The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

WINTER 2024 VOLUME 50 NUMBER 1

Winter Winners

In search of contenders for our traditional winter art feature, Collections Manager Kirsti Scutt Edwards dove into the deep waters of the museum's permanent collection. Within that ocean of possibility, specifically within the Monier Trophy Art Collection of 200-plus paintings, four underwater scenes caught her attention. Her discovery that the same artist had worked on children's nature books and illustrated *Sea Monsters of Long Ago*, a book she remembers from her own childhood, likely helped to decide the matter. In "John Hamberger: Underwater Worlds" (page 18), Edwards discusses Hamberger's works and dynamic style.

We don't search for contenders for the annual Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award—they simply show up. That the decision for this award is always difficult and debated is testament to the quality of writing submitted each year. The 2023 winner is Matt Powell, whose "Middle-Seat Meditations" begins on page 2. Finalists are listed on page 5, where you will also find a call for 2024 submissions.

An issue featuring fiction and paintings seems like a good one in which to include an essay and a review. James Woods made his first trip to the Battenkill in 1959 with his father and brother—a trip that changed his life. He learned a lot about fishing early on by watching other anglers and asking advice. Through veterans he encountered, Woods got his first glimpses into the trauma and aftermath of war and the healing power of fly fishing. His essay "The Battenkill: Midcentury Moments" begins on page 20. Then, on page 23, G. William Fowler—in a piece that's part book review, part profile—discusses Glen Larum's *Leaving Montana*, a collection of poems he finds worthy of our attention.

Now, onto some flies and some rods.

Stephen E. Wright designed his own fly pattern, the Gray Raptor, thinking he was onto something new. The design came to him "through deductive reasoning and creative discovery, without the use of pattern imitation, examples, or recipe instructions." But he soon figured out that his creation wasn't new at all. "We fly tiers occasionally design new patterns or change old ones only to find neither were ever new—that both were designed at an earlier time or were independently invented in another geographic location," he explains. Wright began looking for instances of what he now calls the soft-hackle dry fly. He defined his terms, looked for its origin, and collected examples of flies he'd not known existed. "The Soft-Hackle Dry Fly: The Phantom among Us" begins on page 10.

Late last year, Art Director Sara Wilcox pointed out that it was fifty years ago, in winter of 1974, that the museum published its premier issue of the *American Fly Fisher* and that with Winter 2024 we launch Volume 50. (The math is a bit off because Volume 13's four issues are spread over two years.) Still, with a nod to this milestone, we're reprinting—exactly as it appeared—an article from Volume 1, Number 1.

Fittingly, it is a piece by the classic tackle historian Martin J. Keane (1937–2009), who, in the museum's early days, identified rods, helped to catalog the growing collection, and made recommendations for proper storage. He continued to support the museum by providing identification, authentication, and appraisals. "Dating Guide for Vintage Rods" (page 6), which appeared under a "Technology" department head, is a primer: handles, materials, ferrules, guides. It's exemplary of the type of information the museum wanted to both gather and distribute. Keane would soon publish his 1976 book, *Classic Rods and Rod Makers*, which, as it is "always our first stop when it comes to [identifying] rods," made the staff's fiftieth-anniversary list of fifty favorite collection items (see vol. 44, no. 3).

Winter well, friends.

Kathleen Achor
Editor

The American Fly Fisher (ISSN 0884-3562) is published four times a year by the museum at P.O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254. Publication dates are winter, spring, summer, and fall. Membership dues include the cost of the journal ($50) and are tax deductible as provided for by law. Membership rates are listed in the back of each issue. All letters, manuscripts, photographs, and materials intended for publication in the journal should be sent to the museum. The museum and journal are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, drawings, photographic material, or memorabilia. The museum cannot accept responsibility for statements and interpretations that are wholly the author's. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless postage is provided. Contributions to *The American Fly Fisher* are to be considered gratuitous and the property of the museum unless otherwise requested by the contributor. Original material appearing may not be reprinted without prior permission. Periodical postage paid at Manchester, Vermont 05254; Manchester, Vermont 05255; and additional offices (USPS 057410). *The American Fly Fisher* (ISSN 0884-3562) email: amff@amff.org website: www.amff.org phone: 802-362-3300

postmaster: Send address changes to:
The American Fly Fisher
P.O. Box 42
Manchester, Vermont 05254

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We welcome contributions to the *American Fly Fisher*. Before making a submission, please review our Contributor's Guidelines on our website (www.amff.org), or write to request a copy. The museum cannot accept responsibility for statements and interpretations that are wholly the author's.

The American Fly Fisher

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ON THE COVER: Rainbow Trout, *1983. Oil on canvas (16½ x 26½ inches). From the Trophy Art Collection donated by Mike Monier. AMFF permanent collection. 2019.051.037.*

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

The American Fly Fisher (publication number 0084-3562) is published four times per year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). Editor is Kathleen Achor. Complete address for both publisher and editor is The American Museum of Fly Fishing, P.O. Box 42, Manchester, VT 05254. The journal is wholly owned by the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Total number of copies: 1,188 (average number of copies of each issue run during the preceding twelve months; 1,100 actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date). Paid/requested circulations (including advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 922 (average; 922 actual). Paid distribution by other classes of mail: 48 (average; 56 actual). Paid distribution through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales: 29 (average; 22 actual). Free distribution by mail: 60 (average; 52 actual). Free distribution outside the mail: 11 (average; 10 actual). Total free distribution: 71 (average; 62 actual). Total distribution: 1,070 (average; 1,052 actual). Copies not distributed: 118 (average; 48 actual). Total: 1,188 (average; 1,100 actual). Percent paid and/or requested circulation: 93.3% (average; 94.1% actual).

THE 2023 ROBERT TRAVER
FLY-FISHING WRITING AWARD

Middle-Seat Meditations

by Matt Powell

Photograph by Chris Vaage and artistically interpreted by David Van Wie.

"What did you just say?"

Shelby's question is rhetorical and final. He may not know it yet, but the guy leaning on the boat's knee brace behind me has just stepped on a land mine. I hope he heard it in her tone or saw her expression after his naïve comment because there will be no more talking between them. If any more words are directed at her, there will be a detonation. It will be ugly, and I am sitting between them. The fly rod goes limp in his hand, and he sits down, sipping beer from his koozie, considering his next move. The only sound now is faint humming from an electric pump up ahead on river right drawing water to irrigate potatoes and the click-click-click of sprinkler heads atop a wheel line. Shelby whips her seat around to face front, toes clenched and bloodless against the bottoms of her sandals jammed hard against the casting deck. She strokes the articulated fly in her hand, smoothing its variegated feathers. She has been dredging the deep channels to tempt brown trout lying in wait, but so far we haven't boated a fish.

Shelby used similar fly patterns in Alaska and Patagonia. Men within her orbit back then would linger unsure, testosterone-fueled machismo crumbling into awkward smiles, unable to look away as she threw tight loops with a flawless presentation. I can see her laughing at them over her shoulder as she hauls in another slab-sided Chinook or hefty brown trout. BIG FLIES FOR BIG FISH should be tattooed on her forearm. Shelby gazes across the water ahead, remembering those times, no doubt wishing she were there. Images from Yakutat and Balmaceda flash in my head as well, tinted memories from when I too was overwhelmed by her fly-fishing prowess, enveloped by her allure, until the day I said what I felt on a cobbled beach and was left foundering, wondering how something so splendid could collapse into a funeral pyre so quickly. The guy behind me has no way to know, but I've stepped on that same land mine.

Up ahead, as the Henry's Fork slides a lazy turn to the left, there's wading access to the river. Early August is a good time to spot cars and trucks piled in below Vernon Bridge, and it coincides with inexperienced casters, flailing the water with dry flies, trying to catch fish that will never rise during the heat of the day. There's just a single rental car covered in road dust pulled over at Seeley's on river right today. A lone wader stands chest deep stripping a weighted leech just above the weeds. I dip an oar, drift toward the left bank to give him room, and nod as we pass. Shelby turns to me with subversion in her eyes—the bow is swinging toward the Vernon Boat Ramp. She spins back and starts unrigging her rod, nipping the fly off the leader with her teeth and jabbing it on the brim of her cap. The guy behind me hasn't caught on. The float out to Chester Dam with just him is going to be tricky.

No one ever takes up space in Shelby's head for long. Many have pretensions to think they might. I tried to keep pace with her but recognized—with my pride laid bare, wondering who she was—that I'd always be lagging and that she'd always dress the truth in her own clothes. Shelby doesn't chase equality, as some women often feel the need to. Her notable talents are innate and treated the same as her corruptions, with neither one ever suffering a second thought. And she mostly doesn't mind the company of the rest of us except, like now, when she does. The boat noses onto shore. Shelby hops out and without a word or glance back, she strides away up the boat ramp. The guy watches her go, thinking she is headed for the toilet. "She's coming back, right?" he finally asks.

"She'll meet us at the takeout."

"What's her deal?"

"You should move up front . . . it'll be easier for me to show you where to throw."

Maybe Siddhartha Gautama was referring to guiding when he said, "Life is suffering." I can see his point; there are manual labors of rowing and obligate good behaviors of assisting and deferring to difficult clients. There are plenty of spiritual labors too because guiding involves a lot of thinking. Perhaps that's why many fly-fishing guides eventually recognize that clients can be mostly distilled to three categories, which Gautama didn't comment on since he didn't spend much time rowing a drift boat.

First, there are clients who strive to be seen. They have not only found the sunshine but struggle to remain in it regardless of cost. Their ambition can inspire others, but as far as I've seen, this blind desire more often leaves all sorts of material and emotional wreckage strewn in their wake. When these folks are aware of this, they rationalize the rubble they leave behind is stardust for others to follow. The river and the fish are just another in a long string of shallow and short-lived conquests for them.

Then there are clients who most times remain bogged down with life, suffering in everyday metaphorical shade. Ordinary folks, who come to not only recognize the light they rarely touch, but the circumstances that keep them from it. For them, the river and fishing are maintenance for soul and sanity, though they may not be conscious of it. The fly rod becomes their connection to a peace that subdues the numerous thoughts in their head competing for attention. For these folks, you really try to make a great day of it. The river and the boat reduce the complexities of their world to a singular consideration for the next few hours. They never know it, but this watery construction is often as much of a restorative for the guide as it is for the client, their fish and their triumphs many times lingering as much in my memory as theirs. People ask, "Why do you guide?" Because every time my boat slides into the water, hope floats forever promisingly along with it.

Finally, there are a very rare few who recognize that all things end well if you believe it so. With these folks, the most sought-after and most sincere qualities of human nature arise. Gautama aspired to teach us to be these people—they have let go of suffering. The river and the fish are one continual path: any outcome, every outcome, ends in happiness. In my case, there's got to be more to it than just racking up good river karma because so far, despite my best meditations with the sun beating down and wishing I could someday get a day off, I've never managed to float away to nirvana.

There are two ways things could go as far as my tip is concerned. I'm tending to place the guy, now moving clumsily to the front of the boat, in the first category: a player who hopped a plane from L.A. up here for the week. Without any of his acolytes around to demonstrate his liberality to, my tip will be meager, especially with Shelby stomping off. On the other hand, he may just hand over his primo fishing outfit when we get to Chester Dam. This happens more often than you'd think. Over the seasons, I have collected rods and reels that were used once or so and given over as a final gesture from well-financed clients certain they would never return.

This guy had somehow chatted up Shelby in the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar in Jackson and had fished down from Yellowstone Lake to Alpine in Shelby's boat on a personal gig. Why she decided to bring him over to the Henry's Fork instead of continuing down the South Fork in her own boat is beyond me. She knows the South Fork as well as I do, and it's fishing better right now. The yellow Sallies are still coming off well. The Henry's Fork is always tough this time of year. Water temps drive the fish deep, and clients don't want excuses about biological oxygen demand or trout physiology. You're supposed to be the one with the cheat codes for catching fish, no matter the hour of day or season. "Just get it done before it's time for gin and tonics, okay?" You tie on a brown rubber legs and troll it behind the boat hoping a whitefish will suck it up and save your ass.

I slide the boat off the ramp back into the current. The guy, now in front, remains motionless, fly rod across his thighs. Just as I start to say something, he steps out of whatever mental debris he's been tangled in. He stands up and begins casting, going deep and stripping in earnest. His casts are mindful and directed. This isn't his first weekend on the water after all, and I decide I'm going to boat a fish for this guy if it takes all day. Unfortunately, the places between here and Chester Dam that offer any reasonable chance in the afternoon are slim. The weedy glides and deep channels holding most of the fish are behind us. There is a basalt wall, though, that gradually curves out into the current downstream aways on river left. Water pillows up in its throat and leaves an outer edge that forms a subtle eddy fence that swirls away downstream. It's a well-known river feature, and newbies always fish the throat where the water piles up and scours a deep hole. Big fish do sometimes hang out there, and if you were to believe the fishing lore on the internet, it should be the place to cast your fly. I have learned there are alternatives.

To those who listen, Gautama would have whispered a koan, "Where are the fish besides where you expect?" If you focus, you'll find enlightenment in a lovely scum line. There are indeed big fish in the deep hole, but there are hungry fish, lower in the feeding hierarchy, down the bank side of the eddy fence where the water slows and food items tumble out of the recirculating current. That thin meandering line of foamy debris is a handy surface marker to visualize the eddy fence

and an answer to Gautama's paradox. I scull downstream of the hole and anchor up, telling the guy to move to the stern and cast back upstream inside the foam line. He does okay, but he's getting tired and sloppy. This all changes after a few casts when his line zings to life, nearly jerking the rod from his hand. We boat a fine rainbow I measure at 16 inches and then another from the same spot at least 2 inches longer. He fishes on with renewed energy, but to no avail. Midafternoon on the Henry's Fork in late summer is more than a challenge for anyone. Even so, he has succeeded with a two-fish release, and his contentment will not be denied.

