The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SUMMER 2025 VOLUME 51 NUMBER 3

In Search Of: From Maclean to Macedonia to Maine

It's either a good time or a good story (so says my buddy Bridgett). If you're lucky, it turns out to be both.

But the wait for that turning out may trigger anxiety, as you'll discover in at least one of the stories here. This summer issue features three writers looking for something: a missing author, a river, a trout.

In 1987, Norman Maclean delivered the Wallace Stegner Lecture at Lewis-Clark State College, where Jim Hepworth had recently signed on as publisher of Confluence Press, assistant professor of English, and organizer of the event.

At first blush, Hepworth's "On 'A River Runs through It' and Norman Maclean" (page 2) presents as both homage to and brief history of Maclean's classic novella: early drafts (both hand- and typewritten), publication and reception, the movie. But it is in the recounting of the Stegner Lecture, of the inevitable bumps in the road, that this story becomes Hepworth's—one in which the reader gains glimpses into the politics of academia and publishing, as well as Hepworth's relationship with a man he deeply admired. Photographer Tom Matney was on hand to document the lecture in black and white, and Hepworth shares two of those photos—one never before published—that show Maclean "at his joyful best . . . full of delight, humor, wisdom, and perhaps a little mischief."

From a search for Maclean we move to one for a Macedonian river. In 2001, Andrew Herd and Goran Grubic attempted to identify the location and modern name of the Astræus River, mentioned by Claudius Ælianus in *De natura animalium*, the first description of fly fishing in print. Grubic subsequently had conversations that led him, years later, to practical field work in search of a more definitive answer. In June 2024, he at last traveled to Macedonia for a firsthand look at rivers and the land around them. In "Finding Astræus" (page 10), Grubic narrows the candidates to three possibilities and comes to a conclusion.

Hepworth found Maclean. Grubic found the Astræus. William B. Krohn was looking to catch a particular type of trout under specific conditions.

One hundred–plus years ago, blueback trout were caught by netting them during their late-fall spawning run. At the time, some claimed that blueback would never take a fly or bait. A few claimed that they could sometimes be caught with bait in deep water. No one had reported them being caught on flies.

In "Quests through Time: Fly Fishing for Maine's Blueback Trout," Krohn explains why there aren't many blueback and why fishing for them is a challenge—especially fly fishing. He highlights fly tier Bert Quimby's mid-twentieth-century quest to determine whether Maine's blueback trout could be taken on flies. Inspired, Krohn and friends narrow the question further and set off on a quest of their own (page 20).

This issue continues with what I'm beginning to think of as our one-two Schottenham-Biron punch. In Gallery (page 14), Curator Jim Schottenham shares some history of the Pflueger Medalist, a favorite fly reel among anglers worldwide since its introduction nearly a hundred years ago. He then highlights one in the museum's collection that was owned and later modified by Lefty Kreh. In Tying Traditions (page 16), Scott Biron writes about the influential New Hampshire fly tier Jim Warner. AMFF recently received a donation of Warner's flies, pattern notes, and fly histories, including the Winnipesaukee Smelt. Biron will be tying Warner's Winni Smelt at our annual festival August 9 at 1:00 p.m. local time, both live and via Zoom. Join us!

Kathleen Achor
Editor

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.

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.

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ON THE COVER: *Male (upper) and female (lower) blueback trout from Rangeley Lake. Painted by Walter H. Rich. From W. C. Kendall, "The Fishes of New England: The Salmon Family, Part 1—The Trout or Charrs,"* Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History *(1914, vol. 8, no. 1), plate 4.*

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On "A River Runs through It" and Norman Maclean

by Jim Hepworth

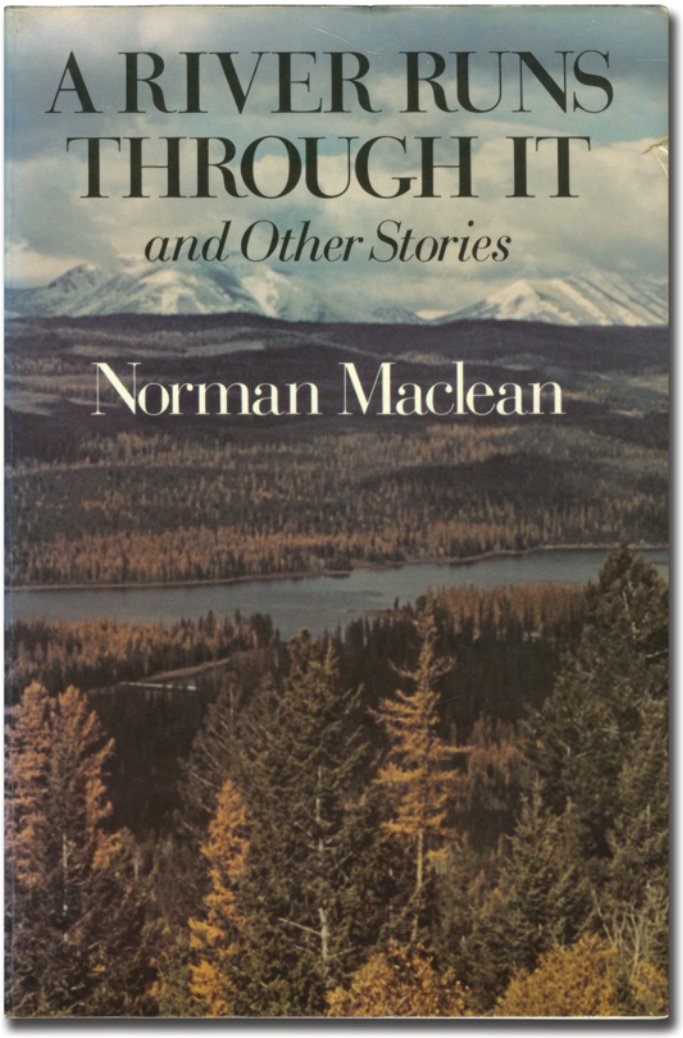
I know I'm not alone in this, but I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing when I first set eyes on a copy of Norman Maclean's book, *A River Runs through It and Other Stories*.[1] That book and the man who wrote it forever changed my life.

It was the spring of 1980. My friend Bill McGlothing and I were sitting on the front seat of his new pickup barreling along U.S. 70 West headed north from Tucson toward the White Mountain Apache Reservation in east-central Arizona. Bill was driving. We had just been hired by the University of Arizona to deliver two on-site courses in English composition to nineteen Apache women who worked as teacher's aides during the school year. Although we looked forward to the challenge of teaching an all-female cohort of dual-language speakers (English/Western Apache), we undoubtedly felt even more excited by the prospect of exploring the back roads of the reservation's 1.67 million acres on our weekends off. The terrain, mostly covered by pine forests, ranges in elevation from 2,600 feet in the Salt River Canyon to 11,400 feet on top of the Tribe's most sacred peak, *Dził Łigai Sí'án* (aka Mount Baldy). We knew we were almost guaranteed to see plenty of wildlife. Bill, a serious amateur herpetologist, especially looked forward to catch-and-release rattlesnake hunting, just as I looked forward to fly fishing for trout in the numerous lakes, creeks, and rivers scattered throughout an area roughly twice the size of Rhode Island.

We might have been almost to the little town of Whiteriver when Bill produced the book seemingly out of thin air. He held it aloft in his right hand with his elbow bent, the way a preacher might hold up a Bible at a pulpit. His baby-blue eyes flashed once under his straw cowboy hat as he glanced from the highway directly toward me. He shook the book ever so slightly. "We need to read this," he said solemnly. "Pat[2] gave it to me and made me promise I'd pass it along to you. I guess Margaret gave it to her. They both say it's a terrific book, one of the best they've ever read."

But when I reached for the book, Bill pulled it away. "Nope," he said, "Not 'til we get settled."

I know now the book was a copy of the first paperback edition, the one with the John B. Roberts photograph of Seeley Lake surrounded by gold-needled hemlocks and thousands of evergreens wrapped around the entire cover.[3] I know now, too, how Maclean's book, with very few reviews[4] and virtually no advertising, became an unexpected and astonishing literary success just by being passed along, personally, from the hand of one reader to another and by word of mouth. In one of the most famous of those exchanges, novelist and fly fisherman Tom McGuane gave Robert Redford a copy of *River* to settle the question of what counted as the "real thing" in Western



Front cover of the paperback edition featuring one of Maclean's favorite photographs of Seeley Lake. It was taken by Maclean's friend, the late U.S.F.S. forester John B. Roberts Jr. The Maclean family has maintained their cabin on Seeley Lake since 1921.

Jim Hepworth

George Croonenbergs (1918–2005) tied the yellow quill fly pictured here. The Croonenbergs cabin was next to the Maclean cabin at Seeley Lake, and it was Norman Maclean's father, Reverend J. N. Maclean, who first taught a very young George Croonenbergs to tie flies. According to the Reverend's grandson, John, the author of Home Waters *(2021), George's yellow quill fly was not only his most popular creation but "the first fly" any of the Macleans pulled out of their fly boxes when fishing the Blackfoot River (16).*

writing. As soon as he finished reading it, Redford said, he knew immediately that he wanted to "bring it to the screen."[5]

Certainly, there is no question about American anglers being the first to discover the story, thanks in part to Nick Lyons's enthusiastic review in the Mid-Season 1976 issue of *Fly Fisherman*, which coincided nicely with the book's April release. To this day, fly fishers remain a crucial part of the book's core audience. As Maclean's son John notes in his memoir, *Home Waters*, "Lyons put his own considerable reputation on the line when called the book a literary 'classic' and 'an uncanny blending of fly fishing and the affections of the heart.'"[6] Maclean knew *of* Lyons but did not yet know Lyons personally. The review, however, deeply touched him. Consequently, he quickly wrote to personally thank its author. The letter launched a friendship that lasted until Maclean's death sixteen years later. Although Maclean later commented with pride that no one had ever questioned any factual statement in his stories, he was especially pleased that no "fisherman" had ever challenged anything he had written, adding that "most fishermen are looking more for arguments than for fish."[7]

Today, less than a year away from the book's fiftieth year in print, most Americans and millions of other people in countries around the world know the title of Maclean's masterpiece even if they have never read a word of it. That such is the case doubtless is due more to the popularity of Robert Redford's sensitive 1992 film adaptation of Maclean's novella than to the work itself. Still, thanks to the film, the book passed the million-copy milestone in sales "soon after The Movie came out."[8] I suspect, as do others,[9] the book has now sold closer to two million copies than one million. Best-selling author Michael Levin notes that publishers "are loath to provide accurate sales figures for two reasons. One is that they don't want authors to know how many copies they sold so they don't have to pay all the royalties due the authors. Second, they are embarrassed by how few copies most books sell."[10]

Regardless, scholars George Jensen and Heidi Skurat Harris point out in their new book, *Norman Maclean's "A River Runs through It": The Search for Beauty*, that "most readers of the story, even those who have never studied poetics, sense that they are reading something beyond ordinary prose, that stylistically something is there [in Maclean's writing] that cannot be adequately explained by calling it rhythmic or poetic or elevated or art."[11] Indeed, Jensen and Harris are the first to go beyond Nick Lyons's prescient conclusion that "A River Runs through It" is a "literary classic." They convincingly argue that Maclean is one of the truly "great prose stylists in American literature,"[12] right up there with Melville, Twain, Hemingway, Faulkner, and a very few others. What's more, to say that Maclean's works "continue to be read and taught is true enough, but that hardly conveys the deep love—this word is not too strong—many readers feel toward Maclean and his writing,"[13] including legions of readers who have never even picked up a fly rod. In fact, it was a group of nonfishers—Maclean's editor, Allen Fitchen, and Maclean's English department colleagues, Gwin Kolb, Philip Booth, and Edward Rosenheim—who convinced the board of the University of Chicago Press to break its rule against publishing "original fiction"[14] and make an exception for Maclean's *River*.

"None of us at Chicago thought Norman's book would be a 'bestseller,'"[15] Fitchen recalled in his 1983 foreword to the so-called Picture Book edition that includes color photographs of the Blackfoot River by Maclean's son-in-law, Joel Snyder. And why would they? Ask any literary agent: first novels even by young, up-and-coming writers are notoriously difficult to sell. But a first book of short stories by an unpublished writer in his early seventies?

Forget about it.

Fitchen, however, was smitten. He stayed up all night reading the first typescript copy of "A River Runs through It" the day he received it from Maclean, around the twenty-first of December 1974.[16] That first reading instilled in Fitchen a passionate and unwavering belief in the story's literary value. He may not have believed *River* would become a bestseller, but he did believe that "the book would make its way, would have an impact that would surprise most commercial houses—and so indeed it did."[17] Before reading "A River Runs through It," Fitchen had been impressed enough by Maclean's two earlier stories to try to place them, strictly as a personal favor to Maclean, with another publisher, Swallow Press, but once he read the title story he could not let it go. Both Maclean's son, John,[18] and his son-in-law, Joel,[19] believe Fitchen was already determined to publish it as soon as he read the title story, and further that Fitchen contrived to have the book rejected by eastern publishers in order to play off regional biases. Fitchen's first move was apparently to share the story with his boss, Morris Phillipson, the director of the University of Chicago Press, perhaps hoping the power of Maclean's story would equally motivate in Phillipson a desire to publish it. But Phillipson was decidedly "not a fan of Maclean's work"[20] or of Maclean himself, so Fitchen settled for asking Phillipson to send all three of Maclean's stories to Knopf, where he had previously worked before coming to Chicago. Phillipson then wrote to Knopf Editor William A. Koshland that the manuscript "was not the sort of thing UC Press could do, but it would be 'right up Knopf's alley, similar to *Goodbye to a River* and *An Only Child*.'"[21] Eventually, the manuscript landed on the desk of Senior Editor Angus Cameron, who wanted to publish it but was overruled by Editor-in-Chief Robert Gottlieb, who declared that the stories were "'well written but not saleable,'"[22] a verdict Norman Maclean's son, John, calls "one of the great misjudgments in the history of book publishing."[23] (Even accounting for some hyperbole and strong familial bias, he could be right.) For the week of 29 November 1992, in the wake of the October release of Redford's film, the *New York Times* listed not one but two editions of *River* among its

paperback bestsellers: the just-released mass-market paperback edition published by Pocket Books (#3) and the trade paperback edition published by Chicago (#10).

Maclean began the first draft of "A River Runs through It" "around May 1973, about the time he retired from teaching at the University of Chicago, and he finished the draft "in late October of the same year."[24] "I know of no writer, good or bad," said Maclean's friend and colleague, the distinguished literary critic Wayne Booth, "who reworks a story or poem as much as Norman did."[25] In total, Maclean produced four handwritten drafts and three typewritten drafts before he was satisfied with the story, although each of these seven drafts also shows evidence that Maclean read and reread "each draft multiple times, making cuts, rewriting sections, and revising phrases."[26] Each draft demonstrates that Maclean made numerous changes, sometimes days, weeks, or months apart. To create his four handwritten drafts, Maclean wrote on lined, three-hole-punch notebook paper. In their study of the production and evolution of Maclean's masterpiece, Jensen and Harris note that "moving back in time from the poetic prose of the first edition to the first handwritten draft of 'A River Runs through It' is almost disorienting."[27] Jensen and Harris do their best to duplicate this disorientation for their readers by providing verbatim transcriptions from long sections of all four of his handwritten drafts. Here's how the story originally began:

Fly Fishing

My brother said to me, "He's just as welcome as a dose of gonorrhea."

