



Dewey Gillespie's hands finish his featherwing version of NB Fly Tyer, Everett Price's "Rose of New England Streamer"

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Introduction

When the first book on New Brunswick Fly Tyers was released in 1995, I knew there were other respectable tyers that should have been including in the book. In absence of the information about those tyers I decided to proceed with what I had and over the next few years, if I could get the information on the others, I would consider releasing a second book. Never did I realize that it would take me six years to gather that information.

During the six years I had the pleasure of personally meeting a number of the tyers. Sadly some of them are no longer with us.

During the many meetings I had with the fly tyers, their families and friends I will never forget their kindness and generosity. Our conversations regarding their fly tying friends, angling and the river never tired. It is beyond my ability to put into words how they felt. I hope what is written regarding each of them will help you understand why the Fly Tyers of New Brunswick mean so much to me.

Even now, without intent, I know I have overlooked other deserving tyers. For those tyers whom I have not mentioned I apologize dearly. I hope that someday someone will grasp the same interest that I had in researching the Fly Tyers of New Brunswick and prepare a record of your fly tying genius.

It may come as a surprise to learn that angling with the artificial fly is not the comparatively modern sport it is claimed to be, but was popular centuries ago. "Homer," who perhaps recorded the first accounts of fishing, relates that the anglers of Greece, as early as 1000 B.C., used "insidious food"

The Macedonians are credited with first having used artificial flies when, in the river Astraeus, located between Thessalonica and Boroëa, they cast their feathered hooks intended to represent "Hipporous," an insect similar to the bee or wasp. Claudius Aelian, famous historian of that day, wrote at great length about the Macedonians and their imitations of "Hipporous" around 200 AD. The imitation of this fly is then described.

"Hipporous"

Head:	Black
Body:	Blood red
Wings:	A real shinny deep brown hackle from the wattles of a cock

The late Charles DeFeo, famous artist and professional fly tyer, who I had the pleasure of meeting many times as a youth, believed that the salmon hair-wings have their roots in Newfoundland, and patterns dressed from red-

dish calf tail. Herbert Howard, another well-known American fly tier and fisherman confirm his judgements. Howard tells of a bible he examined on a backcountry Newfoundland farm that included the description of such Hereford hair-wing and its success in 1795. The hair-wing is a North American departure of merit, having proved its worth, on the Atlantic and Pacific salmon, steelhead, and trout. It's here to stay.

“Red Devon”

Wing: Several strands of hair from a red Devon Cow

The “Red Devon” is one of the simplest patterns known. The butt ends of the wing material are left extended over the hook eye and are cut off flat. This gives the fly a unique action in the water.

According to certain very obscure accounts on fly-fishing, the first streamer fly was produced by accident. It seems that a fly dresser had made several hackle patterns of wet flies for one of his clients, a very adept fisherman, but had been a trifle careless with the details of finishing the head of one fly. The fisherman, upon arriving at the stream, happened to select the very fly having the imperfect head and commenced fishing, totally unaware, of course, that he was about to introduce a new kind of fly. Repeated casts soon caused the hackle to unwind and trail behind the rest of the fly. Several large trout were taken on this “unwound fly” thus producing the streamer. Whether this incident was really the founding of the streamer or not is highly debatable.

Fly tiers since the days of Issak Walton have evidently not been content to leave established standard fly patterns unaltered and in their original forms. If you want to start a heated argument, start talking about the origins of the “Coachman” family of flies that we have today. The best we can tell from looking into the matter is that the “Coachman” came to us from England, as so many other patterns did, in the form of a wet fly. Theodore Gordon took the pattern and started dressing it in the form of a dry fly. Later, John Haily, in his little shop on Henry Street in New York City, tied the “Coachman” with a red silk centre band to suit the whim of a customer. Around 1878, he sent one to Charles F. Orvis in Manchester, Vermont, who liked it and named it the “Royal Coachman.” From then on the variations that followed appear to be without end. Possibly the word “Coachman” was a status symbol of some sort which signified acceptance by the fly fishers of yesterday.

If you consider there are tabulated thirty-one dressings for the Coachman flies, you will appreciate the expression: It isn't the pattern, but who made it.

It is virtually impossible to concoct a pattern or devise a fly that has not

been made at least once before. Some of the latest developments, according to the real histories, are not new at all but are, in more than a few instances, merely new names applied to patterns as old as ninety-five years or more.

Tying Atlantic salmon flies is perceived as being very difficult. It is really an application of the same basic skills used to make trout flies. Since you are tying more materials on the hook, you have to think about each step before you do it. Despite the assertions of many fly tiers and authors, the composition of the Atlantic salmon fly is not defined by absolutes. There is no correct or incorrect method, no right or wrong material, for tying a fly.

Many thousands of variations and patterns of salmon flies have been tied and tried at one time or another. Small differences, such as replacing half a dozen blue fibers with the same number in green, or changing the ribbing wire from silver to gold, are often held to make the difference between a salmon captured and a fishless day. No human knows just how important these small variations actually are to the salmon, but it is certain they are thoroughly appreciated by most salmon anglers.

It is pertinent to ask by what stretch of the imagination one can feel that a salmon, whose worldwide terrestrial experience is nonexistent, could possibly be expected to tell whether a bit of feather in a fly came from a rare bird in India and was natural, or was dyed and came originally from a chicken or a duck that was raised in New Brunswick. If a salmon had any inkling the fly was made up of feathers at all he would most certainly spurn it.

The angler with a knowledge of aquatic insects and the important relationship they bear to the fish he wants to catch is better equipped with a single fly, than is the angler who knows nothing of such things though he sports a jacket full of boxes stuffed with crisp, unmouthed flies of every description.

For an angler, there can be no better feeling than to dress a salmon fly, cast it into a river and witness an Atlantic salmon break the surface of the river, and strike that fly, for which it was intended. What a thrill to experience that sudden surge of power, from the tip of the hook, as it sharply becomes lodged in the jaw of the fish. There's the vibration caused by the river current against your line, as it is drawn tight in the tug-of-war between you and the salmon. You feel the weight of the fish through the rod tip, through the guides to the reel, and finally to the controller, your hand, which clutches tight around the corked handle. For the experienced angler, this feeling, and excitement is never the same, even though we may have experienced it a hundred and one times. Why is this?

We take a little wool and feather and tying it in a particular manner upon a hook make an imitation of a fly, then we throw it across the river and let it sweep around the stream with a lively motion. This we have an undoubted right to do, for the river belongs to us, or our friends, but mark what follows.

Up starts a monster salmon with murderous jaws. It makes a dash at the little fly and is hooked. Thus he is the aggressor, not us. His intention is evidently to commit murder. Thirty years ago he would be sentenced to the frying pan for his clearly formulated or planned intention. Today, he is released ensuring his survival for present and future generations. New Brunswick regulations permit fly angling only and the keeping of grilse, but stipulate the returning of all large salmon. Hopefully, by using such regulations our beautiful rivers will be restored to their former glory.

Naturally no one human being can be an authority on flies. The fly then, is a device to conjure with. The perfect fly is to an angler as his potions are to a Witch Doctor. The angler guards them jealously, handles them with care and reverence, and casts them out in the same mixture of faith and cunning as the heathen sorcerer uses to destroy an enemy or make it rain.