We continue downstream to Chester Dam. Shelby is not at the takeout; neither is her pickup. I offer to drive the guy to Alpine even though it's way past the fly shop at Palisades. He waves me off, says he's traveling with buddies who are in Ashton and will come pick him up. He chats with them on his phone, texting pictures of his fish. He tips me three crisp Benjamins from his wallet and even helps me trailer the boat. He genuinely thanks me and genuinely smiles. I leave him leaning against a picnic table laughing as his friends arrive. Grand Teton glows coral pink as I head south on Highway 20 toward St. Anthony, and I'm left a bit undecided which category to place this guy in.

Back at Palisades, I park the rig at the fly shop, empty the ice chest, and stow my gear for tomorrow. I transfer Shelby's rod and boat box into the back of her pickup and walk across the highway. She is there, sitting beside Larry, helping him with receipts. Larry, our outfitter and confirmed Luddite, considers computers with disdain, preferring expenses written in a ledger and sums totaled by hand. Shelby uses the calculator on her cell phone to check his work. The rest of our crew slouch in the yellow glow of the Pioneer Bar and Grill's varnished log interior watching Mariners baseball on the TV above the bar. There are two nonfishing tourists near the door finishing hamburgers.

Larry asks me to take a newlywed couple through the canyon stretch on the South Fork tomorrow. They are in Jackson tonight, driving here in the morning. Larry feigns an apology. He knows this translates to a late start from the Conant Boat Ramp and a long push on the oars out of the canyon to Byington in the afternoon when the upriver wind notoriously picks up and rushes back toward the Continental Divide. It'll be a fight with a boat that wants to weathervane and fly lines in novice hands that whip precariously out of control. Larry knows I'm okay with it—the canyon is beautiful. There are no electric pumps or wheel lines there. It's filled with splendid old cottonwood galleries and sun-dappled runs of cool water. What's more, there are loads of whitefish in the canyon too, and if all else fails, trolling a brown rubber legs will almost always bring them to the boat.

Shelby will take a couple businessmen on a milk run from Palisades Dam down to the highway bridge on the South Fork. They'll miss most of the action, which is happening in the braided channels just above Conant. I don't think they really care. Larry will pick them up at the bridge and drop them off for dinner at the South Fork Lodge. The selection of single malts there is much better than the Pioneer has to offer, and you can watch late floaters loading out at Conant with your feet propped next to the outdoor fire pit. The businessmen are repeats from Atlanta. Clients who have fallen under Shelby's persuasive powers quickly find there's no remedy. They always ask for her.

It usually begins with the large outline of Idaho concealed and tilting eastward on Shelby's left side. Several whitewater and fly-fishing guides have similar tattoos. It's a tribal thing to Idaho natives, a subtle discrimination to out-of-state guides. The southwest corner points toward her navel while the northern panhandle traces up past the bottom of her ribs. The southern border angles sharply down and around behind her hip. Most importantly, a tiny red star indicates her hometown in the southeast corner of the state. In Shelby's case, her choice of the tattoo's location is what I think the military refers to as a "force multiplier" because she deploys it to complement other assets. "Where are you from?" is the innocent question put to Shelby by an unsuspecting male client that triggers her streamside shock and awe. An uncomfortably long pause follows as she considers the best way to explain. Then as if giving in, she'll pull her shirt up exposing the bottom of her bra, hook her thumb in the waist band of her shorts tugging everything downward like a Coppertone ad to reveal the entire state, and nod to the star well below her tan line. The question is answered without a word, and suddenly everyone begins to fidget and feel hot in the shade. I'm sure the guy from L.A. is amusing his buddies in Ashton with the story of meeting an Idaho fly-fishing guide from Montpelier with a well-placed, red star on her backside.

One of our new guys manages to forget his popcorn in the microwave. Blue smoke churns across the Pioneer's ceiling. Larry is yelling, the smoke detector is screeching, and I head outside and across the highway toward the fly shop. Shelby slips out behind me. She jogs over and loops her arm through mine and says she's been meaning to ask if I would go back to Chile with her this fall. She's taken a job guiding out of Coyhaique for their summer season. Aspen leaves applaud in the evening breeze. Her chin presses softly on my shoulder. A barely audible South Fork slides along nearby. Her closeness begins a delicate reordering of my memory, rendering past recollections imperfect. From the rowing seat, I remain convinced that I've somehow been allotted more grace in life than most but, I must concede, Gautama was right. Life is suffering.

The 2023 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award: Finalists

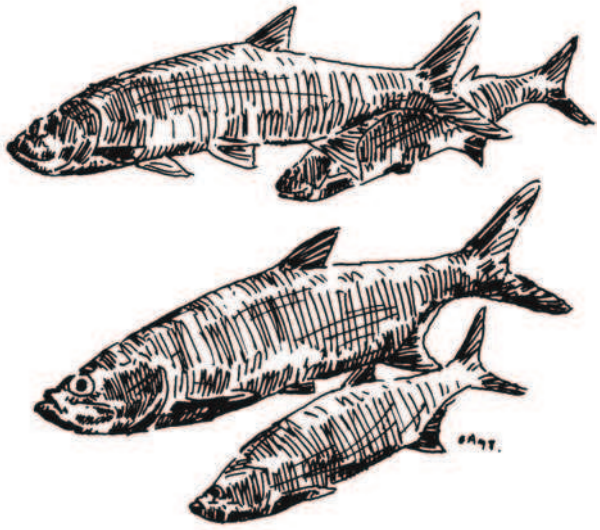
The 2023 competition drew a field of sixty-five stories and essays. Entries were judged anonymously, resulting in six finalists. In addition to the winner, judges bestowed honorable mention recognition on two entries:

"The Cerulean Trout" by Jacob Sotak of Montpelier, Vermont
"Fixer-Upper" by Thomas Walters of Banner Elk, North Carolina

These three stories can be found on the museum website at www.amff.org/traver-winners-2023.

The other three finalists were:

"Fish on the Wall" by John Humphrey of Mystic, Connecticut
"Crossing the Blue Ceiling" by Jon Tobey of Duvall, Washington
"Hope Truly Is the Thing with Feathers" by Mike Toth of Pennington, New Jersey



The 2024 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award: A Call for Submissions

Al Pellicane

John Voelker at Frenchman's Pond in 1980. From the collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

The John D. Voelker Foundation and the American Museum of Fly Fishing are pleased to announce that submissions are now being accepted for the 2024 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award (the Traver Award). The award is named after Robert Traver, pen name for the late John Voelker, author of *Trout Madness*, *Trout Magic*, *Anatomy of a Fisherman*, the 1958 best seller *Anatomy of a Murder*, and the historical novel *Laughing Whitefish*.

The Traver Award, which includes a $2,500 prize, was created in 1994 to encourage and recognize "distinguished original stories or essays that embody the implicit love of fly fishing, respect for the sport, and the natural world in which it takes place." The Traver stories and essays must demonstrate high literary values in one or more of these three categories:

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

The 2024 Traver Award will be granted for the winning short work of fiction or nonfiction essay in the English language not previously published commercially in print or digital media. "Short work" means 3,000 words or less. An entry fee of $25 will offset the administrative costs of the award program. Previous Traver Award winners are not eligible.

The deadline for submissions is midnight on May 31, 2024. The submission form and additional instructions can be found on the Voelker Foundation website: www.voelkerfoundation.com.

The Traver Award winner will be notified in the fall of 2024. The winning entry will be published in the Winter or Spring 2025 edition of the *American Fly Fisher*, the journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Since 1994, twenty-four awards have been given. Two anthologies of the Traver Award–winning essays have been published: *In Hemingway's Meadow* (2009) and *Love Story of the Trout* (2010).

For more information, see www.voelkerfoundation.com and www.amff.org.

Reprinted from the first issue of the *American Fly Fisher* (Winter 1974, vol. 1, no. 1).

TECHNOLOGY

Dating Guide for Vintage Rods

by
MARTIN J. KEANE

To most fly fishermen, the foundations of American angling history are securely implanted in the legendary scriptures of Gordon, Hewitt, LaBranche, and other honored disciples of the art. There is however, an intimate association which exists between our early classic volumes and the exquisetly fashioned flyrods of the past. Indeed, each seems nostagically interwoven with the other. . . the books poignantly reflect each new level of man's advancement in piscatorial matters, while his elegant rods physically display a certain spirit that breathes life into their words; certainly each takes on deeper meaning and suggests that each antique rod we're able to preserve and understand, tends to benefit the permanancy of our angling history.

As with all collectable articles, determining the age of a specimen is of first importance, for without a proper date a piece has little fascination and exists only as a curiosity, lacking both status and the power to conjure-up romantic affiliation with the past. Since there are no technical books available to guide the angling historian, he must consult the rods themselves to learn their proper age brackets.

When you begin examining an old rod, try to be completely open-minded, don't be swayed by a specimens general condition, the date on its container, or the apparent age of the container. Instead, concentrate on the four major components of the rod which in order of importance are it's handle; rod shaft material; ferrules; and guides.

HANDLES

Handles are marvelous indicators of age. Each holds certain features from which an observant person can learn a great deal. Although little is known about the early rods of pre-1850 America, the historian is not likely to be mistaken when he's confronted with one. These rods are inevitably 12 to 20 feet in length and are built with a lance-like form, with solid wood butt sections. These close-grained, elegantly turned rods have no distinct handle as we know them today, instead the wood of the rodshaft itself-after tapering into the butt area-became the handle. Another characteristic was the unique placement of the reelseat in the center of the huge handle, so the angler could gain some control over his towering outfit by placing one hand below the reel, the other above it.

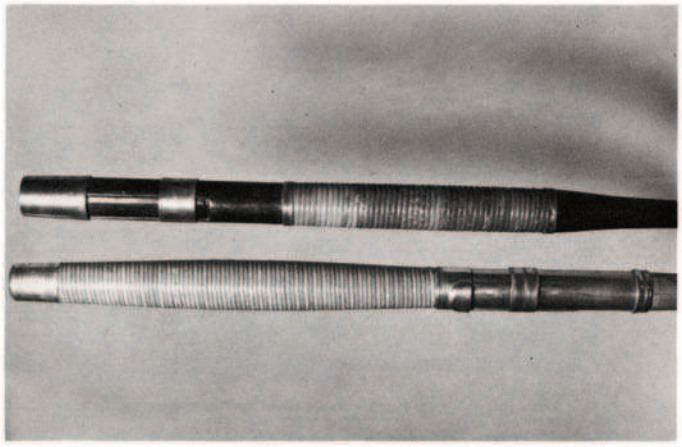
Rods built after 1850 are noted for their more delicate and diminutive appearance, most specimens sported a totally different handle which changed the reel position to the bottom section of the rod, behind and below the hand. While these rods resembled their earlier ancestors, the handles were considerably reduced in diameter and length, but more importantly they allowed one-hand manipulation. The only concession made to the past was retaining a three to six-inch portion of the rod butt which extended beyond the reelseat. Handles may be seen finished with spiral ribbons of rattan, or the old style bare wood of the rodshaft itself.

Of the many inovative and creative advancements which occurred from 1860 to 1870, the most dateworthy feature was the presence of a metal ring which separated the handle from the rodshaft. Streamlining and delicate execution were by-words of the day among rodmakers, who discovered that silver reelseats added additional glimmer to the rattan-wound handles, while some craftsmen featured solid handles of curly maple, ash, cherry, and other nut and fruitwoods.

The next two decades (1870-1890) witnessed some curious and important inovations in handle construction, including: the debut of rods with hollow butts for storing an extra tip, in the mid 1880's; seamless, one-piece metal reelseats in 1880; and the detatchable handle, in 1883. Finally, in the late 1880's cork handles were introduced on "ladies' rods", offering reduced weight and a softer more comfortable grip. Well, in spite of the feminine implications, cork grips rapidly gained in favor in preference to other choices of the period, which included handles of fluted-wood, solid wood, rubber, rattan, black celluloid ribbing and other finishing techniques. By 1890, cork was king. Even cheap production rods slated for catalog promotion featured cork handles, however these were finished with a wrap of thin sheet-cork over a wooden handle. The high grade rods were fitted with individual solid cork rings that were slid down the rod, glued and carefully finished in a lathe. Cork rings appearing on rods built before 1900 were remarkably thin, usually measuring 1/8 to 1/4 inch wide, becoming progressively wider with each advancing decade. The last important changes relating to handles took place in the early 1920's with the introduction of the much-loved screw-locking reelseat, and the waning disappearance of the fancy full metal silver reelseats, a regrettable loss whose fans still bemoan its passing.

RODSHAFT MATERIAL

The wood which goes into creating the rodshaft itself is, of course, fundamentally important, but with the exception of split-bamboo, there's little here to aid in the dating of rods. More important than the specie of wood used in rod-making, is the physical design of the rodshaft itself. Until 1850, rods were built with shafts that closely resembled our present-day billiard cue stick, being straight tapered from



Early Rod Handles: tip-Circa 1865 rod of hickory with lancewood tips. Bottom rod is typical of early 1870's.

butt to tip, a design providing a substantial handle above the reel station. Favored woods were hickory and ash for butts and midsections, with tips of lancewood (nicknamed lemonwood), and occasionally tips of three or four strip split-bamboo. All rods of this pre-1850 era reflected the need for considerable strength and stamina on the part of the angler, to wield these highly polished behemoths.

