

# Of Baseball and Bamboo: Bobby Doerr, Ted Williams, and the Paul H. Young Rod Company

by John A. Feldenzer

THE YEAR 1918 WAS A memorable one. World War I ended, a global epidemic of influenza killed millions, and the Boston Red Sox won the World Series for the last time in the twentieth century. Two men were born that year in southern California who would later become the best of friends. Bobby Doerr and Ted Williams were great baseball heroes of another era, Hall of Famers from the old Boston Red Sox, and men who loved to fish as much or more than playing the game of professional baseball.

Robert Pershing Doerr was “a child star in baseball” and played so well at the high school and American Legion levels that he was signed, in the fall of 1934, to play second base for the Hollywood Stars of the AAA Pacific Coast League.<sup>1</sup> Needing his father’s consent to play, Doerr got it by agreeing to continue studies toward his high school diploma. At sixteen, Doerr looked too young to play professional baseball and on occasion was barred from the clubhouse.<sup>2</sup>

In late 1935, the Stars moved to San Diego as the new Padres. Theodore Samuel Williams, a local kid from San Diego, joined the Padres team midseason 1936.<sup>3</sup> “Williams and Doerr became road-trip friends, pushed together by their age and situation and what they found was a common love for fishing . . . Doerr talked about fishing for steelheads and trout, Williams about fishing for bass and albacore.”<sup>4</sup> Author David Halberstam states that at the end of the ’36 season, “Doerr, who loved the outdoors, introduced Williams to fishing (which, of course, Williams denies; as he remembers it, he introduced Doerr to fishing). That began a fifty-year friendship.”<sup>5</sup>

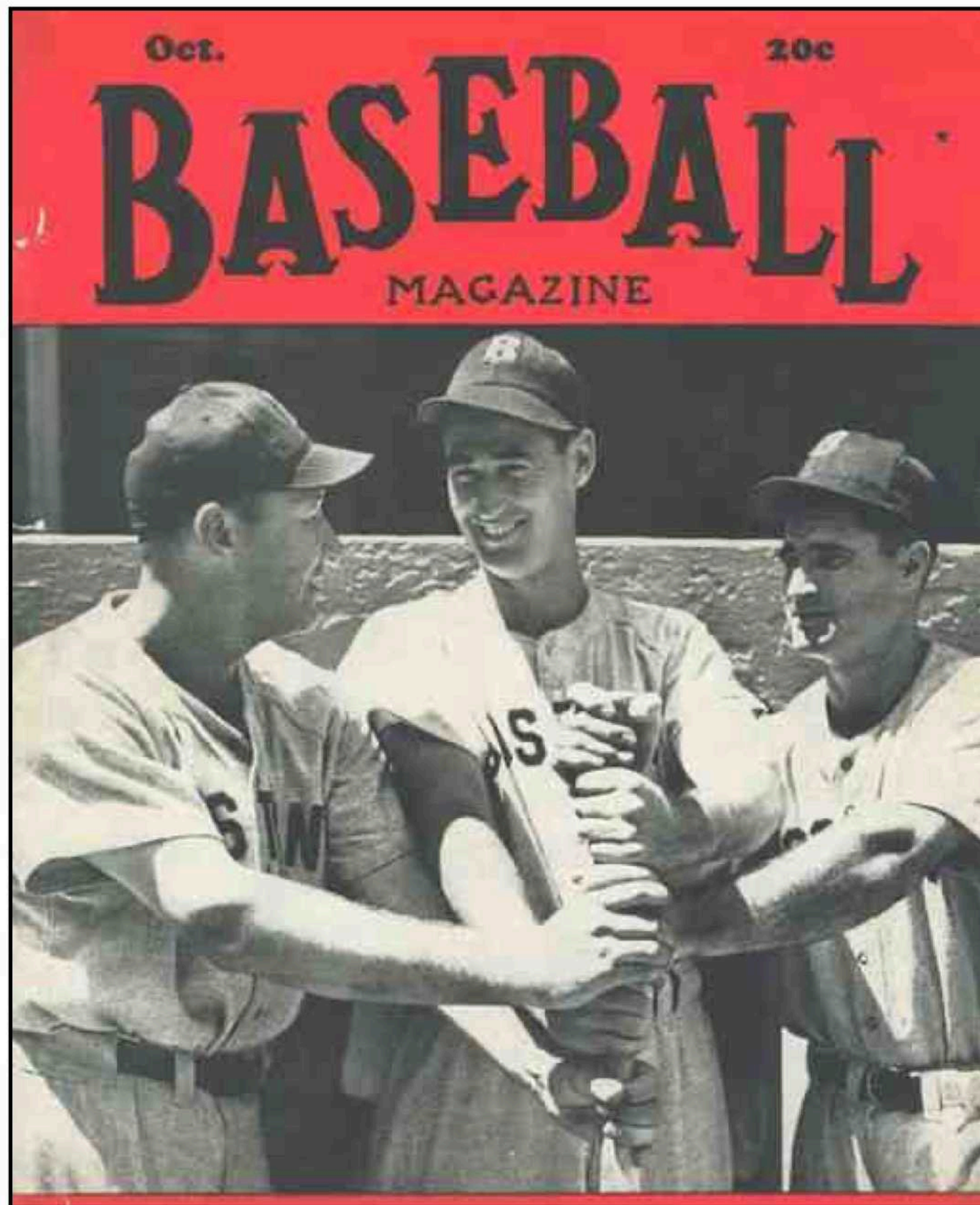


Figure 1. Rudy York, Ted Williams, and Bobby Doerr (left to right), World Series, Sportsman’s Park, St. Louis, on the cover of Baseball Magazine (October 1946, vol. LXXVII, no. 5). Courtesy of the Baseball Magazine Co., New York. From the baseball memorabilia collection of John A. Feldenzer.

Doerr had been lured to the outdoors since his early years. While playing in San Diego, he was influenced by trainer Les Cook, who regularly fly fished the Rogue River for steelhead in the off-season. At eighteen, on a trip to the Rogue with Cook, Doerr fell in love with the river, the area, and the local schoolteacher, Monica Terpin. He eventually married the schoolteacher, bought 160 acres on the Rogue, and for the next sixty-plus years never left the area except each spring to engage in the national pastime.<sup>6</sup>

Over the years, Williams reflected on his beginnings in angling. His father had no interest in the outdoors and was

rarely at home, and his mother was totally absorbed in her activities with the Salvation Army. Williams spent a lot of time alone, and his interests were focused on the baseball fields and fishing opportunities in southern California. In both *My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life* (he referred to it as “the book”) and *Ted Williams: Fishing “The Big Three,”* Williams reviewed his early exposure to fishing with John Underwood, his coauthor and friend. Chick Rotert, a game warden and disabled World War I veteran, introduced the eleven-year-old Williams to the bass lakes around San Diego. Williams was hooked by the “six and seven pound bass, nice bass”<sup>7</sup> and “finally got a rod and reel, a three-dollar and ninety-cent Pflueger Akron reel and Heddon bamboo rod . . .”<sup>8</sup> Williams admonished Underwood, who was having trouble casting on an outing with Williams, “I went out and learned how to cast the damn thing before I went fishing with it. I learned how to use it,” implying, of course, that

Underwood had not done his homework before their fishing trip.<sup>9</sup> Williams was a perfectionist and simply could not tolerate sharing an activity with those possessing lesser skills than he. Another great influence on young Williams was Les Cassie, a kindly neighbor, high school maintenance man, father of Ted’s baseball teammate Les Cassie Jr., and an avid surf fisherman. It seems that Mr. Cassie’s own son had no interest in angling. Williams reflects:

We’d make up two or three Calcutta (“Kal-Kut-A”) rods and drive to Coronado Beach and fish the whole night for croakers and cobia. Till four in the



morning we'd fish. We'd catch the tide and wade in almost to our waists and get soaking wet, but I didn't care. Surf casting was great fun. After a while I could cast as far as anybody on the beach.<sup>10</sup>

At a young age, Ted Williams, the fisherman, displayed two lifelong qualities. First, he loved all kinds of fishing, never restricting himself to fresh or salt water, to a single species pursued, or even to type of tackle (although fly fishing was his first love). Second, his perfectionist personality applied to his fishing as much as it did to his mastery of fighter planes while a wartime Marine aviator and, even more, his obsession over the science of hitting a baseball. Williams simply had to be the best at everything!

### TOGETHER AGAIN: DOERR AND WILLIAMS

Friends Bobby Doerr and Ted Williams, along with their futures in professional baseball, would again be united. Doerr was signed to a Red Sox contract in 1937 by general manager Eddie Collins. Boston acquired the rights to Williams in December 1937 and, after the Sox 1938 training camp, manager Joe Cronin sent Williams to the Minneapolis Millers of the American Association "to improve his head."<sup>11</sup> Red Sox management thought Williams was "too young, too immature, too wacky" according to Williams's biographer Leigh Montville.<sup>12</sup> Doerr and Williams were emotional opposites. Doerr was calm and uncommonly mature for his age, whereas Williams was emotionally volatile and difficult to get along with. Halberstam masterfully summarizes their relationship in *The Teammates*.

In the beginning Ted had been closer to Bobby Doerr. Bobby was five months older, but infinitely more mature, with an uncommon emotional equilibrium that would stay with him throughout life. He never seemed to get angry or get down. This stood in sharp contrast to Williams' almost uncontrollable volatility, and his meteoric mood swings. It was as if Ted somehow understood the difference, that Bobby was balanced as he was not and that Bobby could handle things that he could not. Ted somehow understood that he needed Bobby's calm and he seized on his friend's maturity and took comfort in it from the start.<sup>13</sup>

The minor league year in Minnesota was rewarding for Williams. He met Rogers Hornsby, the "Rajah, greatest right-handed hitter of all time,"<sup>14</sup> who claimed

"a great hitter is not born, he is made" and instructed Ted to "get a good ball to hit."<sup>15</sup> Williams led the league in four categories with a .366 batting average, forty-three home runs, 142 RBIs, and 130 runs scored.<sup>16</sup> He enjoyed the hunting and fishing in Minnesota and would eventually marry Doris Soule, his first wife and the daughter of his hunting guide there.<sup>17</sup> In 1939, Williams joined his friend Bobby Doerr on the Boston Red Sox, and baseball history records their accomplishments (Figure 1).

Ted Williams would become a baseball legend: "The Splendid Splinter," "Teddy Ballgame," and his favorite, "The Kid," the last man to hit over .400 in a season. He led American League hitters in more than thirty major categories in nineteen seasons. These included six batting championships, nine slugging titles, four home-run crowns, and an amazing eighteen seasons (seventeen in a row) of .300 hitting with a lifetime average of .344. He hit 521 career home runs and had a lifetime on-base percentage of .483.<sup>18</sup> Baseball fans can only speculate how much greater these statistics would have been had Williams not given five years to military service during two wars at the prime of his career. Bill Nowlin recently calculated what might have been if Williams had played his entire career in San Diego in the Pacific Coast League and without military interruption. Nowlin projected a .419 lifetime average and an almost unbelievable 990 career home runs!<sup>19</sup> Williams was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1966.

Williams did not forget the special people from his past. He loved Mr. Cassie. His only high school graduation present, a fountain pen, came from Mr. Cassie. Mr. Cassie used his vacation time to drive Williams to spring training in his second year with the Red Sox. He promised Mr. Cassie that if he ever made it to the World Series, he would send along some tickets. In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Cassie were at the World Series, compliments of "The Kid."<sup>20</sup> It would be the only good thing that happened for Williams during the 1946 World Series.



Figure 2. Ted Williams and Bob Doerr on the riverbank, Rogue River, 9 October 1987 after their famous riverbank batting clinic/debate on the "proper swing" of a baseball bat. Zane Grey's cabin is seen in the background. Grey fished the Rogue frequently in the 1920s. Photo courtesy of Bob Doerr.

Doerr would carve out his own legend in baseball history as one of its great hitting second basemen. Unlike Williams, whose approach to hitting was scientific, Doerr was a natural, intuitive hitter who drove in more than one hundred RBIs in six of his fourteen seasons.<sup>21</sup> The arguments between Williams and Doerr over the correct batting swing (level according to Doerr, slight upswing according to Williams) are well known. Halberstam describes a memorable three-day argument during a steelhead fishing trip on the Rogue River in 1987. Williams: "You always chopped at the ball." Doerr: "No, I didn't chop."<sup>22</sup> This discussion culminated on 9 October 1987 in a video-recorded hitting clinic and debate on the riverbank (Figure 2). The soft-spoken and patient Bobby Doerr made his case for the proper mental approach, correct hand position, and a level or even slight downswing. Then the domineering, irreverent, and sometimes profane Williams preached on the essential pivot of the hips, the ideal slight upswing, and the advantage of "choking up" or switching to a lighter bat to get "quicker" with two strikes. A secret bal-



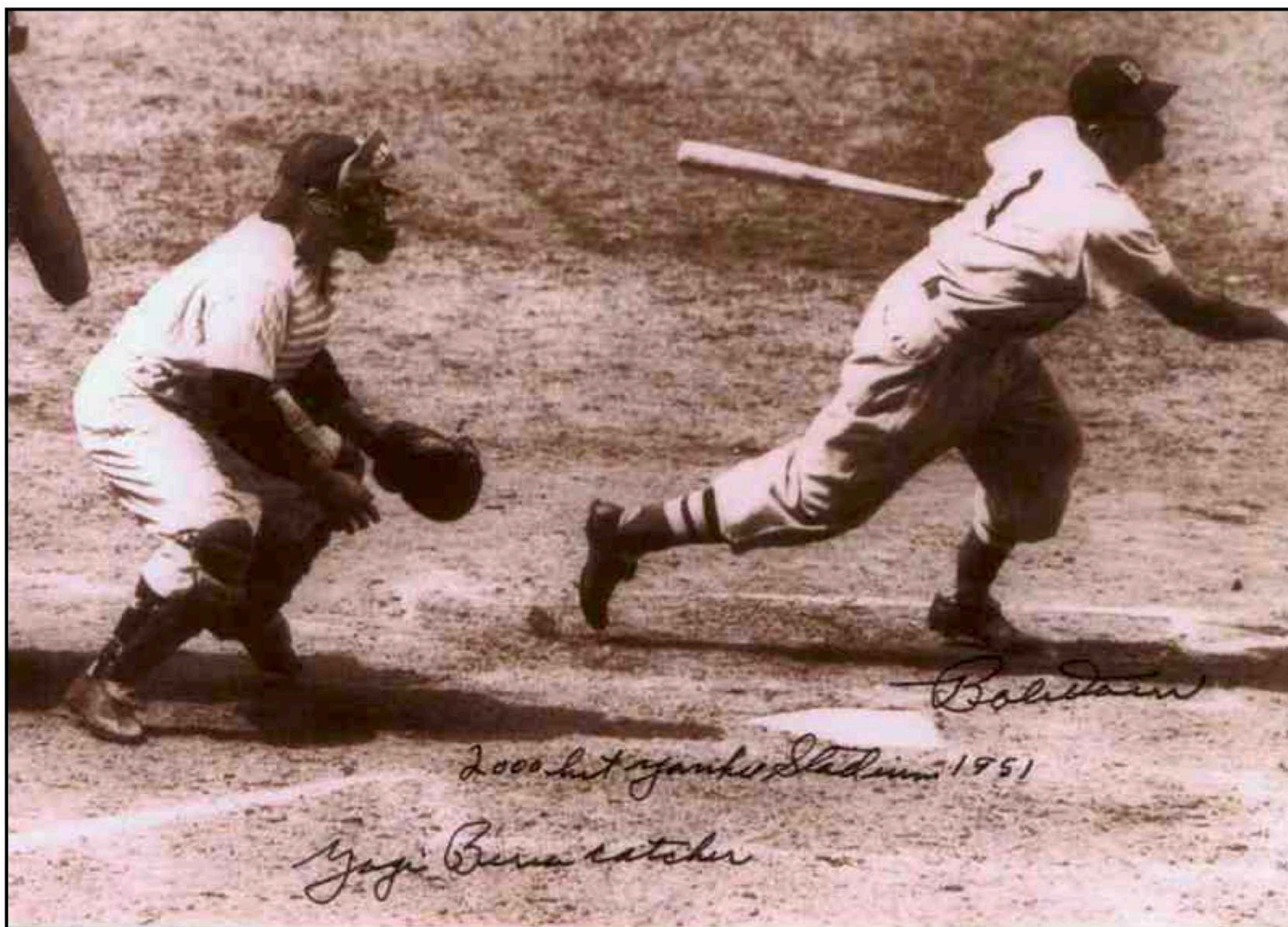


Figure 3. Inscribed photo of Bobby Doerr getting his 2,000th hit at Yankee Stadium, 1951. Yogi Berra is catching. Photo courtesy of Bob Doerr.

lot on who won the debate resulted in a “tie.”<sup>23</sup> But everyone knew Williams was the master, and no one, not even Doerr, could argue with his record. He was quite likely the greatest hitter of all time and had already published his theories in *The Science of Hitting*.

Doerr collected 2,042 hits, slammed 223 home runs, and drove in 1,247 runs from 1937 to 1951 with a lifetime batting average of .288 (Figure 3). Unlike Williams, he excelled in the 1946 World Series with nine hits in six games for a .409 average.<sup>24</sup> Also, unlike Williams, Doerr was a defensive standout and among all-time career leaders for put-outs and assists for second basemen, including those who played much longer. Bobby Doerr was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1986. His great friend, Ted Williams, was present.

### THE PAUL H. YOUNG ROD COMPANY AND TED'S QUEST FOR THE BEST

By 1918, the year that Doerr and Williams were born, Paul H. Young was an outdoorsman and taxidermist who

had moved from Arkansas, his birthplace, to Minnesota, where he sold fishing tackle in Duluth. After exploring the waters of Minnesota and Wisconsin, he moved to Detroit. At age twenty, he read a book on rodmaking and began producing hand-planed bamboo fly rods as a self-taught artisan. His shop at 8065 Grand River Avenue in Detroit specialized in taxidermy, fly tying, and tackle and soon became a gathering place for anglers. In 1925, Young began marketing his rods to the public and, in 1927, developed his first compound taper and issued his first catalog.<sup>25</sup> Young's innovation with tapers and his quest for perfection led to a popular line of affordable bamboo fly rods for trout, bass, and salmon. Demand for his rods quickly became overwhelming, and within two years Paul had to contract out to Heddon and Wes Jordan at South Bend for blanks made to Young's designed tapers.<sup>26</sup> Young's business survived the Depression. During that time, he sold his Prosperity rod for about ten dollars. In 1938, Young noted that his sixteen-year-old son, Jack, “has bamboo in the blood,” and Young began teaching him the art of making bamboo rods.<sup>27</sup> The

Youngs followed the great father-son bamboo rod-making tradition of Ed and Jim Payne, Fred and Leon Thomas, Eustis (“Bill”) Edwards and sons Gene and Bill, E. C. and Walton Powell, and, more recently, Charlie and Steve Jenkins.

