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From the Selected Works of William B. Krohn

Winter 2013

Henry O. Stanley and his fishing tackle business

William B. Krohn, *University of Maine*



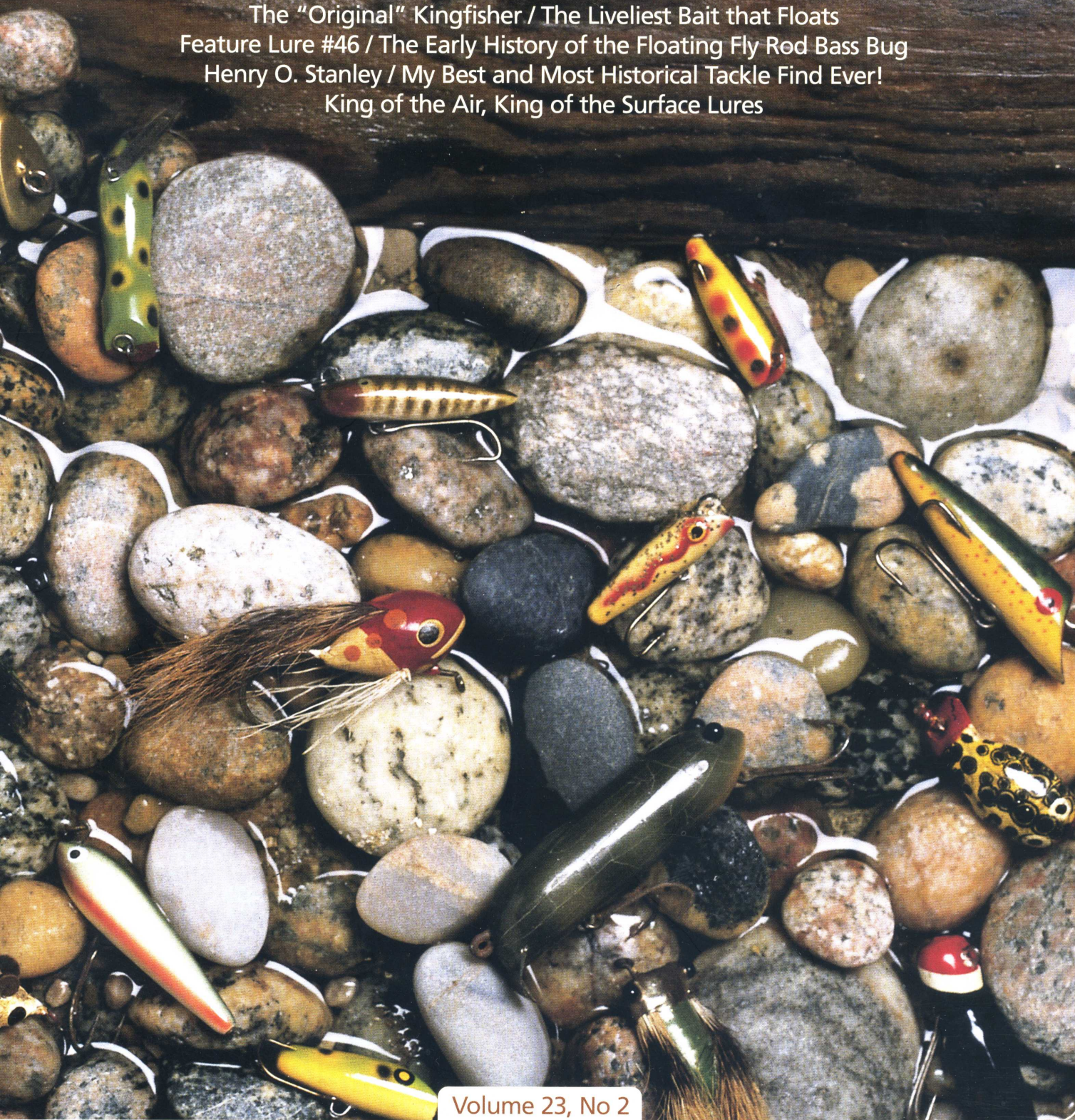
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Winter, 2013

The National Fishing Lure Collectors Club

MAGAZINE

The "Original" Kingfisher / The Liveliest Bait that Floats
Feature Lure #46 / The Early History of the Floating Fly Rod Bass Bug
Henry O. Stanley / My Best and Most Historical Tackle Find Ever!
King of the Air, King of the Surface Lures



