At the meeting this month our professional fly tyer, Dave Everhart, will be demonstrating how to tie a few flies. In concert with his presentation, the newsletter this month is dedicated to the history of fly tying with a special emphasis on flies created right here in North Carolina including one of the best known the Yallerhammer.

**PRESIDENT’S CORNER**

I hope everyone enjoyed their summer activities with family and friends. Schools have started and so is our season. It is fall again and it is time to return to our gatherings. Starting September, we will be back to meet every third Tuesday at the Sixty-Six grill and Taphouse in Winston Salem. Our classes continue at South Fork community center on Wednesdays with Fly tying classes in the morning and evening. Our board members are busy looking for good speakers and planning fun activities. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and good friends again.

Speaking of that we had a summer social at Fiddlin’ Fish Brewery in mid-August got to taste some new beers, chocolate beer, raspberry beer, and of course many traditional beers. Fiddlin’ Fish was gracious to give us a $200 donation to go to our Trout in the classroom program. Thank you Fiddlin’ Fish. Frank Beasley, one of board members was very gracious also and matched that number with another $200. Thank You Frank.

Now to a more serious issue that demands attention and action from all of us. In recent years the trout streams in North Carolina continue to suffer severe siltation from development and agriculture. This summer has seen major siltation of the Mitchell River from cultivated fields and a reduction in the barrier between the fields and the river. Please see the article below for details of the Mitchell and other rivers in our area.

We are asking everyone to raise awareness of the situation by writing or emailing the DEQ and the WRC at the following addresses. A copy of the complaint sent by BRTU can be found at [letters](#).

Loni Snyder
lon.snyder@ncdenr.gov
N.C. DEQ Water Resources
450 W. Haes Mill Rd, Suite 30
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

Elizabeth S. Biser ,Secretary NCDEQ
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
217 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27603

Kinnon Hodges
e-mail: kin.hodges@ncwildlife.org
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
179 Stone Bridge Road
Mount Airy, NC 27030

Elizabeth Biser
Secretary of NC DEQ
elizabeth.biser@ncdencr.gov

We truly appreciate your support in this important matter.

Robby Abou-Rizk
SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

When: Tuesday, September 20th, 6:30 PM
Where: Sixty Six Grill and Tap House, private room, 3440 Frontis St, Winston Salem
This will also be available on Zoom. The link will be emailed before the meeting.
Speaker: Dave Everhart, Professional Fly Tyer
Topic: Fly Tying Demonstration

Dave started fly fishing and tying in the late 70’s as a teenager in South Central Pennsylvania. He joined the Navy at 19 and carried on fishing and tying while stationed in Virginia, England and Spain. While stationed in Pensacola, he tied and fished salt water and carried that on in coastal NC. After retirement he spent a year traveling the country and taking advantage to fish and tie in many states across the country.

Settling down in Hickory 10 years ago on the banks of Jacobs Fork led to opportunity to tie commercially, at the urging of several friends. Jacobs Fork Fly Tying is in its 6th year of operations and he has tied for fly fishers in just about every state. He will be demonstrating:

- Soft hackle Pheasant tail- always a good winter fly.
- Euro-nymph/Perdigon
- Foam ant- these are really popular and are fishing extremely well
- Super simple BWO-I was introduced to in the Sierra Nevada several years back.
- Realistic stonefly pattern using some new materials.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Balsam Lodge Trip
October 9 - 12, 2022

If you are interested in joining us on one of the most popular trips, please sign-up by clicking here. This trip if full, feel free to sign-up to be on the waiting list. If you are interested in a Guided Trip, please let us know by clicking the box "Yes".

Fly Tying Classes

At 9am on Wednesdays Project Healing Waters will host fly tying classes and at 6pm on Wednesday evenings Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited will host classes. The classes are free and all are welcome - from beginners to advanced. No need to sign up, just come join us. If you have specific questions about the evening classes, you can contact, Rusty Berrier at rustyberrier@outlook.com.

