

June, 2007

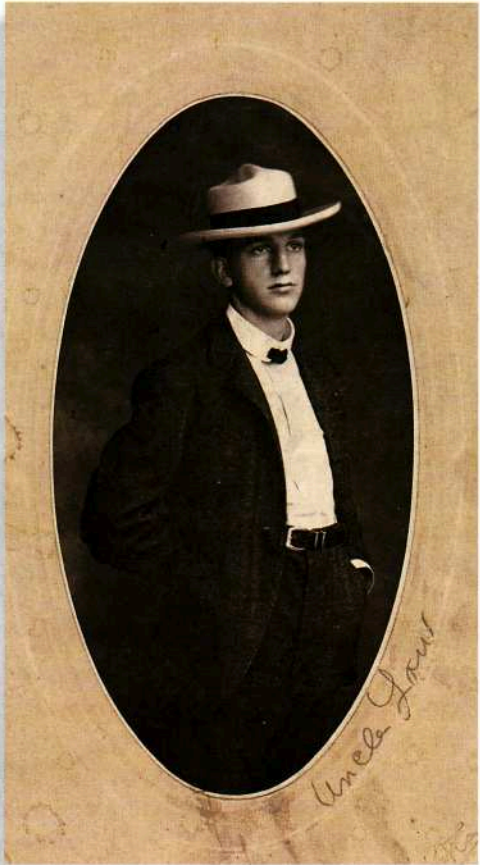
The National Fishing Lure Collectors Club

MAGAZINE

Lou J. Eppinger / The Weber Lifelike Fly Co. / The Clark Expert
A.G. Spalding / Ideal Solution? The Jersey Expert



LOU J. EPPINGER



An early photograph of a dapper Lou Eppinger, storeowner at age eighteen.

Sometimes you are blessed to be in the right place at the right time. For me, it was during a duck hunting trip in Manitoba when I took the day off to go fishing. It was one of those magnificent fall days with brilliant blue skies and racing white clouds. I was fishing patches of wild rice, catching smallmouth, walleye and northern on just about every cast. I threw crankbaits, spoons, spinner baits, and inline spinners with just about equal success...and then the wind came up. I didn't want to stop fishing, but I was finding it almost impossible to throw into the wind with my bait casting outfit. Backlashes were a problem, but the wind was also knocking down just about any lure I had been using. Finally, I tied on a one ounce red and white Dardevle and threw it straight into the wind. I snapped the cast to keep the lure low and was surprised to see the Dardevle cut through the air, flying straight to my target. I could see the lure pivot slightly as it was buffeted by the wind, but I was able to keep fishing.

I found a spot in ten to twelve feet of water over good weed cover where the northers were suspended and eagerly feeding. I switched colors from red and white to crackle frog to Eppinger's great crystal finish. Regardless of what color I used, my Dardevle and I spent the next two hours hammering northern pike, landing and releasing enough fish to finally tire me out. My three best fish of the afternoon were two northers that could have been twins, both measuring 41 inches, plus a full-bodied pike that taped at 45 inches!

That early October day was the best single day of northern pike fishing that I have ever experienced. The single key to my success that day was finding the right lure to fish with under incredibly difficult conditions. That lure was the Eppinger Dardevle.

The Dardevle was recently rated as the #2 best lure in John Merwin's April 2006 *Field & Stream* article entitled *50 Best Lures of all Time*, which stated that "the familiar red-and-white striped Dardevle is probably the world's most recognized fishing lure, just as effective now as it was a century ago when Lou Eppinger first started selling them". Dardevles are in just about every angler's tackle box for a good reason. These well-made spoons catch fish, and this is just as true today as it was in my father or grandfather's time.

Lou Eppinger was born Louis John Eppinger on November 14, 1877, and grew up in the German-American community called "Germantown" on what was then the east side of Detroit. His parents were Christian and Johanna Eppinger who had migrated from Germany to the United States in 1872. Christian was from Berlin and Johanna was from Alsace, an area bordering France and Germany. Christian and Johanna had five children before they immigrated to the United States. Two of these German-born children apparently died at an early age and two sons and one daughter stayed in Germany. Christian and Johanna had six more children after coming to Detroit - three sons, Herman, Louis and Edward, along with three daughters, Johanna, Emilie (Millie) and Mary (Mamie), so the Eppinger home must have been happy but noisy.

Young Lou Eppinger attended the local German Lutheran school and after

school often fished and hunted the local rural area. He fished inland lakes as well as the Detroit River, the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair, all great places to fish for panfish, walleyes, smallmouth bass, northerns, and muskies. During the fall, Lou built duck blinds on Belle Isle as well as running a trapline along the Detroit River near where Waterworks Park is currently located. He lived an idyllic life until age fourteen when he apprenticed to a local taxidermist and furrier whose small store was located on the corner of Chene and Charlevoix Avenues. Apparently, there was a good relationship between Lou and the taxidermist, because Lou inherited the business four years later in 1895 when his boss died. At the age of eighteen, Lou found himself the owner of the business.

The Eppinger taxidermy studio became a successful business and must have been an interesting place to work - one of the very few places where you could literally eat from the profits. Lou's nephew, Ed Jr., remembered, "Come the fall we used to skin out the ducks. Lou's girlfriend, Betty, would put them in the oven on a low fire. Lou and Betty would go to the track and when they returned we had enough roast duck to feed the neighborhood."

In going through Lou's 1905 notebook, I found that they mounted a wide assortment of animals in head, shoulder and full mounts. They also made rugs out of various skins, robes out of sheepskins and muffs out of smaller pelts. Lou listed the more common four-legged critters such as bear, raccoon, deer, caribou, skunk, woodchuck, fox and sable plus some unusual ones - badger, lemur, gazelle, green monkeys, and dogs and cats! The studio also mounted a variety of birds such as pheasant, grouse, woodcock, osprey, and ducks of all kinds, as well as, many kinds of fish. Lou also bought other items when the opportunity came through the store's front door. His 1905 notes show that he purchased different kinds of tanned skins from trappers and that he also purchased a collection of Indian artifacts.

Taxidermy was for the most part a seasonal business - if it wasn't fishing or hunting season, business was slow. Lou decided that something else was needed, so in 1910 he took

The Perils of Retailing

Detroit Herald - 1944

Ed Eppinger, the sporting goods expert, was a bit startled the other day when an irate lady came bustling into the shop. "I want my dog!" she demanded. "Somebody stole it a month ago and now it's in your window, sleeping!"

"But lady," sighed Ed, "we don't have your dog. That's OUR dog."

"It's MY dog," insisted the lady. "I ought to know my own dog. If you think it's your dog show me the pedigree papers!"

"But lady," Ed began, and that's as far as he got. The woman turned on another storm of accusation. Finally Ed had to go outside with her and point out that the dog was not sleeping but stuffed, and that it had been stuffed at least 20 years ago. She left, still a little suspicious.

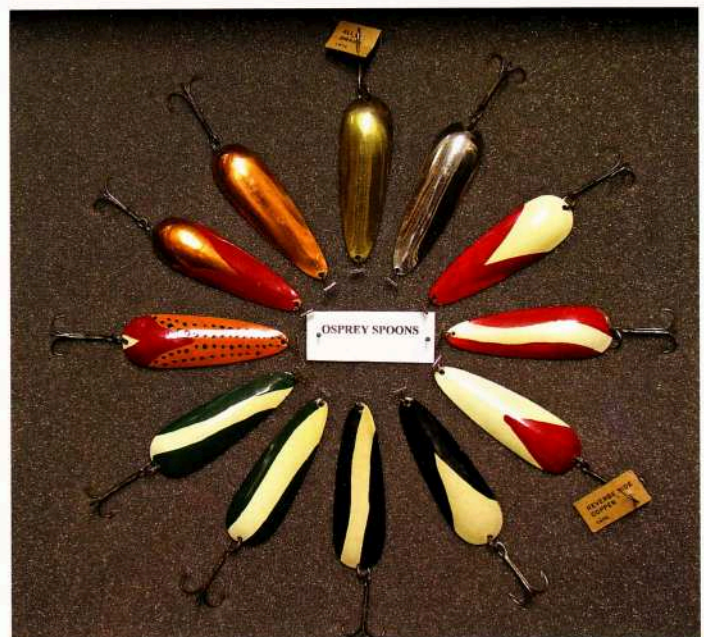
\$25 and bought a small selection of fishing tackle that he hoped would appeal to the sportsmen who were already coming into his store for his taxidermy. Sales quickly picked up, and the fishing side of the business grew as he added more and more to his selection of fishing products.

The famous Eppinger Osprey spoon was introduced during this period. There are a number of different stories of when and how the lure was developed, and the facts are somewhat muddled. The first version of the story comes from Harvey W. Thompson's book *The Spooners*, published in 1979 by the Eppinger Manufacturing Company. Author Thompson relates "the young taxidermist-fishing tackle merchant, who had never had a vacation, found himself, in the year 1906, deep in the Ontario bush. He was taking a month's leave of absence to visit those wilderness lakes and soak in the solitude." Lou camped on small islands seeing no one for days at a time. He fished in the shallows for Northern Pike using the lure he found most successful - the one that he had made himself. That winter Lou worked on a number of prototypes, changing the curves and thickness to improve on his original attempt. He named the lure... "after the best fisherman I ever saw, soaring high above those northern lakes - the Osprey."

The second version of the Dardevle story comes from a fascinating account that Lou Eppinger wrote in 1956, two years before his death. *The History of the Dardevle* recounts that the discovery of the Dardevle "was the result of many



Backside marking of the Osprey spoon.



