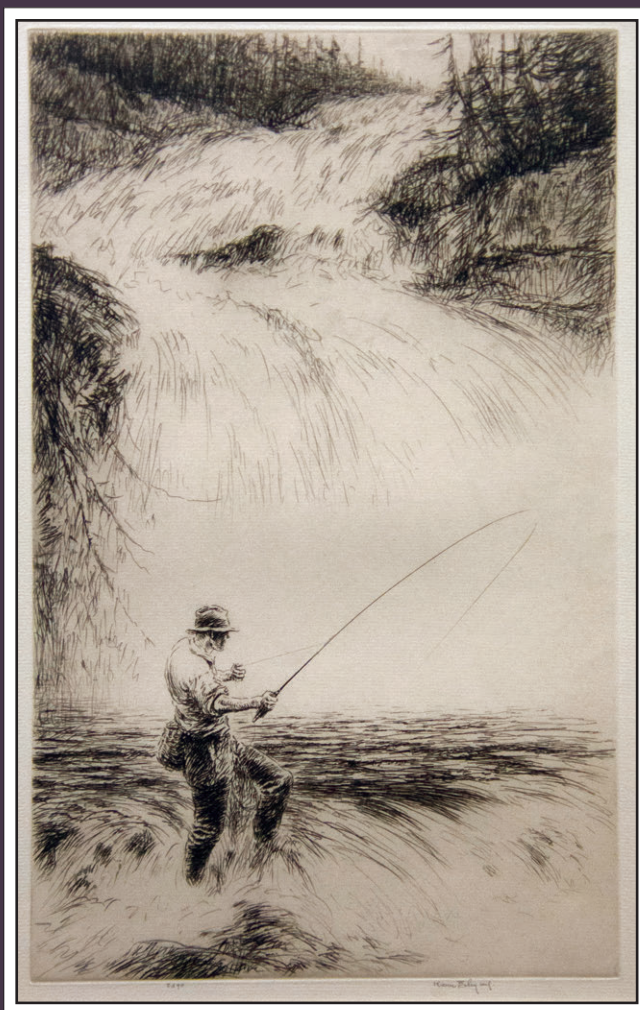


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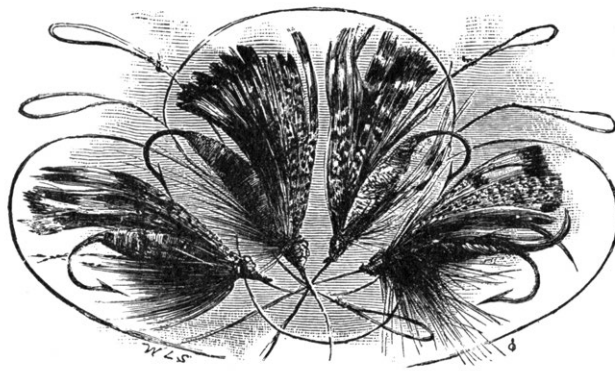
Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



WINTER 2020

VOLUME 46 NUMBER 1

Fly Fight!



From Thomas Sedgwick Steele, *Canoe & Camera*
(Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1882), 90.

Don't you just love a good fight? Perhaps *argument* is a better word for differences of fly-fishing opinion. *Disagreement*, maybe. *Quarrel*.

The fly-fishing world, like all worlds, harbors pockets of hostility. When these differences of opinion were argued in print one or two centuries back, retorts could be years in the making, given the relative slowness of book publishing. Fights could last decades.

Alan Diodore—employing the phrase *vented his most argumentative spleen*—reports on one of these drawn-out tensions in “A Forty-Year Spat.” Setting the historical stage of early-nineteenth-century Great Britain, Diodore introduces us to John Younger (the “Tweedside Gnostic,” author of *River Angling for Salmon and Trout*), born into poverty, and Thomas Tod Stoddart (author of *The Art of Angling as Practiced in Scotland*), a man with a steady income who was well educated and well connected. The two Scots, says Diodore, “disagreed on nearly everything except for their mutual dislike of enclosure.” Learn what “nearly everything” means (and, perhaps, “enclosure”) by turning to page 2.

Also on the above-mentioned Tweedside Gnostic's much-disliked list was fellow Tweedside angler Sir Walter Scott. The famed author not only wrote novels and poetry, but also spent a great deal of time fishing. Keith Harwood, in “Sir Walter Scott and Angling” (page 7), offers us a brief biography and reports on fishing stories found in letters, memoirs, journal entries, and the writings of others. He includes information about the relatively short-lived Scott series of salmon flies, named for the novels, sold in the *Hardy Anglers' Guide* in the early twentieth century. Harwood's full-length book, *Sir Walter Scott on Angling*, was published in November by Medlar Press.

From Scotland's Tweed we move to the Amethyst Brook in western Massachusetts. It was there, Thomas Johnson tells us, that the first factory to manufacture fly rods was established in the mid-1800s, and that “manufacturing equipment, skilled craftsmen, and knowledge from this original facility would, over the years, pass to different companies and locations in the Pioneer Valley, through which the Connecticut flows.” Johnson traces this historical line from Horace Gray & Son in Pelham to Thomas & Thomas in Greenfield in “America's First Fly-Fishing Rod Factory in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts: A Short History.” You'll find it on page 16.

A few months back, one of my favorite authors sent me a copy of the museum's first *Greenheart Gazette*, a short-lived newsletter. In it I found a humorous piece written by longtime (and beloved) museum volunteer Joe Pizarro. It deserves a wider audience, and you'll find it on page 22.

Events continue to keep us busy: a members-only gathering, Hooked on the Holidays, and presentation of the 2018 Austin Hogan Award to Lance Hidy at our holiday reception (see Museum News). In October, the museum honored President Jimmy Carter and the late President George H. W. Bush with its Heritage Award (page 23).

And once again, our Winter issue features an artist and work from our permanent collection. Last year, as part of the Trophy Sporting Art Collection, the museum acquired *Spring Freshets*, which appears on the front cover. Turn to page 13 to read “Darkness and Light: Etchings by Kerr Eby,” in which Collections Manager Ava Freeman tells us about this accomplished printmaker and his work.

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The American Fly Fisher

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ON THE COVER: Spring Freshets, *etching and sandpaper ground on paper*
by Kerr Eby (plate: 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{15}{16}$ inches), 1929. From the collection of the
American Museum of Fly Fishing.

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A Forty-Year Spat

by Alan R. Diodore

THE EARLY NINETEENTH century was an exceptionally difficult time for those on the low end of the socioeconomic scale in Great Britain. In some ways, those in rural areas were hurt the most.¹

Britain was engaged in war with France at the time, and three domestic events caused great harm to the poor. The first was the Corn Laws of 1815.² These were protective tariffs on the importation of grain, which drove the price of bread up so dramatically that it took the entire income of many. Second, although the enclosure practices of the landed gentry had been taking place for several centuries, new laws were passed to enclose commons and open fields to grow more grain.³ The upshot of enclosure was that where one could previously roam—or more importantly, *fish*, more or less at will—became off-limits to non-riparian landowners or renters. In Scotland, enclosure was effective, and “the lairds used their power to have the land enclosed and tilled by modern methods.”⁴ It is interesting to note that in 1801, Mr. Arthur Young, the “Chief Apostle” of enclosure, wrote: “By nineteen out of twenty Enclosure Bills the poor are injured and most grossly.”⁵

The third event—actually, a process—was the Industrial Revolution, which destroyed the spinning and other home-based employment of women and children from agricultural families. It also destroyed the “full-time employment of villagers in various trades as . . . milling and brewing . . . cobbling, and tailoring . . . and cloth-weaving.”⁶ This resulted in migration from rural areas to industrial centers to find employment, leaving the villages almost purely agricultural.

With the foregoing circumstances against him, John Younger was born on 5 July 1785 in the tiny village of Langnewton on the bank of Ale water, a tributary of the Teviot.

Younger was born into poverty, and except for rare brief flashes of prosperity, he lived and died in poverty. To help with his family’s income, he was put to work as a shoemaker while still a child—a trade that he followed for life. By the age of twenty-five, he had married and settled on the Tweed at St. Boswells.⁷ That was likely 1810, the year in which Thomas Tod

Stoddart was born.⁸ Tom Stoddart was well educated and well connected, and he had sufficient steady income to enable him to marry and establish a life of fishing and writing.⁹ In 1837, he and his wife, Bess, settled in Kelso, some 10 miles from St. Boswells.

William Henderson was acquainted with Younger, and he described Younger’s shoemaker’s shop as a gathering place for local anglers. He said of Younger that there was “a charm about the old man” who was “singularly modest and diffident.”¹⁰

As to modest and diffident, it appears that those qualities may not have fully extended to his prose.

Stoddart and Younger disagreed on nearly everything except for their mutual dislike of enclosure, and Stoddart had some sharply pointed comments about enclosure in Sutherlandshire.

Almost the sole proprietor in this shire is the present Duke of Sutherland, . . . Will it be believed . . . that the subjects of this free realm . . . are denied access to its



This image of John Younger is the frontispiece from the 1860 edition of *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (Kelso: J. & J. H. Rutherford, and Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons). Photo by Michael Phelps.

remotest corner; . . . That without special permission . . . no one may throw a feather across the most insignificant of its countless pools, or lift a single stone from its dragon-guarded soil?"

Permission was one problem, but the other inevitable result of enclosure was the rental of access. Younger despised the rich. Although less eloquent than Stoddart, he was no less bitter in pointing out that in his area, William Scrope¹² and others with wealth drove rents so high that the effect was "these great lordly pikes driving us smaller fry out of the water."¹³ It is worth noting that two of Scrope's neighbors were his good friend Sir Walter Scott, much disliked by Younger, and George Bainbridge, a wealthy Liverpool banker.¹⁴

John Younger was fifty years old when Stoddart's *The Art of Angling as Practiced in Scotland* was first published in book form in 1835. By that time Younger had

been for many years regarded as one of the premier fishers on the Tweed and was even known as the "Tweedside Gnostic."¹⁵ Whether "gnostic" was meant to be merely extensive knowledge or mystically acquired knowledge is not known; but it is certain that, at least locally, he was placed on a piscatorial pedestal.

SALMON FLIES

In his comments on salmon flies, Stoddart wrote that those who used Irish and other gaudy flies were ridiculed by "prejudiced clodhoppers" on the Tweed and in the north. He went on to say that no dependence should be placed on "stubborn prejudice"; that salmon would rise at a gaudy fly when they would not rise at another; and that anglers should "be shy of being advised by a downright ignoramus."¹⁶ Whether the last comment was only general or directed at Younger is

certainly open to question. Stoddart's book was published two years before he settled in Kelso; he may not have known Younger personally, but he probably knew of him.

Intended or not, Younger clearly took Stoddart's remarks personally and took serious exception to them. He set out to refute them and to criticize Stoddart's methods and suggested flies in language surprisingly truculent for a person who had been described as "singularly modest and diffident."

Stoddart had outlined his first list of salmon and trout flies in *The Art of Angling*. It contained, among others, wingless black or red hackles; the Maule fly named for William Maule of Edinburgh; and the Professor fly in both salmon and trout sizes, named for his friend and mentor Professor John Wilson.¹⁷ In regard to Highland trout, Stoddart said: "You may catch them with bread and cheese at the end of a cable. . . . Give them red and black flies in abundance. . . . A killing fly may be constructed of a hen's feather and a twitch of flannel wool taken out of an old carpet, when no other materials are at hand."¹⁸

Both men opined that the salmon fly resembled no creature on the water in which they angled. Stoddart remained content with that, but Younger looked for something to explain or justify the appearance of the salmon fly.

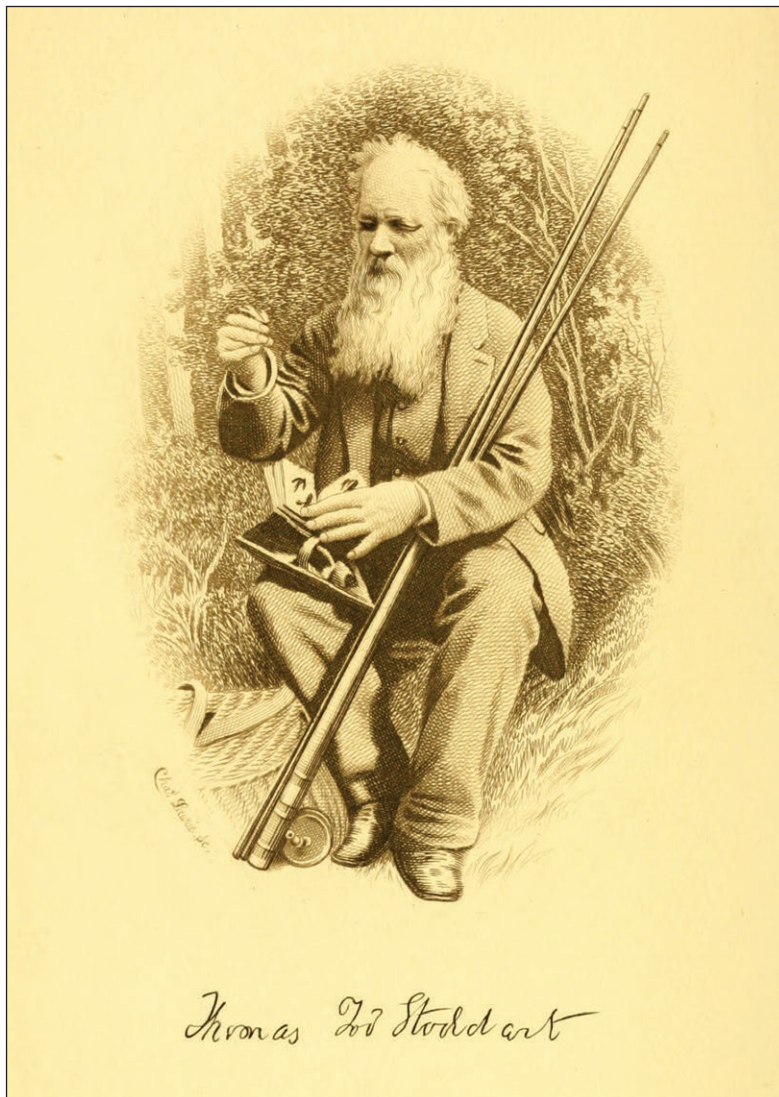
In 1851, Henry Newland's book, *The Erne*, was published, which contained a paragraph clearly limited in application, but upon which Younger seized enthusiastically. In writing about what he referred to as "the three fly Parson Tribe," the "Kill-Many," the "Kill-More," and "Jack the Giant Killer," Newland said:

