**Light Cahill (Dan Cahill)**

Hook: 900BL, sizes 12-20
 Thread: Pale yellow
 Wing: Mallard flank dyed woodduck, upright and divided (woodduck flank was originally used)
 Tail: Light ginger or cream hackle fibers
 Body: Light ginger or cream Super-fine
 Hackle: Light ginger or cream

**Quill Gordon (Theodore Gordon)**

Hook: 900BL, sizes 12-18
 Thread: Gray
 Wing: Mallard dyed woodduck, upright and divided
 Tail: Blue dun hackle fibers
 Body: Stripped peacock quill
 Hackle: Blue dun

**Hendrickson (Roy Steenrod, 1916)**

Hook: 900BL, sizes 12-16
 Thread: Gray or black
 Wing: Mallard flank dyed woodduck
 Tail: Dark blue dun hackle fibers
 Body: Dark gray, tan, or pinkish-tan dubbing
 Hackle: Dark blue dun

Note: Old-time standard-style adult imitation of *Ephemerella subvaria*, a major early-season hatch east of the Mississippi. Duns hatch in the afternoon, and spinners fall in the evening. This pattern is often referred to as a Dark Hendrickson.

Chapter 17

Light Cahill and Quill Gordon

It is believed that Dan Cahill first tied the Cahill around 1880 and that Theodore Gordon tied a variation of the Cahill and called it the Light Cahill around 1890. The pale cream dressing popular today is credited to William Chandler, who first fished it on the Neversink River in New York. The Light Cahill has been praised as “one of the best dry flies ever devised.” The Light Cahill is the preferred imitation during light-colored mayfly hatches, especially for *Stenonema canadense*, for which it was originally devised.

Theodore Gordon is believed to have first tied the Quill Gordon around 1890-1895. It was possibly designed to fish the *Iron fraudator* hatch, which is very closely related to *Epeorus pleuralis*. The Hendrickson, a similar pattern, comes to us from Roy Steenrod, circa 1916. It was first fished on the Beaverkill River in New York to imitate the female *Ephemerella subvaria*.

The Light Cahill, Quill Gordon, and Hendrickson embody the Catskill fly tying and angling tradition and have been praised as the “perfect flies.” Edward Hewitt, Herman Christian, Roy Steenrod, and Theodore Gordon are considered the founding fathers of the Catskill tradition. Anglers interested in learning more about Catskill fly tyers should read *Catskill Fly Tyer* by Harry Darbee with Mac Francis.

Many flies have been patterned after these early imitations, and, if you can tie the Light Cahill and Quill Gordon, you can tie many others. The only difference between the two is the construction of the body. The Light Cahill has a dubbed body, and the Quill Gordon has a stripped peacock quill body.

Tying a perfect stripped peacock quill body is difficult. There are several methods for eliminating the herl, including soaking peacock eyed tails in wax and then peeling them off, soaking them in a bleach solution, and using an eraser. All work, but, unless you have a lot of free time, buy them pre-stripped. If you are tying only a few I suggest scratching the herl off between your thumb and forefinger. This method insures that the quill is soft, easy to tie with, and of the best quality.

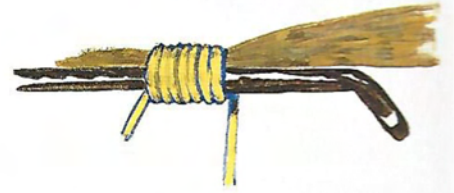
The eyed section of the tail offers the best barring, but the widest and easiest quills to use are found immediately below the eye. For larger flies, use two or three quills. Always tie them in toward the tips, but not too close to the ends because they are fragile and break easily as you wind them. Tying in toward the tips creates narrower segments toward the tail—just like the natural. Be certain you have a smooth, tapered



underbody. I often wrap additional thread or dub a *slight* amount of fur to smooth out the underbody.

Properly constructed quill bodies are smooth and slender. They appear much like a delicate mayfly body. When the fly is complete, treat the quill body with Flexament.