On January 24th, 1862, Richard Lewis Dashwood sailed from Cork, for North America, with six companies of his regiment. They formed part of the force sent from England at that time, in consequence of the seizure by an American man-of-war of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, while passengers on board that royal mail steamer Trent.

In 1872, Captain Richard Lewis Dashwood, 1837–1905, upon returning to England wrote a book called “**CHIPLOQUORGAN**”; or *Life by the Camp Fire in Dominion of Canada and Newfoundland* (Dublin: R.T. White, 1871). In his book he wrote about the many hunting and fishing adventures he had in the province of New Brunswick. He also wrote about fly tying.

“It is an immense advantage in this country to be able to tie your own fly: good ones are hardly to be got, except a few imported from home. As a rule you pay enormously for a very inferior article, both as regards workmanship, material and pattern. Most of the feathers are dyed, and the hooks weak and bad.”

“Fortunately for myself I mastered the art of fly tying years ago, and was therefore independent of the scamped rubbish sold by tackle makers, more especially those in Halifax. In Saint John, New Brunswick, there was a very respectable man of the name of Willis, a saw filer, who could put a decent fly together if he had the materials.”

It is a delight, and an educational experience to watch a young girl or boy sit behind a vice and attempt the basics of fly tying for the first time. Each phase of the fly construction presents a major obstacle for the beginner. Their hands and fingers resist all attempts to manipulate and attach the materials to the slender steel hook. In many ways it reminds one of the first time they tried to ride a bicycle, or tie their sneaker laces. Each step of the operation takes considerable concentration, but once learned it is seldom, if never forgotten. The real joy comes when you meet that person many years later and learn that

they are still trying to perfect the techniques of fly tying, which they repeated thousands of times in the past. Many will admit that perfection is most difficult to achieve.

The work of many of New Brunswick's fly-dressers is shown in this book. It is evident that those who earn their living by guiding and tying flies must of necessity have first hand information as to why certain types, colours, and sizes of flies are useful. From these most interesting collection of tiers dependable information, and history can be passed on.

It is better to fish a fly that will catch a fish than to hunt a fish that will take a fly.

(Dewey Gillespie with gratitude to AJH)

Beulah Eleanor Armstrong

She'd set up her fly tying vice on a picnic table and tie the flies she needed for the weekend. Sometimes her fly would be a smaller size, or at other times it would be a different version of an old standard pattern. Regardless of what she decided to tie, it was a lot of fun experimenting with salmon flies. Once the fly was finished she took her newest creation to the river to try it out to see what kind of luck it might bring. "That was when fly tying and fishing was the greatest fun of all," says Beulah.

Beulah Eleanor Armstrong was born at Handford Brook, in Saint John, New Brunswick, on March 23, 1938. She is the daughter of the late Annie Martina (nee Allaby) and William Edward Greer.



Beulah Armstrong (circa 1995)

Beulah represents the Big Salmon River. The Big Salmon is a very pristine river. The water is very clear, and there are many deep pools even when the water is low. Because of these features, offered by the Big Salmon River, it is what makes it Beulah's favourite. She also enjoys fishing in New Brunswick's Black River. It was during the late 1960's that Beulah started fishing. She began by fishing for trout. The trout fishing in the surrounding lakes was excellent so she began fishing in earnest. She quickly learned that casting was a real challenge and her flies were easily broken on the back cast. Trying to keep enough flies on hand was an expensive venture.

While on holidays in Ontario, in the late 1960's, Beulah Armstrong spotted a fly tying kit, and decided to buy it for her oldest son. Upon her return home they both tried

their hand at fly tying. Today she wishes she kept some of her earliest tied flies, for although they weren't the prettiest, they did catch fish.

Beulah's inspiration for fly tying came from watching the late Rita Parks, from Saint John, New Brunswick. In 1970, Beulah decided to take a fly tying course. During the course she met James Forret from Quispamsis. He gave Beulah a lot of help. During Beulah's earliest trips to the rivers she met many old timer fishermen who would stop and give her a fly to sample. More than often these old gentlemen would provide her with instructions on how to use the fly. At other times many of the visiting fishermen and fly tiers would offer suggestions and helpful hints to make her fly tying a bit easier.

One of Beulah's favourite flies is a deer hair bug. "You can fish this fly up stream and let it float down. It's a thrill to watch a fish flip over backwards for this fly; maybe nose it or slap it with their tail in an attempt to drown it. I've spent many hours on the river just trying to raise a fish, or just to have a fish follow the fly across the pool. Many times I've seen this happen without the fish actually taking the fly, but the thrill of just having the fish acknowledge the fly is just as great a thrill. There'd be times when I'd stand on a rock ledge and watch as a salmon would rise and follow the fly. I'd holler, "take it, take it." This would always get a laugh out of other fishermen close by," says Beulah.

"Not long ago I've seen fishermen race to the river at the crack of dawn, but there was no need to. Back then the river was good for fishing at just about any time. Recently though, with the decline in the salmon in Big Salmon River, it has been restricted to hook and release, and for the last couple of years the river has been closed altogether," says Beulah.

Over the years Beulah Armstrong has been very not only in her community but also equally as active in the preservation of the Atlantic salmon, and angling. In 1976 to 1977, Beulah organized the Simond's Local Service District, Simond's Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Service. She was the Divisional Superintendent and President until 1983, at which time she retired due to poor health. From 1983 to 1985 she served as a director with the Big Salmon Angling Association, and from 1985 to 1995 she served as the Association's President. Her leadership with the Big Salmon River Angling Association helped them in being selected as the recipient of the New Brunswick Salmon Council's 1995 award. Finding the time to devote to such a worthy cause, while at the same time working as a school bus driver, while raising a family of three, are truly amazing accomplishments by a truly amazing woman.



Silver Cosseboom and Miramichi Cosseboom tied by Beulah Armstrong November 1995

Beulah Armstrong has been featured in numerous articles written about salmon fishing and conservation. Among them is an article written in the February/March, 1995 issue of SALAR, a newsletter published by the Atlantic Salmon Federation for its members and affiliated organizations. The article was about the Beulah Armstrong and the volunteers who sparked special stocking in the Big Salmon River. On October 14, 1995, the Telegraph Journal, in Watershed Down, featured an article on Beulah Armstrong, "Healers of the River."

Beulah's favourite hair-wing fly is the "Butterfly" with a red or green butt. Her favourite feather-wing fly is the "Blue Doctor."

Beulah caught her largest fish at the "Amateur Pool" on the Big Salmon River. She caught the 14-pound salmon on a green butt "Butterfly." Now we know why this is her favourite fly.



Corinne (Legace) Gallant

Corinne (Legace) Gallant tied flies for the most famous fly tiers in northern New Brunswick and this is her story.

In the early 1940's the village of Atholville had three prominent fly tiers. They were in strict competition over the supplying of salmon flies to the local anglers and visiting sportsmen. A rivalry grew between them and at times they did not get along well. David Arthur LaPointe was the earliest fly tier, followed by Joseph Clovis Arseneault and taking third spot was David's brother, Lawrence Alfred LaPointe. Of the three fly tiers, Lawrence Alfred (L.A.) LaPointe was the easiest to get along with.

