

# The American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

SUMMER 1997

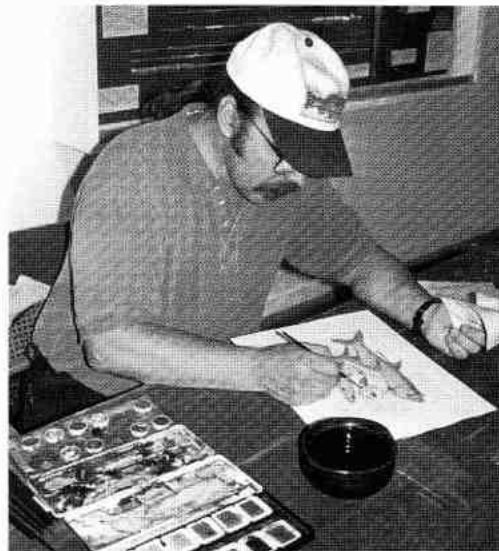
VOLUME 23 NUMBER 3



Museum grounds showcased the work of boatmaker Gregory Sowers during festival weekend.



Festival weekend guests were transported to nearby Equinox Pond, where they enjoyed an afternoon of fishing and socializing.



Alan James Robinson, whose exhibit opened at the Museum the night before, was on hand during festival weekend to demonstrate his painting technique.

## Summer Stock

IT'S BEEN A BUSY SPRING. Two of our staff members got married (not to each other), we celebrated another successful festival weekend at the Museum, we welcomed a new executive director (see page 29), and the journal staff prepared this Summer 1997 issue for you to enjoy during those few hours that you're not on the water.

Last December, Paul Morosky paid us a visit, bringing with him a photo album that belonged to his great-grandfather, Archibald Mitchell, a salmon fisher and creator of the Mitchell salmon fly. Mr. Morosky has been successfully researching the details of his relative's life. In "The Ristigouche Atlantic Salmon Fishing of Archibald Mitchell," we share with you not only some basic biographical information about this angler, but some of the images from that historic album of photographs as well.

Notes & Comment features "The Earliest Fishing Reel: A New Perspective." Frederick Buller discusses the earliest known artistic representation of a fishing reel, housed in the J. Paul Getty Museum, which suggests that anglers were using reels at least 1,500 years ago.

In a salute to American summertime, the American Revolution, and American fishing, we present "General Lafayette's Visit to the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill," an excerpt from *An Authentic Historical Memoir of the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill*, written by William Milnor in 1830. This official transcript of the first angling club founded in the New World relates the tale of the visit of, and bestowal of honorary membership upon, this leader of two revolutions. Curator Jon Mathewson provides some introductory background to this piece.

We always enjoy our festival weekend here at the Museum. Photos from our favorite annual event appear at left and in Museum News.

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
EDITOR



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM  
OF FLY FISHING  
*Preserving the Heritage  
of Fly Fishing*

TRUSTEES

E. M. Bakwin	Janet Mavec
Michael Bakwin	Wayne Nordberg
Foster Bam	O. Miles Pollard
Paul Bofinger	Allan K. Poole
James H. Carey	Pamela B. Richards
Michael D. Copeland	Tom Rosenbauer
Peter Corbin	Robert G. Scott
Thomas N. Davidson	James Spendiff
Charles Ferree	Arthur Stern
Reed Freyermuth	John Swan
Gardner L. Grant	James Taylor
James Hunter	Richard G. Tisch
Dr. Arthur Kaemmer	David H. Walsh
Woods King III	Richard J. Warren
Walter Matia	James C. Woods

TRUSTEES EMERITI

G. Dick Finlay	Leon Martuch
W. Michael Fitzgerald	Keith C. Russell
Robert N. Johnson	Paul Schullery
David B. Ledlie	Stephen Sloan

OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	Richard G. Tisch
<i>Vice Presidents</i>	Arthur Stern Pamela B. Richards
<i>Treasurer</i>	James H. Carey
<i>Secretary</i>	James C. Woods

STAFF

<i>Executive Director</i>	Gary Tanner
<i>Executive Assistant</i>	Marianne Kennedy
<i>Curator</i>	Jon C. Mathewson
<i>Development Director</i>	Eric Brown
<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Paula M. Welch

THE AMERICAN FLY FISHER

<i>Editor</i>	Kathleen Achor
<i>Design &amp; Production</i>	Randall Rives Perkins
<i>Copy Editor</i>	Sarah May Clarkson
<i>Consulting Editor</i>	Margot Page
<i>Contributing Editor</i>	Paul Schullery



# The American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

SUMMER 1997

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 3

The Ristigouche Atlantic Salmon Fishing  
of Archibald Mitchell . . . . . 2  
*Paul A. Morosky*

Notes & Comment:  
The Earliest Fishing Reel: A New Perspective . . . . . 14  
*Frederick Buller*

Off the Shelf:  
General Lafayette's Visit to the Schuylkill Fishing  
Company of the State in Schuylkill . . . . . 19  
*William Milnor*

Museum Exhibits . . . . . 23

Gallery:  
Charles DeFeo . . . . . 24

Museum News . . . . . 26

Contributor . . . . . 28

New Executive Director . . . . . 29

ON THE COVER: *Runnymede Lodge guides with the "First catch of 1911."*  
(See Archibald Mitchell, "Stories of the Taking of the Record Fish," *Field & Stream*, January 1913, vol. 17, no. 9, p. 998.)

*The American Fly Fisher* is published

four times a year by the Museum at P.O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254.

Publication dates are winter, spring, summer, and fall. Membership dues include the cost of the journal (\$25) and are tax deductible as provided for by law. Membership rates are listed in the back of each issue. All letters, manuscripts, photographs, and materials intended for publication in the journal should be sent to the Museum. The Museum and journal are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, drawings, photographic material, or memorabilia. The Museum cannot accept responsibility for statements and interpretations that are wholly the author's. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless postage is provided. Contributions to *The American Fly Fisher* are to be considered gratuitous and the property of the Museum unless otherwise requested by the contributor. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *American History and Life*. Copyright © 1997, the American Museum of Fly Fishing, Manchester, Vermont 05254. Original material appearing may not be reprinted without prior permission. Second Class Permit postage paid at Manchester

Vermont 05254 and additional offices (USPS 057410). *The American Fly Fisher* (ISSN 0884-3562)

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Fly Fisher*, P.O. Box 42,

Manchester, Vermont 05254.

# The Ristigouche Atlantic Salmon Fishing of Archibald Mitchell

by Paul A. Morosky

ANYONE WHO HAS fly fished seriously for Atlantic salmon has heard wonderful tales and folklore about the magnificent salmon fly fishing in Canada during the “early days”—unspoiled rivers, countless fish, and huge salmon. What was it really like to be one of those pioneers experiencing perhaps the finest of all fly fishing?

David B. Ledlie has provided excellent insight into this era with his articles in *The American Fly Fisher* (Spring 1976 and others) concerning Dean Sage and the fishing at his Camp Harmony on Canada’s Ristigouche River (now Restigouche River), c. 1875–1902.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, John Mundt, in “The Historic Penobscot: America’s Atlantic Salmon Fishing Legacy” (*The American Fly Fisher*, Summer 1996), recounts the first Atlantic salmon fly fishing on the Penobscot River in Maine by Frederick W. Ayer and others in the mid-1880s.<sup>2</sup>

Another opportunity to learn more of this wondrous early sport is found in the stories about the Atlantic salmon fly-fishing years of Archibald Mitchell of Norwich, Connecticut, from about 1886 to 1923. Mitchell was introduced to fly fishing for salmon on the Penobscot River by Fred Ayer in 1886, and in 1892 they began three decades of salmon fishing on the Ristigouche.<sup>3</sup> Two salmon-fishing companions are responsible for preserving the history of Mitchell’s fishing: Albert Nelson Cheney and Edward Alan Olds. Mitchell communicated regularly by letter and telegram with Cheney, who preserved portions of those communications in

his weekly column, “Angling Notes,” in the nineteenth-century periodical *Forest and Stream* (now *Field & Stream*). Olds was Mitchell’s son-in-law, and when fishing with his father-in-law he brought along a camera! Through Cheney’s words and Olds’s photographs, it is possible to travel back a century to glimpse the superb fishing of that time.

The setting for Mitchell’s fishing was a stretch of the Ristigouche River shown on pages 6 and 7. From 1892 until 1902, he owned and fished the Alford water opposite Camp Harmony.<sup>4</sup> In the years from 1902 until his death in 1923, Mitchell owned the Dawson Farm and fished the abutting Dawson water on the Ristigouche.<sup>5</sup> He also owned fishing rights to other pools on the Ristigouche and its Upsalquitch tributary, but he had his greatest successes in the High Rock, Florence, and Rough Water pools of the Dawson water.<sup>6</sup> The Dawson farmhouse was referred to as Runnymede Lodge, or the “Old Camp,” and was expanded at least twice to accommodate additional guests. Around 1915, a luxurious and much larger “New Camp” was built between the farmhouse and the river, and the name Runnymede Lodge was transferred to this new camp.<sup>7</sup>

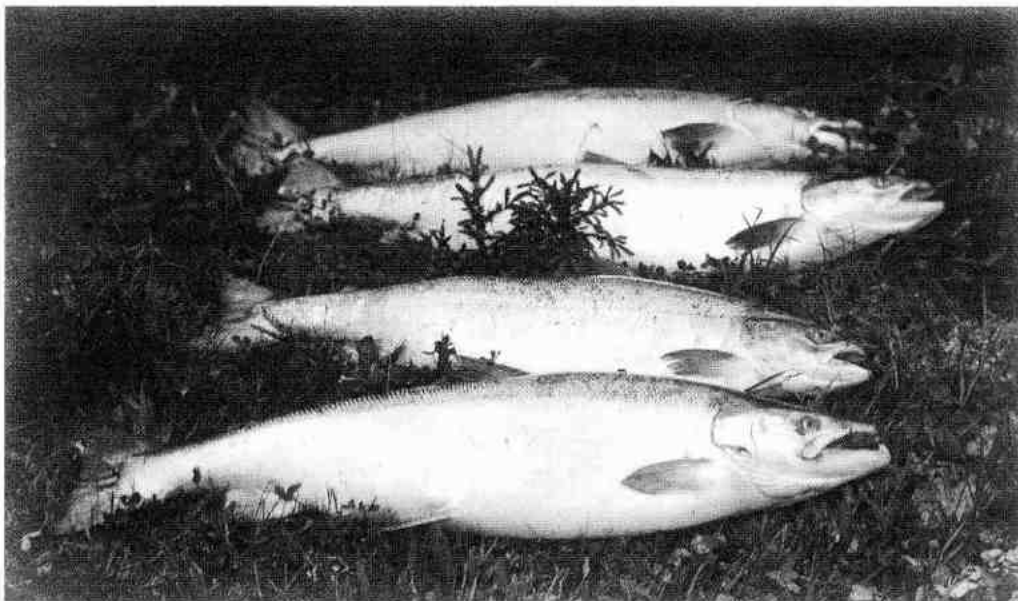
How magnificent was the fishing? Olds’s photographs, reproduced on these pages, give testimony to the numbers and size of fish caught on a daily basis. Mitchell’s reports to Cheney are equally enlightening. On 29 June 1896, he wrote to Cheney, “This morning I killed my fifty-sixth salmon (in June). I

will send you the fish by tonight’s express and hope you receive it in good condition (for supper)—This is better fishing than I expected and I may not live long enough to strike it so rich again.”<sup>8</sup> The 1912 season was similarly rich and he wrote, “I began fishing this year on Monday, June 10th, and had met with good success up to June 27th, having up to this time killed fifty fish, weighing in the aggregate 1,001 pounds.”<sup>9</sup> And in 1900, Mitchell defined the word *blasé* when he reported to Cheney about his June fishing: “Leaving out all under twenty pounds, I had twenty fish.”<sup>10</sup> Today’s salmon angler wonders with awe: When was the last time a fly fisher casually ignored all salmon weighing less than 20 pounds?

