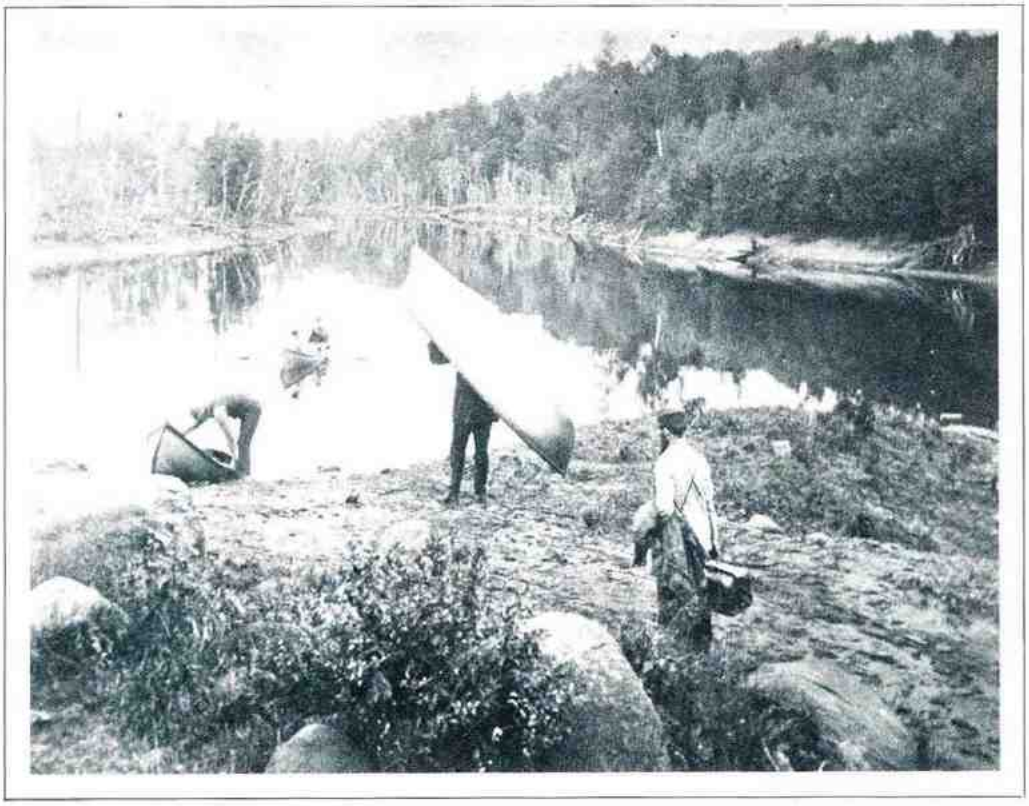
The American Fly Fisher

Volume 8 · Number 1 · WINTER 1981



New York, March 31

This coming March 31 the Museum will be holding its third annual New York auction/raffle, at the Yale Club. Members will be receiving more information about the auction in a month or so. Please do not contact the Club for information; drop us a note at the Museum.

We're gathering prizes now for this auction, and already have quite a few, including some rather different from the run-of-the-mill fishing auction prize. It's going to be fun. And, of course, we're always looking for more prizes. If you're a fly tier or a rod builder or an artist, why not share your work with us?

On the subject of upcoming events, we can also tell you that the Annual Meeting of the membership, which has been held in the Spring the past few years, will be held in the Fall in 1981. We'll let you know more as the time approaches. At the Annual Meeting last May the Trustees decided that a Fall meeting was both more convenient and appropriate. It was observed by one Museum officer that the prevailing sentiment in favor of a Fall meeting may have resulted in part from reports of an excellent Hendrickson hatch on the Battenkill right during the afternoon business meeting.

The American Fly Fisher

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Volume 8 Number 1
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On the cover: Gifford Pinchot and his son enjoy a trout stream in the 1930's. See article on page nine.

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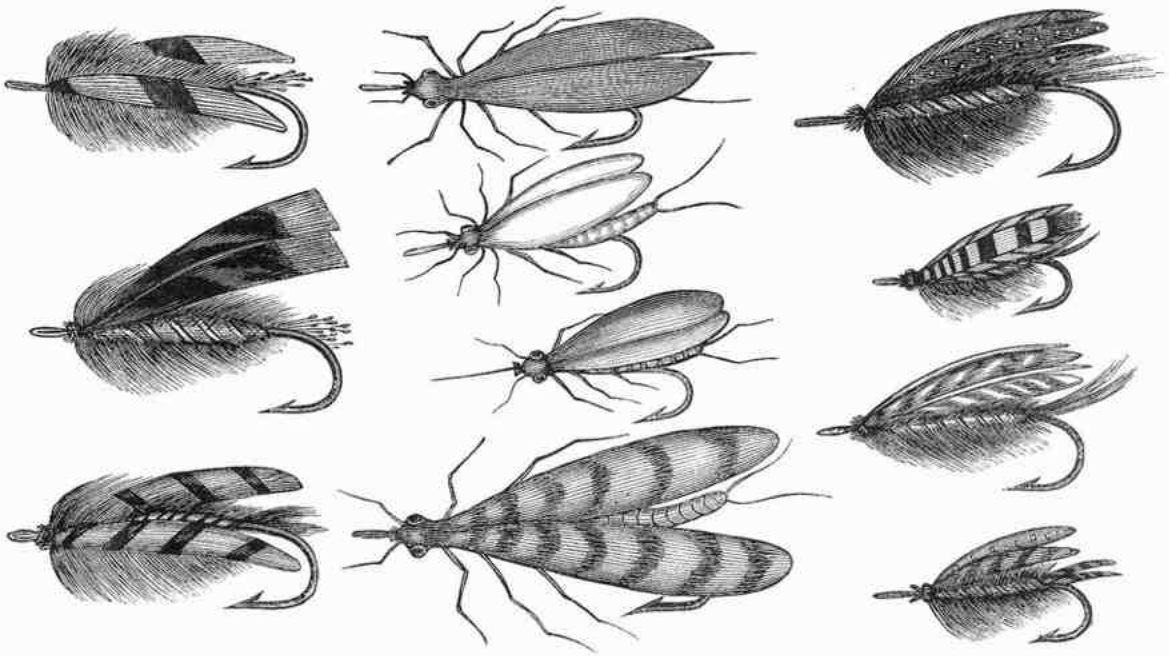


Fly Styles

by Ken Cameron

The English have long been aware of important regional differences among trout flies, differences that can be summarized under the word *style*. Stylistic differences must be distinguished somewhat from differences of function; I am not thinking primarily of such distinctions as wet-dry, imitator-attractor, stream-loch, but of distinctions visible in the structure of the fly itself (although these differences are often dictated by function or intent). The elements of fly style can be reduced to three -- set and length of wings; set and length of tails; and length and thickness of body. Each of these depends, in part, upon the materials used, the style of hook, and the way materials are tied in.

Of course, there is no hard edge where style ends and function begins; each gives to and takes from the other. The intention to fish dry determines a great deal about materials and construction, for example; nevertheless, within the clear outline of that intention, there are still vagaries of style -- as, for instance, Theodore Gordon's slight backward tilt of the wings of his dry flies.

The English, as I said, have remained aware of styles, although less so, perhaps, in the last fifty years than formerly. Skues made stylistic variations one of the two or three most important aspects of his own analyses; Lawrie (*English Trout Flies*), following Skues, showed that it is almost impossible to think coherently about fly-fishing history without understanding regional styles. In England, three were primary in the nineteenth century: the Northern, or Border; the Western; and the Southern, or London (before Halford). A distinct Scottish style also existed in the loch flies of the Wilsons and Stewart and Stoddart, and the "midge heckles" used there and on the border. Jack Heddon (*Scotcher Notes*) has suggested a "common bond in Wales" of eighteenth-century writers about the floating fly. Especially after the middle of the nineteenth century, there was considerable exchange of influence through printed communications and a blurring of the differences by the turn of the twentieth century.

Such distinct regional differences did not exist in the same way in the United States *until* nineteen hundred, after which at least three important regional variations (the Midwestern bucktail, the Maine streamer, and the West Coast steelhead fly) came so quickly to prominence that within a generation they were no longer stylistic variations on the wet fly, but distinct categories of flies with distinct fishing techniques. In fact, through much of the nineteenth century there had been an indifference to (or ignorance of) British fly styles, and it is likely that many American fly-fishermen would have looked upon one of the regional English variations as simply a badly-made fly.

It was probably the London style that had the greatest early influence in America, the style identified as "portly" by Lawrie, having thickly-dubbed bodies and heavy, often palmered hackles and highly visible wings. This is the style illustrated in Hofland (1839) and copied in the illustration for Norris' *American Angler's Book* (1864); with slight modification, it is the style of the plate of flies in "Stonehenge" (1855), copied in *Frank Forester's Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen* (1856); and it is the style of most of the flies in the *Supplement* to *Frank Forester's Fish and Fish of the United States* (1850). The bodies extend the length of the hook shank and are often quite thick, especially when mohair is the body material (as it would become in the great majority of commercial dressings). The wings are sometimes heavy, but, as shown, they are divided and, except in the Green and Grey Drake dressings, are raised high enough to make the body clearly visible. Hackles

are heavy and long (to hide the hook, according to "Stonehenge"). In the plate of flies in Scott's *Fishing in American Waters* (1869) that was copied from Rennie's *Alphabet of Angling* (1833), the stiffly-hackled flies look like test-tube cleaning-brushes.

The Northern, or Border, or "Tweed and Clyde" dressing was quite different. First there is the spare body, dressed with tying silk only, with or without wire ribbing, or lightly dubbed with soft fur, making an absorbent dubbing; then a small and lightly dressed soft hackle, two turns at the outside, close up behind a pair of wings tied in a bunch, and either left single or, preferably for our purposes, split in equal portions, and divided with the figure-of-eight . . . ." (Skues, *Minor Tactics*). Stoddart (*Angler's Companion,* 1847) tied a very sparse fly with divided wings. "[Dubbing] should be applied, as well as the hackle, very sparingly . . . [the dresser] may also, by way of change, leave the wings undivided, or append them so as to turn over [stand upright with tips pointing forward?] and thus maintain a more upright and life-like position when drawn along the water's surface." Stewart (*Practical Angler,* 1857) argued that "the great point, then, in fly-dressing, is to make the artificial fly resemble the natural insect in shape, and the great characteristic of all river insects is extreme lightness and neatness of form. Our great objection to the flies in common use is, that they are much too bushy . . . ." The flies shown in Stewart are extremely sparse, their bodies covering only the forward half of the hook, their hackle either picked-out dubbing or a soft feather turned "once or twice round the hook as close under the wings as possible," the wings themselves feather slips longer than the hook and raised about thirty degrees from the shank to give complete clearance between wing and body. (An even more extreme example of light Northern dressing is the fly tied with hackled wings, in which a soft feather -- underwing feather of woodcock or starling, for example -- is wound on at the head as hackle, the fibres then separated and tied in place to suggest distinct wings and legs.)

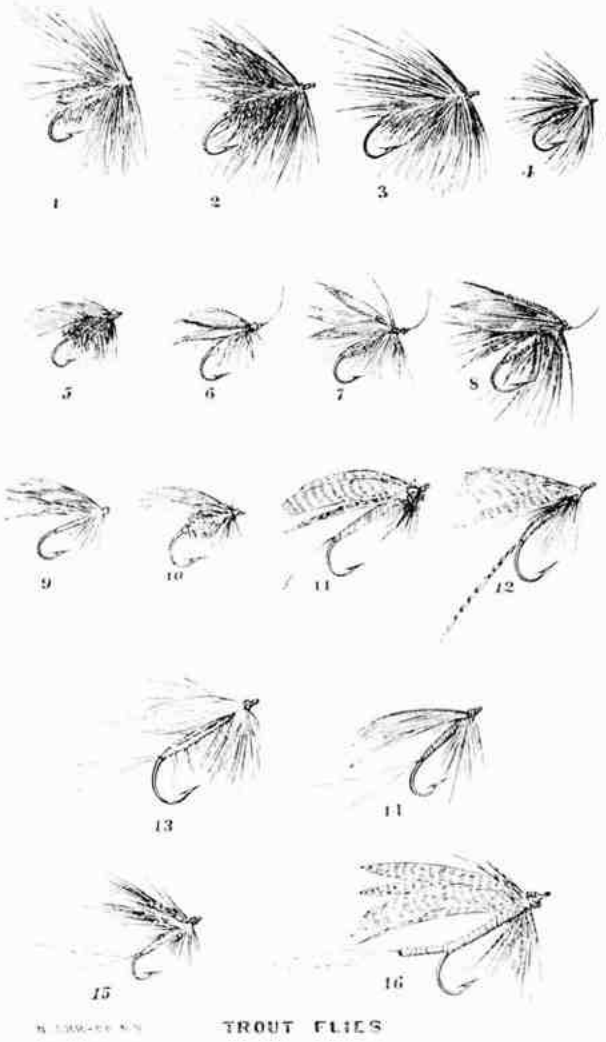
The West Country flies of H. C. Cutcliffe (*Trout Fishing on Rapid Streams,* 1863) were typical of the Western style in their lack of wings and the impressionistic imitation of color and the overall effect of the natural. Lightly dubbed and hackled (usually with cock's hackles), they were delicate and subtly colored, Cutcliffe, too, suggested dividing the hackle, which was heavier than on Border flies, being wound over the forward third of the body, so "as to assume the direction of the wings and the legs of a natural fly, the uppermost representing the wings, and the lower ones the legs. Whether this is of any practical advantage, I leave the reader to judge, merely stating that I do not believe it is, so far as the representation of the natural fly is concerned; but by placing the fibres so as to maintain only two directions, I think it gives them greater firmness to resist the action of rapid current . . . ." Cutcliffe's Western flies were not tailed, although many typical West Country patterns (the Blue Upright, for example) were given whisks of cock's hackle.

These three styles -- the portly Southern, the sparse Northern, the hackled Western -- do not cover the complexities of all English flies (which, after all, must finally have varied from individual tier to individual tier) but they do show the major choices open to anyone intending to tie imitative dressings in the mid-nineteenth century. The styles were dictated by materials and by local fishing

left: sparsely dressed flies from Stewart's The Practical Angler.
below: early American trout flies from Thaddeus Norris's American Angler's Book.

TROUT FLIES.

1. Ginger Hackle.
2. Grouse Hackle.
3. Dotterel.
4. A Palmer.
5. Red Spinner.
6. Coachman.
7. Alder Fly.
8. Yellow Sally.
9. Gray Drake—A May Fly.



Frank Forester, in his **Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen,** *suggested these sixteen trout flies: 1-4, various palmers and hackles; 5, Black Gnat; 6, Hare-Lug; 7, Yellow Sally; 8, Oak-Fly; 9, Caperer; 10, Winged Palmer; 11, Green Drake; 12, Gray Drake; 13, Stone-Fly; 14, March Brown; 15, Red Spinner; 16, Winged Larva. Forester tells us, in what we hope was an unintentional gaffe (more fishermen use this kind than the other), that number sixteen was "The Winged Larva of Mr. Blacker." Presumably Mr. Blacker pupated before writing his own book.*

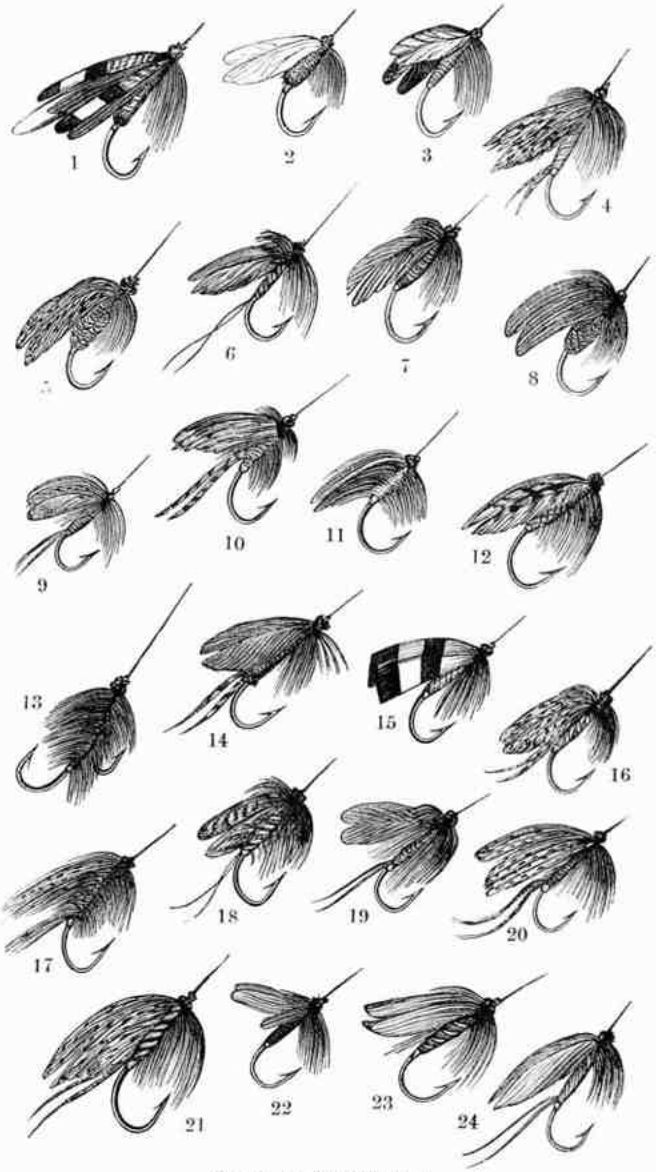


PLATE OF TROUT-FLIES.