[I]t is not like anything in heaven or earth; but is very like something in the water; it is like a shrimp, which I imagine to be the food of the salmon while at sea. . . . It moves in a succession of jumps, like nothing whatever that has life, except a shrimp, but exactly like that. Depend upon it, your fly is a shrimp.¹⁹

Younger embraced and greatly expanded upon this quote, and wrote at length about it in 1860, coming to the conclusion that "having never seen a shrimp, dead or alive, . . . the bright golden flies of the Erne, and the darker flies of the Tweed, must all be imitations of shrimps, though unwittingly so designed."²⁰

Seven years earlier, in 1853, Stoddart wrote that herring fry, sand eels, and shrimp were favorite foods for salmon:

With regard to the shrimp, as forming part of the customary marine food of the salmon, I have heard alleged that



Thomas Tod Stoddart. From *Thomas Tod Stoddart, Angling Songs, with a Memoir by Anna M. Stoddart* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1889), facing title page.

the jerking motions frequently given to the artificial fly by the rod-fisher, bear a close resemblance to those of this little shell-fish; in short, to this particular play of the lure they attribute, more than any other cause, the readiness of the salmon to approach and seize it. With this opinion I am not inclined to coincide; but as it is held by a sportsman of great celebrity, I think it proper to notice it.²¹

Younger claimed that he had reduced the number of salmon flies needed to five or six, based on “the variety of colour, fur, wool, and feather.”²² He then set out to contradict Stoddart, maintaining that Irish flies had “unexpectedly good success” on the Tweed and that “inexperienced fishers are very unwilling to believe in the propriety of sober colored flies.”²³ He further claimed that although salmon will rise to the gaudy fly, they will “shy off” and not take it, and that the “local product” of turkey wing provided all that was necessary.²⁴

That Younger had little, if any, interest in the principles and techniques of others is shown when he wrote that one could fish a lifetime and not use an exact type of one of his salmon flies, but “at the same time, I am certain that unless he come so near that my principle can be detected in his practice, his general success will be far from coming to his wishes and expectations.”²⁵ It is striking to contrast this Younger quote with Stoddart’s very brief instruction on how to tie a salmon fly, then urging those who wanted to become adept to read Blacker’s *The Art of Fly Making*.²⁶

It appears that Younger had somehow, perhaps through his virtual isolation, come to believe that his principles of color and shade were in some way proprietary. For example, in his autobiography, he wrote that his friend John Haliburton had obtained flies from him and that Haliburton had worked for William Scrope for seven to ten years. Because of that, Younger concluded that the flies illustrated in Scrope’s book were his “to a shade.”²⁷ That assertion seems somewhat questionable as Haliburton is mentioned in passing only twice in Scrope’s book. Further, in describing his six salmon flies, Scrope wrote, “They

were tied by my Fisherman Charles Purdie,” and that the white-tipped wing fly “has been called Toppo from time immemorial.”²⁸ As to his fly “Kinmont Willie,” Scrope said, “I found this fly very successful in the Annan when I lived at Kinmont.”²⁹

Clearly, the old shoemaker’s principles of color and shade were by no means unique. In 1837, John Kirkbride of Carlisle described a series of materials that were, for all practical purposes, the same as Younger’s.³⁰ In addition, the

WINGS AND HACKLES

Younger’s trout flies were all winged save one palmer, and only two—apparently somewhat reluctantly—had hackle behind the wings. For the most part, they were based on the English March Brown and what he termed the Pale Yellow Dun.³² Actually, those flies were old patterns even by the first edition of *River Angling* (1840). In 1816, most of the trout flies Bainbridge listed were hackled behind the wings.³³ Younger obviously knew

about Bainbridge because he criticized his paired-wing slip method as “extreme nicety, which may only be resorted to as a trial of skill.”³⁴

Referring to Stoddart’s wingless hackled flies in comparison with his winged productions, Younger wrote: “a hundred vile imitations of this fly [his winged fly] meet with partial success, while those who use such often ignorantly aver that it is of no consequence to be nice about flies.”³⁵ He also criticized black and red hackle flies as not working on the Tweed between Melrose and Berwick, a stretch that includes Kelso. Continuing the attack on the hackle, he stated that “occasionally, a very small short bristle of hackle close behind the wings . . . can do no harm . . . though by no means an essential appendage.”³⁶

Younger went on to describe his yellow night fly, which he claimed to have invented twenty-five years earlier. His inconsequential error was in not knowing that his fly was practically the same as the Yellow Cadew described by Samuel Taylor in 1800.³⁷ The larger error was to refer to the Professor fly as a “vulgar imitation” of his yellow fly.³⁸

Stoddart did not claim to have invented any particular fly but gave full credit for his trout patterns to Professor John Wilson (aka Christopher North) and the professor’s brother, James.³⁹ The Professor fly was first tied by John Wilson on an angling tour of the Highlands in the summer of 1815.⁴⁰ To use the word *vulgar* in connection with Wilson no doubt irritated Stoddart, who idolized and virtually worshiped the professor. It is of some parenthetical interest that this “vulgar” fly lives on as a trout fly in at least nine pattern variations⁴¹ and as a salmon fly.⁴²



This image of Scrope’s flies can be found facing page 134 in *Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing in the Tweed* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1921). Photo by Michael Phelps.

authority Andrew Herd has pointed out, “The most common English, Welsh, and Scottish salmon flies in the very early lists were tied with fur or wool bodies, and had divided wings made from duck, turkey, bittern or kite, . . . and there wasn’t a great deal of difference in salmon patterns tied anywhere in the three nations.”³¹

Trout and trout flies did not rank as high on the fishing scale as salmon to Younger, but he vented his most argumentative spleen at Stoddart’s trout flies.

As might be expected, the level of invective demonstrated by “inexperienced,” “ignorant,” “vile,” and “vulgar” was not lost on Stoddart, and seven years later, in 1847, he wrote:

The flies dressed by Younger of St. Boswells are, upon the whole serviceable; still, it is plain, that this worthy angler is but partially, or if the term may be used with propriety, locally versed in the mysteries of the Art. There is too much mannerism about them to render his winged productions general favourites, and I cannot say, in regard to his salmon flies, that they at all take my fancy, or that I could employ them with any sanguine expectation of success.⁴³

For a time, Stoddart said no more; but others did, and for Younger, it did not get better.

A *Blackwood's* magazine reviewer wrote about the 1847 edition of *The Angler's Companion* that “as a teacher of practical angling in Scotland, we look on Mr. Stoddart to be without rival or equal.”⁴⁴ In 1850, Edward Fitzgibbon's *The Book of the Salmon* was published, in which he discussed the casting techniques of both Stoddart and Scrope—not two of Younger's favorite people. Fitzgibbon also listed all of Scrope's salmon flies.⁴⁵ Then in 1855, the second edition of William Blacker's *The Art of Fly Making* was published with a favorable mention of Stoddart.⁴⁶ Neither Fitzgibbon nor Blacker mentioned John Younger; nor did Stoddart in his 1853 edition of *The Angler's Companion*.

If Younger was aware of being ignored by these doyens of mid-nineteenth-century fly fishing, it must have given him the impression that the sky was falling and that his pedestal as the “Tweedside Gnostic” was crumbling away. A response to Stoddart would come; but in the interim, there was another, much milder, and actually humorous development.

In 1857, W. C. Stewart's *The Practical Angler* was published.⁴⁷ Anna Stoddart gave a lengthy description of her father's surprise that some gave Stewart's book a higher rating than his. Both he and his best friend, John Wilson Jr. (son of Professor John Wilson), referred to Stewart as the “Pretender.” Stoddart quickly came to realize, however, that times were changing and that the angler of “Arcadia . . . was giving place to new men,

persons who did other things.”⁴⁸ After much correspondence between Stoddart and Stewart—all of which, unfortunately, seems to have been lost—a fishing contest was arranged, complete with seconds. Sadly, there is no evidence that the contest ever took place; but Anna opined that if it had, Stewart probably would have won.⁴⁹

It took thirteen years for Younger to respond to Stoddart's 1847 comments on his flies. In 1860, when Younger was seventy-five years old, an expanded and partially revised edition of *River Angling*

ANIMADVERSIONS

Revisions were actually few in the 1860 edition, but it did include a section titled “Animadversions,” in which Younger wasted no time in venting his anger at T. Tod Stoddart. He stated that he had not been aware of Stoddart's 1847 comments until three or four years later and that his income had been injured thereby.⁵¹ Merely as a matter of curiosity, one wonders how much his income could have been affected if it took up to four years to learn of Stoddart's criticism and thirteen

years to complain. For some reason, he then quoted the entire offending passage and then ingenuously asked: “What spirit could have induced these remarks from a person I had but twice or thrice casually met?”⁵²

William Scrope, who had really done nothing, was once more dragged into the fray; and again Younger insisted that both Scrope's and Stoddart's salmon flies were his patterns. Oddly, he did not mention that in his 1860 list of salmon flies he had added the Maule fly from Stoddart's *Art of Angling* and the Double White Top that was in the 1853 edition of *The Angler's Companion*. To be fair, the Maule fly was probably pretty widely known because Mr. Maule was a familiar angler on the Tweed.

It comes as no surprise, however, that the crux of Younger's complaint came down to money. Younger's book sold for eighteen pence; Scrope's book sold for two guineas and had some excellent art, including a full-color lithograph of his salmon flies; and Stoddart's sold for half a guinea with a full-color lithograph of salmon flies that were, according to Younger, “hardly perceptibly, removed from Scrope's.”⁵³ Actually, although the recipes for

the flies use many of the same materials, the lithographs show little similarity in the flies. Sadly, there are no images of Younger's flies. To understand Younger's complaint and to put those book prices in perspective, twelve pence equal one shilling, twenty shillings equal a pound, and a pound plus a shilling equal a guinea.

Younger ended his polemic with a statement dripping with animus: “Let Mr. Stoddart do what he can for himself . . . he had better just contrive to fall as softly as he can for there are those who



An insert with bound color facsimiles of “the flies used by Mr. Stewart” was included with the 1919 edition of W. C. Stewart's *The Practical Angler* (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd.).

appeared. The response contained therein strikes one as a mixture of desperation, pathos, anger, and confusion. In the preface, he asserted that eight or ten authors had succeeded him since his 1840 edition, and he named Wilson and Stoddart among them.⁵⁰ It is possible that Younger may not have known that John Wilson had written for *Blackwood's* magazine on sporting and other subjects since 1826, but he did know that Stoddart's *Art of Angling* had preceded his book by five years because that was the genesis of his irritation.

may be able, though very unwillingly, to put him down.”⁵⁴ Not only did no one ever put Stoddart down, but Younger did not even have the satisfaction of seeing “Animadversions” in print in the 1860 edition of his book. After revising only fifty-five pages of *River Angling*, he died on 19 June 1860, some months before its publication.

Of course, not even Younger’s death ended the matter. It had taken him thirty-two years to respond to Stoddart. Twenty years later, in 1880, the publisher of Stoddart’s book of poetry, *Songs of the Seasons*, asked him to write a short autobiography for a second edition. The brief autobiography contains, with other information, some genealogy and long lists of friends, associates, and acquaintances. Stoddart did mention Younger and simply wrote, “My publication on the subject preceded his by several years.”⁵⁵ The book was published in 1881. Tom Stoddart died 21 November 1880.

It seems somehow appropriate here to recall Confucius’s admonition that before embarking on a mission of revenge, one should dig two graves.

YOUNGER’S BRUSH WITH ENDURING FAME

John Younger may not have been adaptable or particularly creative, but in his own way he was quite observant, and he certainly observed the nymph. I believe that Robert Venables gave the first description of weighted wet-fly technique in 1668: “You may if you please place a small slender Lead upon the shank of your Hook to sink the Bait where the River is not violently swift, and draw the Cadbait over the Lead, you may make one the head of black silk, and the body of yellow wax; this you must be often raising from the bottom, and so let it sink again.”⁵⁶

However, it was John Younger who first described what appears to be actual nymph fishing in the 1860 edition of *River Angling*:

When the flies come up thickly on the surface . . . ; for a trial of skill mutilate the wings of your flies by picking them off about half middle (not cutting them); or rather by tying down the top of the wing near the tail of the fly, which makes its appearance something like the maggot released from its first case on the bottom stone on its ascent to the surface. Then, as much as you can, let them sink low in the water . . . , and you will most likely succeed in getting a few trouts.⁵⁷

Again, Younger died after revising only seventy-five pages of the second edition

of *River Angling*, so his death was probably within a few days, or perhaps even a few hours, of writing these words. He may have teetered on the brink of fly-fishing immortality as father of nymph fishing, but he dismissed his discovery in the same way that he dismissed Bainbridge’s paired-wing slip technique—merely as a trial of skill. It is likely that because of his isolation and his inability to break from the iron tradition of the winged fly, he could not appreciate the nymph as a valid, effective method in its own right. Thus, it was left to the inquiring mind of G. E. M. Skues to become “father” of the nymph.