In his life, Mitchell caught two salmon weighing more than 40 pounds, one in 1912, which is shown on page 11, and another in 1918. Mitchell and Cheney agreed that “the most remarkable salmon score for one day’s fishing that ever came to my knowledge . . .” was that of James Barnes Baker, who in one day on the Grand Cascapectia in 1898 landed seven salmon weighing 28, 30, 35, 35, 38, 40, and 41 pounds.<sup>11</sup> Such a day boggles the imagination of the present-day salmon fly fisher, who may not hope for such a record in a lifetime. Yet he or she can find solace in Mitchell’s words: “It was my fortune, or misfortune, to fish on a salmon river every day but Sunday for three weeks one season without getting a rise.”<sup>12</sup> Even in the glorious early days, there was no guarantee of successful salmon fishing. ∞



*On more than one occasion, Archibald Mitchell Jr. (Archie) achieved the honor of landing the first salmon of the season on the Ristigouche River system, much to his father's delight. (See Albert Nelson Cheney, "Angling Notes," Forest and Stream, 15 June 1901, p. 467.)*



*The note on the back of this Runnymede Lodge photograph (c. 1911) reads, "23, 26, 29 and 32—not bad for a morning." Today, the average salmon fly fisherman might say "not bad" for a season, if not a lifetime.*

## Archibald Mitchell



**A**RCHIBALD MITCHELL was born in Cupar, Fife, Scotland, in 1844. As a boy, he developed a love for trout fishing in the Eden Stream in Fife Shire. In 1869, with his friends James Hyslop and John Porteous, he emigrated to the United States, where the three began an apprenticeship at the Brown, Thompkins and McWirter Dry Goods Store in Hartford, Connecticut. Four years later, they established the Hyslop, Porteous and Mitchell

Dry Goods Store in Norwich, Connecticut. The business grew rapidly and became eastern Connecticut's largest department store with branches in New London and Middletown, Connecticut; Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Saginaw, Michigan; Portland, Maine; and Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 1877, Archibald Mitchell married Mary Catherine Foley of Hartford. They settled in Norwich, where they raised three children: Archibald Jr. (Archie), Edith, and Isabel. Mitchell led an active life outside of his business interests. A lover and supporter of the musical arts, he sponsored concerts in Norwich by world-famous musicians and acquired an exceptional collection of rare Stradivarius violins.<sup>13</sup>

Of all his activities, fly fishing for Atlantic salmon proved to be his greatest love. In 1886, Frederick Ayer of Bangor, Maine (see "The Historic Penobscot: America's Atlantic Salmon Fishing Legacy," *The American Fly Fisher*, Summer 1996), introduced Archibald Mitchell to fly fishing for salmon on the Penobscot River.<sup>14</sup> In her 1892 book, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*, Mary Orvis Mar-

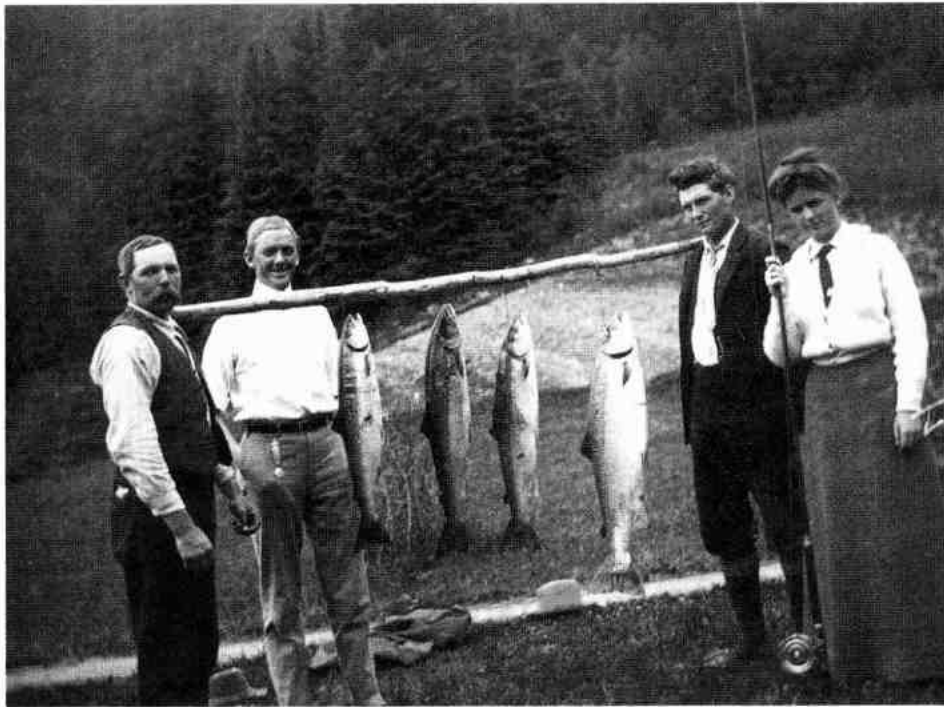
bury gives an account of the creation of the Mitchell salmon fly and reports that "Mr. Mitchell is a most accomplished fisherman, and at the Fly Casters Tournament, held in New York City in 1889, was greatly envied by all who witnessed his casting. His grace and accuracy aroused unlimited enthusiasm."<sup>15</sup> In 1891, he fished for salmon at the famous Lorne Cottage on the Grand Cascapedia and reported this experience in his chap-

ter on salmon fishing in E. A. Samuels's 1897 book, *With Rod and Gun in New England and the Maritime Provinces*.<sup>16</sup> A year later, Mitchell acquired the Alford property near the hamlet of Runnymede on the Ristigouche (now Restigouche) River, along with its fishing rights, for \$7,000. In 1902, he again authored a chapter on salmon fishing in Frank Mackie Johnson's book, *Forest, Lake and River*.<sup>17</sup> Also in that year, Mitchell and Ayer purchased the Dawson Farm on the Ristigouche for \$4,000 ("house, furniture and land") and paid an additional \$40,000 for the fishing rights on the Ristigouche abutting the property, a princely sum in those days.<sup>18</sup> In later years, Mitchell and others founded and built the famous Runnymede Lodge on the Dawson property. From 1902 until his death in 1923, Mitchell typically spent "the season" (June through August) either at the "Old Camp" (Dawson farmhouse) or the "New Camp" (Runnymede Lodge), fishing for salmon every day except Sundays, as required by Scottish tradition.

P.M.

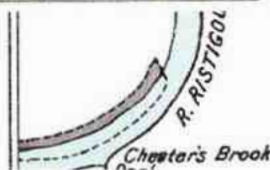
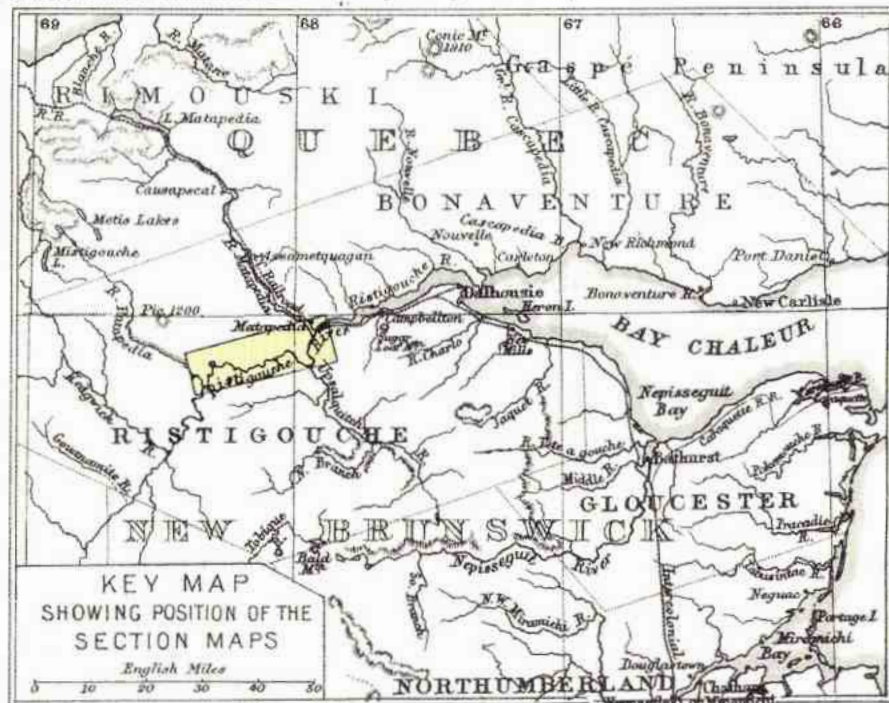


*Travelers on their way to fish Archibald Mitchell's waters on the Ristigouche River passed the original clubhouse of the Ristigouche Salmon Club, c. 1902.*



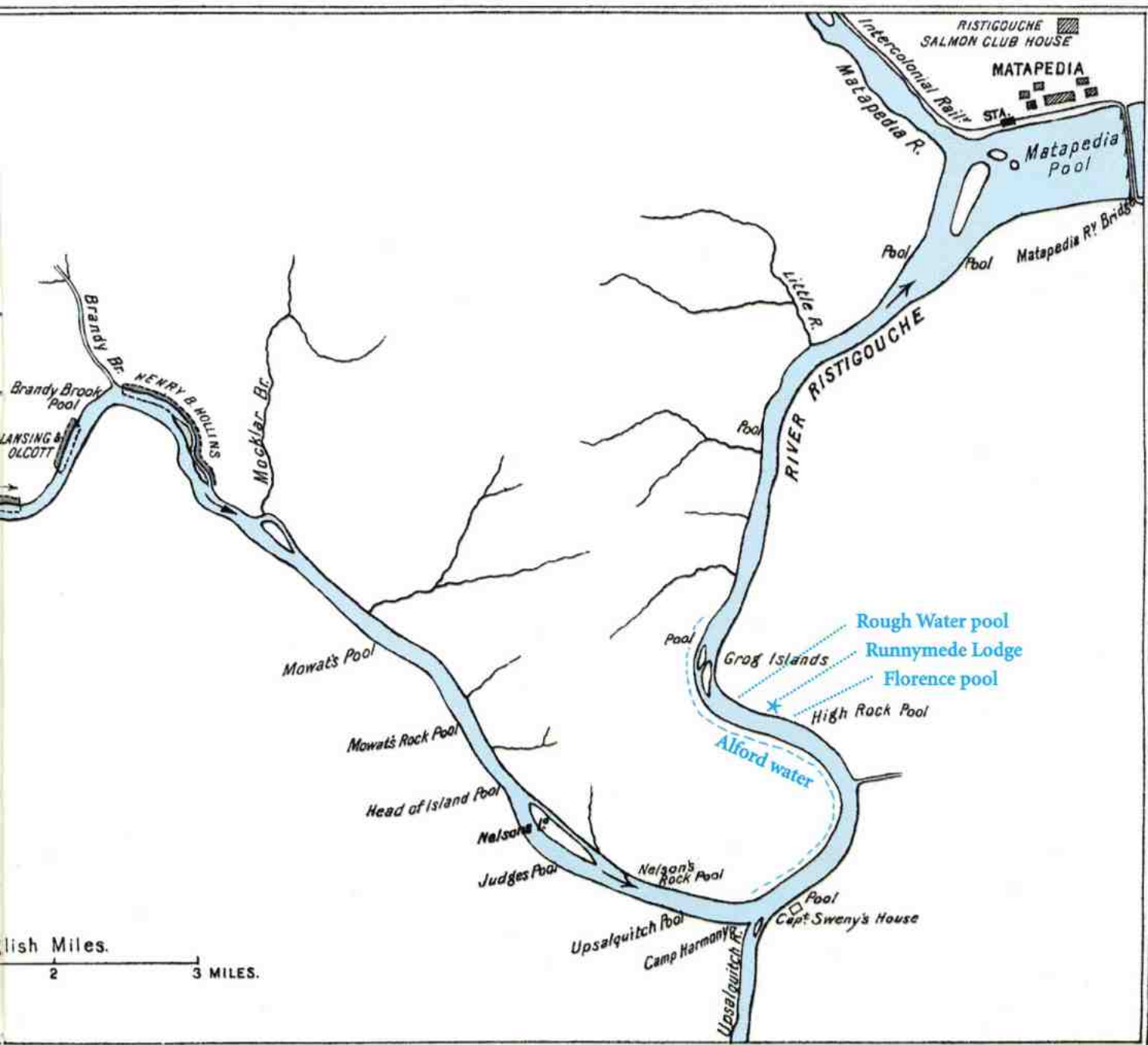
*Not to be outdone by her brother Archie, Isabel Mitchell carried on the traditions of the Scottish fly fisherwoman.*

Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University



The original Dawson farmhouse, with furnishings and 300 acres, was purchased by Archibald Mitchell and Frederick Ayer for \$4,000 in 1902.





