



A Letter on Leonard

by

James K. Douglas

The original "H. L. Leonard, Maker." stamp with the separate "Bangor, Me." stamp which appear on rods made after the dissolution of Abbey & Imbrey's sole agency in the marketing of Leonard rods.

Letter to the Editor

In the spirit of your Summer 1991 editorial: that tackle knowledge is gained best through the slow accretion of new data and more refined speculation than through the ex-cathedra pronouncements of "experts," I submit further dates and guesses on the stamping of Leonard rods.

1. The original Leonard stamp. As Mary Kelly noted in her article, the original stamp is quite narrow. Also noted was that Leonard was a gunsmith before he became a rod maker. Because it was customary at that time for gunsmiths to stamp their products on the rib, necessitating a narrow, flat die, one can conclude that the original Leonard stamp was created for his guns and then used for his rods simply because it was ready at hand. Some may ask how Leonard could stamp a round butt cap with a flat die. The answer is that back then round metal fittings (ferrules, slide bands, butt caps, etc.) were not made from drawn tubing but from flat stock which the rod maker had to roll and seam. The oldest Leonard rod bear-

ing this stamp that I have been able to locate and inspect, albeit indirectly, is an 11 1/2' foot trout rod with primitive ferrules and of four strip, rounded construction. The butt swell and reel seat spacer are extensions of the butt blank without any other material spliced in; one can only wonder at the width of the strips! Such a rod must have been one of Leonard's earliest.

2. The reappearance of the original stamp after the break up with Abbey & Imbrie. Mrs. Kelly dates the reappearance at 1877-1879. I have a 14 foot Leonard salmon rod which has the original stamp with the separate "Bangor, Me." stamp. The rod also has the first ferrule patent stamp, "PAT. Oct.26.75", but not the

TO GO A'FISHING



HAWES-LEONARD MODEL RODS
ARE THE BEST

MADE BY
H. W. HAWES & CO.,
CANTERBURY, CONN.,
U. S. A.

The title page of an undated catalog put out by Hiram Hawes, maker of "Leonard" rods.



During the past few years our attention has been repeatedly called to the fact that a number of dealers, both in this country and in Europe, have offered and sold other makes of rods as Leonard. Hereafter all genuine Leonard rods will bear this stamp on either the metal reel seat or butt cap of each rod.

27

The caveat paragraph from a 1922 William Mills catalog.

second of September 3, 1878. This would indicate that the original stamp was reintroduced closer to the 1876-77 time span where Mrs. Kelly places the break up.

3. The change from "...LEONARD & MILLS CO./MAKERS" to "...H.L.LEONARD ROD CO./MAKERS." Mrs. Kelly states that this change occurred at or near the death of Leonard in 1907. This cannot be correct. Starting about 1911,

after Hiram Hawes had begun producing his own "Leonard" rods in Canterbury, Connecticut, Mills added a caveat paragraph to the introductory page of the rod section of their catalog. It said, in effect, beware of imitations, always look for this stamp on a genuine Leonard rod. Accompanying the text is an illustration of the Leonard butt cap stamp with the "...LEONARD & MILLS CO./MAKERS" wording. It would

have been self defeating at best had the actual rod stamp read differently. The caveat illustration did not change to the "...H.L.LEONARD ROD CO./MAKERS" wording until possibly 1923, definitely 1924.

4. The patent stamps on the (first female) ferrule. Word at the Leonard shop had it that Leonard stopped patent dating their ferrules sometime in 1928. But since ferrules were made in large batches, and since ferrule sizes would have been used up at different rates, one should allow a span of 1928 to 1930 for dating purposes.

Information for this letter was supplied by John Bradford, Marty Keane and Tom Maxwell, who have my thanks.

The Catskill Fly Fishing Center's Fisherman's Flea Market

by Seth Rosenbaum

August 25th, 1991

Livingston Manor, NY

800 visitors crowded around 41 tables of miscellaneous fishing tackle ranging from high class to moderate, but interesting. Rods, reels and books were well represented by John Gallas, Ray Hatsky and Peter Corrigan, respectively. The fine fall weather brought out whole families to look at and buy tackle and to admire the extensive museum collection, which is rapidly becoming one of the best repositories of fishing tackle in the Northeast. Next year's show will be held at the same time of year on the center's grounds at Livingston Manor, New York and would be well worth exhibiting or attending. The museum can be reached at CFFC and Museum, PO Box 1295, Livingston Manor, New York 12758, Phone (914) 439-4810.



The Catskill Fly Fishing Center's Fisherman's Flea Market.