The victorian influence finally caught up with rod design in the early 1850's, causing rodshafts to become lighter, shorter, and decidedly thinner. Here the observer will note the funnel-like connection of handle to shaft, caused by the removal of excess materials which allowed the action to flex much lower down on the rod.

The first all-split-bamboo rods began to appear just prior to 1860, starting with four-strip sections throughout the rod, followed by six-strip butts and midsections with four-strip tips, then ultimately evolving into complete six-strip rods by the close of 1862. Specimens of the first two types mentioned, are rare treasures of the highest order.

The idea of building a hexagonal-shaped rod, with its six flat sides, did not develop until approximately 1878, when Hiram Leonard saw the advantages gained by retaining all the outer power fibers of the cane; before, the flats had been planed away to conform to the traditional round shaped rods. Incidentally, Leonard did build round rods on special order, for at least another five years. All through this period rods built with all sorts of exotic woods opposed split-bamboo rods for the angling market; ash, hickory, greenheart, lancewood, bethabara and snakewood, were just a few of the more popular woods offered. These solid wood rods did not loose favor with anglers altogether, on the contrary, they enjoyed such a dedicated following, their availablitly extended well into the 1920's. . . it's for this very reason that dating old solid wood rods is so difficult.

Although Tonkin cane was introduced into this country in the early 1900's, it was not well received. Instead, for years sportsmen remained loyal to their time-tested Calcutta cane rods, so easily distinguished by the ever present dappled appearance of black patches, or in the case of high-grade rods, light brown patches, that fairly covered the rod like raindrops. Tonkin and calcutta rods openly competed from about 1905 to 1915, at which time Calcutta all but disappeared, holding on only as second-class material for inexpensive rods, a fate shared with lancewood and greenheart.

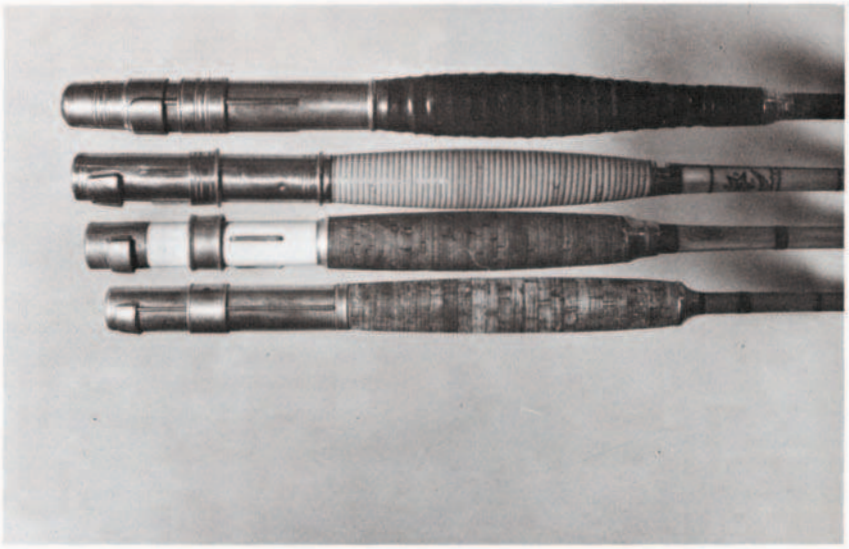
FERRULES

Ferrules are, of course, cylindrical joints which connect the sections of a rod. The two prime questions one must ask before considering specific ferrules as accurate dating guides are: (1) are they original equipment? and (2) is the rod a top quality, first grade rod. A quick measure of rod quality is it's fittings. Nickel silver fittings are the hall-mark of excellence, and even brass and cooper are acceptable when the rest of the rod reflects meticulous finishing; however nickel-plated brass and other "cover-up" treatments are-indicative of low or compromised quality. If the rod in question is found to be originally outfitted and quality built, the ferrules will definitely help in dating the piece.

Early ferrules-popular from approximately 1800 to 1890, were built on the dowelled ferrule principle. They are also known as: spike, spiked, and dowel-and-pin ferrules, because of the tapered pin which protrudes from the base of the male ferrule. The pre-1860 dowelled ferrule is identified by it's straight cylindircal tube design, having no shoulder or swelled portions anywhere, and excepting one or two hardly discernable close spaced rings for decoration, they're strikingly plain. Simple ferrules were also used on rods of the same era and are identified as being even more austere appearing than the dowelled design, in that they will lack the tapered dowel-pin, thereby exposing the wood of the rod which is flush with the male ferrule base.

Just prior to 1860, ferrules of both simple and dowelled design began to appear showing signs of sophistication. Reinforcing rings-called welts-were applied to the open ends of female ferrules, benefitting both their strength and appearance. By 1860, the two-piece male ferrule made it's entry, which was constructed from two cylinders of different diameters, with the smaller being soldered just inside the other, to create a step, or shoulder.

The 1870's witnessed the coming of Hiram Leonard's first patent in 1875, which introduced the first waterproof ferrule, followed in 1878 by his patented split ferrule which consisted of a series of cuts in the ferrule, and allowed for the smooth transfer of energy through the flexing rod into the ferrule with no sharp edges to wear, or cause a fulcrum. From 1878 to the early 1920's, these two patent markings were stamped on each large female Leonard ferrule. It quickly became the envy of rodmakers throughout the nation, who cleverly devised different approaches to arrive at a



Handle Variations: tip, circa 1870 experimental rod built with 4 strips greenheart & 4 strips of white cedar, Second: Chubb with rattan handle, seamless metseat-circa 1885; Third is the ultra rare Kosmic rod, circa 1895; Fourth, Circa 1898 Von Lengerke & Detmold; (note the thin cork rings on last two handles)

similar solution without infringing on Leonards patents. One imaginative design patented by W.H. Reed in 1885, introduced the theory of gradual thinning of the metal ferrule where it met the wood-a sound design made even more unique, in that this same ferrule was swaged or die-formed to create a shoulder from a single piece of tubing.

By 1890, two more interesting ferrules were granted patents, one awarded to Eustis W. Edwards became known as the "Kosmic" ferrule, the other-also awarded to a student of Leonard, George Varney, introduced another very sound and strongly endorsed design; here long pie-shaped wedges were cut into the ferrule where it joined with the wood of the rod, thereby allowing gradual diminishing of force upon the metal by the rod when flexing. In slightly modified form, this technique formed the ferrule design used by many of the most famous classic rodbuilders in America, and is still in use today.

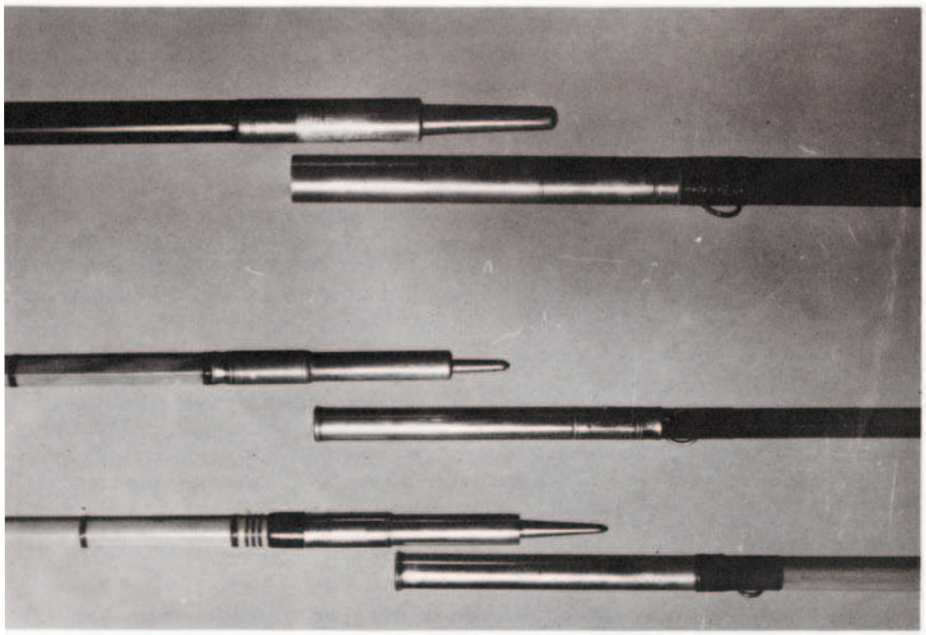
The original Varney ferrules bear the patent date "Pat'd Mar 4, 1890" on the first female ferrule. Though many other ferrule designs were patented, they are of primary interest to advanced angling historians. The only other unique ferrule one may encounter is the four-sided ferrule developed in 1939 by William E. Edwards, for his four-strip "quad rod"; he is Eustis W. Edwards' son.

GUIDES

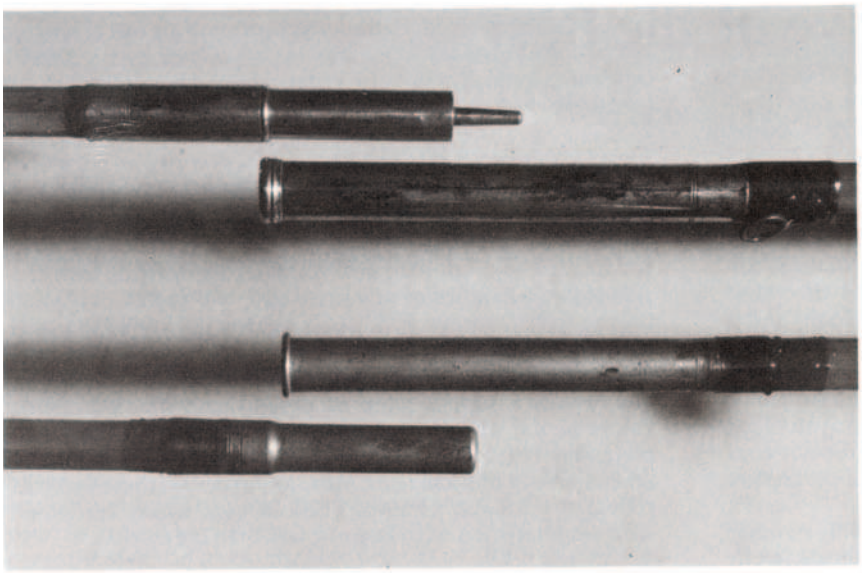
Guides are rather simple to distinguish from each other, and each fits a particular period of time. Ring guides, so called due to their circular design, were common fittings on rods until early 1900, when English snake guides, gained favor with anglers and rodbuilders alike. One interesting dating guide, is that rods built between 1900 and 1915 were furnished with English snake guides, while those built thereafter were equipped with guides that are exactly reversed. These later style guides, in use today, are identified by having their openings toward the left side of the rod, when its being held normally in front of you with the reel down; English guides are open to the right side of the rod, and the only major American rodmaker who retained the use of English guides beyond 1915, was F.E. Thomas, of Bangor, Maine.

Another guide the historian may encounter, is the antifriction guide which was primarily used on trolling, or boat rods of the 1890, to 1920 era; they're sometimes called tunnel guides-for obvious reasons. The uniquely valuable bridge guide qppeared in use on American rods sometime between 1890 and 1895. Just after the turn-of-the-century, less expensive rods were occasionally outfitted with the offbeat double-snake, or double-twist guides and their unimpressive cousins, the double ring guides. It's not unusual to find both on the same rod. The same rules that applied to determining the quality of rods when considering ferrules, should also be used when evaluating guides, for again, we'll find the lower grade rods tending to lag behind new inovations which were expensive to manufacture or buy and were therefor allocated only to the top grade instruments.

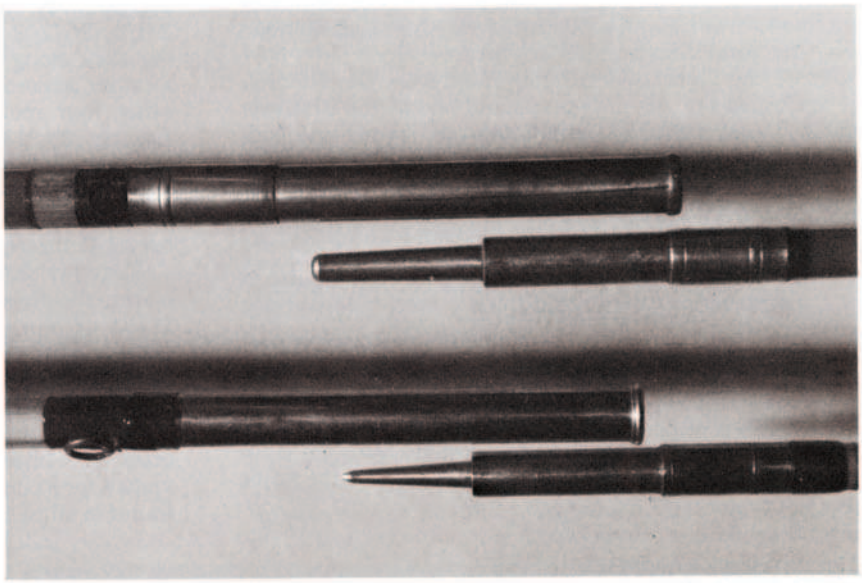
No one should expect to become an expert at dating overnight, it takes practice and experience, but once you've learned the keys, examining old rods will take on the drama of a treasure hunt. Learning the dates of various improvements not only helps one to fix a proper date category to a rod exhibiting that inovation, it also dates the piece by its absence, indicating, of course, that it's an earlier rod.



