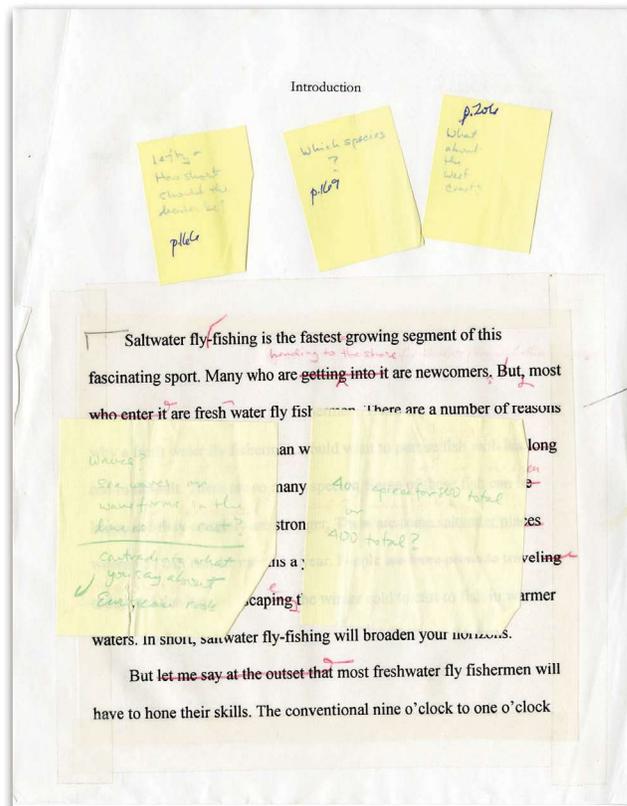


The Legacy of Lefty



This image shows Lefty Kreh (left) with his first 100-pound tarpon catch. He is accompanied by his friend and fellow saltwater legend, Stu Apte. From the collection of AMFF courtesy of Lefty Kreh.



This annotated document is the first-page introduction to the book L.L.Bean Saltwater Fly-Fishing Handbook, published by Lyons Press in 2001. The entire original manuscript is in the museum's collection. From the collection of AMFF courtesy of Lefty Kreh.

EVERY SPORT HAS an important figure who is recognized by first name alone, whether it's a given name or a nickname. Hearing that name evokes an instant image, often among people who don't even follow that sport. Golf has Tiger, baseball has Babe, and tennis has Billie Jean. We fly fishers have Lefty.

Bernard "Lefty" Kreh was born in America during the age of flappers, early talking pictures, and Prohibition. Some historians believe that at this time—the mid-1920s—American fly fishing had reached one of its many peaks. In fact, Lefty was born the same year that Howard Bonbright's tarpon fly pattern was in commercial production at Abercrombie & Fitch.

Fast-forward to 1947. After serving the country in World War II, Lefty met fly-fishing legend Joe Brooks, who introduced him to the sport. From then on, Lefty's life was focused

on angling. He spent the next several decades writing magazine articles, publishing books (his *Fly Fishing in Saltwater* is in its third edition), analyzing and teaching new casting techniques, making television appearances, photographing fishing locations and angling personalities, creating new fly patterns (the Deceiver is his most popular), designing equipment and boats, and managing important saltwater events (specifically the Miami Metropolitan Fishing Tournament). Lefty is acknowledged as one of the great saltwater pioneers who questioned, challenged, and innovated the sport.

Lefty Kreh has always shared his *ideas* about fly fishing. Recently, he decided to share his personal collection as well. In 2011, the museum received materials and artifacts that document Lefty's illustrious career. This collection contains correspondence, dozens of books he authored, some of his original



Lefty improved his line drag by cutting a thumb insert in this Pflueger Medalist reel. This is the first fly reel that Lefty ever bought, in 1947. From the collection of AMFF courtesy of Lefty Kreh.

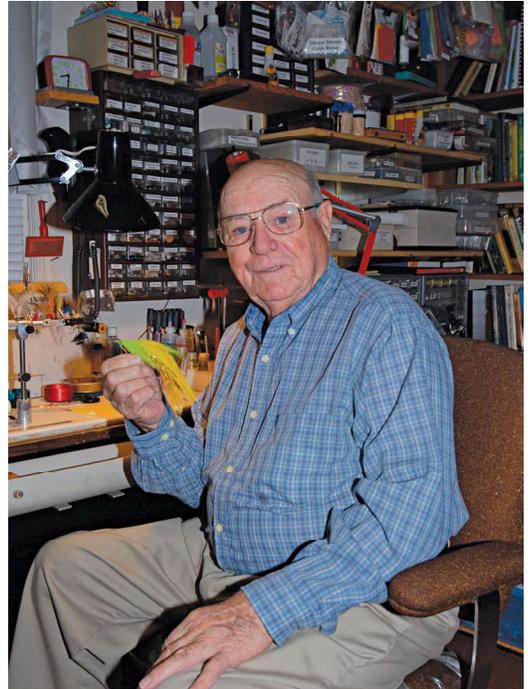


Lefty developed this streamer pattern, which can be used for both saltwater and freshwater fishing, in the 1950s. This Deceiver was tied by Lefty in 2012. From the collection of AMFF courtesy of Lefty Kreh.

fly patterns, and photographs of friends fishing (including Stu Apte and Flip Pallot). Some of the important equipment designs he developed are represented in his fiberglass rods from the 1950s and 1960s, the Tibor reel set he designed with Flip Pallot and Ted Juracsik, and the first fly reel he ever purchased (in 1947), a Pflueger Medalist, in which he created a unique thumb control by cutting an opening into the side plate.

Special items include a gold-plated one-of-a-kind vise made especially for him, and one of the fly-tying vises that he often used on his tying bench.

The museum is fortunate that we do not need to struggle to fill in the collection gaps to tell Lefty's story; he has made provisions for us to acquire the remainder of his personal collection at a later date. As an educational institution, it is exciting to know that we will be able to document Lefty's accomplishments through this collection.



Lefty in his fly-tying shop in Maryland. From the collection of AMFF courtesy of Lefty Kreh.

Lefty is working with the museum on our upcoming saltwater project as well. In March 2012, he was one of nine saltwater pioneers who gathered at the International Game Fish Association to be interviewed and filmed, thus recording some of the history that they both shaped and watched unfold. He and our deputy director are working to piece together the highlights of his fly-fishing career and to ensure that our collection represents his contributions. In the coming months, we plan to stay in touch as the saltwater project plans are developed.

Lefty Kreh has spent most of his life sharing his knowledge with the fly-fishing community, and it is through his generous donation to the American Museum of Fly Fishing that we are able to truly see his legacy.

—CATHI COMAR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR