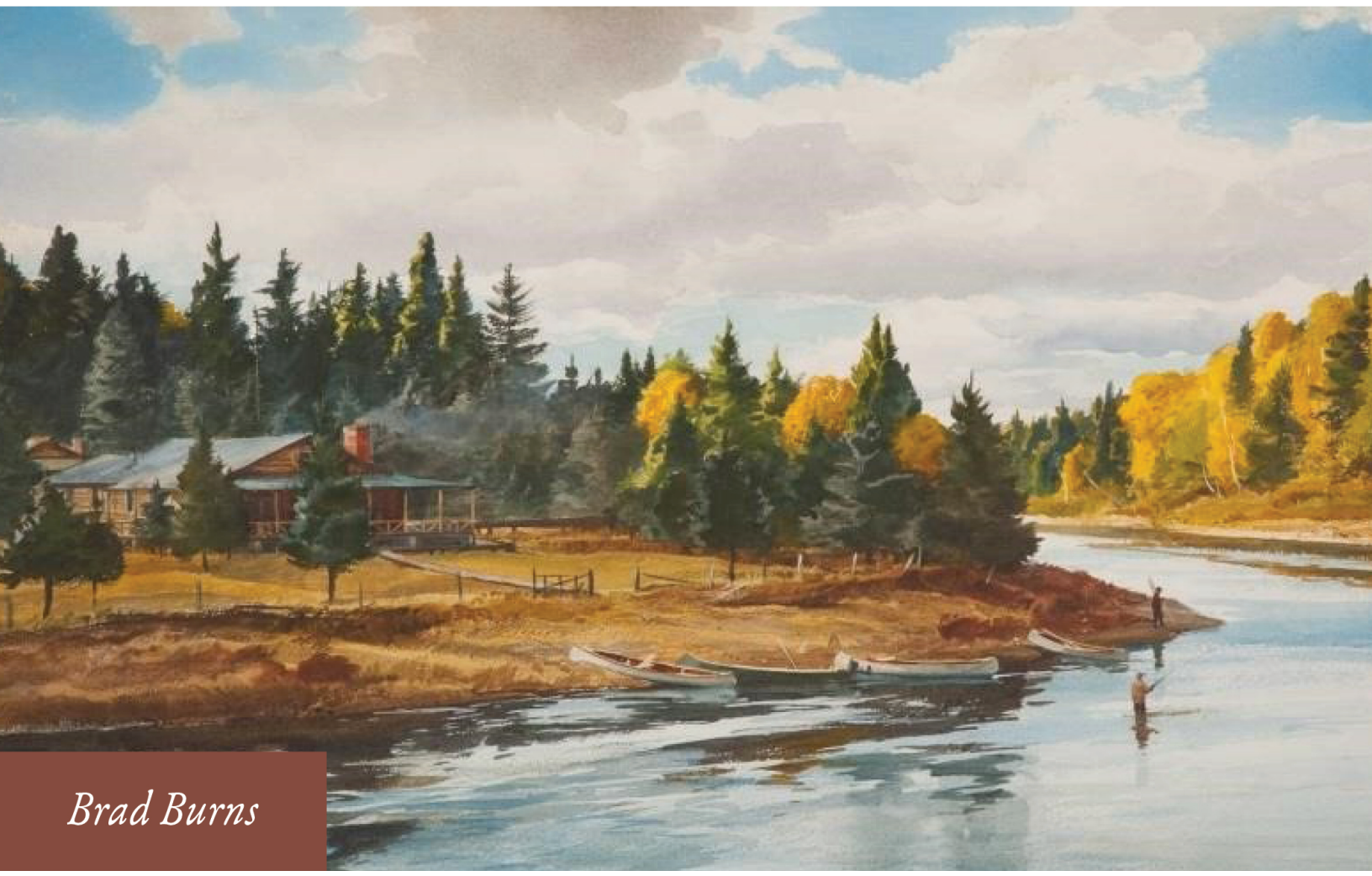


ON THE CAINS

*Atlantic Salmon
& Sea-Run
Brook Trout on
the Miramichi's
Greatest Tributary*



Brad Burns

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Beyond its fish-producing powers, there are other attractions to the Cains that lure fishermen. The greatest of these attractions is that, even compared to the relatively rural makeup of the Miramichi Valley, the Cains provides fishermen with a real feeling of wilderness. I hear the reverence in the voices of the local men when they speak of the Cains. “Where’d you get your moose, Johnny?” “Shot him at the end of that big woods road that goes nor’east on the way to Shinnickburn, over on Cains River.” To those who know it, the words “Cains River” do not simply mean a river; they mean a piece of old New Brunswick, an area still largely untouched, where one can find beauty, quiet, and relative solitude.

In the 1905 *Bulletin of the Natural History Society of New Brunswick Number XXII Volume 5, Part II*, University of New Brunswick professor and naturalist Joseph Whitman Bailey said that there were then three great wilderness areas left in New Brunswick: the Great New Brunswick Wilderness, running to the north of the Miramichi that extended off into

Quebec, was the largest; the smaller of the three, called the Head of Canaan River, lies well to the southeast of the Miramichi; and sandwiched in between them is the second largest, called the Cains River Wilderness.

In 1905, the 1,500-square-mile Cains River Wilderness area reached to within two miles of the City of Fredericton. Bailey said that to achieve this wilderness designation the regions must have no railways, no roads—other than used by lumbermen—and no permanent human habitations. Even today, most of the Cains River area still qualifies. Throughout its 70 odd miles of flowing river and an additional 15 miles of boggy headwaters, there is still no year-round human inhabitant. The 1905 map of the area showed the exclusion of a small tongue of land that started at the mouth of the Cains, ran narrowly along the river, and extended for barely a couple of miles beyond Muzzeroll Brook. It appears that the old Arbeau farm near the point of the Indian portage to the Gaspereau and Saint John—about 25 miles upriver from the mouth—was as far upriver as any

ANGLING STATISTICS - N. B. ATLANTIC SALMON RIVERS							
These angling statistics have been prepared to better acquaint you with world famous New Brunswick salmon angling. Much of this information has been made available through CONSCIENTIOUS ANGLERS who submitted their angling reports on the reverse side of their fishing licences. You too can provide a valuable service to salmon conservation by reporting accurately your angling success on your licence's SALMON KILL RECORD. Your information provides a fundamental need in salmon management and research to determine Atlantic salmon catches and angler success. YOUR COOPERATION MEANS ATLANTIC SALMON CONSERVATION!							
New Brunswick Atlantic Salmon rivers	Popularity of the River: (Percent of Total Salmon Angling Trips Made)	1967-A Good Catch Year Black Salmon	Bright Salmon	1968-A Poor Catch Year* Black Salmon	Bright Salmon	Peak Angling Periods Black Salmon	Bright Salmon
1. Southwest Miramichi	52%	10,422	34,280	9,228	11,356	April 15- May 7	July 5- August 7 September 8- September 30
2. Little Southwest Miramichi	8%	2,520	3,675	738	4,282	April 15- May 7	July 1- August 15 September 1- September 15
3. Restigouche	7%	0	1,619	0	1,025	No Angling	June 5- July 31
4. Cains	6%	480	6,480	660	284	April 15- May 7	September 20- October 15
5. Northwest Miramichi	6%	1,500	2,325	465	1,168	April 15- May 7	September 8- September 30
6. Big Salmon	6%	0	999	0	541	No Angling	July 1- October 15
7. Renous-Dungarvon	4%	617	1,009	340	1,942	April 15- May 7	July 1-July 31 Sept 15-Oct 15 (Renous only) Sept 5-Sept 15 (Dungarvon only)
8. Petitcodiac	2%	460	738	231	4	April 15- May 7	September 15- October 15
9. Nashwaak	2%	117	115	0	248	April 15- May 7	July 7-July 31 September 15- October 15
10. Alma	1%	0	211	0	363	No Angling	July 15-Sept 15
Other Salmon Rivers	6%						
* Very Low Water Conditions							

This illustration from the Fishing Guide produced by the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources reveals some amazing statistics for the 1967 and 1968 salmon catches in various New Brunswick Rivers, including the Cains. Note the difference in catches between these famous rivers during each year depending on water conditions, as further explained in the text. The Cains can be not only the most productive Miramichi tributary, but by itself, it can produce more salmon than any of the famous Gaspé salmon rivers.

GREAT NEW B



RUNSWICK WILDERNESS





Guide Jason Curtis with a Cains River hookbill and angler Bill Utley with a big hen salmon. The hen came from the deep Mahoney Pool, while the cockfish was waiting beside a boulder in the narrow run in front of the camp.

Even though the attempts at settling the river eventually failed, there is a silver lining. Except for a very few sporting camps located on the handful of original Crown grants, the river is completely owned by the government, and well over 95 percent is public fishing water. There have been a handful of Crown leases made for the purpose of building camps, but even on these, there is a substantial set back from the river

required, and the public has complete access to the shoreland and fishing.

In my research for this book, I found many photographs of fishing and canoe travel along the Cains dating from the very early 1900s. When one passes down the Cains today, the views are essentially the same as then. There aren't many reasonably accessible places left today about which that can be said.

