



Bartlett Memorial Angling Collection until the building experienced a fire in 2011. Lost treasures from the collection included eight “Match the Hatch” instructional panels created by Bartlett to display photos of 47 aquatic insect species in various life stages, matched with the artificial flies imitating each insect.

Prior to the fire, the collection was located on the second floor of the library in a room referred to as the “Angler’s Parlor.” The archive boasted more than 800 books about fishing and fly tying—as well as rods and reels, tackle, historical items, artwork and other resources celebrating the traditions of Catskill angling. For more than 15 years the parlor served as a gathering place for lessons, workshops, book signings, and also hosted the local Trout in the Classroom program.

“The Parlor served as an important resource for people looking for one of the best angling collections anywhere,” says Chester Karwatowski, president of TU’s Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter.

After the fire, volunteers organized just as they had in 1996 when their donations and hard work established the original collection in Bartlett’s memory. However, this time, it was to rebuild what had been lost.

“When Jerry died, the library did not have a section, or even a book, dedicated to angling in the Catskills,” says Beth Waterman, a library volunteer and co-founder of the collection, along with Doris Bartlett. “So our tight-knit community transformed that space into a val-

ued resource for local history. Lucky for us, this time around technology made it possible to preserve things not only physically, but virtually as well.” Re-creating Bartlett’s panels and additional information was three years in the making due to changing technology. Launched in April 2014, the website created by Stephanie

Blackman Design and Mark Loete, a professional photographer and fly fishing guide, provides anglers with history and science related to fly fishing in the Catskills.

“The digital version of the Bartlett Collection is fitting because Jerry liked new ways of doing things,” adds Doris Bartlett. “He always

embraced new ideas and technology—but could have never pictured this. It is incredible.”

The Phoenicia Public Library is set to re-open in fall 2014. The grand re-opening of the Jerry Bartlett Angling Collection will follow suit in spring 2015.

Jerry Bartlett Angling Collection

Back in the day, angling instructor and past president of TU’s Catskill Chapter, Jerry Bartlett, recorded a daily phone message to update his community about local fishing conditions. His messages were so informative, people from throughout the Northeast would call what became known as the “Esopus Creek Hotline” to learn about turbidity, temperatures and other information relevant to fly fishing and conservation issues surrounding the popular fishing spot.

Almost 20 years after his death, Bartlett’s messages live on through a modern resource—the Jerry Bartlett Angling Collection website (www.catskillanglingcollection.org), recently launched by the public library in his adopted hometown of Phoenicia, N.Y.

“Jerry would have been delighted by this website, especially because it will make the information reach an audience beyond anything he could have ever imagined,” says Bartlett’s widow, Doris.

The Phoenicia Public Library also housed physical items of the Jerry



The Jerry Bartlett Angling Collection

website cross-correlates information transcribed from Bartlett’s instructional panels with macro-invertebrate surveys of Esopus Creek conducted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from 1995 to 2010 and streamside observations by experienced anglers. The taxonomy also reflects recent changes in the naming and classification of insects brought about by advances in genetic DNA testing. Additional information found on the website includes:

- Listing of 33 insect species favored by Esopus Creek trout arranged by month of their appearance
- A photograph of the nymph and adult phase of each species paired with studio photographs of the artificial flies that best imitate each insect
- Original recipes for artificial flies, provided by fourteen masters of the craft of Catskill-style fly tying