Volume 23, No 2

Henry O. Stanley

And His Fishing Tackle Business

The northeastern U.S.A., as well as other regions of the nation, was a cauldron of inventing and manufacturing throughout the 19th century. With literate, hard-working people and an abundance of natural resources, cities and towns across the region grew and prospered during this period. The southern half of Maine - blessed with water power and rail transportation, and having a population wanting to work for wages instead of farm - was a prime example of this cauldron. In the late 1800s through early 1900s, Maine had a variety of large-scale manufacturers including pulp and paper mills, textile mills, and shoe factories. But there were also smaller manufacturers including mills to grind grain and to clean and process wool (i.e. carding), and factories to make toothpicks and spools (for the textile industry). Of special interest to the readers of this journal were the many makers of fishing tackle. Famous rod and reel makers included H. L. Leonard and F. E. Thomas, both of whom were once located in Bangor, Maine. Less widely known was C. E. Wheeler of Farmington who made high-quality bamboo rods (as well as landing nets, guns, etc.). In Auburn, Maine, there was J. B. Daniels who, when not guiding, made both bamboo fly and trolling rods. A number of early lure and fly makers also resided and worked in Maine, including C. H. Morse of Auburn (large trolling spinners), F. E. Bailey of Dover-Foxcroft (flies and spinners), W. H. "Bill" Burgess of Minot (flies and spinners), and the focus of this article, H. O. Stanley of Dixfield.

Henry Orville Stanley (1829-1913) lived his life in Dixfield (excepting nearly two years when he explored the California gold fields), a small town in western Maine situated on the north bank of the Androscoggin River. As an adult, Stanley became one of the town's most prominent citizens, serving the State of Maine as an Inland Fisheries and Game Commissioner from 1872 until his retirement in 1905 (excepting 1880). As is the case today, commissioners were appointed by the governor and while considered by many to be a prestigious job, Stanley's annual salary was modest. To supplement his income during his tenure with the State, he owned and operated a number of businesses, including a general store, a grist mill, a carding factory, as well as a factory to manufacture fishing tackle.

When Did the Tackle Business Start?

The 1905 business directory of Canton and Dixfield states that Stanley was "interested in the manufacture of flies and fishing-tackle which he began about the time he was first appointed fish and game commissioner." While

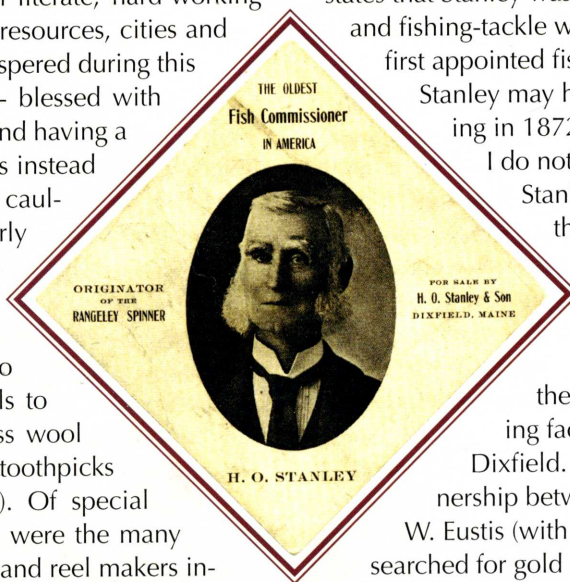
Stanley may have been "interested" in manufacturing in 1872 when first appointed commissioner,

I do not know of any advertisements for Stanley-made tackle from the 1870s and thus it's unlikely that he produced much fishing tackle during this period.

Furthermore, in the 1870s Stanley was exceptionally busy with his new job as commissioner, overseeing the operations of his grist mill and carding factory, and running his general store in Dixfield. This store started in 1856 as a partnership between Stanley and his cousin, Charles

W. Eustis (with whom, from 1852 until 1854, Henry searched for gold in California). In 1866, Stanley bought out Eustis and ran the store until 1885. Today, the 11-foot sign that once hung in front of the store, first reading "Eustis & Stanley" and then painted over to read "Henry O. Stanley," hangs in the lecture hall of the Dixfield Historical Society. A letterhead from an envelope postmarked 1866 shows "fishing tackle" as one featured class of items sold at the general store, located on the town's Main Street.

Possibly, Stanley contracted with local people at this time to make flies and spinners for the general store, thus planting the seeds which eventually evolved into his tackle manufacturing business. In 1880, Stanley was away from home at Moosehead Lake assisting in the construction of a fish hatchery. In his absence, both his grist mill and carding factory, which he had bought two years earlier, caught fire. The machinery in both businesses was destroyed. Tragically, his insurance had expired the previous day. This same year, due to political reasons, Stanley had not been reappointed as commissioner. Apparently lacking enough funds to rebuild his factory and mill, Stanley started a smaller enterprise, the manufacture of fishing lures. Most of the above information came from an article authored by Leroy T. Carleton, published in the March 1908 issue of *Carleton's State of Maine Sportsman's Journal* (hereafter called *Carleton's Journal*). Carleton and Henry Stanley were colleagues and Carleton had known Henry's youngest brother, Frank, since they served together in the Civil War.



