

# The American Fly Fisher

*Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing*

SPRING 1999

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 2

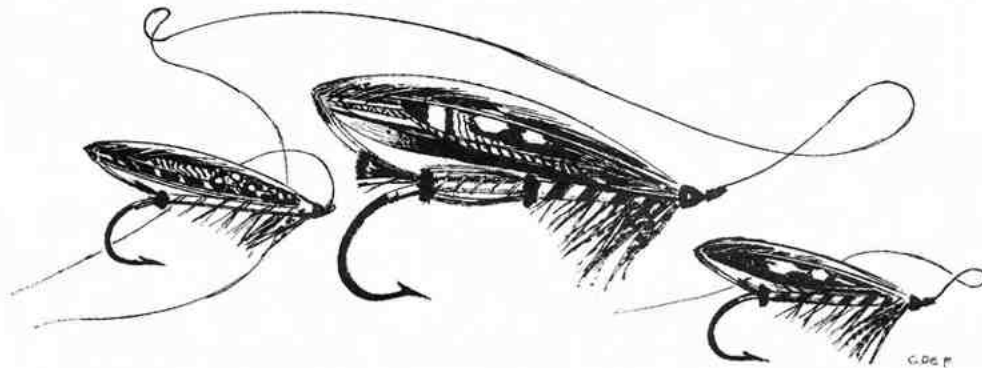


Illustration by Charles De Feo from the Bates collection.

## Show and Tell

**T**HE MUSEUM has acquired some incredible things in its thirty-one-year history—and quite a few within the last year. One staff acquisition is Curator Sean Sonderman, whose expertise we greatly appreciate. When we decided to focus the bulk of this issue on the Museum and some of its holdings, Sean's help with writing articles, researching introductions, setting up photo shoots, and fact checking was invaluable.

In "Museums, Oddities, and Slices of Life," Sean introduces us to the very concept of museums. He addresses how museums have evolved over the past four centuries and where the American Museum of Fly Fishing's collection fits into this development. He then goes on to share some of the more unusual objects that we have collected over the years.

In "Our Man Finlay Moves North," Sean tells us about Trustee Emeritus Dick Finlay's move to the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont after years of history with the Museum. The loss of this most valuable resource feels like the *opposite* of an acquisition.

Last year, in one of its most important acquisitions, the Museum received 303 flies from the collection of renowned author, fly fisher, and collector Joseph D. Bates Jr. In

"Joseph D. Bates Jr.: Collection of a Lifetime," his daughter, author and Museum Trustee Pamela Bates Richards, introduces both this collection and her father.

And last November we received a framed set of the flies described in *A Treatyse of Fysshinge wyth an Angle*—one of a limited edition of 500. Andrew Herd was producing a new edition of the 1496 book, and in the process he teamed up with the established fly-dressing business Rogan's of Donegal. They produced a limited-edition set of the *Treatyse* flies, employing only the tools and methods used by the original fifteenth-century creators of the patterns, as best as can be understood today. "The Tying of the *Treatyse* Flies" is Herd's relating of the story.

And in a noncollection twist to this issue, Jim Repine speculates on some of Japan's fly-fishing history in "Fly Fishing in Japan" and relates some of his own history with fly fishing in that country.

Welcome to the spring issue. And don't forget Festival Weekend May 15 (for more information, see the ad on page 26, or contact Paula Welch at 802-362-3300).

KATHLEEN ACHOR  
EDITOR



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*Preserving the Heritage  
of Fly Fishing*

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The Tying of the *Treatyse* Flies . . . . . 2  
*Andrew Herd*

Fly Fishing in Japan . . . . . 5  
*Jim Repine*

Museums, Oddities, and Slices of Life . . . . . 8  
*Sean Sonderman*

Joseph D. Bates Jr.: Collection of a Lifetime . . . . . 12  
*Pamela Bates Richards*

Our Man Finlay Moves North . . . . . 20  
*Sean Sonderman*

Museum News . . . . . 22

Contributors . . . . . 26

ON THE COVER: *From the collection of Pamela Bates Richards. No date. Written on the back of the photograph is "We built a raft to fish from." Ross McKenny, guide, and Joe Bates Jr. [right]. Carpenter Pond, Maine.*

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# The Tying of the *Treatyse* Flies

by Andrew Herd

*The American Museum of Fly Fishing receives fly-fishing items every week. Most of these donated items are fine pieces that add to the overall record of angling history. On rare occasions, however, an item or collection arrives at our doorstep that truly stands out from the rest.*

*In November, one such item arrived from the famed fly-dressing house, Rogan's of Donegal. Enclosed in a black case emblazoned with the unmistakable logotype of the oldest fly dressing firm in the world was a modern reminder of fly fishing's rich history. Within a hand-finished solid oak frame was an exquisite reproduction set of the twelve original flies from the 1496 A Treatyse of Fysshinge wyth an Angle, attributed to Dame Juliana Berners. Obviously, many accomplished tyers have created reproductions of the Treatyse flies over the years, and discussion and disagreement over their origins could fill volumes. However, this collection is far more than the typical reproduction of the "dubbes" using modern fly-tying tools and methods.*

*Dr. Andrew Herd, in his quest to produce a new edition of the Treatyse, unknowingly set out on an expedition into the field of experimental archaeology. His literary work soon transformed into a desire to create the Treatyse flies using only the tools (a pair of scissors) and methods (as we understand them) used by the original fifteenth-century creators of the patterns. He assembled a talented team of fly tyers, handmade hook makers, and dyers under the umbrella of Rogan's of Donegal. As you can see for yourself, the results are an extraordinary combination of history and art. As an aside, this donation came as a result of contact via the internet between Museum staff and Rogan's—truly and example of history meeting the future. We would like to thank Rogan's for their kind contribution. The set—one of a limited edition of five hundred—will make a fine addition to our exhibit hall.*

—SEAN SONDERMAN  
CURATOR

**A** CHANCE CONVERSATION started it all. Although it was many years ago, I can remember it as clearly as if it happened last night.

We were sitting around the table at Aldernaig Mill, Invergarry, sipping whiskey as we warmed ourselves by the fire, and as the shadows lengthened, the conversation drifted toward the history of fly fishing. It was the first time that I had heard of the *Treatyse on Fysshynge wyth an Angle*. The story had me entranced. Before the month was out, I had a copy of the 1880 Elliot Stock facsimile edition and set out to decipher the matted characters of the old English black letter.

That was before I discovered John McDonald's wonderful *Origins of Angling* (1957), a book that lit my imagination. Out of such curiosity are obsessions born. One only has to read McDonald to realize just how much speculation there has been about how the flies listed in the *Treatyse* should be tied. The truth is that we will never know exactly what the *Treatyse*

author intended, because we know virtually nothing about medieval fly-tying conventions. What we do know is which materials were used and how the hooks were made; but we have precious little else to go on.

In the process of putting together a new facsimile of the *Treatyse* (to be published by the Medlar Press in the first quarter of 1999), I looked at several modern interpretations of the *Treatyse* patterns and had the sudden and quixotic notion to tie a set of flies using exactly the same materials and techniques that would have been used in the fifteenth century—as near as I could judge.

The easiest part was finding the horsehair, although even this apparently simple task led me into the depths of a controversy. Very few of the older angling authors ever seemed to agree about the ranking of different colors of horsehair, and to make matters worse, there was some dispute even about the sex of horse from which the hair should be taken.





Without sharing the minutiae of this less-than-epic dispute, I can reveal that the consensus favored stallions, because mares' tails become soaked with urine and were liable to be rotten as a consequence. One recommendation for selecting hair is that the best hair comes from horses whose tails are cut or brushed reasonably frequently; this lessens the chances of the angler being let down by damaged hairs. For my purposes, I pounced on a neighbor's pony, partly because he was a gray, but mostly because he didn't look like he would fight back too much.

The hooks were made for us by Partridge of Redditch, one of the few commercial suppliers of fishhooks left whose workforce has the expertise to hand make hooks. We based the hooks on the illustrations in the *Treatyse*—but allowing for artistic licence and for the limitations of fifteenth-century printing, my opinion is that the woodcut exaggerates the shortness and thickness of the shank. In addition, the barbs

look too prominent for the hook to have good penetrating qualities, and I am sure that contemporary anglers would have cut smaller ones. Comparing the illustration with the Partridge range, I felt that the hooks should be loosely modeled on the CS7 MW Captain Hamilton International, but 1x short and made of 2x strong square steel with the barb raised so that it is more prominent than usual. The rest of the specification was that the hooks were to be blind with a spade end and made in size 12. The method used to make the hooks barely differed from that given in the *Treatyse*. Our finished product is neither blued nor bronzed, so the hooks, like the originals, will rust unless they are properly cared for.

The *Treatyse* gives detailed instructions on how horsehair should be dyed, but not the slightest hint about how the wool used to tie the flies should be treated. As it happens, the average fifteenth-century fisherman didn't need to know how to dye his own wool, because almost every village would have

had its own resident dyer living in a house near the river. It was a secret art, and the dyers had an almost witchlike status. Because of this secrecy, we know relatively little of the details of dyeing in ancient times. The mystery that surrounded their doings was enhanced by the plants they grew and the materials they needed. Some recipes mention the use of dead cats; dyers usually had a large barrel round the back of the house into which the men would relieve themselves, rather than using the bushes. Urine was used in vast quantities for woading and dyeing with indigo, and it may have been used for softening wool as well. Huge vats of boiling water would have been used in an area protected by a wall, because it could be a dangerous process. Fleeces would have been prepared by dousing them in the river, perhaps in a basket containing fuller's earth, and then the wool was teased out onto wooden cards. Most dyers' work would have been done out in the open in summer, when the weather was better.

The *Treatyse* flies require wool to be dyed black, green, yellow, blue, and red. The majority of medieval dyes were vegetable based, and they were relatively fast to light and washing, despite the fact that mordanting (a process used to fix dyes) was not discovered until about 1600. Our dyer, Mary Shiels, from County Wicklow, used techniques as similar to the ancient methods as she could. She shared her knowledge and experience thus:

In Ireland and England, the plants usually used to obtain the colors red and yellow on wool and silk were madder (*Rubia peregrina*) for red and weld (dyer's rocket—*Reseda luteola*) for yellow. These plants have been known to dyers for centuries. In the days of the *Treatyse*, fleeces would have been buried in black bog soil to get a kind of black, but black sheep might have been used, which were really dark charcoal. The other source is a natural very dark brown, which is best got from the newer fleece near the skin of youngish lambs. Nowadays logwood is used for black. I usually gather weld locally from quarries or along roadside verges, where road works have taken place on major roads. The best color is obtained if the plant is gathered when young, just as it is beginning to color and before it sets seed. It may be used fresh or tied in bundles and hung up indoors to dry. With both madder and weld, I usually soak the plant material overnight in cold water before boiling up to make the dye liquor. There are good and bad years for madder; Irish summers are usually too wet, so good madder is normally bought from the Mediterranean. It is a time-consuming process; just to do one color takes most of one day, which is why most people don't do an awful lot of it.

In the Middle Ages, woad [a European herb of the mustard family] was used to obtain blues, but Mary used indigo, which explorers discovered on the Silk Road and has been available since ancient times. Indigo is used for blue, which came from China originally and is very expensive; wars were fought over it.

The flies were tied by the magic hand of Connie Feely of Rogan's of Donegal. Connie and David Feely took over the oldest established fly-dressing business in the world in 1994. Their primary aims are to preserve the traditions and the unique hand-tying skills handed down through the many generations of the Rogan family, and Connie learned the painstaking skill of tying flies the Rogan way. The only tool she uses is a pair of scissors, and she ties flies held between her index finger and thumb, using her middle finger to control the thread. These days she is so practiced that she can tie a size 20 without problems.

