

The American Fly Fisher

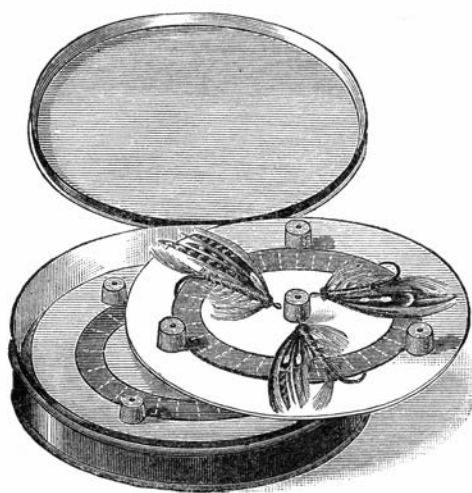
Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing



SPRING 2019

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And Now . . .



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

IF YOU'VE READ Part I of Andrew Herd and Paul Schullery's two-parter about the museum's Harris collection, no doubt you've been hankering for Part II. If by some chance you *haven't* read it, go find your copy of the Winter 2019 issue right now and read "The Oldest Flies, Part I: In Which the Extraordinary Harris Fly Collection's Origins Are Finally Discovered." I'll wait.

Finished? Good. Now let me direct your immediate attention to "The Oldest Flies, Part II: In Which the Harris Flies Are Sorted and Replicated." If that sounds a bit dry, let me assure you that this is the true show-and-tell: an opportunity to take a close look—with real-life-historian guides—at what may be the most important collection within our collection (think "it comprehensively rewrites the early history of fly tying"). In lieu of yet-to-be-taken studio-quality photos of the flies, the authors (in England and the United States) enlisted the help of Robert Frandsen (in Australia), a gifted recreator of traditional fly patterns, to replicate them. Herd then photographed the replicas for this article. Your private tour begins on page 2.

This issue also features not one, but two fishing-inspired artists. In "Henry Loenidas Rolfe: The Landseer of Fish Painters" (page 11), Keith Harwood highlights a painting found in the Haworth Art Gallery, provides a biography of the Victorian artist, and shares some reproduction prints from his own collection. Willard Greenwood, in "Fishing with Winslow Homer" (page 14), takes a personal approach as he considers his own

days growing up near Homer's Maine coast stomping ground. Greenwood weaves together his love of both painter and place, including some of the complicated parts: one particularly haunting painting and the letting go of a beloved family home.

Turning to museum news, we have new ambassadors to announce. Our ambassadors dedicate their time to promoting the mission, increasing awareness, and spreading enthusiasm of the history of our great sport. We welcome five more on page 18. And the Spring issue brings the opportunity to thank everyone who helped the museum in 2018 with donations of money, resources, and time. A list of our fine friends begins on page 20.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that the American Museum of Fly Fishing has partnered with the John D. Voelker Foundation to bring back the Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award. The award, which was established by Nick Lyons and the foundation in 1994, was administered by *Fly Rod & Reel* magazine until it ceased publication in 2017. Writer David Van Wie (see "I Took to the Woods: A Storied Waters Adventure," Spring 2018), inspired by his friendship with Voelker's daughter, Grace Wood, spearheaded conversations between the Voelker Foundation and the museum that have led to the award's reincarnation. You'll find a call for submissions on page 27. The deadline is May 31; we plan to publish the winner in the Summer 2020 issue of this journal.

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ON THE COVER: *Reproductions of the O'Holleran flies. The originals, Irish salmon and trout patterns tied by Peter O'Holleran for Lough Corrib Company of Galway in 1791, are part of the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Harris flies collection. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen. Photo by Andrew Herd.*

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The Oldest Flies

Part II: In Which the Harris Flies Are Sorted and Replicated

by Andrew Herd and Paul Schullery



Photos by Andrew Herd except where noted

Flies for Lough Sheelin, tied in 1820. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen.

A SHORT WORD IS in order about how this article came to be written. Starting about a decade ago, Paul Schullery, Ken Cameron, and Andrew Herd exchanged a lengthy and highly enjoyable series of e-mails about the early flies in the Harris collection, the intention being to publish something, perhaps even a book, about them all. But we realized the more we found out, the less we knew. So many years have passed since we began that, despite many essential contributions to the conversation, some of which will be noted below, Ken has to our regret dropped out of the project.

But it has taken all of that time to reach the present position, from which we feel able to make reasonably confident statements about the earliest surviving artificial flies and are happily able to provide references to back up our assertions.

Still, what really made these articles possible was another development: the

more recent involvement of Robert Frandsen. Paul and Ken live in the United States (eastern and western, 2,000 miles apart; no actual meeting to discuss things!), Andrew in England, and Robert in Australia. It is rare to the point of nearly nonexistent that any of our paths ever cross, especially at the museum in Vermont where the flies are, but some years ago, Ken did make a trip to the museum and took a set of working photographs (i.e., not intended to be publication quality, but excellent for study) of the earliest flies in the Harris collection.

Aside from our continued and extensive ramblings about the flies back and forth via e-mail, the next big step in the project occurred in 2017, when Andrew, while working on another project, asked Robert, a gifted recreator of traditional fly patterns, if he might be willing to tie some of the flies. Just like that, it suddenly became possible to show the flies in the Harris collection in a way remarkably

similar, if not identical, to how they looked when the patterns were first tied (we drew the line at making exact duplications of the hooks on the grounds of cost). Because at present there seems to be little hope of getting professional, studio-quality images of the Harris collection given the expense involved, we believe that our approach is the best way forward—and perhaps it might inspire a donor to cover the costs of a definitive photographic survey that we feel is long overdue.

Richard Gregory was responsible for (i.e., directly connected with) the majority of the very early flies in the Harris collection, which appear to have been acquired, presumably by him, with the intention that they should be fished. In other words, they were not intended for ornament or display, and we believe that they are representative of the quality of fly that would have been found in many anglers' fly books of the period.

SOURCES OF THE FLIES

The earliest flies that we are sure he bought came from Thomas Cummess, of Kilbride, in 1789, and were purchased when Gregory was twenty-eight years old. There are others tied by Cornelius O’Gorman, of Ennis, in 1791; an O’Holleran set (of Annagh) from the same year; a 1797 set tied by Haynes of Gort; a couple of flies from Kiltartan—which must be Gregory’s—dated 1810, the year that he inherited the estate; and a fly from Caernarvon, in Wales, dated 1815.

Other flies in this part of the Harris collection include sets from Stockbridge, dated 1816; Lough Sheelin, dated 1820 (seen opposite); and Mallow and Ettingsall (not dated, but on blued Limericks and so probably post-1837). Stockbridge is in Hampshire in southern England, and Lough Sheelin lies 90 miles from Coole Park, whereas Mallow and Ettingsall’s business was in Dublin. Harris’s note with the Lough Sheelin flies said that they were from an old fly book dated to 1817, and it seems probable that they were tied within Gregory’s lifetime.

Why are these flies so important? The Cummess, O’Gorman, O’Holleran, and

Haynes are the earliest known patterns of any description for which the date can be authenticated. The Cummess also contains the earliest known patterns with mixed wings and shows a completely undocumented tying style. The Haynes set contains the earliest known sea trout patterns, and the Cornelius O’Gorman set basks in the colorful reputation their creator gained from cameo appearances in a book written by his relative James O’Gorman in 1845.¹ All of the Irish sets are fascinating because next to nothing is known about the Irish style of fly dressing before 1842. The Caernarvon and Stockbridge sets are noteworthy because while they are youngsters by the standard of the rest of the collection, they are still rare survivors of flies from their period.

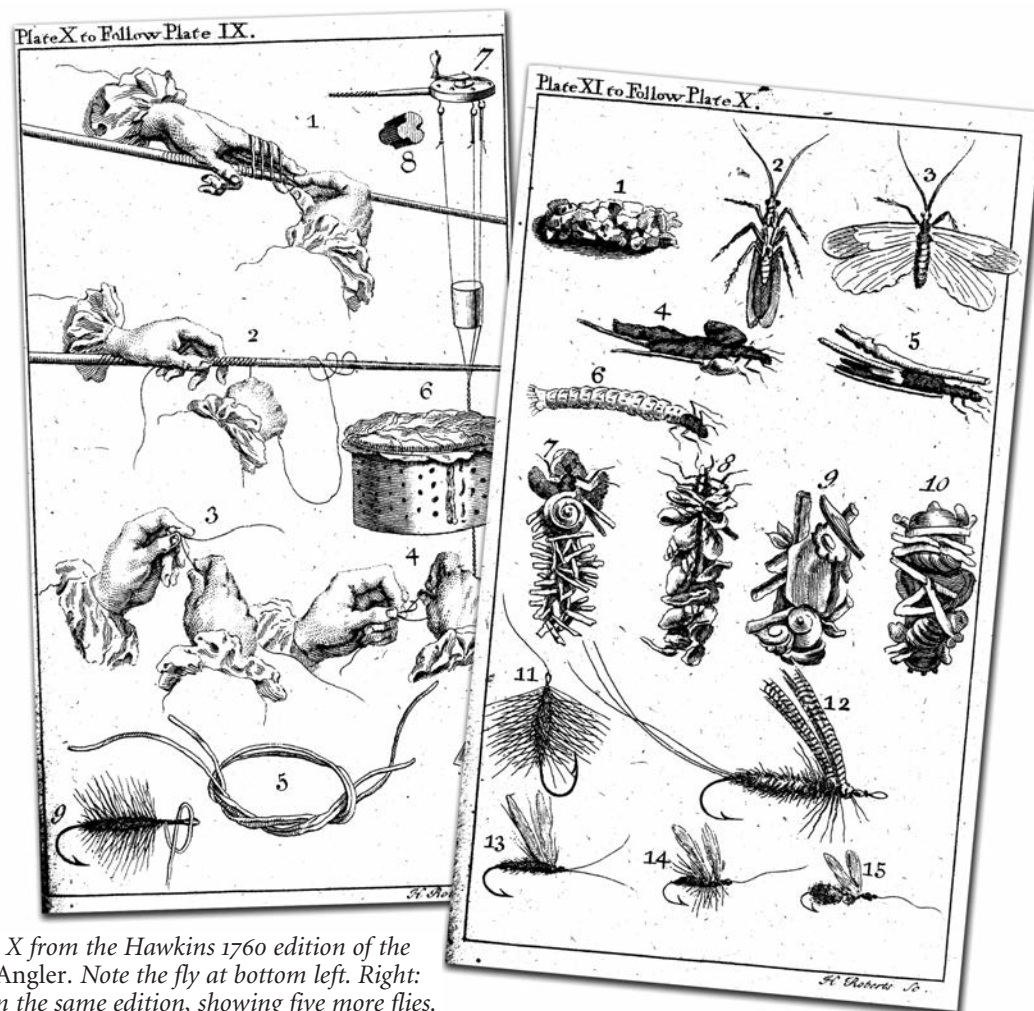
The value of these flies lies not so much in the contents of their dressings—after all, we have descriptions of British patterns tied a century before—but because they show *how* these early flies were tied. In some cases, examination of the patterns considerably advances the date on which we can confidently say that certain materials, or even certain styles of tying, were being used. One of the most noticeable features of all of these early

patterns is that even though many were tied by well-known fly dressers on a presumably commercial basis, the apparent quality standards of their construction leaves much to be desired by modern criteria, and we believe that there is a lesson to be taken from that.

In summary, Richard Gregory’s flies are a stunningly important treasure trove—perhaps the single most distinguished collection of flies on the planet—but they become even more compelling once one knows something of the man who collected them. Gregory was an unforgettable character, but understanding his life and that of his family turns what at first glance is a random collection of flies into a coherent group, because all of the early Irish flies were sourced from within a short distance of Coole Park by a man who had the resources to purchase the very best of anything he wanted.

THE HAWKINS ILLUSTRATIONS

Having mentioned the Hawkins plates in Part I, we will discuss them a little further because there are some notable similarities between the flies they depict and some of the patterns that Richard Gregory was



Left: Plate X from the Hawkins 1760 edition of the *Compleat Angler*. Note the fly at bottom left. Right: Plate XI from the same edition, showing five more flies.

using.² The hooks are different—the Hawkins set is tied on round bends, possibly Kirbys, and three of the six flies have either gut or hog bristle loops, proving that such refinements were in use in England in the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

It is also possible, by the way, that the hooks were eyed, but we think it unlikely, as eyed hooks were virtually unknown at the time and the artist has deliberately chosen a finer line to show the loops by comparison to the visible parts of the hooks in two of the three flies concerned. By contrast, all the Irish flies are tied on Limericks, and none have loops for attachment to the leader.

The Hawkins flies comprise two palmers and four winged patterns, all of which have markedly tapered bodies, showing coarse or intentionally picked-out material with a variable length of fiber. The material cannot be guessed from the illustration, but the lists of flies appended to Hawkins's *Compleat Angler* include wool, bear, hare, rabbit, martin, spaniel, calf, fox, old barge sail, and in one case seal fur, there being no mention of pig's wool at all. The palmers are tied as palmers have been since the first instructions were recorded in the seventeenth century, so we can dispense with those with little further discussion, but there is much more to be said about the winged flies.

Every single one of the winged flies have strikingly upright wings, compatible with the reversed-wing method that was popular at the time. Barring on the fly numbered 12 makes it likely that it has either a mallard or a teal wing, but the others have such artistically stylized wings that it is impossible to guess what the material might have been, although the lists of patterns appended to the book make it clear that nothing out of the ordinary for the period was used. Likely candidates for their winging material are starling, land rail, coot, or fieldfare.

The only two winged flies that appear to have ribs are nos. 12 and 13. Note that only one of the six flies has a tail and that the exaggerated length of tail shown is very likely to be correct. Two of the winged flies have a collar hackle tied in just behind the wing, whereas one is an ant pattern, which appears to lack any hackle at all. The horns or antennae on fly no. 13 make it likely that it was a sedge, and fly no. 12 was almost certainly a green drake. But fly no. 13 is a bit of a conundrum as far as the details of its construction are concerned. It might have been dressed with a tapered body and a hackle tied in halfway down the shank and wound forward, or it might have a body that is increasingly well picked out toward the shoulder, where a hackle has been wound in.

One of the most important sources of our excitement over the Harris flies is that on many occasions they clearly bring the Hawkins engravings to life. For the first time in the long study of fly-fishing history, we are presented with a clear link between the early artwork representing flies and the actual flies they were intended to show. As important, we are exposed to a previously unimagined wealth of detail about how these late-eighteenth-century patterns were tied and what they looked like; as if that isn't enough, we are made aware of earlier applications of various materials and tying techniques than we had any awareness of. Here follows a summary of those lessons, surprises, and discoveries.

THE CUMMESS FLIES

If we compare the flies on the Hawkins plates to the Thomas Cummess flies in the Harris collection, we are on familiar territory, despite the fact that the Hawkins patterns were tied in London in 1760 on trout hooks and the Cummess set in 1789 for trout in Lough Mask in the west of Ireland on salmon hooks. The wings of the Cummess flies are strikingly upright, in many cases inclining forward of vertical, and many of the flies lack tails.



Flies from the plates in the 1760 edition of The Compleat Angler, published by Hawkins. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen.



Flies for Lough Mask dressed by Thomas Cummess, of Kilbride, in 1789. The salmon fly at bottom right is 1991.020.015 in the Harris collection and is one of a pair of the earliest known surviving mixed-wing salmon flies. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen, including a variant.

Now we come to the differences. The vast majority of the Cummess set's wings are built from bronze mallard, with the exception of two that used woodcock and one that used starling. The bodies are dressed with a marked taper and well picked-out fur, which on very close examination turns out to be pig's wool in most cases, although a few may be tied with sheep's wool. The bodies are worthy of further study, because the picking out is exaggerated to the point of being bouffant, but the only reason it looks odd to us now is because in most cases we would use a hackle to achieve the same effect today. Pig's wool has long and short hairs, so it was a trivial job for a fly dresser to produce an enticing effect. Although pig's wool was mentioned by Venables,³ the first mention of the use of pig's wool in a specific pattern is by Kirkbride in 1837,⁴ and yet here we are looking at it in a fly dressed nearly fifty years earlier. If there ever was a better demonstration of the "parade of authors"—i.e., as if there was a simple, linear progression in the sport's development that is fully portrayed by a sequential reading of the published books of a given period—then this Cummess set most surely is it. There must always have been more going on among fly makers than the surviving books tell

us, especially in the centuries before 1800, when so few books were produced compared with the great many anglers who were out there experimenting and working on their own fly patterns without writing books about the results.

Another point worth noting is how short are the bodies on this early Irish set. It might be because the dresser was tying trout flies on large hooks for big fish and was making a compromise, or it might be the style that Cummess favored. What the bodies lack in length, they make up in bulk, and hackles are common, usually wound starting one-fourth to one-third the way up the body and using the steeply tapered feathers that were common in this period. In four cases, the heads are made using dyed pig's wool, which was to become a trademark of an Irish tie, if it wasn't already so in 1879.

The final pattern included in this set, 1991.020.015, is a salmon fly that Gregory used to catch four fish at Galway in 1791, which may or may not have been tied by Cummess but is in any case a spectacular historical artifact. It is one of a pair of the earliest known surviving mixed-wing salmon flies, and it is tied with a silver wire tip, a yellow silk tag, and a flamboyant peacock herl body, with a wing made of a golden pheasant rump feather sandwiched

between a pair of short golden pheasant tippets, sprigged with gray mallard. The pattern has blue and yellow macaw horns, and it is finished with an ostrich herl head, making it a remarkably sophisticated item. The wing alone shows an extraordinary command of the possibilities offered by the Irish method, the sandwiching of the rump feather between the tippets being particularly striking, because if this particular fly had not survived, the first confirmed use of this method would be fifty years later. However, the sprigging of the wing and the use of blue and yellow macaw horns (Gregory would probably have called them "feelers") over it nails down the first use of two more of the core salmon fly-tying methods, to the best of our knowledge, to an Irish origin.

Whatever materials 1991.020.015 was tied with, it would be a first, but it moves the earliest known use of a mixed-wing, golden pheasant, macaw horns, and the classic ostrich herl head back to the late eighteenth century, and, most important of all, to Ireland. Once again, this shows the dangers of relying entirely on the literature—the first mention of either the use of golden pheasant or of a mixed wing in a book was by Taylor in 1800, yet here is a fly tied nearly a decade earlier, demonstrating that both methods were



Flies tied by Cornelius O’Gorman, of Ennis, in 1791. Fly no. 1991.020.024 in the Harris collection is at the center of the top row. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen.

already in use.⁵ We find it entertaining that in the closing years of the nineteenth century, the famous and generally controversial George Kelson maintained—against all evidence to the contrary—that he had invented the mixed wing, but he was born forty-four years after this fly was tied. We decline to even guess how much this fly is worth.

While we are on the subject, be aware that the terminology for the parts of a salmon fly wasn’t standardized until the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Terms like *tip*, *tag*, *butt*, and *joint* would have meant nothing to an eighteenth-century fly dresser. This complicates the interpretation of early salmon fly dressings immensely, not least because they were invariably written for anglers who tied in the hand, which demands a completely different approach to tying on a vise.

Although the Cummess set is by no means sophisticated by late-Victorian standards, given Gregory’s means it is reasonable to assume that they were the best flies available to him at the time. We suggest, therefore, that they are probably typical of the standard of Irish flies in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It is intriguing and almost certainly revealing that in the majority of cases, the style of tying is very similar to that shown in the Hawkins plates, barring the lack of gut/bristle loops and the increased length of the English fly bodies, which typically begin on the shank directly above the barb, rather than forward of the point. We suggest that there is evidence of a common method of dressing

flies here that was shared between Irish and English dressers in the late eighteenth century.

THE O’GORMAN FLIES

The next set of flies we need to consider are the ones tied by Cornelius O’Gorman in 1791. These are roughly contemporary with the Cummess set, and most were tied for use on Lough Mask, so one might expect them to resemble the 1789 set, but in many respects they do not. There is a note with the flies remarking that the hooks of flies 1991.020.020–.023 were likely examples of original O’Shaughnessy Limericks, and if so, the original 024 is also an O’Shaughnessy iron. Note that the bend on the original flies is similar to but not necessarily identical with flies in the Haynes set (specifically 1991.020.025–.032) or to other hooks in the part of the Harris collection that were owned by Richard Gregory.

Dan O’Shaughnessy started making hooks in 1795 and was dead by 1820, so the dates do fit. The key identifying feature is the way the point of the hooks was filed: it is fine, but not at the expense of the thickness of the wire where the barb was formed, which caused it to be the weak point of many hooks. The filing produced a characteristic profile that could not be achieved using normal production methods. Unfortunately, the identifying tags are all hooked over the one part of the bend we would really like to see on the O’Gorman flies; in the limited time that Ken had available when he took the pictures, using the equipment he

had, this was about all that could be hoped for. But the Haynes flies all have the characteristic “kick” or smaller radius where the bend of the hook reaches 90 degrees to the shank, which is a characteristic of the way O’Shaughnessy bent his irons.