ENDNOTES

1. G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England, Vol. III* (London: Longman, Green & Co., Anchor Books ed., New York, 1953), 117–57.
2. *Ibid.*, 157.
3. *Ibid.*, 141–42.
4. *Ibid.*, 144.
5. *Ibid.*, 146.
6. *Ibid.*, 142.
7. John Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout, with a Memoir of the Author: Together with a Treatise on the Salmon and a List of the Tweed Salmon-Casts* (Kelso: J. & J. H. Rutherford, and Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1860), xv–xx.
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9. Anna M. Stoddart, *Memoirs and Angling Songs* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1889), 83.
10. William Henderson, *My Life as an Angler* (London: W. Satchell, Parton & Co., 1879), 103–06.
11. Thomas Tod Stoddart, *The Art of Angling as Practiced in Scotland* (Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, and London: Orr & Smith, 1835), 135.
12. William Scrope, *Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing in the Tweed*, 1st ed. (London: John Murray, 1843).
13. John Younger, *Autobiography* (Kelso: J. & J. H. Rutherford, and Edinburgh & Glasgow: John Menzies & Co., 1881), 245.
14. George Bainbridge, *The Fly-Fisher’s Guide* (Liverpool: F. G. Harris’ Widow and Brothers), 1816.
15. Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (1860 ed.), xxiii.
16. Stoddart, *The Art of Angling as Practiced in Scotland*, 32.
17. *Ibid.*, 27–31.
18. *Ibid.*, 34–35.
19. Henry Newland, *The Erne* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1851), 175–77.
20. Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (1860 ed.), 44–46.
21. Thomas Tod Stoddart, *The Angler’s Companion to the Rivers and Lochs of Scotland*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood

and Sons, 1853), 145.

22. John Younger, *On River Angling for Salmon and Trout, More Particularly Practised in the Tweed and Its Tributaries* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1840), 15.

23. *Ibid.*, 23.

24. *Ibid.*, 25–26.

25. *Ibid.*, 68.

26. Stoddart, *The Angler’s Companion to the Rivers and Lochs of Scotland*, 2nd ed., 59.

27. Younger, *Autobiography*, 418–20.

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29. *Ibid.*

30. John Kirkbride, *The Northern Angler* (London: C. Thurnam, 1837), 67–72.

31. Andrew Herd, *Salmon Fly Patterns: 1766–1914* (Ellesmere: Medlar Press, 2013), 15.

32. Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (1860 ed.), 55.

33. Bainbridge, *The Fly-Fisher’s Guide*, 103–40.

34. Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (1840 ed.), 45.

35. *Ibid.*, 35.

36. *Ibid.*, 40–41.

37. Samuel Taylor, *Angling in All Its Branches* (London: T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1800), 266.

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43. Thomas Tod Stoddart, *The Angler’s Companion to the Rivers and Lochs of Scotland*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Sons, 1847), 74.

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48. Quoted in Anna M. Stoddart, *Memoirs and Angling Songs*, 135.

49. Anna M. Stoddart, *Memoirs and Angling Songs*, 134–37.

50. Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (1860 ed.), 1.

51. *Ibid.*, 10.

52. *Ibid.*, 11.

53. *Ibid.*, 16.

54. *Ibid.*, 17.

55. Thomas Tod Stoddart, *Songs of the Seasons and Other Poems* (Kelso: J. & J. H. Rutherford, 1881), xlii.

56. Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler*, 3rd ed. (London: Printed for Richard Marriot, Under the King’s-Head Tavern, Fleet Street, 1668), 29–30.

57. Younger, *River Angling for Salmon and Trout* (1860 ed.), 64–65.

Sir Walter Scott and Angling

by Keith Harwood

ALTHOUGH SIR WALTER Scott is best known today for his poetry and his works of historical fiction, what is less well known is that he was also an angler who fished for salmon and trout by both fair means and what would be regarded today as foul means. This, perhaps, should come as no surprise as Scott spent a great deal of his life in the Scottish Borders, and Abbotsford—the magnificent house he built—sits on the banks of the Tweed, the most prolific salmon river in the United Kingdom.

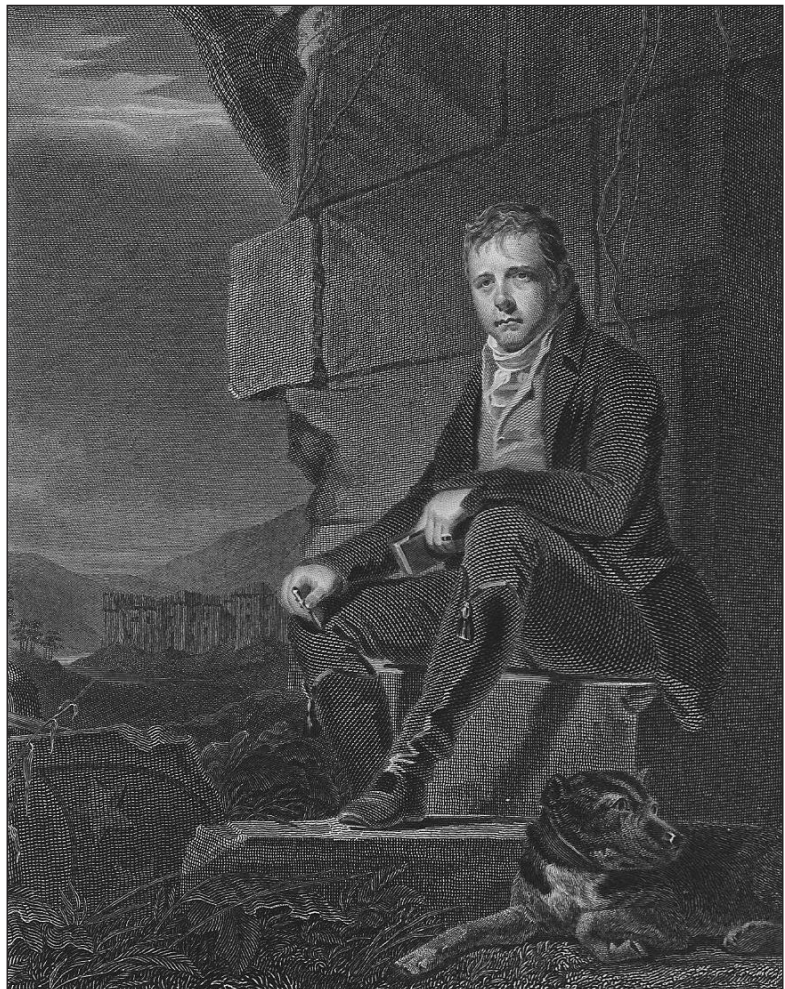
Walter Scott was born on 15 August 1771 at College Wynd (since demolished) in Edinburgh, where his father was a lawyer. At the age of eighteen months, he contracted polio, which left him lame for the rest of his life. However, this limitation does not seem to have affected his love of walking, horse riding, and participation in a variety of field sports, which included fox hunting, shooting, and fishing. In hope of a cure, he was sent in 1773 to live with his paternal grandparents at their farm at Sandy-Knowe, near Kelso in the Scottish Borders. He returned to Edinburgh in 1775, but during the summer he was taken by his aunt Jenny for spa treatment at Bath in England. He remained at Bath for a year before returning to Edinburgh and then to his grandparents' house at Sandy-Knowe. By 1778, he was back in Edinburgh, and the following October he commenced his education at the Royal High School of Edinburgh. After finishing school in Edinburgh in 1783, he was sent to stay for six months with his aunt Jenny in Kelso and attended lessons at the local grammar school, where he met and befriended James Ballantyne, a keen angler, who later became his publisher.

At the age of twelve, Scott attended classes in Latin, Greek, and logic at Edinburgh University, but a serious illness in 1785 meant that he was sent back to Kelso to convalesce. He returned to Edinburgh University from 1789 to 1792. There he studied law, was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates, and became an advocate (barrister). After his marriage to Charlotte Carpenter in 1797 and his father's death in 1799, Scott was appointed sheriff-depute (a judge) of Selkirkshire

and rented a cottage at Lasswade, a village on the River North Esk, 9 miles south of Edinburgh. Five years later he rented Ashestiel House from his cousin James Russell, who was serving in India. The house was located 6 miles from Selkirk on the south bank of the River Tweed. He remained at Ashestiel until 1811, when he bought a farm, which became Abbotsford, on the right bank of the Tweed and embarked on an ambitious building program to convert the property into a suitable country residence. Today, Abbotsford is the house most associated with Scott, containing his library and extraordinary collection

of treasures, which includes a fine display of antique armor and weapons. It has become a shrine to lovers of Scott's works and is one of Scotland's most popular tourist attractions.¹

As we have already seen, Scott spent a great deal of time during his formative years in the Scottish Borders, especially in the neighbourhood of Kelso, and it is not surprising that he developed a great love for the area's natural beauty. His imagination was captivated by the area's historical associations and by its songs and ballads, which inspired him to become a writer and resulted in the publication of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.²



Engraving of Walter Scott after the 1808 portrait by Sir Henry Raeburn. Author's collection.



Abbotsford.



The River Tweed at Abbotsford.

Not only did Scott stay at his grandparents' house at Sandy-Knowe and his aunt Jenny's at Kelso, but he also spent many summers at his uncle's house at Rosebank in the countryside to the east of the town.³ His uncle, Captain Robert Scott, a retired ship's captain who had worked for the East India Company, appears to have taken his nephew under his wing, and it seems likely that he introduced Scott to the delights of angling. John Purdie, a nephew of Tom Purdie, a poacher-turned-gamekeeper whom Scott employed as his forester at Abbotsford, had this to say of Scott's angling skills:

[B]ut young Sir Walter was gude [good] wi' aither rod or leister [a type of barbed fork for spearing salmon]—a better never threw a line, and a strapping fallow [fellow] as ever stood in shoe leather. Him and me was baith about a age, and about a heicht, and twae as bang [lithe] youths when we took the moors wi' our guns as ye micht hae seen. Ah me! I can see him now throw his line wi' a 16lb. rod across the Carey Weel Pool [a pool on the Tweed], and make her licht [light] like a feather at the far side.⁴

Unfortunately, Scott's 16-pound rod no longer survives, but his brass fishing reel can still be seen in the collections of the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. In Scott's review of Sir Humphry

Davy's *Salmonia* (1828), which appeared in the October 1828 *Quarterly Review*, he is rather modest about his own angling skill.

For ourselves, though we have wetted a line in our time, we are far from boasting of more than a very superficial knowledge of the art, and possess no part whatever of the scientific information which is necessary to constitute the philosophical angler. Yet we have read our Walton . . . and, when we endeavour to form an idea of paradise, we always suppose a trout-stream going through it. The art itself is peculiarly seductive, requires much ingenuity, and yet is easily reconciled to a course of quiet reflections.⁵

In fact, Scott was skillful with both rod and leister. His knowledge of angling literature was unrivaled, and he lived in an angler's paradise with the waters of the Tweed flowing at the bottom of his extensive gardens at Abbotsford.

All anglers need a mentor—someone who can teach them the basics of the art—and Walter Scott was no exception. It seems likely that Scott's uncle, Captain Robert Scott, was his nephew's angling mentor and, in the same review quoted above, Walter Scott reported:

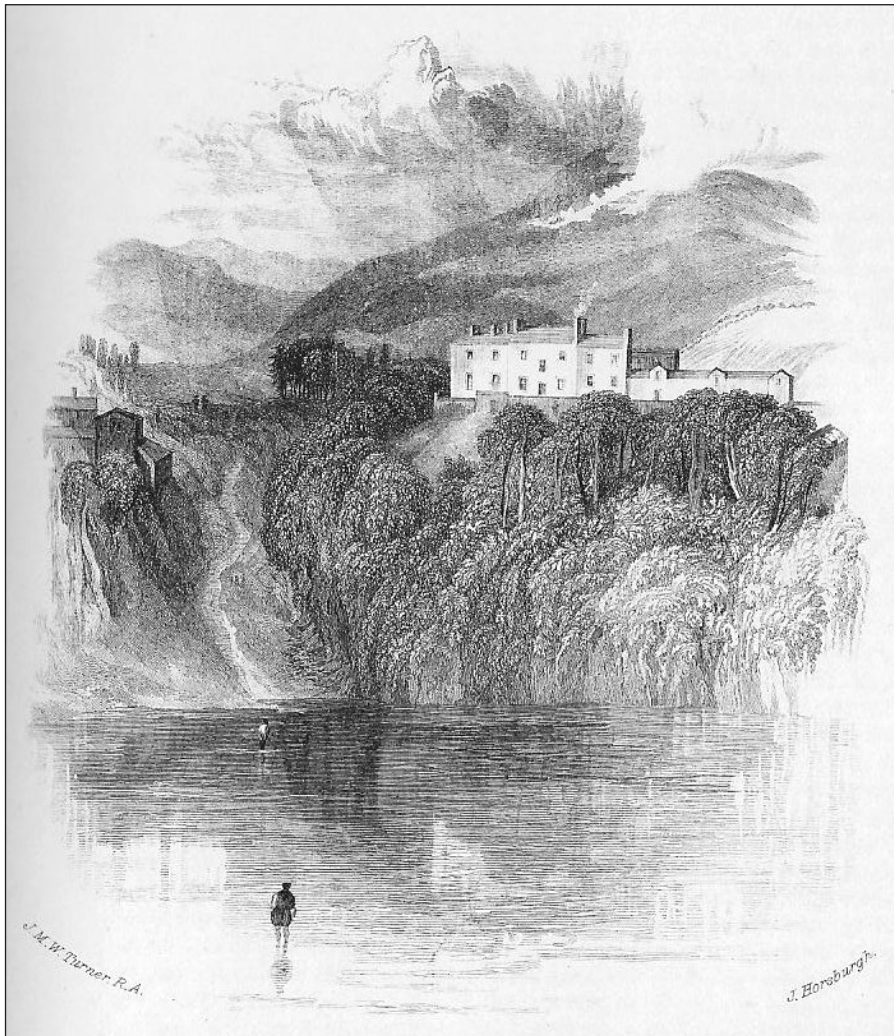
We used sometimes to pursue the amusement with an excellent friend now no more [Capt. Scott died in June 1804 and left his entire estate to his

nephew], and we still recollect the mortifying distinction between his success and our want of it. With all the kindness and much of the skill of Halieus [the angler in Davy's *Salmonia*], he trained us to high adventure:—"Throw where yonder stone breaks the stream; there is a trout behind it"—we obeyed, and hooked the stone itself. . . . Our Mentor gave us the choice of his flies and relinquished in our favour even that which we had seen do instant execution. It seemed as if what in his hands had been a real, animated insect, the live child of heat and moisture, was disenchanted in ours, and returned to a clumsy composition of iron, wool, fur, and feathers.⁶

Scott records fishing with his uncle on several occasions, and in a letter to his mother dated 5 September 1788 (written at Rosebank, his uncle's house at Kelso), he complains about the fishing: "The fishing has been hitherto but indifferent."⁷ Unfortunately, he does not tell us where he had been fishing, but he is confident of catching a hare with the help of his uncle's newly acquired greyhounds.