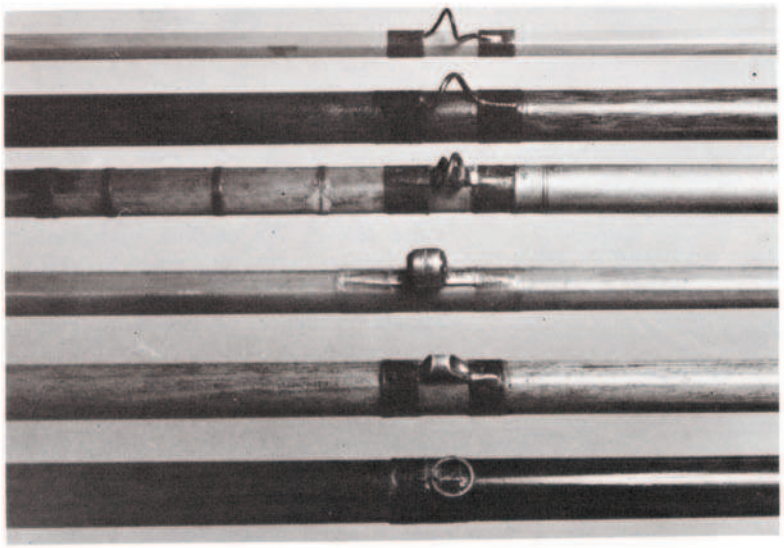
Ferrule types: Top, pre-1860 doweled ferrule; Middle, Circa 1865 shouldered ferrule; Bottom, Leonard waterproof ferrule of early 1890's.



Ferrules: top, circa 1890 design with mini-dowel design; was used while the Varney type was just appearing on the market.



Leonard ferrules: Top, Early Bangor model, circa 1870, below is improved model, waterproofed and serrated.



Guide Variations: tip, 1973 snake guide; Circa 1910 English snake guide; (3) double twist guide; (4) Agate butt guide of circa 1905; (5) Tunnel Guide; (6) ring guide, typical of type used from 1800 to 1900.

The Soft-Hackle Dry Fly: The Phantom among Us

by Stephen E. Wright

All photos by Stephen E. Wright

The Gray Raptor: the soft-hackle dry fly that was the inspiration and catalyst for this research project.

It was a sunny afternoon on the Beaverkill, and Hendrickson mayflies were just starting to emerge from the water. With great enthusiasm and anticipation, I hurried to tie on my newly designed pattern, the Gray Raptor (a Hendrickson emerger). There was a slight breeze about, and the trees were glistening a vibrant sunlit green.

It did not take long before I spotted several brown trout taking flies on the water's surface. But before casting, a few questions came to mind: Will this fly design float correctly? Will the soft-hackle goose and stiff-hackle rooster feathers work in unison? I believe the colors and fly size are advantageous—will the fish see it as a moving and living Hendrickson? Waiting no longer, I made my first cast, and my fly, tied with a barbless Limerick hook, landed softly on the water. There was no drag on my tippet, and the fly was just a meter above my target in its feeding lane. Within seconds, the Gray Raptor disappeared, and a beautiful brown trout was on the other end of my line. The take was strong but graceful. It was exhilarating, exciting. I needed only to lift the rod slightly and the fight was on. It had worked! I had caught my first trout with a soft-hackle dry fly (SHDF) of my own design.

The Gray Raptor design came to me through deductive reasoning and creative discovery, without the use of pattern imitation, examples, or recipe instructions. My criteria were simple: this Hendrickson mayfly emerger imitation must include a soft goose hackle (marginal covert) feather for lifelike movement and a stiff rooster hackle to provide floatability. Both feathers would be tied near the hook's eye to form a hackled collar. It would have a dubbed hare's ear body and include a tail made of wood duck or hen feathers.

The late Datus Proper would be proud; I now understood the difference between replicating a fly pattern and designing a fly.[1] But the story does not stop here. We fly tiers occasionally design new patterns or change old ones only to find neither were ever new—that both were designed at an earlier time or were independently invented in another geographic location (regional, national, or international).

Using my design criteria and being curious, I canvassed fly-fishing literature from 1800 to 2020 in multiple libraries and online archives to see if the Gray Raptor design and tying technique had been achieved in the past. With a huge smile, I discovered that my experience with independent design had come full circle. My literary and archival research turned up the Hackle Blue Quill,[2] Hackle Red Quill,[3] Summer Duck Hackle,[4] Hackle Ginger Quill,[5] Pepper's March Brown,[6] Jingler,[7] Howie Special,[8] and Cinberg[9] patterns. These dry-fly designs collectively represented English and American fly-tying cultures, and included SHDFs I never knew existed.

I asked myself, an avid fly-fishing enthusiast, fly-tying reader, and amateur fly-fishing historian: Why haven't I heard of these flies and their tying technique before? How did I miss this? These questions were the catalyst for further research.

A Soft-Hackle Dry-Fly Definition

The creation of a standardized definition was imperative to objectively investigate the origin(s) of the SHDF. Only if one knows what to look for can one identify a particular fly type and tying style among the many flies that exist in the literature. I developed my SHDF definition based on my Gray Raptor design criteria, its tying technique, and my newly discovered similar flies (such as the Jingler, Hackle Ginger Quill, Pepper's March Brown, and Cinberg).

As J. Edson Leonard suggested in *Flies*, there are numerous "hackle-type flies."[10] Leonard did not account for many types of hackle-type flies, and fully categorizing all of them is the subject for a different article. That said, to lessen any potential hackle-fly-concept confusion, my research centered only on the hackle-dry-fly type. Where needed, some discussion and/or description of other types of hackle dry flies is presented.

Given Leonard's dry-fly classifications, I believe he would have called my SHDF a soft-hackle dry-fly spider, which would differentiate and isolate this floating-fly type and design from other forms of SHDFs. This is my definition: The soft-hackle dry-fly spider is an imitative floating fly that employs one soft feather (for lifelike movement) tied as a hackle collar adjacent to the hook eye, with the next feather tied immediately after the first to extend the spiraled hackle collar at the hook's shoulder (to provide floatability) and with both feather types (soft then hard) present in each fly. Feather installation order is highly important and crucial to this design. The soft feather (or hook head/front feather) nearest the hook eye may be taken from a variety of bird types (e.g., goose, grouse, hen chicken, land rail, mallard, partridge, snipe, woodcock), whereas the hard/stiff feather (or hook shoulder feather) is *always that of a rooster*. In addition, this soft-hackle dry-fly spider has a body of dubbed fur (e.g., hare's face or ear fur), horsehair, raffia grass, tying silk, or quill/herl. Mayfly imitations have a fly tail made of feather barbs. In nonmayfly imitations (such as caddis flies), fly tails are optional.

Dry flies that contain "wings" or one or two rooster feathers as a spiral hackle collar are excluded and do not meet the constraints of the aforementioned definition. Also omitted are hackle dry flies with a reverse hackle order of hard and then soft at the hook's head and shoulder, and flies containing an intermixing of both soft and hard hackles. Hackle flies composed of head and shoulder feathers of two soft-hackle feathers (e.g., Rouen duck then hen chicken) are omitted. Bumbles or flies characterized with soft-hackle front feathers followed by a fly body of stiff cock feathers tied (palmered) to the hook's bend are excluded from this definition. Dry flies that incorporate soft-hackle feathers alongside twentieth-century cul de canard (CDC) feathers or deer/elk hair to float the fly—like those found in Allen McGee's book, *Fly-Fishing Soft-Hackles: Nymphs, Emergers, and Dry Flies*[11]—are also excluded. Moving forward, whenever I use the term *soft-hackle dry fly* or *SHDF*, I am only referring to the soft-hackle dry-fly spider as defined here.

Frederic Halford's Hackle Ginger Quill is an early example of a soft-hackle dry fly. Its design consisted of a soft head hackle of pale blue dun hen followed by a stiff shoulder hackle of pale ginger cock.

Left and below: the Jingler is a soft-hackle dry fly that can be tied either as a Spring Olive or March Brown, depending on its selected dressing. Here it is tied as a March Brown. The soft head hackle is partridge, and the hard/stiff shoulder hackle is rooster.

The soft-hackle dry-fly structure as defined within this article. It is important to note that the soft-hackle front feather may be from different soft-feathered birds, but the hard/stiff hackle is always from a rooster. Feather order—soft, then hard—is important in this fly design.

Searching for the SHDF Origin

Using my SHDF definition as a filter, the research process for its origin began. This is what I discovered.

In 1879, James Ogden wrote in the preface to his *Ogden on Fly Tying, Etc.*, "It is well known that I am the inventor of the Floating Flies."[12] An English fly tier and tackle maker, Ogden was surely an early adopter and promoter of the floating fly, but he was not its inventor. He did, however, influence dry-fly development and promotion in the 1880s and 1890s. John Waller Hills concludes that Ogden influenced the use of dry flies as early as 1865 (when he triumphantly demonstrated the use of a floating fly on the Derbyshire Wye)[13] and possibly before. But earlier works, such as the 1851 edition of G. P. R. Pulman's *The Vade-Mecum of Fly-Fishing for Trout*, suggest the use of dry flies before Ogden's authorship claim.[14] Hills believed that the existence of the floating fly can be traced back as early as "the year 1800, and the first mention of drying the fly in 1851. From this latter date the dry fly has a continuous history, but its use did not become common till 1860"[15]—but that the true inventor(s) is lost in time and history.[16] Historian Andrew Herd provided a caveat to the mid-1800 dry-fly beginnings; he states that "the general convention follows [John W.] Hills' reckoning that the floating fly was evolved in the middle of the nineteenth century, but this is quite wrong. As I have stated with wearying frequency, there is abundant evidence that anglers knew it was possible to catch fish on floating patterns from the moment the first fly was cast on the water."[17]

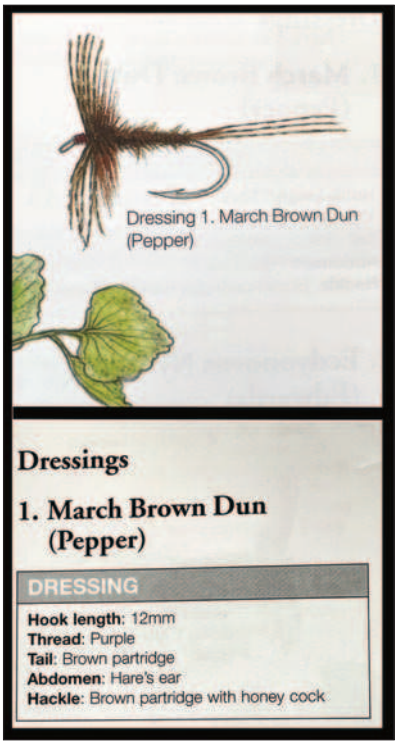
When did the SHDF appear? Like the dry fly, no one knows who invented the first one. To my knowledge, the earliest use of the term *soft-hackle dry fly* in English literature was in 2015, in Ian Whitelaw's *The History of Fly-Fishing in Fifty Flies*.[18] In it, Whitelaw briefly discussed the Jingler and Large Dark Olive Mayfly. He wrote that the Jingler was "reputedly a 19th-century Scottish pattern" that employed soft fibers (Hungarian partridge feathers, for example) for flexibility to imitate fly-leg movement and a stiff hackle to keep the fly afloat and to "hold the fly in the surface film and help it to move with the current, reducing unnatural drag."[19] Whitelaw states that the Jingler pattern tied as a March Brown fly pattern "has burst onto the UK scene from obscurity in the last decade."[20]

What we now call the soft-hackle dry fly was simply called the hackle fly in the nineteenth century. But the term *hackle fly*, when applied in general usage, could have included a number of dissimilar but related dry-fly designs, such as palmer flies (full and partial body hackle palmers), dry spiders (using one or more collared stiff cock feathers and no soft feathers), fore-and-aft hackle flies (using collared stiff cock feathers spiraled in the front and in the rear), plain hackle flies (recognized by the usage of one or more collared cock hackles, or interwoven rooster and soft hackle feathers, but designed to float), and hackle dry flies (characterized by the usage of head and shoulder hackles, using soft-hackle feathers from a variety of birds, and hard/stiff hackles from a rooster only)—the last being the SHDF of today. That said, each of these fly-design styles (or hackle-fly models) can easily be differentiated from one another once the design strategies (or the resulting pattern) are known. According to J. Edson Leonard, "Basically there are only five types of dry flies: the upright-wing, the spent-wing, the down-wing, the flat-wing and the hackle. Although hundreds of different variations have been developed, each of these is easily recognizable as a development of one of the five basic types."[21] Thus, all of our aforementioned dry-fly hackle design forms would have been placed under Leonard's dry-fly category as a "Hackle Fly,"[22] but there are subgroups within the hackle-fly designation, and the SHDF is but one type within the dry-fly hackle group.[23]

We may never know the complete evolutionary origin or development of the SHDF, but it is easy to speculate that this dry-fly type has its roots in the development and manner of use of the wet-fly spider. It's highly likely that nineteenth-century fly fishers purposely treated their wet-fly spiders with oil, paraffin, or some other flotant, if needed, as some do today. Sometimes a one-use or first-cast soft-hackle spider (or other wet-fly style that initially floated) was used as a dry fly. For example, G. E. M. Skues believed:

> A floater may, especially in the minute sizes of fly, be dressed with a soft feather, and may be made to float long enough for practical purposes without oiling. Here the hackle serves the pur-

Jackson's Grey Gnat of 1854 is an early example of a soft-hackle dry fly. Note the three viewing perspectives that illustrate the simplicity of this fly design.