Genio Scott, in his **Fishing in American Waters,** *provided his readers with this assortment of patterns. Most were not named, only being described in terms of color and materials. The only named patterns shown were as follows: 2, Coachman; 11, June-fly; 20, Yellow Professor; 21, Gray Professor; 22, Black Gnat; 23, Blue Professor.*

conditions. In brief, the matter of materials seems most important to bodies (especially when mohair is used in place of skimpy dubbing, or when tying silk alone is used); to hackles, or hackle wings, depending upon whether stiff cock's hackles (even for Western wet flies) or soft feathers (woodcock or starling underwing) are used; and to tails, which can vary from whisks of cock's hackle, to bulky fibres of duck primary to ridiculous tufts of bright-colored wool.

The method of application seems most important to wings, and it is in the winging that fly styles are most clearly distinct. There may be no wing feather at all, even on a "winged" pattern (the Western hackle); or there may be a wing or wings applied in one of the three techniques described by Hofland: in the "natural" position, before the body is put on; in the natural position *after* the body is put on; and in the "reverse-tied" method, butts toward the bend before the body is put on, then raised into position and tied down a second time. As well, the manner of separating split wings is important: they may be separated with the "figure-of-eight" tie, or they may be left in a clump (as in both Stoddart and Bowlker, for example, when the upright-winged dun is intended). Too, the angle between wing and body is important and varies from almost ninety degrees (and this is not a dry fly) through Stewart's thirty-degree wing to some London wings that lay almost flat on the body and that, if tied with the wings split over the body, actually hid it.

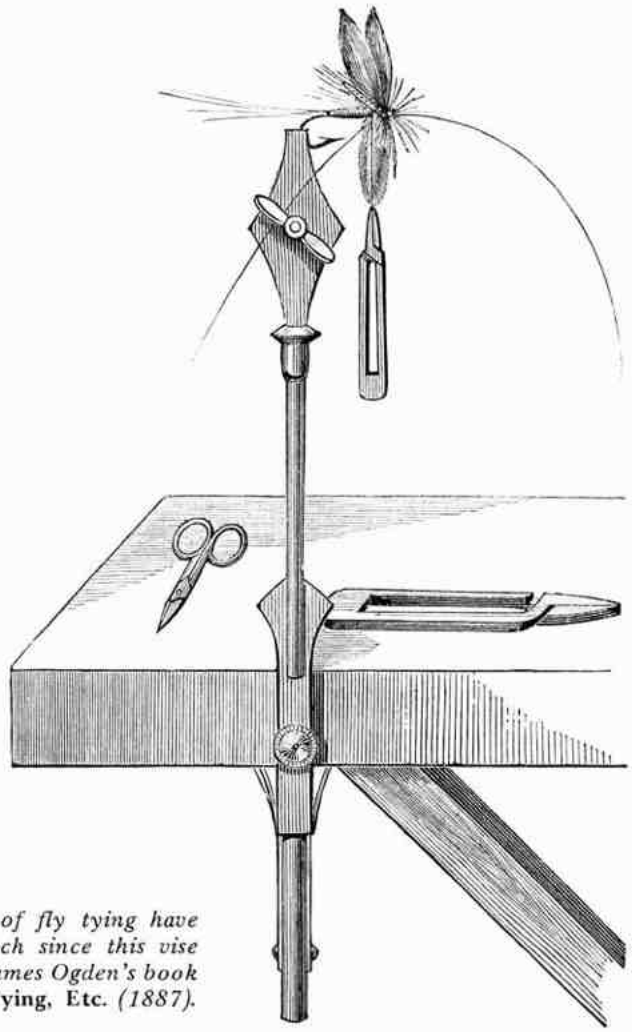
Wing materials effect style in both their amount and their source. Northern flies are slim-winged; Southern flies are bulky. Occasionally (as in some drake imitations) whole feathers were used for wings; more commonly, slips from feathers were used. Slip wings might be made in any of five ways: from a cutting from a primary, secondary or tail feather (as in Norris), the cutting folded over itself several times and tied in; from two adjacent cuttings from the same feather, tied on side by side (meaning that the two sides will have wings of rather different colors and that both wings will curl in the same direction); from a broad cutting from the same feather, folded only once (different colored wings again, and the tips pointing in different directions); from two facing cuttings from the same feather (usually from the tail of the bird), tied down back to back; and, finally, from identical cuttings from matching feathers from the same bird (rare until the Hammond-Halford dry fly).

Combinations of wing materials and methods were many -- divided, reverse-tied, of a rolled slip; "natural" position, divided, of two adjacent slips; reverse-wing, upright, divided, of facing slips -- and so on. With the exception of the upright wing, the result was, by and large, divided and at least slightly raised to show the body.

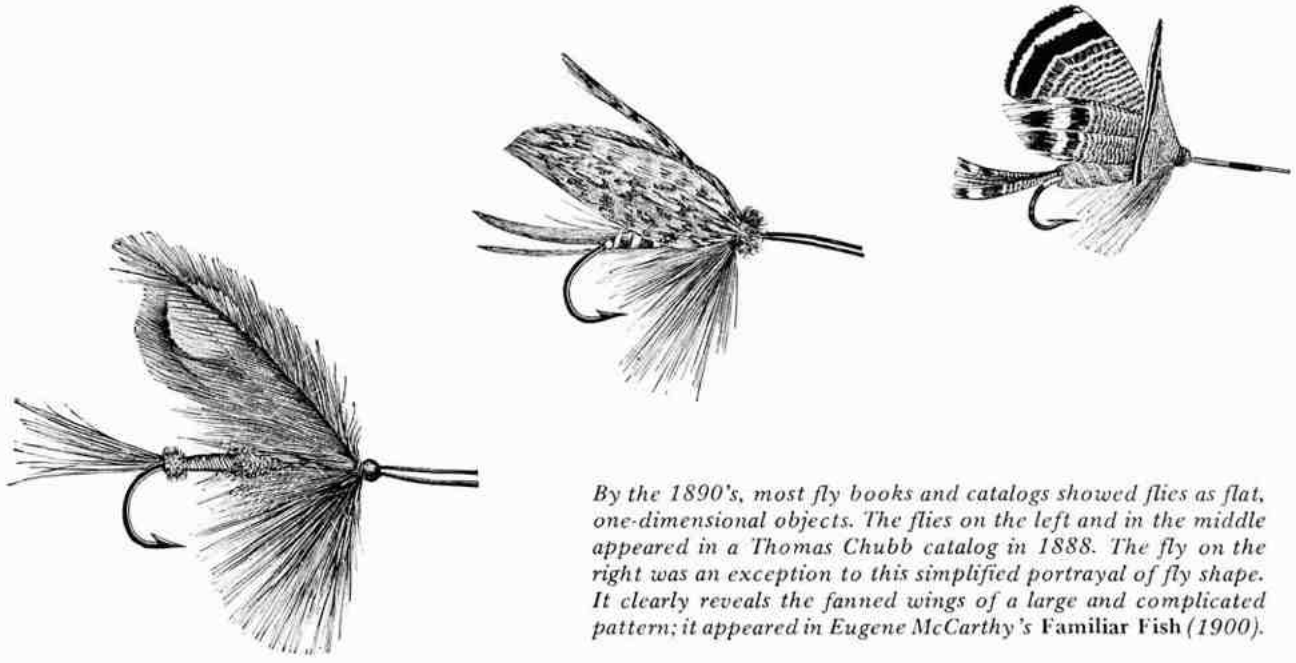
How, then, did the typical American fly of c. 1885 and after get to be a bushy creation with a broad wing tied down so far that the bottom edge masked part of the body? The answer lies partly in the influence of the Southern English style; partly it was a commercial compromise; and partly it was the result of the way American anglers learned to see flies.

It might be well to take a look at the way that American flies were illustrated -- are still being illustrated, for that matter. In some early illustrations (those in Norris and Herbert, for instance) the flies were shown in three-quarter views and the flare of hackles and the separation of wings could be seen; there was sometimes even a delineation of wing fibres that showed how the wing was applied. Yet, the common illustration a generation later -- and today -- is a purely profile view that renders the fly in only two dimensions. Such a view is excellent for showing colors, but it is poor in showing flare of hackles, set of wings, and spread of tails. The profile is not the inevitable view of a fly, but it is the one that fishermen have become conditioned to (as in, for example, Bergman's *Trout*, Marbury's *Favorite Flies*, Jennings' *Book of Trout Flies*, the turn-of-the-century catalogs of Chubb, Mills, Abbey and Imbrie, and so on). I would not go so far as to suggest that the profile illustration alone changed the style of the American fly, but I would suggest strongly that failure to show flies in three dimensions encouraged factory tiers and non-tying fishermen to think of the fly as a two-dimensional object.

Wings might have been separated, but such early color illustrations as those in Stevens' *Fly-Fishing in Maine Lakes* (1881) and Orvis' and Cheney's *Fishing With the Fly* (1883) could not show the separation. Hackle could have flared wide, but the illustrations did not show the flare. What they did show to advantage was a long tail of heavy fibres, a massive wing, and heavy hackling over a thick body.



The basic tools of fly tying have not changed much since this vise was pictured in James Ogden's book Ogden On Fly Tying, Etc. *(1887).*



By the 1890's, most fly books and catalogs showed flies as flat, one-dimensional objects. The flies on the left and in the middle appeared in a Thomas Chubb catalog in 1888. The fly on the right was an exception to this simplified portrayal of fly shape. It clearly reveals the fanned wings of a large and complicated pattern; it appeared in Eugene McCarthy's Familiar Fish *(1900).*

It is interesting to note that in *Favorite Flies* (1892) only one of the one hundred and seventy-seven lake and trout flies (not counting the Halford dries) was shown with divided wings, and that fly was Marston's Fancy, an English pattern. Yet, the actual flies from which the plates were made often have slightly divided wings, as well as divided tail fibres and flared hackles. As illustrated, the flies appeared as they might have looked on a display card or in an angler's fly-book after a season or two of being squashed flat. (Although George Washington Bethune had urged fishermen in 1847 to have a fly-book with spacers to keep from mashing hackles.)

The illustrators' attention to the profile may reflect, perhaps unconsciously, the Victorian American angler's attention to pattern rather than to style, if pattern is understood as color arrangement. The extreme visual bias of late nineteenth-century fishermen, coupled with the emphasis on proprietary patterns (as in *Favorite Flies*) led to a concern with the appearance of the fly for its own sake -- not its appearance in the water or on the water, but its appearance in the fly-book, on the tackle-dealer's counter, and in colored illustration. Contrary to English practice, in America style became the creature of aesthetics, not of function; it was not the "lively play of hackle-point wings" (Francis) nor the "effective suggestion of a fly struggling with its difficulties upon the surface" (Skues) that mattered, but the aesthetic arrangement of color.

This shift in emphasis -- with its analogy in Irish salmon flies, to be sure -- was abetted by the industrialization of fly-dressing. Fly-tying factories came into existence as middle- and upper-class anglers became separated from the country; unable or unwilling to tie their own flies, they turned increasingly to commercial establishments in the last third of the century. (It should be pointed out that there have been commercial fly-tiers for a very, very long time. Bethune bought his flies ready-made in the eighteen-forties from Conroy; "Frank Forester" from Conroy and Thomas Finnegan; John Wilson ("Christopher North") bought some of his flies from Mrs. Phin, the wife of an Edinburgh rod-maker; but these early commercial tiers were no farther away from the angler than the width of the counter. After about eighteen-seventy, that distance could increase to hundreds of miles.) Necessarily, the commercial fly-tying factories gave up "custom" tying in favor of mass-production, and the Finnegans and Mrs. Phins gave way to rote copyists with little understanding of their work.

It may be that rote copying itself made some formerly effective flies useless because the rote tier, like the angler, concentrated more on color (i.e., pattern) than on style. To be sure, several things can cause a fly to lose its effectiveness -- a change of fishing techniques (downstream wet to upstream dry, for example) or a radical change in a fishery or the introduction of a new species (brown and rainbow trout into Eastern waters in the eighties and nineties). But often, a fly simply seems to stop being attractive to fish, and the reason may be that after it has gone into commercial mass production, it is so changed that it no longer has any appeal. Consider, for example, a fly like the Francis, named for the *Field* editor and author of *A Book on Angling*. The fly was a mid-century Hampshire pattern, fished mostly wet by Francis. Although a general and not a specific imitator, it was effective. As originally tied by Francis it was a very simple fly: "body . . . of copper-coloured peacock's herl, ribbed distinctly with copper-red silk; hackle, medium blue dun; wings, two hackle-points of a grizzly blue dun's cock's hackle set well up." The wings were divided; elsewhere, Francis spoke of the importance of light hackling, ("Be sure not to overhackle your fly -- it makes it lumpy and unnatural.") so we can assume he used only a few turns. The result was a translucent body with gauzy, divided, semi-upright wings.

If we turn to a mass-produced American copy (as shown in *Favorite Flies*) we see a large, rather coarse fly. The ribbing is scarlet, not coppery, and is very distinct and is apparently carried forward to make a knobby head. The fly has acquired a gold tag and the wings are over-sized and made, not of cock's hackle points, but of wide hen's hackles. (In another Orvis version of about this period, an actual fly had wings of mallard, tied large, rather like a mayfly or a Tomah Jo.) The wings are not "set well up"; rather, their lower edge touches the body, and it seems as if the fly is on its way to becoming a prototypical Rooster's Regret streamer.

The Francis was still shown in Bergman's *Trout* (1938). His version was somewhat different; the fly had a grizzly hackle and wings of Jungle-cock body feather, and, as illustrated there, the

body was as thick as a bumblebee's and the ribbing was very wide and vivid. In style, the fly looks like any other wet fly in the book, the wings undivided and certainly not "set well up." (An English version of about the same date, as tied by Allcock for A. Courtney Williams' *Trout Flies*, 1932, seemed closer to the original fly, at least in the size and angle of wing, although the body was predominately copper-colored silk with narrow bands of herl, rather than the other way around -- although this may be what Francis intended by saying that the body be "distinctively" ribbed. Interestingly, the Allcock dressings of American dry flies in the same book have typically English hackles, soft and spread, and the Parmachene Belle is of a style that would have given Henry Wells, its American originator, the raving wobblies. Change of style cuts both ways.)

I was surprised to find the Francis in Bergman's book, because I am unaware of any enthusiasm for it in the United States after the turn of the century. Certainly, it has not been much written of in recent years. But why? Is it simply no good now, or has it never been any good? Francis' enthusiasm for the fly, and the respect of his contemporaries, indicates that it was once a very effective fly in England. Can it, then, be plausibly argued that it was never a good fly in America? Perhaps, although its similarity to the Coachman type suggests that it should have worked. Regrettably, by the time it had gone through changes at the hands of mass-production tiers, it had become an ugly and illogical conglomeration of feathers, and there is little wonder that it was not popular.

But think of Francis Francis by the Itchen in the eighteen-sixties, tying this fly for the evening rise with divided, almost upright wings. Think of his whippy fifteen-foot rod and light line. He fishes with the wind, the fly stirring in the water and giving "the lively and attractive play of the hackle-point wings." It is an alluring fly, perhaps suggestive of an emerging dun, and the trout rise to it.

Think next of the commercial tiers three thousand miles away. They must work quickly (sixteen dozen flies a day at a couple of pennies per fly for the tier). Their pattern is a master fly tied by their foreman, who has never seen the fly fished. The foreman does not understand divided wings, nor does he want his girls to take the time to pinch the wing butts between thumbnail and forefinger to cock them up, as Francis suggested. He knows that his customers like bright colors and heavily dressed flies. He knows, too, that carrying the scarlet ribbing silk up to make a head will give a bit more flash to the fly and will hide the awkward bulge that many of his girls leave at the wing-butts. The result of these small changes is that the fly-dressers at their tables will tie a Francis that will have the same general coloration as the original (hence, it is "true to pattern") but that might not raise a fish on the Itchen even if it were used by Francis himself.

Flies do not lose their effectiveness, except when fishing conditions change. Poor copies of flies lose their effectiveness very quickly, and after a few years fishermen no longer buy certain patterns because they're no damned good, or so they say. Too often, what is no damned good is the fisherman, who cannot tell a badly styled fly from a proper one.

The effect of style upon attractor patterns may be less important than upon imitators, although I am not at all sure of this. Certainly, the stylistic change in a classic attractor like the Montreal has been enormous since its introduction about eighteen-fifty. It is usually ascribed to Peter Cowan of Montreal, with a maroon or claret body, gold rib, ginger hackle, and either a gray or a mottled brown (turkey or grouse) wing. Sara McBride's Portland was similar (although not, I think, similar in style, because it was probably a dun or spinner imitation) as were several English lake flies, "each lake and each professor on that lake having his own varieties," as Francis put it.

In the beginning, the Montreal was probably a slim fly like the loch flies of Stewart and Stoddart. In commercial American hands, however, it took on a new identity as gaudiness on a hook. A Montreal tied for Dame, Stoddard and Kendall of Boston about 1895 is on an eyeless Limerick hook of about size 8. The wing is made from two turkey slips fully half an inch wide and extending a quarter of an inch beyond the bend. The body is thick claret mohair, some of it picked out. The hackle is very heavy and does not so much veil the forward part of the body as hide it. The tail is made of two stiff, thick slips from a scarlet duck primary, while the head is made of peacock herl and gives the fly a very blunt forward end, a "poor entry." (The fly is reverse-winged, which may explain the head; such heavy reverse-tied wings created a hump on top of the shank.)

The fly seems to have been dressed on the same theory that guided my grandmother's giving of medicine -- if a little is good, a lot must be better. And like the medicine, the fly has become counter-productive. It is solid, incapable of any simulation of life. Only the most forward fibres of the hackle could give any suggestion of movement.