Cornelius O’Gorman was related to James O’Gorman and is mentioned multiple times in the latter’s *Practice of Angling Particularly as Regards Ireland*, published in 1845. On pages 13 and 14 of volume 1, Corney (or Corny) is described as a rod maker, and on page 90 as “our fly-tier.” On page 210 we learn that Corney had died—probably of cholera and in Ennis, which is on the Shannon—some years before the book was written. That would almost certainly place his death between 1831 and 1834, when the town was hit by an epidemic. On page 207 of the same volume, James O’Gorman tells us that Corney “repeatedly disappointed us of flies and tackling—sometimes from caprice, oftener from drunkenness,” and there is more of his drinking habits on page 209. A reliable character Corney was not, but James O’Gorman clearly had a high opinion of his fly-dressing abilities.

As noted above, these flies look very different from the Cummess set, despite the majority being tied on large hooks for use in Lough Mask. The two smallest flies in the set were dressed for use on Inchiquin Lough in County Clare. Features that distinguish the O’Gorman set are the wings, which lie close to the shank instead of vertical; the bodies, which are longer and begin above the

point; and the tails, which, where present, are long. Examining the photographs we have very carefully, we conclude that the wings were probably tied in as paired slips on most of the patterns, which are neatly finished, despite Corney's liking for a glass or three. The pig's wool in the bodies is picked out in much the same way as it is on the Cummess set, and two use different colors of wool. All of the patterns have hackles, generally starting one-third to one-half the way up the shank, and although most have woodcock or bronze mallard wings, 1991.020.024 has a miniature mixed wing, using starling over a few fibers of peacock and an ostrich herl head. This fly matches 1991.020.015, and the pair are the oldest mixed-wings known to exist.

What are the messages to take home from the O'Gorman set? We cannot be sure that he tied every fly with a "down-wing," but these are the earliest authenticated surviving flies tied using the style. The many stylistic differences they exhibit demonstrate that there were at least two different styles of dressing flies in use in Ireland in the late eighteenth century, and because the Cummess style resembles the Hawkins dressings, the hunt is on for other eighteenth-century flies that resemble O'Gorman's—which takes us neatly to the O'Holleran set of 1791.

THE O'HOLLERAN FLIES

A note included with the O'Holleran flies says, "Lough Corrib Co^y. of Galway. Pattern flies for Ireland Salmon & Trout.

Tied by Peter O'Holleran of Annagh Theetane, near Birts [illegible word] Eyreconnaught—1791, R.G." The place in question might have been Annagh, near Limerick, because Eyreconnaught was an ancient kingdom of Ireland, one of whose boundaries was the Shannon. But a glance at the Griffith's valuation townships database for Ireland is enough to cure anyone of certainty, because there are Annaghs everywhere. The reason for this is that Annagh is an Anglicization of the Irish *Eanach*, which means "a marsh, or a cut out bog," features that could be found aplenty across the Emerald Isle, there being seven Annaghs in Galway alone and dozens of other variations on the name. Another candidate is Annaghdown in Galway, in Irish *Eanach Dhúin*, the "marsh of the port," which lies on the shore of a bay on the eastern shore of Corrib; the Annagh only just to the east of Coole Park and close to the Annagh River is hard to ignore, although its proximity to Coole Park may be just a coincidence.

In many ways, this is the most interesting set of patterns in Gregory's collection because they are salmon flies, three of which have mixed wings, the fourth being so badly moth-eaten that it is anybody's guess, although the stubs of the wings strongly suggest that it was another mixed wing. No. 1991.020.016 has a bronze mallard wing with blue and yellow macaw feelers, an ostrich herl head, and no tail; 017 has bronze mallard wing over peacock, with a tail made of scarlet macaw and green parrot, and an ostrich herl head; 018 has a wing made of bronze mallard over

peacock, a jay tail, and a head made of tying silk; and 019 was clearly a very elaborate fly, tied with a yellow and black body, a rib of silver twist followed by orange silk floss, and a head made of blue beads for eyes, which can still be seen on the leader, with the remnants of the ostrich herl that once was wound around them. Most startling of all is that 019 has an ostrich herl butt, and it is the oldest surviving fly to demonstrate this feature. We strongly suspect that it had a fancy gaudy wing, largely because the body is so highly ornamented. With a very few exceptions, the only early-nineteenth-century flies we are aware of that had bead eyes were pike flies, but we have seen an early salmon fly so adorned. No. 1991.020.019 might well be the second, because it is tied on twisted gut instead of the armored gimp that would have been needed to withstand a pike's formidable teeth.

Along with 1991.020.015, the Galway salmon fly (pictured with the Cummess flies on page 5), the O'Holleran set contains the oldest surviving salmon flies tied with blue and yellow macaw feelers, and they are the oldest surviving salmon flies that contain scarlet macaw and green parrot; 1991.020.019 is simultaneously the oldest known fly tied with bead eyes and the oldest surviving fly with an ostrich herl butt. Although Franck wrote about the use of "moccaw" in 1694,⁶ and Bainbridge mentions "macaw" without any clue as to the color in 1816,⁷ the first mention of green parrot in the literature is once again in Kirkbride's *Northern Angler* of 1837.⁸ They are quite a set.



Flies tied by O'Holleran in 1791. Top row, left, reconstruction of the Harris collection's fly no. 1991.020.019 as it might have been, minus the bead eyes; no. 1991.020.018 right. Bottom row, no. 1991.020.017 left and 1991.020.016 right. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen.

THE HAYNES FLIES

Chronologically, the next set we come to was tied by Haynes half a dozen years after the other flies. A note with the Haynes set states, "Flies tied 1797 for White Trout at Kinward near Castle of Dungourney by Haynes at Gort." Dungourney is not very far east of Cork, but there is no village called anything like Kinward in the immediate area, so it might well have been the name of a house where Haynes was staying. The Dungourney River flows into Cork Harbour, which is only a few miles distant, and the nearest large waterway is the Blackwater. Haynes was well out of his way, because Gort is in Galway, 100 miles to the north of Dungourney. These flies are a most interesting set, chiefly because they are the earliest documented sea trout patterns known to exist, and they are tied on trout-size hooks. Every single one appears to have been tied in a hurry, perhaps by someone who wasn't much bothered about neatness, or was under the influence—the heads are shocking.

The Haynes set has much in common with O'Gorman's, once allowances are made for the casual approach to tying them. The wings are tied much nearer to the horizontal than the vertical, the tails are long, and the bodies begin above the point of the hook. Every single one has a tip of silver or gold tinsel, in line with the Irish view that sea trout liked a bit of flash in a pattern. The wings are tied with starling, or possibly land rail, the tails are made from quite a variety of materials, two flies using long strands of peacock. Many of the bodies are markedly tapered, and while some are picked out, others are wound as tight as possible. Five of the eight have a hackle, in some quite long, and in the case of 1991.020.032, the hackle appears to have been trimmed to length.

What can we say of the Haynes flies? As the earliest known set of specialized sea trout flies, they are *sui generis*. Mentions of sea trout are very rare in the literature before 1800, so these amount almost to type specimens as far as flies of their class are concerned. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the set is their shared use of downwings and tinsel tips, which could be taken as the beginnings of a trend toward the classic sea trout patterns of the late nineteenth century. Whatever might be their place in that trend, these patterns are extraordinarily interesting.



Flies tied by Haynes of Gort in 1797. The Harris collection's fly no. 1991.020.032 is the left fly in the second row from the top. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen.



Flies tied for fishing at Kiltartan, dating to 1810. Fly no. 1991.020.033 from the Harris collection is on the left; 1991.020.036 is on the right. Reproductions tied by Robert Frandsen.

THE “KILTARTAN RIVER” FLIES

Now we have to jump forward more than a decade, to a set of three patterns, of which two, 1991.020.034 and 035, were tied for the “Kiltartan River” in 1810. The third, 1991.020.033, was from 1803, according to Harris’s note, which gives no clue as to its origin. This trio is a puzzle for a couple of reasons: first, there isn’t a Kiltartan River, and second, we have no idea who tied them. However, because the Coole River runs very close to the hamlet of Kiltartan, our assumption is that they were tied to be fished somewhere on the Coole estate and, coupled with the date, that they have to be from the Gregory collection. There are two green drake patterns and a hare’s ear.

One of the most interesting flies in this set is 036, a Hare’s Ear also tied for the Kiltartan River. This has a well picked-out hare’s ear body, over which is a dirty yellow hackle with fibers in the usual steep taper from the base of the feather to the tip. The hackle would not be remarkable had it not been clipped on the under-

side of the shank. The wing is vertical and made of starling, and the tail is two long bronze mallard fibers. Given the clipping of the hackle, this pattern must have been intended for use as a dry fly. In the same set, 033 is accompanied by an extended note, which gives the dressing of the fly, as given to Gregory by the foreman of the shop that tied it. The hackle is described as “cuckoo-cock,” but don’t for a second imagine that Gregory spent his spring mornings hunting cuckoos, because in the early nineteenth century the term meant a bluish gray or silver dun poultry hackle with gray bars across it, the description being the one given to the plumage of the cuckoo-breasted cuckoo line of old English gamecock.⁹ Such feathers were almost as rare as pure blue dun, and after cockfighting was banned, the term *cuckoo* became subject to considerable drift, so that by the late nineteenth century some fly dressers took it to mean a white hackle that had black bars across it,¹⁰ whereas others thought of cuckoo as “supplied by pure-bred Plymouth Rocks, . . . They are grey, with darker grey mottlings. Some have a yellowish or brownish tinge.”¹¹

THE CAERNARVON FLY

The Caernarvon fly is difficult to place, in as much as it has no obvious connection with Coole Park. However, given the date, and the fact that Caernarvon lay on Richard Gregory’s way from Ireland to London, it seems more than possible that he either took the opportunity to do some salmon fishing as he passed through the town, or bought some flies along the way. For its period, this fly is a remarkably sophisticated little item, with a mixed wing made of woodcock, sprigged with peacock herl. The horns are blue and yellow macaw with scarlet macaw, and the body is butted with ostrich herl. The butt is balanced by an ostrich herl head, giving a distinctly Irish feel to the pattern. It looks nothing like the few early nineteenth century Welsh flies of the period we have seen, which are much simpler, if no less appealing. Perhaps this little salmon fly was a sign that the Irish were coming.