CHAPTER 1

The Source of the Cains River

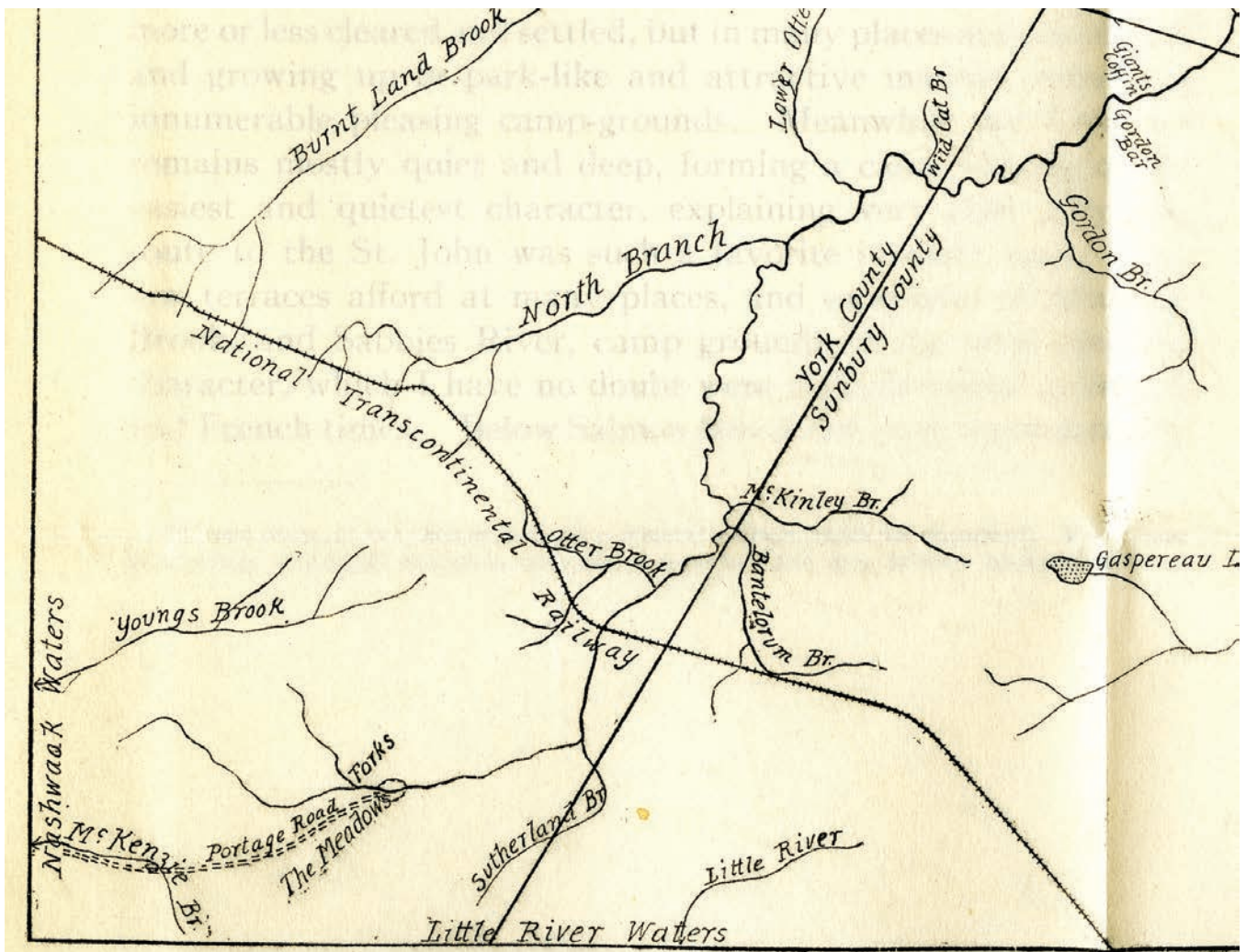
In early May of 2018, the photographer Alex Leslie, fishing outfitter Keith Wilson, and the author stood on the south bank of the Cains River a few yards upriver from its junction with the North Branch. At this point, we were approximately 53 miles up the Cains River from where it flows into the Miramichi. One could never get this far upriver under power except in the high flows of the spring freshet. Above and below here lies a marvelous, vast network of brooks and streams that, along with the main stem of the Cains itself, provides incredible spawning and nursery habitat for Atlantic Salmon and sea-run Brook Trout.

I've always been intrigued by the idea of the source or physical beginning of a river, the place far back in the upland where a mighty river first collects enough seeps and rivulets to be worthy of its name. In *Highland River*, Neil Gunn, a Scottish author, writing about his own life through a character named

Kenn, walked for miles up his native Dunbeath River, past the private salmon waters of the estate near where he lived as a boy and watched the river grow smaller as he went upstream. He continued up into the hill country and, eventually, came to a place where the small burn that the river had become actually flowed right out of the ground. Was this, though, the source? He walked further up the hill and found where the stream again flowed along the surface, and then came again from out of the ground. This repeated itself several times, with each iteration of the stream being somewhat smaller, until finally, a short way from the top of the hill, from a little pocket in the rocky ground, the stream barely oozed to the surface even though the longest stick Kenn could find would not touch the bottom of the inky black hole from which the water emerged. No trace of the stream could be found above that point on the hill.



The Cains has captured the imagination of anglers from far and near for well over 100 years. Standing here on this spring day, my mind's eye can instantly travel back to the dawn of the twentieth century and see the Chestnut canoes of Harry Allen's outfitting business, loaded with provisions and wealthy sports gliding down the river in front of me. Strong, confident, young guides are poling the boats, anticipating encounters with big salmon or brook trout and perhaps the glimpse of a moose, caribou, or black bear. This book is the story of the Cains River: its fish, fishing pools, camps and lodges, and the men who spent their lives guiding and outfitting on its waters.



W. F. Ganong's map from 1910, cropped to show the Cains River headwaters and their proximity to the tributaries of the Nashwaak River and, thus, the Saint John River. As explained in the text of this chapter, the vast networks of brooks and streams that are the beginnings of all the rivers of New Brunswick interlock with each other in many locations. The exact point at which an area of ground changes the direction of its drainage from one watershed to another can be very indistinct, even though the final destination of each respective flow to the sea can be more than a hundred miles apart. GANONG'S MAP SUPPLIED COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

beginnings of an equally small tributary of Young's Brook that runs in the opposite direction. From the point where the two streams emerge and flow in opposite directions, it is about nine more miles to the west before Young's Brook empties into the Nashawaak River—a tributary of the mighty Saint John River. Within that 1,800-foot-wide no-man's bog, it is a toss-up as to whether the ground belongs to the Saint John watershed or that of the Cains River and, therefore, the Miramichi.

Other nearby tributaries of the Cains are interlaced with still more brooks and bogs that feed instead into the Little and Gaspereau Rivers. These two rivers flow off in somewhat different directions, but eventually, they both turn south, emptying into Grand Lake, and via the Jemseg on into the Saint John River, eventually reaching the Bay of Fundy. The Cains, on the other hand, flows northeast, merges with the Miramichi, and ends up entering the Atlantic on New Brunswick's

Northumberland Shore, more or less parallel with the northern tip of Prince Edward Island. Thus, raindrops falling within feet or even mere inches of each other eventually end up in the ocean on opposite sides of the Province some 140 miles apart as the crow flies—approximately 690 miles by water, even using the Canso Canal shortcut to eliminate the log route out around Cape Breton.

The North Branch of the Cains doesn't make it quite as far west as the South Branch and begins its journey from a point about six miles north-northeast of the Cains River's source described in the last paragraph and eight miles from the town of McGivney located due north on Route 8. The North Branch's tentacles intermingle with those of West Burntland Brook, a branch that, eventually, becomes the lively Burntland Brook that fisherman headed for the Miramichi drive across when on Route 8 in Boiestown. Burntland Brook is often our

CHAPTER 2

Cains River Biology, Atlantic Salmon, and Brook Trout

While the Cains River has very few areas that approach rapids status, it is also without the broad, slow areas found here and there in the lower portions of the Miramichi. In periods of low flow, some of the deeper pools do become slow, but even these pick up to a good fishing pace with a modest raise of water. On the other hand, the river quickly shrugs off all but the most extreme raises of water, clearing up and dropping to a reasonable flow level. In short, the Cains is a river of consistently moderate flows.

Since the Cains winds through an area of sandstone ledges, there are some pools found over the entire length of the river

that are at least, in part, solid ledge bottomed. But still, the most common bottom for the Cains River is gravel. An actual mud or sand bottom is rare and usually just occurs in small pockets. Round pebbles or rocks up to one inch in diameter can handle about 0.75 meters per second in flow before becoming mobile, while coarse gravel with some cobblestone-sized pieces can withstand about 1.2 meters per second. Having had pool enhancement work done on the Cains and the southwest Miramichi, I have found that very few places attain current speeds of over 1.2 meter per second except in spate conditions. This means that there are very few places along



A stretch of river located just downstream from the author's camp at Mahoney Brook on the Cains. I have observed recently made redds and salmon spawning there in the fall of 2017. The basic bottom structure and pace of current flow in this area about four miles upriver of Shinnickburn is very similar to the area between Sabbies River and Salmon Brook where the Miramichi Salmon Association noted, in their 2007 research entitled *Spawning Survey during the Season Extension—Mouth of Sabbies River to the mouth of Salmon Brook*, they reported locating approximately 100 redds during the spawning period that year.

had ever seen. Some of these were more than three feet thick and twenty or thirty feet long. The cakes were laying all over a big grassy plain on one side of the river, here and there stacked up two and three deep, and on the other side where the banking came steeply down to the river, some were pushed right up into the trees. They must have simply smashed and broken their way into the forest. Jason said a big jam had been reported there during ice out. The brooks, though, are not subjected to this sort of destruction, and redds made in their relatively gentle confines have an excellent chance of successfully producing young salmon.

SIZE AND TIMING OF THE CAINS RIVER RUN

One thing that I've heard asked many times is "What is the size of the Cains River salmon run?" I'm not aware of anyone trying to make an official estimate of this number, but we can make some reasonably intelligent guesses that should put us in the ballpark.

In a September 1997 article by Philip Lee written for the Competitive Enterprise Institute based in Washington, DC, William K. Hooper, then a senior biologist for the New Brunswick Government, is quoted as saying this about the historical production of the Miramichi River system: "There were big years in the 1920s and 1930s. I wouldn't be surprised if the river was producing a million fish. . . . People have forgotten what fish abundance really was like." According to Hooper, the Miramichi experienced its last great run in 1967, and the total run was somewhere upwards of 600,000 fish.

Let's look again at the 1967 salmon run, which had a rod catch for the entire Miramichi system of 47,769 salmon and grilse. The estimate for the Cains catch for that year was 6,480, or 13.6 percent of the catch for the total Miramichi River system. Now, admittedly, that was a barn-burner year, but if Hooper was correct, and the run was 600,000 or more fish, than the Cains River alone, with 13.6 percent of the fish caught, should logically have hosted 13.6 percent of the run, or 81,600 salmon and grilse—a mind-boggling number. Another good reality check of the 13.6 percent number is that the spawning habitat of the Cains River was calculated in that 1983 survey to be 12.7 percent of the entire Miramichi system. The numbers 13.6 and 12.7 are very similar values.

