



The Arts of Fly Fishing

“Mostly the Northwest”

2004/05 Exhibit

Paul and Mary Ann Ford
Fly Fishing Collection
WWU Libraries Special Collections

Legend is fabricated of odd lore—some factual history, some reverie and memory and always a bit of wishful elaboration. Northwest steelhead fly fishing is but a hundred years or so old, yet its imprint is etched forever in the literature of sport fishing—fish of enormous power and courage, fishers of ingenious talent and determination; waters of softness and violence. Many of the books in this year's display are of the Northwest steelhead legend. Roderick Haig-Brown, Trey Combs, Tom McGuane, Kent Helvie and Bob Arnold are among those who lived the legend.

Other display books are of Northwest alpine, desert and meadow lakes and ponds; and of freestone and spring creeks with beaver dam water just around the next bend. John Gierach, Dave Hughes, John Shewey, Bill Barnett and Bellingham's Dan Homel have told their stories.

1 Dr. Thomas W. Lambert was an English physician who arrived in British Columbia in 1892, practiced at Kamloops for about twelve years, and served as president of the British Columbia College of Physicians. The written record he left of fly and bait fishing throughout interior and coastal B. C. is extraordinary. *Fishing British Columbia*, published in London in 1907, is a great read and a distinguished forerunner of all that would be written about the Thompson River and its steelhead. The display copy is a re-issue by W. Richard Olmsted, himself a Thompson River fanatic. Copy L of a deluxe limited edition lettered A-Z.; quarter bound in blue leather with gold lettering in slipcase. Signed by the publisher and designer. (1996).

2 Roderick L. Haig-Brown wrote scores of articles and books on topics ranging from wildlife (*Panther*, 1934), to primitive people fighting for existence (*The Whale People*, 1962) to the politics of conservation; he also wrote fiction. But Haig-Brown is best known for the fishing literature he created. *The Western Angler* was issued in 1939 by the world famous Derrydale Press in a two-volume, large format limited edition of 950 copies. The frontispiece of Volume 1 is a color plate of British Columbia interior flies; that for Volume II is a color plate of coastal flies. The lower numbered copies, such as this one, include a map at the beginning of Volume 1, Chapter 1, said to have been drawn by Haig-Brown, highlighting his beloved British Columbia interior and coastal waters. Color and black and white artwork is by E.B.S. Logier. This book is Haig-Brown's *magnum opus* on British Columbia interior and coastal trout, steelhead and salmon. It is of fishes and flies; lakes and rivers; fauna and friends—truly a magnificent tribute to Haig-Brown country. Bound in red cloth, this is 111/950. Uncut. (1939).

3 Trey Combs of Port Townsend, Washington, is an expert fly fisher and tier and a prolific writer about steelhead fly fishing. But, too, his adventures have taken him to the high country and to the great deep blue in search of other game fish. *The Steelhead Trout—Life History, Early Angling, Contemporary Steelheading* [3] is the first definitive American effort to describe this fish and ways to take it with a fly. First edition, first state in dust jacket and signed by the author. Reprinted several times. (1971). *Steelhead Fly Fishing* [4] is a large volume filled with descriptions of the greatest Western steelhead rivers (American and Canadian) and the talented and sometimes unusual characters who have plied them. Tackle and technique are given their due and there are splendid color plates of steelhead flies. Black and white photography fills the book, giving it just the right touch when one considers how many gray days fly fishers spend on coastal rivers. On display are a copy of the trade issue with dust jacket, and copy number 95 (signed) of the limited edition of 250, issued in a slipcase inset with a fly tied by Combs. (1991).

5 *Bluewater Fly Fishing* [5], also by Combs, deals mostly with "offshore" fish, including sailfishes and marlins; tunas and wahoo; our albacore and salmon; and, of course, the glowing dorado. Fly tackle and technique are discussed but what makes this book so attractive is the color photography. The book was issued in a trade edition and a deluxe limited edition of 25 copies bound in navy blue Nigerian goatskin in a matching silk slipcase. Here we have a copy of the trade edition in dust jacket, signed by the author and the deluxe limited edition 4/25, signed by the author, publisher and designer. (1995). *Fishing the High Country* [6] is an odd little paperback published early on in Combs' career. It is of golden trout and "brookies" taken well above the horizon; and, indelicately, it speaks to such low life activities as spin fishing. But Combs was young then. The book is long on tackle and technique and short on the fishing life—and its end-pages carry advertising we no longer see. This is a first edition, first printing. (1973).