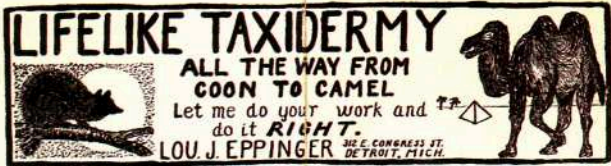
A color collection of Osprey spoons.

LIFELIKE TAXIDERMISTRY

ALL THE WAY FROM
COON TO CAMEL

Let me do your work and
do it RIGHT.

77
JUL 6 CONGRESS ST.
DETROIT, MICH.



Prices for Mounting Deer Heads

Deer Head—Without Neck	\$12.00
Short Neck	15.00
Long Neck Mount	20.00
Semi Shoulder Mount	25.00
Special Mount, De Leane	30.00

Prices for Mounting Mammals

Virginia Deer	\$100.00
Wild Cat, Oodot and Lynx	\$20.00 to 35.00
Domestic Cat—Paid in advance	35.00
Fox, Raccoon, Otter, Beaver	25.00 to 28.00
Mink, Ferret	7.00 to 10.00
Weasel, Fox and Gray Squirrel	6.00 to 7.00
Skunk	25.00
Bad, Mole, Chipmunk and Flying Squirrel, Red Squirrel	4.00 to 5.00
Dogs—Paid in advance	35.00 to 100.00
Wood Chuck	15.00 to 20.00

Prices for Rug Work

Prices include tanning, mounting, brad, lining, etc.

Black Bear—Closed Mouth	\$25.00 to \$40.00
Open Mouth	35.00 to 50.00
Mountain Lion—Closed Mouth	25.00 to 35.00
Open Mouth	35.00 to 50.00
Coyote, Wolf and Lynx—Closed Mouth	15.00 to 25.00
Open Mouth	25.00 to 35.00
Fox, Wild Cat, Coon—Closed Mouth	15.00 to 25.00
Open Mouth	20.00 to 25.00

Prices for Mounting Fish and Reptiles

Trout	\$20.00 to \$40.00
Black Bass	15.00 to 25.00
Pickered, Pike	10.00 to 40.00
Muskegong	20.00 to 40.00
Alligators, small size	10.00 and Up
Alligators, large size	25.00 and Up
Fish Heads	10.00 and Up

When sending specimens for mounting, a cash deposit must accompany order.

Above prices on Fish include painting and panel.

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Eppinger Lifelike Taxidermy price list, all the way from Coon to Camel.



OSPREY DARDEVLE
DETROIT, MICH.

*It took me six years
to find out about this bait!*
Lou J. Eppinger

"Yes, sir; that's the gospel truth.
"Six years ago a fellow came into my sporting goods store asking for a split ring and a treble hook.
"I thought nothing about it, but pretty soon in come some more fellows for more split rings and treble hooks.

Bulletin!
Big catches of Lake Trout reported from Canada, on our old copper Dardevles, some 20-pounders in the lot.

Big strings of Wall-Eyes and Great Northern Pike being taken on the Dardevle at Houghton Lake, Mich.

ing them to his friends, and then to their

For Expert Taxidermy—Send Your Trophies Here

The sportsman who has traveled hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles and spent much money in railroad fares, licenses, guide hire, etc. to secure a cherished trophy, will do well to select with thought the taxidermist in whose hands the hard-earned trophy is placed for mounting. Be assured that work sent here will be cared for with all the thought and experience known to the art of taxidermy, that it will be treated out promptly, and with a life-likeness and durability that customers tell us is rarely duplicated.

Whether the subject is a lovely record moose head, or a tiny bird or fish, our pride is to turn out work that will be a lasting memorial to the prowess of the sportsman and to the skill of our workman.

Decide to have at least one trophy mounted each year. With every passing season your collection of trophies will acquire greater value, both practical and sentimental. There are no decorations for den or dining-room that are so virile and manly in character as the "trophies of the chase." Start this season. Send it to us. Send for catalog today.

Send today for Your Osprey Silk Casting Line

Orlando, Fla., April 22, '19.
Lou J. Eppinger
Detroit, Mich.
Dear Sir:—

I am sending you a picture of a Large Mouth Black Bass that I caught April 18th, 1919, on an Osprey line I got from you. I have been using your lines now for 2 years. This fish weighed thirteen (13) pounds on tested scales and came to my net without any harm to the fish. I was with you when I caught him. Yours truly,
Arthur Butts.

"OSPREY" lines are waterproofed so they won't rot, are braided so they shoot through the guides like greased lightning, and are guaranteed to stand anything excepting rough or cracked guides. "Osprey" lines have stood the test for ten years.

STOCK UP NOW!
PRICES ADVANCE JAN. 1st!

Present prices are

15-lb. test	\$1.25	20-lb. test	\$1.50
20-lb. "	1.65	25-lb. "	1.80
30-lb. "	2.00	Post Paid	

The 26 and 30-lb. test are suitable for salt water fishing as well as muskellunge and other large fish. Satisfaction guaranteed. Write for samples and price sheet.