In one of those strange twists of fate, David and Connie became interested in tying the *Treatyse* flies at almost exactly the same time that I began work on the new edition. Between the two of them, they had solved many of the challenges inherent in tying the series while producing their own limited edition of *Treatyse* patterns tied on modern hooks. It did not take many conversations before it became clear to everyone involved in the project that Rogan's was not the only logical choice for tying our flies, but that they were the last link left to the old fly-tying traditions. Legend has it that Rogan's began tying flies only 150 years after the *Treatyse* was first published. The result, as you can see, is something special—I would go so far as to say that nothing like it has been seen for a quarter of a millennium. ~

*The following individuals and companies were involved in the tying of the Treatyse series: The Medlar Press, The Grange, Ellesmere, Shropshire, England; Partridge of Redditch, Mount Pleasant, Redditch, Worcs B97 4JE England; Rogan's of Donegal, Bridge End, Ballyshannon, County Donegal, Eire; and Mary Shiels, Kalimna Textile Craft Holidays, Kalimna, Coynes Cross, Ashford, County Wicklow.*



# Fly Fishing in Japan

by Jim Repine



Trout photos by Jim Repine

FOR CENTURIES, Japan was a tiny island nation shrouded in mystery and determined to remain so. The country tried by every means to avoid foreign corruption, keeping its unique social, cultural, political, and economic customs to itself. Authorities went so far as to forbid building boats capable of sailing to other lands. The fate of alien sailors unfortunate enough to be found on her beaches was rarely pleasant.

Japan's 200-year period before it was forced into international conflict in 1852 was, incidentally, the longest era of peace of any modern country. That year, Admiral Matthew Calbraith Perry, on a pretext of concern for those same seamen, forced Japan at gunpoint to expose itself to United States mercenary interests, and in so doing, to European greed as well. The wisdom of such "diplomacy" I'll leave to the more learned to argue, but the development of fly fishing in such a tiny, little-known corner of the world is a tantalizing tale with surprising questions and puzzles about who taught who what and when.

Masaaki Nishiki—my closest friend in the magic land of Nippon and a highly esteemed historical novelist and noted television personality—and I have been fishing together for more than a quarter century. We have shared remarkable adventures all over Alaska and Japan for long enough to disprove the myth that the sinful die young. It's from him that I learned most of what I know about the history of Japanese fly fishing.

For example, fishing in Japan's lowland rivers and streams

with natural bait and hooks fashioned of bone dates back to the fourth century and beyond. Catching native char—*iwana*—was in practice in remote mountain villages as early as the sixteenth century and probably much earlier. And although it's hardly a shock to discover primitive cultures fishing to eat from local streams, these mountain dwellers were doing it with long rods, tapered horsehair lines, and flies—handcrafted floating flies—tied on metal hooks. Were they the first dry-fly purists?

Without benefit of the works of Ernest Schwiebert or Doug Swisher and Carl Richards, the Japanese apparently had little knowledge of what was under the water, such as aquatic insect life. They only knew what they saw. Insects appeared on the surface of the water, and fish ate them. Therefore, if they created an imitation insect over a hook and attached it to a line fastened to a long bamboo wand, they could catch fish.

It rains often on island mountains, and plant and animal life is prolific. There are thus lots of insects and lots of fish. It didn't matter to the success of this food-gathering effort what percentage of the *iwana* diet was ingested beneath the surface. These anglers caught all they wanted without knowing or caring about the degree of a nymph's hackle softness or, for that matter, the effectiveness of night crawlers. The patterns, some still around, were designed after adult insects.

So the picture we get is of a man in clothes of thatched straw, a woven conical hat, a coat, knee pants, and woven san-

dals. He dappled his flies with a simple one-piece bamboo or willow rod of 10 feet or more and a tapered horsehair line of like length fastened to the rod tip. There were no reels.

Methods and equipment so strikingly similar to what was happening in England at the same time (as early as the fifteenth century) seems amazing. How could it be? There is no proof that Marco Polo visited Japan—most scholars feel that he did not—however, he knew of and wrote about the mystical islands. But as renowned a traveler as he was, Señor Polo was only one of several extraordinary tourists in those days. The intercourse of knowledge between East and West was more extensive than generally realized. So who spread the word of methods and equipment to whom? It makes fascinating speculation.

Once the U.S. diplomatic corps arrived, the British weren't far behind. Their primary mission wherever they went was to preserve and extend the empire, but they also seemed bent on insuring that the sun would never set on trout fishing. If Englishmen were required to be somewhere for more than a few months, fly fishing was sure to spring up. As a result, fruits of their evangels are enjoyed to this day in Africa, New Zealand, Australia, India, Patagonia, and Japan.

During the 1930s, John Hunter—half English, half Japanese—had become an influence in important circles of Tokyo's international political and social set. His exact role was shadowy, strongly suggesting intrigue. He founded the Angling Club on Chuzenji Ko, a large alpine lake in the mountains at Nikko. These enchanting environs had long been the private preserve of shoguns and the place where royal family members escaped the summer heat of Tokyo.

The Angling Club was exclusive. Only the royal family and British, American, and Italian foreign officers were invited to join. It was not strictly limited to fly fishing—any sporting method would do—but members were mostly advocates of long rods and feathers. Such notables as Jim Hardy visited the Angling Club, and in 1982 I had the high honor of visiting the man who guided him. Well into his eighties, he showed me two rods Hardy had given him and told me about accompanying the famed angler to the northern island of Hokkaido. Hardy has been quoted as saying the three best fishing locations in the world are British Columbia, New Zealand, and Hokkaido. But the sleeping ghosts of Perry's ships eventually reawakened. The catastrophic tragedy of World War II ended things at Chuzenji Ko for some time.

I first went to Japan in 1955 as a young Marine and spent two of my most pleasant years there. I have a vivid memory of waking one early morning in an ancient mountain inn. I had taken a room for the weekend and was looking out at a gorgeous stream flowing just under my window. Birds were singing to the music of gurgling water. Like an apparition, there suddenly appeared a man dressed in the conical hat and a coat, but he wore jeans that fit into shiny, new rubber boots. He cast (dappled) a fly I couldn't see. (I knew nothing of horsehair lines then, so I don't know whether he was using one.) His rod was a single-piece bamboo affair with no reel. The second cast produced,

as best I can recall, an approximately 8-inch fish, which he deftly lifted from the stream and deposited into a small woven reed creel attached to his belt. As quickly as he had come, he vanished.

"Trout fishing?" I wondered. It was the last thing I had expected to find there.

The "trout" I now know was a char, one of the two native species found in Japan's countless streams and rivers. There are also three indigenous species of Pacific salmon: chum, sockeye, and a sixth Pacific salmon—cherry salmon—that doesn't come to the Americas. In lower portions of many watersheds and in some lake systems, cherry salmon have for

centuries been landlocked and have taken on typical stream fish characteristics. So Japan's fresh water held three principal salmonid species in plentiful year-round supply.

Salmon runs occurred from south of Tokyo to the northern extremes of Hokkaido and were as prolific as those of northwestern America. Then two things happened. First, in the rush to modernize between Perry's visit and World War II—from about 1900 on—hydroelectric projects brought a great number of dams to almost every body of water that flowed. The results were predictable. Second, the commercial salmon fishery was developed with typical Japanese ingenuity and efficiency.

The most productive runs were trapped in entirety at the mouths of their spawning water, harvested, and artificially propagated on the spot. It was efficient farming, but it soon left the rest of the river or stream almost devoid of life. It should be noted, however, that with no sportfishing constituency and with no one imagining there ever would be one, the only interest in the resource was commercial exploitation. But the seeds of fly fishing planted at Chuzenji Ko had germinated. Although the insanity of war left those seeds dormant for some years, fruition would come.





The postwar Japan I first encountered was a country rapidly “going western.” Jeans were in fashion, Elvis was the musical rage, and this period was the last brief respite from the onslaught of contemporary western influences. Whatever was happening in the United States was the “in” thing. Jazz clubs opened. Baseball had been popular for decades, but when interest in tennis exploded in the States, the Japanese all enrolled in tennis schools. Golf followed. And fly fishing reemerged—but with a dramatic difference.

The country’s economic recovery, aided in large part by the United States, was a world wonder, and with it grew a gigantic middle class. For the first time in history, folks by the millions had two new things: surplus income and leisure time. Fly fishing would never again be reserved for a tiny handful of the rich and privileged. Estimates of current fly angler numbers vary: Nishiki puts the number at about 100,000; others more than double that figure. All I can say is that the annual Tokyo Tackle Show, covering all forms of sport angling, is billed as the best-attended fishing show in the world, and the last time I was there, it looked that way.

Mel Krieger has been warmly received in Japan, as has Steve Rayjeff and many other U.S. fly-fishing notables. I met and chatted with the current Jim Hardy there, and over the years I’ve written and published a hundred or so fishing articles for various Japanese magazines. Yet the westerner best known and respected—the man who played the most significant role in helping to reawaken Japan’s interest in fly fishing after the war—was, and still is, Leon Chandler, vice president of the Cortland Line Company and one of the world’s most influential fly fisherman.

Chandler—who had fought the Japanese during the war—made several visits to Japan in the years following World War II giving seminars, appearing at shows, and generally encouraging local anglers. Today his name is spoken with reverence from one end of the island nation to the other. In fact, this soft-spoken man, who for half a century has influenced fly fishing around the world, still occasionally returns to Nippon, thirty years after his first visits. As he helped nurture things along, he has had the deeply satisfying experience of seeing the sport grow there. Tackle manufacturers large and small have evolved and now not only turn out world-class-quality products, but a good number of innovative ones as well. For example, Diawa became the largest fishing tackle producer in the world. They now have a top-of-the-line rod collection that compares well with anything I’ve seen. Marryat reels enjoy wide American acceptance, and much of the best leader material and hooks are now made in Japan. And there are many other successful Japanese manufacturers.

Yet where—in a nation with the land mass of California and a population half that of the United States—could there be any place left to fish? Japan is assumed to be a country of endless factories, farmers cultivating rice on whatever small patches of land are left. This must be the common impression, because it’s a question I always get.


All three main islands, south to north—Kyushu, Honshu, and Hokkaido—are steeply mountainous. Less than a third of the land is level enough for industrial or urban expansion. The vast majority of people on Honshu, the largest island, live in an area from megalopolitan Tokyo south along the Pacific coast to Osaka, the country’s second largest city. In the north there are still a good number of farms and woodlands. The Japan Alps—a high, wild mountain range bisecting the island north to south—are among the most rugged hills in the world.

Hokkaido, roughly the size of Ireland, has almost three million people. About half of them live in or close to Sapporo, leaving the southern portion largely devoted to modern dairy farms, with the upper half surprisingly pristine. Kyushu also has a generous amount of open space.

The same coalition of consumers, manufacturers, and related services that give anglers’ organizations elsewhere enough economic clout to get political attention are at work in Japan today. Japan Fly Fishers and other organizations are working hard at environmental restoration. Meanwhile, it has become common to find well-turned-out, skilled Japanese fly fishers on rivers and streams in Montana, Maine, Alaska, Canada, New Zealand, and even Patagonia.

This is not to say that there isn’t some excellent fishing remaining on all three islands. Nishiki and others have taken me to some of my most memorable fishing there, especially on northern Honshu and Hokkaido. And over the last three decades, most popular sport fish have been introduced. Rainbow, brown, lake, and brook trout are all found in an interesting variety of water, from small mountain streams and major rivers to ponds and large lakes. Bass, large- and small-mouth, have become very popular and do very well.

But don’t go to Japan expecting the ego satiations of Alaska’s overly plentiful large and easy fish. It’s not like that. For me, in fact, the native species are the prime attraction. With them, you will always earn your catches. The fish are intricately marked char, prolific but seldom more than 12 inches in length. They exact their own prices: time-consuming research, long involved trips north, rugged mountain hikes, and at times near-perfect execution of difficult techniques with long spiderweb leaders and no. 24 patterns.

Can Japan’s rivers, lakes, and streams someday be restored to their original quality and attract worldwide interest in practicing our lovely sport there? It is just as relevant to ask if the Penobscot and countless other eastern rivers can be restored to anything close to their once-remarkable states. Can anything pertaining to environmental quality be truly preserved—much less restored—in Japan, the United States, or anywhere else, as long as we continue crowding 90 million new human beings each year onto a rather small planet? A nation that in the short space of time between world wars I and II took itself from isolated feudalism to the highest levels of industrialized strength, influence, and power might have a shot at it. If significant restoration of a nation’s sport fishery is possible, it’s as likely to happen in Japan as any place I’ve been. 