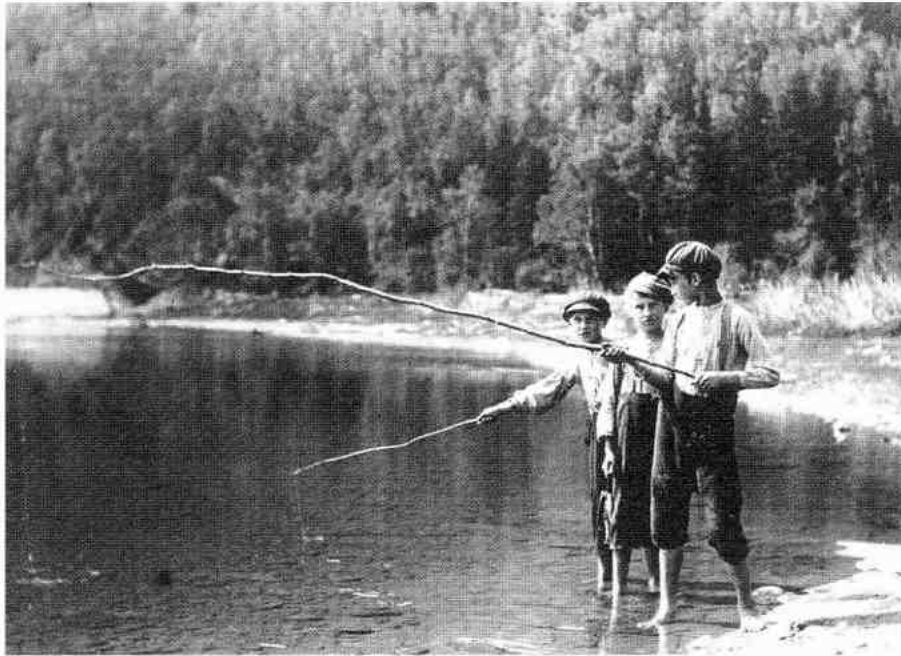
An 1888 map of the Ristigouche River from Dean Sage's *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1888, pp. 6-7), annotated to show the locations of the Alford water, Runnymede Lodge, and the Florence and Rough Water pools.



*The Dawson farmhouse (the "Old Camp," above) was enlarged to accommodate additional guests before the construction of Runnymede Lodge (the "New Camp").*



*George W. Styles, camp caretaker, on the porch of the "Old Camp"  
(Dawson farmhouse).*



*Future "salmon killers," c. 1902.*



*Archibald Mitchell (right) and his son-in-law Edward Alan Olds (left) surveying the site for the "New Camp" (Runnymede Lodge).*



David Wheeler, head boatman at Runnymede Lodge, landed Archibald Mitchell's 40-pound salmon in 1912, declaring, "This is the biggest salmon ever landed in my canoe and I have been a guide on this river continuously for over 30 years." (See Archibald Mitchell, "Stories of the Taking of the Record Fish," *Field & Stream*, January 1913, vol. 17, no. 9, p. 999.)

## The Mitchell Salmon Fly

THE ARTIST'S RENDERING that most exactly matches the Mitchell flies in the Mitchell collection is the one shown here from Frank Mackie Johnson's 1902 book, *Forest, Lake and River*.<sup>19</sup>

In a letter to Charles F. Orvis, c. 1890, Archibald Mitchell wrote:

I take pleasure in sending you the Mitchell salmon fly, as requested. Its history is short and easily told. I conceived the idea that a very dark fly would be a success on the Penobscot River, for salmon, and tied a few of them for the first time during the winter of 1887-1888. It is my own invention, and was not copied from any other fly. It was first tried on the Penobscot during the following spring.

A gentleman from Boston put one on his leader, when fishing one day after dinner, and, to my surprise and his delight, he hooked and brought to gaff two salmon on this fly during the afternoon.—Last spring, well on toward the end of the season, Mr. F. W. Ayer, of Bangor, killed a 27-pound salmon on one of these flies.

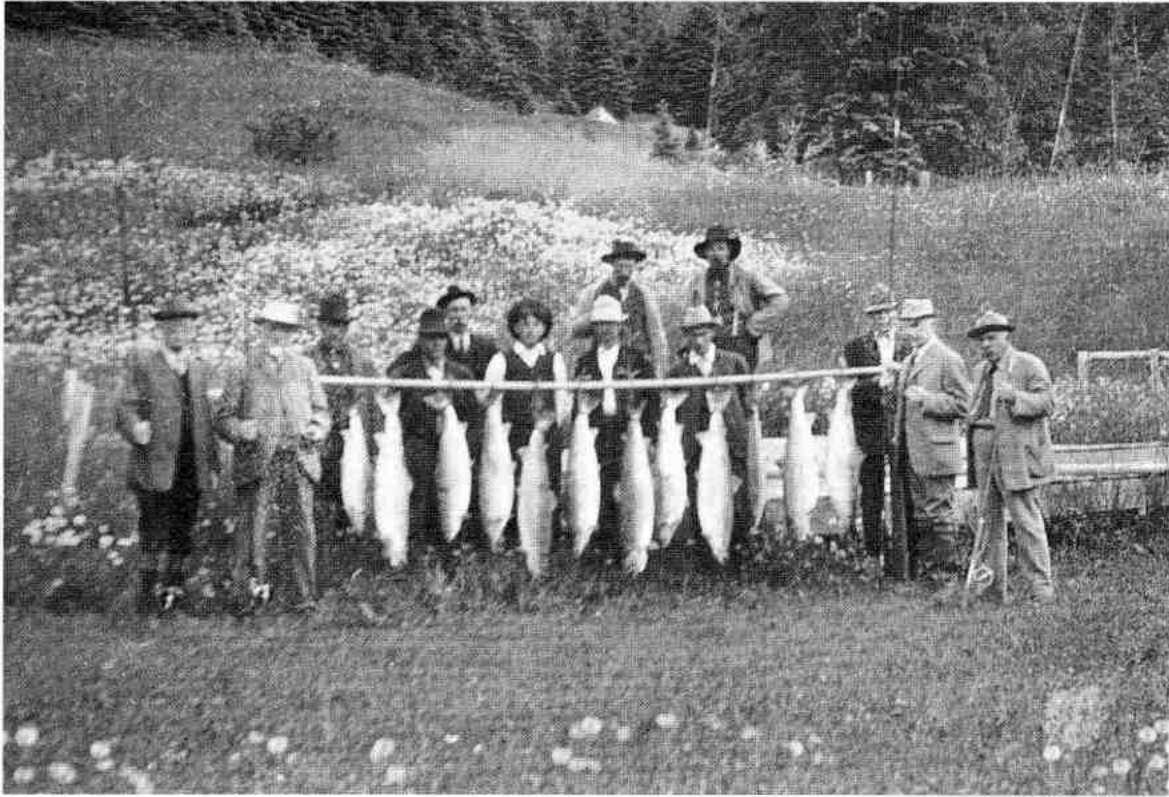
The writer, while on his way to Canada, during the last week in May, last year, spent one day at Bangor, and hooked a salmon, also on this fly—This happened at a time when the fishing was very poor, and it was the only fish that had been struck during the past ten days.



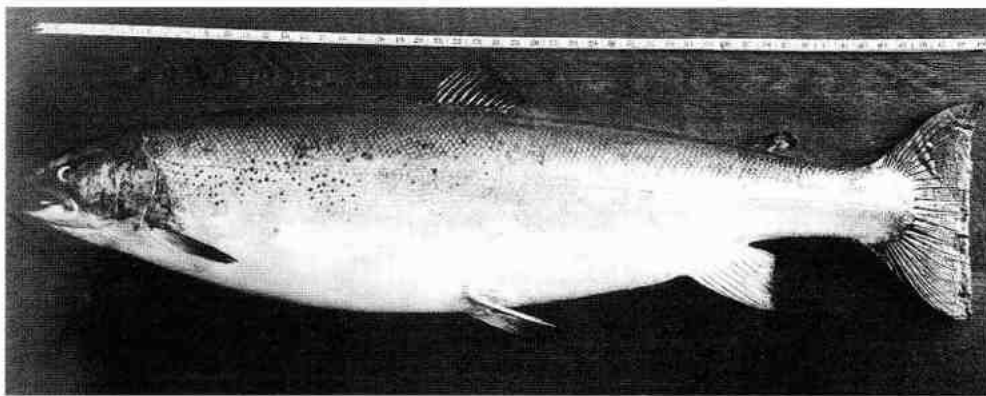
I therefore consider this fly, for a new one, has made a fair showing.<sup>20</sup>

A faithful reproduction of the Mitchell fly is shown in Mary Orvis Marbury's 1892 book, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*.<sup>21</sup> One of the many slight variations in dressing the Mitchell fly is shown in Joseph D. Bates's 1970 book, *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing*, wherein he wrote, "The Mitchell is a favorite fly in Newfoundland and other areas."<sup>22</sup>

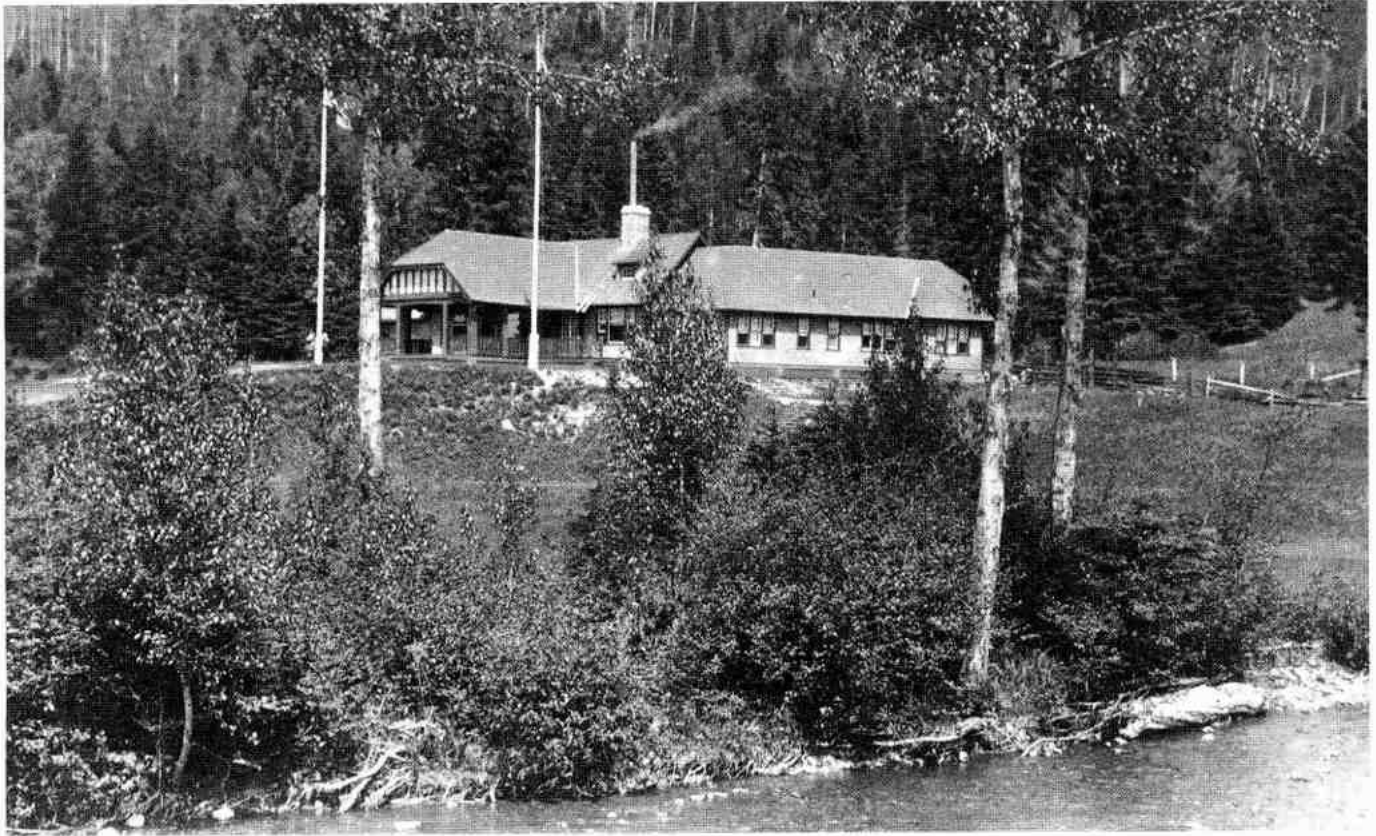
P.M.



