

The American Fly Fisher

SPRING 1991 VOLUME 17 NUMBER 1

New Images, New Faces



SALMON! The word conjures up some of the most romantic imagery in the world of angling. As a cold-water anadromous fish, the salmon is equally at home in the vast reaches of two great oceans—the Atlantic and Pacific—and in thousands of freshwater rivers the world over. Its amazing life cycle has intrigued, enticed, and captivated anglers and naturalists alike from the time of Pliny (first century A.D.) up to the present. To celebrate the world of the salmon and herald our forthcoming special exhibition, “The World of the Salmon,” co-sponsored by the Atlantic Salmon Federation and scheduled to open June 7 in our Manchester galleries, we are devoting the Spring 1991 *American Fly Fisher* to the salmon.

In this issue, we are pleased to offer you the erudition of Jim Brown, reel scholar and author of our recently published book *A Treasury of Reels*, whose article on antique salmon reels features a near-dozen classic American and British reels that span a century of salmon fishing. We also are very proud to introduce three writers new to the ranks of *American Fly Fisher* contributors. Robert F. Jones, nationally known writer and stalwart Museum supporter, reviews a unique recent donation to the Museum: home movies of salmon fishing excursions—complete with horse-powered houseboats—on the Patapedia River in the 1930s.

We also welcome Trey Combs, whose writing you have seen in many of the sporting magazines, to our journal. He debuts with an intriguing article on the evolution of steelhead flies and the integration of Eastern fly-tying tradition and Western innovation. Don Catalfimo makes his first appearance with an overview of the great salmon books over the years. And we are also proud to offer you excerpts from “The Salmon Portfolio,” produced by the government of Canada in 1974 to focus world attention on salmon conservation.

I have had the great pleasure of introducing a number of new writers/friends to our readers during the last two years. Now I am pleased and excited to be able to introduce *The American Fly Fisher's* new editor, Margot Page.

You all know Margot. She has served the Museum as a copy and associate editor for this journal, and, of course, as the founding editor of the Museum's biannual newsletter, the *Greenheart Gazette*. Margot holds an M.A. in English, has a background in magazine and book publishing (the latter with Nick Lyons Books in New York City), and has published freelance articles and essays about fishing and other matters. She is, in every way, talented, energetic, and totally dedicated to her craft. Simply put, Margot will be a superb editor, and she has put together an exciting issue for her premier effort.

Some of you who wait for the arrival of this quarterly magazine with bated breath may have had your patience somewhat tested over the past year or two. The Museum has undergone such expansion in so many areas that it has been difficult to ensure the timely publication of *The American Fly Fisher*. In the interests of scheduling, and with the addition of our new editor, we have decided to eliminate what would have been the last issue of 1990 (Winter, Volume 16, Number 4) and will be moving right into the production of (Spring, Volume 17, Number 1), with the determined goal to fulfill our quarterly obligation to you.

And so it is with mixed feelings of regret, joy, and relief that I end my tour as caretaker editor of this fine journal. In the future I will be devoting myself almost solely to administering and developing our growing museum. Perhaps now I can find the time to finish up a few articles that have, out of necessity, been put on hold. There is one piece in particular about fly fishing in the Himalayas in the days of the British Raj I'd love to work on . . .

All good wishes.

D.S.J.



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Lane Press, Burlington, Vermont

The American Fly Fisher

Journal of *The American Museum of Fly Fishing*

SPRING 1991

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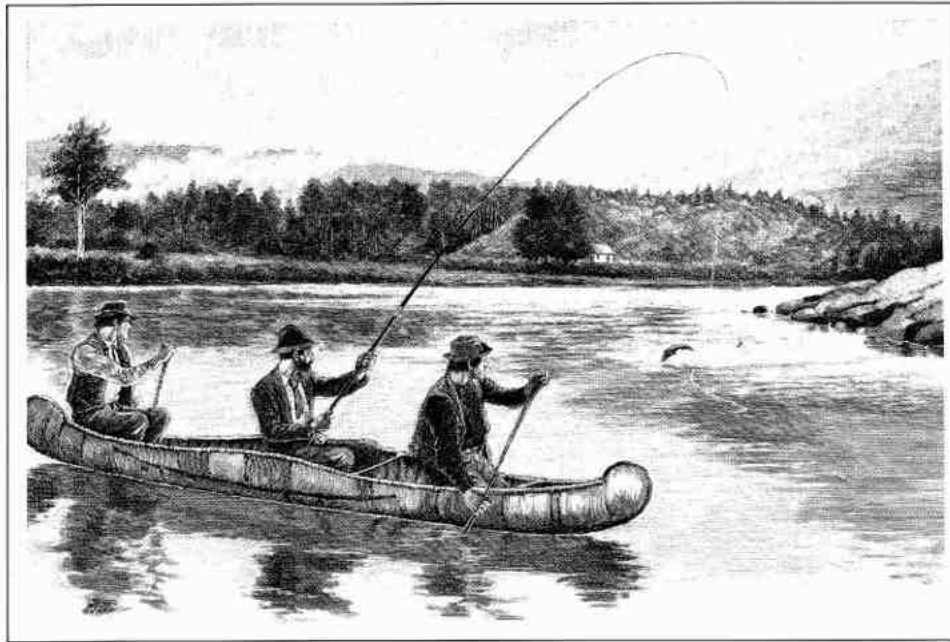
Hand-colored copper engraving of Atlantic salmon from Sir William Jardine's The Naturalist's Library (Edinburgh, 1833-1843). From The Salmon Portfolio, produced by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 1974, a copy of which was donated to the Museum by trustee James S. Taylor.

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Classic Salmon Books

by Don Catalfimo



IN 1965, ARNOLD GINGRICH, in writing "Literature of Angling" for *McClane's Standard Fishing Encyclopedia*, stated that a definitive angling bibliography would exceed 5,000 volumes in the English language alone, and add over 50,000 more if titles on ichthyology were included. Given the publishing boom in fishing books over the last quarter century and the doubling of scientific knowledge about every ten years, that estimated number today must be astounding.

The subject of the Atlantic salmon has always been one of special consideration in terms both of angling and of literature. Aside from some of the special fly fishing volumes containing mounts of flies and materials, no other aspect of fly fishing seems to have inspired its authors to such heights of prose, poetry, private printings, limited editions, and examples of the book binder's best art.

For sheer lavish production, two titles, *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* by Dean Sage (Edinburgh, 1888) and *Atlantic Salmon Fishing* by Charles Phair (Derrydale, 1937), contend for top place. The Sage book was limited to 105 copies of which fifty were for sale. It was bound in

green pictorial buckram, and embellished with photogravure illustrations, a map, etchings, portraits, heliogravure designs and wood cuts. The copy described in the reference source *Angling Books of the Americas* by Henry P. Bruns featured hand-colored flies. An extremely scarce book in its first edition, Colonel Siegel of Anglers and Shooters Press issued a beautiful reprint of 250 copies in 1973.

The Phair book was issued in an edition of 950, which was a significant printing for a Derrydale book. Additionally, a deluxe limited edition of forty was issued that included a second volume featuring twelve mounts, each containing a salmon fly and samples of the materials from which it was made, truly a rare jewel for any fly fisher or fine book lover.

One limited edition deserves special comment, not only because its editor had such an influence on salmon fishing, but because he was also a spokesman for conservation and a good friend to the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Additionally, the scope of this work is so well chosen and uniquely broad enough as to stand as a one-volume reference. *The Atlantic Salmon Treasury*, edited by Joseph D. Bates,

was published by the Atlantic Salmon Federation in 1975 in a limited edition of 1,000 copies. Composed of selections from the *Atlantic Salmon Journal* from 1954 through 1974, the subjects include history, natural history, flies and tackle, salmon lore, and salmon readings. The binding is exceptional and the volume is slip-cased. Of all the available salmon books, this comes as close to a one-volume library as a reader could hope for.

It is only a short cast from a discussion of limited editions to one of privately printed books. Some of the best writing about salmon, the places they are found, and the people who fish for them, can be found here. Most deserve the title "labor of love."

Because of unusual circumstances, two volumes among those privately printed tend to stand out from their brethren. The first, *Salmon Fishing on Cain River, New Brunswick* by Lee Sturges (Chicago: R. F. Seymour, 1919), was limited to fifty copies. Apparently, after Sturges picked up his books from the printer and returned home, his house burned down that night and he was only able to save a few copies. Some speculation exists as to exactly how many of the books perished; sporting

Opposite: Illustration by A. B. Frost from "Salmon Angling on the Restigouche" by Dean Sage, Scribner's Magazine, May 1888.

book dealer Judith Bowman has documented twelve, via their presentations by the author. Interestingly, during October of 1990, six of the existing copies were close enough for a reunion. In addition to a copy in the archives of The American Museum of Fly Fishing, a New York dealer offered four for sale, and a copy was auctioned in Massachusetts.

And, for angling bibliophiles who may also be Baker Street regulars, one title presents a mystery of truly Holmesian proportions. Although mentioned in some bibliographies and literature, while researching this article the author could find no evidence that a book called *Salmon Fishing on the Restigouche*, attributed to W. S. Kies and dated 1938, has ever been seen. There is speculation that the title may refer to a periodical article, rather than a book. Any readers who can shed light on this problem are encouraged to do so.

Other noteworthy titles in the category of privately printed books include *Salmon Fishing on the Grand Cascapedia* by E. W. Davis (1904), 100 copies (first printing with 120 pages, and a second printing of 100, same year with added material on fly patterns, 143 pages); *Recollections* by A. Lansing (1909), 300 copies; *The Ballad of Myra Gray* by A. A. Fowler (1927), 250 copies; *Salmon on the Dry Fly* by M. Wertheim (1927), 500 copies; and *In Pursuit of Salar* by A. W. Bissell (1966), 100 copies.

We should not leave this topic without paying homage to that doyen of the Grand Cascapedia, Frank Gray Griswold. He captures so well the heyday of private water, full-dress flies, and premium tackle. His titles include *The Cascapedia Club* (1920); *Observations on a Salmon River* (1921); *Some Fish and Some Fishing* (1921); *Fish Facts and Fancies* (1926); *Big and Little Fishes* (1927); *A Salmon River* (1928); *Salmo Salar* (1929); *Salmon Score of F. Gray Griswold 1920-29* (1930); *The Life History of the Atlantic and Pacific Salmon of Canada* (with R. D. Hume, 1930); and *Memoirs of a Salmon* (1931).

The salmon fly has long stood as the epitome of the fly dressers' art and as art forms themselves. Three volumes are noteworthy. *The Salmon Fly* by George Kelson (1895 and 1979) has held the distinction of being called "bible" since its publication. Although scooped by J. H. Hale in 1892, Kelson's sumptuous volume and his previous writings unequivocally secured the title for himself.

Kelson not only formalized the art of the married wing, full-dress salmon fly, his list of patterns for most of the flies extant at the time became a standard by which all other lists were compared. The commerce of the British empire at its Victorian best gave tyers access to exotic feathers many of the patterns called for, however dear in price.

If Kelson gave us patterns, T. E. Pryce-Tannatt's *How to Dress Salmon Flies* (1914) gave us one of the best fly-tying manuals ever written. Other stylists were influential by this time, so though the beauty of the full-dress fly was preserved, Pryce-Tannatt's readers were assured that it was not treasonous to simplify some of the more heavily dressed patterns and that

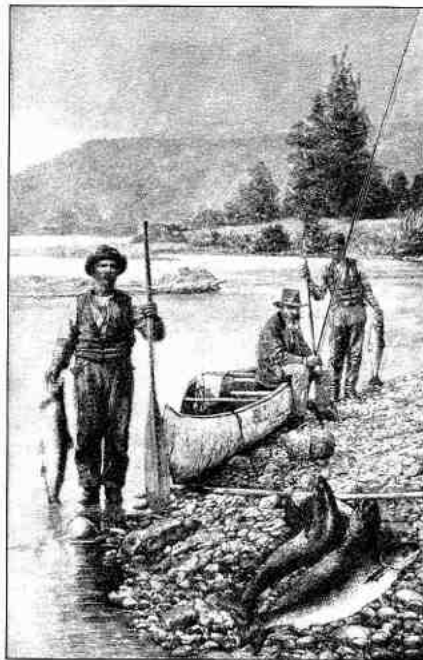


Illustration from "Salmon Fishing" by Henry P. Wells from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, July 1886.

substitution for already scarce or endangered feathers was acceptable.

Although it does not outdo Pryce-Tannatt, *Fly Tying for Salmon* by Eric Taverner (1939), excerpted from his mammoth 1931 Lonsdale Library edition, contains a fine summary of salmon fly evolution and color plates that are a welcome addition to any tyer's library.

For the salmon angler, the sunk fly across and down reigned supreme from the time of "Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle" (1496). Later in the season with low, warm water and dour fish, anglers tied flies and grumbled into their pints. The publication of A. H. E. Wood's experi-

ments with low water by his friend, D. G. F. Rudd, titled *Greased Line Fishing* (1933) by "Jock Scott," Rudds' *nom de plume*, changed all that forever. Today, fifty-seven years later, salmon fishers, West Coast steelheaders, and those of the Great Lakes tributaries are finding Wood has a lot to teach them. Low-water patterns, small flies and floating line, mended to control speed, are no longer a novelty. *Salmon Fishing the Greased Line on Dee, Don, and Earn* by F. Hill (1948) is icing on the cake.

The foundation volume of taking salmon on dry flies is generally conceded to be written by George LaBranche, with his *The Salmon and the Dry Fly* (1924). Edward R. Hewitt related some of his experiences in *Secrets of the Salmon* (1922), but LaBranche's book is the cornerstone. The aforementioned *Salmon on the Dry Fly* by M. Wertheim completes a delightful trio.

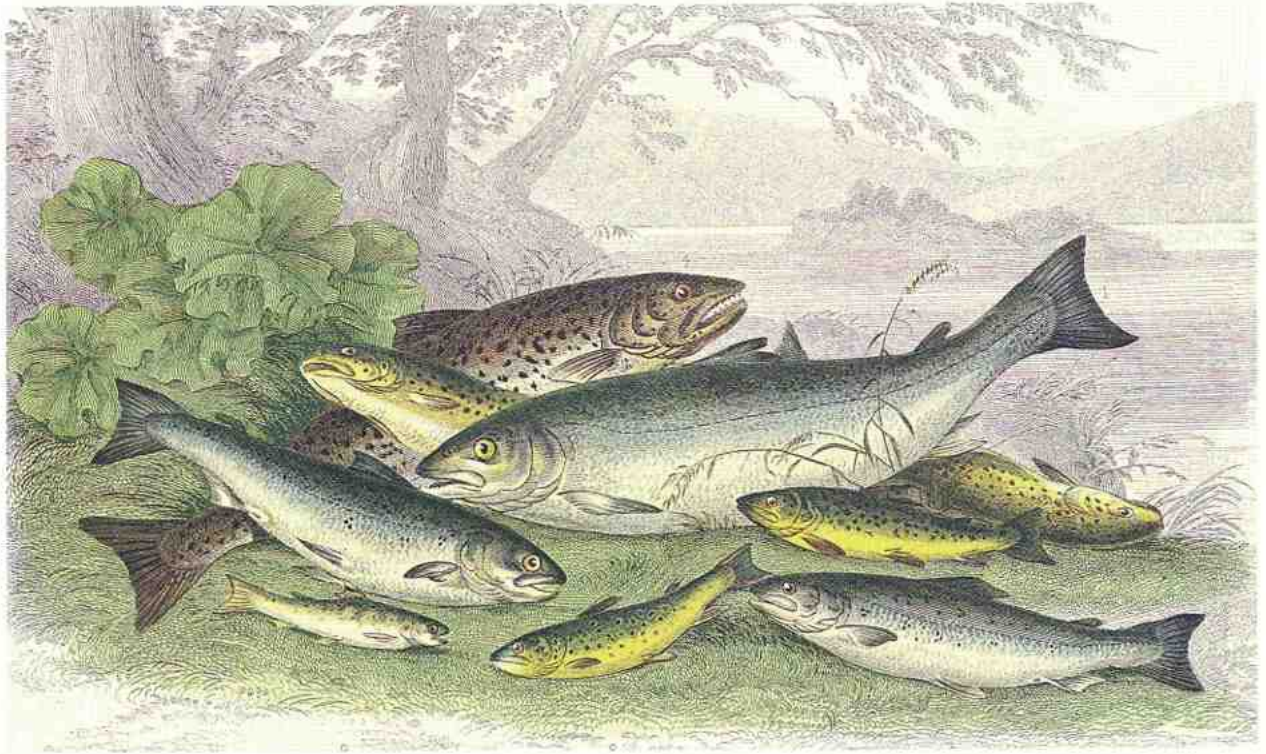
Rounding out this group of epochal angling breakthroughs is *The Atlantic Salmon* by Lee Wulff (1958, revised 1983). His pioneering use of light tackle for salmon and the development of hitched or riffling flies were truly innovative breakthroughs. The more ordinary angler owes him a debt of thanks for debunking many of the myths associated with the sport. Clearly, salmon fishing isn't the same as trout fishing in terms of method or expectation, but reading Wulff makes it easier for the initiate to give salmon a try.

A few volumes have carved unique niches for themselves. *The Salmon Rivers of Iceland* by R. N. Stewart (1950) appears to be one of few full-length books on that geographic mecca. *The Fishes of New England* by W. C. Kendall (1935) is a special natural history of our northeast fishery with beautiful color salmon plates featured in Volume II. *The Atlantic Salmon, A Vanishing Species?* (1968) and *Salmon, The World's Most Harassed Fish* (1980) by Anthony Netboy are powerful indictments of the ecological havoc that has been wreaked on this fish.

Salmon of the World by Ernest Schweibert (1970) and *The Salmon* by R. Haig-Brown (1974) with their accompanying suites of color prints reach new heights of salmon art. *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* by Joseph D. Bates (1987) and *The Art of the Classic Salmon Fly* by Ken Sawada (1989) detail the history and glory of the salmon fly with some of the most eye-popping photography ever.

Books like these (and this list is by no means exhaustive) make it easier to understand why *salar*, the leaper, is called king of the freshwater game fish. ∞

The Salmon



Hand-colored copper engraving drawn by J. Stewart, c. 1840, from Oliver Goldsmith's A History of the Earth and Animated Nature (London, 1873).

THE EXTRAORDINARY "Salmon Portfolio" from which this feature was assembled was created by the government of Canada to celebrate the history of the salmon and focus world attention on salmon conservation. Approximately 1,500 copies were presented to heads of government attending the International Law of the Seas Conference in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1974. "The Salmon Portfolio" is dedicated by Canada to the salmon of the Pacific and Atlantic, and to those countries and people seeking to protect them. It was donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing in 1988 by trustee James S. Taylor of Santa Barbara, California.

Featuring a limited edition of Roderick Haig-Brown's book *The Salmon*, and notable art prints by contemporary Canadian artists Bill Reid, David Denbigh, and Rudi Kovach, the oversize portfolio (17 inches by 22 inches) also showcases handsome reproductions of antique chromolithographs by Reverend Houghton, from his book *British Fresh-water Fishes* (1879), one of the finest Victorian colored-plate publications, as well as the hand-colored copper engravings of J. Stewart (c. 1840) and Sir William Jardine (1833-1843). The

Portfolio

portfolio and limited edition book are an admirable example of a government's interest in and commitment to an important natural, cultural, and historical resource. We are proud to house "The Salmon Portfolio" and are grateful to James Taylor for his generous donation. Reprinted by permission of the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

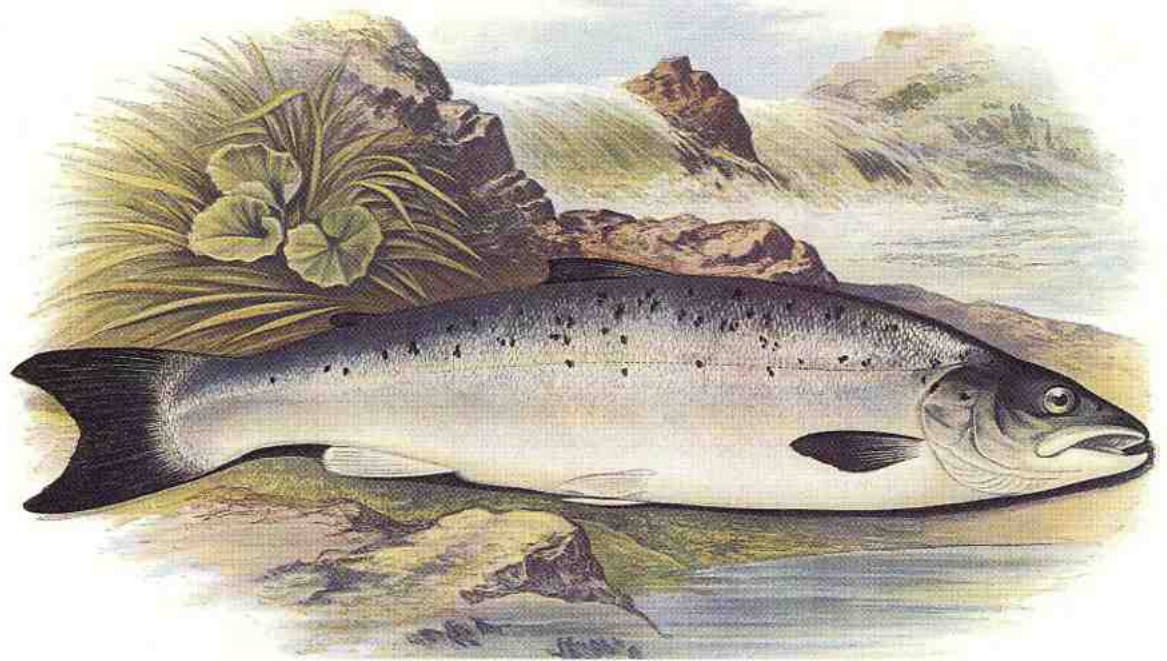


"The Salmon," a silk-screen print by Bill Reid, well-known Canadian gold and silversmith, printmaker, wood carver, and argillite sculptor.

THE LEGACY

OF ALL THE LIVING CREATURES who shared the world with the early men of the Northwest Coast, the most important to them were the five species of salmon, who every year came home from the sea to provide the main food for the long winter months. Their arrival was greeted with great ceremony, and they were welcomed as the honored guests they were, and suitably thanked for their sacrifice. Such important creatures naturally figured in many of the legends which explained the arrival of man on earth and the beginnings of the great families. In some cases, the salmon were the most important figures in these dramas, and were used as heraldic crests of the men and women whose origins they helped to explain.

One of the myths tells of a boy, found in the belly of a huge spring salmon, who was adopted by the chief of a village and raised as his heir. Later he was to return to his home village, that of the Spring Salmon people, and there marry the beautiful and powerful Woman of the Sea, and eventually return with her and her magic to his adopted home, to found the family which thereafter used the salmon as their crest. In Bill Reid's design, above, the salmon is shown with the image of the young man inside it, as it was told in the old story. Even today, many of the native people of the West Coast make their living from the rich salmon harvest, and in many villages the salmon is still preserved by smoking to form a valued and important part of their food supply.

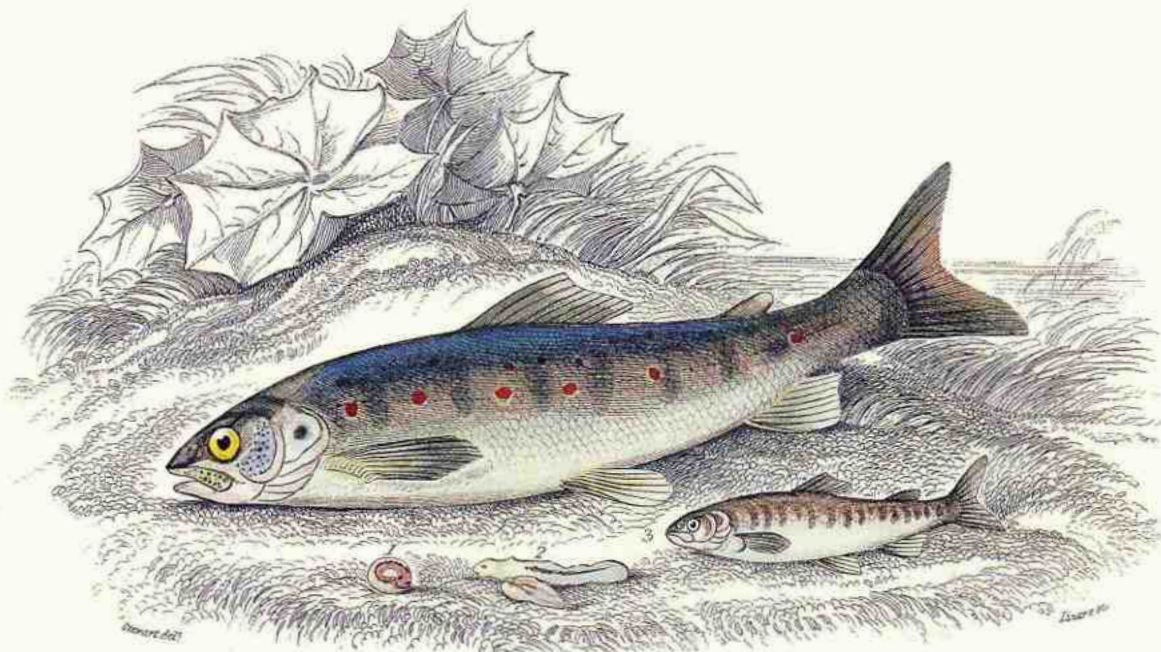


Chromolithograph from Reverend Houghton's British Fresh-water Fishes (Edinburgh, 1879).

THE ATLANTIC SALMON

THE ATLANTIC SALMON once swarmed in the rivers of the Northeast of America and the Northwest of Europe. From New York, every suitable river to Labrador welcomed the returning salmon, while identical scenes were repeated from Portugal to the north of Scandinavia. As late as the 1860s, there was a massive Indian salmon fishery in Lake Ontario, almost a thousand miles further inland than the southern limits of today's range. In Europe, salmon of the Rhine graced the tables of the Roman emperors, and in the Middle Ages, workers were guaranteed not to be forced to eat salmon more than one day per week.

Today, the salmon are disappearing from rivers which once welcomed "the leaper" by the millions. Belatedly, the countries whose streams produce the salmon stocks are trying desperately to preserve the essential spawning beds. By rehabilitating streams now devoid of salmon, the original range is being slowly reestablished. The life cycle of the Atlantic salmon is as complex as it is unique. Born in fresh water, passing through estuaries and coastal zones to the pastures of the sea, back to the river of birth, the Atlantic salmon must be protected and managed in all three areas. To ignore any link in its chain of life is to condemn the Atlantic salmon to the same fate as all other over-exploited species.

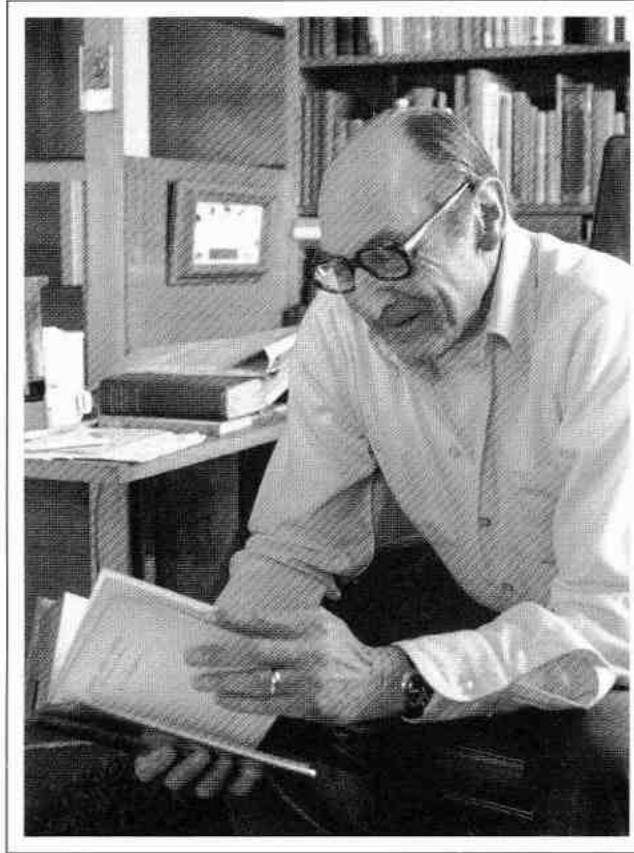


Hand-colored copper engraving by Sir William Jardine from The Naturalist's Library (Edinburgh, 1833-1843).

THE CYCLE

THE LOWER ADAMS RIVER in British Columbia is one of a kind among the rivers of the world, unique for the sheer volume of a single species that it propagates. This is one of earth's special life cradles. A place like the tropical rain forest, and certain areas of ocean, in which the pilot light seems to burn more tenaciously. The human visitor is aware of something different in the air. A message comes from the river of the detached indifference of nature to man. The importance of *homo sapiens* is small amidst the immensity of presence of the dominant species. Some call the Adams River, "the world's richest 500 acres."

Probably they do not exaggerate: it has been estimated that at any one time, a million fish, weighing on an average five pounds each, are in the river. At spawning time each year the desperate pageant of destruction and renewal is celebrated. Tribe after tribe of salmon swim up the river fighting desperately for a spawning place. Regardless of the success or undoing of its mission, it is the end of the journey for each; the arriving salmon will die. Much new life is extinguished at its very beginning. Even though the female will try to protect the nest, fresh incoming waves of fish may sweep it away. For well over a month the riverbed gravel is pounded until the destroyed spawn are as thick in the river as sand and gravel itself. Yet from this chemistry of collision another generation somehow emerges and grows to replay the drama at a future time.



Roderick Haig-Brown in his library, 1976.

Fall Defined

TO SOME PEOPLE, the thought that the salmon, all Pacific salmon of all species, die very soon after spawning is a depressing one. They see in it only decay and waste, a sort of pathetic frustration of life. This is a natural view, but it does not question deeply enough; the end of the salmon is not death and corruption, but only fall, the autumn of their cycle. They come to the spawning gravels in all their brilliant colors—reds, browns, greens, gray and black and golden. Like the autumn leaves above them, they have their time of fierce glory. Then the frosts and the rains and the winds come. The leaves become torn and sodden and dulled and in their time they fall, covering the ground, drifting with the stream currents, piling against the rocks and shallows. But within the trees life is still strong and self-renewing.

As the winds stir and drift the dying leaves, so the waters drift and stir the dying salmon against the gray-brown gravels of the stream beds. But under those gravels life is strong and secret and protected in the buried eggs, the real life of the race. Fungus grows on the emptied bodies, as it grows among the fallen leaves; they collect in the eddies and strand on the gravel bars and the bacteria of change work in them to make a new fertility. In spring life will burst from the gravel as it bursts again from the trees, into the massive yield of the new cycle. Death is seldom more fleeting or more fertile than this.

(From *Fisherman's Fall* by Roderick Haig-Brown, 1964. Reprinted by permission of Valerie Haig-Brown.)

A Profile of Roderick Haig-Brown 1908-1976

by Joe A. Pisarro

ARNOLD GINGRICH ONCE RECALLED a lunch with Alfred A. Knopf during which he was attempting to persuade the publisher to bring out a trade edition of the privately printed, limited edition of *The Gordon Garland*. To bolster his case, Gingrich handed Knopf a list of some thirty-three of the day's leading angling writers who had contributed to *The Gordon Garland*, brought out to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Theodore Gordon. Knopf, no sportsman, studied the list and handed it back to Gingrich, remarking, "I've no doubt that to you fishers every last one of these people is a household name, but I've never heard of any of 'em, except of course, Haig-Brown."

Of course. Except Haig-Brown.

Haig-Brown's place in the larger world of literature is beyond question. It was Gingrich, too, who characterized Haig-Brown as "fly-fishing's ambassador to the world of belles lettres." He then added, "Not in every generation, nor even in every century, does fly-fishing enjoy the services of a writer whose work is universally negotiable as literature, quite apart from the happenstance that its subject is angling. But our time is lucky in this respect, because we have one in Haig-Brown."

By the time of his death in 1976, Haig-Brown had published twenty-five books. His first, published while he was still in his native England in 1931, was *Silver*, the life story of an Atlantic salmon in the British Isles. His love of salmon, both the Atlantic and Pacific varieties, continued throughout his lifetime. Probably no individual did more to raise the alarm on behalf of the preservation and restoration of salmon stocks than did he. In his last six years, he was a dedicated, active member of the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission.

In 1974, a magnificent portfolio was presented to each delegate of the International Law of the Seas Conference at Caracas, Venezuela. Included was a limited-edition copy of *The Salmon*, in which Haig-Brown described Pacific and Atlantic salmon resources, examined their cultural legacy, and presented the need to maintain the resources on national and international levels.

Born in Sussex, England, in 1908, Haig-Brown first visited North America in 1926 and returned in 1932 to settle in British Columbia. A busy and varied life followed. By the age of twenty-four, he had worked as a logger, trapper, cougar hunter, tourist guide, and boxer. And all the while, he worked at his writing.

His first view of the Campbell River in British Columbia

convinced him that this was where he wanted to make his home and it remained his home for the rest of his life. There, he and his wife Ann raised their family and there he wrote most of his books, along with numerous articles and essays. It was largely through those writings, lectures, speeches, and his indomitable passion for the environment and its resources that he did so much to raise the consciousness of so many people and spur them into effective conservation activity.

Single minded as he was about the environment and its protection, his interests were wide and varied. During World War II, he served in the Canadian army, rising to the rank of major. In turn, he was a magistrate and then a judge of the Provincial Court of British Columbia. In 1952, he was awarded an honorary LL.D. by the University of British Columbia, and from 1969 to 1972, he was Chancellor of the University of Victoria.

Two years after his death in 1976 the area along the banks of the Adams River, one of the mighty Fraser's most important sockeye spawning tributaries, was dedicated to Roderick Haig-Brown in honor of his lifelong devotion to the salmon and his enormous contribution to the restoration and conservation of those stocks and their streams.

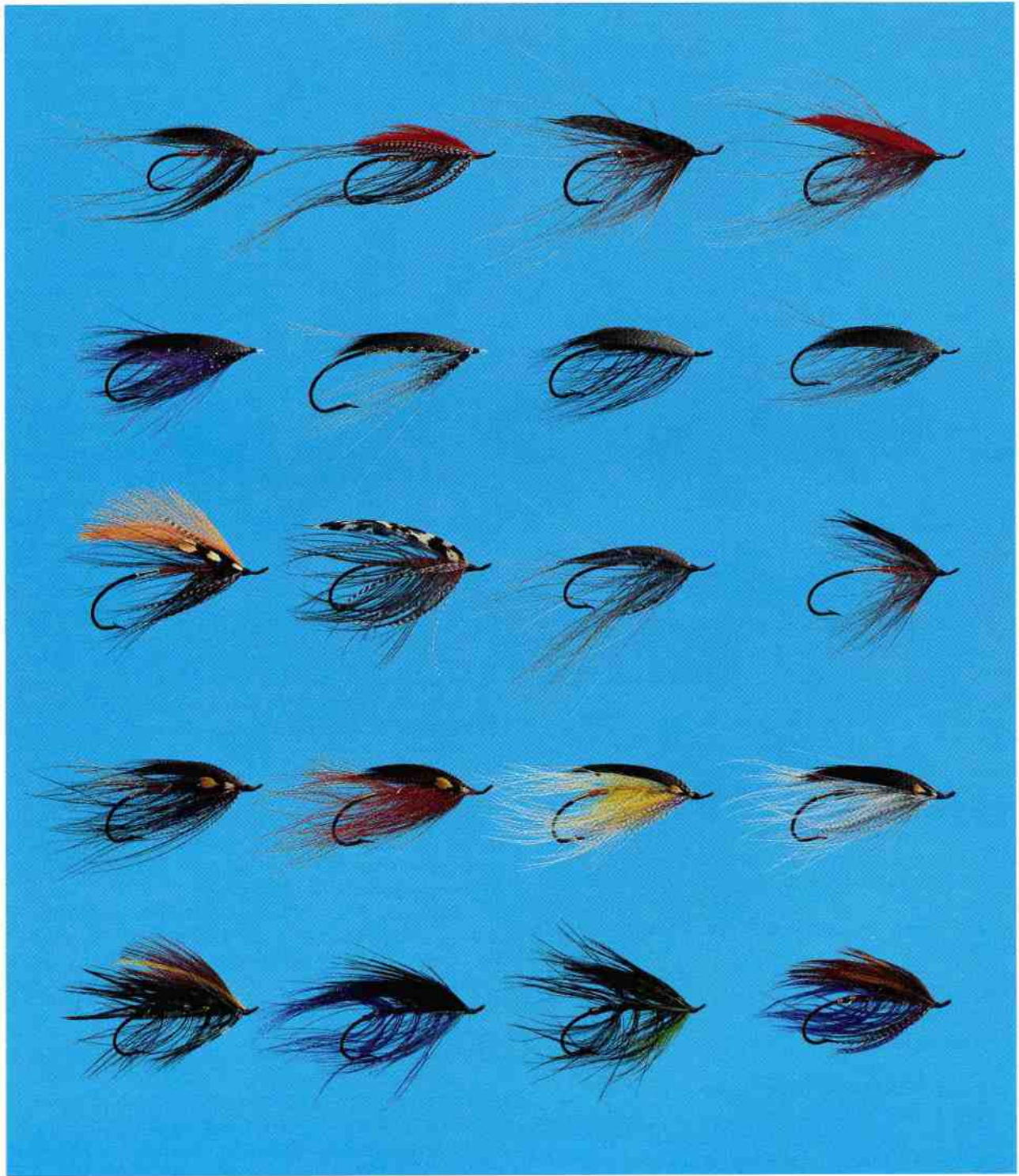
Though he loved all rivers — "water in its loveliest form" — he called them, his most beloved remained the Campbell, just as the Pacific salmon would remain his most favored among the finny silver warriors. This he expressed in a paean to them:

PACIFIC SALMON

*River-born fugitives, red muscled under sheathing silver
Alive with lights of ocean's changing colors;
The range of deeps and distances through wild salt years
Has gathered the sea's plenty into your perfection.*

*Fullness is the long return from dark depths
Rendering toll of itself to the searching nets
Surging on to strife on brilliant gravel shallows
That opened long ago behind the failing ice.*

*In violence over the gravel, under the burn of fall,
Fullness spends itself, thrusting forth new life
To nurse in the stream's flow. The old life,
Used utterly, yields itself among the river rocks of home.*



CONTEMPORARY STEELHEAD SPEY FLIES

Top row: Gray Heron, Orange Heron by Syd Glasso. Brown Heron, Orange Heron by Pat Crane.

Second row: Purple Spey, Gray Heron, Claret Spey, Gray Heron (reduced) by Steve Gobin.

Third row: Orange Heron #1, Orange Heron #2, Silver Streak, Gold Streak by Joe Howell.

Fourth row: Black Skagit Spey, Orange Skagit Spey, Yellow Skagit Spey, White Skagit Spey by John Farrar.

Fifth row: Boulder Creek, Car Body, Dark Daze, Dragon's Tooth by Mike Kinney.

Atlantic Salmon Dressings in Steelhead Fly Fishing

by Trey Combs



NINETEENTH-CENTURY Atlantic salmon dressings came to steelheading embodying the most aristocratic of all angling heritages. Slips of feathers from a dozen different exotic birds were

crafted into a single salmon fly that was an attractor of fish and a metaphor for peerage, propriety, and mystique. A Jock Scott or a Thunder and Lightning spoke to us, grounded us, gave our sport a necessary infusion of soul. We traded on this association, and our steelhead flies, always the product of plebeian enterprise, became more than graceless confections. Married strips of dyed goose, silk tags, ostrich butts, heads of peacock herl, and golden pheasant crests embellished steelhead ties, bastard creations that nevertheless required a thorough knowledge of fly tying. A British gilly would have considered them coarse as he noted parts missing from the classic originals, but the flies gladdened our untutored frontier anglers and filled them with confidence. A steelhead fly is nothing if it can't do that.

The earliest "fly shops" were hardware stores that sold fishing and hunting licenses. At a back counter beneath elk heads and stuffed salmon, one could purchase anything from deer rifles to snelled trout flies imported from Ireland and Scotland. In the larger sizes, these wet flies were among the first steelhead patterns, the Royal Coachman, Black Gnat, Professor, and Red Ibis, for example. Steelhead flies would come to have red tails and white wings and, as often as not, cheeks of jungle cock. When they came to be constructed of bucktail and chenille, these simple trout flies were easily converted. The elaborate Atlantic salmon patterns were not. For more than thirty years beginning in the 1930s, the proliferation

of bright, showy steelhead bucktails became a distinctly American art form and symbolized the sport of steelhead fly fishing. In these many dressings, Atlantic salmon flies survived mostly as trace elements.

Two men in particular, Sam Wells and Joe Wharton, strongly influenced the early development of steelhead flies. Wells' shop at 315 F Street in Eureka, California, serviced fly fishermen bound for the Eel River, certainly the first American river where summer-run steelhead were routinely pursued with a fly. His own Wells Special, John Benn's Railbird, and Sumner Carson's Royal Coachman were locally popular steelhead dressings. Beginning in 1922, Wells had these and other steelhead patterns tied for him in Ireland. "Imported flies" meant British, and that mattered greatly to West Coast anglers taking their first tentative steps toward sorting out steelhead with a fly. According to Wells' letterhead, he could advance the angler's needs with "Hardy Reels, Scotch Tapered Lines and Leaders, English Waders, and Many High Class Necessities."

Joe Wharton's store changed from hardware to sporting goods, and by the 1930s his location at 104 South Sixth Street in Grants Pass, Oregon, was a landmark. He helped outfit Zane Grey for an expedition down the Rogue in 1926, and Grey had urged him to begin stocking English and Scottish fly tackle. The famous writer told about his Rogue adventures in *Tales of Freshwater Fishing* (Harper and Brothers, 1928) and Wharton became a celebrity. He took to calling himself the "Sage of the Rogue," and wrote extravagantly about its steelhead. Wharton's "#1 Special" became the Rogue River Special, and his Turkey and Red

became an early favorite of Grey's.

Not all the steelhead flies being sold were imported. Commercial fly tying was always something of a cottage industry, often a sideline occupation that attracted women who could work from their homes. Overhead was minimal, the flies readily marketed through local sporting goods stores.

The Bunnell sisters, Ardath and Irene, grew up in Goldendale, Washington, and learned their craft from Wharton and Wells. They ran a mail-order business, Oregon Waters Fly Company, from Portland, Oregon, and called their product "Water Call 'Scotch tied' Flies." These flies reflected the fashion of the 1930s, as steelhead flies became hairwings, a bucktail wing vastly out of proportion to the body, three or four times the length of the hook. Anglers found the dressings extremely unstable, a characteristic which led to the use of double hooks, especially on the Rogue. Among the fifteen "steelhead" patterns the Bunnell sisters listed in their catalog were the Durham Ranger and Jock Scott as simplified featherwings, and a hairwing Silver Doctor—all Victorian salmon flies.

Glen Evans, Inc., a tackle and lure manufacturer in Caldwell, Idaho, was the largest commercial tyer in the West through the 1940s and 1950s. John Joy worked for Evans and had invented the sewing machine "vise," a trundle operation in which the hook spun around and could be dressed in seconds. Eventually, over one hundred women tied flies for Evans on these machines, including Joy's daughter, Audrey.

Audrey Joy left Idaho in 1945 to find work in Portland, Oregon. At the time, Polly Rosborough was quitting his job as a fly tyer in the sporting goods section of

Among the fifteen "steelhead" patterns listed in the 1930s advertising brochure from the Bunnell sisters' Oregon Waters Fly Company, Portland, for their "Water Call Flies," were featherwings Durham Ranger and Jock Scott, and a hairwing Silver Doctor—all Victorian salmon flies.

Meier and Frank, a Portland department store, and the job became available to Joy. For more than twenty years, she tied at her sewing machine—an estimated 300,000 flies, and her little booth became a shrine. She is best remembered for refining the Rogue River Special and Juicy Bug to more compact, double hook dressings.

Perhaps the most influential of the sporting goods dealers was Shoff's Tackle in Kent, Washington. Though little known outside of Puget Sound, Clarence Shoff wholesaled flies and fly-tying materials to many other businesses, including Sam Wells, Joe Wharton, and C. Jim Pray. By the 1930s, Zane Grey was ordering flies directly from Shoff. In a handwritten letter dated April 7, 1935, Grey wrote:

I rec'd the 6 dozen flies and they sure are swell. I confess that collecting flies is a passion with me. But some of them I use. Tie me a dozen Gold Demon Bucktails for the size hook enclosed. Also, one dozen each of Hair Coachman in 10-8-6-4 and the size I enclose. Put in a little more bucktail.

This last request is interesting. At the time, Washington steelhead fly-fishers were tying their flies on larger hooks and along sparser lines. Grey, still operating from a California/southern Oregon frame of reference, wanted flies with longer streamer-style wings and tied on regular-length hooks.

Zane Grey's next letter to Shoff, dated May 22, 1935, illustrates the West Coast angler's ambivalence about Atlantic salmon dressings that persisted in steelheading.

One dozen each of numbers 6, 4, 2, 01, size hooks, Jock Scott pattern only with gold body (not gilt) with red streamer running out from the body.

By the 1940s, steelheading had its own

cherished fly patterns, home grown and winged with bucktail or polar bear. Jim Pray's Optics and Thor, the Umpqua Special and Skunk from the North Umpqua, Ken McLeod's Skykomish Sunrise and Purple Peril, Enos Bradner's Brad's Brat, and Clarence Shoff's Polar Shrimp were standards that would soon beget hundreds of similar patterns.

The steelhead bucktail was something of a one-dimensional approach. It was usually fished on a sinking line, commonly a shooting head system by the 1960s, the fly was typically weighted for summer fishing, and heavily weighted for winter rivers. Hook size ran to 6s, 4s, and 2s in regular length, with turned down eye. Its typical symmetry was a fairly long hackle tail, a wing that came to the end of the tail, and hackle that reached just to the point of the hook. Overdressed by today's standards, it did not penetrate strong currents well on a floating or slow sinking silk line, and was likely to plane across the surface on its side. Weighting the fly

helped to sink it, but this made it even less stable, and not uncommonly, the fly passed through a hard swing upside down.

Anglers sought to fish these flies well sunk because of their general conviction that the fly needed to be carried to the steelhead, that it was less effective—or not effective at all—when working in the surface film. Gradually, our perceptions changed.

Twenty years ago, steelhead fly fishing began a tremendous growth which corresponded to a truly remarkable renaissance in steelhead fly tying. For inspiration, tyers returned to their spiritual roots, to the Atlantic salmon flies of both the past and the present. They dusted off *Greased Line Fishing* by Jock Scott (published in England in 1933), studied it carefully, and tied low-water flies that functioned as beautifully as they were formed.

