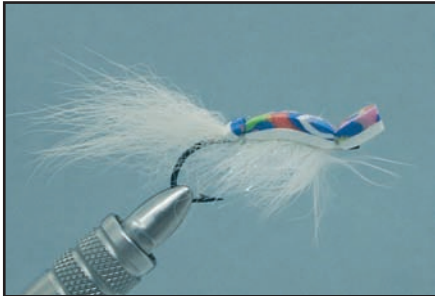


Documenting a Career and a Passion

Photos by Sara Wilcox



Some of Jack Gartside's well-used and well-loved fly-fishing equipment, including a pair of rods, a Hardy reel, his chest pack, and his signature red baseball cap. Also pictured left, top to bottom, are three of Gartside's original fly patterns: the Gurgler, the Slider, and his Secret Minnow.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, the museum was fortunate to receive materials from the estate of John Clarence “Jack” Gartside (1942–2009). Gartside was a prolific writer, an accomplished fly tier, and an unforgettable fixture in the fly-fishing community. Over the past three decades, his fly-tying and fly-fishing career has been well documented in magazine articles, books, and interviews, but the collection donated to the museum tells a different type of story: the story of how one man documented his own passion.

The Gartside collection includes books he published from 1993 through 2008, including *Striper Strategies: Secrets of a Striper Bum* (2008), *Fly Patterns for the Adventurous Tyer* (1993), *Scratching the Surface: Strange but True Tales & Techniques* (1999), and *The Soft Hackle Streamer* (1995). In all, there are twelve books written by Gartside and two catalogs detailing his flies. Gartside was an avid reader, and his home was filled with books of all kinds. One can only imagine the great pride Gartside took in his published works to place them on his shelves alongside the likes of William Shakespeare. To avid anglers, Gartside's books proved invaluable resources.

The collection also includes more than one hundred flies tied by Gartside. As Gartside fished both fresh and salt water, the variety of flies is astonishing. Most of the flies are Gartside's versions of popular Woolly Buggers, Minnows, Caddis, and Deceivers, but some were his own creation. Among the original

Gartside's in this collection are his Secret Minnow, Beastmaster, Chicken Poop, Gurgler, Slider, and Gartside Bug patterns. These were created as Gartside strived for different ways to tempt a fish to a fly. All of these Gartside flies have become favorites around the world.

The last part of this collection affirms the minimalist philosophy of Jack Gartside. It has been well published that Gartside left his teaching job many years ago to pursue his love of the sport. His main concern was his next fishing trip (near or far), but he would accept various jobs to maintain his modest lifestyle. Many were familiar with the Boston cabbie who tied flies at his steering wheel. This modest style of living, as well as his belief that rod and reel were merely a vehicle for the fly, was reflected in his fishing gear. Within this collection are basic reels and fly rods that many anglers would pass up simply because they are not high-end equipment. Gartside felt that if it got the fish, that was just fine. His signature red baseball hat is also part of this collection.

The museum appreciates the assistance of Kate Lavelle, Dale Linder, and Melvyn Harris for making sure that this important collection now has a place at the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

—CATHI COMAR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR