be too cold in some areas and too hot in others to guarantee that the fragile eggs would survive the journey. To circumvent potential problems, the eggs were packed in a very specific manner. Boxes made of half-inch pine measuring 2 feet wide and 1 foot deep housed each batch of eggs. The packing process went as follows: first a layer of moss was laid down, with mosquito bar (netting) placed on top. A layer of eggs was spread on the netting, followed by another layer of netting, moss, more netting, eggs, etc., until the box was half full. At this point, a horizontal wooden partition was put in place so that the upper layers of eggs wouldn't squash their cousins toward the bottom of the box. With this partition in place, the layering process began anew until the box was filled and a lid screwed to the top.

Two of these boxes composed a crate.<sup>23</sup> The boxes were positioned in the crate to create a space of about 4 inches between them. Ice filled this space, leav-

ing a 3-inch gap on the outsides of the boxes into which dry moss was stuffed. The ice and moss served to keep the eggs at the desired temperature. Remember that these crates were being shipped across the country in rail cars with no climate control, whether cooling or heating. Extra ice was placed on the top before closing the crate. The thousands of eggs nestled in each crate were ready for their train trip.

The first harvest of eggs traveled by horse-drawn wagon from Stone's McCloud Station over rough mountain paths and dirt roads to a rail site 25 miles away. They were transferred to agents of Wells, Fargo & Company and bound for Sacramento. From there they went to Omaha on the Union Pacific, and from Omaha they were transferred to other rail lines before reaching their final destination: a hatchery in Bloomsbury, New Jersey.

Like many experiments, the initial undertaking was fraught with hitches. A breakdown in communication sent the eggs to Stone's Charlestown, New Hampshire, hatchery. Baird telegraphed the hatchery and directed the eggs sent to Dr. Slack at the Bloomsbury hatchery, their intended destination.<sup>24</sup> As a result of the rigors of the trip and additional travel time, a large number of this first shipment of eggs was lost; only 7,000 of the initial 30,000 salmon eggs hatched. Now, the question was where to put them. A committee of state fish commissioners and fish culturists weighed in, picking the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania for the initial deposit. Because of cold weather and an early winter, that plan was scrapped, so Dr. Slack in New Jersey was instructed to keep the fry in his hatchery until better conditions prevailed. That apparently did not happen until March of the following year. So it was that early into President Grant's second term, the fingerlings hatched from this initial shipment of Pacific salmon finally were released into the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg.

Baird was guardedly optimistic, writing “It is much to be hoped that some important result may follow this enterprise, especially if it be at all possible to add largely to the number in the course of the next few years.”<sup>25</sup> The initial success of at least acquiring and transporting salmon eggs from California to the East caused Stone to assert, perhaps a little too boldly, that “the untried field had become familiar ground, and a path over the unknown sea had been found [with] the results of the first year's operations on the McCloud” being an unqualified success.<sup>26</sup> Waxing romantic, he even compared sending that maiden shipment

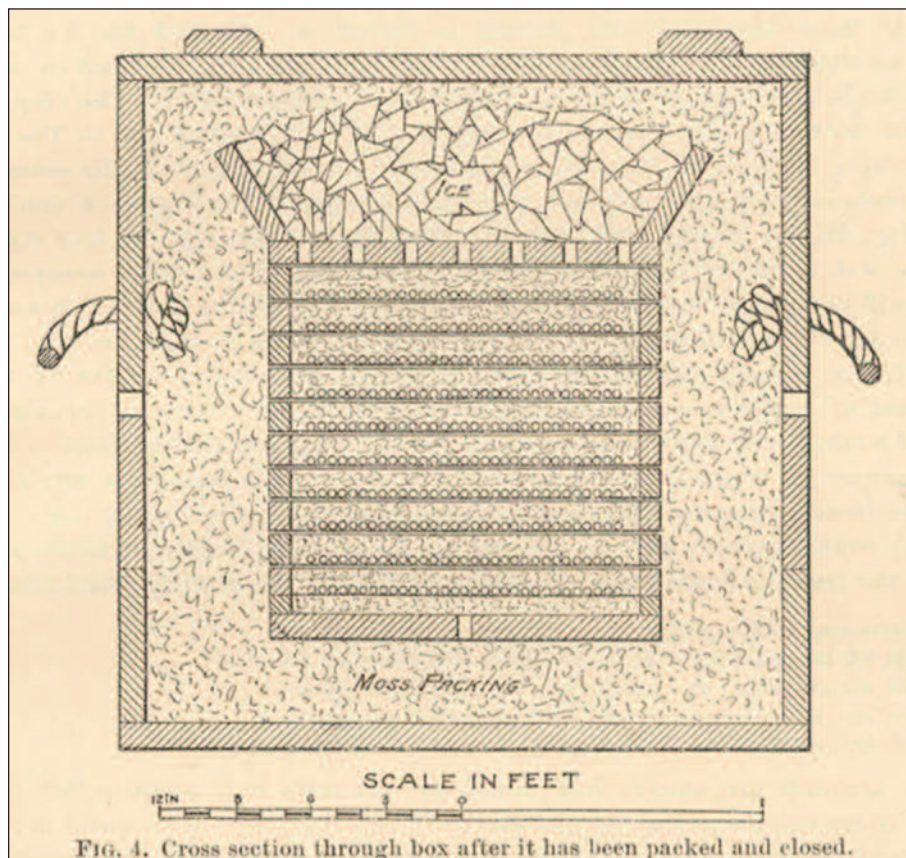


FIG. 4. Cross section through box after it has been packed and closed.

Cross-section of an egg crate after being packed and closed. From George A. Seagle, “The Artificial Propagation of the Rainbow Trout,” Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1896 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), 251.

of “delicate embryos packed in wooden boxes, to run the gauntlet of the vague and innumerable dangers of a journey across the continent” with “sailing out into an undiscovered sea.”<sup>27</sup> The Great Experiment was up and running.

### SALMON OPERATIONS AT THE MCCLOUD STATION EXPAND

From this auspicious beginning, the McCloud Station, as it was called, quickly became the largest salmon egg-taking operation in the United States. A larger hatchery building, erected in 1873, represented a significant capital improvement. A current wheel was built to better divert water from the river to the hatching house. The wheel consisted of a series of buckets around its circumference. River water flowing under the wheel rotated it as water filled the buckets, which then were dumped on the downward side of each revolution. Although simple in design, the wheel redirected thousands of gallons of water an hour from the river to the hatching troughs.

During the 1873 spawning run, the salmon harvest was increased dramatically using sweep seines. Once netted, the hundreds of salmon were clubbed into unconsciousness and taken onshore where the eggs and the milt were collected into buckets and any other containers around.<sup>28</sup> The salmon were not wasted, however: Stone sought to keep up good relations, giving “the Indians all the salmon which we caught after we had got through with them.”<sup>29</sup>

Because Baird’s charge was to maximize the number of eggs collected, the sweep seines were manned night and day during the spawning run. Such diligence was rewarded with a significant increase

in eggs harvested, even though Stone lamented that *only* 2 million salmon eggs were collected during the 1873 season.<sup>30</sup> And although he suggested that that level of egg collection was probably the maximum for the hatchery in its current configuration and staffing, he believed it wasn’t sufficient. The “object of this station was to collect eggs *on a large scale*,” observed Stone, so a catch of a couple million “was by no means satisfactory.”<sup>31</sup>

In addition to shipping eggs to the East, 1873 marks the first year that some of the hatchery’s salmon eggs were shipped to other countries. From 1873 through 1881, Stone shipped more than 4.6 million salmon eggs to consignees in other countries, including Australia, Canada, England, several European countries, and New Zealand. Even a hatchery in Hawaii received a small shipment. It seems that not only were fish culturists in the United States eagerly experimenting with transplanting salmon, but their counterparts in other countries were similarly engaged.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note that even though he sought to maximize production, Stone seemed conflicted, cognizant of the potentially negative consequences. Upsetting the natural reproduction process increased the already significant pressure faced by Pacific salmon populations (recall the demise of spawning runs noted earlier). With this in mind, Stone often had his team return salmon fry to the McCloud River.<sup>33</sup> He even tried to protect the native Wintus and the native salmon by petitioning the government to protect the entire McCloud River drainage from outside fishing. That idea was a nonstarter. Not only did his own actions violate that goal, but settlers were encroaching rapidly on the Wintu’s land and on the wildlife. After witnessing the decline of the Pacific

salmon population over time, later in his career he even suggested that a “national salmon park” be established in Alaska.<sup>34</sup> And he was right to be worried. Fast-forward to the present: the salmon comprising the Sacramento River winter run and the Upper Columbia River spring run are classified as “endangered,” and seven other Chinook species along the West Coast currently are listed as “threatened.”<sup>35</sup>

Stories about Stone’s activities and the experiment itself were reaching the outside world. Articles about the McCloud River operation appeared in regional newspapers, like the *Sacramento Record*, and even in national publications, like the *Overland Monthly*.<sup>36</sup> The renowned naturalist John Muir even took time to visit Stone on a walking trip from Redding to Mount Shasta. Muir and Stone, both avid hikers, climbed Mount Persephone together during Muir’s visit in October 1874. That event, along with laudatory descriptions of the hatchery’s activities, appeared in Muir’s articles in the *San Francisco Bulletin*.

In the ensuing years, more capital improvements were made. An “obstruction”—essentially a bridge with spaced wooden slats that reached down to the bottom of the river—was installed across the McCloud. The idea was to block the salmon’s upstream migration: water could flow through the openings, but not all the salmon could. Stone was quite taken by this innovation, boasting that it solved “the problem of getting salmon eggs on a large scale.”<sup>37</sup>

By 1878, a much larger hatching house was in use. So was a larger current wheel. Because current wheels often were damaged by flooding, this one was built on floats: as the water level rose and fell, so did the current wheel.



The McCloud hatchery house (above) and current wheel (right) circa 1878. From *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1896* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), plates 73 (facing page 205) and 74 (facing page 208).



Millions of salmon eggs were harvested and shipped from the McCloud Station. Stone recorded that the hatchery harvested about 9 million eggs during the 1875 season. According to Stone, that season the river was “thick” with salmon; they were observed jumping at a rate that, according to his calculations, put “6,000 to be actually in the air in an hour.”<sup>38</sup> Even more could have been harvested if only the hatchery was larger and had more workers. But 9 million taxed the staff and facility. It also meant a notable increase in packaging and shipping them. Stone’s records show that shipping 9 million eggs required 160 bushels of moss and 800 yards of mosquito bar (netting). The egg trays filled 158 boxes, filling 79 crates. Overall, the shipment weighed in at nearly 10 tons, for which Wells, Fargo & Company charged the commission about \$3,000 (close to \$70,000 in modern terms) to send the eggs on their way to the East and points in between.<sup>39</sup> A few years later, in 1878 (the year Stone renamed the McCloud Station the Baird Station), a record harvest of 14 million eggs was achieved. That shipment was so big that it took two railcars to hold all of the egg crates. It also meant that contrary to Stone’s aforementioned concern about the *Pacific* coast salmon, thousands of salmon were forever removed from the population.<sup>40</sup>

### SHIPPING SALMON ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Thus far you may have gotten the idea that salmon eggs from the McCloud River went only to the East Coast. This was true early on, but soon the program became much more expansive. The table at right lists those states in which Pacific salmon were deposited as part of the Great Experiment. Remember that this was long before the “lower 48” comprised many of the states currently in existence, hence the largely federal nature of the operation. The state fish commissions that existed were, however, more than willing to play their part.