# Museums, Oddities, and Slices of Life

by Sean Sonderman



Cook Nielson

*An odd assortment from the Museum's collection (from top to bottom): A deer's head ink stand; a lighter with fly suspended in glass; a nine-piece, five-foot Abercrombie & Fitch pack rod; a mother-of-pearl fish replica; several of the library's thirteen copies of Charles Orvis's *Fishing with the Fly*; a pack of WWII-era Lucky Strike cigarettes; one of eleven Shakespeare OK Automatic reels; a collection of Orvis Minnow Trap tops; and a sample of the miles of synthetic line in the Museum's collection.*

I LIVE BY DAY in a fly fisher's dream world. I have more than 1,100 rods—including Garrisons, Dickersons, Gillums, Murphys, and Leonards—and reels that number 1,200, including the finest Vom Hofes, Orvises, Meeks, Hardys, and Mallocks. I also possess more than 25,000 flies, a library of approximately 3,000 fly-fishing titles, and a large collection of fly-fishing objects, ranging from creels to waders to fly-tying benches. I communicate with fly fishers from across the globe on a daily basis. At 5:00 P.M. each day, however, this fantasy submits to reality as I lock the gate to the dreamland and head home for the evening.

Ah, the life of a curator. Admittedly, a strange lot are we, dedicating our lives—sometimes to outrageous degrees—to dusty old objects in crowded repositories. We are often questioned about the validity of collecting and exhibiting objects on topics such as Victorian dolls, duck decoys, Eva Gardner movies, or . . . fly fishing. Yes, there are even those who cannot fathom why a museum exists based solely on the pursuit of fly fishing.

It is often wise to look back before you step forward. As I ponder the institutional founding of the American Museum of Fly Fishing (AMFF), I cannot help but wonder how museums first developed. Why do people assemble these pieces of the

past, and why do people come to see them? How have we arrived at the point where there can be a museum dedicated to as narrow a topic as fly fishing? Before examining our own collection, the first half of this article is reserved for a historical examination of how museums have evolved over the past four centuries. We will then examine where AMFF's collection fits into this development. Finally, as part of the Museum's perpetual mission to share its collections with the public, we will introduce some of the more unusual objects that the Museum has collected over the past thirty years.

Before discussing what museums are and where they began, it is important to clarify the difference between *collecting* and museum *acquisition*. A collector can assemble a hoard of 10,000 Beanie Babies or 10,000 illuminated manuscripts, but neither constitutes a museum collection until it is researched, catalogued, interpreted, and exhibited for viewing. People have been collecting objects for as long as people have been people. Studies at Harvard and Johns Hopkins have found that *people collect objects* for the pure fascination of the objects themselves. *Museums acquire objects* for a different purpose: to preserve, research, document, and exhibit objects and ideas in order to increase the understanding of a particular object, subject, or time period.



## A SHORT HISTORY OF MUSEUMS

So, where did all of this begin? How did museums come to be? And where does the American Museum of Fly Fishing fit into the continuum? Great collections have existed for centuries. Two formidable examples include the great Library at Alexandria in Egypt and the collections of the Medici family of Venice. These collections of wondrous items from around the world, although impressive, do not qualify as true museums. They were assemblages arranged for the edification of a family or ruler during their golden ages.

Modern museums—those that promote the concept of furthering public education and our understanding of ourselves and the physical world through exhibits—first appeared in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Oddly enough, the roots of the modern museum, including ours, can be traced back to the *Kunst- und Wunderkammern*, or art- and wonder-cabinets, of the late 1500s. From the beginning of modern museum collecting in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, collectors amassed great assortments of unusual artifacts. Often exhibited in no intellectual order, these “cabinets of curiosities” remained popular among the general public.<sup>2</sup>

Cabinets of curiosities proliferated throughout Europe during a period of rapid technological advancement, global exploration, and a renewed interest in classic texts. Visitors to them experienced “theaters of the marvelous, museums of accumulated curiosities, proving God’s ingenuity.”<sup>3</sup> They contained whatever was the biggest, the smallest, the rarest, the most expensive, the most bizarre, the most grotesque. Items might include voodoo dolls, a native’s ear, and a unicorn horn, alongside Shakespeare’s quill pen, Galileo’s telescope, and famous art works. These early museums were designed to cause a wonderment that sparked questions, furthering visitors to think about their world. Unlike previous collections, they added a flare to exhibiting and an underlying objective to educate people that has persisted in the modern museum.

As early as 1596, the English philosopher Francis Bacon became one of the most influential of the original proponents of the establishment of a museum specific to the study of science.<sup>4</sup> René Descartes, the French philosopher/scientist, proposed a museum of scientific instruments and tools of mechanical trades. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, a German scholar, mathematician, and philosopher, advocated the establishment of a science museum or exhibition to enlighten and entertain the public. Certainly, Leibniz believed that exhibiting science would “open people’s eyes, stimulate inventions, present beautiful sights, instruct people with an endless number of useful or ingenious novelties. . . .”<sup>5</sup>

These departures from centuries of collecting anything and everything in large halls for display established a new chapter in the amalgamation of the modern museum: specialization. Although early museums enticed visitors with their “wonders,” the museums of the seventeenth century presented philosophical ideas, natural phenomenon, or scientific instruments to the public in independent galleries or in specialized exhibitions. This is the genesis of the modern museum: collections

and ideas presented in categories as opposed to the display of wondrous oddities. This established the philosophy of exhibiting that has dominated into the twentieth century: developing areas of curatorial provenance.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century, smaller museums dedicated to topics such as nature, human history, and art began to proliferate. This trend has continued to the present.

In early nineteenth-century America, a few museums of curiosities survived. Charles Peale revered his institution, the Philadelphia Museum (1822), as a “school of useful knowledge.” In reality, it existed mostly as an assortment of the odd and curious—a cow with five legs, a petrified nest, shrunken heads, and such.<sup>7</sup> The museum did, however, include scientific exhibits on subjects such as light, sound, and motion, and Peale’s intentions of educating the public appear to be sincere. Calling it a forerunner to natural science/history museums

may be more accurate because Peale introduced many exhibit methods that perpetuate in modern natural history museums.

In the late nineteenth century, showmen such as P. T. Barnum and Moses Kimball eventually acquired Peale’s museum and many other early museums of curiosities to incorporate into their shows of the ghastly and fantastic. By the mid-nineteenth century, museum professionals and historians looked at Barnum and Kimball’s collections with disdain. Eventually, staffs at respectable museums, such as the Smithsonian’s National Museum, acquired the natural science/history elements of the various museums of curiosities. These valid elements included such objects as a large mastodon skeleton, an Allegheny River paddlefish, and objects collected

on the Lewis and Clark expedition. By the end of the nineteenth century, cabinets of curiosity were no longer considered museums. Their heyday over, “cabinets” added to the development of the modern museum with many valuable artifacts and collections as well as many exhibit techniques still in use today.

The final major development for the modern museum was a philosophical shift rather than an exhibiting technique. In the 1880s, George Brown Goode, the first director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum, encouraged the collecting of the ordinary and the commonplace, citing that one day the material would be an important reminder of our past. In the past, only the celebrated and the unusual were deemed worthy of a museum’s collection. Goode shifted the museum acquisition paradigm. He acquired the traditional “important” items—George Washington’s tea service and Daniel Boone’s pocketknife—but he also added the Copp family collection, a rich assortment of housewares, clothing, and textiles from a middling Connecticut family. He promoted and institutionalized the acquisition of vernacular items alongside the famous. Goode summed up his philosophy in the following statement.

The museum of the past must be set aside, reconstructed, transformed from a cemetery of bric-a-brac into a nursery of living thoughts. The museum of the future must stand side by side with the library and the university . . . and in the great cities cooperate with the public library as one of the principal agencies for the enlightenment of the people.<sup>8</sup>



Cook Nielson

*An Ecuadorian bead with fish imprint, c. 200 A.D. The oldest piece in the Museum’s collection.*



Unusual items such as these—a bottle of Findlater Dry Fly sherry; a miniature canoe; a 19½", three-piece Grampus cane rod; and a 6-foot 5-inch, twelve-piece Japanese telescoping dapping rod—provide variety to the Museum's traditional collection of rods, reels, and flies.



Through the years, museums have developed along intellectual, philosophical, and physical lines in response to changes in society and technological advancements. With each new development, museums shifted toward increasingly public presentations and toward a clearer philosophy of education and specialization. As a result, contemporary museums bear little resemblance to yesterday's collections of curiosities that dominated early museums. From the collecting of everything wondrous to specialized museums, from the accumulation of things to the exhibition of ideas, and from the assemblage of the celebrated and peculiar to collecting the vernacular, museums have developed along physical and philosophical lines.

## WHY A FLY-FISHING MUSEUM?

So, how does the American Museum of Fly Fishing relate to this lineage of museum development? The early museums paved the way for museums such as ours. The cabinets of curiosities began the trend of exhibiting for educational consumption. They introduced many exhibition modes and, of course, they entertained. Later, "professional" museums categorized topics and developed modern museum nomenclature. They made it possible for dedicated organizations such as ours to specialize in certain areas. In the nineteenth century, museums began collecting objects from the everyday person. This philosophy has extended to our modern collecting practices. For example, at the American Museum of Fly Fishing, Winslow Homer's Hardy Fairy rod can be exhibited along with William Fenton's Orvis 8-foot (Wes Jordan) rod.

The early museums are our ancestors, and they were far from perfect, just like people. Collecting is an art that museums have refined over the past four centuries. The American Museum of Fly Fishing is an extension of that refinement and is, we hope, building on it. So, why do museums collect, and why fly fishing? First of all, if it exists, it is collected. There are museums dedicated to light bulbs, trash, beer cans, and dirt. There is a museum in Philadelphia that collects anatomical and pathological specimens and one in Minnesota that collects the body parts of famous people. So, if you want to see a tumor from President Grover Cleveland's jaw or John Wilkes Booth's spleen, they're out there.

But why fly fishing? The official museum slogan: to preserve

our rich fly-fishing heritage for future generations. What does this mean, you ask? Fly fishing is a slice. It is a slice of who we are as people, whether we fly fish or not. Human history is made up of many slices, and museums have dedicated themselves to preserving these slices of life. Together they make up a rich stew of history, science, art, philosophy, nature, and many other facets of life. For many of us, fly fishing is the slice we like the best. It combines engineering with physics. It is sport and art form. Fly fishing is the study of entomology, ichthyology, and water dynamics. It is craft, philosophy, literature, geography, conservation, and science all rolled into one passionate pursuit.

We collect, preserve, and exhibit fly-fishing objects to trace the evolution of the entire sport or perhaps the evolution of the development of a single rod. We maintain the largest public repository in the world that is available for researchers to study all aspects of fly fishing. Within our walls, researchers can find historical information on stream environments to track changing conditions over time, log books from tackle dealers to trace century-old rod origins, periodicals and volumes for research on Victorian-era leisure activities, as well as thousands of other topics.

Admittedly, we also choose fly fishing because it is enjoyable, it is a chance to commune with nature, it is challenging—fill in your personal blank. Creating a museum about subjects that are dear to us is another tradition carried down from the original museums of the sixteenth century. People collect and exhibit objects that other people will want to see. Locke would call this supply and demand. P. T. Barnum would call it a circus. AMFF is somewhere in between.

## SOME OF AMFF'S HOLDINGS

Now that this has all been laid on the table before you, you may wonder what the Museum has collected over the last thirty years. Along the way, the original founders and subsequent curators at the American Museum of Fly Fishing have collected the finest public collection of fly-fishing material in the world. In the collection, you will find reels by Billingham, Millward, Chubb, Leonard, Orvis, and Vom Hofe; rods by Payne, Leonard, Garrison, Gillum, Murphy, Furman, and Orvis; artwork created by Corbin, Swan, Daly, Reneson,



Pictured from left to right: a B.F. Meek & Sons "44", the first item accessioned into the Museum's collection; a miniature Orvis Minnow Trap; a Ted Williams fly-casting card; and a 10" x 7/8", 38-ounce Scarborough reel with a 1 3/4" x 1", 1 3/4-ounce Hendryx reel, the largest and the smallest reels in the collection respectively.



Schaldach, and Fuertes; and flies tied by Steenrod, Hewitt, Leisenring, Darbee, Niemyer, Bates, Stevens, Jennings, Glasso, and Wulff. Among the thousands of creels, waders, leaders, awards, and other material are individual collections from Preston Jennings, Colonel Joseph Bates Jr., Tim Bedford, Zane Grey, Arnold Gingrich, Lyle Dickerson, Art Flick, Nick Lyons, and others. We also possess items from many famous men who fly fished, such as Aldo Leopold, Daniel Webster, Babe Ruth, Glenn Miller, Bing Crosby, and seven former presidents.