In the summer of 1791, Scott accompanied his uncle Robert on a fishing expedition to Wooler in Northumbria. In a letter to his friend William Clerk dated August 26, he recorded some of their experiences.

[N]ext morning's sun beheld us on our journey, through a pass in the Cheviots, upon the back of two special nags, and



J. M. W. Turner engraving of Ashestiel from J. G. Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1896).



Sir Walter Scott Finding the Manuscript of *Waverley* in an Attic by Charles Martin Hardie. Oil on canvas, 1890. By kind permission of Abbotsford Trust.

man Thomas behind with a portman-teau, and two fishing-rods fastened across his back, much in the style of St. Andrew's Cross. . . . Out of the brooks with which these hills are intersected, we pull trouts of half a yard in length, as fast as we did the perches from the pond at Pennycuick . . . all the day we shoot, fish, walk and ride: dine and sup upon fish struggling from the stream.⁸

William Clerk, to whom this letter was addressed, was a friend of Scott's at Edinburgh University, where they both studied law. Clerk, too, was an angler. In his memoirs, begun at Ashestiel in 1808, Scott told of a fishing expedition with Clerk and several other friends.

Wood, water, wilderness itself had an inexpressible charm for me and I had a dreaming way of going much further than I intended so that unconsciously my return was protracted and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness. For example, I once set out with Mr. George Abercromby, now Lord Abercromby, Mr. William Clerk and some others to fish in the lake above Howgate [a hamlet south of Penicuik, Midlothian] and the stream which descends from it into the Esk. We breakfasted at Howgate and fished the whole day and while we were on our return next morning I was easily seduced by Will Clerk, then a great intimate, to visit Pennycuick House the seat of his family.⁹

His delay in returning home following this expedition caused a certain amount of alarm in his father's household, and he was suitably chastised.

It is largely thanks to fishing that Scott rediscovered his unfinished manuscript of *Waverley* not long after moving into Abbotsford. Scott himself told the story of its rediscovery in his "General Preface to the *Waverley Novels*" (1829).

I happened to want some fishing-tackle for the use of a guest, when it occurred to me to search the old writing-desk already mentioned, in which I used to keep articles of that nature. I got access to it with some difficulty; and, in looking for lines and flies, the long-lost manuscript presented itself. I immediately set to work to complete it, according to my original purpose.¹⁰

And complete it Scott did. *Waverley*, generally regarded as the first historical novel in the western tradition, was published in 1814, and such was its success that it was quickly followed by a series of other historical novels.

Apart from Scott's account of the rediscovery of his manuscript, the scene was depicted in oils by the artist Charles Martin Hardie (1858–1916). The painting can be seen at Abbotsford House.

While living at Abbotsford, Scott enjoyed walking, fishing, and picnicking at Cauldshiels Loch, which became part of the Abbotsford estate in 1817. Scott made a number of references to this loch in his journal, which covers the years from 1825 to the year of his death, 1832. In his entry for 19 August 1826, he records visiting the loch with Dr. and Mrs. Brewster and their family. Although they fished the loch, they did not have a great deal of success; the children managed to catch four trout.¹¹ George Cole Bainbridge, author of the acclaimed *Fly Fisher's Guide* (1816), had bought the neighboring Gattonside estate and was a frequent visitor to Abbotsford. Initially, Scott was not enamoured of Bainbridge and referred to him as the "cursed banker."¹² However, Scott soon revised his opinion, and the two became friends, frequently dining at each other's houses, and Bainbridge was granted permission to fish at Cauldshiels Loch on a number of occasions.¹³

As well as fishing his loch, Scott liked to fish the Tweed (not surprisingly, as he lived on its banks). James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," a friend and fellow angler, recalls Scott "toiling in the Tweed to the waist."¹⁴ However, it seems that Scott was no purist when it came to fishing and was not averse to float fishing when the occasion demanded, as the following 23 May 1828 entry from his journal reveals: "I have been at Gladdies Wiel [a pool on the Tweed] when I have caught two trouts, one with the fly the other with the bobber. I have landed both."¹⁵

Not only did Scott resort to float fishing on occasion, but he also very much enjoyed the now highly illegal method of "burning the water." This method involved using a torch of burning peat or coal, known as a blaze, to illuminate the water and, when a salmon was spotted, to spear it with a leister. James Hogg relates one such story about Scott when he lived at Ashestiel, which did not quite go as planned.

He, and Skene of Rubislaw, and I were out one night about midnight, leistering kippers [salmon about to spawn] in Tweed, about the end of January, not long after the opening of the river for fishing, which was then on the tenth, and Scott having a great range of the river himself, we went up to the side of the Rough haugh of Elibank; but when we came to kindle our light, behold our peat was gone out. This was a terrible disappointment; but to think of giving up our sport was out of the question, so we had no other shift save to send Rob Fletcher all the way through the darkness, the distance of two miles, for another fiery peat. . . .

Rob Fletcher came at last, and old Mr. Laidlaw of the Peel with him, carrying a



Scott Monument in Edinburgh. Engraving from J. G. Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1896).



Nineteenth-century engraving of burning the water. Author's collection.

lantern, and into the river we plunged in a frail bark which had suffered some deadly damage in bringing up. We had a fine blazing light, and the salmon began to appear in plenty, "turning up sides like swine;" but wo be to us, our boat began instantly to manifest a disposition to sink, and in a few minutes we reached Gleddie's Weal, the deepest pool in all that part of Tweed. When Scott saw the terror that his neighbour old Peel was in, he laughed till the tears blinded his eyes. Always the more mischief the better sport for him. "For god's sake, push her to the side!" roared Peel. "Oh, she goes fine," said Scott.

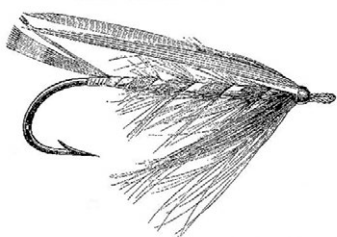
"An' gin the boat war bottomless, An' seven miles to row."

A verse of an old song; and during the very time he was reciting these lines, down went the boat to the bottom, plunging us all into the Tweed, over head and ears. It was no sport to me at all, for I had no change of raiment at Ashestiel, but that was a glorious night for Scott, and the next day was no worse.¹⁶

Not all of Scott's attempts at harpooning a salmon ended in a nocturnal dip in the Tweed. C. S. M. Lockhart, in *The Centenary Memorial of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (1871), gives a vivid account of Scott successfully harpooning a 30-pound salmon in the Tweed at Abbotsford.¹⁷

Sadly, Sir Walter Scott (he was created a baronet in 1820) passed away at his beloved Abbotsford on 21 September 1832, following a trip to Italy. His legacy, however, lives on in the form of the Scott Monument in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens and the nearby Waverley Railway Station, named after Scott's Waverley novels. In 1912, the *Hardy Anglers' Guide* launched a set of six new salmon flies, the Scott series, which bear the names of several of his published works: *Ivanhoe*, *Waverley*, *Rob Roy*, *The Black Dwarf*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *Marmion*. The *Guide* claimed that these flies had been "designed in November,

Hardy's 1912 Pattern Salmon Flies THE "SCOTT" SERIES.



A set of six flies, designed by a committee of practical salmon anglers and fly-dressing experts.

These flies are all dressed "LIGHT," with low rakish lively wings and hackles, golden pheasant crests and body feathers being used for hackles in Numbers 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

As a set of killing patterns they are hard to beat, and are worth inspection by all salmon anglers. To facilitate this (as they are not illustrated in colour), we will gladly send a set on approval.

Nos.	Sizes of Hooks	3	2, 1, 1½	0, 2/0	3/0	4/0	5/0	6/0	7/0
1. IVANHOE	1/6	1/9	2/0	2/3	2/6	2/9	3/0	3/6	
2. WAVERLEY	1/3	1/6	1/9	2/0	2/3	2/6	2/9	3/0	
3. ROB ROY	1/6	1/9	2/0	2/3	2/6	2/9	3/0	3/6	
4. THE BLACK DWARF	1/3	1/6	1/9	2/0	2/3	2/6	2/9	3/0	
5. THE LADY OF THE LAKE	1/0	1/3	1/6	1/9	2/0	2/3	2/6	2/9	
6. MARMION	1/0	1/3	1/6	1/9	2/0	2/3	2/6	2/9	

Left: Hardy's 1912 Pattern Salmon Flies, the "Scott" Series, Hardy Anglers' Guide, 1914.

Below: The "Scott" Series Salmon Flies, Hardy Anglers' Guide, 1927.

70 Hardy Brothers Limited

Extra Small Salmon Flies

Dressed on Hardy's Patent "Oval" Wire Hooks, with upturned loop eyes or twisted gut loops.

SEE ILLUSTRATIONS ON PLATE 13 FOR ACTUAL SIZES.

In this series the flies are lightly dressed, the correct colour and character being portrayed in each pattern. They are suitable for salmon in low water, and excellent for sea-trout, large lake or rainbow trout.

JOCK SCOTT.	SILVER DOCTOR.	LEMON GREY.
THUNDER & LIGHTNING.	BLUE DOCTOR.	GOLDEN OLIVE.
BUTCHER.	BLACK DOCTOR.	BLACK GOSHAWK.
CHILDERS.	DUSTY MILLER.	LOGIE.
KATE.	SILVER GREY.	JOCKIE.
POPHAM.	ORANGE GROUSE.	BUMBLE.
DUNKELD.	DURHAM RANGER.	WILKINSON.

Sizes Nos. 10, 11 and 12, Hardy's Pat. "Oval" Wire Single Hooks, with upturned loop eye or with twisted gut loop, 16/- per doz. Double Hooks, 18/- per doz.

The "SCOTT" Series Salmon Flies

These flies, designed by Mr. J. J. Hardy, are dressed "Light," with low rakish lively wings and hackles. Dyed golden pheasant crests and body feathers are used for hackles in Numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and give a beautiful translucent effect, which is of great value in clear water and strong sunlight.

Single "Oval" Wire Hooks. Nos. } 3 2 1 1½ 1/0 2/0 3/0 4/0 5/0 6/0 7/0 8/0

Ivanhoe - - -	2/9	3/3	2/3	3/4	3/6	3/8	3/10	4/2	4/6	5/3
Waverley - - -										
Rob Roy - - -										
The Black Dwarf										
Lady of the Lake										
Marmion - - -	2/0	2/3	2/4	2/5	2/6	2/8	2/10	3/-	3/3	3/8 3/10

Prices are for flies on single hooks with gut loops.
Extras as in "Rover" Series, see page 71.

HARDY BROTHERS LTD., ALNWICK.

EXTRA SMALL SALMON FLIES. Dressed on Pat. "OVAL" Wire Loop Eyed Hooks.
PLATE 13.

1911, by a committee of practical salmon anglers and fly dressing experts.” It also stated that “as a set of killing patterns they will be hard to beat, and are worth inspection by all salmon anglers.”¹⁸

Following World War I, the Scott series was reintroduced and appeared in the *Hardy Anglers’ Guide* from 1920 to 1927. However, by this time it was claimed that the flies had been designed by J. J. Hardy, one of the founders of Hardy Brothers and author of *Salmon Fishing* (1907). Whether this was a genuine mistake or whether J. J. Hardy was claiming these flies as his own invention, it is hard to know. What is clear, however, is that the flies appeared to fall out of favor and were not listed in the guides after 1927.

Although the Scott series of salmon flies may no longer grace the casts of salmon anglers, the name Sir Walter Scott lives on, especially through his poetical works and historical novels, which are still popular with the general public and loom large in university courses devoted to Scottish literature. The story of Scott as an angler and reviewer of angling books is less well known, and it is hoped that this article may help to redress the balance.



ENDNOTES

1. There are numerous accounts of Scott’s life, both online and in print. I found *Sir Walter Scott 1771–1971: A Bicentenary Exhibition* most useful. The catalog was published in Edinburgh by HMSO in 1971. The exhibition was organized jointly by the Faculty of Advocates and the National Library of Scotland. Other biographies that I have found useful include J. G. Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Adam & Charles Black, New Popular Edition, 1896); Eileen Dunlop, *Sir Walter Scott: A Life in Story* (Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland, 2016); and A. N. Wilson, *A Life of Walter Scott: The Laird of Abbotsford* (London: Pimlico, 2002).

2. Walter Scott, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1802 and 1803).

3. David Kilpatrick, *Walter Scott’s Kelso* (Kelso, Scotland: Kelso and District Amenity Society, 2005), 2.

4. C. S. M. Lockhart, *The Centenary Memorial of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (London: Virtue & Co., 1871), 67.

5. Sir Walter Scott, review of *Salmonia: or Days of Fly-Fishing* in *Quarterly Review* (vol. xxxviii, October 1828, London: John Murray), 504.

6. *Ibid.*, 508.

7. Quoted in J. G. Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Adam & Charles Black,



The Scott series of flies, tied by the author.

New Popular Edition, 1896), 42.

8. *Ibid.*, 50.

9. Quoted in David Hewitt (ed.), *Scott on Himself* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1981), 36.

10. *Ibid.*, 251. A complete collection of Scott’s Waverley novels (a series of novels written between 1814 and 1831, which takes its name from the first novel, *Waverley*), complete with Scott’s newly written general preface, was published by Cadell and Company in Edinburgh between 1829 and 1833.

11. W. E. K. Anderson, ed., *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1998), 212.

12. Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 523.

13. Anderson, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, 162.

14. James Hogg, *Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott* (London: The Folio Press, 1987), 5.

15. Anderson, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, 538.

16. Hogg, *Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 6–7.

17. Lockhart, *The Centenary Memorial of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 67–71.

18. *Hardy Anglers’ Guide* quoted in Andrew Herd, *Hardy Brothers Anglers’ Bible* (Ellesmere, U.K.: The Medlar Press, 2015), 109.