Since South Fork is City of Winston-Salem property, a mask is still required to be worn properly inside the buildings.

Mitchell River Cleanup October 22nd

Watch for further details.

Trout in the classroom:

The TIC is in full swing, schools are back in session, getting their aquariums ready. This year David Ring, the faculty from Davidson Davie community college, Zoo and aquarium program will be playing a big role in refining our schools water chemistry to promote healthier environment to grow more and bigger fish. We are excited to have him involved. We are planning on delivering eggs to 10-11 schools in mid-September or so and still need volunteers to help. Please contact Tom Jackson at t5video@yahoo.com to volunteer.

Fly Fishing hands on workshop
Date: October 2, 2022
Time: 1pm - 4pm
Location: Bolton Park Picnic Shelter, 1590 Bolton St SW, Winston-Salem

Event: We are going to take the time to review fly fishing techniques. This will be a great opportunity for experienced and new to the sport of fly fishing to learn. Please, bring your rod and reel, and friends as we will do some casting lessons for those that want to improve their techniques. Also, we will talk about when to use different leaders, tippet, flies, etc in different conditions. This will be an interactive and fun session.

REEL RECOVERY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Reel Recovery is in need of fishing buddies for the upcoming retreat September 23-25 at SpringMaid Mountain Resort in Spruce Pine NC

The fishing buddies are an important part of the retreat because they are the ones who interact with the participants the most. Buddies will be needed on Saturday at 9:30-5:00 and again on Sunday from 9:30-1:00. All meals will be included and I have lodging available if needed. Reel Recoveries Covid protocol requires all volunteers to be vaccinated and boosted. Please let me know if you can help!

Reel Recovery is a national non-profit organization that conducts free fly fishing retreats for men living with cancer. www.reelrecovery.org

Doug Turner
Reel Recovery
573-480-1950
Turner.reelrecovery@gmail.com

THE STATE OF NC TROUT STREAMS

The last two years have been tough on NC trout Streams. Our corner of the piedmont, Surry and Alleghany county has lost four streams, Ramey Creek, Big Piney, Roaring fork brook trout streams of the Blue Ridge parkway and Little Fisher, impacted Wolf creek in Alleghany, Elkin creek, and now the Mitchell River is being affected making it seven streams gone or impacted. All due to sediment from
agricultural work and run off. Agriculture is exempt from any sedimentation and erosion controls in the state. Here is a photo from the Elkin creek trout hatchery supported section on August 24th. The hatchery supported water is above the dam you see in the photo. All this sediment is coming from Tobacco fields. Does it look like this trout water will survive? This Happens every time it rains.

This summer the Mitchell River has seen excess sediment flowing into the river after rainstorms. This is happening due to a change in planting from no till crops like corn to tilled crops like cabbage and Tobacco. This loosens the soil and brings it up to the surface. Then if you have a very narrow buffer zone, it's a recipe for lots of sediment to flow into the river when it rains. So far two agricultural operations are the major contributors, a big cabbage field just above the delayed harvest section and a tobacco field around the devotion area. If enough sediment flows to cover the bottom of the river, that will be the death sentence for the Mitchell River. The Mitchell River is the host of wild trout in its upper region, around Devotion and is also the host for the endangered Brook-Floater mussel. See Page below.

Surry County recognized the importance of the Mitchell River with its pure and cold water many years ago. It put in special regulation to protect the river and mandated a 75-foot buffer zone from Kapps Mill Road all the way up to the county line. Over the years this got watered down by ordinances exempting agriculture. Unfortunately, these fields run almost the whole length of the same protected section currently. The river barely has a 25-foot zone or less in many areas.