The Maine Register, a directory of businesses published yearly, shows that Stanley's tackle manufacturing started in 1880, listing H. O. Stanley from 1880 to 1890 as a manufacturer of "flies & leaders." In 1895, this description changed to "flies & fishing tackle." Three years later Henry's son, George P. Stanley (1868-1955), joined the business which was now called H. O. Stanley & Son. In 1907, George became Manager of the Dixfield Toothpick Factory and around this time Stanley & Son sold the rights to the Rangeley Spinner (The last advertisement I found for Stanley & Son selling Rangeley Spinners was in *Carleton's Journal* dated December 1906). After ceasing production of Rangeleys, perhaps their most profitable product, the Stanleys started making and selling Cupsuptic Spinners. H. O. Stanley & Son at this time was thus also called the Cupsuptic Spinner Company.

How Did the Business Operate?

The 1905 Canton and Dixfield business directory claims that H. O. Stanley & Son, employing a dozen women, "sold 100,000 doz. [Rangeley Spinners] in 1904. These they sell entirely to wholesale dealers, including Iver Johnson and the Lovell Arms Co." [In 1900, Johnson had bought up Lovell]. Twelve times 100,000 is 1.2 million spinners, a large number indeed! Is such a volume of production possible with only a dozen employees? With 260 potential work days in a year (assuming 5 days/52 weeks), and assuming the women worked 250 of these days, this would be a total of 3,000 worker days. Because 1.2 million spinners were claimed to have been made in only a year, each worker would have had to make 400 spinners per day, or 50 spinners per hour (assuming an 8 hour work-day). Because much of the work was hand labor, and these workers had other tasks in addition to making this one type of spinner, is this level of output reasonable? The preceding analysis suggests not.

Both Iver Johnson and John P. Lovell Arms Company started in Massachusetts. These companies were pioneers in the large-scale manufacturing and distribution of sporting goods. Lovell had a large factory in South Portland (and elsewhere) and dealt in firearms, fishing tackle, sporting goods, police equipment, and bicycles. Johnson had a similar product line. Lovell sold to wholesalers as well as operating its own retail stores. Lovell had retail outlets throughout New

England, including stores in Bangor and Portland, Maine. As an aside, an illustration of the massive Lovell factory, and a photograph of the front of their retail store in Portland, were published on page 181 in C. B. Gillespie's *Portland Past and Present* (1899).

In addition to Johnson and Lovell, Stanley lures were known to have been sold by the Davis Arms Company in Portland. H. O. Stanley & Son also sold fishing flies and lures directly to the public, as evident from numerous advertisements. Clearly, anglers throughout Maine and the Northeast had ready access to Stanley lures.

What Did the Business Make?

Arlan Carter, in his book *19th Century Fishing Lures: A Collector's Guide to U.S. Lures Manufactured Prior to 1901*, devotes a page and one-half to Stanley lures. Since publication of Carter's book in 2000, new source material has been found. An 8-page catalog produced and published by H. O. Stanley & Son around 1900 provided previously unknown information about the sizes and other details regarding some of Stanley-produced flies and lures (hereafter called the Catalog). Another new source of information has been a full-page advertisement published in *Carleton's Pathfinder and Gazetteer of the Hunting and Fishing Resorts of the State of Maine*, together with a *Digest of the Laws Pertaining to Inland Fisheries and Game* (1899) (hereafter called *Carleton's Pathfinder*). The book's author, Leroy T. Carleton (1847-1934) was a lawyer in Winthrop, Maine, and a Maine Inland Fisheries and Game Commissioner from 1896 until 1910. Leroy Carleton volunteered for the Civil War, as did Henry's youngest brother, Frank Stanley (1848-1935) when only in his early teens. Leroy Carleton and Frank Stanley served together in the 32nd Maine Infantry, and in their senior years jointly attended Civil War reunions, as documented in newspaper articles with photographs of the two men standing together.

Carleton, as suggested above, also published *Carleton's Journal*. Between June 1906 and May 1910, three advertisements for Stanley lures appeared on the pages of this monthly periodical. More importantly, the full-page H. O. Stanley & Son advertisement in *Carleton's Pathfinder* has detailed drawings of three of the Stanley-produced lures, describes how the lures work, and the varieties available for purchase. Based



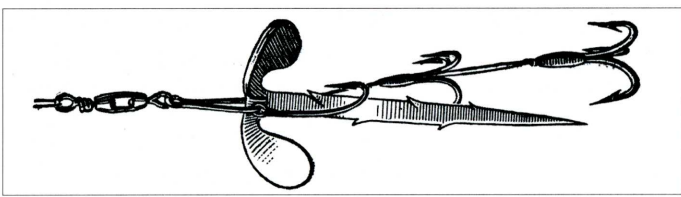
The side (left) and front (right) views of H. O. Stanley & Son's Sporting Goods and Bicycle Shop. The retail shop was located on the west side of Weld Street, one house north of Main Street in Dixfield, Maine. (Photographs courtesy of N. McReynolds.)