Following V-J day, the Paul H. Young Rod Co. unveiled a new line of rods, including the delicate 6-foot, 3-inch Midge, the popular 7½-foot Perfectionist, and Young's Modified American Parabolic rods, such as the famous 8-foot Para 15.<sup>28</sup> He also introduced the powerful 7½-foot Martha Marie model, designed for and named after his wife, who was ahead of her time as an avid female fly fisher. Martin J. Keane, a recognized expert on classic bamboo fly rods, states that 1947 to 1957 were Paul Young's “golden years.”<sup>29</sup> Young had a vast stock of prime, preembargo Tonkin cane with which to work. Improvements were monumental: animal glues were discarded for synthetic resin adhesives, the famous and unique Young flame finish was developed by tempering bamboo in a “ring of fire,” parabolic tapers were perfected, and varnish coating was improved.

Ted Williams was a fanatic about



sporting equipment. He traveled every winter to the Hillerich and Bradsby factory in Kentucky to choose his own Louisville Sluggers, those of the “whitest ash and the tightest grain.”<sup>30</sup> He was perceptive about, and sensitive to, his bats.

I always worked on my bats, boning them down, putting a shine on them, forcing the fibers together. I treated them like babies. Weight tolerance got to be a big thing with me. The weight can change. Early in the season it’s cold and damp and the bats lying around on the ground pick up moisture and get heavier. I used to take them down to the post office to have them weighed. Eventually, with the Red Sox, we got a little set of scales put in the locker room. I’ll never forget Mr. Hillerich of Hillerich and Bradsby, the Louisville Slugger Company, put six bats on a bed in Boston. One was a half ounce heavier than the others. He had me close my eyes and pick out the heavier bat. I picked it out twice in a row.<sup>31</sup>

His approach to fishing tackle was no less intense. He wanted the best equipment available to optimize his performance, whether swinging a baseball bat or casting to tarpon, bonefish, or Atlantic salmon, his “big three.” Williams had to have the best to be the best. “If there is one thing I am an absolute nut about in fishing, it’s adequate tackle—the right rod and reel, the correct strength line, the best-tied knots, the sharpest hooks. It is as easy as it is important, because you can be sure of those things no matter how experienced you are.”<sup>32</sup>

## THE FLORIDA KEYS

Williams became interested in Florida fishing when reading about Ray Holland catching powerful snook there. He became fascinated with saltwater fly fishing. “I loved to fly cast even then—I had Heddon rods, South Bend rods, *bamboo* rods, and a B-level or C-level line. And I loved to make my own flies. I’d been doing it since the World Series in 1946.”<sup>33</sup> In the 1940s, Islamorada, Florida, was a barren place except for serious fishing guides, led by Jimmie Albright and Jack Brothers, who poled their small skiffs in search of bonefish and tarpon. In 1947, Albright, inventor of the Albright Special knot, guided Joe Brooks, who caught three bonefish on flies during his first day.<sup>34</sup> Brooks was a writer, and word got around.

Williams’s interest in bonefishing was further stimulated by J. Lee Cuddy, an outstanding saltwater fly fisherman.<sup>35</sup> The Florida Keys was a place for dedicated anglers, so it was the place for Ted Williams. Author R. B. Cramer describes

Williams in Florida this way: “Ted could do it all, brilliantly. The guides didn’t make much fuss about his fame, but they loved his fishing. His meticulous detail work, always an oddity at Fenway Park, was respected here as the mark of a fine angler. Ted had the best tackle, best reels, best rods, the perfect line, his lures were impeccable.”<sup>36</sup>

Williams’s intensity, natural ability, and acquired skill made it difficult for others to fish with him. In his short essay “I’m No Ted Williams,” Charles Elliot, the forest ranger, prolific writer, and field editor of *Outdoor Life* for many years, described a memorable day of bonefishing with Williams and Joe Brooks off Key Largo in 1951. They were fly fishing and using a large bamboo rod (likely a Paul Young rod). “Sure you can handle that rod?” Williams asked. Initially, Williams was frustrated by Elliot’s inability to spot bonefish at a distance or distinguish one from a barracuda or shark. “How in the hell can you catch ’m if you can’t see ’m?” Williams asked explosively. Then later, “You’re going to catch a bonefish if we have to kick it into the boat and fasten it to your fly,” Williams said. After several technical errors, such as catching the fly line around the reel handle, thus losing the bonefish and then inadvertently hooking a barracuda, Elliot gave up the bamboo. Williams effortlessly cast 110 feet into a stiff breeze then proceeded to hook and land a 10-pound bonefish. He quickly casted to, and landed, another. Elliot eventually reeled in a 5-pounder that Brooks had hooked. The strength of the fish and effort required impressed Elliot. “I know one thing,” I gasped. “I’m not man enough to catch a ten-pounder, if they grow in strength as they increase in size.” “If you don’t learn how to throw that line,” Williams grunted, “you’ll never have a chance at a ten-pounder.” When Elliot finally hooked a huge bonefish and then broke it off, Williams was merciful. “Oh well,” he said, “no man bats a thousand in the bonefish league.”<sup>37</sup> But how about .400? Williams was becoming a master of bonefish and tarpon just as he had mastered major league pitchers.

Williams also had a need to know he was the best, an insecurity that was insatiable. Author R. B. Cramer relates a conversation between Williams and a Boston writer (one of the “knights of the keyboard,” as Williams disdainfully called them):

“Ain’t no one in heaven or earth ever knew more about fishing.”

“Sure there is,” says the scribe.

“Oh yeah? Who?”

“Well God made the fish.”

“Yeah, awright,” Ted says. “But you had to go pretty far back.”<sup>38</sup>

But even heroes have heroes. One of Williams’s heroes was Zane Grey (ZG), the author and sportsman. Williams admired ZG not for his literary status but for his independent spirit and determination to be the best fisherman of his time.<sup>39</sup> Grey also had a baseball connection and was a very talented slugger (and pitcher!) at the collegiate and semiprofessional levels.<sup>40</sup> ZG pioneered saltwater fly fishing for tarpon, bonefish, and permit in Long Key, Florida, in the early twentieth century. He was president of the Long Key Fishing Club for three years after its inception in 1917.<sup>41</sup> (Williams often fished for tarpon alone at a place off Long Key. The fishing guides called it “Ted’s Spot.”<sup>42</sup>) Grey owned a fishing cabin on the Rogue River and often fished there for steelhead in the 1920s (see Figure 2).<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the last six chapters of Grey’s book, *Tales of Fresh-Water Fishing*, and many of its photographic illustrations describe his fly-fishing experiences on the Rogue with his brother, son, and others.<sup>44</sup> “The Rogue River magnifies the favorite places and fish of our boyhood. This river is indeed magnificent. Think. It is icy water, crystal clear. It runs between high mountain slopes of Oregon forests. And it is full of beautiful, savage, unconquerable fish.”<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, Grey, like Williams, was drawn to the sea for his ultimate fishing challenges. “Although his sons and ZG reserved a special place in their private lives for steelhead trout fishing in Oregon, his enduring angling fame rests on his pioneering efforts in the sea.”<sup>46</sup> In his monograph, *Sea Angling*, Grey writes:

Salmon-fishermen who have mastered the highest art of angling must never forget that salmon run up out of the sea. It is the sea that makes the silver lord of the Restigouche the incomparable fish he is. It is the sea that makes the pearl tinted steelhead of the Rogue so savage and wonderful. It is the salt water that develops the dynamic bonefish. Which is to say that the sea is the mother of all fish, and for that matter, of all life on the earth.<sup>47</sup>

## YOUNG AND WILLIAMS

It is not surprising that Williams’s quest for fine fly-fishing tackle, especially saltwater tackle, would lead him to the doorstep of Paul Young. How Williams learned about Paul Young’s rods isn’t clear, but it was possibly from Jimmie Albright. Albright had moved from Detroit to the Keys in 1942 to fish and may have directed Williams to Young’s Detroit shop.<sup>48</sup> Lee Cuddy was also using Young’s rods. Young was in those creative





Figure 4. Ted Williams's personal rod, a Paul H. Young Parabolic 18, one tip, dated May 1950. Photo courtesy of Ron Swanson.

Stephen Brown; computer background modification by Daaave Summers



Figure 5 (A and B). The Ted Williams Parabolic 18, dated May 1949 (with Doerr's name on it also), in Paul Young's handwriting, which was given to Doerr by the Youngs on their trip to Oregon, late 1951. The rod is in the Ted Williams Museum and Hitters Hall of Fame Museum in Hernando, Florida.

Stephen Brown; computer background modification by Daaave Summers



“golden years” and, in 1948 or 1949, Williams began to visit the Young shop in Detroit after finishing games at Tiger Stadium.<sup>49</sup> (Ted loved Tiger Stadium. “I saw the ball better there. I hit fifty-four home runs in Detroit, more than any other park I played in on the road.”<sup>50</sup>) Williams studied and discussed rod tapers with Paul Young and ordered custom bamboo rods to fish for tarpon, snook, and bonefish in Florida. Young made several custom rods for Williams with Ted's name on them. The single-tip 9-foot, 3-inch, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce Parabolic 18 rod shown above has Paul Young's usual hand lettering in print as well as TED WILLIAMS MAY 1950 written in script (Figure 4).<sup>51</sup> Young also developed a 9-foot, 6-inch Parabolic 18 bass and light steelhead rod for Williams.