Many in Surry County are worried about the rivers health and have been voicing their concern to the county commissioners, the DWR and other state regulators. BRTU has filed complaints to DWR (department of water quality) and NC Wildlife resources asking them to investigate the source of the sediment and take action to protect the river. However, the Department of Environmental Quality’s budget has been cut consistently over the past decade and is now roughly a third smaller than it was before the 2008/09 financial crisis. This is very worrisome given the emergence of new threats to water quality and public health since that time. There are currently over 1,000 impaired rivers and streams in North Carolina, and the Department does not have the capacity to meet and help address the numerous threats that these streams are facing. Regional offices are under-resourced and desperately need more staff capacity to provide prompt customer service to citizens who are impacted directly by toxic algal blooms, PFAS/PFOA (Gen-X) contamination of drinking water supplies, excessive stormwater runoff, increased sedimentation, and deterioration of aquatic habitats.

So the Mitchell River waits in line for DWR staff to go inspect the river.

BRTU is working with Surry County residents and organizations to address the sediment flow into the Mitchell River from Agriculture operations. We are trying to work with the owners of properties, the County commissioners and the soil and water conservation board to try to resolve the issue of sediment run off. We need help to organize this communication effort with officials and education of owners on the importance of Mitchell River and the buffer zone.

We are waiting on an assessment from DEQ on the Sediment level in the Mitchell. Once we receive that we will let you know more about the impact on the river.

North Carolina's list of 303(d) impaired waters is available here: Over 1000 streams:
The Old Highway 601 Public Fishing Area near Dobson is newest access site along a network of access points on the Fisher River thanks to a herculean effort from a broad coalition of partners — Surry County, the Wildlife Commission, Duke Energy, the N.C. Department of Transportation and others. In 2020, the site was days from opening when flood waters washed away the parking lot and undermined the concrete stairs. The site is fully restored with a paddle boat launch and wade fishing opportunities. *(Try for smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish!)* Nine standard parking spaces and one ADA-compliant parking space are available.

**FLY TYING HISTORY**

Early Color Plate Showing Fly Tying Steps (1860)

Ogden's Improved Fly Vise (1887)
Tying artificial flies has always been about imitating some form of fish prey with natural and/or synthetic materials bound to a hook. Significant literature exists, especially for trout flies, on the concepts of imitation. A Book of Trout Flies – Jennings (1935), Streamside Guide to Naturals & Their Imitations – Art Flick (1947), Matching the Hatch – Schweibert (1955), Selective Trout-Swisher and Richards (1971), Nymphs-Schweibert (1973), Caddisflies-LaFontaine (1989), Prey-Richards (1995) are but a few 20th century titles that deal extensively with imitating natural prey. However, from the human perspective, many fly patterns do not exactly imitate fish prey found in nature, yet they still are successful patterns. As such, a successful or killing fly pattern, therefore imitates something that the target species preys on. This has resulted in fly tiers and fishers devising additional terms to characterize those flies that obviously don’t imitate anything in particular, yet are successful at catching fish. These additional terms are inconsistently, but commonly associated with trout fly patterns because of the huge variety of patterns, both historical and contemporary. The term Attractor pattern has been applied to flies that resemble nothing in particular, but are successful in attracting strikes from fish (Trout Fishing, Brooks 1972).

Dick Stewart in Flies for Trout (1993) characterizes these same patterns as General Purpose. Dave Hughes in Trout Flies-The Tier’s Reference (1999) describes the same flies as Searching flies and characterizes three levels of imitation: Impressionistic, Suggestive and Imitative.

Paul Schullery in American Fly Fishing – A History (1996) and The Rise (2006) explains however that although much has been written about the imitation theories of fly design, all successful fly patterns must imitate something to the fish, and even a perfect imitation attracts strikes from fish. The huge range of fly patterns documented today for all sorts of target species-trout, salmon, bass and panfish, pike, saltwater, tropical exotics, etc. are not easily categorized as merely imitative, attractors, searching, impressionistic or something else.\[10\]

GARDEN GUN

Sometimes you just can’t improve on an original. These heritage Southern Appalachian flies have stood the test of time.