A letterhead from an envelope postmarked 1866 shows "fishing tackle" as one featured class of items sold at the general store, located on the town's Main Street.



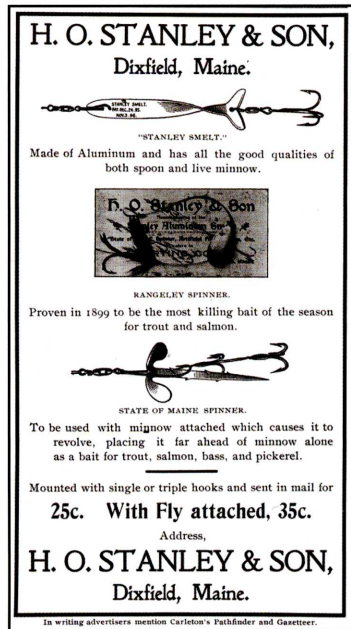
A full-page illustrated description about the Rangeley Spinner being made by Edwards was also published in the Edwards and Walker Fishing Tackle Catalog ca. 1908.



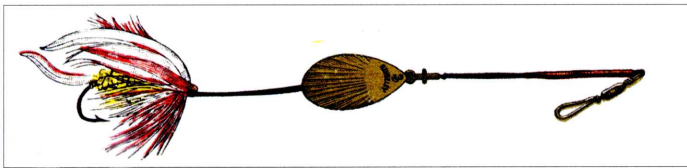
The State of Maine Spinner is unmarked, has an aluminum spike, flat and barbed, with three barbs on each side. Only two sizes were made: 2 1/4" and 2 1/8" in length.



Front cover of the Catalog produced by H. O. Stanley & Son. Because the Stanley photograph first appeared in 1900, this pamphlet was probably published in that year or shortly thereafter. (Catalog from the author's collection.)



This advertisement was page 76 in Carleton's Pathfinder and Gazetteer of the Hunting and Fishing Resorts of the State of Maine. (Author's collection.)



The Catalog claims that the Rangeley Spinner is "Acknowledged by all who have used it to be the most killing bait on the market." The lure has a single, fluted blade that came in gold, silver, or nickel. The spinner was made in four sizes and came equipped with a plain hook (to hold bait) or a fly (Parmarchenee Bell [as above], Toodle Bug, or Jock Scott).



An aluminum bookmark advertising H. O. Stanley & Son, likely made between 1898 and 1913 (Author's collection).

on what we know from the above sources, as well as other period information, the following is a discussion of what is now known about Stanley flies and lures.

Fishing Flies: Initially, Stanley's tackle business focused on making and selling flies and leaders. Without an original, labeled card with flies marked "made by H. O. Stanley & Co.," it's impossible to definitively attribute any early fishing fly to Stanley. I have not seen any Stanley-labeled flies, but they could be out there - so please look carefully in that old tackle box in the back barn! H. O. Stanley & Son produced and sold a variety of flies as advertised on pages 4 and 5 of the Catalog.

In addition to flies, Stanley manufactured four types of spinners. Two of the spinners can be identified by Stanley stamp-marks, discussed below; the other two are not stamped and thus cannot be definitively identified as Stanley products, although one spinner - the State of Maine Spinner - is so distinctive it's unlikely to be misidentified. All four had box versus barrel swivels (characteristic of an early lure) between the lure and the fishing line. The swivel minimized line twisting, which was needed because the four lures were designed for trolling behind a boat.

State of Maine Spinner: The *Carleton's Pathfinder* advertisement states that this lure is "To be used with minnow attached which causes it to revolve, placing it far ahead of minnow alone as a bait for trout, salmon, bass, and pickerel." The lure is similar to the Hardy Spinner and Archer Minnow Harness, both early English lures designed for trolling dead minnows. The State of Maine Spinner is unmarked, but differs from the English minnow rigs in that the spike that goes through the minnow is aluminum, not steel; the spike is flat and barbed, not round and smooth; and the spike and spinner blades are a single unit, not separate. The aluminum barb of a State of Maine Spinner is the same thickness as the Stanley Aluminum Smelt and the spike has six barbs, three on each side. Apparently, only two sizes were made: 2 1/4" and 2 1/2"s in length. An illustration of this spinner was published with the *Carleton's Pathfinders* advertisement.