Since the 1930s, hairwing Atlantic salmon flies, particularly those from New Brunswick's Miramichi, had been slowly

Water Call Flies

GRADE NAMES AND DESCRIPTION

Today there are hundreds of Steelhead patterns in both wing and hair-tied on heavy turned-down eyed hooks (preferably spratt) especially designed to sink rapidly and to withstand the terrific slashing of the fighting Steelhead and Salmon.

Hunker—Plain wing Steelhead fly. Picture No. 1, Professor. A very sturdy, heavily dressed fly especially tied to sink rapidly, tied on extra stout t.d.e. hollow point imported hooks; select materials, all standard Scotch and American patterns. Size: 10-2.

Gypsy Lure—Fancy wing Steelhead fly with jungle cock shoulders. Highest quality genuine jungle cock mounted each side of wings. Fancy patterned flies made of finest materials. Bodies of finest silk floss, chenille, tinsel, gold or yarn. Tied on extra stout t.d.e. hollow point hooks. Standard and special patterns. Size: 10-2.

Grizzly—Bucktail Steelhead fly. Picture No. 3, Durham Ranger. A very popular fly especially designed for Steelhead fishing. Northern bucktail securely tied on extra stout t.d.e. hollow point hooks; beautifully wrapped bodies of finest materials, full untrimmed select hackles. Standard and special patterns. Size: 10-2.

Tantalizer—Bucktail Steelhead fly with jungle cock shoulders. Picture No. 4, Golden Demon. Choice jungle cock leathers mounted each side of bucktail streamer. Many patterns of vividly dyed bucktail, non-lading. Securely tied to withstand terrific lashing on extra stout t.d.e. hollow point hooks. Choice of long or short streamer in bucktail, polar or squirrel. Standard and special patterns. Size: 10-2.

Bass Flies—Picture No. 5, Jock Scott. Standard patterns in hackle or bucktail streamers or flat, inverted or upright wings. Fully hackled. Well formed fly. Bodies finest quality silk, chenille, tinsel or yarn. Ringed or t.d.e. hooks.

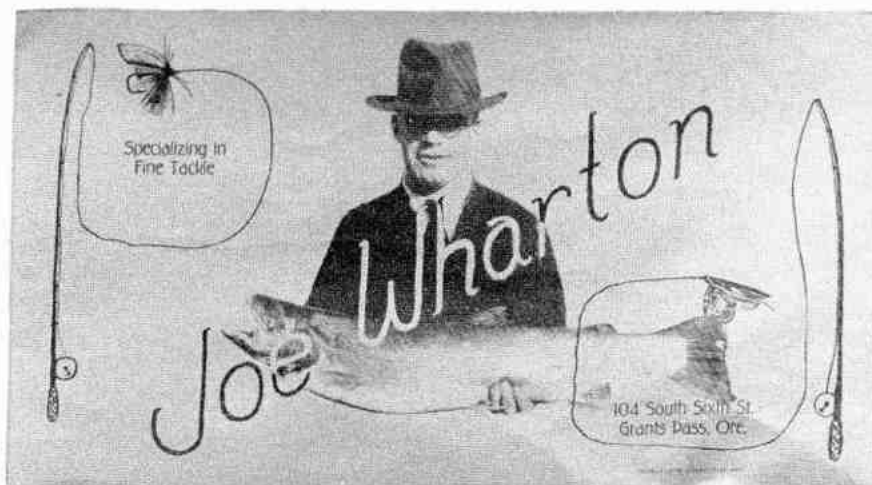
Fancy patterns, leather or hair, or combination leather and hair streamers. Many patterns jungle cock trim. Size: 4-2*

Distinctly Bass, Salmon and Steelhead Patterns

Beauty Snow	Colonial Fuller	Laughlin	Royal Coachman
Black Dog	Doc Fox	Jungle Cock	Salmon
Black Doctor	Durham Ranger	Lord Baltimore	Silver Gony
Bronzo	Golden Demon	Oxide	Silver Doctor
Cameo	Gold Dust Queen	Oxicon	Thunder and
Cameo	Grasshopper	Pernicious Belle	Lightning
Colony Salmon Fly	Hammond	Pinkie Special	Wall's Special
Red Beret	Imperial Governor	Red Bandy	Wilkinson
Green Silver Tip	Indian Boy	Rogue River Special	Umpqua Special
Blue Silver Tip	Jock Scott	Red Gumbo King	Yellow Hazzard
Green Streamer			Yonaguni
Cobalt Queen			

OREGON WATERS FLY CO., PORTLAND, OREGON

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Joe Wharton was a strong influence on the early development of steelhead flies. His store's location on Sixth Street in Grants Pass, Oregon, became a landmark and he became something of a celebrity himself in the salmon world of the 1920s and 1930s, outfitting Zane Grey, writing "extravagantly" about steelhead, and calling himself "Sage of the Rogue."

replacing the classic full-dressed Atlantic salmon patterns. Harry Smith's Black Bear series, John Cosseboom's lovely full-collared patterns, and Roy Angus Thompson's now famous Rat series (RAT for his initials), were examples of highly original Atlantic salmon ties using bear, squirrel tail, and fox, but not bucktail. At the same time, complicated married-wing dressings were dressed down—"reduced"—and, when possible, simply tied with wings of hair. These and other dressings were given a "Portland hitch," two overhand knots secured behind the head so that the leader came from the throat of the fly, forcing the fly into the surface film where it caused a visible and erratic wake. By the 1960s, a spun deer hair dry fly, the Bomber, was fished under

intentional drag on a downstream swing and "skated" in a manner impossible to achieve with Wulffs and Steelhead Bees. It, too, could be given a "hitch" and made nearly unsinkable.

These developments in Canada ignored Scottish Spey flies, an omission resolved by Syd Glasso of Forks, Washington, with Spey flies that are still among the most beautiful in steelheading. So, unlike many of the other patterns from England that passed through Atlantic Canada and then on to the West Coast, Spey fly design went directly from the British Isles to the North Pacific rain forests. Syd inspired an army of disciplined, studious followers, and I think the Northwest—including British Columbia—has a larger number of truly

outstanding Spey fly dressers than any other area of the world.

We had gleaned so much from Atlantic salmon anglers that by the 1970s, our heads were filled with many new approaches to tying and fishing steelhead flies. New materials and traditional materials, dyed in exciting hot colors, were appearing, challenging the imagination still further. Using Atlantic salmon dressings for their graceful proportions and better swimming characteristics, anglers began the cross-pollination that has created a generation of steelhead flies at once new and classic.

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Steelhead as Pacific Salmon

IN 1989, the American Fisheries Society's Committee on Names of Fishes announced that the trout species naturally indigenous to western North America and the northern Pacific Ocean drainages, the rainbow, cutthroat, golden, Apache, Mexican golden, and Gila would no longer have the generic name of *Salmo*. Henceforth, these species would be classed as *Oncorhynchus*, the genera of Pacific salmon. The Atlantic salmon and brown trout remained *Salmo*. My steelhead, *Salmo gairdneri*, a name fixed in Northwest history, became the incomprehensible and largely unpronounceable *Oncorhynchus mykiss*.

They based their decision on a more complete discovery and interpretation of fossil records. The common ancestor of today's trout and salmon lived some twenty million years ago. A major branching split this family into a

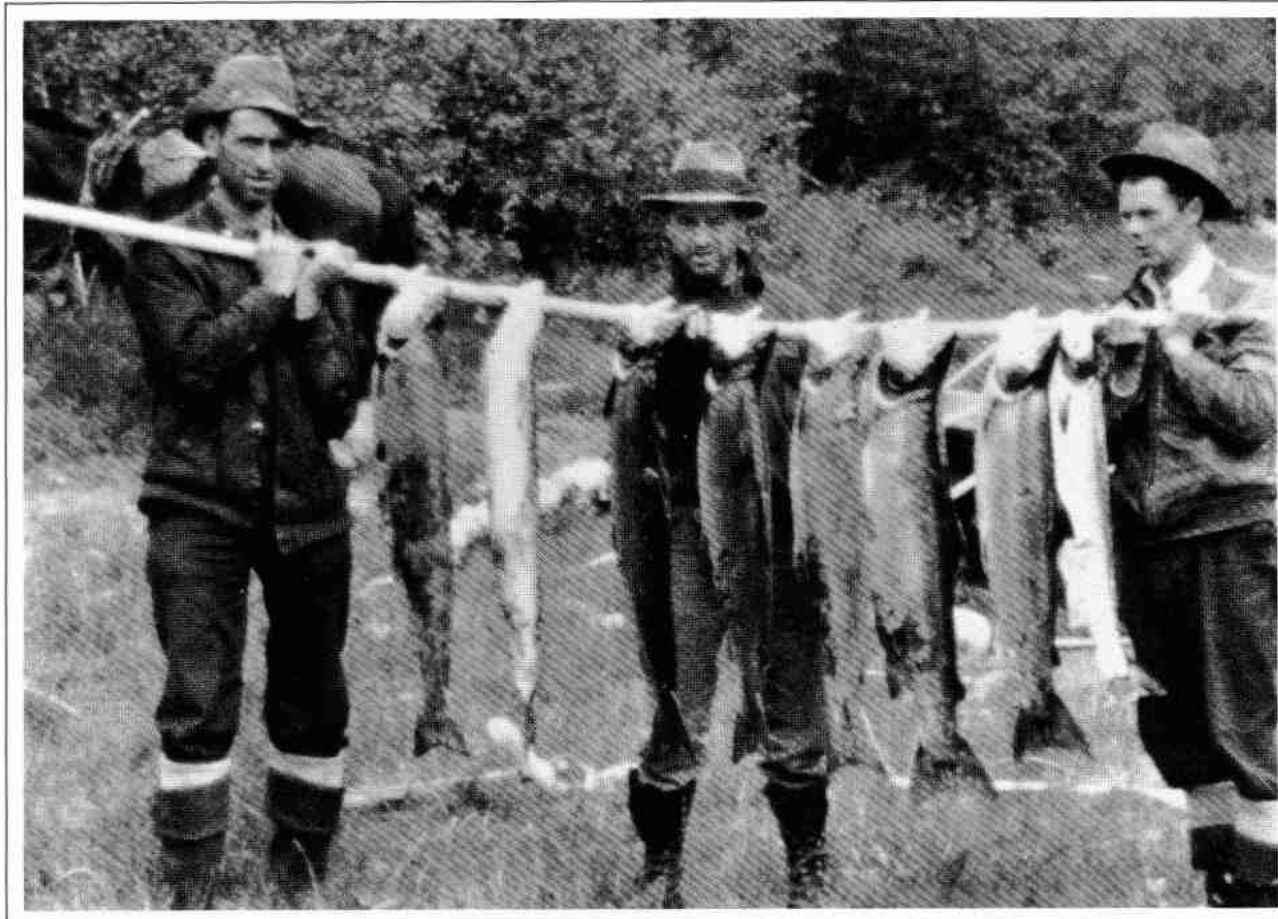
North Atlantic population which led directly to the Atlantic salmon and the brown trout, and a Pacific population. The Pacific group split again about ten million years ago, one group becoming western trout, the other Pacific salmon. Because taxonomists seek evolutionary relationships upon which to base their classifications, the decision to place western trout with Pacific salmon was logical. Other lines of comparative scientific investigation such as chromosome counts, DNA, and electrophoretic analysis of proteins support the findings of the paleoichthyologists. Outward habits and general appearance aside, the trout of western North America and eastern Russia have more physical characteristics in common with Pacific salmon than with Atlantic trout and salmon.

In 1792, Johann Walbaum described five species of North Pacific salmon, the

Dolly Varden char, and the rainbow trout found in the Soviet Union's Kamchatka peninsula. He named the rainbow *Salmo mykiss*, the species a transliteration of the Russian. Investigators have now clearly established that *S. mykiss* and *S. gairdneri* are identical. When the generic name was changed to *Oncorhynchus*, the species name *mykiss* was retained, because it predated *gairdneri* and thus had priority.

The steelhead of western North America ascend cold water rivers from Cook Inlet off Anchorage, Alaska, to the Big Sur coast south of San Francisco. Their range once extended south to rivers in Baja California del Norte. Loss of Mexican and southern California steelhead was due to the partial-to-complete loss of their spawning rivers to a myriad of urban and rural uses.

T.C.
(From *Steelhead Fly Fishing: The Great Rivers* by Trey Combs.)



In the early 1930s, the fishing on the Patapedia was "stupendous." Albert Berol recalls they caught more fish than they knew what to do with, salting them down in barrels for their guides to eat in the winter.

Another Planet: The Old Days on the Patapedia

by Robert F. Jones



Living testimony to a world long gone is contained in the rare footage of a VHS tape donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing in 1990 by Albert Berol of Bedford Hills, New York. Composed of clips edited from his family's home movies that were photographed on salmon trips on the Patapedia and Restigouche Rivers, near the border of Quebec and New Brunswick, Canada, in the 1930s, the moving images on film provide a breathtaking record of time and place, unlike the sometimes static evidence of the printed page.

The videotape gives us a fascinating look at a splendid, productive salmon river

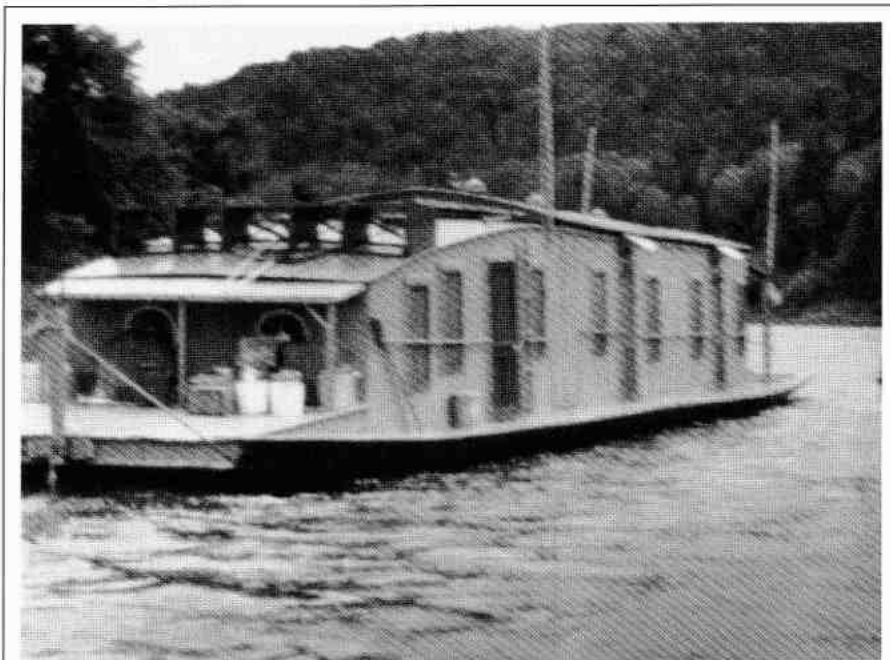
before roads were constructed along it, and at an era of leisure and privilege where the family's (and their guides') transportation was a comfortable houseboat pulled upstream by a team of draft horses, who staunchly navigated through the breast-high, boulder-studded water, not on paths alongside the river. We are even witness to the somewhat startling sight of the powerful horses in harness dragging the hitched canoes upstream, the family casting calmly to the great salmon rolling around them. We asked the noted writer (and Museum friend) Robert F. Jones to view the videotape and give us a sense of this unique window in time.

M.P.

MEMORY IN SOME CASES has a wicked way of playing false with the past, editing out the bad parts and preserving only the good. Anglers are more prone to this form of retrospective enhancement than most, as in "You should have been here last year." But were the rivers of yore really that much better in an objective sense—as full of big, strong, readily-taken fish as old anglers' memories insist?