*The note on the back of this photograph reads, "One morning's catch on Runnymede Lodge water, Ristigouche River, New Brunswick in June 1911, by four rods."*



*Forty-and-one-half-pound salmon caught by Archibald Mitchell in the Florence pool at Runnymede Lodge on 28 June 1912. This salmon proved to be the largest landed in North America that year. The largest known salmon landed by Mitchell was a forty-one-and-one-quarter-pounder caught in the Rough Water pool at Runnymede Lodge on 8 July 1918.*



*Runnymede Lodge ("New Camp") c. 1910, "Twixt Brook and Hill."*



*The road to Runnymede Lodge hugged the shore of the Ristigouche River.*



Archibald Mitchell and John Porteous, owners of the Hyslop, Porteous and Mitchell Dry Goods Store in Norwich, Connecticut.

#### ENDNOTES

1. David B. Ledlie, "Dean Sage Part II: The First Trip," *The American Fly Fisher*, Spring 1976, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 16–19.
2. John E. Mundt, "The Historic Penobscot: America's Atlantic Salmon Fishing Legacy," *The American Fly Fisher*, Summer 1996, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 2–9.
3. Charles Phair, *Atlantic Salmon Fishing* (1937; Camden, S.C.: Culler, 1995), p. 98.
4. Albert Nelson Cheney, "Angling Notes," *Forest and Stream*, 21 July 1892, p. 52.
5. Archibald Mitchell, "Stories of the Taking of the Record Fish," *Field & Stream*, January 1913, vol. 17, no. 9, pp. 996–99.
6. Archibald Mitchell, notebook 1902–1909, ms., Mitchell collection, P. A. Morosky, Groton Long Point, Connecticut, pp. 4–5.
7. Edward Alan Olds, photo album c. 1902–1918, Mitchell collection, P. A. Morosky, Groton Long Point, Connecticut.
8. Albert Nelson Cheney, "Angling Notes," *Forest and Stream*, 18 July 1896, p. 47.
9. Mitchell, "Record Fish," p. 998.
10. Albert Nelson Cheney, "Angling Notes," *Forest and Stream*, 18 August 1900, p. 127.
11. Albert Nelson Cheney, "Angling Notes," *Forest and Stream*, 7 January 1899, p. 14.
12. Archibald Mitchell, "Salmon Fishing," in *Forest, Lake and River: The Fishes of New England & Eastern Canada*, edited by Frank Mackie Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), pp. 33–43.
13. "Three Scotsmen Fulfilled Their American Dream In Norwich," *Norwich Bulletin*, 29 September 1991, p. 4.
14. Archibald Mitchell, "Salmon Fishing," in *With Rod and Gun in New England and the Maritime Provinces*, edited by Edward A. Samuels (Boston: Samuels & Kimball, 1897), p. 219.
15. Mary Orvis Marbury, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* (1892; Secaucus, N.J.: Wellfleet Press, 1988), p. 41.
16. Mitchell, "Salmon Fishing," in *With Rod and Gun*, pp. 216–26.
17. Mitchell, "Salmon Fishing," in *Forest, Lake and River*, pp. 33–43.
18. Mitchell, notebook 1902–1909, p. 5.
19. Frank Mackie Johnson, *Forest, Lake and River: The Fishes of New England & Eastern Canada* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), p. 32.
20. Marbury, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*, p. 53.
21. Marbury, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*, Plate B, No. 21.
22. Joseph D. Bates, *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Stackpole Books, 1970), p. 219.

# The Earliest Fishing Reel: A New

by Frederick Buller

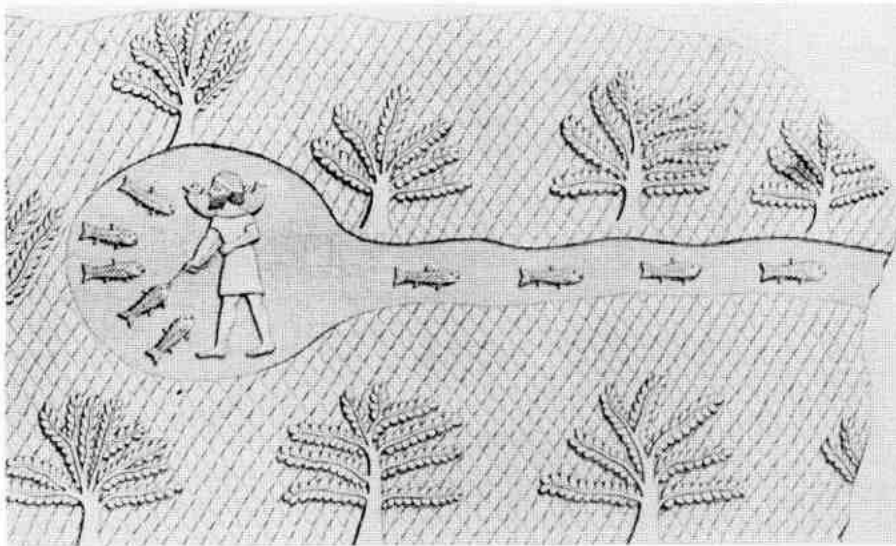


FIGURE 1. An Assyrian fishing with a hand-line; from Layard's *Monuments of Nineveh* (1849), 1st series, Pl. 673.

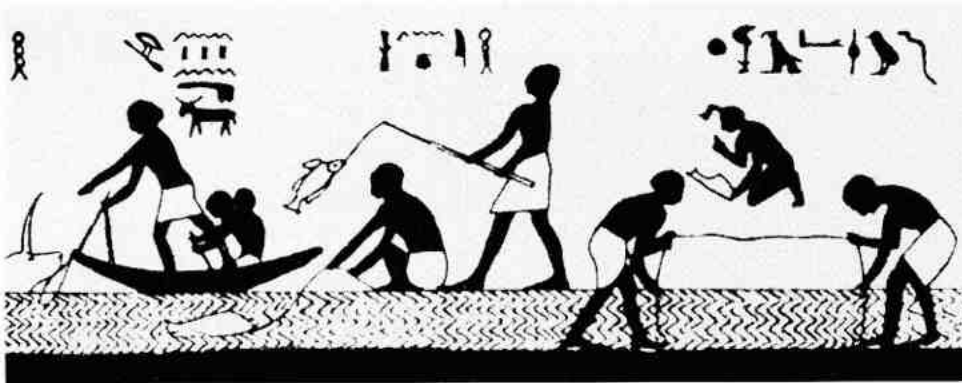


FIGURE 2. The earliest angling illustration, c. 2000 B.C., is from P. E. Newberry's *Beni Hasan* (1893), Part 1, Plt. 29. It depicts a party of Egyptian fishermen, including a kneeling angler hand-lining and a standing angler rod fishing. Both are fishing with a tight line.

A COMPREHENSIVE world history of the development of fishing tackle has yet to be written, notwithstanding our need for such a work. Most of us who are interested in the subject have a picture of the main events and are unaffected by the debate over peripheral issues, however enjoyable, such as who invented the multiplying reel or who was the first to produce a hexagonal-built cane rod.

Now, because of the comparatively recent recovery of a gilded silver plate engraved with the image of a fisherman holding a rod with a reel attached (that was long buried in a wreck off the coast of Israel and is now housed in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California), we may have to accept that fishing reels were probably in use 1,500 years ago.

Considering the early sophistication of hook making (the hook implies the existence of the fishing line), it may have taken thousands of years before the fishing rod came into being. Hand-lining was still *de rigueur* 5,000 years ago, as we can see from the illustration of an Assyrian fishing with a hand-line (Figure 1). Notice that he carries a bag of captured fish in a creel that hangs about his shoulders.

A thousand years later (c. 2000 B.C.), we have the first illustration of rod-fishing (Figure 2). Both methods shown coexisted and still coexist—methods that we now describe as tight-lining. After another long lapse of time (some two-and-a-half or three-and-a-half thousand years later), the next great advance in fishing technique was implemented: the running line, a loose line that slipped through a rod ring or rings. Even in medieval times, there was no mention of a top ring.



# Perspective

It is probable that a loose or a running line came into use in Europe some time during the sixteenth or the seventeenth centuries, although not until Thomas Barker's *The Art of Angling* (1651) was anything like a reel mentioned; nevertheless, the reel had been invented long before the mid-seventeenth century. Its origin seems likely (as we are accustomed to think) to have been in the Far East; as evidence for this, we have a Chinese painting depicting a type of fishing reel (a spoke reel) dated 1195 (Figure 3). When I visited China in 1986 to further my research on fishing reels, I found Chinese anglers using the same type of reel as their twelfth-century ancestors—albeit reels made from modern plastic materials rather than cane.

In the second edition of *Falkus & Buller's Freshwater Fishing* (1988), Hugh Falkus and I offered some of this information and much besides in our chapter on reels, believing that we had looked at all the evidence that was extant. To our surprise, a letter from Laurence Brown published in *The American Fly Fisher* (vol. 20, no. 4, Fall 1994) indicated that the J. Paul Getty Museum possesses a silver-gilt plate engraved with a fishing scene, which includes an image of a fishing reel, that is earlier than any previously recorded (Figure 4).

The engraving on the plate features a seated angler using both hands to unhook a fish. While so engaged, he secures his rod and reel by tucking the butt of the rod under his right arm. The plate, which features his catch of fish with other denizens of the sea, is nearly two feet in diameter and is dated

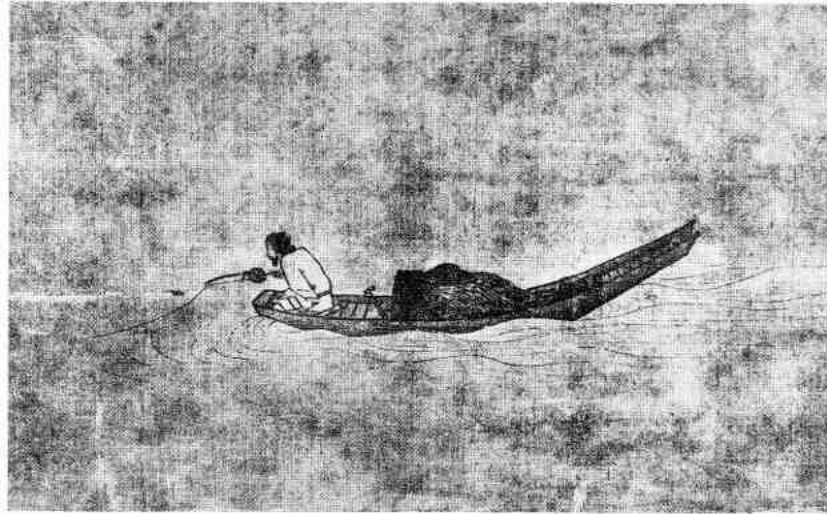


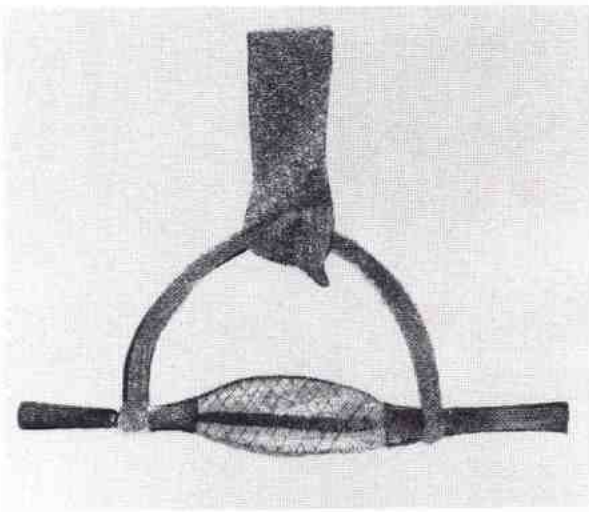
FIGURE 3. Angler on a Wintry Lake depicts an angler fishing from a boat. The painting shows what has long been thought to be the earliest known illustration of a fishing reel. It was painted by Ma Yuan more than 800 years ago. The reel shown is the classic "spoke" reel. From O. Siren, *History of Early Chinese Painting* (London, the Medici Society, 2 vols., 1933). Photograph courtesy of the British Library (Shelf No. LR 400 c. 20).



FIGURE 4. This photograph shows the Byzantine Plate with Relief Decoration believed to be sixth century A.D. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.