I said to my brother, ~~"He's my brother-in-law."~~ "Go easy on him. He's my brother-in-law."

My brother said, "I won't fish with him."

~~I should have known better than to ask, "Why not?"~~ <I went ahead and asked, "Why not?>

My brother said, "He's from the West Coast and he fishes with worms."

I said, to my brother "Cut it out, Paul. He was born and brought up here in Montana. He just works on the West Coast. And now he is coming back for a vacation and he writes and says he wants to fish with us. With you especially."

My brother who was a reporter on The Helena Independent, <and was supposed to record facts,> said, "The hell he isn't from the West Coast. [**in margin:**] <insert> [**back to text:**] The fact he was ~~born <born>~~ here in Montana doesn't prove anything. Everybody on the West coast was born in Montana. Either that or Idaho or Utah, or Arizona or New Mexico."

"That's it," he said, "Nobody is born on the West Coast. I think there's a law against it.

I said to my brother, "Cut it out. What about the retired farmers from North Dakota?"

He said, "All right, all right. And South Dakota, too. But Nobody was ever born on the West Coast. ~~Name me one.~~ Name me one."[28]

Of course, any close reader of Maclean's novella would immediately recognize this scene as a version of the published one that takes place at ten o'clock in the morning just outside the Montana Club in Helena, "supposedly on the spot where gold was discovered in Last Chance Gulch."[29] Such a reader would recognize the voices of the two brothers who are speaking as Norman and Paul. But they might also be bewildered, as I was, by the title of the draft—"Fly Fishing"—and by the missing first line of the story, which by now has probably become one of the most famous first lines in all of American literature: "In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing."[30] Although the sentence does, eventually, surface in Maclean's first handwritten draft, it's pretty much buried on the bottom of page 4. Most disorienting of all, at least for me, is the master stylist Maclean's obvious struggle to find the right order for words and phrases and the inclusion of so much extraneous material. The first things that jumped out at me were a tense problem ("He's") and Maclean's use of the word "gonorrhea" in place of the stronger word he ultimately chose ("clap"): "He'll be just as welcome as a dose of the clap."[31]

To behold a great writer like Maclean not only struggling with individual sentences and paragraphs but almost desperately searching to find the right order for events, the right rhythms, the right emotional tones, the right narrative voice will perplex and perhaps unnerve even the most confident writer. How could he, for example, ever seriously consider something so plain as "Fly Fishing" or so corny as "Besides the Still Waters" for a title?[32] Did he temporarily become tone deaf? Perhaps above all, reading through Maclean's handwritten drafts we are forced to recognize that writing is work, indeed, the hardest kind of work, and that it takes real courage and real humility to persist in that work, like Sisyphus, day after day after day after day after day until the muse has been completely satisfied.

In the fall of 1985, I wrote to Maclean at his apartment in Hyde Park to see if he might have any interest in giving the Wallace Stegner Lecture here in northern Idaho at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, where I had recently signed on as the publisher of Confluence Press and as an assistant professor of English who had been put in charge of the event. Stegner himself had inaugurated the series a couple of years before my arrival, followed by Larry McMurtry. Now that it had become an established event, the lecture qualified as one of the year's true literary highlights in a region that also included both Washington State University and the University of Idaho. As it happened, Stegner and his novel *Angle of Repose* (1971) were the subject of my ongoing PhD dissertation and, consequently, I was in fairly close touch with Stegner both by letter[33] and by phone. But as it also happened, my boss, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences who had founded the lecture, specifically told me to book Edward Abbey for the next lecture. ("How hard can that be? He was your teacher at Arizona, and you're editing a book about him!"[34]) As a speaker, however, in those last few years before he died at the age of sixty-two, Ed was at the peak of his popularity and in extremely high demand. He ended up double-booking himself for the same date at different Idaho venues and begged me to get him out of the Stegner Lecture, which paid considerably less than his talk in southern Idaho at Pocatello. Consequently, Ed ended up as a no-show that year but promised to visit another time and, as a bonus to make up for his dereliction, to stick around long enough to visit a couple of classes.

After reading and teaching *River* for a few years, I doubted that Norman Fitzroy Maclean, the preacher's son, was the sort

of person who double-booked himself for lectures. In fact, even without having talked to him or met him, I believed he might be constitutionally incapable of such a thing. In short, I took him at his word when he wrote, although he wrote it in a work of fiction, that he and his brother never "violated" their "early religious training of being on time for church, work, and fishing."[35] I didn't think, and still don't, there was much if any significant difference between real people and the fictional characters in "A River Runs through It." As a literary scholar, a creative writer, and a fly fisher, I admired "A River Runs through It" inordinately and still felt sporadic pangs of (self?) righteous indignation every time I remembered that Maclean's book had *twice* received the unanimous vote of the 1977 Pulitzer Prize fiction jury only to have the general committee overrule them and refuse to award a prize in fiction that year.[36]

It took me about eighteen months to convince Norman to give the lecture (and several months for my boss, also a fly fisherman, to overcome his bias against Maclean as a Stegner Lecture candidate for only having published one book). I grew impatient when Norman didn't answer my initial letter of inquiry straightaway. When I incidentally mentioned Maclean's silence during a conversation with Stegner, he suggested I call Maclean. Unlike my boss, Stegner had no qualms about the idea of Maclean giving the lecture. He said Maclean had already visited the Stanford campus and given a marvelous presentation. Maclean's book, he said, speaks like bugles for people everywhere but especially in the Mountain West.

I don't know where I got Maclean's number. Like Stegner's, I think his number might have been openly listed and available simply by dialing information. Back in those days, before the invention of cell phones, it was a decidedly different world. From the beginning of our conversations, which were far-ranging and would make a story in themselves, I could tell Norman Maclean wanted to come to Idaho to give the lecture. Lewiston, after all, is just over casting distance from the Lochsa and Selway River country he writes about in "USFS 1919: The Ranger, the Cook, and a Hole in the Sky," the country of his teenage youth. He sounded both bemused and impressed that I had visited places in the story like Blodgett Canyon and Elk Summit, where, he was happy to know, two of the old log ranger station buildings still stood in working order. I said I had seen his old boss's name, the legendary Ranger Bill Bell, carved on the inside of the door of the old log warehouse where he and Bill used to build packs for strings of horses and mules. When I mentioned I had fished both Hoodoo Lake and Hoodoo Creek, he chuckled and asked, "Did you do any good?" Remembering a line from his story attributed to his father, I answered, "I caught all I wanted." Then I added, "They were beautiful," at which point he grew silent.

The problem—the reason—he kept putting me off, and avoided giving me a definitive answer for month after month, came down to his ongoing wrestling match with his "new" manuscript, *Young Men and Fire*, which he had been working on for at least a decade and which he was urgently trying to finish. Besides, he was in his eighties now, and, he confessed, not altogether in the best health. Among other things, he very reluctantly confided, he had both heart and prostate problems. His daughter Jean and his son-in-law Joel were not exactly in love with the idea of him flying eighteen hundred miles across the continent to talk for an hour in front of a few people in some lost Idaho college town. Nevertheless, he liked the idea of being the subject of the volume in the American Authors series I was publishing at Confluence Press, although I repeatedly assured him I had already made the decision to include him, and it was in no way conditioned on his agreeing to lecture. As I said, from the beginning I sensed that he wanted to come and he often said as much. Perhaps more importantly, as those who knew him best often confirm, "he had a hard time saying no,"[37] even when it cost him valuable time away from the manuscript of his second book.

Once the date of 1 May 1987 had been firmly set and announced in a press release for Norman Maclean's Stegner Lecture, which he titled "The Hidden Art of a Good Story," anticipation and even some tension began to build. Newspapers as far away as Missoula, Portland, Spokane, Seattle, and Boise printed the news. The local paper ran a short feature. Probably because my name was listed as the contact on the news release, I began to receive phone calls from strangers as well as a few friends and acquaintances wanting me to reserve them front-row seats. When I explained that I could not, one of them hung up. Another of them, apparently an "important" booster, called the president of the college and the president called me. I told him the truth. We had already advertised an open-seating plan and told the public that admission would be free of charge. Other callers wanted to know if they would have an opportunity to have their books signed? Some also wanted to know if additional books would be available for purchase before or after the lecture so they might buy gift copies for relatives and friends. I said they would. A television reporter asked if I could arrange an "exclusive" interview. After consulting with Norman, I called her back to say I could not. During that conversation, though, Norman agreed to let us film his talk on videotape as I explained had been done for all the guests in our visiting writers series. A copy of his talk would be available to him if he wanted one and another copy deposited for student and faculty viewing strictly within the library. I also asked if he would be willing to have lunch with the winners of the student creative writing contest, which would be announced the week of his arrival. In addition to a modest cash prize, I told him, first-place winners would also receive a copy of his book, which I hoped he'd autograph for them at the luncheon. He sounded especially pleased at the prospect and volunteered the information that he'd won the Lockwood Prize[38] in writing as an undergraduate his junior year (1922–1923) at Dartmouth. He said he was looking forward to his visit, in particular to meeting my wife, Tanya, who had recently finished her undergraduate degree and delivered our second child, a boy we named Myrlin after my father.

Perhaps you can imagine our stupefaction, then, when the two of us, Tanya and I, went to pick Norman up at the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport at his scheduled time of arrival and he failed to show up.

I try to tell it the way it happened, without premonition or sign, and the way it felt—incomprehensibly and preposterously unreal, which it *was*. The longer we stood holding hands and looking through the glass out onto the tarmac at the stationary plane and the empty steps of the airstairs while all around us the deplaned passengers hugged and kissed their friends and relatives and their suitcases and bags ran round and round on the baggage belt, the more forlorn, lost, and hopeless we felt. It was impossible to assimilate what had just happened, but apparently this event or nonevent was never going to turn into anything else.

Had he suffered a stroke or a heart attack and died? Or, more likely, had he survived but ended up in a hospital? Maybe he'd been in an accident on the way to the airport? My mind began to spin like a top. I recalled him telling me the story of fishing on the Swan River near his friend Bud Moore's place and finding himself inexplicably coming to consciousness on river rocks near the shore. Whether he simply slipped or some sort of medical condition caused him to faint, he couldn't say. Or maybe, in this case, had he simply changed his mind at the last minute and stayed home? Should we call his daughter, Jean?

Tanya suggested we consult the agent of Norman's airline. After a short walk, we found her standing behind the counter speaking with a co-worker. She could apparently tell by the look on our faces—or at least the look on mine—that we were extraordinarily distraught. She could not, she said, for legal reasons tell us if Norman's name was on the passenger list of the plane that had just landed. Then she disappeared for a few moments to call, she said, her supervisor. When she returned, she was smiling. "I still can't tell you if his name was listed on that flight or not," she said, "but there is a second flight to Lewiston out of Boise that arrives later this evening. I'm sure you'll want to be here to greet the passengers coming off that flight."

And so, two or three hours later, we were. And there he was: the last passenger off the plane, a little old man descending the stairs at his own pace, holding onto the railing with one hand and carrying his corduroy sports jacket over one shoulder with the other.

He had simply missed his connection in Boise, he explained, grinning ear to ear.

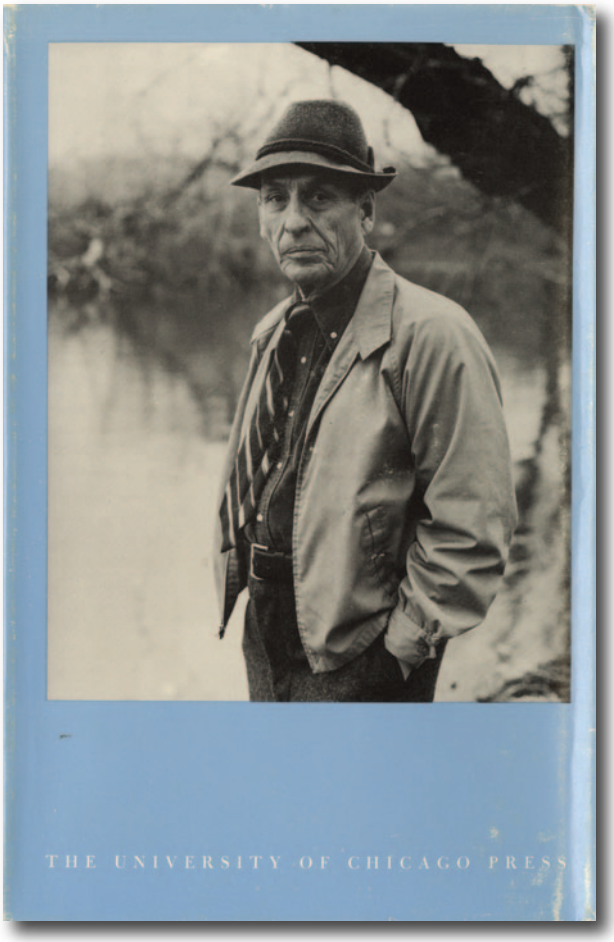
Of course, once we reached his hotel, he insisted we come up to his room for "a drink": three fingers of George Dickel, no ice, a glass for each of us. Tanya swears she didn't drink hers. But somebody did.

It was probably predictable that Norman Maclean would attract a standing-room-only crowd for his lecture, which lasted just more than an hour and included both a reading from "USFS 1919" and the conclusion to "A River Runs through It." His standing ovation lasted until a swarm had surrounded him at the podium and the others began to make their way toward the exits or the pile of books for sale on a table. I did my best to extract him from the crush, but a few of those in line were old friends and acquaintances, including, if I recall accurately, Lois Jansson, the widow of the ranger at Mann Gulch. Eventually, I gave up trying to get Norman to leave the podium for the booksellers table at the back of the room, where he might have sat down while signing. To their credit, his autograph seekers were mostly considerate. While my friend, the late Tom Matney,[39] snapped photos, they hung on every word Norman said between autographs, whether it was to them or anyone else. He probably signed books for close to an hour while using the podium as a kind of third leg.