Corinne Gallant was born on January 2, 1929 in Atholville, New Brunswick. She is the daughter of the late Pamela (nee Haché) and Charles Legace



Corinne (Legace) Gallant Tying Flies at Clovis Arseneault's Fly Shop in 1975

Corinne started tying flies in 1945. She was only 16 years old when the famous fly tier David Arthur (D.A.) LaPointe introduced her to the art. Corinne

lived close to D.A. LaPointe's Fly Shop. There were already two women at the shop, Robertine LeBlanc and Helen Jean, who were tying flies for Mr. LaPointe. Corinne would visit the shop and watch the women tie the beautiful trout and salmon flies. On one of her visits, D.A. LaPointe asked Corinne if she would like to try tying flies. She agreed to let him show her. At that time they would never have guessed that, during the next three decades, Corinne would tie trout and salmon flies behind a vice for some of the most famous fly tiers in New Brunswick.

Corinne liked the challenge that came with constructing the fully dressed feather-wing patterns. She studied the art under LaPointe's watchful eye for several years. In the beginning, Corinne was only allowed to tie the bodies on the hooks. Mr. LaPointe would build and attach the wings. Corinne studied the patterns in the fly tying books and practiced regularly until her ability became so advanced that Mr. LaPointe recognized this and gave his approval for her to perform all the stages of the flies construction. She remembers how difficult it was to get materials, especially "jungle cock." The best materials had to be shipped in from the old country. Corinne tied mostly fully dressed patterns such as the "Silver Grey" and "Jock Scott." She could tie a dozen of these patterns a day. She also many hair-wing patterns. Corinne tied flies for D.A. LaPointe until his death in October 1949



**Corinne (Legace) Gallant Tying Flies at Clovis Arseneault's Fly Shop
in 1975**

In December 1949, Corinne started tying flies for Jean-Paul Dubé of New Carlisle, Quebec, who owned a tackle shop in Matapedia between 1948 and 1956. She worked for him until 1951, and during that time Corrine taught

fly tying to Lucienné Doiron, a young lady from Matapedia, Quebec. Between 1952 to 1962, Corinne stopped tying flies in order to pursue other interests.

D.A. LaPointe's brother, L.A. LaPointe was quickly building a reputation for himself as a fly tier and supplier of salmon and trout flies to sportsmen in New Brunswick and Quebec. In the same year as his brother's death, L.A. LaPointe was also tying flies for Jean-Paul Dubé. In 1956, L.A. LaPointe opened his own fly tying shop in Matapedia, Quebec. In 1963, he hired Corinne to tie flies. She worked for him until 1966, at which time he sold his business to his niece, Carmelle Bigaouette. Corinne remained with the shop and tied flies for Carmelle until 1967, when Carmelle moved to Maria, Quebec. It wasn't long before the fly tying talent of Corinne was in demand by yet another famous fly tier from Atholville.

Joseph Clovis Arseneault specialized in hair-wing salmon flies. His flies were in great demand, but to fill all the orders required additional help. Corinne's talent was what he needed so he asked her to tie trout and salmon flies for him. In 1973 she started tying flies at J.C. Arseneault's Fly Shop. When she went to Arseneault's shop he already had some experienced fly tiers working for him. Roger and René Baker along with Alfred and Mark Gallant were very experienced fly tiers in their own right. The men had dominated the tying benches, but Corinne had the talent to compete with the best and she did so, part time, until 1979. After she stopped tying at the shop of Clovis Arseneault, she continued with a private practice, at her home for several more years. Her fly tying spanned over a 30-year period. During those 30 some years Corinne Gallant tied salmon flies elbow to elbow with four of New Brunswick's most prominent fly tiers. There is no need for debate when assessing the contribution Mrs. Corinne Gallant made to fly tying in New Brunswick. She is among the earliest known lady fly tiers in the province. She tied trout and salmon flies for some of our most famous fly tiers and her flies have floated in the waters of the most famous salmon rivers. Her flies have also found refuge in hundreds of fly boxes, carried by fishermen and women from around the world. Corinne is one of "Five Lady Fly Tiers" who were taught the art of fly tying by D.A. LaPointe.

Corinne's favourite salmon fly is the "Green Highlander" There was never one particular fly that she preferred to tie more than any of the others.

She liked to fish, but not for salmon. Her interest was trout and she didn't use salmon flies to catch them. Her bait was a nice large, fresh worm. She caught a beautiful five-pound trout in her favourite river, the Restigouche.

Green Highlander

Tip:	Silver tinsel
Tag:	Canary yellow silk floss
Tail:	Golden Pheasant crest topped with Teal
Butt:	Black Ostrich herl
Body:	Rear three-quarters: Canary yellow silk floss. Remainder: Green Seal's fur or floss
Rib:	Silver tinsel
Hackle:	Green, palmered
Throat:	Yellow Wing: Two Golden Pheasant tippets, back to back; veiled by "married" strips of yellow and green Swan and grey mottled Turkey; veiled by black and white barred Teal, with narrow strips of bronze Mallard over, at top, topped with a Golden Pheasant crest
Cheeks:	Jungle Cock
Horns:	Blue and yellow Macaw
Head:	Black

David Arthur LaPointe

1897 - 1949

As a young boy he would pull the silk strands from his mother's runner and wrap them around a hook so he could go fishing.

Nash Creek is a small settlement located along Highway 11, between Bathurst and Dalhousie in northern New Brunswick. On September 7, 1897, Nash Creek became the birthplace for one of the Province's earliest and best-known fly tiers, David Arthur LaPointe, son of the late Mary Jane (nee Arseneau) and Lawrence LaPointe.



D.A. LaPointe, Salmon Fly Dresser 1944

Prior to 1664, Nicholas Audet was the first LaPointe to arrive on the North American Continent. He settled on a point of land on the Ile d' Orléans, an island in the Fleuve Saint-Laurent, opposite the Beaupré Coast.

The Indians living on the island named him LaPointe. For the next

three generations the surname “Audet dit LaPointe” would be used.

The fourth generation left the island and took up residence on the Gaspé Coast. Some of the family members decided to use the name Audet. Some of the others chose to keep the name LaPointe. David Arthur LaPointe is a descendent of that generation.

David Arthur LaPointe was referred to as D.A. LaPointe when being addressed by the professional world, but was better referred to as Arthur by the people who bought his salmon flies.

Arthur worked at many different jobs, but eventually studied and practiced barbering which provided him with his main source of income. He found business for his trade in the City of Fredericton. By the late 1920's he had his own barber shop there. One of his customers was a bank manager who was from Scotland. The banker, who was also a fly tier, introduced Arthur to the art of tying flies. He presented Arthur with his book on how to dress trout and salmon flies. In the spare moments between customers to the barber's chair, Arthur studied and practiced the art with great enthusiasm. His practice became a passion and within a couple of years Arthur was mastering the art of fly tying and producing some of the best tied salmon flies in the province.

Fly tying in the 1920's and early 1930's was a hobby for David Arthur LaPointe. In 1935 he moved to Atholville, New Brunswick and started tying flies as a sideline. The local fishermen were using a lot of Arthur's flies. The visiting fishermen to the province started buying his salmon flies too, and soon David Arthur LaPointe, “the barber” became better known as, D.A. LaPointe, “the fly dresser.”