By T. Edward Nickens

May 13, 2020
The storied Yallerhammer fly.

I brought four Yallerhammer flies—three in a pill bottle and one tied to the trout leader on my f-or-weight rod. Not a lot to choose from, and that was the point. The Yallerhammer is so old-school and old-timey that few have heard of the trout fly and fewer still have fished it. But you can still find them in old fly shops in the deep hollers of Tennessee and North Carolina, and I’ve made a habit of catching my first trout of spring on a Yallerhammer, one of the most storied of the old Southern Appalachian flies.

When it comes to trout fly development, the Southern Appalachians might not have been as fertile as, say, the Catskills. But Southern anglers were inventive and progressive and just as passionate about catching fish, and there’s a host of local fly patterns that made a splash in the region.

Part of the mystical Yallerhammer’s allure is that it was tied with the feathers of the yellow-shafted northern flicker. That bird, like all songbirds, is protected, so these days, dyed quail and chicken feathers will have to suffice. I loaded up on Yallerhammers at Fay’s Store, an ancient shop across the street from the fire department in Linville, North Carolina, and headed north and up and up and up into the folds of Grandfather Mountain and the headwaters of famed Wilson Creek.

Yallerhammers can be fished as both a wet fly and a dry, but I was fishing wet, the most traditional pattern. I hiked high and cast short into tiny pools that stair stepped down through the mountains. At Fay’s, the man behind the counter, Hugh Palmer, told me that he’d first seen the Yallerhammer in 1941. He was 11 years old and came across an old man behind the counter, Hugh Palmer, told me that he’d first seen the Yallerhammer in 1941. He was 11 years old and came across another fellow casting the fly, which he called a “skull crusher.” “He said the fish would come out of them stream holes so hard to get at that fly,” Palmer recalled, “they’d bash their heads against the boulders.”

It took but four casts to close the circle on my annual spring ritual. The brown trout streaked from under a ledge to smack a Yallerhammer deep in the foam. Skull crusher, indeed. I backed the fly gently from its jaws, released the fish, and for a moment contemplated hiking downstream to the trout leader on my f-or-weight rod. Not a lot to choose from, and that was the point. The Yallerhammer is so old-school and old-timey that few have heard of the trout fly and fewer still have fished it. But you can still find them in old fly shops in the deep hollers of Tennessee and North Carolina, and I’ve made a habit of catching my first trout of spring on a Yallerhammer, one of the most storied of the old Southern Appalachian flies.

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These days are as good as any, and better than most, for paying homage to what is enduring of our passions afield. If you find yourself in Southern trout country, here are four more heritage trout flies to try.

Tellico nymph

Pinning down the provenance of old Southern flies is always tricky. Some say Northerners coming south to fish Appalachian trout waters brought down an old wet fly, the McGinty, that morphed into this pattern. Others hold that the Tellico nymph was developed by a priest-angler along the Tellico River around the mid-1920s. One thing is for sure: The Tellico nymph catches fish like the devil. In trout waters, its size and coloration suggest a golden stonefly nymph, but put this yellow-barred and (often) mink-hair-tailed nymph in front of a farm pond bluegill, and you might as well break out the tartar sauce.

Thunderhead

Beloved as a brook trout smasher, the Thunderhead dry fly floats like a cork through bubbly pocket water in the high-elevation streams required by the South’s only native trout. Developed by a legendary Great Smoky Mountains tyer named Fred Hall, the Thunderhead looks a bit like an overstuffed Adams Wulff fly, with a gray, brown, and white body that serves as a general mayfly attractor pattern. Its buoyancy makes it a great choice for a dry fly with an added nymph dropper.

Sheep Fly

This vintage pattern was developed to mimic a small gray fly that pestered Southern Appalachian sheep herds. Designed by an angler named Newland Saunders of Lenoir, North Carolina, the Sheep Fly could also imitate a large emerging mayfly or a crane fly larva. It was a favorite of George “Cap” Wiese, the first president of Trout Unlimited North Carolina.