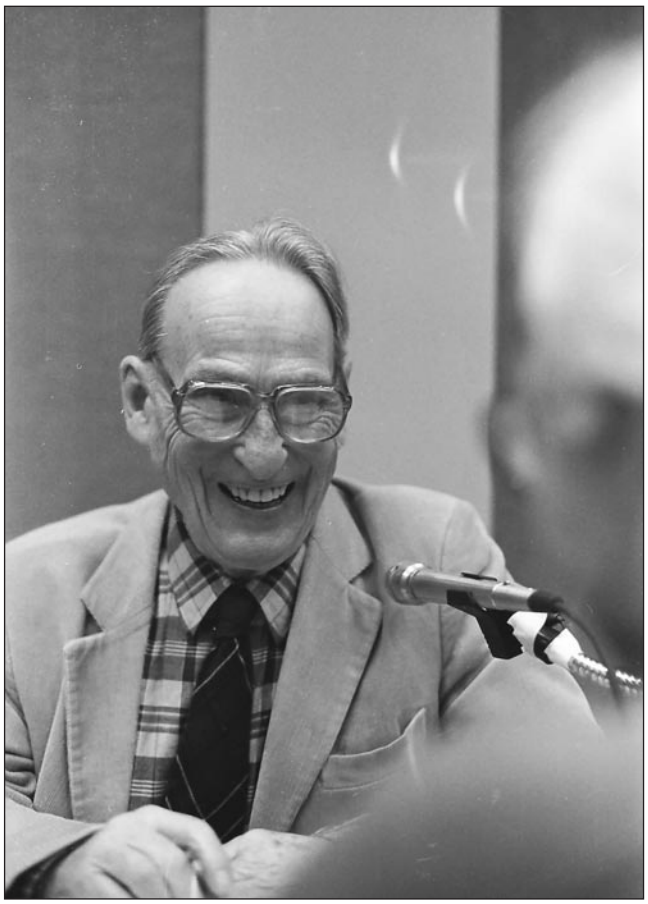
Today, finding a signed copy of any edition, let alone a first edition,[40] is not unlike the search for the Holy Grail. Reliable sources tend to agree that Maclean signed books only in four places: Chicago, Bozeman, Missoula, and Lewiston.[41] They estimate the number of signed books at "a minimum of 250 copies" of all editions and printings published during Maclean's lifetime. To be sure, "Signed or inscribed copies of the book exist of the 'Blue Book' out to the 16th printing, and also of the Trade Paper and 'Picture Book' editions," but "inscribed copies are uncommon."[42]

Norman's Stegner Lecture is by no means the most important of his miscellaneous pieces of writing, which are good enough and numerous enough to be collected into a small volume of their own. In his Stegner Lecture, however, he discusses the structure of "A River Runs through It." "One principle of progression in the story," he writes, "is the order in which you learn about the art of fly fishing, from the initial scene in which my brother and I as boys are taught the art of casting a fly rod. The next time you see my brother he is doing what you would do next—picking out the water he is going to fish, quite an important part of the art."[43] He claims that he presents only "one aspect of the art of fly fishing"[44] each time we see Paul fish. That would be wonderful, if only it were true. There is certainly some truth in it. And certainly it is not the first time he made the claim that he structured the story around the various skills required in fly fishing and in the order they are required. Nevertheless, after the casting lessons at the head of the story, the next time we see Paul fishing, he is taking "his cigarettes and matches from his shirt pockets" and putting them in his hat," preparing to jump "off a rock into the swirl" and swim for a "chunk of cliff that had dropped into the river and parted it."[45] What soon follows is the well-known shadow-casting scene. In fact, it may be true, as Alan Weltzien writes in his introduction to *The Norman Maclean Reader*, that Maclean "structured the novella so that each fishing scene progressively elaborates the art of fly fishing"[46] and that Maclean waits until the final, climactic scene to illustrate the art of landing a fish, a huge trout, and the last fish the narrator and his father were ever to see Paul catch. In between the casting lessons and the landing of Paul's last fish, we get plenty of lessons in fly fishing: lessons in roll casting, reading water, spotting fish, reading rises, selecting an appropriate fly, hooking fish, playing fish, identifying species of trout, and landing fish, but more often than not the unnamed narrator of the story does the teaching, not Paul. And the "lessons" incorporate themselves seamlessly and invisibly into the narrative commentary and the actions of the story. Throughout, from the casting lessons to the landing of Paul's last fish, Maclean faces a difficult task: to teach the uninitiated how to fly fish while simultaneously pleasing seasoned fly fishers by making them think what they know and "can do well is beautiful."[47]

In his Stegner Lecture, Maclean says, "I believe very much in what I call hidden art—art in which the reader doesn't quite see what you have done—he only feels it's a good story."[48] He



Back cover of the first edition of Maclean's A River Runs through It and Other Stories, *with son-in-law Joel Snyder's photo.*



Norman Maclean (b. 1902) at the podium after delivering the Wallace Stegner Lecture at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho, on 1 May 1987. Previously unpublished photo by Tom Matney.

In his elegy for Maclean, Professor Edward "Ned" Rosenheim said there was one characteristic of Maclean's complex character that "subsumed and transcended all the others," and that was "his sense of curiosity, of delight, of wonder with whatever surrounded him." In this 1987 Tom Matney photo, Maclean is surrounded off camera by several of his loyal readers, some of them old friends. The photo contrasts sharply with the tough-guy persona he often cultivated.

says he knew that showing his brother "close at hand as he fought his last big fish would have certain advantages" but "decided against it. I decided," he writes, "he should start fading away as an individual existence just before he faded away forever. I also wanted toward the end for him to fade away as a body and become as befitted a master fisherman: just an abstract in the art of fishing in the most climactic act of the art—landing a big fish."[49]

By contrast, the photos taken by Tom Matney show Norman Maclean up close at his joyful best in his old age: as a "rare and fully realized character"[50] full of delight, humor, wisdom, and perhaps a little mischief. As a photographer, Tom knew that black-and-white images can easily convey emotion in a way color photographs never can or will. They permit even amateur photographers to play with light, contrast, and shadows and achieve more dramatic effects than color. But Tom Matney's Stegner Lecture photos also contrast dramatically with other classic black-and-white photos of Norman. Consider, for instance, the tough-guy image on the back of the dust jacket of his first book. There we find the doppelganger of "a man who takes no prisoners" and who looks out at you, in Pete Dexter's words, "as if you had just invented Rock n' Roll."[51] Undoubtedly, Norman Maclean could be a "terrifying but invaluable judge"[52] of others, especially those who violated

or fell below his standards. But there is none of that in Tom Matney's photos. Nor is there even a hint of the despondent-appearing old man staring down at the water while sitting in the bow of a canoe on Seeley Lake, the image conveyed by Bozeman photographer V. C. Wald for the dust jacket of *Young Men and Fire*. In his eulogy, Norman's friend and colleague Edward "Ned" Rosenheim writes that one element of Norman's complex character "transcended and subsumed the other qualities" and "linked with the magician who wrote *A River Runs Through It*. This was his sense of curiosity, of delight, of wonder with whatever surrounded him: the rivers of Montana and canals of Chicago; sugar maples and high rises; the natives of Missoula and of Bridgeport; the poetry of Shakespeare and Wordsworth and his own talented (or untalented) undergraduates."[53] These are the characteristics Tom Matney's photos convey. Because Norman Maclean "was a generous man," Rosenheim concludes, "his interests and passions and pleasures were his gifts to us. Because he was never bored, he was never boring."[54] Rosenheim's words best describe for me the Norman Maclean I knew—and still remember and know and love.

~

Jim Hepworth

This vintage can arrived as a gift to Jim Hepworth from John Maclean, who found it and several others while cleaning up the Maclean cabin and outbuildings at Seeley Lake. Besides being a collector's item, since the publication of A River Runs through It and Other Stories *(1976), the can has taken on almost iconic significance among some fly fishers as a symbol of bait fishing with worms.*

ENDNOTES

1. Norman Maclean, *A River Runs through It and Other Stories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). Hereafter I refer to the book as *River* and to the title story in quotation marks.

2. Pat refers to Bill's partner at the time, poet and scholar Patricia Clark Smith (1943–2010). Pat had studied at Smith and Yale with Marie Borroff (1923–2019), a former student of Maclean's. Margaret is Margaret Hecht Wimsatt (1919–1999), another former student of Maclean's and wife of the famous New Critic at Yale, W. K. Wimsatt. She was also a poet, reviewer, essayist, and teacher in her own right. In fact, she was one of the few people to write a signed review of the book the year of its publication. See Margaret Wimsatt, untitled review in *America* (2 October 1976, vol. 135), 216–18.

3. On the first softcover trade edition, the John B. Roberts Jr. photo bleeds off both the front and the back covers. At the extreme bottom left of the front cover, the $3.95 price appears in small type and black ink just after the figures P821. A first printing (1979) of this edition is now rare. This cover image, chosen by Maclean himself, has drawn comments from at least two Maclean scholars. Roberts was the ranger at Seeley Lake when Maclean was working on his manuscript of the story at his cabin there. See Henry Hughes, in his survey, "Images Run through It: Illustrating Maclean's Masterpiece," in the *American Fly Fisher* (Summer 2022, vol. 48, no. 2), 2–13. Also see Timothy P. Schilling, *The Writings of Norman Maclean: Seeking Truth amid Tragedy* (Reno: The University of Nevada Press, 2024), xix.

4. By my count, a total of seven signed reviews appeared in the book's first year of publication, and although they include both the *New York Times Book Review* (19 September 1976) and the *New York Review of Books* (27 May 1976), missing are reviews from Maclean's two hometown papers, the *Missoulian* and the *Chicago Tribune*. A nearly complete list of signed and unsigned reviews appears in Ron McFarland and Hugh Nichols, eds., and James R. Hepworth, American Authors Series ed., *Norman Maclean* (Lewiston, Idaho: Confluence Press, 1988), 224. Hereafter, McFarland and Nichols.

5. Robert Redford, "Introduction," in Richard Friedenberg, *A River Runs through It: Bringing a Classic to the Screen* (Livingston, Mont.: Clark City Press, 1992), 1.

6. John N. Maclean, *Home Waters: A Chronicle of Family and a River* (New York: Custom House/HarperCollins, 2021). See pages 195–96 for a discussion of the relationship that developed between Nick Lyons and Norman Maclean. Hereafter, *Home Waters*.

7. Norman Maclean, "Teaching and Storytelling: Talk at University of Chicago and Montana State University," in McFarland and Nichols, 90.

8. Email to author from John N. Maclean, 12 July 2024.

9. See page 3 of Rebecca McCarthy's *Norman Maclean: A Life of Letters and Rivers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2024), where she says *River* "has sold close to two million copies." She offers no source for this information, however. Hereafter, McCarthy.

10. See Michael Levin, "Why Publishers Will Tell You Anything but the Truth," *Book Pleasures*, www.bookpleasures.com/websitepublisher/articles/5000/1/Why-Publishers-Will-Tell-You-Anything-But-The-Truth-Contributed-To-Bookpleasures--By-Michael-Levin/Page1.html. Accessed 11 February 2025.

11. George H. Jensen and Heidi Skurat Harris, *Norman Maclean's "A River Runs through It": The Search for Beauty* (New York: Routledge, 2024), 149. Hereafter, Jensen and Harris.

12. Jensen and Harris, xvi.

13. Ibid., 147.

14. *Home Waters*, 192–93.

15. Allen Fitchen, "Foreword," in Norman Maclean, *A River Runs through It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), vii, photographs by Joel Snyder. Hereafter, Fitchen.

16. Jensen and Harris, 19.

17. Fitchen, vii.

18. See page 92 in *Home Waters* where John Maclean discusses Allen Fitchen's "scheme" to "get the book rejected in the East" in order to get a "sympathy card" to play with "the Press's publications board" and so make a case for getting around the press's "hard and fast rule against publishing original fiction."

19. See Jensen and Harris, 19.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Jensen and Harris quote from Angus Cameron's 17 March 1975 letter to Phillipson, 20.

23. *Home Waters*, 192.

24. Jensen and Harris, 29.

25. Untitled talk by Wayne C. Booth in *A Service in Memory of Norman F. Maclean 1902–1990* (Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, The University of Chicago, 4 October 1990). This pamphlet was distributed to mourners at Maclean's celebration of life on the University of Chicago campus after his death from natural causes on 2 August 1990. The pamphlet is unpaginated and without publisher attribution, and includes other untitled talks by Edward W. Rosenheim, Marie Borroff, and Jim Chandler. All but Chandler were privy to early drafts

of Maclean's stories and named in his acknowledgments to *River*. Hereafter, *A Service in Memory of Norman F. Maclean*.

26. Jensen and Harris, 7.
27. Ibid., 9.
28. Ibid., 29.
29. *River*, 9.
30. Ibid., 1.
31. Ibid., 9.
32. Jensen and Harris, 36.
33. See ten of twenty or so letters Stegner wrote to me in the mid-1980s in the "Biographers and Critics" section of *The Selected Letters of Wallace Stegner*, edited by Page Stegner (Berkeley, Calif.: 2007).
34. See James Hepworth and Gregory McNamee, eds., *Resist Much, Obey Little: Some Notes on Edward Abbey* (Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1985).
35. *River*, 34.
36. John N. Maclean has the fullest, most detailed account of his father's near miss with the Pulitzer Prize, including the chance he, John, took in criticizing the decision in a letter to his boss, *Chicago Tribune* editor Clayton Kirkpatrick, one of the board members of the Pulitzer jury who voted against awarding the prize. See *Home Waters*, 197–200.
37. McCarthy, 192. In *A Service in Memory of Norman F. Maclean*, University of Chicago Professor Jim Chandler recounts an illustrative example of Norman's difficulty saying no when Chandler was writing his dissertation on Wordsworth and wanted to discuss the subject with Norman, whose knowledge of Wordsworth was legendary. "His reaction," Chandler said at the memorial service, "was not only reluctant but vaguely hostile. He said that he was preoccupied with some writing of his own and that in any case he had no desire to hang around that bleeping Department anymore. He then fell silent, and, if my dissertation had been on Blake or Shelley, second-raters as he always called them, our dealings would have ended right there. But then he said: 'Just out of curiosity, which poems are you working on?' We began to talk about our common interest, the conversation stretched on, and he ended by agreeing to talk again—but only because, as he quickly added, he had always been 'a sucker for Wordsworth.'" They "ended up meeting semi-regularly in a dusty fire escape office he [Norman] kept in Wiebolt Hall." It was characteristic of Maclean, Chandler adds, that he usually proved to be "far more generous than he liked to appear."
38. The Lockwood Prize is, in fact, recorded on Maclean's Dartmouth transcript under the category of "Honors and Prizes" for the year 1922–1923. The prize is still listed among the awards in writing at Dartmouth and "is open to undergraduates classified as Junior. Any form of writing except plays may be submitted. A group of short poems may be considered as one manuscript." See https://english.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate/prizes/creative-writing-prizes. Accessed 11 February 2025.
39. Tom Matney (1951–2008) worked for Lewis-Clark State College, where he taught photography and directed the department of educational technology. Gifted and significantly undervalued and underpaid, in 1999 Tom accepted an invitation from the University of Oregon to become their director of media services, where he worked almost up to the time of his premature death.
40. See *Home Waters*, 195. The first edition, first printing is easily identified by a "typographical error that appears on page 27, line 15: the word *adways*. This was corrected to *always* in the third and all subsequently print runs. The true first printing can be identified by an additional and often overlooked error on the copyright page, where the ISBN number is incorrectly given as 022650051, omitting the final 5 from the correct number, 0226500551."
41. The most reliable source is Fireside Angler, "A River Runs through It, a Bibliography" (2012), www.firesideangler.net/media/home/arrtibib.htm. Accessed 11 February 2025. The Fireside Angler bibliography is also the most reliable source on the quantity of the first edition: "5000 printed. First State: 3000 copies bound and cased, Second State 2000 copies were bound and cased after the first 3000 were sold. No differences between the first and second state are known. . . ."
42. Ibid.
43. Norman Maclean, "The Hidden Art of a Good Story," in McFarland and Nichols, 32.
44. Ibid.
45. *River*, 21.
46. O. Alan Weltzien, ed., "Introduction," *The Norman Maclean Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 20.
47. McFarland and Nichols, "Teaching and Storytelling," 98.
48. McFarland and Nichols, "The Hidden Art of a Good Story: Wallace Stegner Lecture," 33.
49. Ibid., 34.
50. This phrase belongs to Marie Borroff, found in her untitled talk in *A Service in Memory of Norman F. Maclean*.
51. Pete Dexter, "The Old Man and the River," in McFarland and Nichols, 142. Reprinted from *Esquire* (June 1981, vol. 95), 86, 88–89, 91.
52. Edward Rosenheim, *A Service in Memory of Norman F. Maclean*.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.

Nick Lyons's enthusiastic review of A River Runs through It and Other Stories*, which ran in* Fly Fisherman *in 1976. Note that an ad for this very publication appears at the upper left of the second page. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.*

Finding Astræus

by Goran Grubic

Illustrations and photos by Goran Grubic

Map 1. Contemporary rivers in the area: (1) Gallikos, (2) Axios, (3) Loudias, (4) Haliacmon, (5) Regional Canal (Moglenitsas),(6) Arapitsas, (7) Koutichas, and (8) Tripotamos.