The table lists cumulative salmon stockings by state between 1872 and 1880, with the ordering determined by number of fish planted. Salmon were released in thirty-six states, at least officially; there is no way of knowing how many private individuals acquired salmon and released them. Pick your state and see how you ranked. (My state, Missouri, ranks fifteenth, nudged out by Iowa but ahead of Nebraska.) One thing to notice is that of the top six states, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut,

State	Number of Fish	Number of Plantings
Maryland	2,999,000	201
Pennsylvania	1,860,000	77
New Jersey	1,650,000	79
Michigan	1,460,000	167
Connecticut	1,330,000	19
Virginia	1,120,000	46
Wisconsin	830,000	46
New York	795,000	66
North Carolina	759,000	33
West Virginia	709,000	49
Ohio	620,000	27
Minnesota	600,000	325
New Hampshire	567,000	17
Iowa	555,000	150
Missouri	546,000	29
Nebraska	490,000	9
Utah	456,000	21
Indiana	443,000	8
Illinois	430,000	27
Kansas	389,000	89
Massachusetts	288,000	12
Texas	214,000	not available
Nevada	200,000	2
Rhode Island	183,000	8
Kentucky	144,000	70
Tennessee	78,000	6
Mississippi	72,000	4
South Carolina	71,000	33
Maine	47,000	5
Louisiana	43,000	3
Vermont	35,000	4
Alabama	30,000	2
Georgia	29,000	16
Colorado	23,000	4
Delaware	21,000	4
Arkansas	11,000	9

*From Jerry C. Towle, “The Great Failure: Nineteenth-Century Dispersals of the Pacific Salmon,” California Geographical Society, vol. XXVII (1987), 83.*

and Virginia all are in the Atlantic drainage, which originally is where the Pacific salmon were thought to be a replacement for Atlantic salmon. Michigan also received a large number of salmon, the idea being that if planted into the rivers flowing into the Great Lakes, a spawning run could be created.<sup>41</sup>



The author's map of Missouri counties with one or more salmon releases, 1878–1896.

What jumps out from the table is the peculiar nature of where and how many salmon were released. The varied values for the number of plantings and/or fish released suggest that many of the states did not have suitable waterways that could hold salmon (obviously not always a prerequisite), nor create a spawning run to the Atlantic or the Great Lakes. Perhaps early plantings were made and the experiment was quickly terminated. Or perhaps the salmon were placed in lakes and ponds. Maybe this explains the thirty separate plantings in South Carolina and the twenty-one in Utah. More than likely, states participated in the experiment because the U.S. Fish Commission provided the salmon basically for free. After all, what local politician or fish commissioner wanted to be the one who kept his state from joining in such a grand plan? Whatever the reason, the range over which the experts thought Pacific salmon could survive and thrive is astonishing.

As questionable as this pattern of distribution might seem to us today, it can be explained. Although not necessarily a good reason, the commission was using government money to fund the experiment. An adept political operator, Baird convinced enough congressmen and senators in Washington, D.C., that stocking salmon in their state was not only feasible but, more importantly, many of their constituents would view this use of government funds favorably. Who would pass up the chance to have salmon swimming in local rivers and streams (and

take credit for it)? The government funds kept flowing.

Existing evidence at the time also made it scientifically feasible (at least testable) to consider stocking salmon in some interior rivers. This is evident in the table. Baird reasoned that “taking into consideration the temperature, the turbidity, the volume, the velocity, and the character of the sources, as well as other physical conditions of the rivers inhabited by the California salmon, it seems probable that a very large number of the rivers of [the United States] are equally adapted for the production and growth of this species.”<sup>42</sup> Let me use Missouri’s experience to see just how far that idea was taken.<sup>43</sup>

### THE MISSOURI EXPERIENCE

Salmon were first released in Missouri in 1878. Over the years, the numbers of salmon released counted in the hundreds of thousands. In 1879, for example, 190,000 fry were released into a handful of rivers, the majority into the spring-fed Meramec River, which already was a popular tourist and angling destination, especially for those living in St. Louis. The records show that in 1880 the number of salmon released amounted to more than 175,000; in 1881 more than 157,000 were set loose into Missouri waters.<sup>44</sup> If salmon didn’t take in Missouri, it wasn’t for lack of trying.

The distribution of salmon in Missouri was widespread. The map above

highlights the counties in which at least one planting of salmon was made. For those unfamiliar with the state’s geology, much of the southern half of the state—the Ozarks—is chock-full of cold-water springs.<sup>45</sup> Equally important is the fact that many of these streams flow into other streams that eventually lead to the Mississippi River on the state’s eastern border. Putting salmon into these southern Missouri streams could be rationalized thus: *if* the salmon could grow to spawning age in the cool spring-fed waters and, at the right time, *if* they could make it to the Mississippi, and *if* they then could make the journey down to the Gulf of Mexico, then maybe, just maybe, in a few years they could make the return journey to spawn. If young salmon could survive the long trip from their birthplace in the McCloud River to the Sacramento River to the sea and back to the McCloud, why not from southern Missouri to the Mississippi to the Gulf and back?

Explaining deposits in the counties in the northern half of the state isn’t, however, so logical. If you’ve ever driven Interstate 70 from St. Louis to Kansas City, you probably did not recognize it as salmon country, because it isn’t. Unlike the Ozarks, there are few cold-water springs, the streams are turgid and muddy, and they warm considerably during the summer. How then to explain these sites to deposit a cold-water fish?

One answer is that many streams in counties in the northern half of the state eventually drain into the Missouri River. The cluster of counties located in the northwestern quadrant of the state are close to St. Joseph (just north of Kansas City). That’s important because St. Joseph was home to the state’s only cold-water hatchery at the time, which is where the state’s fish commission took delivery of the salmon from the U.S. Fish Commission. Because the rivers in this area empty into the Missouri River, which eventually flows to the Mississippi River north of St. Louis, it could be explained scientifically.<sup>46</sup> It also is true that it simply was more convenient to plant the fry in nearby rivers, although they undoubtedly met a quick and inglorious demise.

### THE GREAT EXPERIMENT ENDS

Salmon egg production at the McCloud hatchery began to decline in the early 1880s. The ongoing extension of the Central Pacific Railroad Company line north of Redding along the Little Sacramento River led to indiscriminate blasting of the hillsides to make way for the railbed. This washed soil and debris into

the river, killing many salmon trying to make their way to the McCloud. Another factor was that the number of salmon and ease of taking them provided a readily available (and free) source of protein for the railroad's construction crews. This combination helps explain the dramatic decline in egg production at the hatchery between 1882 and 1884, at which time the salmon-taking operation was suspended. From that point on, the Baird hatchery continued to operate, but only to release salmon into Pacific coastal waters.

The Great Experiment, which began in 1872 with the first shipment of eggs to the East Coast, was over. And it wasn't due to lack of production from the McCloud. What killed the program was the information coming in from the deposit sites around the country, which revealed the incontrovertible truth that transplanting Pacific salmon to the East and other places in the country was a failure. A. N. Cheney, a fish culturist with the New York Fisheries, Game & Forest Commission, recounted in 1886 that "between 1873 and 1876 the New York fish commission planted 156,000 California salmon fry (*Salmo quinnat*) in the headwaters of the Hudson, and nearly 100,000 on Long Island. Few, if any, of these fish were ever afterwards heard from."<sup>47</sup> Cheney's observation could be generalized to most reports from other locations. Forget making it to the ocean and back: most of the fry did not survive long after they were released, victims of either the unsuitable water into which they were put or local fish who quickly fed on the tasty treat.

Stone was stunned, finding the outcome "a stupendous surprise and disappointment."<sup>48</sup> Why so surprised? Whether it reflects naiveté or hubris, consider what Stone (and others) expected when the experiment began:

I doubt if there was one person who had heard about it [the Great Experiment] in America, whether interested in fish-culture or not, who did not believe that salmon were going to become abundant again in the Atlantic rivers on account of the introduction of the Pacific Coast fish; and not only this, but many persons believed that several southern rivers that had never had salmon in them before, would now become prolific salmon streams, when they were well stocked with this new California salmon that abounded in warm latitudes on the Pacific Coast.<sup>49</sup>

Sometimes man's ingenuity and scientific prowess come up short.

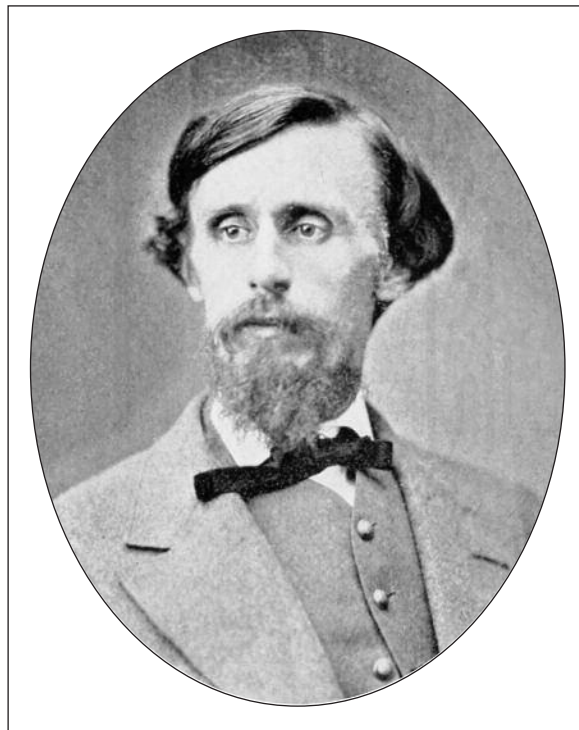
If some salmon actually did make it to puberty and to salt water, there is no evidence that any returned to spawn.

Various explanations were floated. Some suggested that maybe Pacific salmon were simply too big for the smaller streams into which they were planted. Or maybe the process of getting from fry to spawning run just took longer than expected. Whatever the excuses, millions of salmon that might have one day populated the McCloud and the Sacramento Rivers in California vanished. Stone lamented their passing by asking, "What became of them? Where did they go? . . . Are any of them still alive anywhere in the boundless ocean? Or are they all dead? And if they are dead, what killed them?"<sup>50</sup> To Baird, Stone attributed the glib explanation that the salmon "had found an underground passage beneath the continent, and had returned by it to the Pacific," but everyone really knew that "these millions of salmon have disappeared as completely . . . as if they had all been devoured years ago by the monsters of the deep."<sup>51</sup>

By the late 1880s, new ideas at the U.S. Fish Commission were in the wind and, perhaps more importantly, new personnel were in charge. Spencer Baird died in the summer of 1887 and Marshall McDonald, his deputy and a noted fish culturist in his own right, became the new U.S. fish commissioner.<sup>52</sup> McDonald closed the book on the Great Experiment in his 1888 report, writing that "in no single case did the experiment prove satisfactory," and he saw no alternative but "reluctantly to abandon an experiment which, reasoning from a priori considerations, gave fair promises of success."<sup>53</sup> How reluctant McDonald was in shutting down the Great Experiment is debatable. What he had his sights set on was another experiment in fish management: the mass propagation and stocking of rainbow trout from federal fish hatcheries. The rainbow trout was the new wonder fish from the West capturing everyone's attention.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The Great Experiment provided a critical foundation to the story of why and how rainbow trout now reside in many states. If nothing else, introducing you to the Great Experiment highlights the



Marshall McDonald. From *Flora McDonald Williams, The Glengarry McDonalds of Virginia (Louisville, Ky.: Geo. G. Fetter Company, 1911), facing page 218.*

sheer audacity of early fish culturists, a mindset that science could be used to alter nature to serve man's purpose. If overfishing was decimating the nation's fish stock—remember, that is ostensibly why the Fish Commission was created in the first place—the solution was to "scientifically" move fish (salmon, trout, shad, carp, or any other fish for that matter) to where they are "needed."

The Great Experiment was not a *total* failure—far from it. Fish culturists and scientists in the United States and elsewhere gained a working knowledge of how to collect large numbers of fish eggs and successfully transport them thousands of miles. It also expanded scientific knowledge about the Pacific salmon's spawning habits, which later was used to try to avoid the declines suffered by the Atlantic salmon. And the collection of new flora and fauna from the Northern California region greatly expanded the Smithsonian's natural history collection and scientists' knowledge.