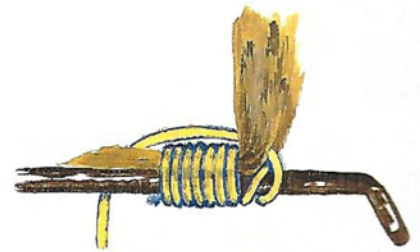
Tying instructions for the Light Cahill explain how to secure upright and divided feather wings. Pay close attention to proportion, which is critical for a well-balanced dry fly. Unlike most western-style dry flies, Catskill-style patterns are tied sparse and delicate. In addition, wings are usually a bit longer than normal and are cocked slightly forward.



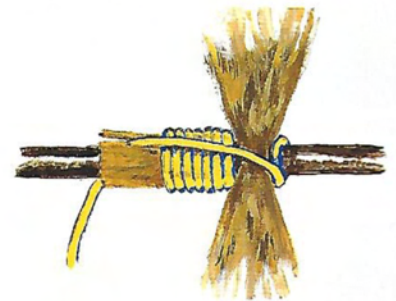
Thread is wrapped backwards and then forward.



Three to six turns of thread will hold the wings upright.



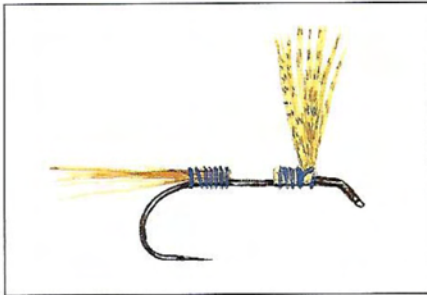
Divide wing with your finger. Place thread through wings into butts of tie down.



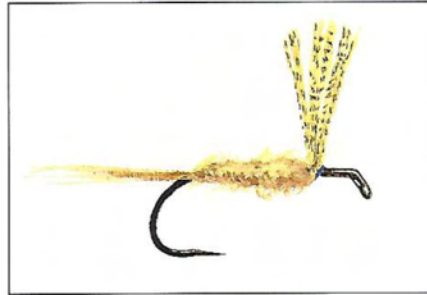
Thread hooks into butts of wing tie down.



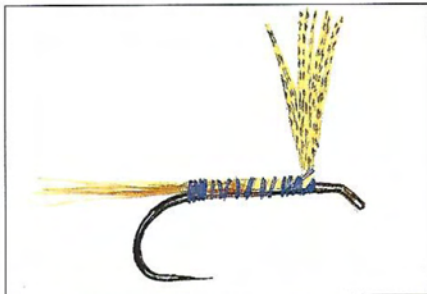
One oblong X of thread separates wing.



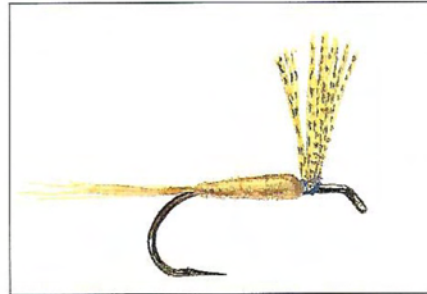
Incorrect wing and tail tie in. Note uneven body area.



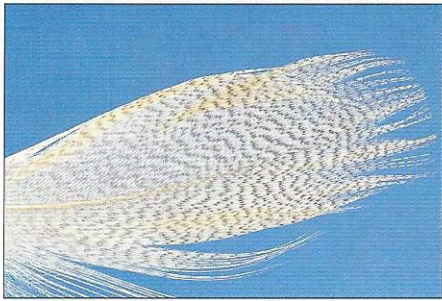
Incorrectly dubbed body. Dubbing is too fat and loose.



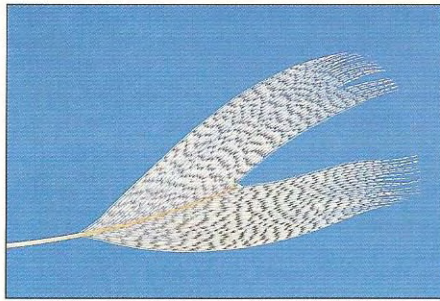
Correct wing and tail tie in. Body area is smooth and level.



