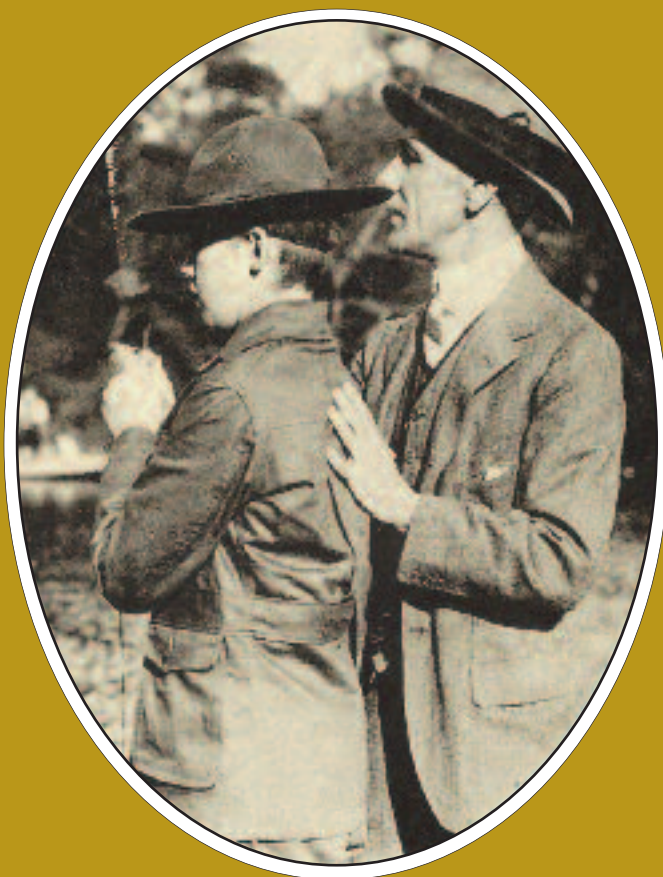


The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



SUMMER 2017

VOLUME 43 NUMBER 3

Be Prepared



DO YOU FLY FISH? Are you pretty good at it? Are you good enough to earn the Boy Scouts of America Fly-Fishing merit badge? The good news is that it's gotten a little easier over the years. In this expanded installment of Keepers of the Flame, John Mundt—noting that fishing has been a part of scouting for more than a century—gives us a merit-badge history course, from Angling to Fishing to Fly-Fishing. Check out *your* merit badge potential on page 6.

When in the habit of catching fish, it's helpful to be prepared for subsequent storytelling. Having an extensive vocabulary in your arsenal can help. Jan Harold Brunvand admits that the terms we use to describe big fish are both limited and predictable; for variety and creativity, look to small-fish terms. In "On Lunkers, Tiddlers, and Other Terms for Big and Little Fish," Brunvand reports on his hunt through the sporting literature and his discoveries about the way we talk about fish. Begin your own vocabulary expansion by turning to page 2.

Occasionally we turn to our library for fishing stories holding deep in older volumes, stories that you may not have had opportunity to read before. This time we present a piece on the lighter side from H. T. Sheringham's *An Angler's Hours* (1905), "The Mystery of a Thames Salmon," in which Amaryllis (rather unprepared) goes fishing (page 18). We also share something much more recent: a poem by William F. Herrick, "The Men Downstream" (page 21), about cherished fishing memories as one's angling days come to end.

A brand new addition to this library of ours is *Bibliotheca Salmo Salar: A selection of rare books, manuscripts, journals, diaries, photograph albums, & ephemera on the subject of Atlantic Salmon Fishing from the collection of Charles B. Wood III*. Back in the Fall 2008 and Winter 2009 issues, when Wood was preparing the book, we ran a two-part article ("Bibliotheca Salmo Salar: The History of Salmon Clubs"), which became one of its chapters. Thomas Wolf offers his review, "Beautiful Fish and Beautiful Books," on page 22.

Each year, the museum looks forward to presenting its Heritage Award to a worthy recipient committed to the sport of fly fishing and the conservation of our natural resources. In April, our 2017 award went to writer/conservationist Tom McGuane, whose friend (and 2015



From *Field and Stream*, August 1919, p. 395.
Bound volume 1919–1920, vol. 24.

Heritage Award recipient) Tom Brokaw showed up prepared to interview him. For coverage of the event, turn to page 14.

Communications Coordinator Peter Nardini is always prepared to tell you about items in our collection. This Gallery piece features two reels from Brooklyn. "Julius Vom Hofe: Pushing the Boundaries of Reel Design" can be found on page 24. And speaking of our collection and being prepared: the museum will open a saltwater exhibit in early 2018, and we're searching for a few items. Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama has put together a list of particulars on page 25. Check it out, and if you're able to help us out, let us know.

What, you're still reading? You haven't checked out the merit badge requirements yet? Can you demonstrate the ability to cast a fly 30 feet consistently and accurately using both overhead and roll-cast techniques? name and explain five safety practices you should always follow while fly fishing? discuss what good outdoor sportsmanlike behavior is and how it relates to anglers? explain how to remove a hook that has lodged in your arm? I'm warning you, there will be a test. Be prepared.

KATHLEEN ACHOR
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ON THE COVER: *George M. L. La Branche showing a boy scout how to cast, ca. 1920. From The Anglers' Club Story (Mount Vernon, N.Y.: Peter Pauper Press, 1956), 112. Courtesy of the Anglers' Club of New York.*

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On Lunkers, Tiddlers, and Other Terms for Big and Little Fish

by Jan Harold Brunvand

Judy Brunvand



On Soda Butte Creek in Yellowstone National Park, where the author found a lot of dandiprats eager for his flies in a pool surrounded by downed timber.

THE TERMS WE USE to describe big fish—especially the ones that got away—are fairly limited and predictable. These are *lunkers*, *monsters*, *giants*, *whoppers*, *whales*, and the like. At one end of the sophistication scale, we Americans might say *hawg*; at the other end, our more poetic British ancestors sometimes chose *leviathan*.

The terms used for very small fish tend to be more creative and varied, often suggesting some measure of pretentiousness and gullibility on the part of the little fellow or chap. Although big fish are thought of as wary, wise, and educated, *tiddlers*, as I usually call them, are regarded as foolish, impetuous, and naive. Small fish are often personified as small people. A *fry* is a baby fish, but a *small fry* is a little person of similar importance.

Even the common diminutive forms of species' names suggest condescension. We

hear of *brookies*, *brownies*, and *dollies* (for Dolly Varden), as well as *bows* and *cutts* (but seldom, if ever *cutties*).

Personifying the members of what was sometimes called the finny tribe started early. John Dennys's *The Secrets of Angling* (1613) was written in the form of a poem composed of 151 eight-line verses. In a verse beginning "Some youthful Gallant here perhaps will say/This is no pastime for a gentleman," Dennys listed gambling with cards or dice, fencing, dancing, and courting as more fit gentlemanly amusements than wasting time "a silly Fish to catch."² Fish, of course, are neither silly nor dignified; they are simply fish.

Izaak Walton quoted several of Dennys's stanzas in defense of angling—although not the one about "silly Fish." It remained for Charles Cotton in his 1676 *Instructions* supplement to the fifth edi-

tion of *The Compleat Angler* to refer to a small fish as "a diminutive gentleman"³ and to advise the angler "e'en throw him in again, and let him grow."⁴

In subsequent angling literature, the tradition continued of characterizing small fish as small people. *Diminutive* is again the term used by William Scrope in his *Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing in the River Tweed* (1885), which he wrote about one smallish fish, "but, dwarf as he was, he thought a good deal of himself, and was prodigal of the little strength which nature had given him. I thought him conceited and so hauled him on shore at once without any ceremony. He proved to be a river trout of four pounds,—a silly-looking creature enough."⁵

A 4-pound dwarf! It depends on what you are fishing for. Scrope revealed his prejudice when he wrote that before becoming salmon fishers, men "generally

acquire some skill in river angling for trout, and such like pigmies.”⁶

Andrew Lang, in *Angling Sketches* (1891), seldom characterized a small fish as a diminutive human (he did once write of “small fellows”⁷), but he varied his terminology for tiddlers using words like *minnow* and *fingerling* and phrases like *tiny and eager*. Describing the first fish he caught as a boy, he called it a *troutling*.⁸ The cuteness is there, if not the personification.

Describing an 1876 fishing trip in Connemara, E. S. Roscoe, in *Rambles with a Fishing-Rod* (1883), mentioned an Irish term he encountered: *jackeen*. A half-pound *jackeen* was perfect for a breakfast, and he continued, “by this name are those spirited little fellows, small sea-trout, known in the West of Ireland, which, for their size and strength, are the gamest fish that swim.”⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *jackeen* as “a contemptuous designation for a self-assertive worthless fellow,” citing the earliest occurrence as 1840.¹⁰ The explanation of the term is a bit complicated.

Jack, a nickname for John, supposedly evokes the image of a Dubliner resembling an Englishman, both via the John Bull stereotype and an echo of the term *Union Jack*. The suffix *-een* makes Jack an unremarkable small fellow. According to the Wikipedia entry, *jackeen* is still used to describe Dublin athletes and supporters of the GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association);¹¹ whether it is still used to refer to a little fish, I don’t know.

Another British writer continuing this tradition of referring to tiddlers as foolish fellows was J. C. Mottram, who, in *Fly-Fishing: Some New Arts and Mysteries* (1915), wrote of “fish of little or no education, who will, of course, take anything.”¹² In another passage, Mottram wonders whether he has hooked “a good one or a little chap.”¹³

In one of the first notable American works on fishing, Thaddeus Norris (“Uncle Thad”) wrote in *The American Angler’s Book* (1864) of *fingerlings*, *small fry*, and “little fellows—eight and nine inches—the very size for the pan.”¹⁴ Here he anticipates the common idea of keep-

ing what are termed *pan-sized* fish for eating. In romanticizing a boy’s earliest days of fishing, as so many angling authors still do, Uncle Thad described a young lad “[returning] home at night weary and footsore, but exulting in his string of chubs, minnows, and sunnies, the largest as broad as his three fingers!”¹⁵ Small fry are happy merely catching small fry.

Theodore Gordon, the so-called father of American dry-fly fishing, wrote many letters and articles about the sport, and he found several ways to describe fish size. For large trout, he sometimes used the terms *sockdollager*, *jumbo*, and *buster* (perhaps for one that would bust your tackle). Gordon’s favorite terms for tiddlers were *baby trout*, *small chaps*, and *little chaps*. In a typical passage, quoted in John McDonald’s *The Complete Fly Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon* (1947), Gordon wrote, “The American trout is a game chap. I have seen one not over eight inches in length go for a big disabled dragonfly until he got it under and kept it.”¹⁶



Peter Nardini

Museum Communications Coordinator Peter Nardini cradles a Vermont brookie he caught in September 2016.