For our purpose, from the failed experiment with Pacific salmon arose another experiment that, by most accounts, was a roaring success: the harvesting and shipping of eggs from another California native—the rainbow trout—for transplanting in other areas of the country. That story unfolds in the final installment.



## ENDNOTES

1. Shad (and other fish) were being sent concurrently from the East Coast to the West Coast. The experiment with shad turned out to be quite successful, if success is measured by creating a thriving population of an immigrant fish in non-native waters.

2. R. B. Roosevelt, "Fish Culture Compared in Importance with Agriculture: Speech of Hon. Robert B. Roosevelt of New York, in the House of Representatives, May 13, 1872" (Washington, D.C.: F. and J. Rives and Geo. A. Bailey, 1872). Cited in Anders Halverson, *An Entirely Synthetic Fish: How Rainbow Trout Beguiled America and Overran the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 17. Maybe an increased interest in preserving the country's natural resources was taking hold? In March of the same year, Congress designated Yellowstone the country's first national park.

3. Approximate price equivalencies in this article use data from Robert J. Gordon and Stanley G. Harris, "The Annual Consumer Price Index for the United States, 1774 to Present," MeasuringWorth.com, www.measuringworth.com/datasets/uscpil/. Accessed 28 October 2020.

4. Livingston Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon on the Pacific Coast of the United States, with Notes on the Natural History of the Quinnat Salmon," *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1896* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), 206.

5. Letter from Spencer Baird to Livingston Stone, quoted in Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 206.

6. *Ibid.*, footnote 1. Stone suggests that there were five known species of Pacific salmon and that steelhead trout were often mistakenly called salmon.

7. *Ibid.*, 206.

8. Spencer F. Baird, *Report of the Commissioner for 1872 and 1873*, Part II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1874), xxiii.

9. The official opening of the transcontinental route occurred on 8 May 1869 when the Union Pacific's Engine 119 and the Central Pacific's Jupiter met at Promontory, Utah.

10. Keith Wheeler and the Editors of Time-Life Books, *The Railroaders* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1973), 135.

11. *Ibid.*

12. For example, the stage from St. Louis to Sacramento cost upward of \$200, or about \$4,650 in modern terms, and surely was a nastier trip than riding in a train car. My source for the price is from an exhibition on travel in the Old West displayed in the Gateway Arch Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, on 15 July 2019.

13. The Union Pacific flooded the country with such posters advertising the allure of transcontinental rail travel. This quote comes from one that appeared on 10 May 1869, reproduced in *The Railroaders* (117).

14. It would be very difficult, without his itinerary, to calculate the cost of the leg from Boston to Omaha. Stone likely would have traveled on several different rail lines to complete the initial leg of his journey.

15. Letter from Spencer Baird to Livingston Stone, quoted in Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 206. In modern terms, this is equivalent to about \$17,000.

16. For perspective, a foreman in the Boston foundry of James Gurney & Co. earned \$4 a day. Even the "cheap" fare of \$80 thus amounted to twenty days' pay for someone who had a responsible and well-paid job. Rail travel just didn't fit into too many budgets. See Joseph D. Weeks, *Report on the Statistics of Wages in Manufacturing Industries: With Supplementary Reports on the Average Retail Prices of Necessaries of Life, and on Trades Societies, and Strikes and Lockouts* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886), 152. Retrieved at catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100470930. Accessed 30 June 2020.

17. Travel by rail from Omaha to the West in coach could be brutal. For a firsthand account, see Robert Louis Stevenson, "Across the Plains," in his *The Travels and Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vol. XV (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 99–148.

18. For more on the salmon decline in this era, see Jerry C. Towle, "The Great Failure: Nineteenth-Century Dispersals of the Pacific Salmon," *California Geographical Society*, Vol. XXVII (1987), 75–96.

19. Stone renamed the hatchery the Baird Station in 1878 in honor of his friend.

20. Spencer Baird, *Report of Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, 1873–74 and 1874–75* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1876), xxvi–xxvii. Baird, Stone, and most others believed that if spawning Pacific salmon traveled through an often muddy Sacramento River, it was not far-fetched to think that a spawning run could be established in most any river along the eastern seaboard, especially north of Washington, D.C.

21. For a full account, see Earl Leitzitz, "A History of California's Fish Hatcheries, 1870–1960," *Fish Bulletin 150* (Sacramento: State of California Department of Fish and Game, 1970).

22. Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 208.

23. The illustration I have is from 1896. I do not have an example of the 1872 version, but I assume it isn't much different.

24. See Spencer F. Baird, *Report of the Commissioner for 1872 and 1873*, xxiv.

25. *Ibid.*, xxv.

26. Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 209.

27. *Ibid.*

28. This is how wild salmon are harvested to this day.

29. Livingston Stone, "Salmon Breeding," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* (1874, vol. 3, no. 1), 16. The account of how the salmon eggs were taken has two versions. One approach is how I have described it—collecting salmon in the river and harvesting the eggs. In "Salmon Breeding" (page 18), Stone writes of building corrals in the river that were used to halt the salmon's upward migration. Once the female salmon appeared ripe, they were removed and the eggs taken. A major drawback of this approach was that the salmon, instinctively trying to get upstream to their spawning grounds, often died as they thrashed about in the corrals. With his eyes set firmly on his mission, Stone wrote that even after causing this additional loss of salmon, "Fortunately, there were enough more in the river to get eggs from, for had we depended on our stock on hand when the first eggs were taken we should have obtained a very meager supply. As it was, I kept on fishing" (18–19).

30. Livingston Stone, "History of Operations at the Fish-Hatching Stations on the McCloud River, California, from the Beginning, August, 1872, to October, 1884," *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1885* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1885), 28.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Towle, "The Great Failure," 77. Towle suggests that one reason for the widespread

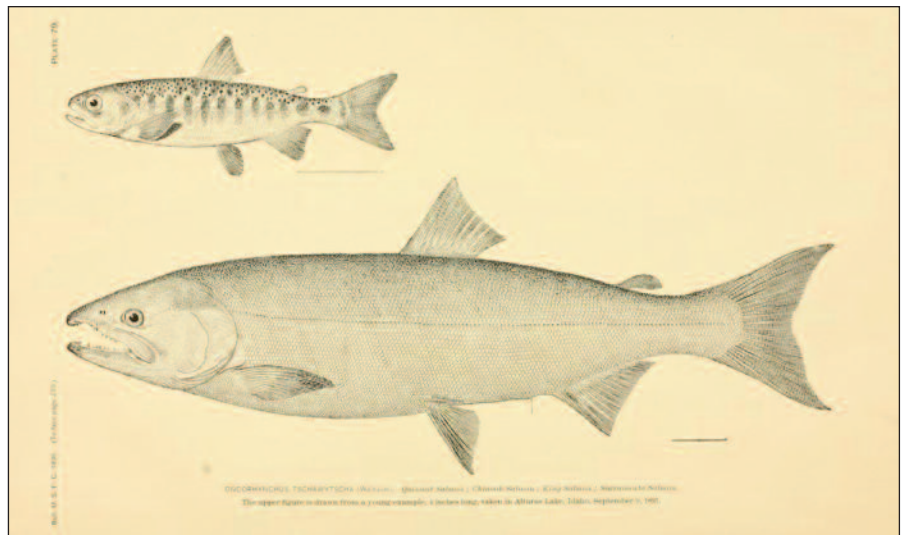


Illustration of a Quinnat salmon. From Livingston Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon on the Pacific Coast of the United States, with Notes on the Natural History of the Quinnat Salmon," *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1896* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), plate 79, facing page 230.



*Interior of the Baird Hatchery. From Livingston Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon on the Pacific Coast of the United States, with Notes on the Natural History of the Quinmat Salmon," Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1896 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), plate 78, facing page 228.*

importation of salmon from the United States was the fact that "immigrants to new homelands often deplored what seemed to them incomplete and unsatisfactory plant and animal assemblages. In older settled regions, deterioration of nature under the impact of human depredations led to similar dissatisfaction."

33. It is not clear why he didn't just reduce the harvest. My guess is that he faced a quota (implicit or explicit, I do not know) and being the dutiful employee made sure to hit it.

34. These proposals appear, in order, in Livingston Stone, "Report of Operations during 1872 at the United States Hatchery Establishment on the McCloud River, and on the California Salmonidae Generally, with a List of Specimens Collected," *U.S. Fish Commission, Report of the Commissioner for 1872 and 1873*, Appendix B, VI (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1874), 168–200; and "A National Salmon Park," *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* (1892, vol. 21, no. 1), 149–62. See also Robert Behnke, "Livingston Stone, J. B. Campbell, and the Origins of Hatchery Rainbow Trout," *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 1990, vol. 16, no. 3), 20–22.

35. These classifications are for 2019. See the NOAA Fisheries web page for Chinook salmon at [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/Chinook-salmon-protected](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/Chinook-salmon-protected). Accessed 29 June 2020.

36. See, for example, W. M. Turner, "Salmon Hatching on the McCloud River," *Overland Monthly* (1875, vol. 14, issue 1), 79–85.

37. Stone, "History of Operations at the Fish-Hatching Stations," 28.

38. Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 212.

39. *Ibid.*

40. How many fish did it take to yield 14 million eggs? I have found estimates suggesting that a female Chinook salmon produces, on average, between 3,000 and 5,000 eggs. To generate the 14 million eggs shipped in 1878 meant harvesting between 2,800 and 4,600 salmon. I also have found that a "good" result in the wild is an estimated ratio of fish-to-spawning-adult is 3 to 1; that is, for each adult, three of her progeny survive to return from the sea to spawn. Using these values, and all other factors held constant, the 1878 harvest reduced the future salmon population by somewhere between 8,400 to 13,800 fish. No wonder Stone was concerned about the effect of his actions on the Pacific salmon population.

41. Although these early plantings failed, the release of coho salmon into Lake Michigan tributaries in the 1960s was quite successful and remains so today.

42. Spencer Baird, *Report of the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1876), xxvi–xxvii. Although published in 1876, Baird's report was submitted in February 1875.

43. Details are provided in my book *From Northern California to the Ozarks of Missouri: How Rainbow Trout Came to the Show-Me State* (2020). It is interesting to note that Missouri, among other states, was concurrently conducting an experiment, overseen by the U.S. Fish Commission, of introducing eastern shad into Missouri waters for the purpose of creating a spawning run to the Gulf of Mexico. As the Missouri commission noted in their 1881–1882 report, "Shad has been deposited in our waters for the past five years successively and regularly. We have yet no authenticated report of returning shad having been captured in Missouri waters, but we still hope for favorable results" (*Report of*

*the Fish Commission of the State of Missouri for the Years 1881–1882* [1883], 6–7).

44. These figures were reported in various editions of the biannual reports of the Missouri Fish Commission.

45. This fact will be more important when deciding where to plant rainbow trout. I leave that for the next installment of this series.

46. The astute (or perplexed) reader may be asking, "If St. Joseph is where the salmon eggs from California were sent, and if they used wagons to distribute them, then how did salmon get to the Ozarks in the southern half of the state?" The answer is that St. Joseph was the home of the state hatchery, and the state's plantings used that stock of salmon. The plantings made in the Ozarks often were done by the U.S. Fish Commission. Many salmon came in through St. Louis from other hatcheries and were transported to the southwest, where they were deposited in many of the counties shaded in the map on page 8. (Spur lines allowed even wider dispersion from the main trunk line.) This railroad, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway—more commonly known as the Frisco—played an important role in getting salmon to Missouri, but an even more important part in introducing rainbow trout to the state, my topic in Part III of this series.

47. A. N. Cheney, "Salmon in the Hudson River," *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission for 1886* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1887), 252.

48. Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 219.

49. *Ibid.*, 218.

50. *Ibid.*, 219.