Bob Summers, a protégé of Paul Young who began working in the shop after high school in 1956 and stayed on for eighteen years, remembers the visits of Ted Williams to the shop. Summers and I studied the Young Co. tackle catalogs from the 1950s titled *More Fishing Less Fussing*. The dated 1950 catalog makes no mention of Williams. The next, undated catalog (with Lee Cuddy and a fly-caught tarpon on the cover), which Summers and I believe to be from 1952 or 1953, contains two photographs of Williams: one with his first bonefish

caught on a Paul Young Oregon Egg bait-casting rod and one of Williams “with a 9 lb. bonefish taken with our 9-foot–18 modified parabolic rod, December 26, 1950 at Key Largo, Florida.”<sup>52</sup> The “9-foot” Para 18 in the second photograph may be the 9-foot, 3-inch rod shown in Figure 4.<sup>53</sup> This rod and the 9-foot, 6-inch rod were once owned by Ron Swanson, who notes that the 9-foot, 6-inch rod had inked markings by Paul Young that tallied the number of bonefish caught by Williams and him.<sup>54</sup> This most likely occurred on Young's 1950–1951 holiday fishing trip to Key Largo. The 1952–1953 catalog also contains this letter from Williams to Young.

Dear Paul:

Inclosed find check that will cover my bill and Bobby Doerr's rod.\* Gee! He just loved the feel of his as soon as he felt it. He said when he told me to go ahead and order it that he wasn't sure he was doing the smart thing, but I assured him he'd never be sorry and he is tickled pink. Now about mine. I tried it the other day and I'm not so sure it could be improved on. I can't wait till we get in action down there and I think when we do we'll have all the boys singing.

I lost the bill you sent me so if I'm not exactly right will square with you in

Detroit. You should see the flies I'm tying—really out of this world—no kidding.

All my love to “Mrs. America” and family.

“Ted” Williams, Massachusetts  
(Boston Red Sox)

\* (9-foot–18/17–6 modified parabolic)<sup>55</sup>

It seems that two of Young's Para 18 rods were destined to become “Ted Williams” models (Figure 5). The 1952–1953 catalog has a list of regular and dry-fly rods as well as Modified American Parabolics on the inside front cover. The two Ted Williams models are a 9-foot, two-piece Para 18 (6.25 ounces with  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch tip-top) labeled “Ted Williams Bonefish” for GAF (WF9) line, and a lighter 9-foot, 6-inch, two-piece Para 18 (6.09 ounces with a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch tip-top) labeled “Ted Williams Bass Rod, Light Steelhead” for GBF (WF8) line. A Florida Special Bonefish Para 18 model (9-foot, 6-inch, two-piece, 6.40-ounce rod with  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch tip-top for GAF line) and Lee Cuddy Powerhouse Para 20 (9-foot, two-piece, 7.00-ounce,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch tip-top for 2A line) model were also listed.<sup>56</sup>

Sometime thereafter (Williams was flying a Marine F-9 Panther jet in Korea during 1952–1953), he began experimenting with bamboo rods on his own. Williams finished several himself from



Figure 6. Ted Williams, Johnny Pesky (standing), Bobby Doerr, and Dom DiMaggio celebrating the retirement of Doerr's uniform number (1) at Jimmy's restaurant, Boston Harbor, 12 May 1988. Photo taken by Everett Gothier. Photo courtesy of Tom Ripp.



Figure 7. Martha Marie Young with a fish on, Rogue River, late 1951. Lucas at the oars, Doerr in the front of the boat. Williams referred to Martha as "Mrs. America." Photo was likely taken by Paul Young. Photo courtesy of Bob Doerr.

Young Co. blanks and then developed his own business, the Ted Williams Tackle Manufacturing Company.<sup>57</sup> Williams then personally asked Paul Young to not use his name on any of the Young models or in the catalog. Young agreed. In the undated but likely 1955–1956 catalog (with Ned Jewett Jr. on the cover), there is no mention of Ted Williams or his models. The Ted Williams Bonefish model became the Florida Special Para 18 (9-foot, 6.25 ounces with  $\frac{7}{64}$  [GAF] and  $\frac{7}{64}$  [GBG] tip-tops).<sup>58</sup> Williams subsequently entered into a major business relationship with Sears Roebuck and Company. The exclusive five-year contract, announced on 27 December 1960 in Chicago, was for \$100,000 per year.<sup>59</sup>

## THE DOERR ROD

In 1950 or 1951, Williams requested that Young develop a custom taper for his friend, Bobby Doerr, to use for steelhead

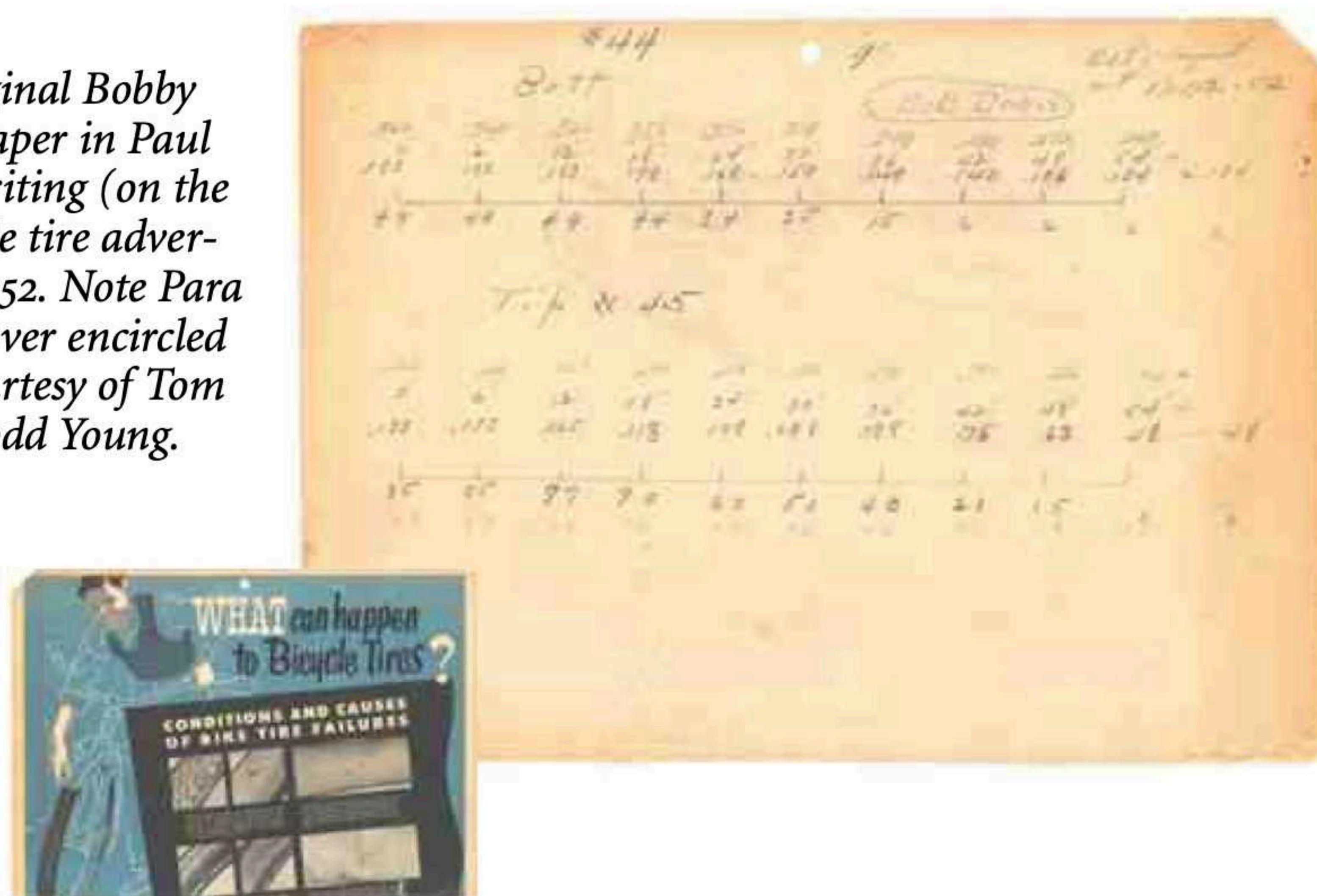
and salmon on the big water in Oregon. Doerr picked up his rod at the Youngs' shop in the fall of 1951, the year he retired. He paid \$75 for the rod.<sup>60</sup> Ted Williams verified this story to Tom Ripp, a longtime fishing friend of Doerr's, in the spring of 1988 during a party in Boston to celebrate the retirement of Doerr's number 1 at Fenway Park (Figure 6).<sup>61</sup>

In late 1951, Paul and Martha Marie Young traveled to Oregon to fish the Rogue River for winter steelhead with Doerr and the famous river guide Larry Lucas (Figure 7). During that fishing trip, Young assessed Doerr's home waters, his fishing capability, and his powerful, muscular arms. Paul Young left a rod with Doerr after the trip. This was a 9-foot, 6.41-ounce, two-piece Parabolic 18 with one tip. It was marked on the butt section with the names of both Williams and Doerr, Parabolic 18, the usual technical information, and the date, May 1949, in the usual Paul H. Young printing (see

Figure 5). Doerr fished the heavy rod for steelhead, but he never liked it as much as his Bobby Doerr prototype.<sup>62</sup> He sent the rod back to the Youngs' shop for restoration at some point, and it was returned to him with three tips. He never fished the rod again and subsequently donated it to the Ted Williams Museum and Hitters Hall of Fame in Hernando, Florida, where it can now be viewed (see Figure 5). Doerr and his wife, Monica, continued a lifetime friendship with the Youngs and maintained contact with Martha Marie after Paul's death in 1960. In a 1990 phone conversation, Martha told Bobby and Monica that she "was ninety-one years old and, because of knee surgery, had missed the opening of trout season for the first time in sixty-five years, and would not miss another!"<sup>63</sup>

The taper for what would later become the Bobby Doerr model was established in October and the blanks cut in November 1952. This early taper, written