LOU J. EPPINGER
68 East Congress Street, Dept. C, Detroit, Mich.

An early Eppinger Dardevle advertisement from the October 1919 Field and Stream.

years of experimentation. The object was to create and to produce a swimming lure that the fisherman could cast without continuous backlashing. At that period, 1907-1910, there were no artificial lures with action. The Wilson Wobbler was produced later. To my knowledge, the first action lure produced, however, had only a slight wiggle, and due to its bulk was difficult to cast, especially for the beginner, for whom it produced many backlashes and headaches. Wooden plugs were too bulky and too light, and could not be cast into the wind without the resultant back-lash. Therefore, a lure that would cut through the air and wind and also have action was the answer."

According to *The History of the Dardevle*, Lou produced many prototypes through 1916 with different shapes and weights. One version with a turned down nose, dived to six feet with a wiggle so active it almost shook the rod out of the angler's hands. Sometime late in 1916 or early 1917, Eppinger was satisfied that the present shape of the Dardevle was the answer. Any beginner could easily cast it, and the depth of the lure was easy to control. The Dardevle would wiggle slowly with a slow retrieve and fast with fast retrieve. The lure was originally introduced in the Eppinger retail store and to other sporting goods dealers in 1917 or 1918, and as Lou stated, "Believe me, it required a lot of selling to get 75¢ for that piece of iron."

The third version of the Dardevle story comes from the first ads that Eppinger ran in *Field and Stream* starting in 1919 and 1920. Lou's good friend, Jack Macy, who was the western advertising manager of *Field and Stream* magazine, created these ads. In the ad, Eppinger recounts the story about fishermen who were coming into his store to buy replacement treble hooks and split rings. This went on for several years until Lou asked them what they were doing with them, "but none of them would say anythin' - only grin and look wise." Lou investigated and found that one of his old customers had been making a "mystery spoon" and was selling it to his friends until finally just about everybody in Detroit was fishing with the lure. He made arrangements with the "old customer" to purchase the rights to the spoon and put the lure on the market, thus the 1920 ad's opening line - "It took six years to get this bait on the market, but now - Oh boy!"

The last version of the Dardevle story comes from a letter written in 1995 by ninety-year-old Leslie Eppinger, who was one of Lou's children. The letter was written to Karen Eppinger, Lou's grandniece and president of Eppinger Manufacturing Company today. Leslie tells that when he was twelve years old he was out visiting a buddy one day. There were three or four men in his buddy's backyard standing around a blacksmith's anvil. "On it was a block of steel. One of the men put a piece of oval shaped brass on it. Then he put another piece of steel on top of that and hit the plate of steel with a large sledgehammer several times. When the plate was removed, the flat piece of brass was now spoon-shaped. I asked what it was and was told it was a spoon. I thought what a funny thing to eat with and thought nothing more about it."

"When I was 14, I started going to Cass Tech High School and your dad [Ed Eppinger Jr., Lou's nephew] also started there. Since we were downtown, we started working at my father's store after school. It only paid 25¢ an hour, but it was big money for us then. We swept floors, cleaned unspeakably filthy toilets, sinks, and cuspidors, bailed scrap paper, and trapped RATS! Your dad and I became very close friends and buddies, for many years afterwards."

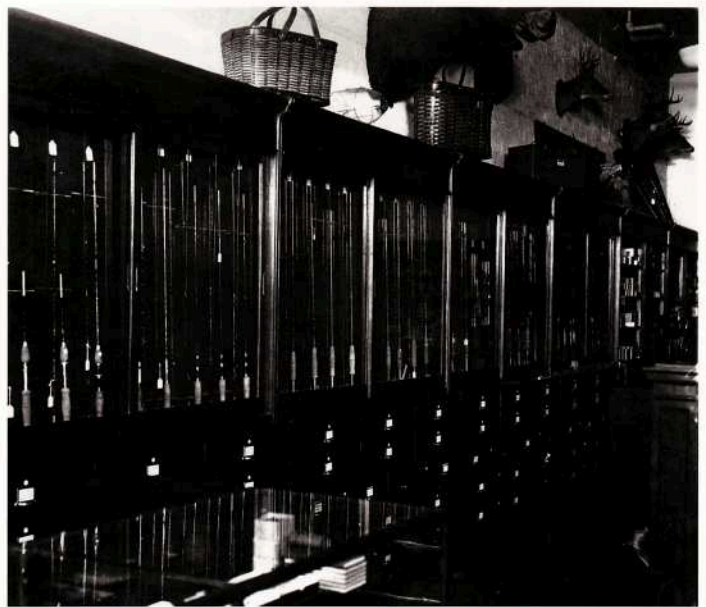
"But, back to the Dardevle. My father taught me to fish when I was only 7 years old. I learned to bait cast and I used every bait in his box. There were only wooden baits then and various spinners of every kind and size. So, when I was working at the store as I mentioned above, my father showed me that same spoon that I had seen in 1917. He called it 'Dardevle,' and said it was a 'killer,' and that he had bought the rights to it from a Mr. Simonsen, and was advertising it in sports magazines."

