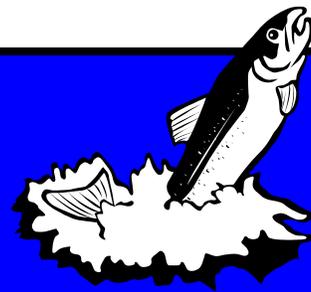


# Brule River

## Sportsmen's Club, Inc.

OVER 500 MEMBERS DEDICATED TO THE IMPROVEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF THE BRULE



October 2020

## Legend of Hank's Creation

by Richard Goddard, BRSC Club member

Anyone who spends time on the Brule learns, at least by osmosis if not conscious study, some of the mysteries and lore that surround this extraordinary and storied trout stream. A brief account concerning a monster brown trout captured in the late evening or early night hours somewhere upstream from the Gitche Gumee Lodge on what was cryptically described as a Hank's Creation caught my attention many years ago. That account accompanied the full profile, pine-cutout of a trout hanging on the wall of the lodge.

I knew no one who owned an exemplar of Hank's Creation or who could explain its origin. It appears nowhere in the many volumes of my fly fishing library. I clearly had not dug deeply enough. I had even failed to consult the generations of experience residing in the extended Holbrook clan. So, I began my research. Praise God for the internet and the devotion of the Holbrook family to the Brule.

Henry "Hank" Denny was born in Michigan in 1865 and died in Brule, Wisconsin, in 1934. He is buried in the Pine Ridge Cemetery in Brule. His father was Cyprian Denny (b. 1845, d. 1918), and his mother was Nancy Vinette Denny. They had seven children. Hank married Iva

Seamon Denny (b. 1893, d. 1988) and they had four sons: Robert (b. 1914, d. 1982), James William (b. 1920, d. 1972), Allen "Swede" (b. 1923, d. 1984), and John (b. 1925, d. 1979).

Hank owned and operated a combination store, garage, filling station, and restaurant in Brule. He was reputed to be one of the finest fishing guides in

postulated a hand-painted sign in his store that read, "Be it hereby known to all those present that Hank Denny has no space to rent, sell, or lease. Be it also known that Hank Denny has ordered enough pop, gum, candy, cigars, gasoline and oil to last till the Brule freezes over; he is too gall-darned busy to listen to salesmen, and gall-darn if he wants to

talk to 'em." At some unknown time before his death, Hank entrusted to mankind his immortal Hank's Creation.

John Holbrook kindly contacted Amy Holbrook Abrams for me who, in turn, graciously shared photographs of her prized collection of vintage Hank's Creations. Guided by those photos and an exceptional piece by Steve Therrien (<https://troutshadows.blogspot.com/2014/04/forgive-me-father-for-i-have-sinned.html>), I tried my hand at replicating this truly unique "pattern."

Steve Therrien also states that, "Hank's ancestors originate from a storied corner of bass fly angling history. In the early 1900's, wood bodied poppers were used to fly-fish for bass. Cal McCarthy produced the famous

See "Legend" on pg. 3

### October Fly of the Month

#### Hank's Creation

Rick Goddard, BRSC member – Cleveland, OH



The recipe can be found at <https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-October-fly.pdf>.

Brule. An Associated Press article published in *The Capital Times* of Madison, Wisconsin on June 7, 1928 (before President Coolidge's arrival in Brule for his summer vacation) reported that Hank

produced the famous



**BRSC Calendar:** All future in-person board meetings are cancelled until further notice. Meetings will be held via email.





## Brule River Sportsmen's Club Electronic Meeting Minutes September 28, 2020



President Dennis Pratt emailed the draft meeting notes to board members on September 28.

Minutes of the August Meeting: Motion was made to approve by Dean Wellman, seconded by Walt Swanson, and approved by majority vote.

Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's Reports: Financial Secretary Dean Wellman submitted his report to the board on September 28th. Deposits in the general fund totaled \$310 since the last meeting, and the Club had four new members. The Financial Secretary's Report was approved without changes by the board following a motion from Jeff Stollenwerk and a second by Mike Sierszen. Treasurer Jeff Stollenwerk reported to the board on September 28 that September's beginning balance was \$16,516.43 and the ending balance is \$16,513.49 with the following expenses: Pro Print (July and August newsletters – \$50.26); Katie Thompson (August and September newsletters – \$400); Northwestern High School scholarship – \$500; and Computing Done Right (annual website – \$287). The Treasurer's Report was approved without changes by the board following a motion by Dean Wellman and a second by Walt Swanson.

### Committee Reports

Habitat: Pratt visited our Beaupre habitat project site and found it free of beaver.

Legislative: Ken Lundberg received word from past board member Dave Zeug that the state was considering approval of a 48-acre parcel of land between Afterhours Road and the Brule River to add to the Brule River State Forest. Letters were sent to four State legislators with our support for this purchase.

Membership: Ed Chaplinski stated that he had talked to several anglers this past month that said they were intending to join the club.

Budget: Nothing new to report.

Scholarship: Committee chairman Mike states that Courtney Johnson has volunteered to be our liaison for the Northwestern High School scholarship.

Education: Nothing new to report.

Social Media: Website – Mike Zicus has completed a map with clickable photos of the Brule River that you can find at <https://brulerriversportsmensclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Map-with-photos.pdf>

Facebook – Pratt reported that we have placed three items on the Club's Facebook site this past month including a few fall photos and a short video of past board member Tom Bydalek poling his canoe upstream. Also answered a couple of inquiries.

### Other Business

**South Shore Grade Update** – Progress reported to our Club by DNR biologist Paul Piszczek on September 4:

*The temporary easement with Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) has gone through a couple of drafts during the summer. I received the most recent draft last Friday (August 28) and reviewed it this week. Overall, it is in decent shape. I have a call scheduled with CP the day after Labor Day, which will include a conversation about who will do the work. CP is expecting a contractor, whereas I was leaning toward DNR staff. Contractors will obviously come at a higher cost, require bidding, etc. Also, the scope of the easement needed to expand to include soils testing, which is appropriate. I discussed a soil testing plan with DNR remediation staff and have an approach that will suit our needs and help guide the decision regarding disposal location. I would use project funds for the soils testing, which I expect to be around \$5,000.*

*I have a verbal commitment from Stacy Dehne (DATCP engineer) to help with design (during winter), since Paul Johnson, our original design partner from NRCS, is retiring. A private contractor might be able to produce a design sooner than that, although likely at a higher cost...not necessarily planned for in my initial cost estimate.*

September minutes continued on pg. 3



September minutes from pg. 1

Although things are moving on this project, I can understand your frustrations about not being further along, particularly to the point of some on-the-groundwork. Thank you for your patience.

**Fly of the Month** – Dean Wellman reports that our October fly was submitted by Club member Rick Goddard called Hanks Creation. Our October newsletter will also present the incredibly unique history of that fly and Hank Denny as feature articles.

“Legend” from pg. 1

Cal-Mac. Introduced in 1910, the Cal-Mac was the forerunner of the commercial popper. It's (sic) flat face and forward facing painted eyes with miniature broom tail with hair wings swept back over the hook became its signature look.

Eventually, the South Bend Bait Company, South Bend, Indiana, commercially produced a fly popper using the Cal-Mac design.”



Two original Hank's Creations that belonged to Hester Holbrook Abrams. Courtesy of Amy Holbrook Abrams.

## More About Henry “Hank” Denny, His Creation

by Dean Wellman, BRSC Financial Secretary

First, I want to thank Richard Goddard for bringing Hank's Creation back to life. I met with Donna Bergsten, granddaughter of Henry “Hank” Denny after Richard sent the Club a package with copies of his Hank's Creation and the background information he'd compiled. Donna provided the following additional information, which I found fascinating.