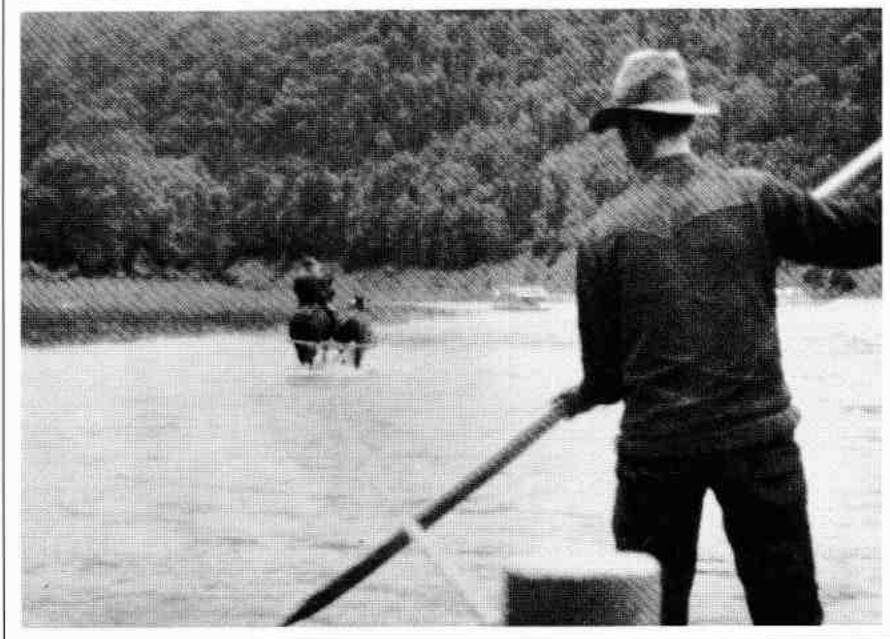
Judging by the evidence on a videotape recently donated to the Museum, of salmon fishing more than half a century ago in the Canadian Maritimes, you'd better believe it.

In the early 1930s, Edwin M. Berolz-



Top: The "Silver Grey" houseboat, built on a coal scow, offered a combined living/dining room, a bunk room with four berths, a kitchen in the rear, and a roof sundeck that doubled as luggage/supply area. It was towed upriver by a team of horses, and guided downriver by a long rudder and by guides standing aft with poles to keep it from being broken up by large boulders.

Below: "You needed good horses for that job," Berol tells us. The draft horses worked as a team, deftly supervised by teamster Jack Murray. Standing onboard a separate scow for their downstream drift, they were quieted by nosebags of feed.



by their entourage, head guide Guy Wyers, his brothers Lal and Jack, cousin Harvey Wyers, cook Tom Lake and—of all things—a teamster, named Jack Murray. The teamster was necessary because of the draft horses, which pulled the houseboat on which the "sports" traveled, along with their luggage and canoes, down the Restigouche to the Million Dollar Pool and then up the swift, narrow Patapedia to one after another of four campsites.

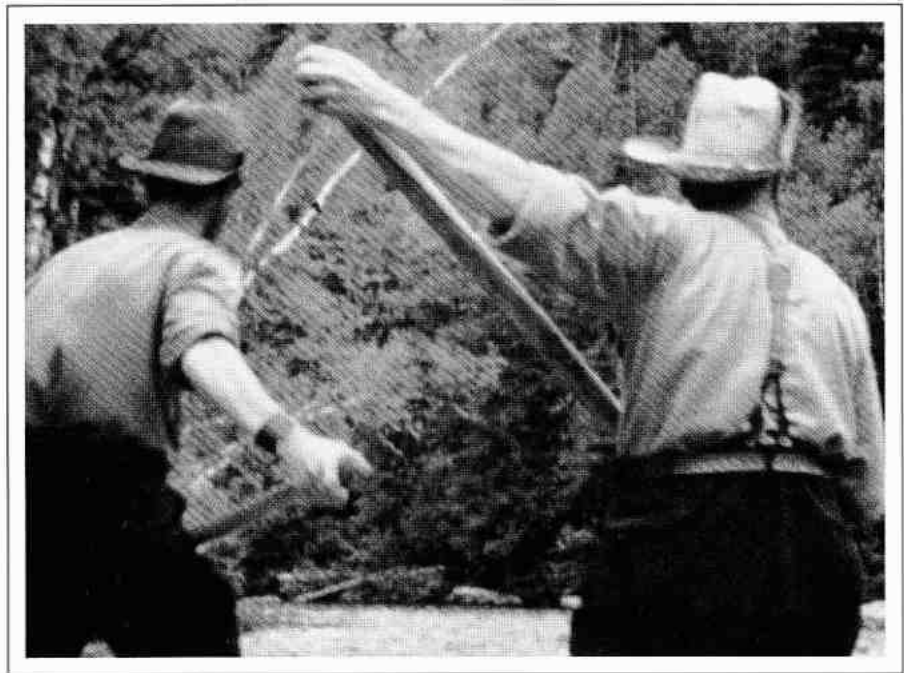
Judging by the film record, Berolzheimer's wife, Myra, was a confident angler, an authoritative woman who favored cloches, long-skirted jackets, riding breeches, and elegant knee-high boots for informal wear. His daughter, Margot, then probably in her twenties, was dark-haired, slim, and a bit shy, perhaps in the minxish way of young women in that period. In the two passages of the film devoted to her, showing her swimming in fast fifty-degree water and then paddling or poling a canoe in a quiet backwater for her father's proud cinematic album, with her guide stretched out at leisure in the bow, puffing a cigarette, Margot appears far pluckier than most of the "feisty" young ladies of this feminized era. Berolzheimer's son—who has minimized his name to E. Albert Berol nowadays and who provides a poignant "voice-over" narration of the tape in a New York accent as gravelly as the Patapedia in spate—was then probably in his late twenties or early thirties, a tall, strong, cocksure youth who often slept on the sandbars in a pup tent (rather than in the

heimer and Otto von Kienbusch leased a fifty-mile stretch of the Patapedia River—a tributary of the famed Restigouche—alternating months on the water each June and July, the height of the salmon run. Their predecessor on the lease had been none other than Edward Ringwood Hewitt, the crusty nabob of the Never-sink, who along with Preston Jennings and Ray Bergman was one of the most influential fly fishermen of the era. Fortunately for posterity Berolzheimer had been bitten by the home-movie bug and could ply his primitive Bell & Howell as effectively as he could his Leonard rods. The footage he shot of those halcyon days

on the Patapedia, transferred in 1988 to magnetic videotape by his son Albert, opens a window on a forgotten angling wonderland of bright water, big woods, strong men, capable women, and pristine salmon whose long-gone leaps at the end of a lacquered silk line can still bring tears to the eyes.

Berolzheimer brought his family with him on their annual salmon outings, driving up through Maine from New York City, crossing the border into New Brunswick at Van Buren/St. Leonard, thence north to Kedgwick, New Brunswick, where the river of that name joined the Little Restigouche. There they were met

“Athletic and wiry” head guide Guy Wyers and teamster Jack Murray fighting off the rocks going downriver, which required swift reflexes and brute strength. The most dangerous time of the year was late July when the river was low and the rocks more exposed. Their duties sometimes required them to lever large rocks out of the way of the scow.



four-bunk bedroom of the houseboat) and pitched in with the guides shifting rocks out of the channel for the boat's passage in shoal waters.

Indeed, Albert's narration is as valuable as the film itself. It is informative—telling us among other things that the houseboat, “The Silver Gray,” was built on the hull of an old Campbellton, New Brunswick, coal scow; naming the luxury salmon camps the Berolzheimers drifted past on the Restigouche en route downstream to the Patapedia; gauging the speed of the smaller river at five m.p.h.; and lauding the horsework necessary in combatting the water in the long, up-river pull—as well as humorous. During Margot's canoeing sequence, he comments in deadpan: “He [the guide] has more guts than I would, knowing the talents of the boatman. But she did pretty well, only upset the canoe two or three times.” And of their chef, the only “Frenchman” in the party, he notes, “Tom was a pretty fair cook—he could open cans well, and it was difficult to tell his coffee from his tea.”

Ah, the old humor!

But it is the salmon that make this film memorable. Albert tells us that, during the early 1930s at least, they averaged twenty-two pounds (“which in this day and age is fantastic”), and that his father, whenever he'd had enough of pulling them, had no problem in traveling up or down the river with his movie camera and recording one or another of the party fighting big fish. We see wife Myra casting from a canoe, with Lal Wyers in the stern,

flipping a fourteen-ounce, fifteen-foot German-silver-ferruled Leonard split-bamboo rod as familiarly as if it were a wire egg-white whisk; Albert battling back-to-back salmon (the largest he caught, he tells us, was thirty-six pounds); two guides straining to shoulder a pole from which hang eight salmon, all of a size to make one weep. Albert regrets killing so many fish in those easy days, but apologizes by saying that those caught early on the trip were salted down so that the guides could eat them during the winter (the later fish, caught in the last day or two of the trip, were taken to Matapedia, packed in snow and shipped home for the Berolzheimers' own delectation).

At one point in the tape, Edwin's brother Alfred—“He was mostly a gun man,” our narrator explains—drops by the houseboat for a visit and manages to tie into a glistening, broad-sided salmon that he subdues in short order, upon which the guide gaffs the fish and finishes it with five crisp blows of a makeshift “priest”—a hunk of driftwood from the river. It all looks so easy.

“We used gaffs in those days, not nets,” Albert says, “and I do not like it.” He pauses for a moment then adds: “It's much cleaner to net them.”

And at times he seems to doubt the evidence of his own eyes as to the size of the fish. “Of course,” he cautions, “you know that any salmon you catch weighs more, after a few hours or days, than when you catch it. That's the psychological truth. Not factual.”

Technically, the most surprising thing is that these reels of ancient film, which play for nearly an hour, have held up so well over all these years. Edwin Berolzheimer must have had a natural's eye for composition and tone, as well as high-quality film. Many of the scenes, looking up or downriver, into or away from the natural light, pulsate vividly with the glitter of bright, moving water or the slow moving shadows of the forest highlighted in one instance by the scuttling flight of a family of ducks—probably mergansers—surprised by “The Silver Gray” around a sudden bend. The heavily-wooded banks of the Patapedia dusk and shiver in the timeless wind, throwing off subtle, shifting coruscations of light and shadow that would do credit to a Monet or a Cezanne.

“You get a little flavor of life on the river,” Albert muses during one of these idyllic passages. “It was usually pretty cool. The weather was beautiful. At night it was quite cool—nothing to stop it coming down from the North Pole.” But he doesn't softpedal the black flies, which came out in force at dusk. A few scenes show Myra Berolzheimer, clad like a Martian in headnet and long gloves, casting the dry fly in the gloaming, hip-deep in rushing water. “No matter how many times I look at these pictures,” Albert says quietly, “the more thrill I get out of them . . . Edwin got it all—he didn't miss a trick.”

Fish rise with sudden, heart-stopping swirls in a quiet evening pool. A few large mayflies are dancing in the twilight—a spinner fall? You can see the long shapes



Top: When the houseboat beached at a camping site, the horses towed the canoes upstream for salmon fishing, saving the guides from having to pole canoes up the rapid-flowing river. They waded half the time, and fished from canoes the rest.



Below: Albert Berol, the son of Edwin Berolzheimer, dressed in a parka to ward off the evening chill. He says about his father's films, "Considering how long ago they were taken, they're really beautiful. Edwin got everything in there . . . he didn't miss a trick."

of salmon cruising, slow and ghostly in the thickening gloom, truculent as they swirl to smash the fallen naturals. "Isn't that a beautiful picture?" our narrator asks at one point. It is the lower river at dusk. "Might as well be on another planet."

But Albert Berol, from the vantage point of his old age, reserves his greatest respect for the family's skilled, hard-working guide crew. Scene after scene shows them lining their heavy, cedar-ribbed, canvas-hulled canoes up snarling rapids at a brisk walking pace, the steel-shod poles whirling like parade-ground batons in their sure hands—"Those poles


were a natural part of them"—or else fighting off the boulders that threatened to gut "The Silver Gray" during fast, turbulent downstream runs in the thirty-foot houseboat.

They are tall, wiry, weathered-looking men, these guides, stoic of countenance, possessed of a natural dignity and the poise of strong bodies, dark-faced from exposure to sun and wind, perhaps a bit dour in a manner befitting their Scots heritage—canvas-shirted men puffing pipes, wearing battered fedoras or Aussie-style bush hats with one side of the brim pinned up, the clothing and men both stained with old-fashioned fly dope (you

can almost smell its pungent, nostalgic, coal-tar reek), staggd whipcord trousers, and "high-top" lace-up boots reaching nearly to the knee with heavy wool stockings folded down over the uppers. In the marvelous fish-fighting sequences they hover quietly behind the grim-faced anglers, gaffs winking bright at the ready, perhaps muttering a few low words of advice or encouragement. And when the gaff strikes home, it never misses.

"Believe me," Albert Berol says in conclusion, his gritty voice heavy with suppressed emotion, "if you didn't have a group of men who knew that river—going downriver and upriver, and angling and gaffing and all about this sport—you'd be in real trouble. They were real pros. Especially Guy . . . Hard work, that business."

Houseboats like "The Silver Gray" no longer ply the Patapedia or the Restigouche. Highways and helicopters have rendered them and their draft-horse propulsion obsolete. Most guides nowadays prefer the outboard motor to the push pole. The once-empty empyrean over the rivers—empty but for the flight of the raven or the flash of the kingfisher—is now regularly streaked with the contrails of Montreal-bound jetliners bellowing in from London. Salmon rods are far shorter and lighter than Edwin Berolzheimer's old Leonards, and so are the salmon. But then again, an angler doesn't have to fight as many of them each day—there are far fewer fish in the rivers. An hour spent with this wonderful film will show just how much we have lost.

"Another planet" indeed. 

Atlantic Salmon Reels of the Past

Text by Jim Brown

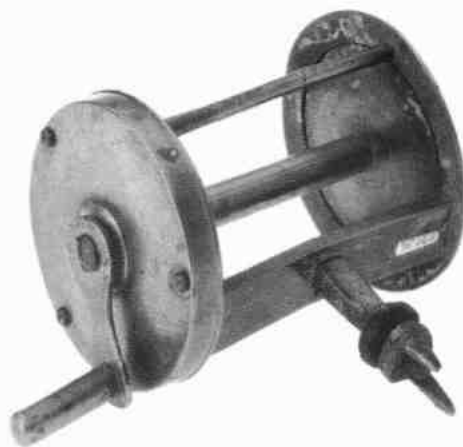
Photographs by Bob O'Shaughnessy



IT HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN SAID that the sole purpose of a reel is to store line. This may be true in some kinds of fishing, but it is distinctly not the case for Atlantic salmon fishing. The Atlantic salmon is strong and quick enough to empty a fly line and backing from a reel in a single rush. Most salmon fishermen have experienced something like this, and it is the chief reason why there is such a demand for the high-performance salmon reels by modern reelmakers like Bogdan, Fin-nor, and Seamaster. Such reels are more than line storage containers; they possess excellent drags, operate smoothly and durably, and are efficiently designed.

Of course the salmon reel is not a modern invention; it has been made and used for more than three hundred years, and ideas about what constitutes a top-quality reel have varied considerably over this time. The American Museum of Fly Fishing is fortunate to possess a large collection of Atlantic salmon reels that includes some of the finest British and American designs of the past. The following selection, arranged chronologically and covering the period of 1810 to 1905, is only a small sampling, but it suggests an evolution of the Atlantic salmon reel from its primitive beginnings to the increasingly sophisticated and sometimes elegant products of the more recent past.