The vast majority of the collection is of the highest category. But what of the rest of the collection? Every museum has its share of oddities or unfortunate acquisitions. In general, when museums first begin, they collect for quantity, not quality. This is understandable, as the need to fill space often supersedes the methodical process of collecting only the choicest of items. Fortunately, the founders of the American Museum of Fly Fishing took the opposite approach. In fact, one early member says that they were actually too selective.

As a result of this approach, some of the finest pieces in the collection came during the first four years in the life of the Museum (1967 to 1970). The first item ever to be accessioned into the collection was a magnificent Meek & Sons No. 44 reel. This piece was followed by a succession of Leonard, Murphy, Orvis, and Thomas rods; Malloch, Hardy, and Vom Hofe reels; LaBranche, Rhead, and Mary Orvis Marbury flies; and artwork by Pleissner, Kilbourne, and Tait.

Later directors and curators continued this practice of collecting fine artifacts, but many items of a less-than-spectacular nature have also made it past the gate. For whatever reason, it is inevitable that this occurs. It will no doubt happen to me. Individual preferences, not wanting to upset a donor or benefactor, changes in collecting foci, and other reasons often allow items of strange, unusual, or an unrelated nature to enter a museum's collection.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing has its own entries. I have chosen to show a few of the more unusual items in our collection in this article, some of which are perfectly suited for the museum, some that are not, as opposed to picking out the large number of spinning reels, bait-casting rods, plugs, and other non-fly-fishing related items that we possess. Also omitted are the countless mounted fish, the shotgun, the accessioned door with no supporting documentation, the 1,100 patches, and other material. The collection also holds many

duplicates, which is actually a proactive practice, but thirteen Orvis Battenkill rods, nine South Bend "Automatic" Model A reels, and eleven copies of Ray Bergman's *Just Fishing*?

As the Museum matures, the selection process becomes more stringent. It has to. The Museum's collections storage space is vastly overcrowded, and the exhibit space is not large enough to display large quantities of material. We must concentrate on collecting for quality as opposed to quantity. We must also begin collecting the finest rods, reels, and flies from contemporary firms and individuals. This active approach to collecting will benefit the Museum and, in the long run, the history of fly fishing.

The unusual objects are interesting. Many deserve a place in the Museum and will in the future. They were at one time the focus of all museum/cabinets. Today they are the interesting sidelights to more mainstream history. They always add variety and often give us clues to unexamined slices of life. I recently donated a baseball card to the Museum that pictures Ted Williams holding a tarpon and a fly rod. Is this a future oddity in the collection or a valuable artifact? Will this be amusing or outrageous to a later curator? Perhaps, but that is what makes museum acquisition and exhibiting fly-fishing objects such a splendid slice.

#### ENDNOTES

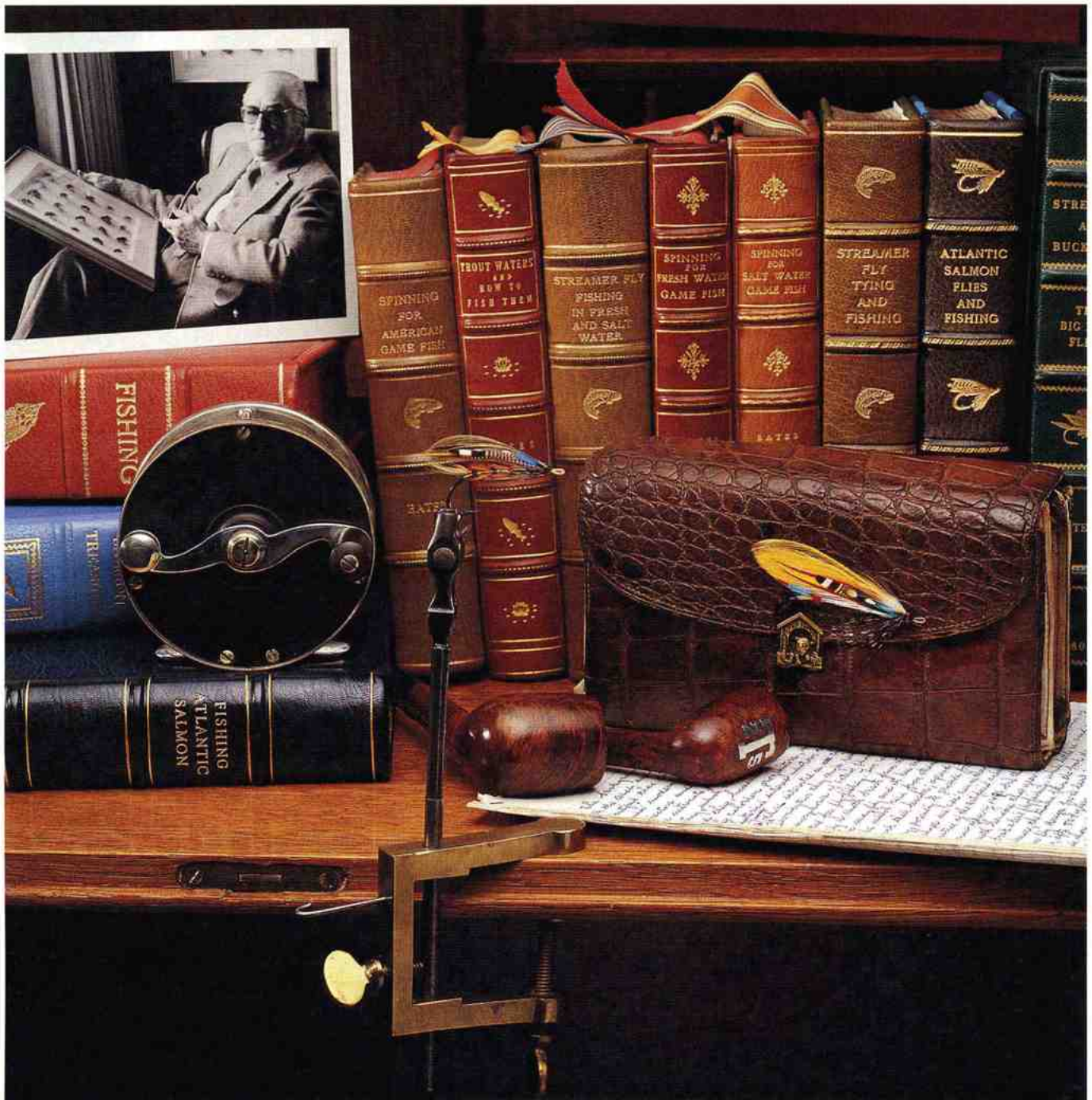
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# Joseph D. Bates Jr.: The Collection of a Lifetime

*by Pamela Bates Richards*

Photograph by Cook Neilson



*The American Museum of Fly Fishing recently acquired 303 flies from the collection of renowned author, fly fisher, and collector Joseph D. Bates Jr. He personally selected this series of flies as the pride of his collection. Above, Bates's handwritten manuscript of *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* (1987) rests among a collection of his angling titles. The twenty-four plates in the acquisition formed the basis for this landmark work. We are pleased to have Colonel Bates's daughter, author and Museum Trustee Pamela Bates Richards, introduce the collection and her father in the following article.*





Joseph D. Bates Jr., c. 1940.

LIKE FIRECRACKERS, the report of the rifle salute pierced the fall afternoon and was gone. So, too, was my father. Joseph D. Bates Jr. died on 30 September 1988, and was buried with a simple but imposing military service. Although he had requested a veteran's flag at his grave, the Army's suggestion for full military honors seemed only appropriate. Joe's long association with the Army was heartfelt and endowed him with an unyielding sense of precision and dedication. He had worn his khaki well.

That early October day was full of contrasts: hellos and good-byes punctuated by the burst of rifle fire and the plaintive echo of taps. Late evening, when family and friends had sifted themselves to their places, I sought refuge in my father's study. I did not know then that departures can be as much about beginnings as they are about farewells.

The desk at which my father had worked was affirmation of his active and dedicated life. In forty years, he had ventured from spinning pioneer to salmon fly historian. Flies for a planned exhibit were laid out, carbon copies of letters sent were piled chronologically, and an unfinished manuscript stood by. Only inches remained on walls that were covered with collected art, Cushner framings, and Army and angling memorabilia. Decoys nested on stacked books near bookcases that seemed ready to implode, and, above it all, hung the familiar aroma of Mixture No. 79.

Referred to in our family as the "inner sanctum," the study was eloquent testimony to a lifetime committed to the world of angling and other outdoor pastimes. Invitations to visit Dad there were either dreaded or eagerly anticipated. As I was

growing up, entry might imply a problem with deportment, or, if Nature's gods were smiling, it could be time to clean the guns or look at "good stuff." From 1947 to 1988, the muffled timpani of a vintage typewriter could be heard as sixteen books and countless articles and letters were written. Collections of flies, tackle, books, art, decoys, and guns were assembled while friendships past and present flourished: Atherton, Burke, DeFeo, and Hogan; Stevens, Stickney, Welch, and Wheeler; Crowell, Gibbs, Ward, and Weiler; Boyd, Glasso, Grant, and Martinez. It was very male, very Joe, and very private.

Joe died as precisely as he had lived. His instructions regarding the disposition of his collections were explicit: to relieve my mother of responsibility and to put his treasures back into the hands of collectors, the books, tackle, flies, and art were to be sold at public auction. As executor, my brother, Bruce, felt obligated to carry out our father's wishes, but I had both the desire and the need to understand more. The generous spirits of my mother and brother prevailed, and they designated me family curator. After making our personal choices of things to retain, auctions began the following year. However poignant the process of sorting and parting with Dad's collections or belongings was, preparing for the auctions was also, for me, a beginning. The first of several transitions was taking place, and I was entering a world I had been exposed to but was not a part of.

One of my first assignments was to visit the American Museum of Fly Fishing where the salmon flies used in the color plates of *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* were on



Sydney Glasso tied these flies from Blacker's intricate patterns in *Art of Fly Making* (1855) for plate VI of Bates's *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* (1987).

exhibit. Associations made there quickly developed into friendships, and the duties of a daughter took on new meaning and pleasure. When I realized the magnitude of the toy chest at hand, my focus turned to the how and why of the fly collection.

I began with my father's own books and then went to the references he had cited. As a new and objective respect for his work and its scope grew, I noticed that several of his early books had no bibliography. Skepticism suggested this might be an oversight, but logic told me otherwise. Soon it became clear to me that throughout his writing career, Joe repeatedly pioneered fresh territory in the angling world. Included are the first book on "spinning" to be written in this country (*Spinning for American Game Fish*, 1947), the first title specifi-

cally on long-shanked flies (*Streamer Fly Fishing in Fresh and Salt Water*, 1950), and the first definitive American publication concentrating on detailed salmon fly pattern information (*Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing*, 1970). In 1970, *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing* (originally published in 1966) and *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing* were presented as a pair in limited deluxe editions. Spanning thirty of the forty years that Joe wrote about and collected flies, these two books provide not only personal and technical information on angling, but also documentation of the origins and patterns of both streamer and salmon flies. Today, these titles are not only recognized as fundamental references, but are also responsible for spawning a new interest in collecting flies and a respect for the tyers who create them. Relating them to my own mission to learn more





Colonel Bates during desert training. His jeep, "Little Pam," is named for his daughter, Pamela Bates Richards.

about my father's work and collections, they served as confirmation of Joe's acquisitive and inquisitive skills.

My father's creative abilities came to him naturally. His mother, Josephine Avery Bates, published numerous stories and articles, and his father, Joseph D. Bates Sr., founded his own advertising agency and exercised other talents by inventing such things as the "squeegee" sponge mop and flexible ice cube trays. Young Joe's education began in a one-room schoolhouse and, at the insistence of his father, ended with the class of 1926 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Having little interest in engineering, Joe studied as much English as he dared at MIT and then began his career in advertising at the family firm. Following active duty in the southwest Pacific during World War II, my father resumed work at the Bates agency, and, combining vocation with avocation, he began writing for various magazines on a wide variety of fishing-related subjects. His correspondence tells us:

I don't know if I ever related how I got started in the avocation of writing books. Right after WWII a gentleman—retired architect—moved here from living in France, and he brought with him some spinning reels, rods, etc. We became good friends, and I was fascinated with the new equipment—unknown here then. I did a lot of research on it; we used it in both fresh and salt water, and I set a few records with the tackle. Then I wrote some magazine articles about it; gave demonstrations, etc. Angus Cameron, then a young editor with Little, Brown & Company in Boston, phoned me and asked me to write a book about spinning (thread-line fishing). I told him I never had written a book, and didn't know how to. He said he had read some of my magazine articles and that he knew I could do it, and he was sending me a contract.