Rangeley Spinner: This is Stanley's most famous lure. It was used and written about by Fly Rod Crosby and other notables. The Rangeley's fluted blade is distinctive, but not diagnostic because many post-Stanley Rangeley Spinners had similar markings. Because Stanley was the first to manufacture this spinner, he apparently saw no need to stamp his name on the product. A lack of a unique mark makes positive identification of a Stanley Rangeley Spinner problematic.

The Catalog claims that the Rangeley Spinner is "Acknowledged by all who have used it to be the most killing bait on the market." The lure has a single, fluted blade that came in gold, silver, or nickel. The spinner was made in four sizes and came equipped with a plain hook (to hold bait) or a fly (Parmarchenee Bell, Toodle Bug, or Jock Scott). For those interested, descriptions and histories of these flies, two of which were invented in Maine, can be found in Mary Orvis

Marbury's *Favorite Flies and Histories* with Many Replies from Practical Anglers to Inquiries Concerning How, When, and Where to Use Them (1892).

In a 1907 interview of Stanley, the reporter wrote that "The right to manufacture the Rangeley Spinner was transferred to a Mr. Edwards of Deering, Maine..." *The Maine Woods* issue of February 21, 1908, on page one, announced that "The Celebrated Rangeley Spinner" fishing tackle originated by former Fish and Game Commissioner, H. O. Stanley, is now being made by the P. W. Edwards... Manufacturer of Leather and Waterproof Duck Packs, Gun Cases, and Fine Sportsman's Goods." The announcement was followed on March 6, also on page one, with the following advertisement. A full-page, illustrated description about the Rangeley Spinner being made by Edwards was also published in the Edwards and Walker Fishing Tackle Catalog circa 1908. The last advertisement I found for the Edwards Rangeley Spinner appeared on the bottom of page 137 of the 1909 issue of *In The Maine Woods* (published by the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, Bangor, Maine).

Edwards was married to Anna Conant from Canton, Maine, and he lived in Rumford Falls at the time of his marriage in the spring of 1899. Given the proximity of Canton and Rumford Falls to Dixfield, it's likely that Edwards knew Stanley before taking over the manufacturing of the Stanley Rangeley Spinner sometime in 1906-07. In October 1909, Edwards died at the age of 36. Following his death, the Rangeley Spinners were made by a number of manufacturers without crediting Stanley as the inventor.

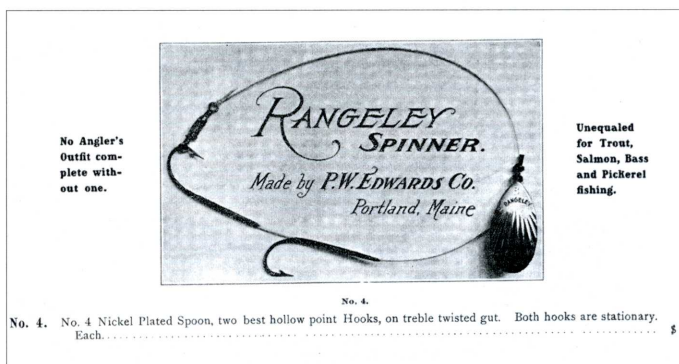
Stanley Aluminum Smelt: As the name suggests, the body of this lure is made of aluminum. Too light to throw with a casting (or spinning) rod, and too heavy to cast with a fly rod, this lure was mostly trolled behind a boat. Stanley himself trolled this lure as documented in an article he authored in the May 29, 1897 issue of *Forest and Stream*: "We found it too early for fly fishing, as the weather thus far has been very cold and the season late, although Mr. Oak succeeded in rising two or three at the outlet. We caught our fish by trolling with the Stanley Smelt - we could not get them with anything else. At Moosehead and Sebec [lakes] Messrs. Oaks, Carleton, and myself ran two rods each - one baited with Stanley smelt, Sebago pattern, the other with live minnow. Every strike we had was on the smelt." Charles E. Oak, Leroy T. Carleton, and Henry O. Stanley served together as the three Maine Inland Fisheries and Game Commissioners, 1896-1901.

The first patent date for the Stanley Smelt (Dec. 24, 1895) is co-assigned to L. Dana Chapman of Brookline, Massachusetts. Chapman is included on the earliest advertisement I found for a Stanley lure. This advertisement was published during the spring and summer of 1895 in *Forest and Stream*.

Chapman was a salesperson for Dame, Stoddard, & Kendall, a large sporting goods dealer in Boston, Massachusetts. The sales of the Stanley Smelt, however, were apparently independent of his employer. He was also an avid angler and an active member of the Megantic Fish and Game Club in western Maine. Chapman served as the club's secretary-trea-



Stanley Rangeley Spinners were sold in at least two different kinds of boxes. The upper was produced first, and the lower box was made later, circa 1907-1909. These boxes are approximately 7 3/8" by 2 1/8". (Photographs courtesy of J. Knapp [upper] and D. Leroux [lower].)