A salmon fly tied to be fished in Caernarvon in Wales, dating to 1815.

UNDOCUMENTED TREASURES

What more can we say? The Harris collection is such a treasure trove that we have only been able to skim the surface of its contents, but it comprehensively rewrites the early history of fly tying. The story of how these flies came together can hardly be beat, but the flies themselves are proof that by the late eighteenth century, the development of the mixed wing was well under way in Ireland. Beyond a few brief mentions of the method in print, the first time that many British fly tiers became aware of the Irish style of fly tying and the mixed wing was when the amazing Mr. Blacker set up shop in Soho's Dean Street and published the patterns for 100 glittering salmon flies. And yet the extraordinary story of how the Irish beat the British at their own game and devised an entirely new genre of tying has almost entirely been forgotten, buried by numerous encyclopedias of salmon flies that swept the world in the late Victorian era. We find it curious that these late adaptations of the Irish style—that substituted staid British married wing for the sensual Irish mixed wing—should have triumphed in the end, and that even American classic salmon fly dressers tie little else today, but here is proof that there was and is another way. Even now it is not too late to escape Kelson's imperial grip.

Last, we must return to the urgent need for this fabulous collection of flies to be photodocumented to the highest professional standards. In our considered opinion, no energy or expense should be spared in providing a visual—and readily shareable—record of this collection.

In its half-century history, the American Museum of Fly Fishing has accomplished extraordinary things in gathering, preserving, and celebrating many of the sport's greatest treasures. This includes a nearly incredible collection of historic and modern fly patterns. We can think of no part of the museum's remarkable collection more deserving of further celebration than all these flies, the handiwork of countless gifted craftsmen and craftswomen.

Furthermore, a comprehensive plan for high-quality photography of the museum's other significant fly collections would be an internationally valuable enterprise. The Harris flies seem to us the highest priority for such an undertaking, but among the museum's distinguished fly collections are many sets no less deserving of thorough photodocumentation. These include the complete set of original model patterns tied for the creation of the glorious chromolithograph plates in the milestone books *Fishing*

with the Fly by Orvis and Cheney (1883) and *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* by Marbury (1892), and the wide-ranging collection of patterns by dozens of historically significant tiers gathered and documented by Preston Jennings and other angling luminaries of the twentieth century. It is our fondest hope that this examination of the Harris flies might serve as a modest example for other studies of the museum's unique fly collections—studies that would be made infinitely easier to conduct were the flies available for widespread examination, especially through photographs displayed on the museum website or published in this journal.



ENDNOTES

1. James O'Gorman, *The Practice of Angling Particularly as Regards Ireland* (Dublin: Curry, 1845).
2. Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton, *The*

Compleat Angler, ed. Sir John Hawkins (London: Thomas Hope, 1760).

3. Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler* (London: Printed by B[enjamin]. W[hite]. for B. Tooke, at the Ship in St. Paul's Church-yard, and Tho. Sawbridge, 1683), 20.

4. John Kirkbride, *The Northern Angler* (Carlisle: Printed and published by C. Thurnam, 1837), 70.

5. Samuel Taylor, *Angling in All Its Branches* (London: Printed by A. Strahan, Printers Street, for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, Paternoster-Row, 1800), 248–50.

6. Richard Franck, *Northern Memoirs* (Edinburgh: A. Constable and Co., 1821), 303. The first edition was published in London, printed for the author, to be sold by Henry Mortclock, 1694, and is scarce. We cite the more readily available 1821 edition for ease of reference.

7. George Cole Bainbridge, *The Fly-Fisher's Guide* (Liverpool: Published by the author, 1816), 99.

8. Kirkbride, *The Northern Angler*, 76.

9. Herbert Atkinson, *The Old English Game Fowl* (London: Fancier's Gazette, 1891), 37.

10. John Henry Hale, *How to Tie Salmon Flies* (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1892), 9–10.

11. T. E. Pryce-Tannatt, *How to Dress Salmon Flies* (London: A. & C. Black, 1914), 14.

Gordon M. Wickstrom



J. R. Harris (right), collector of the Harris flies and author of *An Angler's Entomology*, with Col. Edward E. Cusack at Garnett & Keegan's, Ltd., in Dublin, 11 January 1979.

Henry Leonidas Rolfe: The Landseer of Fish Painters

by Keith Harwood

ACCINGTON, THE LANCASHIRE town once famed for its cotton manufacturing industry, is not a place that you would naturally associate with Tiffany glass or with Henry Leonidas Rolfe, the outstanding Victorian fish painter, who was referred to by Alfred Jardine, his friend, as the “Landseer of fish painters.”¹ However, Accrington’s Haworth Art Gallery is home to the largest public collection of Tiffany glass in Europe (presented to the town by Joseph Briggs, an Accrington man, who eventually rose to become art director at Tiffany’s) and to a superb painting of sea fish by Henry Leonidas Rolfe.

Originally called Hollins Hill House after the hill on which it was built, the gallery’s arts and crafts house was built for brother and sister William and Anne Haworth in 1909. William Haworth died in 1913, his sister in 1920. Following Anne’s death and upon the wishes of her brother, the house and its fine collection of paintings and antiquities were bequeathed to the people of Accrington and renamed the Haworth Art Gallery. The outstanding collection of Tiffany glass was given to the town in 1933 and was transferred to the Haworth Art Gallery during World War II.²

The Rolfe painting pictured here, simply titled *The Catch*, was acquired by the gallery in 1946. It was a gift from Edwin Hitchon, a local engineering manager at a textile machinery company in town. Hitchon had inherited the painting from his father, Albert, who may have been its original purchaser.³ It is one of the very few Rolfe paintings in a public collection; most are held privately. The painting itself is unusual for a Rolfe in that it depicts sea fish. The painting portrays a typical catch of sea fish, presumably caught on rod and line, and includes a halibut, a red gurnard, a mackerel, and either a small haddock or pouting. The composition of the painting is skillfully arranged. The fish in the foreground are painted against a typical coastal background with a sky threatening a storm. The pearly-white underside of the halibut contrasts admirably with the brightly colored gurnard lying across it and the



The Catch, 1868, by H. L. Rolfe. Property of Haworth Art Gallery, Accrington, Lancashire, England. Oil on canvas; 45.8 cm x 76 cm unframed. Used with permission.



Haworth Art Gallery, Accrington, Lancashire.

iridescent sheen of the mackerel’s skin. The delicately painted scales on the haddock or pouting in the left foreground possess a silvery sheen and give credence to Rolfe being referred to by his friends as “the scaly painter.”⁴ The mussel shell in the bottom right corner draws the

viewer’s attention to the artist’s signature immediately below and to the date of the painting: 1868.

Henry Leonidas Rolfe was born in Paris in 1823, the first child of his father’s second marriage. His two half-brothers from his father’s first marriage, Edmund (b. 1810)



Pike and Perch, print by Henry Leonidas Rolfe. This print was originally given free in *Fishing* magazine in 1886. From the author's collection.



Grayling, print by Henry Leonidas Rolfe. This print was originally given free in *Fishing* magazine in 1886. From the author's collection.

and Alexander Frederick (b. 1814), were both artists, and Alexander is known to have painted a number of angling scenes. Rolfe's father and grandfather were both goldsmiths in the City of London and, at some point, young Henry was taken back to London. Unfortunately, we know little of the artist's early life and education but, by the age of twenty-four, he was exhibiting paintings at the Royal Academy and continued exhibiting there until 1874.⁵

It was as a painter of fish that Rolfe gained a reputation, and he readily accepted commissions from anglers desiring a record of their catch. Not surprisingly, therefore, the majority of his paintings depict game fish, salmon, or trout painted against a landscape background or lying on a riverbank, which sometimes included items of tackle: rods, reels, creels, fly wallets, gaffs. Rolfe himself was a keen pike angler and many of his paintings, which clearly display an angler's knowledge of the subject matter, depict pike and

other freshwater fish. Otters, too, can often be found in his paintings, and he is known to have also painted game birds.

Unfortunately, my pockets do not stretch to owning an original Rolfe, but within my modest collection of piscatorial art are a number of nineteenth-century colored lithographs of Rolfe's paintings, including the one of pike and perch and the one of grayling, both pictured above. Rolfe was very much aware of the commercial possibilities of prints and during his lifetime produced several portfolios of them, which are now highly collectible. In addition, a number of his prints appeared in the *Sporting Magazine*, one of the leading periodicals of the day, and the relatively short-lived *Fishing* magazine (1886–1890). As well as prints and oil paintings on canvas, Rolfe was sometimes commissioned to paint plaster casts of fish, including a number for the famous ichthyologist Frank Buckland and his fish museum.⁶

Francis Francis, who was a friend of Rolfe's, gave a fascinating glimpse of the artist at work in his London studio in *Anglers' Evenings*.⁷ This volume contains a compilation of papers given by members of the Manchester Anglers' Association, of which Francis was an honorary member.

There was no pleasanter lounge, or place of gossip, than the little studio of "the scaly painter" (as his familiar friends pleasantly called him), in Nicholas Lane, City . . . If you were known and had the entrée, or if you desired to transact business with the proprietor, you would enter and see, beyond a half drawn curtain, the studio, a wee cozy nook, with "the Baron" himself (as he was called), seated at an easel, touching and retouching, a noble salmon, which is bounding from the water with a fly in his mouth and a broken cast attached, and which is entitled "A Leap for Liberty," probably, for he was fond of apt titles for his pictures, and very clever in devising them. The glittering scales come out life-

like and clear under his skilful touch, as he chats away pleasantly with some old friends the while, smoking the inseparable pipe, without which he never did anything, and on his head the almost equally inseparable fez, a striking figure, much over six feet in height, with very handsome features, which a grave kindly smile from time to time overspread, rarely deepening into anything approaching laughter.⁸

W. Shaw Sparrow, writing of Rolfe in his magisterial *Angling in British Art*, was less impressed by the artist's work and, indeed, his appearance. His sideburns, which were very much a feature of Rolfe's facial appearance, he described as "Dun-dreary," and he compared Rolfe's work unfavorably against the angling paintings of James Pollard (1792–1867).⁹

It is from the same article by Francis that we learn something of Rolfe the angler.