Observing tiny trout go after ovipositing aquatic insects inspired George M. L. La Branche to use a wonderfully obsolete term for ambitious tiddlers. Here it occurs in a passage from *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (1914):

One who observes closely will see that at the moment the female [mayfly] approaches the water, or during her subsequent dips, attempts, frequently successful, are made by the fish to capture her. As these efforts required some activity, they are resorted to usually by the more agile dandiprats. The larger fish are quite as interested in the dainty morsel as are their younger brothers, but they do not make the same frantic efforts to secure it.¹⁷

Dandiprats—what a wonderful word! It suggests both the vain foppery of a human dandy and the spectacle of a pratfall—that is, “a humiliating mishap or blunder” as my desk dictionary defines it.¹⁸ La Branche used the term again with reference to a promising pool in a stream that “looks as if it should contain a big fish . . . [yet] yields but a few dandiprats.”¹⁹

The *OED* offers no etymology for *dandiprat*, so my notions expressed above are mere guesswork. The definitive *Oxford English Dictionary* records examples of its use, beginning in the early sixteenth century: first for a small coin and later for “a small, insignificant, or contemptible fellow.”²⁰ A third sense is that of “a young lad, little boy, urchin; rarely . . . a young girl.”²¹ All three are labeled obsolete and archaic. A typical illustrative quotation from 1718 reads, “I saw a little Dandiprat riding about, who, they said was a hugeous great Lord.”²² The most recent citation in the *OED*, dated 1872, refers to “a bit of a chit of a boy . . . [a] snickering dandiprat.”²³ Unmentioned in the *OED* is the occurrence of the word in an English nursery rhyme included in Iona and Peter Opie’s compilation *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (1951), which begins, “Little Jack Dandy-prat was my first suitor;/He had a dish and a spoon, and had some pewter.”²⁴ The items mentioned are evidently the simple household items this unremarkable suitor could bring to a marriage. The Opies cite examples of “Little Jack Dandy-prat” from 1810 and 1844.

George M. L. La Branche (1875–1961) was a wealthy and successful man, described by Paul Schullery in his introduction to the 1998 reissue of *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* as one of “American fly fishing’s most polished, dapper, and articulate writers.”²⁵ La Branche may have come upon the term *dandiprat* in his readings, or it’s possible someone of his acquaintance in the New York City gentlemen’s angling scene was still using such an old-fashioned word, even in the early twentieth century. Whatever his source, it’s a lovely word to describe a tiny trout, and I think it should inspire some modern fly tier to create a dandiprat pattern. (Who better than Dandy Reiner, owner of the Hatch Finders Fly Shop in Livingston, Montana, and creator of the Pink Pookie fly? I proposed this project to Ms. Reiner last summer at the International Federation of Fly Fishers fair in Livingston, and she agreed to keep it in mind. Stay tuned!)

In searching other classic fly-fishing writings for terms referring to lunkers versus tiddlers, I’ve most recently checked John Atherton’s *The Fly and the Fish* (1951). Atherton had fished with La Branche,

Jan Harold Brunvand



The author’s granddaughter, Charlotte (“Charley”), with a small trout in a big net.



The author with a fish on that is so small it doesn't put a bend in his 3-weight rod.

among several other gurus of the sport, but, no, he didn't pick up the term *dandiprat*. However, he did imagine small fish as little humans in this passage: "The trout in that pool were wary; I imagine that the ones which finally came to our flies were the less experienced, and I always wondered, when we unhooked them and sent them back with our blessing, whether they communicated their adventures to their brethren."²⁶ Atherton (1900–1952) is also the most recent writer I've found to dub a large trout a *leviathan*. As for the charms of catching tiddlers versus lunkers, Atherton wrote, "I would greatly prefer a day in which the rewards were three or four medium-sized fish than one spent in pursuit of a single big one. The angler who has a passion for big fish only, at any cost, is missing a great deal the charm of the sport by not simply taking things as they come."²⁷

I wholeheartedly agree, possibly because most of the fish I catch are medium sized at best. Part of the charm of the sport for me lies in reading the well-expressed sentiments of brothers of the angle who may employ such a charming old word as *dandiprat* for a silly little fish.



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4. Ibid.

5. William Scrope, *Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing in the River Tweed* (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co. and Glasgow: Thomas D. Morison, 1885), 191.

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7. Andrew Lang, *Angling Sketches* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1891), 99.

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16. Theodore Gordon, in John McDonald, ed., *The Complete Fly Fisherman: The Notes and Letters of Theodore Gordon*, reprint of material in 1968 edition (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1989), 41–42.

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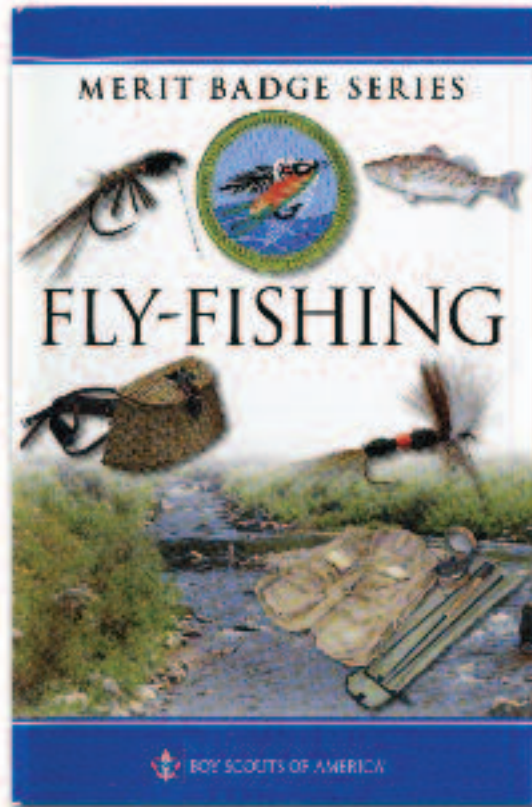
From Genio C. Scott, *Fishing in American Waters* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1869), 355.

The Boy Scouts of America

by John Mundt

THE FLY-FISHING merit badge: I must admit to a slight sense of apprehension when I first picked up the diminutive Merit Badge Series booklet, *Fly-Fishing*, one summer day while spending a week with my son Jack at our local Boy Scouts of America (BSA) camp. I'm a lifelong fly fisherman. Would this compact volume designed for instructing teenage boys reveal large voids in my general knowledge of the sport? Would I be able to meet the ten requirements without having to shuffle through its pages to learn the answers? I began to read:

1. Do the following:
 - a. Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in fly-fishing activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards. Name and explain five safety practices you should always follow while fly-fishing. Discuss the prevention of and treatment for health concerns that could occur while fly-fishing, including cuts and scratches, puncture wounds, insect bites, hypothermia, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat-stroke, and sunburn.
 - b. Explain how to remove a hook that has lodged in your arm.
2. Demonstrate how to match a fly rod, line, and leader to achieve a balanced system. Discuss several types of fly lines, and explain how and when each would be used. Review with your counselor how to care for this equipment.
3. Demonstrate how to tie proper knots to prepare a fly rod for fishing:
 - a. Tie a backing to a fly reel spool using the arbor knot.
 - b. Attach backing to fly line using the nail knot.
 - c. Attach a leader to fly line using the needle knot, nail knot, or a loop-to-loop connection.
 - d. Add a tippet to a leader using a loop-to-loop connection or blood knot.
 - e. Tie a fly onto the terminal end of the leader using the improved clinch knot.



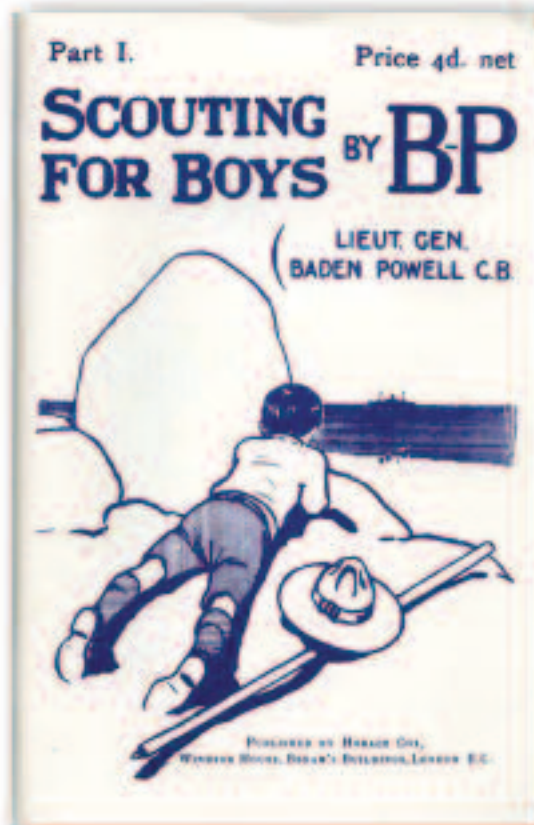
The current Fly-Fishing merit badge booklet and the merit badge itself, shown at its actual size.

4. Explain how and when each of the following types of flies is used: dry flies, wet flies, nymphs, streamers, bass bugs, poppers, and saltwater flies. Tell what each one imitates. Tie at least two types of the flies mentioned in this requirement.
5. Demonstrate the ability to cast a fly 30 feet consistently and accurately using both overhead and roll cast techniques.
6. Go to a suitable fishing location and make observations on what fish may be eating both above and beneath the water's surface. Look for flying insects and some that may be on or beneath the water's surface. Explain the importance of matching the hatch.
7. Do the following:
 - a. Explain the importance of practicing Leave No Trace techniques. Discuss the positive effects of Leave No Trace on fishing resources.
 - b. Discuss the meaning and importance of catch and release. Describe how to properly release a fish safely to the water.
8. Obtain and review a copy of the regulations affecting game fishing where you live or where you plan to fish. Explain why they were adopted and what is accomplished by following them.
9. Discuss what good outdoor sportsmanlike behavior is and how it relates to anglers. Tell how the Outdoor Code of the Boy Scouts of America relates to a fishing enthusiast, including the aspects of littering, trespassing, courteous behavior, and obeying fishing regulations.
10. Catch at least one fish. If regulations and health concerns permit, clean and cook a fish you have caught. Otherwise, acquire a fish and cook it.¹



Left: Robert Baden-Powell, photographed by Walter Stoneman in 1927. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

Below: Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, first published in 1908.



With a slight sense of relief, I checked off the list without distress. My paranoia out of the way, I soon discovered that the merit badge booklet contained plenty of useful information. For example, it taught me how to tie the Duncan loop, a knot that I had never tried before. As a new adult advisor for older scouts teaching the course, my confidence was renewed.

