

OSPREY FLY BOX

CALIFORNIA COACHMAN

contributed by
Lois McNeil

Summer holidays in Nelson always began with a visit to the local tackle shop. Dad would sit chatting with the fellow for about an hour before loading up with several copies of his favorite fly, three youngsters in tow, and umpteen stories about how some of the local hot spots had fared over the summer.

After our traditional visit to the local soda shop and then back to the house to pick up my Mom and little sister, we were off to fish the West Arm of Kootenay Lake.

After a long drive, a ferry ride across the Arm and another drive thru MANY cow pastures, we arrived. The Arm, which looked and acted more like a river, was a wondrous site to a 7 year old. A beach line full of boulders, two creeks to build fish ponds in, tons of gophers to chase, shallows brimming with minnows and periwinkles, and ALWAYS... an almost constant sound of splashes and slurps from feeding trout.

Mom would set-up day camp, Dad would set-up the rods, my brothers would be digging out slingshots and BB guns, my sister would be sulking (she didn't enjoy any of this) and I would be trapping minnows in the creek or catching grasshoppers. After all was said and done (and life jackets donned of course), we dispersed.

Mom always took the big bay below the creek mouth (I think to keep my sister out of trouble), my brothers fished up current from that stream, and Dad always started me out at the point to fish with him. We fished with torpedo bubbles back then, a 4-5 foot leader and that special fly. I know it's not "fly-fishing" but it was effective, it was on a fly, and it was an easy thing for a young fly fisher to start out on.

Your cast would be up current... letting it drift down past you

and usually, if something was going to hit ... it would pick up the fly as it started to wake.



*Dad's Favourite
The California Coachman*

WOW ... each take was electrifying; no matter if it was your first or your tenth. And could these fish ever run and JUMP!! Many knees were skinned and bruises born from having to chase them downstream (over all of those boulders) just to avoid being spooled. At the end of the day, we would return to my Grandmother's house with four kids asleep in the backseat and several fish in the cooler. All ranging between 3 to 5 pounds with more than the occasional 7 pound Girard thrown in for good measure. I was hooked !

To this day... when fishing that magical spot, though the shoreline and creeks have changed from flooding and flow, we still find the fish. All on that magical little fly called the "California Coachman".

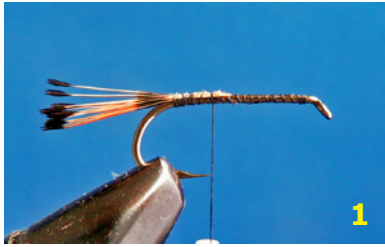
MATERIALS



- Hook: Dry Fly - Mustad 94840 or equivalent
Size: #8 to #12
- Thread: Black
- Tail: Golden Pheasant Tippet
- Body: Peacock Herl & Yellow/Orange Floss
- Hackle: Yellow/Orange Hackle

TYING INSTRUCTIONS & PHOTOGRAPHY

by Peter Chatt



Debarb the hook.
Lay down a thread base.
Tie in the golden pheasant tippet tail.



Tie on two or three peacock herl and wrap rear third of hook.
Tie off and tie down the herl flat for the next third.
Tie in the golden floss and wrap the center third with the floss.
Tie off and clip the excess floss.



Wrap the front third of the hook with herl.
Tie off and clip the excess herl.
Tie in the Yellow/Orange hackle and wrap.
Tie off and clip the excess.



Tie in the white Duck feather to one side.

The Finished Fly



California Coachman

Tie in the second duck feather on the other side.
Secure with several wraps and clip excess.
Form a thread head, whip finish and add a drop of head cement.