7 Kent Helvie's *Steelhead Fly Tying Guide* is one of the most beautifully illustrated books ever published about the sport. Photographs of materials and flies are stunning. Patterns shown represent the best of the best among Northwest tiers. This is signed copy of the trade edition. (1994).

8 Bob Arnold is seen often by fly rod steelheaders along the banks of the Skagit and Sauk Rivers. But for more than thirty years his first love has been the native steelhead of the Stillaguamish North Fork where he keeps a comfortable old cabin close by the river. *Steelhead Water*, illustrated by Loren Smith, was Arnold's first book and is must reading for those who live to fly fish for steelhead. The book is of the river and its characters—an insight into nature's ways. This is a limited edition with a fly tied by Arnold mounted inside the front cover. The cover is blue leatherette under a dust jacket. 21/60. Signed by the author and illustrator. (1993).

Bellingham author Dan Homel published *Diary of Northwest Trout Flies* in a paperback trade edition in 1991. The copy displayed is unusual because it is also signed by Ralph Wahl and by Ed Ruckey, the illustrator; and an author-tied fly is under the front cover. An inexpensive limited edition, also included in the display, was issued in 1997. This short book is of flies frequently useful in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia, although there are no references to specific waters. An extra original drawing by Ruckey of a spey fly is housed in an envelope under the front cover of the limited edition. The book's cover is maroon leatherette with custom endpapers and there is a matching maroon ribbon place marker. This is copy 18/35. Signed by author and illustrator on the limitation page. (1997).

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Another Homel work, *The Quiet Pool—Fly Fishing the Rivers and Still Waters of Washington*, was published in a hardback trade edition (1996) and in an inexpensive limited edition (1995), illustrated by Ariel Shimodle with black and white photos by Ralph Wahl and four color plates. Also published in softbound with a pastel done by Richard Van Demark on its cover. In this, the limited edition, Demark's pastel of the Methow River has been photographed and included in an envelope under the front cover. The stories in this little book are charming and deceptively simple. Yet the reader is always left with the complex question: Where is your quiet pool? Maroon leatherette boards.; copy 8/100. Signed by the author. (1995).

10

Dave Hughes of Astoria, Oregon, editor of *Fly Fishing and Tying Journal*, has been fly fishing, fly tying and writing about both, especially in the Northwest, for more than three decades. His major interest is in trout, but an occasional steelhead or salmon sneaks into his fishing life. His book *An Angler's Astoria* is a collection of stories Hughes wrote early in his career. They are of his native Oregon and sometimes beyond, and are both instructive and humorous, with less "how to do it" and more "why we do it" than in much of his later writing. This is a deluxe edition quarter bound in tan leather and matching tan sailcloth boards. Hughes' "March Brown Flymph" is inset on the limitation page. Copy 77/100; signed by the author. (1982).

11

In his *Western Streamside Guide* [12], Hughes tells the fly fisher precisely when and where to find specific fly hatches, how to imitate them and how to fish the imitations. An invaluable guide, this is a limited edition, full-bound in tan leather with a Hughes-tied fly set on the limitation page. This is copy 17/20 and is signed by the author. (1987). *American Fly Tying Manual* [13] is a beautifully illustrated "how to do it" book for serious fly fishers. Color plates of materials and flies enhance lucid writing. This is a limited edition with full brown boards under glassine, copy 119/500. Signed by the author. (1986). *Deschutes* [14] is about Oregon's dream stream—an inland river, tributary of the Columbia, that some say has been loved to death. Hughes writes of its multi-form topography, its flora and fauna and of its grand trout and steelhead fishing. The color photography is most appealing with a cover photo by Bill McMillan. First edition, first printing. New, in dust jacket. Signed by the author. (1990).

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The Yellowstone River and Its Angling is a large format, full color illustrated tour by Hughes of one of the West's premier trout rivers, telling of its geologic history, its flora and fauna; and of its spirited Yellowstone cutthroat trout and rainbows. Hughes offers advice about hatches, flies and where to fish. This book is typical of the new generation of publications for fly fishers. That is, it features as much first rate color photography as prose, is printed in Hong Kong on glossy paper and emphasizes "how to do it." This is a limited edition, copy 31/62, and features a leatherette cover. New, in dust jacket. Signed by the author. (1992).