In 1968, the overall run was thought to be much smaller, and the total rod catch on the Miramichi slumped to an estimated 19,032. Of those 19,032, the Cains produced an unbelievably low 284 bright fish, or just 1.5 percent of the total for the system! How could this be? I'm going to compare the conditions during both 1967 and 1968 in detail later, but it is certain that at least a fair amount of fish came into the Cains to spawn with raises of water after the season had closed. It is also true that the Cains, just like the Miramichi itself, went into a decline during the late 1960s and early 1970s from which it has never fully recovered. Here are some statistics on the Cains River catch that

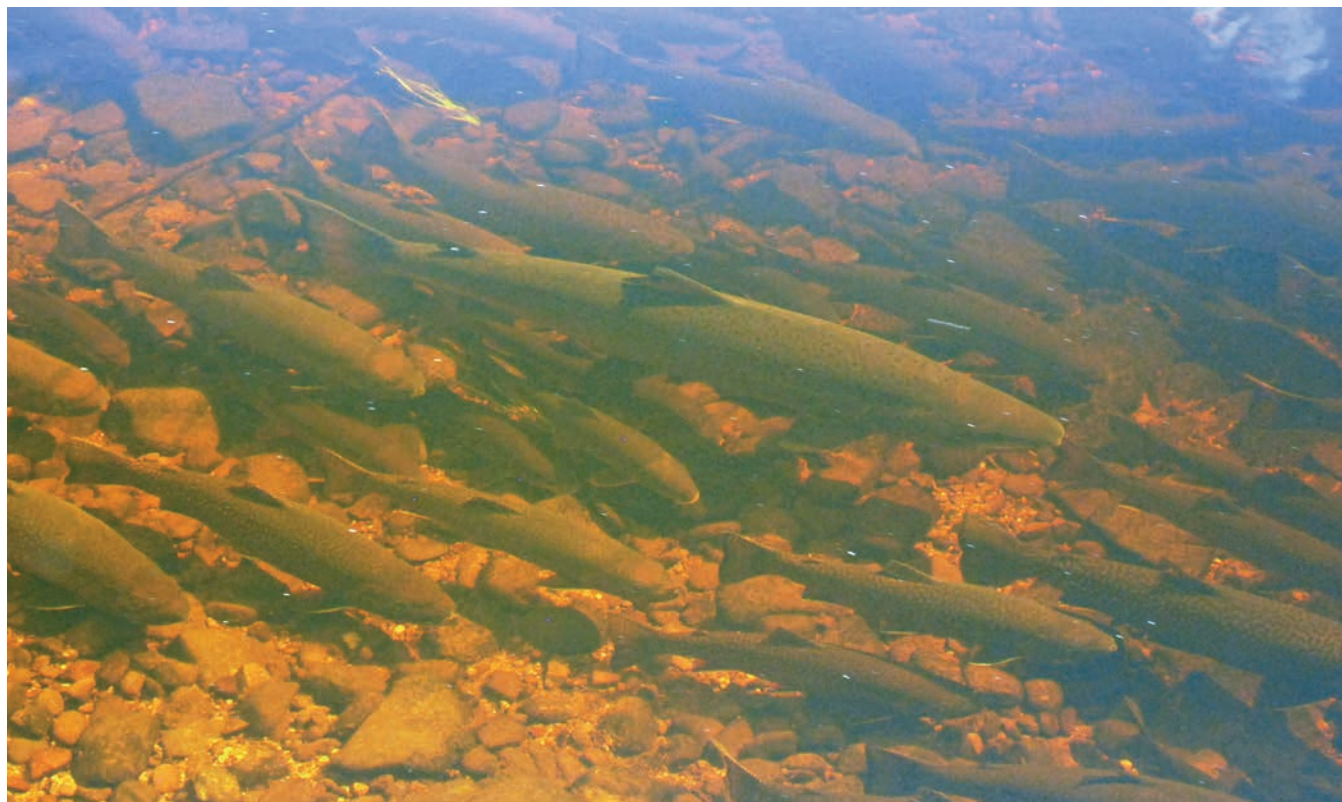
were provided in a 1976 Angling Survey of the Cains River by New Brunswick Department of Fisheries and the Environment.

NUMBER OF BRIGHT SALMON CAUGHT			
Year	Grilse	Large salmon	Totals
1970	258	49	307
1971	1 no data available for 1971		
1972	1,135	425	1,560
1973	150	103	253
1974	246	162	408
1975	22	8	30
1976	101	124	225

No statistics were available for 1971. While the catch in none of these years approaches the 1967 catch, the extreme variability that we saw between 1967 and 1968 shows itself to be not all that unusual as illustrated by the rod catch of 1,560 salmon and grilse in 1972 and only 30 in 1975. Another table of statistics for the Cains River that I found continued until 1994 and averaged less than 500 rod-caught bright fish annually.

These days, the Miramichi system has a run of about 40,000 fish, though it is quite variable, and years like the 100,000 or so that came in 2011 are still possible. The first full season was in 2011, which was after I had acquired the Mahoney Brook camp. We caught 15 salmon and grilse there in the last week and a half of the season while learning the water, and I know that Black Brook landed more than a hundred fish on their Admiral Pool water. There were many more also caught at Brophy's, Buttermilk, Salmon Brook, Sabbies, Moore's Pool, Six Mile, and Doctor's Island. This says nothing about all the water along the river that is not as well known, and it also says nothing of those caught in the upper-river pools where most of the run is heading to spawn. I'm confident that the rod catch in 2011 was in excess of 1,500 fish and very likely well over 2,000.

If we look at 1967 and logically deduce that the Cains caught 13.6 percent of the run because 13.6 percent of the fish went up the Cains and then use 40,000 fish as the size of the current run, you get an estimated run of 5,440 salmon and grilse just in the Cains. The next year, 1.5 percent would only give us 600 fish. That might be accurate for the fish that came in during the season, but it is safe to assume that many more came in after the season had ended. Therefore, the run is probably somewhere near the larger of those two numbers. I've also heard others throw around a figure of 5,000 salmon before for the Cains, and while I don't know how others estimated it in the past, that number certainly sounds reasonable to me based on the evidence that I have just presented. Just to put that in perspective, 5,000 in the Cains compares to about the same sized run as typically found in the Gaspé Peninsula's very famous Cascapédia River.



Note this large, solitary salmon in the upper center holding amidst this aggregation of bragging-size sea-run brookies at a cold-water source in the upper Cains River. The location of this pool is roughly 70 miles from the sea. Research by Nathan Wilbur showed quite conclusively that very few adult salmon move into the Cains River headwaters until after the warm summer season has ended. PHOTO COURTESY OF NATHAN WILBUR.

In all cases where the trout were holding, the infrared imagery identified a visible cold-water input flowing from the riverbank—spring or stream. The Cains is typically a fall run Atlantic salmon river, but interestingly, among all these gigantic brook trout in mid-summer was one, single, yard-long Atlantic salmon. Clearly, during 2010, which was a year with a relatively robust salmon run that took place at least in good part early in the season, there were essentially no salmon summering in the upper Cains River. To me, Nathan's

findings are a clear indicator that there is no significant summer run of salmon to the upper Cains River. I can also state from personal observation that there was a good run of salmon into the upper Cains that fall. Why the trout don't remain in the estuary during the summer, and the more temperature tolerant salmon run up and wait in the headwaters, is hard to understand. The trout are feeding, though, and the Cains River provides a reliable flow of insect food in the summer, so that might be the lure.



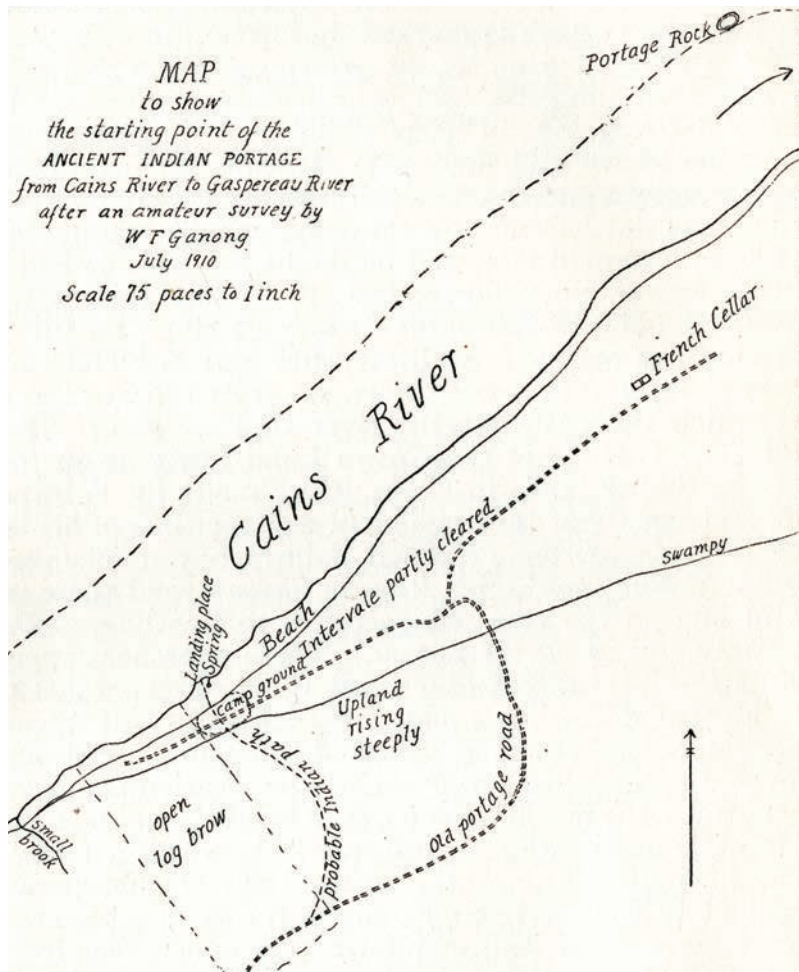
Aboriginal “stemmed projectile” gathered near Six Mile Brook on the Cains River believed by one authority to be between 3,700 and 4,000 years old.

couldn’t get enough of the spearing, so it was probably nothing specific to aboriginals.

It was around 1840 before any number of white settlers occupied the Cains River Valley. Whatever the aboriginals did in the way of a salmon harvest up on the Cains before that time seems to be completely unknown. By 1840, when the Cains started to become settled, the Indians had already been rubbing up against the European settlers around the province for over 100 years, and the Micmac population within New Brunswick was estimated to be down to only 900 odd souls. In any case, using the *naygog* effectively may have been difficult in the Cains. This is partly because the fish are only in the upper portions of the river for a short while during spawning season but mostly because the water from the Cains is normally terribly dark, making it hard to see the fish even in bright light. Additionally, the headwaters of the Cains River, where the most prolific spawning would be taking place, were right on the borderline between the MicMac and Maliseet tribes, and both may have preferred to do their fishing on waters that were more securely within their own respective territories.

THE ANCIENT PORTAGE ROUTES

The Cains was known to be a favorite pathway for Indian travel between the Miramichi and points north in the eastern half of the province as well as the Saint John watershed to the south and west. One of the most famous of the aboriginal portage routes that existed led from the Cains River across a relatively narrow strip of level if somewhat boggy ground down to the Gaspereau River, then on into Grand Lake and, eventually, the main stem of the Saint John River. There were other portages in the area too, such as the Avery Portage



W. F. Ganong drew this map in 1910 of the site where he believed the Ancient Indian Portage from the Cains River to the Gaspereau River intersected the Cains. The map was published in the *Bulletin of the Natural History Society of New Brunswick* No. XXVIII. Modern GPS and LiDar mapping technologies have now verified exactly where this path ran, even though it is invisible to the eye and has not been used in more than 150 years.