51. *Ibid.*

52. McDonald was the inventor of the universal automatic hatching jar.

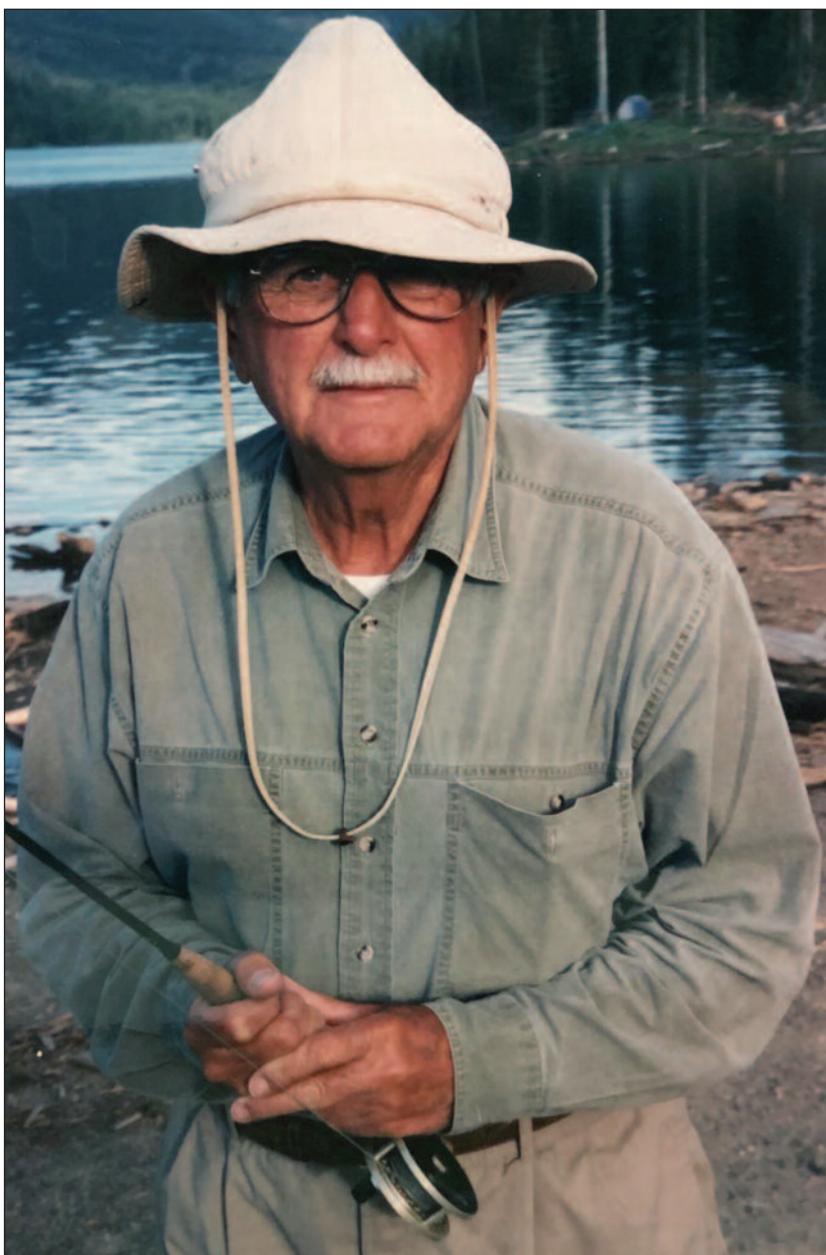
53. Quoted in Stone, "The Artificial Propagation of Salmon," 219.

# Hands Across the Ocean: Sylvester Nemes and the North Country Soft Hackle

*by Andrew Herd*

**I**N JUNE 2017, Paul Schullery introduced me to a tiny fly shop in rural Montana. The shop, which was no more than a small room, served a short section of a spring creek, and the selection of flies it sold had been selected to work on roughly half a mile of water. As such, it qualifies as the most specialized fly shop that I have ever seen—but what caught my eye was that a remarkable proportion of the patterns on its shelves were soft hackles. Today, such flies are fished all over the United States, but I wonder how many realize that the man who made them so popular played a significant role in rescuing the North Country fly from obscurity in Britain? To understand how this came about, and why some of the most innovative interpretations of the soft hackle can today be found an ocean away from their homeland, I must introduce Sylvester Nemes.

Nemes was born on 2 April 1922 in Pennsylvania to Romanian parents, Dominic Nemes and Pauline Angel (the name is pronounced *Neem-ess*). Sylvester spent his childhood in Cleveland, Ohio, during the Depression, and it was there that he began fly fishing. Nemes's mentor was a barber who encouraged him to start tying flies in 1938, but Sylvester's teenage years were cut short by his enlistment in the U.S. Army at the age of nineteen when America entered World War II. He was posted to England as part of a fighter control squadron because his eyesight wasn't up to aircrew standard, and there he enjoyed a period of fishing on the chalk streams, to which American troops had access, before landing at Omaha Beach shortly after D-Day. After serving in Europe for nine months as a fighter controller, he returned to marry Hazel Mary Barclay, a nurse, on 17 March 1945 in Southampton. The couple's first child was born in England, but they subsequently moved back to the States, where their second and third children were born.



*Sylvester Nemes. From Collection 2576, Sylvester Nemes Papers, 1973–2010, Box 32:7, Photos. S Nemes, #2. Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections, Renne Library, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.*



Picking up the threads of his life again, Nemes took a bachelor's degree in English at Kent State University and went on to work as a copywriter and photographer in Cleveland and Detroit before the couple settled in the Chicago area. In 1961, the family moved to Crown Point, Indiana, where Nemes established his own business as a photojournalist and published his first book, *The Soft-Hackled Fly* (1975). The Nemeses moved to San Francisco in the early 1980s and from there to Bozeman, Montana, in 1984, where they built a house at the base of the Bridger Mountains, overlooking the Gallatin Valley. Sylvester died more than ten years ago, on 3 February 2011.

When *The Soft-Hackled Fly* was published, it triggered an unexpected series of events. Traditional North Country fly pattern use had reached its nadir in Britain in the 1970s, pushed aside by a flood of new inventions, the decline of fly tying in Britain, and an influx of cheap patterns tied far beyond the borders of Europe. Apart from a few diehards who carried the flame, the number of anglers actively fishing soft hackles had fallen to an all-time low. However, a renaissance in the publication of fly-fishing books had just begun, and timing of *The Soft-Hackled Fly* could hardly have been better.

At this point, I ought to make it clear that in 1970s Britain, the last bastion of what today we call "soft hackles" had become known as the North Country Spiders, because W. C. Stewart's once equally well-known patterns had been more or less forgotten.<sup>1</sup> It is a measure of Nemes's success that the term *soft hackle* became popular once more because his books arrived just in time to help to save an entire tradition from going under. Virtually nothing significant about North Country Spiders had been published in Britain since World War II, and very little since World War I, unless you count reprints and books that dealt with the matter in passing. With the exception of a few articles from stalwarts like Reg Righyni, Oliver Edwards, and Malcolm Greenhalgh, even the magazines had fallen silent. Anyone who wanted to know more had little choice but to resort to antiquarian booksellers, and even then, it wasn't easy to find out where to start. Into this void stepped Mr. Nemes, and as far as British anglers were concerned, for a dozen years, he became the most ardent advocate of the soft hackle, a distinction

*The author examining flies in a Montana shop (above left) and conducting research on Sylvester Nemes with then-University Archivist Kim Allen Scott at Montana State University (left).*



*Selection of Sylvester Nemes's favorite soft-hackled flies. Top row: partridge and yellow (with fur thorax); partridge and orange (with fur thorax); snipe and yellow. Second row: snipe and purple; March brown spider; partridge and yellow. Third row: starling and herl; pheasant tail; grouse and orange; partridge and green (with fur thorax). Bottom row: partridge and green; partridge and orange; iron blue dun; and Tup's Indispensable. From Sylvester Nemes, *The Soft-Hackled Fly and Tiny Soft Hackles: A Trout Fisherman's Guide* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2006). Photo by Sylvester Nemes. Reproduced courtesy of Stackpole Books.*

that continued until Roger Fogg published his classic *A Handbook of North Country Flies* in 1988.<sup>2</sup>

Nemes's interest in soft-hackled flies had been kindled in 1960 when he was shown three partridge-hackled patterns in Paul Young's fly shop in Detroit. The frustrating thing about this part of the story is that Nemes left no clue about how Young had gotten hold of them, and

although it is known that the Detroit shop marketed some soft-hackled flies, they were a minor interest. Although it is true that other American tiers understood the efficacy of soft hackles—James Leisenring obviously springs to mind,<sup>3</sup> also Ernest Schwiebert,<sup>4</sup> and perhaps Sid Gordon<sup>5</sup>—the concept had remained relatively niche. In “The Evolution of Fly Fishing” chapter of *Trout*, Schwiebert,

for example, disposed of the North Country masters John Jackson<sup>6</sup> and T. E. Pritt in a single paragraph each, failed to mention Harfield H. Edmonds and Norman N. Lee at all, and although he illustrated Stewart's spiders as an element of a larger group of patterns, they were barely mentioned in the text and the reader was directed back to Leisenring.<sup>7</sup> Today it is hard to imagine how



such a promising idea could have lain forgotten for so long, but don't forget that there weren't so many fly fishers in those days, that the British columnists mentioned earlier were almost unknown in the United States, and that anglers in the U.K. were equally unfamiliar with American writers. This was where Nemes came in, because through the combination of a single-minded concentration on his subject, an accident of timing, and—crucially—the availability of his book in Britain, he became impossible to escape.

In *The Soft-Hackled Fly*, Nemes tells us that he developed a fishing method that was a blend of his own intuition and a way of mending the line that he had learned—of all places—from Jock Scott's book, *Greased Line Fishing for Salmon* (1935).<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting that Joe Brooks had also experimented with a similar type of presentation, but in Nemes's case, the end result was a down-and-across method that aimed to float the fly in a dead drift, and Brooks wasn't using soft hackles. The combination turned out to be very effective in Nemes's home rivers, despite the fact that the patterns didn't imitate any known American insect. Practical fisherman that he was, Nemes wasn't bothered, because he was catching plenty.

It is fascinating to relate that when Nemes began fishing soft hackles, he had little idea of their history and no more than a hazy understanding that their roots lay in the north of England. This

means that if his first book is considered in isolation, it is easy to dismiss its content, and indeed some have done so, but in practice, Nemes's treatment of the soft hackle is better seen as a work in progress. The more he looked into the patterns, the more he became aware that they had a long history. By 1981, when Nemes published his next book, *The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict*,<sup>9</sup> he had read some of the core literature on the subject, specifically Pritt<sup>10</sup> and Edmonds and Lee.<sup>11</sup> In the introduction to *Addict*, Nemes made it clear that not only he, but his publisher, had been in a sweat to get his first book to press and that there hadn't been time for the section on casting and presentation to be filled out as well as either would have wished. *Addict* was written to rectify that omission and as an opportunity to introduce new material. Bearing in mind that *Addict* was published nearly forty years ago and that the two British books that Nemes had managed to find at that point contained remarkably little about how to fish North Country patterns, he did a remarkable job in putting together a method for fishing them.