FLY FISHING FROM THE START

Before the Fly-Fishing merit badge was officially sanctioned in 2002, the sport had been a part of scouting's rich history for nearly a century. The movement's founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell (B-P), was an avid fly fisher. He was posthumously inducted into the International Game Fish Association Hall of Fame the year the merit badge was established.²

B-P believed that a scout should know how to fish, for both survival purposes and the virtues of sportsmanship and perseverance that can be learned through its practice.³ In the Fall 1999 issue of the *American Fly Fisher*, museum member

and Eagle Scout Douglas R. Precourt authored an informative piece, "Fishing with Baden-Powell: Stories of the Chief Scout and His Love of Angling." In it, he informs the reader:

As the "Chief Scout" of the growing Boy Scout movement, B-P traveled the world. He oversaw the development of the organization, attended jamborees, and provided leadership and inspiration. Everywhere he went, his fly rods, reels, and fishing kit went with him so he could collect his personal "fishing fee" for the time he had given to scouting.⁴

In 1908, B-P published his thoughts in *Scouting for Boys*. The value he placed on fly fishing was made clear when he wrote, "Fishing brings out a lot of the points in Scouting, especially if you fish with a fly . . . If you use a dry fly, that is, keeping your fly sitting on top of the water instead of sunk under the surface, you have to really stalk your fish, just as you would a deer or any other game, for a trout is very sharp-eyed and shy."⁵ As the scouting movement took hold in America, fly fishing was part of it.

Those early scouts had a much more challenging task on their hands when the

Angling merit badge was first introduced by the BSA in 1911. Fly fishing and rod building were key components for earning the badge. It was startling to learn how demanding the five requirements were, as well as to accept the fact that I couldn't come close to completing them today:

1. Catch and name ten different species of fish: salmon or trout to be taken with flies; bass, pickerel, or pike to be caught with rod or reel; muskellunge to be caught by trolling.
2. Make a bait rod of three joints, straight and sound, 14 oz. or less in weight, 10 feet or less in length, to stand a strain of 1½ lbs. at the tip, 13 lbs. at the grip.
3. Make a jointed fly-rod 8–10 feet long, 4–8 oz. in weight, capable of casting a fly 60 feet.
4. Name and describe twenty-five different species of fish found in North American waters and give a complete list of the fishes ascertained by himself to inhabit a given body of water.
5. Give the history of the young of any species of wild fish from the time of hatching until the adult stage is reached.⁶

It was interesting, but not quite a surprise, to learn that by 1913, only one scout had earned the Angling merit badge as originally constituted. The June 1913 edition of *Boys' Life* contains the following announcement:

It is surprising to find that the angling badge, won by Scout Commissioner Evarts this month, is the only one of its kind that has been awarded in the history of this organization.* This is one of the best times of the year for fishing, and no sport can be more healthful than this. Why not have angling head the list next month? How about this, you fisherman scouts?⁷

The asterisk in the text above led to this revealing note:

The reason for this is found in the requirements of the test, which should be revised. Requirements Nos 1 and 2

[sic] might well be stricken out, as ability to make rods as specified is not, and never has been, considered a test of an angler's qualifications. Instead, the scout should be required to pass certain tests in casting with bait or fly rod, should know the natural food of various game fishes and the best baits or lures to use in catching them, and especially should be able to tell how and where to fish for the different species. He should know how to secure various natural baits and how to fix them on his hook; how to properly land a game fish with a dip-net, whether wading or fishing from a boat; and he should have a knowledge of the propagation and protection of fish, without which to-day we would have no fishing worthwhile. —ED.⁸

So, who was this extraordinary scout?

Further research led me to a website, Portraits of War, which had the following information posted about native Vermonter Joseph Allen Evarts:

Originally born in Swanton, Evarts attended Norwich in 1904 and eventually joined up with the 1st VT National Guard. He was a direct descendant of the famous Allen family and can claim Ethan Allen as a great-great-uncle. He went overseas in October of 1917 with the 101st Machine Gun Battalion as a 1st LT and was promoted to Captain in August of 1918. He was assigned as Company Commander of Company D of the 103rd Machine Gun Battalion of the 26th Division. Evarts was well loved by the citizens of St. Albans and was sorely missed after he passed away in 1920 from gas-related lung complications. . . . He was cited at least two times for bravery while overseas and likely saw a lot of combat.⁹

Another contributor to the site added in the comments section:

Joseph A. Evarts was the 34th Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts of America and earned his Eagle Scout rank in 1913 while serving as Scout Commissioner for the state of Vermont at the age of 26. He was the first Eagle Scout from Vermont and also the first Scout ever to earn Life and Star ranks as a pre-requisite for Eagle.¹⁰

It is clear that earning the Angling merit badge was not within the reach of the average teenager; the fact that Joseph Evarts was twenty-six when he earned the first shows the level of commitment that was required. (Before 1965, adults could earn the Eagle rank.)

The merit badge was officially revised, and the following guidelines appeared in the August 1914 issue of *Boys' Life*:

1. Catch and name seven different species of fishes by the usual angling methods (fly-casting, bait-casting, trolling and bait-fishing). At least one species must be taken by fly-casting, and one by bait-casting. In single-handed fly-casting the rod must not exceed seven ounces in weight; in double-handed fly-casting one ounce in weight may be allowed for each foot in length; in bait-fishing and trolling the rod must not exceed ten feet in length nor twelve ounces in weight.
2. Show proficiency in accurate single-handed casting with the fly for distances of 30, 40, and 50 feet, and in bait-casting for distances of 40, 60, and 70 feet.
3. Make three artificial flies (either after three standard patterns, or in imitation of different natural flies), and take fish with at least two of them. Make a neat single gut leader at least four feet long, or a twisted or braided leader at least three feet long. Splice the broken joint of a rod neatly.
4. Give the open season for the game fishes in his vicinity, and explain how and why they are protected by law.¹¹



Joseph Allen Evarts and an example of the original Angling merit badge, which he was the first scout to earn.

The cover and page 8 in the 1922 Merit Badge Series Angling pamphlet. From the author's collection.



The acclaimed statesman and angler Henry van Dyke contributed an article to the same issue titled "The Scout Merit Badge of Angling: A Famous Fisherman Writes of Some Things All Boys Should Know About This Fascinating Sport." Van Dyke wrote, "The list of requirements, I think, is a very fair one; not too hard and not too easy, and may be generally applied to all parts of the country."¹² He also advocates for the scouts themselves by attempting to shield them from a debate that was under way in the sport.

Many very good anglers maintain that the artificial fly is not really an imitation of any natural insect, but that it attracts the fish largely from curiosity. I think this is certainly true in the case of salmon flies. In my opinion, therefore, the boy should be left free to choose which of the two theories of fly fishing he wishes to follow; the imitation of the natural fly, or the making of an artificial fly on one of those patterns which have proved successful in stimulating the curiosity of the fish.¹³

By 1951, when the badge was retired, the four requirements had evolved:

1. Catch and identify at least one specimen from each of three local species of fish by usual angling methods (fly-casting, bait-casting, trolling, and bait-fishing). At least one species must be taken by fly-casting or one by bait-casting.
2. Show proficiency and accuracy in fly-casting with the fly for distances of 30 or 40 feet, or in bait-casting for distances of 40, 60 and 70 feet.
3. Name and describe at least five standard fly patterns, or make a fly, spoon troll, plug or any other form of artificial bait lure and prove its worth by catching fish with it. Make a neat single-gut leader at least four feet long. Splice the broken joint of a rod or in some other way show proficiency in repairing broken tackle.
4. Give the open season for game fishes in his vicinity, and explain how and why they are protected by the law.¹⁴



George M. L. La Branche showing a scout how to cast, ca. 1920. From The Anglers' Club Story (Mount Vernon, N.Y.: Peter Pauper Press, 1956), 112. Courtesy of the Anglers' Club of New York.



FISHING MERIT BADGE (1952–PRESENT)

When the Angling merit badge was retired in 1951, it was replaced by the Fishing merit badge, which remains a current offering. The fly-fishing requirements were reduced to an elective under the nonspecific “demonstrate the proper use of two different types of fishing equipment.”¹⁵ This reduction to an elective seems unnecessary considering that a reported total of 43,884 scouts had earned the Angling merit badge since 1913.¹⁶

FLY-FISHING MERIT BADGE (2002–PRESENT)

News of the new Fly-Fishing merit badge broke for me in the Fall 2001 issue of this journal in a letter submitted by Doug Precourt, wherein he states:

I was asked by the National Advancement Committee of the Boy Scouts of America to rewrite the current fishing merit badge requirements and book to incorporate fly-fishing elements and to propose the creation of a new fly-fishing merit badge for consideration. A committee was formed and the work done, and I just learned in May that starting in 2002, all scouts will have the opportunity to earn the new Fly-Fishing Merit Badge.¹⁷

Fifty years after the Angling merit badge had been replaced by the Fishing merit badge in 1952, a group of dedicated individuals established the Fly-Fishing merit badge. The American Museum of Fly Fishing is listed as a resource in the booklet.¹⁸

COMPLETE ANGLER RECOGNITION (2014–PRESENT)

In 2014, scouts were given the opportunity to gain special recognition by wearing the Complete Angler patch. This requires earning the Fishing, Fly-Fishing, and Fish and Wildlife Management merit badges and performing a specified service activity in scouting or their community.



The Complete Angler patch (displayed actual size) showing the Fishing, Fly-Fishing, and Fish and Wildlife Management merit badges as having been earned by the recognized scout.

SCOUT CAMPS

Lord Baden-Powell first field tested the concepts he promoted in *Scouting for Boys* during an experimental encampment in 1907 on Brownsea Island, just off the southern English coast near Poole. That initial experiment was a success, and it eventually grew into thousands of such camps as the scouting movement took hold and expanded worldwide.

The establishment of America's first scout camp remains a subject of debate today. Camp Owaspippe in Twin Lake, Michigan, makes a credible claim as the oldest known camp. The land was purchased in 1910, the camp was constructed in 1911, and it opened in 1912. Camp Owaspippe officially celebrated its centennial in 2011.¹⁹

LAKE KENOSHA AT CAMP MATTATUCK

BSA Camp Mattatuck in Thomaston, Connecticut, was founded in 1939. Lake Kenosha is the centerpiece of the 500-acre property. As a scout leader, I attended camp there with Jack each summer, always with my fly rod rigged and ready outside my tent. At dawn on most mornings, I took a quiet walk down to the lake to cast bass bugs in peace for the hour or so before all hell broke loose. Then it would be a frenzy of canoes, sailboats, swimmers, and lifeguard whistles blowing throughout the day. Scouts taking their Fishing or Fly-Fishing merit badge classes filled in along the open gaps on the shoreline in their attempts to catch one of the lake's resident bass. Many of these fish were large and aggressive, and at least once during the week a young scout would bring in a 20-incher to swim around in the nature center fish tank for a day or two before being released back into the lake.