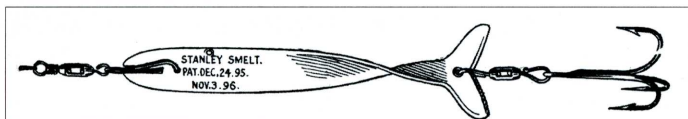
The Edwards & Walker Company's Fishing Tackle Catalog (circa 1908) (dealers in sporting goods and wholesale hardware), Portland, Maine, devoted a page and one-half to post-Stanley Rangeley Spinners. (Author's collection.)

THE STANLEY SMELT.

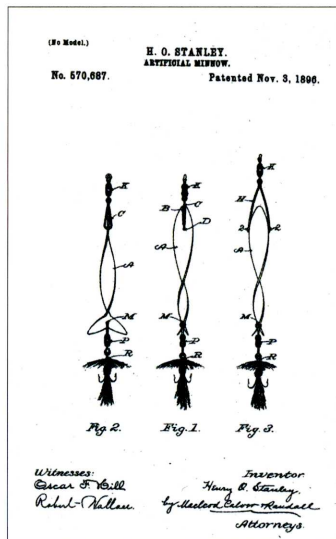
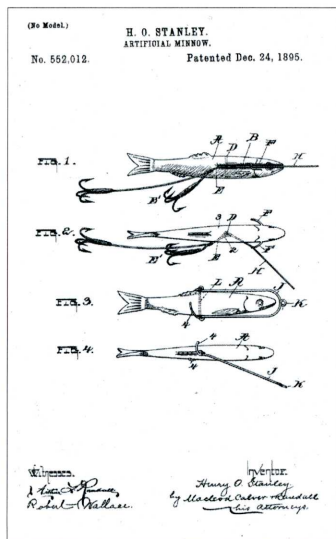
(Invented by Fish Commissioner Henry O. Stanley, of Dixfield, Me.)

Has proved a successful bait for
BLACK BASS,
LAND LOCKED SALMON, TROUT and PICKEREL.
Is the Most Natural Artificial Bait.
 Made of solid aluminum.
 No. 1, large, 75 cents. No. 2, small, 65 cents.
 The line, as shown by cut, draws from a pin near the center, and the bait darts from side to-side as the bars at the head of bait allow.
 Manufactured and sold by
STANLEY & CHAPMAN,
 P. O. Box 1390, - - Boston, Mass.
 Sent, postpaid, on receipt of price.

Chapman was a salesperson for Dame, Stoddard, & Kendall. The sales of the Stanley Smelt, however, were apparently independent of his employer. He sold his rights to the 1895 patent to Stanley, and his name no longer appeared on advertisement for the lure.



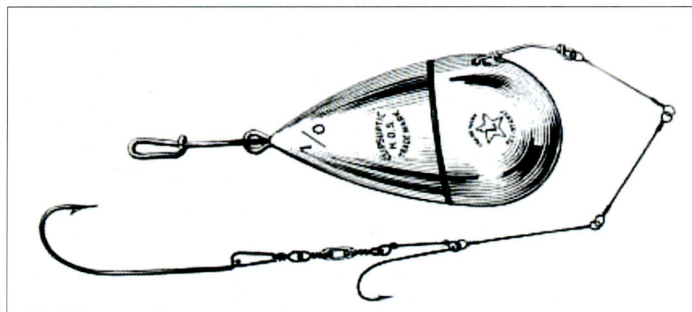
A drawing of the Stanley Smelt from Cartleton's Pathfinder, stamped with two patent dates: Dec. 24, 1895 and Nov. 3, 1896. Both patents were for the artificial minnow."



Drawings that H. O. Stanley used in the two patents for the "artificial minnow." These patents were the basis for the Stanley Aluminum Smelt. (Drawings from the website of the U.S. Patent Office, Washington, D.C.)



The Stanley Aluminum Smelt with a plain hook (left, top, in the box) and another equipped with a fly (bottom). The notch at the front of the lure would allow the lure to dart back and forth. The original Smelt in this box would have had one patent date, suggesting that the lure was made after December 1895 (date of first patent) and before November 1896 (second patent date). (Photograph courtesy of A. Carter.) The right illustration is a close-up of the box swivel connecting the hook to the Smelt's body. The small, sharply pointed hooks at both ends of the swivel (both open in this example) are unique to original Stanley Aluminum Smelts. (Author's collection.)



The Cupsuptic was a fairly large, heavy single-bladed spinner designed to fish subsurface, and was made in three sizes, all ranging from 1-2" wide by 2-3" long.

surer and was one of the directors of their hatchery program. At the end of August 1896, Chapman sold his rights to the 1895 patent to Stanley, and his name no longer appeared on advertisement for the lure.