In 1940, Arthur started teaching the art of fly tying. His first students tied flies exclusively for him, but eventually some of those students left, and went on to become well-known independent fly tiers in their own right. An interesting thing about his first students is that they were women. They were Lucille and Hélène Jean, Carmelle and Robertine LeBlanc and Corinne Legace.

Lucille Jean was the first of the five women who Arthur taught. Hélène Jean, his second student became a commercial and exhibition fly tier at major trade shows in Toronto. Another student, Carmelle LeBlanc would marry and become Mrs. Carmelle Bigaouette. She was world renown as a professional

commercial fly tier. She operated her own tackle shop in Quebec and was the originator of the famous salmon fly called, "Orange Blossom." Carmelle died in 1985.

Corinne Gallant is the only female fly tier to tie trout and salmon flies for three of New Brunswick's most prominent fly tiers, David Arthur LaPointe, Lawrence Alfred LaPointe and Joseph Clovis Arseneault.

David Arthur LaPointe also gave fly tying instructions to Joseph Clovis Arseneault, originator of the famous "Rusty Rat." Arthur's brother, Alfred was also one of his students. Keep in mind that for a short time all these fly tiers were concentrated in the little village of Atholville, New Brunswick. The fishing was good and the demand for salmon flies was high. Competition was intense and the methods used for luring the angler into the fly tier shop to purchase flies were left to the best imagination. If you were successful in making a sale, the prospect of the purchaser sending another customer your way was very promising. It is said that tempers ran high between a couple of neighbouring fly tiers.

David Arthur LaPointe died suddenly on October 15, 1949. He was 53 years old. During his lifetime he produced and shipped thousands of salmon flies around the world. He tied flies extensively for the Restigouche Salmon Club in Matapedia, P.Q. He tied flies for the Grand Cascapedia Fishing Club, and Neil's Sporting Goods Store in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Arthur's fly tying career spanned a short 17 years. Within that time he became a legend in the realm of fly tying, not only for the quality of his flies, but for the creation of several salmon fly patterns that still reign as the most popular among anglers and fly tiers. Some of his patterns include the "Nepisiquit Gray" and "Green Drake." These patterns are still fished by anglers around the world. It is not know if Arthur favoured any one particular salmon fly. We believe it is safe to say he loved all the fly patterns.

In 1948, Arthur was given distinction among such fly tying greats as Lee Wulff, Charles DeFeo and Alex Rogan, after "Fortune Magazine" published an article titled, LEAPER. The article included sketches of two salmon flies called "Lady Amherst" and "Nepisiquit Gray", tied by D.A. LaPointe. Dick Stewart, Farrow Allen, and Joseph D. Bates Jr. are some others who recognized D.A. LaPointe when they too wrote books on the art of fly tying.

D.A. LaPointe loved to fish the Lauzon and Restigouche Rivers.

Nepisiguit Gray

Tag:	Oval gold tinsel
Tip:	Yellow floss
Tail:	Golden Pheasant crest
Butt:	Peacock herl
Rib:	Oval gold tinsel
Body:	Gray underbelly fur of a Muskrat
Throat:	Grizzly hackle
Wing:	Black Bear hair
Head:	Black

Frank Lawrence Rickard

1920 – 1993



Frank Lawrence Rickard was born on January 11, 1920 at the settlement of Upper Brighton, situated just north of the mouth of Becaguimac (River of Salmon), or Hartland, New Brunswick. He was the son of the late Lottie B. (nee Lawrence) and George T. Rickard.

Frank was a tall, thin man with a very shy disposition. He never liked getting his picture taken, and he had an ability of quickly assessing a person's personality. He had a way of identifying trust, sincerity and honesty in a person. If he didn't take a liking to you he would let you know right up front. After that he would distance himself from you, but there wasn't many people who Frank Rickard didn't like, and even fewer who didn't immediately take a liking to him. He was extremely generous and enjoyed helping those who were not as fortunate as himself. As a young boy he loved the outdoors and fishing was his passion. He always en-

joyed being in the woods and after finishing school went to work logging at Canterbury until he got his call to go and serve with the army in the Second World War. When he first enlisted in the army he was a member of the Saint John Fusilier's. When he went overseas he became a member of the Cameron Highlander's of Ottawa.

After the war ended he went to work in the woods in British Columbia and then worked at an airport in Calgary before returning to New Brunswick. Shortly after arriving back in Hartland he went to work at Aiton's Drug Store where he prepared orders and drove truck. He spent nearly a decade working at Aiton's Drug Store before going to work for Hatfield Industries. After he finished working for Hatfield's he spent the remainder of his life working as a carpenter and painter, a guide and fly tyer.

He began tying flies in the early 1950's. He started tying his own flies because he couldn't get the ones he wanted. Frank was a self-taught fly tyer who learned the art by studying the construction of different flies he was either given, purchased, found, or that he seen in fly tying books. In the beginning he would carefully dissect many of these flies to see how they were tied. He used hair fur and feathers from local game and domestic animals, but most of his fly tying material was purchased in Quebec. His hooks were imported from England.



Frank was a natural at tying flies. He picked it up real quick and it wasn't long before he was tying more flies than he could ever fish with so he started selling them. It didn't take long for Frank to figure out that he could

make money from tying flies for others. He could tie just about any pattern that the angler wanted. His brother Clinton Rickard has a framed presentation hanging in his home that contains 81 different fly patterns tied by Frank.

In the early years of his fly tying he concentrated on tying the fully dressed patterns. With materials needed to tie the fully dressed flies being so expensive and time consuming to tie he began focusing his attention on the more common hair wing and streamer flies. He was able to offer such a variety of patterns to the customer, and there was no shortage of customers. He sold flies to people from all over the world. One would find it difficult to imagine whom all the people could be that would have purchased Frank Rickard's salmon flies. If we consider only the people from around the world who came to New Brunswick to fish the Tobique and Saint John Rivers, it gives us a good idea just how many people would have been exposed to Frank Rickard's flies. Frank was considered the Wally Doak of fly tying in his area. His salmon flies were available just about everywhere. We know they were distributed extensively to just about every store and outfitter from Bath to the Quebec border. We know this from information provided by Mr. Raymond Seeley and Thomas Underhill who worked as travelling salesmen for Aiton's Drug store. Mr. Seeley distributed them for nearly 30 years, and Mr. Underhill distributed them from 1983 until Frank's death in 1993. Both salesmen carried two big cedar boxes that were divided with trays that held several thousand flies each. While doing their sales route they would distribute the flies. A few of the businesses that purchased and resold Frank's flies were:

- Robert Miller's General Store, Riley Brook
- Arthurette's General Store, Arthurette
- Buckingham Department Store, Florenceville
- Fineley Sports, Plaster Rock
- Gaunce's Grocery Store, Bristol and Holmesville
- Lawrence Green's Barber Shop, Perth
- Lewis's Grocery, Juniper
- Reno Roberte Store, Riley Brook
- Shaw's Auto Parts, Plaster Rock
- Till's, Four Falls

There was also a man in Wapske who sold many of Frank Rickard's flies, and the famous Boston Red Sox baseball player, Ted Williams who fished a lot at the Hartland Salmon Pool, purchased Frank's flies.

Frank carried boxes of his flies with him wherever he went. He always

had them with him in his truck as he travelling from job to job, and sold them to whomever, whenever and wherever he could.