The first description of fly fishing in print comes from Claudius Ælianus (170–230 A.D.),[1] often called Ælian, in his book *De natura animalium*. It was said to be practiced on the river Astræus in Macedonia. In a 2001 article in this journal, Andrew Herd and I—while taking into consideration changes over time in demographics, toponyms, and geography—described attempts to identify the river and its modern name,[2] including those made by Nicholas G. L. Hammond.[3] It seemed that the location of the river was solved with Hammond's article, but apparently this was not generally accepted by other scholars.

After our article was published, I exchanged several letters with Professor Eugene N. Borza, an expert on Macedonian geography. He explained that Hammond's article was not taken seriously because it was generally believed that "Ælian might have made a mistake by confusing the Astræus with the Axios."[4] This error seems quite possible, considering that the name *Astræus* is mentioned by Ælian alone.[5] The problem with this explanation, however, is that fly fishing as described by Ælian was never possible in that section of the Axios.[6] I explained this to Professor Borza, and he gave me some good advice: "In the past, when I could not solve problems in a formal academic way, I have often done some practical field work."[7] So, at the end of June 2024, I visited the Macedonian town of Naoussa to observe the rivers in the area.

Ælian briefly described the location of Astræus as "between Berœa [now Veria] and Thessaloniki."[8] There are four rivers in that region: the Gallikos (known in ancient times as the Echedorus), the Axios, the Loudias, and the Moglenitsas (Map 1). These are slow-flowing, swampy rivers (the Loudias and the Moglenitsas are now canals) that never supported trout or encouraged fly fishing.

It may seem that there are many possible Astræus candidates, but in reality, the choice is quite limited.

The Arapitsas spring. The concrete structure captures a significant part of the river for water supply.

Three Possibilities

Considering that the rivers flowing directly between Veria and Thessaloniki are not trout fly-fishing waters, we must look for the nearest suitable rivers. Such rivers have a high oxygen content, which in this part of Europe means they flow from the mountains. The mountain closest to Veria is Mount Vermion.

We must also limit ourselves to rivers suitable for the type of fly fishing described by Ælian. The literature indicates that brown trout still occur in the local rivers Arapitsas and Tripotamos[9] and that they are somewhat different from other trout populations in Greece.[10]

There are three possible Astræus candidates on the slopes of Mount Vermion: the rivers Tripotamos, Koutichas, and Arapitsas. My on-site investigations revealed that the Tripotamos and the Koutichas are very small rivers, too small to be serious Astræus candidates. However, the Arapitsas (which means "little black river" in Greek) appears to be just the right kind of river.

The Arapitsas rises from a spring under a limestone cliff in Agios Nikolaos (St. Nicholas) Park about 2 kilometers (1.24 miles) from Naoussa and 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) from Veria. It flows in an east-west direction until Naoussa, then changes its course to northwest and flows through the village of Lefkadia and not far from Kopanos in the Macedonian Plain.

I had a pleasant stay in Naoussa, spending two days there and visiting all the important places. I hiked to the Arapitsas spring and down to the point in Naoussa where it flows into the Macedonian Plain. A lot of water is taken from the river for the town and for fruit plantations, so there was probably much more water in the river in Ælian's time than there is today. On the plain, it flows into the regional canal (which originated from the Moglenitsas River) that is also used for intensive fruit growing.

Visiting the Region

If you want to visit the Arapitsas to see for yourself the river where fly fishing was first described, I recommend the area around Naoussa. The town is charming, the people are hospitable, and there are many opportunities for outdoor activities on the slopes of Mount Vermion. Good accommodation options and very good restaurants can be found, and the viticulture in the region is considered among the best in Greece.

That said, fly fishing is not readily available there. The best stretches of the river are either inaccessible or fishing is prohibited. Fly fishing is possible in Greece—there are some nice trout rivers in the mountains of Epirus and Thessaly—but it is practiced by only a small number of enthusiasts who compete with spin and bait fishermen. The fishing rules are simple: anyone can fish for trout without a special license, as long as they do not kill fish under 22 centimeters (8.7 inches) and respect the closed season (November to February). Fishing is only permitted with a hook and line.*

*Information from Kostis Nikolis, "Law & restrictions," Fly Fishing in Greece (blog) at https://wildtrouthunting.wordpress.com/the-law/. Accessed 21 February 2025.

The view of the Macedonian Plain from Naoussa.

The view from the Macedonian Plain of Naoussa with Mount Vermion in the background. The Arapitsas rises and flows out of the gorge on the right. The town lies at an altitude of 330 to 480 meters (1,100 to 1,600 feet) above sea level, and the Arapitsas rises at an altitude of about 600 meters (2,000 feet).

The Arapitsas Valley with fruit plantations and Mount Vermion in the background.

Conclusion: Arapitsas

The Arapitsas flow can be divided into four sections (Map 2): (1) the source and the free flow in St. Nicholas Park, (2) the flow through the farms to Naoussa, (3) the flow in Naoussa, and (4) the flow in the Macedonian Plain.

The river in St. Nicholas Park (section 1) looks like a spring creek, but fishing is forbidden there. Part of the river has been tapped directly at the spring for the water supply. I saw some trout there, but they were very timid and hard to spot. Section 2 is a fast-flowing, freestone type of river. But because of farm fences and dogs, it is not possible to approach the river in this section. Section 3 runs through the town and flows in a steep gorge, so you can see the river only from above. It was at this point, however, that I met a fisherman. He told me that he had been fishing "pestrofa," a Greek word for trout. He was fishing with earthworms as bait with a bait-casting rod and reel (which is legal in Greece).

Ælian described fly fishing with a 6-foot rod and line. From earlier research, I know that until recently, this form of fly fishing was still seen on some rivers in the Balkans.[11] Direct observation of Macedonian-style anglers was helpful in determining the type of water they prefer and how they fish in general. A 6-foot rod is very short, but on the right waters it can be fished successfully. Therefore, these anglers prefer rivers with fast and broken water. In sections 2 and 3, the Arapitsas is perfect for this type of fly fishing, better than any other river in the area.

From all the information gathered about rivers in the region and their suitability for the type of fishing described by Ælian, it can be concluded that the Arapitsas is the river most likely mentioned in *De natura animalium.* It is located in the area where the Astræus could be expected and still holds a trout population. It is well suited to the type of fly fishing described by Ælian.

The Arapitsas must be the Astræus. Hammond came to the same conclusion, but he was not a fly fisher and could not

Map 2. The Arapitsas flow in the Naoussa area.

Above: The Arapitsas in St. Nicholas Park under a lush canopy of plane trees.

Left: The fast-flowing river Arapitsas just below its source.

A slightly lower section of the Arapitsas close to its exit from the St. Nicholas Park.

The last part of the Arapitsas in the city of Naoussa before the waterfalls, which channel its waters into the Macedonian Plain.

assess the fishing potential of possible river candidates. Now we see that only one river meets the necessary criteria. If Ælian's location of the Astræus was correct, the Arapitsas is almost certainly the river he described.

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ENDNOTES

1. Claudius Ælianus, *De natura animalium*, book XV, section 1. Best accessed in Loeb Classical Library edition, A. F. Scholfield, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 203–4.

2. Goran Grubic and Andrew Herd, "Astræus: The First Fly-Fishing River," *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 2001, vol. 27, no. 4), 16–22. As explained in that article (which can be accessed online at http://amff.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2001-Vol27-No4web.pdf), these geographic changes took place on the Macedonian Plain, not on the slopes of Mount Vermion where the trout-inhabited part of the Arapitsas flows. They happened around and along low-oxygen lowland rivers, where trout life was never possible.

3. Nicholas G. L. Hammond, "The Location of the Trout-River Astræus," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* (1995, vol. 36, no. 2), 173f.

4. Letter to author from Eugene N. Borza, professor emeritus of ancient history, Pennsylvania State University, 18 November 2001.

5. The source of this problem lies in Scholfield's commentary in the Loeb Classical Library edition of *De natura animalium*. Footnote a on page 203 reads, "presumably the Axios is intended." Professor Borza sent me practically the same explanation. But as a fly fisherman, I know that this cannot be correct.

6. Ælian described fishing for trout ("fishes of a speckled hue"), and there are very few rivers in the area between Veria and Thessaloniki inhabited with trout. It is simply not possible to catch trout in the Axios, Loudias, Moglenitsas, or Gallikos because there are no trout in these rivers. It was that way in Ælian's time too. This is what some historians have misunderstood. There are trout populations in the *upper* reaches of these rivers, but that is very far from the area mentioned by Ælian—just as there are trout in the headwaters of the Mississippi, but none in the lowlands around New Orleans.

7. Letter to author from Eugene N. Borza, professor emeritus of ancient history, Pennsylvania State University, 26 November 2001.

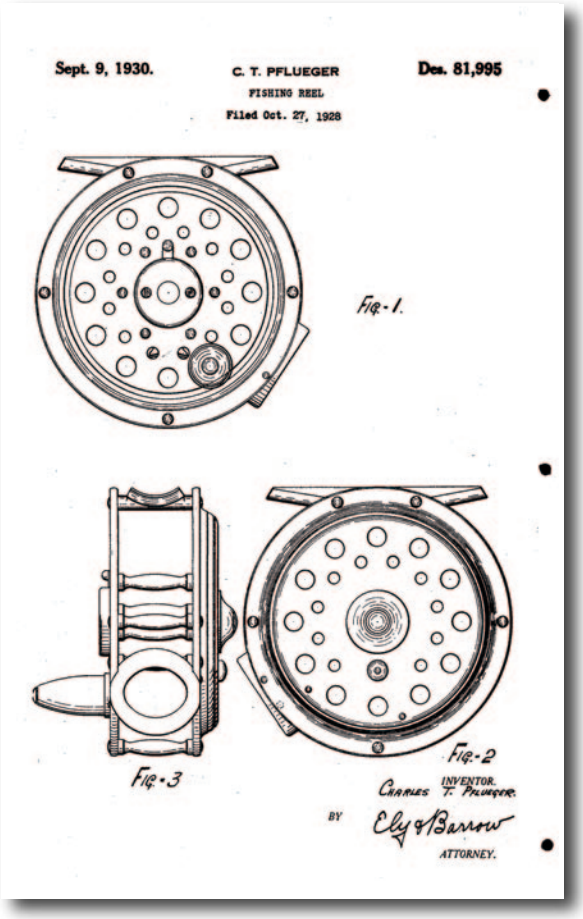
8. Ælianus, *De natura animalium*, book XV, section 1, 203. In all the texts dealing with Ælian's description of fly fishing, it was assumed that the place was exactly "between Berœa and Thessaloniki," but as we can see, trout fishing was never really possible in that exact area. I do not assume that Ælian had a clear idea about it; it's likely he passed along only what he had heard. That said, I have always had the feeling that by "between Berœa and Thessaloniki," he actually meant to say that it occurs somewhere in the central part of Macedonia (which is where it is).

9. A. P. Apostolidis, M. Th. Stoumboudi, E. Kalogianni, G. Cote, and L. Bernatchez, "Genetic Divergence among Native Trout *Salmo trutta* Populations from Southern Balkans Based on Mitochondrial DNA and Microsatellite Variation," *Journal of Fish Biology* (2011, vol. 79), 1950–60. Available at http://www2.bio.ulaval.ca/louisbernatchez/pdf/(246)%20Apostolidis_JFB_11.pdf. Accessed 3 February 2025.

10. A. E. Daskalakis and A. P. Apostolidis, "Study of the Genetic Structure and Differentiation between Brown Trout Populations (*Salmo trutta L.*) from Tripotamos and Arapitsa," *4th International Symposium on Hydrobiology and Fisheries* (9–11 June 2011), Volos, Greece. Available in Greek with English summary at http://www.apae.uth.gr/conferences/index.php?option=com_conten&view=article&id=112:-salmo-trutta-l-&catid=5:2011-07-13-06-51-18&Itemid=18. Accessed 3 February 2025.

11. Andrew Herd included observations of this form of fly fishing in "The Macedonian Fly Revisited," *The American Fly Fisher* (Winter 2001, vol. 27, no. 1), 7–11.

The Legendary Pflueger Medalist Fly Reel


Sept. 9, 1930. C. T. PFLUEGER Des. 81,995
FISHING REEL
Filed Oct. 27, 1928
Fig. 1.
Fig. 2
Fig. 3
INVENTOR. CHARLES T. PFLUEGER.
BY Ely & Barrow
ATTORNEY.

United States Design Patent 81995 was applied for on 27 October 1928 by Charles T. Pflueger. Note the sculpted pillars and sculpted arbor pillars found on the earliest Medalist reels.

Sara Wilcox

Pflueger Medalist fly reel owned by Lefty Kreh, 1947. By removing a large portion of the tail plate, Lefty was able to apply direct pressure on the spool to create more drag. Based on the even amount of wear along the crudely cut opening, it's safe to say it was utilized often. Gift of Lefty Kreh. 2011.006.215.

For nearly a century, the Pflueger Medalist has been a favorite fly reel among anglers worldwide. First introduced at the 1926 Sesquicentennial International Exposition in Philadelphia,[1] the reel earned acclaim—hence the "Medalist" moniker—and was granted a design patent on 9 September 1930, awarded to Charles T. Pflueger, assignor to the Enterprise Manufacturing Company.[2] It made its official debut in the 1929 Pflueger tackle catalog.

A staple in the gear of countless fly anglers, the Medalist has never gone out of style. Its popularity has seen several resurgences over the years, the most notable being in 1992, when it appeared in the hands of Brad Pitt portraying Paul Maclean in the film *A River Runs Through It*.[3]

In February, AMFF Ambassador Chris Miller presented a detailed history of the Medalist and its connection to the film at the AMFF gallery inside the Wonders of Wildlife Museum in Springfield, Missouri.[4] Recently, the reel has also been featured in numerous online and print publications. One notable mention appears in *Fly Fisherman* magazine, in which writer Ben Carmichael recounts a story about his father, Hoagy B. Carmichael, and his first encounter with renowned rod maker Everett Garrison—at which Hoagy was fishing with his very first fly reel: a Medalist.[5]

Most notably, new *Midcurrent* editor-in-chief Phil Monahan recently brought renewed attention to the reel—not just any Medalist, but one owned and modified by none other than Lefty Kreh, widely regarded as one of the greatest fly fishers of all time. As part of the AMFF's "Top 50 Interesting Collection Items" collaboration with *Midcurrent*, Phil was asked which item he expected to see on the list. His answer: Lefty's Pflueger Medalist.[6]

Although the exact details of how Lefty acquired his first fly reel vary depending on the source, all accounts point to a pivotal moment in 1947. While guiding author Joe Brooks on the Potomac River, Lefty watched Brooks land one smallmouth after another on a fly rod. Amazed, Lefty famously exclaimed, "Mr. Brooks, I gots to have some of this."[7] The following day, he visited Tochterman's Sporting Goods in Baltimore and purchased a South Bend fiberglass fly rod and a Pflueger Medalist reel.

Unsatisfied with the stock drag system, Lefty later modified the reel by cutting a large section from the back to allow direct contact with the spool, providing a level of drag control not possible with the original setup. That very reel is now part of AMFF's permanent collection and is on display at the museum in Manchester, Vermont.[8]

Whether the Medalist makes the Top 50 list remains to be seen—you'll need to keep an eye on *Midcurrent* and the *American Fly Fisher* for that reveal.