Jim Charley

The origin of the Jim Charley dry fly seems as difficult to pin down as a Smoky Mountain mist. “Really old,” is how one local fly-tying history puts it, with an oblique reference to a possible origination on the East and West Forks of the Pigeon River in Tennessee and North Carolina prior to World War II. The fly is tied with a signature barred
ginger hackle, but what isn’t a mystery is why it has been so successful: Like the Yallerhammer, it’s as bright as can be. Follow T. Edward Nickens on Instagram @enickens

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

September is a great month to fish the Blue Lines here in WNC, and this year, we have had the summer rains to make it dang near perfect. Strap on an extra granola bar and your water filter and go for a hike. It is said that trout live in beautiful places and the high country in September has both. Take advantage of the Blue Ridge Parkway to get you as close as you can to these wild waters. This month, I’ll present a classic Appalachian fly- the storied Yallerhammer. While I’ve been fortunate enough to have been exposed to tying the classic British flies, this guy here not only says American, I think it really looks the part of a southern trout fly to catch native “specks” in pocket water. Water that bubbles up cold, clear and clean from the deep center of the rock that makes our mountains a timeless treasure on this earth.

Some say this pattern is a gift from the Cherokee, others trace it back to the Scots-Irish settlers that brought fly fishing from their native lands. It gets its name from the Yellow Flicker. A woodpecker, native to the mountains with a bright yellow front flight feather. A few hundred years later, the flicker is on the endangered list primarily to loss of habitat. As most modern tiers know, songbirds are off limits- legally speaking, so we need to come up with an alternative sustainable source. I raise quails for eggs. In their inevitable short lifespan, they supply me with some lovely soft hackle pelts. A few of them are white, and their wing feathers are perfect to dye yellow and use for this pattern.

Mechanically, it is a pretty straightforward tie. Floss body, soft hackle tailing and a palmered hackle rib. It’s the feather prep that’s takes some time and patience with this one. The hackle is unique in that rather than a pluck and spin, we have to do some work and split a quill from the wing and wrap that in the Palmer style. Splitting the quill harkens back to building a wing on a Scottish salmon fly, it’s a bit tedious and may take a few tries and low level profanity to get it right.

Here’s the start of the fly. A simple wing feather, and through the magic of your Coptic marker, it’s now yellow. These high end markers use an analine dye in an alcohol base that stays water resistant and fade resistant and is so much easier to use than trying to dye the whole wing in kool-aid or Rit. You can pick those up at the art store for 10 bucks and they last for years.

While I’m using a quail wing, a dove wing makes is an excellent feather as well, and can be treated in the same manner. As you can see above, nature has provided us with a nice grove to start our split. I’ve used a brand new scalpel blade, and scissors and I prefer the scissors. Now, these are not your everyday scissors. The key is sharp and slow. I find the serrated hair scissors that grip the material superior to the task for me, but find your own groove. Slow, in that it’s a steady small bite that will not leave you with half a feather. It takes some practice to master this one.

Once the feather is prepped, I take my marker and touch up the cut edge and let that dry while I’m prepping the hook. I’m using a 2X long dry hook for this fly, a Firehole 619. While this fly is a wet fly by design, I find it will lay on the film for a bit before it swamps, and I’ve had many a fish take it off the top on the landing, so a lighter hook becomes the choice. You could go with a heavier wet fly hook if your intention was to get it down a bit faster.
I’m using yellow floss for the body and yellow thread to tie. Like I said, this is a really simple tie, so start off with your split hackle and remove some fibers from base end for the tail. I like this heavier tailing as it keeps the fly on the film a little longer. Trim the butt end and tie in a strand of floss. A little moisture on the floss helps it from fraying.

Tie in the split quill hackle at the tip, and gently but firmly wind the hackle towards the eye. This is a somewhat fragile hackle making this step a potential fail point to break the quill. A rotary vise is nice here as you can better control the pressure. Be sure not to crowd the eye and leave an eye length to make a small head, secure the hackle with a few snug wraps and whip finish.