Darkness and Light: Etchings by Kerr Eby

(Canadian American, 1889–1946)



*A Bank Street Balcony, etching on paper (plate: 6 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 7 $\frac{7}{16}$ inches), 1913.
Used with permission from Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of
Mrs. Harry Katz in memory of Harry Katz. 1977.66.63.*

ON A FROZEN WINTER'S NIGHT, artist Kerr Eby was known to step outside and gaze at the darkened landscape regardless of the weather. Close friend and fellow artist Robert Lawson described Eby "standing out there in the starlight, his hair blown by the wind, looking out at the twinkling lights in the valley, at the bulk of his old house and the great maple branches etched black against the sky. 'God,' he'd always say, 'isn't it swell?'"¹ Here, beneath the night sky, we imagine Eby contemplating nature's beauty. Nature is reduced to its simplest of forms, darkness and light—contrasts that together reveal the world around us. One could say these thoughtful moments form the foundation for Eby's artistic inspiration.

Kerr Eby was generally regarded as one of the most technically accomplished American printmakers of his time.² He practiced alongside great artists such as Frank W. Benson, John Taylor Arms, and Childe Hassam during the early- to mid-twentieth century. Working primarily in intaglio, Eby developed more than two hundred prints throughout his lifetime depicting an array of subjects, among them New England landscapes, field sports (including fly fishing), and battlefield scenes.

Eby was born in Japan to Canadian Methodist missionaries and lived abroad the first four years of his life before the family returned to Canada. He moved to New York in 1907 to study

art at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, then lived in New England for much of his adult life. Eby served in both world wars for the United States; he earned the rank of sergeant first class in World War I and was hired as an artist correspondent for Abbott Laboratories during World War II.³ The subjects depicted in Eby's work serve equally as an autobiography: he worked from what he saw in life, both harrowing and beautiful.

Eby used etching to its full potential as an artistic medium. In his work, light and dark serve as critical dualities within a language of tone, line, and space. To master this vocabulary, Eby experimented with various approaches for composing and marking his plate.⁴ In his 1913 etching, *A Bank Street Balcony*, Eby captures the light bouncing off bedsheets as they are hung to dry from a clothesline over a shadowed street. The silhouettes from nearby rooftops softly overtake the sheets as they blow in the wind while solid moments of darkness, glimpsed through the balcony windows, quiet the scene. Eby's use of dark and light work harmoniously to convey an absorbing beauty in this humble moment.

Eby gained recognition in the art world for a series of etchings transferred from images in the sketchbook he carried on the battlefield during World War I. In these prints, the depths of Eby's talent is exposed. When asked about his work, Eby passionately

stated, "Into these war things I have put all I know, technically and otherwise. I actually do not care a 'tinker's dam' whether they are art or not, so long as they say what I want to say."⁵ Eby's etchings speak loud and clear, ironically, in a manner only translatable through art. In *A Kiss for the Kaiser* (1919), a soldier shields himself from the blast as he fires his own artillery. There is no harmony in Eby's treatment of light and dark in this image; instead, the shadows appear paralyzed as they struggle to stand their ground against the jarring light. Eby delivers an unforgiving rawness in his portrayal of the soldier's experience: the viewer is faced with the stark contrast between the power of man and one's own mortality.

Although the war left its shadow on Eby, he searched for beauty within the delicate boundary where the forces of nature and human life coexist. In 1923, he settled in Westport, Connecticut, where he owned property bordering the Aspetuck River.⁶ Eby's hand submitted to the landscape around him as he continued to

pull etchings in his studio. Dark stubborn lines across his plate began to transform into the edges of trees bordering a snow-covered field or the outline of a hunter and his dogs as they patiently trek through the wilderness. When he was away from home, Eby drew ancient streetscapes twisted by gravity, sea fishermen coming in from the catch, violent seascapes, and silent forests. In the 1931 etching pictured below, Eby selectively wiped the plate of ink to softly cradle the light of a campfire being tended within a shadowy forest.⁷ Although the scene is centered on the camp's activities, Eby allows the night sky to reveal the tops of pine trees in the distance, subtly reminding viewers of the forest's depth and allure. The scene is quiet and tranquil, displaying a mutual respect between mankind and nature.

Eby's work can be found in renowned museum collections across the country, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Last year, the American Museum of



A Kiss for the Kaiser, drypoint etching on paper (plate: 7 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches), 1919. Plate I in Kerr Eby, *War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1936).



Untitled, night scene by water edge, drypoint etching on paper (sheet: 17 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches), 1931. Used with permission from the collection of the Williams College Museum of Art. Gift of Daniel A. Dickinson, class of 1949, in honor of his aunt Phyllis Eby, widow of the artist. M.2003.13.



Spring Freshets, etching and sandpaper ground on paper (plate: 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches), 1929. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Fly Fishing welcomed Kerr Eby's 1929 etching of an angling scene, *Spring Freshets*, into its collection. This piece is a perfect example of Eby's use of expressive line and soft toning to introduce us to his subject. Gazing at the overflowing falls, we are left to contemplate Eby's marks as they organically join to form crooked trees that find their footing along the rocky ledge above while an angler finds his in the riverbed below.

AVA FREEMAN
COLLECTIONS MANAGER

ENDNOTES

1. "Kerr Eby: Born 1889—Died 1946," *The Westporter-Herald* (27 November 1946), 4, quoted in Bernadette Passi Giardina, *Kerr Eby: The Complete Prints* (Bronxville, N.Y.: M. Hausberg, 1997), 11.

2. John Taylor Arms, *Kerr Eby, 1889–1946* (New York: A. H. Harlow, 1947).

3. Giardina, *Kerr Eby: The Complete Prints*, biographical information, 3–12.

4. Arms, *Kerr Eby*; Giardina, *Kerr Eby: The Complete Prints*, Appendix A: Kerr Eby, "Etching—Technique," 157–64.

5. "Dramatic War Etchings by Kerr Eby," *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C., 12 December 1936), B-3. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1936-12-12/ed-1/seq-19/>, accessed 7 October 2019.

6. Giardina, *Kerr Eby: The Complete Prints*, 6.

7. *Light in the Woods* is the title listed by the catalogue raisonné, No. 161. Giardina, *Kerr Eby: The Complete Prints*.



America's First Fly-Fishing Rod Factory in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts: A Short History

by Thomas Johnson

All photos by Thomas Johnson except where noted



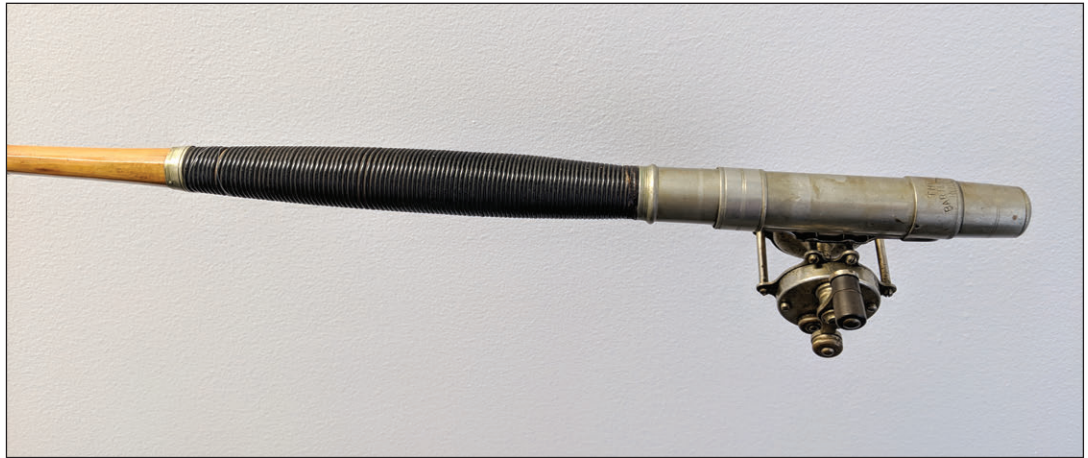
Site of the Horace Gray & Son fishing rod factory on Amethyst Brook in Pelham, Massachusetts. The factory later produced small-batch bamboo rods for the Montague City Rod Company. The site is still in commercial use.

AMETHYST BROOK FLOWS from the eastern hills through the towns of Pelham and Amherst in western Massachusetts to the Fort River and finally to the largest river in New England, the Connecticut. At the higher elevations of this Pioneer Valley drainage, there are small native populations of brook trout. Similar streams can be found throughout New England. But along the banks of this seemingly typical brook, fly-fishing history was made. It was there, near the Pelham-Amherst town line, that the first factory in the United States that manufactured fly rods was established in the mid-1800s; in another fifty years, it evolved into the largest rod producer in the world. Manufacturing equipment, skilled craftsmen, and knowledge from

this original facility would, over the years, pass to different companies and locations in the Pioneer Valley, through which the Connecticut flows. Like other areas in New England, the region deserves a special place in fly-fishing history.

Horace Gray & Son (Calvin) established the rod factory in 1860 on the site of a sawmill founded in 1794. The original rods were crafted by Calvin from native ash, maple and birch, lancewood from Mexico, and greenheart from Africa. In 1864, they expanded operations when they acquired and moved production to an 1820 gristmill on an adjacent larger site 200 feet upstream.¹ That same year, Calvin Gray devised the production of six-piece, split-cane rods by hand, and at some point in the next

few years adopted the use of a steam engine-powered beveling machine to increase output.² Calvin passed away in 1873. The next year, Horace Gray sold most of the company to Joseph Ward, from whom it then passed in 1880 to Eugene P. and Leander Bartlett, local Pelham boys who had started working at the factory in 1872. In 1874 Eugene was made superintendent; later in the year, he married. Thus, at age twenty-one he had apprenticed under Calvin Gray, begun running the Pelham plant, and married the owner's daughter, Jane Ward. His brother, Leander Bartlett, sold his interest to Eugene and left Pelham in 1882, then with other partners established the Montague City Rod Company in 1886 in the north of the Pioneer Valley.³



This recently surfaced Eugene P. Bartlett split-cane rod was manufactured in Pelham sometime between 1878 and 1889. It is a three-piece, six-strip hexagonal rod and is approximately 9½ feet long—apparently the “Best Light Fly” model listed in the 1878 catalog. It features a German silver John Krider-style reel seat with rails, a stained rattan grip, agate stripping guides, bayonet ferrules, and ring guides. Note the band fastener at the swell. A circa 1900 Hendryx reel is mounted.

Sara Wilcox



This circa 1898–1900 Varney rod from the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing is illustrated on page 159 in A. J. Campbell’s Classic & Antique Fishing Tackle. Compare it with the Eugene P. Bartlett rod shown above, which predates it by a decade.

Between the years 1874 and 1889 at Pelham, Eugene Bartlett produced six-section split-cane rods that were among the best being produced anywhere in America. What is more, the higher-priced items brought to market by Montague in the next decades continued to be produced at the Amethyst Brook factory, continuously run by Eugene after the brothers joined companies in 1889.⁴ As an 1884 newspaper article notes, “Mr. Bartlett sells his rods directly to the city dealers, but many sportsmen in this region get their rods of him, where they know the genuine article to be had.”⁵

An 1878 Eugene P. Bartlett catalog notes in an introductory statement that the company was established in 1860—highlighting its continuity from Horace Gray & Son—and therefore was “no new-fledged concern.”⁶ The catalog introduc-

tion, signed by Bartlett, states that the company would provide a sample of any rod, and if potential buyers were not satisfied, they could return it at Bartlett’s expense. He also wrote, “To anyone wishing rods not contained in this catalogue, or that we not make, we will gladly make such rods either from a sample or descriptions furnished.”⁷ The “Best Hexagonal Section Split Bamboo Rods” came in three weight models—light, medium, and heavy—and those with German silver mountings sold for \$30 apiece (roughly \$725 today). The catalog provides clear evidence that Bartlett rods were at this time not sold only through retailers.⁸

Until now it was not thought that rods made at Pelham by E. P. Bartlett during the decade before the facility became part of Montague were maker marked, as most were sold wholesale.⁹

For example, Mark B. Aldrich, Eugene’s grandson, in an oral history conducted for the town of Pelham Historical Society, notes that rods were manufactured for Abbey & Imbrie in New York City, E. K. Tryon in Philadelphia, and the Marshall Field’s department store in Chicago.¹⁰ The last company was renowned both for wholesaling and its flagship retail store, which sold luxury merchandise under a Tiffany-glass ceiling and, in the early 1900s, was the largest department store in the world. (Incidentally, Marshall Field was born in Conway, Massachusetts, less than 25 miles from Pelham.) However, possibly the first documented example of a Bartlett-marked rod recently surfaced when a fly fisher living in New Mexico, James Buckmelter, donated it to American Rivers,¹¹ the nongovernmental



The former Montague City Rod Company factory in Montague City, Massachusetts. This is where the company mass-produced its less expensive bamboo rods. It sits abandoned since Montague closed its doors in the early 1950s.

organization that helped with the removal of the Amethyst Brook millpond dam (see sidebar below, “The Factory on the River”). Buckmelter had purchased it at a New Jersey estate sale in 1952 and fished with it for the next sixty years.