If you're new to fly fishing, or a seasoned angler who hasn't yet tried one, consider adding a vintage Medalist to your collection. You'd be following in some legendary footsteps.

Jim Schottenham
Curator

ENDNOTES

1. Bob Miller, "Worth: A Pflueger Trilogy," *The Reel News* (March 2006, vol. xvi, no. 2), 7–10, 10.

2. C. T. Pflueger. Fishing Reel. U.S. Patent D81995, filed 27 October 1928 and issued 9 September 1930. https://patents.google.com/patent/USD81995S/en?oq=D81995. Accessed 29 May 2025.

3. For a glimpse of the Pflueger Medalist in the film, see the clip at www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnz7BQ7lxJQ. Accessed 29 May 2025.

4. Chris Miller, "The Angling Gear of *A River Runs Through It*," fly tying and casting workshop at Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium, 22 February 2025. www.amff.org/february-22-fly-tying-casting-workshop-wow/. Accessed 29 May 2025.

5. Ben Carmichael, "Trading Palm Trees for Bamboo: A Son's Profile of Hoagy B. Carmichael," *Fly Fisherman* (June–July 2025), 10–16, 11.

6. Phil Monahan, AMFF Display Case Podcast, beginning at the 22:55 mark: https://youtu.be/Ab3zlvo4dlI?si=iLUETBctw09pJ900. Accessed 29 May 2025.

7. Numerous websites give accounts of how Lefty came to own his reel, including Monte Burke, "Southern Master: The Legend of Lefty Kreh," *Garden & Gun* (August/September 2015), https://gardenandgun.com/feature/southern-master-the-legend-of-lefty/; Phil Monahan, "Museum Pieces: A Fly-Fishing Icon's First Reel," *Orvis News* (27 December 2017), https://news.orvis.com/fly-fishing/museum-pieces-a-fly-fishing-icons-first-reel; Gary Reich, "Remembering Lefty Kreh," *Anglers Journal* (14 March 2018), https://anglersjournal.com/people/profile-of-lefty-kreh/; and Conrad Botes, "Lifer: Lefty Kreh," *The Mission: The Cult of Fly Fishing* (15 January 2024), https://themission-flymag.com/lifer-lefty-kreh-interview/, from which the quote is taken. All accessed 29 May 2025.

8. Pflueger Medalist reel, modified and used by Lefty Kreh. Object Record, the American Museum of Fly Fishing, https://amff.catalogaccess.com/objects/8993. Accessed 29 May 2025.

Jim Warner

by Scott Biron

Photos by Jim Schottenham

These Jim Warner flies are currently on display at the museum in the Selch-Bakwin Fly Room. Gift of Glenn Raiche. 2025.006.001–018.

For years anglers would pass through New Hampshire on their way to fish in Maine. Stories of Maine's legendary-sized brook trout and landlocked salmon beckoned them from all parts of the world. But in the mid-1950s, fly tier Jim Warner put New Hampshire's Lake Winnipesaukee on the map and on their radar.

Warner (8 January 1928–12 February 2015), originally from Pennsylvania, summered with his family in Westmoreland, New Hampshire. He was introduced to Lake Winnipesaukee in 1949 and soon built a solid foundation of Lakes Region knowledge from which anglers are still benefiting.[1]

One of Warner's earliest influences was Harry Cheney. Cheney owned Neal Hardware on the Durham Road in Dover, New Hampshire. Cheney tied flies and sold many of them in his store. Most of his patterns incorporated a marabou feather. He'd create his own patterns, as well as take old standby flies and substitute a marabou feather for a traditional saddle one.

Warner was introduced to Cheney in the mid-1950s and began learning some tying techniques from him. Cheney's use of marabou was a major influence in Warner's tying, and many of Warner's subsequent signature patterns included it. He felt the marabou feather gave the fly a more lifelike appearance.

Another early influence was Warner's friend and local guide Glenn Morrill of Alton Bay.[2] Morrill liked flies that incorporated yellow, blue, and red. Warner's Guide's Special and Babb's Ghost streamer patterns both were built around these primary colors. These flies are still very popular on the lake today.

After service in the Korean War, Warner opened the Sportsman's Center in Wolfeboro, which moved to the docks in 1963 and became the Lakes Region Sports Shop (he sold it in 1976). He tied flies for both his and other area fly shops, and his patterns were sold under the name Jim Warner's Hackle Craft. His knowledge of the lake region was an asset in designing fly patterns, and anglers often made the shop their first stop for flies and advice.

Warner's most popular pattern was the Winnipesaukee Smelt, a simple but effective marabou pattern with lavender coloring and a white marabou wing. The original fly had a silver pheasant crest topping, but when it became harder to find in longer lengths, Warner switched to black ostrich herl. The fly got a set of painted eyes. These eyes were painted with pearlescent paint, making them very lifelike.

As newer materials became available, Warner incorporated them into his flies. Synthetic materials became available in the simple form of tinsel used on a Christmas tree. Then more colors and different materials specifically for fly tiers were introduced. A trip to the local craft stores always produced something new. Warner's Winnipesaukee Smelt became the Winnipesaukee Flash Smelt. Many of his patterns benefited from flash or synthetic bodies. He was constantly experimenting, with the goal of making flies more lifelike.

In 1958, when his fly shop was not able to get live redfin shiners, Warner developed the Red Fin Shiner fly to meet customer needs.[3] He had a series he called the 10 Feather

Streamers. These flies had a flash body and some white bucktail tied very sparsely on top of the hook. Then, on top of the bucktail, ten feathers of different colors were tied in flat. Warner referred to these as his "bottle flies" because he had to store them in empty cigar tubes so they would maintain their shape.[4] I caught an Atlantic salmon on a casting version of the Winnipesaukee Smelt and have tied and used the 10 Feather Smelt with success as well.

Early in 2025, AMFF received a unique donation of some of Warner's flies, pattern notes, and fly histories, one of four sets of these patterns that Warner tied in 1996. Many of the patterns are his creation, but some are flies fellow tiers came up with that proved effective enough for Warner to tie and sell. I encourage you to visit the museum to look at these.

The pattern notes are unique. Reading through them, you can follow the tier's development of each fly. Most flies have a date associated with them and a detailed history, which includes any changes made to the original pattern.

Warner was a staple at the United Fly Tyers monthly meeting in Boston, which drew some of the best fly tiers in New England. Patterns were shared and techniques taught to new tiers. He also volunteered at a Lakes Region boys camp each summer as a tying instructor.

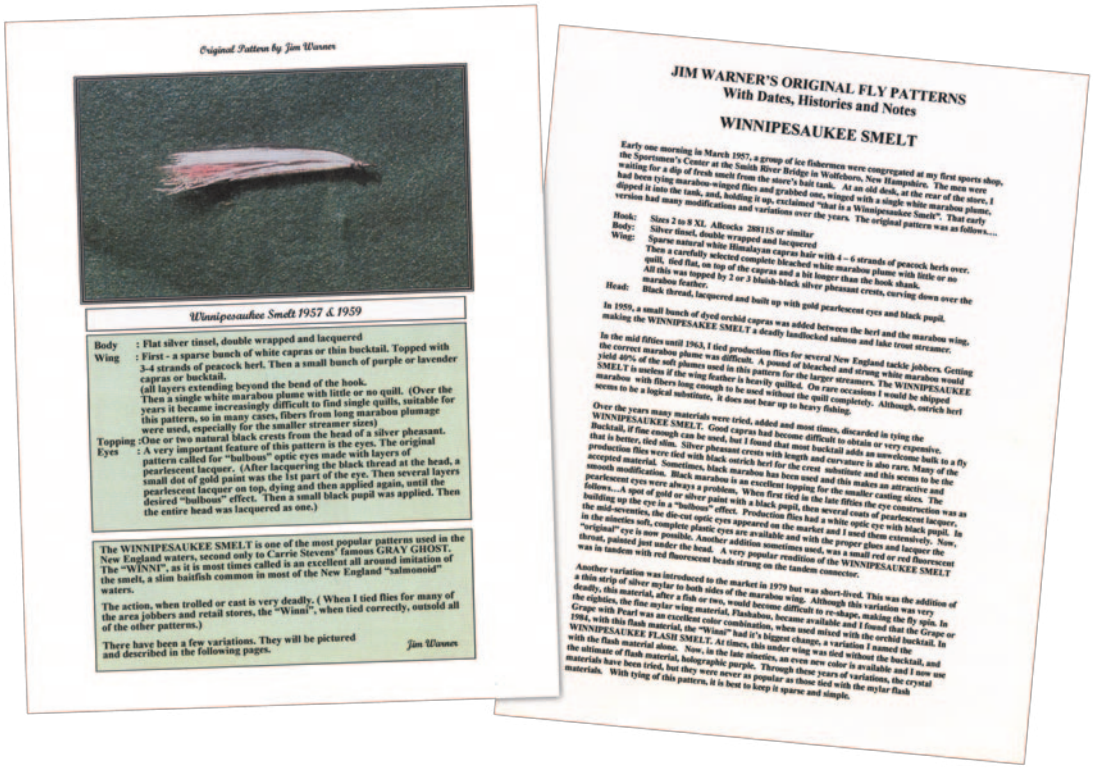
Among his proudest achievements was teaching a young man in 1995 to tie flies under the auspices of the New Hampshire Council of the Arts.[5] Having gone through this same program and mentored two students in fly tying, I understand why he was proud to pass on the creative art and its traditional methods.

Today Lake Winnipesaukee is a major fishing destination. Its popularity can be traced back to Jim Warner's flies, his fly shop, and his willingness to share his tying expertise with others.

Scott Biron is an AMFF ambassador, a master artist in the New Hampshire Heritage & Traditional Arts Program, and a national and international fly-tying instructor. On August 9, he and Curator Jim Schottenham will host a webinar about Warner's Winni Smelt. To watch Scott tie it, go to amff.org /streamer-fly-tying-episode-6.

ENDNOTES

1. Harold C. Lyon Jr., *Angling in the Smile of the Great Spirit*, 3rd rev. ed. (Meredith, N.H.: Deep Waters Press, 2014), 145.
2. Ibid., 147.
3. Dick Stewart and Bob Leeman, *Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Greene Press, 1982), 38.
4. Ibid., 40.
5. Lyon, *Angling in the Smile of the Great Spirit*, 155.



Original Pattern by Jim Warner

Winnipesaukee Smelt 1957 & 1959

Body : Flat silver tinsel, double wrapped and lacquered
Wing : First - a sparse bunch of white capras or thin bucktail. Topped with 3-4 strands of peacock herl. Then a small bunch of purple or lavender capras or bucktail.
(all layers extending beyond the bend of the hook.
Then a single white marabou plume with little or no quill. (Over the years it became increasingly difficult to find single quills, suitable for this pattern, so in many cases, fibers from long marabou plumage were used, especially for the smaller streamer sizes)
Topping :One or two natural black crests from the head of a silver pheasant.
Eyes : A very important feature of this pattern is the eyes. The original pattern called for "bulbous" optic eyes made with layers of pearlescent lacquer. (After lacquering the black thread at the head, a small dot of gold paint was the 1st part of the eye. Then several layers pearlescent lacquer on top, dying and then applied again, until the desired "bulbous" effect. Then a small black pupil was applied. Then the entire head was lacquered as one.)

The WINNIPESAUKEE SMELT is one of the most popular patterns used in the New England waters, second only to Carrie Stevens' famous GRAY GHOST. The "WINNI", as it is most times called is an excellent all around imitation of the smelt, a slim baitfish common in most of the New England "salmonoid" waters.

The action, when trolled or cast is very deadly. (When I tied flies for many of the area jobbers and retail stores, the "Winni", when tied correctly, outsold all of the other patterns.)

There have been a few variations. They will be pictured and described in the following pages.

Jim Warner

JIM WARNER'S ORIGINAL FLY PATTERNS
With Dates, Histories and Notes

WINNIPESAUKEE SMELT

Early one morning in March 1957, a group of ice fishermen were congregated at my first sports shop, the Sportsmen's Center at the Smith River Bridge in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. The men were waiting for a dip of fresh smelt from the store's bait tank. At an old desk, at the rear of the store, I had been tying marabou-winged flies and grabbed one, winged with a single white marabou plume, dipped it into the tank, and, holding it up, exclaimed "that is a Winnipesaukee Smelt". That early version had many modifications and variations over the years. The original pattern was as follows....

Hook: Sizes 2 to 8 XL Allcocks 2881IS or similar
Body: Silver tinsel, double wrapped and lacquered
Wing: Sparse natural white Himalayan capras hair with 4 – 6 strands of peacock herls over. Then a carefully selected complete bleached white marabou plume with little or no quill, tied flat, on top of the capras and a bit longer than the hook shank. All this was topped by 2 or 3 bluish-black silver pheasant crests, curving down over the marabou feather.
Head: Black thread, lacquered and built up with gold pearlescent eyes and black pupil.

In 1959, a small bunch of dyed orchid capras was added between the herl and the marabou wing, making the WINNIPESAUKEE SMELT a deadly landlocked salmon and lake trout streamer.

In the mid fifties until 1963, I tied production flies for several New England tackle jobbers. Getting the correct marabou plume was difficult. A pound of bleached and strung white marabou would yield 40% of the soft plumes used in this pattern for the larger streamers. The WINNIPESAUKEE SMELT is useless if the wing feather is heavily quilled. On rare occasions I would be shipped marabou with fibers long enough to be used without the quill completely. Although, ostrich herl seems to be a logical substitute, it does not bear up to heavy fishing.

Over the years many materials were tried, added and most times, discarded in tying the WINNIPESAUKEE SMELT. Good capras had become difficult to obtain or very expensive. Bucktail, if fine enough can be used, but I found that most bucktail adds an unwelcome bulk to a fly that is better, tied slim. Silver pheasant crests with length and curvature is also rare. Many of the production flies were tied with black ostrich herl for the crest substitute and this seems to be the accepted material. Sometimes, black marabou has been used and this seems to be the smooth modification. Black marabou is an excellent topping for the smaller casting sizes. The pearlescent eyes were always a problem. When first tied in the late fifties the eye construction was as follows....A spot of gold or silver paint with a black pupil, then several coats of pearlescent lacquer, building up the eye in a "bulbous" effect. Production flies had a white optic eye with black pupil. In the mid-seventies, the die-cut optic eyes appeared on the market and I used them extensively. Now, in the nineties soft, complete plastic eyes are available and with the proper glues and lacquer the "original" eye is now possible. Another addition sometimes used, was a small red or red fluorescent throat, painted just under the head. A very popular rendition of the WINNIPESAUKEE SMELT was in tandem with red fluorescent beads strung on the tandem connector.

Another variation was introduced to the market in 1979 but was short-lived. This was the addition of a thin strip of silver mylar to both sides of the marabou wing. Although this variation was very deadly, this material, after a fish or two, would become difficult to re-shape, making the fly spin. In the eighties, the flat mylar wing material, Flashabou, became available and I found that the Grape or Grape with Pearl was an excellent color combination, when used mixed with the orchid bucktail. In 1984, with this flash material, the "Winni" had it's biggest change, a variation I named the WINNIPESAUKEE FLASH SMELT. At times, this under wing was tied without the bucktail, and with the flash material alone. Now, in the late nineties, an even new color is available and I now use the ultimate of flash material, holographic purple. Through these years of variations, the crystal materials have been tried, but they were never as popular as those tied with the mylar flash materials. With tying of this pattern, it is best to keep it sparse and simple.