The Hank's Creation was tied by famous local Brule guide Hank Denny. The following is a quote from a letter addressed to Henry on June 13, 1928, from one his guiding clients, John Stewart, who was close to President Coolidge, “I am greatly delighted to read in the newspapers and to learn from Washington that the President is going to Brule.”

“I immediately wrote to him and gave him a lot of dope. . . I have told the president about you, about my experiences with ‘Dad’ and Steve and how many very,

very delightful days I spent on that stream.”

When news hit Brule that President Coolidge was coming for the summer of 1928, the locals gathered at Denny's store to talk it over. Henry was quoted saying, as he pointed to the mounted trophies on the wall of his store, “If it's fishing the President wants, this is the place.”

Henry was famous for his skin-mounted fish on wood. His obituary stated, “He was probably more widely known among fishermen than any other living person in upper Wisconsin and his place in Brule was a gathering place for fishermen and sportsmen. His store was decorated with mounted fish, and his collection of mounted trout have been exhibited at the World's Fair and at numerous exhibitions given at cities.

Mr. Denny also built canoes and other river craft that were considered pieces

of workmanship. His name was indelibly written into the history of upper Wisconsin...”

Hank's Creation is mentioned in Sam Cook's 1986 book *Up North* in the chapter titled “Brule by Night” where he describes Steve Therrien fishing an angleton (large deer hair mouse) with Dave Spencer guiding. He later describes Spencer fishing a Hank's Creation with Therrien guiding.

Hank's Creation is also mentioned in Ross Fruen's 2018 *Boys of the Brule: Centuries of Comradery on Wisconsin's River of Presidents*. On page 86, Ross describes Hank's Creation this way: “It is the unholy co-conspirator of night fishing. It is the duckbill platypus of fishing lures. It is a child of the Hula Popper, and resembles a voodoo doll.”

What a great piece of Brule River history!

<b>BRSC Gift Store Order Form</b> (prices include shipping & handling)			
#	Item	Cost	Total
	Lower river map poster of Brule (36"x24")	\$30	
	BRSC baseball hat	\$25	
	Lower Brule River map	\$10	
	Upper Brule River map	\$10	
	Historical newsletter DVD	\$5	
	Framed Lower River Map (cannot be Shipped)	\$125	
<p><i>The Brule River Sportsmen's Club, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization defined by Chapter 501 (C) (3) of the IRS Tax Code.</i></p>			



**What We Do:**

**Fisheries Habitat Projects** — Club members and others volunteer during the summer months to restore features necessary for fish spawning, growing, and feeding.

**Clean-ups** — Keep the Brule clean and beautiful.

**Monthly Membership Meetings** — Frequently include guest speakers.

**Monthly Newsletter** — Helps generate understanding of fisheries and water quality, and keeps members and others informed about Club activities.

**Scholarship Program** — Provides financial support to students.

Newsletter editor: Katie Thompson (goirish@cheqnet.net)

**BRSC Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:**     Renewal (due January 1st)     New Membership

*Email newsletter only:*     \$20 – Individual     \$25 – Household

*Paper newsletter only:*     \$30 – Individual     \$35 – Household

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Donations**

College Scholarship \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 High School Scholarship \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Habitat \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 General \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Multiple \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Visit us online at [www.brulerriversportsmensclub.com](http://www.brulerriversportsmensclub.com)

All information contained herein is confidential.  
 All but \$1.00 of your membership dues is tax deductible.  
 Donations are 100 percent tax deductible.  
*Thank you for your support!*

<b>Officers</b>	<b>Board of Directors</b>
President — Dennis Pratt — prattd@charter.net Vice President — Ken Lundberg Financial Secretary — Dean Wellman Recording Secretary — Walt Swanson Treasurer — Jeff Stollenwerk	Ed Chaplinski                      Dennis Smet Paul Helbach                      Jim Waletzko Courtney Johnson                Mike Sierszen Mick Killoren                      Mike Zicus Glen Hill