Frank Rickard's flies came with a money back or replacement guarantee. The guarantee was a very important part of the selling strategy provided by both travelling salesmen. Frank insisted that they provide the guarantee with every order.

The majority of Frank's flies distributed by Mr. Seeley and Mr. Underhill were tied on double hooks. The only single flies sold were a "Mickey Finn" and a "Trout Finn. Every fly was individually package and signed by Frank. The package also displayed the name of the fly and size of the hook.

The flies that Frank tied for selling were always dressed with a heavy wing. He learned very early that a fly with a sparsely dressed wing would not sell. According to Frank the angler would always buy the heavier dressed fly. However, the flies that Frank tied for his own personal use were tied with a sparse wing. He often said that he had more success with them.

Frank Rickard didn't like tying flies during the fishing season unless it was absolutely necessary. That necessity came only into play under the following circumstances. Whenever he needed a particular pattern that he happened to run out of, or if an angling friend requested it. If he was going to be on the river away from home he always took a case containing his fly tying equipment. He didn't tie flies during the summer to build up his inventory. The flies tied during the summer months were tied for more personal reasons and if there happened to be people around when he tied it certainly helped promote him. Frank tried to use as much spare time as he could during the summer for fishing and guiding.

In the fall of the year, after the fishing season ended, Frank would start tying flies. He would take inventory of the all the flies he hadn't sold throughout the fishing season, and then he would make a list of the flies that sold the best. From these two lists he would calculate how many flies he would tie over the winter. Throughout the winter months, right up to the start of the fishing season he would tie. He spent hour upon hour, day after day tying flies. He would tie hundreds and hundreds of flies in the months between the salmon seasons. Once he filled his quota he stopped.

Frank liked to guide for two to three weeks when the salmon season first opened in the spring of the year. He was a really good friend with Max

Vickers, Clarence Mountain and Arch Jardine, all of whom were very experience guides working for the Doctor's Island Club in Blackville, New Brunswick. In the summertime he would go to Doctor's Island to guide his good friend, Robert C. "Bob" Albee Jr., an American businessman and member of the Doctor's Island Club in Blackville.

Frank Rickard originated two fly patterns in the late 1950's. Both patterns are usually tied on large hooks. The first is the "Albee Special", originated after his good friend Robert Albee. The pattern is identical to the "Mickey Finn" but with a white beard added. This fly is considered a real killer during all water conditions, but especially during high water.

One year Frank and Bob were supposed to go on a fishing trip in Quebec. For whatever reason Frank couldn't make it so Bob went on alone. While in Quebec Bob used the "Albee Special" and the success he had with that fly was tremendous. He called Frank from Quebec to tell him that he'd caught his limit every day and the fish he caught were big salmon. Frank used the fly a lot on the Miramichi and had great luck with it also. It is a fly that can be fished effectively at any time during salmon season.

The second fly is one he called the "Sacred Cow". He sometimes referred to it as the "Holy Cow". It is a very simple, sparsely dressed fly consisting of a medium brown wool body and two gray feathers for the wings. Max Vickers can attest to the fly's effectiveness for catching salmon.

Frank was an exceptional angler who could cast a really long line. His cast was straight and powerful. With his casting ability he could accurately set a fly anywhere he desired. This could be witnessed when he fished below the Hartland Bridge at a spot known as the Dungeon. Frank wanted to get the fish to stop and hold below the Hartland Bridge. In order to get them to do so he took his 20-foot canoe and loaded it with great big boulders, as big as the canoe could safely transport, and he paddled them out into the middle of the river where he dropped them overboard. This created a resting spot for the fish, but in order to fish over the boulders one had to cast a real long line, or fish it from a boat. With Frank's casting ability he had no trouble fishing the rocks from shore. He caught many a fish there.

Frank's favourite river was the Saint John, where he spent a lot of time fishing his favourite pool known as the Dungenon. In the spring of the year he looked forward to taking his boat and motor and going to fish at the Doctor's Island Pool at Blackville. Burpee's Bar, situated at Doaktown was another spot

where Frank spent a lot of time angling.

Frank Rickard's fly tying heyday spanned two and a half decades from 1960 to 1985. His closest friends that shared his fly tying enthusiasm during the 60's and 70's maintain that Frank tied an annual estimate of 7000 flies.

Frank was 73-years old when he passed away, but he tied flies right up to a couple of weeks before his death in 1993.

Albee Special

Butt: Fluorescent red floss or yarn

Body: Flat silver tinsel

Rib: Oval silver tinsel

Wing: A small bunch of yellow bucktail or calftail, over which is a small bunch of red followed by a small bunch of yellow. The wing is tied very sparse.

Beard: White hackle

Head: Black

Sacred Cow (Holy Cow)

Body: Medium brown wool or floss

Wing: Gray feathers

Head: Black

James Norton DeWitt

1915 – 1969

Perth-Andover (Victoria), which means “ash tree stream”, dates back to 1833. It stems from the parish name Andover in Hampshire, England. Since 1966 the community has been part of Perth-Andover. The twin communities are originally named for locations in the United Kingdom – Perth for the Scottish city; Andover for a town in Hampshire, England. The joint name was approved on July 6, 1970



James Norton “Salmon Fly” DeWitt was born on May 1, 1915, in Perth, New Brunswick. On September 3, 1942 he married Helen Castle “Nellie” McLeod who he met in Scotland while serving with the Canadian Forestry Corps of the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War. Helen and James moved back to Andover where they raised four children.

While overseas James and a regiment of other New Brunswick men worked at setting up sawmills and cutting lumber for the construction of bridges that were destroyed during the war. When he returned to New Brunswick he did some freelance guiding, but also guided for Arnold DeMerchant. He then went to work at Fred Tribe’s sawmill in Andover. Shortly after that he got hired on with the Canadian Pacific Railway where he worked as a Section Man in the Upper Kent area. A couple of years after he went to work for the railway he had an on-the-job accident that caused severe injury to his spine. James always believed that if a proper diagnosis of his injury was made right after the accident it might have prevented a deterioration of the condition, which eventually destroyed his health. The injury caused James terrible pain but, being a fighter and tough as nails he tried never to let his injury get the best of him.

He opened a cobbler shop in Perth. This was adjacent to his home on Main Street in Andover. A short while later he connected the cobbler shop to the house. It was in the same shop that he later opened his fly tying business.

James was an artist. He was an inventor, very articulate and creative. He was always experimenting with new ideas. He was fascinated with life and what made things tick. An example of his creativity was a folding buck saw that James and his friend Robert Wright from the Tobique designed. The saw, which they named "Forest King Buck Saw", was made of aluminium. It was designed with a folding blade for easy dismantling; it weighed half a pound and would fit into an 18-inch leather case that could be carried around your waist. He formed the Forest King Manufacturing Company and sold the saws to the Canadian Armed Forces. They never got to patent the saw but years later a similar one appeared on the market. The saw that James and Robert designed still exists today.

He also made and framed a large copper salmon that was leaping out of the water. He was inspired to do this after he seen a picture in a magazine of a salmon leaping from the Miramichi River. James loved fishing. He loved the river, the people along the river, fishermen, guides, and fly tiers.