One calm morning, the fishing was slow, and the quiet was broken suddenly by the words "Nice cast, mister." Turning around to say thank you, I found three scouts standing attentively, tackle boxes and spinning rods in hand. One added, "Yeah, my brother likes fly fishing, but I don't get it." I responded, "Don't worry, you've got plenty of time to try it. Take the Fly-Fishing merit badge class; it's a lot of fun to catch a fish on a fly." Another casually informed me that he had never seen anyone casting a fly rod from Lightning Rock before, and that I should stay off it during a thunderstorm, as it has taken a number of strikes. "Thanks for that tip," I replied, and filed a very useful piece of information away.



A postcard of Baden-Powell's encampment at Brownsea in 1907.



A badge commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Camp Mattatuck, shown actual size. From the author's collection.

With that, the scouts turned and rambled off down the trail.

Helping teach the Fly-Fishing merit badge course is its own test of “infinite patience”²⁰ as you watch the scouts tying and untangling knots, smacking the camp’s fly-rod tips back and forth on the grass, and winding away at tying their first flies. The catch-and-release ethic we teach today was also a tenet found in *Scouting for Boys* generations before the practice became widely adopted.²¹

Now I’ll take the liberty of sharing one personal reflection on fly fishing and scouting. It was my first summer at Camp Mattatuck, and I was casting a popper off the dock near the camp chapel. It was a quiet morning, the lake was still, and it was all mine. From the far side, a group of adults and scouts could be heard plodding loudly down the hill from their campsites, gravel crunching and tackle boxes rattling. They must not have realized how easily sound travels

across water, and the words, “What? This guy is fly fishing?” were followed by some mocking giggles. At that moment I believed that if there were truly any justice in this world, my fly would land just off the lily pad and an angry bass would slam it with fury. Fate did its part. The popper landed where it was supposed to, two quick strips produced the necessary disturbance, and the water exploded. A good bass was on, and I let it run freely so my reel could make as much of a whir as

THE PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH



The Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico, is the big BSA camp. It was established in 1938 when benefactor Waite Phillips donated his 35,857-acre ranch to the movement. The ranch has grown to cover 214 square miles and witnessed its millionth scout step onto the property in 2014. Rayado Lodge, one of Phillips’s favorite spots on the ranch, is now known as Fish Camp. It hosts a variety of fly-fishing programs for scouts and training for their adult leaders.*

*“Philmont Scout Ranch, Boy Scouts of America, Fish Camp Profile,” Northern Tier. http://www.ntier.org/filestore/philmont/pdf/jobs/Backcountry_Fish_Camp_HW.pdf, 3. Accessed 28 March 2017.



Clockwise from upper left: Waite Phillips at Rayado Lodge, now known as Fish Camp; the early days of Fish Camp; a more current look at Fish Camp; and the Fish Camp at Philmont patch (shown actual size). Images courtesy of the Philmont Museum. Dates unknown.





Mike McConnell of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service teaches John Braudis how to tie a fly during the 2010 Boy Scout Jamboree at Fish Hook Lake in Virginia.

possible. They all came running to watch as I reeled in the 17-incher and nonchalantly released it. Feigning that it was routine, I bid them “Good luck,” and headed off. The sin of pride aside, I was pleased to have had the opportunity to protect the integrity of the sport at a place where fishing has always been practiced.

The Boy Scouts of America have been keepers of the flame since its formal establishment in 1910 and introduction of the Angling merit badge in 1911. Fishing, fly fishing, and the ethics of good sportsmanship have been practiced by both scouts and adult scouters throughout the movement’s history. The BSA National Camping School offers courses for adults to become certified angling instructors to help scouts receive the proper introduction, guidance, and practical experience necessary to earn their Fishing and Fly-Fishing merit badges.

Nationwide, scouts have the opportunity to fly fish at the hundreds of camps that are attended each summer or for a full week at a specialty fly-fishing camp. We often hear that we need to ensure that the next generation becomes inspired to carry on the sport, the enjoyment, and the legacy of fly fishing. Thankfully, the BSA has always honored the sport and continues to do so. Who knows? Maybe the next time you visit the American Museum of Fly Fishing, you’ll see tents pitched out back by the pond with scouts flailing away with their rods, tying flies, and untangling knots along the way to earning their Fly-Fishing merit badges.

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About This Fascinating Sport,” *Boys’ Life* (August 1914), 11.

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17. Doug Precourt, “Fly-Fishing Scouts” (letter), *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 2001, vol. 27, no. 4), 32.

18. Boy Scouts of America, Merit Badge Series, *Fly-Fishing*, 95.

19. “History,” Owasippe Scout Reservation. <http://www.owasippeadventure.com/history/>. Accessed 28 March 2017.

20. Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, 115.

21. Boy Scouts of America, *Boy Scouts Handbook*, 109. The catch-and-release tenet reads as follows: “It should be the invariable practice of anglers to return to the water all uninjured fish that are not needed for food or study. ‘It is not all of fishing to fish,’ and no thoughtful boy who has the interests of the country at heart, and no lover of nature, will go fishing merely for the purpose of catching the longest possible string of fish, thus placing himself in the class of anglers properly known as ‘fish hogs.’”



Tom McGuane Receives 2017 Heritage Award

Photos by Jack McCoy except where noted



AMFF Executive Director Bob Ruley, honoree Tom McGuane, and AMFF President Karen Kaplan.

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING honored Tom McGuane with its 2017 Heritage Award on April 5 in New York City. The Heritage Award honors and celebrates individuals and organizations whose commitment to the museum, the sport of fly fishing, and the conservation of our natural resources set standards to which we all should aspire.

McGuane is the author of ten important novels, including *Ninety-two in the Shade*, and three works of nonfiction, including *The Longest Silence*, perhaps the most celebrated angling text of modern times. He is also a devoted outdoorsman and conservationist.

Among McGuane's many accolades are the Rosenthal Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Wallace Stegner Award, and *Fly Rod & Reel's* Angler of the Year. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Cutting Horse Association Hall of Fame.

A spirited crowd gathered at the Racquet and Tennis Club, where guests caught up with one another over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while browsing the live and silent auction items before dinner.

Executive Director Bob Ruley addressed the guests during dinner and thanked McGuane for accepting the honor. Ruley touched on the literary great's ability to connect with his readers and how McGuane's books inform us not only as readers, but also anglers, noting that he could never lift another bonefish out of the water without thinking of it as being "handsomely vulpine." Ruley went on to emphasize that the late Jim Harrison's statement, "McGuane writes better about fishing than anyone else in the history of mankind," is notable for both its audacity and its accuracy.

After an amusing video tribute narrated by Guy de la Valdene, auctioneer Nick Dawes took the stage to lead a fun live auction featuring items that money usually cannot buy.

Following the auction, Ruley and Board of Trustees President Karen Kaplan presented the Heritage Award to McGuane. The award featured a custom fly dressed by master tier Roger Plourde. In his acceptance speech, McGuane stressed the importance of public lands, as well as the importance of protecting them, adding, "I hope that the American Museum of Fly Fishing doesn't become the American Mausoleum of Fly Fishing."

The highlight of the evening came when McGuane's friend and fellow Heritage Award recipient Tom Brokaw took the stage to interview the honoree. The chemistry and history between the two friends was apparent as they easily moved from tarpon to brown trout and from Iceland to Tierra del Fuego. When asked his favorite type of fishing, McGuane paused and then answered, "Public water brown trout fishing," which garnered an enthusiastic round of applause from the audience.

The museum would like to thank honoree Tom McGuane, auctioneer Nick Dawes, Tom Brokaw, event committee chair Bruce McNae, and members of the committee (Skip Herman, Rob Oden, Erik Oken, Bill Platt, Warren Stern, and, with special thanks, Alan Gnann). We would also like to extend our gratitude to the following auction donors and providers: Arms Reach, Jim Becker, Berkshire Rivers, Steve and Sandra Bogdan, Nicholas Brawer, Brian Cadoret, Mark Comora, Bert Darrow, Nick Dawes, Douglas Outdoors, the Equinox Resort & Spa, E. J. Gallo, Matt Hart, Jim Heckman, the Image Loft, Fred Kretchman, Carmine Lisella, Tom McGuane, Gordon Miller, Mother Myrick's, John Mundt, Northshire Bookstore, the Orvis Company, El Pescador, Walter Matia, the Ranch at Rock Creek, REC Components, Restigouche River Lodge, Bob Ruley, Rio Products, Scientific Anglers, Simms, Three Forks Ranch, Richard Tisch, Jacques and Hasty Torres, Ted Turner, Urban Angler, Richard Vander Veen, Village Picture Shows, and Paul Volcker.





AMFF trustee and dinner committee member Alan Gnann and his wife Linda at the silent auction.



Dinner committee members Billy Platt and Erik Oken with Karen Kaplan and Tom McGuane.



The McGuane, created and tied by Roger Plourde.



Tom McGuane chats with dinner committee member Skip Herman and Meg Herman.



AMFF Trustee Nick Selch, Jean Selch, Cassie Polhemus, Emily Polhemus, and Trustee Fred Polhemus.



Dave Beveridge, Bud Bynack, and Bert Darrow.



The evening's program and one of the Wheatley fly boxes donated by REC Components for the event.



AMFF Trustees Jim Heckman and Frank Schurz.



Sara Low and dinner committee member/AMFF Trustee Rob Oden.



James Carpenter, Tom McGuane, and Topher Browne.



Tom McGuane.



Thomas McGuane enjoys his father's acceptance speech.



*Tom Brokaw interviews
Tom McGuane.*




The Mystery of a Thames Salmon

by H. T. Sheringham



From John Fisher Murray, *A Picturesque Tour of the River Thames in its Western Course* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1845), 49.

 MARYLLIS," SAID WILLIAM with studied carelessness, "is thinking of taking up fishing."

I did not encourage him, merely saying "Oh!" in as non-committal a tone as I could manage.

He went on rather dubiously, "She wants to catch salmon, because they make such good presents." I nodded politely, but did not comment on his statement. William has been married to Amaryllis for three months, and is the most dutiful of husbands.

He seemed a little dashed by my lack of sympathy, and relighted his pipe, which had gone out. Then he returned

gallantly to the charge. "And so, you know, we thought I'd better come and see you, because you know about fishing, and could tell us what to do and where to go. It'll be awfully good of you. Amaryllis suggested that you might go out with us next Saturday and put us in the way of it. Where shall we go?"