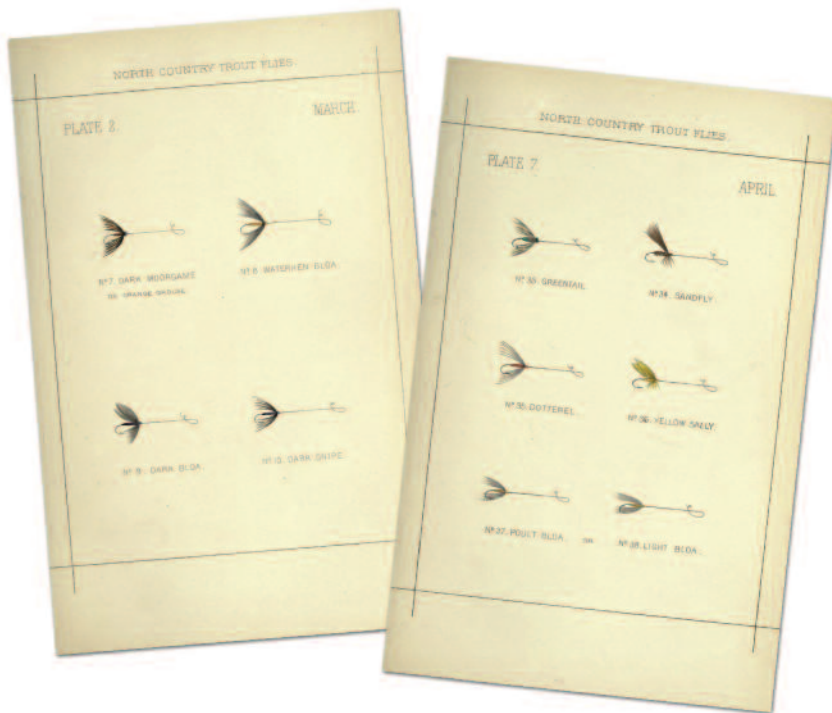
The second chapter of *Addict* must have been an eye-opener for American readers—not to mention many British ones—because the author printed Pritt's dressings more or less verbatim, along with reproductions of the eleven plates found in *North Country Flies*, which few outside of Britain had ever seen. The

third chapter focused on Pritt's advice about angling, and just about the only place where Nemes faltered was that he fell foul of the old naming system for British artificials because he didn't appreciate that many of Pritt's patterns were named after the natural they were supposed to imitate. The fourth chapter was a concise take on Edmonds and Lee, and in the chapter that followed, the reader was taken fishing on a river in northwestern Wyoming—which Nemes used to illustrate his methods.

Another notable book from Nemes is *Two Centuries of Soft-Hackled Flies*.<sup>12</sup> Published by Stackpole in 2004, it marked the moment when Nemes had caught up with the totality of the literature and had become able to portray the soft hackle against its true historical background. *Two Centuries* details every source that Nemes could find on soft hackles and it is a valuable review, not least because it was written without any preconceived ideas. The one disadvantage of *Two Centuries* as a reference work is that it lacks footnotes, but fortunately Nemes rarely leaves his reader unable to verify what he wrote.

To return to *The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict*, the final third of the book is where Nemes makes his own presence felt, beginning on page 81, with a subhead "Long Distance Fishing" and the observation that game hackles could be cast on a long line to minimize the chances of the fish being spooked by the angler. Bearing in mind that neither Pritt nor Edmonds and Lee ever made it entirely clear that they fished with comparatively short lines in murky water, it is unlikely that Nemes appreciated how far he was breaking new ground. Nemes added to his down-and-across dead-drift style a variant of the upstream method, which kept the fly in the film the way the old masters had done. Although this was closer to the method employed by the British writers, the use of lengthy casts meant that Nemes was out in new territory compared with the older writers, and it was one of the features that made his books popular on both sides of the Atlantic.

Something else had changed, though. When *The Soft-Hackled Fly* was published in 1975, the importation of many types of feather to the United States was impossible, but the situation altered in 1978 with the adoption of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife, better known as CITES. Although CITES is viewed today as a restrictive list, upon its introduction in the late 1970s, it had the paradoxical effect of enabling trade in many European game-bird species. With the adoption of the convention, American



Two of the fly plates from T. E. Pritt's *North Country Flies* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886), which Nemes later reproduced in *The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict*.

dealers were suddenly able to import what had once been impossible rarities, including coot, partridge, snipe, woodcock, golden plover, jackdaw, ostrich, and magpie. The feathers of these species lie at the core of the North Country Spider tradition, and their arrival in American fly shops was perfectly timed to give Nemes's ideas a huge boost.

The availability of these exciting new feathers brought a challenge in its wake, which has caused stressful moments at fly-tying desks ever since. Spring creek fish in the West aren't very much inclined to dine on anything large enough to see with the naked eye, and Nemes found that it was tough to wind game-bird hackles such as partridge and woodcock on a hook smaller than a size 20. At the time, this was way below the lower limit that the majority of British anglers used, and Pritt would have been astonished to learn that there was a need to tie anything smaller than a 17, but it wasn't long before others were dressing soft hackles on hooks as small as a 28. For what it is worth, the biggest soft hackle that Nemes tied in the early 1980s was on a size 4 low-water hook, and a friend used it to catch two grilse on the Matapedia and a 10-pound steelhead somewhere on the Pacific slope. Today, bead-head soft hackles are widely available in America, tied down to the sort of sizes that make pocket fluff look large by comparison.

*The Soft-Hackled Fly* is a sweet book. One of the features that make it all the sweeter is that when Nemes wrote it, he had little or no idea that he had picked up the torch of a style of fly tying that was at least two hundred years old, had originated on a different continent, and was in the process of dying on its feet in its homeland. Nemes became such an evangelist for the method that he well and truly deserves the 2008 Legend of the Headwaters award he was given by Trout Unlimited in Bozeman. By then, Nemes was so well known that a fly-fishing club had been started by his fans in Japan and a fly rod bearing his name was being sold, but we should be grateful to him for something else: he stirred up a new awareness of game hackles in Britain by publishing when interest in such flies was at an all-time low. Nemes's books played a significant part in inspiring a generation of British anglers to revive a dying tradition and to reach toward a future in which the North Country Spider's roots would lie as much in Montana as they do in England.



*With many thanks to Paul Schullery for his indispensable help and advice.*



*Guy Gregory, friend of the author, netting a grayling on a North Country stream.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. W. C. Stewart, *The Practical Angler* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1857), 69.
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3. James Leisenring, *The Art of Tying the Wet Fly* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1941), 66–76.
4. Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 98–104, 110.
5. Sid Gordon, *How to Fish from Top to Bottom* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Co., 1955).
6. John Jackson, *The Practical Fly Fisher* (London: Charles Farlow; Leeds: Swallow, 1854).
7. Schwiebert, *Trout*, 101.

8. Sylvester Nemes, *The Soft-Hackled Fly* (Old Greenwich, Conn.: Chatham Press, 1975), 36–37.

9. Sylvester Nemes, *The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict* (Chicago: S. Nemes, 1981).

10. T. E. Pritt, *North Country Flies* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886).

11. Harfield H. Edmonds and Norman N. Lee, *Brook and River Trouting: A Manual of Modern North Country Methods, with Coloured Illustrations of Flies and Fly-Dressing Materials* (Bradford, U.K.: The Authors, 1916).

12. Sylvester Nemes, *Two Centuries of Soft-Hackled Flies: A Survey of the Literature Complete with Original Patterns, 1747–Present* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2004).

# Fishing Cousins: The Story of Picket Pin

by Fred Polhemus



A nice brook trout landed with a spinning outfit on Comstock Brook, Wilton, Connecticut, in 1972. Photo courtesy of the author.



Fred Polhemus

Magna Power outfit.

THE YEAR WAS 1975. The Bee Gees, Eagles, and Van McCoy's "The Hustle" filled the airwaves. *Jaws* flooded the theaters and scared everyone out of the water. And bell-bottom blue jeans . . . well, let's just leave it at that.

My first foray into fly fishing was with my godfather. I was still a spinning guy at that point. He took me to a favored section of the Housatonic River in the northwest corner of Connecticut. As I feverishly cast my Phoebe out again and again—each retrieve either hooking a rock, log, or clump of algae—my godfather effortlessly waved a magical wand in the air, gently placing his fly to sipping fish. Cast after cast, he would get a rise, strike, and, often, a beautifully landed trout. I thought to myself, *That's cool!*

Fast-forward to early summer 1976 and the U.S. Bicentennial. I purchased my first fly-fishing outfit. It was a beauty: a Magna Power with a reel that only had one maker's mark on the reel seat—Japan. This was a blister-pack, all-in-one, "this-outfit-will-catch-serious-fish"—proclaiming rig. (I still wonder how the Japanese manufacturer could know if any given fish was "serious" or not—maybe some had a great sense of humor!) As

I look back now, I realize perhaps the *manufacturer* had the great sense of humor when putting these outfits together. The flies appeared to have been tied largely with Christmas tinsel and firecracker-wrapper paper. They kept the buyer in the dark on line weight, how to attach the included single leader to the fly line, and which way the drag worked (thus determining retrieval hand). I have every confidence the people assembling these "outfits" were having a good chuckle as they did so! No matter to me, I was now a self-proclaimed fly angler.

I would load my Schwinn Varsity ten-speed an hour or so before first light and pedal my way back to the spot where my godfather had originally taken me—at least a 10-mile ride in the dark with my fly-angling outfit strapped to the cargo rack on the back of the bike and a flashlight taped to the handlebars. Little did I know then that there was great trout water just a mile or so from my house. I thought all the fish—the serious fish, anyway—simply had to be where my godfather took me and nowhere else, certainly not closer to home. So I would arrive at the water right around dawn, assemble the outfit, and approach the river.

I leapfrogged among algae-covered rocks to get out to where I thought the best fish would be, not really knowing where any of them would *actually* be, much less how to even cast to them. With nothing more than an old pair of Sierra sneakers, cut-off jeans, and a sweatshirt, I was hardly equipped to handle the slippery-when-wet exposed rocks and had more than a few dips in the early-morning cold water. I was also uneducated about the water flows of the Housatonic in those years—specifically, that at a certain time in the midmorning hours, the plant in Falls Village would exercise controlled releases of water into the river, thus bringing a largely unnoticed wave of water downstream with impressive force. In my first solo outing on this section of the river, I noticed, while flailing away with my new WMFD (weapon of mass fishing destruction), that my feet were starting to get wet on the high perch of the largest rock from which I was casting. I looked down and then behind me back toward the shore. All my leapfrog rocks were gone. Oops.

About a week later, my cousin stopped by my house for a family dinner. He was considered a master of fly angling by family members, many of whom proclaimed, “Fritz can pull a fish out of a puddle of water on the side of the road.”

He was in fact a very skilled angler at that point in his fishing career, regardless of family lore. He was also seven years my senior, which meant he had not only graduated from high school but also had a car. I was eleven at the time, and the age difference felt like a generation gap. No matter. I too was a fly fisher now, so we shared that common bond. At dinner I informed Fritz that I was now a fly angler and had the serious outfit to prove it. He graciously humored me and took interest, allowing that we should look at everything together. I proudly presented my rod, reel, and box of glitter flies. He reviewed it all and, without bursting into laughter, suggested that the flies in my outfit might not be the best match for local trout. He offered to tie me a fly after dinner that might be better suited for local waters.

He brought in an old travel hat box and, as he unzipped it, a plume of feathers rose out and fell onto the table. I looked inside. There was a primordial soup in one big clump in the middle—all sorts of exotic-looking feathers and furs and some tools that looked like those found in a dentist’s office or on a jeweler’s desk. I had no idea what I was looking at. He set a vise on the side of the table, clamped a hook into it, and began to work his magic. After a few minutes, he handed me a fly and said, “This is a Picket Pin. It works well in a lot of the local streams.”



