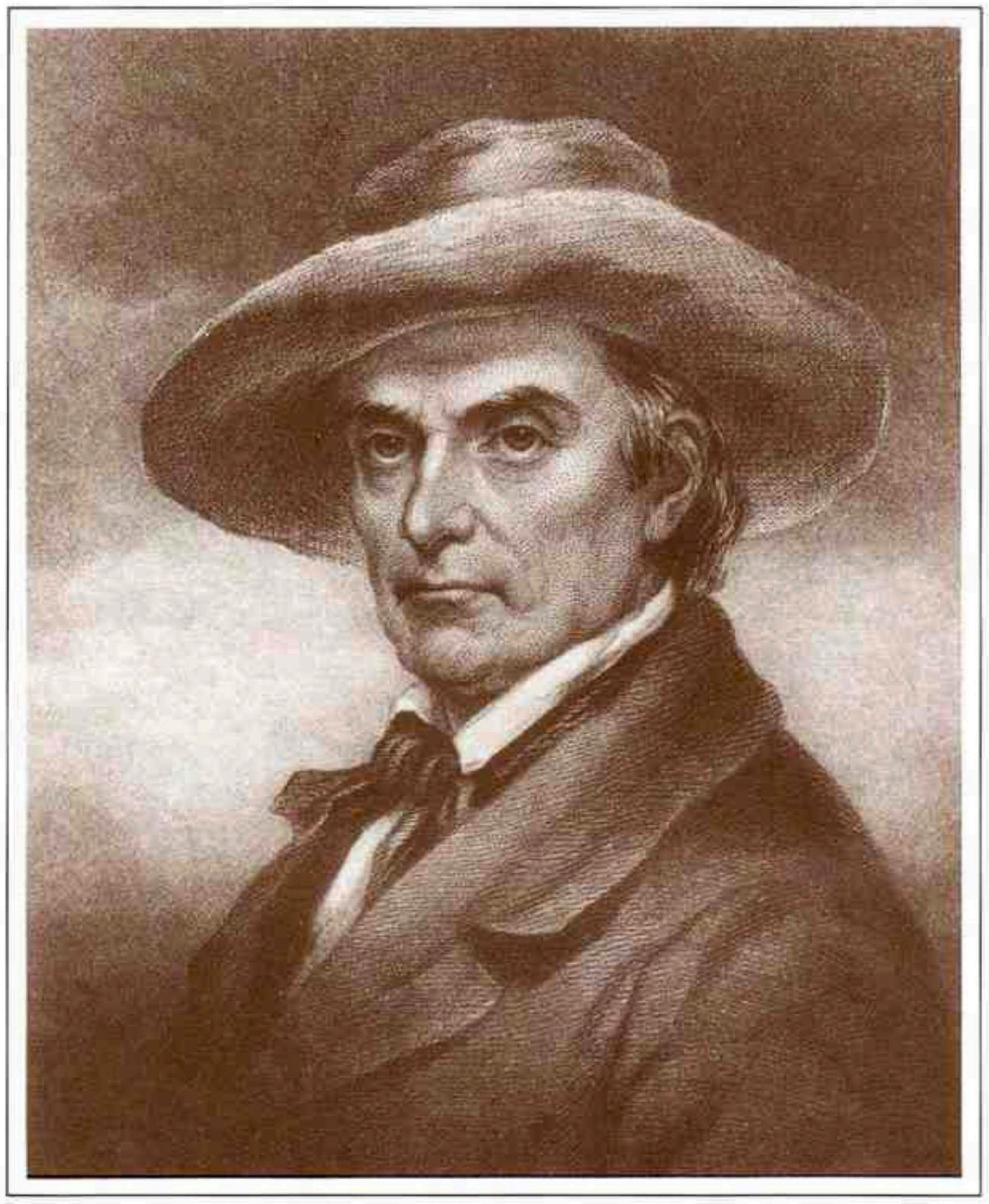


Daniel Webster, Angler

by Kenneth E. Shewmaker

ONE OF THE PREEMINENT Webster scholars in the country, Dr. Kenneth E. Shewmaker, professor of history at Dartmouth College, has previously contributed brief articles about aspects of Daniel Webster's role in angling history to The American Fly Fisher *(see "Daniel Webster and the Great Brook Trout," vol. 8, no. 1, Winter 1981; "Three Daniel Webster Letters on Fishing," vol. 10, no. 1, Winter 1983). He was asked by former executive director Paul Schullery and former journal editor David Ledlie years ago to write a thorough account of Daniel Webster's angling life. Evidently, their request sparked his interest and one might assume he has been researching and writing this comprehensive, lively article ever since. Here is a most exhaustively researched personal look at one of America's greatest statesmen, Daniel Webster, and the role that angling played in his life.* EDITOR

BY ALMOST ANY STANDARD, Daniel Webster (1782-1852) ranks as one of the most prominent Americans of the nineteenth century. Generally regarded as one of the greatest lawyers, orators, politicians, and secretaries of state in American history, he also gained a reputation as one of America's greatest anglers. According to one often recounted story, he allegedly caught a world-record breaking 14½-pound brook trout on a fly in the Carman's River on Long Island in 1827.[1] In his celebrated journal, Ralph Waldo Emerson characterized the versatile and many talented Webster as America's "completest man." "Nature had not in our days, or not since Napoleon," Emerson wrote, "cut out such a masterpiece."[2]

Clearly, Daniel Webster had the stuff of which legends are made and he even

Opposite: Daniel Webster was remembered by Charles Lanman, his private secretary and frequent fishing companion, as not only "our foremost statesman," but "our greatest angler." Another colleague solemnly described Webster's angling talents as "proverbial." This portrait of Daniel Webster was engraved by H. Wright Smith after a painting by Joseph Ames.

became a legend in his own time. Primarily because of intellectual and oratorical prowess, Webster came to be described by his contemporaries as "Godlike" and acquired the status of what historian Merrill D. Peterson calls "the mythical statesman."[3] He also gained status as what might be called the mythical angler. In 1845, John J. Brown, a New York tackle dealer, published *The American Angler's Guide,* one of the earliest and best books by an American on the subject of fishing.[4] Along with Martin Van Buren, Brown included Webster on his short list of famous American politician-anglers. Moreover, Brown credited Webster with catching a 9-pound cod off the coast of Massachusetts "with a common trout line and trout hook."[5] In 1852, J. Prescott Hall, a U.S. district attorney who had worked with Webster in a legal capacity and who was himself an angler, characterized Webster's success at fishing as "proverbial."[6] Charles Lanman, who served as Webster's private secretary and frequent fishing companion from 1850 to 1852, remembered Webster not only as "our foremost statesman," but also as "our greatest angler."[7]

If anything, the legend of Daniel Webster has grown with the passage of time. No other author has done more to mythologize Webster than Stephen Vincent Benét. Benét's famous short story of 1936, "The Devil and Daniel Webster," has become an American classic. Although the fictional tale revolves around a legal contest between Webster and Satan over the life of a condemned New Hampshire man who has bargained away his soul, Benét did not overlook Webster's reputation as a skillful fisherman. In Benét's own words, when Webster "walked the woods with his fishing rod, Kill-all, the trout would jump out of the streams right into his pockets, for they knew it was no use putting up a fight against him."[8] Like the trout, the devil ended up in the frying pan.

The purpose of this article is not to add to Webster's reputation as a mythical angler. Rather, the goal is to determine what the historical documents suggest about the kind of fisherman Webster actually was, to see what those records add to our knowledge of the early history of American sport fishing in general and American fly fishing in particular, and to assess the role that fishing played in Webster's life. After a chronologically organized account of Webster's activities as an angler, the essay addresses several specific questions bearing on Webster and the history of American sport fishing. What kind of fishing equipment did he use? What were the largest fish that he caught? Most importantly, what part did angling play in his life?

In order to separate myth from reality, I have relied primarily on Webster's private correspondence and public statements, which have been examined systematically from the time he learned to write until his death in 1852. I also have studied accounts of Webster's exploits in what were then called "field sports" by friends and other contemporaries. The third major source upon which this essay rests is contemporary books about fishing such as Brown's previously mentioned *American Angler's Guide,* and outdoor magazines such as the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* (published from 1829 to 1844) and *Spirit of the Times* (published from 1831 to 1861), the first journals devoted entirely to sports (horse racing, hunting, fishing) popular at the time. Although these magazines paid relatively little attention to angling, they provide, as Paul Schullery has observed, valuable information about the history of American fishing and fishermen, especially since only "a small portion of anglers in any generation write anything at all about their sport."[9]

Long before Daniel Webster was born in the rural and sparsely settled community of Salisbury, New Hampshire, a tradition of sport fishing, including the subsport of fly fishing, had become well established in America. The town of Boston enacted laws to protect public access to certain fishing waters as early as the 1630s, and the first angling club in North America, the Schuylkill Fishing Company, was founded in Philadelphia in 1732. Colonial newspapers carried advertisements for tackle dealers and some colonial anglers, such as John Rowe of Boston, had their rods and reels imported from England. Not surprisingly, North Americans were strongly influenced by their British heritage, which helps to explain why "fly fishing was an established practice on the eve of the Revolution."[10] Although individuals like John Conroy and Benjamin Welch of New York were producing quality rods and reels by the 1840s, the English influence remained strong, and many fly fishers continued to use imported tackle from Britain.

Webster's introduction to fishing may have been tied to more native traditions, but the English influence reached even into the wilds of New Hampshire. According to Lanman, Webster caught his first trout when he was five years old. The site, which Webster himself apparently pointed out to Lanman in the 1850s, was somewhere on Punch Brook, a small but lovely stream which runs through the property that belonged to his father, Ebenezer Webster. Ebenezer fashioned a rod from a hazel branch for his son, to which Ebenezer then attached a string and pin-hook, baited the hook with a worm, and showed the young boy where to cast. In the process of struggling with a 1-pound trout, which immediately grabbed the worm, the youngster lost his balance and tumbled into the water. When Ebenezer rescued Daniel from Punch Brook, he still had possession of the trout and was hooked on the sport for the rest of his life, or at least so the story goes.[11] Webster himself does not mention this tale in an autobiographical fragment that he wrote for a friend in 1829. Rather, he credits an Englishman, not his father, for early instruction in the art of angling.

Robert Wise and Other Sporting Companions

According to Webster, Robert Wise was "my Isaac [sic] Walton."[12] Wise was a Yorkshireman who deserted from the British army after the Battle at Bunker Hill in 1775 and went over to the American side. He thereafter served with New Hampshire troops, and perhaps with Ebenezer, who was the captain of a militia company which fought in several important engagements, including Bennington and White Plains.[13] In any event, Ebenezer Webster allowed Robert Wise to live in a small cottage which was located on a corner of the Webster farm in Salisbury.[14] Wise was apparently both childless and illiterate and as a young man Daniel Webster would read the newspapers to him. Wise, in turn, according to Webster, "carried me many a mile" on his back "paddled me over, & over, & up & down the stream," and devoted entire days "in aid of my boyish sports," asking in return only that he be

All photographs courtesy of the Dartmouth College Library

read to in the evening. Daniel Webster loved Robert Wise and characterized him as "a true Briton."[15] According to Samuel P. Lyman, a longtime friend of Webster and one of his earliest biographers, as soon as school was out or the chores were finished, Webster, presumably often in the company of Wise, headed for such nearby streams as Punch, Middle, Stirrup Iron, or Wigwag Brook. "It was rare indeed," Lyman writes, "that he ever returned without being heavily laden with the trophies of his skill and patience."[16] Although there is no reference to fly fishing in Webster's autobiographical fragment or other accounts of Webster's early years, it is at least conceivable that it was a deserter from the British army who introduced an impressionable young Webster to the art of angling with a fly. What is incontrovertible, however, is that at an early point in his life Daniel Webster developed a passion for fishing, which he called his "favorite sport."[17]

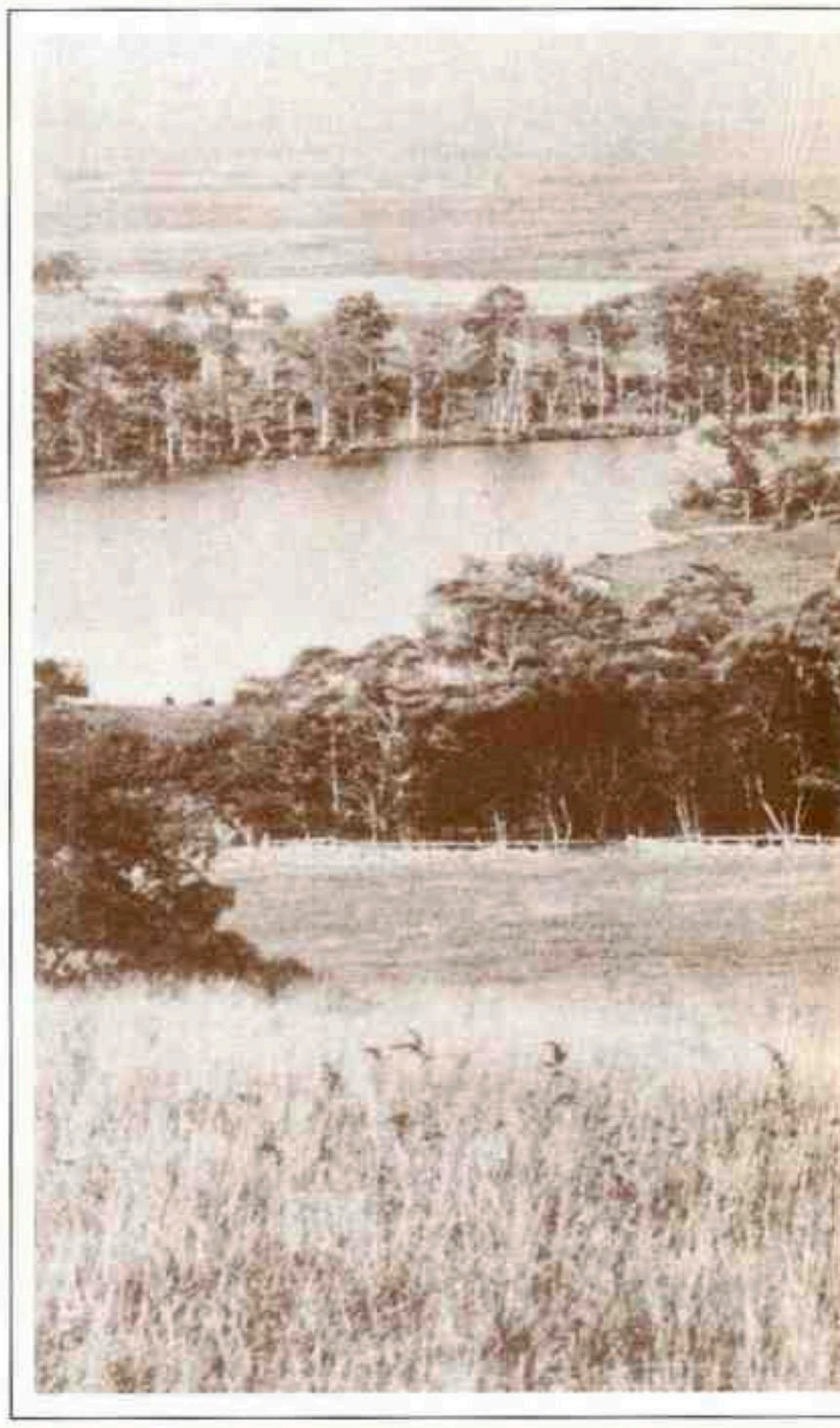
The earliest letters in which Webster recounts his sporting activities in any detail date to the 1820s. Aside from the autobiographical fragment, then, there is very little first person information historians can draw on for recreational insights until Daniel Webster was a mature man in his late thirties and early forties.

In the 1820s, Webster and his wife Grace frequently vacationed at Sandwich, a town on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, with George and Sarah Blake. George Blake, an easygoing U.S. attorney for Massachusetts who lived near the Websters on Summer Street in Boston, shared Daniel Webster's enthusiasm for hunting and fishing. The two men spent many happy hours together working the streams of Cape Cod for trout and searching the marshes for game birds.[18] In 1820 Webster wrote that although the weather had been good, few birds had "paid dearly for our visit. Mr. Blake is the great man in this department—I run after & pick up the birds."[19] During another trip with the Blakes to Sandwich in 1825, Webster commented to a relative that he would have sent him "some *trouts* had there been a less number of mouths" to feed.[20] The ladies sometimes joined their husbands on fishing excursions in the ocean, but from the surviving correspondence it seems that Daniel Webster and George Blake spent most of their time together at Sandwich tramping the fields for game birds or fishing the streams for trout.[21]

A letter that Webster wrote to Henry Cabot on June 4, 1825 offers considerable information about trout fishing near Sandwich and about Webster's skill as an angler. Cabot, a Boston lawyer, had provided advice on how to fish Mashpee Brook and Webster found the advice helpful, for he stated that "on the whole" he had never "had so agreeable a days [sic] fishing" nor did he "ever expect such another."[22] Webster's companion on that agreeable occasion was not George Blake, but John Denison (or Dennison), one of the earliest known American fishing guides.[23] Nicknamed "Johnny Trout," a term commonly used to refer to trout in general, Denison had a reputation among sportsmen for probably taking "more trout than any-one person in the United States." Denison also made rods and lines "for a moderate compensation," provided that his guests would "not take his 'kill-all,' a favorite fishing tackle which no one sees but himself."[24] Denison may have made an exception in Webster's case, for he built Daniel Webster's favorite trout rod and Webster nicknamed it "Kill-all."[25] According to *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, Denison was frequently employed by Bostonians such as Webster "to show them the sly places where the fish congregate, and also to catch them a mess, when all their exertions have failed."[26]

Denison did show Webster "the sly places," but he did not have to catch fish for his guest. John Denison "was with me," Webster wrote, "full of good advice, but did not fish—nor carry a rod." Since anglers frequented the Mashpee "nearly everyday," the trout were not plentiful. But Webster did well by following Cabot's suggestion that he carefully and thoroughly fish "the difficult places" that others tended to pass by. Altogether he took "26 trouts" with a total weight of 17 pounds and 12 ounces. In gratitude, he sent Cabot the largest: a fish weighing 2 pounds and 4 ounces, taken under a bush below some beech trees at 3:00 P.M. Webster asked Cabot to show the large trout to Isaac P. Davis, a Boston manufacturer who had promised to join Webster on the excursion but then "fell back." Webster wanted, he wrote, to "excite" Davis's regrets. Daniel Webster also had an experience that day familiar to anglers. He "hooked one, which I suppose to be larger than any which I took as he broke my line, by fair pulling, after I had pulled him out of his den, & was playing him in fair open water."[27]

