



William B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Conservation, preservation, and restoration of Michigan's cold-water resources

The Story of the Mershon Fly

Au Sable River guide and local fly tier, Jerry Regan, has preserved some fascinating information about our chapter's Mershon Fly. The following is a brief history of the origins of the flies.

I quote from a letter from Mr. Mershon to Harold Smedley, dated February 10, 1942.

The Mershon Fly originated from the old Mowry, which was made of a turkey wing, and it was, I thought, not bright enough, so I wrote to Wm. Mills & Son, New York, and asked them to tie some flies for me with a black silk body and wing feathers from a mallard drake, leaving the tip of white thereon. They did so, and afterwards I had Mills have some tied with a white body, and the white bodies Mershon proved to be more attractive than the black bodies.

William B. Mershon, born in 1856 and an early lumberman from Saginaw, is the man after whom this fly is named. He fished the streams of Michigan when they were filled with grayling. Mr. Mershon, a voice for conservation in the early 1900's, was secretary of the Michigan Sportsmen's Association in 1882. The Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited, is the only chapter I know of that has a fly to call it's own.

Ref. Trout, Ray Bergman. Page 122, Plate No. 6. Page 422

Ref: Fly Patterns and Their Origins, Harold Hinsdill Smedley. Page 95, 96

Mershon Wet Fly

Hook: 3906 #8, 10, or 12
Thread: Black
Tail: Black
Body: Black silk floss
Wing: Dark blue white tip
Hackle: Black

Mershon White Wet Fly

Hook: 3906 #8, 10, or 12
Thread: Black
Tail: golden pheasant tippet
Body: White silk floss
Wing: Dark blue white tip
Hackle: Light brown