Figure 8. Original Bobby Doerr model taper in Paul Young's handwriting (on the back of a bicycle tire advertisement), fall 1952. Note Para 17 seen faintly over encircled Bob Doerr. Courtesy of Tom Ripp from Todd Young.





in Young's hand (on the back of a bicycle tire advertisement!) was obtained by Tom Ripp in 1990 from Todd Young, Young's grandson and rodmaker (Figure 8).<sup>64</sup> The 1955–1956 Paul H. Young Co. catalog, with Ned Jewett Jr. on the cover, describes the Bobby Doerr model for the first time and offers it, in deluxe grade only, for \$75.<sup>65</sup>

Mark Canfield is a bamboo rodmaker with thirty years experience from Ketchum, Idaho. He is also an expert on rod tapers and a former owner of the Bobby Doerr rod illustrated in this essay. In August 2003, he discussed the history of the rod with Doerr personally. Canfield examined Young's original production taper for the Doerr model of 1952 (see Figure 8) and compared it with the taper (compensated over varnish) of the 1955 rod illustrated here. The butt section tapers are very similar, but the 1952 model has significantly more bamboo from the midbutt section through the ferrule and clear through to the tips. This indicates that the original Doerr model was made for at least a 9WF line and that Paul Young subsequently modified the Doerr rod to suit the needs of his later fishing clients.<sup>66</sup> I asked Canfield to explore any relationship between the popular Para 17 model (8½ feet) and the original Doerr rod because the written taper has Para 17 erased right above the encircled *Bob Doerr* (see Figure 8), and the ferrule size, ¼ inch, is the same. Canfield's

micrometer data show that the Para 17 is nearly identical to the original Doerr model through the butt section, except in the lowest 6 inches above the hand grasp, and nearly identical for 5 inches above and below the ferrule. Aside from those two places, however, there is no similarity. Canfield concluded that the original Doerr model was not a simple modification of a previous Para 17 taper.<sup>67</sup> It is more likely that the original 6-plus-ounce, 9-foot rod made for Doerr was a modification of the 9-foot Para 18 that had already been made for Williams (see Figure 4).

Young was a fanatic about rod weight and action and was frequently modifying his tapers. Ernest Schwiebert is a long-standing aficionado of Young rods. His magnum opus, *Trout*, contains a chapter, "The Iconography of the Split-Cane Rod," in which he postulates that later Young parabolics were based on prototype or experimental models that Young listed as early as 1933 in his book *Making and Using the Fly and Leader*. "Its [the Para 15's] larger cousin, the powerful Parabolic 17 of eight and a half feet and five and a half ounces is clearly anticipated by the experimental nine foot, five and half ounce slow-action rod Young developed right before the Second World War."<sup>68</sup> Young describes such "remodeling" of a 9-foot "slow" rod in *Making and Using the Fly and Leader*. He describes the slow rod's poor dry-fly casting capa-

bility and suggests that "such a rod may be cut down: a 9 foot rod may be cut to 8½ or 8 foot 3 inches and becomes a fine dry fly rod."<sup>69</sup> In a chapter titled "The Alchemy of Bamboo," Schwiebert reported his experience with a unique Young Parabolic 17, one of Young's personal rods, sent to him by Martha Marie after Paul's death. The rod "performed beautifully" in Patagonia, Iceland, Labrador, and Yellowstone.<sup>70</sup> The rod had three tips, one bringing the length to 8½ feet and the other two special tips (one for nymphs, one for dry flies) bringing the rod to nearly 9 feet.

Most customers considered this early prototype of the famous Parabolic 17 too radical in its calibrations and casting stroke, but Paul Young loved its demanding character, and grudgingly modified his subsequent Parabolic 17 tapers to satisfy his audience. The original has a unique character, with a willful spirit of its own, and it was some time before I successfully adjusted my casting rhythms to fulfill its obvious potential.<sup>71</sup>

The 1955 Doerr model illustrated below was originally sold by the company on 31 October 1955.<sup>72</sup> It is a powerful 9-foot, two-piece rod with two tips: a WF7 (HCF), bringing the rod weight to 5.60 ounces, and an WF8 (GBF) tip, resulting in a 5.73-ounce rod (Figure 9). The reel seat is cork and black anodized alu-

Dan McDilda and Daaave Summers



Figure 9. A 1955 Bobby Doerr model (serial number 2093) in excellent and original condition with Young's book, *Making and Using the Fly and Leader*, 3rd edition, 1938.

Dan McDilda and Daaave Summers

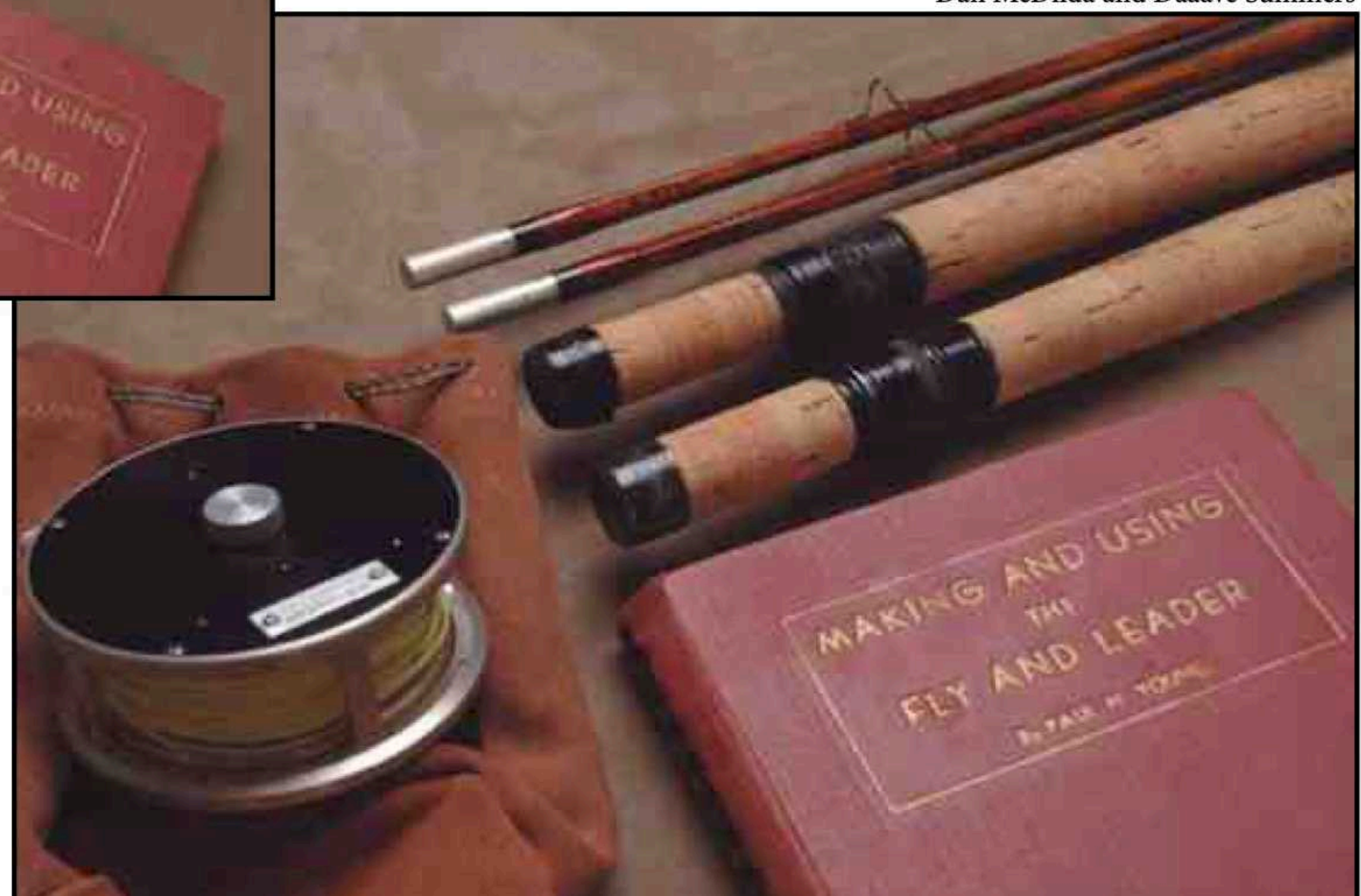


Figure 10. Typical Paul Young-style black anodized aluminum screw-locking cork insert reel seats, functionally designed with light weight being a priority. Doerr model above and pre-1954 (no serial number) professionally restored Para 15 below. Rods built after 1946 have the Young Co. die stamp on the butt cap.





Figure 11. Paul Young inked more technical information on bamboo rods than any other maker. A 1955 Doerr model above, pre-1954 restored Para 15 below.

minimum with down-locking screw and the Young Co. die stamp on the butt cap (Figure 10). The cork grip is Wells type. The beautiful, Young-style, flame-tempered cane with 2-by-2 node placement is wrapped in the typical auburn-colored silks with a red spiral silk wrap to distinguish the WF7 tip at both male ferrule and tip-top. The butt ink markings, in Young's handwriting, include the original owner's name as well as BOB DOERR MODEL, 9'—5.73 OZ. AND 5.60 OZ. PAUL H. YOUNG CO—DETROIT—MAKER and NO. 2093 below the stripping guide. The tips are marked: TIP  $\frac{3}{4}$  G.B.F. #2093 and TIP TOP 5 1/2/64 H.C.F. #2093 (Figure 11). The size 17 Super Z ferrules are oxidized black, and the tungsten guides and tip-tops are from the Perfection Tip Company. The rod was packaged in a brown satin bag with brass-collared aluminum Cal Air tube (Figure 12).

