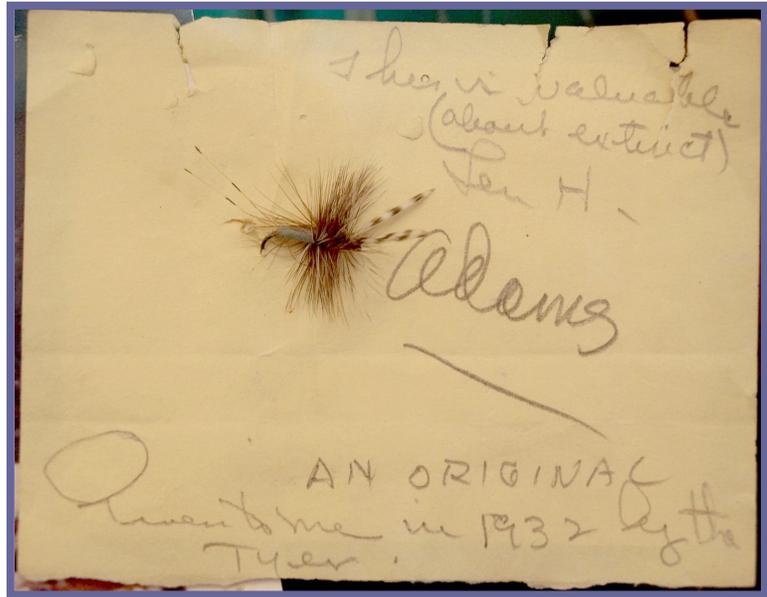


# *The “Original” Adams*

*by: Tom Deschaine*

In 1922, on the banks of the Mayfield Pond stood the Halladay Hotel. The inn was owned and operated by Len and Rilla Halladay. Here, they boarded loggers and entertained hunters and fishermen from several surrounding states.

Among their clients was a man named Charles Adams, a lawyer from Lorraine, Ohio. While fishing the Boardman River Mr. Adams discovered an insect that he was not familiar with to Len Halladay and asked him to tie up a fly that resembled it. Len tied up his modest creation and presented it to Mr. Adams.



The following day Mr. Adams returned to see Halladay and announced the success he had with the fly, on the Boardman River. Halladay then christened the fly “Adams” in honor of the fly’s first successful fisherman.

Trout fisherman and fly aficionados have all heard this story dozens of times. But, what of the ‘original’ Adams fly? Do any really exist today?

A man by the name of George Wells, who owned a summer home on Spider Lake (near Mayfield), was a well-known sports writer of the 40s and 50s. He was also an accomplished fisherman and a friend of Len Halladay. Mr. Wells was a professor of microbiology at Ferris State University. In 1932, ten years after the creation of the fly pattern, Mr. Wells went to Len Halladay and asked him to tie up an exact duplicate of the original pattern that he first gave to Charles Adams. Len obliged. Mr. Wells saved the fly for many years.

Dr. Dan Gottwald, a frequent visitor to the Mayfield Pond, fished the pond ever since he was a young boy. His interest in fly fishing and fly history led him to George Wells. They became friends. When Mr. Wells died (1979), he bequeathed his fly collection along with the above pictured Adams fly to Dr. Gottwald. The original Adams fly he received was attached to a note written by Mr. Wells, which reads, “This is valuable (about extinct) Len H - AN ORIGINAL given to me in 1932 by the tyer.”



Dr. Gottwald felt that the Adams fly should be returned to its home in Michigan. He turned the fly over to Ms. Edna Sargent, a close friend of the Halladay family, in 2003. Ms. Sargent had a strong interest in preserving this major bit of local history.

The fly, some photos, and additional

memorabilia were originally displayed as an exhibit at the Grand Traverse Historical Museum in Traverse City, Michigan. The museum decided to place the exhibit into storage. Edna Sargent retrieved the exhibit and redonated it to its new, permanent home at the Kingsley Branch Library, in Kingsley, Michigan, just a few short miles from the Mayfield Pond, where it was originally created.



The only 'original' known fly to exist today, tied by Len Halladay, is on display and is open to viewing during the library's normal hours of operation.

The historical lineage of this fly is documented with letters which I have received from Dr. Gottwald and with conversations I have had with Edna Sargent. The Halladay family confirms the information.

*See you on the water.....*

Tom Deschaine

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