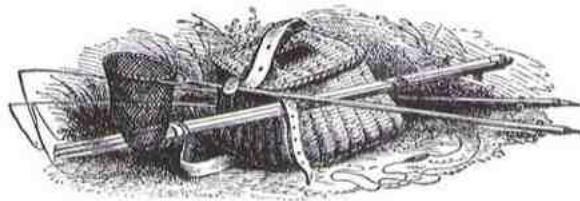


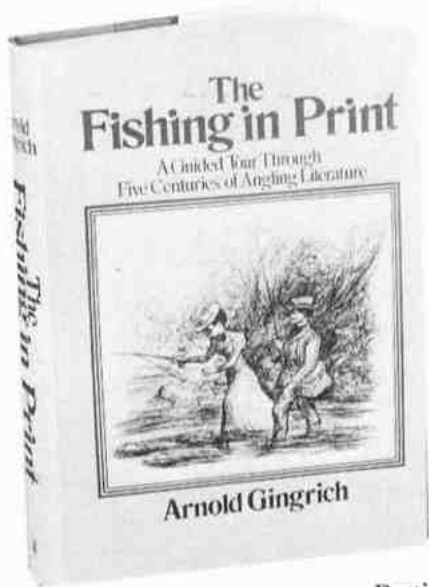
# The American Fly Fisher



Vol. 2, No. 2  
Spring 1975

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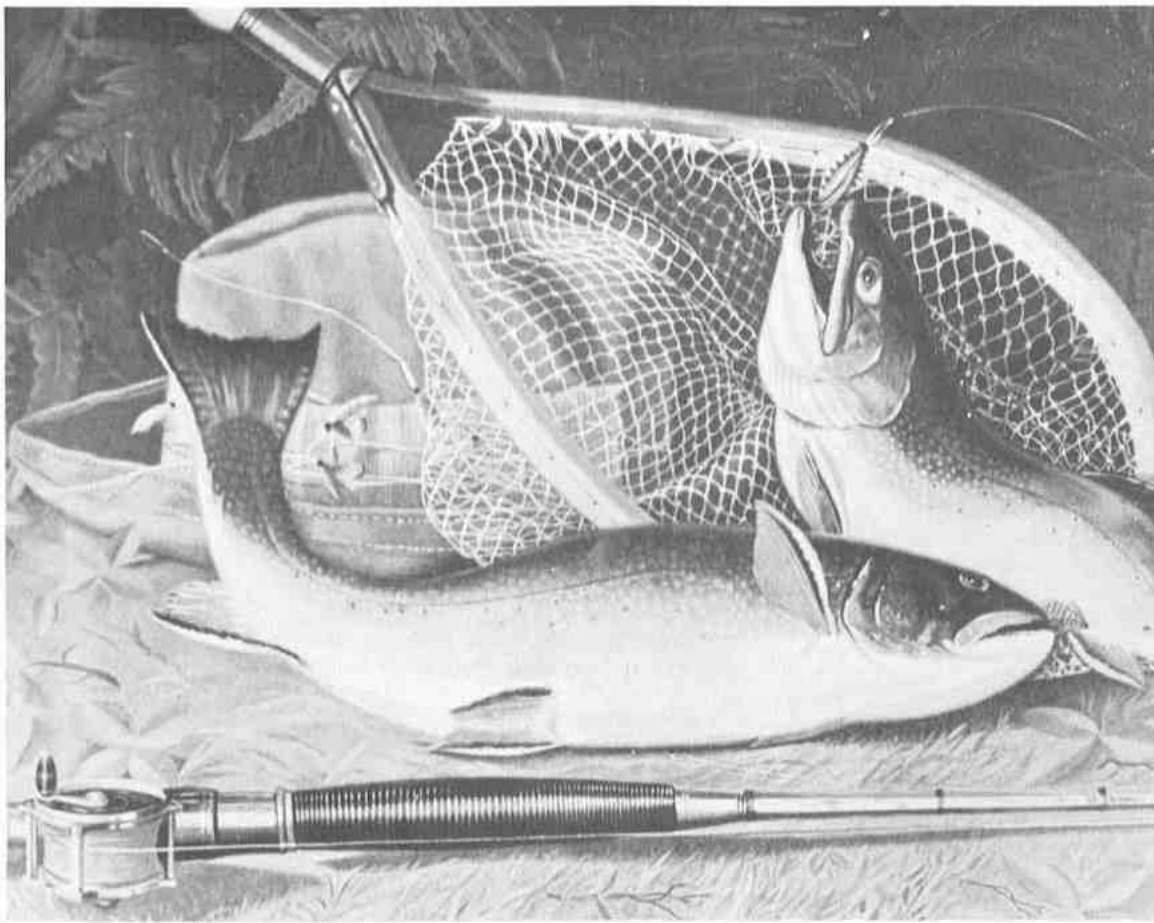
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From a painting "Two on a Cast" by Thomas Sedgewick Steel, c. 1903

## Of Misty Mornings Long Ago

by

DANA S. LAMB

*The first American lyric writer of angling books gives us a happy remembrance of his early days a'fishing. The request was made for this article because too often the boyhood fishing experience never gets into print and in turn, the fly fishers of the future especially, are deprived of part of a personal history which is both good reading and of historic value.*

You ask what role fly fishing played in my long happy outdoor life. I'll try to answer that — at least in part — without too many useless words.

My uncle fished the Belgrade Lakes from Davey's Naptha Launch for small mouth bass with bait; my father never tried to catch a fish of any kind. In consequence, I spent my boyhood days — when on my own — in quest of sunfish, perch and such with worms. Not 'til the verge of man's estate did I pack up a dozen store-bought flies, a limber rod, a nickel plated reel and varnished line, and board a train for Maine.

Kind parents, worried lest I undermine my health by late, late nights in New York City's foul air, made me a present of a modest purse, and packed

me off to Rockwood on the shore of Moosehead Lake. Here, with a pleasant understanding Micmac guide, I fished the lake as well as foam-flecked waters of a tributary stream, the Moose.

We built a lean-to in a clearing on the river bank and camped there while the hardwood's leaves twined red or apple-yellow and the frost crept 'round our fire in the night. We camped there for a bracing clear-skyed Autumn week and although we shot a ruffed grouse now and then for food, I caught no fish.

Then, on the morning of the day the season closed, we coasted down our little river to Maine's largest lake. The Micmac, Tomah, who was in the stern, suggested that I trail a salmon fly while paddling to the weathered Rockwood

dock to get the train.

"I'll tie a Jock Scott on" he said. "Just keep the rod between your knees."

The sunlight on Mount Kinco was bright, the lake was blue. The breeze brought fragrance from the balsam forest on the shore. Suddenly the rod tip whipped the water as it bent. Excitedly I seized the butt and handle of the reel. A hundred feet astern a landlocked salmon leaped; it leaped and leaped and leaped again. With muttered exhortation to myself, and trembling hands, I fought a winning battle with an eight pound fish. And as the smiling redman netted it at last, the hook fell out - surrounded by the remnant of a gob of worms; my triumph had been born in sin!

But even triumphs born in sin are sometimes sweet. The next September I was in the state of Maine again; this time among the Rangeley Lakes. The Rangeley Lakes were famous then for *salvelinus fontinalis* of tremendous size which for years had fed and prospered on the little blue back trout by now extinct. These disappeared down through the years as landlocked salmon took their place. My guide, in 1921, was Robert Martin, deep-voiced Dean of Rangeley guides. He met me at Oquossoc's railroad station-stop.

"Hi Kid" he said. "I've brought the Thomas rod you sent me sixteen dollars for; I'll bet it's twice as good as what you got; It's down to Herbie Welch's store. We'll pick it up as we go past; it's down to what they call Haines Landing, on the way to their Bald Mountain camp."

He paused. "Don't mind my sayin' 'kid,'" he said and smiled. "I'm flirtin' in the sixties and I guess you won't be there for forty years or more. If your castin's good enough to beat a horse, we'll have some fun. The speckles here's as big as those at Nipigon; the salmon's big as those they tell of on the Miramichi."

My casting *wasn't* good enough to beat a horse, but we had fun. The first few days we anchored off the bar of sand that washes down from Kennebago River and from Rangeley's stump-filled stream to birch-surrounded Mooselukmeguntic Lake. My brace of big wet flies on heavy snells, a Montreal and Parmachenee Belle, would waver out and plop and be retrieved untouched. Close in to shore at Indian Rock, I'd fling a nine point six without success. That's where the members of the country's second oldest fishing club, the Oquossoc Angling Association, had, at one time, filled the crates beneath their nearby dock with living trout of six pound weight or more so they'd be fit to eat or mount when taken home.

Sometimes, as early night came slowly on, we walked along the railroad ties that paralleled the Kennebago's downstream pools and shared a snug log cabin in a grove of birch. If we were tired as we walked along, we knew the train would stop and take us on. Alas those trains no longer run, and if the rails on which they ran had not been sold to the Japanese before "The Day of Infamy" we know they wouldn't stop today.

"I'm going to get a fish before I quit tonight" I said to Bob one afternoon. "I've spotted one by that big rock, and if he takes I'm going to let him go. And don't forget I like my beefsteak rare. Just call me when the dinner's almost done."

A half a sunset hour passed, and I heard Martin shout: "If you get that feller that was risin' don't you let him go; we need fish to eat tonight. The god-

damn rats has stole the steak."

Then Bob came down and — praise the Lord — he caught a three pound Kennebago trout while I sat on a fallen tree and watched.

For several years I fished each fall with Bob. We visited the hot spots on a half a dozen streams and lakes. Later, from Grants' Camps on Kennebago Lake we followed Benedict Arnold's route — to Little Kennebago where at the inlet the trout were sometimes large — along the stream called Seven Ponds by which the General moved his men to storm the city of Quebec — but stormed in vain.

During all these happy years, I never fished a dry fly or a nymph. My lures were bucktails bought from William Mills and Son or large wet flies on heavy snells. With leaders big and strong enough to hold a fractious horse, I splashed, with heavy hand, my way along the shoreline of the lakes and up and down the rocky streams. I fished with small success, but most enormous hopes.

In winter time I read the ads on where to go in *Field and Stream*. I blamed my lack of luck on lack of fish, not lack of skill and sought some other place to go. I came across a picture of a sportsman's camp on Eagle Lake owned by a man named Saul Michaud. I fished two happy autumn holidays at Saul's before I shifted, for a dozen years, to Gordon Fraser's Inlet Camps on big and beautiful Square Lake.

On this great fish river chain of lakes and thoroughfares that ran a hundred lonely woods, surrounded miles, I learned that there the landlocked salmon grew in weight to twenty pounds; the trout — if trout remained — were small and at the mouths of brooks.

I write of things that happened long ago, and yet my love for Maine has not abated as the time has passed, although the schools of trout and salmon have. Long since, I've learned Sebago Lake no longer yields the sea-sized salmon of the early years, and big trout, for the most part, now are gone.

But still I dream of misty mornings on the lake or stream in front of Maynard's, Grant's, Michaud's, or Fraser's camps. I hear the chore boy bring the pail of water from the spring, and lie a while and listen to the rumble of the burning birch logs in the black pot-bellied stove. I never fished the upper waters of the Kennebec, Umbagog Lake, Pierce Pond or Grand Lake Stream, although I wish I had. But after spending many happy New York years upstate, I learned about Atlantic salmon in Maine's coastal streams: the Narragagus, Pleasant, and Machias, east and west, the Dennys and adjacent rivers of New Brunswick to the north.

I also learned about the greatest fish of all. And this, I think, is not the bonefish sliding slyly up onto the Carib-

bean's tidal flats to flee or fight and make a man forget his other sports. This is the European brown.

I found the brown trout first in streams between the Adirondack's snow capped peaks some miles upstream from where the branches of the beautiful Ausable, at the village of the Forks, unite and thunder down to Lake Champlain.

Here, in Upper Jay, at Byron Blanchard's Adirondack Mountain house — beefsteak twice a day at any hour of the day or night at only twenty-two a week — I struggled with the subtleties of dry fly presentation where the fish were feeding on the mayfly duns.

If some great angler — and most of them those days were there: LaBranche and Bergman, Mackey, Collins, Randebrock, and Wulff, came in each night with more and bigger fish, who cared? Down state at Keener's Antrim Lodge, the sunburned men of equal skills were sure to guide a brother of the angle to a run where *salmo fario* would rise at dusk and often take.

In 1929, I felt the sparkling halcyon days of youth on these and other rivers like the Mettowee, the Battenkill, West Canada and Neversink would never end. When winter drew its snowy curtains down, I dreamed of driving to the Bushkill or the Delaware, come spring.

And, later on, I fished with joy, or dreamed about the countless watersheds of eastern Canada. My footprints, close beside the footprints of the moose, now lined the banks of Matane, Cap Chat, and St. Anne, the Bonaventure, Madelaine, St. Jean and Margaree. I forged firm friendships with the salmon guides who knew the waters — knew them well — from Cosupscal down to Matapedia; from Upsalquich upstream to Kedgwick and beyond. I spent a hundred happy hours in listening to the small talk in the tackle shops of Arsenault and Wallace Doak. I found the country beautiful, the people fine, and in my waders or a Gaspé boat, or in my dreams, I found that life beside the rivers that I loved, was sweet.



# William Samuel:

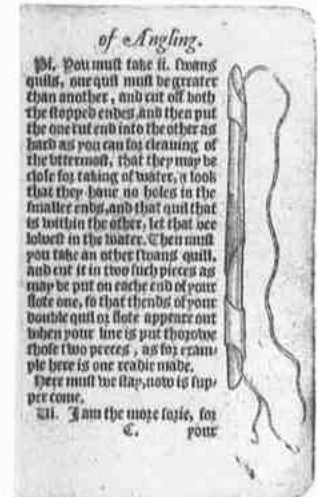
## A New Name to Revere between Dame Juliana and Izaak Walton

by

ARNOLD GINGRICH

As Major Hills said in his invaluable *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout*, it is awkward to have to cite an anonymous book. But it has been necessary in the case of *The Arte of Angling* (1577), ever since Otto von Kienbusch made the exciting discovery in London in 1954 of the one known surviving copy of this little masterpiece — previously unheard of and unrecorded anywhere — complete with colophon showing the printer's name and the date of publication, but lacking the first three pages.