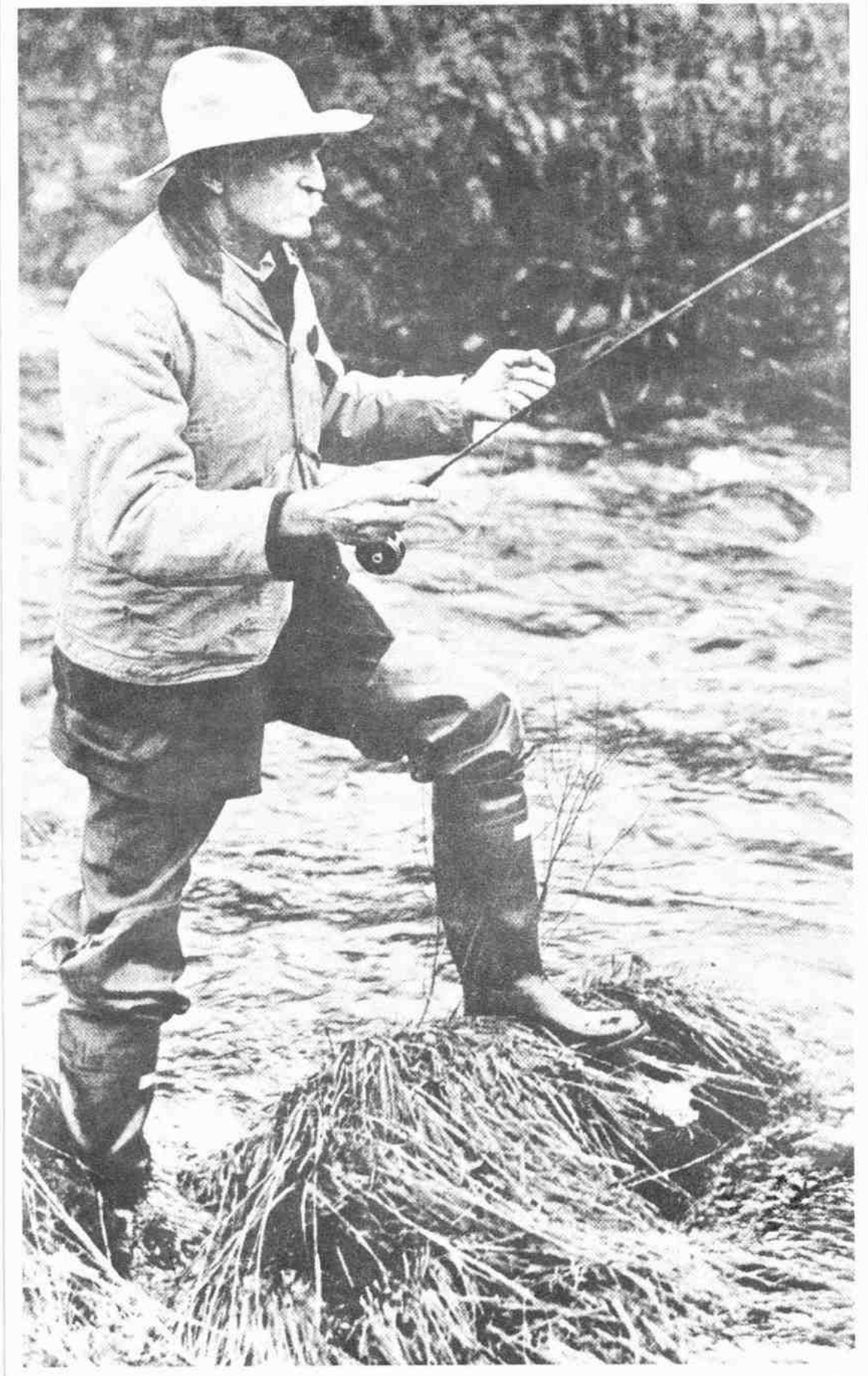
It is still a something called the Montreal. It is still a something to be flung at the trout of Maine, most of whose mouths were barely large enough to engulf such a mass.

There can be no use in having the fisherman who is to use this Montreal read books or study natural insects or engage in theoretical discussion. The style of the fly determines everything. He might as well troll -- as, in fact, the owner of this fly did, if I may judge from the number of twisted gut leaders with trolling swivels that were found in his fly book.

At some point, too much hackle or too heavy a wing or too thick a body so alters any fly that it becomes inferior as a lure. Such excess is likely to be applied when the fly's maker has no interest in its use, when fly-making is put into the hands of a man or woman who has no more concern for the result than an assembly-line worker in Detroit has for the driving idiosyncracies of a man in Tallahassee. If haste and poor materials are also involved, the angler who fishes the result in the belief that he is casting a Montreal or a Francis or an Adams or a Gray Ghost might just as well be casting a bare hook. Better yet, he should be fishing a worm.

There is a rationale of pattern: the desire to catch a fish with an imitation of *this* insect or *that* minnow, or to attract it by triggering certain responses. There is a rationale of style: the desire to serve the fishing method of *this* fisherman on *this* water fishing for *that* fish. Of the two, I think style is the more important. To the old question of what one pattern would one choose to fish if only one were allowed to him, I think the proper answer is that, given the proper style of fly, any pattern (within broad limits) would do.

Ken Cameron, of Bowling Green, Ohio, is author of many books and articles on a wide variety of subjects; he is a frequent contributor to The American Fly Fisher. *His article on Victorian anglers appeared in Volume Seven, Number One.*



Gifford Pinchot about the time his book **Just Fishing Talk** *was published.*

When The Dry Fly Was New

by Gifford Pinchot

Gifford Pinchot, perhaps best remembered now as the "father of the U.S. Forest Service" and Theodore Roosevelt's closest advisor on conservation matters, was an enthusiastic and lifelong angler. This short article appeared in his book Just Fishing Talk, *published in 1936, but according to the author's notes it first appeared "twenty-odd" years earlier in an outdoor magazine. Since Gill's book* Practical Dry Fly Fishing *first appeared in 1912, the article was probably written before 1915. The article is reprinted here with the kind permission of Dr. Gifford Pinchot, the son of the author. The illustrations are all from the book.*

I have a classmate who has a brother who wrote a book. Therein he described what is at once the simplest and the most difficult, and by far the most attractive method of stream fishing that ever has come my way. The book is Emlyn Gill's *Dry Fly Fishing in America*. For me it opened the road to the most satisfactory of all forms of fresh water sport.

To read Gill's book was to be eager for the practice of the dry fly, so I sent to New York for the means, began with no teacher but the printed word, and dry fly fishing for trout captured me on the spot.

One of the charms of it is the simplicity of the outfit—a leader or two, a pill box with a few flies, a little one-drop oil can filled with albolene (five cents' worth of which will last you a season), and you have the whole of the special appliances necessary for the use of the dry fly beyond the ordinary equipment of rod and reel, creel and net.

Long before Emlyn Gill had come himself to teach me, by the example of the master at work, some of the finer points of dry fly fishing, I had discovered that it was possible, when streams were low, to take more and bigger fish with the dry fly than with the wet, and to take them not only in cloudy weather and at the two ends of the day, but in bright sunlight at noon, with the water clear as crystal, provided only you approach the trout from behind as he lies headed upstream, or otherwise keep out of sight.

There are two ways of staying hid. The one is to fish upstream with a long line delicately; the other to keep behind what cover there may be along the brook, so that the trout cannot suspect your presence, while you yourself often cannot see your fly as it takes the water. Each way is good in its place, but keep hid you must, except where the water is rapid. There, provided you fish upstream and your shadow is behind you, you may take trout almost between your feet.

In the Pennsylvania village where I live there is a man famous for years as the best fly fisherman of all that region. He knows the brooks as few men can, and the trout he has caught in past days make the envy and despair of his younger followers.

To him I said one day last summer, "Come to the Sawkill, and let me see you use the wet fly. I am studying trout just now, and I want to learn how you do it."

"No," said he, "this is a bad day. When the brooks are low, I must have cloudy weather. I will call you up the first good day."

So he did, and we went to the stream at the time and place he chose. But the water was still too low for the wet fly, and he had no sooner seen the brook than he said so; and he added, "I can do nothing in this water. Let me see you try."

Just then a trout rose in a long still reach of the stream. There was no cover near, and the rise was nearly as far from where we stood as the longest cast I could manage. But by good fortune reach it I did (I am a very moderate fisherman) and the response was satisfactory. By the time the trout had got his liberty again (for this was a native trout, and since, worse luck, there are brown trout in this brook, for the present all the natives caught go back), the veteran's ideas began to undergo a change.

On our way to the brook he had condemned the dry fly without mercy. Now he had seen taken a trout which the wet fly could not possibly have reached. To make the story short, throughout the afternoon the wet fly took no fish, while the dry fly made a score of eight, four of which, being natives, were returned to the stream.

My friend went home converted, but not before he had promised that some day when the stream is high he will show me how the Cahill fly (which bears his name) will do its work under his hand in roily water.

Another day another friend of mine—Grant, we will call him because that happens to be his name—was walking up the Sawkill with me about the middle of a hot still afternoon. The brook was excessively low, the water clear as glass, but what little wind was stirring came from the South, and here and there a trout was rising. As we came near the spring by which we meant to eat our belated lunch, we saw, holding his place almost without motion in the imperceptible current, a brown trout well over a foot long.

He was lying in water not two feet deep, close behind a high tuft of grass upon the bank, and he rose as we watched him, and saw us as he rose. It would have been useless to "chuck a brute of a fly" at him just then.

"We'll attend to him after lunch," said Grant, and on we went to the lunching place. But all the while we were lunching we could see that our fish was lunching too. We finished eating, my friend smoked his smoke out to the end, but evidently the fish was hungry still.

Finally Grant could stand it no longer. Crawling on hands and knees, as though he were stalking big game, as indeed he was, Grant reached the cover of the bunch of grass. Once there, the trout was within ten feet. There had been no jarring footfall, no movement of grass or brush, and the trout was still unfrightened and unaware. Then the single fly dropped delicately upon the water above the feeding fish, which did not wait for this final course of his long meal to be brought slowly to him by the stream, but came swiftly to meet it.

There followed as pretty a fight as you will often see. Three times the brown trout came out of water with a rush, and it was not until after a most spirited struggle of ten minutes that the net rose round him—a beauty 15 inches in length, and a pound and a half in weight.

This fish represented the best size and condition of brown trout rising to the dry fly in this particular stream. Here was a fish, wholly inaccessible to the wet fly as such, and which the longest and finest casting even of the dry fly might well, in such a place and on such a day, have frightened and put down. It was taken purely because the fish did not know the fisherman was about.

Someone may say that, in this particular instance, a grasshopper would have answered the purpose just as well. It is possible, although not probable, but this much is certain, that in such a case the pleasure of the recollection would have lost its finest quality.

For me, two trout stand out as the best catches of that season. One of them was the last I took, a fish of a pound and five ounces. As I walked quietly at sunset through the old meadow along the brook, it rose with a splash. The rise I heard but could not see till the widening ripples had half crossed the stream. Then, lengthening my line from behind some bushes, I cast around them, so that the fly struck the water out of my sight. Up came the trout smartly, and I hooked him by the sound of his rise.

I was fishing with perhaps thirty feet of line, and for the moment that was all I had, because the rest of it, to my shame, was tangled on the reel. Also, I was on my way home and fishing, as I seldom do, downstream, and downstream went the trout when I hooked him. He had to be stopped short, for there was no more line to give him, and stopped he was, and out of the water he came, and the leader held, and at the end of five minutes of vigorous play the net rose round him too, and I had finished the season with one of its finest fish.

The best of the English dry fly fishers are, I am told, the purists, who will cast at a trout only after they have seen him rise. If the trout are not rising, there is no fishing, and not only the fly but the line goes home as dry as it came out. We in America fish streams less known, less clear, less placid, and we are always speculating, dropping the dry fly here and there where a trout is apt to be, seeking our luck from the stream even though no trout rises to invite us to come and kill him.

I am by no means a purist. I am given to taking chances along the brook; but the more I fish with this most sportgiving of entanglements the more I find myself enjoying the taking of the individual fish that I have seen and stalked and hooked, as against the promiscuous unseen fish I have cast for merely in general.

There is a spot in a meadow brook where two logs cross. Near them lie the last remnants of an ancient beaver dam, and these, it is reported, are inhabited by huge and somewhat legendary trout whose weight and length and game qualities may be set as high as the reader pleases. I wish I knew. Coming home one evening at the heel of a rather unsuccessful day, between dog and wolf, as the French say, just when the beauty of the brook is at its loveliest, I saw the second of my two best trout rise in the angle of the logs.

The distance was about the limit of my casting power, which is not set at ninety odd feet like Emlyn Gill's, but at a figure so much more modest that it declines to be mentioned at all. Luck was with me, and when at last the line was well out, the whirling dun dropped lightly in the angle. Instantly came the strike, and instantly the hooked trout dove under and between the logs. It was a ticklish moment, with so much line out, but the tangle became untangled, the roots and branches were cleared, and one of the most welcome trout I ever caught came to the nearer bank.

It was not the legendary big fellow, but only a trout of a pound. Yet because I had seen him and gone after him, had fished for him perfectly so far as my abilities would take me, and had landed him without a mistake, that fish makes, and will continue to make, one of the pleasantest memories of my days along the brook.

There is no question, I take it, that the dry fly beats the wet fly when streams are low, and I judge from my small experience that at all times the average of fish taken is larger with the dry fly than with the wet. Indeed, there are but three things to be said in even partial detraction of it.

The first is that the dry fly requires a far more intimate knowledge of the places where fish lie, and of their habits of feeding than does the wet fly. The brown trout, for example, on clear sunny days with the wind in the South, affects the lower margins of still pools, lying many times on sand bars in six or eight inches of water, plainly visible to the distant but discerning fisherman, yet out of reach of all but the most careful casting of the dry fly. At such times, let your fly drop six feet to one side and a little behind the fish, and if he has not seen you, which he can do at the most astonishing distances and through the most astonishing amount of cover, you are more than likely to hook him, and to find him of good size.

At other times you will get no fish but in the riffles, and yet again only in the deepest center of the pools, at which times the dry fly jerked under and retrieved below the surface has a fascination often not to be denied. So this first objection is really an advantage, for the dry fly compels you to learn your fish.

The second detraction is that dry fly fishermen are the natural prey of all the brush along the streams. The need of false casts to dry the fly makes so many additional opportunities for all the prehensile fingers of the trees to snatch your hook, and the fact that you must fish against the current, and therefore cannot trust it to place the fly for you, makes longer casting, with a good back cast, most necessary. In other words, the dry fly requires a kind of handling of the rod and line on wooded streams which adds ten fold at times to the aggravation, and on those rare occasions when everything a man does goes well, a hundred fold to the delights, of the fishing.

This second drawback then is really but a spur to ambition in disguise. Nevertheless, if you own the stream, use your axe where the brush is thickest. You will be astonished at the comfort which will follow a little judicious cutting.

The third difficulty is more serious. Accuracy in the placing and management of the fly is more essential to success with the dry than with the wet fly, of which latter I speak as a user and lover for many years; and accuracy in the placing and handling of the fly involves a degree of eye strain, especially if a very small fly be employed, which may amount to a serious drain upon the angler. This is the one real objection to dry fly fishing.

There is a pool upon the Sawkill where in the edge of the evening you may see and hear trout rising with the deep convincing plop which always means a heavy

fish. I have haunted that pool evening after evening, when the colors of sky and land and water were almost enough to drown the love of fishing. I have cast my longest and finest. I have done my very prettiest. I have dropped my fly over the rising trout just beyond the grass, and in the center just below the middle of the rise. Evening after evening I have come back from that pool with my trouble for my pains.

I have used the whirling dun and Wickham's fancy, the most uniformly successful flies upon that brook, and the coachman, the pale evening dun, the Cahill, and many another fly whose name I do not know; and night after night those fish rise and rise, but not for me; and night after night I go home without them.

What ever it is they feed on they will take within six inches of my fly, but my fly they do not strike. Gill has tried them; my brother has done his best. We are not good enough, yet. We do not know how, yet. Could there be a stronger reason for the next season's campaign?

Gifford Pinchot wrote his most devoted articles about the Sawkill, pictured here in an early steel engraving that was used as the frontispiece for his book.

Hendricksons

For many anglers in the midwest and east, the Hendrickson is especially loved because it is the first hatch of importance at the beginning of the season. Hendricksons often appear in the opening weeks of the season, providing anglers with a heartwarming welcome (even in the blustery and unpredictable weather of April) after a long winter away from the water.

The origins and entomology of the fly have been traced in several books, notably Ernest Schwiebert's *Trout*, Sparse Grey Hackle's *Fishless Days, Angling Nights*, and Harold Smedley's *Fly Patterns and Their Origins*. It was developed by Roy Steenrod, now considered to have been the only person with whom Theodore Gordon was willing to share his fly-tying techniques. In looking over the various accounts of this pattern's development, we noticed a few small inconsistencies, and a surprise or two.

We have two stories of the fly's creation from Roy Steenrod himself. One appeared in a letter that Steenrod wrote to Harold Smedley, apparently when Smedley was working on the book mentioned above. According to that account, Steenrod first worked out the pattern to imitate a fly hatch he experienced on the Beaverkill at Roscoe, New York, in 1916. As he explained, "One day, while sitting on the bank of the stream perhaps two years after I had tied the first patterns, the matter was brought up as to what I would call or name the fly. Looking at A.E., the best friend a person could ever wish to have, I said 'the fly is the Hendrickson.' " Albert Everett Hendrickson (1866-1936) was an official with the United States Trucking Corporation, New York, and a good friend of other well-known fly fishermen besides Steenrod. Hendrickson was an especially generous patron of the Payne Rod Company, and a well-known salmon fisherman.