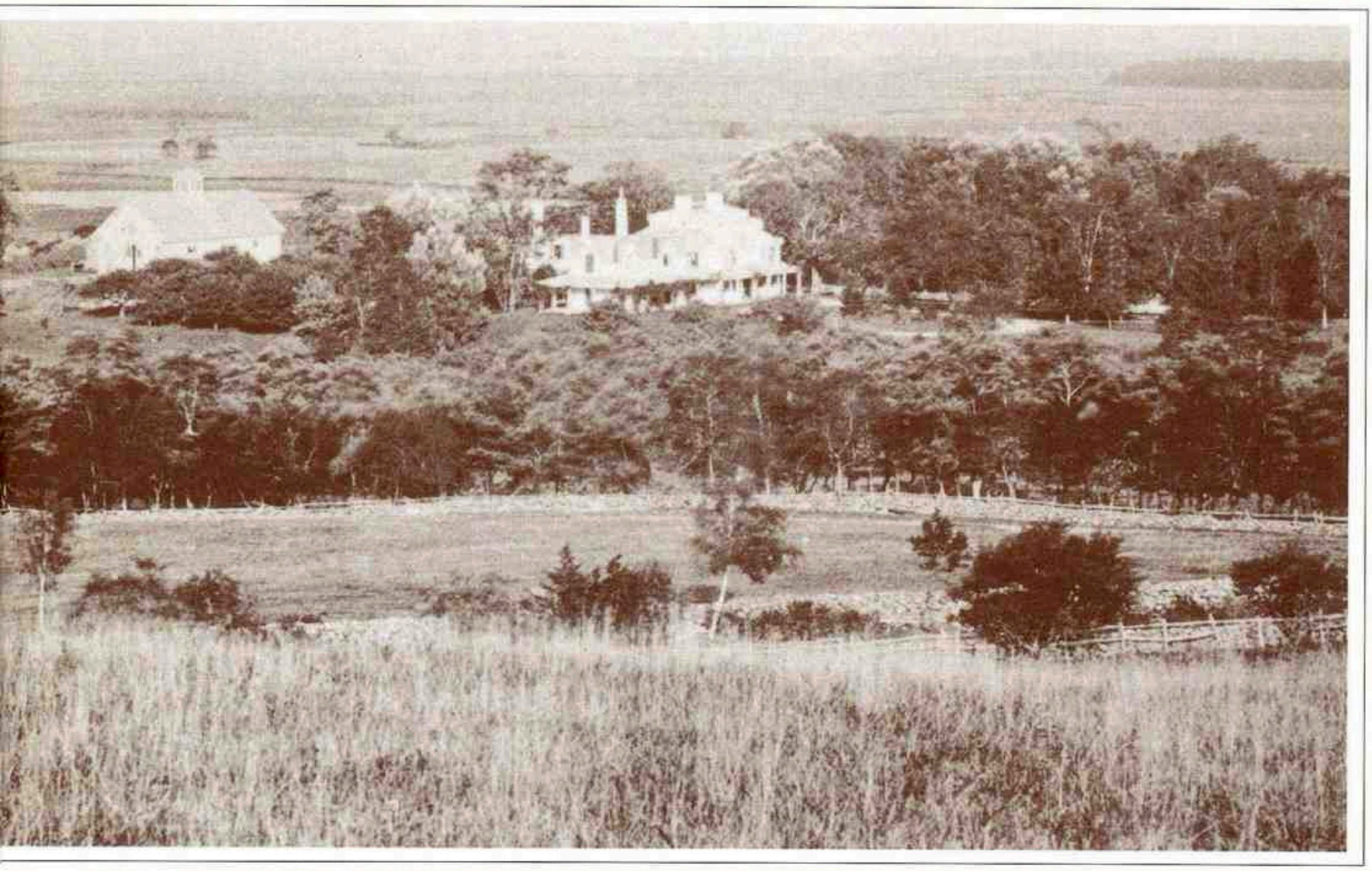
Although the records suggest that Webster fished the Mashpee again, and



Webster lavished an estimated $90,000 in transform-an ocean fishing expedition, as well as hunting jaunts

that he even succeeded in tempting Davis into joining him, Webster increasingly spent more time angling in the ocean than in trout streams.[28] Until the 1830s, freshwater fishing for trout seems to have been the type of angling Webster pursued most frequently. Thereafter, he turned toward the sea, where he sought cod and haddock and other saltwater species off the coast of Massachusetts. There seems to have been two reasons for the change. One reason centers around Webster's purchase of property in Marshfield, Massachusetts, and the other involves a decline in the quality of the trout fishery.

Because of wanton overfishing by indiscriminate anglers, netting, and the taking of fish during spawning time, there was a noticeable decline in the quality of the trout fishing in certain parts of America by the early nineteenth century. Writing in the 1840s, John J. Brown observed that trout had "become extinct in those parts of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and many of the



ing his Marshfield estate (in Massachusetts) into one of the showplaces of New England. An invitation to Webster's country home often included The estate was his escape from the pressures of diplomacy, law, and politics.

eastern states, that are adjacent to the principal cities and towns, and are abundant only in the less populated and accessible portions, and even there are fast decreasing."[29] Long before Brown published these comments, Webster was aware of the problem and he did something about it.

Webster's political career was atypical in that he spent very little time serving in local or state office prior to being elected to Congress. As Webster himself put it in a dinner speech he gave in Syracuse, New York in May 1851, "all the public services which I have rendered in the world, in my day and generation," with but one exception "have been connected with the general Government."[30] The single exception occurred for ten days in 1822 when Webster represented Boston in the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During that brief service, he introduced a bill to prevent the destruction of pickerel and trout in the state. Webster's bill, which was passed into law on June 15, made it illegal "to catch Pickerel or Trout in any of the rivers, streams or ponds within the Commonwealth, by day or night, in any other manner than by hooks and lines, on penalty of fifty cents for every pickerel or trout so taken, to be paid to the person who may sue for the same."[31] Charles Eliot Goodspeed believes that the law of 1822 may have been "the first general protective measure applying specifically to any game fish passed by an American legislature."[32] If so, it certainly is appropriate that the bill was sponsored by Daniel Webster.

Webster's Marshfield

Though a decline in the quality of the trout fishery may help to explain Webster's turn toward the ocean as the place to practice his favorite sport, the more important reason seems to have been his purchase of the Marshfield property, which was near the ocean on the Massachusetts coast south of Boston. When the neighborhood around Sandwich ceased to supply quality fishing and hunting in the late 1820s, Isaac Davis suggested that Webster consider Marshfield as a location that still provided "good sport."[33] After several successful excursions to the area, Webster purchased 160 acres from Captain John Thomas in 1832. From this modest beginning, Webster went on to create a kind of New England counterpart to Mount Vernon, the estate of his boyhood hero, George Washington. By the time of Webster's death in 1852, the property at Marshfield had grown to 1,400 acres, complete with thirty buildings, including an enlarged, remodeled, and imposing two-story main house, a network of well-organized fields and groves, a trout pond, and a collection of livestock and birds that included llamas from Peru and peacocks from India. Marshfield was maintained by a small army of about twenty-five laborers, overseen by Captain John Thomas's son, Charles Henry Thomas, and later by Charles Porter Wright. The main house

lay only about a mile from the outlet of Green Harbor River into the Atlantic Ocean, and Webster usually had a yacht and two or three smaller boats moored at his boat landing there.[34] Either Seth Peterson or Thomas D. Hatch was in charge of the boats and tackle, which were kept ready for a fishing excursion at a moment's notice.[35] Webster lavished an estimated $90,000 in transforming the Marshfield property into one of the showplaces of New England.[36]

Marshfield was an ideal place for an outdoors sportsman interested in boating, fishing, and hunting, and visitors quickly learned that an invitation to Webster's country home almost automatically included a fishing excursion with their host on the ocean. Philip Hone, the mayor of New York City and a famous nineteenth-century diarist, spent several days at Marshfield in July 1845. Hone characterized Webster as "the very perfection of a host." After breakfast on July 9, Webster drove Hone and another guest "over his extensive grounds down to the beach, where his boats were ready for a fishing excursion, which is one of his greatest enjoyments." Attired in "a loose coat and trousers, with a most picturesque slouched hat, which a Mexican bandit might have coveted," Webster directed his boatmen on how to prepare the vessel for departure, examined the bait, and helped to hoist the sails. The fishing party aboard the sloop *Comet* "had tolerably good sport for a couple of hours," but the water turned rough and both Hone and Webster became seasick. They quickly returned to shore, changed into proper dinner attire, and enjoyed a "sumptuous meal" gracefully presided over by a good-humored host. Two days later, Webster and Hone were on the ocean again. This time the weather cooperated and the party caught "twenty-six cod and twenty-two haddoch [sic], weighing more than three hundred pounds." Hone's diary entry for July 11 states that he had "never had such sport and never saw such 'spoils,' and the sail home in our beautiful yacht was delightful."[37]

Hone's experience at Marshfield was not atypical and other visitors, including Richard Blatchford, Charles Lanman, and Samuel Lyman, soon found themselves aboard the *Comet* or one of Webster's other boats catching fare that would be prepared for dinner.[38] According to Lanman, when he had large numbers of guests under his roof, Webster might send one group after trout and take another aboard his yacht for a fishing trip on the ocean.[39] On other occasions, Webster would assign some guests to the *Comet* while he and Peterson would teach the ladies the art of angling aboard a smaller boat, the *Signet*. Lyman participated in one such trip during August of 1844. With Peterson busily "baiting the hooks, taking off the fish, and shaking his sides with laughter," the "great expounder of the Constitution . . . taught the young ladies old Izaak Walton's art."[40] Squire Webster presided over everything and he insisted on certain "customs of etiquette," as Lanman soon discovered. Dinner was a "full dress" occasion, and Webster did not hesitate to reprimand Lanman for appearing at the dinner table attired in informal garb.[41]