A very limited number of Doerr models were built. Bob Summers contends that "less than two dozen" Doerr rods were made and even fewer of the Florida Special model.<sup>73</sup> My review of Marty Keane's tackle catalogs (*Classic Rods & Tackle*) from 1983 to 2004 shows that only three Doerr models sold on the secondary market.<sup>74</sup> Keane is the caretaker of the Paul H. Young Co. ledger, which records the production of all rods from 26 July 1955 (starting with serial number 1955) to 25 May 1976. Before July 1955, the company did not use serial numbers. Keane recently reviewed the ledger and reported:

. . . During this period, when serial numbers were recorded for each rod

and they were the only ones that appear in the ledger, there were a total of twenty-seven Bobby Doerr rods made; it was apparently much more than the Florida Special or the Powerhouse at 9½ feet, all of which were in single digits for the production totals.<sup>75</sup>

There is no record of how many Doerr models were made from the fall of 1952 until July 1955, when the ledger began. Obviously, Paul Young himself only participated in their production until his death in April 1960. Thereafter, Doerr models were built by Bob Summers and Jack Young. The limited number of Doerr models made reflects the "specialty" nature of the rod and the 1950s

advent of fiberglass technology. Fiberglass gave an angler the ability to cast a heavy line with a rod just as large but much lighter than bamboo. Ted Williams was quick to adapt to the new technology.

Interestingly, Paul Young named only a few of his many fly rods after individuals: the 7½-foot Martha Marie after his wife and the 9-foot Bobby Doerr. Young undoubtedly wanted to market a Ted Williams model (the Para 18) until Williams put a stop to it. The early version of the 8-foot Para 15 was named the K. T. Keller<sup>76</sup> model after the former president and board chair of the Chrysler Corporation, who was "a loyal devotee of the rod."<sup>77</sup> The 1952–1953 catalog referred to the Lee Cuddy Powerhouse model, but Cuddy's name was dropped in the 1955–1956 catalog.<sup>78</sup>

Bobby Doerr loved his Paul Young custom rod. Williams attested to this in his letter to Young.<sup>79</sup> However, Doerr did not realize that Paul Young offered the rod to the public as the Bobby Doerr model for more than thirty years! In 1986, Tom Ripp discovered this fact while reading an article describing fly rod and line balance by A. J. McClane in a *Fly Fisherman* magazine from 1976.<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately, Doerr lost his only prototype Doerr model in the 1950s on the Rogue River. When he returned to where he left it on the riverbank one afternoon, the rod was gone! Doerr's longtime fishing buddies from the San Francisco Bay area (organized as the Oregon Sashweight Society or O.S.S.), led by Tom Ripp, commissioned Todd Young to build a duplicate Bobby Doerr model rod from the original Paul Young taper. This was accomplished, and on 2 June 1990, the O.S.S. presented Doerr with his new



Figure 12. A 1955 Doerr model with original bag and aluminum tube.



Bobby Doerr model bamboo rod at a dinner party thirty-nine years after he received the original.<sup>81</sup> That day Doerr was seen enthusiastically casting it in a local park (Figure 13). He later promised Todd Young that the “the user will own the rod,” not the reverse.<sup>82</sup>

Not everyone appreciated the Bobby Doerr model. Arnold Gingrich, longtime editor of *Esquire* magazine, avid fly fisherman, and a “light tackle crank”<sup>83</sup> according to Ernest Schwiebert, was a devotee of Paul Young rods, especially the diminutive Midge model. *The Well-Tempered Angler* contains a chapter titled “Paul Young and the Midge Rod,” in which Gingrich describes a salmon fishing trip to Iceland with his fly-fishing wife, Jane. He obtained two Bobby Doerr rods from Young and had great difficulty casting the 9-footer: “A stiffer, more stubbornly clublike and unyielding stick I never tried to wield . . .”<sup>84</sup> Gingrich was a very slight man and simply could not get the large semiparabolic taper to respond to him. He called the rod a “shillelagh” and gave both rods as gifts to his Icelandic guides, “in whose eyes a 6-ounce rod is practically a toy.”<sup>85</sup> Gudmundur, the guide who received Jane’s Bobby Doerr steelhead rod, “for years thereafter sent us countless pictures of slews of salmon taken ‘on the Jane rod and the Arnold reel.’”<sup>86</sup>

Paul Young died on 28 April 1960. Martha Marie and son Jack continued the rod-making tradition along with Bob Summers. Martha retired in 1969, and Jack moved the company from Detroit to Traverse City. Bob Summers left the Youngs in 1972 to make his own fine bamboo rods.<sup>87</sup> Todd Young continued the rod-making business on a limited basis thereafter. Martha Marie Young passed away on 6 April 1995.

If there was a Hall of Fame for bamboo rod-building, Paul Young would be an early inductee. His rods are cherished by those fortunate enough to own and fish them. They are highly collectible and command impressive prices today on the secondary market. The Young Company’s production until 1976 was approximately 5,000 rods. In 1976, Keane estimated the total at 5,500,<sup>88</sup> but his later review of the

ledger shows the last recorded serial number as 4715.<sup>89</sup> “The record book shows no rods made during the month of April 1960, it goes from March 14th serial number 3888 to May 21st which is serial number 3889.”<sup>90</sup> Keane originally reported that the last rod built in Young’s lifetime was a Para 15 with serial number 3892.<sup>91</sup> The quality of Young’s bamboo and the uniqueness of his tempering

Williams couldn’t win the big ones. He spent more and more time on the water. In 1948, when Doris was in a Boston hospital to deliver their first child, Williams was in Florida fishing. The papers (and mothers in Boston) were brutal. Williams spent two days in Boston, then was back fishing. Fishing the Keys for bonefish with light fly tackle became an obsession. “When Ted tried this new sport, he found

a love that would last longer than any of his marriages.”<sup>92</sup>

In 1955, he fished the Miramichi for Atlantic salmon with guide Roy Curtis. By 1958, he was hooked, bought a pool on the river in 1961, and hired Roy as guide and Roy’s wife Edna as housekeeper. On the Miramichi, Williams related his respect for the Atlantic salmon to Red Smith, dean of American sportswriters: “The Atlantic salmon is very, very special in my mind. The greatest experience a fisherman can have is to hook an Atlantic salmon. There is nothing in angling like it.”<sup>93</sup>

Williams stalked the salmon relentlessly. He had to be the best. When author John Underwood asked Roy Curtis, “Is he the best?” Roy answered, “The best I’ve seen. Forty years and I ain’t seen none better, no.”<sup>94</sup> Williams feared for the future of the Atlantic salmon and worried about the pollution from acid rain, the “ravages of heavy netting,” and the “illegal operations” of commercial fishermen. “The Atlantic salmon is a power-packed, leaping silver thing of beauty, and God, I hope it lives forever,” he said.<sup>95</sup>

Tom Ripp



Figure 13. Bob Doerr, age seventy-two, casting his new Todd Young Bobby Doerr model rod in a park, San Ramon, California, 2 June 1990.

have made later reproductions of his rods by other makers less than perfect copies. Paul Young was a true master of his art.

#### WILLIAMS: A LIFELONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH FISH

Ted Williams pursued fishing with passion, and it became an escape for him. Eventually, it became his life. After his disappointing performance in the 1946 World Series (he went five for twenty-five with no home runs), he escaped to Florida to fish. The Boston sportswriters were merciless, saying that Ted Wil-

His passion for fly fishing both fresh and salt water continued after his career as a player and manager ended. He retired as a player in 1960 and later managed the Washington Senators and Texas Rangers from 1969 to 1972. Without the tug of professional baseball, his life became his own. Each winter, he’d fish the flats, then head to the Boston Sportmen’s Show, where he demonstrated fly casting and pontificated on fishing. His interest in tackle evolved as fiberglass then graphite all but replaced bamboo fly rods. He had signed a six-figure contract with Sears and had his name on a complete line of fishing tackle, hunting gear, and other sporting goods.<sup>96</sup>



Williams joined his hero, Zane Grey, upon induction into the International Game Fishing Association's Hall of Fame in 1999.<sup>97</sup> That year, at nearly eighty-one, Ted Williams threw out the first pitch at the All Star game in Fenway Park. Although he needed the great, nearly .400 hitter Tony Gwynn to stabilize his weak left side, Williams stood and threw a straight strike to Carlton Fisk, who was catching. All of the active All Stars and those retired Hall of Fame legends (Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Bob Feller, and others) mobbed Williams on the mound.<sup>98</sup> During this tearful tribute and homecoming, he was welcomed by the fans of Boston, with whom he had had such a tumultuous relationship fifty years earlier. The prodigal son was home, and Williams wept with joy.

Williams was also loved in Boston for another reason. For many years, he was a strong advocate of the Jimmy Fund, the public, fund-raising arm of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Williams dedicated himself to supporting children with cancer, but would accept no public recognition for this until November 1988. At age seventy, he was honored in Boston at an event called "An Evening with Number 9." Honored guests included teammates Bobby Doerr, Johnny Pesky, and Dominic DiMaggio, as well as opposing greats Bob Feller and Joe DiMaggio. The great hitter Reggie Jackson was there, as well as close fishing friends Curt Gowdy, the sportscaster, and Bud Leavitt, sports columnist for the *Bangor Daily News*. His fellow marine aviator and astronaut John Glenn gave a testimonial of Williams in Korea, and there were video appearances by President Ronald Reagan and President-elect George H. W. Bush. Bud Leavitt proclaimed Williams to be "a great American, a great human being, and a helluva Republican."<sup>99</sup> Williams was humbled by the event.

In the end, Williams achieved his goals.