The origins of the Osprey spoon and when it was first introduced will probably never be fully known. The facts are probably a mixture of these different stories - that Lou had been working on the idea for a casting spoon for many years and that he had purchased a spoon from a local Detroit angler-inventor. I believe that Lou took all the ideas, created prototypes, and eventually produced his great fish-catching spoon, which he initially called the Osprey.

Lou Eppinger was a great promoter and the next step that he took helped shape the success of the growing Eppinger business. He changed the name of the Osprey spoon to Dardevle. The lure was named after the 4th Marine Brigade, which had performed so gallantly during WWI. After the bitter fighting in Belleau Woods during June 1918, captured German soldiers stated that the Marines had fought like "teufel hunden," the legendary wild, devil dogs that at one time roamed the forests of northern Germany. The Germans called the Marines "Devil Dogs" and the allies called them "Dare Devils". Lou took the name and changed the spelling to Dardevle, supposedly to make church folk, who objected to seeing the word devil in print, happy.

The very first Osprey colors were black and white chunk and black and white stripe! Lou felt that all an angler needed was the black and white color combination, but he quickly responded to customer requests and added green and white, green and red, frog, all nickel, all copper, and of course, the famous red and white. Dardevle quality also was a key to the company's success. They have always used the best metals and soon developed the finest painted colors and finishes in the fishing tackle business.

His next major step was to start heavy advertising on a national basis. The *Field and Stream* ads were initially two-thirds of a page, an amazingly large ad for a single Detroit sporting goods store to run promoting an unknown lure. Lou supposedly invested \$27,000 the first year in a national campaign promoting the "Osprey Dardevle" spoon, Osprey silk casting line, Nostealum bait hooks, as well as his taxidermy services. But Lou's emphasis was always on the Dardevle with his goal being "Dardevles in every tackle box." In that first year, lure sales went from 500 to 6,000



A view of the Eppinger's Cadillac Square retail store, the outfitting headquarters for Detroit-area sportsmen.

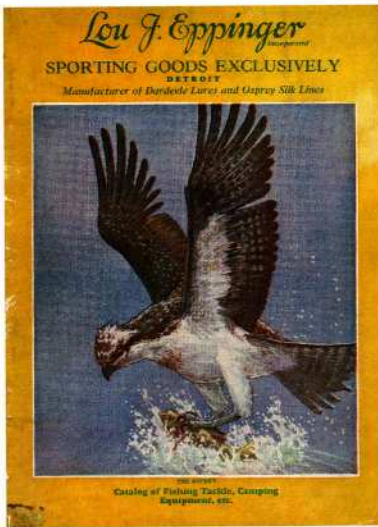


A view of Eppinger's third floor Woodland Lodge, gathering spot for like-minded conservation groups and sportsmen.

spoons and continued to increase as more and more people caught fish and told their friends.

It was a great time to be selling sporting goods, especially fishing tackle. Soldiers were returning to civilian life after WWI with money in their pockets, and they spent a lot of it on fishing and camping equipment. The second huge factor was the automobile, which transformed the American way of life. After WWI, the numbers of automobiles exploded and Americans took to the roads by the millions, camping and fishing across the country.

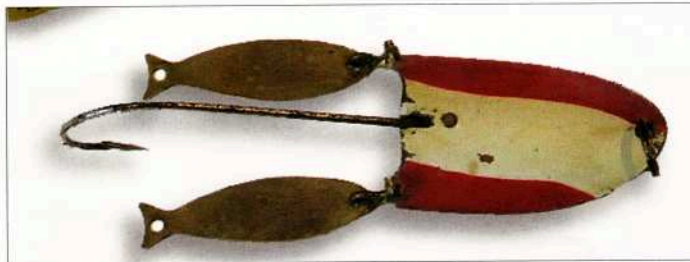
In 1925, Lou moved the business from 310 Congress Street to 131-137 Cadillac Square in downtown Detroit. This was a four-story building with a basement and plenty of room for the sporting goods store, taxidermy, a shooting range and for lure manufacturing. The second floor was called the "Woodland Lodge." Its walls were lined with logs,