When not entertaining guests, Webster used Marshfield as a place of refreshment and escape from the pressure of diplomacy, law, and politics. He would fish or hunt from daylight to dusk either alone or in the company of boatman Seth Peterson.[42] For example, in May 1842, while serving as secretary of state, Webster made a short visit to Marshfield just prior to the commencement of his negotiations with the special British envoy, Lord Ashburton. In a delightful letter dated at Washington, D.C. on May 4, he let a friend in on "one of the secrets of diplomacy." Although the press was speculating that he was traveling to Boston to confer with the governor of Massachusetts on the disputed northeastern boundary between Britain and the United States, the "great object" of his trip was to "see Seth Peterson, and catch one trout."[43] On May 26 he informed the same friend that he had "done fishing and trout-catching," had taken leave of Peterson, and would be heading for Washington in the morning.[44] In August 1842, after the successful completion of his negotiations with Lord Ashburton, the secretary of state returned to Marshfield where he enjoyed "a glorious month of leisure" during which he and Peterson "settled many a knotty point."[45]

To ensure that Marshfield was a place of respite, Webster did not allow any conversation on diplomacy, law, or politics during the fishing excursions aboard the *Comet* or the *Signet*.[46] Webster also had a pact with his neighbors, as one of them recalled, that they "were welcome at Green Harbor [an inlet near Marshfield where he kept his boathouse and moored his vessels] to talk of farming, fishing, and community concerns," but there were "to be no discussions of politics or law."[47] Webster confirmed that understanding in the last public speech that he delivered. On July 25, 1852 Webster's friends and neighbors surprised him with a large reception at Marshfield. Speaking extemporaneously, Webster gratefully thanked the assembled crowd for honoring "a well-understood covenant" that he "would talk to them about farming, but not a word about law or politics."[48]

"The Elms" in Franklin

Marshfield was not Webster's only escape. After his brother Ezekiel's death in 1829, he became sole owner of the Elms, the family farm in Franklin, New Hampshire (formerly Salisbury).[49] Purchase of adjoining lands enlarged the Elms to approximately 1,000 acres.[50] Webster also held title to two of the seven houses in the village of Franklin and forty acres fronting on nearby Lake Como.[51] The Lake Como property included "a fine white sandy beach," a boathouse, and "a boat big enough to row out four Ladies, to catch little fishes."[52]

Webster described the Elms as a tranquil "spot of absolute quiet" and the water there "so exquisite, as strongly to induce teetotalism."[53] But he did not spend much time in New Hampshire, especially after the acquisition of Marshfield. The Webster family farm was ably managed from 1835 on by John Taylor, a capable 6-foot, 5-inch New Hampshire Yankee who received one-half of the income produced from growing corn and potatoes and raising livestock there. Taylor reserved a wing of the main house for Webster's occasional visits, but they were few and far between.[54] In 1838 Webster commented that it had been two years since he had been able to spend a day in New Hampshire.[55] When Webster did manage to get to the Elms, fish and fishing were on the agenda. In July 1843 Webster hosted a "chowder party" for some four to five hundred friends and neighbors on the shoreline of Lake Como. The guests, according to the Boston *Atlas,* enjoyed "quite a variety of fried and chowdered fish," and one satisfied guest toasted "The Constitution of Webster—rarely has so large a heart been mated with so great a mind."[56] In the company of Richard Blatchford and Charles Lanman, Webster spent a few days at the Elms both in 1851 and 1852. For the 1852 visit, he advised Taylor to warn the perch in Lake Como "that Mr. Blatchford is coming"; in a subsequent note he added that Lanman would supply all of them "with fish from Lake Como."[57] Whether either of Webster's angler com-

Daniel Webster relaxing under an elm at his family home "The Elms" in Franklin, New Hampshire, which he once described as a "spot of absolute quiet." Because of the demands on his time, he was an infrequent visitor to this farm, especially after the purchase of the Marshfield property, but when able, he enjoyed fishing for perch and pike on nearby Lake Como where he kept a boathouse. Engraving by Joseph Lakeman (1871).

panions caught fish is unclear, but Lanman recalled taking a drive around Lake Como, a body of water abounding in perch and pike, where Webster kept a boathouse and enjoyed "the pleasant recreation of angling."[58]

Webster and Charles Lanman

As the 1852 visit to the Elms suggests, Charles Lanman had many opportunities to observe Daniel Webster. Some of the best firsthand accounts we have of Webster as an angler come from Lanman's prolific pen. Lanman himself holds an important place in the history of American sport fishing. According to Schullery, Lanman, who authored thirty-two books and many articles, was America's "first great travel writer."[59] In addition to being a much published author, Lanman was an accomplished artist and newspaper reporter prior to becoming Webster's private secretary in October 1851. Lanman, however, was much more than Webster's scribe. Although thirty-seven years younger than the secretary of state, Lanman established a close friendship with the older man.[60] In a letter of introduction, Webster characterized Lanman as a "friend" and "a faithful, reliable, good man."[61]

How two men so far apart in age became close friends is an interesting story, and the bond that tied them together was their mutual love for fishing. At some point in 1850, William Winston Seaton, publisher of the *National Intelligencer*, the most influential newspaper of the time, introduced Lanman to Webster. Seaton and Webster had been friends, occasional fishing partners, and political allies for over thirty years, and Lanman had been a reporter for the *National Intelligencer* prior to becoming librarian of the War Department in 1849. In 1850 Seaton told Webster about "an unusually large rockfish" that Lanman had taken at the Little Falls of the Potomac River and a few days later ushered his former employee into the office of the secretary of state. Webster greeted the younger man with an exclamation: "I am told, sir, you are a famous fisherman, and I wish to capture a monster rockfish in your company."[62] From this warm beginning Webster and Lanman went on to become almost constant fishing companions. In 1850 Lanman switched clerkships to become librarian of the Department of State, and in 1851 he became Daniel Webster's private secretary and traveling companion. According to George Ticknor Curtis, Lanman accompanied Webster on all of his visits to Franklin and Marshfield.[63]

Webster held Lanman in high regard as an agreeable companion and a "great fisherman, so great as to have killed Salmon, in the Rivers of the British Provinces."[64] In June 1851 Lanman planned a short trip to the Allegheny Mountains and served as Webster's guide. Although Lanman anticipated that the trout fishing would be "superb," Webster found himself too busy being entertained at public dinners in towns such as Capon Springs, Virginia, to explore the nearby mountain streams.[65] Lanman returned from one of those streams with forty trout, some of them "decent in size . . . two or three being a foot long," but Webster seems not to have had the opportunity to try his luck. He did, however, notice that the chubs and dace in the waters around Capon Springs fed gluttonously on locusts and rose "to the fly."[66] What had been planned as a vacation for the secretary of state turned into a round of receptions and speeches, part of the price that Webster willingly paid for his fame, but Lanman lived up to his reputation as a skilled fisherman.

The Fishing in D.C.

Once back in Washington, however, Webster found time to go fishing and he did so by getting up at four o'clock in the morning. While serving as secretary of state, Webster regularly spent a few hours with Lanman angling in the Potomac, and he was back at his desk in the Department of State by ten o'clock.[67] As this pattern of behavior suggests, Daniel Webster was an early riser. We know from the notations that he made in the margins of many of his letters that he habitually awakened himself between 4:00 and 5:00 A.M., and he was proud of the fact that he was always moving about before the sun appeared on the horizon. Webster usually went to bed at ten o'clock: he was one of those fortunate people who did not need more than six hours of sleep.[68] Samuel Lyman once overheard Webster remark to Charles Lanman that what little he had accomplished in his life had been "done early in the morning."[69] Unless fishing was on the schedule, Webster sometimes had as many as twenty letters ready to mail before breakfast. When many people were just beginning their daily tasks, Webster often was finishing his. "Now," he commented to Peter Harvey on one such occasion, "my day's work is done: I have nothing to do but fish."[70]

Whether he was going fishing or not, dawn was Daniel Webster's favorite time. One of the most poetic letters he ever wrote, at "5. o clock A.M.," proclaimed the morning to be "a new issuing of light, a new bursting forth of the sun, a new waking up, of all that has life, from a sort of temporary death, to behold, again the works of God, the Heavens & the Earth." He did not think that Adam and Eve "had much advantage of us, from having seen the world, while it was new. The manifestations of the power of God, like his mercies, are 'new every *morning*—& fresh every moment.' We see as fine rising of the sun, as ever Adam saw; & its risings are as much a miracle now, as they were in his day." "I know the morning," Webster concluded, "I am acquainted with it, & I love it, fresh & sweet as it is, a daily new creation, breaking forth, & calling all that have life, & breath, & being, to a new Adoration, new enjoyments, & new gratitude."[71]

Not everyone, of course, shared Webster's enthusiasm for getting out of bed at 4:00 A.M. As Webster commented in the letter cited above, few inhabitants of American cities knew anything about the morning. "Their idea of it is, that it is that part of the day, which comes along after a cup of coffee, & a beef steak or a peice [sic] of toast."[72] Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, the British minister to the United States, found himself "too indisposed, do not fancy I was too lazy," to meet the secretary of state early in the morning, most probably for a fishing excursion.[73] Even Lanman sometimes had to be roused by his employer. Lanman recalled being awakened at Marshfield "at a very early hour" by a secretary of state imitating "the graceful motions of an angler, throwing a fly and striking a trout." The day, not surprisingly, "was given to fishing."[74]