Having got thoroughly into his subject, William acquired confidence, and his concluding question took, I thought, a good deal for granted. He has not yet got over his delighted wonder that so unworthy a person as himself should have been chosen to render domestic obedience to Amaryllis, and he is still inclined to exact for her extra-mural obedience on the part of his friends, which, to do us justice, we are in general very willing to accord, for she is the most charming little autocrat in the world.

Nevertheless there are occasions on which one must obey with judgement, and when William pointed out that, even

though I was going to fish the Itchen on Saturday, and even though there were no salmon there, still Amaryllis might be willing to content herself with trout—large ones—I hastened to exercise the judgement aforesaid.

Itchen trout, I assured him, were not to be caught in a day, even by Amaryllis. Was he aware, I asked, that one of the most noted experts living had only killed one small fish during the whole of his first season? Did he think that his wife would be willing to persevere at least as long? I put the case somewhat strongly, because I had a vision of keeper Jobson's face when he should come upon the wedded pair seated side by side and dangling lobworms in a hatch-hole.

Fortunately William saw the point, and was convinced that Amaryllis would require more speedy success, and besides it was salmon she wanted, not trout. He invited other suggestions. I gave him some. I told him what were the chances

Excerpted from *An Angler's Hours* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1905; chapter XII, pages 202–14).

Initial capital "A" illustration from Genio Scott, *Fishing in American Waters* (New York: The American News Company, 1875), 215.

of a young and uninfluential married couple in the matter of salmon-angling. I forget now what the figures were, but they roughly represented a cost of from ten to a hundred guineas per pound of fish, according to the locality of the fishing, and they considerably lengthened William's face.

He said he had no idea that it would be so costly a business. They could of course, as his wife had intimated, lessen the outlay somewhat by borrowing the necessary implements from me, but even so it required consideration. He would go home and talk it over with Amaryllis in the light of the information that I had so kindly given him. He went, and for some days I heard no more of the matter, which seemed just as well. It would be absurd if these two young people were really to add the angling fever to the other woes of married life.

Then came a note to me from Amaryllis. "Please come to tea," it ran. "We have found out where we can catch salmon for nothing"—she underlined the word—"and I want to show you how wrong you were."

One rather likes to be shown how wrong one was by Amaryllis, so I went and found her triumphant. "There," she said, giving me a little slip of newspaper as I took my teacup, "what do you think of that? Willy said that what you didn't know about fishing wasn't worth knowing. Is that worth knowing, please?"

Amaryllis's eyelashes curl upwards at the end, and can look very mischievous, but it was not my fault if William had misrepresented me as an oracle on the subject of my particular hobby. That he should apologise for me then by saying that "Everybody is liable to make mistakes" I regarded as my misfortune, and I proceeded in self-defence to read the newspaper cutting.

It was headed "Salmon for the Thames," and stated in a few words that "a further consignment of young salmon had been liberated" by the association which undertakes that laudable work. In fact, the paragraph closely resembled others that I had seen before, and I did not feel that it required any particular comment or that it possessed any particular significance. I looked to Amaryllis for enlightenment, and was told without delay that if some people put salmon into the Thames other people could take them out again, and, moreover, could make presentation thereof to Aunt Elizabeth and other objects of deserved esteem.

"Certainly," agreed William weightily; it seemed that he did not object to being a little oracular himself—when it could be done in the safe form of conjugal agreement.

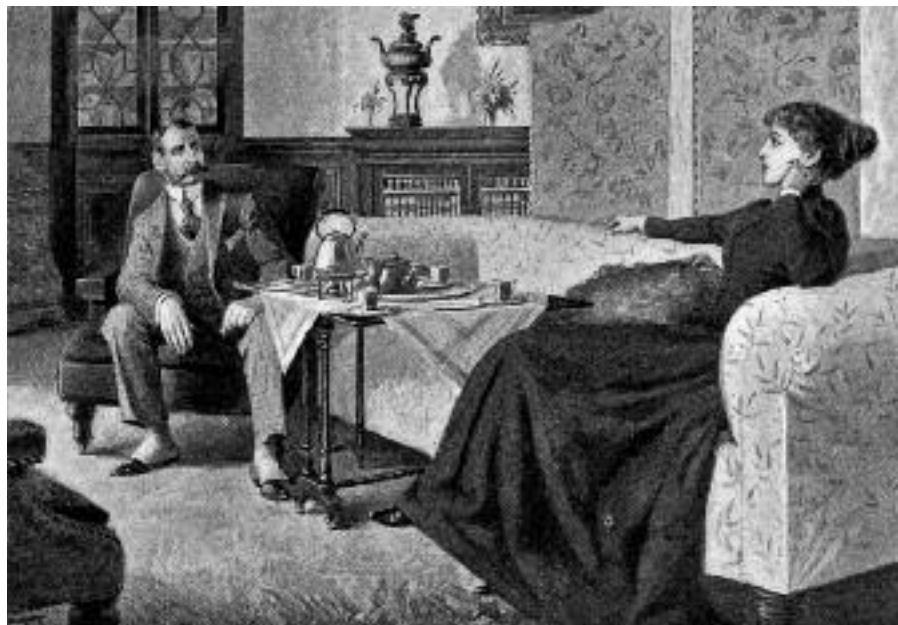


Illustration by F. S. Wilson. From Alfred E. T. Watson, ed., The Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes, vol. III (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 46.

It may be that subsequent events found me too ready to take the broad downward path, that I lost for a moment—for a good many moments—the frank-faced candour that should be an angler's proudest quality. But I would plead that I conscientiously endeavoured to explain to the pair what the paragraph signified, and that they steadily refused to be convinced. Also, as I have mentioned, Amaryllis's eyelashes are not to be disregarded in a discussion.

"It says salmon," she asserted, with a little toss of her head. "If it meant parrs, or whatever you call them, it would say so."

"Undoubtedly," William threw in.

"I don't believe you know anything at all about it," she continued with dignity, "you weren't there. I believe they put in quite big salmon, so that they might begin to fish for them at once. I call it very wise of them, and very stupid of you to be so obstinate." Amaryllis's eyelashes almost touched her cheek, and betokened that their mistress was quite hurt about it. I gave way.

"You may be right," I admitted. The eyelashes left the cheek, and Amaryllis looked up brightly.

"I believe you were only teasing me," she said, "and to make up, now you admit I am right, you must come and help us catch them."

"You must, old man," William added; "can't do less."

So it came about that not long afterwards three persons were seated on three Windsor chairs in a punt anchored in a certain backwater of the Thames. Two of them were prepared to give battle to any salmon that might be in the vicinity; the

third (myself) was resignedly acting as philosopher and guide. It had seemed inadvisable to enlist the services of a professional fisherman, for it is not every fisherman who can enter into the spirit of a delicate situation. Amaryllis was confident that she was going to catch a salmon, and she expected a show of confidence in those around her. Anything like laughter or even doubt she would never have forgiven. William also would dutifully have shown resentment.

So I put lobworms on barbel hooks for them, explained (in answer to certain initial complaints) that they had not been provided with eighteen-foot fly-rods because the water was the wrong colour for the fly, and generally endeavoured to seek peace at the expense of veracity. After all, I can bait a hook, and I know as much of the haunts of Thames salmon as the next man. I hoped, too, that a long day spent in vain would cool Amaryllis's enthusiasm, and that after it the incident would be regarded as closed, even at the expense of Father Thames's reputation as a salmon river. It was possible, of course, that she might ascribe failure to my inefficiency, but in that event she would not be unappeasable. If she were ever to learn that she had caught no salmon because there were none to catch, I should never be forgiven for letting her fish in error.

The day wore on. We sought several fresh beats (save the mark!), but never a touch indicated that salmon or anything else fancied lobworms on leger tackle. We lunched, and I held forth at some length on the uncertainty of salmon-fishing. I amended the ancient Thames

story (of the man who caught a brace of ten-pound trout the first day he fished the river, five years ago, took a house on the banks on the strength of it, and has been there ever since fishing early and late without touching another) and gave it them. In my version he caught two twenty-pound salmon early in the sixties, but the other details were the same.

Amaryllis was plainly impressed, and began to eye the river doubtfully. Then there was a momentary excitement over a small perch which attached itself to William's lobworm. It excited her contempt as being a mere "common" fish, and was returned. A little later we boiled the kettle and had tea, and I told the story of the ardent but unfortunate angler who, since early boyhood, had been wandering from river to river throughout the United Kingdom, fishing day after day, but had never yet caught a salmon, though he once hooked and lost what his gillie said might have been a sea-trout. It was an almost probable story, and very convincing. Amaryllis looked at her rod with distaste, and feared she would never *really* have patience enough for fishing. In fact, all was going well. It was nearly time to go ashore for the train; she had had her day's salmon-fishing, and was in a fair way to be persuaded that the fault of failure was not mine but fate's. And all would doubtless have been well if she had not soon afterwards had a bite, and, after a severe tussle, succeeded in landing the fish.

It was a three-pound chub, plump, silvery, and, as such a fish is apt to be, imposing. I was about to disclose its identity to Amaryllis, who was still palpitating with excitement, when William, looking at it judicially, said suddenly, "It is a salmon, by Jove!" That did the mischief. Amaryllis's secret suspicions were confirmed, and she at once agreed with him enthusiastically. She had seen salmon in shops, and they were just such big bright fish as this. Its head was, perhaps, a trifle big, and some of its fins were red, but in all other respects it was just what it should have been.

I shrugged my shoulders; their minds were made up, and it was no good saying anything, for they would not now have believed me. I merely observed ironically that its head and fins might be accounted for by their owner's having been a long time in fresh water. They took me seriously, and said that it doubtless was so. After that we had to pack up in a hurry and catch our train. Amaryllis was all smiles and enthusiasm during the journey back to town (luckily we had the carriage to ourselves), and when we parted at Waterloo she thanked me prettily for my trouble, and announced that she was going to send the lovely salmon to Aunt Elizabeth that very night.

I went home wondering what the recipient would think of the gift when it came to table, and hoping that I, at least, might not hear of the matter again. I did

not for some days, but about a week afterwards it was recalled to my memory rather violently by One in Authority, who met me and waved a journal at me. "Have you seen this?" he asked.

I had not seen that, and was promptly shown. The journal was the *Hourly Alarm*, and in it was an article entitled, "Salmon Return to the Thames: Lady's Remarkable Capture." With many sub-headings, such as "Netted after the ninth leap," the article gave a grotesque but recognisable version of Amaryllis's exploit, and, after a paragraph of superlatives, wandered into a remarkable life-history of the "king of fish," stating how it always works up rivers to feed and down them to spawn, and attributing the return of salmon to the Thames to a food-supply increased by the winter floods.