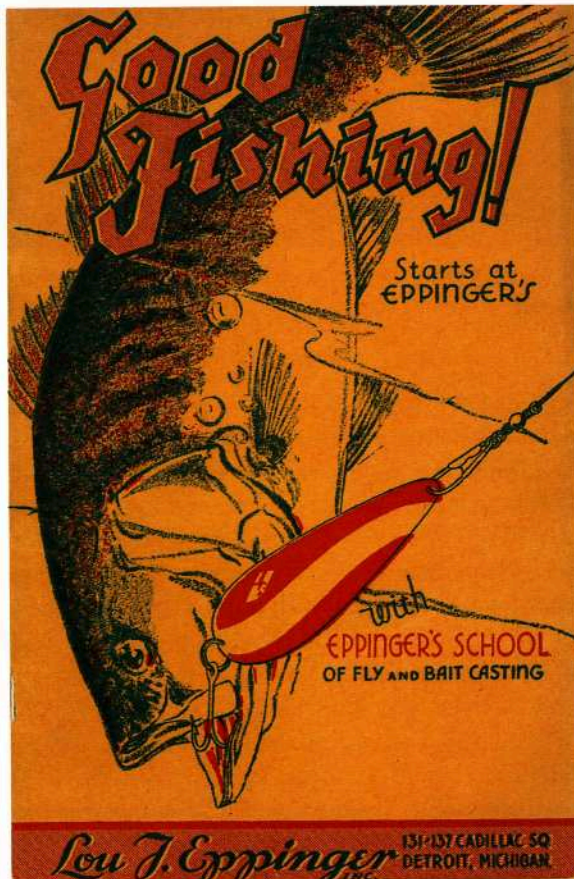
Cover of the Eppinger 1930 mail-order catalog. 52 pages filled with fishing, camping and hunting equipment.



Ozark Ripley Dardevle ad, April 1928 *Field & Stream*.



A hard to find Dardevle Klinker.



Cover of the *Good Fishing* booklet from about 1934.

and it contained a small log cabin office. This large room was filled with mounted deer, ducks, and fish as well as displays of woods boats and outboard motors, camping tents and equipment and fishing tackle. The spacious room was also used as a meeting room for outdoor groups who met evenings to listen to different speakers, discuss their favorite sports, view outdoor films or just to socialize. Lou also helped to organize the Shiawasee Club and the Isaak Walton League, with meetings for both groups being held in the lodge.

The new Eppinger sporting goods store proved to be a great location and sales prospered, and perhaps it didn't hurt that it was located across the street from a Detroit burlesque theater! Lou added spring-summer and fall-winter mail order catalogs advertising the extensive line of products that were carried throughout the store. The first catalog that I found was from 1925, and it promoted Dardevles, Osprey Notangle spinners, Osprey Nostealum hooks, an assortment of Osprey fishing lines, Goodwin Granger bamboo casting rods and fly rods, plus a small assortment of other accessories. By 1930, the spring-summer catalogs had expanded to include a full line of brand name reels, rods, lures, and accessories besides the Dardevle and Osprey private label items. The catalog also contained leather boots, waders, knives, camping equipment, wood boats and canoes, hunting clothes, rifles, shotguns and ammunition.

Lou also surrounded himself with good people including his nephew Ed Jr., who went to work for him in 1918 at the age of thirteen. Ed Jr. started out his budding career as a newsboy at age seven, and a year later he went to work for his uncle, Hazen VanVliet, who sold fruits and vegetables out of a "huckster wagon" that he drove through Detroit's residential neighborhoods. During the summers of 1915 and 1916, he worked on a farm near Winan's Lake, and in 1917 Ed got a year around job at C. F. Smith's Grocery working from 3:30 PM to 8:00 PM after school during the week and from 7:30 AM to 10:00 PM on Saturdays. Grocer Smith paid Ed \$1.50 a week plus a modest amount of good food to take home! In October of 1918 Ed felt he was underpaid and asked for wage increase to \$2.50 a week plus the food bonus for his thirty-six hours of labor. He was turned down and immediately quit the grocery business. The next day Ed asked his uncle Lou for a job, and Lou hired him for 25¢ an hour. Ed Jr. didn't know it then, but that day became the first day of his life's career.

Lou also worked with many outdoor writers to help promote the Dardevle. One of the best-known writers that he worked with was John B. Thompson who was known as "Ozark Ripley." They became fishing companions and life-long friends. "Ozark" sang the praises of the Dardevle in the stories that he wrote for national outdoor magazines. Eppinger also ran several ads during 1928 that highlighted a photo of the writer along with the caption, "Ozark Ripley Uses the Dardevle," and then went on to state, "Ozark Ripley - expert angler, lecturer and noted writer on angling subjects in the sporting press - became a died-in-the-wool enthusiast over the Dardevle lures on a recent Canadian

trip." The two of them also came up with a spinner and spoon combination called "The Ozark Ripley," which was a spinner rigged on a short wire leader in front of a 3/5-ounce Dardevlet or a 1-ounce Dardevle spoon. "The Ozark Ripley" appeared in the 1925 Eppinger mail-order catalog, but was gone by 1930. I have not seen it in any other catalogs or Dardevle ads, so it is an extremely rare Eppinger item.