In 1851, on almost a daily basis, Lanman and Webster fished the Potomac River. They had a routine. Webster picked Lanman up at 4:00 A.M., and they were on the water by 5:00. Joseph Payne, who lived near the Little Falls, served as their boatman. According to Lanman, Webster was contented if he caught nothing, but delighted if he captured a bass or rockfish. Lanman recalled a morning when Webster landed a 16-pound rockfish. When the prize had been gaffed, the secretary of state clapped his hands like a small child, "jumped to his feet," and let out an Indian yell "which might have been heard in Georgetown." On this, as on other occasions, Webster insisted that he and Lanman return to the city before the Department of State opened for business. He told Lanman that he (Webster) "was President Fillmore's clerk" and was therefore obliged to be at his desk. Moreover, he did not want to rob the government of any time that he owed it. "For an old man," Lanmnan remembered Payne commenting, the secretary of state "was a good fisherman."[75]

Lanman was with Webster on May 8, 1852 when the secretary of state was seriously injured in a carriage accident that may have contributed to his death six months later. The two friends were on their way from Marshfield to Plymouth "to enjoy some trout-fishing" in a private pond. Both men were thrown from the carriage when the transom bolt broke, and Webster was knocked unconscious and badly bruised. He was confined to bed for ten days and was unable to sign his name for several weeks thereafter. The unfortunate carriage accident seems to have ended Daniel Webster's days as an angler.[76]

Some Questions Answered

This chronologically-oriented account of Daniel Webster as an angler has left out some topics that merit more specific attention. What kinds of fishing tackle did Webster use, what were the largest trophies that he brought to the net, and, most importantly, what part did fishing play in his life? When angling in the ocean, he usually employed clams and baitfish or artificial lures made locally in Marshfield. Although he often fished with flies in freshwater streams and ponds, not a single reference to the patterns that Webster favored can be found. Such inattention to specifics is not unusual in the history of early American fly fishing. The editors of *The American Fly Fisher* have noted that Charles Lanman qualifies as "one of the first Americans to write about fly fishing," but his writings are weak in describing the methods employed by nineteenth-century anglers.[77] We do know, however, that outdoorsmen such as Lanman and Webster had many choices. In *The American Angler's Guide*, John J. Brown listed forty-seven patterns, some of which—the Alder Fly, Black Knat, Cow Dung, Green Drake, March Brown, Red Ant, and White Miller—are still familiar today. These "and many other flies not enumerated," Brown observed, can be purchased "at the regular tackle stores, can be made to order, or procured from England." Indeed, Brown recommended that anglers always "examine the waters and shake the boughs of trees, to procure the latest insect that will most probably fall a prey to the voracious trout, and imitate nature's handiwork on the spot."[78]

Imitation of natural insects was no great mystery to Webster's contemporaries; as early as 1830, the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* had provided detailed and illustrated instructions on how to tie flies.[79] According to Genio C. Scott, the Red Ibis, an attractor that did not actually "imitate any winged insect," was one of the most popular patterns in the northeast.[80] In a kind of primer for those who wanted to take up fly fishing, the editor of *Spirit of the Times* recommended that the first choice of the novice should be "the Brown, Red, and Black Hackle," two of each. Before using these flies up, the novice was advised to learn to tie his own imitations.[81] Unfortunately, there is no indication that Webster learned to tie his own flies, and he does not tell us whether he ever used a Red Hackle or Ibis or any of the other specific patterns that were widely available in his time. He did, however, express a dislike for Limerick hooks, because the fish seemed more likely to let go of their

hold than was the case with "old fashioned hooks."[82] Webster probably used Kirby hooks, an inexpensive brand that was imported from England in large quantities.[83] In a letter to Isaac P. Davis, Webster mentioned that he had brought with him to Washington "white tinned hooks from England, lines boiled in gum from Rio Janeiro [sic], and other craft from Boston and New York, not to mention some beautiful little reels, and some elegant artificial bass and blue fish bait, manufactured at Marshfield."[84] We also know that Webster purchased fishing tackle from Joseph West and Company of New York.[85] But we know very little about the particular items that he purchased.

Webster's Rods

We know much more about Webster's rods than we do about his flies, reels, and other fishing tackle. In addition to Kill-all, made by John Denison, he possessed another rod made of red wood which he named the Edgar rod, given to him by a friend, perhaps William Edgar, a New York lawyer. In June 1847 Webster returned to Marshfield after a long absence only to find the Edgar "entirely good for nothing" and the rest of his tackle broken and in disarray. A "book of flies and hooks" had simply disappeared.[86] Webster was able to repair old Kill-all and to make it serviceable, but he then made an absolutely delighful discovery, the kind that fishermen dream about. In an unopened box in the gun room he found "the most splendid angling apparatus" one could imagine. The box contained "three complete rods, all silver mounted, with my name engraved; beautiful reels, and books of flies and hooks, and quantities of other equipments."[87]

Except for the rodmaker's card, Webster did not have a clue as to the origins of his good fortune. Not knowing what else to do, on June 10 he dispatched a letter of effusive gratitude to the name on the card, Benjamin Welch of New York. Along with John Conroy, Welch was one of the most highly regarded rodmakers of Webster's time.[88] Genio C. Scott characterized his Welch rod as "the best" he had ever "owned for general fly-fishing," and Webster seemed equally pleased with his three Welch rods.[89] Webster complimented Welch for the "exquisite workmanship" represented in the rods and reels and thanked him for the "truly beautiful" flies. He could now pursue "his favorite sport" more elegantly equipped than "Poor Isaac [sic] Walton" ever could have imagined might be possible. Webster then professed a sense of responsibility when it came to throwing "a May fly to a trout, by this beautiful gear." "A fly thrown clumsily," he wrote, "with such implements, or a fish struck unadroitly, or played without skill, or suffered to escape, except into the basket, would justly affect the operator with lasting disgrace." Webster concluded by complimenting Welch for his incomparable work and by asking him to convey his "warmest thanks . . . to the source to which I owe this most extraordinary and elegant outfit for angling."[90]

In September the mystery was cleared up when Timothy Hedges of East Hampton, New York, identified himself as the donor of the contents of the box. Apparently a letter that Hedges had sent Webster "contemporaneously with the box" had not reached Marshfield. The gift, Hedges stated, was intended as a mark of his "high estimation" of Webster as a statesman who had rendered "distinguished Services" to his "country & to the world."[91] In 1977, the American Museum of Fly Fishing acquired one of Webster's Welch rods, an impressive 12-foot, four-piece apparatus with Webster's name engraved on the silver reel seat. Webster was not exaggerating when he described Welch rods as "exquisite," nor were the editors of *The American Fly Fisher* exaggerating when they characterized the acquisition as "a tangible link with our dimmest angling past."[92] We may not know much about the flies that Webster used, but visitors to the Museum can examine one of the rods that belonged to him.

Prizes and Trophies

As far as we can tell from Webster's own accounts and those of his fishing companions, what were the largest fish that he caught? Lanman, as mentioned earlier, credited a jubilant Webster with bringing a 16-pound rockfish from the Potomac to the net. Webster credited himself with taking a 7-pound blackfish. On a "mild, still" day in September 1851, just at flood tide, he "caught thirty very fine Tautog." He reported to Blatchford that he threw his hook "into their den" under Sunk Rock near Marshfield and that "the chiefs" all contended for it. The largest was a fine "seven pound fellow."[93] In 1849, Webster and his son Daniel Fletcher went after blues off Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard. Webster's appetite had been whetted when his son returned from a solo excursion with tales of "lines broken, hooks carried off, fish jumping ten feet out of the water, &c.," which persuaded him to try his own hand at catching blues.[94] On August 7, he took twenty-five "remarkably fat and plump" blues who "pulled like horses."[95] Webster did not tell Blatchford how much the fattest blue weighed, but he concluded that "for blue fish merely, nothing can be quite so good as Edgartown."[96] Although Webster turned many large cod into chowder, I have found no record by Webster or his fishing companions of how much any specific cod weighed.

The largest trout that Webster credited himself with landing is the 2-pound, 4-ounce native taken from the Mashpee in 1825. At first glance this does not seem to be much of a prize for a mythical angler like Daniel Webster. However, in the context of Webster's overfished environment, it was a big fish. In 1851, Webster defined a "decent"-sized trout to be one of 12 inches.[97] Articles in the sporting journals of Webster's time and letters from Webster's angler friends also suggest that a 2-pound trout would have been considered a prize. For example, an unsigned letter to the editor of the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine,* dated June 30, 1830, reported that "fat, plump" trout ranging in size from 8 to 16 inches could be taken with a fly in the neighborhood of Carlisle, Pennsylvania.[98] A subsequent note, perhaps from the same correspondent, told of a mammoth trout of 4 pounds "gigged by Mr. John Lee" near Carlisle.[99] Another anonymous sportsman claimed that he had taken a 3-pound trout at Samuel Carman's pond on Long Island in 1812 "and one had since been taken in the mill tail, at the same place, which weighed 14½ lbs." Notwithstanding the tantalizing rumor that someone at some point in time had captured a 14½-pound leviathan, the largest trout claimed by "X" did not exceed 3 pounds.[100] In an article titled "Johnny Trout Beat at Last" and dated at Boston on June 12, 1832, another anonymous writer at least gave names when he stated that James Bodfisk, "a scientific and expert angler of the first water," had killed an 18-inch "salmon trout" that went 4¼ pounds near Sandwich. Since John Denison, according to "Leather Stocking," had never caught, during the whole of his professional career, a fish weighing more than 3¾ pounds," Bodfisk had "completely outgeneralled" Johnny Trout.[101]