Next tie in some black thread behind the eye and form a bit of a head on the fly to give it a nice tidy finish. Top that with a bodkin drop of black UV resin. I like the shine that gives the head, and you are ready for the next.

As always, I’m honored to answer questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly tying and fishing. Don’t hesitate to contact me at jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying. Hope to see you at the meeting on September 20th.

Dave Everhart

THE YALLERHAMMER FLY

Excerpted from the book The Last Wild Road, by T. Edward Nickens.

Appalachian browns like the Yallerhammer, as well.

The old man called the fly the “skull crusher” because the brook trout would come after it so hard and fast that they’d
bash their heads on boulders. He tied them with one arm, in the cool of the little store in the shadow of Grandfather Mountain, not far from the creek where he’d first heard of the fly when he was a kid, some 75 years earlier.

I thought I knew all about the Yallerhammer, arguably the most traditional of the old Southern Appalachian fly patterns, but this was news to me. The region has birthed a number of homegrown fly patterns—among them the Thunderhead, Jim Charley, Sheep Fly, and Tellico Nymph, the region’s true breakthrough to fame and widespread use. But the Yallerhammer is the fly that seems to hold the fancy of local anglers. Its history is as shrouded in mystery and lore as these old North Carolina mountains are in their famed blue mist. Some say the pattern was devised by the Cherokee. Others figure Scotch-Irish pioneers dreamed up the bug. It was originally tied from the split wing feather of a yellow-shafted flicker—what the old-timers called a “yellowhammer,” a large woodpecker once common across these mountains—but these days, of course, it’s illegal to shoot a songbird such as a flicker. Most of the flies are tied with dyed mourning dove feathers. You hardly ever see anyone fish it. The Yallerhammer is an attractor pattern, sort of a Bob Evans–buffet kind of offering, which tends to offend the purists of fly anglers. And the Yallerhammer was traditionally fished as a wet fly, although those have fallen out of favor these days.

The Yallerhammer’s provenance is not clear, but the fly clearly works.

None of this mattered to me. I was hunting for Yallerhammers because of their historic and cultural significance. If they caused trout to bang their heads on the way to the hook, all the better. I bought the last four the old man had in stock, size 14s. “I’m fixing to tie some 10s when I get around to it,” he said, apologetically. But I couldn’t wait, because I was fixing to turn off the hard road and onto the Forest Service gravel, and climb high enough into the Southern Appalachians to leave behind cell service and stocked fish alike. Four Yallerhammers seemed like plenty to gamble the day on.

The last time I counted, there were 1.6 billion trout fly patterns, with more on the way, options made increasingly numerous through an ever-evolving array of new synthetic fly materials—stuff like holographic chenille, UV polar flash, translucent midge tubing, and photo-imprinted foam.

I’d hardly be called a traditionalist, with my graphite rod and sling pack, and I’m a sucker for sexy articulated streamers. Who wouldn’t want a Sex Dungeon in the fly box? But when it comes to tiny brook trout in ancient brookie water, there’s something to be said for dressing up in your Sunday best, fly-wise. Beloved though they are, rainbow and brown trout are interlopers in these parts, the rainbow hailing from western America, and the brown from the waters of Europe. Only the lovely little brook trout, whose name Salvelinus fontinalis means “dweller of springs,” can boast of being a true Southerner, hanging on in the highest headwater creeks since the last glaciers turned tail in retreat from Dixie heat. Drive far enough into these mountains and hike high enough into these headwater creeks, and chunking some gaudy postmodern polar-ice chenille fly at a fish like a wild Southern Appalachian brook trout seems a little off, like wearing Versace ankle boots to a rodeo.

Small-stream trout seem extraordinarily drawn the bright attractor pattern.