In 1891, it was reported by Pioneer Valley historian Frederick Hills Hitchcock that some 6,000 rods, from among 200 styles, “of all grades, ranging from boys’ cheap rods to the finest silver mounted split bamboo rods”¹² were being produced by Montague each year with a workforce

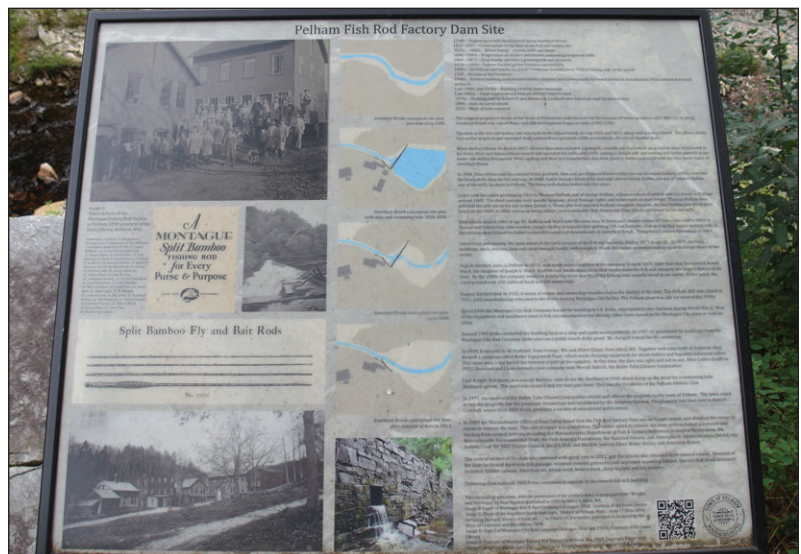
of approximately fifty craftsmen. Hitchcock also noted that the Pelham facility “*was the first known factory in which fishing rods were made by machinery*” (italics mine).¹³ Town of Pelham historian C. O. Parmenter wrote in 1898 that Montague was producing three-quarters “all of goods,” including split-cane poles, “using bamboo from Calcutta and Japan [*sic*].”¹⁴ It appears that before the end of the century, Tonkin cane was being used for at least some split-cane rods made in Pelham.¹⁵

The main factory for mass-producing rods was in Montague City, actually a village in the town of Montague located near Turners Falls, with its dam and power canal on the Connecticut River. The factory owners selected this location for the inexpensive hydroelectricity used to power the rod-manufacturing machinery and the railroad that would take the rods to markets around America. Indicating the significance of the rod company, its treasurer, C. W. Hazelton, also served in that role for the Turners Falls Company, which developed Montague City and the adjacent Turners Falls planned industrial town beginning in 1867.¹⁶

Between 1890 and 1925, the company was the largest producer of fly and other fishing rods in the world.¹⁷ Reels were produced at a factory in Brooklyn, New York. According to *Horace Gray & Son: The First Fishing Rod Factory in the United States*, a catalog from the early 1900s contained sixty pages of rods, another sixty pages of reels, and some twenty pages of rod components and other fishing supplies.¹⁸ Records indicate that in the teens of the twentieth century, the company was still manufacturing approximately three-quarters of all the split-bamboo rods in the world. To meet this large demand, the original 1886 factory in Montague City was replaced in 1924 with a large new factory on Rod Shop Road, which today still stands, albeit largely abandoned.

THE FACTORY ON THE RIVER

I fish the Amethyst with my circa 1952 Amherst Fishing Rod Company “Amherst” Tonkin bamboo rod and recently caught a mature brookie in the remnant of the factory millpond. The dam was removed in the early 2000s, in part to facilitate upstream spawning by trout, American eel, and lamprey. The factory site is today still in commercial use, and at the edge of the parking area, overlooking the brook, the Town of Pelham Historical Society has placed an informational plaque in recognition of the Horace Gray & Son factory. Access to the brook is through the Amethyst Brook Conservation Area on Pelham Road in Amherst, downstream from the former factory (upstream is a reservoir that contributes to the Amherst water supply). To access the small millpond remnant, one must wade up the brook after first following a segment of the Robert Frost Trail, which crosses through the conservation area.



The historic plaque placed at the Horace Gray & Son rod factory site by the Town of Pelham Historical Society.

In 1931 the company was renamed the Montague City Rod & Reel Company, and stock was offered to the public.¹⁹ It suffered through the Great Depression, when demand lessened, and World War II and the subsequent Red China embargo, when the prized Tonkin cane bamboo could not be obtained. It also appears to have failed to effectively embrace the new fiberglass rod-manufacturing technologies following the war. Montague closed in 1955, but other Pioneer Valley businessmen established the Amherst Fishing Rod Company (AFRC) in 1947, relying on the bamboo-rod expertise of the former Amethyst Brook factory superintendent: none other than Eugene Bartlett's grandson,

Leander Aldrich.²⁰ He and his brother Mark also worked at the Montague City factory after the closing of the Pelham shop in 1931. Leander's son, Richard Aldrich, recently told me about two summers that he worked at AFRC helping to glue the rod sections together. He noted that the business closed because it could not afford the cost of adequately marketing its rods; this is one of the reasons given by Mark Aldrich for the mid-1950s demise of Montague, closed by its then-owner, the American Fork and Hoe Company (True-Temper brand).²¹

AFRC, which never had more than a dozen employees, was more of a shop than a factory and thus not unlike the Thomas Rod Company of the same peri-

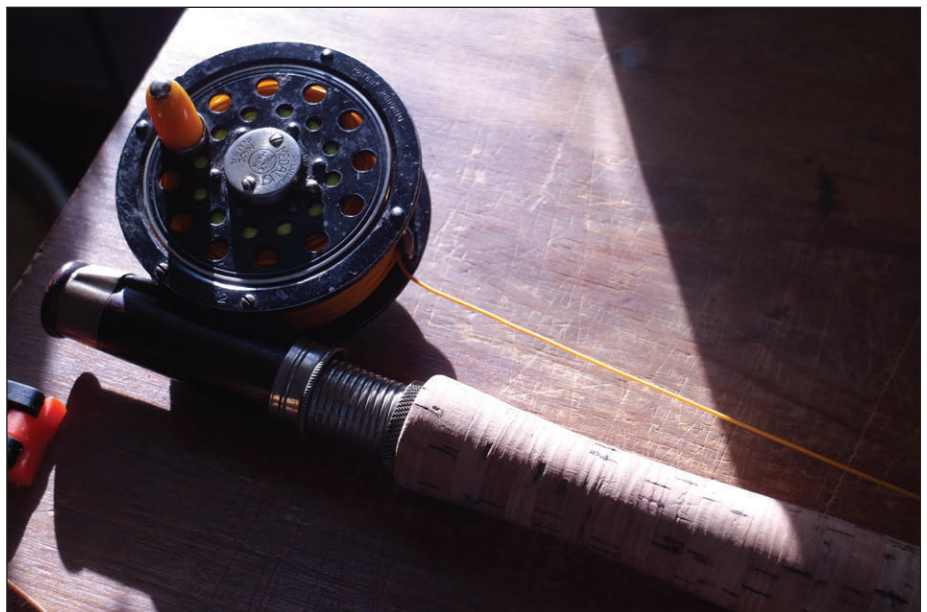
od (the AFRC's original building is located two doors away from me in South Amherst). AFRC lasted only until 1953, but for those few post-WWII transitional years, it produced a small number of the most finely crafted bamboo rods made in the United States at the time. My Amherst model rod, #142, illustrates this fine craftsmanship. The butt cut, mismatched nodule, and flame-treated Tonkin split-cane rod is 8 feet long and weighs 4½ ounces. It uses finely made Ambrac hardware, including a knurled locknut, tungsten snake guides, a hardened Mildarbid alloy butt guide, and a cocobolo wood rod shank.

The provenance of these materials illustrates the high quality of rods produced in



Site of the short-lived Amherst Fishing Rod Company factory in South Amherst, Massachusetts. The building was originally built to can locally grown fruit and today serves as off-campus student housing.

The top-of-the-line Amherst Fishing Rod Company "Amherst" model, #142. A pre-war Pflueger Medalist model 1392 reel is mounted.





The current Thomas & Thomas production facility in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

the Pioneer Valley during the immediate post-WWII period, when mass-production and especially fiberglass were conspiring to the detriment of the fine bamboo rod just as returning servicemen took up fishing and other leisure pursuits. AFRC produced some of the first high-tech rods anywhere, replacing traditional German silver metalwork and use of agate with newly manufactured materials conceived and made in America.

Ambrac—a white-nickel (20 percent) silver alloy developed by Anaconda—was trademarked in 1921 by the American Brass Company, in Waterbury, Connecticut. It is strong, bright in appearance, and corrosion resistant. For these reasons, it was primarily used for marine hardware fittings.²² Compared with the aluminum and even plastic being used at the time by other rod makers, its use by AFRC for the reel-seat hardware is notable and perhaps unique.

Mildarhide is the trademarked name for a tungsten-based alloy originally made by the W. W. Mildrum Jewel Co. in East Berlin, Connecticut. The company was established in 1915 and made jewels for manufacturing purposes, as well as agate rod guides—one of the first U.S. manufacturers to do so after precision drilling techniques developed by a Chicago lapidary company around 1920 displaced the handcraft methods used in Germany.²³ In 1948, Mildrum patented the use of the alloy for textile machinery guides, then quickly adapted the technology for rod hardware. An early adopter, AFRC began using the new butt guides manufactured by Mildrum the following year.

Cocobolo is a rare and expensive tropical hardwood from Central America used for high-value woodwork. It comes from a species that is now protected under CITES (the Convention on International Trade in

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). It is dense, hard, and has a high oil content, making it difficult and even dangerous to work, but those properties also make it ideal for the finest musical instruments, gun grips, knife handles, and other inlay applications. The use of cocobolo for rod shanks by other manufacturers during this era is unknown but unlikely for production rods.

The Pioneer Valley story then moves to the town of Greenfield, located across the river from Montague City, where the Deerfield River joins the Connecticut. There, another veteran of the Montague City plant, Sewell Dutton, bought the remaining Tonkin cane stock and equipment from the defunct AFRC and in 1954 established a new production line for the Angler's Choice label. When he retired in 1974, the equipment was sold to Tom Dorsey and Tom Maxwell, the founders of Thomas & Thomas, which started production in Turners Falls and is now located in Greenfield.²⁴ This company, today considered one of the most noted production makers of fly rods, is located less than 25 miles as the crow flies from the first fly-fishing rod factory on Amethyst Brook—a thin blue line with quite a history.

Unique to the pioneering fly-fishing rod makers of the Pioneer Valley is the single family who stayed in one area and saw their skills cross four generations over nearly one hundred years, beginning with Eugene P. Bartlett in 1872 and ending with his great-grandson, Richard Aldrich, who was working in AFRC when it closed in the mid-1950s. During that time, the valley saw the introduction of skills and knowledge from outside the region. George I. Varney arrived at Montague in 1900 with years of experience behind him, including experience with H. L. Leonard. Campbell said of

Varney's Pioneer Valley rods, "The greatest Montagues were actually direct descendants of the Leonard ethic"²⁵ (see photo on page 17). That same ethic, influence, and craftsmanship passed on to AFRC through shop manager Leander Aldrich, who as a young man had worked under Varney at Montague. The cane and equipment, if not the people, attracted Dorsey and Maxwell, who established Thomas & Thomas a century after Pioneer Valley rod making started on Amethyst Brook. The rest is history.



ENDNOTES

1. C. O. Parmenter, *History of Pelham, Mass. from 1738 to 1898* (Amherst, Mass.: Press of Carpenter & Morehouse, 1898) and Wesley Autio, *Horace Gray & Son: The First Fishing Rod Factory in the United States* (Pelham, Mass.: Pelham [Massachusetts] Historical Society monograph, 1999). Autio is a University of Massachusetts, Amherst professor and Pelham resident; the monograph is available on the society's website (<http://pelhamhistory.org>).

2. The Pelham Historical Society gave me access to the Amherst Fly Rod Company Pelham model bamboo fly rod (<http://pelhamhs.org/paz/index.php/Gallery/7>) and document collection donated by Mark Bartlett Aldrich (1907–1987), the son of Royal Wesley Aldrich (1868–1937, superintendent of the Montague factory in Pelham) and Lota Amanda Bartlett (1875–1954), the daughter of Eugene P. Bartlett. The reference to Calvin Gray is from these documents, in particular an unpublished 2001 manuscript, "Montague City Rod Company," by Michele B. Cutting, which is part of the Pelham Historical Society's Bartlett-Montague collection. The beveling machine is mentioned in "A Bay State Town with a History" in the 19 August 1906 edition of the *Springfield Sunday Union*.

3. James K. Garrett and Lenard Brooks, "The Rise and Fall of the Montague City Rod Company," *Montague Rod and Reel* (17 July 2017), www.montaguerodandreel.com/2017/07/17/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-montague-city-rod-company/. Accessed 6 November 2018. This website piece is informative, but it incorrectly states that Eugene and Leander Bartlett "began working in the fishing rod factory of Joseph G. Ward." In fact, the brothers began working in the fishing rod "industry" in the Horace Gray & Son factory in 1872 for Gray senior, although Ward did purchase a majority stake in the company in 1874.

4. This information is corroborated by Bartlett-Montague documents in the archives of the Pelham Historical Society and in Frederick Hills Hitchcock's *The Handbook of Amherst, Massachusetts* (London: Forgotten Books, Classic Reprint Series, 2013 [originally published in 1891]). See also A. J. Campbell, *Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle: A Guide for Collectors & Anglers* (Guilford, Conn.: The

Lyons Press, 1997), 157, in the section “Eugene P. Bartlett, Fishing-Rod Manufacturer,” which can be found in the “Classic Eastern Tackle” chapter.

5. “A Fishpole Factory,” *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* (4 August 1884). This newspaper article is part of the Pelham Historical Society’s Bartlett-Montague collection, obtained from Mark B. Aldrich and other sources. The collection includes the transcript of an oral history recording of Aldrich by Barbara Benda Jenkins for the Pelham Historical Society conducted in February 1981 and the 2001 manuscript written by society member Michele B. Cutting based on information gathered over the years by the longtime town archivist, Robert Lord Keyes. Both Mark Aldrich and his brother Leander worked as young men at the Pelham factory; after it closed, they worked at the Montague City plant. They were thus in an ideal position to have historic knowledge about the Bartlett family, Montague, and the Amherst Fishing Rod Company, where Leander served as the factory superintendent. Whenever possible, I confirmed information from the archives through discussions with their respective living sons, cousins Mark Aldrich and Richard Aldrich.

6. Cover page introductory statement, 1878 Eugene P. Bartlett Catalogue and Price-List, Montague City Rod Company file, Special Collections, Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. See, for example, Campbell, *Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle*, 157.