How this book, which is now pretty generally conceded to have served as prototype for at least Izaak Walton's first (1653) edition of *The Compleat Angler*, could have escaped all notice for three centuries is and will undoubtedly remain angling literature's greatest mystery. When Kienbusch generously caused the issuance of a limited facsimile edition by the Friends of the Princeton Library in 1956, and a second facsimile edition of somewhat wider distribution in 1958 by Princeton University Press, both he in his introduction and the book's editor, Gerald Eades Bentley, in separate essays, speculated on the unknown author's identity, and Bentley, particularly in his essay on the book's context, in the 1958 edition, narrowed the field of speculation down with some extremely telling clues. In fact, he came very close to solving the puzzle that he had devised from the text's interior evidence. From it he deduced that the unknown would have been (a) a returned Marian exile who had lived in or near Geneva; (b) an inhabitant of, or a frequent visitor in, the county of Huntingdon on the Ouse, near St. Ives; (c) a man closely associated with a church or school, whose warden, also a fisherman, sometimes troubled him; (d) a man who had published other works; (e) an experienced angler. He found a near fit for this outlined shadow of the unknown author in Alexander Nowell, the Dean of St. Paul's, who answered all the qualifications except that he never fished the Ouse. Bentley left the question with the hope that somebody with better access



from "The Arte of Angling" copy in Princeton University Library

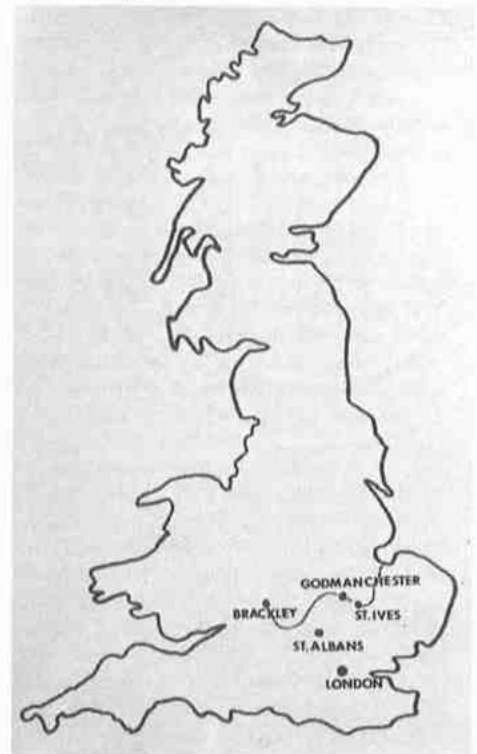
to the records of the Marian exiles and the local records of Huntingdon would come up with the answer.

That happened when Thomas P. Harrison, Professor Emeritus in the English Department at the University of Texas, found a reference in Edward Topsell's *The Historie of Serpents* (1608) to "a caterpillered hook, which kind of fishing fraude, if you would better be instructed in, I must refer you to a little booke dedicated to Robert Dudley, late Earle of Leicester, written by Ma: Samuel Vicar, of Godmanchester in Huntingtonshiere." In the edition of 1658 the same reference read: "to a little Book dedicated to Robert Dudley, late Earl of Leicester, written by Master Samuel Vicar of Godmanchester in Huntingtonshire." Search of the records of the Marian exiles and of Huntingdon annals was disappointing at first because of the utter absence of Vicar as a surname, but ultimately rewarding with ample information about William Samuel (sometimes Samuell and Samwell), the Vicar of Godmanchester, who finally qualified on every count, meeting every one of Bentley's five prerequisites like joining the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Professor Harrison, meticulously documenting every one of these attributes with a welter of footnotes, confided his discovery to *Notes and Queries*, an international compendium that serves scholars as a sort of combined question-answer-and-suggestion box, noting with

characteristic academic restraint simply that the evidence now makes it possible to identify the author of *The Arte* "with reasonable certainty."

There it has lain (like Poe's purloined letter, unnoticed in a frenzied search because it was out in plain sight on the mantelpiece) ever since October of 1960 while angling writers and readers have



gone on referring to the anonymous author of *The Arte of Angling* (1577).

Recently, having come across my reference to *The Arte* in *The Fishing in Print*, Professor Harrison sent me a copy of his contribution to *Notes and Queries*. This is my means of thanking him publicly, on behalf of all the angling readers and writers I know, for having given us a new name to place in our pantheon. William Samuel wrote one of the seminal books, for his 1577 enumeration of the qualities of an angler appears again in 1613, in the John Dennys poem, *The Secrets of Angling*, and again in Gervase Markham's *The Pleasures of Princes* one year later, and in some degree, though less obviously repeated, in dozens of fishing books thereafter.

As for Walton, while the parallel passages and other similarities to *The Arte* in his first edition of 1653 indicate that he knew the book, the fact that he credited Topsell, in paraphrasing the very passage in *The Historie of Serpents* where the Vicar of Godmanchester was mentioned, makes it all the more remarkable that he never referred to it in any way. In the facsimile edition of the 1653 *Compleat Angler*, you will find

Walton going out of his way to credit Topsell: "And yet I will exercise your promised patience by saying a little of the *Caterpillar* or the *Palmer-flie* or *worm* . . . (as our *Topsel* hath with great diligence observed)" yet without a word about the place where "our *Topsel*" said he observed it.

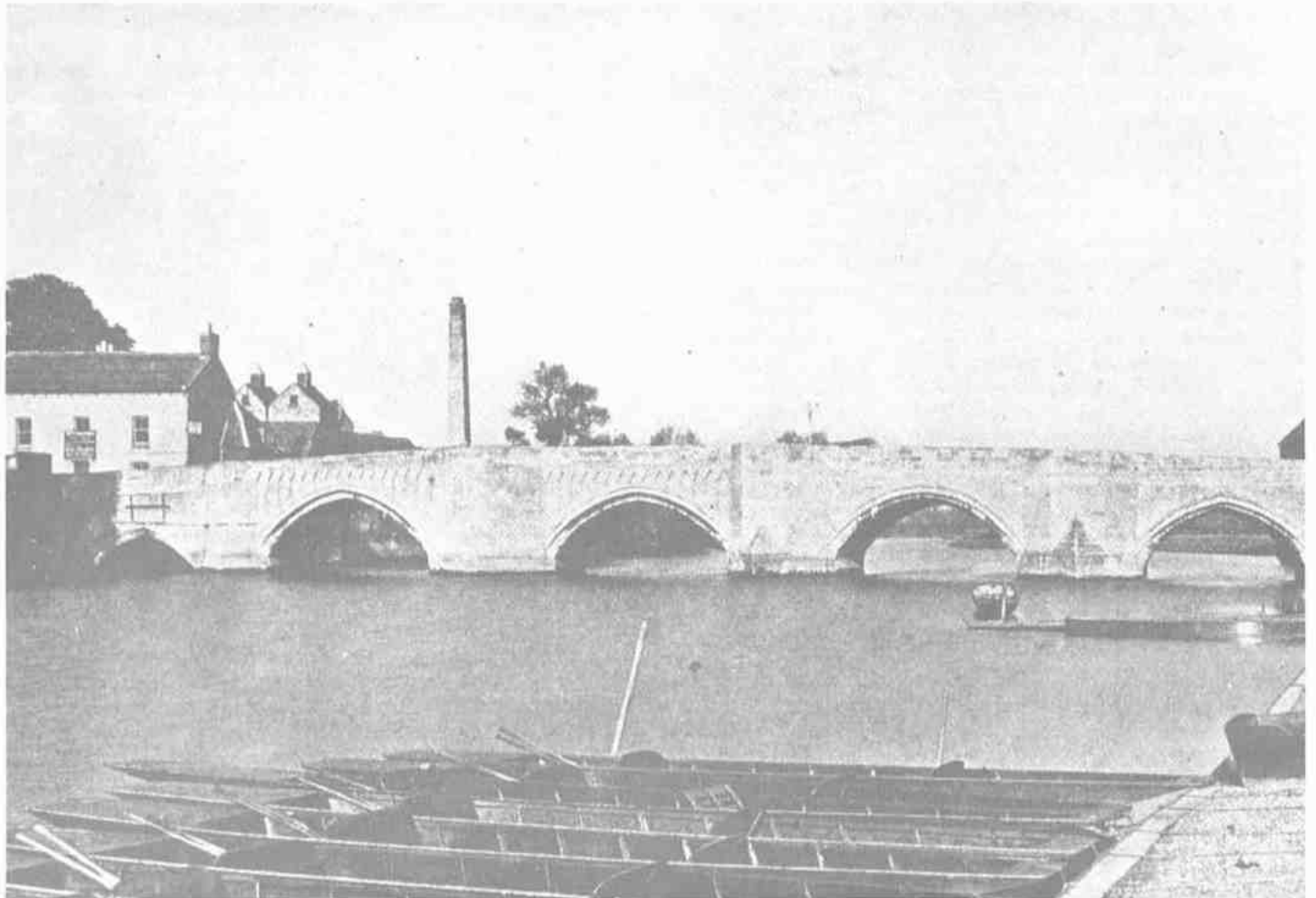
Thus though nobody else, in three hundred years, ever found a reference anywhere in print to the "little booke," until Professor Harrison found Topsell's astonishingly revelatory mention of it that named the author, his town and his patron, the only other person we can be sure had seen the Topsell reference — because he paraphrased its context — is old Izaak himself.

So as one angling literary mystery clears another deepens. Why, when he was so free with credits to everybody else, did Walton avoid all mention of William Samuel, Vicar of Godmanchester, the one author on whom, it is now quite obvious, he leaned more heavily than on any other?

Meanwhile, all honor to Professor Harrison for having given us another name to revere.



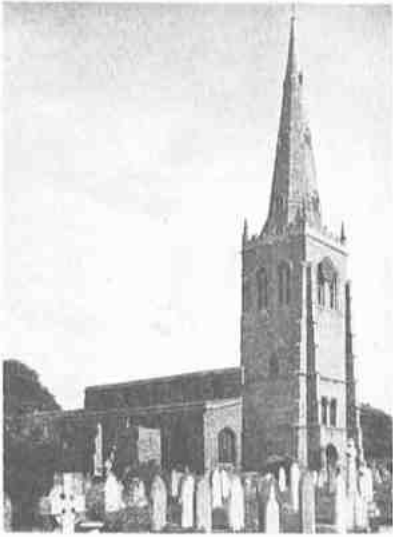
A fine pen and ink drawing by Louis Rhead but completely inaccurate as to the rendition of rods and reel seats.



Huntingdon Bridge where Samuel mentions he bought the bream that got away . . .

See "The Arte of Angling" page 55, 1956 edition.

# William Samuel, The Reformation, and The Marian Exiles



St. Mary's Church in Godmanchester.

Some forty miles (as the crow flies) north of St. Albans, on the River Ouse (see map) and in the county of Huntingdonshire lies the borough of Godmanchester. It is here in Godmanchester directly across the river from Huntingdon, that William Samuel, author of *The Arte of Angling* (1577) made his home. Samuel was probably born in Northamptonshire, a county adjacent to and west of Huntingdonshire. The date of his birth, however, is unknown to us. According to Harrison [see accompanying article and T. P. Harrison, *Notes and Queries*, 7, 373 (1960)] Samuel was vicar of Godmanchester in 1550 at the Church of St. Mary. The vicarage was instituted at St. Mary's sometime between 1209 and 1219. It included two houses, land, and vicarial tithes (*The Victoria History of the Counties of England*, Vol. 2, 1932). Samuel apparently remained as vicar until November of 1556. It was then that both he and his wife, whose name we do not know, left England to join John Knox's Protestant Congregation in Geneva, Switzerland. Samuel became a resident of Geneva on January 7, 1557 (C. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles*) and a member of Knox's Congregation on May 8th.

Knox's Congregation at Geneva was typical of several settlements which were established in Switzerland, France, and Germany during Mary's reign (1553-1558) as havens for English Protestants who had emigrated from their native land in order to (ostensibly) avoid religious persecution. These were the Marian exiles whose plight can be directly attributed to a chain of events initiated by Henry VIII.

In 1509 Henry VIII succeeded Henry VII to the throne of England. He married Catherine of Aragon, the wife of his older brother who had died in 1502.

The marriage was allowed only after a special dispensation had been granted by Pope Julius II. After some 18 years of marriage, Catherine (now 40) had borne Henry at least three sons and two daughters; however, all except one of his children (Mary) had died in infancy. The problem of a male successor to the English throne thus loomed large in Henry's mind. By this time Henry's heart had been captured by the charming, infamous Anne Boleyn (you might say that he lost *bis* head). The solution to the succession problem seemed quite simple. The all powerful Henry would merely request a papal indult declaring his marriage null and void. A favorable ruling would allow him to marry Anne, and hopefully the problem could then be adequately taken care of. Annulment applications were immediately made to Rome; however, there was a problem. The Pope, Clement VII, was at the mercy of the emperor Charles V and Charles just happened to be Catherine's nephew. The Pope, unwilling to offend Charles, stalled for time. Disputes and discussions carried on for two years before Henry's patience became exhausted. The solution? Henry would sever England's ties with Rome — an allegiance that had been in existence for approximately 1000 years. By 1534, Henry had very cleverly accomplished this feat. This was the beginning of the English Reformation. During Henry's reign the Bible was published in English for the first time, and clergyment were allowed to marry (as noted earlier, Samuel took advantage of this new privilege of wedlock).

When Henry died in 1547, his son Edward VI was only nine years old. Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset and uncle of young Edward VI assumed control of the council that was to govern England until Edward VI became of age. It is important to note that Seymour was a champion of church reform who was greatly influenced by Protestant scholars who had come to England from the continent. His reforms thus embody a great deal of Protestant thinking.

With the death of Edward in 1553 came the end of the first stage of England's Reformation. Mary, the half-Spaniard, fanatical Roman Catholic daughter of Henry VIII, who for nearly twenty years had lived as a publically proclaimed illegitimate, assumed the throne. She immediately set to work to restore the Roman Catholic Church to England (the Counter Reformation). Injunctions were published early in 1554 which required all bishops to restore the old order, and to remove all married clergy from their cures. Official recon-

ciliation with Rome came in 1555 when Cardinal Poll, a liaison for the Pope, graciously absolved Mary's realm.

There was some persecution of the more blatant Protestants, but for the most part, persecution was held to a minimum (Samuel didn't flee(?) England until late in 1556. Nevertheless, many English Protestants migrated to the Marian settlements mentioned earlier (for an interesting discussion as to whether the Marian's emigration was a self imposed and carefully planned "migration" or a disorganized flight see C. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles*) and remained there until 1558 when Elizabeth I took the throne. Shortly after her coronation Elizabeth renewed the break with Rome and returned the Church of England to a position of reform comparable to the early years of Seymour's influence. Samuel "divine and poet and servant of the Duke of Somerset" (*Dictionary of National Biography*) returned to England sometime in 1559, for Harrison notes that at this time he was clerk for the rectory of Eynesbury (St. Mary's Church). Apparently he concurrently held this position and his old one, Vicar of Godmanchester. In 1561, he was appointed to the board of governors of Queen Elizabeth's Free Grammar School and as Harrison speculates, probably was presented to the Queen when she visited Huntingdon in 1564. Samuel died sometime before August 9, 1580 (Harrison) three years after the publication of *The Arte*.