With the classics in my chest pocket, I drove past the stocked section of the creek and past the delayed-harvest waters, parked at a sign that designated the stream as catch-and-release/artificial lures only, and started hiking. Up and farther up, until the trail petered out and the rhododendrons were too thick to crawl under. Until it was time to fish.

By then, the creek had narrowed to a meager shimmer in the boulders. It’s hard to imagine a trout even living there, but this is where these Southern Appalachian brookies have to stay, hunkered down against the browns and rainbows that will outcompete them for food and the warmer waters in lower, less protected crannies. There’s no room for a real cast, but I’ve never been an old-school dabbler, dipping flies into tiny pocket water like a mayfly laying eggs. So I moved through the crazy-tight cover without concern of scattering fish, threading the rod through the rhodos, holding my hat to my head, until the creek straightened out just enough.

I roll-cast a Yallerhammer into the foamiest part of the water and took in the slack line. The heavily palmered fly “sort of spins and twirls in the water,” the old man told me earlier, “and that drives the trout nuts.” I tried to imagine the fly doing just that, tumbling in the washing machine of the pour-over, then drifting in the calmer water, like something dazed and confused but still alive. And edible.

The fiberglass 4-weight bent deep, and the tip jerked like a dowitcher pointing fish. The little bugger ran straight at me, and I glimpsed a small slip back to the plunge pool. I took a half step forward, protecting the light tippet, then coaxed the brawler to hand.
The yellow fly was nearly the size of the brook trout’s head. The fish struggled in my palm with violent wiggles, leaping from my loose fingers twice before I could get the forceps on the hook and back it out. Forget all that stuff about swishing fresh water through the gills and babying a fish until it gathers back its strength. This little pig had gumption and attitude to spare. It burst back into the deep water, trailing orange sparks like a bottle rocket. If it could have flipped me a pectoral-fin bird, I’m sure it would have.

Everything else was in miniature—the water, the rod, the fly, the cast—except for the outsize heart of that 12,000-year-old beast, its life a struggle, its future a stacked deck, but its fight and tenacious lust for life no mystery at all.

T. Edward Nickens, columnist and editor-at-large for Field & Stream, is a New York Times best-selling author and award-winning journalist who has written about hunting, fishing, and their modern expression across North America for more than 30 years. He also serves as a contributing editor for Garden & Gun, Ducks Unlimited, and Audubon, and is author of Field & Stream’s highly successful Total Outdoorsman Manual series. He lives and writes in Raleigh and Morehead City, North Carolina.

THE TELLICO NYMPH
By Louis Cahill

THE TELLICO NYMPH IS A SOUTHERN CLASSIC.

Named after the storied North Carolina river where it was proven to fool big browns, the Tellico Nymph is as southern as moonshine and just as effective. It’s a simple impressionistic fly that works in any size, although #10 is a favorite. Just because it’s a southern fly doesn’t mean it won’t catch fish on your home waters. In fact, showing your local fish something they’ve never seen might be a great idea.

Louis Cahill
Gink & Gasoline
www.ginkandgasoline.com
hookups@ginkandgasoline.com

There were several interesting comments regarding this fly that I will share.
David on January 16, 2016 at 2:24 pm said:

No one is certain just WHO first tied the Tellico. The only record we have shows where it first was sold by a man named Peckinbaugn, of Chattanooga.

It turns out, though, that it was a modification of the “McGinty.” Seems Northern anglers brought the bee-like McGinty with them, starting in the late 1800’s, having themselves borrowed it from the Irish.

But no self-respecting Dixie boy was gonna use a Yankee bug – until they saw how well it worked! So they played with it and modified it into the now-standard Tellico.

But, by the time it was first sold by Mr. Peckinbaug, it had become so common in Southern Appalachia that no one knew who gets credit for it. One thing is sure, he or she fished along the Tellico!