Through much of the early twentieth century, a considerable fleet of small boats netted Miramichi Bay and the ocean just outside the Bay for salmon. During the 1920s and 1930s, these boats took approximately 300,000 salmon annually. There was still plenty of salmon to seed the spawning reaches. These photos show the large Atlantic salmon fleet docked in Escuminac during 1937 and a smaller one at Bay du Vin. Bay du Vin is considered by some to be a corruption of what is believed to be the original name of this French settlement Baie de Vents, which means “bay of winds.” Note the double-ender construction of these boats. This made these boats much safer in a following sea when trying to navigate the channels between the barrier islands of Miramichi Bay. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

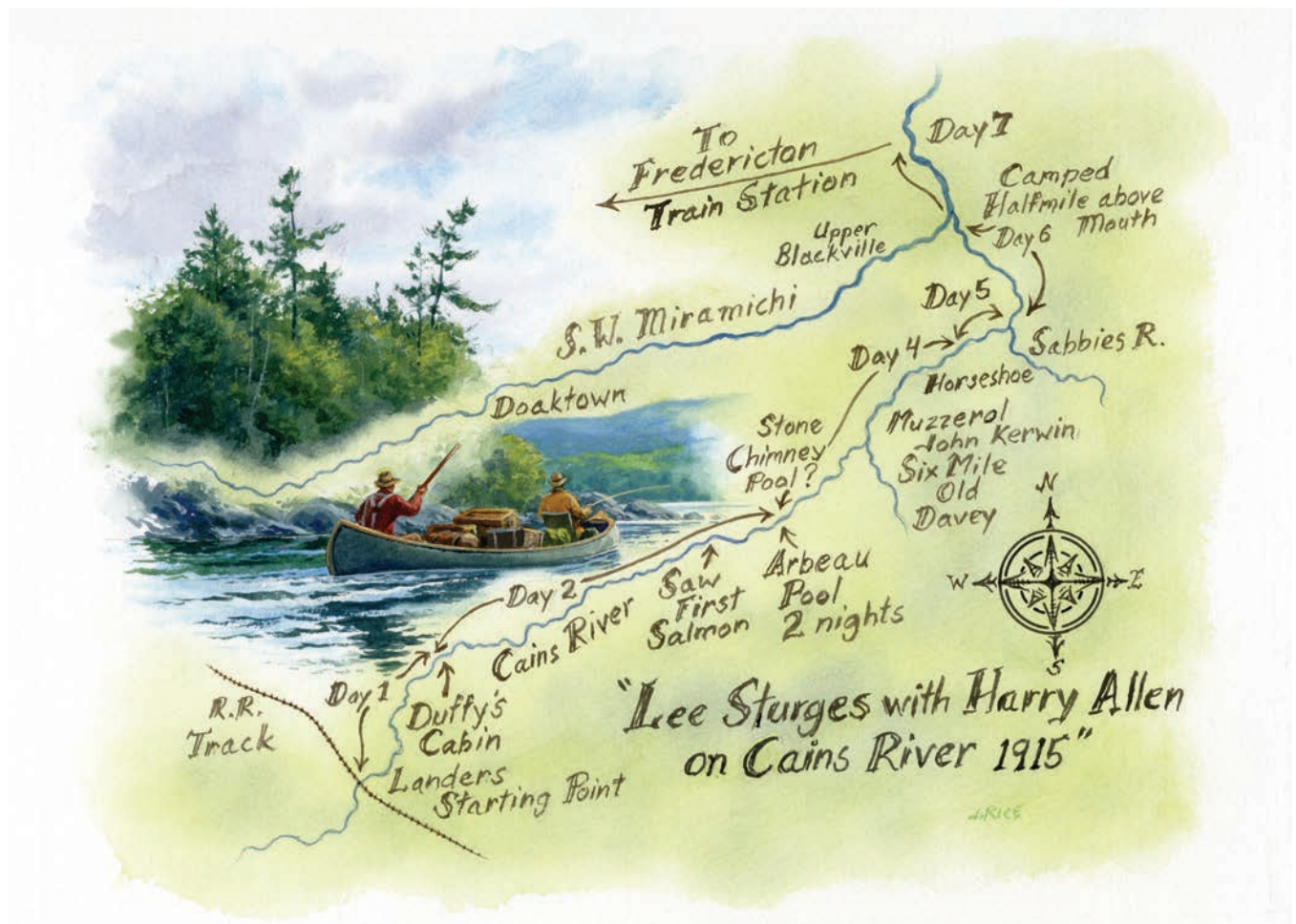
CHAPTER 4

Early Sport Fishing through 1932

According to Peter Thomas in his book *Lost Land of Moses*, which was written about New Brunswick's first fishery commissioner Moses Perley, it was English military officers who brought sport fishing to New Brunswick. With relatively few exceptions there was very little salmon fishing activity, especially from central New Brunswick, until the middle of the nineteenth century. The preface to Thomas's book states the following: "When Sir James Alexander, a military surveyor, arrived in the Province in 1844, he declared that

'Neither in England nor in Canada was much known of New Brunswick: the general idea of it was, that it was an immense expanse of dark woods, over which hung everlasting mists, that a few fishermen inhabited the stormy coasts, which were bound up in ice for many months of the year, and that the interior was unfit for settlement.'"

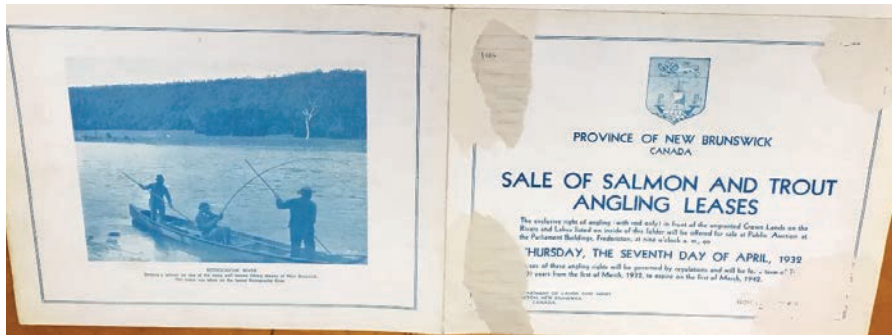
That was one man's view, and while there was at least one much earlier reference made in the late 1700s to the Nashwaak River being "useful" for salmon angling, things on the



Outfitter Harry Allen and his guides took Lee Sturges of Chicago on a float trip down the Cains River in 1915. This map shows the areas that they canoed each day, where they camped and fished, and how long they stayed at each location. I was unable to pinpoint one of the named pools that they fished during their trip—the Stone Chimney Pool—but in this chapter, I've made some educated guesses.



This is the front and back cover of the 1932 auction flyer and the “description of the angling stretch” that was included. The slogan “New Brunswick Land of Beauty and Royal Sport” dates to a time when Canada still very strongly identified with Great Britain. The handsome flyer also indicates strong support by the New Brunswick government for the commerce generating outfitters association.



cover the entire river. These leases were named as trout leases, but it sounds as if Allen was able to keep his salmon fishery reserved for his clients. On this lease, as he had done on the 1910 lease, Allen took a partner. This time, it was in the form of Frank Hopewell, who owned the Hopewell Lodge, not far upriver from the Grand Lake Road. Hopewell Lodge was an incredible place, and we’ll discuss it in much more detail later in the book. Assumedly splitting the lease lowered both of their costs, and there was no conflict, as Hopewell would have been interested in the upriver trout fishing while Allen wanted the spring salmon fishing that started a few miles downriver of Hopewell Lodge.

These leases brought, and still do bring, some revenue to the Province, and they typically provided jobs for guardians, guides, cooks, and other personnel required to maintain a backwoods fishing camp. The Province did its best to hype the auctions and produced quite an elegant brochure. In 1922, Allen signed Crown Fishing Lease #34 and again for \$335 annum. This was also for the entire Cains River and branches, and it would be his last 10-year lease. Allen passed away in the summer of 1932, and he was in declining health for some time before, but he lived to see the end of his own era in that the comprehensive leases he had enjoyed up to that point were ended in March of 1932. Instead, the Cains was divided up into four leases numbers—43, 44, 45, and 46—in the next

auction. For #43, it ran from just above Muzzeroll Brook upriver to the Arbeau Farm; #44 was from Arbeau’s up to the Murray camp—just below Route 123; #45 was from the Murray camp up to Otter Brook; and the final lease, #46, was from Otter Brook up to the Canadian Railway Bridge where Allen began his float trips. (Note: The Province has historically also offered camp leases on Crown-owned land. These leases typically do not include angling rights but just the right to build and keep a camp on the site. The Murray Lease was such a camp lease.) The crown water below Muzzeroll became open public water, as it remains to this day. Interestingly, the two downriver sections—which would be more known for their salmon fishing—failed to reach the upset price that the government had raised to \$500 for each section.

The upper stretches were leased out, undoubtedly to people who wanted to fish for the river’s big sea-run brook trout. Apparently the government had a change of heart, because at the end of October 1934, there was a new auction for a slightly modified item #43, that was now for the Cains—without any tributaries—from Muzzeroll upstream all the way to the Canadian National Railway bridge from where Allen and his guides used to launch their trips. This lease was for eight years so that it would expire with the other 10-year leases in 1942. George Allen won the lease for \$200 a year. The new terms were expanded considerably from the original 1932 lease that

(A) This is the artwork for the title page of the film made in 1915 by the Canadian National Railway System to promote Atlantic salmon fishing on the Cains River in the Province of New Brunswick, specifically the Cains River. In his book, Lee Sturges quotes Harry Allen: "Fish are in the river. Be here Friday. Wire number in party. If no objections, Government will send a moving-picture outfit to photograph the salmon fishing." Allen was always promoting, and clearly, Sturges was seen as an influential fisherman. (B) In this segment of the film, the fishing party is now headed downriver to a new pool. Based on the film ending in the vicinity of Sabbies River, I believe this is somewhere between the Arbeau Pool and the Sabbies River. That is a distance of more than 15 miles, but there is really no way to pin it down more closely than that. (C) Outfitter W. Harry Allen and sportsman Lee Sturges are seen here selecting their flies for the upcoming day's fishing. This was before the Cains River streamers were developed, though the forerunner, the Allen Streamer, may have already been in existence. They were probably selecting from the traditional, English-designed, feather-wing salmon flies that Allen had instructed Sturges to purchase for the trip. (D) Guides are shown here gaffing salmon. Almost all the fish caught were kept and eaten on these trips, including kelts. The caption in the film says that this picture was taken at the Whirlpool between Shinnickburn and the Mouth of Sabbies River. (E) Harry Allen's group tented on this gravel bar in the mouth of the Sabbies River. This bar is still there today but in varying sizes year to year. It is always being swept away by ice and/or high water and then redeveloping. It seems like a very precarious choice for a place to camp, and possibly, it was just staged for this film. You can see a tall, slim guide poling hard *downstream* in the far, front canoe. This scene was probably also staged for the film. (F) George Allen, who was known for his cooking, is on the right cutting up salmon steaks and depositing them in the cast-iron skillet. These would be steaks from black salmon or kelts. No one would think of eating these today, but at one time, they were very commonly eaten, and according to accounts I have heard, they are quite delicious since they lacked the oily fat of fresh-run fish. (G) Lee Sturges and Harry Allen are left and right on the far side of the fire. I believe that George Allen is sitting next to the pole across the fire on the left side. I cannot identify the other guides present. ALL PHOTOS IN THIS GROUP ARE COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF FLY FISHING.

scenes that he encountered on that trip along the Cains. The book was said to be privately printed in a run of only 50 copies. Most of these were reportedly lost when Sturges' house burned, but one expert collector tells me that he knows of approximately 20 copies, so it is unclear how many actually survived.