So I wrote the book and it went through fourteen printings. I thought I had it made, and henceforth could relax at a fishing camp and write between hatches, or when rivers were too low. It didn't work out that way, but I enjoy writing books anyway—sort of a challenge, I guess.<sup>1</sup>

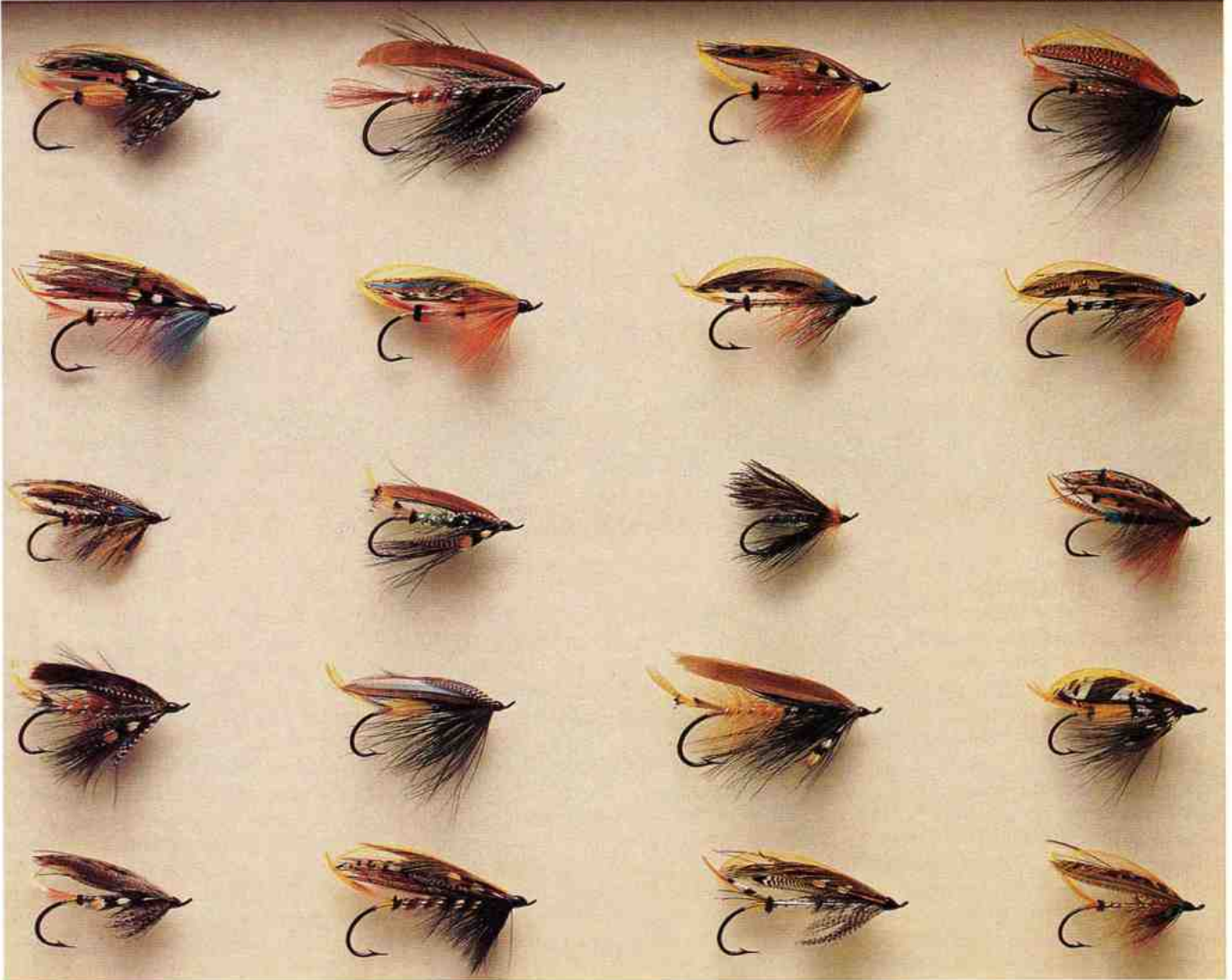
Two years later, in 1949, *Trout Waters and How to Fish Them* was published, inspiring Dwight Eisenhower to write, "... the book gave me the opportunity of experiencing, by remote con-

trol, the delights of the sport we both enjoy so much."<sup>2</sup> The third book, *Streamer Fly Fishing in Fresh and Salt Water*, followed in 1950, but spinning remained a new horizon for Joe. Combining the traditional with the revolutionary, Joe adapted Rangeley streamers to weighted flies for spinning and alternated fly tackle and spinning gear as conditions dictated. The new equipment sparked both his creative and advertising abilities, and Joe began developing and marketing products that related to his interests. Using rods and lures of his own design, he set out to catch record fish in far-flung places. Ripley's *Believe It or Not* validated his success, and additional credentials as sportsman and writer led to consulting and promotional contracts with tackle companies and larger corporations as well as to two additional books on the subject. In later years, Dad apologetically dismissed "the spinning episode," although its professional and personal merits cannot be denied. Perhaps now we can forgive Joe this brief digression from the "purist" approach to angling because it not only provided subject matter for three of the sixteen books he wrote, but facilitated his first and final love of fly fishing.

From the first book in 1947 to the last in 1987, the collections my father assembled corresponded to the dates of the books he wrote, and, biographically, this sequence serves him well. Joe was a fisherman first. His introduction to *Spinning for American Game Fish* (1947) described his angling recollections as going back more than thirty years—"to the short pants stage of my boyhood." In the 1920s, Joe found his way to Maine to fish where, as a budding author twenty years later, he was taken under the wings of prominent bucktail and streamer innovators such as Bill Edson, Herbie Welch, Joe Stickney, Bert Quimby, and Carrie Stevens. In a letter to Angus Cameron in 1988, he related:

I fished with all of them (except Carrie) and roamed the Maine woods when it was really the Maine woods—a wilderness except for previous logging. The trout and landlocked salmon fishing was spectacular! I spent several springs and falls doing this, usually with Ross McKenny as guide, going up and down the rivers and lakes by canoe and outboard—later, flying in with Joe





*Megan Boyd tied these British classics for plates 31–32 of Fishing Atlantic Salmon (1996). The author finished the volume after the death of her father. William Cushner framed this presentation.*

Stickney, who had access to a state airplane. We camped oftentimes in deserted lumber shacks, or stayed in wardens' cabins, or just camped out. Then, was the happy days! . . . I figured that the flies dressed by such pioneers might become valuable, so collected them. They were the basis of my three books on streamer flies.<sup>3</sup>

By the time that *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing* was published in 1966, Joe had amassed hundreds of streamer flies, a great portion of which were tied by their originators. These flies, together with the correspondence that accompanied them, became the foundation of several books on streamers and bucktails. Joe's determined effort to gather information regarding fly patterns and their histories was gratified, and, concurrently, a collection was generated. The flies and the patterns Joe had accumulated were filed alphabetically in large loose-leaf binders. Each fly, in its original envelope, was taped to a typed pattern page that fully described the fly and its ori-

gin. Joe's own files later produced invaluable correspondence documenting the development and acquisition of many of these flies.

For both author and collector, the 1960s marked a time of transition for my father's avocational pursuits. In twenty years, Joe had written eight books; in the following twenty he would write another eight. Of this period, my father wrote:

Hobbies change and mine did after I learned about Atlantic salmon fishing about 1960. Salmon of 10 pounds or more seemed more important than squaretail trout of 4 pounds or less, so my interest turned to salmon fishing, usually then on the Miramichi. I began to collect salmon flies and traded my streamers and bucktails for salmon flies. The collection of antique and contemporary salmon flies, including important ones as well as those for fishing, now number about 9,000. Examples were exhibited at the American Museum of Fly Fishing between 1986 and 1987. The collection includes a few by





*Bates contacted Sydney Glasso to tie this magnificent Golden Parsons for The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly (1987). Of the old patterns, Glasso commented, "It's good for my soul to just look at these feathers."*

such dressers as George M. Kelson and Dr. T. E. Pryce-Tannatt, and contemporaries such as Sydney Glasso, Megan Boyd, Belarmino Martinez, and many other modern experts. Many say this collection is the best in the world.<sup>4</sup>

He reflected in *Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*:

Like dressing the classics, collecting can begin simply and be carried as far as one wishes. My fascination with it began with my love and respect for salmon fishing. I studied and experimented with the various angling techniques, which of course required delving into books—all leading to growing familiarity with the various styles and characters of salmon flies. This led to a fascination with the flies themselves.

At first I collected them to have a supply of the various patterns for fishing. At that early time classics were still in vogue, and I favored them because of their beauty. I learned to respect them because of their old and often debatable histories . . . I submit that one cannot appreciate the full flavor of tying or collecting classics without studying books about them.<sup>5</sup>

Dad was relentless in his research to document patterns of the flies that so fascinated him. Understanding the history of the flies gave fishing them another dimension. As Joe's friendships developed with tyers we now look on as legendary, his fly boxes grew accordingly. Joe kept the bulk of his salmon fishing flies in an antique mahogany and cedar chest that was never far from his desk. Opening it transported the observer to Maine, Canada, Iceland, Norway, and the British Isles; beneath the essence of camphor was a handwritten memo, stating, "This box contains 1,832 flies . . ." with the cryptic pencil addenda, "There are more now." Labeled according to size, pattern, tyer, and river, the fly boxes within the chest held nearly 200 flies dressed by Megan Boyd, approximately 400 dressed by Belarmino Martinez, and hundreds of classic and hairwing patterns dressed by tyers such as Jack Atherton, Charlie DeFeo, Poul Jorgensen, Jimmy Younger—and Joe Bates. I am told by those who fished with Joe that he took delight in sharing his flies on the river—especially those from a box marked "Colonel Bates—Megan Boyd," which, at the time of his death, held fifty-two fully dressed flies in sizes from No. 12 to No. 2. In filling an order for several dozen Colonel Bates patterns in varying sizes, Megan wrote:

Now, to give you a "ticking off"! Col. Bates is exactly as described in your book—or for show?? To tie side hackles (solid stems) plus all the other items requiring to be tied in separately on a No. 6 or No. 8 hook requires the help of a magician!! . . . I

did reduce the number of hackles, and I had difficulty getting matching sides of barred duck—the bars being much too wide for small hooks—but it was the best I could do. You certainly seemed quite pleased with the flies, but I was not, for I find nothing more exasperating than tying a fly and not being able to get the exact materials for the job.<sup>6</sup>

Correspondence from the 1970s tells us more about the development of the collection. Joe wrote to Megan Boyd, "My salmon fly collection is slowly prospering. I find it awfully hard to get perfect old flies and when I find any my joy knows no bounds! If I live long enough this collection may be outstanding—something I can leave to posterity so new generations can see what the old classics look like."<sup>7</sup> In another letter to Boyd, he wrote, "I thought it might please you to know that the loving care you gave to the flies you sent to me will be perpetuated . . ."<sup>8</sup> And she wrote to him, "As long as I can exist on fly tying that is all I ask—for the day is now at hand when good work is seldom seen, and the tying of these beautiful patterns no longer appreciated except by the very few like yourself. I'm so glad to have found you for that reason—you are doing what I always wanted to do—keep flies to look at."<sup>9</sup>

The phenomenal growth of the collection required additional focus, and, in 1978, Joe wrote to Syd Glasso:

This collection now consists of several thousand flies, of which a couple of thousand could be called museum grade. The trouble is that many of the flies sent to me are patterns I have—T & L, the Doctors, Durham Ranger, Jock Scott, etc.—the well-known ones. Of course, I save them, but I have concluded that the collection should take a firm course—that being to try to obtain all the flies whose patterns are given in Pryce-Tannatt and in Kelson, particularly. . . . A few of the people in the world able to do this grade of art have interested themselves in this project—especially Megan Boyd, Belarmino Martinez, Larry Borders, and Ted Godfrey.<sup>10</sup>

Joe's correspondence continues to confirm his regard for salmon flies as an art form and his respect for the tyers who create them. To Boyd, he wrote, "Also, the book [*The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*] makes the point that, while the Victorian classics now rarely are used in fishing, a rapidly growing number of people are dressing these flies as the old masters did, and these new artists should be given proper recognition."<sup>11</sup> Glasso wrote, "What you are doing about the old classic flies is a fine thing. These old flies, besides being truly beautiful, recall a time and a way of life that is gone for all time."<sup>12</sup>



In his ninth decade, Joe allowed the nuances of the salmon fly to replace the challenges of wading the rivers. As the collection grew to encyclopedic proportions, his own criteria expanded. Joe's exposure to the flies he collected elevated his perception of the salmon fly from an art form to a fine art.