It was about 1949 when James started tying flies, but his uncle, Ansel DeWitt started around the same time and together they figured out many of the secrets to tying. Ansel tied flies primarily for his own use. If James got an order that was more than he could handle then Ansel would help James tie the flies, but they had to be tied to James's specifications.

In the beginning fly tying for James was a hobby and pastime. He loved to fish so he began tying flies for his personal use. It didn't take long for him to accumulate more flies than he could fish with. It didn't take him long either to discover that fishermen who couldn't tie flies were willing to pay for them. Word soon got around about his fly tying, and so his business was born under the name of "Salmon Flies J. DeWitt". This sign paved the way for an unusual nickname for James DeWitt, the fly tyer. When the sign for outside his shop was being made, whomever it was that was making it was supposed to write, "Salmon Flies by J. DeWitt." Instead they left out "by" and so James inherited the name of "Salmon Fly DeWitt".

By the mid 1950's fly tying for James became more than just a hobby or pastime. It became a business and source of income. He was now taking orders and tying flies by the hundreds to keep up with the demand. He supplied flies to the locals, outfitters, and the many visiting sportsmen to New Brunswick. He shipped flies by the gross to Hardy Brothers in England. A lot of his flies were shipped across the border into the State of Maine where they were resold in businesses there. Some of his customers included Fred Tribe, sound producer Glen Glen from Hollywood, California, Ted Williams, and Neil's Sport Shop in Fredericton and to many members of the Tobique Maliseet First Nations at Indian Point, New Brunswick. The great fisherman and fly tyer Lee Wulff once visited at the fly shop, and he later wrote about James's fly tying in

one of his books that was published in the 1960's.

Being on the river a lot and fishing at the mouth of the Tobique River, Upsalquitch, and all along the upper stretches of the Saint John River brought James into contact with any number of fishermen. They were always looking for the secret weapon that could catch the 'big one.' Being with those fishermen gave James the opportunity to share his flies with the anglers. He also got to learn which patterns were the preferred ones.

James tied a durable fly. His tying wasn't restricted to the usual hair wing patterns. He was an artist and he tacked the fully dressed patterns with enthusiasm. He even made key chains, earrings and other jewellery from his salmon flies. He was so talented, and his love for the challenge is probably why he excelled at fly tying.

James's long time friend and fishing companion Fred Tribe, who is now in his 90's, classed James's flies as beautiful, well tied, and they caught fish. Proof of this was in a photograph that hung on the wall of his fly shop. It showed James with his favourite fishing friend, Wesley Seymour from Andover, holding a 35-pound salmon that he caught on the Saint John River in 1959. He caught that salmon on a Silver Doctor.

There was another photo taken of James and his brother Budd holding an even larger salmon. This salmon was taken by angling. The salmon that was estimated at between 40 and 50 pounds was caught by hand. Yes, that's right. By some stroke of luck for them, bad luck for the salmon, they came upon the huge Salar trapped in a shallow pond of water adjacent to the river. James, who was tall and slender, and as quick as greased lightning with his hands, commenced the attack. Budd followed with support. The two of them wrestled that fish onto the shore and dispatched it in short order. Very few people knew the story behind that photo, and for years folks probably heralded the DeWitt boys as the catchers of the largest salmon in their neck of the woods. The truth being known today about the wrestled salmon shouldn't make much difference. There is still the proof of James's fishing skill in the photo of the 35-pounder. Although James was in pain most of the time it seldom deterred him from getting out there on the river, or from going after the big one.



Elwood Wright from Perth Andover, who was the personal guide for U.S. industrialist and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, traveled to the United States with James DeWitt to compete in fly casting contests. It is said that James and Wright would stand on the sidewalks and cast flies into teacups just to demonstrate their accuracy with which they could place a fly. Their success as anglers was often attributed to being able to place the salmon fly in the exact location where they saw fish.

One summer in the late 50's Fred and James took the canoe and went down the Miramichi to fish for salmon. They fished all day long and tented over night. By the end of the following day James was in such pain that he had to lie on the flat of his back in the canoe while Fred poled them back upstream. It was difficult for Fred to watch and at times he wondered why the man would put himself through all that. Today he looks back at what James did with admiration. Now he understands just how much it meant for James to be out there. The hurt would have been greater for James had he not been able to go. Fred is so pleased that he was able to help James live some of the great times fishing for Atlantic salmon and trout in the rivers he loved so well.

Lawrence Green, a Barber in Andover at the time was also a fly tyer. People in Andover couldn't figure out whether Lawrence liked cutting hair, or tying flies more. Between haircuts Lawrence would tie flies. Fred Tribe remembers Lawrence giving him a salmon fly every time he cut his hair. This was a great deal for the customer, especially if he was a fisherman. James and

Lawrence traded many a fly, and shared their techniques on how to tie them. Lawrence sold his own flies at the barbershop, but he also sold some that James tied just to help his friend. It may have been Lawrence Green who taught James DeWitt how to tie flies.

James had other talents, which included fixing and making fishing rods, singing, playing the harmonica and guitar. When James was just a young man he was part of a small musical band. One day he met the famous singer Burl Ives who was doing a travelling road show through the province. Jim loved to tell folks about the time that Burl Ives gave him his first guitar lesson. They sang a couple of songs, strummed their guitars and had a grand old time.

James tied flies with every piece of material you could imagine. He even clipped hair of his old dog one time to tie a fly. A lot of the local wild game and domestic animals provided him with the fur, hair and feathers he needed, but for those really special pattern flies he would order his materials through suppliers in the United States.

James's favourite fly was the Silver Doctor. He originated his own version of a fly he named the Orange Blossom Special. It had a silver body, gray and black hair wing, and an orange collar. He also originated a fly for Wesley Seymour, which he called the "Seymour Special." Wesley used it often and caught many fish on it.

James's nephew, the late Henry DeWitt, told of a fly that James originated. It was called "Hair of the Dog." It isn't hard to figure out the story behind this fly.

Every person I spoke to regarding James DeWitt classed him as a down to earth guy. He was kind, thoughtful, and generous and he treated everyone with respect. They can't recall him every saying a bad word against anyone. James Norton "Salmon Fly" DeWitt died suddenly on November 7, 1969.

Orange Blossom Special

Head:	Black
Body:	Silver tinsel
Wing:	Gray and black hair
Collar:	Orange hackle

Marie J. R. (LeBlanc) St. Laurent

Although Marie Jeanne Robertine St. Laurent will say that she is a relatively minor figure in the fly tying history of New Brunswick, she deserves recognition because of her connection with four other lady fly tyers who were taught the art of fly tying by David Arthur LaPointe.

Robertine St. Laurent was born on April 27, 1926 in Atholville, New Brunswick, and is the daughter of the late Eugenie (nee LaPointe) and Joseph Edward LeBlanc.



Marie J. R. (LeBlanc) St. Laurent (circa 1944)

Robertine started tying salmon flies in 1944. She was 18 years old at the time and a regular visitor to the fly tying shop of her uncle, David Arthur (D.A.) LaPointe, professional fly tier from Atholville. Robertine liked to visit her sister, Carmelle (LeBlanc) Bigaouette and her friends, Corrine (Legace) Gallant and H el ene (Jean) LeFebvre who were already employed as fly tiers by Mr. LaPointe. It was during one of Robertine's visits that D.A. LaPointe asked her if she would like to learn the art of fly tying. Robertine who was eager to give it a try did so and for the next two years worked as a fly tyer with her sister and friends at D.A. LaPointe's Fly Dressing Shop.