The American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont, was very helpful in providing me with scans of the Sturges book and a digitized copy of the promotional film made of that trip by photographers hired by the Canadian National Railway. In this early film, you can see Harry Allen and Sturges sitting together comparing salmon flies, men gaffing salmon at the famous Horseshoe Pool, George Allen frying black salmon steaks, camping tents set on the gravel bar at the mouth of the Sabbies River, and some terrific footage of the guides poling down the Cains with the outrageously long poles used for high water travel as well as holding the canoes in position for fishing. The quality of the image has the limitations of such an old film that was first transferred to a VHS tape format, but it is still thrilling to see moving images of these early days of Atlantic salmon fishing on the Cains River.

Here is a selection of pictures that we extracted from the film:

The other book, called *Fishing Memories*, is by Dorothy Noyes Arms. Arms and her famous husband, artist John Taylor Arms—he did those incredibly detailed, dark-gothic etchings of gloomy, medieval cathedrals with gargoyles perched over



do not *arrive* in the river during the spring, and trees are not budding in the fall—statements from the book that seem to contradict each other. Some fish are still there after spawning the previous fall, but these are kelts, not fish that fight by leaping into the air and fighting like tigers for 20 or 30 minutes, as Sturges describes them.

The Arms book, though, is unquestionably about kelt fishing, though she does mention the odd bright fish, as we will discuss later. Arms states the following: “We first went to New Brunswick in May. The spring freshet had passed and the stream was rapidly approaching its summer level.” A little later, she writes, “Since then we have gone in April when the melting snow, lying drifted through the woods, makes a boiling torrent of the river.” She also writes about long, extended fights with the larger fish that they caught, as well as the fish making many jumps clearing the water and landing with a resounding splash. Arms also talks about seeing the swirls of the fish chasing her fly and fish rushing after it with open mouths. All of this certainly seems unusual for kelts, but they could also be just a bit of exaggeration.

There are subtle keys to the timing in the Sturges book. Near the end of the story, Sturges states that: “Good salmon fishing during a short season; fine brook trout fishing later.” I assume that “later” means the late May or early June run of larger, sea-run brookies—historically up to seven or more pounds—that the river is also famous for, and we’ll discuss that later in the book. This certainly points to a spring trip

and perhaps one made earlier rather than later in May. The timing of both trips and the kind of fishing described seems confusing and hard to reconcile with what we know about the fishing today.

Another difference in the fishing compared to modern times appears to be the average size of the fish. Both authors talk about some large specimens. Sturges was not a longtime salmon fisherman, and he didn’t have much of a frame of reference. Arms and her husband, J.T., though, were veterans at salmon fishing. Many spring fishermen today, me for one, just see it as a chance to get out on the river and be in the New Brunswick countryside early in the season. It is fun to catch a few kelts, especially if you get a large one. I know, however, that these fish are only a shadow of what they were when they entered the river and what, with luck, they will be again after a little feeding in the ocean. The Arms fished in the ocean and out west for trout. They were sophisticated fishermen. They chose kelt fishing over bright salmon fishing because she very honestly states that she and her husband simply didn’t have the patience to fish for the more elusive bright fish. Arms also went on to say that they thought that fishing for the fall run was unsporting. She admitted to never having witnessed it but had been told that during the fall run, “The salmon lie so close to each other that sides touch sides, and their fins rise above the surface of the water like a vast fleet of tiny black sails.” She reported that the fish were so thick, “Even if none rose to a fly, one could hardly fail to snag any number among the



Above left: In this etching from Sturges’ book, you can see the large size of the reel and the use of a two-handed rod. Before coming on the trip, Sturges agreed to: “... set about securing the necessary two-handed fly rod; large salmon reel, the 150 yards of suitable line.” Later American-style single-handed fly rods became the custom, and by the 1950s, two-handed rods had virtually disappeared from the scene. *Above right:* A heavy two-handed rod stands next to a large catch of salmon.



This is a picture of the guides unloading the canoes and supplies at Landers, where the train tracks cross the Cains River to begin their trip downriver. Upon reaching the Miramichi at the end of their trip, they brought their canoes up the hill to the train station at Howards for the trip back to Fredericton. Years ago, this sort of transportation to and from remote fishing and hunting locations was commonly utilized all over Canada. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF NEW BRUNSWICK.



A fishing party having lunch before heading down the river. Note the sport on the left wearing breeks and knee socks. The English sporting influence was still very strong in Canada during the first half of the twentieth century. Photo courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.

plateau that contains the headwaters of the Cains River to a drop off called Landers at a railroad bridge that crosses the river in the heart of the Bantalor Wildlife Refuge. This point in the journey was used for many years by anglers taking this



Sturges' etching of the group starting out. Courtesy American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Right: Sturges' etching of a bull and cow moose wading in the Cains River. The last few caribou left in New Brunswick were being shot around the years of Sturges trip. Courtesy American Museum of Fly Fishing.



As we can see by the small width of the Cains River in this photograph, this is the very beginning of the journey. Look at the loads that these canoes are carrying! Their capacity was considerable, but they are sitting very deep in the water. No wonder that they needed the protective skids. Photo courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.



six miles downriver from where Allen's guided began fishing for kelt at the Elkins and Arbeau pools.

If Sturges left Chicago for Fredericton after getting the word to come from Allen, a minimum of two weeks must have passed before Sturges was on the river. This is precious time in the spring salmon fishery. These days, the good fishing is definitely over by May 15 and a good deal earlier in some years. This is especially true on the Cains, which, by our experience, is best during the last two weeks of April. It appears, though, that at least in some years during the early 1900s things were a lot different. Undoubtedly the larger runs of those years were the biggest factor, but also, the upriver pools might have been deeper, and from the combination, the fishing simply held on later.

In December 2017, on eBay, I was able to acquire glass-negative photographs of two men fishing for trout and salmon on the Cains River. The photos were taken by a Eugene S. Jones, who was the official photographer for the Boston and Maine Railroad and author of "Maine, The Sportsman's Paradise," a 1922 short story and picture review of hunting and fishing in Maine. When I looked at the pictures on eBay, I recognized a large rock that sits in the mouth of the Sabbies River junction pool with the Cains. This is the pool where Camp Stanton now stands. Even though a large cleared field visible just up the river is now forest, I was fortunate enough to be able to recognize the entire scene from personal experience. Curtis, head guide at Campbell's Pool camp, who grew up fishing these places, confirmed it, saying that he had stood many pleasant hours trout fishing on that exact rock.

There are two older men pictured reeling in Atlantic salmon and carrying a good-sized brook trout. There is also a much younger man, I would say in his twenties, who appears to be a guide, as well as another older man who I believe was also guiding. Neither of these men has any fishing equipment, and they are pictured holding up the catches of the men for photographs. The fish being held up are unquestionably kelts, one of them exceedingly long. The frame of one photograph reads, "31 pounds Cains River Atlantic salmon." It might have been true when the fish was fresh off the tide seven or eight months before, but the weight seems exaggerated when you look at the picture—which shows that not all that much has changed with fishermen.

This group of photographs was taken at the mouth of Sabbies Pool on the Cains River. 44e is especially unmistakable, in that the large rock off the bow of the canoe is still there, and in fact, the author stood upon it almost 100 years after the photographs were taken, casting into the seam where the Sabbies and Cains Rivers meet. The young guide in 44d and 44f is none other than Charlie Wade, who would follow his uncle W. Harry Allen as the most important name in Cains River and Miramichi salmon fishing for more than 40 years after Harry's death in 1932.



Black Brook Salmon Club as it appeared in 2018, with the new lodge and cabins. Black Brook stream itself is on the right side of the photograph.



Pete Howell and guide with a nice, late-season salmon along with the slim fly that caught it at Black Brook in October 2017. In the fall, low-water fish destined for the Cains River—as well as the Miramichi headwaters—hold up in the Black Brook home pool waiting for a raise to head upstream on their spawning run. PHOTO COURTESY OF PETE HOWELL.



Young Bud Hoffer on his first trip to the Miramichi in 1958. In 2019, he is still coming back each year to the Miramichi and Cains Rivers.



The woman holding court is Maxine Atherton, author of *The Fly-fisher and the River*, which has some incredible stories of her fishing exploits. She was a very adventurous woman, doing things such as taking the iceberg-dodging coastal steamer to the wilds of Labrador alone to fish the Adlatok River in the days before outfitters arranged every detail.



Herb Wade teaching a young boy how to fly cast. As a teenager, a friend of the author's, who is an extremely accomplished fly angler, was taught about fly casting by Herb Wade. My friend stated the following: "Herb Wade was a magician with a fly rod, and that it was he who first showed me what a fly rod could do."

PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. DAVID AND ASTRID WADE.



The most upriver camp at Wade's Fishing Lodge was one of the earliest constructed. The man is unknown. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. DAVID AND ASTRID WADE.



Dorothy Wade makes a terrific advertisement for Cains River salmon fishing in the early 1940s. It was truly a fishing family.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. DAVID AND ASTRID WADE.



John Brophy on left and Charlie Wade on right with a mess of nice brook trout from the Dungarvon River. Brophy's son, Emery, said that after the black salmon season ended on May 15, Wade brought guides and sports to these leased camps on the Dungarvon to fish for early run salmon and sea-run brook trout that were always there in good numbers. PHOTO COURTESY OF DR.

DAVID AND ASTRID WADE.



Ogilvie Pool is one of the quintessential upper Cains River pools with a private campsite owned by Jack Fitzpatrick from Fredericton.



Then graduate student Nathan Wilbur—now with the Atlantic Salmon Federation—camped out at Wildcat Lodge for a summer of research into aspects of cold-water buffering on the upper Cains River. PHOTO COURTESY OF NATHAN WILBUR.



Here is the view inside the old Wildcat Lodge. The author spent a night at Wildcat in early June 2018. It was 27°F on the deck when I woke up in the morning.



The Leighton Brook pool has a deep, moderately paced upper end and a fast, ledged lower end sweetened by a large brook. The road along the river fords the brook. The pool has accounted for many large fall salmon. This camp lease is owned by Keith Wilson.



Gartley Clarke on the left, and Wallace O'Donnell on the right. Clarke was a famous fisherman in his day, and he is holding a pair of fine Cains River brook trout. The photograph was hanging inside of Wildcat Camp.

HOPEWELL LODGE AND POOL

Located 36 miles from the Mouth of the Cains but only a short distance above the Doaktown Road, this water is fast at the top and has a deep slot running along a ledged side. This is an excellent trout and salmon pool. Hopewell is the first notable pool downstream of the daily Crown Reserve Section, and it is shown near the upstream end of Plan 3 of the Cains River maps.

Howard Moore, whose great uncle was the famous hunting guide "Barn Door" Adam Moore, owned Hopewell Lodge between 1969 and 2001 before retiring and selling to members of the famous New Brunswick Irving family. Moore's New Brunswick wildlife heritage also included a grandfather named William Moore who was one of the Province's most important taxidermists.