This absorbing hobby began decades ago, prompted and developed by contacts with prominent historians, anglers, and fly dressers overseas. It resulted in acquisitions now numbering thousands. Some flies I own purely for fishing, some I have retained for sentiment, but most flies in my collection have been chosen because of rarity or excellence of construction. I soon learned that the best were not necessarily antiques or commercial European patterns. The handsomest and most precisely dressed patterns are most often tied by modern amateurs, many of whom have developed their craft into a fine art.<sup>13</sup>

Although *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing* and *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing* had secured their places as a world overview of flies and their patterns, Joe was still not satisfied. Yet one more book was "in the works," and he set out to celebrate the culmination of his own collection with *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*. Academically and aesthetically, the text and the flies present Joe's account of the art of the Atlantic salmon fly as his experience and his research dictated.

As he worked on the book he thought of as his swan song, he wrote:

Although modern use of the classic salmon fly is confined to a small core of nostalgic anglers, its magnificence and honorable history are far too fascinating to consign it to obscurity. A growing number of fly tyers, always interested in new challenges and techniques, are finding in classic patterns a test of ability and a reward of beauty transcending those afforded by other forms of fly dressing. This art, be it folk or fine, is so absorbing as to become an obsession. For many it provides a never-ending quest toward perfection. What some dressers can do, as color plates herein demonstrate, is nothing short of astounding. I submit that, in the hands of experts, the classic salmon fly becomes a new form of fine art!<sup>14</sup>

The 303 flies he selected for the twenty-four color plates represent what he believed to be the best he had to offer in his final work. To make his work complete and create his most definitive tribute to the history of the salmon fly and the art of tying it, Joe requested flies from the finest resources he had available and chose others from the thousands of flies he had collected. Unlike the flies used in other books that were either traded or returned to his collection, Joe elected to preserve those in his conclusive work. He had them mounted, framed, and placed in a walnut case, and, together, these framings serve as his final commentary on the salmon fly. Correspondence from that time reveals lengthy exchanges with tyers such as Larry Borders, Megan Boyd, Al Cohen, Peter Deane, Sydney Glasso, Jack Heddon, and Belarmino Martinez. Today, the same correspondence that solicited the flies substantiates and documents them, further adding to their historic and monetary worth.

The correspondence further underscores the author's and tyer's shared goal of perfection. Enclosed with a fly sent by Megan Boyd was the comment, "I hope you think it good enough for your book. In fact, I think I make a better job of my flies for everyday use than when I try to do something special. If you are not pleased with it and there is time I will make any fly you like."<sup>15</sup> On other occasions, she wrote, "I enclose a 'Salscraggie' or Pale Torrish if it is good enough for your book—the wing could be better, but I just hadn't time to do it again."<sup>16</sup> And "I'm so pleased I was not able to do your flies before as I got some pre-war beautiful hooks and some Indian crow. Your flies are all made on these hooks."<sup>17</sup> In his own self-

effacing manner, Syd Glasso wrote, "Just got back the color prints that I took of the flies I sent you, including the Claret Palmer and Beresford's Fancy. The herl heads on these two flies look like hell. It was the first herl head I'd made and now I'm truly ashamed of them. If it's convenient for you, please send them back and I'll fix them up."<sup>18</sup> And, "I've enclosed, in a separate package, twelve of the fifteen Blacker patterns. There is a picture too—hard to identify the flies otherwise. They simply do not look like the illustrations in the book (neither do Kelson's flies). I hope they are satisfactory but if not please do not hesitate to use someone else's flies."<sup>19</sup> Syd's misgivings were, of course, unfounded; and he once wrote Joe, "Thanks for your letter of December 10th and your two kind words about the flies I sent. Some turn out fairly good, but there are days when I can't tie my shoelaces decently."<sup>20</sup>

During production of *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*, Joe began seeking more obscure patterns—from the earliest to a few of the most contemporary. He contacted tyers whose expertise was in particular patterns, or pattern styles, and had a number of flies tied to order. For example, Joe asked Bob Veverka to dress many of the Spey flies used in the book and Mark Waslick to tackle Traherne's elaborate patterns. Often, flies were needed to complete color plates illustrating established angling references such as *A Treatise of Fysshynge wyth an Angle* and *Blacker's Art of Fly Making*. Joe turned to Jack Heddon and Syd Glasso to fill this void and wrote to Syd, "On our part, we need the Blacker set done by the best expert available—one also sympathetic to history, who will do the reproductions as in Blacker's book. You are the first choice for this."<sup>21</sup> Another letter followed, "Your doing these takes a great load off my mind. The actual antiques and the 'reproductions' will be selected or must be dressed with the greatest care, by the best people in the world capable of doing this exacting work. In general, I am getting fine cooperation, as many want to be included in a book of this sort. Jack Heddon, of London, is doing the Berners patterns. Evidently he is the top expert on Berners. . . ."<sup>22</sup> In looking for Victorian patterns, Joe again turned to Syd, "As for the Golden Parson, Francis's pattern gives no ribbing—his is the pattern I sent you. I do think a bit of fine oval gold tinsel would help the fly, so use it if you wish. The reason for no ribbing may be that there is so much hackling. This is one of my most favorite flies, and one by you would help to make a stunning color plate—so I hope you'll get in the mood soon. Size can be as large as you wish. It could be the focal point of the plate."<sup>23</sup>

As work progressed, Joe wrote to Syd Glasso, "My interest in this book is more intense than in any other I have done. It should be a stunning book, and I'm pleased with it so far. . . . The research is almost overwhelming. Luckily, I know a lot of people around the Atlantic who are angling historians or fly experts, and all have come to my rescue on points I need to clear up."<sup>24</sup> Finally, a year before my father's death, *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* was published. The result of this undertaking inspired Joe's lifelong friend and editor, Angus Cameron, to write in this journal, "*The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* must take its rightful place in the grand tradition of books on salmon fly dressing. We may properly say to Hale, Blacker, Francis, Kelson, and Pryce-Tannatt, 'Move over worthy gentlemen and make a place for Joseph D. Bates Jr.'"<sup>25</sup>

Ten years have passed since Angus wrote this tribute to his friend that, coincidentally, appeared in the same issue of *The American Fly Fisher* (Fall 1988) as my father's obituary. I cannot, however, imagine a finer eulogy to a man whose dedication to the world of angling was consummate. The essence of Joe was perhaps best expressed by Bill Hunter in his review of *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*, which appeared in *Fly*



Joseph D. Bates Jr. in Maine.

*Fisherman*: "It is difficult to separate the man from the subject. He was a big man with a big life. He lived it, touched it, and now has passed it on."<sup>26</sup>

A decade later, Hunter's succinct summation of Joe Bates holds greater meaning because he has, indeed, "passed it on." Gratefully, the Joseph Bates collection of Atlantic salmon flies came to me with the respect my father taught me about such things. The ten years spent learning about my father's work and his collections made me realize the historical significance of the flies, and my efforts to protect them became all but obsessive. It is clear to me that the books, and the fishing and flies that inspired them, are my father's life statement, but it is the fly collection that is the core of his lifework. Guardians of salmon fly history such as Keith Fulsher, David Ledlie, and Paul Schullery confirmed my belief in the importance of the whole of the Bates collection, and a plan to preserve the invaluable and irreplaceable learning tool Joe had created took form.

I reasoned that as long as the flies were earning their keep, the collection could remain intact until I could properly place it. The unpublished manuscript in the study—which would become *Fishing Atlantic Salmon*—came to the rescue, and, once again, Joe's favorites were called to service as plans to publish it became a reality. Initially, the manuscript was intended as a revision of the 1970 edition of *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing*, but Stackpole Books suggested that we reissue the original work, along with its mate *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing*, and use Joe's manuscript as the foundation to rewrite "a grand new book." Thus, in 1995, two books were put back into the hands of readers, and, in 1996, a collaborative effort by father and daughter was published. The Bates collection now had new flies and new color plates to its credit. We had done our job.

While the fly collection is at the heart of the matter, it is the flies that were so meticulously selected to illustrate *The Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly* that are its keystone. It is now fitting that this portion of the collection be passed on once again for

the benefit of generations of fly fishers. Most appropriate of all is that, at last, it has safe haven as a permanent acquisition at the American Museum of Fly Fishing. My associations there have been some of the most gratifying and pleasurable aspects of the life my father unknowingly bequeathed me. During the past ten years, it has been my privilege to grow both with the Bates collection and the Museum. Each has meant an incomparable beginning, and now it is time to celebrate together "the collection of a lifetime." ~

## ENDNOTES

1. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Brian G. Fabbeni, 12 August 1982.
2. Letter from Dwight Eisenhower to Joseph D. Bates Jr., January 1956.
3. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Angus Cameron, 7 June 1988.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Joseph D. Bates Jr., *Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*, Boston, Mass.: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc., 1987, p. 171.
6. Letter from Megan Boyd to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 7 February 1973.
7. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Megan Boyd, 17 January 1978.
8. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Megan Boyd, 22 February 1973.
9. Letter from Megan Boyd to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 17 April 1972.
10. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Sydney Glasso, 23 October 1978.
11. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Megan Boyd, 10 December 1986.
12. Letter from Sydney Glasso to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 25 February 1979.
13. Joseph D. Bates Jr., *Art of the Atlantic Salmon Fly*, Boston, Mass.: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc., 1987, p. 171.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Letter from Megan Boyd to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 16 February 1970.
16. Letter from Megan Boyd to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 3 March 1970.
17. Letter from Megan Boyd to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 11 November 1971.
18. Letter from Sydney Glasso to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 3 March 1979.
19. Letter from Sydney Glasso to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 9 January 1982.
20. Letter from Sydney Glasso to Joseph D. Bates Jr., 2 December 1978.
21. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Sydney Glasso, 17 June 1981.
22. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Sydney Glasso, 16 July 1981.
23. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Sydney Glasso, 21 February 1982.
24. Letter from Joseph D. Bates Jr. to Sydney Glasso, 6 December 1981.
25. Angus Cameron, "Joseph D. Bates, Jr. (1903-1988)," *The American Fly Fisher*, vol. 14, no. 2 (Fall 1988), p. 28.
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# Our Man Finlay Moves North

by Sean Sonderman



As the Museum's first registrar and curator, G. Dick Finlay collected thousands of fly-fishing items, including Winslow Homer's B. F. Nichols fly rod, pictured above in 1969.

WHEN TRUSTEE EMERITUS and Museum volunteer G. Dick Finlay announced that after fifty-two years he was saying goodbye to his Manchester home to be with his children in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, we at the Museum were sad and disappointed to see him go. Dick routinely dropped by, armed with a wealth of fly-fishing knowledge and an unwavering smile. A day when Dick visited was always a good day.

We are still realizing the void his departure from Manchester has left.

Some of us knew G. Dick Finlay as a fixture at American Museum of Fly Fishing events, the man who never seemed too busy to lend his expertise at fly tackle identification or to host a fly-casting demonstration for visitors. Others remember Dick as a twenty-year employee of the Orvis Company, a founder of the Museum, and a dedicated family man. Some were lucky enough to have known him all along.

Dick graduated from Williams College in 1943. He served in the 10th Mountain Division in World War II and worked for the Orvis Company after the war. He did two ten-year tours of duty with Orvis, 1947 to 1957 and 1961 to 1971, and was integral in establishing the Orvis Fly Fishing School in 1966.

Along with Hermann Kessler, then art director at *Field & Stream*, Dick promoted the idea of a fly-fishing museum in Manchester. Leigh Perkins took the reigns of the Orvis Company in 1965, he liked the idea, and the Museum became a reality. Dick quickly became the Museum's heart and soul. He served as first registrar in 1967, and along with others who supported the idea of a fly-fishing museum—such as Austin Hogan, Martin Keane, Ken Cameron, and Ben Upson—he began the ardent task of collecting, preserving, and identifying thousands of fly-fishing items. He nurtured the collection along and rapidly built a fine one.