Correctly dubbed body: smooth, slightly tapered, and tight.



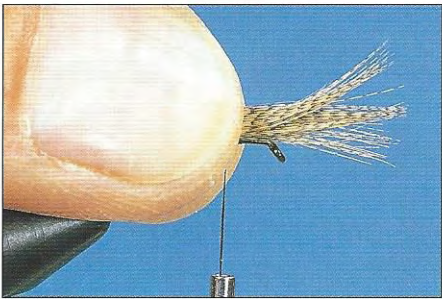
1. The Light Cahill has an upright and divided feather wing. Select a mallard feather with even tips.



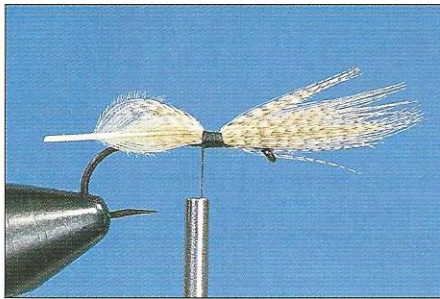
2. Cut out the center stem below height of wings. (You do not want stem in the wings.)



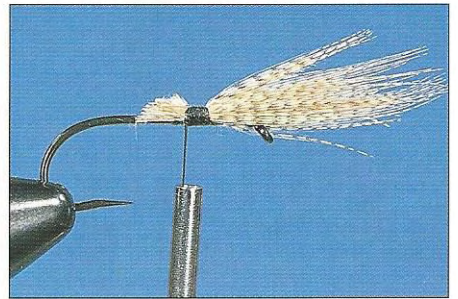
3. Stroke fibers together and, holding them in your right hand, measure them against the hook shank, ensuring that they are the proper length. They should be as tall as the hook shank is long.



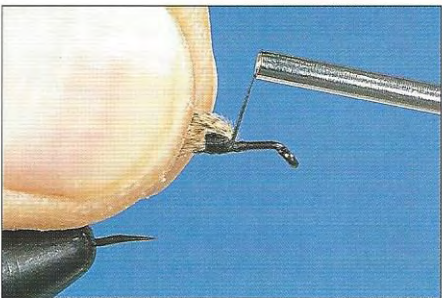
4. Change hands and position feathers at the 80-percent mark. Using the up-between-the-fingers technique, secure them in place. Note that feather tips are of equal length.



5. Feather has been tied in place on top of hook shank.



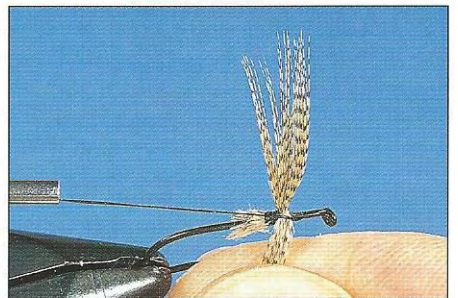
6. Trim butts off at an angle, but not too close to thread tie down. There must be enough to catch the thread when dividing the wings (see step 9).



7. Wrap thread against front of wing. Five wraps, properly placed, should do it. This thread has split. Twist the bobbin to tighten thread.



8. Wing has been positioned upright. Notice that there are very few wraps of thread in front of wing—every wrap should be effective.



9. Divide wing in half with your fingers. We are going to X thread between wings, catching back of the X in the butts. This will separate fibers into equal halves.



10. You will want to hold half the wing between your fingers as the "X" is placed. Wings can be slanted at any angle. After they have been tied in place, you can change the angle with your fingers or hackle placement.