The Stanley Aluminum Smelt was not only known in Maine. Albert Nelson Cheney (1847-1901), the New York State Fish Culturist, published in *Forest and Stream* on March 21, 1896, under the heading of "Aluminum Smelt," the following: "Fish Commissioner Henry O. Stanley of Maine, has sent me an artificial bait for landlocked salmon. It is called the aluminum smelt bait, and is light, strong and very attractive, so much so that it must prove to be a killing bait for other fish than landlocked salmon. The hooks are at the tail of the metal smelt, and for this reason should be a good black bass and lake trout bait, as both fish are quite apt to strike the tail of a bait rather than the head."

While a number of advertisements (Carter 2000, p. 247D; Wm. Mills Catalog 1909, p. 78) state that the Stanley Smelt was made in 4 sizes (2 1/4", 2 3/4", 3 1/4", & 3 3/4" in length), information provided to me by 7 collectors about 23 Stanley Smelts revealed 8 sizes ranging from 1 1/4" to 3 3/4" with the 4 sizes first mentioned most common. Of the 23 Smelts examined, one had only the first patent date and, one had no patent date, and the remaining lures were stamped with both patent dates. Stanley Smelt come equipped with a treble hook, either plain or dressed with feathers (e.g., the Sebago pattern mentioned above), and very rarely can be found in a box.

Stanley Cupsuptic Spinner: Wells Sporting Goods from Auburn, Maine, declared in an advertisement on April 15, 1911 in the *Lewiston Saturday Journal* that anglers should "Try a Stanley Cupsuptic Spinner the next time you are going where live bait is hard to get. You won't need live bait. "The Cupsuptic is a fairly large, heavy single-bladed spinner designed to fish subsurface, and was made in three sizes, all ranging from 1-2 inches wide by 2-3 inches long. The H.O.S. Cupsuptic Spinner was sold in a box and production of this spinner presumably started around the time Stanley ceased making Rangeley Spinners. The Cupsuptic Spinner was invented by Stanley and manufactured for H. O. Stanley & Son by William T. J. Lowe of Buffalo, New York. The Stanley Cupsuptic carried the a large "L" in a star on the bottom section of the blade (is the trademark of W. T. J. Lowe Co.); the upper half of the blade stamped "CUPSUPTIC/ H.O.S./ TRADEMARK" (Fig. 13); this stamping is absent in later Cupsuptic Spinners that Lowe produced and sold under only his name.

Two versions of the Stanley Cupsuptic Spinners were made at different times, and they can be distinguished based on their shafts. The earliest has an attachment loop only on the upper end of the shaft and functions only as a wobbler. This Original Stanley Cupsuptic was made from 1907-08 (after the rights to the Rangeley Spinner were sold) to February 1910. The New Stanley Cupsuptic Spinner was made from March 1910 (first advertisement for this lure) to around 1915 (when Frank Stanley ceased operations). The final version of the spinner had attachment loops on both ends of the shaft, permitting this lure to function both as a as a wobbler as a true spinner.

Stated another way, the New Stanley Cupsuptic worked both as a wobbler and a spinner depending on where the hook harness was attached (i.e., attached to blade = wobbler; attached to lower part of shaft = in-line spinner). I know of only 17 Stanley Cupsuptic Spinners in the hands of seven collectors, with approximately 64 percent of these spinners with shafts being of the original design.

H. O. Stanley & Son ran in *Carleton's State of Maine Sportsman's Journal* an advertisement simply entitled "Cupsuptic Spinner" from June 1909 to February 1910. As mentioned, after the Stanley's ceased making the Cupsuptic Spinner, W. T. J. Lowe continued making the Cupsuptic Spinner without any reference to Stanley. Apparently, Lowe even made for a short time the version with two attachment sites for the hook harness as shown in the photograph of a Lowe Cupsuptic Spinner in the lower right corner on page 115 of Carter's book.

When Did the Tackle Business End?

Henry Stanley had been in poor health since his 1905 retirement as commissioner, and after a brief illness died at his Dixfield home in January 1913. The tackle store had been sold to Almon Stockbridge years earlier, about the time Stanley retired. Stockbridge immediately reopened the business as a hardware store on the east side of Weld Street. Shortly after Henry's death the *Franklin Journal* announced that "Mr. [Frank] Stanley will take over the business of his brother, the late Hon. Henry O. Stanley of Dixfield and continue it. It is known as the Cupsuptic Spinner Company and manufactures several different kinds of fishing spinners, among them the famous Rangeley." The statement regarding the Rangeley Spinner may be in error because as noted above, Henry had transferred his rights to this spinner six years earlier following the selling of his tackle store. However, if someone has a Rangeley Spinner box or card that reads "made by Frank Stanley" (as is the case for the Stanley Cupsuptic Spinner), then we know differently. George stayed involved in the business until his father's death in 1913, when Stanley & Son ceased and Frank Stanley took over the Cupsuptic Spinner Company. Two years after Henry O. Stanley's death, in 1915,



The H.O.S. (Henry O. Stanley) Cupsuptic Spinner with an original box. One box has also been found labeled "FRANK STANLEY / 'CUPSUPTIC SPINNER' / DIXFIELD, ME." Boxes that Stanley Cupsuptic Spinner came in are approximately 3 3/8 X 1 3/4 in. (Photograph courtesy of A. Carter.)