Harrison pictures Samuel as an orthodox country clergyman, not a university man, but well read and certainly very able. In addition to *The Arte* Samuel published several other works, all of which are of an ecclesiastical nature (*An Abridgment of all the Canonical Books of the Old Testament* (1569) for example).

It is interesting to note that the headwaters of the River Ouse rise near the borough of Brackley, a village approximately fifty miles from Godmanchester (see map). It was near Brackley that Edward Toppell (1572-1625) resided when he compiled *The Historie of Four-footed Beasts* (1607) and *The Historie of Serpents* (1608). It is here in the pages of the latter work that Thomas P. Harrison found mention of the quaint little angling book by William Samuel which Professor Harrison adequately & ambiguously demonstrates must be *The Arte of Angling* (1577), printed by Henry Middleton, the well known 16th century printer. Professor Harrison thus has given us a "New Name to Revere between Dame Juliana Berners and Izaak Walton."

— DAVID B. LEDLIE



# Origins of the Dry Fly



*The article that follows was reprinted by William T. Porter in a then new sporting periodical named "THE AMERICAN SPORTING CHRONICLE" (1843). It was short lived, passing into limbo after little more than a year of publication. Perhaps a gamble by Porter, who was then editing two others, ("The Turf Register" and "The Spirit of the Times"), it did offer some unusual articles. Few fly fishermen appreciate the simple fact that there is constant diffusion of knowledge in all matters relating to catching fish between the bait fisher and those who use the artificial fly. In this instance, the bait fisher had already encountered problems connected with fishing what was later to be called the "dry" fly. He also had made some long strides in casting a natural fly for distance. It should be remembered what was called the "floating" fly (artificial) was in use as early as the beginning of the 17th century when a cork body was invented. Note however that this may be the first recognition of "drag."*

## On Angling with the Natural May Fly

To the Editor of Bell's Life in London.

Sir - Having been a subscriber to your paper for many years past, and being an old fly-fisher, I have, of course, read the whole of Ephemera's communications which have appeared in it from time to time. From these I have frequently derived much pleasure, combined with instruction; and, for the able manner in which he handles his subject, I am sure he must be a good practical fisherman in all branches of the sport. His favorite pursuit, however, seems, like my own, to be that of fly fishing; and his general instructions upon this head, combined with his receipts for dressing the various kinds of flies principally in use, will be found extremely useful to the tyro. I have sometimes, it is true, had reason to differ with him upon some points; but as he and I angle in very different parts of the country,

and most probably in rivers which vary very widely in the character of the flies which they produce, I do not, for one moment, presume to say that he is wrong, or that I am right. For every experienced angler knows well that rivers only a few miles apart will produce the same "species" of flies, but with some trifling differences in them as to colour and size, and also as to the time of their being in season; and, the same fly which will be found very abundant (and consequently a good killer) upon one river, will perhaps be scarce, and of comparatively little use upon the other. To instance this, I may mention the Derwent and the Wye, both Derbyshire streams, running only a few miles apart, say three or four; and in fact, uniting their waters about six miles above Matlock. Now, upon the former the dun drake, and its change, the great red spinner, will be found a most killing fly, and is

much used by all anglers frequenting it; whilst upon the Wye, it is scarcely ever used by those who know the river well; indeed, I never recollect having any sport with it there.

To return to this digression, which I have made merely for the purpose of showing that no angler should suppose, that because the instructions which he may read, as to the best method of dressing certain flies, may not exactly correspond with what his own experience tells him is most suitable for the rivers in his own country, still he is not to suppose, off-hand, that they are not perfectly correct for the streams for which they are intended. The object of my present letter is to notice some remarks contained in Ephemera's communication of last week as to the best method of fishing with the May-fly, or as we term it in this part of the country, the drake. We (at least all such as pro-

fess to be adepts with this fly) use it in a different manner, therefore I am tempted to give your readers a short description of it, from which they may judge for themselves which is the most scientific and agreeable style of fishing, as well as the most killing. To commence with the rod which is used in open parts of the river; it should be 16 or 17 feet in length, and should be made as light as possible, taking care that just sufficient strength is preserved, and it should be particularly pliable and springy. No stiff rod will do for this fishing, as the angler would be continually cutting his drake off with such a one. The best reel lines which I have ever met with are the patent taper ones made in London, or at least sold by the London tackle makers, and the finer the better. To the end of the reel line should be attached a gut casting line about ten feet in length, which need not be very fine where it joins the line, but should gradually get finer, until the piece of gut to which the hook is attached should be as thin and round as can possibly be procured. If the water should be a little coloured, or if there should be a good supply of it in the river, you may then venture to use rather stronger gut. The hook which is generally used is one of Adlington's or Scott's No. 2, and, in order to make it as light as possible, I usually cut off a little of the shank, leaving only as much as is requisite for tying it on to the gut. Having now got rod and tackle ready, take your drake (which should be a freshly sprung one, and consequently brighter and more lively) by its wings, and pass the hook through the thick part of the body under the wings, and not between them, as Ephemera recommends. This description of rod and tackle differs greatly from his. He says - "The rod used should be about 13 feet long, light, and with a stiff top. In still, mild weather, you should fish with about four feet of line out, three feet of which should be good and moderately fine gut." This will at once be seen is only applicable to dabling with the fly, which, in fact, is the only plan he mentions. Now for the "modus operandi" upon my system. The angler should go to the lower part of the reach of river which he intends fishing, so as, in all cases where the wind permits, he may fish up the stream. Should the breeze be at all strong down the stream, this cannot possibly be done; for then even the most skillful drake fisher will find it impossible to avoid whipping off his fly. But let us suppose there is either a breeze up the stream or else none at all, which latter state of affairs I prefer. Then let him use rather more line than the length of his rod, say about eighteen or twenty feet, and proceed to throw his fly up the stream, first under his own bank, then all over the likely parts, until he reaches

the opposite bank. This is a very slow species of fishing, but it is obvious that it cannot be a rapid one, for only one fly is used, and that one must try every likely part of the stream; and in this way a good fisherman will frequently make a hundred yards of river last him an hour or two. But, perhaps, some of your readers may say, "How is it possible to reach all over the stream with a natural fly, and with one so tender and so liable to be cut on as the drake is. But, I can assure them, that with a rod and tackle of the description I have mentioned, it is, to an old practiced hand, a matter of no difficulty. The art of throwing the drake well is an extremely troublesome one to learn, and no one need flatter himself that he will be perfect in it after a few trials. In three or four seasons, perhaps, he may accomplish it tolerably; but ten or twelve years will not be too long a time for him to attain proficiency in it. When once learned, however, it will be as easy to him as throwing the artificial fly, and it will amply repay him for the time and trouble which he has spent over attaining it. A skillful drake-fisher will easily



throw his fly eighteen or twenty yards, and even then it will fall upon the water as lightly as if it had been blown on from the nearest bush. But when upon the water, another difficulty has to be contended with; for, supposing the fly to have been cast across the river, the chances are that the line, which lays in the water, will get pulled by the streams and eddies between the fisherman and his fly, until the latter gets dragged under water, or otherwise swims with so unnatural a motion as to alarm the ever watchful trout, in which case it is useless to try for him a second time. Practice, however, if it will not in all cases enable the angler to avoid this evil, still will enable him greatly to modify it. In throwing the drake great care must be taken to avoid anything like a sudden whip at the end of the line. The fisherman must take a good round sweep, and throw steadily, but at the same time lightly; and when once he has become an adept at it he may make pretty sure of every fish he sees rising, though at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards.

A strong arm is required to wield a rod of such dimensions, and some use two hands to it; but, if possible, I always prefer one, as greater nicety is always attained. The advantages of such a method of angling are obvious. You are not nearly so liable to be seen by the fish as when angling down stream, and when you hook one you can bring him down into water which has been fished over, without disturbing any which are rising above. Indeed, I have frequently taken five or six, one after the other, from the same bank in a very short time. Considerable skill is requisite, however, in knowing where fish are likely to be found, for as only one fly is used, much valuable time may be wasted in trying places where an experienced hand would never think of throwing. Indeed some men never learn this most important point, while others seem almost to have an intuitive knowledge of where fish will be if they are in the river. I have always considered it as the first lesson to be instilled into the mind of a young angler.

Should you see a fish rise, throw your fly about a foot above him, and let it float down over his nose, when the chances are three to one that he take it, and takes it well also, for fish thus hooked are seldom lost. Do not attempt to strike him, but give him plenty of time, for finding he has got a real fly, he is in no hurry to quit it. Tighten your line quietly after he has had time to shut his mouth, and you have him safe enough; but as you are fishing with fine gut, you must not be in too great a hurry to have him in your landing net if he is a heavy fish; and the largest trout are taken with the drake. In a bright, hot season, when the water is very low, and as clear as crystal; this plan of fishing upstream will kill three or four times as much fish as any other. Indeed, if practised by a skillful person, these otherwise adverse circumstances will make but little difference, provided your tackle is good, and the fish are in the humor for the drake, which is not always the case. Do not abandon a fish if he does not take you the first, second, or even the third time; for they frequently require teasing into it, particularly early in the season, before they have got acquainted with the drake. I have frequently taken a fish after he has refused even twenty times, and these are often the largest ones. But an experienced fisherman will generally soon perceive whether he is wasting time or no; for if the fish does not look at your fly as it passes over him, you may consider it "notice to quit." Ephemera says, "for all fish that feed on flies, it is a captivating cockatrice." Here, however, I do not agree with him. The trout is the only fish really worthy the attention of the drake fisher. No doubt greyling and also chub, when the latter unfortunately

happen to be in a river, will occasionally take the drake; but the former certainly prefer smaller flies, and I have seen times, when the drakes have been floating in swarms down the surface of the river, and scarcely one has been taken by a greyling. Besides their mouths are too small to admit so large a fly readily, and even if you succeed in raising a greyling, the chances are, that he cuts off half-a-dozen flies before you hook him. Still, there are times when they will rise pretty freely at the drake, and then never fish for them. But as a general thing, I never fish for them. They are good customers for the artificial fly, and for that I leave them. In a river such as the Wye at Bakewell, when there are five or six greylings to one trout, some little experience is necessary to enable the angler to discriminate between them when they are rising, and many persons unaccustomed to the river lose much time in throwing for the former, and with little chance of success in the most difficult of streams, where they are bad enough to take with even the best and most accurately made artificial flies. Having now given your readers a des-

cription of the manner in which the drake or mayfly is used by all good anglers in Derbyshire, I take my leave of them, with the assurance that if any one will be at the trouble of practising it till he is tolerably perfect, he will never dabble with it again.

In my opinion, no description of fishing is so pleasant and exciting as it is; and, at the same time, I must add that I consider none so difficult to do well. In this part of the country many persons call the drake "the fool's fly," thereby meaning that any fool can kill fish with it. But this is meant to apply to dabling with it, and to a certain extent, no doubt, an inexperienced hand may have some sport with it when the river is pretty full of water and the day cloudy or windy, as he can then poke his rod over the bank and let his fly float down; and in this manner he will be almost certain to raise a few unwary fish. But let the water be low and bright and the sunshine in full splendour, without a cloud to obscure his face, and the tables will be turned: truly, he may "toil all day and catch nothing." Before concluding, allow me to correct an error

of Ephemera's, which appeared in one of his letters last summer, but which I cannot lay my hand upon at this moment. Speaking of the comparative merits of winged flies and hackle ones, he says "that at Bakewell, in Derbyshire where they are no mean judges, they prefer them made as hackles." But here he is under a mistake.† The up-winged duns of many varieties (and by the way, most difficult to imitate accurately) are the standard flies for the Wye; and all the most scientific fishermen who flog its waters make these flies winged. Experience has taught them that they will take two or three fish when a hackle fly would take one. These duns are troublesome gentlemen to make correctly, and we make many of them from very different materials from what I have ever seen recommended in print. Indeed, with the exception, perhaps, of the orange dun, and that only sometimes, I have never seen any London flies which I should have liked to use upon the Wye. I remain, sir, yours, &c.,

Hawthorn

Rowsley, Derbyshire, May 16

*In 1838 I bought flies at a shop in Bakewell, and found them all hackles. --- Ephemera.*

† Ephemera is well pleased to be able from the evidence contained in Hawthorn's excellent letter to return him conscientiously the compliment. We differ I perceive on some points, but if Hawthorn will refer to E's articles, and read them attentively he will find the difference less than he states. E knows Rowsley well and passed some pleasant days at the Peacock at the foot of the bridge where the Wye runs into the Derwent. Hawthorn's communications (I wish other local anglers would follow his example) will always be

acceptable to the columns of "Bell's Life" should they be, like the present one, rife with practical piscatorial information. What the Editor of this paper wants, for Ephemera has had the pleasure and honour of his acquaintance long enough to know his desires, he is not vague, fanciful and speculative writing, relative to sporting subjects, but information containing plain facts.

*From: American Sporting Chronicle  
Vol. 1, No. 16, July 4, 1843 p. 61*



**WAS PRESIDENT  
BENJAMIN HARRISON  
A FLY FISHER?**

That Harrison built a sanctuary in a wilderness as his Grandfather before him, seems to have been forgotten by his biographers.

The photo taken from the book "Nat Foster" by Bryan Curtis, 1897, suggests the 23rd President of the United States (1889-1893) was a lover of the outdoors. Berkeley Lodge is located in the Adirondacks, noted for their fishing and hunting. As a boy, he may have vacationed with his grandfather and the remembrance may have prompted a return to the mountains. Kay Brodney, our researcher at the Library of Congress, reports no information at all in the files. Help would be appreciated.



# An Attempt to Reproduce Early Nineteenth Century Fly Dressings

by

JACK HEDDON

When Tony Sismore, John Simpson and I formed The Honey Dun Press, we gave ourselves the objective of publishing "rare and interesting angling books." Our first problem was to decide upon a suitable book with which to launch our venture. Of some half dozen titles originally considered, including L.[eonard] M.[ascall's] *A Booke of Fishing with Hook & Line* . . . 1590 and Blacker's *Art of Fly Making, &c.* . . . 1855, George Scotcher's *The Fly Fisher's Legacy*, c. 1810, emerged as an obvious first choice; not only is it one of the rarest angling books, but in our opinion, one of the most interesting. So we decided to publish a limited edition of the *Legacy*, with a hand coloured facsimile of the original frontispiece. John then suggested a very small deluxe edition with artificial flies dressed to Scotcher's patterns and tied in the style of the period. As the flydresser of the partnership the task of establishing patterns and finding a professional to tie them, was given to men.

Thus, we started our pre-production researches with two main problems to solve; first, what was the date of the first edition (usually given as c.1800); and second, what did Scotcher's artificial flies look like and how were they dressed?