Probably the oldest reel in the Museum's collection is a British spike-mount reel by an unknown maker. This reel is believed to be nearly two hundred years old and has been tentatively dated to circa 1810. It is a single-action reel (i.e., one turn of the handle causes one turn of the spool) and is made of brass with an iron spike fitting. This spike is built to fit



Early Spike-mount Reel. British, c. 1810; 2½" x 2⅝"; 10¾ oz.

through a hole in the rod butt. The reel is then fastened by a wing nut that threads up the spike until the reel is firmly in place. Very little is known of the origin of the spike-mount reel. Although it appears to be a design of substantial age, it is also listed in some British tackle catalogs as late as the 1880s where it is referred to as an "Irish pattern."

Can you imagine the angler who used this reel in 1810? He was possibly on leave from the Napoleonic Wars, and worked the fly on a favorite salmon pool with a long rod and horsehair line.

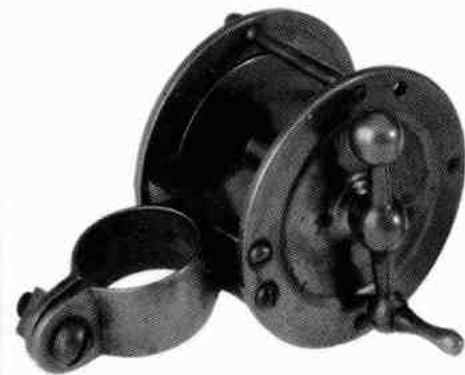
The first salmon reels were British-made, but by the early nineteenth century American tackle makers began to develop reels of their own. At this time, the multiplying reel was losing favor in Britain, and it was picked up and revitalized by American reelmakers, especially those in New York and Kentucky. It was most likely some New York reelsmith who built the G.C. Furman Salmon or Saltwater reel, a large and sturdy brass double multiplier. The maker is unknown, but the reel is engraved "G.C. Furman made 1826 Rebuilt 1838."



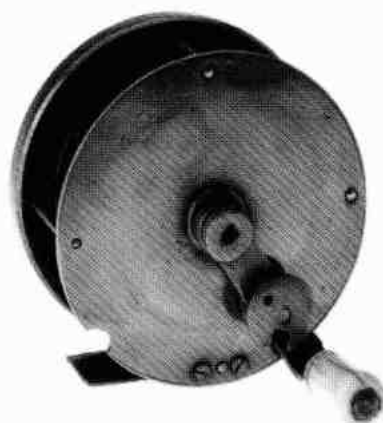
G. C. Furman Salmon or Saltwater Reel. American, c. 1826; 3" x 1½"; 16 oz.

This refers to the owner, Grover Coe Furman (1793-1856?), a merchant from New York City and uncle to William Furman (1819-1893), the pioneering fish culturist. The Furman reel shows some surprisingly advanced details for its age: a unique dovetailed sliding oil cap on the back of the reel as well as a slightly serpentine counterbalanced handle. It is possible that the handle is part of the later rebuild, but even so, it is an extremely early appearance for this feature. The advantage of a counterbalanced handle is that it helps promote even pivot wear and in a casting reel it helps to continue spool momentum, making for longer, smoother casts.

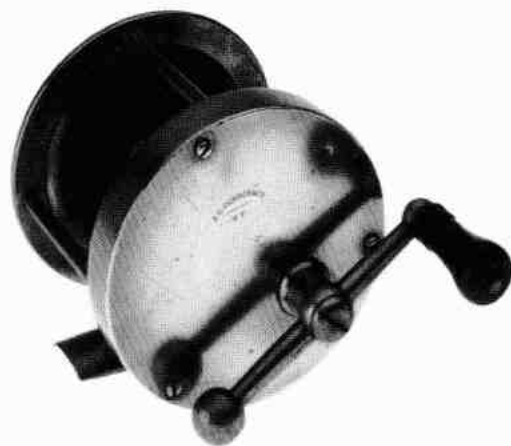
Another American reel of early vintage and unusual design is the single-action New York Ball-handle Reel. This reel, which also features a ring-clamp rod attachment, is believed to date to circa 1840.



New York Ball-handle Reel, single action. American, c. 1840; 2⁵/₈" x 2³/₈"; 11¹/₂ oz.



Folding Crank Fly Reel. British, c. 1845; 3¹/₄" x 1¹/₈"; 14 oz.



J. C. Conroy & Co. Ball-handle Reel. New York, c. 1870; 3¹/₈" x 2"; 18 oz.

As the name suggests, this style of reel probably originated in New York and typically is fitted with a counterbalanced handle having a ball-shaped counterweight. What is unusual about this particular reel is that it is not a multiplier but a single-action. This is significant because the handle is not offset; rather it is centrally mounted and therefore less likely to be in the way for fly fishing. Secondly, it is not customary for New York Ball-handle reels to be fitted with anything but a conventional reel foot, perhaps because they tend to be large and heavy. Yet the reel has a heavy, machined ring-clamp rod attachment that is both serviceable and beautifully made. It seems likely that the entire reel was either homemade or custom-made.

One aspect of modern life often taken for granted is the ease with which we can travel by automobile or plane. Previous generations of anglers were often faced with long and arduous trips on horseback in order to reach their salmon fishing. Under such conditions, the portability of tackle was important. Rods had to store compactly and so did reels. A suitcase is one thing but a saddle bag is quite another matter!

Addressing this need, the British developed a folding-crank fly reel that en-

joyed considerable popularity for a time. There were several variations but this early example of circa 1845 is fairly illustrative. The crank is hinged so that the handle can fold into a recess on the frontplate rim for flat storage. To use the reel, the handle is hinged back into position and tightened into place by a knurled thumbscrew. This sounds like a terrific idea, and it doubtless served a purpose, but one can't help but think that the last thing a fisherman wants is a reel handle that decides to misbehave at the wrong time. Apparently others reached the same conclusion, for this type of reel is no longer made.

The New York Ball-handle reels mentioned earlier continued to be made and used into the 1880s. One of the predominant manufacturers of this style was the Conroy Firm. In large sizes this reel was capable of handling salmon, bluefish, or stripers. It was always perhaps more of a saltwater reel than a salmon reel, and this was particularly true during the final years it was on the market, at which time more specialized reels for fly fishing became increasingly available. Still, many of these New York Ball-handle reels were passed down from father to son and were dutifully pressed into traditional salmon fishing use.

Today a good number of these reels are discovered at estate sales: frequently they are filled with old silk fly line and firmly rusted to the seat of an ancient salmon rod. But what is most amazing about these reels, whether used for salmon or saltwater fishing, is that they lacked any form of drag. A fish was played quite literally by hand: either the line had to be

grasped by the hand above the reel, or the fingers of the hand below the reel were pressed against the line running off the spool (usually the latter). Both techniques produced painful finger burns to any angler trying to slow a strong fish too early in its run! For this reason it is common to see many of these early reels fitted with leather thumb pads.

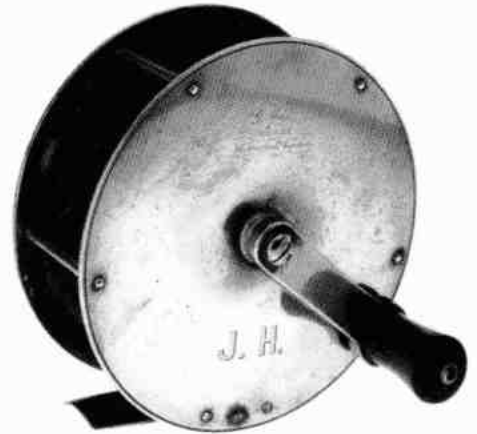
In response to the tendency of crank-handle reels to foul the line, tackle makers in Britain began to produce a new type of reel during the 1860s called the revolving-plate reel. In this pattern, the handle knob is fastened to an outer winding plate which revolves next to the spool, making for a trouble-free arrangement. This design was so good that it has been produced almost continuously ever since. One of the more striking examples from the Museum's collections is the E. Paton Salmon Reel, made by Edward Paton of Perth, Scotland, circa 1880. It has a rosewood backplate and front frame and brass winding plate; the use of dark reddish wood and bright yellow brass in combination yields an extra fine-looking reel. It also raises the question of why wooden reels were so much more popular in Britain than in the United States. America did produce some side-mounted wood-trolling reels but nothing like the number of Nottingham reels made in Britain and, unfortunately, nothing resembling this very beautiful reel by Edward Paton.



Edward Paton Revolving-plate Salmon Fly Reel. Perth, Scotland, c. 1880; 4½" x 1½"; 20 oz.



H. L. Leonard 1877 Patent Bimetal Salmon Fly Reel. Bangor, Maine, c. 1880; 4½" x 2"; 21½ oz.



George Main Hinged Checkplate Salmon Fly Reel. London, c. 1885; 5" x 1¾"; 38 oz.

American reelmaking had its own high points, however, and one of these is the H.L. Leonard 1877 Patent Salmon Reel. Hiram Lewis Leonard (1831-1907) is remembered today chiefly as a rod builder from Bangor, Maine, who, more than any other, helped establish the craft of bamboo rodmaking in this country. Yet many fine reels were also made under the Leonard mark. Most of these are based on the June 12, 1877 patent of Francis Philbrook, an inventor and fellow Bangor resident. Leonard acquired the rights to this patent and, the evidence suggests, contracted the work out to various shops over the years. The Leonard reel was a big success: it was made in many sizes and of various materials for nearly one hundred years.

The 1877 Patent Salmon Reel is one of the rarest Leonard reels. Probably few were built. It sold for \$25 in 1877, putting it out of reach of the average salmon fisherman. The reel is both an aesthetic and mechanical triumph, handsomely made of nickel silver and bronze in a unique raised pillar pattern. Leonard may not have been the first to introduce the raised pillar style, but his reels did much to popularize it. The advantage of placing the pillars above the circumference of the reel is that it provides a greater line capacity than the conventional pillar reel and therefore weighs less than a conventional reel of similar capacity. The patent claims the technical advances of a recessed side plate to contain the click

mechanism and a click mechanism that is easily removed for repairs. Of more importance to the angler is an excellent adjustable drag with real stopping power and a counterbalanced handle that moves within a protective rim which effectively prevents the entanglement of line.

Modern salmon fishermen are often amazed at the large size of antique salmon reels. Most salmon reels today measure from three inches to four inches in diameter, but in the past huge salmon reels of five inches to six inches and weighing one and a half pounds were not uncommon in some parts of the world. Salmon reels longer than four and a half inches were not as popular in America as in Britain or Scandinavia where a preference for large double-handed rods of eighteen to twenty feet and longer made the use of oversize reels practical. Such reels were used not only for fly fishing but also in boat fishing for salmon by trolling and harling with spoons and bait. Harling is a method of Atlantic salmon fishing in which two or three rods are mounted in the stern of a boat and the boat is allowed to drift with the current at the same pace as the lures being presented. It is a style of angling well suited to large, deep, and turbulent rivers such as the Tay in Scotland and many of the Norwegian rivers where casting would be tedious and wading impossible.

One of the most interesting reels in the Museum's collection of this oversize type is the George Main Salmon Reel. This reel was made in London about 1885 and is a whopping five inches in diameter and weighs 38 ounces. In the hand, it seems to have an immense capacity (a mile of line seems about right), and it is very definite-

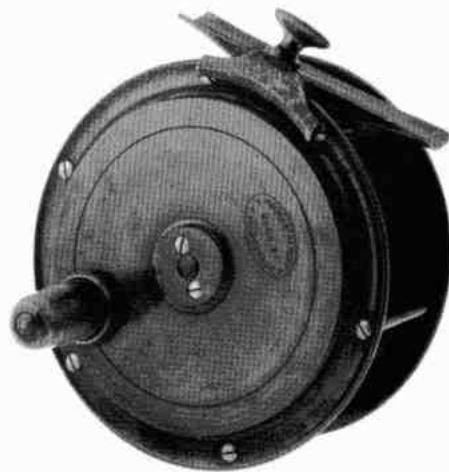
ly one reel you don't want to drop on your toes. This reel is not just exceptional for its large size, but also because of a thoughtful antifoul handle design and most particularly for its hinged checkplate.

The raised checkplate design probably originated in Britain as early as the 1840s and continued to be popular for nearly forty years. In this style of reel, the click mechanism is contained in a disc-shaped box on the back of the reel rather than placed between the backplate and rear spool flange. This arrangement gives the angler ready access to the important working parts of the reel for repairs, adjustment, cleaning, and lubrication without completely disassembling the reel. The hinged checkplate of George Main's reel is a further refinement of the basic raised checkplate idea offering the added convenience of push-button operation. In spite of their positive points, raised-checkplate reels tended to be extra heavy and sometimes bulky. They were gradually replaced by lighter-weight designs.

The angler's search for lightweight tackle is not a new phenomenon. Particularly in America, where one-handed salmon rods have long enjoyed high regard. Reelmakers have for many years experimented with both design and materials to achieve lighter-weight sal-



Edward Vom Hofe Restigouche Salmon Fly Reel. New York, c. 1890; 4¼" x 1¾"; 20 oz.



Thomas' 1896 Patent Mahseer Fly Reel by S. Allcock & Co. Redditch, England, c. 1900; 4½" x 1⅝"; 18 oz.



W. A. Macleay Salmon Fly Reel with Palming Ring. Inverness, Scotland, c. 1905; 4½" x 1⅝"; 25 oz.

mon reels. One of the truly outstanding reels in this category is Edward Vom Hofe's Restigouche Salmon Reel. Sometime during the 1870s Vom Hofe began to use black hard rubber side plates on his reels. Such reels were far lighter than the all-metal reels generally in use at the time and, many would argue, far more beautiful as well.

These black hard rubber sideplates took an excellent finish and contrasted richly with the nickel-silver fittings Vom Hofe invariably used on his reels. An S-shaped counterbalanced handle completed the distinctive Edward Vom Hofe look, a look which has continued in later reels by Otto Zwarg, Arthur Walker, and Stanley Bogdan. But Vom Hofe was more than a consummate stylist, he was a master reelsmith and mechanic. A careful study of his reels shows an exacting attention to details such as Tobin bronze bearings, oversize gears, shouldered pillars, handcut countersunk screws, roller pillars to reduce line friction, and clever oil port closures to insure that no sand or grime would be introduced into the reel. It is also typical of Vom Hofe's persistent dedication to the improvement of his reels that the adjustable drag on his Restigouche salmon reel, which was originally on the front of the reel, was eventually relocated to the back where it could easily be reset at any time, even while playing a fish.

At the same that some reelmakers like Edward Vom Hofe were striving to pro-

duce lightweight, elegant salmon reels, other manufacturers saw the need to create specialty reels that were ultra rugged and could deal with heavy gamefish in a no-nonsense way. Thomas' 1896 patent fly reel built by S. Allcock & Co. of Redditch, England, is of this latter type. This reel, designed and patented by Henry Sullivan Thomas, has a revolving plate built with a peripheral groove into which a V-shaped block mounted on a spring could be pressed to act as a brake. Thomas invented this reel for braking the heavy runs of large fish, specifically the mahseer described in his book *The Rod in India* (London: Trubner, 1873). The mahseer is a powerful native gamefish of India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Related to the carp family, but omnivorous, the mahseer grows to 120 pounds (thirty pounds is reportedly common), is capable of initial runs of one hundred yards, and is known for its stubborn resistance even on heavy tackle. Inasmuch as there are no mahseer in Britain, we can probably assume that at least a few of Thomas' patent reels were employed by salmon fishermen.