He'd done, he believed, the hardest thing in sport: by God, he hit the ball. And there was pride in his new life: he had his name on more rods and reels, hunting guns, tackle boxes, jackets, boots and bats than any man in the world. He studied fishing like no other man, and lent to it his fame and grace, his discerning eye. He had his tournament wins and trophies, a fishing book and fishing movies, and he got his thousand of the Big Three.<sup>100</sup>

Williams was a complex man whose career reached lofty public heights, but whose difficult personality complicated his relationships with wives, children, friends, baseball fans, and sportswriters. There is no better evidence of this than

Halberstam's painful description of Doerr's tarpon fishing trip with Williams in Islamorada in 1961 or 1962. Doerr recalled the experience at "An Evening with Number 9." Williams verbally abused Doerr when Doerr failed on several occasions to land a tarpon. Doerr forgave Williams, as he always did. According to Halberstam, "Had Bobby Doerr been anyone else, someone not as balanced, someone not as comfortable with himself, someone who didn't understand Ted so well, it might have ended the friendship."<sup>101</sup> Bobby Doerr loved Ted Williams, and Ted loved Bobby. They were friends, and Ted was Ted. Ted Williams died on 5 July 2002 at age eighty-three in Inverness, Florida. He never saw the Boston Red Sox win a World Series.

## DOERR: STILL ON THE ROGUE

At the time of this writing, Bobby Doerr is nearly eighty-seven and the fourth-oldest living member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. "Doerr was easily the most popular member of the Red Sox and possibly the most popular baseball player of his era."<sup>102</sup> He retired in 1951 because of a lumbar spinal problem. He sought advice from Dr. James L. Poppen, a famous neurosurgeon at the Lahey Clinic in Boston.<sup>103</sup> Poppen told Doerr that he might avoid a fusion operation if he stopped playing baseball, and Doerr did. He later coached the Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays. Bobby Doerr lost his beloved wife, Monica, in December 2003 after sixty-five years of marriage. They have one son, Donald.

In 1928, Zane Grey stated that "The happiest lot of any angler would be to live somewhere along the banks of the Rogue River, most beautiful stream of Oregon. Then, if he kept close watch on conditions, he could be ready on the spot when the run of steelhead began."<sup>104</sup>

*Field & Stream* memorialized Zane Grey in 1995 and honored Bobby Doerr in their *Field & Stream* "Legends" section, which commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of the magazine. In his article titled "On the Rogue Again," Pat Smith wrote, "Bobby Doerr and Zane Grey both fell in love with the Rogue at first sight . . . and both made it their home."<sup>105</sup> Bobby Doerr continues to live on and to fish his favorite Rogue River for steelhead and salmon. He lived to see the Red Sox become World Champions as "the curse of the Bambino" was lifted in October 2004.<sup>106</sup>

Ted Williams and Bobby Doerr are baseball heroes of another time, a time when players often remained on the same team for their entire careers. These

heroes developed lasting bonds with their fans and communities. They became like family, which is not to say, as in the case of Williams, that the situation was always pleasant. They were human but, unlike us, their mistakes and bad days became tomorrow's headlines. They were patriotic and in wartime did not shirk their duty to country. They pursued athletic excellence and achievement in professional baseball the old-fashioned way, without illegal performance-enhancing drugs. They were paid to play a game that most of us only dream of playing. Like us, they loved to fish. Williams was driven in his pursuit of fish and becoming the best. Doerr was quiet, confident, and content in achieving life's goals and recreational pleasure. Williams and Doerr were the heroes of our childhood and remain the objects of our fascination today.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Bobby Doerr, Tom Ripp, Bob Summers, Mark Canfield, and Stephen Brown for their help with my research and for their advice and comments. Thanks to Ron Swanson for providing the photo of the Ted Williams's personal Para 18 rod, which he once owned.

## ENDNOTES

1. David Halberstam, *Summer of '49* (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1989), 110.
2. Ibid.
3. Interview with Bob Doerr and Ted Williams by Jim Kaat, "Bob Costas Coast to Coast" (radio program), 12 July 1992, during the All-Star break in San Diego and the occasion of the naming of the Ted Williams Expressway.
4. Leigh Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 33.
5. Halberstam, *Summer of '49*, 111.
6. David Halberstam, *The Teammates* (New York: Hyperion, 2003), 70-71.
7. Ted Williams with John Underwood, *My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life* (New York: Fireside/Simon & Schuster, 1988), 26-27.
8. Ted Williams and John Underwood, *Ted Williams: Fishing "The Big Three": Tarpon, Bonefish, Atlantic Salmon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 70-71.
9. Ibid., 71.
10. Ibid.
11. Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, 41.
12. Ibid.
13. Halberstam, *The Teammates*, 16-17.
14. Ted Williams with John Underwood, *The Science of Hitting* (New York: Simon &



- Schuster, 1970), 88.
15. Ibid., 24.
  16. Bill Nowlin, *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego* (Cambridge, Mass.: Rounder Books, 2005), 162.
  17. Ibid., 164.
  18. Paul Adomites et al., *Cooperstown Hall of Fame Players* (Lincolnwood, Ill.: Publications International, Ltd., 2002), 210–11.
  19. Nowlin, *The Kid: Ted Williams in San Diego*, 344.
  20. Williams with Underwood, *My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life*, 28.
  21. Adomites et al., *Cooperstown Hall of Fame Players*, 194.
  22. Halberstam, *The Teammates*, 68–69.
  23. Private video recording by Lee Thornally, Rogue River, 9 October 1987.
  24. Adomites et al., *Cooperstown Hall of Fame Players*, 194.
  25. Dick Spurr, *Classic Bamboo Rod-makers Past and Present* (Grand Junction, Colo.: Centennial Publications, 1992), 91.
  26. A. J. Campbell, *Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle* (New York: Lyons & Burford, 1997), 197–98.
  27. Arnold Gingrich, *The Well-Tempered Angler* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 106.
  28. Campbell, *Classic & Antique Fly-Fishing Tackle*, 199. The number after a Young parabolic model indicates the ferrule size in  $\frac{1}{4}$ ths of an inch; e.g., the Para 15 had a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch ferrule.
  29. Martin J. Keane, *Classic Rods and Rod-makers* (New York: Winchester Press, 1976), 156.
  30. Richard Ben Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now? A Remembrance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 101.
  31. Williams with Underwood, *My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life*, 56.
  32. Williams and Underwood, *Ted Williams: Fishing "The Big Three,"* 38.
  33. Ibid., 58.
  34. Ibid.
  35. Ibid.; Paul H. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (Paul H. Young Co. catalog, privately printed, 1952 or 1953), 16. This Young Co. tackle catalog has a photograph of Lee Cuddy on the cover with the 63-pound tarpon he caught on a fly with a Paul Young bamboo rod. Cuddy's testimonial letter to Paul Young is printed on page 16 of the catalog. Catalog material courtesy of Bob Summers.
  36. Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?*, 52.
  37. Charles Elliot, "I'm No Ted Williams," in Danielle J. Ibister, ed., *The Fly-Fishing Anthology* (Stillwater, Minn.: Voyageur Press, Inc., 2004), 39–49. This essay first appeared in the June 1951 issue of *Outdoor Life*.
  38. Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?*, 11.
  39. Williams and Underwood, *Ted Williams: Fishing "The Big Three,"* 9, 11.
  40. George Reiger, ed., *The Undiscovered Zane Grey Fishing Stories* (Piscataway, N.J.: Winchester Press, 1983), xvi.
  41. George X. Sand, *Salt-Water Fly Fishing* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 6.
  42. Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, 312.
  43. Bob Doerr, letter to author, 29 September 2004, and phone conversations.
  44. Zane Grey, *Tales of Fresh-Water Fishing* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1928), 108–227.
  45. Ibid., 172.
  46. Reiger, *The Undiscovered Zane Grey Fishing Stories*, 88.
  47. Quoted in Reiger, *The Undiscovered Zane Grey Fishing Stories*, 90–91.
  48. Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, 308.
  49. Bob Doerr, letter to author, 29 September 2004, and phone conversations.
  50. Williams with Underwood, *My Turn at Bat: The Story of My Life*, 38.
  51. Ron Swanson, e-mail to author, 22 December 2004. For many years, Swanson owned this Paul H. Young Parabolic 18 made for Ted Williams in 1950. He provided a history on the rod.
- Postwar Paul Young rods were hand marked in ink with technical information and, if custom made, with the owner's name in Young's usual printing. The penmanship used to write Ted Williams and the date on Williams's 1950 Para 18 is unusual for a Young Co. rod. Ron Swanson, the former owner, and Hoagy Carmichael, an expert on classic bamboo fly rods, contend that the script is an original autograph based on comparisons with Williams's baseball card autographs. Stephen Brown was a close friend of Ted Williams for thirty years. Although Brown is not a handwriting expert, he has seen Williams's genuine autograph on hundreds of baseball and fishing articles. Brown examined the Williams signature in photographs of the 1950 rod, and it is his opinion that the *Ted Williams* does not represent a genuine autograph by Williams. Doerr does not believe that Williams ever personally signed a Young rod. There is, however, no question about the authenticity of this 1950 Para 18 as a Paul H. Young rod or that it was owned and used by Ted Williams.
52. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (1952 or 1953), 10, 19. Both photographs of Ted Williams were taken by Paul H. Young. These photographs and one of Young himself, dated 1 January 1951 (p. 16), indicate that the Youngs joined Williams in the Keys during the Christmas/New Year holidays (1950–1951) for bonefishing.
  53. The second photograph can also be seen on the current Young Co. website above the description of the Para 17 model; [www.paulyoungrodco.com/therods1.htm](http://www.paulyoungrodco.com/therods1.htm).
  54. Ron Swanson, e-mail to author, 22 December 2004.
  55. Quoted in Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (1952 or 1953), 10.
  56. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (1952 or 1953), 2.
  57. Edwin Pope, *Ted Williams: The Golden Year 1957* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), 11, and Stephen Brown, phone conversation with author, 22 December 2004. Brown confirmed Williams's fascination with tackle and his desire to have and develop the best fishing equipment, which led to the formation of his own company. Williams subsequently signed the lucrative contract with Sears Roebuck and Co. and became head of the Ted Williams Sears Advisory Staff.
  58. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (Paul H. Young Co. catalog, privately printed, 1955 or 1956), 27. Catalog material courtesy of Bob Summers.
  59. Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, 239.
  60. Bob Doerr, letter to author, 22 December 2004.
  61. Letter from Tom Ripp to John Randolph, editor, *Fly Fisherman*, 2 July 1990.
  62. Bob Doerr, phone conversation with author, December 2004.
  63. Letter from Tom Ripp to John Randolph, editor, *Fly Fisherman*, 2 July 1990.
  64. Letter from Todd Young to Tom Ripp, 12 June 1990. That year, Ripp organized and forwarded material on the Paul Young Bobby Doerr model rod for a proposed piece in *Fly Fisherman* magazine. The article never materialized. I was able to retrieve this unused, original material from editor/publisher John Randolph's old files in October 2004.
  65. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (1955 or 1956), 27.
  66. Mark Canfield, letter to author, 20 November 2004. Canfield himself was drafted in 1972 by the Pittsburgh Pirates as a pitcher and first baseman but elected to pursue a successful career in crew at the University of Washington. He once had the rare opportunity to discuss hitting with Ted Williams by phone.
  67. Ibid.
  68. Ernest Schwiebert, *Trout*, vol. 2 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984), 1060.
  69. Paul H. Young, *Making and Using the Fly and Leader* (Paul H. Young, privately printed, 1938), 78.
  70. Ernest Schwiebert, *The Compleat Schwiebert* (New York: Dutton, 1990), 372.
  71. Ibid.
  72. Letter from Martin J. Keane to John A. Feldenzer, 12 August 2004.
  73. Bob Summers, phone conversation with author, December 2004.
  74. A Doerr rod sold in 1987 for \$720 (*Classic Rods & Tackle*, no. 48, 1987, p. 12), another in 1993 for \$1,200 (*Classic Rods & Tackle*, no. 63, 1993, p. 12), and the last in 2004 for \$2,000 (*Classic Rods & Tackle*, no. 88, 2004, p. 9).
  75. Letter from Martin J. Keane to John A. Feldenzer, 2 December 2004.
  76. Schwiebert, *Trout*, vol. 2, 1064.
  77. [www.paulyoungrodco.com/therods1.htm](http://www.paulyoungrodco.com/therods1.htm), at the description of the Parabolic 15.
  78. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (1952 or 1953), 29.
  79. Young, *More Fishing Less Fussing* (1952 or 1953), 10.
  80. A. J. McClane, "Fishing Better—with the Best," *Fly Fisherman* (Spring 1976, vol. 7, no. 3), 67–82.
  81. The Oregon Sashweight Society (founded in 1971) includes the following members (some deceased): Dee Carter (cofounder), Charlie Blake (cofounder), Al Schneller (who named the group), Bob Doerr, Ed McGah Jr. (who was a catcher for the Boston Red Sox in 1946–1947), Tom Ripp, Lee Thornally, Ed Rotticci, Jim Wiekling, Bud Sage, George