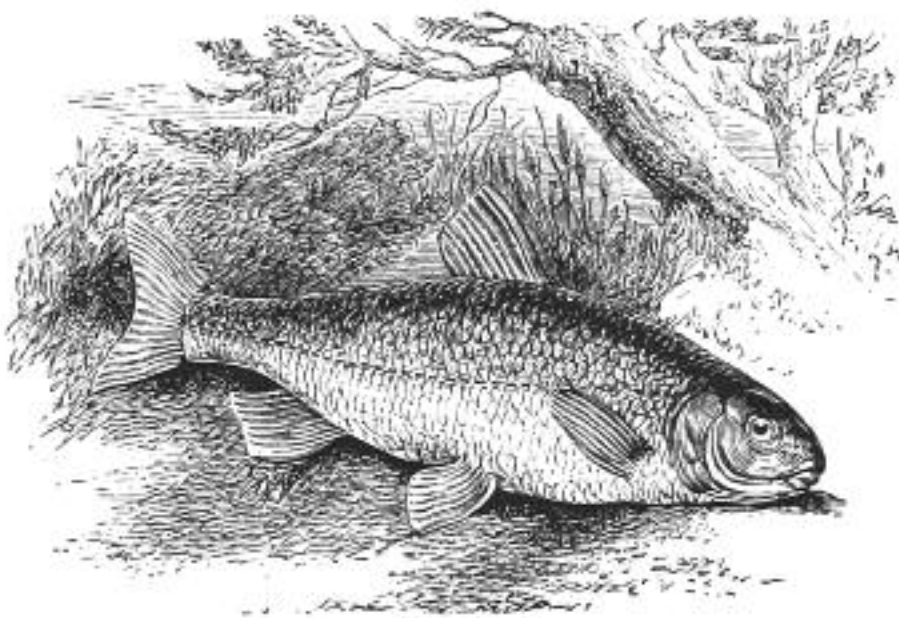
"This is important," said the One in Authority, "not the gas, of course, but the fact." I gasped, and begged him not to take too much on trust, but somehow I could not tell him why I was so warm about it. He seemed surprised, but thanked me. But he had, he said, the best of reasons for believing that the fish was a real grilse; he had ascertained the lady's name and address (William must have been talking in the city), and he proposed to call upon her without delay. With that we parted.

Events have moved rapidly since then. I met the One in Authority yesterday morning, and he was a very angry man. "It had a big head and red fins," he explained shortly. "It is disgraceful that these rumours should be published as facts in this way."

The lady, he explained, had been herself misled, and apparently by some experienced angler who was with her. The name of that angler he intended to ascertain, and his tone implied dire consequences to the person in question. The One in Authority does not like having his time wasted over trifles.

When I got home I found a note from Amaryllis saying that doubts had been cast on the authenticity of her fish, and commanding me instantly to write letters to all the papers giving my word as an angler that it was a salmon. Even Aunt Elizabeth was doubtful about it.

Lastly, this morning I find a paragraph in the *Hourly Alarm* headed, "Thames Salmon: Cruel Hoax on a Lady," and filled with caustic observations about a certain gentleman who is responsible for the whole mistake, and who is in plain words invited to explain his conduct. So I am just throwing a few clothes into a portmanteau, and am leaving town for an indefinite period. Letters will not be forwarded.



The Chub.

From S. C. Hall, *The Book of the Thames*
(London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1859), 367.



The Hen Downstream

by William F. Herrick

The rivers I have known are quiet,
now the season's done. For one last time
I'll store my gear in the cluttered closets
of our home.

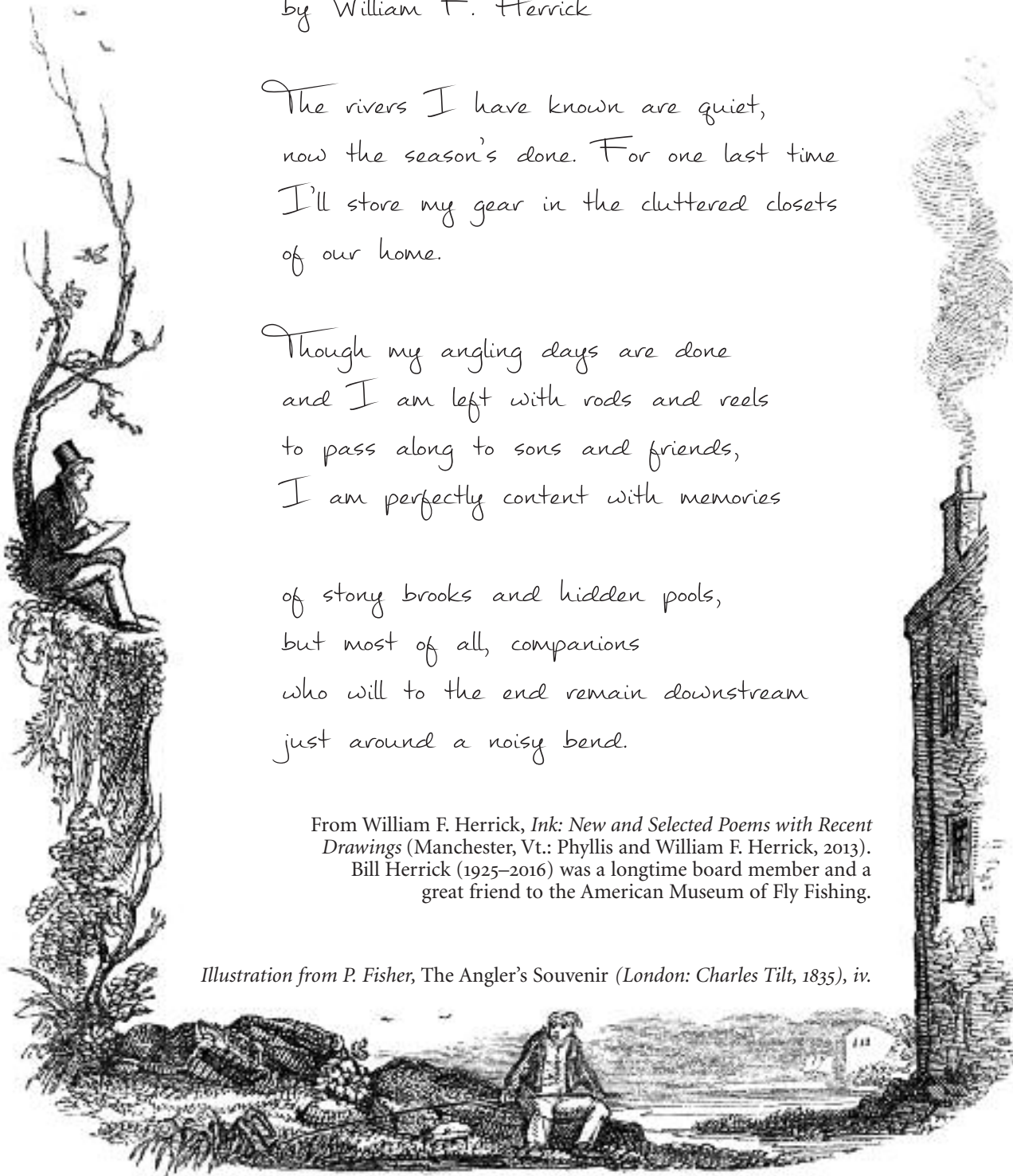
Though my angling days are done
and I am left with rods and reels
to pass along to sons and friends,
I am perfectly content with memories

of stony brooks and hidden pools,
but most of all, companions
who will to the end remain downstream
just around a noisy bend.

From William F. Herrick, *Ink: New and Selected Poems with Recent Drawings* (Manchester, Vt.: Phyllis and William F. Herrick, 2013).

Bill Herrick (1925–2016) was a longtime board member and a great friend to the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Illustration from P. Fisher, *The Angler's Souvenir* (London: Charles Tilt, 1835), iv.



Beautiful Fish and Beautiful Books

by Thomas Wolf

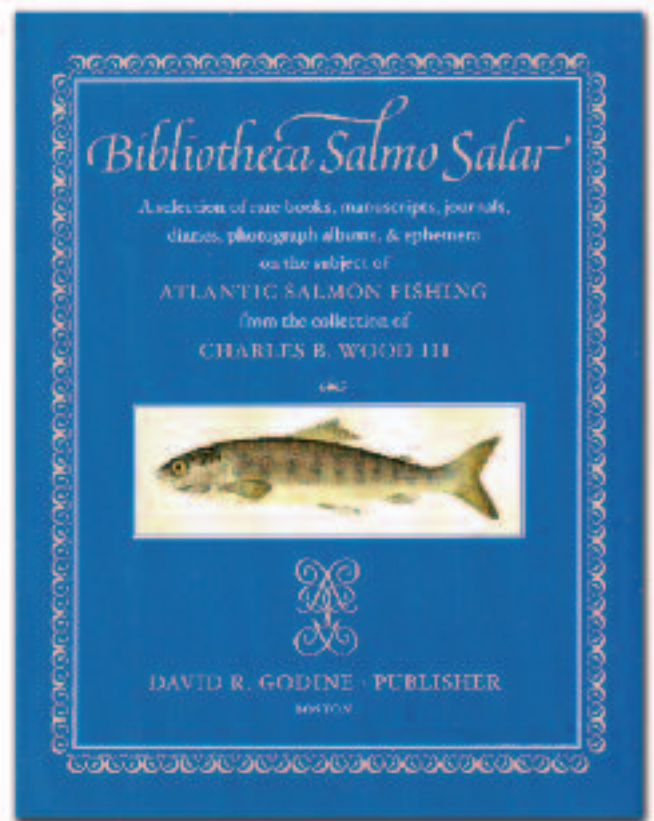
I PURCHASED MY FIRST “rare” book at the age of eleven at a charity rummage sale. I couldn’t believe my luck. I come from a family of well-known antiquarian bookmen, so I was anxious to prove myself to the family elders. My purchase was a two-volume treatise on fishing, and I was convinced it was a dazzler. Bragging about it to family and friends, I was urged to take it to one of the relatives for inspection. The expert was cousin Edwin Wolf II, who, among other things, had worked for the most famous of our family’s antiquarians—the legendary bookseller Abraham Simon Wolf Rosenbach.

Edwin looked at my treasure and remarked caustically: “Let me share a few rules. First, never buy an incomplete set.” (I hadn’t noticed that I had only volumes I and IV.) “Second, if a book is the seventh printing of the third edition as this one is, you don’t want it. Third, never buy books with missing pages.” (Mine had several illustration pages torn out.) “And fourth, remember that condition almost always is critical to value.” (My books had badly scuffed covers, including one with a missing spine.)