Jim Warner's notes on the Winnipesaukee Smelt. Gift of Scott Biron. 2025.007.001.

Winnipesaukee Smelt. Gift of Glenn Raiche. 2025.006.006.

Winnipesaukee Smelt

Body: Flat silver tinsel-double wrapped
Wing: *First layer* sparse white bucktail
Second layer 3–4 thin peacock herls
Third layer sparse dyed orchid bucktail
Fourth layer single white marabou plume tied in flat
Top layer black ostrich herl
Head: White pearlescent lacquer with a black pupil built up

AMFF Honors Oliver White with the 2025 Heritage Award

Photos by Jack McCoy except where noted

AMFF President Gardner Grant Jr. (left) presents the 2025 Heritage Award to Oliver White.

The 2025 Heritage Award event honoring Oliver White was held May 1 before a sold-out crowd in the elegant Model Room of the New York Yacht Club. Oliver—chair of Indifly and general manager and partner of South Fork Lodge—is a celebrated fly-fishing expert, entrepreneur, and conservation leader whose journey has had a profound impact on the sport and indigenous communities worldwide.

During the lively reception, artist Mike Sudal put the finishing touches on a painting of a brown trout that was later auctioned off. Master of ceremonies AMFF President Gardner Grant Jr. welcomed everyone and shared a surprise tribute video featuring congratulatory and heartfelt messages from notable and passionate anglers, including Jimmy Kimmel, who offered a glimpse into how their relationship started and his admiration for the way Oliver lives his life. Huey Lewis took the podium to share stories of his friend and their fishing adventures. The inimitable Alec Griswold, cofounder of Soul Fly Lodge, served as the evening's auctioneer. His energy, paired with the generosity of attendees, helped to raise record-breaking funds.

A highlight of the night was the "fireside chat" between Oliver and his friend of more than twenty years, Bill Ackman, the well-known Pershing Square hedge fund manager. Bill met fishing guide Oliver on a trip in Argentina and soon introduced him to the fast-paced world of finance. Oliver worked alongside Bill for a couple of years before eventually heading back to the water, where he's built a celebrated career in fly fishing. Their conversation delved into Oliver's remarkable journey and his lasting contributions to the sport. Reflecting on its enduring appeal, Oliver captured the essence of fly fishing, saying, "What makes fly fishing so great is that it requires just enough thought to be challenging and keep you present, but not so much that it is taxing."

As always, we would like to thank our wonderful auction donors who helped make the evening such a success. Live auction donors include Rachel Finn, John Francis, Jimmy Kimmel, David Mangum, Bill Matthews, Brew Moscarello, Flip Pallot, Al Quatrocchi, South Fork Lodge, Mike Sudal, and Yeti. Silent auction donors include Gordon Allen, Scott Biron, Alan Bourgault, Henry Caldwell, Salvatore Campofranco, Catskill Outfitters, Cheeky, Blane Chocklett, Mark Comora, Frank Conroy, Costa, Harry Desmond, Derek DeYoung, Steve Earle, Stephen Farrelly, James Heckman, Peter Kellogg, Jim Klug, Val Kropiwnicki, Ted Lebow, Josh Miller, John Mundt, Al Quattrocchi, Vaughn Podmore, Fred Polhemus, Poncho, REC Components, Mark Rehbein, the Shade Hotel, Simms, Scott Smith, Turtlebox, VAER, Jess Westbrook, Emily Whitlock, Joan Wulff, and Yeti. Every attendee walked away with a Yeti tumbler, a custom bandana designed by artist Paul Puckett, and a renewed sense of inspiration. Thank you to all who participated in and supported this extremely memorable and successful event.

Auctioneer Alec Griswold in action.

Val Kropiwnicki

Once again Val Kropiwnicki designed and tied this year's Heritage Award: Your Turn.325.SSP.

An emotional Oliver White gives his acceptance speech.

Trustee Fred Polhemus, John Holland, Adam Raleigh, David Buck, and artist Mike Sudal gather around Sudal's brown trout painting during the reception.

Oliver White and Bill Ackman reflect on fly fishing and their longtime friendship.

Musicians Huey Lewis and Steve Earle.

Quests through Time: Fly Fishing for Maine's Blueback Trout

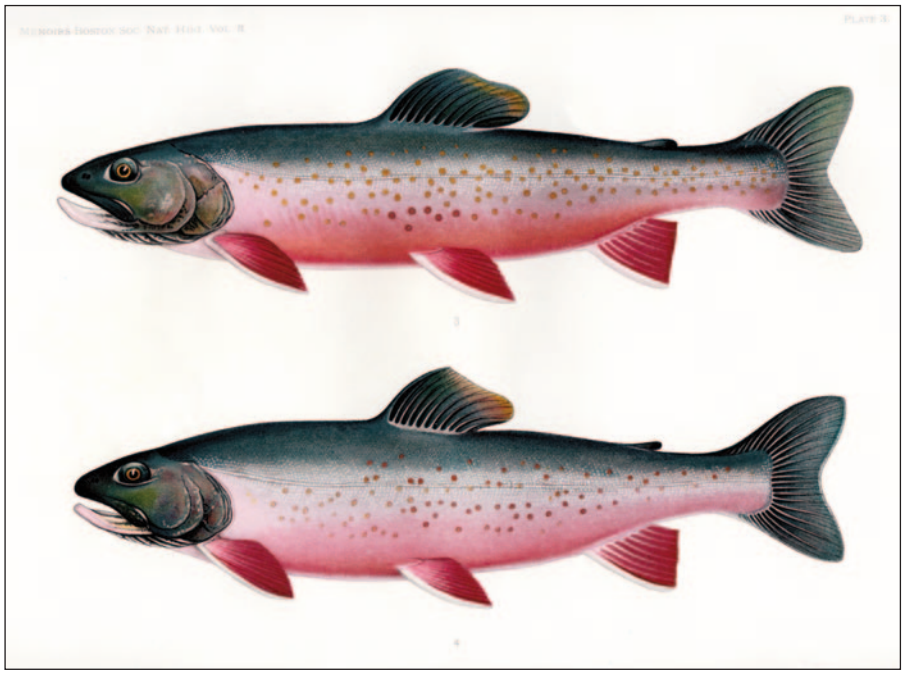
by William B. Krohn

This story starts approximately 14,000 years ago, when the world's climate moderated and the massive ice sheets that covered what now is Maine started to melt. As glaciers receded, the sea level rose and salt water flooded inland. The weight of these massive ice sheets depressed the earth's crust, and as the ice turned to water and ran to sea, the land rose.[1]

Over thousands of years, these geologic forces resulted in major changes in Maine's coastline and inland watersheds. Rivers and lakes that were once far from the sea became closer to the Atlantic Ocean. Depressions originally dug out by the glaciers flooded with fresh water, creating thousands of lakes and ponds. Some of the lakes with outlet rivers had relatively unobstructed flows to the sea. A few of these newly available habitats became populated with Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*), a species that, in one of its several life-history forms, spent summer feeding in salt water and fall spawning in fresh water.

As glaciers continued receding and the land rose even more, certain drainages became inaccessible to fish migrating in from the sea.[2] Arctic char are flexible, however. In addition to the migratory populations that annually move between salt and fresh water, some nonmigratory forms spend their entire lives in fresh water, such as a lake able to support one or more forms.[3] So although the migratory form of the Arctic char went extinct in Maine when it was cut off from the sea, a resident form of this species survives to this day in the Pine Tree State.

Blueback trout, a unique subspecies of the Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus oquassa*), have a limited distribution in Maine. Specifically, self-sustaining populations of blueback trout are today found in fourteen lakes and ponds at higher elevations scattered across western and northern Maine.[4] To understand why only a relative few of the thousands of lakes and ponds in Maine support this species, one needs to realize that most standing bodies of water are too warm during much of the year to support this cold-water fish. More



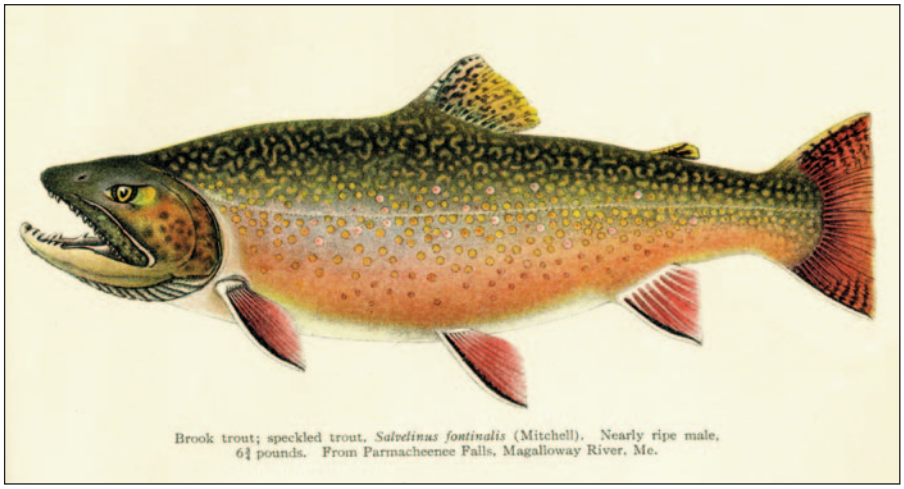
The color of arctic char, including Maine's blueback trout, vary greatly. Shown here are male (upper) and female (lower) blueback trout from Maine's Rainbow Lake (above) and Rangeley Lake (below). These illustrations were painted by Walter H. Rich. From W. C. Kendall, "The Fishes of New England: The Salmon Family, Part 1—The Trout or Charrs," Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History *(1914, vol. 8, no. 1), plates 3 and 4.*

specifically, Arctic char prefer water temperatures around 53 degrees Fahrenheit (even colder in winter).[5] During summer in Maine, this means a lake has to be deep enough to have larger areas of well-oxygenated water at or below this temperature. Given that such deep lakes are uncommon throughout the blueback's range, it is not surprising that relatively few of Maine's standing bodies of water support them. Historically, *Salvelinus alpinus oquassa* had a stronghold in the Rangeley Lakes of western Maine but went extinct in the early 1900s, shortly after smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) were introduced during the early 1890s.[6]

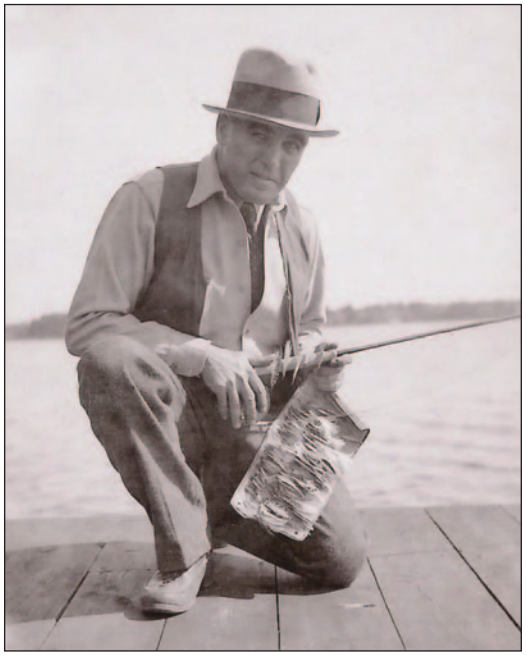
Yesterday's Angling Quests

Given that blueback trout prefer cold water, the quest to catch this species on flies, especially dry flies, has long been considered a special challenge. Fisheries expert William C. Kendall, in his 1914 monograph about New England's char, includes a section about catching blueback trout. A number of sources in this monograph noted that the Rangeley Lake bluebacks could be netted in streams during their late-fall spawning run, including Joshua G. Rich, an early Rangeley settler and naturalist: "In this way several bushels would be secured by each man in a night."[7] George S. Page, first president of the Oquossoc Angling Association and one of Kendall's sources, flatly stated, "They [blueback trout] never take a fly or bait."[8] Yet another one of Kendall's sources, Captain Fred C. Barker, stated that the "blueback would sometimes take a bait in deep water," but he "knew of no case of their taking a fly."[9] Joshua G. Rich further reported, "I have tried them time and again with fly and bait, but never succeeded in taking one or even attracting their attention."[10] (Although not explicitly stated, Rich's experience might have been limited to the fish during the spawning run when fish seldom feed.) Another source, Maine Inland Fisheries Commissioner Henry O. Stanley, wrote that he "occasionally caught one or two at a time when fishing [with bait] in deep water in the summer."[11] In summary, Rangeley Lake bluebacks could readily be netted during their spawning season, sometimes caught on baits in deep water, but this species was not reported to be taken by early fly anglers.

However, not reported to be taken does not necessarily mean that blueback trout cannot be taken on flies. One angler in particular took on the task to determine whether Maine's blueback trout could be taken on flies: the commercial fly tier and streamer inventor Bert Quimby (aka Clive V. Quimby). Quimby started commercially producing fishing flies around 1936. At this time, he and his wife, Ethel, were living in Portland, Maine, and the business was called the Forest City Fly Company. In



A male brook trout painted by Walter H. Rich. Note that the brook trout has a "worm" pattern on its back versus the blueback trout's more solid, blueish back. Bluebacks also have a more forked tail and a smaller mouth than the brook trout. From W. C. Kendall, "The Rangeley Lakes, Maine; with Special Reference to the Habits of the Fishes, Fish Culture, and Angling," Bulletin of the [U.S.] Bureau of Fisheries *(1918, vol. 35), 487–594, plate XLII.*



Bert Quimby (aka Clive V. Quimby), a commercial fly tier and sporting camp manager, in an undated photograph with a fly rod and some of his flies. In the late 1940s, Quimby successfully caught blueback trout on dry flies during spring. Quimby invented and tied flies in Maine from approximately 1936 until his death in 1952. Photo courtesy of Wayne Jordan.

BERT QUIMBY

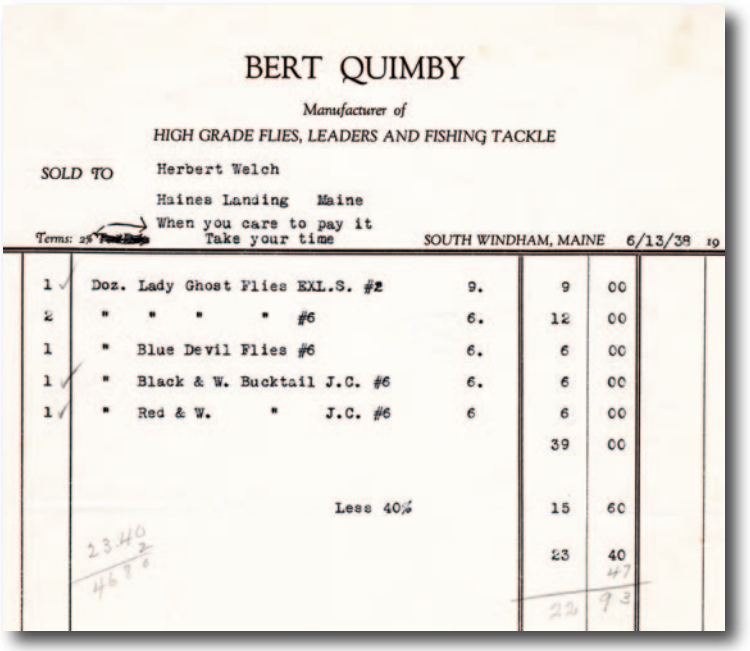
FOREST CITY FLY COMPANY

MAKERS OF HIGH GRADE FLIES AND LEADERS

SOLD TO

Terms: 2% Ten Days

SOUTH WINDHAM, MAINE



BERT QUIMBY

Manufacturer of

HIGH GRADE FLIES, LEADERS AND FISHING TACKLE

SOLD TO Herbert Welch

Haines Landing Maine

When you care to pay it

Terms: 2% Take your time

SOUTH WINDHAM, MAINE 6/13/38

1	Doz. Lady Ghost Flies EXL.S. #2	9.	9	00
2	" " " " #6	6.	12	00
1	" Blue Devil Flies #6	6.	6	00
1	" Black & W. Bucktail J.C. #6	6.	6	00
1	" Red & W. " J.C. #6	6	6	00
			39	00
		Less 40%	15	60
			23	40

The original name of Bert Quimby's fly business was Forest City Fly Company (above), but after he moved from Portland to the Windham area, he dropped this name and simply used his nickname (below). Note that both invoices are for Herbert Welch, another highly respected Maine fly tier. Invoices courtesy of Leslie Hilyard; flies from author's collection.

