

Fishing at Hemlock Lake

Seth Green - The Livonia Gazette

17 July 1885



Seth Green circa 1885

Having just returned from a four days' fishing trip at Hemlock Lake, perhaps an account of the fish taken and tackle used may be of interest to the readers of the Angler.

I took twenty-one salmon trout, seventy black bass, forty rock bass and fifty yellow perch. The salmon trout were taken mostly in about the center of the lake, in water from sixty to eighty feet deep. I trolled with a gang of hooks, using a minnow for bait. All of the trout were taken on the bottom by trolling slowly and feeling the bottom with a six-ounce sinker as often as once in every ten rods of the ground fished over. The fish weighed from one to three pounds. In fishing for the bass and perch I used a gang and three flies, the hook baited the same as for salmon trout and attached to a ten-foot single gut leader.

My fly nearest the gang is called the "Seth Green". It has a green body, with a yellow stripe, a cinnamon wing and red hackle. The next fly is the "Grizzly King." The body is green, the wing is a speckled under wing of a male mallard, the hackle is red, not a dyed red, but a red rooster hackle.

The tail is a red ibis, the upper fly has a red worsted or floss body, striped with gold tinsel, white wing, grizzly hackle and red ibis tail. They are tied on No. 2 O'Shaughnessy forged hooks. The body is made about the size of the small end of a clay pipe stem.

I fished for bass and perch in from four to twenty feet of water. When I fished in twenty feet of water I used about a half-ounce sinker and about sixty feet of line. In water from four to ten feet I used from forty to sixty feet of line with no sinker.

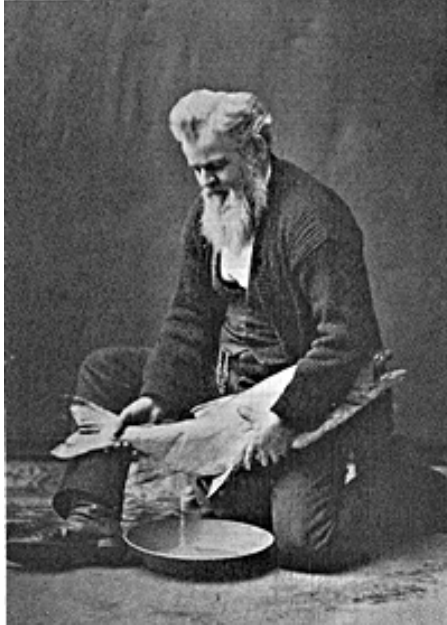
In trolling with minnow for bass and salmon trout the boat should be rowed very slowly. The perch taken were very fine, many of them weighing a pound.

Hemlock lake is a fine body of water, made entirely from springs. It is seven miles long and nearly a mile wide. There are good hotels on the lake. I made my head-quarters at the St. James, W. J. Ackley, proprietor.

The nearest railroad station is Livonia, on the New York, Lake Erie and Western railroad, and thence you go by stage four miles to the lake.

Steamboats make regular trips through the lake every day. The shores are lined with cottages, and there is scarcely a time when you can't hear the merry voices of parties in boats and on the shores. The lake lies in a valley with hills on each side from three to five hundred feet high, and when you talk to your "best gal" I would advise you talk in a whisper if you don't want everybody on the lake to know what you say, as the echo might betray you.

Hemlock lake has been thoroughly restocked and shows the result to a marked degree. Neither black bass (small mouthed) nor rock bass were natives of this lake, but have increased fast since their introduction and are now plentiful and of good size. The restocking of this lake with salmon trout has also been a great success. One party who has fished the lake for many years informed me that there had been more trout taken out this season than had ever been taken in any two years before, and another party declared that he had known the lake for thirteen years, and more trout were caught this spring than during the whole time put together. Bullheads have been taken in this lake weighing three pounds. Seth Green.



Seth Green stripping a fish in 1875.

Seth Green

19 March 1817 - 18 August 1888

The story begins March 19, 1817 where, in a small cabin on Culver Road near Empire Blvd in Rochester, NY, Seth Green was born to a family of farmers. He was taught from a very young age how to plant crops, hunt and fish. Eventually his family, being sick of farming, moved to a then just developing area called Carthage on the Genesee River near the Lower Falls where they opened a tavern on the high banks of the river.

As a boy Seth quickly became friends with some local Seneca Indians and over the years they taught each other hunting and fishing secrets they had learned from their fathers. As a young man, he would catch fish in the Lower Falls and sell them to locals and ships crews that were docked in port. When coming of age, Seth found he had to start providing for himself and having such a solid foundation in fishing, he choose that route.

The timing was right, he started moving about to different fishing areas and

eventually found himself with enough business to open a shop right on Front Street, near the High Falls. The new shop grew over the years and became very successful, so much in fact that by 1857 Green was considered the largest dealer of fish in NY and also the greatest fishermen in the state. Under his

command, his team of 100 men was reeling in anywhere from 12 to 25 tons of fish a month.

In 1864, after years of studying, catching and selling fish, Seth thought maybe there could still be more. That summer he sought out some experimenting grounds and moved in on an area he knew to be an ideal location. Fed by fresh springs and with a consistently cold temperature of 45-60 degrees, Caledonia Creek was perfect for hatching brook trout free of season-limitations and pollution.

Soon there were large buildings packed along the creek and the Caledonia Fish Hatchery was born. Inside were huge tanks where Green began his famous research in fish hatching and where he would ultimately perfect Artificial Propagation. At that time, most hatcheries were getting about a 25% hatch rate but by using Dry Impregnation Seth was able to achieve over 97% success rate. This trick was kept secret for years and helped Green become even more successful and famous than ever before.

Seth is well known for having at one time the largest fish hatchery in the East and for the hard work he did that birthed an industry. Raising trout actually became a fad in the 1870's because of him. The story goes on and if you're interested pick up a copy of Seth Green - Father of Fish Culture by Black, it's recommended reading.

Seth was co-author of a 245-page book, Fish hatching, and fish catching, with R. Barnwell Roosevelt in

1879. Seth Green died on August 18, 1888, and is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery Rochester NY.

The Livonia Gazette

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