“But,” I said, retreating to my rock-solid final argument in favor of the purchase, “I paid only fifty cents.” Edwin’s answer has always stung: “If fifty cents is not too much to pay for the paper required to kindle a fire in your parents’ barbecue, you got a good deal.”

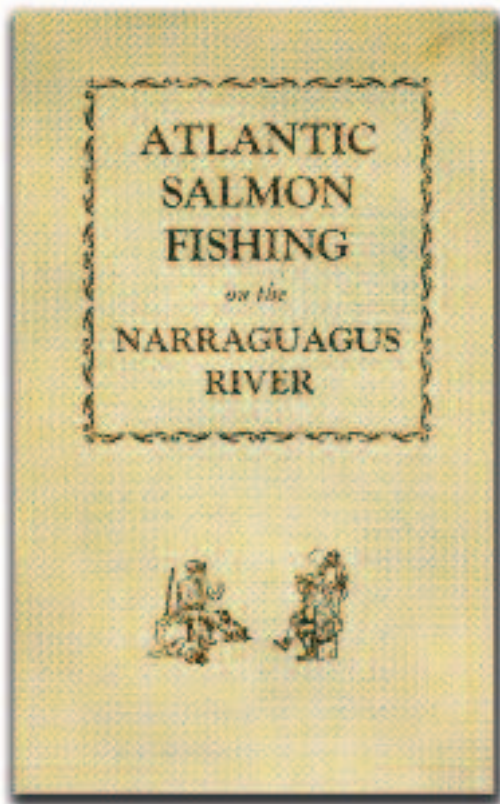
In the ensuing sixty years, I have bought and sold hundreds of *truly* rare books on many subjects and in many fields. But perhaps because of my ill-fated first attempt, I have never purchased one on the subject of fishing, despite being an avid fly fisherman, and certainly none on arguably the highest form of the art, salmon fishing. This is a collecting field about which I have been completely ignorant.

Until now. Indeed, Charles B. Wood III’s magnificent *Bibliotheca Salmo Salar*: *A selection of rare books, manuscripts, journals, diaries, photograph albums, & ephemera on the subject of Atlantic salmon fishing* is the crash course on the subject that I have always needed. A rare book it is not (though you can purchase a rare signed special-edition copy if you are so inclined). The commercial version at \$75 is a treasure in its own right and the next best thing to a “rare book”—someone else’s designation and collection of rarity, one which has taken Wood a lifetime to lovingly assemble. The book combines the best ele-

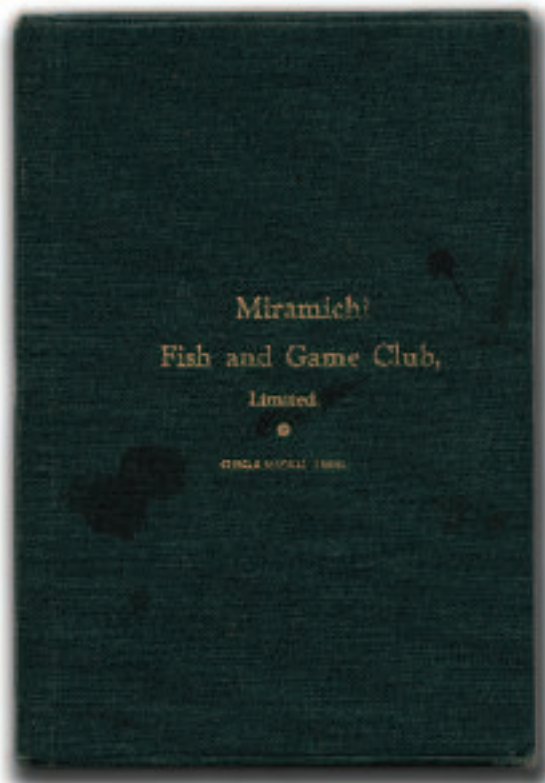


ments of a superb rare book catalog with the fascination of compelling autobiography, and it is fun to peruse. Indeed, few people will read it from cover to cover. Rather, you will savor it in small doses, returning to it again and again to prolong the pleasure, absorbing bits and pieces in a painless and enjoyable form of self-improvement, education, and just pure fun.

Who is it for? Part of its genius is its appeal to all kinds of people. If you know nothing about fishing, fear not. Just leafing through and taking in the beautifully reproduced color illustrations is a fine way to while away a spare few minutes or part of a rainy afternoon. On the other hand, if you are an obsessive salmon angler, you will probably read it the way I



Item #207: a folded flyer promoting salmon fishing on the Narraguagus River in Maine, issued by the Narraguagus Fish and Game Association circa 1940.



Item #148: the 1925 charter of the Miramichi Fish and Game Club in Canada.

did, beginning by looking for some familiar landmarks: a folded flyer promoting salmon fishing on the Narraguagus River in Maine, where I cast my first salmon fly half a century ago (item #207), or the 1925 charter of the Miramichi Fish and Game Club in Canada, where I caught my first salmon (item #148). Only an antiquarian bookseller like Wood, with a passion and knowledge for both printed matter and fishing, could have assembled such a collection, described in the promotional material for the book as “the most extensive . . . about the sport in private hands.”

One of the challenges in a book like this is how to organize the material—do you do it geographically or by topic or by category of printed material? Wood’s decision has been to do all three. The first three sections are geographical, taking us first to Norway, then the British Isles, and finally to Canada. The next two are more topical: works about salmon clubs and books about salmon flies (though these fly volumes have the special distinction of having actual flies in them). Finally, we have categories of printed material—photograph albums; manuscripts, proofs and journals; and miscellany—the last being a catchall for what did not fit into the other chapters. Like any good bookman, Wood relies on research, and this book would have been the poorer had he not shared a list of his reference works in a fascinating bibliography.

It has been said that the magic of salmon fishing may be in its final stages. Dams, pollution, commercial development, global warming, poaching, overfishing, you name it—all have, until recently, made the future seem bleak. Similar things have been said about the future of the printed book. The great revival of fine printing begun by William Morris in England in the late nineteenth century, which gradually influenced the

production of trade books throughout the world for the next hundred years, is being challenged by new technology that could make printed books obsolete. Woe to the publisher today who stakes his or her future on the commercial viability of producing beautiful books.

But the most recent trends on salmon fishing are hopeful. Dams are being eliminated, conservation is preserving great tracts of land from development, pollution is being abated, catch-and-release programs are working, and salmon stocks are making a comeback in many rivers. As for the beautiful printed book, Charles Wood and his publisher, David Godine, have made the case for its future as well. Go out and buy this book and you will see what I mean.



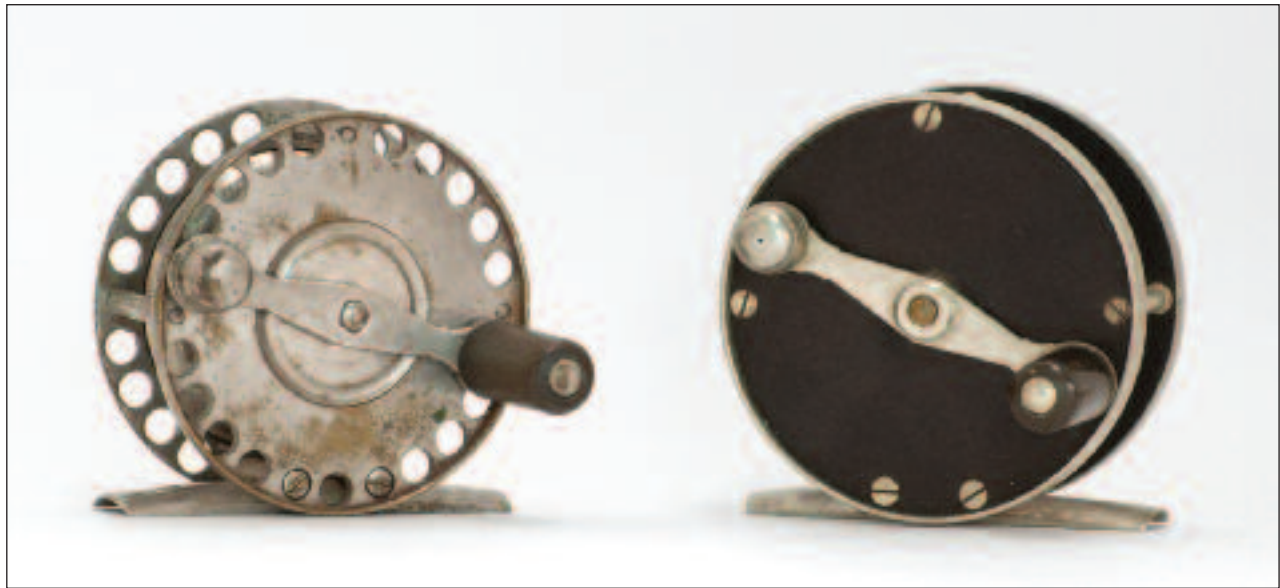
Thomas Wolf is a founder and principal of WolfBrown, an international consulting firm specializing in services to the cultural sector. Among his rare book collecting clients have been the Morgan Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Harry Ransom Center. He is also a professional musician, an avid fly fisherman, and a book collector.

Bibliotheca Salmo Salar: A selection of rare books, manuscripts, journals, diaries, photograph albums, & ephemera on the subject of Atlantic salmon fishing
by Charles B. Wood III

David R. Godine, 2017
\$75 (hardcover)
\$800 (deluxe edition)
248 pages
www.godine.com

Julius Vom Hofe: Pushing the Boundaries of Reel Design

Sara Wilcox



A tale of two reels: accession number 1973.159.002 (left) was a failed attempt at crafting a new kind of reel, whereas accession number 1973.153.009 (right) was a custom-order reel made in the quintessential Vom Hofe style.

A REEL MADE BY the Vom Hofe brothers of Brooklyn, New York, is generally considered a standard in elegant, yet functional, design.

The reel on the right, made by Julius Vom Hofe in 1900, is, according to Jim Brown in *A Treasury of Reels*, “a fabulous example of the extraordinary work that could be done by Julius Vom Hofe on a custom order basis. This reel is markedly narrow between the plates, features an aluminum spool to reduce weight, and is highly decorated throughout. The rosette screws are typical on many Julius Vom Hofe baitcasting reels and salmon reels but are rarely found on his trout reels. Some collectors have speculated that they are not entirely ornamental but that they may help alleviate some of the stress on the fragile rubber sideplates.”¹

But then another fanciful and eccentric reel (left), circa 1915, is not indicative of the usual Vom Hofe style. According to Brown, it “might have easily become a standard Julius Vom Hofe raised-pillar pattern if sections of the frame were removed rather than perforated.”² Instead, it failed in the marketplace. Brown noted, “The perforated rim must have been easier and cheaper to produce than the raised-pillar reel but seemingly it found little favor with fishermen as few are seen today. Perhaps too, it was not entirely as rugged as might be desired—an untoward knock on the rim might break the metal near a perforation.”³

Let’s face it, even the best reel makers in history can have their duds. Julius Vom Hofe, like any good innovator, was constantly tinkering with his designs, even after putting out amazing custom and high-end options as far back as the late 1800s. The 1900 custom reel is an example of his finest work, and the perforated-rim reel represents his attempt to bring innovation to the masses with a more economical option. The perforations on the reel were a deliberate effort to shave weight off more utilitarian models, attempting to give the prospective angler a well-balanced, light-yet-tough tool to tame trout. Lightness was achieved, but toughness was not.