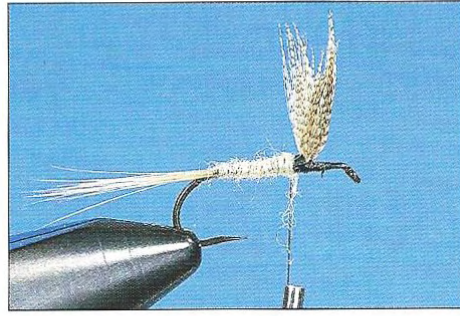
11. Front view of finished wings. A 30-degree spread is about right. Catskill style wings are slanted slightly forward and are about 20 percent longer than hackle. Notice that wings have been tied in place with a minimum amount of thread wraps.



12. Top view.



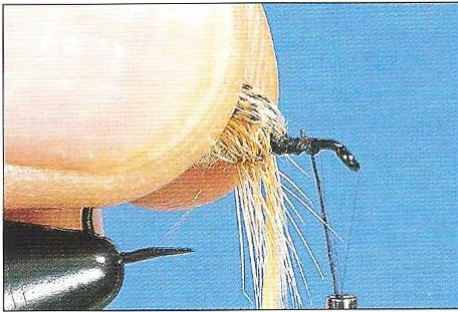
13. Select a bunch of hackle fibers and secure tail behind wing. Tail technique is identical to that of the Mosquito. Tail fibers fit snugly and evenly against wing tie in, creating a level underbody.



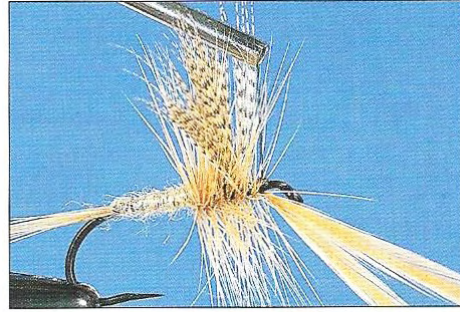
14. Dubbed body should be sparse and wrapped just short of wings. Remember that this is a size 10 hook. A size 14 would have a much smaller body diameter and sparser tail. Cream thread would normally be used and would not be visible through dubbing.



15. Prepare hackle and tie in behind wing. Two hackles are shown because this is a size 10 hook. It is wrapped standard style first behind and then in front of wing, dull side facing forward. Thread has been positioned at hackle tie-off area. Note stripped hackle stem at start.



16. Wrap hackle two to three times behind wing. Stroke wrap back away from wing and place first wrap of hackle tightly against front of wing.



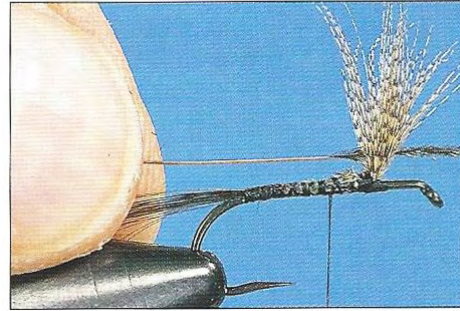
17. Hackle has been wrapped in front of wing. Trim butt close to hook shank.



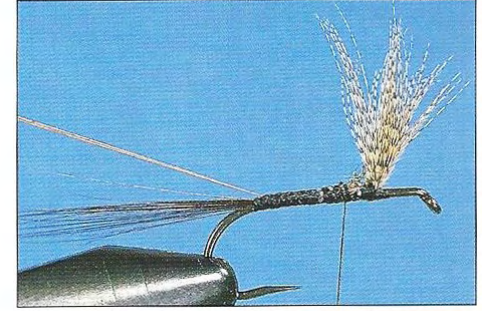
18. Notice that there are no errant fibers protruding from front of fly and that we switched to cream thread. Place about six wraps of thread at head area. Fly is complete.



19. To tie Quill Gordon, repeat steps 1 through 13. Select wide and strong peacock herl from just below eye on tail.



20. Using your thumbnail and first finger, rub off the herl as shown.



21. Tie in tip end of herl at tail area and position thread at body tie-off area. To make a nice quill body, you must have a smooth underbody.



22. This peacock quill was too short to handle with fingers, so we used hackle pliers.



23. Tie in hackle and position thread at tie-off area.



24. Wrap hackle, tie off, lacquer or Flexament body, and your Quill Gordon is complete.