Pepper's March Brown fly is an example of a soft-hackle dry-fly pattern that is still in use today. This photo is from John Cawthorne's Flies, Flowers, Fur & Feather *and appears here by permission and courtesy of the Crowood Press Ltd.*

> pose of flotation and of imitation of wings and legs. I have often floated a No. 00 [size 16] Dotterel dun [a wet fly], perfectly dry, over a trout when there has been a rise of pale watery duns, and have found it very killing, particularly in eddies under the far bank. The soft tips of the hackle cause it to make a far less alarming drag than does a cock's hackle.[24]

And Vince Marinaro, in *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*, wrote, "The earliest dry fly fishing was practiced with wet flies which were 'cracked to remove the super abundant moisture,'"[25] thus representing a one-use/first-cast dry fly.

In John Jackson's 1854 *The Practical Fly-Fisher*, there is a pattern that was designed to float and to be taken by grayling as a dry fly: Jackson's Grey Gnat.[26] The dressing description did not reveal the true form of this fly, but the Grey Gnat pattern structure is revealed in a hand-colored illustration found on Plate III, Fly No. 13. After reviewing the image, one can clearly see that the soft-hackle gray partridge back feather is tied at the hook's head/front with the grizzled [grizzly] feather (most likely cock) tied immediately thereafter at the hook's shoulder; the fly body is orange silk. It is apparent that this pattern falls within my SHDF definition and is one of the earliest observations of the SHDF in English fly-fishing literature.

Frederic Halford and His Soft-Hackle Dry Flies

It was Frederic Halford and his friend George Selwyn Marryat who had the greatest influence on the development of the floating fly in the late-nineteenth century (Halford well into the twentieth). Their dry- or floating-fly influence is well documented in the fly-fishing literature,[27,28] so there is no need to reiterate their many contributions here, except for Halford's influence on the promotion of the hackle fly/hackle dry fly/SHDF.

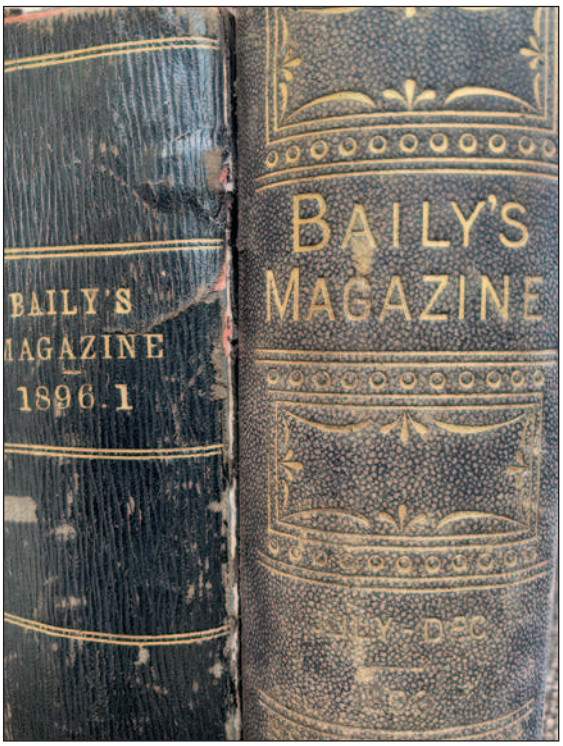
Using my research filter, I discovered that Halford, in his article "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies,"[29] included seventeen flies that met my SHDF definition (twenty-one if revised to include a hackle-ribbed body [the Bumbles]). These seventeen flies are listed in the table (pages 14–15), which provides a pattern number for each fly and enables the reader to review the types of materials Halford used in creating his SHDFs.

Halford published his hundred-best-patterns list for the first time[30] in the 1896 edition of *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* (volumes 65 and 66).[31] He reprinted the same list in his 1897 book *Dry Fly Entomology*.[32] Many of his hundred best patterns of floating flies carried the same names as some patterns mentioned in his earlier book, *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them* (1886), which lists ninety of the most "killing" flies.[33] However, if one closely compares that 1886 ninety-fly list with the hundred-fly compilation of 1896, one will find that Halford developed 1896 hackle versions or SHDF imitations for the Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear, Dark Olive Quill, Medium Olive Quill, Ginger Quill, Adjutant Blue, Blue Quill, Red Quill, Alder, and Red Ant (which were all winged flies in 1886's *Floating Flies*).[34] Winged patterns like the

Fly Name	Fly Pattern Number	Head (Front) Soft-Hackle Feather	Shoulder (Hard/Rooster) Hackle Feather
Hackle Gold-Ribbed Hare's Ear	2	Medium or dark dun hen	Grizzly blue dun cock
Hackle Dark Olive Quill	4	Medium or dark blue dun hen	Cock hackle dyed green olive
Hackle Medium Olive Quill	6	Medium or pale blue dun hen	Cock hackle dyed medium olive
Hackle Pale Watery Dun	10	Pale blue dun hen	Cock hackle dyed a pale lemon green olive (Recipe No. 11)
Hackle Ginger Quill	17	Pale blue dun hen	Pale ginger cock
Hackle Purple Quill Bodied Iron Blue	20	Dark blue dun hen	Dark honey dun cock
Hackle Adjutant Blue	24	Dark blue dun hen	Dark honey dun cock
Hackle Blue Quill	26	Medium blue dun hen	Honey dun cock
Hackle Red Quill	34	Medium blue dun hen	Red gamecock
Hackle Red Spinner	46	Medium blue dun hen	Black-butted red gamecock
Summer Duck Hackle	48	Canadian wood or summer duck (use feathers that are too long and narrow for wings in nonhackle flies)	Pale ginger cock
Hackle Sedge	69	Land rail or brown hen's neck	Sandy ginger cock
Hackle Alder	74	Woodcock	Coch-y-bondhu
Hackle Red Ant	77	Honey dun hen	Red gamecock
Willow Fly	79	Dark honey dun hen	Orange ginger cock
Corkscrew	96	Brown ginger hen	Brown ginger cock
Half Stone	100	Honey dun hen	Honey dun cock (worked in behind the head hackle and carried down to the end of the mole fur dubbing)

Body	Whisk/Tail	Hook Sizes	Modern Hook Sizes
Dark hare's face fur (laid across doubled waxed silk and worked as a hackle)	Gallina dyed brown red	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
Condor or peacock quill dyed green olive	Gallina dyed green olive	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
Condor or peacock quill dyed medium olive	Gallina dyed medium olive	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
White horsehair dyed a faint canary (worked on a bare blue hook); for a bronze hook the horsehair dyed a pale lemon green olive	Very pale olive gallina	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
Well-marked strand of peacock, undyed or dyed a very faint brown red	Gallina dyed a faint brown red	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
Condor dyed purple	Dark undyed gallina	000 to 0	17, 16, 15
A strand of adjutant wing or tail	Undyed dark gallina	000 to 0	17, 16, 15
Peacock quill undyed	Medium gallina undyed	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
Peacock quill or condor dyed brown red	Gallina dyed brown red	000 to 1	17, 16, 15, 14
Adjutant quill dyed brown red; alternatively, a strand of red macaw	White gallina	000 to 0	17, 16, 15
Raffia grass over white quill, ribbed with fine flat gold	Gallina dyed in diamond dark brown	3 long, 3, or 2	12 (long), 13
Central quill of partridge tail feather with plumes cut away close on both sides, ribbed with gold twist	None	0 to 4	15, 14, 13, 12, 11
Copper peacock herl (i.e., dyed magenta). For variety, cover the herl with gutta-percha tissue or thin Indian rubber. The central quill of one of the smaller tail feathers of a hen pheasant is another material for the body of this fly.	None	1 to 3	14, 13, 12
Gray condor dyed brown red; the root on the strand only is stripped and the point worked on close to form butt.	None	00 to 1	16, 15, 14
Gray condor or peacock dyed in diamond orange	No tail, only a primrose floss silk tag	00 long or 0	16, 15 (long)
Central quill of a brown partridge tail feather from which the plumes have been cut away on either side	None	00 to 1	16, 15, 14
Upper half of pale mole fur and lower half of white condor dyed canary	None	0 to 4	15, 14, 13, 12, 11

This table was generated from Frederic M. Halford's "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies" referenced in Dry Fly Entomology *(London: Vinton & Co., Ltd., 1897), 147–87. The wording was taken directly from this source, with the exception of column "Modern Hook Sizes," which provides hook-size translation from the 1890s to today's equivalents.*



Left: Frederic Halford first published his article, "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies," in the 1896 editions of Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes *(vols. 65 and 66) and republished this work in his* Dry Fly Entomology *book the following year (1897).*

*Right: Frederic Halford's Hackle Red Quill is a soft-hackle dry-fly pattern first published in "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies" (*Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, vols. 65 and 66) and republished the following year (1897) in Halford's* Dry Fly Entomology.

1886 Corkscrew and Half Stone were converted into SHDFs in 1896 and included in "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies," but their original winged versions were not included in this publication.

Because of his dry-fly reputation, it is extremely important to note that Halford's 1896 listing may have endorsed, directly or indirectly (if even for a brief time), the use of the hackle dry fly (what we have now defined as the SHDF) by including his seventeen hackle flies in the *Baily's Magazine* and *Dry Fly Entomology* publications. John Waller Hills, W. H. Lawrie, and Andrew Herd did not account for (or include) the name/pattern fly changes in *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout, English Trout Flies: A Reference Book*, and *The History of Fly Fishing, Volume Two: Trout Fly Patterns 1496–1916*, respectively.[35]

Because Halford had reduced his fly list to thirty-three flies (by 1910), Lawrie believed that it was not necessary to include the "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies" in *Dry-Fly Entomology* in his own *English Trout Flies*. Lawrie declared that "since the selection is much more catholic [broad], and still of service" that he would instead include the original 1886 fly list from Halford's *Floating Flies*.[36] Maybe this logic explains why Lawrie did not account for these newly presented fly patterns, especially the seventeen dry-fly hackle patterns, and for not mentioning the significance of the fly-name and pattern changes from 1886 to 1897. However, in *Scottish Trout Flies: An Analysis and Compendium*, Lawrie included a photograph of a Hackle March Brown (an SHDF) in his border plate of wet and dry flies.[37] This indicates that the Hackle March Brown dry fly was still in use in the 1960s. Unfortunately, Lawrie did not provide the dressing for this fly. The photo image appears to show a soft-hackle partridge or mottled hen feather and ginger rooster hackle as the most likely hackle dressings, but without Lawrie's written fly dressing, this is an educated conjecture. However, Lawrie did include a March Brown pattern in his *The Book of the Rough Stream Nymph*. Lawrie's March Brown dressing consisted of a dark partridge for the front hackle, a body and thorax of hare's ear fur, and a tail of three strands of cock pheasant.[38] This supports my dressing conjecture for the Hackle March Brown dry fly in *Scottish Trout Flies*. Unfortunately, the March Brown presented in *Rough Stream Nymph* did not match my SHDF definition because the tying technique was different. This March Brown dry was tied with a semispiral front partridge feather (representing an insect wing) on top of the hook and a semispiral shoulder cock hackle on the hook's bottom to represent insect legs.

Was the omission of Halford's seventeen hackle dry-fly patterns (as part of the hundred best) by major fly-fishing writers of the twentieth century the reason these hackle dry flies and their associated tying technique did not take root or gain popularity among fly fishers of the early- and mid-twentieth century? We may never know, but Vincent Marinaro, in *A Modern Dry-Fly Code*, suggests that the use of unattainable fly-tying materials in pattern dressings is a discouraging factor in keeping a pattern and/or fly-tying technique alive.[39] We know that Halford, in a few of his hackle patterns, used several hard-to-obtain tying items, such as adjutant (stork), condor, and red macaw (see pages 14–15).[40] Marinaro believed:

> Nothing tends to greater discouragement for amateur and professional alike than to be faced with a complicated tying technique requiring specialized or unattainable materials; once attempted, such a system is quickly abandoned, and allowed to remain as a mere abstraction in the history of fly-fishing. It is an error which is common with the Halford . . . techniques . . . and

> it is a fault which should be studiously avoided now and for all time in whatever theory is advanced.[41]

The SHDF tying technique is not complicated, but sourcing condor and stork is not possible in today's fly-tying world and was most likely difficult to obtain in the late 1800s. Although not present in abundance anywhere in fly-fishing literature, I believe no other dry-fly design combines the elements of simplicity, motion, size, silhouette, color, and translucency so effectively as the SHDF.

Final Words

In summary and conclusion, the soft-hackle dry fly (or hackle dry fly, as termed in the nineteenth century) was tied and used to catch trout and/or grayling surely from the mid-1800s into the 2000s. This pattern type was tied as a mayfly or as an adult caddis fly. Its imitative creation and use is typified in classic patterns like the Hackle March Brown, Hackle Red Quill, Hackle Ginger Quill, and others, as well as in my independent Gray Raptor design. In brief, the SHDF has existed in the background as a fly pattern and design technique for more than 169 years and most likely longer. It was eye opening to discover that Frederic Halford had first published his "Hundred Best Patterns of Floating Flies" in *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* and that his pattern compilation included seventeen flies that meet my SHDF definition.

The SHDF has been a phantom pattern design: a mirage, a fly ghost of the past, hiding under its hackle-dry-fly alias, but its presence has been rediscovered and revealed. Its popularity among twenty-first-century fly tiers and fly fishers may grow—only time will tell. After completing this project, I was reminded of Rose Bertin's proverb: "New things are only those which have been forgotten."[42] I believe the late Frederic Halford and others who incorporated this SHDF design into their pattern construction would agree.

Acknowledgments

Without the assistance of Ken Callahan, John Shaner, Michael Danko, David Foley, and Mellasenah Morris, this project would have never materialized. Ken and David were able to locate many of the vintage fly-fishing books that I read and analyzed for this article. John and Mike provided their historical expertise on the floating fly and Frederic Halford. Mellasenah, my wife, provided encouragement and comments on the final draft of my manuscript. To all: thank you.

