



Joe Messinger, shown here at his tying bench around 1935

Known as the creator of the Irresistible Dry Fly

“Virtually every fly tyer who ties deer hair bass bugs knows about Joe Messinger.”



Blazer Joe Miller Messinger, Sr. 1892-1966

North Branch Susquehanna River & Morgantown, West Virginia

Joe Messinger Sr. was a resourceful and talented fly tier - a man who was told that he would be confined to a wheelchair or crutches the rest of his life due to serious war injuries. Yet, he brought to the fly-tying

world creations still popular for nearly a century! Reflecting on his dad's several years of undergoing surgeries and rehabilitation after World War I, his son, Joe Jr. (also a talented tier) explains "The doctors released him and told him to go chase rainbows, and that's just what he had in mind, but his rainbows were the finny variety." Catching fish and tying flies is a family tradition passed down from Joe Sr. to Joe Jr. and to his grandson.

Joe Messinger, Sr. had been tying flies before his military duty. After the war he remodeled his old Hudson automobile – into a tying facility. The backseat was removed and a tying bench was installed, complete with a dome light overhead. The car trunk held a chicken coop for live roosters. Yes, Joe Sr. plucked their hackles as needed.



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The Messinger Bucktail Frog

Joe Messinger Sr.'s Bucktail Frog has very likely received more attention and acclaim over the years than any other deer hair lure ever created. A Messinger Bucktail Frog, tied by his son Joe Jr., mounted in a shadow box along with Joe Sr.'s photo and a signature card, can bring hundreds of dollars at auction at Fly Fishing Conclaves – high praise for a well-known, legendary fly tier that passed away in 1966.

Most books on bass fishing and tying bass flies mention the Messinger Bucktail Frog and its evolutionary role in bass bug design. Stewart and Allen's landmark book, "Flies for Bass and Panfish" has a photograph of several bucktail frogs as the centerpiece of the cover. Four Messinger Frogs are featured in the "Frog Patterns" section - two versions by Joe Sr. and two by Joe Jr. In the "Insect Patterns" section Joe's Nitehummer, tied by Joe Jr., is also featured.



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