The other account we have from Steenrod is from two letters he wrote to Preston Jennings (these are part of the recently received Jennings Collection, from Mrs. Jennings). The first, written in December of 1931, dates the fly to 1918, not 1916: "The Hendrickson Fly I first tied in 1918 and named it after Mr. A.E. Hendrickson my friend with whom I fish and shoot and have had many pleasant hours in his company." The second, written the following May, was sent with a sample Hendrickson fly. Through extraordinary good fortune, that very fly is pictured on page 13. It was given, some years after Preston's death, to Arnold Gingrich by Mrs. Jennings; Arnold passed it along to the Museum during his term as President of the Museum. It is the largest of the flies, center left, in the picture. In the letter which accompanied it, Steenrod explained it as follows: "I am enclosing a true pattern of the Hendrickson as to color but hackle is much too long. It will give you a pattern to work from if you wish to tie some." Steenrod explained that at that time he was having trouble acquiring good hackles. And so, though the proportions of our original Hendrickson are inaccurate, it is instructive in other ways. For example, the tail fibers are the same as the wing — wood duck. Most modern pattern guides recommend dun hackle barbules for the tail. Even more intriguing are Steenrod's own recommendations in his letter to Smedley in *Fly Patterns and Their Origins* (first published in 1943), where he explained that the Hendrickson "is tied with the tails from the crest of a golden pheasant . . ." It appears that Steenrod, like his famous instructor Gordon, appreciated the need to change a pattern to suit circumstances. His successors in tying this fly obviously agreed, and eventually there were not only variations on this pattern, there were at least two well-known *types* of Hendricksons — "Light" and "Dark." Both Ray Bergman and the Darbees were tying a darker version of the Hendrickson before World War II. Like many minor variations in fly pattern, the difference between the two Hendricksons has caused some confusion; there is enough difference in color between the lightest and the darkest of the flies we have pictured on page 20 that it is not inconceivable some of the tiers would have liked to have their fly called a "Light" (we see a difference of opinion among those who have written about Hendricksons; some even seem to think that the original was a "dark").

For example, when Art Flick refined the pattern to suit his needs he used a lighter colored fur for the body. Steenrod specified "fawn colored fur from the belly of the red fox," and Flick preferred that fur when taken from the belly of a female fox; the urine-burned fur had the faint but unmistakable pinkish tinge noticed by many anglers on the actual Hendrickson mayfly. One of Art Flick's Hendrickson's is pictured above the original.

Below the Flick fly and to the immediate right of the original Hendrickson is a fly tied by John Atherton, probably for use on the Battenkill. Though we have far more neatly tied Hendricksons in our collection of Atherton flies, we used this one because it is the only one that is faithful to Steenrod's alternate dressing; the tails are golden pheasant crests.

Below the Atherton fly is Preston Jennings' own version of the Hendrickson, and at the bottom of the page is the darkest of our Hendricksons, tied by Edward R. Hewitt. Both his hackle and his body fur are darker than the others.

It is interesting to note that Steenrod's fly illustrates a relatively common characteristic of the "Catskill School" flies by its open "neck" in front of the hackle and wings. Of the flies in the Museum Collection, only those tied by Rube Cross have quite this much space left uncovered.

The Art Flick pattern was donated to the Museum by Art, we received the Atherton pattern from Mrs. Atherton, the Jennings fly is part of the Jennings Collection, and Alvan Macauley gave us the Hewitt fly. All in all, these five flies are a study in subtlety; five gifted anglers' responses to the same need, each one a little different. It is some testament to the quality of the original fly — and this seems to be the case with each of the few really important American fly patterns that are over fifty years old — that it has changed so little at the hands of so many masters.

Scotcher and Bainbridge Reconsidered

Recent investigations compel us to reconsider two important milestones in angling literature

by David Ledlie

One of the scarcest extant angling books is a small octavo volume written by George Scotcher, entitled *The Fly-Fisher's Legacy. Bibliotheca Piscatoria* gives the date of publication as circa 1800 (no printed date appears in the book) and comments that it is "A rare local work which preceded Bainbridge (1816), Carroll (1818), and Ronalds (1836)." If Scotcher predates Bainbridge then it is the first angling book with a "coloured" plate. An interesting bit of detective work regarding this point was recently carried out by Jack Heddon and John Simpson of the Honey Dun Press. I have included below Heddon's own description of the Scotcher investigation which is taken from *Scotcher Notes* published by the Honey Dun Press in 1975.

"My partner John Simpson, who is a very bibliographically minded collector of angling books, had never been happy with the vagueness of these datings, believing mainly on the grounds of printing style and lay-out that the book belonged to the period c. 1810. Three copies of the book were examined for watermarks. The first examination, in natural light, disclosed part watermarks in two of the frontispieces, but none in the text. The part watermarks both read 'SON/OL/9.' We think that the complete watermark would read: '[FIRM'S NAME &] SON/ [BRIST] OL/ [180] 9.' The text and the frontispiece were printed on different papers; the text being on wove paper. At a later date the text was re-examined with the aid of a powerful artificial light and several pages were found to contain a complete watermark reading 'B/ 1809.'

In an endeavor to date the book exactly John and I spent many hours in the Library of the British Museum searching for, amongst other things, an entry in the catalogues of Lackington, Allen and Co., (the London booksellers mentioned in the imprint). Catalogues covering the period 1804-1820 were examined, without trace of the book. The Record-Books at Stationer's Hall covering the period 1796-1822 were also searched, again without trace of the book. However, during our researches we discovered two publications which contain important and relevant information concerning Mark Willett. These are *A History of Printing and Printers in Wales and Monmouthshire*, 1925, by Ifano Jones; and *Chepstow Printers and Newspapers*, Chepstow, 1970, by Ivor Waters.

Mark Willett was in business at 33 Moor-Street, as a chemist and druggist from 1804 and may have owned a printing press as early as 1805. The earliest date by which Willett can be confirmed as a master printer is 1808 and it is unlikely that he printed any books before the end of that year. In 1817 Willett sold his business to Thomas Major. He must have been a versatile man, for he was listed in Pigot & Co.'s Directory of 1830 as a surgeon; a profession also referred to in his obituary notice in *The Cambrian*, July 18, 1835, which read; 'On the 6th inst., at Chepstow, awfully sudden, Mark Willett, Esq., surgeon, author of the Bristol Tide Tables, Stranger in Monmouthshire, &c. . .'

Willett, in addition to being a surgeon and apothecary, author and general printer, had an ambition to found Monmouthshire's first newspaper; this was to be called *The Cambrian Messenger, and Public Advertiser.* On December 31st, 1808, he placed the following advertisement in *The Cambrian*:

'Monmouthshire & South-Wales Newspaper. Shortly will be published, (Of which due notice will be given in the Swansea, Glocester, Hereford, and Bristol Papers) A New Weekly Paper, price sixpence, Printed on fine wove paper, of a large size, with an elegant new type, cast on purpose for the work, entitled *The Cambrian Messenger and Public Advertiser* for the Counties of Monmouth, Glocester, Hereford, Brecon, Radnor, Cardigan, Carmarthen, Pembroke, and Glamorgan. This paper will be published every Friday morning . . . Further particulars may be known on perusal of a Prospectus, which is now in circulation. Printed and published by M. Willett, at the Office, Moor-Street Chepstow, where orders for the Paper are requested to be sent.'

This advertisement also appeared in

The Cambrian on January 14th, 1809; February 11th and 25th; March 11th and 25th; and April 8th. On April 29th and May 13th there appeared:

'The Friends of the Establishment, and the Public, are most respectfully informed, that the First Number of the new Weekly Paper, entitled The Cambrian Messenger; or, Monmouthshire and South-Wales, Public Advertiser; will be published on Friday Morning, the 19th of May, 1809, at the Office, Moor-street, Chepstow . . .'

The project did not materialise; not only did *The Cambrian Messenger* fail to appear on the 19th of May 1809, but nothing more was mentioned about the paper in *The Cambrian*. As Willett was advertising the paper only six days before it was due to appear, he must have obtained a stock of the 'fine wove paper' referred to in his advertisement. *The Fly Fisher's Legacy* was printed on 'fine wove paper' and we think that the stock of paper intended for *The Cambrian Messenger* was used for the book.

In a recent exchange of correspondence, Mr. Waters has expressed the opinion that the *Legacy* must have been printed between 1808 and 1809, mainly because Willett is so well documented after the latter date. We believe that the book was printed in 1809, but accept the possibility that it could have been printed later. Should we discover any additional facts, these will be published in our forthcoming News Letters."

With all respect to the erudite research of Heddon and Simpson, I would like to offer some additional evidence which indicates that *The Fly Fisher's Legacy* was published in 1819, rather 1809. Thus Bainbridge's *The Fly Fisher's Guide* becomes our first "coloured" plate angling book.

The evidence which casts doubt on the Heddon-Simpson conclusion was brought to my attention by Lindley Eberstadt, whose copy of Scotcher has a watermark on the color plate which is illustrated below.

Unfortunately, the watermark is incomplete; however, the partial watermark would imply "[FIRM'S NAME] & SON/ [BRIS] TOL [18] 19." This would also suggest that the "9" in the watermark examined by Heddon and Simpson belongs to 1819 rather than 1809.

Examination of the George Fearing copy of Scotcher at Harvard revealed a watermark "B/1809" on leaf C1 of the text.[1] Yale's copy contains an identical mark on C3.[2] Both of the above seem to be identical to the watermarks reported by Jack Heddon. It should be noted that neither of the above copies had a watermark on the color plate. The text of the Eberstadt copy contains no watermarks but is printed on what seems to be the same "wove paper" described by Heddon. We suggest that *The Fly Fisher's Legacy* was printed on the (1809) paper originally destined for "The Cambrian Messenger," but was not published until 1819 or 1820. Of course there is always the possibility that the Eberstadt copy is a second edition of this rare work.

In an attempt to find watermarks on both color plate and text two additional copies were examined: one owned by Princeton University's Kienbusch Collection and another owned by a private collector.

The Kienbusch copy was originally owned by Thomas Westwood (signed, 1860) and later by Dean Sage (bookplate). While there are no watermarks on text or plate, the copy is interleaved throughout with blank pieces of watermarked paper. The watermark appears on the inside margin and reads 1820![3] Obviously, the interleaving could have been done after the publication date.

The final copy examined was originally part of the former Henry Sherwin Collection. There is only one watermark and this is found on the color plate. It reads:

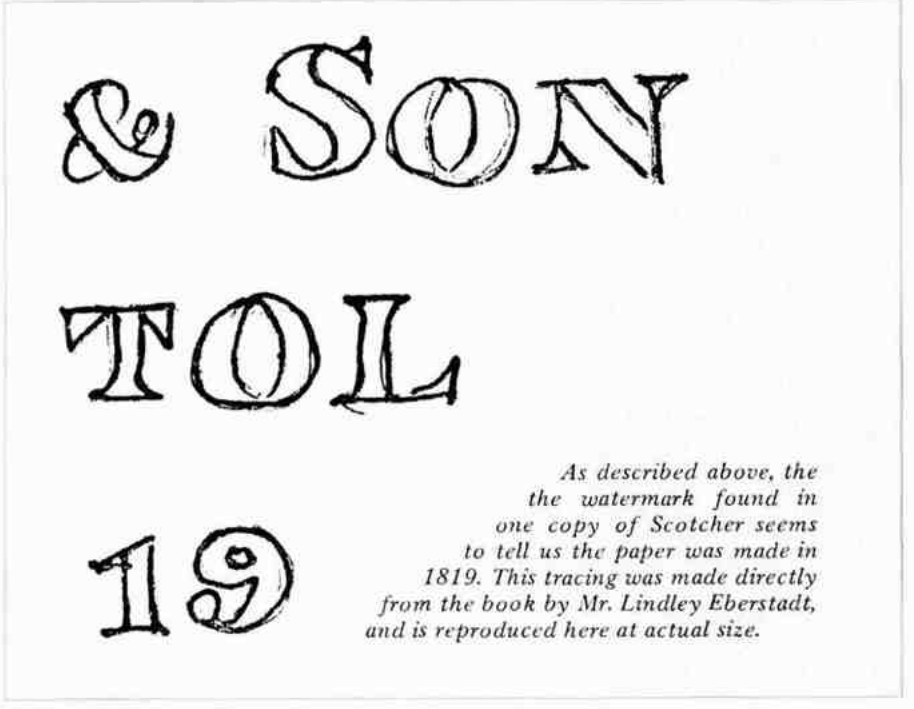
BARF /Br

The fourth letter in the first word is not an upper case "F." It appears to be an "R" that was cut off by the edge of the page. Combining this information with that found on the Eberstadt copy suggests that the complete watermark on the plate should read:

BARRY & SON / BRISTOL / 1819

and that the Sherwin copy is identical to the Eberstadt copy. In summary, we feel that it is highly unlikely that there were two editions of this "rare local work" and that the date of publication is 1819 or 1820 rather than 1809 as suggested by Heddon, *et al.*

Thus Bainbridge becomes our first color plate piscatorial endeavor. We include here several plates taken from the 4th edition of *The Fly Fisher's Guide*; in fact the book we used was the personal property of Theodore Gordon, whose library is now in the Museum collection.[4] Regardless of the final outcome of our search for the exact publication date of Scotcher's little book, Bainbridge will remain secure as the first author to provide his readers with a color illustration of salmon flies, as pictured on page seventeen.



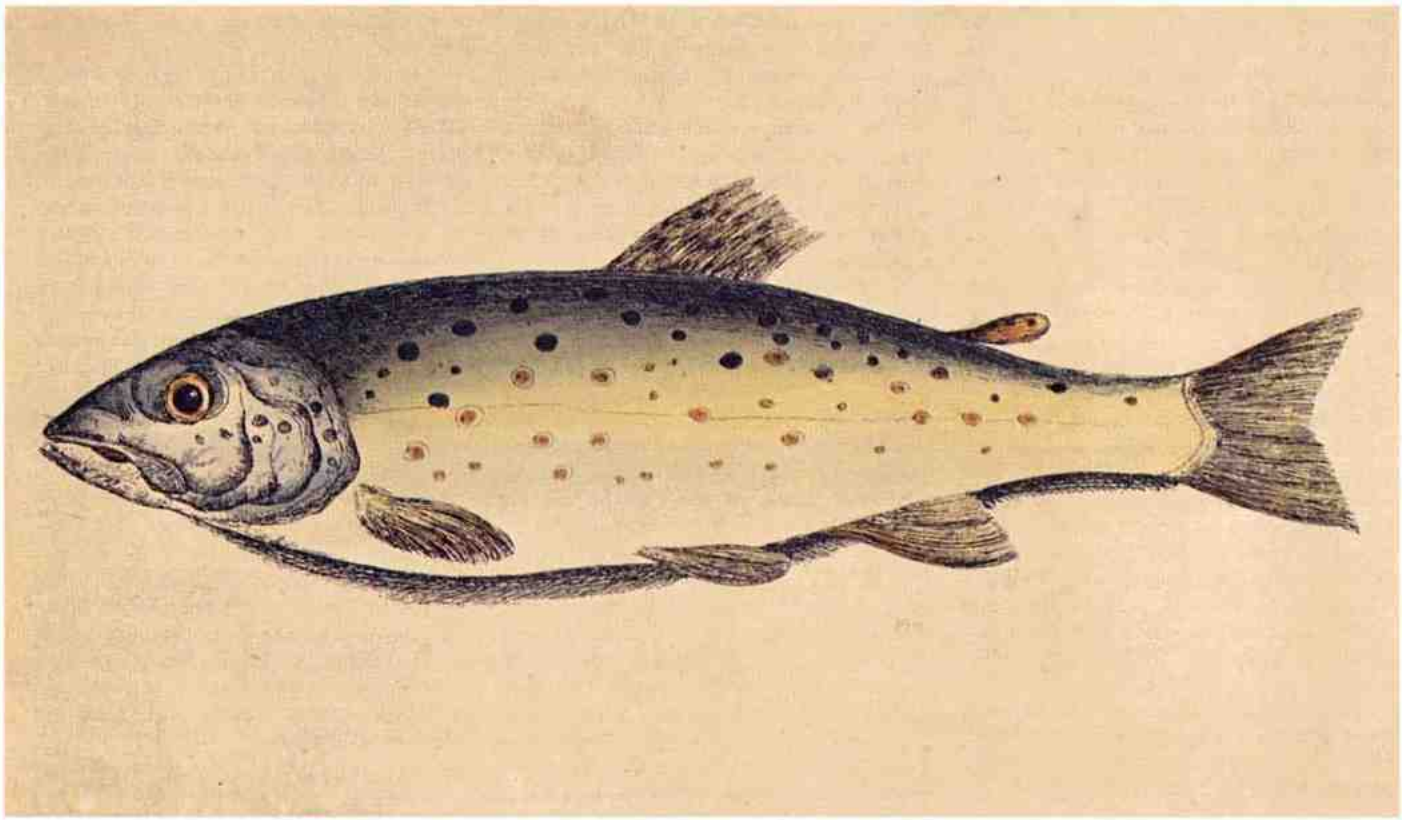
As described above, the the watermark found in one copy of Scotcher seems to tell us the paper was made in 1819. This tracing was made directly from the book by Mr. Lindley Eberstadt, and is reproduced here at actual size.

[1]Copy examined by Roger E. Stoddard, Associate Librarian, Harvard Library.

[2]Copy examined by Marjorie Wynn, Research Librarian, Yale University.

[3]Copy examined by J. I. Merritt, Associate Director of Communications, Princeton University. Mr. Merritt's article on the Kienbusch Collection at Princeton appeared in Volume Seven, Number Three of this magazine.

[4]It should also be noted that our present awareness of and interest in the Scotcher volume is largely the result of the publication of a superb limited edition of that work by Honey Dun Press in 1974.



The Bainbridge Illustrations

The evidence presented on the previous pages can establish **The Fly Fisher's Guide,** *by George Cole Bainbridge, as the first angling book with color (or "colour," if you could ask George) plates. We have arranged five of the eight plates here, taken from the fourth edition of the book.*

Above is the frontispiece, "The Trout." On the upper left, page seventeen, is plate eight, the flies described in the text as follows: 33 and 34, the Sand Fly, with wings raised in the former in order to show body size; 35, The Great Red Spinner; 36, The Pale Evening Dun; 37, The Blue Gnat; 38, The Oak Fly (also called the Downlooker or Canon Fly); 39, The Great Black Ant; 40, The Great Red Ant; 41, The Small Black Ant; 42, The Yellow Sally Fly.

On the upper right is plate seven: 25, an unnamed brown-winged fly; 26, The Brown Dun; 27, The Green Drake (or May Fly); 28, The Blue Blow; 29, The Black Midge; 30, The Gray Drake; 31, The Peacock Fly; 32, The Cinnamon Fly.