Eppinger also started publishing a free annual booklet during the late 1920s that was initially called *Fisherman's Luck*. All the angler had to do was clip the coupon from one of the Eppinger magazine ads and mail it in to receive the booklet. The booklets were also handed out at sport shows and given away at the store. The 24-page *Fisherman's Luck* booklet was a combination of Dardevle items and some outdoor hints and stories. The booklet was continued through the 1980s and eventually evolved into an annual booklet of products and outdoor stories extolling the many virtues of the Dardevle. Many well-known outdoor writers, including Dave Richey, Al Spiers, Homer Circle, Ron Shara, Jack Perry, Tom Opre, Boyd Pfeiffer, Mark Sosin, Harold Blaisdell, and Buck Rogers, contributed stories over the years.

Eppinger only patented three lures. The first bait was the Notangle spinner, which they still sell today. The Notangle spinner patent, #1515849, was filed for on February 17, 1923, and issued on November 18, 1924. It was initially offered in ten colors and came in an attractive two-piece cardboard box. Their second patented lure was the hard-to-find Klinker spoon - a "three-in-one bait that Klinks to wake up the sleepy big lunkers." The Klinker's patent, #1997802, was filed for on December 1, 1931, and issued on April 16, 1935. The Klinker was originally available in six colors and came packaged in a printed two-piece cardboard box. Eppinger also patented the attractive Winged Dardevle, patent #2197209, which was filed for on January 23, 1939 and issued on April 16, 1940. The Winged Dardevle came in four sizes: the 1/2 ounce Winged Dardevle Imp, the 5/8 ounce Winged Dardevlet, the 1 ounce Winged Dardevle and the 2 ounce Winged Husky Devle. The Winged Dardevle came in a wide array of colors and was packed in the Eppinger two-piece cardboard box. The Winged Dardevle was difficult to make and was discontinued after about twelve years and replaced by the weedless Dardevle, a much easier bait to assemble.

Eppinger also patented the process for making their glittering electroplated crystal finish. This patent, #2657495, was applied for on September 10, 1949 and issued on November 3, 1953. They initially offered Crystal Dardevles in three colors: silver pearl (silver), the hard-to-find light gold (bronze) and dark gold (copper). The first ad that I found advertising these beautiful spoons was in the March 1951 issue of *Field and Stream* magazine. Eppinger no longer catalogs the Crystal Dardevles because the process has become too complicated and expensive. Eppinger, however, does have some crystal finish spoons available in stock and can be contacted directly to find out what sizes and colors are still available.

For the most Beautiful fishing fun ever...

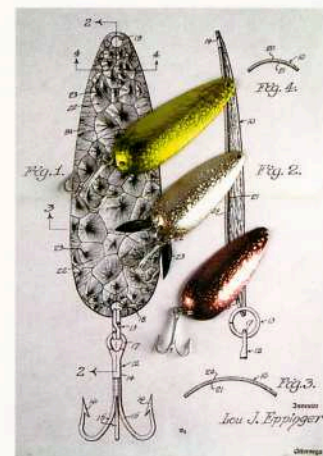
Crystal DARDEVLE 1 oz. \$1.25
Crystal DARDEVLET 3/5 oz. \$1.25
Crystal DARDEVLET IMP 2 5/8 oz. \$1.15

Thousands of fishermen have now discovered this new, amazingly effective DARDEVLE. A rainbow beauty for easy casting. Electroplated finish is chip, rust, salt proof.

ORDER NOW FOR THE SEASON!
Write for FREE catalog

LOU J. EPPINGER MFG. CO.
757 PURITAN AVE., DEPT. C-3, DETROIT 3, MICH.

A Genuine Crystal Finish Dardevle ad from the March 1951 *Field & Stream* magazine.



All three Crystal Finish colors arrayed on the patent drawing.



Winged Dardevles, produced from 1939 through the early 1950's.

187 LOU J. EPPINGER, SPORTING GOODS, DETROIT, MICH.

PRICES OF OSPREY WATERPROOF SILK CASTING LINES

Furnished in Black and Mottled White and Black Colors

50 Yard Spools, 100 Yards Conventional

12-pound test, \$4.25	per spool of 50 yards
15-pound test, 5.50	per spool of 50 yards
18-pound test, 7.25	per spool of 50 yards
20-pound test, 8.50	per spool of 50 yards
25-pound test, 11.00	per spool of 50 yards
30-pound test, 13.50	per spool of 50 yards
35-pound test, 16.00	per spool of 50 yards
40-pound test, 18.50	per spool of 50 yards
45-pound test, 21.00	per spool of 50 yards
50-pound test, 23.50	per spool of 50 yards
55-pound test, 26.00	per spool of 50 yards
60-pound test, 28.50	per spool of 50 yards
65-pound test, 31.00	per spool of 50 yards
70-pound test, 33.50	per spool of 50 yards
75-pound test, 36.00	per spool of 50 yards
80-pound test, 38.50	per spool of 50 yards
85-pound test, 41.00	per spool of 50 yards
90-pound test, 43.50	per spool of 50 yards
95-pound test, 46.00	per spool of 50 yards
100-pound test, 48.50	per spool of 50 yards

Important

The 9-pound test line is designed for baits weighing 1/4 oz. or under.