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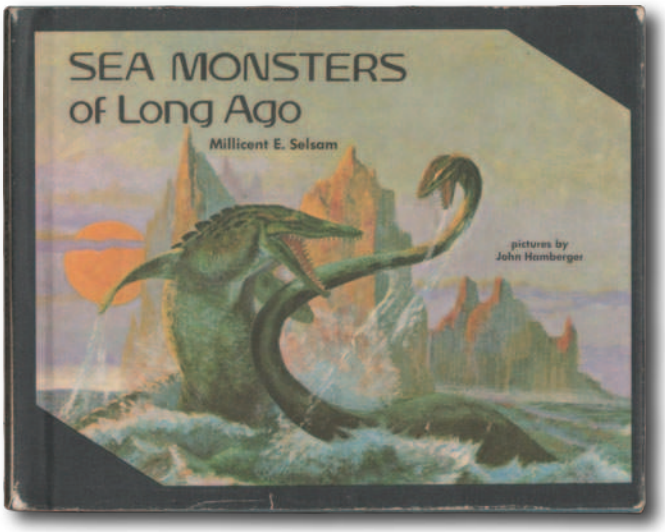
John Hamberger: Underwater Worlds

Rainbow Trout*, 1983. Oil on canvas (16½ x 26½ inches). From the Trophy Art Collection donated by Mike Monier. AMFF permanent collection. 2019.051.037.*

In the 1977 children's book *Sea Monsters of Long Ago*, artist John Hamberger empowers prehistoric marine creatures, dynamically illustrating their presumed behaviors and underwater prowess. Suspended underwater, ichthyosaurs such as *Opthalmosaurus*, *Kronosaurus*, and *Eurhinosaurus* dive, hunt, writhe, and dart through the water; they command their subsurface presence. Hamberger romantically theorizes how these dinosaurs might have behaved in their natural element millions of years ago, all while illustrating the beauty of an underwater world.

Sea Monsters of Long Ago was not Hamberger's only literary illustrative effort. Although there is little published about Hamberger, the artist was author, illustrator, and editor for a multitude of children's nature books, including *Birth of a Pond* (1975), *Little Whale* (1979), and *Animals of the Sea* (1975).

AMFF is fortunate to have four of Hamberger's paintings in its permanent collection. Donated by Mike Monier in 2019, these works are part of a significant angling art collection entrusted to the museum. The paintings are not of sea monsters but of various fish species popular with anglers. *Rainbow Trout* (1983) features two fish, calmly hovering beneath the surface, the sunlight filtering the current as it works through the water. A fly hangs beneath the first trout, the fish's agape expression suggesting it is aware of the foreign object and potential snack. The plants undulate with the water as the trout contemplate their next moves. Hamberger's composition embodies the underwater calm and reminds us it is the fish's world we are interrupting. Prehistoric dinosaur or modern-day trout, Hamberger is skilled at capturing the nature of his subject matter. His fish are not just scientific specimens—they have character.



The cover of Sea Monsters of Long Ago *by Millicent E. Selsam, pictures by John Hamberger, first published by Four Winds Press, 1977.*

John Ross of *Sporting Classics Daily,* in a 2022 article about Hamberger, said, "This man Hamberger knew his fish, not so much because he caught them with rod and reel, but because he studied them."[1] Hamberger's son, John C. Hamberger, told Ross: "Dad's freezer was full of fish . . . People would bring them to him. Sometimes it was only the head."[2]

Hamberger, though, could bring these heads to life. He spent time connecting with this subject matter pulled from the freezer. Creating portraits of rainbow trout, striped bass, and Atlantic salmon, Hamberger animates each species, presenting a fish actively in control and in command of its habitat, like the sea monsters of long ago he so effectively portrayed. His skill at harnessing underwater light and atmosphere beneath the surface effectively reminds us of the habitats we share with nature, as well as those we only borrow.

Kirsti Scutt Edwards
Collections Manager

ENDNOTES

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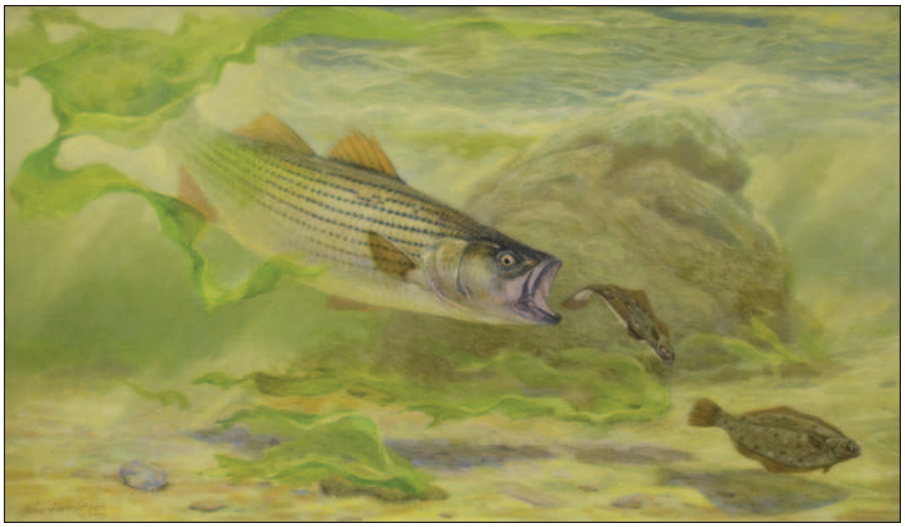
Atlantic Salmon, *1990. Oil on canvas (23¾ x 35¾ inches). From the Trophy Art Collection donated by Mike Monier. AMFF permanent collection. 2019.051.167.*



Striped Bass, *1990. Oil on canvas (23½ x 35¾ inches). From the Trophy Art Collection donated by Mike Monier. AMFF permanent collection. 2019.051.166.*

Atlantic Salmon, *1983. Oil on canvas (24 x 40½ inches). From the Trophy Art Collection donated by Mike Monier. AMFF permanent collection. 2019.051.036.*

The Battenkill: Midcentury Moments

by James Woods

John Atherton on the Battenkill c. 1950. Photographer unknown. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing Atherton Collection.

With the advent of summer, the weather turned predictably hot in early July. As the old Dodge made its way across upstate New York in 1959, from Cleveland to Vermont, heat shimmered off the road, and the dull thud from the highway's concrete seams punctuated the steamy afternoon. The New York State Thruway takes its toll on a hot summer's day. That afternoon we rolled on through. While Dad smoked his pipe, distracted, I furtively changed the radio station from Sinatra and Nat King Cole to rock and roll. I was riding shotgun, and my late brother, Craig (Guy), was drifting in and out of a doze in the back seat.

We were going to Vermont to fish the Battenkill. I was ten and Guy was nine. My father chose the Battenkill because he thought it was a gentle river that his young sons could handle, and it had many small tributaries, too. Little could any of us have imagined that the summer and those after it would have such a lasting and profound effect on both my life and Guy's. The characters we met during those early years yielded memories and lessons as well.

Pittsfield Father and Son

We met a father and son from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, our first summer. One of their favorite spots was what our family called the Otter Pool (where a pair of otters gave Dad a bit of shock the first time we fished it), just above the western terminus of River Road at the penultimate bridge in Vermont. There is a lovely pool with an outcropping and tailout about 100 yards above the bridge. Above the pool is a 100-yard stretch of deep water that runs close to the riprap-protected road, then a 90-degree turn with a riffle just above that. All of that section is productive, and when the bugs are on the water, fish are rising everywhere.

One evening there was a man about fifty years old in the tailout. He was clearly an accomplished fly fisherman. We headed upstream. Dad dropped into the long stretch close to the road, and I went up to the riffle, where I found another angler. Even as a ten-year-old, I could tell that this man was compromised. Using an automatic reel, he cast with his right hand. The left

side of body remained mostly still, his hand hanging lifelessly and moving involuntarily when he shifted in the stream. He had a limping gait. He was intent, thin, somewhat disheveled, unshaven, and looked a little older than the man downstream—maybe in his sixties. It was clear he was skilled fisherman, and I never missed an opportunity to visit and learn from skilled fishermen, even at my young age. I approached him, startling him, but he was kind, and maybe flattered by my attention. I had questions as he fished. He gave me that day's report: he and his father had been there most of the day, and it had been hard fishing. (I eventually figured out that the younger-looking man was the *father*, the partially paralyzed man the son, who worked for his dad in a small manufacturing business in Pittsfield.) Why he was fishing the riffle was perplexing to me; he worked it with a small gray dry fly. He told me he had caught two 19-inch browns out of the riffle in the last two nights. I was incredulous. He explained that on summer days and hot nights, the riffles had the oxygen, provided cover, and funneled food down the river.

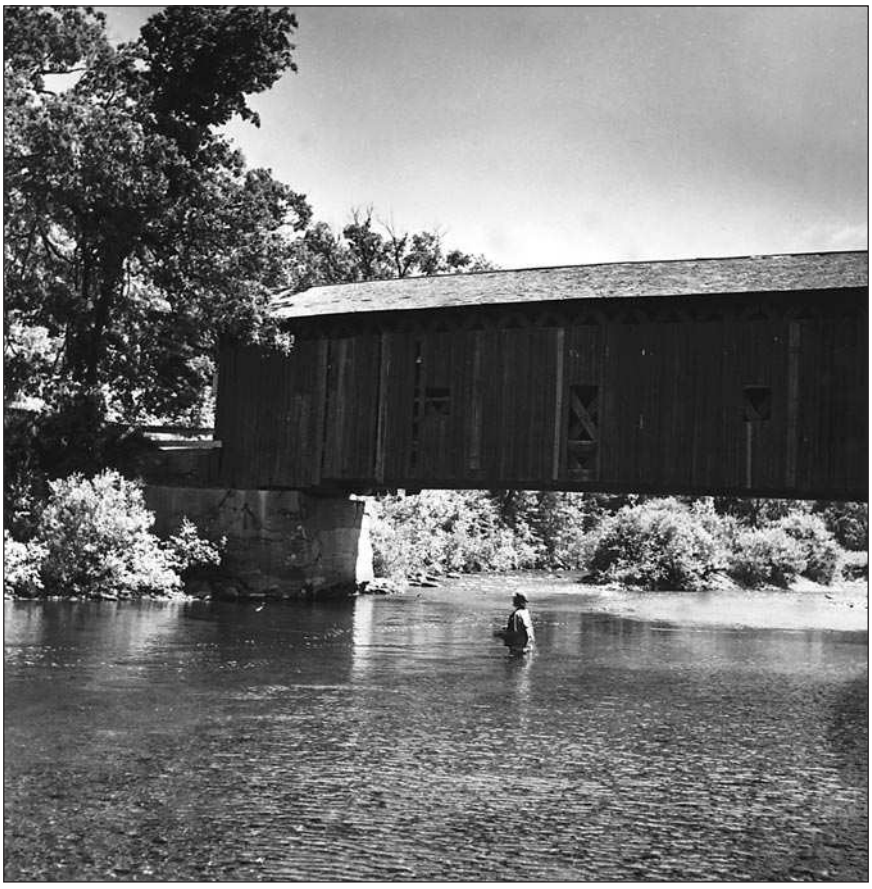
So I stayed, hoping to see him connect with another 19-incher. Watching him thread a size-18 dry fly on a light leader with one hand was nothing short of magic. He held the fly eye forward with his two middle fingers and the tippet with his index finger and thumb. Somehow he passed the tippet through the eye and grabbed the end with his teeth. With his fingers, he manipulated an overhand knot and drew the fly though the opening for a perfect turle knot. Yikes! How long would it take to learn that?

I didn't ask him how he became injured, but that night he said that his biggest issue was learning to use an automatic reel. Sometimes when he struck a small trout and released the reel, the reel spring derricked the trout up and over his head, onto the beach or into the woods behind. He tied his own flies, and his father and he kept a daily journal. They generally took (and released) more than five hundred 12-plus-inch trout each summer. For those of us who have labored assiduously over the selective Battenkill trout, both brown and brook, that number is somewhat astounding, but I had no reason to doubt him.

That summer and for the next couple of years, we would run into them, often at the Otter Pool. One evening the son and I were at the riffle again. I was watching him tie a fly on the stony beach. As he walked back into the riffle, he paused for a moment, looked up the hillside, and said, "Son, a machine-gun nest about halfway up a hillside like that . . . " That was all I heard him say about the war. I found out later that his injuries were sustained in World War II.

I eventually learned that the two spent late May until September at a nearby boardinghouse, where they took their meals. I hardly fished when I was around them, just watched. By watching father and son, I learned stream craft and presentation. They positioned themselves where they could reach all targets, and their dry flies fluttered delicately to the water's surface. I learned that in the evening, the fish drifted into the skinny water in the tailouts and the edges. Small ring forms were often large trout.

They also talked about a phenomenon I call dumb days—days when the good trout just go dumb, occurring but once a year or so. I can only imagine it was like Brigadoon—good fish would rush out from under banks, across tailouts, and up from the depths to take their dry flies. For Battenkill veterans, this sounds like blasphemy, and I have certainly never experienced it, but on the Beaverkill something like that happens when the



Maxine Atherton at the Arlington Covered Bridge on the Battenkill, 1948. Photographer unknown. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing Atherton Collection.

March browns are on: a sudden flurry of a half dozen March browns comes drifting down and the fish are on them immediately, with little discrimination.

For several years I stalked the father and son in the interest of trout lore. Then one summer they were no longer on the river. We learned—I think from Dan or Ben at Orvis—that the son had died from his war injuries in late fall or over the winter; the father lost all interest in life and died within the year. Sadly, I have neither Dan nor Ben to check in with today. Perhaps some Battenkill veteran recognizes them and can provide more information. Now that I have sons, I can only imagine the difficulty of sending a child off to combat and having him come home so injured. But I can understand the extraordinary devotion of a father dedicating himself to his son's love of trout fishing.

Another War Veteran and the Parachute Man

We frequented the Vermont sections of the Battenkill, roughly from the Union Street Bridge in Manchester down to the New York state line. That same first year, 1959, we ran across another one-armed fisherman. Like the other father-and-son duo, we saw him a lot, almost daily when we fished to the state line from West Arlington. Again, I do not know his name, but I remember him like it was yesterday, as well as his equipment and campsite.

This angler had a campsite on the Wilcox sawmill property right along the north side of the bend in the river across from the Wilcox homestead in West Arlington. He spent most—if not all—of the summer there in a large beige wall tent. He was average height, probably in his sixties. His right arm was amputated at the shoulder. In retrospect, he looked like a stout Ernest Hemingway with a well-trimmed full white beard. So what, aside from being an active amputee, was so remarkable about this camper? He fished exclusively a cast of wet flies: three to be exact. As he explained to me and Dad, his top cast was a black gnat on a short tippet that he liked to dance across the surface. Like the younger veteran, he used an automatic reel with a glass rod. His modus operandi was to cover a lot of water. He walked the meadows (or sometimes the road) east, upstream to the where the road abutted the river and fished downstream with his cast. He always carried a creel and always had some lovely browns, 12 to 14 inches, therein. He told of many 18- to 22-inch fish he took with this cast. Even at my young age, I thought, How could this be? Battenkill browns falling for a cast of three flies, with a leader that looked like a rope? And large fish jumping on the dancing black gnat? But the proof was in his creel each day.

One late afternoon toward 6 p.m., when all fly fishers get ready to stake out their section of the Battenkill, we intended to go to the Dugway, which is midway down the road as the river stays adjacent to Route 313. It starts behind the "Pink House" and courses through a riffle and behind a lovely riverside home. The deep pool—a great late-night pool—is opposite the house, basically in that backyard.

When we arrived, there was a 1953 Chevrolet sedan already there. A large man in his late sixties was out of the car, putting on his waders. In those days there was a camaraderie of anglers, and there were no issues with getting onto your part of the river. We stopped to talk.

The man worked in a factory in Mechanicville on the Hudson—really only about forty-five minutes away, but to us it seemed like a very long drive. He fished most nights on the Battenkill and quickly showed us his ties. They were all parachutes. They were exquisite: sparse and clean with the hackle winding around the wing studs. We knew about them, popular in Britain, but had never seen them. He told us that the night before he had lost a very large fish in a spinner fall. He explained that the parachutes best imitated the spinners because they sat flat on the water. His enthusiasm was contagious. Later Dad asked me, "Can you tie those?" I laughed, "Not likely, Dad."

I think we can say that Mr. Parachute was ahead of his time. The notion of fishing the falling spinners was not clearly defined in the 1960s, nor was the idea of a fly lying flat in the surface film, like a parachute or a Paradun. The poet and writer George Mendoza in *Fishing the Morning Lonely* (Freshet Press, 1974), without naming him, speaks of encountering the Parachute Man—assuredly, the same person.

Lessons Given, Lessons Learned

Experiences and events turn into memories, and memories sustain us into the fourth quarter of our lives. As we get older, we look for lessons. What has experience taught us? Such inquiries help define us.

Surely, the healing power of fly fishing and the strength of the human spirit to overcome physical challenges, war, and personal trauma is now recognized by many contemporary organizations. But even sixty-odd years ago, veterans—and parents of veterans—knew this. Our sport can help to assuage the trauma of war. It can strengthen and reestablish an essential familial bond. Those early encounters on the Battenkill were my first glimpses of this.

The Battenkill from the Union Street Bridge in Manchester, photographed and artistically interpreted by Sara Wilcox.

Angling Poetry: Glen Larum's *Leaving Montana*

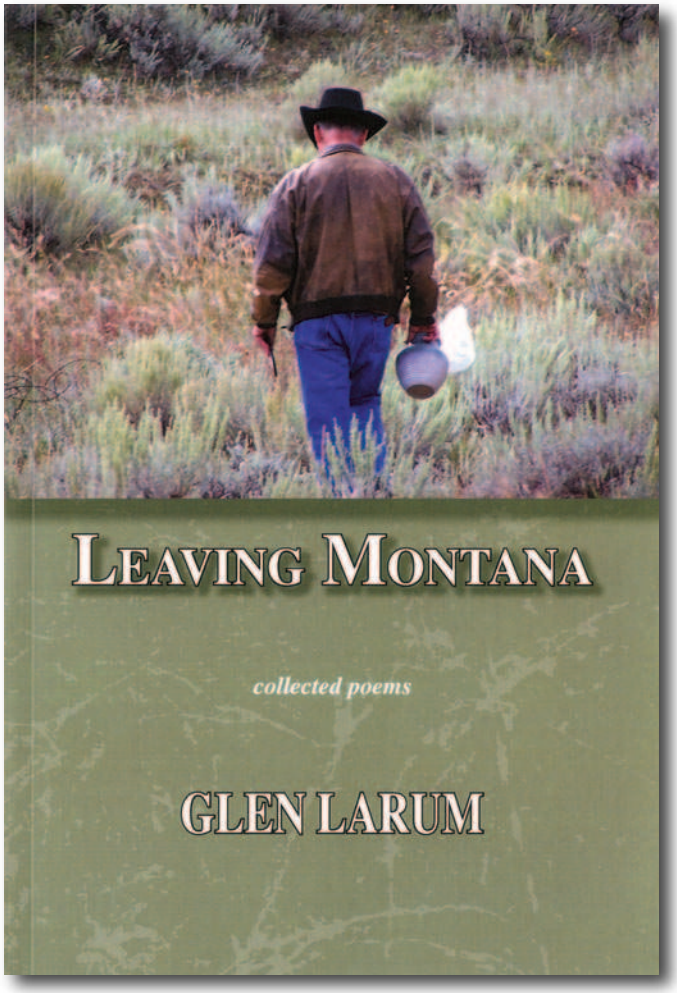
by G. William Fowler

A refreshing collection of poems has come my way. I say "refreshing" in that the book breathes the reader into the natural world that formed and nurtured the poet—the prairie and mountain streams of Montana—a world rich with outdoor experiences.

Leaving Montana: Collected Poems by Glen Larum makes for a very good read. It suggests to me that poets may have an advantage over the painter, who works with brush in hand and a palette of colors, or the sculptor, who molds clay and melts bronze. While painters and sculptors create beautiful pieces of art, their efforts often become a reflection of the reality of the scene. Larum creates a landscape all its own and seeks to explain the inexplicable with what he describes in the volume's very first line as "a western tongue."[1] The poet T. S. Eliot could easily have been speaking about these poems when he was considering Shakespeare's mature use of the English language to express "the most subtle of the most refined shades of feelings."[2]

As a kid armed with a red willow pole, about 20 feet of line, a stick, a bobber, a lead sinker, and a small J-hook, Larum learned to fish the shallow stock reservoirs on the family ranch for black bullhead catfish. Later, as a teenager, he wandered the banks of Crow Creek near his western Montana home trying to think like a trout. Using a piece of torn red bandana tied to the hook, he always hoped to get lucky enough to bring one or two home for his mother to fry. "Really, I was just a guy trying to drop a line somewhere I thought there might be a fish, all the while enjoying being in the moment," he said.[3]

Larum has never considered himself a fly fisherman, but rather "an admirer of real fly fishermen."[4] While at the University of Montana Western in Dillon, one of his professors, Sam Davis, took him aside after class one day to show him the rhythm and art of angling, an art that Larum quickly understood needed to be practiced outdoors. Soon he was haunting the Blacktail, Big Hole, and Beaverhead, a trail rod in his backpack.



For three summers in the early 1970s, Larum worked on a two-man fencing crew in Targhee National Forest building lay-down fence for a rancher near the Continental Divide. He and his partner fished lakes above the timberline during hot afternoons to escape the hordes of biting flies and mosquitoes below, a scene Larum captured in "A Take on Time and Distance":

> Do trout still rise
> to Coachman flies
> plucked off the lacquered board
> next to the antique cash register?[5]

The two ranged as far afield as the Salmon River in Idaho, planning to finally fish the deep eddies in the River of No Return when, unexpectedly, his partner's girlfriend showed up at their fishing camp. Glen hiked downriver alone. Awaiting was the unexpected.

> Just before dark, I caught what I took to be the scent of apples in the air and rounded a bend to see the remnant trees of an abandoned apple orchard above a sandbar at the mouth of a tributary creek where tour boats could put in for the night. Above the sandbar was a screened-in boathouse, and under the canyon rim was a U.S. Forest Service ranger cabin where three young doctors from Dallas, two men and a woman, had taken up residence for the week. After chatting with them about the fishing, I bid them good night and took my sleeping bag to the boathouse. The arresting aroma of those rotting apples triggered vivid dreams mixing fishing for trout and trees raining apples, dreams perhaps abetted by a couple of half-cups of the doctors' prescriptive medicine—one of the finer bourbons. Just after dawn, I took my little journal out of my backpack and wrote the first draft of "It Was a Kingdom Coming Home." It required just a few tweaks to become the version printed in *Leaving Montana*.[6]

Later Larum told me that "several of the poems in my collection use fishing visuals to convey meaning, including a poem about romance that didn't work out—'the one that got away,' in fisherman's parlance."[7] These memorable lines from "I Remember Her as Fish" recall a teenager's kiss, a moment that clings to his memory like the slick coating of a fresh-caught rainbow trout.

> The memory of that lost kiss,
> the surrealist's trout,
> swims now
> in the stairway of the two-story
> prairie home two worlds away,
> a fixed pattern against the gray.[8]

In "Watching Mayflies Fish at Dusk," Larum loses himself in the idyll that a hatch of mayflies at dusk on the Beaverhead River is a creative element in a celestial moment, fishing for the night itself. Even the fly fishers who view a mayfly merely as bait might share that perspective when in the midst of such a sight.

> This sprawling dance,
> all wings,
> lures the swift strike.
>
> And a fishhook moon
> cast against the blue
> baits
> the great night.[9]

There is a similar moment in "Teaching Trees to Be Round" when he takes nature's view while ruminating on the day's work, the drudgery of sinking a line of posts in the midst of a forest. Wooden fence posts are common, yet have we considered a tree's life in a thicket before becoming a post with barbwire strung along its side?

> Teaching trees to be round,
> smooth, barkless
> is not natural.
>
> No tree ever thought
> itself post,
> thought naked
> of bark and red underskin
> would be a way to stand.[10]

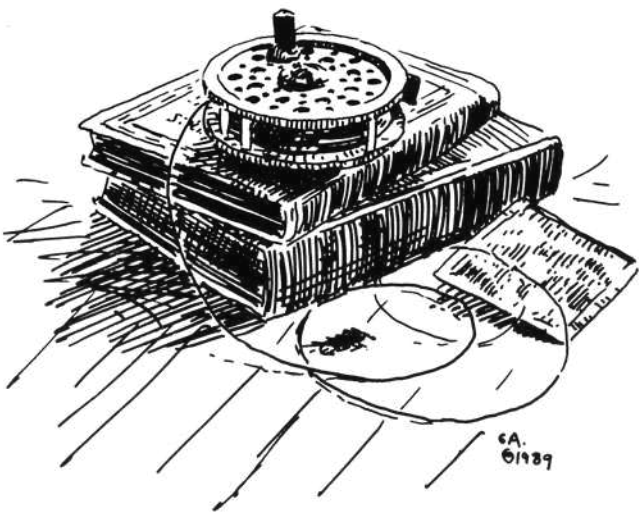
In this and other poems in *Leaving Montana*, Larum takes the reader back to nature with simple, yet profound ideas about life. Refreshing, indeed.

G. William Fowler is a lawyer from Odessa, Texas. With more than fifty years practicing law and fly fishing, he is still trying to overcome being thought of as a slow learner in both endeavors.

Leaving Montana: Collected Poems
by Glen Larum
Walking Three Bar T Publishing, Inc., 2020
$14.95
100 pages
https://walking3bartpublishing.com

ENDNOTES

1. Glen Larum, "I Have Never Thought to Make a Poem," *Leaving Montana: Collected Poems* (Austin, Tex.: Walking Three Bar T Publishing, Inc., 2020), 1.
2. T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009 paperback edition), 56.
3. Glen Larum, e-mail to author, 29 December 2020.
4. Ibid.
5. Larum, *Leaving Montana*, 96.
6. Larum, e-mail to author, 29 December 2020.
7. Glen Larum, e-mail to author, 1 October 2023.
8. Larum, *Leaving Montana*, 20.
9. Ibid., 2.
10. Ibid., 31.



Museum News

From left: Curator Jim Schottenham, AMFF Ambassador Scott Biron, and Jonathan Larrabee of HMH Vises shared fascinating facts and entertaining anecdotes while discussing the history of the fly vise in the inaugural episode of Tackle Talk.

AMFF Adds New Webinar Series

After such a positive response to our Reel Talk webinars, the museum is branching out. Our Streamer Fly Tying series features AMFF Ambassador Scott Biron, who offers up a history of an influential streamer fly tier, then follows it with a tying lesson. To date, the series has focused on Ora Smith, a New Hampshire native with an impressive array of patterns to his credit, and the late Ray Salminen, an Acton, Massachusetts, tier and friend of the famous Joe Brooks.