15

John Shewey lives in Bend, Oregon, and writes frequently about fly fishing the Northwest. His style ranges from "how to do it" to interesting anecdotal quips. This type of writing and heavily illustrated presentation dominates today's fishing literature. Fly fishers are more interested now in practicalities, reflecting a considerable shift during the past dozen years in their literary tastes. In *Northwest Fly Fishing—Trout and Beyond*, Shewey explores fly fishing opportunities throughout Oregon, Washington and Idaho with visits to saltwater for such unlikely game fish prospects as surfperch and striped bass, then inland for shad and then the regulars—trout, salmon and steelhead. Lots of practical advice, with many fly recipes. Striking photographs. New. First edition, first printing in dust jacket. Signed. (1992).

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17 In *Mastering the Spring Creeks* [17], Shewey presents the technical aspects of spring creek fishing and then visits the great spring creeks of Idaho, California, Oregon Washington and Montana. A spring creek, because it is spring-fed, tends to be pretty much the same temperature year round. So, it probably doesn't freeze over in the winter or become too warm for trout during summer. Great color photos. First edition, first printing in dust jacket. (1994). Shewey's

18 *Alpine Angler* [18] is another beautifully illustrated large format book. This is of the high and difficult places to reach and of jewels that swim there—brook trout, cutthroats, golden trout and even grayling. The author's range is from Wyoming to Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. First edition, first printing in dust jacket. (1995).

19 Bill Barnett was a Wenatchee gentleman fly fisher of the old school whose passion for fly fishing extended from the wildest British Columbia steelhead waters to the tiniest secret Montana rivulets. His wit and wisdom, together with the characters he cultivated, are gathered in *Mostly Reel Memories*, illustrated by Betty M. Bell. This good-humored man would never stoop to touch a "how to do it" book and, except in rare instances, would use nothing but a #14 Royal Wulff dry fly—come hail or snow! The display copy is of a limited edition with maroon leatherette boards. The book jacket shows the view from Barnett's home overlooking the Wenatchee River. If one looks closely at the point jutting out into the river, Barnett can be seen just offshore casting his fly. 428/500. Signed by the author. (1993).

20 John Gierach is among the most prolific and widely read of all American fly fishing writers. Beyond that, despite the advent some forty years ago of chest high waders and shortly thereafter of glass, graphite and boron fly rods, he still fishes in ratty old hip boots—but with only the best of bamboo rods! He has mastered the ancient Japanese Gyotaku technique for creating illustrations for his works and is an accomplished fly tier and bamboo rod maker—a fly fisher extraordinaire. The display book, *Standing in a River Waving a Stick*, was illustrated by Glenn Wolff. Its stories range geographically from Colorado to British Columbia. Gierach speaks with humor and wisdom of places and people and fly patterns, and never takes himself too seriously. This copy is letterpress printed on Arches mould-made paper and is half bound in red Nigerian goatskin. The book's boards are of muted red, blue and white marbled paper separated from the red leather by gold inlays. The marbled pattern is repeated on the endpapers. Uncut and housed in a red slipcase. This is a masterpiece of the book crafters art. Signed by the author and illustrator. Copy 19/25. (1999). A copy of the trade edition of this work is also displayed. New, in dust jacket. Signed by the author. (1999).

21 Special Collections has a deluxe limited edition of Gierach's *Fishing Bamboo* (5/55; 1997). Displayed here is an inexpensive, limited edition of that work. This copy has protective paper over its cover, which has a color picture by Glenn Wolff inset in its top quarter. The book is housed in a heavy cloth slipcase. Mint. First edition, first printing and limited to 1750 copies. Signed by the author and illustrator. (1997).

22 The novelist Tom McGuane is well known in the fly fishing world for books such as *Live Water* (1996) and *The Longest Silence—A Life in Fishing* (1999). On display is the advance uncorrected proof of his first novel, *The Sporting Club*. At publication, the work was compared favorably with that of the young Hemingway—though the sometimes Rabelaisian moods of McGuane's novel are not seen in early Hemingway. An oddity about the proof copy front page is that it reads 1969, while the inside cover reads, correctly, 1968, the year the book was actually published. The proof copy is pristine, housed in a hand-made drop spin case. This art-piece is a rare find and complements the Special Collections' first edition copy. Signed. (1968).

23 The Ford Fly Fishing Collection in Special Collections has a copy of the deluxe limited edition of Tom McGuane's *Live Water* (6/67; 1996), illustrated by John Swan. Displayed here is a copy of the trade edition of 1500 copies, published the same year. In a slipcase and printed on Mohawk Superfine paper, this is a first edition, first printing. Note how Swan's painting is inset into the book's cover. Signed by the author. (1996).

—Introduction & Annotations by Paul Ford