Origins of the McGinty fly? - The Classic Fly Rod Forum
Post by quashnet » 12/26/08 20:00

I am currently studying a group of flies sold by the Paul H. Young Co. Many of these are specialties like the Strawman nymph. Others are traditional patterns, such as these three McGinty wet flies. They came from the fly box of a former Chrysler executive from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Other trout flies in his box were untouched, but you can tell that he often attached a McGinty to his tippe. All three flies show signs of wear, and two still have a bit of tippet attached.

In his book Fly Patterns and Their Origins, Harold Hindsdill Smedley admits that his "unstinted research has failed to disclose any authoritative history of this fly," but he quotes William B. Mershon (angling author, timber company executive, and early conservationist) as one old-timer who relied upon the McGinty for everyday angling: “There was another favorite fly that you do not hear much about these days—the McGinty. I used to use it for floating under the overhanging tag alders of the West Branch of the Rifle... almost instantly it would be taken by a big trout, for the big ones lurked there. Such trout are not to be had in Michigan, these days.”

Smedley speculated that a popular song of the 1880’s, "Down Went McGinty to the Bottom of the Sea," provided the name for this fly. However, George E. Emanuel of Fly...
Anglers On-Line tells us very confidently that Charles McGinty of Chicago created this fly in 1883. Unfortunately, no references are provided.

"Trout of every description absolutely love these," says Emanuel. But Gary LaFontaine said that the McGinty worked well only after quick, afternoon rainstorms, and was "a lousy fly the rest of the time," thus contradicting both Mershon and Emanuel (and possibly Charles McGinty too!).

Does anyone know another story of the McGinty's origin? Has any ever fished one, in fair weather or foul?

Post by Tom Smithwick » 12/28/08 15:59
Bob - The story is out there somewhere in the literature. I read somewhere a long time ago that McGinty was a bartender in Chicago who originated and sold the fly to customers. I checked Bergman and Schwiebert's "Trout" volumes without success. I think I read at the same time that bee imitations in general work well at certain times and places, but not at all at other times. That has been my experience. I will keep looking...

Post by Whitefish Press » 08/05/09 17:30
Here's another lead for you that I don't think I've come across before. Novelist and outdoor writer Emerson Hough—who wrote the Chicago and the West column for Forest & Stream—referred to the McGinty as the "Colonel McGinty" fly in the summer of 1902. This is also the earliest reference in print I can find for the fly. In 1903, Hough writes that he was the "first to fish the McGinty fly" in the state of Michigan. The first catalog reference I could find is the 1903 William Mills catalog, implying by that time it had become popular enough to be carried by a major fly tying house. If I were trying to track down the origins, I'd ditch what others have written and start by trying to find the first known reference.

My guess is that it was named for a "Colonel McGinty" who was likely from Chicago. I doubt, however, the fly was named McGinty much before it begins to surface in literature ca. 1902-1903. Hough writes of it five times in that span and always refers to it like a new pattern. Nothing happened in Chicago concerning fly fishing that he did not know about.

Editor's note: Growing up on the trout streams of Michigan, this was a go to fly, but I fished it as a dry, not a nymph, though back in those days we fished only dry. Best dry fly fishing was early morning and late evening, but this was one of the few flies that worked well during the day, perhaps because that's when bees were active. The origin and history of this fly is a bit cloudy, but there is no question it plays a big part of NC fly fishing history.

ARE YOU READY FOR DELAYED HARVEST?

Delayed harvest begins on October 1st. To make sure all of your gear is ready visit our past newsletter article about equipment care. September 2021

OCTOBER 18TH BUSINESS MEETING

The annual business meeting will be held at the October monthly meeting. Elections will be held for 2 board positions (3 year terms) and secretary (2 year) term. We have the following members nominated Troy Machamer, Rick Conner and Jon Bowman. If anyone would like to nominate other members please send your nomination to our chapter email blueridgetuws@gmail.com.

Fly Fishing Guide, comedian and Cub Scout Dropout Hank Patterson will present to us at our October 18 chapter meeting.

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