During the months of research, we discovered several interesting facts, some of which - in our opinion - will be of considerable general interest and a decision was taken (by the majority - my two partners against me!) that I should commit to paper the results of our researches and that we would print them as part of the deluxe edition of *Legacy*. Hence *Notes - Bibliographical, Biographical and Historical Notes to George Scotcher's The Fly Fisher's Legacy* . . . circa 1810; *With Comments on the Fly-Dressings*.

Some of our most interesting discoveries were made during the research into Scotcher's probable method of dressing; one of the most important being the alteration and enlargement of the 'Redditch,' or 'Old' hook scale during the 1850's. The following extract from my *Scotcher Notes* relates to the establishing of patterns and the style of dressing.

## *Research on the Flies*

### DRESSING SAMPLE PATTERNS

Reconstruction of the patterns involved several months research. In addition to the Library of the British Museum and the very fine angling library of John Simpson, John Henderson has kindly given me the run of his extensive collection of angling books and I have a fairly good collection of my own. I think I can safely say that every important angling book has been checked. One of my biggest problems has been the scarcity of trout flies which it can be proved were tied before about 1830. In addition, there were even then considerable local variations in style and establishing the origin of early flies has proved very difficult.

My patterns were reconstructed after reading as many descriptions of flies of the period as I could find. The books which I found most useful were:-

Bainbridge, George C. "The Fly Fishers Guide," 1816.

Bowlker, Charles. "The Art of Angling, and Complete Fly-Fishing," 1774.

Bowlker, Richard. "The Art of Angling Improved," (n.d.) c. 1747.

Daniel, Rev. W. B. "Rural Sports," Vol. II, 1807.

Hawkins, Sir John. "Notes Historical, Critical and Explanatory; 'The Complete Angler'," 1760.

Lascelles, Robert. "Angling; Being The First Part of a Series of Familiar Letters on Sporting," dated 1811, (n.d.) c. 1813-14.

Salter, Robert. "The Modern Angler," (n.d.) Probably 1802.

Taylor, Samuel. "Angling in all its Branches," 1800.

Williamson, Capt. T. "The Complete Angler's Vade-Mecum," 1808.

These are the books to which I shall most frequently make reference in the following notes. John Simpson's copy of Robert Salter's "Modern Angler" was particularly useful as it contained the remnants, time and moth ravaged, of a set of flies tied to Salter's dressings, dating from about 1820.

Scotcher was printed in Chepstow, Salter in Oswestry, Richard Bowlker in Worcester and Charles Bowlker in Birmingham; Lascelles fished and datelined his letters from Wales. These were upstream anglers who fished with an imitation of the insect that was hatching, or on the water. They had a common bond in Wales and the west of England. Wales must have been to the eighteenth century angler what Hampshire became to anglers at the end of the nineteenth century.

### HOOKS

Hooks have caused us more problems than any other materials, even the rarer feathers and furs. An immediate reaction to reading fly dressings in early angling books is that the flies used to be tied on much larger hooks. This has generally been accepted without question by angling historians, who have also quite wrongly concluded that hooks were also much heavier than are their modern counterparts. The eighteenth and early nineteenth century angler copied nature when making his flies, as did all early anglers and insects are still the same size as they were a hundred and sixty years ago. Scotcher was most particular about imitating the natural insect and it seemed wrong for him to dress a March Brown on a size 8 hook and a Black Gnat on a size 12. I checked on the size range of hooks recommended by other authors of the period. Robert Salter used from No. 1, for salmon flies, through Nos. 5 and 6 for May-flies, to No. 10 for the smallest trout flies; Charles Bowlker from No. 3, to No. 9; Lascelles from No. 4 to No. 11. Not a hook smaller than No. 12 and that for Scotcher's Black Gnat!

Both John Simpson and I have collections of old hooks, some of which we can establish as being pre-1830, a few are pre-1820; some of these early hooks are as small as a modern 16 or 17. Obviously we had to establish the sizes in the hook scale used around 1820.

The earliest reference to a hook scale that I have been able to find is in "The Art of Angling . . ." c. 1747, by Richard Bowlker; numbered hook sizes are

mentioned only six times in the entire text and only once in connection with fly-dressing. Numbered hook sizes are given in Hawkins' "Notes etc. . . ." to the 1760 edition of Walton and Cotton and in most subsequent angling books. The first hook scale probably dates from about 1740.

I only know of two early nineteenth century illustrations of complete hook scales. Plate I, "The Complete Angler's Vade-Mecum," 1808, Williamson; and Plate 3, "The Angler's Guide," second edition, 1815, T. F. Salter. "Rural Sports," Vol. II. Daniel, 1807, contains many fine plates, most of which are dated 1801, many of these plates include illustrations of hooks and the complete set includes all sizes between No. 1 (large) and No. 10 (small) and T. F. Salter's from No. 1 (large) to No. 13 (small). An examination of these plates indicates that hooks were probably measured by the width of their gape and not shank length, as is usual with eyed hooks. Blind hooks were often made rather long in the shank so that fly-dressers could clip off the end to obtain the required shank length - a facility we have lost with eyed hooks. The old No. 13 measured approximately 1/16th" in gape, No. 11 about 1/8th" and No. 9 about 3/16ths". These sizes would now be approximately Redditch Nos. 17, 15, and 12. I should add "Modern Redditch," for the old scale which went from a large No. 1 to a small No. 13 was

also called "The Redditch Scale."

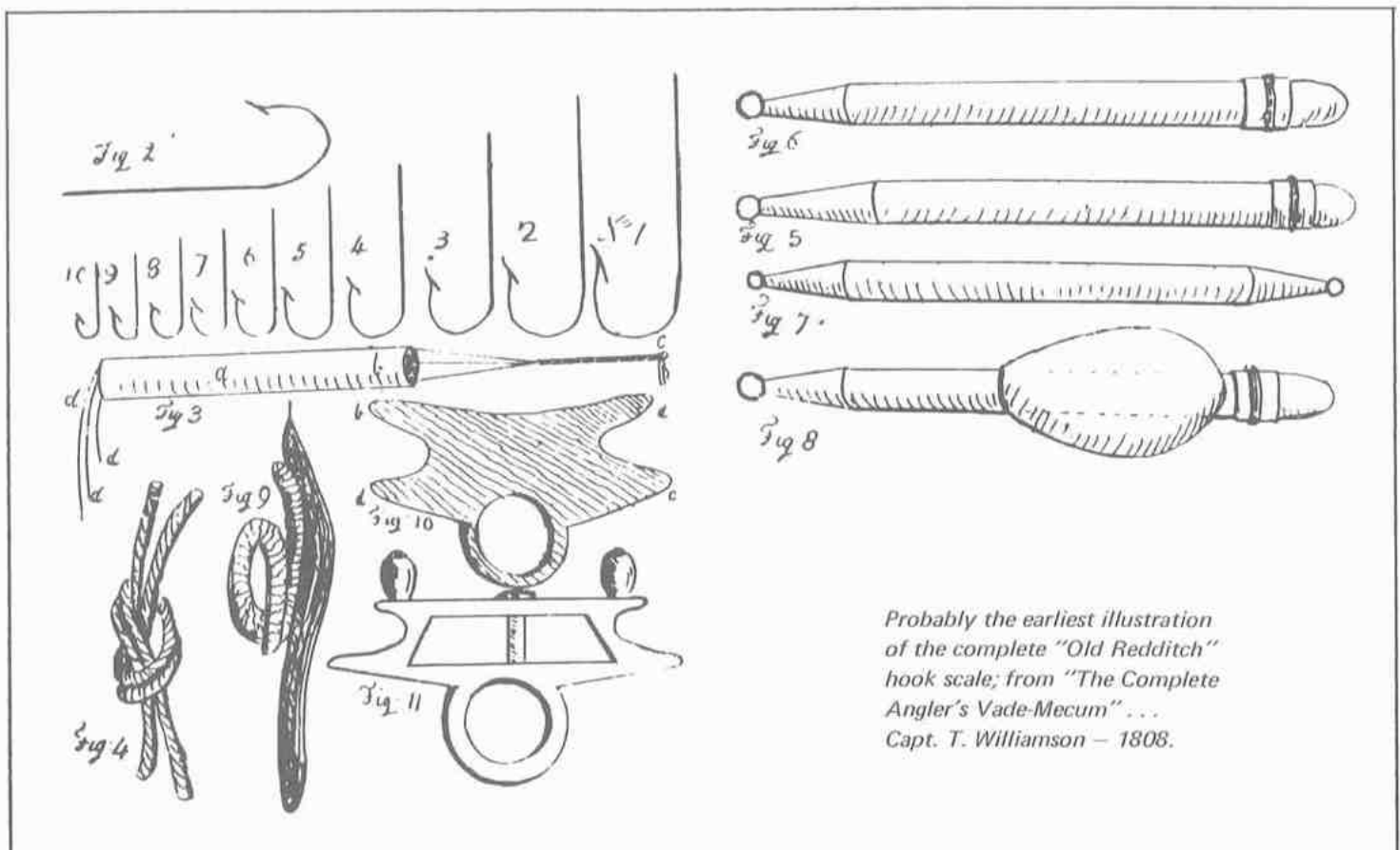
This "Old Redditch" scale was in use for a long time. Two of the plates in the 1855 edition of "Blacker's, Art of Fly Making" illustrate trout flies; on each plate is printed "(exact size)." By measuring the gape of the illustrated hooks and comparing with the size numbers in the text, it is clear that Blacker was still using the scale illustrated by Daniel and Williamson. T. F. Salter's plate of hooks was again used in 1856 and 1861 for Edward Jesse's editions of Walton and Cotton's "Complete Angler." As the earliest reference that I have found of the "Enlarged" Redditch scale is in "The Practical Angler" 1857 by W. C. Stewart, there must have been considerable overlapping of the scales. Stewart said "Bartlett (Bartleet) numbers his hooks from 1 1/2, the largest size, to 17, the smallest. Addlington's (Addlington's) numbers are from the largest trout size to 00, the smallest."

As a matter of passing interest, the earliest reference to the "Kendal," or so-called "New Scale," that I have been able to find is in John Turton's "The Anglers Manual," 1836 and the earliest illustration of this scale, in "The Contemplative Angler," 1842, by J. Wells, which has a frontispiece depicting twelve hooks, from 00 (smallest) to 10 (largest). I think that this scale must have been introduced about the year 1830, probably by Addlington, the hook makers of Kendal. I hardly think that

this scale still warrants the designation "New," I now prefer "Kendal."

An early comparison of the different scales can be found in "A True Treatise on the Art of Fly Fishing" 1838, by Shipley and Fitzgibbon. ". . . Kendal hooks marked 00, 0, 1, 2, 3, and so on, will correspond to Redditch hooks marked 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, and so on for other numbers." This is additional confirmation that the Redditch hook scale was considerably enlarged at a later date.

Two final points regarding early hooks. First; they were blued and not bronzed. I am not sure when bronzed hooks replaced blued as the standard finish, but it was late in the nineteenth century. Even the first "Hall's Sneaky Limerick Bend Eyed Hooks," made in 1879, were blued. When W. Woodfield took over the manufacture of Hall's hooks from Hutchinson and Son, in 1885, they were bronzed. Second; early nineteenth century hooks were usually much finer in the wire than are their modern counterparts. The "casting line" was of hair, or gut; rods were long and limber; hooks had to be fine in the wire, because the rods were soft in action and a hard strike would break the hair or fine gut hook link. I have quite a number of hooks made well before 1840, in their original packets (from which I can date them fairly accurately); most are finer in the wire than the eyed fly-hooks I now buy.



Probably the earliest illustration of the complete "Old Redditch" hook scale; from "The Complete Angler's Vade-Mecum" . . . Capt. T. Williamson - 1808.

## WINGING THE PATTERNS

Having resolved the question of hook sizes, how to wing the patterns became the next problem. Scotcher gave clear directions for tying hackled patterns, but nothing about the method of winging. Not only is there a dearth of flies from this period, but also a lack of illustrations. The earliest illustrations of any value are in the 1760 Hawkins edition of "The Complete Angler." These were copied by Brookes in the later editions of "The Art of Angling" and also by Best for his "Concise Treatise," 1787, and later editions. There are a few better quality plates in Daniel's "Rural Sports," including what must be the first illustrations of salmon flies. Bainbridge too has a fine plate of salmon flies, but for trout flies mainly confined himself to illustrations of natural insects. By the time illustrations of artificial flies had become of use to the fly-dresser, (Bowlker, 1826 to Ronalds, 1836) we are moving away from the era of Scotcher.

Accordingly, I turned to written descriptions. The first instructions how to wing a fly are given by Thomas Barker in "The Art of Angling," 1651. Curiously, Barker called it "the palmer fly," but it was winged and hackled. The method was to whip on the gut, then tie a bunch of feather fibres for wings, with the points away from the bend of the hook, what we now call a reversed wing. The wing was divided into two with tying silk, wound in a figure of eight between the bunches of fibres. The body was then spun and wound on the shank, the hackle turned and the wings pulled upright, or sloped back towards the bend, with tying silk reinforced with the last turns of hackle. This was more or less the method followed by Cotton, the Bowlkers and most other writers until almost the mid-nineteenth century. This is also the method illustrated by Bainbridge in 1816. There were variations. Robert Salter, for example, tied on the wings first, but with the points toward the bend; the bunch of fibres were divided as before, but the butts of the wings were pulled back between the wings, tied down and trimmed off; the wings were then put into an upright position. Taylor in 1800 was the first to suggest tying on the wings sloping back towards the bend, he wanted what we now call "a good entry" and was one of the first to write of down-stream, sunk-fly fishing.

Tying the wing in first makes a very strong fly and gives a very neat head, especially when the rest of the method is followed and the fly tied-off either behind the hackle, or at the bend. And yet my reading still left me puzzled. Most of the early flies I have seen have obviously been winged after the body and hackle have been finished. True, I have not

seen many flies from before 1830. Ronalds, in 1836, clearly, illustrates winging last and tying-off at the head. I found part of the answer in "The British Angler's Manual," 1839, by T. C. Hofland. In the directions "How to make an artificial fly" Hofland said:—

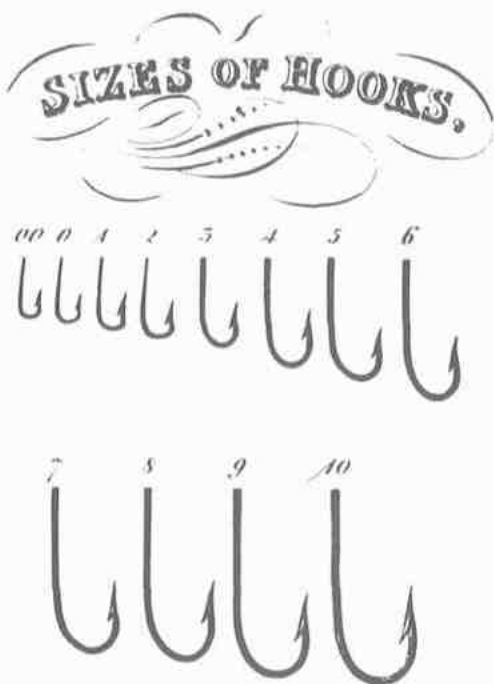
"There are several modes adopted in making the artificial fly: one is, to tie the wings on to the hook in the natural position in the first instance; another method is, to place the feathers for the wings in a reversed position in the first instance, and naturally afterwards; and the third and last way is, to tie the wings on the hook after the body is made, instead of beginning with them.