*Fritz with a nice wild brown trout on Mt. Riga Brook, Salisbury, Connecticut, 1968. Photo courtesy of Fritz Mitchell.*



*A Picket Pin fly.*



*Fenwick/Hardy Lightweight outfit.*

Sara Wilcox

Fred Polhemus



*The author with an Arctic char on the Kanektok River, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska, in 2015. Photo courtesy of the author.*



*Fritz with a nice landlocked salmon on the Ausable River, Keeseville, New York, in 2017. Photo courtesy of Fritz Mitchell.*

The next morning we arrived at a local creek not far from home. Although not a true spring creek, it had many of the same attributes: slow-moving water, gentle curves through farm pastures, and deeply undercut banks. I jumped from his car, grabbed my rod, and started running down toward the bank. Fritz grabbed my arm and pulled me back. “You have to approach the water very quietly and gently so the fish don’t feel you coming.” He slowly and calmly worked his way to the low-lying bank and, at about 20 feet back or so, got down on one knee and began false casting. With surgeon-like prowess, Fritz gently placed a little caddis pattern on the far bank such that it drifted drag-free right along the undercut. Within a few seconds, a fish emerged from a clump of overhanging cover and slapped at the fly. A beautiful 16-inch wild brown trout slowly made its way to his net. He released the fish, we moved upstream a few yards, and he turned to me. “Your turn.” *My turn?*

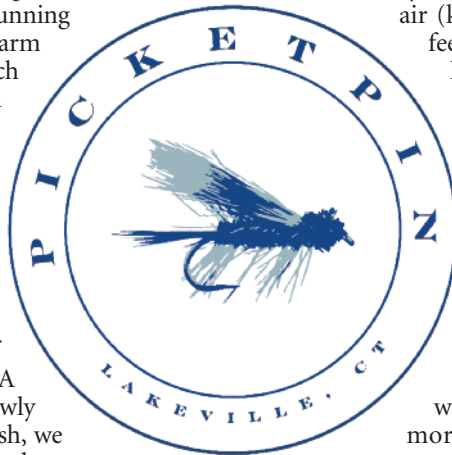
I slowly approached the bank of the next section of water. I did not have the confidence to cast from the one-knee-down position, so I sort of hunched down, looking a little like Quasimodo. I realized I was now on stage and that Fritz was intently watching me. I began my false casts in a fashion somewhat like an orchestra conductor who had enjoyed six to eight double espressos just before a performance. Forget ten o’clock to two o’clock—I covered every number on the clock. Flailing away, I felt a sudden tug behind me. I had hooked a hay wagon. Fritz jumped in. “No worries,” he offered as he unhooked my fly. I started in on my furious frenzy again and, after a few more flails, felt another tug behind me. This time I hooked the tractor to which the hay wagon was connected. “All good,” Fritz said, as he again freed me from the farm equipment. Now I was really in a sweat. Fritz was patiently watching me, and a line of Holsteins had formed a viewing gallery on the other side of the

bank. “Don’t mess this one up,” I kept saying to myself. “Just get it out there.” After about a half dozen or so of the worst loops anyone could visualize, I released the line and thought to myself, *Success at last!* The fly sailed through the air (keep in mind the creek is roughly 10 to 12 feet wide), well past the far bank, and gently landed in a thicket of razor-sharp pricker bushes about 10 feet beyond. Fritz looked at me. “Let’s move on,” he said.

My first fly-angling outing with my cousin was largely a no-show on my part. But he worked with me over the course of the summer and encouraged me to get out and keep practicing. He took me to a few nice mountain brooks where, if one could not land beautiful little brook trout, it might be best to find a new pastime. He suggested that I might want to look into some lighter gear and a few more flies. I pooled all my lawn-mowing money and invested in a Fenwick 6-foot glass rod and Hardy Lightweight reel, both huge investments for an eleven-year-old kid, but I was committed to honing my angling skills. This new outfit was much more to my liking, and I even bought a variety of flies that allowed me to land more local fish. The passion slowly took hold.

Fritz and I fish together to this day. My mode of transportation and equipment have evolved and improved over the decades, and my angling reach is a little broader. Fritz and I still chase fish in those same waters near home and, when we do, I still break out the old Fenwick/Hardy rig and fish that exclusively. My family homestead has aptly been named Picket Pin, and Fritz visits as often as he can.

These early rituals created the underlying foundation of the passion both Fritz and I bring to the great pastime of fly angling. And it is still on these local waters, Fenwick in hand, that I find my greatest sense of place.



*Logo design by Katherine F. Polhemus, based on the original Picket Pin fly.*



# Leigh H. Perkins

## 27 November 1927–7 May 2021

### *Gone Fishing*

*Leigh H. Perkins (born 1927 in Cleveland, Ohio) is best known for transforming Orvis into an iconic lifestyle brand after purchasing the company in 1965. Among those in the AMFF community, he is known as our founder, our visionary, and our greatest supporter.*

*Leigh passed away on May 7, leaving a legacy of a lifetime committed to the great outdoors. He was a firm believer in tradition and understood the importance of giving back. The creation of the American Museum of Fly Fishing was just one of many ways he gave back to the fishing and outdoor industry, and we are forever grateful.*

*Trustee Emeritus Walt Matia shares the following personal remembrance of this true outdoorsman. Leigh Perkins was an inspiration to many and always will be.*

—Sarah Foster, Executive Director

**I**N 1972, LEIGH took his son Perk and me on a fishing trip to the West. I had never been on a fishing trip, or even west of Detroit. We hit the iconic places—Armstrong Spring Creek, the Henry’s Fork, Sixteen Mile Creek—and ended up in Yellowstone. We had been hard at it most of the day by the time we pulled our rental car into a campground for the evening, only to find ourselves assigned a gravelly dirt patch between two large Winnebagos. Leigh looked at it for exactly three seconds, then drove out of the campground.

About 5 miles down the road, a dirt track veered off to the left, heading toward the Firehole. A series of signs announcing a range of forbidden practices lined the turnoff, but these signs were not in the best condition, and we were looking into the setting sun. The road ended at a beautiful bluff overlooking the broad valley of the river. Out came sleeping bags, fishing rods, and an ice chest. Tin cups with a dram were poured, elk were bugling, the temperature was dropping—it was just about as perfect as an evening could be.

Shortly thereafter, a park ranger arrived. The usual pleasantries followed while a list of violations was written up. “Who gets the ticket?” the ranger asked, and Perk and I immediately looked at Leigh. More pleasantries, and the ranger left. We finished our drinks. I started packing up the gear only to see Leigh assembling his fishing rod and searching around for his waders. I started to say something, but he cut me off. “I’ve already paid for the night. Let’s go fishing.”

Leigh Perkins was not the likeliest man to start the American Museum of Fly Fishing. There was no real plan. In the basement of the Manchester store were some hanging wall displays of fly patterns by Mary Orvis Marbury, part of the flotsam of the sale of the Orvis Company from Ducky Corkran. (They were, in fact, fly panels that Marbury created to represent Orvis at the historic 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition.) Did Leigh feel there was some intrinsic historical value? Probably yes, but we never talked about it. For a man



*Leigh H. Perkins. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*



*Leigh Perkins stands in the center of the original board of trustees in this photo, taken in 1970. First row, from left: Dick Finlay, D. Clarke Corkran, Alvin Grove, Ted Rogowski, and Wes Jordan. Second row, from left: Milford K. Smith, Hermann Kessler, Clayton Shappy, Leigh Perkins, Donald DuBois, and Capt. Raymond Kotrla. Third row, from left: Austin Hogan, Ben Schley, Jane Gingrich, Arnold Gingrich, and Harry Darbee. Not pictured: Warren Shepard and Gene Anderegg.*



*From left: Leigh with his good friend Johnny Morris, alongside their wives Jeanie Morris and AMFF Trustee Annie Perkins, at the 2019 Heritage Event in New York City.*

who would go on to become one of the premier developers and marketers of quality fishing and hunting equipment, Leigh was remarkably unsentimental about “things.” He liked what worked, kept what did, and moved on from what was no longer the best. His was not a common attitude on many museum boards. Keeping some record of the equipment advances that marked the history of fly fishing was somewhere on Leigh’s radar, but it was the people and the places that really interested him. He could celebrate announcements of new additions to the collections, he could enjoy a trip through the exhibits, but it was the community of fishermen who made up the board and membership that kept his interest. He mostly wanted to go fishing.

Leigh’s dream for the museum was his hope that exposure to the beauty and fun of the sport through its exhibits would increase the number of anglers. Yes, he ran a company that sold fishing equipment, but that was only part of the story. Leigh believed that the best way to protect the lakes, rivers, and streams he loved was through growing the numbers of apostles

for their conservation. The best way to gain converts and political allies was not through speeches or laws but by getting a person with a fishing rod into a healthy stretch of water. The Orvis fly-fishing schools were as much a conservation tool as a sales program. He shared this belief with his friend Johnny Morris of Bass Pro Shop. The partnership between AMFF and the World of Wildlife Museum was tied to both men’s shared vision of conservation of habitats through enjoyment of the outdoors. He wanted others to go fishing.

Orvis was successful, and Leigh had resources. There were trips to fish some exotic waters: the Amazon for peacock bass, Argentina for sea-run browns. But mostly there were visits with friends for a renewal of bonds through time on the water. There were a few modest houses—no great collections or pomp, just places to house dogs close to where he loved to hunt and fish.

Leigh cared about the land, and he was blessed with a long enough life to enjoy the fruits of his conservation and enhancement efforts. He managed his wooded acreage in

Vermont—hillsides of maple, birch, aging aspen, and the occasional overgrown apple orchard—with the optimist's hope of finding one or two more grouse for all the effort. His few miles along the famed Batten Kill—famous and sometimes fishless—were owned with the steward's obligation to place logs and firm up banks in exchange for being able to walk down in the evening to throw a dry fly at the rare rise.

The Star Valley in Wyoming was a much bigger vision. More than thirty years went into gathering like-minded friends to acquire and then enhance the management of what has become the finest spring creek cutthroat water in the world: fencing out cows, restoring banks, creating redds, and linking up tracts of ownerships to provide spawning access for the Salt River cutthroat. A lot of effort, but the man wanted to go fishing and he loved catching his fish—the fish he had earned.

Mays Pond was a family inheritance of a few thousand Florida acres of farmed-out sandy soil. It was added to, planted, burned, and stewarded to create a place for the enjoyment

of fifty bird dogs. Leigh could spend a day on horseback passing through trees planted by his father, enjoy a duck pond with a hundred stories from great shoots to epic retrieves, and peruse the leather-bound logs chronicling every hunt, every shooter, and every dog for generations. He filled ponds with varieties of bass and tried out endless stocking theories and feeding regimes. Why have a pond if you don't fish in it?

"Don't let something stop you until it stops you," Leigh would say. Dozens of miserable wet mornings and soggy sleeping bags have accompanied that admonition. I've survived a score of "don't stops" and never regretted any of them. But Leigh's most lasting lesson was his optimism and his insistence that it was both possible and imperative to leave the natural world better than you found it. A lesson learned, and I am trying. Thanks for sharing a great life with me.