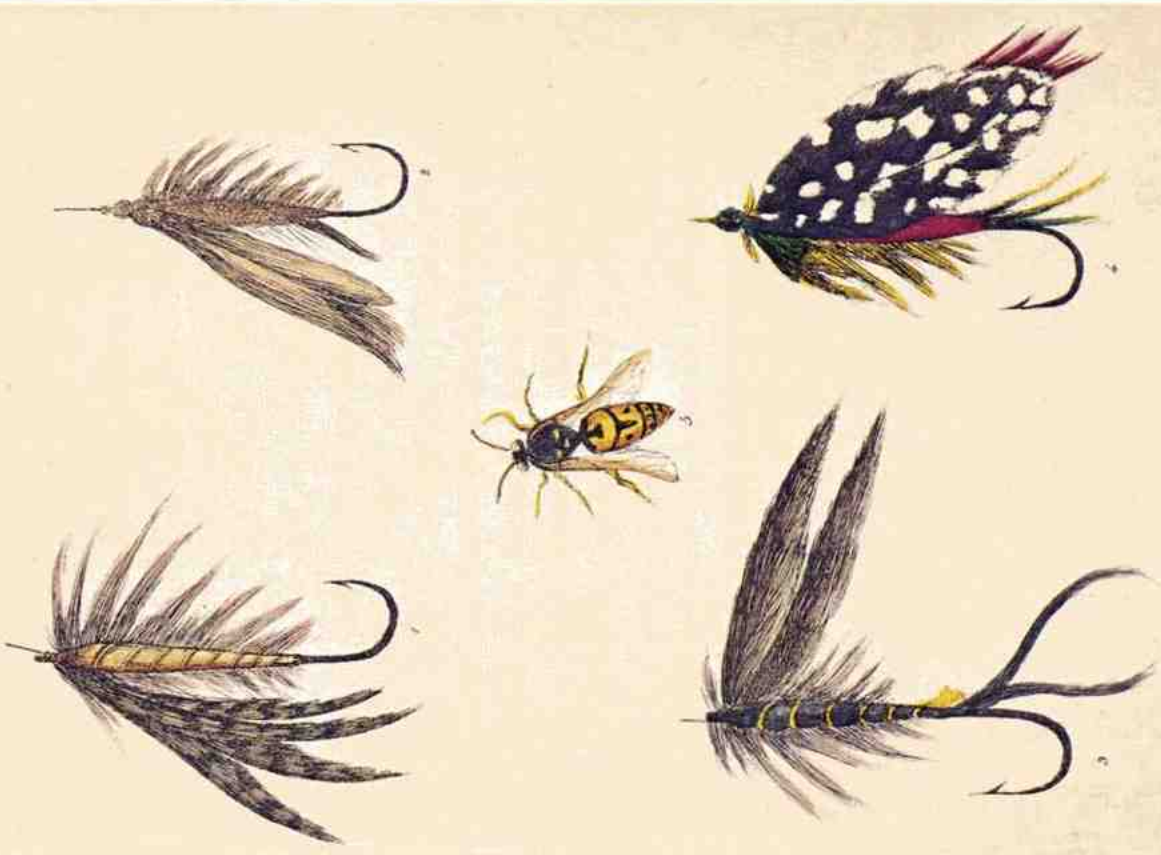
Below the trout flies is what is certainly the first color plate of salmon flies. Interestingly, none of these had well established names, though number two was called the "quaker fly" because it was so drab. Number one was an early spring pattern (presumably for high water), number three was a summer fly, and number four was described as being from the class of "gaudy flies." It would have been an early progenitor of the elaborate and complex patterns that would become powerfully fashionable by the end of the nineteenth century. Number five was a direct effort at imitating the wasp.

Bainbridge, incidentally, cautioned against heavy flies; he believed that flies with too much gold or silver wire would be difficult to "throw" and would sink "too much under the water." The use of beads for eyes, which he said was an occasional practice when imitating dragonflies, was to be avoided for the same reasons. In fact, he thought beads were "reprehensible."

Plate 8

Plate 7

Plate 3



A Most Extraordinary Spectacle

by Charles Holder

The vicissitudes of saltwater fly fishing in the 1890's

Charles Frederick Holder was an important popularizer of saltwater fishing of many kinds; he organized the Catalina Tuna Club in 1898 and was the author of nearly twenty books about the sea and sea fishing.

As we have pointed out in past issues of **The American Fly Fisher,** *saltwater fly fishing is not new. At least a few adventurous souls were casting large bass and salmon flies in salt water by the time of the Civil War in this country, and by the 1890's many southern saltwater fish had been taken on flies. In the following account, which appeared in* **The Century Magazine** *in May of 1891, we can see that fly fishing in salt water was viewed by many with skepticism and amusement. At a time when many saltwater fish seemed almost too strong for conventional heavy tackle, fly fishing probably did appear quixotic to the practical-minded angler.*

Holder's story involved three characters: the judge, the colonel, and a guide named Paublo. As we join them, the judge and the colonel are fishing with bait for barracuda, near Long Key.

The judge carried his line, which was similar in color and size to the one used for snapper-fishing, in a large coil over his arm, explaining that it could not tangle, as it had been stretched forty-eight hours at severe tension, and was always stretched moderately after using. The hook was fastened to a slender copper wire two feet in length, and a mullet five inches long being impaled, it was thrown out ahead of the first barracuda sighted.

The splash attracted the notice of the fish, which moved forward; but seeing that the bait was dead, it instantly regained its former motionless position between surface and bottom. Now a quivering motion was imparted to the bait, which seemed struggling to escape, waving to and fro under the adroit manipulation of the fisherman, movements that were not lost upon the watchful

barracuda. Dropping its muzzle, it sank slowly and gently to the bottom, and moved imperceptibly upon the bait, creeping upon it as a cat would upon a bird, then backing off as if suspicious. The slightest overdoing of the motion aroused its incredulity, and the clever simulation of life urged it on, until finally it seized the mullet, rose quickly from the bottom, and with quick gulps swallowed it. It was then that the hook struck home, and like a shot the blue-hued fish was high in air, bending and shaking its savage jaws in agony and surprise, and for some moments giving the fisherman ample scope for an exposition of dexterity and skill.

As he brought the fish in the judge remarked, "I myself see no sport in the heavy-sinker, deep-water hand-line fishing, but thus outwitting a gamy fish, where you can watch his every move in the clear water and feel every thrill through the medium of the line, is to me pleasure that I do not obtain from the rod."

"But," urged the colonel, "I could use a rod in a similar way after short practice."

"You forget," replied the judge, laughing at his friend's persistence, "that the rod that would land an eighty-pound striped bass would not, unless I am greatly mistaken, be a match for a barracuda of equal weight; the action and activity of the fish are entirely different."

It must be admitted, however, in defense of the champion of the rod, that he succeeded later in killing a thirty-pound barracuda, although his season of triumph was of short duration. An early riser, he was often on the reef at sunrise, taking advantage of the dead calms that are so characteristic of the locality, frequently for days not a ripple save that occasioned by the breakers on the barrier reef disturbing the glassy surface. One morning he returned and aroused the judge and Paublo with a magnificent jack nearly two feet long that he had taken with his favorite silver doctor.

"It rose like a salmon," he said exultantly, "and I was thirty minutes in landing it."

"Did you see any others?" asked the judge, with a twinkle of merriment in his gray eye.

"No," replied the jubilant angler; "I was satisfied with this, and it fully demonstrates that the rod has no restrictions."

"'Scuse me, sah," said Paublo, who was ganging hooks hard by, "but w'en de jacks come, sah, yo' better leave disher pole in de bag."

But the colonel was not to be deterred, and later in the day was standing at the place of his morning's exploit, gracefully whipping the warm waters for a companion jack, his book of flies on the sand. At the stand he had taken the channel was forty feet away, so that the fly was dropped delicately upon its borders at every cast.

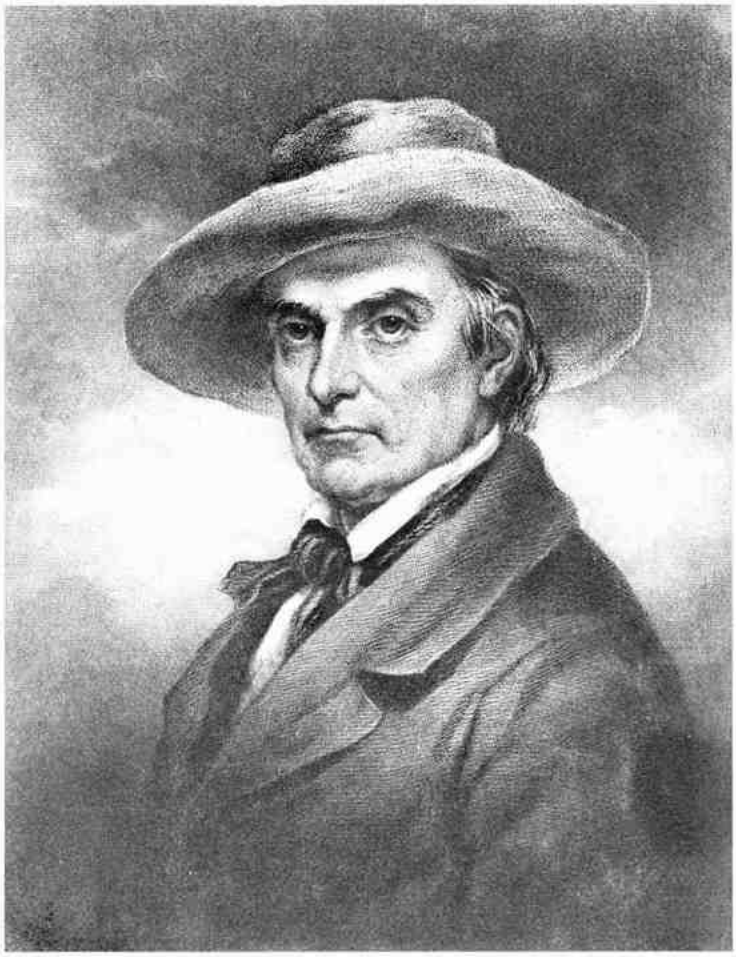
The judge and Paublo were a thousand yards up the narrow key endeavoring to secure some live bait with a cast-net, the crash of which, as it fell when hurled by the bait-catcher, being the only sound that broke the stillness of the calm. The fly-fisherman had been casting half an hour with creditable patience, when the others heard a hail, and, turning and hurrying towards him, became laughing witnesses to a most extraordinary spectacle. The colonel was waist-deep in the water, wielding his rod in a manner that would have attracted the attention of the ghost of Walton himself. He held it over his head, now pushing it backward, now down and up, the tip undergoing a tremendous strain, and the rod and caster seemingly involved in indescribable confusion. The water about him appeared to be boiling, as if under the influence of some sudden irruption, while fish from a foot to two and a half feet in length were leaping into the air by thousands, striking his body, dashing over his head and between his legs, and one, which had originally seized the killing fly, had completely entangled the fisherman in his own line. The confusion grew momentarily greater, the patter of fins and falling fish forming a babel of sounds that could have been heard a mile distant. Millions of small fry packed the water so closely that it was with difficulty the colonel forced his way through them as he struggled towards the shore· the great jacks dashing into the school with increasing fury, wild with excitement and seemingly unconscious of their human enemies.

Near the beach for several feet there was a solid mass of small fish, and as the demoralized fisherman neared the shore the jacks had preceded him, and were leaping upon the sands, the pattering of their silvery bodies and the laughter of his companions adding to his amazement and discomfiture.

The turmoil, which at first had been confined to his immediate vicinity, spread rapidly up the beach, until for a quarter of a mile the shore was lined with a jumping mass of frenzied fishes that seemed possessed with an uncontrollable desire to hurl themselves upon the sands. The noise from the strange performance soon attracted other observers: gulls came flying from all quarters of the key, dashing into the throng with wild cries; lumbering pelicans fell heavily, and filled their capacious pouches with the smaller fry, and in turn were nipped and then jerked below by the larger fish. As the gulls rose, the watchful man-of-war birds gave chase; and so this curious phase of life continued, finally ceasing as suddenly as it began.

"That," said the judge to the astonished colonel, "is a 'jack-beat.' I knew this morning when you brought one in that they had come. They appear by thousands, I might say millions, rushing out of the channel without warning, chasing large schools of sardines inshore, hemming them in against the beach, and devouring them by the score, and, as you have seen, completely oblivious of danger. From now," continued the judge, "for a month or more, these beats will be of daily occurrence. You can hear a heavy one two miles away."

The evidence to support one of America's great fishing stories is as slight as the two objects illustrated here. Above is the famous Currier and Ives print, which has often been said to show Daniel Webster killing the famous trout. As the author points out, there is no record that the artist intended to portray Webster (though it sure looks like him), and the fish pictured could hardly be more than two pounds. Below is the almost equally famous wooden weathervane, alleged to have been made from a tracing of the big trout. This and the other photographs in this article were taken by Craig Woods.



Daniel Webster and the Great Brook Trout

by Kenneth Shewmaker

The story seems too good to be true. In 1823, Philip Hone (1780-1851; businessman, diarist, and mayor of New York City from 1825 to 1827) saw an enormous brook trout in the Carmans River just below the tavern owned and operated by Samuel Carman. The Carmans River is on Long Island, and the alleged sighting took place near the town of Brookhaven, which was called the Fire Place in the 1820s. Hone shared his secret with Daniel Webster (1782-1852; elected United States Senator from Massachusetts in 1827), and the two friends spent several hours unsuccessfully trying to tempt the huge trout into taking a fly. Webster, who was an avid fisherman, became obsessed with the Carmans River leviathan, and four years later he had a second chance.

In 1827, the story continues, the huge brook trout was dislodged from its hiding place because of the repair of a water wheel. It darted from the millrace into the millpond, and soon became the subject of animated conversation at Samuel Carman's tavern. As luck would have it, Webster and Hone, in the company of Martin Van Buren (1782-1862; a United States Senator from New York in 1827), were in town for another fishing excursion that spring. Webster and Hone fished all day Saturday without locating the great trout, and that evening they commiserated by imbibing too much rum at Samuel Carman's inn. Despite their hangovers, or perhaps because of them, Webster and Hone dutifully attended the services at Parson Ezra King's Presbyterian church the next morning. Leaving nothing to chance, however, Carman had stationed his servant (who has been identified as a man named either Apaius Enos or Lige) at the millpond with orders to keep a ready eye out for the big fish. The prophetic hymn of the day, of course, was "Shall we gather at the river, the beautiful, beautiful river."

As the long-winded Parson King droned on, Carman's servant tiptoed into the church with the news that the big brook trout was swimming about in the millpond. Webster, Hone, Carman, and the servant left their pews as inconspicuously as possible. Guessing what was afoot, other members of the congregation also began to slip out, until only the most pious remained. Finally, Parson King, who also was a dedicated fly fisherman, uttered a hasty benediction and headed for the door. The entire congregation gathered at the river to watch the ensuing battle between a great man and a great fish.

Webster first caught a small brookie, which he gently released unharmed. About half an hour later, however, the big fish was hooked. The cast was long, the fly landed daintily, the strike was ferocious, the battle was nearly as protracted as Reverend King's sermon, and the memorable words were uttered by Carman's servant: "We hab you now, sar!" What they allegedly had was a world record-breaking 14½ pound leviathan.

Samuel Carman, the story continues, traced the outline of the great fish against a wall, and Philip Hone transferred Carman's scratches onto a linen. Sometime later, a local blacksmith or carpenter made a wooden replica of the gigantic brook trout. This facsimile served as the weathervane on Parson King's church for fifty years. Unfortunately, the cherrywood plank, which had been made a third larger than the original outline in order to provide it with the proper proportions for the church spire, was struck by lightning, which may explain the splintered appearance of that artifact, which still is in existence.

The Carmans River remains a lovely and challenging fishing stream today, as shown in this recent photograph by Craig Woods.

As for Webster, Hone, and Van Buren, they immediately set out for New York City with their trophy. The trout, which was prepared in a tasty and rich sour cream sauce, was served with white wine at Delmonico's. Daniel Webster, the story concludes, was so delighted with his experience that he sent Samuel Carman one hundred dollars.[1]

Such is the legend of Daniel Webster and the great brook trout. Is there any truth to the story? In trying to answer that question, the place to begin is with the various accounts of the incident. For the most part, they are characterized by carelessness and slipshod scholarship. In *Bellport and Brookhaven*, Daniel Webster is identified as "a Senator from New York," which he never was.[2] The article in *Fly Fisherman* by James and Craig Wood relies on *Bellport and Brookhaven*.[3] Nicholas Karas claims that the record-breaking catch "was authenticated and witnessed" by many people, including Philip Hone, Parson King, and Martin Van Buren. Although Karas states that he used Hone's diary, he offers no citation to that document, or, for that matter, to anything else written by any of the alleged eyewitnesses to the dramatic event.[4] Like Karas, Ernest Schwiebert provides no citations to his many references. Schwiebert, however, is somewhat more restrained than Karas. He calculates that reducing the size of the weathervane by a third would mean that the brook trout was approximately 25 inches in length and about 9 or 10 lbs. in weight, not 14½ lbs.[5] Charles Eliot Goodspeed is the most scholarly of the authors, and the most cautious. He quotes an unidentified "prominent resident" of the town of South Haven as the source of the Webster trout story. Goodspeed goes on, however, to observe that two other early renditions of rumors about a big fish being taken in the Carmans River "make no mention of Webster's having caught the fish." Goodspeed even speculates that the trophy in question might have been a salmon, not a trout.[6]

The Webster trout story, in sum, is built on foundations of sand. Except for an oversized fish weathervane of uncertain origin, a Currier and Ives print showing a trout that hardly seems to have the girth required for a 14½ pounder,[7] and a name plate on a pew in Parson King's church bearing the inscription "The Suffolk Club," the evidence is thin. Even the name plate is not very helpful. According to the legend, Webster was a member of "The Suffolk Club."[8] The group, however, was not formed until 1858, and Webster left this world in 1852.