### THIRD METHOD

This includes the Irish manner of tying flies, and is the plan generally adopted in the tackle-shops."

Thus, during the early part of the nineteenth century we find the first radical change in fly dressing methods for about two hundred years. Only part of the explanation is given by Hofland. Professional fly-dressers obviously found it easier to tie on the wings last; this method gave a neater wing and as an added bonus to them, the fly was not so hard wearing! But there were more reasons than this for the change in style; there must have been a demand for flies dressed in this manner. The method of fishing was changing and the new method was to fish downstream, with a sunk fly.

There is sufficient evidence to con-



*The earliest illustration of the "New" hook scale . . . from "The Contemplative and Practical Angler" . . . J. Wells, 1842.*

vince any unbiased jury, "beyond any reasonable doubt," that eighteenth century flies were fished on the surface. Let me make it quite clear, this was not "Dry-fly" fishing as we know it. There is a difference between a floating fly and dry-fly. A fact often forgotten, may be even unknown, to many modern experts. It would be beyond the scope of these notes to examine the evidence here, let it suffice to say that Robert Brookes, 1740, was the first person to suggest sinking an artificial fly as much as six inches under the surface. In 1811 Lascelles considered it a special 'tip' to sink flies in conditions of bright sun and clear sky.

Included in the reasons for the change in fishing methods must be the improvements that had taken place in tackle; woven, tapered lines; better reels and the use of hickory and other imported woods for rod making, all helped to change fishing styles; as some sixty years later the combination of split cane rods, oiled silk lines and eyed hooks resulted in modern dry-fly fishing.

To return to winging the patterns; Scotcher gives directions for upright, or flat wings, according to the shape of the natural insect. Robert Salter and Lascelles were equally concise and gave such directions as "wings nearly upright," "wings must be made to stand upright" and "wings flat."

I concluded that to reproduce early nineteenth century fly-dressings wings should be made of bunched, or rolled, strips of fibres, tied on advanced, split and pulled into the natural position with tying silk.

## BODIES

Bodies were mainly dubbed and ribbed with tying silk or floss silk was used. The few fly illustrations of the period show bodies carried down the shank to opposite the point, or at the most opposite the barb.

Scotcher gave no directions as to the size of body, neither does Robert Salter. Lascelles instructs "the length of two-thirds of the shank" and adds a little later "never to let your body, legs, or wings be too long, or in too great a quantity."

## THE HACKLES

Towards the end of "The Legacy" Scotcher lists the materials required to dress his patterns; these include a fair number of cock's hackles and about half as many hen's. And yet, in the dressings, Scotcher rarely shows a preference between the two. Taking his first choice of hackle in the thirty dressings, four are not from domestic poultry, five are for cock's hackles and five for hen's; in the remaining sixteen patterns colour only is stated, without reference to sex.

# History of the Split Bamboo

by

T. S. MORRELL

*T. S. Morrell was a well known fly fisher who made frequent contributions to the various sporting magazines of the day. It is difficult to determine whether or not he was a professional sports writer. Apparently, he knew quite a bit about tackle making and undoubtedly had a great many friends who were in the trade. The information following concerning the split bamboo was probably given to Dr. James Henshall some time in the 1870's. Unfortunately, Morrell takes for granted the reader will be able to fill in the missing steps and instructions as the building of the split bamboo rod progresses. This article at least gives us an insight as to the beginnings of the split bamboo in the historical sense.*

In order to give the reader an idea of the construction of a split bamboo rod, I can not do better than to reproduce here the following extract from a letter, written to me on this subject by Mr. T. S. Morrell, an accomplished and finished angler, of Newark, New Jersey — relating to the construction of a split bamboo Black Bass minnow rod, as made by himself:—

I have just finished a rod patterned after that described by you in "Hallow's Sportsman's Gazatteer" — a one-hand bait-rod for Black Bass. I will briefly describe my method of manufacture, as I learned it from Mr. E. A. Green:

The rod is eight and a half feet long, in three joints, of six-strip bamboo. The ferrules, reel-bands, butt-cap, and guides I had made to order, not being an expert in working metals. The bamboo I got from Mr. C. F. Murphy, and is as tough as bone.

I first sawed the piece of two strips with a fine, sharp hand-saw; then I took a board with a perfectly straight slit sawed the length of a joint of the proposed rod. Laying the flat part of one of the strips (I had just sawn asunder) on this board over the slit, I carefully placed it so as to get the requisite taper, and then tacked it at the edges firmly to the board.

Then, with rule and pencil I drew on the bamboo a straight line, being careful to taper it right, and sawed it out — six pieces exactly alike in size and taper — for a joint. The manner of getting the size correctly, is to take the male ferrule for the thick end of the joint, and the female ferrule for the small end; stand each on end on a piece of paper, and mark a circle outside; then, with a pair of small compasses measure the circle into six parts, and draw a line from point to point across the circle, so that all the lines meet in the center. This will

show the size and taper of each piece, and the exact shape.

The board on which I sawed out my strips has grooves cut, so that I easily plane the inside of the strips for each joint; any inequality I finish off with a file. I now place my six strips together, winding twine around tightly, but some distance apart, so that I can get my thumb and finger between, so that I can see the joints, and how they come together. If they appear loose, and I can not get them together with thumb and finger, I mark the spots with a pencil, and unwinding, file away until they come well together.

For the butt, I draw a plan on paper, that is, enough of it to represent the hand-hold, measure with compasses the distance across each strip, or cut a pattern of paper, lay it on the bamboo and mark it out. For the tip and middle joint, when I glue the strips together, I wind hard and tight and closely with twine; now I straighten them carefully (as the hot glue has made them pliant), and lay away for twenty-four hours on a shelf. I never stand them on end, as they are likely to warp out of shape.

For the butt, I have iron rings of many sizes; when the strips are glued together, I force on these rings, driving on hard, and close together. This brings the glued strips so tightly together that the joints can not be seen. Twenty-four hours after gluing, I take off the rings and wrappings of twine, and finish off with a file and sandpaper; then fit on the ferrules, which I fasten on with cement.

Before putting on the guides and metal tip, I joint the rod together, and turn it in the ferrules until I get it perfectly straight; then mark the places for the guides and tip, so that they are all in a straight line, so that the fishing-line may have as little friction as possible. I now cement on the metal tip, and lash

on the guides with a string, simply to hold them in place for the silk lashings.

The rod is now ready for the silk lashings, for which I use fine red spool-silk. I wind the guides first; winding on smoothly and closely. When one side of the guide is wound, I cut off the silk, leaving half a yard, which I thread in a needle, and, pushing the latter under the lashings, draw it through tightly and cut off close. Then finish the other side of the guide in the same way.

I now, with a pencil, mark the places for the lashings the whole length of the joint, tip, or butt, on which I am working. I draw off the spool about four feet of silk, cut it off and thread the needle; this is enough for several lashings of the tip. I make not more than a half-dozen turns on the end of the tip, and place the lashings about a half-inch apart, increasing the number of turns and the distance apart, so that at the butt of the rod, the lashings are an eighth of an inch wide and one inch apart.

When the lashings, guides, reel-bands, butt-cap, etc., are all on, I give the rod its first coat of varnish, putting it on very thin and evenly; it is quite an art to varnish well. I give the rod at least four coats, each as thin as I can spread it, and each well dried before the next is put on. I do not use shellac, but varnish of the best gum.

I have, at some length, thus described my method of making a split bamboo rod, as taught me by Mr. Green. There are several other ways of doing it, and it must be understood that this is amateur work. A circular saw is a great help, and indispensable to those who make rods to sell.

*from Henshall, Dr. James A.  
Book of the Black Bass  
1889*

# Salt Water Fly Fishing

by

LETCHER LAMBUTH

*Editor's note: This article is excerpted from an unpublished manuscript by the late Letcher Lambuth, an experimenter and innovator who blazed many new trails in fly fishing in the Pacific Northwest. Some of the items handcrafted by Lambuth -- including a spiral bamboo rod, a reel crocheted from twine and a hand-tied landing net -- now are on display in the Museum. Here, Lambuth writes of salt water fly fishing for coho salmon off Vancouver Island in the 1920's and 30's.*

In Northwestern Washington, the Pacific slope falls off abruptly from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound, a maze of channels and inlets of deep, clean, blue salt water. The Sound is nearly one hundred miles in length, and continues, under other names, some 1,500 miles northwestward along British Columbia and into Alaska. This is the largest and one of the most beautiful protected cruising areas in the world. The water is tempered and the climate is moderated by the warm influence of the "Japan current." Violent storms are relatively uncommon. Hundreds of miles of beaches fringe the emerald shores; the water and the beaches teem with sea life.

In the vicinity of the cities, frontages accessible by ferry and auto are occupied by summer homes. The Sound is the principal summer playground of the lovers of the out-of-doors of Seattle and other cities of the Pacific Northwest. Most of these pursue some form of sea life for sport and for the pan, whether it be shell fish, coarse and bottom fish, or sea trout and salmon, all of which are wholesome and appetizing. The easy availability of this fishing has to a very great extent relieved the woods and rivers of the pressure of those seeking sport and recreation. The skiff, with or without outboard power, rather than the auto is probably the more popular vehicle of sport.

The range of high and low water is perhaps 10 feet in the vicinity of Seattle and very much greater in some British Columbia waters, and this implies the transfer of a tremendous volume of water through narrow channels four times every twenty-four hours. At some points the tides are confined by narrows in which currents of ten knots or more are common during the crest of the ebb and flow, with resultant overfalls, rips and whirlpools. Even moderate winds



*Portrait of Letcher Lambuth contributed to the Museum by Mrs. Olive Lambuth. Her late husband was one of the most knowledgeable fly fishers of the Northwest.*

when adverse to the tidal flow will build up uncomfortable, if not dangerous, chop and in channels threading high ranges such winds will frequently funnel into local gales. By reason of the depth of water and character of terrain, good anchorages are infrequent, and chart and pilot book must be consulted.

The principal game fish are sea-run cutthroat trout and two species of Pacific salmon. The sea trout are found almost the year-round either along the shores in salt water or in the estuaries or in the rivers which they run seasonally for food and spawning. The sea trout is a fine game fish, commonly of one to five or six pounds weight, and is usually taken with either a light troll or a fly when in salt or estuary waters.

The largest species of Pacific salmon is variously known as King, Spring, Chinook or Tyee. On its annual run in

Pacific Northwest waters it is taken by sportsmen in the ocean off the coast, in the tidal waters and in the rivers. The average weight is probably nearly 30 pounds; specimens of over 50 pounds, taken with rod and line, are not uncommon. Individuals of 80 to 100 pounds have been taken commercially. The principal season is July and August in Puget Sound and British Columbia waters and March and April in the Columbia River and its tributaries.

The coho, or silver salmon, appears in Puget Sound and British Columbia waters in September and October. It is a splendid game fish weighing ordinarily up to twenty pounds. During recent years, sportsmen have learned to take cohos on a streamer fly. On the fly, these fish furnish fine sport, and the reader may be interested in the following account of this fishing.

As part of our annual outing program we plan to be at Cowichan Bay in British Columbia for a week sometime between the first and twentieth of October. This is a deep inlet on the east side of Vancouver Island, about 100 miles from Seattle, where the fish gather in thousands, feeding and playing until it is time, with the coming of the heavy rains to ascend the Cowichan River to the spawning beds. The resorts at Cowichan Bay have good hotel accommodations, boats and other facilities for anglers. Other resorts, with similar facilities, are situated at Campbell River, 80 miles farther north on Vancouver Island. These two are the principal coho fly fishing grounds of this district.

We have not yet explored Puget Sound for other grounds, nearer home, for equally favorable conditions, but we feel sure that such places can and will be found. The requirement seems to be a river with a heavy spawning run of cohos emptying into a salt water area sufficiently protected for comfortable



fishing in small boats and frequented by herring and candlefish in sufficient volume to hold the salmon for a few days of conditioning before their final and fatal adventure.

We enjoy the pleasures of anticipation of the trip to Cowichan more than any other. It is the only trip on which we use the larger rods and the streamer flies, and we defer the preparation of tackle and the tying of our flies until the last ten days before departure. I have used rods of several weights and lengths from 9 feet, 5 ounces up, but have finally adopted a 10½ foot, 11 ounce spiral rod of our own making as being best adjusted to the type of casting and weight of fish. My rod weighs 9 ounces exclusive of the two-ounce adjustable locking reel seat that I use for this fishing. The line is a Hardy Corona Number 3, double-tapered salmon fly line, with 200 yards of fine backing; the casting line would be graded about AA on the American scale, or .065 inches; the rod and line are well mated and the rod is properly balanced, with plenty of action from tip to butt so that I can cast and shoot a fairly long line without undue effort.

The streamer flies are made with tinsel ribbon body and polar bear hair dyed in bright colors on 2/0 hooks. The favored color combinations, with white as an underbody, are light and dark blue, blue and brown, blue and orange, blue and red, etc. We believe the fish regard these as some sort of an appetizing minnow. The response of the fish to the fly patterns changes from year to year, and we can never be sure in advance just

what combination will be most successful.

The Canadians extend a cordial welcome to their American visitors. Rooms, boats and guides, if desired, are soon arranged. We usually fish two men to a small powered skiff, without a professional guide, because – with several days at our disposal – we prefer to explore rather than concentrate on the areas in which the fish are feeding. If a guide is employed, oars are preferred to power.

At the height of the run the fish will frequently be jumping in every direction as far as the eye can discern the splashes. Frequently the jumping fish will not take the fly. We explore for those disposed to feed by casting to the side from the slowly moving boat, allowing the line to swing into the wake and then stripping in. Sometimes the fly is taken when thus trolling. More often, as the fly is stripped in, the bow wave of the fish suddenly appears near the fly and the ensuing few seconds as the angler manipulates the fly and the fish makes up his mind to strike are moments of exciting suspense. Suddenly there is a boil or splash, a surge as the hook is set, and the reel whines.

These are powerful fish and often make long runs which cannot be checked with safety to tackle, but eventually, the fish decides to change his course, some line can be recovered and then there is a battle in which the fish leaps, rushes, sounds and stubbornly circles the boat until finally subdued and netted. I adopted 200 yards of backing this year because I have too often seen the last few turns on my reel before the fish turned when using only 100 yards.

When conditions were just right, with a breeze to ripple the water and new schools of fish in, we have tested the finest possibilities of this sport in casting and taking fish from a drifting boat. When this has happened, the fish have been larger than those taken from the moving boat, averaging perhaps 14 lbs. In drifting, a long cast is made and the line is stripped in; the fish, if interested, will follow the line and take within close view of the boat. It is the most exciting action, I think, in the whole realm of salmon fishing because those big fellows don't rush at the lure right-side-up as a proper fish should do, but instead, tumble all over and around the lure in dizzying darts and circles. At the instant of striking they turn straight down and immediately after this turn is the time to set the hook.

We have given attention to the interesting and exciting moments of this sport, but – as in all angling – there is another side to the picture. Cohos can be just as temperamental and just as tantalizing as the resident river trout. Sometimes, with the bay full of fish, not a sign of life is visible. Sometimes, with fish churning the surface all around not one can be interested. But over a period of days, enough fish will be taken at some time to make the trip a success.

Those of us who have been raised on the Sound have been accustomed to salmon fishing by methods and with tackle more or less crude. It is only in the past few years that we have been introduced to streamer fly fishing, and we believe that its possibilities are not yet fully understood and appreciated.



*Letcher Lambuth on one of his favorite streams, c. 1935.*

# Caveat Emptor

Let the buyer beware. Although the two engravings reprinted are quite similar, a close inspection will reveal a few glaring differences. The top engraving is English and first published as a decoration in Hofland's "The British Angler's Manual" 1839. The lower reprint is a pirated American print retitled and with some changes. Both are interesting and fit to be hung on a sportsman's wall. The market value of the second American print, however, is effected even though relatively early in American print making. This kind of piracy was quite common until copyright laws reciprocal between Great Britain and the United States came into effect. A number of Currier & Ives sporting prints were pirated from British sources.



*TEDDINGTON  
WEIR . . .*

*from Hofland's "The  
British Angler's Manual"  
- 1839.*

*TROUT FISHING  
ON LONG ISLAND . . .*

*from "The American Turf  
Register and Sporting  
Magazine" - 1840.*

photo by John Orrelle



# The Choice of Flies

by

LOUIS RHEAD

To choose the six best books would be no more difficult than a like choice of flies. It would be hardly possible to get two flyfishermen, from the many thousands who cast, to agree on a choice of the six best flies. The most that could be hoped for would be that so short a list should contain one of their fancy. Indeed many anglers provide a varied list in their books, because season and locality require it. Bright or cloudy days often make it necessary to change both size and color, and a fly used with success in the morning is often no good at evening, although on the following evening it may be just the thing.

To minimize the difficulty and save time while in the water, a well-known angler has devised a plan to have ready-tied half a dozen leaders with a choice and varied assortment in both color and size — each set entirely different from all the others. The largest and most taking fly is placed as the end, or tail, fly. Should the upper fly be taken first, it is then removed to the end — the end fly being much easier to handle, especially with a large fish. Should the first cast of flies be unsuccessful, it is short work to take it off the line and replace it with another, duller in color, or brighter, as the case may be. By this means, he claims, possibly with truth, that less time is wasted and the quarry sooner brought to the basket. It certainly has advantages when fishing after dusk, with little light to see the fly or tie it on the leader.

Many anglers assert that for bass fishing one fly is sufficient, and some think a small spoon used with the fly gives better results. This would be especially so when a vari-colored fly like the Ferguson is used. It would seem that with two flies, tied forty inches apart and having as great a difference as possible in color and size, success would be more sure. It is by no means rare that two fish will take the flies at the same time. Often in playing one fish the other fly, being moved rapidly in the water, will be taken by another fish, out of pure jealousy. An instance of this kind was shown when the writer, fishing with a

live minnow on the end of the leader, and a fly tied three feet from the bait, a good-sized pickerel took the minnow. After being brought to the edge of the boat, he broke away, again to be returned, with a large bass on the fly — the pickerel on the bait — both being landed after considerable skill and careful work.

Very few will contest the fact that the Silver Doctor, both in form and beauty, is the queen of flies. No matter what its size, for bass, trout, or salmon, it holds its own as a taking fly, in any season or locality. In "Favorite Flies," Mrs. Marbury states that the majority of anglers place the Silver Doctor at the head of the list, especially for evening use. It did not originate in this country, but it has been heartily adopted and adapted to all waters by making it on all sizes of hooks. Its value for all game fish is undisputed.

As a bass fly, next to the Silver Doctor, the Ferguson is probably the most successful fly used. It is named after Major Ferguson, Fish Commissioner of Maryland, who endorsed this special pattern as the true one among a number of others slightly different, but all of the same name. It is a bold and bright-colored fly, the wing with long streaks of yellow, red and black showing brightly in the water, the green hackle softly blending with the black and bright-golden body.

The Matador was designed by William J. Cassard, of New York, and later named by C. F. Orvis. Its gay, rich dress, having wings of the black-barred feathers of the wood-duck, with a bold white streak running across the top, at once stamps it as an excellent bass fly.

The W. D. Cleveland, so named after a member of the "Texas Fishing Club," is somewhat similar to Dr. Henshall's Polka, having a gallina wing and red-and-black body. The black blot at the top and bottom of the wing is showy; otherwise this fly has a sober brown appearance, but with distinct and original markings.

The Cracker was designed by Dr. George Trowbridge, of New York, and was intended for the fishes of Florida,

being named after the "poor whites" of that State and Georgia. Like the Silver Doctor, it is a good all-around fly for different game fish. The luckiest models always contain a plentiful supply of red in wings and back, with yellow and blue mixed in, and with peacock feathers to blend with its blue body. The Cracker is a remarkably handsome fly, having the red hackle of a slightly darker shade than that of the wing. This fly is not so well known as its beauty warrants.

The Murray Hill, with bright body and wings, has a long red tail, black hackle and side feathers, and resembles to an astonishing degree a living moth. It has less color than the usual bass fly. Bass have an eye for bright and strong colors, with deep black well mixed in for contrast; in this they much resemble the salmon and other game fishes. It is beyond question that bright colors will attract from a greater distance. Could we be placed where fish generally lie, these brilliant butterfly fairies dancing on the top of the water would attract our attention, and had we the bass's pugnacious will, we, too, might tackle with avidity the man encased in so bright a robe.

To the thoughtless casual observer a fly is just a bundle of feathers jumbled together anyhow — without meaning. By no means is it so. The great and standard flies have been evolved, designed, sometimes after many years of thoughtful study of both nature and habits of the fishes, and the inventor of such a fly as, for instance, the Silver Doctor, unquestionably has conferred a world-wide benefit for all time. Such a fly is born but once in a long time — like a Shakespeare or a Dante. But all anglers are of one mind in this: that a limited variety of the designs to pick from are as various as the flowers that bloom. Practical fly fishers of many years' standing, like the late William C. Harris, Dr. Henshall and others, have repeatedly stated that in their experience they soon discarded all but a few patterns. Dr. Henshall has complete faith in his own creations, and with reason, too; though his inventions are less brightly colored than those of

others, and, in the writer's opinion, have too thick bodies - at least in some instances. In only one of the five flies is red used, and that only for the body and hackle. On the other hand, Mr. Harris was a staunch believer in red and green, but the difference in success may be apparent only in the locality fished - whether west or east. But all agree in the oft-repeated rule that for dark days and evenings light flies are always taken best.

One of the greatest advantages is having confidence in a fly, for it goes a long way toward making it a success. A fisherman will almost invariably kill the greatest number of fish with the fly he uses most. He persists so long that from sheer anger a game fish rises to his lure, and, be it said, the artificial fly, when playing on the water, is more like the natural fly than the average observer would imagine; the many varieties winging their flight on or near the water, with wings cocked or flat, have been imitated with remarkable fidelity. The duns, drakes, spinners, beetles, ants and browns - all insects in their natural state providing abundant food by night or day - being so difficult of capture, ingenious man provides substitutes that will stay on the hook and keep their form and color, in or on the water, till worn out, to be replaced by new ones.

It is not to be inferred that the writer advises against trying any new patterns that are invented; experience will at once tell whether a new fly will be likely to surpass those now in use, and it is quite possible that the greatest fly is yet to be made by some genius - a fly that will take at all times, in all places, and all kinds of fish. Such a fly would make the designed world-renowned among a host of admiring brother anglers. One has a secret thought that perhaps fishing would be then too easy, and the delightful hope, the fisherman's guide, would be gone forever.

But it is a noticeable fact that the great majority of bass fishermen use live bait - frogs, minnows, helgramites, crawfish and eels. They imagine that a better-filled creel results from the use of live bait; yet fly-fishing is immeasurably superior in every way. It is cleaner, less cruel to bait and quarry, cheaper and easier in many ways. Who has not traveled some distance to find his bait short just as the fish are beginning to bite, or at times find his bait dead and therefore useless? And how often it happens that bait costs much more than the fish are worth. Who cares to wade through a stream with a can of minnows dangling in the water, with nerves on edge every minute, as he expects their escape or loss? Frogs are especially "cute" in getting away either by forcing the lid off the can, or jumping in all directions when the angler has only one hand at liberty; and, worse still, how often will they crawl around a large stone or rock, from which no amount of pulling and tugging moves them, till, weary of trying, a sudden, last, desperate jerk parts the leader from the line?

These and many other ills come not to the fly-caster. He calmly takes his book of flies, lying snugly in his pocket, and soon replaces or adjusts a new cast, right in mid-stream, and freely begins anew his pleasant pastime. It is quite true that bass are not always in the humor to take a fly - the same may be said of salmon and trout - but the ardent fly-caster usually has patience in his make-up to wait till the fish will rise to his feathery lure, and this often happens sooner than is expected, if some coaxing is brought into play.

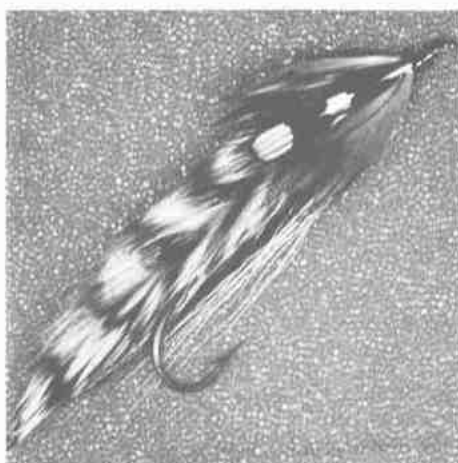
No ingenious American has yet attempted - at least to the writer's knowledge - to make flies by machinery; so that all are tied by hand, and well-made flies are necessarily costly. All the makers, especially well-known and trustworthy houses, can supply and will

furnish the very best if paid for the extra care in tying. No comparison can possibly be made between the ten-cent bass fly of the bargain stores and those made by such firms as Abbey & Imbrie, Mills, and Charles F. Orvis, the latter firm having made the sheet of colored flies for this volume. The original patterns are copied exactly, and each firm has its own choice set of patterns, besides the standard kind.

Experienced anglers often say that bass will jump at anything when they are in the humor; but the trouble is that they are rarely in the humor to jump at any old rag that is cast before them, and the only way to put them in a humor to be always jumping is to show them the most attractive flies. A fly that will rise a fish often is a good fly.

In the order given: No. 1 has a gray wing with red ibis shoulder, warm gray hackle with a green body, red tail to match the shoulder, and deep black head. No. 2 is a brilliant yellow hackle, body and wings, with shoulder of red, black head and tail. No. 3 is decidedly different from the Orvis Silver Doctor, having a bright blue hackle, black head, with wings a mixture of grays, without the golden pheasant's feathers, the absence of the latter taking away much of its beauty in appearance, yet seeming to lessen none of its effectiveness as a taking fly. No. 4 has the brown hackle, thick and bushy, green head and body of peacock's hurl, with a short, stumpy red tail. I like this fly, and made in any size - small preferred - it would do great service for trout. No. 5 has a deep black wing, hackle, head and tail, with a bright golden body and cream-colored spotted shoulder; it is a most effective looking fly, but did not take as I expected on trial. No. 6 is the regulation white and red, with yellow head and wooly body.

A new pattern rising rapidly in favor, the Babcock, used always as a second



The Maine landlocked streamer fly was in use in its simplest form beginning about 1900. By the 1930's Carrie Stevens had produced a very sophisticated flat winged assembly that was entirely different in design than any of these fashioned previously.

The flies pictured above were tied in the Stevens' style and have no name. Carrie Stevens' secret was in the choice of and assembly of her materials. Properly tied, they will have a flutter at the tail quite similar to a minnow. Dressed by A. S. H.

fly -- that nearest the rod -- has bright yellow wings, in striking contrast to the black head and hackle which is carried on by a streak of black up the yellow wing. With its body of scarlet, with twisted gold thread and its black tail, it is both a gracefully built and a strikingly handsome fly. I used it with a Silver Doctor as end fly, and on this cast of flies landed fish.

These flies, with the six Orvis flies pictured on the plate, were specially tested by the writer in swift-running, cold water of the Bearkill, a few miles above its junction with the Delaware, and while, of course, this was not conclusive, it was found that the Silver Doctor, by both makers, was far ahead in the number of rises and of fish caught, in the morning or the evening, on dull or bright days. When I changed back to this successful lure it seemed to be as enticing to trout as to bass, the brown as well as the *fontinalis*, or brook trout, while the ever voracious chub, that rises to any fly, took particular liking to this fly. One large fish weighing over three pounds, after a gamy resistance, was brought to the net, and on extracting the hook he disgorged a good-sized mouse or young rat that, no doubt, in swimming across the stream, had just fallen a victim. The brown palmer, used as a second or upper fly, hooked a number of fish. Another case, made up of the Grizzly King and Lord Baltimore, was not so effective, but attracted attention, the fish rising, but returning without taking the fly.

I am inclined to agree with Mr. Harris that bass flies as sold by the dealers are far too large for running water, and are better suited for the deep, dark-colored water of the lakes. The rule is not infallible -- that big flies catch the large fish; but after dusk the large fly is more serviceable in that both angler and fish see it more easily.

Later I carefully trimmed part of the flies with my scissors, reducing the wings and tail nearly one-third, the change being a decided improvement in the Ferguson, Cracker and Silver Doctor of the Orvis flies, and the Silver Doctor, Parmehenee Belle and Grizzly King of the Abbey & Imbrie flies. While casting for bass in what is known as a bass pool, I landed a splendid brown trout, on the Cracker, before reducing its size; but at twilight, and on three different occasions, I hooked a fine bass on the trimmed Ferguson in this same pool. Twice he got away while out of the water, and once he rubbed the hook off by nosing a rock in the swirl of swift water. I tried him many times after, and on every occasion he would leap out of the water once, but never a second time.