Moore said that Hopewell Lodge and accompanying Camp Caribou were originally built by Frank Hopewell in 1887 for the then whopping sum of \$10,000. A lease for the site of one of Harry Allen's camps was Crown Campsite Lease #1, and Hopewell Lodge and one of its nearby satellite camps called Camp Caribou were leases 2 and 3.

The great years for Hopewell Lodge ended with the caribou in the early 1920s, as did the Hopewell family's ownership. In 1923, the five-acre campsite lease for Hopewell Lodge was made out to James Clemens and Ruby and W. L. Van Wagenen of Boston. From there, it went to people



Metal tags to be affixed to the camps located on the leased land. Howard pulled these off the old Camp Caribou and Hopewell Lodge. With numbers of 2 and 3, Hopewell's leases were clearly among the very first ones handed out by the Provincial Government.

Russell was one of the famous early outfitters in the area. Hopewell Lodge was set on a towering bluff overlooking the Cains River Valley. The Cains River wilderness stretched off to the south, east, and west. The veranda that offered this majestic view was 85 feet long. Hopewell was a well-known hunting destination, and it had six smaller camps set around the area. Foremost among those was Camp Caribou, which was a 16-by-24-foot structure built as a hunting camp. The other camps were simply converted lumber camps and were really a shelter if caught out with approaching nightfall.

It is said that early in the twentieth century when the effects of the great Miramichi fire were still visible, sitting on the veranda at night, one could see the lights of Camp Caribou, more than five miles away on the barren grounds where a herd of New Brunswick caribou wintered.

Howard spent several years at Hopewell before he finally found the remains of the old Camp Caribou. The location was due south of Hopewell, and Howard told me that on early attempts to find the old hunting camp they had underestimated the distances involved and didn't walk far enough to reach it. A huge spruce tree had fallen down through Camp Caribou and destroyed it. The big wooden door that people had traditionally used to carve hunting records into was still intact. Howard made a trip back into the camp the next year to retrieve the door, but someone had burned it down over the winter. The previous year when Howard had read the entries



A guest hunter dressed in safety orange on the lawn of Hopewell Lodge in the 1960s. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWARD MOORE.



In the early twentieth century, New Brunswick was still thought of as a big-game-filled wilderness. After the 1928 Baseball World Series, Mickey Cochrane, the American Leagues' MVP, took off for the Miramichi with five of his sports friends to fish salmon and then hunt moose at Hopewell Lodge. Two of them, including Cochrane, were successful. There are many records of American sports celebrities hunting and fishing on the Cains and Miramichi Rivers.

carved in the door, he saw that it had last been occupied during 1957.

Howard told me that there were three barrens located in hunting range of the camps. These were Ginny Barren, Blue Rock Barren, and Dry Barren. Camp Caribou was located closest to Dry Barren, which had lots of the big deer's favorite



Henry C. Hopewell at left in the doorway of Camp Caribou.

Top right: The Hopewell Lodge veranda was 85 feet long and had one of the greatest views in the Province. *Left:* The new lodge built by Irving on the site of old Hopewell Lodge.



A moose crossing the river at Hopewell Ford seen from the "lookout" just upriver of the lodge.



Some of the Province's last caribou were shot on the Cains River barrens. The man pictured is Henry C. Hopewell, nephew of the original proprietor Frank B. Hopewell.



Six Mile Brook camp and pool. From the late 1940s into the early 1960s, Six Mile was owned by Black Brook Salmon Club member Kingsbury “Crib” Brown, the great uncle of Spey casting expert Topher Brown, author of *Salmon Magic*.



Salmon ascend Six Mile Brook in the late fall to spawn.



In this drone photograph of Doctor's Island Pool and camp, one can see that the pool has great center depth and flow, plus plenty of nice rocky structure. The best water is clearly located on the Doctor's Island side of the center thread of the pool.

who guided there during the fall fishery in 1984 through 1986, this is finest pool on the Cains River, and it holds fish in its bottom end during even lower water heights. Low water pools are the very scarcest of commodities on the Cains. The Club side of the pool is a bit deeper than the public side—but both sides are often productive—and can produce some very good fall fishing.

MOORE POOL

The Moore pool only about seven-tenths of a mile downstream from Doctor's Island's Pool. Coleman B. Moore from Pennsylvania purchased the Moore Pool in 1953 from Charles Kervin. The Kervins were early settlers around the Muzzeroll area of Shinnickburn, and they were the last family to live year-round in the now defunct town. For 11 years, Moore owned both this pool and the Brophy Pool down towards the mouth of the river. Moore sold the Brophy Pool in 1972, assumedly to consolidate his holdings. Later, Bill Moore inherited his father's interest in the Moore Pool property. Bill recently passed away in very early 2017. The Moore family still owns the pool, camp, and land. The Moore Pool property stems from an original Crown grant to Michael McLaughlin in 1837. This individual grant was unusually large and included 150 acres running to both sides of the river.

This property, for several reasons, is one of the best-known—and best-producing—pools on the river. The Cains River here runs right up to within a few feet of the road on the west, or Shinnickburn village side of the river. A nice lodge sits in the woods just across the road from the river. People park along the road in this area when launching canoes headed down the river, or to take out arrivals from upriver locations.

Gary Colford—one of the Miramichi's most famous guides, now with Country Haven Outfitters, and previously for many years at Wade's Fishing Lodge—has been the caretaker of Moore's Pool since the late 1970s. In that position, he followed his uncle Basil Colford, who was Mr. Moore's guide and caretaker from 1959 until Coleman passed away in 1977. Before Basil, Gary's grandfather, Willam G. Colford, held the position.

For me, this is an important and exciting piece of information. It is very difficult in 2018 to find a living person who has a clear memory of the chain people that go back to Harry Allen's time and, essentially, the beginnings of Cains River salmon fishing. I interviewed Gary regarding his Cains River history on January 4, 2018. His memory was very sharp, taking only seconds to recall names that he has probably gone years without uttering, remembering very accurately as other research work verified the timing of property purchases,



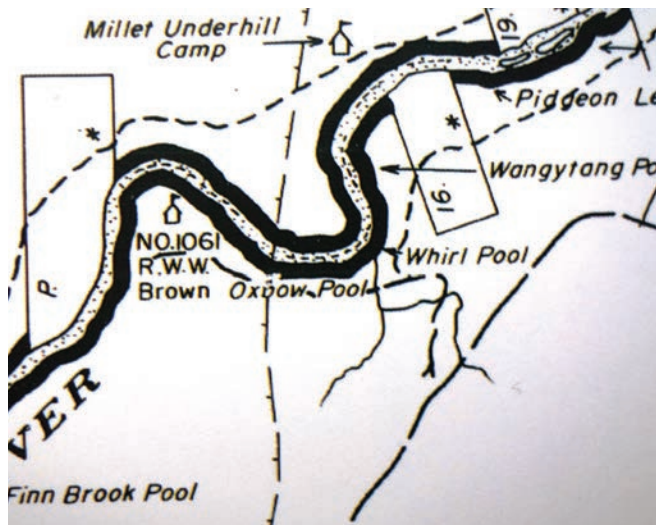
A man with a nice salmon from near Shinnickburn on the Cains caught during the 1960s. PHOTO COURTESY OF WAYNE CURTIS.

selection of snippets from the railroad film displayed in this book show the Sturges party gaffing salmon at the Horseshoe Pool. The pools are located about two-thirds of the way from Shinnickburn down towards the Sabbies River. The Wangy Tang is very deep, and Sturges was told that many large brook trout held in the cool depths later during the summer. This whole stretch is all public water.

There are five named pools located here. In a row, starting from upriver, they are the Horseshoe, Oxbow, Whirl Pool, Pepper Pot, and the Wangy Tang. These are all located in a very pronounced S-bend in the river that produces a fast-running current along a rugged, partially ledged shoreline. This whole section of the river is public, but access is quite remote from either side of the river. It can be accessed nicely by canoe, but the next good take out going downriver from Shinnickburn is Salmon Brook. Putting in at Shinnickburn and taking out at Salmon Brook is only seven miles by the river but 28 miles by car, driving much of it over dirt roads. It requires a lot of logistical work to put in at Shinnickburn and then take out at Salmon Brook. There are many easier and equally productive alternatives for a day of fishing. The result is that this area does not see a lot of fishing pressure. This group of pools is about 11 miles up from the mouth of the Cains River.



Cains River Enterprises operated out of this camp during their years in business. It was then purchased by William Hooper, retired DFO fishery biologist and fishing guide. The nearby water is all public, but there is great fishing water on all sides. This is one of the most difficult areas of the Cains to access by any method. Roads don't really come near it, and it is a long way by water from any of the normal put in locations.



This snippet from the New Brunswick Natural Resources map of the Cains River shows the Oxbow, Pepper Pot, and Wangy Tang Pools. The big bend in the river before you get to the Oxbow—river runs left to right in this picture—was apparently called the Horseshoe Pool in some other old maps. Certainly, this entire stretch is rich in good fishing pools. You can see the campsite number 1061 to R. W. W. Brown—the Cains River Enterprises camp just pictured—located right inside the horseshoe bend. You can also see the location of Millet Underhill's camp and Pigeon Ledge Pool downriver to the right.

The Oxbow Camp, according to Emery Brophy, son of head guide John Brophy, was not the kind of lodge that people would check into for a week's fishing. Cains River Enterprises would fish their way down the Cains from Moore's Pool or Shinnickburn and spend a couple of nights at the Oxbow camp fishing the group of pools in that area. Emery said that during the 1960s the area offered terrific fall fishing for salmon.



Students from Miramichi High School fishing club working Bull Run/Campbell Pool. PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHLEY HALLIHAN.



Herman Campbell sitting on the deck of his Campbell's Pool property on the Cains River in the 1950s. PHOTO COURTESY OF BUD HOFER.

usually a big volume producer but dependably has a few fish holding in the run. Like many Cains River pools, the run tails out into a fairly deep, slow pool. In good years of decent water, it is not unusual to find a lot of salmon holding in the slow water after the run but getting them to take is a real challenge.

The water along the shore in front of the camp is fairly deep in pockets with some nice structure like the big boulder in the photograph with Herman Campbell. That boulder was



Charles "CE" Hofer, father of Bud Hofer, in a 1958 photo standing on the Cains shoreline above Otter Brook with a salmon and a grilse. This appears to be a September photo as the trees show some color but are not yet in full October brilliance. PHOTO COURTESY OF BUD HOFER.