FIGURE 5. An Egyptian Reel. All four Nilotic fishing methods viz spear/harpoon, net, hand-line, or rod fishing, were, according to William Radcliffe in *Fishing from the Earliest Times* (1921), in synchronous use c. 2000 B.C. This picture is a detail from a representation in a tomb, portraying a harpoon reel used in hippo hunting. From P. E. Newberry's *Beni Hasan* (1893) Part 4, Pl. 13,3. Photograph courtesy of the British Library (Shelf No. 7703 pl/1).



by the museum from the Late Antique period (i.e., 400–700 A.D.).

Lacking a parallel example of such an early reel, there has been some unease as to the dating of the Getty plate. It has been suggested that rather than being fourth- to seventh-century Byzantine, the plate could be fifteenth-century Renaissance; but others point out that its foliate ornament is typical Byzantine and not found in Renaissance art.

The plate, once covered with a marine encrustation, is believed to have



FIGURE 6. A composite color print (much enlarged) of the Byzantine Plate is made from two 8-by-10-inch color prints joined together so as to reveal the details of great interest, i.e., the line loops that hang from the underside of the rod. Courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

been recovered by divers from an ancient shipwreck off the coast of Israel, but a satisfactory provenance for the item has yet to be established. (Sometimes valuable items change hands several times before being offered to museum authorities, and so their provenance remains obscure).

With the knowledge that the Egyptians have had the fishing rod since 2000 B.C. and the Chinese only since c. 900 B.C., it should not be a great surprise if the Egyptians thought of the reel first. (They did, but its use was believed to be confined to housing line tied to a harpoon spear that was used for hunting Nile hippopotami [Figure 5], whose night wanderings on land devastated crops.)

J. Paul Getty Museum authorities were most helpful when I approached them to supply me with an 8-by-10-inch black-and-white photograph of

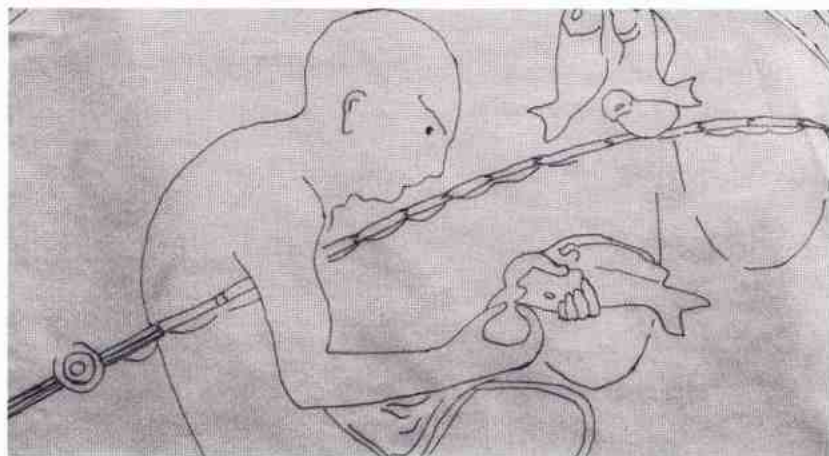


FIGURE 7. The composite color print was given to a draughtsman with instructions to draw the salient points—i.e., rod, reel, line, and the angler—onto tracing paper. The tracing was then photographed, revealing quite clearly an image not unlike a modern salmon rod with loops of line hanging between the rings.

the Byzantine Plate with Relief Decoration No. 83. AM.347 (Figure 4), and again later when I asked them if they would photograph the same plate in color, as I hoped that the latter would reveal more detail. Later still, they kindly supplied me with two 8-by-10-inch color prints showing particular areas of the plate, much enlarged (Figure 6). These last prints enabled me to follow the lines cut by the original engraver with greater confidence. A tracing taken from the prints (Figure 7) reveals the artist's impression of the knots or nodes in the cane or reed that was used to fabricate the rod. It also reveals that the handle or butt of the rod was made of four- or five-sided wood or metal, to which a reel was fitted. Because no handle is depicted, the reel may or may not have revolved, but in either case, the reel would have housed a reservoir of spare line.

Before it can be stated with certainty that the round object on the butt is a fishing reel, it would be necessary to prove that the rod was fitted with at least one ring (i.e., a top ring) that would allow the line to feed through so as to become a running line. Sadly, even with close scrutiny it is not possible (perhaps with the exception of the top ring) to discern any rings, but what can be seen are thirteen loops of line hanging underneath the rod, implying the existence of rings—the loops hanging just as they would from a modern double-handed salmon fly rod. There is no question but that the artist engraved these to look like loops of line because they hang, as gravity demands, only below the rod.

A look at the tracing also reveals that the line hangs down from the tip of the rod, forms a loop, then passes over the top of the rod before forming an even bigger loop as it leads back up to the angler's fingers and into the mouth of the hooked fish.

Because the details on the plate confirm that the artist had indeed engraved an image of a fishing reel of some kind, it only remains for scholars of the Byzantine period to accept that the dating of the gilt-silver plate is 4th–5th century A.D., or thereabouts, to be able to add the fishing reel to the list of firsts in the development of angling that must be credited to the civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> To this end, I consulted David Buckton of the department of medieval and later antiquities at the British Museum for his opinion on the dating of the plate. Buckton in turn put me in touch with an acknowl-

edged authority on Byzantine studies, M. C. Mundell Mango of the Institute of Archaeology at Oxford University, lecturer in Byzantine archeology and art. I wrote to Dr. Mango, who was kind enough to give me a great deal of help.

Referring to the provenance of the plates (a second plate, the philosophers plate, was found at the same time), Mango said, "I have heard independently that the two plates acquired by the Getty Museum in 1983 were found in the sea off the coast of Israel near Gaza in about 1970." She then described the different views on the dating of the plate(s) expressed by several scholars: that the plates were either a) made in antiquity (a Late Antique date as per the museum catalog), b) made during the Renaissance, or c) are modern.

Dr. Mango is of the opinion that the fisherman plate is not Renaissance as was suggested for the philosophers plate by A. Cutler in 1990.<sup>2</sup> Cutler's objection to the proposed Late Antique date for the fisherman plate is based exclusively (so far as he states) on the presence of an image of a fishing reel when the fishing reel was unknown in Europe before 1651.

Dr. Mango then discussed a more recent scientific report on the plates by D. Scott that appeared in the journal of the J. Paul Getty Museum.<sup>3</sup>

It goes some way towards excluding both the modern and a Renaissance date, favouring instead the 4th–5th century date originally suggested by the Museum. Scott states, "From the condition of the two objects, and the fact that both have been shown by their corrosion crust to contain elements associated with marine burial, it is probable that they were found together [in the sea] . . . The depth of corrosive penetration into the sound silver metal would be surprising if the plates were from the Renaissance." He goes on to note the presence of trace elements and manufacturing techniques which are consonant with those of Late Antique rather than Renaissance silver. Finally he says, "I think we are justified in proposing as strong probability that both of the plates were made in antiquity."

Although the scientific report leads Dr. Mango to think seriously to consider the possibility that the plates are authentically antique, she cannot commit herself further on the subject without seeing them firsthand. Dr. Mango concludes, "The subject is very interesting but very difficult given the present state of knowledge."

Although, as seen above, Dr. Mango presently reserves her opinion as to the

authenticity of the silver plates, she was kind enough to make a few observations about the Late Antique milieu in which the fisherman plate could have been manufactured.

The subject on the fisherman plate is in a tradition of Nilotic fishing and fish scenes on silver dishes (and in other media) which goes back ultimately to Alexandria in the Hellenistic period. I enclose photocopies of a few relevant late examples. Of these, one found in Egypt, now in the British Museum, has a fisherman with double, looped line. All of these representations are of a general type (same fish, poses, physical types, etc.); the Getty plate is no exception and thus—the reel apart—could easily be accepted as of Late Antique date. Furthermore, although it is accepted that the fishing scenes were originally developed in Alexandria in the 3rd–1st centuries B.C., but that later they may have been made elsewhere, in my opinion they could still have been produced in Alexandria as late as the 4th–5th century A.D.

With regards to the reel, I would say the following. If the Chinese reel existed as early as 4th–5th century A.D., it could plausibly have been introduced into Alexandria (or introduced from Egypt to China) where trade from the Orient (India and China) passed to the Mediterranean during the Roman period as late as the 4th–5th century, and as far as I am concerned into the 6th and 7th centuries.

From this we can conclude that there is a strong probability that the fisherman plate is authentically 4th/5th century A.D. In time, if this dating can be fully authenticated, it will indicate that reels were being used by anglers at least 1,500 years ago or perhaps even earlier.

Frederick Buller is the author of four books, including *Pike*, and the coauthor of two books, including *Falkus & Buller's Freshwater Fishing*. His most recent contribution to this journal was "The Macedonian Fly," which appeared in the Fall 1996 issue.

#### ENDNOTES

1. First illustration of a fishing rod: 2000 B.C. First mention of fly fishing using an artificial fly: c. 200 A.D. First description of a spade-end hook: c. 200 A.D. First mention of feathering for sea fish: c. 200 A.D. First illustration of a fishing reel: c. 4th–5th century A.D.

2. A. Cutler, "The Disputa Plate in the J. Paul Getty Museum and its Cinquecento Context," *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, vol. 18, 1990, pp. 5–32.

3. D. Scott, "A Technical and Analytical Study of Two Silver Plates in the Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum," *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, vol. 18, 1990, pp. 33–52.



THE CASTLE IN THE STATE OF SCHUYLKILL

## General Lafayette's Visit to the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill

by William Milnor

THE IMPORTANCE of fly fishing is all too often ignored in historical texts, usually to the point of absurdity. Most histories of science talk about the many accomplishments of Sir Humphrey Davy, including his findings about the natures of light and laughing gas. Yet it is seldom mentioned that of Sir Humphrey's many books, the one that has remained in print the longest is *Salmonia, or Days of Fly Fishing* (1828).

Similarly, many historians of colonial political life often ignore the colony in Schuylkill and its famous Schuylkill Fishing Company, which was founded in May 1732 by a sect of Philadelphia anglers seeking to escape the tyranny of the city. The colonists boasted an elected governor, assembly, sheriff, and coroner, as well as an elected secretary of state. Their navy had the distinction of having never engaged in any battle, save for the ongoing struggle against the fish of the Schuylkill. Furthermore, the citizens of the colony firmly believed that

American democracy sprang from their organization.

In 1782, they changed their official name to the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill. As was fitting an independent state, they hosted diplomatic visits from many visiting dignitaries, including several United States presidents. In 1874, the governor of Pennsylvania visited, and, according to Charles Eliot Goodspeed in *Angling in America: Its Early History and Literature*, "it is said that the two 'Governors' . . . were unanimous in their opinion that the relations existing between the two States were of the most harmonious character" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1939, p. 311).

In 1830, William Milnor wrote *An Authentic Historical Memoir of the Schuylkill Fishing Company of the State in Schuylkill* (Philadelphia: Judah Dobson). This history was important mainly because the Company was the first angling club founded in the New World,

and it continued operations for more than two hundred years. The excerpt below relates the tale of a visit to the State in Schuylkill on 19 July 1825 by General Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier de Lafayette (1757–1834), a leader in both the American War of Independence and the French Revolution.

For a more in-depth history of the Schuylkill Company, please refer to Robert Adams Jr., "The Oldest Club in America," from *The Century Magazine* (1880), which was recently reprinted in *The American Fly Fisher* (vol. 21, no. 3, Summer 1995). On a Museum note, at the time that we reprinted the 1995 article, we did not have any copies of Milnor's 1830 history in our library, nor the greatly expanded 1889 edition. Now, thanks to generous members, the Museum has both. The 1830 edition is the oldest history book in our collection.

JON MATHEWSON  
CURATOR

A SPECIAL MEETING was called at the Governor's on the 19th of July 1825, in consequence of an intimation received of a contemplated visit by General Lafayette to the State in Schuylkill, that the necessary preparatory arrangements might be made, which the signal occasion demanded.

It was Resolved, That the Governor, Council and Citizens of the State, understanding General Lafayette and suite propose honoring them with a visit, most heartily welcome them as guests of State, on Thursday next, the 21st . . . at their Castle, at the State in Schuylkill, and that a formal invitation be officially tendered.

It was likewise resolved, That the worthy honorary members, Richard Rundle, Richard Peters, John Graff, and John Hall, Esquires, should be particularly invited as guests, and the invitation extended to our townsman the Honorable Richard Rush, now in the City from Washington.

The Boat committee was instructed forthwith to purchase an additional supply of crockery and glassware.

A special committee was appointed to prepare toasts for the day, and the Caterer was duly authorized to provide a banquet extraordinary.