As an angler he was chiefly devoted to spinning, being but an indifferent fly-fisher. Indeed, he rarely cared to handle the fly-rod, but with his "bottle of pickles," as he called a small bottle of preserved minnows, which he usually carried about with him, and about which many amusing stories are told, he was very deadly. He was one of the earliest visitors to Slapton Ley, and did more than anyone to make that lovely sheet of wild water known to the people. In many of his fishing sketches and studies are bits, jotted down at the time, or taken from memory, from the Ley. He was an excellent and successful pike fisherman, and I well remember once going into his studio, and finding the floor nearly covered with big pike, up to 12 lbs. weight, which he had taken the day before on "a bit of the Colne," as he said.¹⁰

Although Francis claimed that Rolfe was no great fly fisherman, an interesting self-portrait, dated 1871, shows the artist seated beside a Scottish salmon river with a brace of salmon at his feet, together with a fine trout on the bank and several more in his wicker creel. By the artist's side is what appears to be a fly rod and reel and resting on the bank nearby is a hip flask and fly wallet. He is believed to have visited Scotland on a number of occasions, and in 1879–1880 he traveled to Loch Tay, where he recorded the capture by Mr. Haynes of a 40- and a 50-pound salmon.¹¹

However, it was as a pike angler that Rolfe distinguished himself. He was a good friend of Frank Buckland and

Alfred Jardine, as well as Francis, and regularly fished for pike with all of them. In addition, he became a member of the Piscatorial Society in 1864 and was elected an honorary member in 1869. In February 1875, while pike fishing at Shardeloes Lake near Amersham with T. R. Sachs, the secretary of the Piscatorial Society, and his son Edwin, a big pike grabbed both anglers' baits at once. They managed to land the fish jointly and, afterward, Rolfe christened it the Union Jack. The fish, which weighed 24 pounds, was taken to

me to do the fishing. Pike were breaking the water all around us, and the bait had only to be spun near a fish to be instantly seized. The results of that day's sport were fifty-four jack and pike, the largest 17 lbs., and three fine perch, from 3 lbs. to 2 lbs. each.¹³

Sadly, Henry Leonidas Rolfe passed away on 29 August 1881 at the relatively young age of fifty-seven. Perhaps the last words on Rolfe should be left to his good friend and angling companion, Alfred Jardine. In *Pike and Perch*, he recalled the plaster casts of pike, perch, and grayling that he had caught, "which were painted by my artist friend, the late H. L. Rolfe, who depicted the colours of the fish soon after capture; and the perfection of simulation could no further go, nor the art of making the unreal appear as life, 'Before decay's effacing fingers/Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.'"¹⁴



Henry Leonidas Rolfe by Rolfe's Portrait Studio, 1860s. ©National Portrait Gallery, London. Used with permission.

Frank Buckland's studio, where he made two plaster casts of it, which were subsequently painted by Rolfe himself.¹²

Alfred Jardine, writing in *Pike and Perch*, gave a fascinating account of a day's pike fishing with Rolfe.

I well remember when the late H. L. Rolfe (the Landseer of fish painters) was my companion, on December 20th, 1876, fishing a grand expanse of water where pikes fed fast and furiously all that short winter's day. My friend was not very well, and as the weather was cold he sat for some time in the stern of the boat wrapped up in a rug, leaving

ENDNOTES

1. Alfred J. Jardine, *Pike and Perch* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1905), 70.
2. "Haworth, Accrington," free leaflet produced by the Haworth Art Gallery, Accrington, Lancashire, U.K. (2017), 1–3.
3. Malcolm A. Barclay, *Haworth Art Gallery Inventory* (1946). Photocopy of the gallery's inventory of this painting, given to the author by Yvonne Robins, gallery manager.
4. Francis Francis, "In Memoriam," in *Anglers' Evenings: Papers by Members of the Manchester Anglers' Association*, second series (Manchester, U.K.: Abel Heywood and Son, 1882), 80.
5. David Beazley, *Images of Angling* (Haslemere, Surrey, U.K.: Creel Press, 2010), 135–41.
6. Frank Buckland, *Natural History of British Fishes* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1891), 292.
7. Francis, "In Memoriam," 80–84.
8. *Ibid.*, 80–81.
9. W. Shaw Sparrow, *Angling in British Art* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Limited, 1923), 157.
10. Francis, "In Memoriam," 83.
11. Beazley, *Images of Angling*, 140.
12. Graham Booth, *A History of Pike Fishing*, vol. 1 (Dereham, Norfolk, U.K.: Harper Fine Angling Books, 2011), 171.
13. Jardine, *Pike and Perch*, 70.
14. *Ibid.*, 143, the quote being from Lord Byron, *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale* (London: John Murray, 1813).

Fishing with Winslow Homer

by Willard P. Greenwood II



Winslow Homer with The Gulf Stream in his studio at Prouts Neck, Maine, circa 1900. Notice other paintings in the background and how Homer's working studio looked. I remember the interior being very austere, but, of course, the views from it were expansive. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine; gift of the Homer family.

IN 1962, MY GRANDPARENTS bought a saltwater farm in Scarborough, Maine. Connected to that particular stretch of Scarborough Beach is Prouts Neck, where Winslow Homer painted many of his masterpieces. He fished there as well. From the year I was born (1968) to 2009, when the property was sold, my home and my home away from home was 386 Black Point Road. In a perfect world, I would have been able to hang onto this great family place. Alas, through a combination of time, family members moving away, wanderlust, underemployment, almost selling insurance, and wanting to be a professor, this amazing place broke off, like—you guessed it—a large fish. Yet that house, nearby Massacre Pond, the beach cliffs, the beach, the extinct hotels, and a lifetime's worth of fishing episodes have stayed with me.

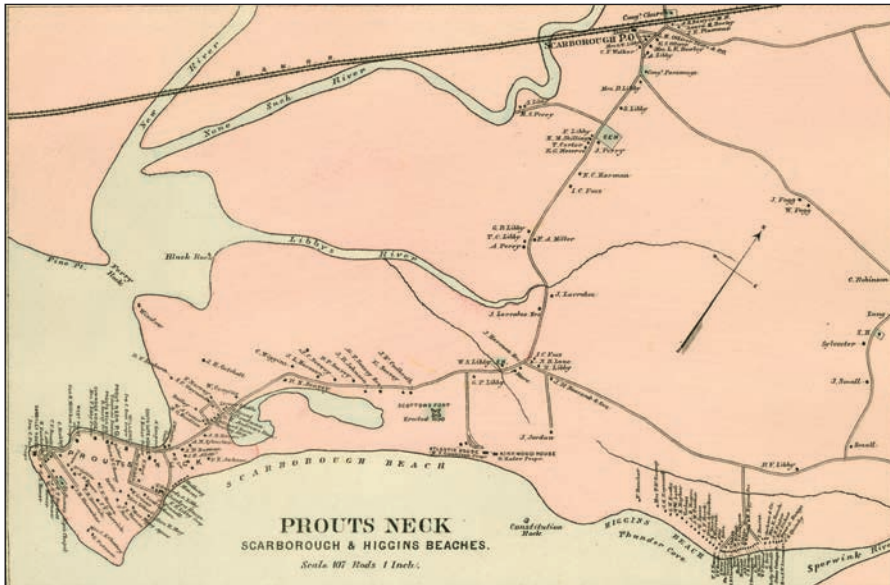
Because I grew up there, fished there, played tennis there, body-surfed there, sailed there, worked there, and lived there, it is permanently lodged in my brain's

reptilian core. And now a print of *The Gulf Stream* (more about that painting later) and a photocopy of a Prouts Neck map are affixed to a wall in my office. On that photocopy, labeled THE EBEN SEAVEY HOUSE, is the house my grandparents bought. Built in the mid-1700s, its dominant exterior feature is a mosquito-choked path to Scarborough Beach, where I swam after pot-washing shifts at a now-torn-down hotel, the Atlantic House (which you can see, as well as Winslow Homer's house, on the map too).¹

I had the singular fortune to discover fly fishing for myself even though no one in my family fly fished. I did have some incredible sailing/fishing adventures with my Hemingway-esque grandmother, an old-school damn Yankee who sailed, rode horses, operated heavy machinery, and started smoking when she was eleven. She taught us all how to play poker and, most importantly, how to get the luff out of the goddamn (she would say it with two As) jib! She was an

incredible captain—fearless and imperious. In addition to playing chess with her, I got the two of us caught in a squall in which we were pelted by hail, all so I could go fishing. On another trip, she manhandled (and I use that word intentionally) a monstrous skate that I caught. Those trips and times with her helped set me on an independent path.

So, without knowing it at the time, and then later knowing it, I fished with Winslow Homer. I remember going into his studio before it was purchased by the Portland Museum of Art. My grandmother knew a distant relative of his, Doris Homer, and she would let us in on occasion. The bare frame walls were not wholly dissimilar to the bare frame walls of a room over the garage of my grandparents' house. As a teenager, I lived in that very hot or very cold uninsulated garage apartment, listening to the same surf that Homer did. His studio was a converted carriage house on his family's property.



I have a photocopy of this map taped to my office wall. It gives a good sense of how exposed the Neck is to the ocean and the size of Scarborough Beach. At the end of the beach, where the Neck begins, is where I hooked the mythic striper. Courtesy of the Maine Historical Society.



West Point, Prouts Neck (1900), oil on canvas, the Clark Art Institute. This picture conveys the surf's power. I've been in water with waves like that.



I explored the real-life settings of *West Point*, *Prouts Neck* and *The Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog*, in addition to the settings of many other paintings, from my grandparents' sailboat and on foot. I trespassed, along with some fellow hotel workers, on his former property to jump off the cliffs into the ocean. It was terrifying and deathly cold, and I shredded both my legs on barnacle-covered rocks while the "mild" waves nearly killed us. The real ocean—not the ocean off beaches—renders human effort almost laughable. In 1934, the freighter *Sagamore* hit a rock and sank just off the coast where we would jump in.

I caught all kinds of fish within eyeshot of Prouts Neck, but I'll just tell you about the last one, that last summer. I took my gently weeping fly gear down to the rocks, which were quarried to make the foundation for the house. It was near the Black Point Inn, where I used to work as a bellman and a bartender. I had caught fish here before. In fact, I remember almost catching the biggest striper I have ever seen in person at this spot. This 40- or 50-pound monster latched onto a big streamer of mine and then let go, and in so doing passed into legend and now myth.

The tide is strong at these cliffs, and you need laser focus or you can find yourself buried at sea. What happened that day was relatively normal, but considering how badly I wanted to catch a fish, what happened was fantastic. I caught a perfectly sized and legal striper. I killed it and walked home without making another cast. There was a lot of excitement about this last fish. My wife Beth and the rest of the family shared in the happy bounty.