In short, after most careful study of this particular kind of water and locality I am firmly convinced that any fish -- bass, trout, or even salmon -- will, nine times out of ten, go for the fly that has a shining metallic body, either of silver or of gold, the former preferred; and that this is the explanation why the Silver Doctor is so universally pronounced a favorite fly. My choice would be, out

of a dozen flies, ten with silver or gold bodies and a varied assortment of wings and hackles, no matter what fish be the quarry. In fresh or salt water the same rule would apply, and size is more important than color. It is only in the latter part of the season that large-sized natural flies are on the wing. In swift-running water the bass is harder to land and has in his favor all the chances of getting away. With movements so quick, he is gone in a flash. Many times, like lightning, he rises to meet the fly, even before it touches the water, so that the angler must be very alert to get ahead, if the bass is to be hooked at all. To the fly fisherman there is no more inspiring sight than a fair-sized bass, leaping out of the foaming, rapid water; in a second, head up; with fly in his lips, shaking his whole body in anger and fright; slipping down again, to tear off upstream; the reel singing a lively tune. We ask ourselves every time: "Will he get away?"

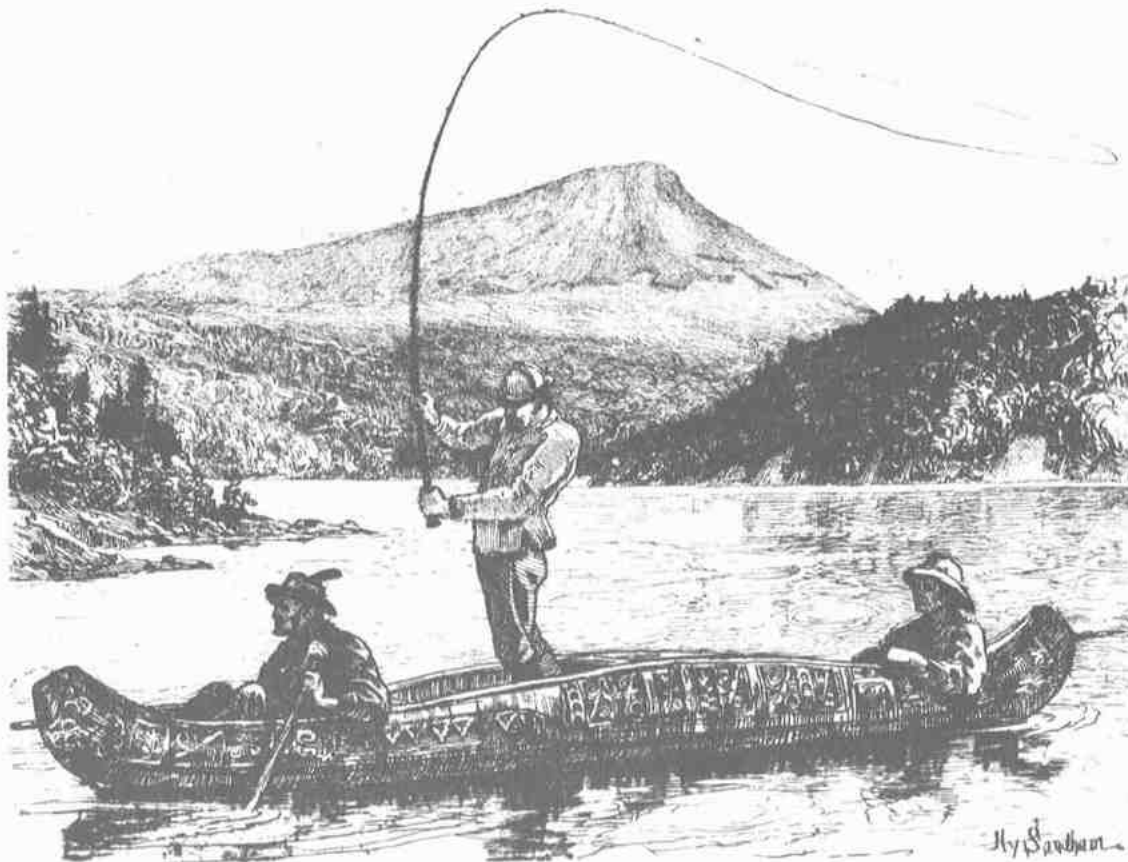
from *The Commissioner's Report*  
*Indiana*  
1905 - 1906



LIFE'S  
DARKEST  
MOMENTS...

This original Webster cartoon has been given to the Museum by Mr. D. C. (Duckie) Corkran. It is now on permanent display in our exhibit rooms.

## The Angling Book Resplendent



"The First Cast" drawn and etched by H. Sandham from Dean Sage's "The Ristigouche and its Salmon Fishing with a Chapter on Angling Literature."

Reading Nick Lyon's *Fisberman's Bounty*, I came upon an article by Frank Mele entitled "Blue Dun" which had to say a great deal about an old friend of mine, Dan Brennan. The author quoted Dan as saying some very astute things concerning fly fishermen and fly tying and his talent as a custom maker of very fine split bamboo rods. I knew him as a seller of the old and rare angling book rather than a craftsman although I had the greatest appreciation for his skill with tools as evidenced by the 9 foot and 11 foot, one piece fly rods he let me handle on one of my first visits to his home in Fayetteville, N. Y. at the far end of the Mohawk Valley. His office and stock room were at the end of a narrow, steep, and difficult staircase, the last leg of a two hour drive in which my anticipation of the visit kept mounting the nearer I came to Fayetteville. All my visits were memorable but the one that is best remembered is the rainy Saturday that introduced me to one of the great rarities of angling literature. Dan stood at the head of the stairs and at the end of my final stumble

handed me a book and put me in the chair by his desk. I can't blame him for the grin on his face for he had succeeded in obtaining Halford's limited edition of *The Modern Development of The Dry Fly* in 2 volumes, 4to., in full green morocco. The text is in volume 1, and in volume 2., a glorious array of custom tied flies placed in sunken mounts . . . each mount containing 33 flies . . . I no longer can remember the details of copy number, signature and date but upon first sight was awed to silence and appreciation. Dan informed me that the dressing was by Halford's fly tier, H. G. McClelland. Already under the spell of Pryce-Tannatt's beautiful reproductions of British salmon flies I had entered the gates of Eden, and from then on found myself bound by the magic influence of fine bindings, tooled leather, gold stampings and all the other embellishments that add to the joy of fishing books.

The extra illustrated book is the highlight of any collection and in a sense, because of the reality of the artificial fly, its use to emphasize an auth-

or's viewpoint is to me the angling book brought to perfection. I am not certain when the first angling book was assembled in this way but mention can be made of Aldam's *A Quaint Treatise On Flees and the Art of Artficial Flee Making*, (1876), as one of the first. In 1962, a signed presentation copy with an 1888 photo of the author laid in was offered at 50 pounds.

The same year, a book of later date, *Taverner's Trout Fishing* (1919) in full blue morocco and 30 flies could be bought for 30 pounds and his *Salmon Flies* (1931), with 7 flies, sold for the same price.

Because of scuff marks and a broken hinge, Dan Brennan quoted his amazing Halford at \$85. Some years later I came upon another Halford similar to that of the Brennan copy described as bound in 1/2 red calf, limited to 50 (American) copies and dated New York, 1910. This issue was priced at 100 pounds.

The comfortable hours with Dan ended upon my transfer to Cambridge, Mass. I never saw him again although we exchanged letters and I helped him re-

search his *Nessmuk* which because of his terminal disease, he never saw in print. He willed me a copy through its publisher. Frank Mele, the author of "Blue Dun" and I were indeed fortunate in knowing Dan Brennan and there could have been no better way for me to be introduced to the angling book on dress parade.

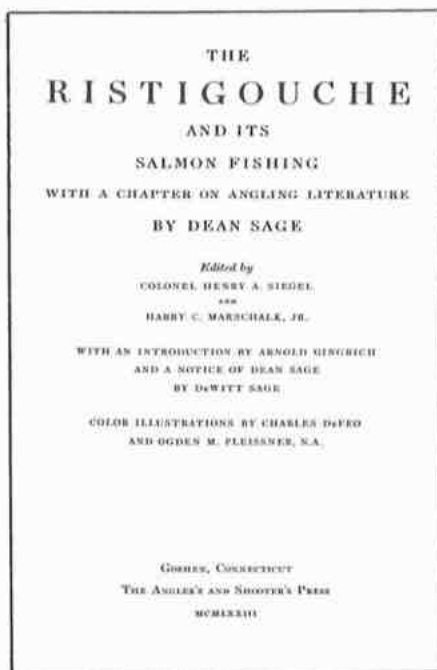
During the following decade in my search through the Boston book markets for the volumes that would fit my desires and pocketbook I often noted the lack of good taste in the makeup of the fishing books that were then being written and put on the market. Each year the current crop boasted more flamboyant book jackets, monotonous photographs replacing the talented artist and too often the paper was closely related to newsprint. The trend has continued and its a certainty because of the synthetic glues used in binding and the acids in the papers, few books of the latter half of this century will remain to be read a hundred years from now.

There was a time when the firmly established publishing house offered for sale one or more "prestige" books. If profit was not entirely forgotten neither was craftsmanship and its alliance with the arts. My concern then, as I watched the continuing changes in publishing practices, was we might never return to a pride in producing angling books of a special layout and manufactured using the best of materials. It could not be expected that in these times a trade edition could ever bear any relationship to what is termed the limited edition, yet if the circumstance is reversed, quite often we find a contemporary limited edition has very little to separate it from its less expensive press mate.

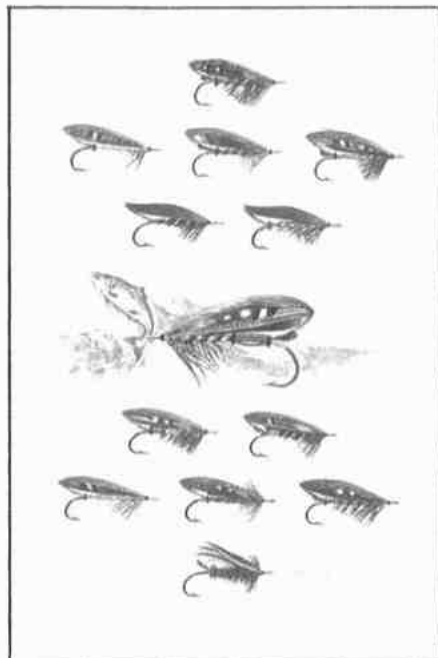
I am not sure this has to be so in either instance. My two copies of John Brown's *American Angler's Guide*, 4th edition, (1857), are for the trade but still with their steel engraving, their gold leaf and their fine printing, they reflect the pride of both the author and the publisher. So does my Dawson *Pleasures of Angling*, Keene's *Fishing Tackle, Its Materials and Manufacture* and Genio Scott's *Fishing American Waters*. The readership for which these books were published were financially no better or worse off than the buyer of today as far as purchasing power is concerned, and I regret the seeming indifference of today's publishers.

If I have given up on trade editions I still have hope in regard to limited editions with the publication and gift to the Museum of two very special publications which do reflect a pride in craftsmanship and the arts and give a good indication we may be again turning to a production of angling books reflecting better taste.

The first is offered by Tony Sismore,



Title Page from "The Ristigouche"



Flies from "The Ristigouche"



"Fishing at Camp Harmony" by Pleissner

John Simpson & Jack Heddon through their Honey Dun press, a reprint of George Scotcher's *The Fly Fisher's Legacy*, c. 1810. The standard limited edition has been given the Museum, a numbered copy of 325 in one quarter leather and boards, a hand colored plate of flies, nicely boxed and suitably inscribed. Copies (if still available) are about \$45. Although I have not had an opportunity to see the deluxe edition of their 2 volume set, which is 4 to., the beauty of binding and presentation has to be all that could be desired if the standard edition we have is a criterion. We are very fortunate in receiving from Jack Heddon a bit of the pre-history relating to the publication in the form of an article published in this issue of *The American Fly Fisher* so I will say no more about the Scotcher.

Our second bountiful gift is from Colonel Henry Siegel, the Angler's and Shooter's Press, Goshen, Conn. and is a reprint of the Dean Sage, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing, with A Chapter on Angling Literature*, (\$500.00). The publication announcement is in itself a collectible with its decorative drawings of salmon flies and a reproduction of an etching by H. Sandham. The new Sage is augmented with individually signed, original color prints and has additional text. Edited by Colonel Siegel and Harry C. Marschalk, Jr., as the publication announcement states, it is "a singularly illustrious and highly prized work in the literature of salmon fishing, newly presented in a truly distinguished edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies only." The preface is by DeWitt Sage, grandnephew of the author, contemporary salmon fly patterns are by Charles Defeo, the foreword by Arnold Gingrich and there is a brilliant full page color print by Odgen M. Pleissner, signed by the artist. Bound in full leather, tooled in gold, the edition is limited to 250 copies. (240 for sale.) Ten percent of the profit from the sale is being donated to the International Atlantic Salmon Foundation.

I asked Colonel Siegel if there were any great problems connected with preparing the work for the printer. With the exception of obtaining the Rives mold made paper preparations went smoothly enough but this does not negate by any means the vast amount of planning that was necessary. The result is immediately apparent for *The Ristigouche* in this edition is one of our great angling books.

At this writing, the angling book market is reflecting the rising spiral of inflation with both dealer and collector faced with the very difficult task of determining what Internal Revenue Service considers the fair market value. The original edition of *The Ristigouche* was limited to 105 copies; (1888) mak-

ing a total printing of this book a mere 355 copies. One might also think about the values of Charles Phair's 40 copies of *Atlantic Salmon Fishing* in 2 volumes, the second volume containing 14 salmon flies and materials, Derrydale 1937 and the William Loring Andrews, velum bound, *Treatyse of Fysbing With An Angle*, 150 copies and type destroyed (1903) which has its own particular charm in its type faces.