On Thursday following, the appointed day Counselor Morris, Lewis, and Fisher, and Messrs. Milnor, Shoemaker, Gerhard, Lippincott, Swift, Hart, S. P. Wetherill, Peddle, and Anderson convened at the Castle at an early hour with their visiting friends, and busied themselves in necessary preparations for the due reception of their illustrious guest and suite, whose approach to the confines of State was announced about two o'clock P.M.

The Company habited in the Fisherman's stile, with white linen aprons and ample straw hats, were formed in open file, facing inwards, near the north front entrance to the Castle. The three banners supported on the right.

General Lafayette and suite, and the gentlemen in waiting on him as escort, deputed by the City authorities, alighted at the lines of the State.

Counselor Morris officiating as Governor, in his Excellency's regretted absence, received him as the guest of the State with a cordial welcome, and presented him with a certificate of honorary membership as a duly qualified citizen, to which he was previously unanimously elected, on the proposition of the Secretary, seconded by Mr. Morris.

The General was then conducted between the open files towards the Castle, near to which he was met by the Secretary of State, who addressed him to the following effect:

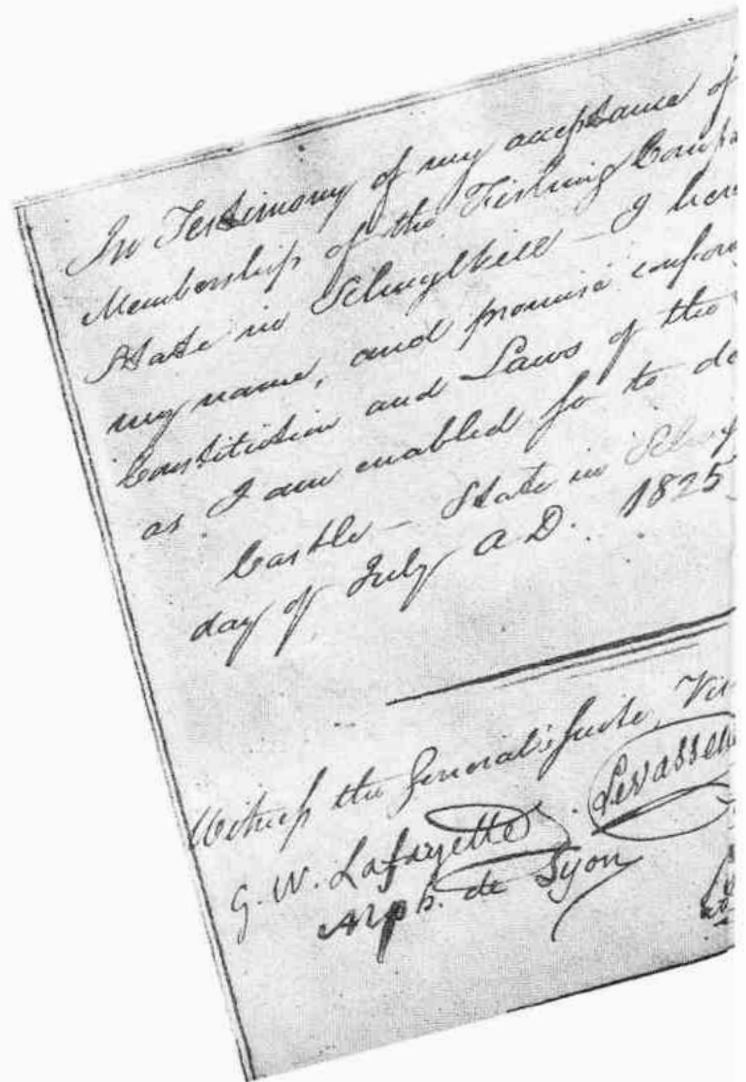
DEAR GENERAL,

The Governor, Council, and Citizens assembled, greet you, and the gentlemen accompanying you, with a cordial welcome to the "State in Schuylkill." Your visit here, completes your *tour to all the States in the Union.*

We possess but a limited territory and population, but there are no limits to the joy we feel on this auspicious occasion. It is now nearly a century since some of the worthiest and most eminent men of our parent Colony of Pennsylvania, associated on the Banks of our beautiful river, and founded this Institution, with a view to occasional relaxation from the cares and fatigue of business.

The waters and woods furnished abundance of game, and the pursuit of it, and its preparation for the festive board, at once contributed to the delight and health of the sportsmen.

No event (save the War of the Revolution, in which you, Sir, bore so distinguished a part), ever interrupted the



amusements of the Fishing and Fowling Company of the Colony in Schuylkill.

Its independence is coeval with the close of that contest, when its surviving citizens, exchanging the sword and musket for the angling rod, and the fowling piece, re-assembled as Freeman, declared the Independence of the State, and adopted that admirable recorded Constitution of Government, under which like her associated sisters of the Union, she has continued to prosper, and her citizens to enjoy those sporting privileges, and frugal festivities, you will witness and partake of this day.

To which brief address, the General in his usual felicitous manner, promptly replied:

MY DEAR SIR,

I feel sincere pleasure in visiting your ancient Institution, so pleasantly situated on the Bank of your beautiful river.

It is the more grateful to me, as it completes my tour to *all the States of the Union.*

About half a century ago, I first crossed your beautiful stream in times of peril; far different now are the sensations I realize, in meeting my friends on so pleasant an occasion.

I feel honored by your polite invitation, and kind reception in your ancient and agreeable State in Schuylkill. May you long continue happy and prosperous.

Honorary  
 member of the  
 fishing company  
 of the State, as far  
 as possible  
 July - the 21<sup>st</sup>  
 Lafayette

Left: Copy of General Lafayette's acceptance of honorary membership.

Below: General Lafayette, by Samuel F. B. Morse, c. 1825. Morse, inventor of the Morse code, was also a painter and fly fisherman. In 1970, Ed C. Silver gave the Museum Morse's eight-foot, seven-inch, 4.5-oz. greenheart fly rod.



After being introduced to all the gentlemen assembled individually, the General and attendants refreshed themselves with the pleasant beverage of Iced Punch, Lemonade, &c. and then proceeded to inspect the interior arrangements of the Castle, culinary establishment, fleet, and grounds of the Company, with which and its novelty, all expressed themselves highly delighted.

Preparations were made for le banquet extraordinaire, and members and visitors sat to work industriously.

The General expressed a desire as a member to do his

duty, was duly invested by the Counselors with a hat and apron, and introduced to the kitchen where he was initiated into business, by attention to the turning of the beef steaks on the gridiron.

All were pleased with the affability and condescension of the illustrious guest. Seldom an occasion presented itself, since his arrival on our shores, for him and his company and assembled visitors to be so perfectly "at home."

The incidents of this day at the Castle will long be remembered by all with delight, and that the names of the guests might not be forgotten, they forthwith recorded their names on the spot, and on the page which attested the acceptance by the General of honorary membership, in his proper handwriting.

*IN TESTIMONY of my acceptance of Honorary Membership, of "THE FISHING COMPANY OF THE STATE IN SCHUYLKILL," I hereunto subscribe my name, and promise conformity to the Constitution and Laws of the State, as far as I am enabled so to do.*

CASTLE, State in Schuylkill, this 21st day of July, A.D. 1825.

LAFAYETTE.

Witness, the General's suite, visitors at the Castle.

G. W. LAFAYETTE.

LEVASSEUR.

ALPH. DE SYON, Secretaire du GL.

LEFREY.

He was also attended as usual in the escort, by the respectable committees of the Select and Common Councils of the City.

The Honorable Richard Peters, and fourteen other gentlemen were present, as invited visitors on this auspicious occasion, and all in *propria persona*, recorded their names respectively in the book of the fair records of State, viz.

Wm. Rush	John M'Cauley.
Joseph S. Lewis	Benj. Tilghman.
A. A. Browne	James C. Biddle.

Joint Committee of Councils.

T. M'Kean, Jno. Roberts, J. P. Wetherill, Jacob C. Wikoff, Jos. G. Nancrede, Thomas Hart, Robert Milnor, John Norvell, J. Donaldson, R. Bache, James C. Fisher, R. T. Potts, Thomas P. Roberts, and John Rakestraw, Visitors. Sansom Perot a member, and one or two others whose names are unrecorded, were present.

The Company consisted of about forty persons in number. About four o'clock, dinner was announced.

The table groaned beneath the weight of its viands, &c. The usual fare of fish boiled and fried, was attended with a variety of meats, fowl, &c. as extra dishes. All fared sumptuously; and after the several courses were cleared, the following toasts prepared for the occasion, were drank, interspersed with song and story.

Judge Peters's witticisms were happy and enlivening, and he sang several excellent songs with effect, to the delight of his veteran friend and revolutionary companion Lafayette.

## TOASTS.

NATIONAL GRATITUDE.—The brightest jewel in a Nation's diadem.

THE HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION.—Living or dead, their glory is imperishable.

THE MEMORY OF OUR FATHER.—*Washington.*

THE MEMORY OF GOVERNOR MORRIS.—Who for nearly fifty years presided here; ever present.\*

THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.—It has gloriously steered its own course to National respect, and the world's applause.

OUR ARMY.—Composed of freemen, appreciating their rights, and capable of defending them.

OUR SISTER STATES.—May they severally remember the sage admonition of *Washington*, that "In union, consists the strength and durability of the National edifice."

LIBERTY.—Cradled in our Country; in half a century she has attained the vigor of a Hercules, and extirpated the monster Tyranny, in both the Americas.

THE STATE IN SCHUYLKILL.—Her sportive citizens may be proud of their ancestry, and should prove themselves worthy descendants.

OUR COUNTRY.—The prized home of the native; the welcome retreat of the oppressed.

FRANCE.—Our magnanimous Ally; the Country of *Lafayette*.

OUR DISTINGUISHED GUEST, AND THE NATION'S.—The name of *Lafayette* is engraved on every heart; a worthy associate of his great military Father.

THE LOVELY FAIR OF THE LAND.—It would be *unfair* ever to forget or neglect them.

## VOLUNTEERS.

By GENERAL LAFAYETTE.—The *whole population* of the State in *Schuylkill*, and the affectionate allegiance of a newly adopted fellow citizen.

By G. W. LAFAYETTE.—A dinner *cooked in the field*; may the soldiers of liberty always find such a one.

By COUNSELOR LEWIS.—George Washington Lafayette; the worthy son of a beloved father.

By A VISITOR.—The memory of Napoleon. His misfortunes are proof that *public opinion must triumph*.

The General and suite reluctantly parted from the agreeable State in *Schuylkill*, and its happy population, but not until the sun had long sunk in the West.

Copy of a letter of invitation to General Lafayette, sent pursuant to instruction, the day preceding his visit.

DEAR SIR,

The Governor, Council, and Citizens of the State in *Schuylkill*, understanding that yourself and suite propose to favor them with a visit at their Castle tomorrow, have requested me officially to express to you the high gratification your presence will afford them.

As Caterer of the day, I have the honor to bid you all a most hearty welcome to our ancient establishment.

With the highest respect,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM MILNOR, JR.

*Sec'y. of State.*

GENERAL LAFAYETTE, July 20th, 1825.

Letters of apology for absence were received from our townsman, R. Rush, Esq., late Minister to the Court of St. James, and from our late worthy and much respected member, John Graff, Esq. Mr. Rush left the City for Washington, agreeably to previous arrangement on the same day, and by a causality, Mr. Graff's note of invitation was not received by him until too late to join in the festivities of the Castle. In a letter addressed next morning to the Secretary, he says:

You cannot judge of the mortification and downright vexation which I felt at the abominable neglect of the letter carrier, in not delivering it, in due time, which has prevented me from enjoying a satisfaction and honor which I should have prized as one of the happiest circumstances of my life. Have the goodness to advise the Governor and Council of the contents of this note, and assure them of my continued high respect and esteem for them and all the company.

Want of due notice and other causes prevented the attendance of other honorary members, in town and country.

The Secretary pursuant to instructions from the Governor and Counselors of State, procured a certificate of membership, to be elegantly executed on parchment, which he subsequently presented to the General, when on the eve of bidding our citizens farewell, which together with the *straw hat* and *apron* presented to, and worn by him at the Castle (on both of which his name, and that of the Company, the date of its foundation, and of his election, were suitably inscribed), all these, as he was pleased to say, "he esteemed as amongst his most valuable presents," expressing his intention to wear the honorable badges of a member of the State in *Schuylkill*, on fishing excursions, on his return, sensibly to remind him of his happy visit, and the high honor conferred. They were forwarded by him to *La Grange*, his family residence in France.