Being a Webster scholar, as well as a fly fisherman, I dearly hoped that the story was true. Accordingly, I made a search of the historical records, including the Papers of Daniel Webster at Dartmouth College. Drawn from many depositories, the Webster Papers at Dartmouth constitute the most complete compendium of Webster's correspondence, speeches, and writings in existence today.

The quest began on a promising note.

A close-up of the small plaque on the old weathervane.

Daniel Webster was in the right place at the right time. From about May 23 to June 6, 1827, he was in New York City. None of the letters he wrote during that time, however, contains a single word about angling. Rather, his correspondence from late May to early June 1827 is mainly concerned with law and politics. I also examined Webster's correspondence with those mentioned in the various accounts as having witnessed the taking of the great brook trout, regardless of chronology. No letters to or from Apaius Enos, Reverend King, or Lige are contained in the Webster Papers. Webster did write one note to Philip Hone on April 30, 1831.[9] In this routine document, however, Webster merely informed Hone that he would not be in New York City long enough to attend a memorial dinner. In 1845, Webster sent two letters to Samuel Carman, but neither referred to the catching of an enormous trout.[10] On April 8, 1845, Webster told Carman that the weather was "so cold, I hardly know when I shall be your way," which indicates that he knew the tavern owner and considered making a trip to Fire Place. Nothing more, however, can be inferred from this interesting communication to Carman. Three Webster-Van Buren letters have been preserved, one undated and the others written in 1828 and 1836.[11] The undated document extended a dinner invitation to Webster, and the 1828 letter involved a legal case. The third letter, happily, did refer to a fish, but it was not a trout. On May 29, 1836, Webster invited Van Buren to a "*Salmon*" dinner. The fish, which Webster hoped had been "well preserved," had been given to him by a relative. None of the letters in the Webster Papers to or from the alleged eyewitnesses contained any reference to a large brook trout.

Since Philip Hone and Martin Van Buren play conspicuous roles in nearly all of the versions of the big fish story, their reminiscences also were scrutinized. None of the three published versions of Hone's famous diary, which he began in 1828, a year after the alleged occurrence, verifies the tale.[12] Indeed, one of Hone's diary entries seems to do the opposite. In April 1834, Hone observed that on a trip to the Carmans River he and his party "took some of the largest trout I ever saw," and the largest taken was 2 lbs. and 12 ounces — a long way from the assumed size of the great Webster trout.[13]

Since the manuscript of the Hone diary is more complete than the published versions and contains some items dating back to 1826, it also was examined. Hone did not actually begin to keep a systematic journal until 1828, and the documents prior to that time

The Size of Long Island Trout

by Frank Forester

The following account of the size of trout in Long Island was written by Frank Forester for George Washington Bethune's 1847 edition of The Compleat Angler. *Though Forester's reputation for accuracy is far from untarnished, we have little reason to doubt this report. Notice that the only fish Forester knew of that approached the alleged weight of the Webster trout was, in fact, taken from Carman's, and that it was suspected, even by 1847, of having been a salmon. It seems likely that this is probably the "same" fish that has figured in the other versions of the big trout tale.*

The principal distinctions that strike the careful observer between the trout of Long Island, or, indeed, I might say North America in general, and those of the British Isles, is, first, the great uniformity of size on the part of the former, which rarely exceed two or three pounds in weight, and *never*, so far as I have been able to ascertain, five or six and, secondly, the fact that in the United States trout are never taken in the large rivers, or, if ever, so rarely as to prove the rule by the wonder arising from the exception.

On Long Island, there are some half dozen instances on record, within three times as many years, of fish, varying in weight from four to six pounds, taken with the rod and line. Two of these instances occur to me, as connected with circumstances which may render the relation acceptable, as of anecdotes very unusual, and almost, but that they are proved beyond the possibility of doubt, incredible.

Both these instances occurred at Stump-pond, on the north side; one in the pond itself, the other in the mill-pool, at the outlet.

A gentleman from New York, thus runs the first story, who had never thrown a line, or taken a trout in his life, and who had come out lately equipped with a complete outfit of Conroy's best and strongest tackle, all spick-and-span new, and point device, on throwing his hook, baited with a common lob-worm, into the water, was greeted with an immediate bite, and bob of the float, which incontinently disappeared beneath the surface carried away by the hard pull of a heavy fish. The novice, ignorant of all the soft and shrewd seductions of the angler's art, hauled in his prize, main force, and actually, without the aid of gaff or landing net, brought to basket a five-pounder!

The fact is remarkable; the example decidedly unworthy of imitation!

The other instance to which I have referred, is, in all respects, except the size of the fish, the very opposite of the former; as, in it, the success of the fortunate fisherman is due as much to superior science in his craft, as *his*, in the former, is attributable to blind and unmerited good luck.

The hero of this anecdote is a gentleman, known by the *nom de guerre* of Commodore Limbrick, a character in which he has figured many a day in the columns of the *Spirit of the Times*, and who is universally allowed to be one of the best and most experienced, as well as the oldest fisherman of that city.

After having fished all the morning with various success in the pond, he ascertained, it seems, that in the pool below the mill there was a fish of extraordinary size, which had been observed repeatedly, and fished for constantly, at all hours of the day and evening, with every different variety of bait, to no purpose. Hearing this he betook himself to the miller, and there having verified the information which he had received, and having satisfied himself that neither fly nor minnow, gentle nor red-worm, would attract the great trout, he procured, *horresco referens*, a *mouse* from the miller's trap, and proceeding to troll therewith, took at the first cast of that inordinate dainty, a fish that weighed four pounds and three quarters.

Another fish or two of the like dimensions have been taken in Liff. Snedecor's and in Carman's streams; and it is on record, that at Fireplace, many years since, a trout was taken of eleven pounds. A rough drawing of this fish is still to be seen on the wall of the tavern bar-room, but it has every appearance of being the sketch of a salmon; and I am informed by a thorough sportsman, who remembers the time and the occurrence, although he did not see the fish, that no doubt was entertained by experienced anglers who did see it, of its being in truth a salmon.

are mainly copies of speeches and lists of those invited to the dinner parties for which Philip Hone was justly famous. On May 31, 1827, about the time when the great brook trout was allegedly caught, Hone requested the presence of a number of eminent people. Daniel Webster was not among them. Webster's name first appeared as one of those invited for dinner on November 10, 1827. Whether he was actually a guest of Hone on the evening of November 10 is not known. More important, nothing whatsoever is mentioned in any of the 1827 documents about a massive brook trout that presumably was consumed at Delmonico's.[14] Hone, in fact, did not come into close contact with Daniel Webster until 1830, when he visited the Senator in Washington.[15] Thereafter, the two men developed a warm and lasting friendship, but this, of course, was years after the supposed incident on the Carmans River. The most colorful fishing excursion with Webster recorded in Hone's diary occurred in 1845, when Hone was a guest at Webster's estate in Marshfield. On July 9, the two men went fishing together aboard "the good sloop *Comet*" on Cape Cod Bay. The water was rough, and both Webster and Hone became seasick.[16]

In his autobiography, Martin Van Buren mentioned that he fished "in a pond a mile or two from my home," but he did not do so in the company of Daniel Webster.[17] It is, in fact, unlikely that Van Buren ever went fishing with Webster, for he did not like the statesman from Massachusetts. Webster, according to Van Buren, was a man of "ill will" toward Democrats.[18] Van Buren even bitterly characterized Webster as a person deficient "both in physical and moral courage."[19] Although they occasionally corresponded with one another and may have eaten a hopefully well-preserved salmon together, Martin Van Buren and Daniel Webster were political opponents who did not much care for one another.

So, where does that leave us? The story of Daniel Webster and the great brook trout seems to be apocryphal. Hoping to find historical evidence confirming what is an absolutely wonderful tale, I found none. Webster certainly was a fly fisherman, and a good one at that. For example, in June 1825 he took, by his own account, "26 trouts, all weighing 17 lb. 12 oz." (which meant that the trout averaged nearly 11 ounces each) from what he called "that chief of all brooks, Mashpee." He also had the familiar experience of losing the big one, which broke his line. Recalling that fine outing on the Mashpee, Webster stated that he had never "had so agreeable a days fishing," nor did he "ever expect such another."[20] Fortunately, he did have many other good days on the Mashpee and other trout streams, but there is no persuasive evidence that he ever landed a 14½ pounder on the Carmans River. Surely, he would have recorded such a gigantic catch for posterity in one of the hundreds of letters that he wrote after 1827, but, if he did, I have been unable to find it in the Webster Papers. I hope that a reader of *The American Fly Fisher* will prove me wrong by producing written historical evidence upholding the legend of Daniel Webster and the great brook trout, but I am afraid that the tale is what some people call a "fish story," which, I think, means a story too good to be true.

Notes

[1]The story of Daniel Webster and the great brook trout as recounted above is a composite drawn from the following sources: Stephanie S. Bigelow, compiler, *Bellport and Brookhaven: A Saga of the Sibling Hamlets at Old Purchase South* (New York, 1968), pp. 30-31, 46-47, 87; Charles Eliot Goodspeed, *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature* (Boston, 1939), pp. 199-200; Nicholas Karas, "Daniel Webster Meets Another Kind of Devil," *Rod & Gun* (Summer 1970); Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout* (2 vols.; New York, 1978), I, pp. 245-258; James and Craig Wood, "Long Island's Gift to American Trout Fishing: The Carmans River," *Fly Fisherman*, 7 (Winter 1975), pp. 46-50.

[2]*Bellport and Brookhaven*, p. 31.

[3]See James and Craig Wood, "Long Island's Gift to American Trout Fishing," pp. 46-47.

[4]Karas, "Daniel Webster Meets Another Kind of Devil," p. 12.

[5]Schwiebert, *Trout*, I, p. 248.

[6]Goodspeed, *Angling in America*, pp. 199-200.

[7]The Currier and Ives print, which was painted by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819-1905) in 1854, does not even mention Daniel Webster by name. It is entitled "Catching a Trout" and carries the caption "We Hab you Now, Sar." Although the angler playing the trout resembles Webster, I have found no evidence that Tait, one of America's greatest sporting artists, had the statesman from Massachusetts in mind. For information on the Currier and Ives print and Tait see Harry T. Peters, *Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People* (Garden City, New York, 1942) and E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs* (Paris, 1976).

[8]See, for example, Schwiebert, *Trout*, I, p. 245.

[9]Daniel Webster to Philip Hone, New York, April 30, 1831 (Dartmouth College-Webster Papers).

[10]Webster to Samuel Carman, Boston, March 31, 1845; Webster to Carman, New York, April 8, 1845 (Suffolk County Historical Society, Riverhead, New York).

[11]Martin Van Buren to Webster, [n.p.], [n.d.] (Dartmouth College-Webster Papers); Webster to Van Buren, Boston, September 27, 1828 (Massachusetts Historical Society-Van Buren Papers); Webster to Van Buren, [n.p.], May 29, 1836 (Phillips Exeter Academy).

[12]Allan Nevins, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851* (2 vols.; New York, 1927; Nevins, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851* (rev. and enlarged ed.; New York, 1936); Bayard Tuckerman, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851* (2 vols.; New York, 1889).

[13]Tuckerman, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, p. 102.

[14]Philip Hone Diary. Volume I: January 17, 1826-April 4, 1829. New York Historical Society.

[15]See Nevins, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone* (rev. and enlarged ed.), p. 23.

[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 736-738.

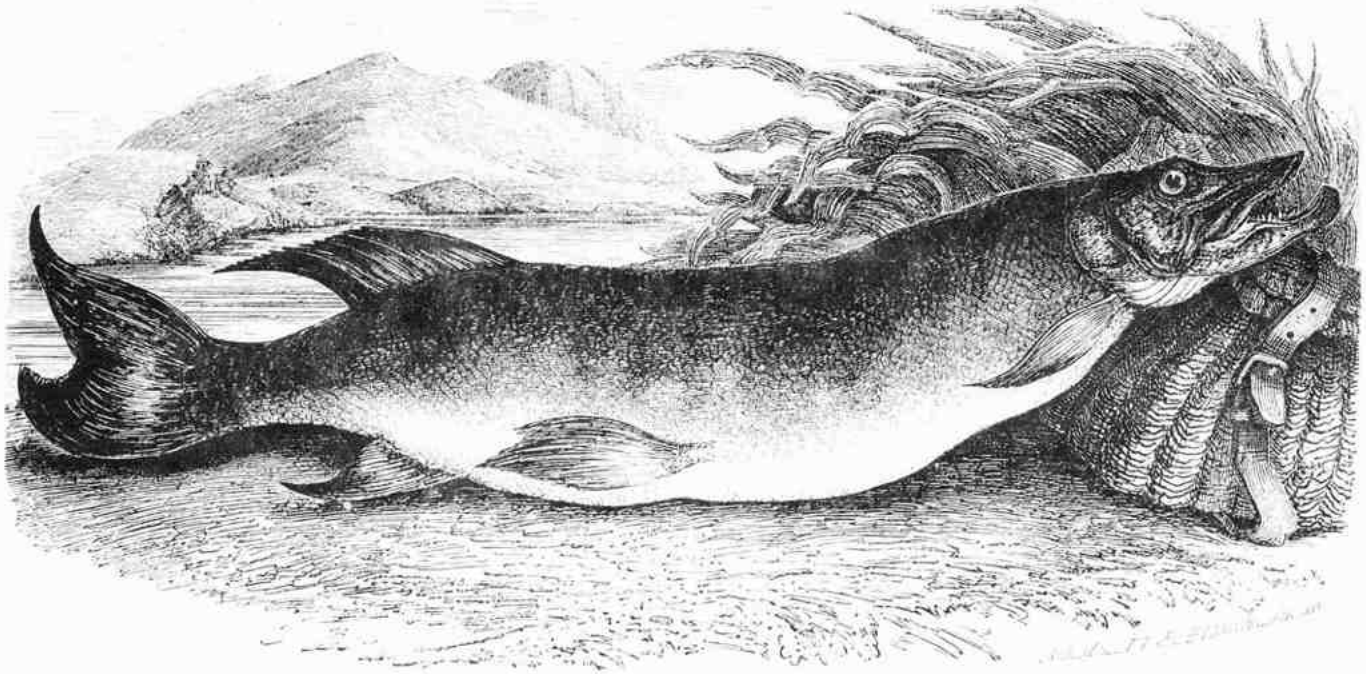
[17]John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Autobiography of Martin Van Buren* (Washington, 1920), p. 536.

[18]*Ibid.*, p. 561.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 662.

[20]Webster to Henry Cabot, June 4, [1825] as printed in Charles M. Wiltse and Harold D. Moser, eds., *The Papers of Daniel Webster, Correspondence, Volume 2, 1825-1829* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1976), pp. 51-52.

As Kenneth Shewmaker points out in his article, he is a Webster scholar. We might explain that he is currently at Dartmouth, editing the diplomatic papers of Daniel Webster; this work, combined with his own familiarity with fly fishing, made him exceptionally well qualified to research the Webster trout story. His examination of the original source materials, which included Webster's own correspondence as well as various related diaries and manuscripts, constitute the first thorough study of the Webster trout episode, and we are delighted he shared it with us. He reports that as his academic work continues he is gathering information for a paper on Webster as an angler, and we hope to be hearing from him about that soon.



MASKALONGE. GREAT LAKES.

ESOX ESTOR.

FROM NATURE, ON WOOD, BY H.W. HERBERT.

Fish Story

With which we begin a series of occasional short features devoted to the dubious art of yarnspinning

Why is it that certain men who are ordinarily decent and temperate, will get drunk on the Fourth of July? Why is it that certain men who are ordinarily truthful and reliable, will lie without stint when they strike the topic of their exploits with rod and reel? I doubt all fish stories. I have never read but one that bore upon its face an indication of truthfulness, or that a candid man might say was not the mere hallucination of the story-teller's brain, or the base fabrication of a depraved mind. I refer to that graphic and vivacious account of the desperate struggle Charles Dudley Warner had with the brook trout.

It was the close of a hot August day. Now I am not going to annoy you with a fish story. I am only going to premise that it had been a hot August day; that with my nine-ounce green-heart rod, I had walked zealously all day long, and had captured but one bass; that the bass *did not* run off fifty yards of line at one fell swoop, making the reel to sing and smoke; that he *did not* tear madly through the water, leaving the usual foaming, boiling wake behind him; that he *did not* leap high into the air, and shaking the silver drops from his bronze armor, regard me with implacable looks of rage and hate. I am only going to premise that he was the sole result of my day's sport; that he weighed five pounds two ounces to a dot; that I had experienced no tremendous strain upon my system in landing him; that I had not even burst a suspender; and that on the porch of the village inn, at the close of the hot August day, the oldest inhabitant had contemptuously examined my rod, and had inquired with no little disdain if I caught fish "with that gad?"

The oldest inhabitant settled himself into his accustomed seat on the porch of the village inn. He tilted back his ruined hat, and turned the broad soles of his brogans towards the rising moon. And then as the sultry evening wore away, he rolled off an interminable yarn of how he had taken "a forty-pounder, by blank, sir," in Crooked Lake. Shall I tell you that fish story? I guess not. When the accusing angel finished his evening's labor he rested with weary wings; and when the recording angel noted the eighteenth entry of "carried forward," on the oldest inhabitants account, he closed the book with a bang and a pious ejaculation that boded no good to the o.h. when his day of reckoning should come. When the oldest inhabitant passes in his checks, it will be from hemorrhage brought on in some unguarded moment by a rash attempt to tell the truth.

The moon was just rising beyond the lake when the oldest inhabitant opened up with his string of lies; but she swung high in Heaven, and the lake slumbered, a burnished sheet of silver under her beams, when the story was ended and the *forty-pounder* brought to shore. The doctor looked long and earnestly at the oldest inhabitant, and quietly remarked:

"That's the most mendacious piscatorial prevarication ever heard of!" and the old man, taking a fresh chew of tobacco, replied in his innocent way:

"You bet your life he was, but I never knowed the scientific name afore. Round here we always call him the muskylunge."