TRY THE New Cupsuptic Spinner

The Best ever placed on the market for
SALMON, TOGUE, TROUT, Etc,

Very durable---Great Bait for
SEBAGO SALMON

Price 75c by mail, postpaid. If not
satisfactory will refund the money

H. O. STANLEY and SON
DIXFIELD, MAINE

An ad for the "New Cupsuptic Spinner in Carleton's State of Maine Sportsman's Journal in 1910.



Close-up of the blade from a H.O.S. (Henry O. Stanley) Cupsuptic Spinner. Note the characteristic hole in the lower half of the blade (on the right side), the Stanley mark at the top of the blade, and the W.T.L. Lowe Company trademark on the bottom half of the blade. (Photograph courtesy of J. Knapp.)



The H.O.S. (Henry O. Stanley) Cupsuptic Spinner was made in two versions that can be identified by the different shafts. The shaft in the upper photograph was the "Original" H.O.S. Cupsuptic. In the "New" H.O.S. Cupsuptic Spinner (lower photograph), the hook harness could be attached to the lower end of the shaft as well as to the hole in the blade. (Author's collection.)



Henry O. Stanley, on the right, with his fishing tackle, standing on a dock in front of the Mooselookmeguntic House, Haines Landing, Maine. Theodore L. Page is on the left. (Photograph courtesy of the Maine State Museum.)



George Page Stanley joined his father in 1898 to form H. O. Stanley & Son. (Photograph courtesy of N. McReynolds.)

William T. J. Lowe died. While Frank Stanley continued selling Cupsuptic Spinners under his own name after Henry's death, I doubt that Frank continued the tackle business for long. Frank Stanley was now in his late 60s and was a successful businessman. During this later period of his life he was also active in various civic affairs, including town selectman and serving two terms in the Maine legislature. In 1916, the rights to the Lowe trademark went to Enterprise Manufacturing Company, better known as Pflueger. I found no evidence that Frank Stanley and Pflueger had any kind of working arrangement to produce Cupsuptic Spinners.

Closing Comments

There are still unanswered questions surrounding the tackle business of Henry O. Stanley. For example, yet to be located are hand-tied flies that can be definitively attributed to H.O. Stanley, and a complete set of the State of Maine Spinners to document the range of sizes in which these lures were made. So keep looking - there are more Stanley tackle artifacts to be discovered. Also, because of the strong similarities between the Stanley and Lowe Cupsuptic spinners, there must be other Stanley Cupsuptic Spinners in the hands of collectors that have simply been misidentified as Lowe Cupsuptics - so look closely.

So Finally, the Dixfield Historical Society owns stationery, dated "190_", from a Dixfield hardware retailer that reads: "GUY O. GARDNER / Successor to H. O. STANLEY & SON / MANUFACTURER OF / "The Rangeley Spinner" / ARTIFICIAL FLIES, LEADERS, ETC." Because Stanley sold the building where his business was located, as well as the rights to the Rangeley Spinner, exactly what Gardner meant by "successor" is unclear. Perhaps Gardner bought out the remaining stock of H. O. Stanley & Son, and after the death of Phillip Edwards (the real successor to Stanley's Rangeley Spinner) started making Rangeley Spinners, as did many other fishing tackle manufacturers.

Conclusions and Acknowledgments

Henry O. Stanley has long been known to fishing lure collectors as the inventor of the Stanley Aluminum Smelt and the Rangeley Spinner. Largely unacknowledged prior to this article, and deserving of more general recognition, is that Stanley also invented the State of Maine Spinner (a very rare lure) and the Cupsuptic Spinner (later mass produced and made famous by W.T.J. Lowe of Buffalo, New York). 🐟

This article would not have been possible if we were not for the help of others. I wish to thank the following individuals for providing information and materials used in this article: Arlan Carter, Dwight Demerit, Ron Goddard, Jim Hanlon, Jeff Knapp, Dan Leroux, Bob Stewart, Peter Stowell, Nancy McReynolds, and the Maine State Museum. Jeff Knapp, Ellen Krohn, and Peter Stowell reviewed earlier versions of this article. A special thanks is due to Lorne Hirsch, who agreed to share via the following addendum, the story of how and when he discovered Henry O. Stanley's personal fishing tackle which was still relatively intact 100 years after Stanley's death.