10. Collectors have speculated that Bartlett-Montague sold wholesale to Abbey & Imbrie, given the similarity in appearance of certain wood-rod models in catalogs of the late 1870s. In an oral history recording conducted by Barbara Benda Jenkins for the Pelham Historical Society in February 1981, Mark Aldrich confirms for the first time that Bartlett rods were marketed through the top retailers in the United States.

11. In a conversation with a vintage bamboo rod expert in Massachusetts, I was told that he had seen one or two other Bartlett-marked rods approximately fifteen years ago within the state. However, no photographs or other documentary proof is available from this source. In a recent conversation, American Museum of Fly Fishing Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama indicated that the museum was not aware of any previously discovered marked Bartlett rods.

12. Frederick Hills Hitchcock, *The Handbook of Amherst, Massachusetts* (London: Forgotten Books, Classic Reprint Series, 2013 [originally published in 1891]), 40.

13. Frederick Hills Hitchcock, *The Handbook of Amherst, Massachusetts* (Amherst, Mass.: F. H. Hitchcock, 1894), 39. This statement by Hitchcock contradicts what others have found, including D. B. Homel in his *Antique & Collectible Fishing Rods: Identification and Value Guide* (Bellingham, Wash.: Forrest Park Publishers, third printing, 2000). Homel states on page 9 that “Hiram

Leonard started the first American factory in Central Valley, New York, during 1881.” We now know that Horace Gray & Son’s rod manufacturing predated this by some two decades. This new information has implications for historians and collectors. As far as I can discern, Homel was not aware of the relationship between these three companies (Gray, Bartlett, Montague), and thus the first fly rods manufactured between 1860 and 1889 in the Pioneer Valley have been largely lost to history. Jon Mathewson, in “Gallery: The Montague Rod & Reel Company” (*The American Fly Fisher* [Winter 1997, vol. 23, no. 1], 25), cites Ward’s company but not its antecedents. To his credit, the late A. J. Campbell highlights Horace Gray & Son in his classic work, but he does not properly acknowledge Eugene P. Bartlett’s role between 1881 (or earlier, as he became the de facto owner of the Pelham operation in 1874) and 1889. Campbell does cite the positive influence of George I. Varney upon joining Montague around 1900, but until the high-quality split-cane fly rods (including custom orders) produced in Pelham by Eugene Bartlett in the last two decades of the nineteenth century can be carefully examined, just how much Varney improved the “best of the Bartletts” is unknown. Now that such a Bartlett rod has come to light, this study can be done.

14. Parmenter, *History of Pelham, Mass. from 1738 to 1898*, 242.

15. It is not precisely known when Tonkin cane was first introduced to America, much less who first used it for split-cane rods. Charles H. Demarest did not purchase the company synonymous with Tonkin until 1911, and at that time it was already supplying the trade (www.tonkincane.com/history.html; accessed 12 March 2019). Trade with China, led by New England-based firms and ships, expanded after the Tianjin Treaty of 1858 and especially following the Civil War. There is little doubt this happened first in America and not England, which lagged behind the United States in bamboo rod making by decades. In 1884 at the London Great Fisheries Exhibition, Hardy Bros. received a prestigious award for “their” invention of the Palakona hexagonal bamboo rod in 1882. It appears Tonkin was introduced in America during the late 1860s and was being used in Pelham for rods as early as anywhere in America.

16. Louis H. Everts, *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts, Volume II: History of Franklin and Hampden Counties* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1879).

17. Autio, *Horace Gray & Son*, 3; Parmenter, *History of Pelham, Mass. from 1738 to 1898*, 1; and Mathewson, “Gallery: The Montague Rod & Reel Company,” 25, also confirm this assertion. Montague purchased the (Thomas) Chubb Company in Post Mills, Vermont, in 1891, and although rods manufactured there continued to be sold under the Chubb label, in 1925 Montague’s Vermont factory alone produced 50,000 rods a year. At its height, the Montague empire consisted of factories in Montague City and Vermont for mass-produced rods primarily sold wholesale; the original facility in Pelham, which

continued to produce small numbers of high-end rods under Montague’s own label; and a reel factory in Brooklyn, New York. It should be noted that in the process of conducting research, I discovered some inaccuracies in the Mathewson article. It states that Eugene Bartlett was from Pelham, New York, when he, and his brother Leander, were actually born in Pelham, Massachusetts. It also states that he and Leander bought the J. G. Ward Rod Company factory in Pelham from Joseph Ward in May 1881, but not that Ward bought most of the Horace Gray & Son factory business from Horace Gray in 1874 (although Gray retained the remaining portion).

18. Autio, *Horace Gray & Son*, 2–3.

19. Ibid., 3.

20. Autio, *Horace Gray & Son*, 4, and personal communication with Richard Aldrich.

21. In the Pelham Historical Society oral history, Mark B. Aldrich, when discussing the difficulties of Montague during the Depression, noted: “The irony of the whole thing was that the Winchester Arms Company had been trying for a long time to buy it out, and had they bought it out they would have continued to manufacture and probably even gone into the glass rods and a lot of it would still be operating.” As Campbell notes (*Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle*, 141–42), Winchester had purchased the E. W. Edwards company in 1919. Edwards left five years later to reopen his own plant in New Haven, Connecticut. It is not known what “long time” period Aldrich was referring to—i.e., before or after the Edwards transaction. Logic would dictate that discussions with Montague would have occurred before Edwards.

22. *MotorBoating* (February 1931, vol. 47, no. 2), following page 178, info-advertisement titled “Anaconda Nickel Silver.”

23. *Field & Stream* (May 1921), 107, and *Scientific American* (21 February 1920, vol. CXXII, no. 8), 189.

24. Thomas & Thomas, “About Us,” <https://thomasandthomas.com/pages/about-us>. Accessed 6 November 2018. As many know, Thomas & Thomas was started by Dorsey and Maxwell in 1969 in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. It was the opportunity to purchase the bamboo-rod manufacturing equipment and “the largest cache of Tonkin bamboo in North America” from Sewell Dutton that led to the T&T operations’ 1974 relocation to Turners Falls.

25. Campbell, *Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle*, 159.



The Reel Thing

by Joe A. Pisarro

In the early 1990s, the museum published a newsletter called the Greenheart Gazette. For this publication, longtime volunteer Joe Pisarro—for whom the museum's Joe A. Pisarro Volunteer of the Year Award is named—wrote a column called "The Reel Thing." The following gem is his inaugural piece (Volume 1, Number 1, Summer 1990).

RECENTLY, MY FRIEND and sometime fishing companion Donovan made a remark that threw me into a funk for days. The topic, as it often is between us, was fly-fishing skill. "To couple your name with skill is to create an oxymoron," he snorted.

I don't often go in for one-upmanship, but Donovan's remark set me to brooding. How could I top him? Obviously any thought of bettering him in fishing bordered on fantasy. If necessity is the mother of invention, then the non sequitur has to be the father of inspiration; it came to me.

Now Lee Wulff is the acknowledged authority on the Atlantic salmon; Ernest Schwiebert has no peer in matching hatches, naming nymphs, and remembering rivers; Vincent Marinaro was the undisputed tsar of terrestrials; Lefty Kreh stands alone in the fief of knotdom; Ed Zern easily leads the pack in aging humor. But none of these regal figures begins to approach me in a rather esoteric branch of the sport, not even Donovan: that of losing flies. On that subject, I could write a book, titled, inevitably, *How Do I Lose Thee?* Well, let me count the ways.

Anyone can lose flies by hanging his backcast in a stream-side hemlock, and I tug a forelock to no man in my proficiency in that method of fly disposal, a talent memorialized by my son, who penned these words:

Onions bring tears,
Potatoes have eyes;
Leaves are on trees
And so are your flies.

Then there are those—I should be so lucky!—who have a hooked fish break off with a fly embedded in its jaw. But those are minor-league tactics, requiring years to rack up the kind of score that would impress Donovan. What distinguishes me as a fly-loser of high order is my gift for losing flies in volume. I mean I lose flies by the boxful. There are fishermen from the Batten Kill to the Bitterroot who have acquired enough flies for several seasons simply by having been downstream from me when a well-stuffed fly box floated within net reach.

Fishing-garb designers are marvelously adept at fashioning vests and jackets with an unbelievable number of pockets to hold fly boxes. I, of course, cram each pocket with boxes stuffed to the gills with flies of every description, from tiny nymphs to



From The Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes, vol. VIII (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899), 171.

huge muddlers, no-hackles, paraduns, and just about every other known type. You name it and chances are I'll have a boxful in some pocket. To their credit, designers build in all sorts of security measures—zippers, Velcro, snaps, straps, buttons, hooks—everything but padlocks. It's hopeless; they might just as well save themselves the bother. I leave pockets unfastened, and short of some device that would automatically seal a pocket, I will go on leaving pocket flaps unclosed and my pockets will continue to spew out flies by the boxful.

Now, I grant this is not a distinction likely to cause other fishermen to churn with envy. Nor earn me a niche in the Angling Hall of Fame. But it is the one area of the sport where I can top Donovan.

To say nothing of the gratitude of all those fishermen downstream from me.



President Jimmy Carter and the Late President George H. W. Bush Receive Heritage Award Honors from the American Museum of Fly Fishing

Sara Wilcox



The America fly, created and tied by Roger Plourde, was featured in the Heritage Awards given to the night's honorees.

The AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING hosted its Heritage Award event honoring President Jimmy Carter and the late President George H. W. Bush on October 29 at the Racquet & Tennis Club in New York City. It was a wonderful evening with friends and fishing stories, illuminating speakers, and an array of auction items that illustrated the breadth and depth of the museum's support from the fly-fishing community and beyond.

Guests sat down to gifts of Wheatley fly boxes donated by REC Components, each containing a favorite fly of both honorees: President Carter's Black Ant and President Bush's Blue Charm. AMFF President Karen Kaplan was warm and welcoming as the evening's host. Auctioneer Nick Dawes expertly took the stage for the live auction to raise funds for AMFF's exhibition program, which is focusing on the Trophy Sporting Art Collection (the museum's largest art acquisition to date) and our space at the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium in Springfield, Missouri.

The special guest speaker was Johnny Morris, founder of Wonders of Wildlife and founder and CEO of Bass Pro Shops. He gave a heartfelt and moving speech about the important role fishing continues to play in his life and that of his family and friends. Since President Carter was in office, Johnny has worked with every presidential administration on initiatives related to public land access and outdoor recreation.

Karen Kaplan then presented the Heritage Awards, fittingly featuring master tier Roger Plourde's America fly. Accepting on behalf of President Carter was Carlton Hicks, his fishing friend of more than forty years; President Bush's award was collected by his grandson and fellow angler Jeb Bush Jr. Both speakers gave wonderful insight into the fishing lives of the two honorees.

The museum would like to thank the Carter Center and the George and Barbara Bush Foundation for their generous cooperation during the planning of this event. We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following auction donors: Yoshi Akiyama, All Waters Fly Fishing, Ancient Ozarks National History Museum, Arms Reach, Bass Pro Shops, Berkshire Rivers Fly Fishing, Big Cedar Lodge, Steve and Sandra Bogdan, Mark Comora, Nick Dawes, Harry Desmond, Paul Dixon, Dogwood Canyon National Park, E. J. Gallo, Brita Fordice, Adam Franceschini, the George and Barbara Bush Foundation, Jim Heckman, the Hollenbeck Club, J. H. Becker Rod Works, Karen Kaplan, Lost Canyon Cave and Nature Trail, Walter Matia, Johnny Morris, Mud Dog Flies, John Mundt, El Pescador, Rebecca Redd, Mike Rice, Robert Rubin, Scientific Anglers, Sea Island, Rich Strolis, Yashuji Sugai, Sulu Collection, Paul and Anke Volcker, Wild Rivers Press, and the Wonders of Wildlife.





Sulu Grant, AMFF Vice President Gary Grant, Marye Tisch, AMFF Trustee Richard Tisch, and Jane Simoni mingle at the cocktail reception.



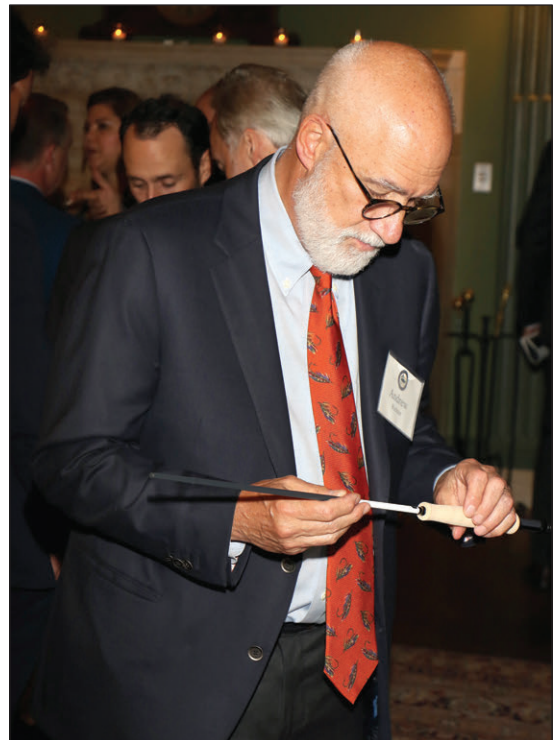
Bob Ziehmer, Jeannie Morris, Johnny Morris, and auctioneer Nick Dawes chat before dinner.



AMFF Trustee Mark Comora and Arlene Comora enjoy the live auction.



This child's chair painted by Yoshi Akiyama was a popular silent auction item.



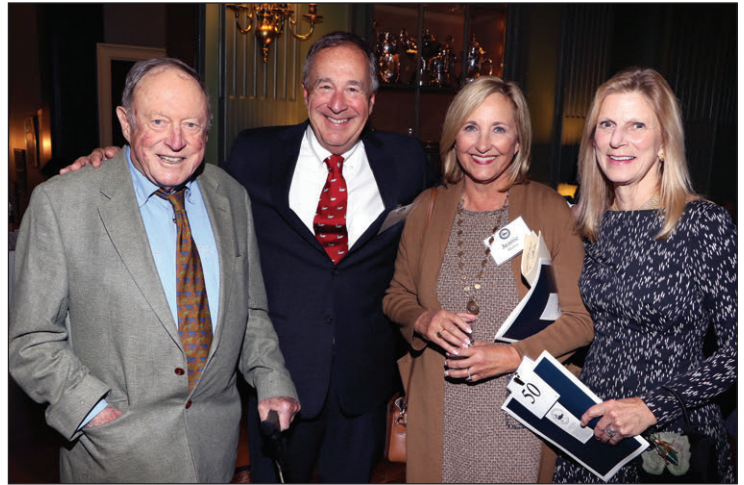
Andrew Richter browses the silent auction.