Beth prepared the striper in the old Scarborough kitchen. There was already some kind of other meat on the menu, in case I failed, so we had surf and turf in the old family dining room at the old family dining table, where I had been eating since before my memories started.

That striper meal concluded the end of an era. Let me fully conclude it by telling you my origin story regarding one of Winslow Homer's most famous paintings, *The Gulf Stream*, whose central figure, a working fisherman, is in a lot of trouble and is no doubt all alone. *The Gulf Stream* gave me nightmares after I saw it—it's filled with sharks, and these were the days of *Jaws*. At the time, I did not realize who the artist was or even what the painting was.

A group of people, including Winslow Homer and his dog, Sam, stands on the cliffs at Prouts Neck, circa 1895. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine; gift of the Homer family.

The *Gulf Stream* sharks swam into my dreams, but they did not stop me from swimming in the ocean. I first saw the painting at my grandparents' house when I was quite young. My grandfather had a baroque and contemporary library (Boccaccio and Robert Ludlum), which included several books on Winslow Homer. Within the pages of those art books, I discovered the haunting image. Later, as a teenager, I saw reprints and surmised that *The Gulf Stream* was the source of my nightmares. A framed print now hangs in my office next to survey maps of various important lakes in Maine where I have been and where I hope to go fly fishing.

In 2009, when we let the place go, we had a couple of boys, great jobs in Ohio, a grandmother in her nineties, and my two parents (who didn't know what to do with the place either). I guess lots of people, and people better than I, had to let go of this house before we did, but I will always miss it. I'll probably never go back, for a lot of reasons, but I dream of winning the lottery and buying it for much more than it is worth.

I still go back to Maine, because I have friends there who allow me to visit on an annual basis. Recently, an old friend moved back there, and I stopped to visit him and his family—they happen to be

in possession of my godson, so my presence was semi-welcome. My friend has considerable talents, one of which has been putting up with me for a few decades. He had taken up watercolors and downloaded many Winslow Homer paintings and illustrations. He is a non-angler but a great artist, so our interests converged over a variety of Homers, such as the nonangling *The New Novel* and *Blown Away* and the angling *Adirondack Guide*.

Because I was the best man at his wedding, I felt obliged to tell him, his wife, and their children that he could have a successful career as an impeccable forger of great art. I know that he is probably not considering this professional move. However, we did bond over more paintings and an attempted trip to Homer's studio that didn't work out.

After that trip to Maine, I returned to Ohio and my job as an English professor and began planning my next trip. In particular, there is an old house on an island on a large lake in western Maine where I plan to spend a week in June fly fishing the green drake hatch. Before such an outing, *Jumping Trout*, in which a large brook trout is throwing a red streamer, and *Ouananiche*, *Lake St. John*, in which a salmon leaps in the foreground of two sports in a canoe, come to mind.

Homer has many great fly-fishing paintings. In fact, his body of work is impressively diverse. Still, there is that man on a boat in the Gulf Stream surrounded by sharks, a squall either coming or going, and a ship that he may or may not see and that may or may not see him. I identify with him as a Mainer and a Mainer in self-exile.

Great art offers unique consolation and allows beauty to change over time. Homer scholar Patricia Junker states that "Homer understood, as all anglers do, that there's more to fishing than catching fish. His fishing subjects are immensely varied. Often they show the 'quiet and gentle' aspects of the sport: a guide sitting silently . . ." But then there's that man on the boat wondering about his survival. That sense of mystery while facing death fascinates me. He is looking at something that we can't see. Look again: maybe he's recovering and summoning energy. There's an energy that stays with me after I look at this painting. I find I keep thinking about it.

In the film *Good Will Hunting*, there's a scene in which Will Hunting criticizes a painting on the office wall of his court-ordered psychologist, Sean Maguire, one that Maguire himself has painted, one that echoes *The Gulf Stream*. Hunting calls the painting a "Homer knockoff"



The Gulf Stream (1898), oil on canvas, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. One of Homer's most famous paintings still captivates with its multiple stories. In particular, the swells remind me of how heavy the seas could get around Prouts Neck in September.

and uses it to analyze his psychologist. When I placed *The Gulf Stream* on my own office wall, I didn't intend for it to be welcoming to my students, but somehow its mystery, power, sense of adventure, and political symbolism has that effect.

On the day I left Maine for good, my grandmother and I stood talking in the driveway of 386 Black Point Road. She said that it was "terrible how families were ripped apart these days." Thinking about that in relation to *The Gulf Stream* makes the man on the boat seem more of an individual and less of a heroic figure. Maybe someone he knows is lonely for him.

No longer a source of my little-boy nightmares, *The Gulf Stream* now offers me unique consolation. Even the beauty of Homer's fly-fishing images changes for me over time.



ENDNOTES

1. Philip C. Beam, Lois Homer Graham, Patricia Junker, David Tatham, and John Wilmerding, *Winslow Homer in the 1890s: Prouts Neck Observed* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1990), 49. This book features a remarkable facsimile of a map of Prouts Neck and Scarborough and Higgins Beaches. On this map you can locate Winslow Homer's house at the end of Prouts Neck itself. Farther down the neck and slightly diagonal from Scottows Fort and the Atlantic House is the Eben Seavey House, which my grandparents owned. All defenders of Scottows Fort were killed during the French and Indian War. There's nothing left except a small monument in the woods. I worked at the Atlantic House (built in the 1840s) from 1985 until it was torn down in 1988. Later, I worked at another hotel on Prouts Neck, the Black Point Inn, which is currently located near the point where the Prouts Neck Post Office is listed on the map.

2. Patricia Junker, "Pictures for Anglers," in Patricia Junker and Sarah Burns, *Winslow Homer: Artist and Angler* (San Francisco: Amon Carter Museum and Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 2002), 57. This is a fantastic collection of essays with accompanying Homer prints. In addition to paintings of Maine, there are prints from Québec and Florida. What Junker rightly notes is that Homer captures the essence of being an expert at fly fishing while making the paintings accessible to a general audience.

Blown Away (1888), watercolor and graphite on paper, Brooklyn Museum. This painting reminds me of the most dramatic squall that my grandmother and I got caught in. For the record, I did not lose control of the jib that day. You can see a version of this image in another Homer painting, Summer Squall (1904).



Jumping Trout (1889), watercolor over graphite on cream, medium-weight, moderately textured wove paper, Brooklyn Museum. This is one of my favorite fishing pictures, simply because it gives good advice: brook trout love red (although I prefer a Mickey Finn).



Winslow Homer (right) was notoriously cranky and private, but notice how at ease he and his brother, Charles Savage Homer Jr., are in this 1900 picture with their stringers of fish. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine; gift of the Homer family.



AMFF Announces New Ambassadors

SINCE 2012, the museum has been assembling an ambassador program like no other. Sure, most fly-fishing brands have a group of industry professionals who represent their products; but not many nonprofit museums have a group of passionate individuals who dedicate their time to promoting the mission, increasing awareness, and spreading enthusiasm of the history of our great sport. As we welcome five more, you'll see that AMFF ambassadors aren't just avid anglers—they are leaders in all parts of our industry and the future of fly fishing.

Scott Biron has been active in fly fishing and fly tying since he was seven years old. In fact, he's never purchased a commercially tied fly. As an educator, he saw the importance of getting young students away from the digital world for a few hours and engaging them in activities that incorporate the outdoors and the environment. Scott wrote a fly-fishing curriculum to be used in the junior high school where he was teaching. The school purchased rods, and 1,000 students received several days of casting instruction. He then started a fly-tying club that met once a week at 6 a.m.

Scott volunteers more than 300 hours each year for the New Hampshire Fish and Game's Let's Go Fishing program and established a program to teach people how to fish New Hampshire's lakes from a float tube. He ties and presents at all regional and some national fly-fishing shows around the country.

Jerry Brenner



Rich Strolis



Captain **Mark Dysinger** has fished the New England salt most of his life. As the owner of Flyosophy Charters, he specializes in the northeast slam of striped bass, bluefish, and false albacore. He guides in Long Island Sound and its surrounding waters, but he also loves freshwater fishing and is a recognized authority on fly fishing for northern pike.

Mark has fished extensively across North America. He has been a featured innovative fly tier for *Eastern Fly Fishing* magazine, and his Musky Bunny Twin Tail is included in the deadly dozen patterns in Rob Tomes's *Muskie on the Fly*. Mark is a regular fixture at the northeast winter fly-fishing shows, where he demonstrates fly-tying techniques and shares angling insights and strategies. His enthusiasm and attention to detail make him a popular instructor, and his topical presentations are both informative and entertaining. He is an experienced teacher both on and off the water, and takes great joy in seeing others succeed.

Mark resides on the Connecticut coast with his wife Anne and daughter Lucy.

Camille Egdorf grew up splitting the year between Montana and Alaska, where she spent every summer in Bristol Bay at her family's fishing lodge on the upper Nushagak River. During the off season, they traveled back to Montana, where she went to school and fished the famous Big Horn River. At age eighteen, she began guiding for her parents in Alaska and spent the next seven years honing her skills. Eventually, she started traveling internationally, hosting groups of anglers to destinations like Christmas Island, Brazil, Belize, and Argentina.

Camille was featured in the award-winning *Providence* (Confluence Films), a feature-length film about piracy issues in the Indian Ocean. She was also highlighted in a YETI film called *Odd Man Out*, which detailed her upbringing and drive. She currently resides with her husband in Bozeman, Montana, and works for Yellow Dog Flyfishing Adventures overseeing the Alaska and Christmas Island departments. She continues to travel to Alaska every year and host trips around the globe. Camille enjoys sharing the sport with others and being a role model for other angling hopefuls who are just getting into fly fishing.



Jim Klug

Photo courtesy of Lori-Ann Murphy



As an avid sportswoman, **Lori-Ann Murphy** discovered the excitement of experiencing nature through fly fishing on her home waters of southwest Montana, Idaho's Snake River, and the Jackson Hole area of Wyoming. Her first fish to the fly was a wild steelhead from the Deschutes River in Oregon. From there, the journey to explore and learn everything about fly fishing started.

In 1989 Lori-Ann became the first female Orvis-endorsed guide and later assisted in creating the first women-only fly-fishing school for the company. In 1994, she founded Reel Women Fly Fishing Adventures with friend Christy Ball. The group received recognition nationally and became an immediate success offering fly-fishing trips for women. Lori-Ann was a technical advisor during the filming of *A River Wild*, won the International Sportsman's Expo's Best of the West casting competition in 2003, and has been featured in the Outdoor Channel's 2011 series *Buccaneers and Bones*. She helped launch Orvis's collection of women's fly-fishing clothing along with Nancy Zakon and Christy Ball.