The American Angler
October 28, 1882

The Angler, the Philosopher, and the Dame

Chas. [illegible]
Theodore Gordon 1891 1860

SALMON-FISHING

IN CANADA

BY A RESIDENT

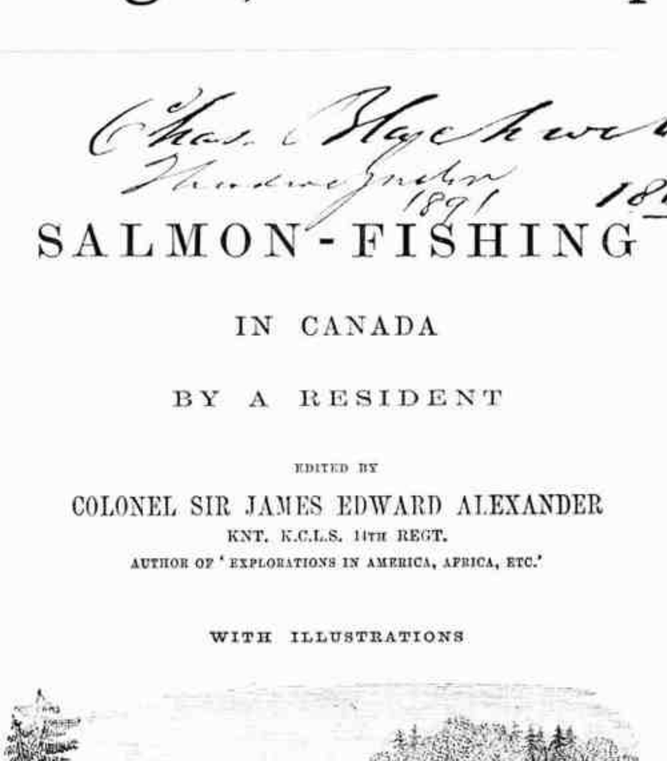
EDITED BY

COLONEL SIR JAMES EDWARD ALEXANDER

KNT. K.C.L.S. 14TH REGT.

AUTHOR OF 'EXPLORATIONS IN AMERICA, AFRICA, ETC.'

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



THE CHUTE-EN-HAUT

LONDON

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

MONTREAL: B. DAWSON AND SON

1860

The title page from our copy of Alexander's book is signed by two former owners, one having been Theodore Gordon.

The Angler, the Philosopher, and the Dame – 'tis nothing but a footnote for angling bibliophiles. Or should I say, bibliomaniacs? Now, duly warned, if you read on, you will add but a snippet (or perhaps naught) to your knowledge; but yet – who knows? – you may find some pleasure, some amusement, as you glance through these rambling lines.

In London, in 1860, the venerable and powerful firm of Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts published a small but a delightfully illustrated book entitled *Salmon – Fishing in Canada by a Resident. Edited by Colonel Sir James Edward Alexander.* The text is a series of well-written informal essays on the delights of angling in the rivers and streams that flow into the mighty St. Lawrence in the areas extending from the ancient city of Quebec to the Saguenay River. It is a work that stands high among the early texts on fishing in Canada and in it tribute is paid, through quotations, to two still earlier works – Charles Lanman's *A Tour to the River Saguenay, in Lower Canada* (Philadelphia, 1848, with a London edition in the same year entitled *Adventures of an Angler in Canada, Nova Scotia and the United States*); and *Frank Forester's Fish and Fishing of the United States, and British Provinces of North America,* first published in 1849 (the author's real name, of course, was Henry William Herbert).

Alexander, the editor of *Salmon-Fishing*, was a Scot, born in Stirling in 1803. He had a brilliant army career, was knighted, and in 1841 was appointed to the staff of the commander-in-chief of the British forces in Canada. For the next decade or so he remained in the Quebec area and there became a friend and a fishing companion of the Rev. William Agar Adamson (1800-1868). An

by Stan Read

Irishman, he came to Canada in 1840, was soon appointed as chaplain and librarian of the Legislative Council, and remained in Canada until his death in Ottawa in 1868, the year after Confederation. And it was he who under the name of "a Resident" was the author of *Salmon-Fishing*. The internal evidence on that point is clear. He was a learned man but apart from a few sermons this angling work was his only major publication. But now to the main reason for this footnote for bibliophiles.

Salmon-Fishing has three appendices. The first, "The Decrease, Restoration and Preservation of Salmon in Canada," is by Adamson, the third, "Fishing in New Brunswick, &c.," by Alexander. The second, "Observations on the Habits of the Salmon Family," is by Walter Henry, described by Alexander as "one of the best fishermen in Canada, and a very intelligent man; he wrote much and well." Who was this third member of this extraordinary triumvirate?

Walter Henry was born in Donegal, Ireland, in 1791. He went to Trinity College in Dublin, studied surgery in London, and in 1811 entered the British army. He was a staff surgeon in Canada from 1827 to 1841; then after more service abroad he returned to Canada in 1852 as inspector-general of hospitals. He died in Belleville, Upper Canada, in 1860. In 1839 he published two volumes of autobiographical essays; wrote various essays for a New York publication *Albion* under a number of pseudonyms (one was "Piscator"); and in 1837 contributed a paper to the *Transactions* of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec. It was this paper that was used as the second appendix of *Salmon-Fishing* in 1860, the year of his death. It is a learned essay, farsighted, and bears the stamp of a dedicated angler, a man well versed in the gentle art, and, like Walton, a man with a rich literary background.

But suddenly, as I was reading this appendix, I began to chuckle, for I found that I was looking at words and phrases that I already well knew. Henry is quoting from "an old English writer": " ' . . . if so be that the angler catch no fish, yet hath he a wholesome walk to the brook-side . . . . . He hath good aire and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow-flowers; he heareth the melodious harmony of birds . . . . . ' " And at the bottom of the page – it's page 317 – Henry inserts a footnote acknowledging the source of his quotation. It reads quite simply, "Anatomy of Melancholy."

And here I gave a further chuckle for it was obvious that the good Walter Henry, well-read man that he was, had perused with care and pleasure that great seventeenth century work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, by the brilliant eccentric, Robert Burton, but obviously, too, he had never read the first great English angling classic, *A Treatyse of Fysshynge with an Angle* by (or perhaps not by) Dame Juliana Berners, Prioress of Sopwell Abbey, first printed by Caxton's busy successor, Wynkyn de Worde, in 1496. For if he had he would have immediately seen that nearly all the quotation attributed to the *Anatomy* is directly taken from the *Treatyse*.

Now there may be a few angling bibliophiles who may well ask at this moment: Who was this cheating fellow Burton, and what is this *Anatomy*? And was Burton an ardent angler, a follower of the contemplative man's recreation?

Robert Burton was born in 1577 and died in 1640. Thus he was a contemporary of Izaac Walton (1593-1683) but was dead before *The Compleat Angler* was first published in 1653, and there is no evidence that he ever wet a line in any of England's rivers. For he was a scholar and a recluse, a sedentary man. A theologian, he lived out his adult life at Christ Church College in Oxford, spending his days and nights in his chambers, surrounded by a multitude of books and constantly writing on the subject of melancholy. For he was a deeply introspective man and "I writ of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy." The first edition of his amazing work appeared in 1621 and he spent his remaining years in preparing new editions for the press – four more appeared in his lifetime and a posthumous edition, the sixth, was published in 1651. Two more printings followed in the 17th century; then after a period of quiet in the 18th century (though Dr. Johnson knew and loved the work and Sterne used it in dubious ways), new editions began appearing in the early 19th century, and its fame has not lessened, even down to the present day.

It is a vast and an impressive work (my own edition, printed 1926, is in three volumes totalling some 1300 pages). Its structure is unique for it is divided into three Partitions, and each Partition is divided again into Sections, Members, and Subsections. The first Partition is devoted to a history of melancholy; the second to cures and remedies; and the third to Love Melancholy, a wide subject in itself. The style is rich and varied, for Burton ranges from the serious and tragic to down-to-earth humor in which there is an intermingling of good fun, cynicism, and satire.

All of which now leads to the question: how does Burton get on to the subject of angling and what did he know of Dame Juliana and a work that even then was ancient?

The footnote in Henry's appendix was at the best a rough guide, just to the *Anatomy*, no page. But I knew that the second Partition dealt with the cures of melancholy; so I riffled through the pages and quickly found that Section II, Member iv, is called "Exercise rectified of Body and Mind." And here are unrolled the sports for body and mind – bowling, tennis, shooting, boating, hunting, hawking, fowling, and – at last – fishing.

And on fishing Burton opens with a learned reference to the joys of fishing from *Silesiographiae* by Nic. Henselius (I know not the work); then another joyful reference to James Dubravius, "that *Moravian*, in his book *de pisc.*" (a work well known to Walton); and thirdly, a reference to Plutarch, who "in his book *De soller animal.* speaks against all fishing." (This charge against Plutarch is vigorously denied by William

Radcliffe in his *Fishing from the Earliest Times*, 1921.) Then, with no reference to any source, comes the following – the core of my footnote:

But he that shall consider the variety of Baits for all seasons & pretty devices which our Anglers have invented, peculiar lines, false flies, several sleights, &c. will say that it deserves like commendation, requires as much study and perspicacity as the rest and is to be preferred before many of them, Because hunting and hawking are very laborious, much riding and many dangers accompany them, but this is still and quiet: and if so be the angler catch no Fish yet he hath a wholesome walk to the Brook side, pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; he hath good air, and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow flowers; he hears the melodious harmony of Birds, he sees the Swans, Herons, Ducks, Waterhens, Coots, &c., and many other Fowl, with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of Houndes, or blast of Horns, and all the sport that they can make.

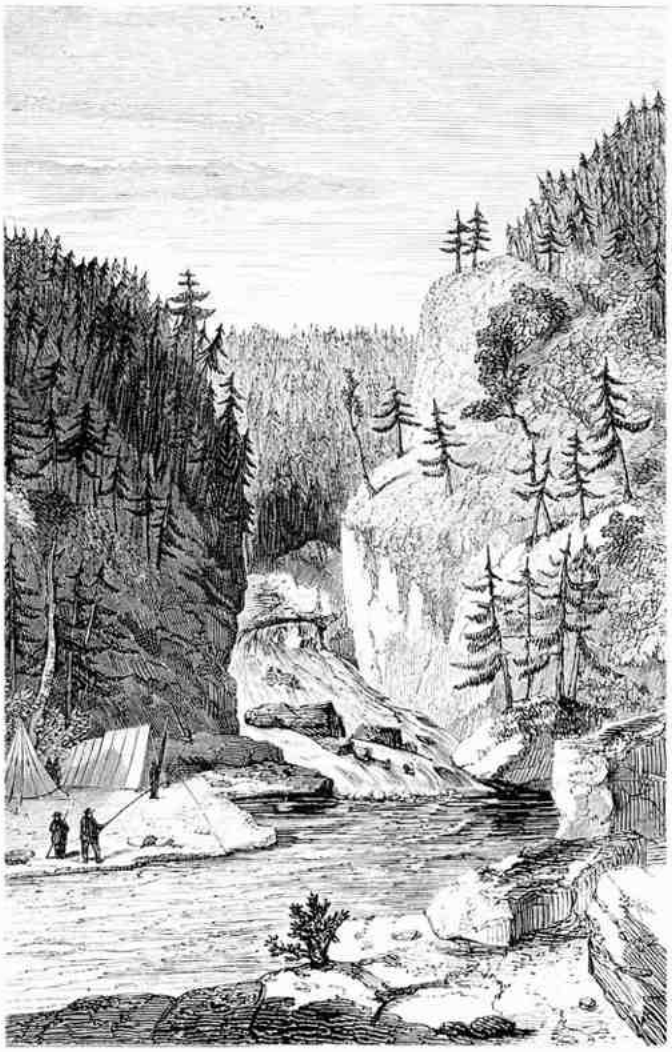
" 'Tis all mine, and none mine," wrote Burton in his introduction to the *Anatomy*. "I have wronged no authors, but given every man his own." And on the whole, he was honest and did indicate sources. But in this rich passage he gives no indication of source, no indication that it was basically a quotation. But, though not letter perfect, the portion that begins "and if so be the angler catch no fish," is taken directly from the *Treatyse* of 1496. And he does have one alteration worth noting. In the original, the gentle author wrote, "Whyche me semyth better than alle the noyse o houndys . . . . ." But Burton, no angler, writes impersonally: "which he thinketh better . . . . . ."

But where, one may ask, did Burton find the *Treatyse*? Without question, he was one of the most avid and most retentive readers in the entire history of English literature. And at his command were the rich sources of the Bodleian Library that had been formally established in 1598. But there is also the possibility that he was drawn to this angling classic by his brother William, a noted antiquarian who at one time had in his possession a manuscript version of the Dame's work. (On this point see John McDonald's excellent chapters on the origins of angling in *Quill Gordon*, 1972.)

And here I shall let the matter rest. For the only point of this extended footnote is this: the eccentric Burton, recluse, scholar, and dedicated student of melancholy, kept at least one vibrant section of the *Treatyse* alive and well through two centuries of time. Walton makes no mention of it; the 18th century knew it not or neglected it, as did the early 19th century, though apparently a small printing of it by William Pickering did appear in 1827. But with the closing years of that century the work really surfaced when scholars such as the Rev. M.G. Watkins and Thomas Satchell brought new and scholarly editions to the angling public, to be followed in our own time by William Van Wyck and J.D. McDonald (see especially his delightful work, *The Origins of Angling*, 1963). And with this outbursting of scholarship, the plagiarism of Burton stood naked for all to see, and no longer was the glorious passage from the gentle Dame quoted as an example of Burton's fine style. But this new knowledge came well after the days of Walter Henry and his fishing friends who angled for salmon in Canadian waters. They knew not the Dame, but they did know the melancholic Burton.

Finally, it is sad to note that when the learned Burton died on the twenty-fifth of January, 1640, the rumour in Oxford was that he had "sent his soul to heaven through a noose about his neck." "Tis a pity that he had not indulged deeply in one of his cures for melancholy – the contemplative man's recreation.

Stanley Read is the author of several books, including Tommy Brayshaw: The Ardent Angler-Artist *and* A Place Called Pennask, *about fishing and fishermen in western Canada. He wrote for us some time ago on the Harry Hawthorn Foundation Library at the University of British Columbia. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia and seems to fish a great deal.*



from Alexander's Salmon-Fishing In Canada.

Books

THE BOOK OF THE HACKLE

by Frank Elder. Scottish Academic Press, 1979, 140 pages.

Frank Elder's *The Book Of The Hackle* is now available. It is an outstanding book destined to assume an important place among the classics of fly fishing literature. Two editions are available: a trade edition at seven pounds fifty pence and a limited edition (of 85 copies) at 125 pounds. The limited edition contains hackle samples taken from birds bred by Elder.

Elder died in late 1977; fortunately for us his book was already with the publishers in proof form. His son Ian, with the aid of some of Elder's friends, completed the project and we are the beneficiaries since *The Book Of The Hackle* is the first book to treat the subject of hackle (and the breeding of birds for hackle) in detail. It is a great book for several reasons, but most important it is a book which sets a standard of excellence for all that follow.

The first three chapters, "How it began," "feather structure," and "The Jungle Cock," are largely devoted to background information and as such provide interesting and stimulating reading. Elder treats his material well and at the same time succeeds in spurring the reader's mind. His fourth chapter, "Dry-fly fishing — the imitation of the newly-hatched dun," is a perfect example of this. Building on the work of such "greats" as Harding and Hewitt, he uses a keen analytical approach to construct and present an original treatment of dry fly attributes.

Chapters five, six, and seven treat the subjects of hackle color, quality, and shape, respectively. These three chapters bring order and system to the general subject of hackle and provide a sound basis for comparing and contrasting the assets and liabilities of hackle from different sources. The concept of Hackle Index (H.I.), though not original with Elder, is introduced; its practical value in describing hackle shape is discussed.

Hen hackles, saddles, and spades are briefly considered in chapter eight. How I wish Elder's treatment of these useful materials had been as comprehensive as his treatment of cock's hackle. Elder recruited Sam Harris to write chapter nine, "The commercial supply." Harris provides an interesting commentary on the feather business. The last two chapters of the book, "Breeding for hackles" and "Preparing the cape," provide a valuable guide to all who wish to try raising their own hackle.

On most subjects I find myself in agreement with Elder. For example, he makes a sound case that, "contrary to what is normally accepted, it is now much easier to obtain a good supply of dry-fly hackles." On the other hand, there are some points with which I do not agree. For example, in the foreword he claims, "Today I don't suppose one fly-dresser in a hundred has ever seen a natural blue dun . . ." It is difficult for an American fly tier to walk into a respectable fly shop and not see at least one natural blue dun neck.

As noted at the onset, there are two editions of *The Book Of The Hackle.* The trade edition is a good value (at about seventeen dollars), and I have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone. My only criticism is that the hackle colors in the six colored plates are not exactly true. On the other hand, the limited edition, at approximately $285, leaves a great deal to be desired. All the faults with the limited edition are the responsibility of the binder; they in no way reflect on Elder.

The limited edition is bound in full red leather. Sad to say, the workmanship is not of the same quality as the leather. The spine of the book (at least on my copy) is very poorly rounded, the head bands are not hand sewn, the gold tooling (of the title, etc.) is both poor and ugly, and the slip case can only be described as cheap and nasty. What a book the limited edition would have been if only it had been bound and tooled by Aquarius! On the positive side, the hackles incorporated into the limited edition are superb, all being of the shape considered perfect by Elder. Most of the hackles are also stiff, steely, and lustrous. There are, however, imperfections in the color match of the hackle samples and those illustrated in the color plates.