You live and you learn.

PETER NARDINI
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

ENDNOTES

1. Jim Brown, *A Treasury of Reels* (Manchester, Vt.: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, 1990), 133.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Museum Wish List

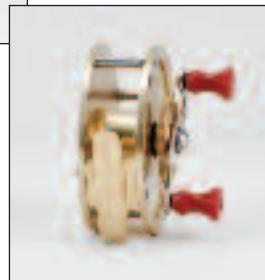
The museum is looking for particular items for both our upcoming saltwater exhibit and our general collection. If you are able to donate, sell, or loan us any of these—or know someone who might—please be in touch with Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama.

For the saltwater exhibit:

- Captain Bob McChristian's Red S-Handle Seamaster fly reels with light-bulb-shaped knob (The first reel was an anti-reverse model. Only a dozen of these were made in the 1950s and sold to his friends.)
- Photograph or reference material for the Florida Keys Fishing Guide Association
- Photographs of Captain Bob McChristian, circa 1950
- A. W. Dimock's *The Book of the Tarpon*, published in 1925
- DuPont original nylon fishing line packet
- Photographs of the Miami Beach Rod and Reel Club, circa 1929
- Photographs of Dr. Arthur Howland, developer of the original fiberglass fishing rod
- Prototype of Gar Wood's machined aluminum saltwater Wedding Cake reel, circa 1967
- Photographs of Myron Gregory, 1950–1960
- Shrimp and tarpon flies tied by Homer Rhode Jr.



An example of Captain Bob McChristian's red S-Handle Seamaster reel.



An example of a DuPont original nylon fishing line packet.



An example of a Richardson chest fly box.

For the general collection:

- A Richardson chest fly box
- Early Orvis catalogs (1890s)
- A copy of Volume 18, Number 4 of *Field & Stream* magazine
- Bendback hooks
- Abercrombie & Fitch catalogs, circa 1925–1930
- The Colonel White, a red and white landlocked salmon streamer developed in Maine
- A bass fly tied by Tom Loving

Announcing AMFF's 2017 Izaak Walton Award Recipient Jim Klug

We are proud to announce that Jim Klug will receive the American Museum of Fly Fishing's 2017 Izaak Walton Award in Bozeman, Montana, this fall. We hope you will join us for a special celebration at the Riverside Country Club on October 5.

Jim is the founder of Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures, an author, and a photographer. He is also the executive producer and writer for Confluence Films. Jim's photographs and articles have appeared in many publications, including the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Drake*, *Fly Fish Journal*, *Fly Fisherman* magazine, *Fly Rod & Reel*, and many more. Jim's book, *Fly Fishing Belize*, is considered one of the finest on the subject and features his captivating photography and riveting text.



"The one thing that just about everyone in this industry has in common," says Jim, "is an appreciation and an understanding of the importance of conservation in our sport." To this end, the Yellow Dog Community and Conservation Foundation (YDCCF) was established. YDCCF directly supports conservation needs, community projects, and education efforts where Yellow Dog customers travel and where Yellow Dog is currently doing business.

Jim's love, skill, and knowledge of the sport; his joy of sharing it with others; his creativity; and his dedication to the conservation of fly-fishing waters and communities around the world make him a truly worthy honoree.

For more information, please visit our website (www.amff.org), or contact Samantha Pitcher (spitcher@amff.org).



The Izaak Walton Award was established in 2014 to honor and celebrate individuals who live by the Compleat Angler philosophy. Their passion for the sport of fly fishing and involvement in the angling community provides inspiration for others and promotes the legacy of leadership for future generations.

Izaak Walton's book, *The Compleat Angler*, helped establish an angling ideal, where "a good Angler must not only be an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope, and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself." Considering its publication date of 1653, Walton was a man ahead of his time.



Museum News

Board Changes

The American Museum of Fly Fishing would like to recognize Jane Cooke for her service as a board member from 2011 to 2017. In addition to being an energetic trustee and all-around supporter of the museum, Jane was a dedicated committee chair and served on multiple event committees. We thank her for her years of commitment.

We would also like to welcome Patricia Watson, senior vice president for university advancement at Brown University, to our board. Patricia brings years of nonprofit development experience and a love of fly fishing that began nearly twenty-five years ago in Belize.

Our board is vital to our continued success, and we are fortunate to benefit from its leadership. Thank you to all our board members, both past and present.

In the Library

Thanks to the following for their donations of titles that have become part of our permanent collection (published in 2017 unless otherwise noted):

Willard P. Greenwood II sent us a signed copy of his book of poems, *Pelagic Mania* (Finishing Line Press). Margot Page gave us a copy of the twentieth-anniversary expanded edition of her book, *Little Rivers: Tales of a Woman Angler* (Three Winds Media, 2015). And David R. Godine, Publisher, sent us a copy of Charles B. Wood's *Bibliotheca Salmo Salar: A selection of rare books, manuscripts, journals, diaries, photograph albums, & ephemera on the subject of Atlantic Salmon Fishing from the collection of Charles B. Wood III*.



Pete Nardini

The AMFF's own Yoshi Akiyama led a fly-tying course at the museum on March 18. Yoshi taught the intimate crowd how to tie small-stream classics, including the Vermont Caddis.

Upcoming Events

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

July 16

Gallery Program
Celebrate National Ice Cream Day!
Fly-fishing activities and free ice cream
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

August 12

10th annual Fly-Fishing Festival
Vendors, demonstrations, casting competition
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

September 14

Members-Only Event
Rare Flies
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

September 23

Smithsonian magazine Museum Day Live!
Free admission with a Museum Day Live! ticket

September 30

Gallery Program
Canvas & Cocktails with Christopher Pierce
5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

October 5

2017 Izaak Walton Award Event
honoring Jim Klug
Riverside Country Club
Bozeman, Montana

October 21

Annual Members Meeting
9:00 a.m.
Manchester Community Library
Manchester, Vermont

December 2

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Zane Williams



Jan Harold Brunvand, whose article “More on the Mickey Finn” appeared in the Fall 2015 issue of this journal, describes himself on his business card as “Folklorist, Author, Skier, Fly Fisher.” He has a PhD in folklore from Indiana University and taught at the University of Idaho, Southern Illinois University–Edwardsville, and for thirty years, until retirement in 1996, at the University of Utah. He lives in Salt Lake City, convenient for pursuing his devotion to downhill skiing and to fly fishing. He is the author of numerous articles in the field of folklore, of the standard textbook in American folklore, and of a series of books about urban legends, including *The Vanishing Hitchhiker*, *The Choking Doberman*, *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends*, and, most recently, a revised and expanded edition of *Too Good to Be True: The Colossal Book of Urban Legends* (paperback by W. W. Norton, 2014 and available as an audiobook at Audible.com). Jan and his wife Judy just welcomed their first great-grandchild in December, and he is, if not a lunker, certainly a keeper. Perhaps appropriately for a fisherman’s kin, his name is Jonah.

Abbey Mundt

John Mundt is a former trustee of the American Museum of Fly Fishing and has been a regular contributor to the *American Fly Fisher* since 1991. He was a recipient of the museum’s Austin Hogan Award in 1996 for his research on Atlantic salmon fishing in Maine’s Penobscot River. Over the past ten years, John has enjoyed watching his son Jack follow the trail from Cub Scout to Eagle Scout with BSA Troop 76 in Simsbury, Connecticut. As an adult leader with the troop, John earned his Wood Badge and completed a Philmont Trek in 2014. He is a past president of the Anglers’ Club of New York and has served for many years on that club’s library committee. John and his family reside in Simsbury, Connecticut, and you can often find him waist deep in the Farmington River during a mayfly hatch.



From Genio C. Scott, *Fishing in American Waters* (New York: The American News Company, 1875), 367.

Looking Forward to Looking Back



The Mary Orvis Marbury panels as displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Photo from the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.



The Mary Orvis Marbury panels on display in the first American Museum of Fly Fishing gallery, photographed by Lefty Kreh in 1976 as part of a collaboration with Boyd Pfeiffer on the museum's first slide show and photo project. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM of Fly Fishing was founded in Manchester, Vermont, in 1968. Although Neil Armstrong wouldn't set foot on the moon for another year, we saw Jim Lovell, Bill Anders, and Frank Borman orbit it ten times on that year's Apollo 8 mission. While the nation reached out into space, some wise anglers in Vermont realized the importance of also looking back into our past.

With our fiftieth anniversary in 2018 approaching fast, I'd like to take a moment to look both back and forward.

When considering our first fifty years, I am struck again and again by not just the sense of history within the American Museum of Fly Fishing, but also the foresight of the individuals who imagined such an institution and then provided for our continued existence.

The Mary Orvis Marbury panels are the cornerstone of our collection. These gorgeous, one-of-a-kind artifacts were originally constructed for and displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. In 1963, Hermann Kessler discovered them in the attic at the Orvis rod shop, wisely realized both their intrinsic and historical value, and ensured that they were preserved. This was really our first act of curation and, working with Orvis owner Leigh Perkins, the discovery led to the creation of our museum.

Interestingly, much of our collection was not curated by us, but by our constituency. Those rods, reels, flies, paintings, and books that brought their owners so much joy over the years were not always relegated to the corner of the cellar or passed to wayward nephews. Many were passed along and added to our museum, where they continue to tell their story today.

I'd like to take this quinquagenary moment to ask that our friends, readers, and supporters consider looking forward another way this year and to include the museum as part of your estate planning. As you talk with professionals in that field, please ask their advice about how you might be able to support our mission for the *next* fifty years. And, of course, please call or e-mail me if you would like to discuss the matter. As we look forward to another half century, I would like to thank you for your support, interest, and participation over the past one.

BOB RULEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
bruley@amff.org



Catch and Release the Spirit of Fly Fishing!

4070 Main Street • PO Box 42
Manchester, Vermont 05254
Tel: (802) 362-3300 • Fax: (802) 362-3308
E-MAIL: amff@amff.org
WEBSITE: www.amff.org

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 Yoshi Akiyama at yakiyama@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.



space for FSC info