L/R Carmelle Bigaouette and Marie Robertine J. LeBlanc-St. Laurent (circa Early 1980's)

During the two years Robertine tied flies for her uncle she was only permitted to tie the bodies of the trout and salmon flies. Her uncle assembled and mounted the wings, and finished the heads. It wasn't because Robertine lacked the ability to totally construct the entire trout or salmon fly, that Mr. LaPointe did not allow her to do so. His method for teaching the art of fly tying was designed in such a way that the student had to graduate from stage to stage in order to earn the honour of constructing the complete salmon fly, of which some patterns are extremely difficult to duplicate.

Robertine's fly tying ended when she moved to Montreal, got married and found other employment. However, she cherishes the many memories from those two years in life where she, along with her sister and friends formed, not only the earliest, but one of "Five Lady Fly Tiers" who were taught the art of fly tying by D.A. LaPointe.

Robertine's favourite fly is the "Green Highlander". Her favourite river is the Restigouche.



Marie Robertine J. St. Laurent, with her sister, Carmelle (LeBlanc) Bigaouette and her friends, Mary Jane Babin, H el ene (Jean) LeFebvre and Lucille (Jean) Gallant outside D.A. LaPointe's Fly Shop, Notre Dame Street, Atholville, New Brunswick (circa Mid 1940's)

Emerson O'Dell Underhill

Emerson O'Dell Underhill was born on November 17, 1931 at Barnettville, New Brunswick. He is the son of Catherine Myrna Elizabeth (nee Sturgeon) and the late Henry James O'Dell Underhill.

As the result of a motor vehicle accident on October 24, 1965, Emerson immediately became a paraplegic. The accident didn't stop him though from raising a family, and accomplishing many goals.

In 1966, while a patient at the old Victoria Hospital in Fredericton, he met the late Herman Hare from Sunny Corner, New Brunswick. Herman, a notable fly tier from the northwest Miramichi River area, had his fly tying gear with him. Herman wanted Emerson to try tying a fly. Herman gave the instruction as Emerson tied his very first fly. It was an "Orange Butt Black Bear", which he still has. They were very pleased with the way the fly turned out considering it was Emerson Underhill's first time at a fly-tying vice. The experience caused Emerson to become extremely interested in the art of fly tying.

After they returned home from the hospital they kept in close contact with each other. Their love for fly tying helped draw them closer together, and it helped to keep them active also. They were continuously sharing patterns and exchanging flies. Herman helped Emerson buy fly tying materials from Veniards in England, because Herman understood the value and exchange on the English currency. "Herman Hare was a wonderful friend, and a very talented fly tier. He could tie the fully dressed flies just about as good as anyone. He continuously gave me help and encouragement with my fly tying right up until his death in 1979", says Emerson.

In the Early 1980's, when they held the Farmer's Market in Doaktown on Saturday mornings, Emerson Underhill went there to sell his salmon flies and leatherwork. It was during this time that he originated the "Green Machine" salmon fly.

Origin of the Green Machine

By Emerson O. Underhill

"There wasn't a lot of thought behind creating the "Green Machine." I was experimenting with the deer hair for the body of the "Shady Lady." I was dyeing a lot of deer hair and experimenting with the colors on different bugs too. When I first tied the "Green Machine" I used dark green deer hair. I also tied the same fly using deer hair dyed Kelly green, Forest green with a small bit of Insect green mixed in. Sometimes I would add a little touch of dark olive dye to get just the right color green. The fly was not tied first using light green hair as stated in a well-known book written about Atlantic salmon flies. It was a while later before other fly tiers tied the "Green Machine" using the brighter green-colored deer hair. I use it some now also, but most of the fishermen I know prefer the dark green color. Dressed as it is with spun deer hair, you'd

tend to fish it dry but it is meant to be fished wet fly style”, says Emerson.

A little six-year-old boy named the “Green Machine”. The boy would stand around Emerson’s fly tying table every Saturday morning at the Farmers Market. He was always asking Emerson what the flies were called. He would go about pointing to this one, and that one, wanting to know their names. One morning Emerson was displaying the little green deer hair bug. Sure enough, the little boy arrived as usual and he immediately pointed to the fly and asked what it was called. Emerson told him it didn’t have a name. The youngster’s response was, “It’s a “Green Machine.” Emerson said, “All right, that’s what we’ll call it.” A long time after Emerson stopped going to the Farmers Market, he wondered where the little boy got that name. “The only thing I can think of is that, around that same time, a toy manufacturer sold a child’s all-plastic 3-wheel tricycle called the “Green Machine”. Whether the little boy had one of those tricycles, or whether he was thinking about something else, I’ll never know, and sadly I have no idea who the little boy was, because I never thought to ask him his name”, says Emerson.

Since the time that Emerson started tying the “Green Machine” he’s had fishermen drive all the way from Juniper, New Brunswick just to get the dark green deer hair he dyes especially for tying the “Green Machine”.

Over the past 15 years Emerson told only a few very close friends about the origin of the “Green Machine”, and how it got its name. It was in the summer of 1997, when those same friends went to Emerson and persuaded him to go public with the story. It was then that he decided to give his story to Dewey Gillespie so it could be published. “It was very hard for me to do for I am a shy person who doesn’t look for any kind of recognition. Telling this story is not about recognition for myself, but simply to set the fly tying history books straight. This New Brunswick favorite and extremely successful salmon fly was originated by me, and named by a little boy from Doaktown, New Brunswick. Beyond a doubt, the “Green Machine” has become one of the best known and extremely successful salmon flies on all the rivers in New Brunswick. I am so proud of the little fly. It deserves all the recognition for its contribution in making many a successful angler”, says Emerson.

On May 16, 1989, George Gruenefeld, a writer for the Montreal Gazette wrote about Emerson Underhill dressing original patterns of the “Green Machine”, “Shady Lady” and a blue version called the “Smurf.”

Origin of the “Deer Hair” Shady Lady

By Emerson O. Underhill

The “Shady Lady” was originated in the early 1950’s. The original pattern was tied with a black dun wool body. Some later fly tiers tied the fly with a black chenille body. In the 1980’s, the Shady Lady’s pattern changed again,

this time to a body made from black deer hair. This version seems to be the most successful and widely used for salmon fishing in New Brunswick. Emerson Underhill is the fly tier responsible for the latest change to the “Shady Lady.” Here’s how it happened.

“While displaying my salmon flies at the Farmer’s Market at Doaktown in the mid 1980’s, I met Tom Balash, a fine fly tier from the United States, who I later became very good friends with. Tom had a camp on the Miramichi River near Doaktown. On the weekends he would visit the market where we’d discuss fly patterns. One day I was looking through some of his flies and found a pattern that resembled a little black bug. I asked Tom what the fly was called and he told me it was a “Shady Lady.” Up until that time I never heard of the fly. I began asking a lot of the older fishermen and fly tiers about the fly, but I couldn’t find anyone that knew, or heard anything about it.”