Left: Bert Quimby tied a wide variety of streamer and bucktail flies. He also made the Feather Fish, a bait designed to be used either with a fly rod or a spinning rod. After Bert's death in 1952, his wife, Ethel, continued making the Feather Fish. Author's collection.

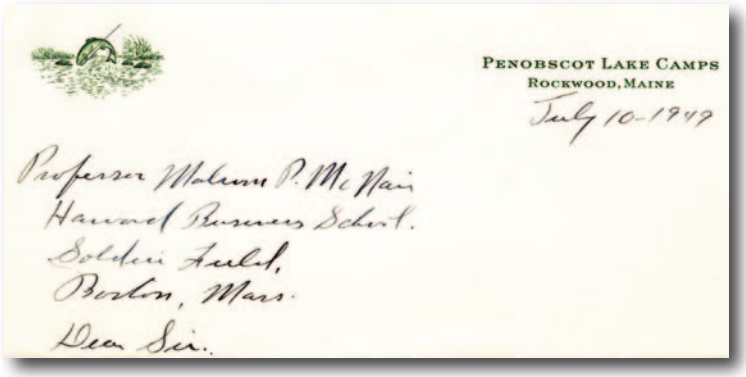
1937, after moving from Portland to the Windham area near Sebago Lake, his letterhead dropped "Forest City" and read simply "BERT QUIMBY / *Manufacturer of* / *HIGH GRADE FLIES, LEADERS AND FISHING TACKLE*."

Quimby not only produced flies and leaders, he guided anglers. One of his clients was the streamer fly expert Joseph D. Bates Jr. In an article about her father, Pamela Bates Richards wrote that in the 1940s Colonel Bates "was taken under the wings of prominent bucktail and streamer innovators such as Bill Edson, Herbie Welch, Joe Stickney, *Bert Quimby* [italics mine], and Carrie Stevens."[12] By the late 1940s, however, Quimby apparently wanted to retire from fly tying and try his hand at a new profession. In a handwritten letter to Joe Bates on letterhead reading "Penobscot Lake Camps / Rockwood, Maine" dated 8 July 1949, Quimby stated that "I took over the above camps a year ago and turned over the fly business to my son."[13] But Bert's retirement from the fly business was brief. In a second letter to Bates, dated 14 September 1949, Quimby writes that "my Son has decided to go to college and has left the fly business in the air. . . ."[14] Sometime in the early 1950s, Bert Quimby ceased managing the Penobscot Lake Camps and returned to his craft of producing high-quality streamer flies.[15]

Penobscot Lake, located in western Maine near the Quebec–Maine border, is the source of the South Branch of the Penobscot River.[16] This 1,019-acre lake has a maximum depth of 104 feet and supports both brook and blueback trout. In contrast, the dozen-plus smaller lakes and ponds within 5 miles of Penobscot Lake are shallower and inhabited by brook trout, but not bluebacks. While managing a sporting camp on Penobscot Lake, or perhaps even before, Quimby became fixated on fly fishing for blueback trout. At the time, few people knew of this species, and those who did often considered it a deep-water species inaccessible to the fly angler.

How do we know of Quimby's quest to catch blueback trout on flies? Quimby was friends with Gene Letourneau, an outdoor writer from Waterville, Maine. Letourneau contributed regularly to a number of publications, including two newspapers in Portland. It is in some of Letourneau's "Sportsmen Say" columns that we learn of Quimby's obsession with blueback trout. Specifically, Letourneau's *Portland Press Herald* column of 4 April 1949 announces that "Bert Quimby of South Windham has taken over the management on Penobscot Lake [Camps]."[17] Then, on May 29, Letourneau writes about blueback trout, stating that "none has been taken as yet this season from Penobscot [Lake] where Bert Quimby is devoting some time trying to round up a few. The streamlined shape and the forked

Left: Penobscot Lake Camps, which Bert Quimby managed in 1949, have served the public going back to around 1909. Today, these facilities are private and no longer operate as a public sporting camp. Throughout its history, brook trout have been the primary target of anglers, whereas blueback trout have been considered an extra-special catch. Postcard from author's collection.



Top of a letter written on Penobscot Lake Camps stationery penned by Bert Quimby to a potential client (upper). In addition to describing the lake, the camp facilities, and the fishing, Quimby touted the availability of blueback trout. This letter was written in Quimby's own hand (lower). Author's collection.

tail distinguish the blue from the brook trout. The fact that it is an unusual fish makes it of more than passing interest to anglers who constantly are looking for something new to catch."[18]

At last, on July 9, Letourneau reports Quimby's success under the subtitle "Bert Quimby: A Top Fly Caster."

> Bert Quimby of South Windham rates with the best of them when it comes to fly casting. It isn't surprising to this department to hear that he's taken over 70 blueback trout at Penobscot Lake in upper Somerset County on wet flies, streamers and dries.
>
> Bert currently is operating the only set of camps on Penobscot. This being his first season, he was interested in the blueback possibilities of that lake. Brook trout are fairly plentiful in Penobscot and in several smaller ponds around it.
>
> We asked Bert early in the season to keep us posted on his fishing experiments with bluebacks. Until the other day it was feared that the experiments had failed to change the general belief that blues could be taken on bait or while fishing artificials under water.
>
> But Bert obviously made sure before filing a report. Now he asserts that he has taken over events. "Our fishing is just starting," he reports. "What caused such a late start, I don't know unless the heat wave put them down for ten days."
>
> "You can feel assured that bluebacks will hit wet flies and streamers. Last evening I took the first one on a Brown Wolf dry."
>
> Bert also informs that the brookies are coming along, one party taking a dozen that averaged two pounds during an evening's session with both dry and wet flies.[19]

Quimby, because he notes this as "the first one," was apparently pleased with his accomplishment of catching a blueback trout on a dry fly. But he seems to have also recognized that the mere presence of this species in Penobscot Lake made the lake special. Following is a letter he penned in July 1949 for a potential client, Professor Malcolm P. McNair of the Harvard Business School.

> Dr. L. Chester Durant suggested I write you regarding the fishing and accommodations at our Camps.
>
> The fishing is all trout and I believe is as good as any place in the east. The main lake is about four miles long and is broken up with deep bays and islands so that you can fish in any wind. The largest fish we take are about two pounds in Penobscot itself. A short time ago I opened up a trail to a back pond that has produced some really large fish. One party took fifteen, the smallest two pounds. As you know this is unusual and they can't be taken every day in the season. In this area we have six other small ponds that produce good fishing up to a pound.
>
> All camps are equipped with hot and cold water, baths, all new furniture, electric lights and plenty of good food.
>
> Our rates are $10 a day and usual charge for canoes.
>
> We can only accommodate fourteen at a time and are only taking in parties that are recommended to us. This is more of a semi public camp and is one of the best equipped camps I was ever in.
>
> Just at the present our dry fly fishing is coming good. That is when conditions are right. A few days ago a big hatch of May flies were out and one party took twenty fish from a half to [a] pound and a half.
>
> *Also we have "Blue Back" trout and so far this season I have taken about seventy fish on flies* [italics mine].
>
> We would be very pleased to have you fish our waters and will try and do everything possible to make your trip pleasant.
>
> Very truly yours,
> Bert Quimby[20]

Quimby not only noted the presence of bluebacks in Penobscot Lake to his potential customers, but he helped others to catch this rare form of Arctic char as shown in this "Sportsmen Say" column of 21 June 1950.

> Ralph Carpenter 3rd who is commissioner of the New Hampshire Conservation Department will have a new trophy to tack on his office walls and it comes from Maine.
>
> While attending the outdoor writer's convention at Moosehead [Lake], Carpenter flew to Penobscot Lake where he devoted his angling time to blueback trout. He managed to catch two of these rare fish and is having them mounted.
>
> Bert Quimby of South Windham who manages sporting camps on Penobscot helped Carpenter in acquiring the bluebacks.[21]

From Gene Letourneau's reporting cited above, we know that Bert Quimby took blueback trout on a variety of flies. But exactly what aquatic hatches and fly patterns produced best for him? Unfortunately, I found no direct statements from Quimby, nor indirect statements via Letourneau. The May 29 "Sportsmen Say" column reported that Quimby had not yet caught a blueback trout, but by the July 9 column, he'd taken seventy blueback trout on "wet flies, streamers and dries." June through early July is a time when many species of aquatic flies hatch in Maine.[22] The July 9 column goes on to quote Quimby saying that he'd taken the first one in the evening on a "Brown Wolf dry." Late evenings in early- to mid-July are the peak times when large mayflies (*Hexagenia* spp.) hatch in Maine, and a Brown Wolf dry fly is a good fly to use in a Hex hatch.[23]

But surface water temperatures at that time of year are relatively warm, and bluebacks are definitely a cold-water fish, so is it possible to catch blueback trout on dry flies in the first half of July? Biologists know that a species will leave its preferred thermal environment for short periods if food is superabundant elsewhere.[24] Can bluebacks therefore be caught on the surface with flies when water temperatures approach or exceed 70 degrees Fahrenheit?

I am not the first to ask this question. In his 2022 book, *Fly Fishing the Hex Hatch*, Leighton Wass writes:

> There is one more species in Maine that I just would love to catch on a dry fly during the Hex Hatch, and that is the magnificent blueback trout. Bluebacks, or Arctic charr (char) if you wish, are found only in a very few Maine water bodies—14 the last time I heard. They prefer deep, cold oxygenated waters and no doubt uncommonly come to the surface to feed on adult mayflies, although I'd bet the same bamboo fly rod I don't have that they often feed on Hex nymphs. Bob Mallard, the author of *Squaretail*, reported he once caught a blueback with a small mayfly spinner pattern on the surface at Big Black Pond in the Deboullie area of northern Maine, and in one other instance, I read that a fly fisherman landed a blueback of over 23 inches on a green drake dry fly. No other reliable sources of this feat came to my attention, although there may be some.[25]

This leads us to our next quest.

Quests of Today and Tomorrow

The inquiry fueling the blueback quest in the late 1800s was, "Can blueback trout be regularly taken on rod and reel, regardless of the terminal tackle used?" Later, in Bert Quimby's day, it was, "Can bluebacks be regularly caught on flies?" Through time, anglers have answered both of these questions.

But the blueback quest, like many, evolves through time. Now we must ask, "Can blueback trout be taken on dry flies later in the year when the surface water is warmer—specifically during *Hexagenia* hatches?" Information provided by Leighton Wass suggests yes. But Wass's sample size was small; thus his results, although interesting, are far from definitive.

So in mid-July 2023, three angling friends and I took up the quest to catch blueback trout in the Deboullie region of

A brook trout (upper) and a blueback trout (lower) caught on dry flies by the author during a fishing trip to northern Maine in summer 2023. Note especially that the blueback has a smaller mouth and a more forked tail than the brook trout. Photo by the author.

Two blueback trout caught on dry flies in northern Maine during summer 2023. One fish clearly has a more orange-colored lower body and fins than the other, but the top portion of both fish lack the brook trout's worm pattern and instead have a more solid, darker back. Photos courtesy of Chase Howard.

northern Maine. Although we caught many more brook trout than bluebacks when *Hexagenia* mayflies were on the surface, we *did* catch sixteen bluebacks on flies. Most significantly, even though the bluebacks were smaller than the brookies, roughly half of the bluebacks caught on the surface were caught with Hex patterns (the others were taken with sinking lines equipped with various wet patterns). I would not be so bold as to call this definitive proof, but it is clear that even with surface temperatures approaching 70 degrees Fahrenheit, at least a few cold-loving bluebacks will take a surface fly.

The quests of the past do not have to be the quests of the future. One of the many aspects of fly fishing I like best is that each of us, in our own time and in our own way, can define our quests. Perhaps we can combine yesterday and today and try to catch blueback trout (or any other species) on an antique bamboo fly rod tipped with our favorite fly. Or catch our target fish at multiple times of year (or places) on dry flies we tied ourselves. With a little imagination and thought, there is no limit to the quests—the adventures—that tomorrow holds.

~

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writings of William C. Kendall (1861–1939) and the deeds of Bert Quimby (1896–1952) triggered my initial interest in Maine's blueback trout. My sincere thanks to Graydon Hilyard (1944–2020) and Leslie Hilyard, who helped my initial research into Bert Quimby. I also thank Donald Wilson, who was my partner in exploring the business and sporting lives of Bert Quimby. I greatly appreciate the reviews of an earlier version of this article by two blueback-fishing friends, Barry Burgason and Chase Howard.

ENDNOTES

1. G. W. Smith and L. E. Hunter, "Late Wisconsinan deglaciation of coastal Maine," in Robert D. Tucker and Robert G. Marvinney, eds., *Studies in Maine Geology, Volume 6: Quaternary Geology* (Augusta: Maine Geological Survey, 1989), 12–32. Note especially Figures 25 and 26.

2. The process of deglaciation—and hence of the origin of blueback trout in New England—was poorly understood at the turn of the century. Ichthyologist William Converse Kendall believed that blueback trout were native to New England, but noted that not everyone agreed, writing, "You know that it has been maintained by some that they were introduced from Europe." W. C. Kendall, "The Blueback Trout," *Maine Sportsman* (February 1905, vol. 12, no. 138), 117.

3. In the Arctic there are lakes with large-lake–resident, small-lake–resident, and large-migratory forms of Arctic char. For additional information about these forms, see K. Hindar and B. Jonsson, "Ecological polymorphism in Arctic charr," *Biological Journal of the Linnean*

Society (January 1993, vol. 48, no. 1), 63–64; O. T. Sandlund, K. Gunnarsson, P. M. Jónasson, B. Jonsson, T. Lindem, K. P. Magnússon, H. J. Malmquist, H. Sigurdjónsdottir, S. Skúlason, and S. S. Snorrason, "The Arctic charr *Salvelinus alpinus* in Thingvallavatn," *Oikos* (1992, vol. 64, no. 1/2), 305–51; and A. Klemetsen, "The most variable vertebrate on Earth," *Journal of Ichthyology* (2006, vol. 273, no. 10), 781–91.

4. Fred W. Kirchis, "The Landlocked Charrs of Maine: The Sunapee and the Blueback," in E. K. Balon, ed., *Charrs: Salmonid Fishes of the Genus* Salvelinus (The Hague, Netherlands: Dr. W. Junk Publishers, 1980), 749–55. A more recent overview of Maine's blueback trout, "Arctic Charr," was published by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife at https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/fisheries/species-information/arctic-charr.html. Accessed 4 February 2025.