From 2009 to 2015 Lori-Ann was the director of fishing and guest relations at Belize's El Pescador Lodge, bringing the guide team from five to fourteen full-time professionals. The lodge was Orvis's International Lodge of the Year in 2013. Today she runs guided trips to Belize, runs saltwater schools, and is a professional speaker.

Kyle Schaefer has been working in the fly-fishing world since he graduated from the University of New Hampshire. He got his start guiding for trout in the mountains of Colorado. Since then, Kyle has logged time managing outdoor brands, developing successful content strategies, writing, advocating for conservation, and guiding salt water through his company, Soul Fly Outfitters.

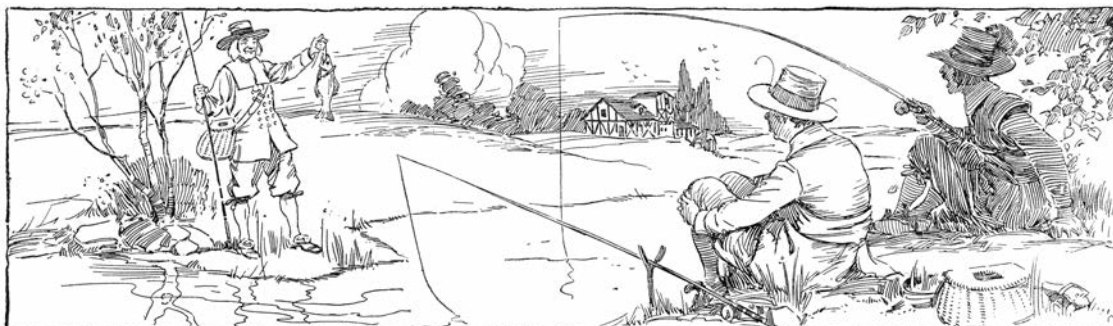
Kyle's passion for the sport is embedded deep within soulful rhythms of the outdoors. The art of the cast and the intricacies of a successful day on the water have always held his attention. Nothing is more satisfying to him than getting to know a body of water intimately. Kyle wants to pass along the great tradition of conservation, and he works tirelessly to protect the resources that we all love.



Joe Klementovich

Museum Contributors

The museum gratefully acknowledges the outstanding support of our 2018 contributors who helped to further the museum's mission. Please accept our apology if any name has been misspelled, placed under the incorrect contribution heading, or inadvertently excluded.



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Museum News



Jack McCoy



From left: David Nichols, Paul Volcker, James Prosek, Jennifer Prosek, Mike Bakwin, and Pete Bakwin at the Izaak Walton Award event in New York on 26 October 2016. Both Bakwin brothers passed away late last year.

Remembering the Bakwin Brothers

At the end of 2018, the American Museum of Fly Fishing lost two of its foremost supporters and friends: former trustees E. M. (“Pete”) Bakwin and Michael Bakwin. Pete Bakwin was on the board of trustees from 1992 until 2007; Mike served from 1993 until 2014. Pete passed away in November and Mike in December.

AMFF Trustee Richard Tisch offered up a few memories of the two:

“Mike and Pete, Pete and Mike. Over the decades that the Bakwin brothers so generously served the museum, they brought a needed, practical business approach to its affairs. They were ever present, quietly so, with Pete in his distinctive banker’s attire—suit, white shirt, silk tie—and Mike wearing his casual sport jacket. In his business life, each was remarkably successful, although one would never have known, as modesty and discretion defined them.

“At board meetings, Mike and Pete spoke rarely but always with candor and insight. Their opinions and recommendations often proved spot-on. For example, Mike—more than once, beginning in the 1990s—noted that the museum should embrace its niche community by focusing on realistic outreach goals. He was right. Pete encouraged the board years ago to focus activities on saltwater fly fishing. He was right, and we have.

“I fished for tarpon and bonefish with Pete and Mike in Belize a few years ago. They shared a flats boat and, as it turned

out, also shared what little success the group had. But the discussions at the bar and during dinner on all topics fishing and nonfishing were memorable. Pete and Mike were worldly, knowledgeable, and always congenial.

“About five years ago, Pete and I fished for sailfish off the coast of Guatemala. During the first day out, in rough seas and 35 miles off the coast, I was below deck trying to stay conscious and Pete was on deck searching for billfish. He was about eighty-five then and landed a sailfish on a fly.

“The Bakwins’ generosity to the museum, even after they retired from the board, has been notable. The Selch-Bakwin Fly Room bears their name and the name of their nephew, former Trustee Nick Selch. We’re grateful for their years of support and honored that a part of their legacy will live on at the museum.”

New Staff

The museum welcomed Ava Freeman as our collections manager earlier this year. Ava is a collections care professional specializing in the accessibility and preservation of museum collections. She began her career as a volunteer for the American Museum of Fly Fishing and the Southern Vermont Arts Center in 2014. She went on to work in the management and care of collections at the Williams College Museum of Art, Middlebury College Museum of Art, the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History, and the Shelburne Museum. As a native



Ava Freeman

Vermont, Ava is at home in nature whether she is hiking, camping, painting, or drawing. She holds a master's degree in the conservation of historic objects from the University of Lincoln, United Kingdom, and a bachelor of fine arts from Hampshire College.

Upcoming Events

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

May 3

Reception celebrating the exhibition *On the Fly in the Salt: American Saltwater Fly Fishing from the Surf to the Flats* Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History
New Haven, Connecticut
5:00 p.m.

May 18

Opening reception for the exhibition *Commemorating the Catch: Fish Carvings* by Stephen R. Smith
5:00 p.m.

June 15

Canvas and Cocktails
4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

July 11, 18, and 25 (Thursdays)

Kids Clinics
10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.

August 10

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

December 7

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.

Tie One On and Iron Fly

The American Museum of Fly Fishing hosted Tie One On and Iron Fly on February 9. Tie One On is a fly-tying course that caters to beginners and seasoned tiers alike. Experts from across the Northeast demonstrated their skills and shared knowledge with guests.

Iron Fly began immediately after Tie One On. For this event, fly tiers compete in the ultimate battle of wits. Challenges included tying blindfolded, switching chairs to tie someone else's flies, and tying creatively under pressure. Thanks to Pig Farm Ink for hosting the Iron Fly again this year.



Participants in this year's Iron Fly competition tried their hand at tying flies blindfolded.

Recent Donations to the Collection

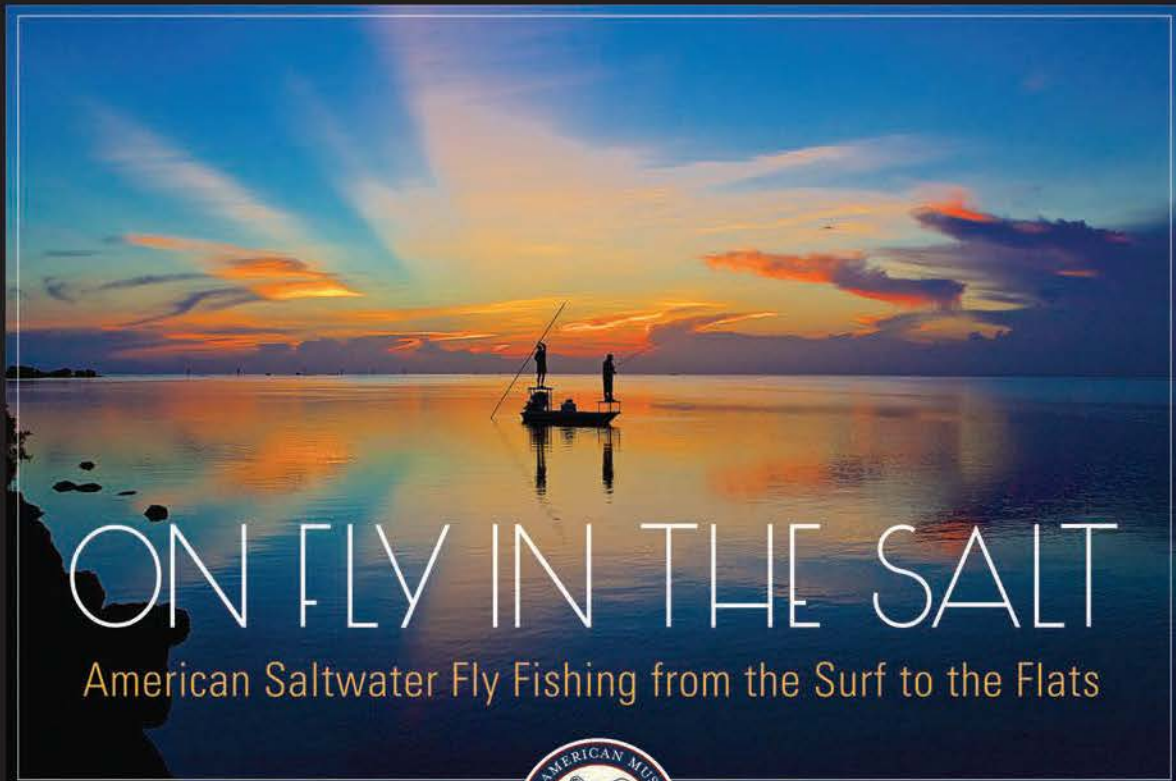
Joan Wulff of Lew Beach, New York, donated a 5-foot, 10¼-inch Lee Wulff Ultimate bamboo fly rod made by Farlows of Aberdeen, Scotland, and archival documents related to William Taylor. **Jim Utterback** of Helena, Montana, gave us three original etchings by Mike Stidham, each individually framed with a fly tied by Lee Wulff.

Marshall Field of Chicago sent us a limited-edition copy of Rudyard Kipling's *Kipling's American Catches* (Poole Press, 1980) with a foreword by J. R. Adams. **Jim Heckman** of Manchester, Vermont, donated two books: Richard Brookes's *The Art of Angling* (T. Lowndes, 1766) and a signed, limited deluxe-edition copy of Eric Leiser's *The Dettes: A Catskill Legend* (Willowkill Press, 1992), illustrated by Matthew Vinciguerra and Ernest Lussier, with three mounted flies tied by Dettes in the window of a matching slipcase. And **Steve Woit** sent us a copy of his 2018 book, *Fly Fishing Treasures: The World of Fly Fishers and Collecting*, which includes a chapter on the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

In the Library

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

Atlantic Monthly Press sent us Bill Heavey's *Should the Tent Be Burning Like That? A Professional Amateur's Guide to the Outdoors* (2017). Bauhan Publishing donated Stephen B. Sulavik's *The Adirondack Guideboat* (2018), with revisions by Edward Comstock Jr. and Christopher Woodward. And Stackpole Books gave us Graydon Hilyard and Leslie Hilyard's *Herbert L. Welch: Black Ghosts and Art in a Maine Guide's Wilderness* (2018).