WALT MATIA  
TRUSTEE EMERITUS



*Leigh with one of his beloved hunting dogs. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*



*Leigh Perkins tying on a no. 22 trico on the Batten Kill. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*



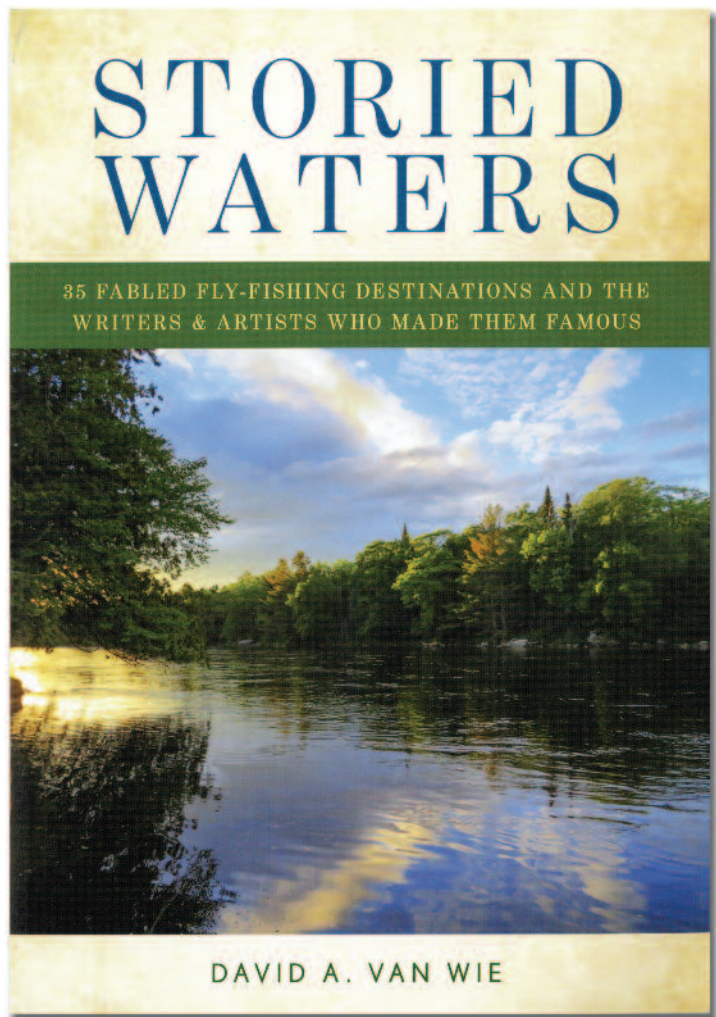
# A Worthy Fish-Lit Pilgrimage

by Robert DeMott

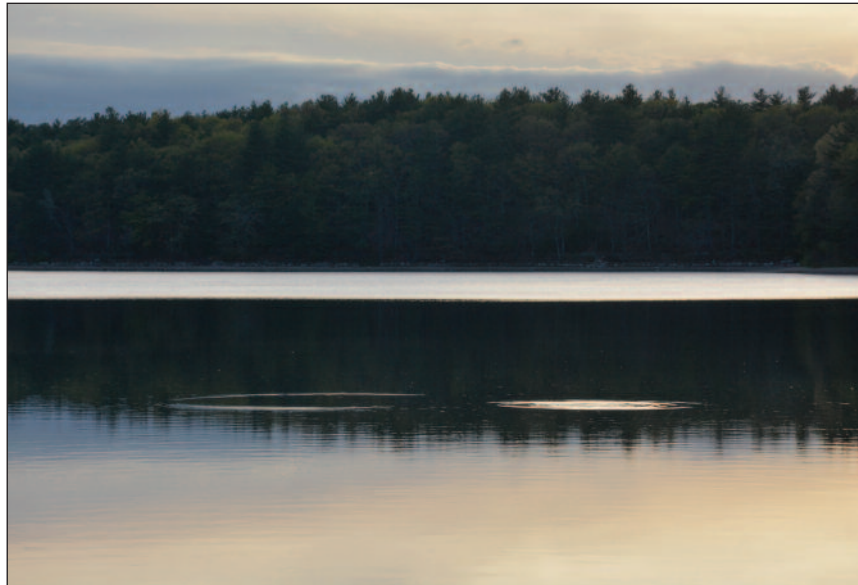
David A. Van Wie, *Storied Waters: 35 Fabled Fly-Fishing Destinations and the Writers & Artists Who Made Them Famous*. Stackpole Books, 2019. 216 pp. \$29.95 (softcover)

I AM A SUCKER for visiting geographic places upon which books and paintings are based, and I've made a quirky hobby of gauging representational relationships—often more complex and fraught than they first appear—between physical venues and their textual counterparts. I've pursued this oddball literary tourism coast to coast for decades, from snooping around Concord, Massachusetts, with a copy of *Walden* in hand (I wrote my PhD dissertation on Henry David Thoreau), to wading a section of the Niobrara River in northwest Nebraska where parts of Jim Harrison's novel *Dalva* are set, to exploring Wyoming's Big Horn Mountains of Gretel Ehrlich's *The Solace of Open Spaces* and the rock canyons and outcrops of Utah's Arches National Park, where Edward Abbey set *Desert Solitaire*. I've strolled the ranch outside Salinas, California, the scene of John Steinbeck's coming-of-age novella, *The Red Pony*. And not to give fly fishing short shrift—it is one of the other chief fascinations in my life—I have logged many deliriously happy hours on Odell Creek near Ennis, Montana, the site of Nick Lyons's masterpiece, *Spring Creek*. To fish that water—or any storied water for that matter—is to imbibe its unique atmosphere and to inhabit, even briefly, a special angling and artistic venue.

I've made a hundred such stops across the United States, jotting impressions in my notebooks and snapping countless photos along the way, which I later showed to forty-five years' worth of American literature students to assist them in linking the setting of a literary work to its physical counterpart. I guess it's the village explainer in me. I have never been disappointed with my findings, never became tired of viewing what author X or artist Y saw at a given geographical place that started their juices flowing. What is water—flowing, still, or tidal—but a blank sheet on which to inscribe our aspirations? Sometimes being in the right place at the right time, whether it is on a stream with a fly rod in hand or afterward at a desk with a pen in hand, connects us to history, tradition, and landscape in ways we cannot always imagine or predict. I like to think those moments—even when they aren't punctuated by trophy-sized fish and grip-and-grin photographs—provide an honorable, necessary way of looking at the world.



In that vein, David Van Wie has written a nifty, entertaining book every literarily inclined fly angler with a dose of wanderlust in his or her soul will want to read. Van Wie is a veteran New England environmentalist, a noted outdoor writer and regular columnist for the *Maine Sportsman*, a skilled photographer, and the chronicler of the lively and colorful blog *Watch Your Backcast*. His well-received earlier book, *The Confluence: A Collection of Essays, Art and Tall-Tales about Fly-fishing and Friendship* (2016), was co-written with several lifelong sporting



Walden Pond. Courtesy of David Van Wie.

pals and college classmates (who also make appearances in *Storied Waters*). *The Confluence*, a lyrical paean to outdoor brotherhood, gathered accounts of the buddies' getaway experiences on an annual trek to Dartmouth's Second College Grant in northern New Hampshire, where the Dead Diamond and Swift Diamond Rivers meet and offer fraternal angling possibilities.

*Storied Waters* takes us away, too, but into a broader arena. It is part autobiography, part road narrative, part literary anthology, part angling geography, and part instructional guide. Plus it is bounteously illustrated with color photographs and twenty focused "Where & How" sidebar sections that offer angling advice and streamcraft tips, and otherwise contextualize and illuminate Van Wie's 5,700-mile eastern angling periplum. "I fished on thirty-eight out of forty-three days in eight different states, hitting one fabled fly-fishing destination per day, on average," he writes. "When I wasn't fishing, I was usually taking photos, writing, driving, eating, or sleeping. I took only one day totally 'off' to hang out and swim with my daughter" (204).

During his whirlwind journey, Van Wie posted stories, photos, and video to his blog site, and those entries served as a foundational rehearsal for this highlight tour book, which comes across as an extended series of jaunty day-by-day journal entries that plot the author's sometimes hurried passage from state to state. His 2017 journey with rod, camera, and pen started on Friday, May 14, while fishing for inspiration at Massachusetts's Walden Pond in Thoreau's footsteps and ended six weeks later on Thursday, June 22, on Maine's Kennebec River, site of writings by Dud Dean (aka Arthur Macdougall, a fly-fishing minister) and the formidable East Branch of the Penobscot memorialized in Thoreau's *The Maine Woods*.

Beginning and ending with Thoreau brings Van Wie's ambitious odyssey of fishing hallowed waters full circle. In between, he traveled a tightly scheduled path to the Catskills and Adirondacks; to Pennsylvania's Fisherman's Paradise, Poconos, and Cumberland Valley; to upper and lower Michigan and Wisconsin's Driftless Area; and back to northern New England, including a chapter devoted to revisiting New Hampshire's Dartmouth Grant and reprising *The Confluence* experience with his sporting pals whom he dubbed "the Boys of the Grant" (160). All the sites along the way are fabled fish-lit locations. For

those who have not visited or wet a line in these vaunted places of angling lore, reading *Storied Waters* is just about the next best thing to being there.

As a bonus, *Storied Waters* has special relevance for readers of the *American Fly Fisher* because it includes a pair of chapters devoted to the Manchester, Vermont, region, which is home to the Batten Kill, the American Museum of Fly Fishing (journal editor Kathleen Achor has a cameo), Orvis, and several creative artists who are associated with the area and who plied its local waters: iconic populist painter Norman Rockwell, contemporary fly-fishing guru Tom Rosenbauer, and writers of three wonderful books that have never been praised highly enough—John Atherton's *The Fly and the Fish*, John Merwin's *The Battenkill*, and Margot Page's *Little Rivers*.

Van Wie rightly understands that fly fishing "is by tradition, a literary sport" and that "there is no clear line between literature and fly fishing" (vi). His realization turned out to be a propulsive belief. His road trip started with an invitation from Grace Voelker Wood to fish Uncles—that is, Frenchman's Pond—in Michigan, which is her father John Voelker (aka Robert Traver's "fabled" Upper Peninsula angling hideaway, whose location remains a "closely guarded secret." (*Storied Waters* is prefaced by Traver's much-quoted "Testament of a Fisherman.") The invitation was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that Van Wie could not pass up. He made the most of it.

But rather than driving to northern Michigan's Upper Peninsula from Maine and then heading straight back home, Van Wie decided to fish his way out to Uncles and back; then, having settled on that plan, he started a roll-call of "other fabled locations in fly-fishing literature," including the Batten Kill, Beaverkill, Willowemoc, Letort, Spruce, Ausable (New York), Au Sable (Michigan), Fox, Flambeau, Rapid, Kennebeco, and so on. During his tour, Van Wie takes us to places fished by the likes of heavy hitters John Burroughs, Ernest Hemingway, Winslow Homer, Theodore Gordon, Aldo Leopold, Lee and Joan Wulff, Art Flick, Vince Marinaro, President Jimmy Carter, and Corey Ford. Once he had decided on the sites, there was plenty of reading and research to do: "My stack of books to read grew to the ceiling like Jack's beanstalk" (viii).

The results of his self-designed tutorial in angling literature are apparent in *Storied Waters*, which comprises a running commentary on that "stack" of must-read books. Two chapters

midway in the book are symbolic of larger themes and recount Van Wie's rich experience at Uncles, which in many ways became the spiritual highpoint of his journey. A "Fantasy Fulfilled," he calls this chapter. At Frenchman's Pond, fly fishing and Robert Traver's literature mesh together: "I felt like I had walked onto the pages of *Trout Magic*" (104).

Indeed, inhabiting vaunted angling sites and their corresponding texts is a refrain throughout *Storied Waters*; Van Wie "felt a connection with the spirits of many writers at various times" (182). On the Beaverkill, he exulted at following in the footsteps of Corey Ford, one of his outdoor writing heroes. Later, he identifies with fishing Wisconsin's Flambeau River in the wake of his other hero, Aldo Leopold, as well as the Namekagon River in the wake of the lesser-known Gordon MacQuarrie, whose story "Now, in June," Van Wie admired. Still later, at Grindstone Falls in northern Maine's Mount Katahdin region, spurred by reading Edmund Ware Smith's "Along Thoreau's Canoe Trail," he is carried away by "a full-scale apparition" of Thoreau's ghost, which "suddenly appeared in the seat beside me" (183). It is a near-mystical moment (not unusual in fly-fishing literature) that sums up the author's angling-lit pilgrimage and briefly transcends the quotidian, hohum aspects of his trip.

But besides paying homage to famous writers, one aspect of *Storied Waters* that stands out is Van Wie's decision to include authors who—like Maine's Louise Dickinson Rich (*We Took to the Woods*), Vermont's Howard Frank Mosher (*God's Kingdom*) and W. D. Wetherell (*Vermont River*), and Michigan's Josh Greenberg (*Rivers of Sand*)—might not be as well known as their more famous counterparts, but deserve our continuing attention and respect nonetheless. The same can be said of his choice of water. Outside of appearing in Jim Harrison's novel *True North* and Voelker's story "The Old Fox," Michigan's Yellow Dog River was never on my radar, but now is thanks to Van Wie's mention (though I can imagine local adherents of the Yellow Dog probably won't be pleased by that news).