Dick also found time to serve as

advertising manager at *Fly Fisherman* magazine, contributing editor at *Rod & Reel* and *Fly Tackle Dealer*, associate curator at the Museum, and to work at the Orvis Fly Fishing School in the summer and as a ski school supervisor at Bromley Mountain in the winter. His contributions to the sport of fly fishing are too numerous to count and too broad to comprehend. G. Dick Finlay is living proof that those who remain behind the scenes are often the most important. We all should be grateful for the energy he devoted and the patience he found to save a large part of our angling history for future generations.

In October, Dick packed up the plantation and moved to Hyde Park in northern Vermont. We hear he is still digging out the snow at his roofline. Although he lives a little farther away now, Dick is always close to our hearts. He will forever be our favorite visitor at the Museum. Or are we the visitors at his Museum? Thank you, G. Dick Finlay—best wishes and tight lines. ~

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*The Museum's year-end 1998 Annual Appeal raised more than \$8,000.  
Our most sincere thanks to those who contributed to fund the Museum's important work.  
(List compiled on 25 January 1999.)*

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R. Valentine Atkinson



"Anglers All" at the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, 1988.

## "Anglers All": On the Road Again in 2000

The American Museum of Fly Fishing would like to announce the return of its highly successful traveling exhibit, "Anglers All 2000: Humanity in Midstream." The new "Anglers All 2000" captures the age-old pursuit of fly fishing with a dynamic exhibit designed to enlighten and entertain visitors. The Museum has developed the exhibit as a multidisciplinary experience for larger audiences. Angling artifacts, text, photos, video, and eye-catching graphics are integrated to provide an aesthetic and informative presentation.

"Anglers All 2000: Humanity in Midstream" explores this "simple" human/nature experience that is, in reality, anything but simple. After all, fly fishing is engineering: intricate reel mechanisms, lightweight pliable rods, and synthetic textiles. It is also physics: laws of motion, velocity, and aerodynamics.

The exhibit approaches fly fishing as the study of entomology, ecosystems, water dynamics, and ichthyology as much as it does the pursuit of trout, salmon, and other aquatic species. In fact, "Anglers All" is an exhibit about art, sport, craft, philosophy, literature, geography, science, and conservation. It is well suited for natural history, history, art, sport, science and technology, and natural science museums, as well as aquariums, and offers an overall view of the many dimensions of fly fishing. Its strength lies in its ability to present fly fishing to a

wide variety of audiences. "Anglers All" is far more than an exhibit about fishing!

"There's something for everyone in these displays," says Robert Cooper, curator of the Rochester Museum and Science Center. "The rich history of fishing... the variety and beauty of the flies, the ingenuity of the equipment, entomology, birds that fish, videos and interactive areas for kids, boats, fly-fishing art... even Bing Crosby's hat and pipe are here!"

Such prestigious institutions as Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History, the Denver Museum of Natural History, the California Academy of Sciences, and Chicago's Shedd Aquarium have all played host to "Anglers All." In the new exhibit, the broad approach to the subject remains the same, with vignettes on personalities, rods, reels, flies, and entomology. The artifacts, text, graphics, and overall interpretation are all new. "Anglers All 2000" reflects new acquisitions, current trends in fly fishing, and a primer on the sport. The science of fly fishing and conservation play a greater role, along with an emphasis on the history and tradition of angling.

The most dramatic alteration revolves around the presentation of these items. "Anglers All 2000" includes all casework, graphics, mounts, and text. In essence, it is a turnkey installation for host institutions. Look for the opening of the new "Anglers All 2000" at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana, in the summer of 2000.

## New Staff

The Museum hired Toney Pozek in October 1998 as part-time executive assistant. Toney, who recently moved to the area from Atlanta, now lives in Arlington, Vermont. She has previously worked in the nonprofit field in several capacities. Her interests include the theater, golf, and skiing. We're happy to have her on board.



Toney Pozek, the Museum's new executive assistant.

## The Museum Travels to Fall Dinner/Auctions

**Philadelphia.** On October 1, under the direction of committee chair Eleanor Peterson, the Museum reprised its Philadelphia fundraising dinner at the Merion Cricket Club. It was sponsored by the Anglers' Club of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley Women's Fly Fishers.

With more than 100 in attendance—the best showing we've had in that area—auctioneer and Museum Director Gary

Tanner roused the crowd to some active bidding. There were more than forty enticing items in the silent auction, and the \$1,000 grand prize made the various raffles popular with the crowd.

One of the most sought-after live auction items was a copy of Ernest Schwiebert's two-volume compendium *Trout*, donated by member George Angstadt and personally inscribed by the author that evening (Ernie was the Museum's guest).

It was a fabulous evening enjoyed by all and a huge success for the Museum. We'll be back in the Philadelphia area again next fall on 2 October 1999, so mark your calendars!

**Napa Valley.** The Museum's California fundraiser was held October 24 at the Hudson House at Beringer's Wine Estates in the Napa Valley. Billed as a patron's event, more than fifty people enjoyed a gourmet meal, catered by Knickerbocker's of St. Helena, which was highlighted by a fine selection of accompanying Beringer wines.

The deluxe silent auction featured original artwork by such sporting art luminaries as Ogden Pleissner, Brett James Smith, Thomas Aquinas Daly, and Mike Stidham, among others, provided by Art Bond of Western Wildlife Galleries. Western Wildlife also donated several Mike Stidham limited-edition prints, and author Peter Bergh donated a deluxe edition of *The Art of Ogden Pleissner*. Brett Smith generously donated a stunning watercolor specifically for this event. His limited-edition etching, *The Pool*, produced for the Museum's thirtieth anniversary in 1998, was etched into bottles of vintage wines from Beringer's.



Trustee Pamela Bates Richards and Joan Wulff, our guest, at the Board of Trustees meeting in October 1998. They are pictured with part of the recently acquired Bates collection (see related story, page 12).

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"The Uncaged Woman"



Committee members Cheryl Johnson of Orvis San Francisco, new Museum Trustee Roger Riccardi, Art Bond, Tripp Diedrichs, Jack Graf, Juan Ordonez, and Dick Wallingford orchestrated a truly exciting event. The Museum extends sincere thanks to Dick Wallingford and Beringer's for hosting and providing fine wines. In addition to the fundraising activities, winemaster Tim Hanni treated the guests to a witty and informal seminar on wine selection during cocktail hour. We hope the Museum's West Coast contingent will join us again next year, when—thanks to the kind offer by Marc and Janet Mondavi—this patron's event is held at Krug Winery.

**Boston.** The Museum returned to downtown Boston for a fundraiser on October 29 at the newly renovated Exchange Conference Center at the Boston Fish Pier. The Center had been used, in one of its earlier lives, as a fish-weighting and processing plant. Its current transformation features stunning cherry and mahogany woodwork and state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment.

Guests dined on fresh Atlantic salmon prepared and served by the Center's fine culinary staff and provided by Splendid Salmon and Museum member Bruce Demustchine. Trustee Pamela Bates Richards chaired the event and was assisted by Rob Coburn; Trustees John Swan, Arthur Stern, and David Walsh; and frequent Museum volunteer Peter Castagnetti.

The evening featured the debut exhibition of the Colonel Joseph D. Bates Jr. salmon fly collection assembled by new Museum Curator Sean Sonderman. The silent auction included original artwork by Thomas Aquinas Daly, George Van Hook, and Luther K. Hall. Centerpieces created by Bob Blain and Pam Richards highlighted flies tied by Max MacPher-

son, Mike Martinek, Warren Duncan, Bill Costello, Ted Kantner, Bob Warren, and Bill Hunter, who all donated their talents especially for this event.

**Hartford.** The Museum's latest fundraiser, held at the Farmington Marriott on November 5, was attended by 110 local supporters. Hartford's event was chaired again this year by John Mundt with the assistance of committee members Bob Allaire, Ron Angelo, Jerry Bannock, Dunny Barney, Phil Castleman, Jack Coyle, David Egan, Joe Garman, Chris Hindman, Larry Johnson, Steve Lewis, John Morona, Sal Micca, Bill and Marie Pastore, James Prosek, John Rano, Vincent Ringrose, Ed Ruestow, Michael Ryan, Paul Sherbacow, Shelley Spencer, and Felix Trommer. It was very clear that a large and active committee insures a large and active attendance.

Cocktail hour featured a silent auction and huge raffle, with the grand raffle prize of a trip for two to Libby's Camps in Maine, an Orvis graphite rod, free taxidermy by Joe Pitruzzella of Northeast Taxidermy, flies by Ron Angelo of Connecticut Outfitters, and \$300 cash. Other generous donors were Lothar Candels, Vincent Ringrose, Ed Mitchell, Jack Smola, and Bill and Marie Pastore.

Ron Domurat of the Coastal Conservation Association also had a display, and the Museum's display featured highlights from the recently acquired Colonel Joseph D. Bates Jr. salmon fly collection.

## Recent Donations

The Museum continues to benefit from the kind donations of our supporters. The reel collection received a 1938 Perrin #50 Automatic from Mirl Gratton of Washougal, Washington. The reel belonged to her father, who fished the wilds of Montana with it. Our rod collection also grew with the addition of a 1920 E. C. Powell 8-foot fly rod, donated by

**Coburn Haskell** of Yuba City, California.

**A. Tucker Cluett** of Blue Hill, Maine, donated a unique 8-foot F. E. Thomas Special, which was produced by Edwin Houston years after the end of the Thomas Rod Company. Trustee Emeritus **G. Dick Finlay** of Hyde Park, Vermont, a regular contributor to the Museum in countless ways, donated a series of three framed original Lew Oatman fly patterns (c. 1960) developed for use on the Battenkill, along with a framing of assorted flies.

Our holdings also grew with the donation of a collection of items from **Catherine Reed** of Bloomfield, Connecticut, including a 7-foot Shakespeare Wonder Rod, a little 4-foot, 6-inch Abercrombie & Fitch Banty 44, a Hardy Flyweight silent click reel, a Garcia Mitchell #756 salmon reel, and a Garcia leader book. **William N. Fenton** of Slingerlands, New York, added to his list of donations with the gift of an excellent Wes Jordan Orvis rod with leather case.

**Corrine Driver** of Verona, New Jersey, generously contributed a variety of items, including a marvelous wicker pack, two Ed Cummings landing nets, a Meisselbach Featherlight fly reel, a Broncia ventilated brass reel, a Yale Metal Products brass reel, two Heddon's Sons nickel-silver bait-casting reels, a Pflueger Monarch side mount, and a beautifully preserved wicker creel with leather side pouch. The Museum also received a fine Otto Zwarg, Co. reel from Trustee and generous supporter **Allan K. Poole** of Orange, Connecticut.

Some years ago, **John M. Kauffman** of Yarmouth, Maine, gave the Museum one of its finest pieces, a wonderfully crafted C. F. Murphy rod. He has added to this donation with the kind gift of a lovely leather fly book that belonged to his grandmother, Sarah F. Kauffman. The book, brand-named "The Bray," contains twenty-eight snelled flies and was used at Christine Lake in the village of Percy, New Hampshire. Longtime member **Kent Bulfinch** of Yreka, California, sent in a marvelously detailed set of seven "signature" nymphs of his own design. Now in his eighties, Mr. Bulfinch is living proof that fly tying never loses its appeal.

**Phoebe Weeks** of Thompson, Connecticut, donated a matching set of 10-foot F. E. Thomas Specials in a wooden rod box. She shared the set with her late husband, Edward "Ted" Weeks, the former editor of *Atlantic Monthly*. The Museum also received a leather rod travel case, an Edward Vom Hofe Restigouche #423 salmon fly reel, and a fine Gar Wood Jr. Fin-Nor #3 Wedding Cake reel from



*Orvis managers and dealers stopped by the Museum on 29 August 1998, for lunch and a tour.*





The Museum was represented at the local Hildene Food and Farm Fair last fall. Pictured are Angus Black and (tying) Special Projects Administrator/Newsletter Editor Sara Wilcox and Peter Burton.

**Carl Andersen**, also of Thompson, Connecticut.

**Everett J. Sullivan** of Danville, Vermont, donated a pristine Shakespeare OK Automatic fly reel, and **Merrel B. Ludlow** of Cincinnati, Ohio, added a Lawson Machine Works fly reel to our burgeoning reel collection. **Bob Shattuck**, of Gladwing, Vermont, donated an L. W. Holmes salmon reel to the Museum.