A New Exhibit Presented by the American Museum of Fly Fishing

National Sporting Library and Museum

Middleburg, VA

October 12, 2018 – March 3, 2019

Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

New Haven, CT

April 6, 2019 – October 13, 2019

Florida Keys History and Discovery Center

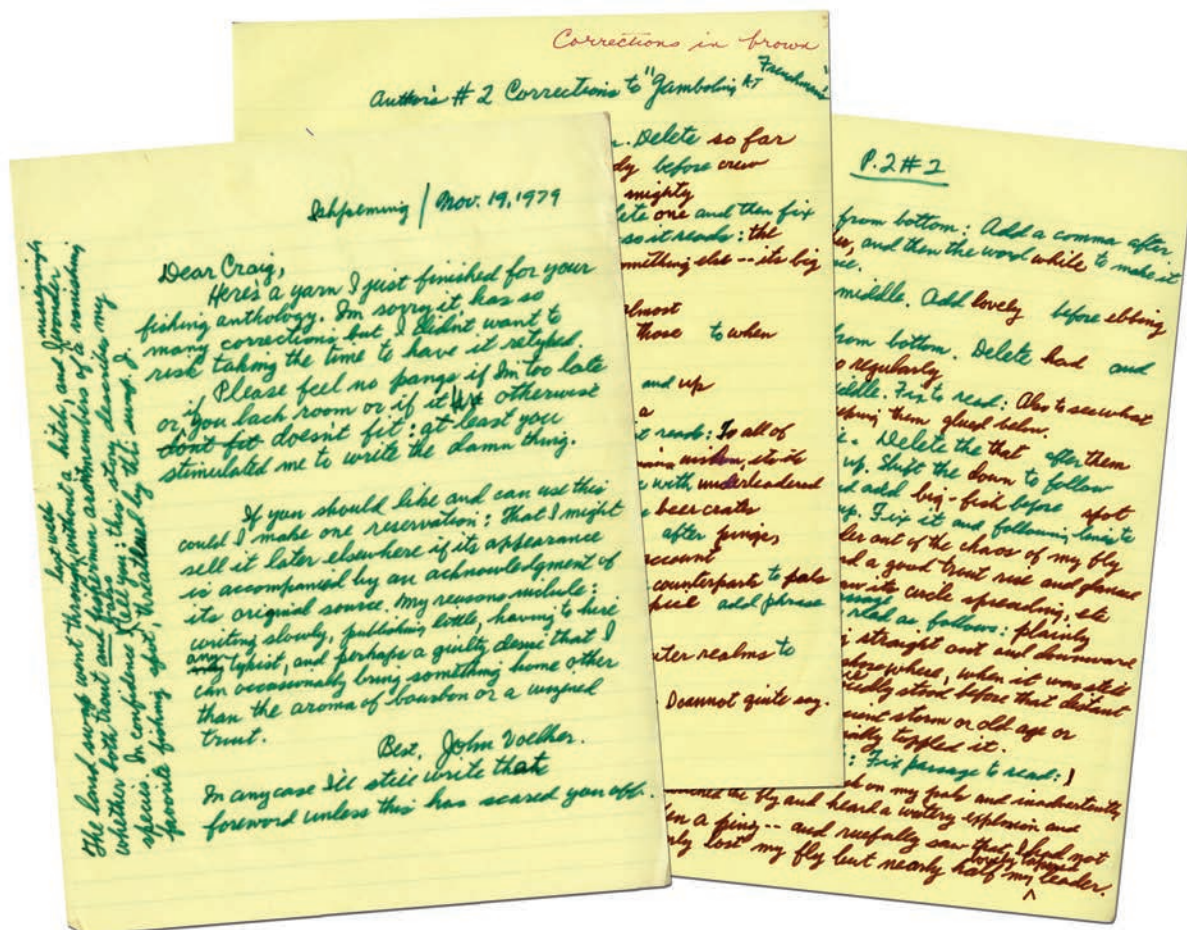
Islamorada, FL

November 10, 2019 – February 29, 2020

amff.org

Photo Courtesy of Pat Ford

Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award: A Call for Submissions



A few pages from John Voelker's 1979 correspondence with Craig Woods, then editor of *Fly Fisherman*, regarding a story Voelker wrote for possible inclusion in an anthology Woods was working on. The story eventually appeared as "Gambling at Frenchman's" in the January/February 1981 issue of *Fly Fisherman*, then under its original title, "Gambling at Frenchman's," in Woods's anthology, *Waters Swift and Still* (Winchester Press, 1982). From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

THE JOHN D. VOELKER FOUNDATION and the American Museum of Fly Fishing are pleased to announce the 2019 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award.

The Traver Award was created in 1994 by Nick Lyons and the Voelker Foundation to encourage and recognize "distinguished original stories or essays that embody the implicit love of fly fishing, respect for the sport, and the natural world in which it takes place." The Traver stories and essays must demonstrate high literary values in one or more of these categories:

- The joy of fly-fishing: personal and philosophic experience
- Ecology: knowledge and protection of the natural world
- Humor: piscatorial friendships and fun on the water

The 2019 Traver Award will be granted for the winning short work of fiction or nonfiction essay in the English language,

either unpublished or published within the previous two years (e.g., for the 2019 award, only works published after January 1, 2017). "Published" means released to the public in print or digital media, including a blog, website, or social media; any previously published work must include a full copyright release for future publication in the *American Fly Fisher* and an anthology. "Short work" means less than 3,000 words. To be considered, submit a PDF of your entry to www.voelkerfoundation.com/traveraward and the \$25 entry fee (to offset the administrative costs of the award program) by May 31, 2019.

The 2019 Traver Award winner will be notified in September. The winning entry will be awarded \$2,500 from the Voelker Foundation and published in the Spring 2020 edition of the *American Fly Fisher*.



CONTRIBUTORS



Susan Greenwood

Willard P. Greenwood II—pictured here with the last striper (page 15)—has taught English at Hiram College since 2001 and is editor of the *Hiram Poetry Review*. He also teaches a course called The Ethos and Practice of Fly Fishing. Greenwood lives with his wife, Beth, and two boys, Robert and Michael, in Hiram Village. His oldest son, Max, lives in Maine. He is an avid fly fisher and reader of fly fishing in literature, conservation, poetry, and history. He also has published a book of fly-fishing poems, *Pelagic Mania*, and a book of literary criticism, *Reading Cormac McCarthy*. He has published fly-fishing articles, essays, and poems in journals and anthologies.

Before his retirement six 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), and *The Trout Angler in Shetland, Past and Present* (Medlar Press, 2017); *Sir Walter Scott on Angling* is to be published by Medlar Press within the year. He lives with his wife in the beautiful Ribbles Valley, and when he is not fishing or writing, he helps to look after their four grandchildren.



Jon Ward-Allen



Barbara Herd, MD, FRCP

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

Herd has published many books, including his *History of Fly Fishing* trilogy (available from the Medlar Press), and was the executive editor of *Waterlog* magazine. His most recently published work is the Blacker trilogy, a detailed and profusely illustrated account of William Blacker's life and times, written with Dr. Hermann Dietrich-Troeltsch and Alberto Calzolari. He is currently working on *The Flyfishers*, a history of the Flyfishers' Club of London, and on *Fishing for the North Country*, both of which will be published by the Medlar Press in 2019.

Currently scholar-in-residence at the Montana State University Library, **Paul Schullery** was the first executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, from 1977 to 1982. He is the recipient of numerous awards for his work as a writer and conservationist, including honorary doctorates from Ohio University (2013) and Montana State University (1997); the Wallace Stegner Award from the University of Colorado Center of the American West (1999); a Panda award for scriptwriting from Wildscreen International for the PBS film *The Living Edens: Yellowstone* (2002), which he wrote and narrated; and induction into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame (2014). The author, co-author, or editor of some four dozen books, Schullery's recent titles include a fly-fishing memoir, *The Fishing Life*; the Yellowstone historical monograph *Nature and Culture at Fishing Bridge*; and the novels *The Time Traveler's Tale* and *Diamond Jubilee*. He is married to the artist Marsha Karle, with whom he has collaborated as author and artist on seven books.



Marsha Karle

Artful Acquisition



Leaping Brook Trout, lithograph (14 x 20 inches) by Samuel A. Kilbourne, 1874. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

IT'S NO SECRET: fly fishing and art have long been connected. Both the unmatched beauty of many angling settings and the artful sport itself draw the attention of artists like a trout to a perfectly presented caddis.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing has accumulated a wonderful collection of sporting art over the years. Among the first pieces added to our permanent collection is a nineteenth-century lithograph by Samuel A. Kilbourne (1836–1881). The Bridgetown, Maine, artist was a talented landscape painter whose prominence sailed when he decided to focus on fish and sport-fishing art. *Leaping Brook Trout*, which was donated by Ernst Mueller in 1969, was just the beginning of our fine collection.

Now fifty years later, it is with excitement and gratitude that we have accepted the largest donation of original sporting art in AMFF's history. The anonymous donor was a longtime friend of the museum who spent nearly twenty-five years curating a personal collection that inspired, motivated, and stirred memories of time on the water. The approximately 200 pieces reflect

the angler and outdoorsman that he was; the donation itself reflects his philanthropy and vision. We are thrilled at the opportunity to treasure, preserve, and share the beauty created by past luminaries Ogden Pleissner (1905–1983), Aiden Lassell Ripley (1896–1969), and Frank Benson (1862–1951), as well as by contemporary greats Thomas Aquinas Daly (b. 1937), Brett James Smith (b. 1952), and Eldridge Hardie (b. 1940)—all of whom are represented in this donation.

Contributions to our collection are the lifeblood of AMFF. Whether receiving a single fly, a dozen bamboo rods, or 200 paintings, we take great pride in providing a home to the pieces that make up the history of fly fishing. Museum magic happens when a contributor has the best interest of the institution in mind and the institution respects the donor's intent and integrity. We are extremely grateful for this little bit of magic!

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.



space for FSC info