

Federation of Fly Fishers Fly of the Month

March, 2001- The Henryville Special



The Henryville Special: A fly with special connections

By Jim Abbs

Some folks believe that fly anglers are so obsessively focused on their sport that nothing in the "real world" is of interest to them. Of course this is not true. Most fly fishers are very concerned with a much wider variety of issues, including new developments in science and medicine (as these relate to the physics of fly rods and medications to reduce pain from a casting elbow), politics (how the new Washington administration is going to regulate hydro-electric dam operation on western tailwaters), and finance (dividends on stocks influence cash available for fishing gear). Seriously, fly fishing often is connected, one way or another, to many important human events, past and present. As an example, this FFF March, 2001 fly of the month has a very rich romantic history, with connections to some of the world's greatest authors and several famously beautiful women.

The Henryville Special was developed about 80 or so years ago by anglers from the Henryville section of Brodhead Creek. Knowledgeable fly anglers know that Brodhead Creek is in Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The Poconos hold the distinction of having perhaps the greatest concentration of cute little honeymoon hotels of anywhere in the lower 48 states... hence the obvious connection to romance. It may even be that the Brodhead waters are such excellent fishing because most of the visiting tourists are not focused on the streams or the fish.

But what about the connection to some of the world's greatest celebrities and authors? As it turns out, a variation of this fly was a favorite of none other than **Jack Hemingway**, son of the legendary author (and fly angler) **Ernst Hemingway**. Jack apparently made trips each year to the Henry's Fork of Idaho and had a version of the Henryville called the Sooty Sedge...subsequently called the Hemingway Caddis. The connection of this fly to famous authors is not limited to Ernst Hemingway, but includes others, among them the late 19th century author **Henry Van Dyke**, author of a famous little book, ***Fisherman's Luck*** (1899). Van Dyke wrote a ditty that mentions the famous water:

Over the hill to Henryville
Tis oft the fisherman's cry
For I'll catch a 14 incher
On an artificial fly!

Let us not forget the connection to beautiful women... Jack Hemingway was, after all, the father of **Margo** and **Maribel Hemingway**. But I don't know if they ever fly fished.

Obviously the connection of this fly to accomplished and beautiful people is a bit whimsical. However, the Henryville Special should be taken seriously. This fly, developed by a Mr. Hiram Brobst of Palmertown, PA gets the following accolades by modern fly experts "...the best caddis imitation every created." Or "our most effective dry caddis pattern"... or "This pattern is now universally accepted as *the* caddis pattern."

Why is it not more popular? In my experience, there are two reasons. First, it is a little difficult to tie (especially the wings...yes there are two sets of wings). Second, when the fish are going wild on a caddis hatch, the Henryville is a little fragile. Nevertheless, for a search pattern in smooth water and/or for selective fish, this fly is a must to have in your box.

MATERIALS

Hook: Mustad 94840, Tiemco 100 #10-20

Thread: Olive, or green

Ribbing: Dry fly quality grizzly hackle palmered

Body: Olive or green floss (poly dubbing is also an alternative - Red or reddish brown is used as well)

Underwing: Lemon barred wood duck flank fibers

Wing: Two duck quill sections tied down

Hackle: Medium brown dry fly hackle

TYING STEPS

1. Tie in thread about 2/3s up from the bend of the hook and lay down a layer of thread to the bend.
2. At the bend of the hook, tie in the grizzly hackle (at the stem) to be used for the ribbing.
3. Wrap the thread forward and tie in the strand of floss for the body.
4. Wrap the floss over the tie in point (backward) and then forward to a point about 30% of the shank length, back from the eye of the hook and tie off.
5. Wrap the grizzly hackle forward over the floss body and trim excess.
6. Trim the top of the grizzly palmered hackle so it is flush with the floss body.
7. Tie in a small bunch of wood duck flank fibers on top of the hook, with the tips extending about 1/3 the length of the shank beyond the hook bend.
8. Select two perfectly matched sections from a duck's wing feather (one section from the right wing feather, one section from the corresponding left wing feather). These sections will be the mirror image of oneanother. These sections should be about ¼ inch for a #16 and larger for larger hooks, and conversely.
9. Hold the two sections in the right thumb and forefinger with the convex sides opposing so the wings flare out. Hold the feathers so one feather is on one side of the hook and the other feather is on the opposite side, with the thumb and finger below the tie in point. The tips of these quill sections should extend the same distance as the wood duck flank underwing.
10. Pinch the feather sections over the top of the hook shank, just forward of the grizzly

palmered hackle and bring the thread up, locking the quill sections in place. Make 3-4 additional wraps and snug down. If necessary adjust these quill sections to make them symmetrical.

11. Trim the butts of the quill sections and wrap over them and back to the point where they are tied in.

12. Choose and tie in a single brown (or ginger) hackle in front of the wing and make a couple of wraps forward leaving some room to finish the head. Tie off and trim.

13. Finish the head and cement.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.

You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at flyofthemoth@fedflyfishers.org