Thomas' patent reel wasn't for everyone. For one thing it must have been as noisy as a locomotive, pressuring heavy

fish with a tongue-and-groove metal brake. Another type of brake that was much quieter and fairly efficient is the palming ring or what today would be called the exposed rim. In this design the angler applies braking force to the rim of the faceplate (usually the front flange of the spool) by hand. When this feature appears on modern reels, advertising sometimes suggests that it is a recent improvement, but the truth is that this concept has been around for close to a century and was clearly well established in 1905 when W. A. Macleay of Inverness, Scotland, built a Palming Ring Salmon Reel. Macleay used an extra large black, hard rubber ring on his reel, and one can imagine this must have worked well as long as it remained smooth. As soon as the rubber cracked or chipped, its usefulness would have been severely compromised.

Atlantic salmon reels today continue to evolve just as they did in the past. New materials such as graphite, titanium, magnesium, and delrin as well as precision machining techniques are all playing a part in this evolution. The development of antireverse reels is noteworthy as is the present work in corrosion-resistant and antireflective finishes. New models are rapidly being introduced, some offering a fresh approach to old problems and some just re-introducing old solutions. It is tempting to think that with the advances of modern technology, many of today's Atlantic salmon reels are without peer, yet it may be closer to the truth to recognize that all these reels owe a large debt to the Atlantic salmon reels of the past.

GALLERY



SALMON FISHING WITH A FLY has seldom been the province of the common man, and has attracted famous fishermen, actors, artists, and even presidents, providing the American Museum of Fly Fishing's archives with some of its most high-profile artifacts, as featured in this new department of the journal, GALLERY. In future issues, we will be using the GALLERY to offer you a close-up look at some of the Museum's most interesting, valuable, pertinent, beautiful, or eccentric artifacts.

The fly box belonging to President Grover Cleveland 1837-1908 was donated by Mrs. Joseph B. Browne in 1986. She received the flies from Cleveland's son, Richard Folsom Cleveland. It has been said that President Cleveland once confided to a friend that he was more interested in the future of fish and game than he was in being President.

The Restigouche salmon fly reel belonging to Ogden Pleissner (1905-1983), landscape and sporting artist, was made by Edward Vom Hofe & Co., circa 1935.

Pleissner once said that people would ask him to come back to their salmon camps because "I knew one end of a salmon rod from the other." Donated by Ogden Pleissner in 1976.

Bing Crosby's (1903-1977) Orvis Impregnated Shooting Star Bamboo rod (a two-piece 9½ foot, 6⅞ ounce for 9-weight line) was donated by Mrs. Katherine Crosby in 1981. Crosby loved fly fishing and spent much time salmon fishing in Ireland and Scotland.

The fishing hat belonging to Charles Ritz (1891-1976), famous hotelier, raconteur, fly fisher, and author (the elegant Swiss/American was also known for his beautiful casting and love of salmon fishing) was donated by Pierre Affre in 1979.

A book from Theodore Gordon's (1854-1915) collection, *The Habits of the Salmon* by John P. Trahrne (London: Chapman and Hall, 1889), donated by William Naden in 1976. An interesting inclusion from the library of one of the great innovators and popularizers of the sport of fly fishing.

The Pacific Slope

by Charles Hallock



A sense of place—the character of our country and its rivers and streams at any given time—is as important to our collective history as are the famous anglers and their rods, reels, tackle, flies, books, and memorabilia. The Fishing Tourist by Charles Hallock (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), off the shelf of the Museum's library, gives us a clear-eyed view of the United States in the 1870s, and is written in lucid prose refreshingly untinted by the purple shading common to travel writing of the era. A writer whose "sketches of travel and adventure" appeared periodically in Harper's Magazine from 1856 to 1873, and the originating editor of Forest & Stream magazine, Charles Hallock lets us see our country, its waters, and the human impact on the environment 118 years ago.

In this particular excerpt, which touches briefly on the waters of the Rocky Mountains, California (at that time still a new state), and Oregon, among others of the Pacific slope, Hallock loftily compares the travel innovations of his day (although the rail routes had not yet connected with the West Coast) to the "old-time wagon travel of twenty years ago" when a man's "har" was imperiled by "predatory" Indians. Reading this chapter also sadly reminds us of the era's racial prejudices and that the pollution of our country's waters isn't a twentieth-century invention.

If readers are familiar with any of the places Hallock mentions, we would welcome your report on how they have changed with the passage of a century. M.P.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS are traversed everywhere by trout streams; and the overland tourist who is inclined to spend the months of July and August among their peaks and defiles and magnificent

upland parks, can hardly cast his line amiss in any of them. In the vicinity of Sherman, on the line of the Union Pacific Railway, 550 miles west of Omaha, the trout fishing is equal to any on the road. Dale Creek, a tributary of the Cache-à-la-Poudre River, and other streams in the immediate neighborhood, abound in trout of the finest quality, and weighing from a quarter of a pound to two pounds each; their flesh is as hard and white as that of the mountain trout of Vermont. Even the tiniest rivulets swarm with them. Fifteen miles beyond Sherman, at Virginia Dale, the Dale Creek traverses a canyon whose walls are 600 feet high, and the adjacent scenery is wonderfully diversified by grottoes, gorges, dells, canyons, precipices, towering peaks, and rugged recesses. Antelope, elk, black-tailed deer, bears, sage hens, and grouse, abound in the hills and on the plateaus. There is excellent hotel accommodation for the sportsman. Within a radius of twenty-five miles from Sherman are many natural curiosities and points of interest, including Old Fort Laramie, which render a sojourn here very attractive; and doubtless this locality will soon become a favorite summer resort for tourists and anglers. The Black Hills flank the valley on one side, and the Rocky Mountain ranges upon the other. Lake Como and the Medicine Bow River, seventy-five miles farther west, abound in trout. At Fort Bridger, a few miles from Carter Station, there is a good hotel, kept by Judge Carter, good fishing, and guides at service. Bear River and Bear Lake, in Utah, are reached by stage from Corinne or Ogden Stations. A small steamer plies on the river and lake, taking passengers and excursion parties to various points. Echo Creek, Chalk Creek, Silver Creek, and

Weber River, are accessible from Echo City, and combine rare fishing and hunting with the grand scenery of the Echo and Weber Canyons. Maggie's Creek, and many other tributaries of the Humboldt River, abound in trout, and may be easily reached from Carlin and neighboring stations. But, to specify names or localities to any great extent, would require a knowledge of the country possessed only by some old "mountain man" or geological surveyor. It will consume many weeks to exhaust the novelty and attractions of the few already named herewith, and they are the very best on the line of the road.

Very different today is the journey to California from the old-time wagon travel of twenty years ago. The Overland Coaches were not running then, and it was as much as a man's "har" was worth to run the gauntlet of the predatory Indians. A few days' ride in a Pullman car, with every luxury at command, will take one across the "Divide" to the Pacific slope. Luxuriating there in an arcadia of boundless extent, with a climate of wonderful salubrity, the angler can unfold a revelation of new experiences startling in their magnitude and sublimity. The scenery of California has formed the inexhaustible theme of every person who has traveled that way; and if it be that the tourist is impelled by an angler's impulses, as well as by an innate love of nature, he will find his way to virgin lakes and streams where artificial fly has never trailed, and whose silvery trout have no suspicion of wiles or stratagems. Of those waters adjacent to and accessible from the railroad, may be mentioned Truckee Lake and River, with their five-pound black-trout; the Ogden River, three miles from Ogden City, with its black-trout, and its silver-trout, that sometimes weigh twenty pounds apiece; Donner Lake, two miles and a half from Truckee Lake, a beautiful bottomless lake, three miles long by one mile wide, with black and silver trout; Lake Tahoe, nine miles from Truckee, black and silver trout again; with the grand preserve of the Comer Company, stocked with its 2,500 black-trout, weighing from two to twelve pounds apiece; and so on, almost *ad nauseam*, so abundant and large are the fish. But the game is sluggish, and not like the lithe, active denizens of the Neepigon or the Tabusintac; and one's desire soon cloy. Then there is the Russian River, near Healdsburg, that has a variety of more vigorous trout, much like the speckled trout of the Atlantic, and doubtless identical with it; and the Merced River, in the Yosemite Valley, with a very peculiar chubby-trout, marked with curious spots,

and a coral lateral line from gill to tail. Most of these waters are much frequented by residents of San Francisco, Sacramento, and other sea-board towns, as well as by travelers. Their superabundant fish afford an inexhaustible fund of food to numerous Digger Indians, unkempt and squalid, who lure them by disgusting tricks and low-bred subterfuges. A favorite mode of fishing is to "chum" them by blowing mouthfuls of bait into the water, and when numbers have been attracted to the spot, catch them with rude tackle baited with worms or cut-up fish. At night they often set an old stump ablaze by the water-side to allure their victims, and then the scene is picturesque indeed, with the lurid glare lighting up the darkness, and casting fantastic shadows upon the background.

California has a seacoast line of nearly 800 miles. From the Coast Range of mountains, which adjoins the coast line for the greater part of this distance, nearly one hundred rivers and streams empty into the Pacific Ocean. These streams and rivers vary from twenty to sixty miles in length. The drainage of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, through seven degrees of latitude, forms several hundred streams, whose united waters make the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers—the first navigable for a distance of 180 miles, and the last navigable one hundred miles from the ocean. The waters from the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada flow into brackish and salt lakes in the state of Nevada, and have no outlet into the ocean. Pyramid Lake, the largest of these, receiving the waters of the Truckee River, is forty miles long and twenty miles wide. The inland bays and fresh-water lakes of California cover more than 650 square miles—a n area half as large as the state of Rhode Island.

Salmon are abundant in the Sacramento and the Joaquin, and were formerly plenty in the Feather, Yuba, and American Rivers. In the first two they have materially decreased of late years, while in the others they have ceased to run altogether, having probably been driven out by the poisonous drainage from the mines along their borders. Trout are found in nearly all the streams that discharge into the Pacific Ocean from the Coast Range of mountains, and in the greater number of the mountain streams of the Sierra Nevada. They vary greatly in size and appearance in different waters, and at different seasons; but so far no variety is exactly similar to any of the brook trout of the New England states. The large brown and silver trout of Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River are pronounced by Mr.

Seth Green not to be trout, but species of the land-locked salmon. These fish make annual migrations from Lake Tahoe to the brackish waters of Pyramid Lake. Many of the fishermen of Tahoe insist that the so-called silver-trout does not leave the lake; but, as they are occasionally caught in the river, it is probable they also migrate, but perhaps at an earlier or later season. In the streams of the Coast Range of mountains the trout spawn in November and December; in the streams of the Sierra Nevada in March and April. There are no trout in the mountain streams above large falls. If there ever were trout above the falls, they have passed below them in their migrations downstream, and are debarred from returning.

Of good trout streams on the coast may be mentioned the Gobethey Creek, two miles below Spanishtown; Lobetis Creek, four miles below; the San Gregoria, which is frequented by salmon also; Pompona Creek, four miles from San Gregoria; and the Pescadero, a confluent of the Butena River, the latter abounding in salmon (so-called), in such quantities that, from October to March, wagon-loads of fish weighing from two to thirty pounds are taken daily and sold at the high price of seventy-five cents per pound.

Great complaint is made of the depletion of lakes and streams by the erection of dams and the refuse of factories which poison the water: the same old story of the Eastern states repeated. Waters which formerly swarmed with fish are now wholly impoverished. Since the creation of a Fishery Commission by the state, its officers have not ceased in their efforts to stay the destruction. They have restocked some of the streams with native and imported fish, established breeding works, and caused some passes to be made over dams. Although California is a new state, the work has not been begun one moment too soon, and much time will be required to repair the losses already incurred.

Of the waters of the North Pacific, tales are told that would seem incredible, were they not confirmed by repeated and most reliable assurances. There the salmon swarm in countless numbers. They spawn all the year round; and at certain periods they fill the rivers of the Arctic Ocean, the rivers of Alaska, the Gulf of Georgia, of British Columbia, Puget's Sound, and all the tributaries of the Columbia whose falls are not insurmountable. In the canyons and contracted channels, during March and April, they so crowd the rivers as absolutely to impede the passage of canoes. Indians, armed with long poles fitted with a cross-piece, through which

long nails are driven, resembling rakes, hang over the rocks that confine the river, and with an upward jerk impale as many fish as there are nails. It is said that Seepays, the Colville Indian salmon-chief, who has a monopoly of the fishing at the Chaudière, or Kettle Falls of the Columbia, catches 1,700 per day, weighing an average of thirty pounds apiece. At this distance of 700 or 800 miles from the sea, they have become so exhausted that, in their efforts to leap the falls, they batter themselves against the rocks, so that they fall back stunned, and often dead; they then float down the river some six miles, where they are picked up by another camp of Indians who do not belong to the salmon-chief's jurisdiction. In the fall, the run is even greater, and the river is filled with such numbers of the dead floating or cast up along shore, that they poison the atmosphere, and cause the river to stink for miles! In the head-waters, horses and pack-mules fording are made to jump and plunge with fright by the fish flopping against their legs! Up and down a distance of two and a half degrees of latitude, the Indians spear and net them in immense quantities. The Hudson's Bay Company long exported them largely, smoked, dried, and pickled. Salted salmon they sold at \$10 per barrel, for shipment to China, the Sandwich Islands, and the South American coast.

Of speckled trout in the cold streams that flow into Puget's Sound, there is no end—even of eight-pounders. Not only can they be netted by the wagon-load, but caught by the hand by wading out into the stream.

It has been generally believed that the salmon of the Pacific never rise to a fly, and repeated tests by expert anglers have failed to controvert the opinion. Nevertheless, had experiments been made in the autumn, instead of the summer months corresponding to the fishing season on the Atlantic coast, this opinion would readily have been found to be erroneous. The fact is, the Pacific salmon can be caught with the fly at any time *after the fall rains commence*.

When the great railway routes now reaching toward the Northwest—the Canadian Pacific, the Northern Pacific, the Oregon and Idaho branch of the Union Pacific, and the California and Oregon, from Sacramento to Portland—when these are completed, the great Columbia River and the rivers of Puget's Sound will be brought within easy access. At present the overland journey to San Francisco and thence by steamer to Portland and Victoria, Vancouver's Island, is not tedious or difficult. ∞

The American Museum of Fly Fishing

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VISIT!

Summer hours (May 1 through October 31) are 10 to 4. Winter hours (November 1 through April 30) are weekdays 10 to 4. We are closed on major holidays.

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- Volume 5, Number 3, 4
- Volume 6, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 7, Numbers 2, 3, 4
- Volume 8, Number 3
- Volume 9, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 10, Number 2
- Volume 11, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 12, Number 3
- Volume 13, Number 3
- Volume 14, Numbers 1, 2
- Volume 15, Numbers 1, 2
- Volume 16, Numbers 1, 2, 3



Museum News

1990 Annual Meeting Notes

Thirty Museum trustees, some from as far away as Oregon, California, Georgia, and Louisiana, assembled in Manchester, Vermont, on October 21-22 for a gala dinner at Manchester's historic Wilburton Inn, tours of the Museum and discussions with our staff members, and, finally, a day-long meeting and planning session at the charming Reluctant Panther Inn. Herewith, an overview:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Don Johnson, completing his third year as the Museum's executive director, reported that AMFF was in the process of finalizing another successful financial year. For the third consecutive year, the Museum's all-important dinner/auction program showed improvement, as did all other income categories such as membership, contributions, publications, grants, and gallery attendance. Don also noted that Alanna Fisher, completing her first year as AMFF's curator/development assistant, and Doug McCombs, the Museum's summer intern, had performed admirably, and that AMFF's traveling exhibits and publications programs continued to grow, as had the Museum's educational programs, trustee, and volunteer involvement, and collections.