The claims of those who corresponded privately with Webster were considerably more modest than the accounts published in the *American Turf Register.*

Henry Grinnell, who had amassed a fortune as a New York merchant, spent much of his leisure time angling for trout and salmon in the United States, Ireland, and Scotland. Grinnell aptly characterized himself as more fond of the sport of fishing than any "man living or dead not excepting the great Izaak Walton." In 1845 Grinnell provided Webster with a full account of his latest fishing excursion. According to Grinnell, on the south side of Long Island he took "60 Trout in 3 hours, but there was not much sport in that as the fish were small, none over ½ of a pound." At Carman's in Fireplace, however, he landed fish that ranged from ¾ of a pound to a pound and a half, and a large trout that weighed "2 pounds." Grinnell hoped in the future to take Webster to Douglasses Pond, where he had "taken some fine fish . . . small in number but large; averaging 1½ lb—you fish in a boat."[102]

Even as Grinnell was pursuing trout on Long Island, Webster invited him to come to Marshfield. Although "the *Trout* season" was "fast running off, & altho our brooks have been a good deal scourged, & exhausted," Webster was confident that he and Grinnell could "make prize of a trout, in Marshfield, Plymouth, or Wareham." "If we find no trout," Webster added, "we shall yet have some pleasant drives, & perhaps it may be agreeable to you to see that part of the Old Colony, even if the Fly should be thrown in vain."[103] Webster and Grinnell were unable to coordinate their schedules in 1845, but their correspondence suggests that the "good old days" were not all that good, at least in the more settled areas of the northeast. According to the editor of the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, in fish stories "a little fiction is said to be allowable."[104] Even if one accepts that questionable principle, Webster's 2-pound, 4-ounce Mashpee trout compares well with the big fish prizes reported by anonymous anglers to that editor and to Webster himself by contemporaries such as Grinnell.

Fishing and Politics

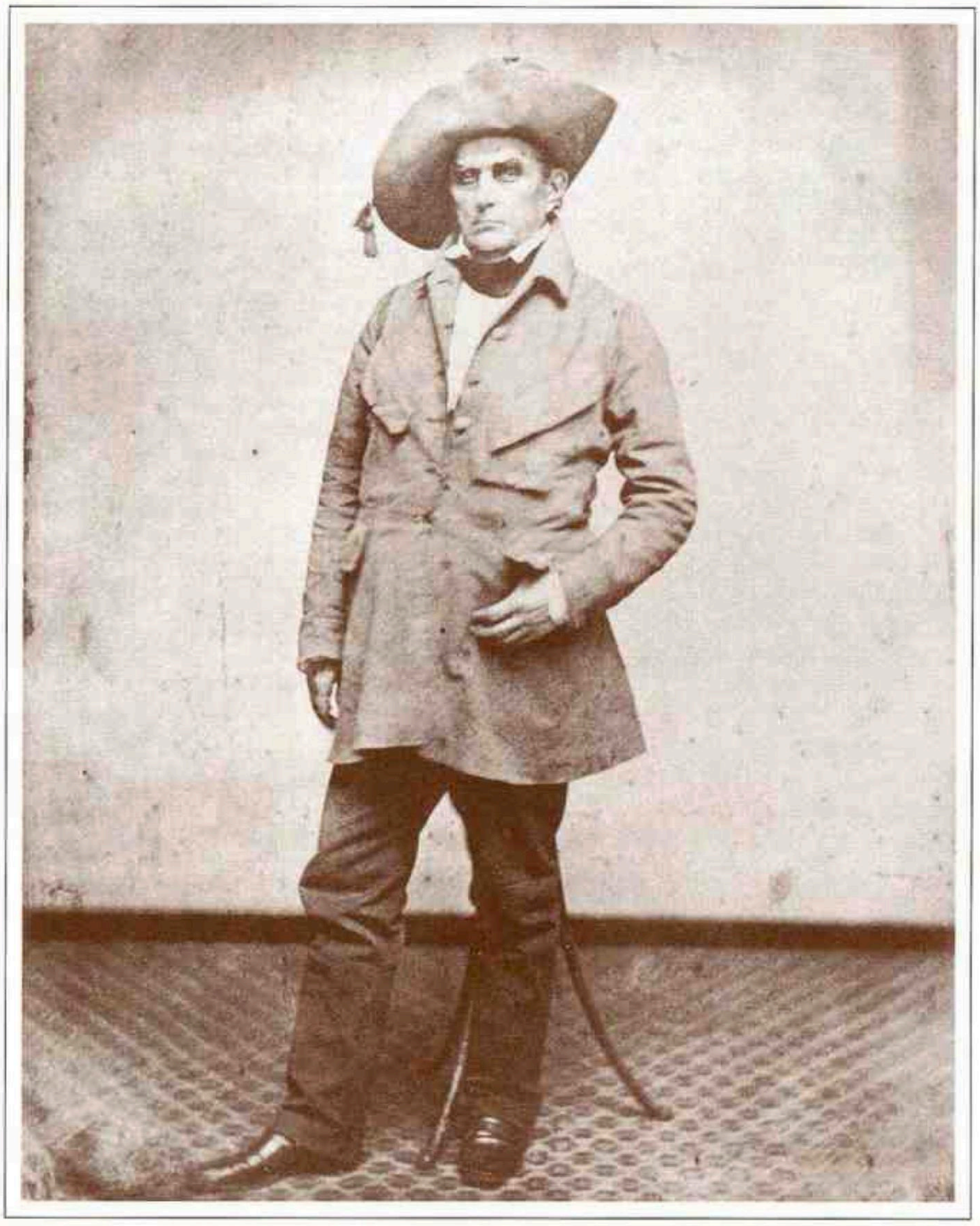
Finally, did Webster's love for angling have any discernible impact on his career as a diplomat, a politician, and an orator? It can be reasonably assumed that his sponsorship of the 1822 law requiring the use of hooks and lines in the ponds and streams of Massachusetts reflected an angler's desire to preserve an endangered natural resource. Moreover, the strong position that he adopted in 1852 as secretary of state in an acrimonious dispute with Great Britain over American access to Canadian waters reflects a fisherman's mentality. When the British government stationed a naval force off the coast of British North America to prevent encroachments by American fishermen in certain disputed waters, Webster took matters into his own hands. Without even consulting President Millard Fillmore, he issued such inflexible statements that both the president and some members of Congress became concerned that hostilities might break out between the two countries. Speaking extemporaneously before that large assembly of friends and neighbors gathered to honor him in Marshfield on July 24, Webster observed that many of those in the audience earned their living on the sea. "To use a Marblehead phrase," the secretary of state proclaimed he would protect their rights "hook and line, and bob and sinker."[105]

A month later, in a private letter to Blatchford, Webster commented that since he had his "great halibut hook" in the fisheries question, "it must come aboard."[106] In response to Webster's belligerent stance, the British quickly backed down. Nevertheless, Webster's behavior alarmed many and drew a fair amount of criticism in Congress. In a speech supportive of Webster's diplomacy, Senator William Henry Seward of New York reminded critics that Webster had defended American maritime interests for decades. Webster, Seward stated, "is a man of Massachusetts—is it too much to say *the* MAN OF MASSACHUSETTS? The ocean with its fisheries, washes the shore of the farm on which he dwells. Nay, sir, he is an angler himself, I am told, and of course he is a good one, for he is not half and half in anything." Seward aptly concluded that in defending American fishing rights, Webster was defending "an interest so near to himself" and his constituency.[107]

As Webster's fiery speech of July 24 and his letter to Blatchford suggest, fishing analogies and metaphors were part of his political discourse. References to fishing and fishermen found their way into several of his great speeches. In an 1840 Saratoga, New York, address Webster immortalized Seth Peterson by offering his fishing companion as a model of American character and common sense.[108] Eighteen forty was an election year and the target of Webster's remarks at the great mass meeting in Saratoga was an alleged plan by the rival Democratic party to lower the wages of American workers. After observing that he was personally fond of being "rowed out to sea" for health and recreation and "occasionally catching a fish,"' Webster recalled some remarks made by Peterson "while pulling an oar." According to Webster, Peterson opposed the Democratic plan because the only thing he had to sell was his honest labor: he needed to purchase such necessities as flour, meat, and clothing, and occasionally a little coffee, sugar, and some spices. Peterson could not see how the prices of these goods, especially the imported ones, would be reduced by lowering the wages of people like himself. Webster concluded by expressing his agreement with Peterson that America did not need "the miserable policy which would bring the condition of a laborer in the United States to that of a laborer in Russia or Sweden, in France or Germany, in Italy or Corsica!"[109]

The Bunker Hill address of 1825 ranks as one of Webster's most memorable discourses. On the fiftieth anniversary of that historic battle, he spoke to an audience of twenty thousand that included the Marquis de Lafayette and scores of veterans of the struggle for independence. Fixing his gaze on Lafayette and the old soldiers, Webster brought tears to the eyes of many with words that soon became famous: "VENERABLE MEN! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country."[110] Webster had first uttered these memorable lines while wading a Cape Cod trout stream in the company of John Denison and his son Fletcher Webster.