*Storied Waters* isn't all literary syllabus, however. The chronicle is enlivened by Van Wie's serial accounts of trip and travel details that round out his tale with texture and color. It is peppered with frequent sidelights on local history, legend, and lore, and grateful shout-outs to various fly-shop owners, guides, and generous and helpful people of every stripe and

background he met along the way who aided and abetted his odyssey and furthered his angling abilities. Indeed, one of the most pleasurable aspects of *Storied Waters* is that everyone the author met seems to have become his friend. "I befriended delightful people who went out of their way to welcome me to their towns, their favorite fishing holes, and sometimes into their homes" (203). His enthusiasm and earnestness is infectious and proves fly fishing is a link to human engagement, social interaction, and environmental awareness that cannot be underestimated. In the process, Van Wie became an ambassador for the sport and art that we all love.

Some people might consider a dream trip to be an adventure somewhere far away in a foreign destination—Russia, New Zealand, Mongolia, the Seychelles—an exotic place where outsized fish on a fly offer a one-of-a-kind thrill. Van Wie never caught a trout larger than 18 inches on his journey, but he caught enough decent fish and other prizes to make his a dream trip, too. *Storied Waters* is written in an accessible conversational style, without highfalutin condescension or one-upmanship. As a narrator, Van Wie is us: a wide-eyed, eager, curious fly-fishing Everyman who is refreshingly honest, especially in appraising his own fishing prowess and onstream fortune. Despite having experienced good fishing and two hundred or so trout, bass, and landlocked salmon (plus one tiny bluegill) eventually brought to hand during his trip, he is unflinching in recording the times he was skunked and is never given to inflating the size of his successes, reminding us, after all, that not all fishermen are congenital liars.

But given his quick pace, Van Wie doesn't always have time on his appointed destinations to delve as deeply as possible into the angling and literary intricacies of given locations, which results occasionally in a panoramic overview rather than a deep dive into landscapes. I was disappointed to see no mention of three superb lyrical fly-fishing texts—Ted Leeson's *Jerusalem Creek*, Jerry Dennis's *The River Home*, and Craig Nova's *Brook Trout and the Writing Life*—that would have fit nicely in his treatment of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, respectively.

But these are small quibbles. Even having registered them does not take away from the fact that in tracing a geography of eastern/midwestern angling-book landscapes, the river that "runs through it" (to cite Norman Maclean) can be a physical body of water, but it also can be the stream of language that comprises every fish story we have ever read or told ourselves. Tallying up who fished where and for what and then wrote about it strikes me as completely admirable work, "a fundamental . . . unavoidable part of fly fishing" (vi). It is also a way of highlighting narrative as the main product—the chief catch—of our real and virtual angling adventures.

Now I hope there will be a western counterpart of Van Wie's entertaining and necessary project.



Mount Khatadin, Maine. Courtesy of David Van Wie.

Robert DeMott is Edwin and Ruth Kennedy Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Ohio University, where he taught in the English department from 1969 to 2013, including a course on the literature of fly fishing. His most recent book is *Up Late Reading Birds of America* (2020).



# Museum News



Sara Wilcox

*The innovative and admired fly tier Charles Edward Krom of White House, Tennessee, passed away on 23 April 2021 at the age of ninety-one. Krom specialized in salmon and trout wet flies tied on longer-shank hooks. His book collaboration with Keith Fulsher, Hair-Wing Atlantic Salmon Flies (Fly-Tyer Inc., 1981), proved seminal in fly-tying instruction. Charlie's flies are prized possessions across the globe, and his work is immortalized both in the framings of William Cushner and in the Selch-Bakwin Fly Room at American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

## Virtual Fly-Fishing Festival August 14

Our 14th Annual Fly-Fishing Festival will be a virtual event again this year, and the day features an exciting lineup:

- Live fly tying on our Facebook page with Scott Biron, Mark Dysinger, Tom Rosenbauer, Rich Strolis, and Brita Fordice
- Live appraisals with Todd Alving and Fred Kretchman (appointments will be available beginning in August)
- Kids activities, such as fly-tying videos with Paul Sinicki, AMFF coloring pages and word search, and an angling-inspired drawing video
- A video preview of our new nature trail
- A video tour of *Reflections: The Angler and Nature in Art*, hosted by Board President Fred Polhemus
- A raffle for a chance to win a George Van Hook painting (valued at \$4,200!)

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

## Yoshi's Trail Opens

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is pleased to announce the expansion of our exhibit space to the great outdoors. Yoshi's Trail takes visitors on an exploration of our museum's pond and stream. Universally accessible and open year-round, the trail features educational panels that imaginatively combine graphics and text to tell the story of fly fishing as it relates to local natural history.

Visitors of all ages are encouraged to enjoy the trail from dawn to dusk. Stroll along the stream and catch glimpses of insect, bird, and amphibian residents, or relax in the gazebo and maybe spy a snapping turtle or mink. Imagine the landscape as an early angler, drawn to the enchanting Batten Kill Valley that hints at idyllic afternoons casting to a trophy brookie.

An anonymous donor named the trail in honor of recently retired Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama.

Sara Wilcox



One of the new signs along Yoshi's Trail.

### 2021 Annual Members Meeting

The 2021 Annual Members Meeting will take place Monday, September 27, at 8:30 am at the museum in Manchester, Vermont.

## Online Screening Room

We are thrilled to announce steady work on the development of our online screening room. This joint effort by museum supporters, partners, and staff will bring our collection of VHS tapes and 16mm film to life for members to enjoy in perpetuity. Stay tuned on social media (@flyfishmuseum) as we start to release some of our favorite clips from iconic presenters Gary Borger, Lefty Kreh, Billy Pate, Lani Waller, and others.

## Recent Donations to the Collection

**Joan Wulff** of Lew Beach, New York, donated a tandem Sea Wulff saltwater fly, a Farlow's Python 4"W saltwater fly reel, and the 9-foot Garcia fiberglass fly rod used by Lee Wulff to catch his 1967 world-record striped marlin.

**Per Brandin** of Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, dropped off two copies—a limited (69/100) and a trade edition—of his book, *A Fly Rod with a Soul: The Bamboo Fishing Rods and Life of E. C. Powell, Angler* (Little West Kill Press, 2020). **Iliona Auth** of New York City gave us a copy of Fred Dunford's *Time of the Take* (Tight Lines Press, 2012).

**Richard Booth** of Cairn, New York, donated several Frank Wentink items: a copy of *Wentink's Saltwater Fly Tying* (Lyons & Burford, 1991), a collection of ten saltwater flies tied by Wentink, and a portfolio containing photos and newspaper and magazine articles about him.

**Drew Chicone** of Fort Myers, Florida, gave us a collection of forty flies tied by Eric Leiser. And **John Kirby** of Skelmersdale, Lancashire, England, sent us a one-piece, 8-foot Leonard Tournament bamboo rod.



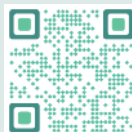
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All proceeds benefit AMFF.



## CONTRIBUTORS

**R. W. Hafer** is an award-winning economist, author, and trout-fishing enthusiast. During his career, he has worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, was a distinguished research professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and was most recently the director of the Center for Economics and the Environment at Lindenwood University. He has taught at several universities, including Washington University in St. Louis and St. Louis University; served as a consultant to the Central Bank of the Philippines and a visiting scholar with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta; and written more than one hundred academic articles, numerous books on monetary policy and financial markets, and many opinion pieces in national and regional newspapers. More importantly, Rik's work also has appeared in the *American Fly Fisher*. He resides in St. Louis, Missouri.

Bruce Petersen



Barbara Herd, MD, FRCP



**Andrew Herd** trained to become a fishing bum, but made a mess of his career path and had to become a physician instead, qualifying at the Middlesex Hospital, London, in 1982 at the age of twenty-two. After a varied career in medicine, which included a spell as the McIndoe Research Fellow at the Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, he took one of the best decisions he ever made, which was to marry Dr. Barbara Holder and settle in County Durham, where he was a family practitioner until his retirement.

Herd has published many books, including his *History of Fly Fishing* trilogy (available from the Medlar Press), and was the executive editor of *Waterlog* magazine. His most recently published work is *The Story of the Salmon Fly* (Medlar Press, 2021), an illustrated history of the salmon fly up to 1867.

**Fred Polhemus** is one of America's leading experts on contemporary sporting art. His expertise has been developed over the past thirty years with organizations such as Greenwich Workshop, International Game Fish Association, and Mystic Seaport Museum. His writing on sporting art has appeared in many publications, including *Anglers Journal*, *Covey Rise*, and *Gray's Sporting Journal*, to name just a few. He is the nation's foremost authority on the paintings of Arthur Shilstone and penned *Arthur Shilstone: A Lifetime of Drawing & Painting* (Tide-mark Press, 2015), the only comprehensive book on Shilstone's seventy-five-year career. He represents more than twenty-four of the top sporting artists through Sportsman's Palette, Inc., providing specialized guidance to private and institutional sporting art collectors worldwide. His exclusive worldwide representation of English sporting artist Keith Cardnell resulted in a 2019 commission of the largest flats painting ever created for the sporting art market.

An avid angler, Polhemus often finds himself on the waters in northwest Connecticut, where he grew up. He and his cousin still share time on the small brooks they visited more than forty-five years ago and get the same enjoyment and excitement fishing together now as they did then.

Jeremiah Bates



# Joan and Lee Wulff

Samantha Pitcher



*Joan Wulff and Executive Director Sarah Foster sort through a treasure trove of memories.*

**T**RIED AND TRUE ADVICE: surround yourself with positive energy, and witness the lasting and powerful effects on your life. Joan Wulff, the first lady of fly fishing, not only clearly surrounded herself with such energy during her life, but positively exudes it. She's one of those lively people everyone wants to be around. After winning her first casting competition in 1939, Joan went on to win countless titles and became one of the most recognized names in casting, both as a competitor and teacher. She has dedicated her life to the sport and, at age ninety-three, remains indefatigable.

This spring Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama, Director of Development Samantha Pitcher, and I made the trip to Lew Beach, New York, to visit Joan. We went to inventory a large portion of her (and late husband Lee Wulff's) fly-fishing memorabilia for AMFF's permanent collection. What we got was so much more.

As we sorted through boxes of immaculately preserved and cataloged artifacts, Joan and her fellow Fly Fishing Hall of Famer husband Ted Rogowski (an AMFF founding trustee, who appears in a photo on page 21) treated us to stories from their adventure-filled lives. Her eyes gleaming with wisdom and warmth, Joan recalled casting competitions, the cross-country trip she and her mother took in the 1940s, and her first

fishing trip with Lee. I left that day feeling like I'd ventured much farther than the Catskills. It's a memory I will cherish.

The name Lee Wulff is one of the most recognized in our industry. I never met Lee, but we have in common a love for the Batten Kill and the hamlet of Eagleville in Shushan, New York—my hometown. Lee was ahead of his time, a proven innovator who paved the way for fly fishing as we know it today. From the invention of the fishing vest to catch-and-release advocacy ("Game fish are too valuable to be caught only once," he wrote in his *Handbook of Freshwater Fishing*), Lee's impact will be everlasting.

The Joan and Lee Wulff Gallery at the American Museum of Fly Fishing will open in 2022 with an inaugural exhibit highlighting their extraordinary careers. Stories will be supported by objects, including Joan's earliest trophies and national publicity, Lee's fishing vest and the flies he created, photos and film that span nearly a century, and art and ephemera that showcase the fly-fishing legacy of Joan and Lee Wulff.

Watch for official announcement of the opening, come see the exhibit, and become a part of the remembering.

SARAH FOSTER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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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 fundraising 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
Supporter	\$35

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 by appointment 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.