Alec Jackson

THE KERRIDGE ANGLING COLLECTION

Strictly speaking, this is perhaps not a book review. It is based on the recently published bibliography, *Kerridge Angling Collection,* a 200-page printout of the excellent book collection in the Special Collections Section of the Library of California State University at Fullerton. The bibliography was reproduced in a very limited number of copies in order to provide other major collections with a guide, and is therefore not being offered widely to the public. It serves a public purpose, however, since the recipients, such as The Museum of American Fly Fishing, will find good use for it.

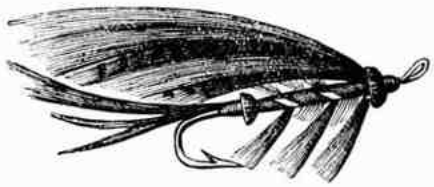
It can also be hoped that at least some of the institutions that receive it will find a way to alert their own patrons to the availability of the Kerridge collection itself for public use.

The late Mark Kerridge was known as one of this country's foremost collectors of angling books. Among his special interests were books with actual flies or materials in them, and books that dealt with golden trout. His collection is in the good care of the California State University at Fullerton, and can be used through arrangements with Special Collections Librarian Linda Herman. Since his death, the University and friends have seen to it that the collection continues to grow. As of the end of 1979 there were 3041 books and 278 pamphlets. Of nearly equal interest to angling historians will be the various ephemera and periodicals. Among this material is the Myron Gregory collection: a sizeable resource in itself on the development of modern fly lines and fly casting.

Customarily, discussions of large book collections hang their narrative on a frame of book titles, listing, more or less chronologically, various literary milestones. Most of these more famous titles, however, can be found in any good collection. We here at the Museum have been fortunate enough to browse a number of fine collections, and it is our opinion that what makes it so enjoyable is not always the reverent handling of a first Walton (though that's something for one's soul) or some other extreme rarity. These are great experiences, yes, but equally exciting are the little discoveries — all the titles one has never heard of. Doors open in all directions in a collection of several thousand fishing books. It is this exploration that we would especially encourage library users

to pursue. Stop and think for a moment; how many fishing book titles can you name? What must those thousands of others contain? It's an endless source of pleasure.

Helen Kerridge has for some time been promoting the use and development of angling library resources, and her interests go beyond the collection of her own late husband's. She hopes, and we agree, that some day there will be a central source of information on such collections, a directory and a guide, so that anglers in any part of the country can easily learn what is available to them and how to find it. We see promising signs that such a source will be developed in the next few years. In the meantime, take advantage of the great wealth of lore and literature that is already ours for the asking, in places like the Kerridge Collection.



REGIONAL ANGLING LITERATURE. A check-list of books on angling and the salmon fisheries in Scotland, Northern England, Wales, and Ireland.

by R.J.W. Coleby. R.J.W. Coleby, Chapel House, Louth Road, East Barkwith, Lincoln, LN3 5RX, England (available in America from Angler's and Shooter's Bookshelf, Goshen, Connecticut and Pisces & Capricorn Books, Albion, Michigan); an edition of 500 of which twenty-five, numbered I to XXV, are specially bound; 1979, 96 pages.

Thousands of angling books have been written and yet there are but a handful of books *about* angling books. Coleby's *Regional Angling Literature* is thus welcome – in fact it is a "must have" for collectors with an interest in British books.

The book is, true to title, a checklist. Indeed, there are four checklists, one each for Scotland, Northern England, Wales, and Ireland. The lists are as accurate and complete as only a man with Coleby's talent and energy can make them. Old hands at book collecting will find them to be useful references; new hands will, without a doubt, use them to compile shopping lists. A superb essay on angling books and collecting them forms the introductory survey, which will delight all book lovers.

Alec Jackson

Museum News

SAN FRANCISCO: A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL

On December 2, the Museum held its first west coast fund raising auction, at the University Club in San Francisco. The auction was very well attended, and the total income from the auction and raffle exceeded $12,000. Equally important, in many ways, the Museum made a lot of new friends out west.

Auction coordinators were Art Frey of Burlingame, who is also West Coast Membership Chairman, and Perk Perkins of San Francisco. Art and Perk put in many hours publicizing the auction and promoting Museum membership, and we can't thank them enough for their good work. University Club member Robert Henderson generously served as the Museum's sponsor, making possible our use of the Club's excellent facilities. The room, refreshments, and all additional arrangements were outstanding.

A special part of recent Museum auctions has been the auctioneering of Museum Trustee Will Godfrey, whose performance was as excellent as usual. Will, a well-known guide and tackle dealer in Idaho, provided an entertaining counterpoint to some fast and keen bidding with his yarns and banter with various bidders. An energetic competition developed between Will and several bidders, all of whom expressed willingness to autograph various rare books if the real author couldn't be located.

The hosts and hostesses for the evening included Leon Martuch, Art and Erika Frey, Perk Perkins, Randall Rives, Paul Schullery, and a number of our western friends who just took it upon themselves to make sure no one was a stranger. Especially pleasing was the presence of many of the leaders of the Federation of Fly Fishermen.

These auctions are made possible also by the generosity of many companies and individuals. We always thank them here in the magazine because we want our members to know how much we depend on this help, and because the least we can do in exchange for such generosity is to publicize it. The following firms and individuals donated prizes to the San Francisco auction:

Dave Allred
Maxine Atherton
Robert Buckmaster
Dan Callaghan
Champoeg Press
Cortland
Fenwick
Fishing International
Fly Tyer Magazine
Fly Fisherman Magazine
Mike and Christine Fong
Art Frey
Evelyn Haas
Susie Isaksen
Hal Janssen
Dana Lamb
Lamiglass
William Levy
Bud Lilly's Trout Shop
Grant Linn
Nick Lyon's Books
John Merwin
Andrew Montague
Mustad
Chuck Nelson
North American Rockwell
George Northup
Orvis
Perk Perkins
Pfleuger
Pisces and Capricorn Books
Ogden Pleissner
Douglas Raines
Rivermeadows, Inc.
Sage Rods
Peter Sang
James Schaaf
Scientific Anglers/3M
Scott Rods
The Steamboat Inn
Mike Stidham
Sutter Buttes Wildlife Gallery
Take It Easy Ranch
Thrifty Scot Motel of Bozeman
Scott Waldie
Dave Whitlock
Wild Wings Orvis Shop of Bozeman
The Wiley Company

At the Auction – *above; Auctioneer Will Godfrey, left, describes a print as Paul Schullery holds it up for the group, most of whom he has blocked from the camera. left; Art Frey shows the group a Dave Allred sculpture as Will starts the bidding (while Paul dozes off, far left). Photographs by Christine Fong.*

OUT OF PRINT BACK ISSUES: AN UNDERWHELMING RESPONSE TO OUR MODEST PROPOSAL

In Volume Seven, Number Three, we offered to serve as intermediaries between people who wanted to collect out of print back issues of the magazine and people who wanted to sell them. We can report that this little enterprise was half successful. It did indeed smoke out a bunch of people who *wanted* back issues, and we have a nice list of these folks on file. It did not, however, inspire any responses from people who wish to get rid of their back issues. We figure this means one of two things: either everybody saves their back issues or everybody throws them away. In either case, we have not despaired, and we will hold our list of people who are looking for back issues in case some do appear.

For those of you who came in late, what we offered to do is to take the names of any person who is looking for certain back issues of the magazine that are out of print and to put such people in touch with anyone who tells us they have said back issues for sale. Our method is first-come, first-serve, so that requests will be handled in the order in which they have been received by us.

MUSEUM ARTICLES REPRINTED

Two articles that recently appeared in *The American Fly Fisher* have been reprinted in other related magazines. Tom Rosenbauer's article about John Atherton that appeared in Volume Seven, Number One, was reprinted in the most recent issue of *Fly Tyer*. Jim Merritt's profile of Otto Kienbusch and the Kienbusch angling collection at Princeton (Volume Seven, Number Three) appeared in *The Atlantic Salmon Journal* for October of 1980.

Museum Magazine Wins Graphic Arts Award

In November, at the thirtieth annual Graphic Arts Awards Competition held by the Printing Industries of America (the ceremony was in Chicago), *The American Fly Fisher* was a winner. In the category of "Magazines and House Organs," we were one of about eighty separate publication issues that were equally honored with a P.I.A. Graphic Arts Award (someone else won the "Best of Category" prize). At first glance, eighty seems like a lot of publications, but remember that this is an industry-wide competition; the number of entries is enormous, and a few outstanding publications often win awards for more than one issue each year (we only submitted Volume Seven, Number One, making us even more of a long shot). And so we're delighted and honored, and downright thrilled to see ourselves there in the P.I.A. Awards Catalog in the company of such distinguished magazines as *Geo*, *Gourmet*, and *Audubon*.

The chief reason we could win this award is our Creative Consultant, Michael Haller. As we explained back in Volume Seven, Number One, his guidance and expertise led us to the new design, and his regular consultations have kept us busy polishing up our graphics ever since. He is also responsible for almost all our color photos (all the good ones are his; the rest are the Editor's), and for the design of our color layouts as well. And so here, again, we thank Mike.

The Proposed Move of the Museum A Report from the President

As was reported in the Fall issue of the magazine, the Federation of Fly Fishermen has decided to move their headquarters to West Yellowstone, Montana, and they have invited the Museum to move its permanent operation there to share a joint facility. A great deal of communication has taken place concerning this proposal since September, when the last issue went to press.

Early in October, after a special meeting of the Museum's Executive Committee was held in New York to review the Federation's proposal, I presented the proposal to the Museum's Board of Trustees. In a detailed memorandum explaining the proposal, the Trustees were asked to vote on the move. Because of the importance of the matter, and because many details could not be settled at this early stage, the vote was a conditional one. The question I asked the Trustees was, if, after further investigation, the Museum's Executive Committee is satisfied that the move to West Yellowstone is financially feasible for the Museum (in terms of both building costs and ongoing expenses), should the Museum accept the Federation's invitation? The vote, which was completed by mail in late October, was overwhelmingly in favor of accepting the invitation of the Federation.

While this vote was going on, the leadership of the two organizations began a series of meetings to discuss various aspects of the move. Museum Director Paul Schullery attended a Federation Executive Committee meeting in Denver on November 6 to report on the Museum Trustees' vote. Subsequent meetings (involving various representatives of both organizations) were held on November 25 in Princeton, December 2 in San Francisco, and December 13 in Denver.

These meetings have covered a great many subjects: the practical aspects, advantages, and potential problems of joint occupancy of a single facility by two organizations, the details of the lease offered the Federation by the town of West Yellowstone, the plans for a fund-raising campaign, architectural considerations in West Yellowstone, and numerous other practical details of the project. A memorandum of understanding regarding many of these details was developed at the December 2 meeting in San Francisco.

Though it would be inappropriate for me to speak for the Federation, I am in a position to report to our members the present state of planning by the Federation (Federation members will also be kept posted by reports in *The Flyfisher*, and we are in touch with *Flyfisher* Editor Mike Fong, so that we can coordinate any important announcements between the two publications). Here is where the Federation stands at the end of 1980. They will be moving their office operation to West Yellowstone in a few months; they will occupy temporary office space until a building is built. In early December a lease agreement between the Federation and the town of West Yellowstone was signed, for slightly more than two acres of land near the west entrance to Yellowstone Park in the southeast corner of the town of West Yellowstone. Federation President Errol Champion and his legal advisors have been in constant communications with the town, and the town fathers of West Yellowstone have been cordial and enthusiastic in their interest in having both the Federation and the Museum move to West Yellowstone. Errol Champion has named former Federation President Jim Eriser Chairman of the Federation's fund-raising campaign, the purpose of which is to earn money for the building of a new facility. The facility would house both the Federation offices and the Museum. The Federation also has recruited Ernest Schwiebert, who is as well known in some circles for his architectural expertise as he is in other circles for his angling expertise, to advise both organizations on the planning of the actual building. Ernie has been involved in several of the planning meetings, and has also visited the building site and reported on both special considerations of building in that location and aesthetic considerations of a fly fishing museum.

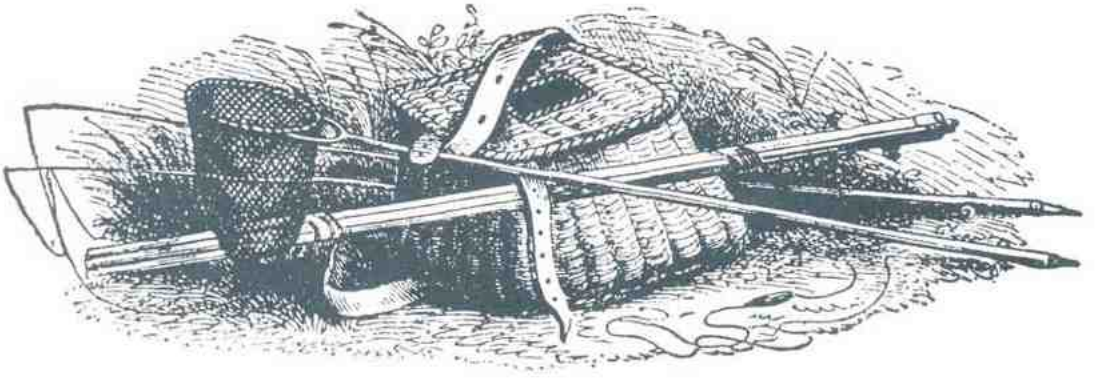
Additional meetings have been scheduled for early in the new year, to discuss recent investigations into fund-raising and building costs. We will keep you posted on these.

And so that's where things stand at present. The leaders of both organizations are quite enthusiastic about the move, and are studying all aspects of it. Professional assistance and guidance is being sought wherever necessary, and a great deal of preliminary discussion and planning are going into the project at every stage.

I would like to clear up some misconceptions that have been drifting around. Some incorrect assumptions have surfaced recently regarding this whole subject, and they are not doing justice to anyone involved; they also have been the cause of some unnecessary alarm. For example, what is proposed is *not* a merger. Neither organization will be submerging its identity in the other. Several people have expressed fears that the Museum would simply become a branch of the Federation. The leaders of both organizations have repeatedly expressed their commitment to maintaining the institutional integrity of the two organizations. Both will, for example, continue to be responsible for their own fiscal welfare. We are talking about the joint occupancy of a single facility by two independent but philosophically related organizations. The most creative rumors have carried this mistaken idea of a merger even further, to the point where it has been said our two magazines will be made into one. Both Mike Fong and Paul Schullery started hearing this one even before the Federation Conclave in August was over. No party involved in the planning for the proposed joint facility has included any such idea in the plan. The two magazines will continue to be two magazines.

In the very near future, the various committees and individuals who are involved in this proposed move will be far enough along in their investigations that we will be able to report in a more substantive manner about such things as costs, dates, and structures. In the meantime the Museum Officers want the members to know that the Federation and the Museum are examining all aspects of the move in great detail. The Museum has never before received such a promising offer. The Federation is a dynamic and important force in the world of fly fishing, and the Museum has energetically sought ways to work with the Federation for several years. A combination such as the Federation has proposed, which would allow the two organizations to work even more closely as an educational force, makes a lot of sense. In fact, it seems like a natural partnership. Our investigations so far have proven that the move is not a simple decision, and that there are still some questions (mostly involving financial realities) that must be answered before we can give the project a final "go-ahead," but right now it all looks very promising. And, I might add, very exciting.

Leon Martuch
President



Anglers and Scholars

Fishing writing has changed tremendously in the past twenty years. Probably most obvious has been a simple increase in volume. There are now at least six magazines devoted exclusively to the sport, and, though the fishing book boom of a few years ago has slackened, many new titles appear each year.

The literature has changed in character as well. There is an enthusiasm — nearly an obsession — with science: limnology, fish biology, and especially entomology are all common subjects. Though terms like "scientific angler" have been around for a century or more, never have so many anglers been concerned with the scientific aspects of the sport. There has also been a maturing in content; writers like Russell Chatham, William Humphrey, Norman Maclean, Thomas McGuane, and others (including a memorable one-volume guest appearance by Richard Brautigan) have broadened and deepened angling literature in important and enduring ways.

It was inevitable that the growth of fly fishing would result in some people becoming absorbed in the sport's history. A growing respect for historical artifacts, an enthusiastic group of tackle collectors, a sudden quickening in the market for out of print fishing books, and a general interest in the "old days" of the sport all combined to generate a small community of interest in fishing history. They also generated a Museum and, ultimately, this magazine.

Though first rate historical scholarship is not new to fishing literature, the scope of current scholarship is. There have been angling historians for many years, at least since Henry Ellis published his *Catalogue of Books on Angling* in 1811. Any reasonably well-read angler recognizes some of the important names, such as Westwood, Satchell, Marston, Radcliffe, Hills, McDonald, Goodspeed, and Wetzel. But in the past twenty years the names have grown far more numerous. Where before most angling history enthusiasts were primarily bibliographers, now they specialize. Some are devoted to tackle, some to books, and some concentrate on more rarified subjects, like sporting philosophy and ethics. And the depth of their research is frequently the match for professional historians in other fields. In fact, some of them *are* professional historians.

In this issue of the magazine appear some good examples of how absorbing and exciting the historical process can be. Academic or not, there is real detective work going on here. Dartmouth Historian and Webster scholar Kenneth Shewmaker provides us with the most penetrating and objective evaluation of the "Great Webster Brook Trout" story — one of America's most famous fish stories — that has ever been written. David Ledlie's brief examination of two important early fly fishing books involved research at Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and several private collections, and is built upon further exhaustive research by Jack Heddon and John Simpson in England. Stan Read's "footnote" on Alexander, Burton, and Dame Juliana is a bibliographical jewel.

Now we know that this stuff is never going to be widely appreciated; the regular "hook and bullet" press is never going to make headlines out of Webster scholarship (though we bet you'll continue to see the old story told again and again) or the art of hand-colored engravings in angling books. But we also know that we are involved in something very vital here, something that matters to more fishermen all the time. We're really pleased to see other magazines pick up items from our magazine. In the past year it has happened several times, including two articles being reprinted entirely. Maybe there's more interest out there than we think.