According to Fletcher Webster's account of the incident, he was following his father down the stream, "fishing the holes and bends which he left to me." At one point, Fletcher noticed that his father was behaving uncharacteristically, that he seemed "quite abstracted and uninterested" in angling. He passed up the best spots; allowed his line to "run carelessly" down the brook; got his hook tangled on twigs or tall grass several times; and even held his rod still while the line was not making contact with the water! When Fletcher quietly approached his father from behind, he found him gazing at the trees, advancing one foot, and speaking to "Venerable Men."[111] According to Charles Lanman, the salutation to "Venerable Men" was "first heard by a couple of huge trout, immediately on their being trans-



The legend of Daniel Webster has only grown with the passage of time: not only has he acquired the status of "mythical statesman" but also that of "mythical angler." The photographer of this rather rakish-looking Daniel Webster is unknown, as is the date.

ferred to his fishing-basket."[112] Lanman seems to have embellished a wonderful tale, but the story seems to be otherwise true. Daniel Webster himself referred to the incident in his autobiography and mentioned it to Lanman and others.[113] In an unpublished letter to Fletcher dated June 22, 1851, he commented that since he had already prepared a forthcoming Fourth of July address he would "not have to be thinking out 'Venerable Men'" if he found a trout stream prior to delivering the speech.[114] If nothing else, the rehearsal of the Bunker Hill oration in a Cape Cod trout stream suggests that Daniel Webster knew how to combine business and pleasure.

Historical Differences

So what does this account of Daniel Webster as an angler add up to and what difference does it all make to historical studies? To begin with, the historical record provides a pretty good idea of when, where, and how Webster fished and of what kind of an angler he was. Prior to the 1830s, he pursued trout in the Cape Cod region; thereafter, he did most of his angling in the ocean near his estate in Marshfield or at Lake Como in New Hampshire. Except for the Potomac, only rarely did he venture outside of Massachusetts and New Hampshire to pursue his favorite sport.

Whether fishing in salt or fresh water, Webster was a skillful angler. Seth Peterson, Webster's neighbor in Marshfield and boatman for fifteen years, provided George Ticknor Curtis with a valuable retrospective on Webster as a fisherman. Peterson characterized Webster as "a first-rate trout fisher." He had never seen "anybody so smart at taking a trout from his hole. Webster even tried to discourage Peterson, who also was a skillful angler, from catching fish in the stream that ran through Peterson's own property. Jokingly, Webster told Peterson that he would prosecute him if he did so! Peterson added that Webster "loved to take trout," but he also liked "to catch big fish." The big fish were in the ocean, and that is where Peterson and Webster spent most of their time together.[115] Although his "great delight," as Curtis concluded, was Marshfield and the sea, Webster could "cast a 'fly' with as much skill as anyone who ever landed a trout."[116] In an article published in 1868, Lanman included Webster on a short list of famous American anglers. The others were George Gibson, George M. Bibb, and George W. Bethune. Gibson, who was fishing the Letort as early as the 1790s, possessed great skill in "throwing the fly." Bibb, a U.S. senator from Kentucky, "scorned the fly," had the bad habits of using profane language and "fishing on the Sabbath," but he was known for an uncommon enthusiasm for catching fish. Bethune, a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church and composer of hymns and books on religion and poetry, edited the first American edition of Walton's *The Compleat Angler* in 1846 and went fishing whenever he could. Webster, "our greatest angler," began fishing "when only five years old, with a pin-hook in New Hampshire, and . . . was on his way to a trout pond near Plymouth, when he met with the sad accident which undoubtedly hastened his death." Lanman observed that Webster "became partial to the fishes and scenery of the sea" as time went on and was happiest "when fishing for cod or pollock in his yacht off the coast of Marshfield." But he also qualified as "an expert trout fisherman."[117]

In his thoughtful history of American fly fishing, Paul Schullery has suggested that "there is nothing wrong with lionizing great fishermen as long as they're really great."[118] Whether Webster qualifies as a truly great fisherman is questionable. Friends (Curtis) and contemporary writers (Brown) may have romanticized Webster's exploits as an angler. Brown, for example, has him "an-

gling for salmon in the Kennebec," though there is no indication that he ever did so.[119] Although Webster may not have been quite the mythical angler that Lanman and others have made him out to be, he was, as Joseph Payne, the D.C. boatman, remarked, "a good fisherman" and fishing certainly played a significant role in his life.

Fishing was never far from Webster's thoughts. Shortly before his death in 1852, Webster told Professor Cornelius C. Felton of Harvard College that although he was not feeling well he hoped to write a book of "personal observations on our fresh and salt water fishes."[120] A few weeks later, he signed his last will and testament. He left all of his "fishing-tackle" to his grandson, Samuel Appleton.[121] Together with eight guns, his fishing equipment, probably well worn from use, was valued at $146.[122] One of Webster's rods has survived to find an honored place in the American Museum of Fly Fishing, but unfortunately his book was never written. Although Webster only provides us with glimpses of his tackle and techniques as a fly fisherman, we can be grateful for the letters that have survived the ravages of time. Webster's love of angling and the imprint that it made on his career and political discourse are well documented in his private correspondence and public writings.

"A Great Secret of State"

Fishing played a large part in Webster's life. In addition to the discernible impact on his behavior and discourse as an orator, politician, and diplomat, angling contributed to his mental and physical health and to the quality of his life in general. "Amidst the toil of law, & the stunning din of politics," he wrote in 1836, "any thing is welcome, which calls my thoughts back to Marshfield, tho' it be only to be told which way the wind blows."[123] In 1838, he returned to Washington from Marshfield refreshed and energized for the issues confronting him in the Supreme Court and Senate. "There is nothing in this world—or at least for me—like the air of the sea, united to a kind of lazy exercise, & an absolute forgetfulness of business & cares. The mackerel fishing has been glorious."[124] Marshfield and mackerel offered Webster rehabilitation and refreshment from "business and cares," and much more. The friendships that he formed with fellow anglers—George Blake, Richard Blatchford, Charles Lanman, and Seth Peterson, among others—were among the most rewarding of his life. In a warm personal letter dated August 23, 1851, Webster told Blatchford that "I like your society" and concluded that their friendship constituted "a source of happiness" to him.[125] Webster counted many of those he had "wet a fly" with among the dearest people on earth.

Richard Current, one of Webster's most insightful biographers, has gone so far as to suggest that "the sportsman and gentleman farmer may have been the true Daniel Webster."[126] On November 19, 1841, shortly after returning to Washington from a vacation in Marshfield, Webster himself scribbled the following note: "Here I am, at my table, and my work—in good health, but not feeling so well as when I was in the Boat with Seth, or sitting under the bushes up at 'Island Creek Pond.' . . . I ought to have been a fisherman. But it is too late to change."[127]

Posterity can be glad that Webster persevered at his desk and did not devote his life to catching fish, but we can also be grateful for the many remarks that he made about angling in his conversations, correspondence, and speeches. In addition to providing some insight into the early history of American sport fishing, they suggest much about Daniel Webster as a human being. To cite a final example, in an undated note to Charles March, a lifelong friend and importer of fine wines, Webster left us this timeless advice on how to console anglers who have bad luck:

> My Dear Sir:
>
> It is a great *secret of state* but I intend going to Long Island, Tuesday Morning, for 2 or 3 days, to take a *trout*. If you will send me one bottle of wine (to Astor House) I will put it in my Bag, & it may console me, in case of bad weather, or bad luck—either or both of which sometimes occur to fishermen.[128]

As one of the eminent historians of our time put it, because of Webster's letters on fishing he "seems to be a much more attractive human being!"[129]

ENDNOTES

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2. Bliss Perry, ed., *The Heart of Emerson's Journals* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), p. 261.

3. Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 391.

4. For more information on Brown, see Paul Schullery, *American Fly Fishing: A History* (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1987), pp. 30-32, 38-39.

5. John J. Brown, *The American Angler's Guide; or, Complete Fisher's Manual for the United States* (New York: H. Long & Brothers, third edition, 1849), pp. 17, 205.

6. S. P. Lyman, *Life and Memorials of Daniel Webster* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1853, 2 volumes), vol. 2, p. 264.

7. Charles Lanman, "The Annals of Angling," *The Galaxy*, vol. 6 (September 1868), p. 312.

8. Stephen Vincent Benét, *The Devil and Daniel Webster and Other Stories by Stephen Vincent Benét* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1967), p. 5.

9. Schullery, *American Fly Fishing*, p. 25. It is worth mentioning that Webster subscribed to *Spirit of the Times* from 1842 to 1852 and that his personal library contained several books on fishing, including such classics as Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*. For information on the holdings in Webster's private library, see Leonard & Co., Auctioneers, *Catalogue of the Private Library of Daniel Webster* (Boston, n.d.). On 30 October 1852, *Spirit of the Times* published an obituary of Webster on its front page. Unlike most obituaries of Webster, this one focused on his fondness for the "pleasures of the field."

10. *Ibid.*, p. 21. Information on the importation of tackle from Britain appears on pp. 2, 7-9, 15-16, 21, 32, 39-41.

11. Charles Lanman, *The Private Life of Daniel Webster* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858), pp. 135-36.

12. Autobiography in Charles M. Wiltse, et al., eds., *The Papers of Daniel Webster, Correspondence* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1974-1986, 7 volumes), vol. 1, p. 14 (autobiography). Hereafter cited as *Correspondence*.

13. Maurice G. Baxter, *One and Inseparable: Daniel Webster and the Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 3.

14. Claude M. Fuess, *Daniel Webster* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1930, 2 volumes), vol. 1, p. 25.

15. Autobiography in *Correspondence*, vol. 1, pp. 14-15.

16. Lyman, *Life and Memorials*, vol. 1, p. 193.

17. Daniel Webster to Benjamin Welch, 10 June 1842, in Fletcher Webster, ed., *The Private Correspondence of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1857, 2 volumes), vol. 2, pp. 255-56. Hereafter cited as *Private Correspondence of Webster*.