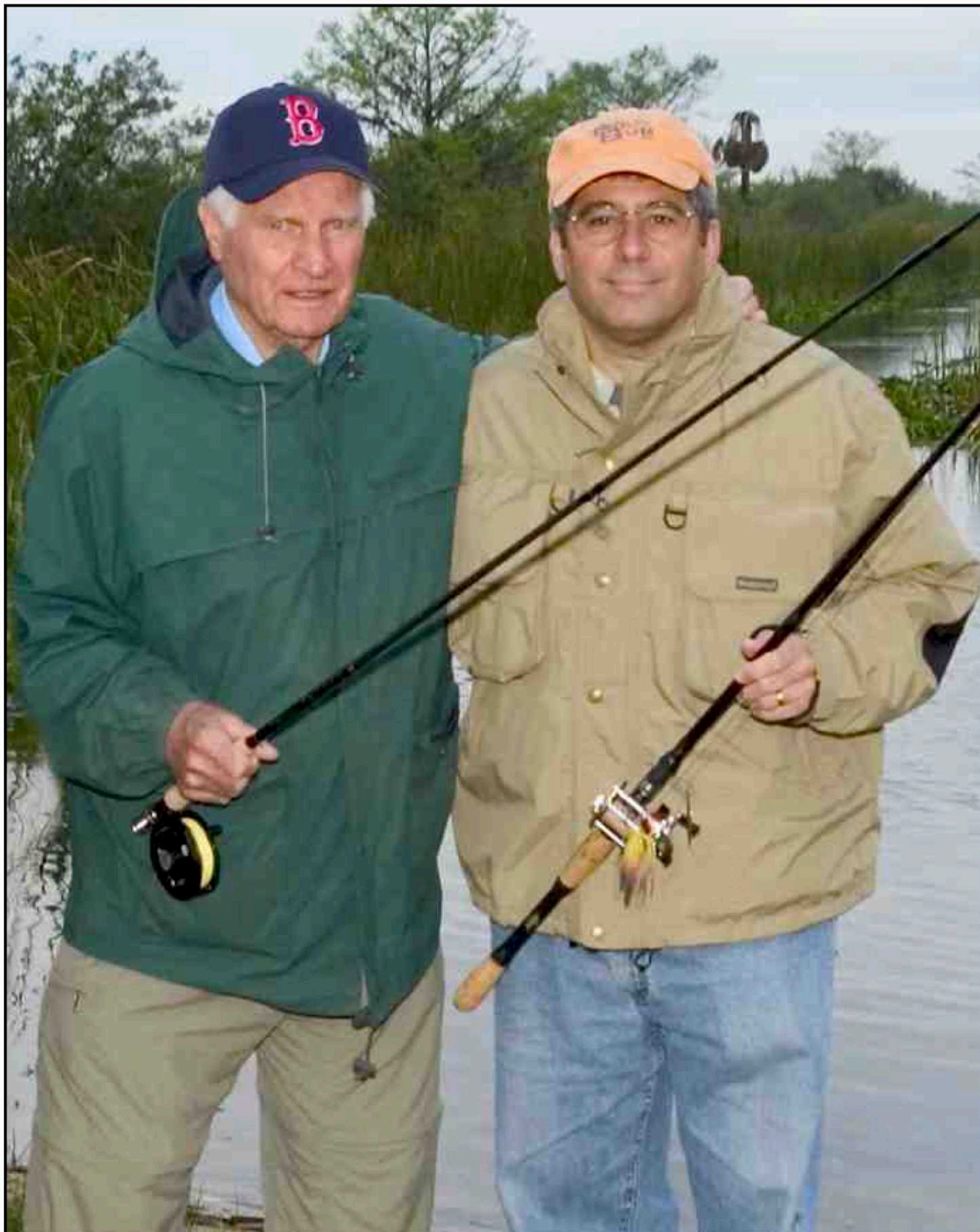


Figure 14. Bobby Doerr and John Feldenzer fishing for largemouth bass on Lake Garcia, Florida, 17 March 2005. They are holding prototype fly- and bait-casting rods, developed by Ted Williams, that are being brought into production. Photo courtesy of Steve Brown.

Villa, Al Otter, Frank Mees, Mert Downing, Paul Doyle, and Blaine Hockeridge. Letter from Dee Carter to Tom Ripp, 5 May 1990.

82. Quoted in a letter from Tom Ripp to John Randolph, editor, *Fly Fisherman*, 2 July 1990.

83. Schwiebert, *Trout*, vol. 2, 1061.

84. Gingrich, *The Well-Tempered Angler*, 109.

85. *Ibid.*, 110.

86. *Ibid.*, 210.

87. Spurr, *Classic Bamboo Rodmakers Past and Present*, 70–71. The R. W. Summers Co., 90 River Road E., Traverse City, MI 49686, [www.rwsummers.com](http://www.rwsummers.com).

88. Keane, *Classic Rods and Rodmakers*, 157.

89. Letter from Martin J. Keane to John A. Feldenzer, 2 December 2004.

90. *Ibid.*

91. Keane, *Classic Rods and Rodmakers*, 157.

92. Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?*, 51–52.

93. Quoted in Montville, *Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero*, 366–67.

94. Williams and Underwood, *Ted Williams: Fishing "The Big Three,"* 95.

95. Richard Buck, *Silver Swimmer* (New York, Lyons & Burford, 1993), ix.

96. Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?*, 72.

97. [www.igfa.org/hall.asp#williams](http://www.igfa.org/hall.asp#williams).

98. Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?*, 106–10.

99. "An Evening with Number 9 and Friends: A Jimmy Fund Tribute to Ted Williams." The Jimmy Fund video recording, 10 November 1988.

100. Cramer, *What Do You Think of Ted Williams Now?*, 75, 77.

101. Halberstam, *The Teammates*, 79.

102. Halberstam, *Summer of '49*, 110.

103. John M. Thompson, ed., *History of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, 1951–1991* (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1992), 50–52. Poppen, in addition to being an excellent surgeon, had been a fine athlete and played professional baseball as a pitcher during summer vacations while in college and early medical school.

104. Grey, *Tales of Fresh-Water Fishing*, 108.

105. Pat Smith, "On the Rogue Again," *Field & Stream Collector's Edition* (October 1995), 69–73.

106. David Green, *101 Reasons to Love the Red Sox* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2005), 42.