## COPY OF THE CERTIFICATE.

WE DO CERTIFY,

That at a Special meeting of the Governor,  
Council, and Citizens of the *Schuylkill* Fishing Company,

held at their CASTLE, in the

STATE IN SCHUYLKILL, on Thursday

July 21st, 1825.

GENERAL LAFAYETTE,

our Nation's Guest,

Was unanimously elected an Honorary Member.

*Certified from the records of State.*

T. MORRIS.

First Counselor, and Governor pro. tem.

Attested by

WILLIAM MILNOR, JR.

Secretary of State.



\*In allusion to an excellent bust of the venerable deceased, by Rush on a pedestal behind the Governor's seat at the north end of the Castle.





**Don Wynn**  
*August 8–September 22*

**D**ON WYNN is a representational painter with a life-long interest in fishing, hunting, and the outdoors. He and his wife live in Long Lake, New York, in the central Adirondacks, a region that provides many of his painting subjects.

Wynn holds a B.F.A. from Pratt Institute and an M.F.A. from Indiana University. He has been visiting artist at many colleges, universities, and institutions—among them Yale University and the Art Institute of Chicago—and has received numerous awards and grants, including fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts; the Elizabeth T. Greenshields Memorial Foundation, Montreal; and the New York State Creative Artists Public Service Program. He is listed in *Who's Who in American Art* and *The Dictionary of International Biography*.

Since his first solo show in New York City in 1964, Wynn has had an active and diverse exhibition career (nine solo exhibits in New York City alone), with recent exhibits held in New York City; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan. His work first received international recognition in the landmark exhibition *Twenty-Two Realists* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1970. In 1978, he was the first living artist to be given a one-person exhibit at the Adirondack Museum. In 1995, the Metro-

politan Museum of Art acquired one of his oil paintings for its twentieth-century collection; he is the only living resident Adirondack painter (and the first since Rockwell Kent) to be so honored.

The Museum will host an artist's reception and opening on August 8.

**S**HIRLEY CLEARY received a B.F.A. from Washington University, St. Louis, and an M.F.A. from the Tyler School of Art of Temple University in Philadelphia and Rome, Italy. She moved to Montana in 1971 and started fly fishing her first summer there. She met Pat Lilly, who encouraged her to paint some fly-fishing images for her gallery in Bud Lilly's Trout Shop in West Yellowstone, and she was asked to participate in various Trout Unlimited art auctions. This was the beginning of a twenty-six-year career that has allowed her to combine her love of fly fishing and painting.

Cleary has received many awards for her work, including selection for the 1992 Association of Northwest Steelheaders stamp/print and the 1990 Oregon trout stamp/print. She has participated in invitational exhibitions across the United States, and her work has been profiled in many art magazines. Her work is handled by galleries across the country.

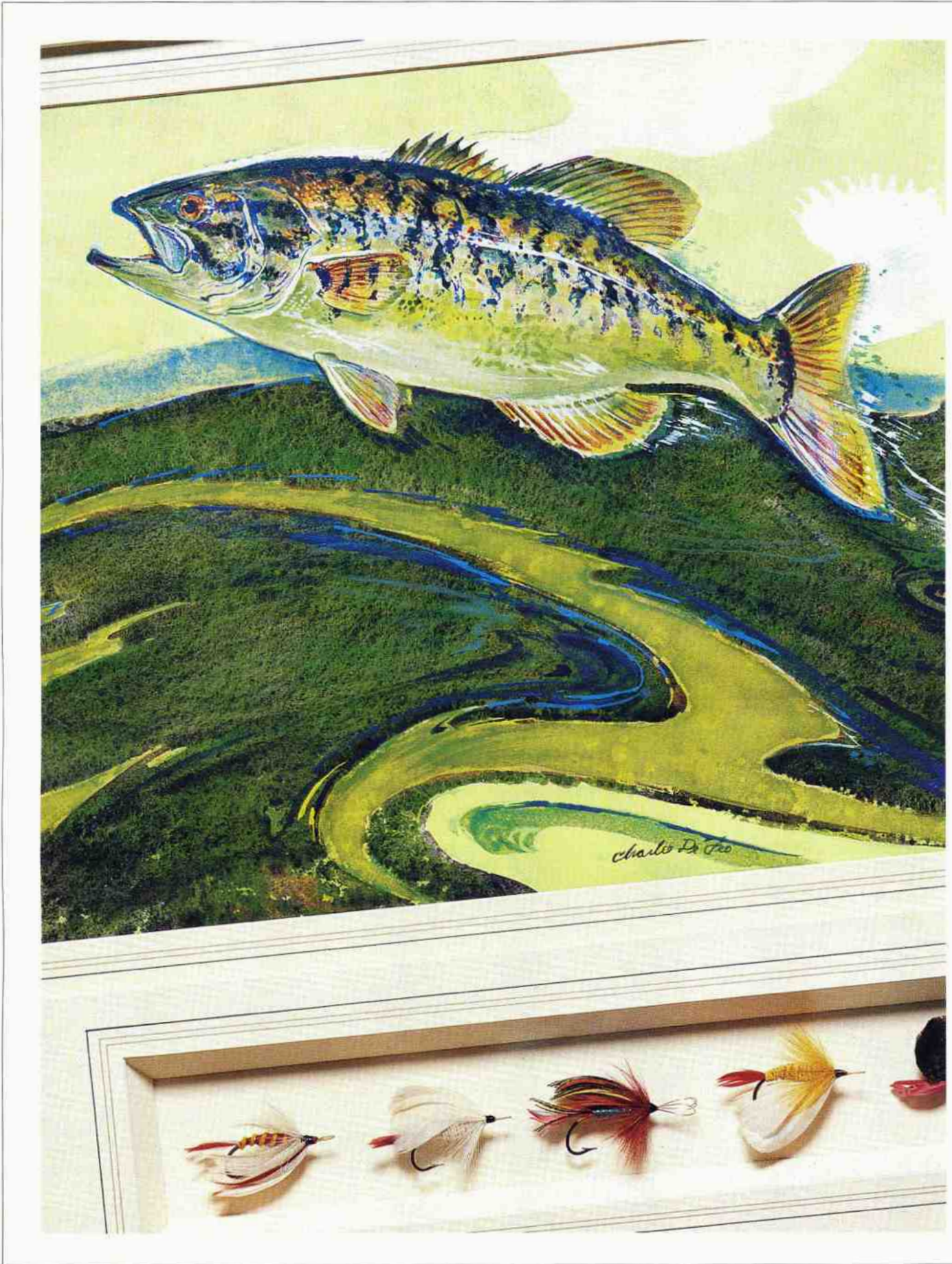
Cleary is on the board of the Pat Barnes–Missouri River Chapter of Trout Unlimited and serves on the advisory board of the state council. Last year she was appointed to the Montana State Fisheries Improvement Program Review Panel.

A calendar of her works was published this year by Tide-mark Publishing. A portion of the funds are being donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

The Museum will host an artist's reception and opening on September 26.



**Shirley Cleary**  
*September 26–November 10*



## Charles DeFeo

**B**EFORE MERGING with *Forest and Stream* in 1930, *Field & Stream* was “the official vehicle of the Camp-Fire Club of America.” In this capacity, the magazine published articles intended for a diverse group of men interested in various aspects of outdoor life. With a loyal and large readership, it also served as a gathering place for some of the finest outdoors writers and artists of that time.

Especially interesting is the January 1912 issue: Zane Grey premiered the first two chapters of his newest serialized novel, *Riders of the Purple Sage*; Gifford Pinchot wrote about “The Problem of the Adirondack Forests”; and Mrs. Will H. Dilg discussed “When Woman Goes A-Fishing” (the subtitle: “Particularly Tarpon Fishing!”). And (not that anyone need judge a book by its cover) the art gracing the cover was the first published work by twenty-year-old artist Charles DeFeo.

Charles DeFeo, born in Wilmington, Delaware, on 9 June 1891, had been interested in art since he was nine. At that age, he had apprenticed with his neighbor, painter Howard Pyle. Later, he worked for a sign-maker who tended to spend more time on the Brandywine than making signs.

Initially too short and light for military service in the United States, DeFeo emerged from World War I after completing duties as a lieutenant first in the Royal Canadian Air Force and then as a sergeant in the United States Army. After the war, he took courses at the Art Students' League in New York City. While there, he had the good fortune to study under Francis Vincent Dumond, who also ran a small summer art school on the Margaree River on Cape Breton Island. Apparently, classes were scheduled so as not to interfere with angling.

A few years later, he met his future wife while the two were studying with Charles Hawthorne at the

Cape Cod School of Art in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1924. He referred to her in later years as “his best catch.”

DeFeo's work for *Field & Stream* stopped after 1913 when he found opportunities to illustrate the covers of other magazines. He also began illustrating books. Most notable of the angling titles are Roderick Haig-Brown's *Return to the River* (1941) and Starbuck Valley Winter (1943), and Sparse Grey Hackle's *Fishless Days* (1954). He also illustrated, along with Ogden Pleissner, the deluxe reprint of Dean Sage's *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (1973) and the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers *Gordon Garland* (the newsletter, not the book). He served for many years on the editorial board of *The Anglers' Club Bulletin*.

Throughout his life, angling was a great overriding passion. Not only did he illustrate angling scenes, he avidly tied flies, especially flies for Atlantic salmon. He was an early advocate of using nymphs for those fish, and Keith Fulsher has written that “his Silver, Grey, Brown and Gold salmon nymphs have long been recognized as pioneering flies.”

DeFeo didn't sell his flies, as a rule, so he was always considered an “amateur.” However, there was nothing amateurish about his abilities. His flies are still prized possessions to their owners. Over the years, the Museum has received some of DeFeo's flies from Rodolphe Coigney, William Cushner, *Esquire* editor Arnold Gingrich, and Maxine Atherton. Most recently, the Museum received a selection of thirty-one wonderful Charles DeFeo salmon flies from William Mapel of Darien, Connecticut.

Pictured here is DeFeo's painting “Bass,” alongside some vintage bass flies. The framed piece is part of the Museum's Cushner Collection.

JON MATHEWSON  
CURATOR

# The American Museum of Fly Fishing

Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254  
Tel: 802-362-3300. Fax: 802-362-3308

## JOIN!

Membership Dues (per annum)

INDIVIDUAL	
Associate	\$35
Sustaining	\$60
Benefactor	\$125
Patron	\$250
GROUP	
Club	\$50
Trade	\$50

Membership dues include four issues of *The American Fly Fisher*. Please send your payment to the Director of Development and include your mailing address. The Museum is a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History, the New England Association of Museums, the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, and the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame. We are a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution chartered under the laws of the state of Vermont.

## SUPPORT!

As an independent, nonprofit institution, the American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. We ask that you give our museum serious consideration when planning for gifts and bequests.

## VISIT!

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

## BACK ISSUES!

Available at \$4 per copy:

- Volume 6, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 7, Numbers 2, 3
- Volume 8, Number 3
- Volume 9, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 10, Number 2
- Volume 11, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 12, Number 3
- Volume 13, Number 3
- Volume 14, Number 1
- Volume 15, Numbers 1, 2
- Volume 16, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 17, Numbers 1, 2, 3
- Volume 18, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 19, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 20, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 21, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 22, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4
- Volume 23, Numbers 1, 2



# Museum News

## Festival Weekend

The Museum's annual festival weekend was held May 9 and 10 this year and was enthusiastically attended, despite a chilly and overcast Saturday. An opening reception was held Friday night at the Museum for artist Alan James Robinson.

Open house at the Museum Saturday featured events on the Museum grounds and fishing at Equinox Pond. Fly-tying demonstrations were given by Dick Lyons, Charlie Chute, Evan Lundeen, and Gene Liehaber. Alan James Robinson gave a painting demonstration. Woodcarver Kurt Vitch and boatmaker Gregory Sowers were on hand throughout the day with exquisite samples of their work. Rodbuilder F. D. Kretchman returned to demonstrate the building of split-bamboo fly rods. David Leitz, author of several fly-fishing mystery novels, and Pamela Bates Richards, coauthor (with her father, the late Joseph D. Bates Jr.) of *Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and Patterns*, signed copies of their books.

Saturday night's annual dinner/auction was held at the Equinox Hotel with auctioneer Hoagy Carmichael presiding. Committee members Ted Ferree, Dawn Murray, Mimi Ams, Angus Black, Jean

Black, Brad Coursen, Jim LePage, Joe McCusker, Dave Shirley, and Judi Shirley made the auction a success.