18. Baxter, *One and Inseparable*, pp. 73-74.

19. Webster to Alexander Bliss, 29 August 1820, Bancroft-Bliss Papers, Library of Congress.

20. Webster to James W. Paige, 27 May 1825, in C. H. Van Tyne, ed., *The Letters of Daniel Webster* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1902), p. 612.

21. See the letters written by Grace Webster in 1826 in *ibid.*, pp. 711-13.

22. Webster to Henry Cabot, 4 June 1825, in *Correspondence*, vol. 2, pp. 51-52.

23. Schullery, *American Fly Fishing*, p. 47.

24. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, vol. 3 (August 1832), p. 624.

25. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 3 May 1849, in Van Tyne, *Letters of Daniel Webster*, pp. 714-15.

26. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, vol. 3 (August 1832), p. 624.

27. Webster to Henry Cabot, 4 June 1825, in *Correspondence*, vol. 2, pp. 51-52.

28. Webster to Issac P. Davis, 29 March 1830, in *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 48-49.

29. Brown, *American Angler's Guide*, p. 232.

30. Speech at Syracuse, May 1851, in James W. McIntyre, ed., *The National Edition of the Writings*

and Speeches of Daniel Webster (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1903, 18 volumes), vol. 13, p. 422.

31. *Boston Daily Advertiser and Repetory*, 17 June 1822.

32. Charles Eliot Goodspeed, *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939), p. 133.

33. Peter Harvey, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1877), p. 264.

34. Baxter, *One and Inseparable*, pp. 282-84.

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36. Irving H. Bartlett, *Daniel Webster* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), p. 208.

37. Allan Nevins, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1927), pp. 736-40.

38. For an accont of a fishing contest between Richard Blatchford and another guest, see Lyman, *Life and Memorials*, vol. 2, pp. 121-32.

39. Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, pp. 90-91.

40. Lyman, *Life and Memorials*, vol. 2, pp. 130-32.

41. Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, pp. 91-92.

42. Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 664.

43. Webster to Mrs. Edward Curtis, 4 May 1842, in *Correspondence*, vol. 5, pp. 203-05.

44. Webster to Mrs. Edward Curtis, 26 May 1842, in Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 109-11.

45. Webster to Edward Everett, 28 November 1842, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 156.

46. Harvey, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Webster*, pp. 279-80.

47. Gershom Bradford, "The Unknown Webster," *Old-Time New England*, vol. 44 (Fall 1953), p. 56.

48. Speech of 25 July 1852, in Kenneth E. Shewmaker, ed., *Daniel Webster: "The Completest Man"* (Hanover, N.H., and London: University Press of New England, 1990), pp. 293-95.

49. Baxter, *One and Inseparable*, p. 282.

50. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate*, pp. 388-89.

51. Webster to Millard Fillmore, 13 July 1852, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 535-36. Lake Como had previously been called Chance Pond and today it is called Webster Lake.

52. Webster to George Ticknor, 21 February 1846, in *Correspondence*, vol. 6, pp. 22-24.

53. Webster to Millard Fillmore, 13 July 1852, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 535-36; Webster to Richard Blatchford, 30 August 1849, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 341.

54. Baxter, *One and Inseparable*, p. 282.

55. Webster to John Davis, 2 October 1838, in *Correspondence*, vol. 4, p. 331.

56. Boston *Atlas*, 9 August 1843.

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58. Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, p. 66.

59. Schullery, *American Fly Fishing*, p. 29.

60. For information on Lanman, see Dorothy McNeilly, "Charles Lanman," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 11 (Summer 1984), pp. 14-19.

61. Webster to Edward Everett, 27 September 1851, in *Correspondence*, vol. 7, pp. 274-75.

62. Josephine Seaton, *William Winston Seaton of the "National Intelligencer": A Biographical Sketch* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1871), pp. 297-98.

63. Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 511.

64. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 27 June 1851, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 446-48.

65. Charles Lanman to Daniel Webster, 9 June 1851, Webster Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 511-20.

66. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 27 June 1851, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 446-48.

67. Lyman, *Life and Memorials of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 263-65.

68. Harvey, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Webster*, p. 366; Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 220-22.

69. Lyman, *Life and Memorials of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 56; Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, p. 85.

70. Harvey, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Webster*, p. 366.

71. Webster to Harriette Story White Paige, 29 April 1847, in *Correspondence*, vol. 6. pp. 231-32.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

73. Bulwer to Webster, 25 June 1851, Webster Papers, Library of Congress.

74. Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, p. 90.

75. Lanman, *Recollections of Curious Characters and Pleasant Places* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1881), pp. 223-24; Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, pp. 99-100.

76. For information on the carriage accident see Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 605-07. Lanman provided Curtis with a detailed account of the mishap. For a briefer account see Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, pp. 173-74.

77. Editors, "A Checklist of Works by Charles Lanman," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 11 (Fall 1984), p. 19.

78. Brown, *American Angler's Guide*, pp. 99-108.

79. "Method of Making Artificial Flies," *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, vol. 2 (September 1830), pp. 35-37.

80. Genio C. Scott, *Fishing American Waters* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1869), p. 30.

81. "Notes by the Editor," *Spirit of the Times*, vol. 6, 9 April 1843, p. 67.

82. Webster to Henry Cabot, 4 June 1825, in *Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 221.

83. For information on nineteenth-century hooks, see Brown, *American Angler's Guide*, pp. 26-27. Brown preferred the Limerick to the Kirby.

84. Webster to Issac P. Davis, 26 June 1842, in *Correspondence*, vol. 5, p. 221.

85. Bill from Joseph West and Company for $12.37 for fishing tackle, 25 May 1849, Webster Papers, Dartmouth College.

86. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 11 June 1847, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 256.

87. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 17 June 1847, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 257-58.

88. Schullery, *American Fly Fishing*, p. 39.

89. Scott, *Fishing American Waters*, p. 173.

90. Webster to Benjamin Welch, 10 June 1847, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 255-56.

91. Timothy Hedges to Webster, 13 September 1847, Webster Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

92. "An Extraordinary Acquisition: The Daniel Webster Rod," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 6 (Fall 1979), pp. 21-22.

93. Webster to Richard Blatchford, 15 September 1851, in Private Correspondence of Webster, vol. 2, pp. 471-72.

94. Webster to Blatchford, 17 July 1849, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 328-29.

95. Webster to Blatchford, 8 August 1849, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 332-34.

96. Webster to Blatchford, 15 August 1849, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 339.

97. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 27 June 1851, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 446-48.

98. "Trout Fishing in the Neighbourhood of Carlisle," *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, vol. 1 (August 1830), pp. 613-14.

99. Unsigned letter, "A Mammoth Trout," *ibid.*, vol. 2 (August 1831), p. 609.

100. "Deer Hunting and Trout Fishing on Long Island," *ibid.*, vol. 2 (March 1831), pp. 343-44.

101. "Johnny Trout Beat at Last," *ibid.*, vol. 3 (August 1832), p. 624.

102. Henry Grinnell to Webster, 22 May 1845, in *Correspondence*, vol. 6, pp. 88-89.

103. Webster to Henry Grinnell, 15 April 1845, in Shewmaker, "Three Daniel Webster Letters on Fishing," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 10 (Winter 1983), pp. 10-11.

104. Editorial Note, *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, vol. 4 (June 1833), p. 528.

105. Kenneth E. Shewmaker, "'Hook and line, and bob and sinker': Daniel Webster and the Fisheries Dispute of 1852," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 9 (Spring 1985), p. 123.

106. Webster to Richard Blatchford, 24 August 1852, in Shewmaker, ed., *The Papers of Daniel Webster, Diplomatic Papers* (Hanover, N.H., and London: University Press of New England, 1983-1987, 2 volumes), vol. 2, p. 712.

107. Cited in Shewmaker, "'Hook and line, and bob and sinker,'" p. 122.

108. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate*, p. 295.

109. McIntyre, *Writings and Speeches of Webster*, vol. 3, pp. 3-36.

110. The Bunker Hill Speech as cited in Shewmaker, *"The Completest Man,"* p. 101.

111. Note by Fletcher Webster in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 257.

112. Lanman, *Private Life of Webster*, p. 99.

113. See Webster's autobiography in *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 14; see also Webster to Fletcher Webster, 12 June 1847, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 257.

114. Webster to Fletcher Webster, 12 June 1841, Webster Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

115. Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 663-64.

116. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 222.

117. Lanman, "The Annals of Angling," pp. 311-12.

118. Schullery, *American Fly Fishing*, p. 245.

119. Brown, *American Angler's Guide*, p. 17.

120. Cornelius C. Felton as cited in Curtis, *Life of Webster*, vol. 2, p. 670.

121. Daniel Webster's Last Will and Testament, 21 October 1852, in *Correspondence*, vol. 7, p. 370.

122. Inventory of Daniel Webster's Estate, 1 January 1853, in *Correspondence*, vol. 7, pp. 376-77.

123. Webster to Charles Henry Thomas, 4 February 1836, in *Correspondence*, vol. 4, p. 82.

124. Webster to John Davis, 2 October 1838, in *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 331.

125. Webster to Richard Blatchford, 23 August 1851, in *Private Correspondence of Webster*, vol. 2, pp. 464-65.

126. Richard N. Current, *Daniel Webster and the Rise of National Conservatism* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 183.

127. Webster to Charles Henry Thomas, 19 November 1841, Webster Papers, Dartmouth College.

128. Shewmaker, "Three Webster Letters on Fishing," p. 11.

129. John Hope Franklin to the author, 15 May 1987. Needless to say, Professor Franklin is an avid trout fisherman.