5. A. Mortensen, O. Ugedal, and F. Lund, "Seasonal variation in the temperature preference of Arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*)," *Journal of Thermal Biology* (August 2007, vol. 32, no. 6), 314–20.

6. *Salvelinus alpinus oquassa* once occurred in Oquossoc Lake (now called Rangeley Lake), the fish's namesake. For more information about the history of the blueback trout in the Rangeley Lakes, see W. C. Kendall, "The Rangeley Lakes, Maine; with Special Reference to the Habits of the Fishes, Fish Culture, and Angling," *Bulletin of the [U.S.] Bureau of Fisheries* (1918, vol. 35), 487–594; pages 532–40 are specifically about blueback trout. For early information about the blueback trout in New England, see W. C. Kendall, "The Fishes of New England: The Salmon Family, Part 1—The Trout or Charrs," *Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History* (1914, vol. 8, no. 1), 27–43.

7. See the section titled "Capture" in Kendall, "The Fishes of New England: The Salmon Family, Part 1—The Trout or Charrs," 32–33. Rich's quote is on page 33. Additional information about Rich can be found in William B. Krohn, *Joshua Gross Rich (1820–1897): Western Maine Pioneer and Wildlife Writer*, Northeast Folklore monograph series, vol. 43 (Orono, Me.: Maine Folklife Center, 2010). Rich was an early, keen student of the fish and wildlife of the Rangeley Lakes region. Pages 122–24 of this book are a republication of Rich's blueback observations; note also the 1883 and 1885 articles about bluebacks by Rich cited on pages 164 and 170.

8. Quoted in Kendall, "The Fishes of New England," 32. For more information about George S. Page, see A. I. "Pal" Alexander, "George Shepard Page, 1828–1896," *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 1976, no. 3, vol. 4), 8. This brief biographical sketch includes a woodcut portrait of Page.

9. Quoted in Kendall, "The Fishes of New England," 33. Captain Barker was a steamboat owner and operator, sporting camp and hotel owner, and woodsman. Details of his life can be found in Fred C. Barker, *Lake and Forest as I Have Known Them* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1903).

10. Quoted in Kendall, "The Fishes of New England," 33.

11. Ibid. For more information about Stanley, see W. B. Krohn, "Henry O. Stanley and His Fishing Tackle Business," *The National Fishing Lure Collectors Club Magazine* (Winter 2013, vol. 23, no. 2), 24–30; and N. D. McReynolds, "Dixfield's Henry O. Stanley: A Pioneer Conservation Leader," *Dixfield Star* [newsletter of the Dixfield (Maine) Historical Society] (2011, vol. 15, no. 4), 1–5, 11.

12. Pamela Bates Richards, "Joseph D. Bates Jr.: Collection of a Lifetime," *The American Fly Fisher* (Spring 1999, vol. 25, no. 2), 12–19, 15.

13. Letter from Bert Quimby to Joe Bates, 8 July 1949. A copy of this letter was provided to me by Leslie Hilyard, whose father, Graydon Hilyard, was a longtime admirer of Bert Quimby's streamers and bucktails.

14. Letter from Bert Quimby to Joe Bates, 14 September 1949. Leslie Hilyard collection.

15. For information about Bert Quimby's fly-tying business, see William B. Krohn and D. A. Wilson, "Bert Quimby's Feather Fish: Fishing Fly or Fishing Lure?" *The National Fishing Lure Collectors Club Gazette* (March 2023, vol. 45, no. 175), 35–40.

16. A period map of Penobscot Lake and surrounding waters was published on page 88 in the 1942 edition of *In the Maine Woods*, an annual published by the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad. This map, part of an advertisement for the Penobscot Lake Camps, also shows the locations of the camps Quimby managed and the area's trails and roads.

17. Gene Letourneau, "Sportsmen Say," *Portland Press Herald* (4 April 1949), 1.

18. Gene Letourneau, "Sportsmen Say," *Portland Press Herald* (29 May 1949), 2.

19. Gene Letourneau, "Sportsmen Say: Bert Quimby: A Top Fly Caster," *Portland Press Herald* (9 July 1949), 10.

20. Letter from Bert Quimby to Malco[l]m P. McNair, 10 July 1949. Author's collection.

21. Gene Letourneau, "Sportsmen Say," *Portland Press Herald* (21 June 1950), 12.

22. Author's experience; see also the chart starting on pages 126–28 of Tom Fuller, *The Complete Guide to Eastern Hatches: What Flies to Fish, When, and Where* (Woodstock, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 2006).

23. Author's experience; see also the chart on pages 130–31 of Fuller, *The Complete Guide to Eastern Hatches*.

24. Maine Department of Inland Fishers & Wildlife, "Arctic Charr," https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/fisheries/species-information/arctic-charr.html.

25. Leighton Wass, *Fly Fishing the Hex Hatch* (Unity, Me.: North Country Press, 2022), 42. The *Hexagenia* hatch occurs after the Hendrickson hatch when waters are warmer; see the chart on page 130 of Fuller, *The Complete Guide to Eastern Hatches*. Additional information about fly fishing for blueback trout can be found in Bob Mallard, *Fly Fishing Maine* (Essex, Conn.: Stackpole Books, 2022), 53–57.

A 15-inch breeding female blueback trout from Rangeley Stream in Oquossoc, Maine. When compared with the fish illustrated earlier in the article (all painted by Walter H. Rich), an even greater range in the color is apparent. Although once abundant, bluebacks are now extinct from the Rangeley Lakes. From W. C. Kendall, "The Rangeley Lakes, Maine; with Special Reference to the Habits of the Fishes, Fish Culture, and Angling," Bulletin of the [U.S.] Bureau of Fisheries *(1918, vol. 35), 596. Pages 533–39 of this technical monograph are an authoritative account of blueback trout in the Rangeley Lakes.*

Museum News

AMFF on YouTube

The museum recently launched a new video series titled *Display Case*, in which hosts Brendan Truscott and Dan Zazworsky highlight all the ways the museum is engaging with the wider angling community. In the most recent episode, Brendan and Dan recap the 2025 Cheeky Schoolie Tournament, discuss the history of sea-run brook trout on Cape Cod, and chat with Kyle Schaefer about fisheries science. Check it out at amff.org/display-case.

Membership director Brendan Truscott and marketing consultant Dan Zazworsky chat during the first episode of Display Case.

Upcoming Events

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

July 10, 17, 24, and **31**
Kids' Clinics

August 8
Manchester Dinner
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

August 9
18th Annual Fly-Fishing Festival
6:00–8:00 p.m.

Streamer Fly Tying with Scott Biron
Live at festival
Via Zoom
1:00 p.m.

October 18
Annual Members' Meeting
Leigh H. Perkins Gallery at AMFF

December 8
Izaak Walton event honoring Steve Huff
Key Largo Anglers Club
Key Largo, Florida

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 email newsletter offers up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.

Recent Donations to the Collection

Val Kropiwnicki (Branford, Connecticut) created a drawer display of his artistic flies and hooks, currently on view in the Selch-Bakwin Fly Room at AMFF. **Spencer Seim** (Taos, New Mexico) gave us a land document from 1880 that preserves the signature of Major John Popkin Traherne, originator of many important salmon fly patterns. **Reed Morisky** (Fairbanks, Alaska) sent us several rare tackle catalogs and an assortment of fly-fishing booklets, including a copy of *British Casting Association Rules and Regulations* formerly owned by rod maker Marvin Hedge.

Jeff Hatton (Paonia, Colorado) gave us Charles Brooks's fly-tying desktop with vise, as well as correspondence and photographs from Brooks's files. Additionally, he gave us a copy of a Byzantine relief plate of an angler, cast by the donor; the original is in the permanent collection of the Getty Villa Museum in Pacific Palisades, California.

William Sonnett (Jackson, Michigan) donated a True Temper hollow steel fly rod. **Michael J. Coles** (Jackson, Wyoming) gave us a Stan Bogdan Model 400 prototype salmon reel. **James P. Dorr** (Evanston, Illinois) sent us a 1925 Heddon Wilder-Dilg lure in its original packaging, and **John Sollo** (Fort Collins, Colorado) sent us a set of Sure Strike Flies from the 1940s, tied by teenage fly-tying entrepreneur Jo Ann Durand.

Robert Easton (Princeton, New Jersey) donated a watercolor by John Swan as well as a Stan Bogdan Model 150 fly reel. **Scott Sanchez** (Jackson, Wyoming) gave us a collection of forty-two flies he tied in addition to a drawing of one of his flies. **Ron Pinet** (Point-Claire, Quebec) shared an interesting collection of letters written to him from various prominent anglers regarding the Ausable; he also sent us a set of Thomas and Thomas nymphs.

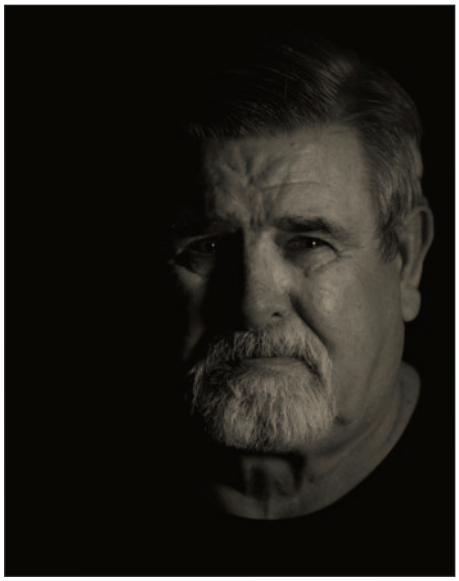
For our museum library, **McKelden Smith** (Cambridge, Massachusetts) shared privately printed copies of Pezon & Michel company histories, and **Goran Grubic** (Belgrade, Serbia) and **Stephen Farrelly** (New York, New York) sent us autographed copies of their books: Grubic *Znakovi na Vodi* [*Signs on the Water*] (2022) and *Price O Musicama* (2010), both in Serbian, and Farrelly *Bonefish Barehanded!* (2023).

CONTRIBUTORS

Predrag Simonovi

Goran Grubic, a retired professor of animal nutrition at the University of Belgrade, Serbia, was born in 1956 and started fly fishing in 1970. He loves dry-fly and nymph fishing for trout and grayling in the high mountain rivers using only his own tied flies. Grubic has fished all over the Balkan Peninsula and has written three books and more than two hundred articles on fly fishing and fly tying. As a result of his interest in fly-fishing history, in 2001 he wrote, with Andrew Herd, "Astræus: The First Fly-Fishing River," which was published in the *American Fly Fisher* (vol. 27, no. 4). When he is not fishing and tying flies, he loves to spend time with his grandchildren.

Sean Cassidy



Jim Hepworth lives near the junction of two great trout rivers in north-central Idaho. He ties his own flies, and sometimes he ties flies for others. As the director and publisher of Confluence Press, he published the first book on Norman Maclean in 1988. It was edited by Ron McFarland and Hugh Nichols. Hepworth's books include *Stealing Glances: Three Interviews with Wallace Stegner* (University of New Mexico Press, 1998); *Resist Much, Obey Little: Some Notes on Edward Abbey* (Dream Garden Press, 1985, co-edited with Greg McNamee); and *The Stories That Shape Us* (W. W. Norton, 1995, co-edited with Teresa Jordan).

Photo courtesy of David Capen

William B. Krohn is a retired wildlife research scientist who enjoys historical research related to fishing and hunting. An avid angler who resides in Maine, he has caught (and released) Arctic char in Alaska (landlocked form) and northern Quebec (sea-run form), as well as blueback trout in his home state. In the accompanying photograph, Krohn is about to release a male Arctic char he landed in the Bristol Bay Region of southcentral Alaska.

Casting and Swinging

Jim Schottenham

Clockwise from top left: a baseball, bat, and flies formerly used by Herb Welch; a photo of Herb Welch fishing; and a photo of Herb Welch in his baseball uniform. Circa 1920s–1950s. Gift of Polly Damon. 2020.018. The museum's upcoming exhibit Fly Ball! *will further examine the parallels between baseball and fly fishing.*

This time of year, there is a very good chance that my thoughts, conversations, and days are consumed by one of two things: baseball or fly fishing. Let's be clear: I have two baseball-playing sons and am the executive director of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, so I'm usually watching, researching, or cheering! Nonetheless, I'm not alone in this baseball-and-fly-fishing mentality. It turns out there are more similarities than meet the eye, with both pastimes requiring a unique blend of precision, patience, and mental discipline that rewards those willing to practice and wait.

Timing plays a major role in both casting and batting and is likely the culmination of countless hours of repetition and muscle memory. Focus and presence are essential in both sports—and often what captivates people most. It's that moment when the activity demands just enough concentration that everything else fades away, and you're fully immersed in the now. But the strongest parallel between fly fishing and baseball is the shared respect for tradition. These traditions bridge the gap between generations, reminding us that they are more than just pastimes—they are part of long, evolving stories.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is fortunate to have a vast, diverse, and passionate community of individuals who value history and understand the importance of preserving and sharing it. This summer we're excited to call on three members of our community who share a unique connection: all are former MLB pitchers. Jim Kaat, AMFF Trustee Jim Beattie, and Rick Porcello will join us at the Fly-Fishing Festival for a special program that dives into the parallels between the two sports. Don't miss "Casts & Fastballs: A Roundtable Discussion with MLB Players" at 2:00 p.m. on August 9. We'll learn when and how they started fly fishing, hear some of their favorite fishing stories, and, of course, compare fly fishing to baseball.

To further pique your interest in this subject, I would encourage you to read (or reread!) John Feldenzer's article, "Of Baseball and Bamboo: Bobby Doerr, Ted Williams, and the Paul H. Young Rod Company" (Fall 2005). "The Year 1918 was a memorable one," it begins. "World War I ended, a global epidemic of influenza killed millions, and the Boston Red Sox won the World Series for the last time in the twentieth century. Two men were born that year in southern California who would later become the best of friends. Bobby Doerr and Ted Williams were great baseball heroes from another era, Hall of Famers from the old Boston Red Sox, and men who loved to fish as much or more than playing the game of professional baseball."

This season, I wish you tight lines right off the bat.

Sarah Foster
Executive Director

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING

18th Annual Fly-Fishing FESTIVAL

Saturday, August 9, 2025
Manchester, Vermont
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Schedule of Events

- 10:30 am: Author and rod maker Hoagy Carmichael discusses the rods of Everett Garrison
- 11:00 am: Casting seminar with Trico Unlimited
- 11:30 am–1 pm: Casting competition
- 12:30 pm: Children's Time with Trout Unlimited at the pond gazebo
- 1:00 pm: Live streamer fly-tying webinar with Scott Biron
- 2:00 pm: Casts & Fastballs: a roundtable discussion with former MLB players Jim Kaat, AMFF Trustee Jim Beattie, and Rick Porcello
- 3:00 pm: Raffle drawing

Happening all day:

- Free tackle appraisals with Bob Selb, Carmine Lisella, and Fred Kretchman
- Vendors and non-profits
- Fly-tying demonstrations
- Casting the Classics
- Local food and beverage trucks
- Children's activities
- Explore multiple exhibitions in the museum galleries
- Music by Shannon Roy
- Free museum admission all day

On Friday, August 8, at 6 pm we're bringing back our Manchester dinner! Save the date and plan to join us under the big tent on the museum grounds for an evening featuring a delicious BBQ meal catered by Jimmy Kennedy, a silent auction, and, of course, great company.

Scan to learn more or purchase tickets

4070 Main Street • Manchester, Vermont 05254 • amff.org • @flyfishmuseum • 802-362-3300