## Awards Presented

Two awards were presented May 10 at the annual Manchester dinner/auction. The 1996 Joe A. Pisarro Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Shane M. Sweet of Sandgate, Vermont. The award, named for the Museum's ultimate volunteer and dear friend, was established in 1990 to recognize the time and effort of our volunteers, the Museum's most valuable resource.

Sweet is the executive director of the Vermont Oil Heat Institute. In this role, he represents Vermont oil, propane, and petroleum marketers as their executive and registered lobbyist. Sweet received the award for his assistance with the Museum's dinner/auctions in 1996, as well as for the technical support he gives to ensure smooth operation of the Museum's computers and software.

The 1996 Austin Hogan Award was awarded to John Mundt of Simsbury, Connecticut. The award was established in 1985 to honor the memory of Austin Hogan, who founded the Museum's journal, *The American Fly Fisher*, in 1974. It is awarded to the person who

▼ Hoagy Carmichael played auctioneer at Manchester's dinner/auction.



▲ F. D. Kretchman demonstrates the stages of building split-bamboo fly rods.

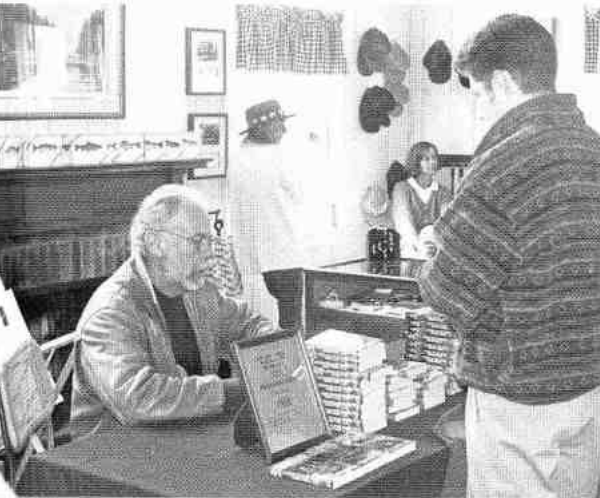
makes the most significant original contribution to the journal that year.

Mundt, co-owner of Sterling Elevator Consultants, is chair of this year's Hartford Dinner/Auction Committee. He received the award for "The Historic Penobscot: America's Atlantic Salmon Fishing Legacy," which appeared in the Summer 1996 issue.

## Art Openings

On March 21, the Museum hosted a reception and book signing for photographer f-stop fitzgerald. Eighteen of fitzgerald's photographs from his newly released book, *Secrets of the Saltwater Fly: Tips and Tales from the World's Greatest Anglers* (Bulfinch Press), were exhibited from February 7 until March 24. The photographs on exhibit were arranged by region, and the exhibit also included regional maps, flies, and information about the flies and their tyers. Among the photographed flies were a number from the Museum's collection.

▼ *David Leitz, author of popular fly-fishing mysteries, signed copies of his books on Saturday.*



► *Galen Mercer (left) and Trustee Tom Rosenbauer at Mercer's March 28 reception and opening.*



An opening and reception was held for the work of Galen Mercer on March 28. The exhibit of twenty-two oils was the first public exhibition of Mercer's work. All business was previously handled directly from his studio or by commission. Mercer, who lives in Roscoe, New York, is especially drawn to the Catskill Mountains and the world-famous trout streams there. Interestingly, no landscape painter has chronicled these waters since the Great Depression of the 1930s, and even at that time, the focus was mostly on the sport of angling itself rather than the water that has attracted anglers for more than a century. Mercer's paintings were on exhibit until May 5.

The Museum kicked off its festival weekend on May 9 with an opening and reception for master printmaker Alan James Robinson. The exhibit featured thirty-three works—mostly original watercolors and hand-watercolored etchings and wood



▲ *f-stop fitzgerald at his book signing reception on March 21, marking the close of the exhibit of his work.*

engravings—of both fresh- and saltwater species. A glass case displayed tools and examples of Robinson's skills in etching and wood engraving, as well as limited edition letterpress books. Robinson is the owner, designer, and illustrator for the award-winning Press of the Sea Turtle, formerly Cheloniidae Press. His work was on exhibit through June 23.



◀ *Fly tyer Dick Lyons was one of several who demonstrated this art during the festival open house.*

◀ *Jim LePage, Ted Ferree, and Dawn Murray, members of this year's dinner/auction committee, helped make the event a great success.*



◀ Alan James Robinson talks with a guest at his opening reception on May 9.

## Passages

Longtime friend and supporter of the Museum, Colonel Henry Auerbach Siegel of Goshen, Connecticut, died on 30 April 1997 after complications from heart surgery. He was eighty-two years old.

By founding the Angler's & Shooter's Bookshelf in 1967, Siegel was among the first to set the market for rare sporting books. He moved his business to Goshen in 1968 and was assisted by his wife Natalie, who will continue to run the business. He was a founding member of the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, where he first served as membership chairman. Siegel also held membership in the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, the American Museum of Fly Fishing, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Miramichi Salmon Association, the Connecticut River Salmon Association, and the Flyfisher's Club of London.

Siegel was one of the Museum's first trustees and over the years donated many books to the dinner/auction program. He was a publisher as well as a bookseller, issuing a 1973 deluxe reprint of Dean Sage's *The Ristigouche and Its Salmon Fishing* (see map on pages 6-7) and a 1979 reprint of George M. Kelson's *The Salmon Fly*. In 1981, he published *The Derrydale Press: A Bibliography*, which he cowrote with Harry C. Marschalk Jr. and Isaac Oelgart and which was excerpted in the Summer 1991 issue of this journal.

A private service will be held in September on the banks of the Matapedia River by Siegel's favorite salmon pool. Memorial donations should be made to the Atlantic Salmon Federation, P.O. Box 807, Calais, ME 04619.

## Local Casts

As a part of the Museum's educational outreach, Curator Jon Mathewson is penning a weekly column that appears in the local *Manchester Journal's* "Mountains & Streams" section. Mathewson began his series in February with a piece that introduced readers to the American Museum of Fly Fishing, its mission, and its staff. Since then, he has written about rivers (for example, the Battenkill), offered biographical sketches (Charles F. Orvis and John Harrington Keene), discussed natural history (mayflies and stoneflies), focused on fly-fishing history (innovations in salt-water fly fishing), and promoted the Museum's holdings (presidential rods and accoutrements). Illustrations that accompany his articles are often used on the front page of the newspaper to direct the reader to his column. Mathewson's efforts are promoting greater sup-

port for the Museum within the local community and is generating enthusiastic feedback.

## Call for Books

Here are yet more angling titles we would like to acquire for our library. This time we've included eight titles from 1829 to 1834:

Head, George. *Forest Scenes and Incidents in the Wilds of North America*. London: John Murray, 1829.

*Proceedings of the Cincinnati Angling Club*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Chronicle Press, 1831.

Jesse, Edward, Esq. *Gleanings in Natural History, with Local Recollections to Which Are Added Maxims & Hints for an Angler*. London: Murray, 1832.

Maxwell, William Hamilton. *Wild Sports of the West. With Legendary Tales, and Local Sketches*. Two volumes. London: Bentley, 1832.

Pickering, William. *Bibliotheca Piscatoria: A Catalogue of Books Upon Angling*. London, 1832.

Rennie, James. *Alphabet of Scientific Angling, For the Use of Beginners*. London: W. Orr, 1833.

Chatto, William Andrew [Stephen Oliver]. *Scenes and Recollections of Fly Fishing, in Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1834.

Baddeley, John. *London Angler's Book, or Waltonian Chronicle*. London: Baddeley, 1834.

Medwin, Thomas. *The Angler in Wales, or Days and Nights of Sportsmen*. Two Volumes. London: Bentley, 1834.

## CONTRIBUTOR



Paul A. Morosky, himself an avid Atlantic salmon fly fisherman, is a great-grandson of Archibald Mitchell. Mr. Morosky and his wife Jeanne reside in Groton Long Point, Connecticut, and have two children, Jon and Carol. Much of the material for his article came from family documents and photographs. Supplementary information resulted from his research in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the G. W. Blunt White Library at the Mystic Seaport, and the archives of the American Museum of Fly Fishing. Mr. Morosky owes much gratitude for access to the stacks and research support of the Sterling, the Mudd, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Libraries at Yale University, his alma mater.



## Board Names New Executive Director

**T**HE BOARD OF TRUSTEES of the American Museum of Fly Fishing is pleased to announce the appointment of its new executive director, Gary P. Tanner, who began work in Manchester, Vermont, in June.

Tanner comes to the Museum from the National Wild Turkey Federation in Edgefield, South Carolina, where he served as director of development. He was promoted to this position after serving as that organization's northeast regional director in Altmar, New York. Tanner successfully raised funds for the Federation through foundation grant proposals, corporate contributions and planned giving programs, capital campaigns, and banquets.

Tanner received an A.A.S. in natural resources conservation from the State University of New York (SUNY) Agricultural and Technical College at Morrisville; a B.S. in wildlife science from Cornell University; and an M.S. in wildlife and fisheries science from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. As a research assistant at SUNY College of

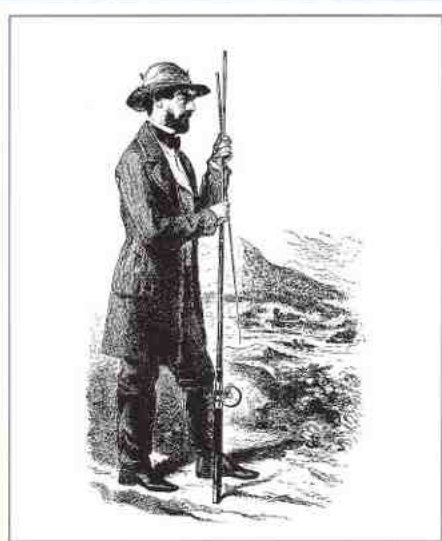
Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, he conducted field research for studies on the ecology of the ruffed grouse in that state. As a research associate at SUNY Oswego, he reviewed past research and prepared new proposals for research projects that focused on the presence and methods of disposal of toxic compounds in the Lake Ontario ecosystem.

Tanner's wife, Martha, is an ultrasound technologist. They enjoy fishing and grouse hunting together and have three English setters, all fine grouse dogs. Fly fishing and fly tying are favorite pastimes for him. "There is something so special about catching and releasing a fish caught on a fly I've tied," he says, "and better yet on one of the rods I've built."

Chief among the Museum's challenges, according to Tanner, is the need to meet rising costs with increased revenue from diversified sources. "Expanding our outreach programs, including reestablishing our traveling exhibits, is important not only in ac-

complishing the Museum's mission, but also in attracting new sources of funding," he says. He also sees the need to develop programs that imbue young people with a sense of the history and an appreciation of the crafts of fly fishing. "Otherwise, one day the Museum will become a place where folks can see what you *used* to be able to do—fly fish," he says. "We must always be mindful that we can help ensure the future of fly fishing by preserving its past."

"We are delighted to welcome Gary Tanner as our new executive director," said Richard Tisch, president of the board of directors. "Gary comes to us with extensive fundraising skills honed as director of development of the National Wild Turkey Federation, a multi-million-dollar nonprofit association. Gary will be able to use the communication, organizational, and management talents he has developed over the years to expand the educational activities of the Museum. The trustees, staff, and members anticipate a productive and progressive tenure."



THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING, a nationally accredited, nonprofit, educational institution dedicated to preserving the rich heritage of fly fishing, was founded in Manchester, Vermont, in 1968. The Museum serves as a repository for, and conservator to, the world's largest collection of angling and angling-related objects. The Museum's collections and exhibits provide the public with thorough documentation of the evolution of fly fishing as a sport, art form, craft, and industry in the United States and abroad from the sixteenth century to the present. Rods, reels, and flies, as well as tackle, art, books, manuscripts, and photographs form the major components of the Museum's collections.

The Museum has gained recognition as a unique educational institution. It supports a publications program through which its national quarterly journal, *The American Fly Fisher*, and books, art prints, and catalogs are regularly offered to the public. The Museum's traveling exhibits program has made it possible for educational exhibits to be viewed across the United States and abroad. The Museum also provides in-house exhibits, related interpretive programming, and research services for members, visiting scholars, authors, and students.

The Museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. For information please contact: The American Museum of Fly Fishing, P. O. Box 42, Manchester, Vermont 05254, 802-362-3300.