“One day I decided I would tie some “Shady Ladies”, but when I tried to put the feather on the chenille body it didn’t work that good so I decided to try tying it with black deer hair. When I first started tying the “Shady Lady” I tied it with a red butt and a little red tag. Then I tied some with a green butt and a little red tag. I also tied it with a double butt and red tag. It’ll also work well with a brown hackle.

Fishermen started using the fly and when the word got around I couldn’t keep up with the demand. For a long time fishermen thought that the name “Shady Lady” was a joke. They’d never heard of a fly by that name. After all these years the fly has never died out. I used to laugh when I would read in the paper about someone catching a salmon on the “Shady Lady.” From time to time someone would announce on the radio that the fly-of-the-day was a “Shady Lady.” The “Shady Lady” is one of the best salmon flies on the Miramichi River.

For a long time I thought of making the story known, but just put it off. Being the type of man that I am I’ve always been a bit shy when trying to speak for myself. I worried that people would feel I was trying to glorify myself. This summer a friend from Georgia, U.S.A. who knew the story came to me and persuaded me to write the story for Dewey Gillespie’s new book that he’s doing about New Brunswick fly tiers. This is when I decided to give the story to Gillespie.

For the past 30 years Emerson tied salmon flies for a countless number of people and businesses. In one year he tied two thousand Bombers for just one order. He remembers selling them for fifty cents each. He’s tied flies for people from all over the world, and has people coming to my home to visit and to buy his salmon flies. The wonderful people complement him about his flies. Although he appreciates the compliments he never takes them to serious for he feels that someone else could probably tie them better.

“Ted Williams and his long-time guide, the late Roy Curtis, visited me regularly, and were good friends of mine. Nearly every day, through the window in my fly tying shop, I would watch them drive by. Every year they would bring me a couple of fish. Ted would pick up some materials, and of course they always had a story or two to tell. I remember showing Ted how to tie the “Green Machine.” It was a wonderful experience and a great pastime. The contribution these people made enabled me to live a more comfortable life confined to a wheelchair. I always appreciate the help and encouragement so many wonderful people give to me, especially the local people from along the Miramichi River. They are very special people”, says Emerson.

Emerson believes there can be no one more deserving of his thanks than his children, and wife Ruth. In a time of need they were always present to fulfill his requests as best they could. There is no way to repay them for this. “I sometimes wonder how many dustpans of deer hair Ruth swept up behind me over the past 38 years.”

Thirty eight years of fly tying has gone by quickly, but Emerson hopes to tie flies for another thirty years because he hasn't yet tied half the flies he wants to. He estimates that he has tied one hundred and fifty thousand flies thus far. He's heard about as many fishing stories too. If God's willing, Emerson Underhill will be tying salmon flies for a long time yet.



“Green Machine” originated and tied by Emerson O. Underhill

Head: Black
Tip: Oval silver tinsel
Tail: Red yarn
Butt: Green yarn
Body: Green Deer hair
Body Hackle: Brown



Emerson Underhill at the tying bench in 2000

Ralph Turner “Ralphie” Miller

Ralph Turner “Ralphie” Miller was born on September 4, 1932 in Florenceville, Carleton County, New Brunswick. He is the son of the late Doris (nee Peters) and Norman Miller.



Ralph Miller at the tying bench in August 1995

Ralphie started tying flies at the age of ten. By the age of fourteen he was tying flies for sale. His uncle, Carleton Miller, was his inspiration to start salmon fishing and tying flies. At that time the American fishermen from Maine often dominated the time, fishing on the Saint John River. They used the Classic flies more than any other type. Ralphie often found their flies on the beach, thanks to their poor back casting. He would search the shoreline constantly. This was his way of obtaining an early supply of flies. He certainly couldn't afford to buy them. When his uncle bought Ralphie a fly tying catalogue, he was fascinated by it. His uncle then helped buy some of the basic fly tying materials and pretty soon he was ready to start tying, without any help or instructions. Ralphie began to dissect some of the fully dressed flies that were not usable and, slowly but surely things began to come together. His first attempt to tie a fly was with a regular bait hook, a few feathers from an old farm rooster, sewing thread from the sewing basket and some of his sister's red fingernail polish. Ralphie and a close friend dashed to a nearby eddy just below the salmon pool where the real test was on, no luck. His dear pal Ernie wanted to use the fly, so in disgust

Ralphie gave it to him. The unbelievable happened. Ernie landed a chub! Who really knows the true source of inspiration! At least it helped to restore Ralphie's ego, if nothing else

For more than forty-five years, he has experimented with fly patterns. He is confident that he could have drummed up some patterns such as "Killer Miller" or "Fame and Fortune", but it just wasn't meant to be. However, he has tied his own variations of the fully dressed and the current bucktails, bombers and buck bugs.

To Ralphie, the completion of a well-tied fly is rewarding, especially when it catches a big salmon. Fly tying is a very challenging art that opens up one's imagination. Having your customer's report their catches and request special flies tied to their specifications is extremely exciting.

Ralphie's favourite Classic fly is a "Jock Scott." His favourite fly to fish with is a dry fly. The "Royal Wulff" or "Royal Coachman" is his preferences both for tying and fishing. His favourite fly tier was the late Clovis Arseneault from Atholville, New Brunswick.

As a fly tier, Ralph Turner Miller represents the Saint John River, Tobique River, the Restigouche and Miramichi drainage in the northern half, such as Miramichi at Juniper, Renous, Little Southwest and the Northwest. His favourite river is the Restigouche where he landed fish up to thirty pounds, not to mention the big ones that got away.

In the early years of Ralph Miller's life, he was blessed with an environment that was only short of paradise for fishing salmon and trout. He had access to three trout streams that ran across his parent's farm. His years on the farm were truly full of romance and adventure. He also had excellent hunting. He had the best of both worlds.

He graduated in 1950 and went on to become a schoolteacher. In 1977, he opened "Miller's Rod and Gun Shop" that he operated out of the Village Place Mall in Florenceville, New Brunswick until 1993. Most of Ralph's life has been dedicated to education, twenty years of teaching school and forty-five years of offering his services in fly tying, gunsmithing and rod and reel repair. He also rented boats to his customers in the fishing and hunting fraternity. He has taught fly tying at the Community College in Woodstock as well as teaching the art on an individual basis, especially through his Rod and Gun Shop where he had constant contact with many fine fishermen and fly tiers. He would like to be classified as a good sportsman. He is a strong supporter of "hook and release." He believes that fishing in the future will have to rest with new attitudes. Fishermen must learn to put back what they have taken away. They can no longer think that the fish resource is limitless. They should make a gallant effort to find better ways of conservation.



L/R Dewey Gillespie, Ralph Miller and W.F. “Budd” Kitchen standing in front of Ralph’s Framed Presentation at Where The Rivers Meet, The Fly Tyer’s of New Brunswick Display at Brookdale Nurseries at Miramichi City in 1996

Since selling his shop, he now mopes about the place offering his assistance. He still has that desire to be near his customers and probably always will. He does not have much interest in full retirement. His philosophy is “to wear out as opposed to rusting out.”

On December 30, 2004 I spoke to Ralph and he told me that he does not tie as many flies as he used to. He has been spending a lot of time trying to master the art of tying the fully dressed patterns. He also has several personal projects on the go that keep him busy.



Rusty Wulff tied by Ralph Miller 1995