Expanding further, AMFF has introduced a new series of webinars called Tackle Talk. The inaugural Special Vise Squad Edition featured both Jonathan Larrabee, owner of HMH Vises, and HMH pro-staff member Scott Biron as they joined Curator Jim Schottenham to discuss the history of the fly vise and several rare and one-of-a-kind HMH vises in the museum's collection. Future editions of Tackle Talk will cover a wide range of topics, offering an educational look at some of the unique objects from both the Manchester, Vermont, and Springfield, Missouri, campuses. Each webinar is available for viewing from the AMFF blog page, at https://www.amff.org/our-blog/.

AMFF Welcomes Director of Membership

Brendan Truscott joined the AMFF staff in November to lead the museum's membership and growth initiatives. Over the past fifteen years, Brendan has helped design, launch, and grow a wide range of new ventures, from early-stage startups to large enterprise clients. Originally from Cape Cod, he spent almost a decade in New York before returning to Boston, where he now lives with his wife and two kids. Brendan is also an avid fly angler, and when he's not working, you can probably find him running around Buzzards Bay in his boat *Triple Haul*—named after his favorite grand slam: stripers, albies, and blues.

Shoott

Brendan Truscott

Recent Donations to the Collection

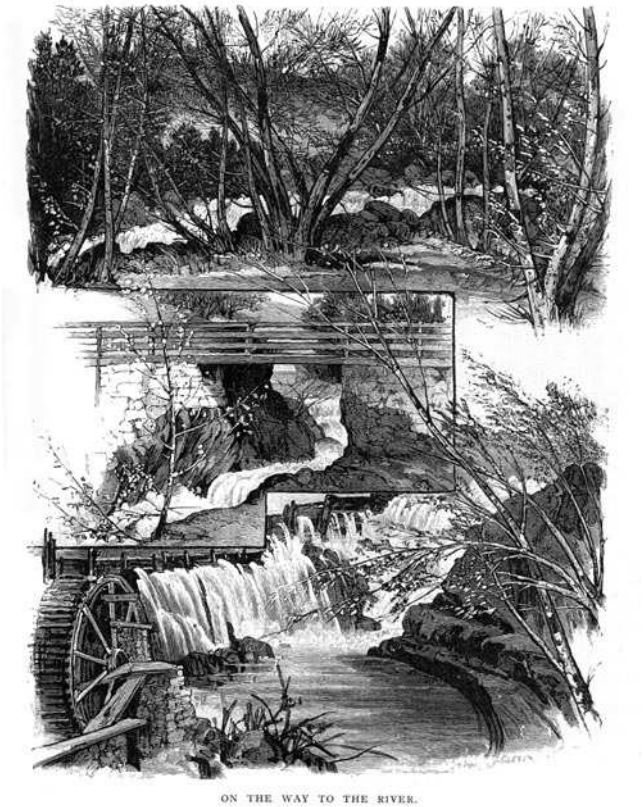
Andy Mill (Boca Raton, Florida), the museum's 2023 Heritage Award winner, gave us his fly-stretcher box with tippets and flies, as well as the Tibor Pacific reel that he used in multiple tournament wins in the late 1990s through the early 2000s. **Tom McGuane** (McLeod, Montana), who recently donated his fly-fishing vest, has now also entrusted us with his S. E. Bogdan fly reel.

Dick and Judie Darbee Vinciguerra Smith (Roscoe, New York) sent us a significant collection of materials related to her parents Harry and Elsie Darbee, as well as some related to John Atherton. The donation included a gold brooch and tie tack in the shape of mayflies that was custom designed by Thomas H. Satherwaite for the Darbees.

Robert B. Mayo (Glen Allen, Virginia) gave us a scrapbook containing Orvis marketing materials and catalogs from the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, as well as a unique collection of original metal printing stamps used in their production.

Paul Manoukian (Reno, Nevada) donated a late-nineteenth-century Edward vom Hofe bamboo fly rod. **Ed Pritchard** (Jupiter, Florida) sent us a Percy Nobbs salmon fly. **Joan Wulff** (Lew Beach, New York) continues to share personal objects documenting her impressive angling career, including photographs and a hand-colored lithograph by Dave Whitlock.

Stephen La Falce and the members of the Northern Arizona Flycasters (Flagstaff, Arizona) donated a Scientific Anglers fiftieth-anniversary reel in honor of Paul J. Weitz: NASA astronaut, commander of Space Shuttle *Challenger*, and member of the *Skylab II* crew. Weitz was an avid angler and longtime member of Northern Arizona Flycasters. And authors **Hunter Jewett** and **Jay Hill** gave us copies of their books for our reference library: *Thirty Rites of Passage: Building an American Fly Fisher* (Whitefish Press, 2023) and *The Gentlemen's Society of Angling* (West Winds Press, 2003), respectively.



ON THE WAY TO THE RIVER.

On the Way to the River. *From Alfred M. Mayer,* Sport with Gun and Rod in American Woods and Waters, Vol. II *(New York: The Century Company, 1883), 563.*

Upcoming Events

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

January 19–21
Denver Fly Fishing Show
Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center
(Booth 669)

January 26–28
Edison Fly Fishing Show
New Jersey Convention and Expo Center
(Booth 1235)

February 10
Fly-Tying Workshop and Film Screening
Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium
Springfield, Missouri
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. CST

April 18
Heritage Award honoring the
Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation
Kick-Off Dinner and Auction
New York Yacht Club
New York City

April 25
Reel Talk with Jim Schottenham
Via Zoom
3:00 p.m.

May 30
Tackle Talk with Jim Schottenham and John Marci
Via Zoom
3:00 p.m.

July 11, 18, 25
Kids Clinics

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

October TBD
Annual Members Meeting

Always check our website (www.amff.org) for additions, updates, and more information or contact (802) 362-3300 or amff@amff.org. The museum's e-mail newsletter offers up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.

2024 Heritage Award to Be Presented to Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation

The American Museum of Fly Fishing (AMFF) will honor the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation (JHOFF) with its 2024 Heritage Award. The foundation is being recognized for its extraordinary efforts in supporting conservation projects and educational stewardship programs that benefit the upper Snake River drainage and its native cutthroat trout population.

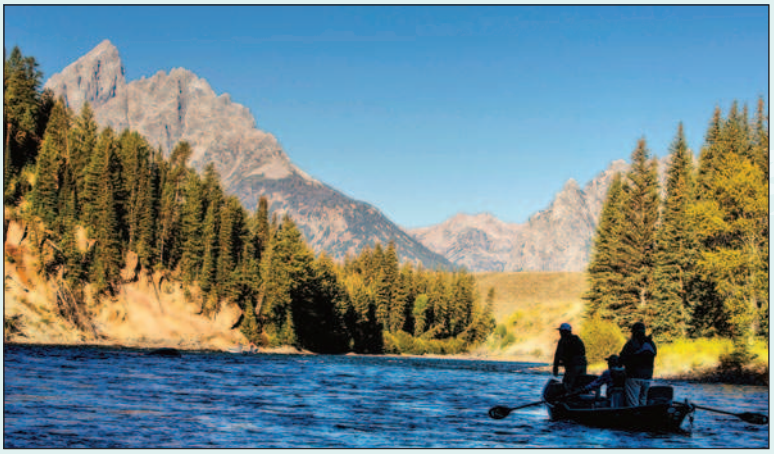


Photo by Neal Henderson. Courtesy of the Jackson Hole One Fly Foundation.

"I am absolutely thrilled to honor such an incredible organization," remarks AMFF Board President Fred Polhemus. "The One Fly has dedicated itself to the conservation of our waters in a way that inspires each of us to be better stewards. We look forward to highlighting the rich history of the tournament, their conservation pioneers, and the camaraderie and community it continues to feed year after year."

Founded in 1986, the foundation hosts the legendary One Fly tournament every September in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Every year, forty select teams put their angling skills to the test over the course of two days, with each angler allowed just a single fly. The tournament captures the spirit of friendly competition while celebrating the generosity of its participants and partners. The JHOFF uses monies raised from the event along with partner matching funds to fund stream conservation and habitat rehabilitation projects along the upper Snake River and its headwaters in Yellowstone National Park. To date, the JHOFF has raised more than $3M while joining matching funds from others to fund more than $22M, yielding total funding of more than $25M for selected native cutthroat trout conservation projects.

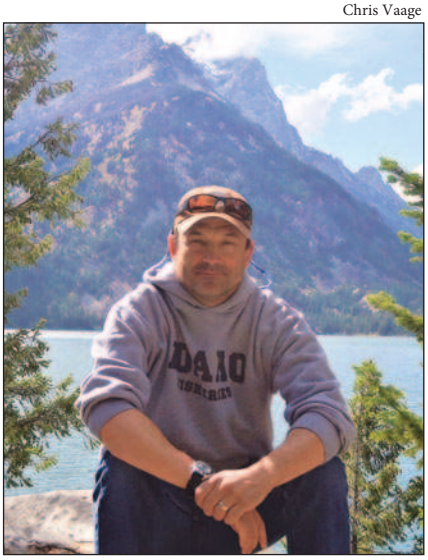
AMFF will honor JHOFF with our 2024 Heritage Award at a special kickoff event April 18 at the New York Yacht Club in New York City. In addition to cocktails and dinner, the event will feature guest speakers and a film that captures the history and magic of the One Fly tournament. The museum is thrilled to have the chance to celebrate the organization's devotion to conservation, and to relive a few tales of the camaraderie and tight-knit community of One Fly participants over the past thirty-eight years. One lucky member of the museum will win a highly coveted seat on the AMFF Chairman's Boat team in the 2024 One Fly tournament. The official Heritage award presentation will take place during the regularly scheduled Jackson Hole One Fly event in Jackson Hole on September 8th.

Please contact Sarah Foster (802-362-3300, x201) for more information.

CONTRIBUTORS

Matt Powell's writing centers on his lifelong interests afield, which have taken him to many corners of the world. His hunting and fishing stories and his bird dogs have been featured in outdoor magazines and on television. Matt is a professor at the University of Idaho, where he has studied trout and salmon for more than twenty-five years. He lives in southern Idaho with his wife and their two Weimaraners.

Chris Vaage



Family photo

James Woods has been an environmental attorney for forty-three years. He is a former federal prosecutor who prosecuted civil and criminal environmental violations for twenty-one years in New Jersey and upstate New York. Currently, he is an assistant attorney general for the State of New York in the Environmental Protection Bureau. Woods is a lifelong fly fisher who made his first trip to the Battenkill in 1959 with his late father and late brother. He has been previously published in *Fly Fisherman* magazine and *Gray's Sporting Journal*. He has been, if his memory serves him correctly, a trustee of the American Museum of Fly Fishing for twenty-seven years. He lives in Cambridge, New York, with his wife and dogs.

Author photo

Stephen E. Wright, now semiretired, holds a PhD in agricultural and extension education from the University of Maryland. Before retirement, he had most recently been the associate dean and associate director of University of Maryland Extension. Before that, he served as the regional director and associate department chair for Ohio State University Extension at the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Last year Dr. Wright came out of full retirement to teach a high school science course.

Wright is a member of the American Museum of Fly Fishing, Trout Unlimited, and the Zanesfield Rod and Gun Club of Ohio. He loves to fish the Henry's Fork of the Snake River, the West Branch of the Delaware River, the Beaverkill, and Mossy Creek each trout season. Wright lives in Maryland with his wife, Dr. Mellasenah Morris, a gifted pianist and retired dean of the Peabody Conservatory of Music. When not teaching or fly fishing, he enjoys the arts and traveling with his wife.

Reaccreditation Celebration

Sara Wilcox

The AAM reaccreditation team granted AMFF their seal of approval after their 2023 summer review.

This past summer, AMFF welcomed a team from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) to conduct a reaccreditation, which happens approximately every ten years. After a rigorous self-assessment and a review by peers, AAM concluded that the American Museum of Fly Fishing meets and exceeds the highest standards and best practices. I'm honored to share these words from our decision letter: "Attainment of accreditation represents the pinnacle of institutional recognition, a status that signifies adherence to the highest professional standards in the museum field including ethics, financial sustainability and accountability. The institution ranks among the most prestigious museums in the United States and its participation in accreditation reflects an enduring commitment to excellence and public trust."

For those of you who have had the opportunity to visit our beautiful Manchester, Vermont, campus; or perhaps our satellite gallery in Springfield, Missouri; or have been devoted readers of this publication, these words may not come as a surprise. But the fact that only 3 percent of the 33,000 museums in the United States are accredited means that this certification is a huge endorsement for our small yet mighty organization.

Here are a few words from our peer reviewers:

> The museum's gallery shows superior exhibitions that are comparable in quality to larger museums with larger budgets.
>
> The museum offers a unique quarterly journal which . . . is the leading publication regarding historic fly fishing and seems to be one of the ongoing projects/legacies the museum is most proud of.
>
> AMFF also has a digital archive of resources. During the site visit, the Visiting Committee learned that the museum received a grant to digitize fly-fishing film to add to its digital archive as a way to . . . (serve) its membership and to connect with a worldwide audience.
>
> The museum's greatest strengths are its staff and their dedication to standards when it comes to exhibits and collections.

The two biggest weaknesses—let's call them our biggest opportunities for growth—are in programming and partnerships. So, what can you expect in 2024? Increased member programming such as book clubs and film clubs, classes to educate anglers on timely conservation and preservation topics, and events with relevant partners.

Our success is always a reflection of you, our faithful and passionate community of museum members, who inspire us every day. Your insight, trust, involvement, support (and great fishing stories) fuel us to achieve greatness. Congratulations to all!

Sarah Foster
Executive Director

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