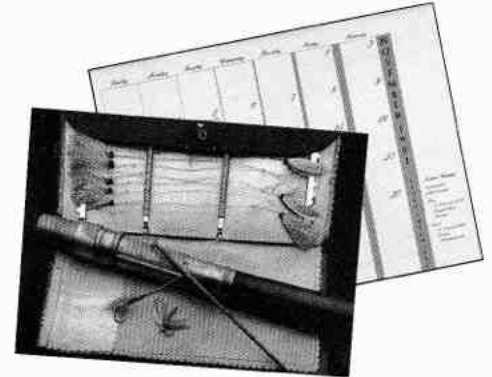
1991 Budget

A fiscal 1991 budget totalling \$258,000 was reviewed and unanimously accepted. A respectable increase in the Museum's publications program budget will help fund the salary of the new editor of *The American Fly Fisher* and the publication of a deluxe edition of the Museum's *A Treasury of Reels* by Jim Brown. Additionally, the funds are allotted to employ a part-time registrar and summer intern.

Capital Campaign

AMFF's development committee chairman Bruce Begin reported on the outstanding success to date of "The Campaign for the American Museum of Fly Fishing: Preserving a Rich Heritage for Future Generations." Bruce felt that the campaign's goal of \$200,000 would be

reached by early spring 1991, and that plans for the renovation and expansion of the Museum would soon be initiated. The support of the Museum's trustees and development committee throughout 1990 was outstanding.



Museum Publications

The Museum, in cooperation with Trout Unlimited and Terry Heffernan Films of San Francisco, California, helped produce a stunning four-color 1991 calendar which featured selections from the Museum's personalities collection. The calendar was circulated to over 65,000 individuals nationwide. The Museum also launched a biannual newsletter entitled the *Greenheart Gazette*, which has been warmly received, and published *A Treasury of Reels: The Fishing Reel Collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*, a comprehensive, hardcover history and museum-quality catalog by Jim Brown; and "Lost Pool," a signed, limited-edition print created with the cooperation of nationally known artist John Swan and the Amscott Group.

Priorities for 1991

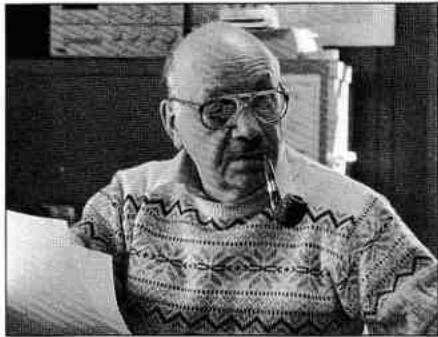
Having satisfied many of the requirements for museum accreditation, such as formulating a collections policy, and hosting an Institute of Museum Services Conservation Survey, and two Museum Assessment Program surveys, the Museum will look forward to applying for accreditation through the American Association of Museums in late 1991 or early 1992. Similarly, it was hoped that the renovation of the Museum—including the opening of audio/visual and special children's interpretive areas—would be

completed by mid-1991, perhaps in time for AMFF's second Annual Museum Festival in June. The Museum will continue to strive for greater professionalism in all areas of operation, and along these lines, the trustees felt that a professional editor for the Museum's journal and a part-time registrar/membership services aide should be added to the Museum's staff, pending the availability of funding.

Awards

Our trustees voted unanimously to honor the seven years of selfless service given to the Museum by volunteer Joe Pisarro, by creating the Joe A. Pisarro Volunteer of the Year Award. This award will be presented yearly to the Museum's most outstanding volunteer.

Don Johnson



The Joe A. Pisarro Volunteer of the Year Award honors the seven years Joe has worked for the Museum.

1991 Annual Meeting

It was resolved that the 1991 Annual Meeting of the American Museum of Fly Fishing would be held in Manchester, Vermont, on Monday, October 21, 1991. It was further resolved that in the future the Museum's Annual Meeting be held on an alternating basis in Manchester, Vermont, and in selected sites around the country.

AMFF Exhibition at Carter Library

A major exhibition devoted to the arts of fly fishing and fly tying is now set to open at the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum in Atlanta, Georgia, on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 23. The exhibition is being jointly orchestrated and installed by the staff members of the Jimmy Carter Library and the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

The exhibition will feature hundreds of components from AMFF's varied collections, and many of President and Mrs. Carter's personal fly-fishing tackle and fly-tying items. The Carters are pas-

Official photograph, The White House. Courtesy, Sebastian Marinaro



President Carter will attend the opening of a fly-fishing exhibition and gala dinner to follow, in Atlanta, Georgia, on Tuesday, April 23.

sionate devotees of all types of outdoor sports, although they especially love fly fishing.

We are very pleased to announce that President Carter will be in attendance at the exhibition opening scheduled for 5:30, to which all Museum members are cordially invited. He will also be attending a gala dinner that evening at the Piedmont Driving Club in Atlanta. For further information call or write the Museum.

First AMFF Endowment Created

Museum members will be pleased to learn of the creation of the Museum's first endowment, recently made possible through an anonymous \$15,000 foundation grant presented to the Museum as part of our current capital campaign. As many of our members are already aware, endowments provide the capacity and flexibility necessary to meet the expanding and future needs of the Museum. This important resource helps to insure the highest quality of service for the fulfillment of the mission and goals of the Museum as a stable financial institution. The purposes and restrictions for the application of endowed funds may include use in educational programming, staff appointments, and youth programs. The ultimate goal of endowed funds is to meet the needs of the institution and the interests of the donor. Those members wishing to help build our new endowment may do so by sending a check to: AMFF Endowment, P.O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254. All gifts are tax deductible as provided by law.

Museum Renovation Begins

The first phase of our plans for the renovation and expansion of the Museum was successfully completed recently following two site surveys by representatives from Vermont's Department of Aging and Disabilities and Department of Labor and Industry.

Our staff was especially interested in the findings of the survey conducted by David Sagi of the Department of Aging and Disabilities, since we have long wanted to make the Museum fully accessible to people who use wheelchairs or who have problems with mobility. As a direct result of David's suggestions, we will be installing a wheelchair ramp in our new entranceway and a washroom that is fully accessible to the aged and disabled, and adding several other special features throughout the Museum. By making these improvements, the Museum will be in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act which mandates that museums be open to all by January 1992.

Museum staff members have also been visiting other museums and talking to museum professionals in the area in order to learn more about audio/visual systems, new labeling techniques, signage, and exhibit construction in preparation for the changes due to take place in the days ahead. As previously noted, we hope to have most of our renovations completed in time for our Second Annual Museum Festival in Manchester on June 7-9.

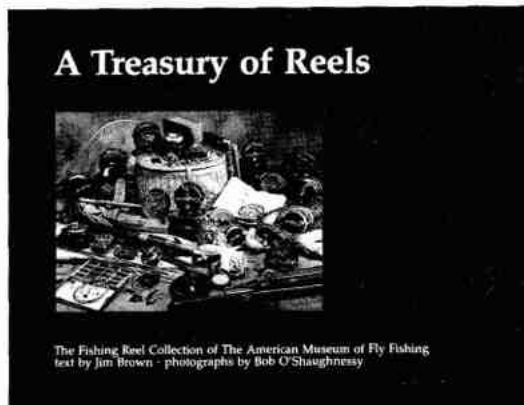
Alanna Fisher



Representatives of Vermont's Department of Aging and Disabilities meet with Executive Director Don Johnson to discuss renovation suggestions.

A Treasury of Reels

The Fishing Reel Collection of The American Museum of Fly Fishing
text by Jim Brown · photographs by Bob O'Shaughnessy



- Over 200 black and white photos of individual reels
- More than 75 historic illustrations
- Printed on acid-free paper
- Large 8½"x11" format – over 285 pages
- Four-color dust jacket
- All proceeds benefit the museum
- Comprehensive bibliography and index

order
A TREASURY OF REELS
directly from the Museum. (Order one for a friend, too!)

_____ signed and numbered limited-edition copies at \$50.00 each Postage and handling \$5.00 Total _____

Museum Gift Shop



Our popular T-shirts are made of 100% preshrunk cotton. Specify color (navy or cream) and size (S, M, L, XL), \$10 each, plus \$2 postage and handling.



Our pewter pin features our logo in silver on an olive-green background. Our patch is silver and black on a Dartmouth Green background; \$5 each, plus \$1 postage and handling.



AN ARTIST'S CREEL · June 9–August 7, 1989
— Peter Corbin

Four-color exhibition posters printed on high-quality glossy stock, ample borders. Left, "Time On the Water" by John Swan (26"x 20"), and "An Artist's Creel" by Peter Corbin (26"x 23") \$15 each, plus \$2.25 postage and handling.



Right, "Lost Pool," special limited edition print by John Swan, printed on acid-free paper (15⅞" x 26¾"), ample borders. Each signed and numbered print, \$95. Postage and handling included.



LOST POOL · June 1–October 31, 1990
— John Swan

Please make checks payable to: AMFF and send to P.O. Box 42, Manchester, VT 05254.
MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted. Call 802-362-3300.

C O N T R I B U T O R S

Arnold Yelin



Jim Brown is a professional librarian who lives and works in Stamford, Connecticut. He is an avid fly fisherman and collector of antique fly tackle who has written numerous articles on the history of American fly reels as well as two books, *Fishing Reel Patents of the United States, 1838-1940* and *A Treasury of Reels*, published in February 1990 by the Museum.

Jim is a member of many angling and conservation groups including Trout Unlimited, Federation of Fly Fishers, Theodore Gordon Fly Fishers, the Housatonic Fly Fisherman's Association, the Catskill Fly Fishing Center, as well as the American Museum of Fly Fishing. He and his wife Pat live with two cats named Felix and Otto.

B. J. Meiggs



Trey Combs, of Port Townsend, Washington, has been writing books and magazine articles about fly fishing for more than twenty years. His book *Steelhead Fly Fishing and Flies* (Frank Amato Publications, 1976) has been called the "steelheader's bible." His article in this journal, "Atlantic Salmon Dressings in Steelhead Fly Fishing," is adapted from his forthcoming book, *Steelhead Fly Fishing: The Great Rivers* (New York: Lyons & Burford), scheduled for publication in Fall 1991.

When not hunting for steelhead on Pacific Coast rivers, he fly fishes offshore in Mexico and Costa Rica for sailfish and dorado. Trey has served as president of local chapters of Trout Unlimited and the Federation of Fly Fishers. He presently serves on the board of directors of Washington Trout.

Lou DiGesare



Donald F. Catalfimo was born and raised in Greenwich, New York, only a ten-minute walk from the lower Battenkill. His father taught him to fish, and after the Boy Scouts taught him to shoot, introduced him to upland game hunting.

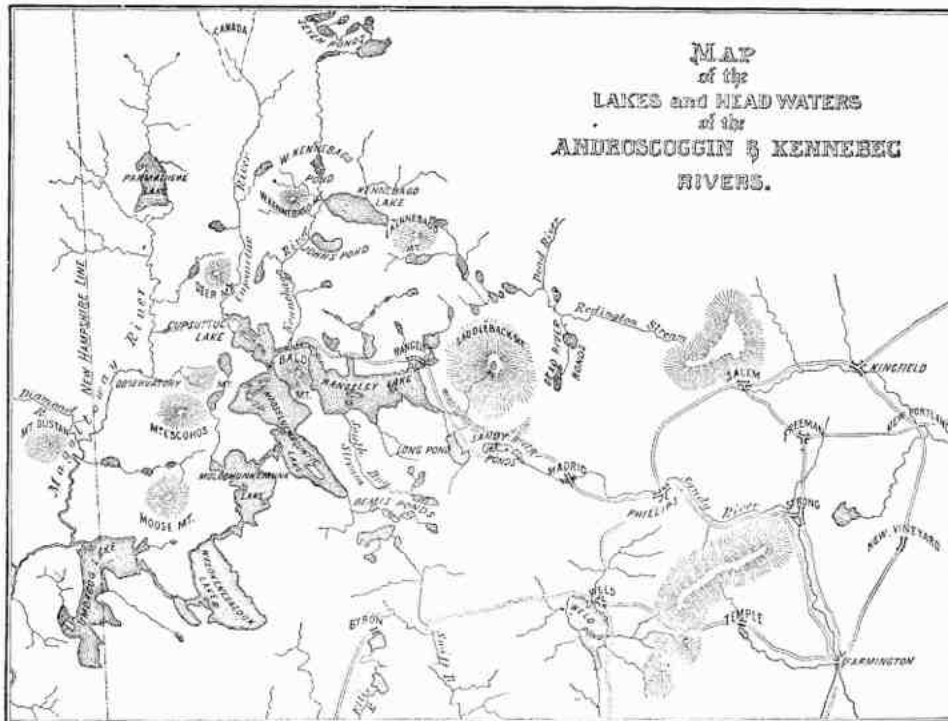
Don teaches biological sciences at a suburban middle school just north of Schenectady, New York, and pursues academic interests in ecology and natural history. He is a member of the National Association of Biology Teachers. He enjoys fly fishing and fly tying, researching and collecting angling and sporting books, grouse hunting, and bird dogs, particularly Gordon setters and yellow Labs.

Don maintains active memberships in Trout Unlimited, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and the American Museum of Fly Fishing, where he often volunteers.

Bill Epperidge



Robert F. Jones is a journalist and novelist who writes primarily about hunting and fishing. His most recent novel is *Blood Tide* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990), and he is a frequent contributor to *Sports Illustrated*. He is currently at work on the first book of a mystery/thriller trilogy. His articles have also appeared in such journals as *Audubon* (for which he wrote a haunting elegy on Africa's wilderness in the September 1990 issue) and *Gray's Sporting Journal*. He lives on a mountain in West Rupert, Vermont, with his wife Louise, their Labs and barn cats, and takes whatever free time he can snatch away from his old Underwood typewriter to sneak down to his favorite, and secret, trout stream.



Map of the Androscoggin and Kennebec Rivers from *Sport with Gun and Rod*, edited by Alfred M. Mayer (The Century Co.: New York, 1883).

A Full Slate



WE HAVE A FULL and exciting schedule of programs for 1991. Museum staff members will be building exhibits, manning public relations booths, and giving audio/visual presentations all over the East. Museum traveling exhibits will be installed by host museums in virtually every region of the country, and we've expanded our dinner/auction program to include two new venues: southern New Hampshire and Atlanta, Georgia. More interesting yet, we plan to host an archaeology/conservation field trip to northern Maine during the summer, a first for this Museum.

While we continue to bring exhibits and programs to folks around the country, we are also, as previously mentioned, focusing on developing a full range of programming here at home. For instance, we're very excited about the way plans for our second Annual Museum Festival Weekend, June 7-9, are shaping up. The Museum's staff is using this year's Festival

as a backdrop for the dedication of the Museum's renovated exhibition and staff areas, and to kick off a new exhibition entitled "The World of the Salmon." Additionally, there will be a major showing of angling art, a gala dinner/auction, lawn sale, and open house. If the success of our first Festival last year is any indication, this year's event should be exceptional. For more information on our second Annual Museum Festival, contact the Museum office. Don't miss it!

Editor Margot Page informs me that the next issue of *The American Fly Fisher* (Summer, Volume 17, Number 2) includes several articles by Theodore Gordon not seen by the public since their original publication around the turn of the century; a profile of the nineteenth-century Colorado writer Lewis B. France; and a portrait of the famous publisher/writer Eugene V. Connett and his renowned Derrydale Press, featuring an introduction by publisher/writer Nick Lyons.

D.S.J.



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING was established in 1968 to preserve and exhibit the treasures of American angling. As the only national nonprofit educational institution of its kind, the Museum serves as the repository and conservator to the world's foremost collection of angling and angling-related objects, including more than 1,500 rods, 800 reels, 40,000 flies, 2,500 books, as well as manuscripts, photographs, periodicals, and other related items. The Museum's growing collections provide students, authors, teachers, writers, and all members of the public with thorough documentation of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry in the United States and abroad from the mid-sixteenth century to the present.