Longtime President Carter friend and fishing partner Carlton Hicks accepts the award on the president's behalf.



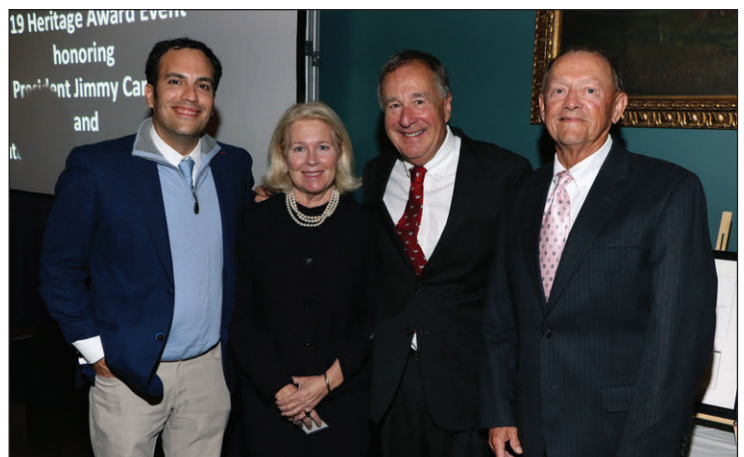
Jeb Bush Jr. pays tribute to his late grandfather.



Good friends AMFF Trustee Leigh Perkins, Johnny Morris, Jeannie Morris, and AMFF Trustee Annie Perkins catch up during the festivities.



Richard Alsop, AMFF Trustee David Beveridge, and Loli Wu enjoy a spirited conversation between courses.



Jeb Bush Jr., Karen Kaplan, Johnny Morris, and Carlton Hicks pose for a photo at evening's end.

Museum News



*Jess Westbrook fishing with his son, Kase.
Photo courtesy of Jess Westbrook.*

Museum Adds Ambassador

Jess Westbrook of the Mayfly Project has joined the museum's ambassador program.

Jess and his wife Laura founded the Mayfly Project in Arkansas in 2015. The project's mission is to support children in foster care through fly fishing and to introduce them to local water ecosystems. This introduction to a rewarding hobby provides opportunities to have fun, feel supported, and develop meaningful connection with the outdoors. In 2016, the Westbrooks partnered with Kaitlin Barnhart, who was running a similar program in Idaho, to form the now-national project (<https://themayflyproject.com>).

Jess's idea for the project came from his own use of fly fishing as a therapeutic tool to manage anxiety. In 2014, Jess and Laura's son, Kase, was born. Soon after, Jess started experiencing intense anxiety attacks, which he had never had before. He had been fly fishing since he was six years old, but something changed for him when a friend stepped in to help by getting him out on the water. "I found that when I was on the river, I forgot about everything but fishing," explained Jess. "When we are fly fishing, we are so concentrated on casting, mending, presenting good drifts, etc., that we forget about everything else around us."

During this time, Jess began mentoring children in foster care. The timing was perfect. He was looking for a way to give back to the community through the sport that had helped him over some tough hurdles. It seemed that during a most chaotic time in their lives, foster children too could find an anchor in the outdoors. They could take a break from being worried and simply spend time in nature catching fish. They could find home rivers even while feeling like they didn't feel have a home.

We're pleased to welcome Jess to the ambassador team.

Recent Donations to the Collection

John O. Sands of Murrels Inlet, South Carolina, donated a portfolio of twelve hand-colored lithographs by John Leech titled *Mr. Briggs and His Doings*, published in 1860 by Bradbury and Evans, London. **Mary A. Finlay** of Payson, Arizona, sent us a collection of historic photographs and film belonging to her father, Dick Finlay. **Nick Lyons** of Woodstock, New York, gave us a portrait of himself drawn by Mari Lyons.

C. P. Heaton of Gainesville, Florida, sent us forty saltwater flies tied by Captain Bill Smith, in original packaging. And **Diane Hoback** of La Verne, California, donated a collection of framed flies containing nine framed by Bob Hoback and one framed by William Cushner.



Museum members gathered on September 14 for Hidden Treasures: Unusual and Not-Often-Seen Items from the Collection. Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama brought out selected pieces from the museum archives, including some counterfeit reels and their genuine doppelgangers.



On December 7, the museum hosted its annual Hooked on the Holidays event. Families joined us for a fun-filled afternoon of activities, from making Christmas cards to decorating trout cookies and tying clown flies with Yoshi. While escaping the winter wonderland outside, guests stayed warm by the fireplace and enjoyed exploring the museum. Thank you to all who shared this special time of year with us.



Lance Hidy delighted guests at a December 7 reception with stories of his father and events that led to his writing the 2018 Austin Hogan Award-winning article "Vernon S. 'Pete' Hidy: The Chronology of a Reluctant Fishing Icon." The award, which recognizes exemplary contributions to the American Fly Fisher, was presented by former Journal Committee Chair and Trustee Emeritus Jim Heckman and featured an original drawing by Austin Hogan.

Upcoming Events

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

February 21

Izaak Walton Award honoring Flip Pallot
Ocean Reef Club
Key Largo, Florida

March 7

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

March 21

Frequent Fly Tier: multilevel fly-tying instruction
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

May (TBD)

Council Members Outing
Potatuck Club, Connecticut

July 9, 16, 23, and 30 (Thursdays)

Kids Clinics
10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

August 8

13th Annual Fly-Fishing Festival
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

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

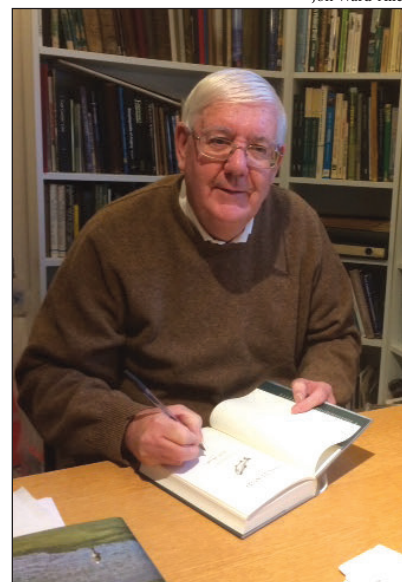
CONTRIBUTORS

J. Michael Phelps



Alan Diodore is a retired federal administrative law judge who received his Doctor of Jurisprudence from Indiana University School of Law. He has been a fly fisher for more than fifty years and has fished extensively in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states and Ontario. He is a past president of the Anglers of the Au Sable and has done considerable pro bono work in the area of gas and oil litigation. Diodore lives on the North Branch of the Au Sable River in Crawford County, Michigan, with his wife, Janet, and their two ancient Brittanies, Charlie and Emily. He currently spends most of his time fly fishing, tying flies, and writing. His article, “Thomas Tod Stoddart: The Completely Scottish Angler,” appeared in the Fall 2017 issue of this journal (vol. 43, no. 4).

Jon Ward-Allen



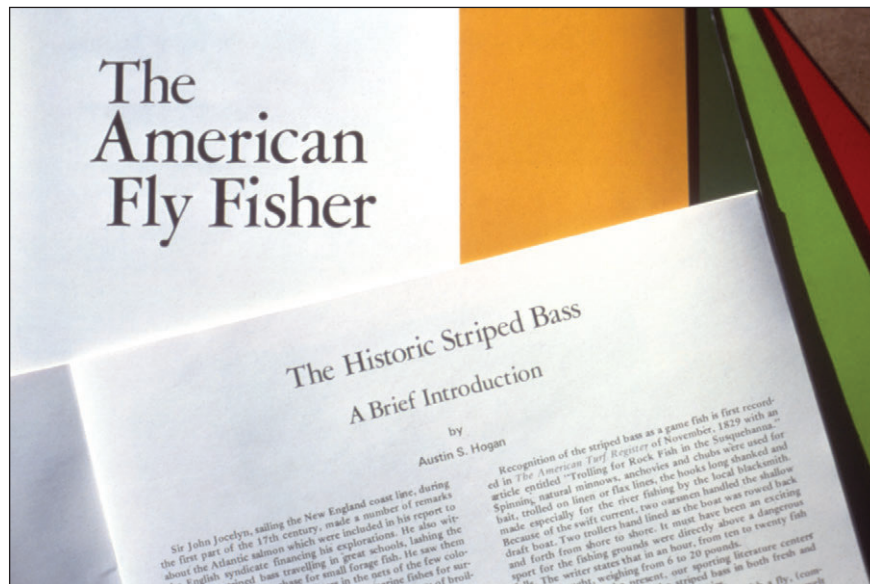
Before his retirement seven years ago, **Keith Harwood** taught Latin and Greek for almost forty years at Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, an institution founded in 1554. He is a keen angler and fly dresser and is very much interested in the history of angling. Nowadays, he fishes mainly for trout on the River Wharfe, a beautiful stream that runs through the Yorkshire Dales National Park. He has written numerous articles for a variety of magazines and is the author of several books. His most recent books include *Angling Books: A Collector's Guide* (Coch-y-Bonddu Books, 2016), *John Buchan On Angling* (Medlar Press, 2016), *The Trout Angler in Shetland, Past and Present* (Medlar Press, 2017), and *Sir Walter Scott on Angling* (Medlar Press, 2019). He lives with his wife in the beautiful Ribble Valley, and when he is not fishing or writing, he helps to look after their four grandchildren.

Lauren Johnson



Thomas Johnson is new to fly fishing, but not to writing or history, having published a number of articles in peer-reviewed professional journals and completed research on his book about the history of public libraries in New England. He is retired U.S. Foreign Service officer who spent twenty-five years working and living around the world before moving to Amherst, Massachusetts. He continues to work part-time as a consultant and toted his Tenkara rod on a recent business trip to Afghanistan. When home, he fishes for trout with bamboo and fiberglass rods as he hunts for elusive native fish in the region's streams and brooks. Earlier in life he was a rock climber; he notes that Yvon Chouinard's creed of simplicity was as inspirational to his climbing then as it is to his fly fishing today.

A Journal's Journey



*Some of the earliest issues of the American Fly Fisher.
From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

“OVER THE TWO CENTURIES fly fishing has been in development in America, its history has been unrecorded and the medium which would be most closely associated with the preserving of tradition and cultural enrichment, the sporting magazine, has very deliberately turned its back on the historical presentation.” So wrote Vice President and Curator Austin S. Hogan in the Spring 1974 edition of the *American Fly Fisher* (page 23). Hogan noted that the lack of both historical records and means of communication made it easy to understand how fly fishers were uninformed and cut off from a natural interest in history of the sport. “Certainly, the fly fisher can have his pleasures without a knowledge of the past,” Hogan said, “yet, how much the greater that enjoyment if there is a knowledge of his development, his creativeness over the ages, and the companionship of an ancestry that took pride in the pursuit of a most unusual and satisfying form of recreation.”

Hogan was reporting on the state of the museum and the launch of the journal in the second-ever issue of the *American Fly Fisher*. “With its advent,” he said, “there is no doubt we are again casting to a dark and secret stream for there is no precedent to guide us, no collected body of research material except what is in our library to refer to, and, what is particularly difficult to face, a potential readership almost completely uninformed as to the details of the historic beginnings. . . . In every project the Museum has undertaken, we have had to break new ground.”

Imagining that moment—when the leaders of AMFF knew that the journal would be an essential arm of the museum—fills me with excitement. Our quarterly publication has become a vehicle that has educated the public and served as historical reference for decades. The fly-fishing community is indebted to the pioneers whose forward thinking positioned

AMFF and the *American Fly Fisher* for a long and steadfast journey—one that has been recorded and is available to inform and educate the angling community. Our sport continues to flourish, and the *American Fly Fisher* will keep these milestones alive in print and online.

Many individuals have played a valuable part in the journal since its 1974 inception, but today, as we enter 2020, I would like to shine a spotlight on Jim Heckman. Shortly after joining the Board of Trustees in 2005, Jim became an unwavering champion for the journal; eventually, he chaired the newly formed Journal Committee. His experience as an editor, knowledge of fly-fishing history, and love of AMFF led the journal through some of its largest endeavors, including digitizing past and current issues, and partnering with the Voelker Foundation to reinstate the Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award. Jim’s efforts were not limited to the journal, however. He curated several exhibits in the Gardner L. Grant Library (featuring magazine covers from the *New Yorker*, *Trout*, *Field & Stream*, and *Gray’s Sporting Journal*) and is a steadfast supporter of our public programs, fund-raising events, and exhibit celebrations. I am thrilled to share that Jim was recently appointed trustee emeritus, a lifetime honorary position.

Passionate anglers near and far long to be connected to the history and the stories of fly fishing, which is why the *American Fly Fisher* has naturally become the way many people experience the museum. On behalf of our readership, I want to thank Jim for his commitment to this publication and thank those who bravely broke ground in 1974.

SARAH FOSTER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Catch and Release the Spirit of Fly Fishing!

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MISSION

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING is the steward of the history, traditions, and practices of the sport of fly fishing and promotes the conservation of its waters. The museum collects, preserves, exhibits, studies, and interprets the artifacts, art, and literature of the sport and, through a variety of outreach platforms, uses these resources to engage, educate, and benefit all.

The museum provides public programs to fulfill its educational mission, including exhibitions, publications, gallery programs, and special events. Research services are available for members, visiting scholars, students, educational organizations, and writers. Contact amff@amff.org 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 to tell us how we would benefit from your skills and talents.

SUPPORT

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

JOIN

Membership Dues (per annum)

Patron	\$1,000
Sustainer	\$500
Contributor	\$250
Benefactor	\$100
Associate	\$50

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

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