If there is a thought the old book market is anything at all like the market of just a few years ago the sampling which follows indicates we are in an exciting era that at long last places books

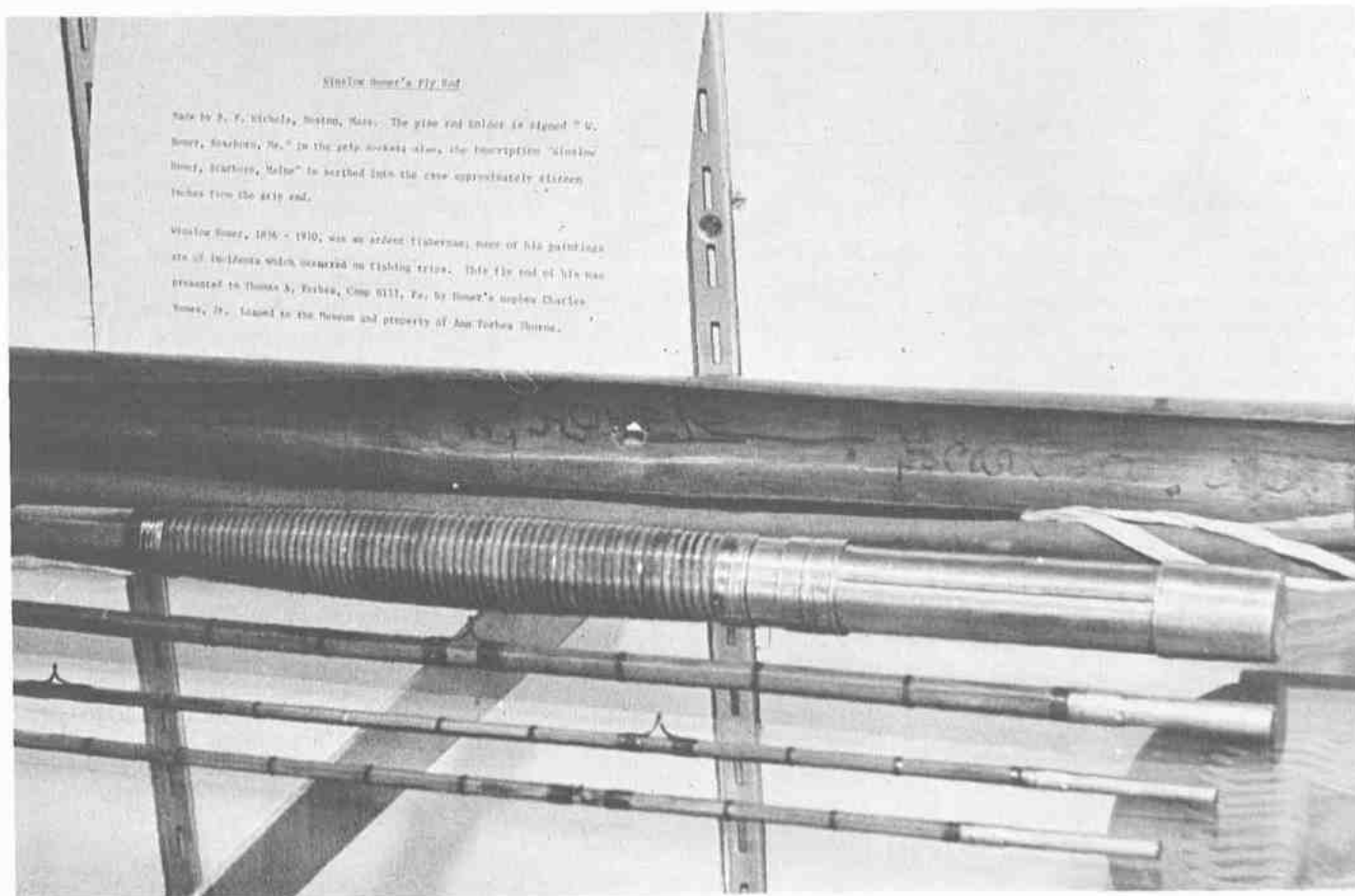
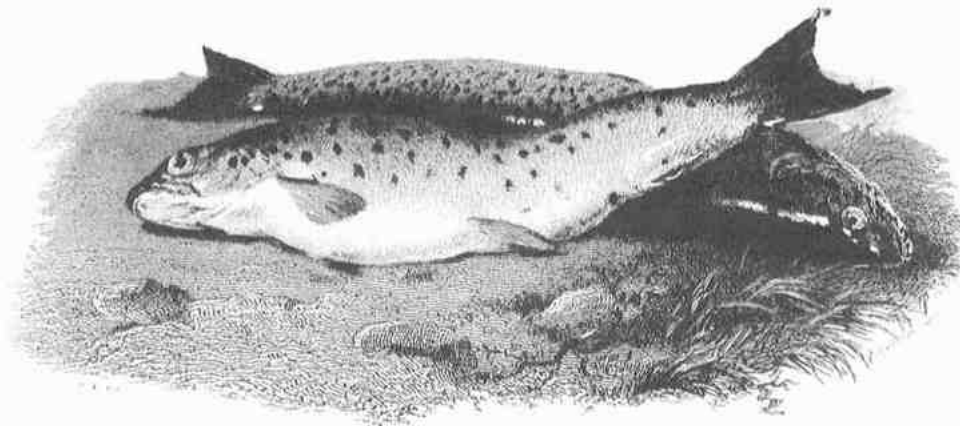
about fishing in their rightful brackets. As examples, note Haig Brown's *The Western Angler*, 2 volumes, 950 copies, Derrydale, 1937 at \$200.; William Schaldach's *Fish*, 137 copies, with an original etching, 1937 offered at \$550.; and the previously cited Phair *Atlantic Salmon*, limited to 950 copies Derrydale (not the Deluxe ed.) 1937, \$200. Of trade editions Marinaro's *A Modern Dry Fly Code*, 1st edition, 1950 is quoted at \$75.; Enos Bradner's *Northwest Angling*, 1950, \$25. and Rhead's *Speckled Brook Trout*, 1902, \$35.

I have a pussy cat grin as I reread the

preceding for over the weekend the book shelves at the Bryn Mawr book store gave me Wood's *The Art of Falconry of Frederic II.*, Stanford University, 1943 for \$10. John McDonald states that the original *Art of Falconry*, 1250 A. D. could make a good claim to be the originating point for sporting books.

Its heartwarming that we can again see a pride in publishing and a response and appreciation among angling book collectors and that the angling book resplendent is not entirely a thing of the past.

— — — A. S. H.



Winslow Homer's fly rod in the Museum's exhibit. It is in such pristine condition that it seems doubtful if it was ever used.



# Memorial Exhibit

## Milton C. Weiler

Artist, Educator, Naturalist and Conservationist best describes Milton C. Weiler. Born in Buffalo, New York on February 28, 1910, he spent most of his life engaged in activities that kept him close to the outdoors. Recognized as one of the finest painters of sporting art in the country, his work has been appreciated by fishers and gunners for over a quarter of a century. This because of the authenticity and breath of sporting life that stamped all of his art work.

The artist was a fine athlete at Syracuse University, attending the College of Fine Arts, played football, boxed and stroked the crew. During World War II, he became a Major in the Corps of Engineers stationed at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point.

Milton Weiler's "incident" sketches first appeared in Eugene Connett's "Derrydale" limited editions of the 1930's. These books are now highly desirable collector's items. He also illustrated Arthur Macdougall's "Dud Dean" stories which in their trade editions introduced him to nationwide audiences.

During the latter part of his life, Mr. Weiler turned his efforts to commission and gallery work maintaining a studio in Garden City, Long Island, where for many years he was Head of the Fine



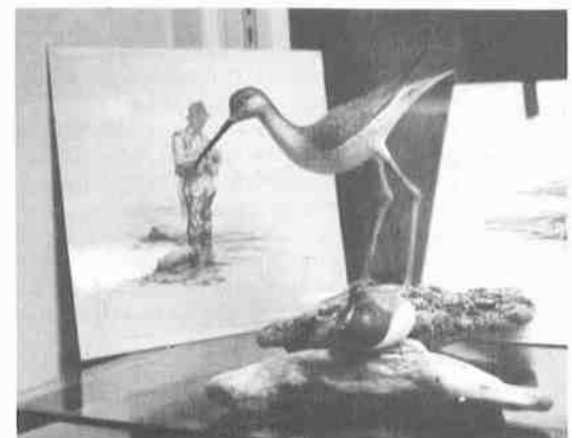
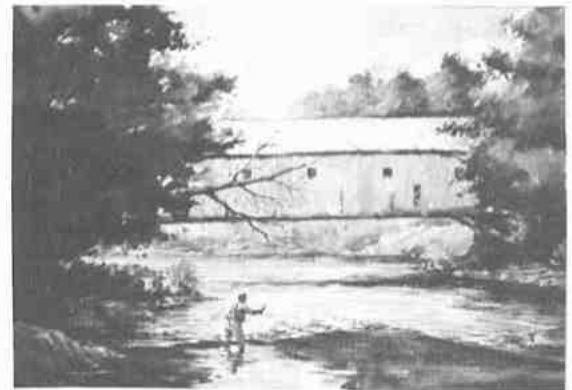
Arts Department, the Garden City Public Schools. Fly fishers were treated to a delightful series of drawings in the Joseph Bates' "Streamer Fly Fishing in Fresh and Salt Water," "Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing," and "Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing." The exquisite art work in these books and many

others mark Milton Weiler as one of the truly American greats in book illustration.

Featured in the Museum exhibit are 18 superb watercolors of fishers and hunters on their favorite waters, walking the hunting grounds, getting ready for the duck shoot, and portraits of fish and wildlife. One large showcase is given to exhibiting pencil drawings, wood carvings and other examples of Milton Weiler's craftsmanship. His own rods, reels and fly boxes are also on display.

Weiler prints, in limited editions, and his original paintings reflect the sincere interest in conservation and the preservation of wild life. A recognized authority on the subject of wild fowl decoys, he was called upon to judge many important national shows. Until the time of his death, he was active in Ducks Unlimited, National Wildlife, the Audubon Society and the International Salmon Foundation. He was a member of the N. Y. Angler's Club and a Trustee of The Museum of American Fly Fishing.

The Museum exhibit and Memorial to Milton C. Weiler has been made possible through the efforts of Mrs. Elizabeth Weiler, Milton C. Weiler, Jr., Mr. Fred King of the Sportsman's Edge, Inc. and Mr. Allan Liu of the Theodore Gordon Fly Fishers.



## THE MUSEUM EXHIBITS OF RARITIES

Since the Museum's inception, an exceptional number of rarities have been given the Museum. The very finest have been placed on exhibit in showcases guarded by heavy plate glass and modern locking systems.

We consider our exhibits to be a precious heritage and do everything possible to let our many visitors examine them, yet, make as certain as possible there is no chance for theft or damage. In this way, visitors may see rods built long before there was any recognition that our waters could be polluted or the abundance of game fish seriously depleted. Here in our Museum are yesterdays remembered, a history of fly fishing in America that is real, informative and entertaining. You will see the finest in craftsmanship, and the many steps in a developing technology that has made American tackle the finest in the world whatever its age.

You as a member on your first or on one of many visits will be proud of what has been accomplished and most certainly be proud that you are a member. Your continued contributions will be appreciated. Please give your friends the opportunity to experience the same glow of satisfaction by soliciting their help through a financial contribution that in turn will provide better exhibits and a better Museum.

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### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

THE AMERICAN FLY FISHER is but one of the many benefits received by participating in the Museum affairs. Also included with your membership are the informative catalogues, free research services, a direct line of communication to experts in history, literature and technology, free appraisals for donors of materials and an opportunity to individually promote a new movement in the field of fly fishing that is completely unique. Your dollar support becomes far more than financial help. It is the keeping of an unspoken promise to future generations that a heritage will not be lost. A brochure will be forwarded on request.

A tie tac is presented with each membership of \$25.00 or more.

Associate	\$ 10.00
Sustaining	\$ 25.00
Patron	\$100.00 and over
Life	\$250.00

All membership dues, contributions and donations are tax deductible.

Please forward checks to THE TREASURER, The Museum of American Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont 05254 with your NAME, ADDRESS and ZIP CODE; type of membership desired and a statement of the amount enclosed. Upon receipt, a catalogue, magazine and membership card will be mailed immediately.

### MAGAZINE

The pages of THE AMERICAN FLY FISHER are open to all those who have a healthy interest in the promotion of the Museum. Constructive criticism is welcome as are suggestions which you feel will make for better reading. If you know of individuals performing research relating to the history of fly fishing we would like to make their acquaintance and if you have a question about the Museum, or historic fly patterns, or literature, or tackle development, it's almost a sure bet the staff will be able to provide just the right answer. Extra copies of the magazine are available.

### THE MUSEUM CATALOG

Museum Catalog No. 1 is given free with all memberships. Fully illustrated, it offers a brief history of fly fishing in America to 1870 by the Curator and a listing of Museum rods, reels, fly patterns and memorabilia by G. Dick Finlay. The explanatory notes are particularly valuable when viewing the displays at Manchester. Extra copies of the catalogue are available from the Museum.

### PERIODICALS

A limited number of the Museum's "A Check List of American Sporting Periodicals" by Austin S. Hogan, who researched the subject for over a decade, are available. Two hundred and more miscellanies were published before 1900. The most useful, to those interested in the history of angling in America have been selected. In addition the work book contains an historical introduction, the public libraries where the periodicals are on the shelves and excerpts which exemplify the period literature. Soft cover, complete references and easily readable, the listing is the only guide of its kind in the field of angling references. \$5.00 postpaid, from the Museum only.

### FAMOUS BROWN UNIVERSITY

#### ANGLING BOOK CATALOGUE

In 1968 Brown's Rockefeller Library put on exhibit a selection of rare angling books. The catalogue, with its history of angling literature soon became a collector's item. An anonymous donor has contributed a limited number to be sold for the Museum's benefit at \$3.00 each. Make checks payable to the "Museum of American Fly Fishing."

# The Museum of American Fly Fishing

Manchester, Vermont 05254

The Museum is a non-profit institution, chartered under the laws of the State of Vermont. As an educational organization it is directed to the preservation and keeping of the traditions that bond the past with the present. The Museum offers a permanent public repository where the historic fly rod, reel, book, art work and fly pattern may be expertly guarded against the destructiveness of time. Contributions are tax deductible as established by the U.S. Revenue Service.

A descriptive brochure is available.



*The permanent exhibits at the Museum display the world's finest collections of fly fishing tackle.*



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## SPRING

by

JAMES THOMSON  
1834 - 1882

Just in the dubious point where with the pool,  
Is mix'd the trembling stream, or where it boils  
Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank  
Reverted plays in undulating flow,  
There throw nice-judging, the delusive fly;  
And, as you lead it round in artful curve,  
With eye attentive mark the springing game.  
Straight as above the surface of the flood  
They wanton rise, or urg'd by hunger leap,  
Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook;  
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,  
And to the shelving shore slow-dragging some,  
With various hand proportion'd to their force.  
If yet too young, and easily deceived,  
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod,  
Him, piteous of his youth, and the short space  
He has enjoy'd the vital light of heaven.  
Soft disengage, and back into the stream  
The speckled infant throw. But should you lure  
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots  
Of pendent trees, the monarch of the brook,  
Behooves you then to ply your finest art.  
Long time he, followed cautious, scans the fly,  
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft  
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.  
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun  
Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death,  
With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,  
Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthen'd line  
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,  
The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode;  
And flies aloft, and founces round the pool,  
Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,  
That feels him still, yet to his furious course  
Gives way, you, now retiring, following now  
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage;  
Till floating broad upon his breathless side,  
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore  
You gayly drag your unresisting prize.