This aerial photo shows the intricacies of the junction of the Cains and the Southwest Miramichi that in large part make Black Brook the great pool that it is. It is clear in this photo that the Cains flow pushes out into the Miramichi, shielded in large part by the big bar between the rivers, so that the Cains influences both sides of the Black Brook Pool. The cooling waters of Black Brook itself enter in the lower left of the photo into the slower, deeper part of the pool that is an important refuge for salmon during summer heat. The Catholic church that Mary Brophy poled her canoe back and forth to from the Brophy farm to attend Sunday services, and that appears in the William Schaldach illustration of the river mouth from *Fishing Memories*, can be seen in the clearing at the upper-right-hand corner of the picture.

at Campbell's and Keenan's Pools we were looking at shoreline that had never been above the surface of the water in my 15 years of ownership. The water was so low that it made the pool almost unrecognizable. Except for a small pocket or two, the upper half of the pool was too shallow to hold fish. The bottom of the pool, which is typically deep, broad, and slow, was now of reasonable fishing depth, quite a bit more narrow than normal, and instead of being dead water, there was actually a modest flow down through the center. The newly defined channel hooked over towards the Campbell side of the river whereas in normal flow Anderson's Point pushed the water back towards the Keenan side. This was

because the area surrounding Papa's Rock and the large rocks out in front of it had become a shoal that was too shallow for salmon. The actual channel of the river—what I call the river within the river—was probably no more than 50 feet wide, and at the head of the pool, it disappeared altogether, and you could walk across the river at that point in water that was only slightly above your knees.

Every evening would see a trickle of fish moving up the river. There would be a handful of arrivals in the pool towards dusk that would mix with the old fish holding there, and a few fish would run through the pool and head upriver. Enough casting would eventually find one or two of these fish to take

a fly, and so we picked at them. Most of the takers we caught were the more aggressive grilse, though we saw some monsters and hooked a precious few of them. At Black Brook, though, these fish, many of which were assumedly destined for the Cains River, stacked up on the east or Cains River side of Black Brook's water on the Miramichi. During the day, the fish hung down in the deeper water and played hard to get. In the evening, though, the restless fish apparently testing the

water depths and moved up into the faster moving shallow water at the mouth of the Cains. The fishing wasn't an outright bonanza, unless you compare it to what most other camps were catching. The size of some of the fish was eye-popping. A number of mid and high 30-pound fish were captured as was one of approximately 40 pounds.

Here are four pictures from the Black Brook Salmon Club water in the years when it was owned by Allen Outfitters:



In this spring fishing scene, the guide is holding the canoe by the pole on the edge of the current. You can see dozens of canoes pulled up on the shore as far as you can see. Probably canoes from Allen's Outfitters are merged with others from Wades that abutted Allen's on the downstream side. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF NEW BRUNSWICK.



These anglers are fishing on Allen Outfitters water, on the Howard's side of what is now the water of the Black Brook Salmon Club. Butterfield's Rock, which is still visible today, is the right side of the first angler. Across the river you can see the guide's seasonal shelter and Lou Butterfield's cottage that was taken by a flood. The photo is looking across and up the Miramichi River. You can make out where the Cains flows in.

CHAPTER 7

The Camp Stanton Logbook

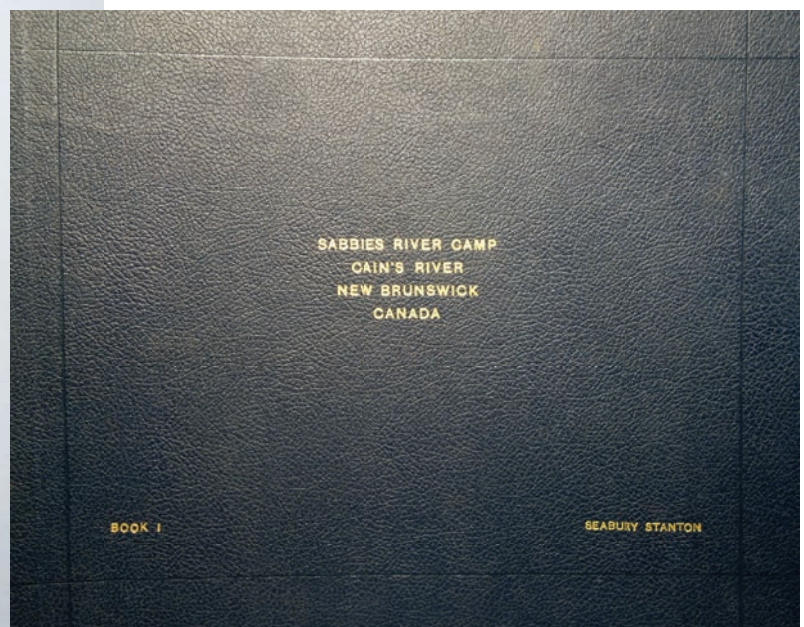
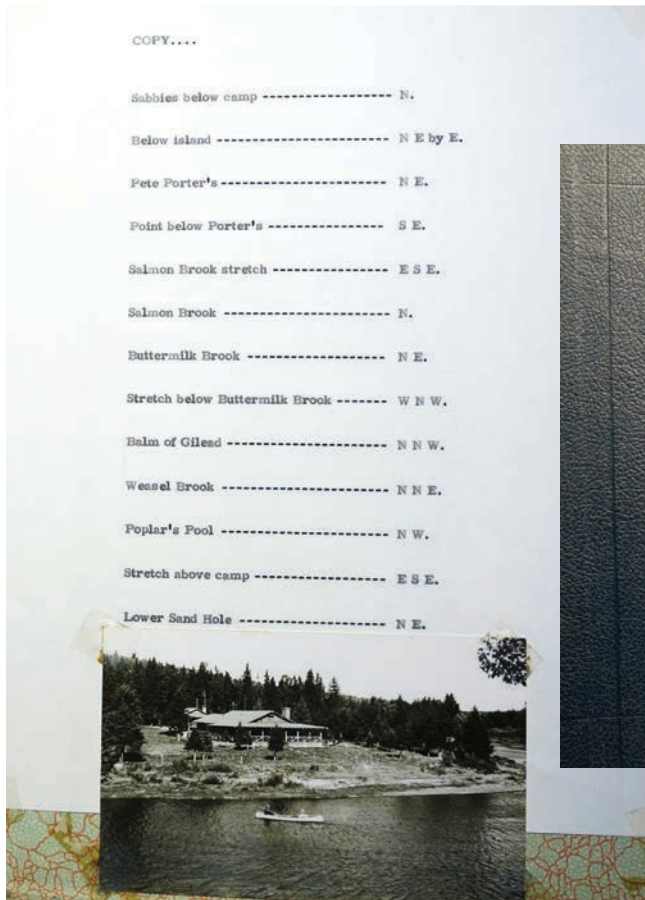
In my research for this book, I was lucky enough to come by several extraordinary documents pertaining to the Cains. Of these, the original, handwritten logbook for Camp Stanton rates at the top. In January 2018, I visited antique sporting book dealer Patrick Ayres, who lives on a family ranch on the banks of the Klamath River in California. I spent three great days enjoying the terrific hospitality of Pat and his wife, Deb, and, we carefully photographed each of 175 pages that comprise the two volumes of the logbooks.

I'm a veteran of reading salmon camp logs from a fair number of trips over the years to various locations in Canada and Scotland. The average log will have the date, name of angler, size of the salmon, weight, beat or pool fished, fly pattern, often the size of the fly, and water temperature. And so it goes: statistics, page after page, and in some old lodges, volume after volume. However, the ones from Camp Stanton are different. Certainly they list the fish caught and the size, and for

this book, it was good information to have, but more importantly, Jean Kellog Stanton's writing offers a perspective on the Stantons time on the river that is not limited to the number and size of fish caught.

You do hear about the fishing but also the weather, the travels, the trials and tribulations of building and managing your own lodge in a place with no electricity or real road, and their friendships and experiences with local people. There is talk about the local people, including who guided them, cooked for them, and drove them back and forth to the Brophy meadows, or the airport. Jean wrote about birthday parties and picnics, trips to town, and even Seabury Stanton's financial involvement with the Allens in helping them to buy and sell lodges and pools as members of the family moved in or out of the business.

The Stantons were very wealthy people by most standards. Seabury's father and grandfather were both whaling captains from New Bedford, so Seabury came naturally by his love of fishing. When Seabury was born in 1892, whaling was in its last throes, but 50 years previous, in his grandfather's day, New Bedford had the highest per capita income of any



Cover of the first of two Camp Stanton logbooks and note fastened inside the cover that describes the directions to various pools on the camp's property with an old photograph of the camp taken from a nearby hilltop.



Guide Karl Wilson is fishing the Crown reserve section of the Cains River in front of Wildcat Camp. In the first photo, Karl has a small brookie on the line. Wildcat Camp is visible in the background. At times, this pristine habitat has offered world-class fishing for brook trout of six pounds or more.



Barrie Duffield's "Burdock" dry fly does look like those prickly, dried things that embed themselves in any article of soft clothing that brushes up against them. This fly won't win any beauty contests, but it has caught a great many large Cains River brookies for Barrie and the sports that he guided. I think of it as a bomber variant. The fly is highly floatable, has the wings of a mayfly, and a long tail that could suggest either a mayfly or even one of the large stoneflies that the Cains and Miramichi have lots of.

days, the fish can be taken readily during the day, but generally speaking, aquatic insect life is more active in the low light of morning and evening, and that is true of the upper Cains. The brook trout tend not to range too far from their cold-water refuges and will often start to feed on the very edge of dusk. While brook trout may lack the horsepower of Atlantic salmon, the large ones especially are excellent fighters, and contacting one on light equipment in such a beautiful place as the upper Cains River is as good an experience as fly fishing offers.

The Wilsons do a lot of guiding on the upper Cains River, and Karl's equipment is very much the same as one would see on any northern Maine trout lake. A four or five-weight, nine-foot rod, with a floating line and a nine-foot, six-pound test leader is pretty much standard issue. A sink tip is normally unnecessary, since, by the time the sea-runs make it up to the headwaters area beginning at the end of May, the water is typically low enough, and warmed up enough, so that a full floating line will do the job. It could be, though, that in higher than normal early or late season water a sink tip for fishing streamers would be helpful. Weighted flies of all types are illegal to use on the Cains River—for trout or salmon—so a sink tip would be the only way to provide a little extra depth to work a deep, cold pool.

Just how nicely sea-run brook trout fishing can dovetail in with salmon fishing on the Miramichi system is well-illustrated by this episode related to me by Kris LeBlanc of Moncton. Kris began the morning of July 7, 2011, by wading into the Buttermilk Pool on the Cains. There were a good number of salmon already in the Cains that year despite the early date,

and Kris could see salmon rising here there around the pool. In spite of their relative freshness to the river, they weren't easy to catch, but eventually, one grabbed a #8 black-bear green butt that Kris had tied just the night before. Happy with his salmon, Kris also had a permit that day for the Crown reserve water and decided to try his luck up in the headwaters. This meant driving back down the southside of the Cains to Blackville, driving west on Route 8 to near Boiestown, and then heading into the backcountry to reach his favorite stretch of the river.