Our library benefited from the dona-

tion of M. R. Montgomery's *Many Rivers to Cross*, given by **J. Sam Moore Jr.** of El Paso, Texas. Trustee **Leigh H. Perkins** of Manchester, Vermont, added a large collection of fishing periodicals, including a complete set of *The American Fly Fisher*, to his many donations to the Museum.

**Louise Martin** of South Burlington, Vermont, donated a 9-foot, 3-inch Heddon Westfield River rod in memory of Fredric Lionel Martin and James

Fredric Martin. **B. T. Fowler**, the "post-card man" from Raleigh, North Carolina, sent in a series of fly-fishing postcards for our collection. The **Orvis Company**, of Manchester, Vermont, donated three contemporary reels, including a DXR 7/8 fly reel, a CFO III salmon reel, and a replica 1874 patent reel, in response to our commitment to actively collect modern reels.

Finally, the Museum received a special gift from the famed fly-dressing house of **Rogan's of Donegal** (see related article, page 2). Rogan's donated a replica set (one of a limited edition of five hundred) of the original twelve flies from the 1496 *A Treatyse of Fysshynge Wyth an Angle*. We thank Rogan's and all of our donors for their kind support.

## In the Library

Thanks to the following publishers for their donations of recent titles that have become a part of our collection.

The Lyons Press sent us *The River Reader*, edited by John A. Murray (1998); Grant McClintock and Mike Crockett's *Watermark* (1998); *The Quotable Fisherman*, compiled and introduced by Nick Lyons (1998); *The Essential G.E.M. Skues*, edited by Kenneth Robson (1998); Brad Burns's *L. L. Bean Fly Fishing for Striped Bass Handbook* (1998); Dick

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Talleur's *L.L. Bean Fly-Tying Handbook* (1998); Dick Pobst and Carl Richards's *The Caddisfly Handbook: An Orvis Streamside Guide* (1998); R. Valentine Atkinson's *Trout & Salmon: The Greatest Fly Fishing for Trout and Salmon Worldwide* (1999); Bill Barich's *Crazy for Rivers* (1999); and Lefty Kreh's *Presenting the Fly: A Practical Guide to the Most Important Element of Fly-Fishing Success* (1999).

Frank Amato Publications sent us Paul Arnold's *Wisdom of the Guides: Rocky Mountain Trout Guides Talk Fly Fishing* (1998); Troy Bachmann's *Frontier Flies: Patterns on the Cutting Edge* (1998); Jeff Passante's *Housatonic River Fly Fishing Guide* (1998); Ray Gould's *Constructing Cane Rods: Secrets of the Bamboo Fly Rod* (1998); Jim Schollmeyer and Ted Leeson's *Trout Flies of the West: Best Contemporary Patterns from the Rockies, West* (1998); John Shewey's *Oregon Blue-Ribbon Fly Fishing Guide* (1998); and Colin J. Kageyama's *What Fish See: Understanding Optics and Color Shifts for Designing Lures and Flies* (1999).

Countryman Press sent us George E. Maurer and Bernard P. Elser's *Fundamentals of Building a Bamboo Fly-Rod* (1998). Their imprint, Backcountry Publications, sent us Charles R. Meck and

John Rohmer's *Arizona Trout Streams and Their Hatches: Fly-Fishing in the High Deserts of Arizona and Western New Mexico* (1998).

Sycamore Island Books sent us Bob Newman's *Flyfishing Structure: The Flyfisher's Guide to Reading and Understanding the Water* (1998). Stackpole Books sent us John D. Varley and Paul Schullery's *Yellowstone Fishes: Ecology, History, and Angling in the Park* (1998). Burford Books sent us Peter Owen's *The Pocket Guide to Fishing Knots* (1998).

### Dinner/Auction Events

APRIL 8

**Pepper Pike, Ohio**  
Cleveland Dinner/Auction  
The Country Club

APRIL 30

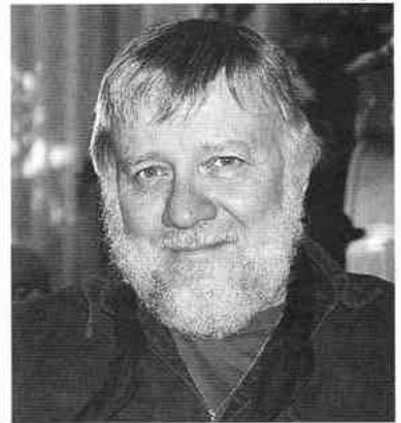
**Denver, Colorado**  
Denver Dinner/Auction  
The Country Club of Denver

MAY 15

**Manchester, Vermont**  
Manchester Dinner Auction  
The Equinox Hotel

## CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Repine



**Jim Repine** is international editor at Fly Fishing Broadcast Network, the America Online/Worldwide Web fly-fishing magazine, as well as a freelance writer and photographer. His latest book, *Pacific Rim Fly Fishing: The Unrepentant Predator*, was published by Frank Amato Publications in 1995. Repine is a professional guide who lives in Chile.

From the collection of Pamela Bates Richards



**Pamela Bates Richards**, a Museum trustee, has catalogued fifty years of correspondence and photographs of noted anglers, writers, and world-famous fly tyers and has cared for and added to the renowned Bates collection of Atlantic salmon flies. In 1995, she reissued two of Bates's most popular classics: *Atlantic Salmon Flies & Fishing* (first published in 1970) and the 1966 edition of *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing* (to which she added twenty-four new color plates and new material to the text). *Fishing Atlantic Salmon: The Flies and the Patterns* was released in 1996 and was excerpted in our Spring 1997 issue. Richards lives in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Until relatively recently, this was the only photo she had of herself with a fish she had caught.

## Annual Festival Weekend & Celebration

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May 14 & 15, 1999

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#### OPEN HOUSE

Saturday starting at 10:00am

#### Featuring

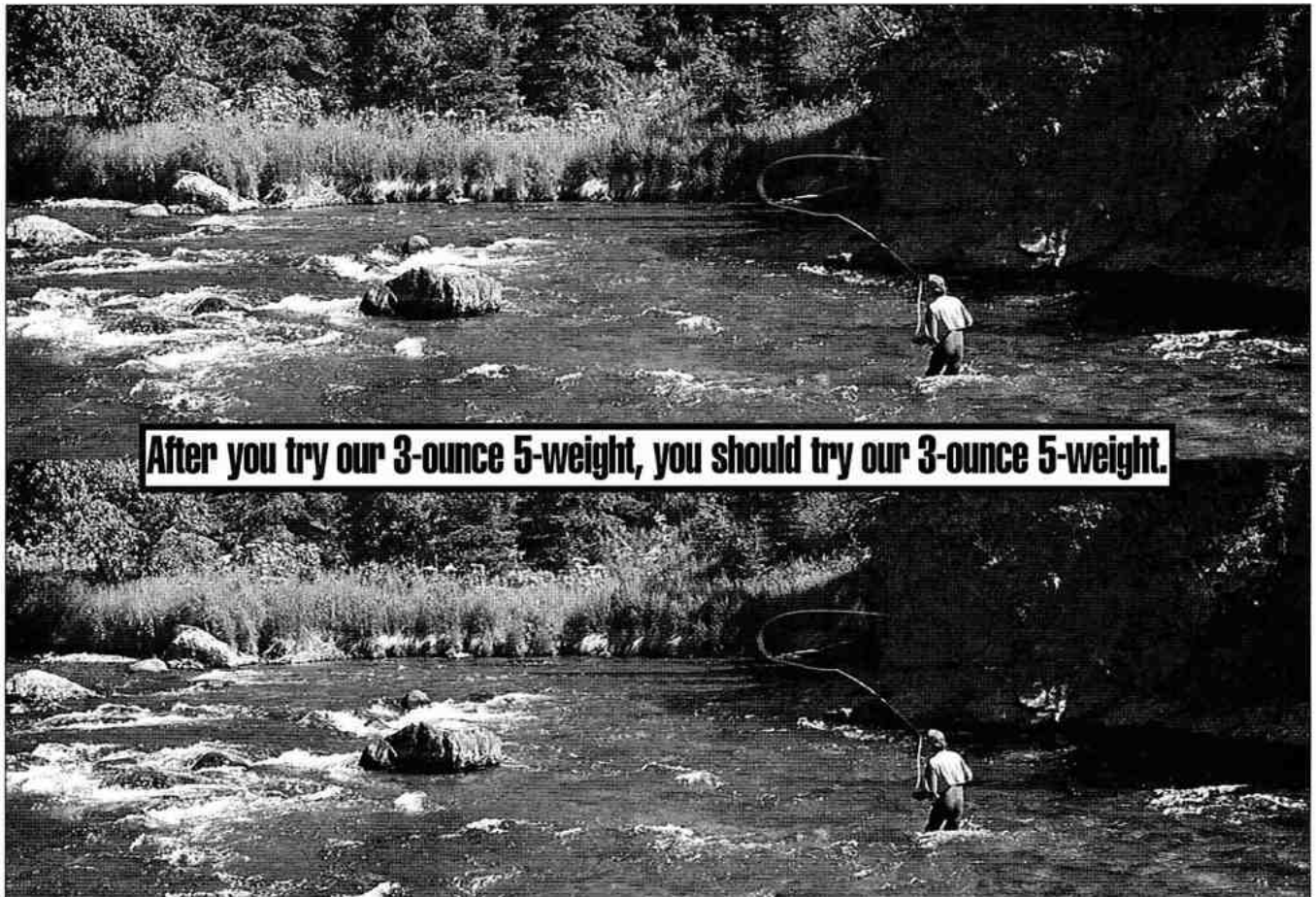
Bamboo rodmaking  
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#### Special Guest Authors

James Prosek and Bill Mares will be signing their new books at the Museum 10 am to 2 pm

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# From our website...

<http://www.amff.com>

As much as I love *The American Fly Fisher* (I can hold it, touch it, enjoy it by the fire, and it won't "crash" while I am reading it), it is our responsibility to use all the tools at hand to accomplish our mission. The internet and our website on it are such tools. I thought, however, we built the website as a teaching tool, not as a learning experience! We'd like to

share with our members how, through the internet and in the blink of an eye, a young woman in Colorado can help a 30-year-old museum do a better job of preserving our rich fly-fishing heritage for *her* generation.

GARY TANNER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Preserving our Rich Fly Fishing Heritage for Future Generations*

## *The American Museum of Fly Fishing*

### *Guestbook*

<http://www.amff.com>

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This site is great, but could use some improvement. It looks like the museum is great and has a lot of info about the sport's history—don't you think your site should too? My point is that especially for rookie fisherpeople, like me, it would be nice to be able to get some history of the sport too. Since I don't live in Vermont and I'm not planning on making a special trip there soon, and since you do have a website why don't you put some info on it so we can learn? It looks like you have a lot to teach! If you don't have the info here because you want to make some \$\$\$, charge a membership fee! Then customers will get more involved, and hey, I might even plan a trip to Vermont sometime in the near future. Hope this has been good advice.

Thanks so much.

Your fan Lily!

(age 12, as if it matters!)

P.S. my b-day is today!!!!

Denver, CO USA—Tuesday, March 02, 1999 at 11:52:49 (CST)

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Lily—Thanks so much for your thoughts on our website. Sometimes the obvious (telling about the history of fly fishing) doesn't get the attention it deserves. Watch our site in the future as we do as you suggest—and happy birthday. Gary Tanner, Executive Director

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Mr. Tanner,

Thanks so much for the reply! What a great birthday gift! I didn't even know that people looked at their guest books. I'm glad you did. I can't believe that you actually took me seriously. I've had some bad experiences with organizations taking me seriously because of my age. For example, once in third grade our teacher suggested that we call up an airline for our study of Africa. I spent hours figuring out what I was going to say. Finally, I called them and when I told them that I was 8 years old, they hung up on me. I decided not to care what others think about my opinion and just to say it. I guess I was wrong because I do care about what you said.

I just caught my first fish on a fly rod last fall (I haven't caught one since). So for one of the biggest projects of the year for my program (I'm in a Highly Gifted and Talented program, HGT, 6th grade) I decided my topic will be the history of fly fishing to find more out about the sport. The competition (National History Day Competition) is this Saturday. That's one of the reasons I looked at your site (which happened to be recommended by Trout Unlimited)! So I've got to go now and type it up.

Thanks again,

Your friend,

Lily

P.S. I will send you some stuff from my project, and trust me, you will hear from me again if I win anything!!!

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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.