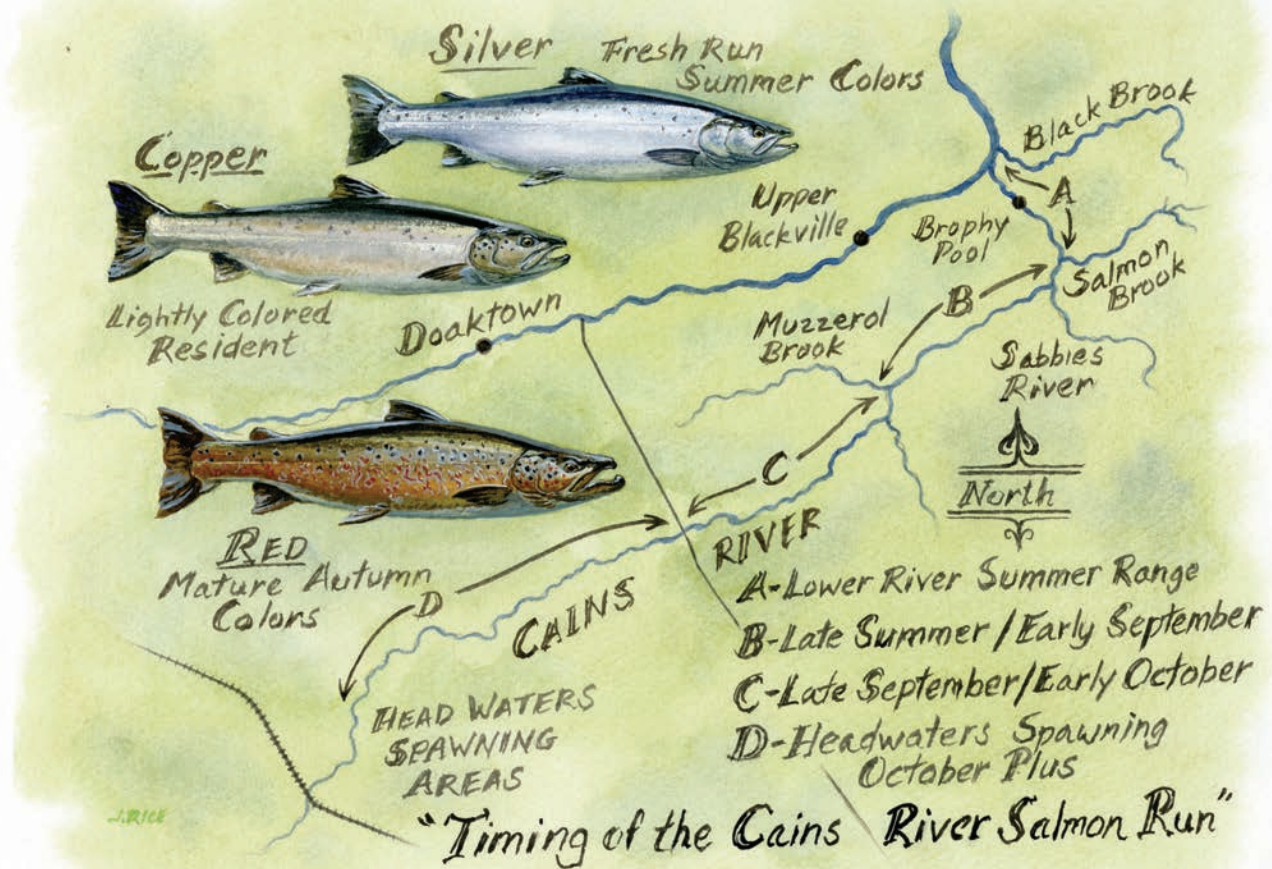
As he passed through town, Kris decided to fish a private salmon pool owned by a friend, and on the first pass through, he succeeded in adding two grilse to his total for the day. It was now early afternoon, and he had already released three salmon, just one short of a limit. By any standards, the day was already complete. Variety, though, is the spice of life, and it was a good fishing day featuring a solid cloud cover.

Late in the afternoon, Kris started working his way through an unnamed pool near Wildcat Brook. He was using a standard-issue attractor dry fly on the end of a 14-foot leader that ended in a five-pound-test tippet. A few hundred feet further downriver Kris saw a big trout rise to take an insect off the surface. A few minutes later, the big sea-run brookie surfaced again in essentially the same spot. After seeing this trout rise twice more in 10 minutes, Kris had now worked into casting range, but after covering the area of the last rise several times, he failed to receive a look.

Kris decided to rest the fish for a few minutes. The evening was getting late, and there was no real hatch underway. Things had become very quiet, and in keeping with the mood of the evening, he switched to a #14 Black Nat, which barely dimpled the surface as it landed gently at the end of the long leader. The big brookie instantly took the fly. This brook trout was 23.5 inches and probably weighed in the vicinity of five pounds.



Kris LeBlanc of Moncton with a monster Cains River brookie from the Crown reserve section of the Cains River that took a #14 Black Gnat fished dry. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRIS LEBLANC.



Bright salmon begin entering the Miramichi in early June. As soon as they enter the river, some of these salmon will swim quite rapidly all the way to the headwaters where they will eventually spawn, and others hold at various locations along the river moving up from time to time with raises of water, but the run normally spreads out fairly well all along the river. The Cains is quite different. Similar to some of the Northumberland Shore rivers, the run in the Cains stays in the estuary or lowest section of the river during the summer, and then, beginning in the early fall, it spreads out into the upper reaches of the river. Areas that offer quite good fishing in early October are usually totally barren in August.

that is further evidence that neither the Miramichi nor the Cains are early run rivers.

Salmon running the river take on the camouflage colors of the riverbed, gradually losing their silver sheen—but it doesn't happen all at once. We catch darkly colored salmon in the fall many miles up the Cains River that are still carrying sea lice. Even though the Miramichi estuary is salt enough for the sea lice to live, it is also fresh enough to encourage the fish to adopt their riverine color scheme.

While there are definitely fish entering the Miramichi all through June, statistically, the first big push of salmon and grilse makes its way into the Miramichi during the second week in July. Some of those fish are destined for the Cains River. Given reasonable conditions, by the second week in July, all the Cains pools from the mouth up through Salmon Brook, some seven miles or so upriver, start to hold salmon.

Conditions mean a great deal. If there is very low, warm water all summer as there was in 2017 most Cains fish won't enter the river but will instead hold back in the estuary. Of those that do enter most will stay in the low water pools of the main river, especially Black Brook, presumably because it is the last stop before jumping into the main stem of the Cains.

It is well-documented by tag returns that the great majority of the fall run destined for the Miramichi and its tributaries is in the estuary by late July or August. Whatever the exact time, the biologists tell us that the fish running the river as late as the end of October are not just coming in straight out of the ocean. Many of them still hold sea lice, but they have been biding their time in the estuary waiting for just the right conditions. Tag returns showed that a nice, mid-teen-sized cockfish that I caught up at Mahoney Brook, 20 miles up the Cains, on October 15 of the 2016 season, sat somewhere between

CHAPTER 11

Cains River Salmon and Trout Flies

The flies appearing in all the groupings are tied by William T. Utley except for certain bombers marked as tied by Warren Duncan.

BLACK OR VERY DARK WET FLIES

All the flies pictured below share an essentially black appearance. Some like the Black Ghost have a black body but a white wing. Some of the flies just have a throat of hackle barbles while others have a full palmer-wound collar. Beyond this, there is often a fair amount of variation in the way the recipes are followed. I tend to believe that, in most cases, the small changes make very little difference, but there are senior salmon anglers who would take great exception to that, claiming that squirrel rather than bear, or a gold rather than silver rib, makes all the difference. When I look in my own fly boxes to make a choice, I see that, due to my own lack of fussiness when tying, my flies of the same pattern and size often vary quite a bit from one another. This variation could exist in any aspect of the flies design from the shape of the hook to the density of the wing, to whether I used floss or mohair for the body, the width of the rib, the shade of green in the butt, and so on. I like these variations, though, and pick the one that seems to have the best feel for the conditions I am fishing. Frankly, plain old gut feeling goes a long way when it comes to fly selection. I am very partial to flies that are “pre-chewed” since I know that to be a stamp of approval from the only opinion that really matters.

If I had to pick a confidence fly from this lot, it would be the Same Thing Murray. First, I like the peacock herl body; second, it has a prominent green butt that seems to be a common thing in many successful salmon flies; and third, it has a palmered hackle collar. The palmered collar dams up a little water and causes the fly to swim back and forth a bit when retrieved. If the water was really low, and I wanted something very stealthy, I might make a different choice like a tiny Black Ghost or Green Butt Bear Hair—mostly because they are just a little simpler and generally come out better in small sizes—or I might tie something custom with only a very few wing fibers, no throat, no butt, no rib, a thin black floss body, and one piece of micro krystal flash.

HAIR WING JOCK SCOTT



- **Hook:** Standard or low-water salmon single or double
- **Tag:** Silver tinsel
- **Tail:** Golden pheasant crest
- **Body:** Rear half—Yellow floss; Front half—Black floss
- **Rib:** Oval silver tinsel
- **Hackle:** Guinea fowl tied as a collar and pulled down
- **Wing:** Scarlet, yellow, and blue dyed grey squirrel
- **Head:** Black

Source: Bates, J. D. *Atlantic Salmon Flies and Fishing*. Stackpole Books: Harrisburg, PA; 1970. Page 316.

CHIEF NEEDABAH



- **Hook:** Strong streamer or low-water salmon
- **Tag:** Flat silver tinsel
- **Tail:** Section of red duck or goose quill
- **Body:** Red floss tied in two sections with the first third broken by a throat of red saddle hackle
- **Rib:** Narrow flat silver tinsel
- **Wing:** Red saddle hackles valing two yellow saddle hackle
- **Hackle:** Red saddle hackle tied as a collar
- **Cheeks:** Jungle cock usually tied short
- **Head:** Black

Source: Bates, J. D. *Streamer Fly Tying and Fly Fishing*. Stackpole Books: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; 1950. Page 255.

CAINS RIVER STREAMERS

These flies still work on the Cains today, too, just as they worked for the Allens and Wades 100 years ago. When Bill Utley tied the streamers for these photographs, he saved out a few for us to fish with in the fall of 2018. We landed salmon on them at the Mahoney Brook camp during the last few days of the season. It was a great bit of nostalgia. Note that the name of the pattern originator is listed after some flies.

ALECK'S WONDER



(Oscar Webber)

- **Hook:** Heavy streamer (Partridge CS42 or Mustad S82-3906B), usually a #2
- **Tag:** Flat gold tinsel
- **Tail:** Two sections of barred wood duck flank feather with a thin section of French blue goose wing of the same length
- **Body:** Flat gold tinsel
- **Wing:** Scarlet saddle hackles covered by a rich yellow saddle hackle on each side that are then covered by a French blue saddle hackle on each side
- **Cheeks:** Jungle cock usually tied long
- **Hackle:** A collar of three turns of scarlet saddle hackle followed by two turns of French blue saddle hackle.
- **Head:** Black

Source: Bates, J. D. *Streamer Fly Tying and Fly Fishing*. Stackpole Books: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; 1950. Page 245.