The 12-pound test lines are designed for casting baits under one-half ounce.

The 15-pound test lines are designed for one-half ounce baits.

The 20-pound test will handle any bait from one-half to one ounce, and up to 10 minutes.

The 25-pound and 30-pound lines are designed for heavy action, particularly in strong currents and deep water, where heavy casters are used, and also due to the waterproofing and special braiding, are just right for baits like the Dardevle, and will hold any fishing fish.

The 35-pound and 40-pound lines are designed for Mosky Lake Trout, trolling and casting, also for Salt Water Fish of all kinds.

Guarantee

I guarantee Osprey Lines to give absolute satisfaction when used as per above specifications, in connection with agar or metal guides, which are neither cracked nor rough.

Osprey Lines will not become frayed unless run over sharp surfaces, so be sure to examine your guides at the first sign of the line becoming frayed, or better still, examine the guide line.

Osprey Lines have been used by fishermen all over the world for thirty years, and the foregoing hope is a synopsis of experience of all kinds of fishermen.

Should any Osprey Line fail to deliver when used as per recommendations, I cheerfully require that the line be returned for examination and replacement without charge, return on original spool if possible.

Our waterproofing is such that it not only prevents the silk from deteriorating, but also keeps the line in the event that the line runs through the guides more freely, thereby reducing backlashes to a minimum.

The black and the mottled Osprey Lines are identical excepting as to color, and if you have a preference, mention either Black Osprey or Mottled Osprey.

TEN PATENTED NOTANGLE DESIGNS TO CHOOSE FROM

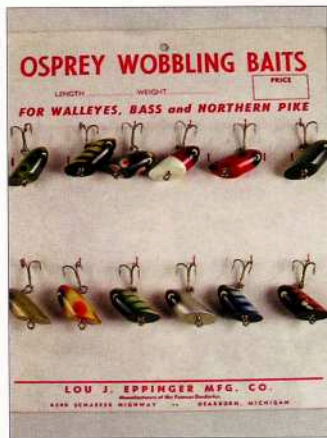
- No. 401-600 Nickel—Reverse Side: Black with White Check.
- No. 402-602 Nickel—Reverse Side: Black with White Stripe.
- No. 415-615 Nickel—Reverse Side: Frog Coloration.
- No. 416-616 Nickel—Reverse Side: Red with White Check.
- No. 416-616 Nickel—Reverse Side: Red with White Stripe.
- No. 425-625 Polished Nickel—Both Sides.
- No. 425-625 Polished Brass—Both Sides.
- No. 424-624 Polished Copper—Both Sides.
- No. 425-625 Nickel—Reverse Side: Yellow Black Spots with Red Check.
- No. 411-611 Polished Nickel—Reverse Side: Copper.

PRICE FIFTY CENTS

Notangle Spinners from the 1925 fall mail-order catalog.



An Eppinger Osprey Pencil Plug catalog sheet with two beautiful examples of this wood bait.



A card of 12 Osprey Wobbling Baits, used on the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers for walleyes.



Three beautifully painted Eppinger Osprey 3/8 ounce Bass Plugs.



Eppinger's School Striper Lure, a half ounce Pencil Plug with saltwater tinned hooks.



An assortment of trophy fish pictures and letters of appreciation from successful Dardevle anglers.

Not many collectors, other than Detroit area anglers, are aware that Eppinger, starting in 1957, also sold wooden baits for sixteen years. They made several styles of wood lures that were popular with the anglers who fished the fast running St. Clair and Detroit Rivers for walleyes. These were 1/4 ounce, 1/2 ounce, and 5/8 ounce Osprey Pencil Plugs, 1/3 ounce Little Louie wobblers, Osprey Wobbling Baits, and 3/8 ounce Osprey Bass Plugs, which were similar in size and shape to South Bend's Babe Oreno. All of these lures came mounted twelve baits to a cardboard card and were available in twelve to twenty colors depending upon the style. Eppinger also sold the 1/2 ounce School Striper Lure for salt-water fishing, which was their 1/2 ounce Pencil Plug but with saltwater tinned hooks and packaged in a square-sided plastic tube. All of the Eppinger wood lures were made outside the plant by the Eppinger plant manager, Ed Jurawitz, on a contract basis. He did, however, paint the wooden lures with the same paints as Eppinger normally used on their metal lures, so if you are lucky to find one of them, it will have a beautifully vivid painted finish.

Eppinger ran into difficult times during the Depression when sales plummeted to less than half, and they were forced to cut retail prices to 50¢ and 60¢ a each, barely above cost. During this grim period, Lou, Ed Jr. and the rest of their crew worked long hours at reduced wages to keep their business afloat. By 1935, the hard work paid off as the U. S. economy started its recovery and sales increased to pre-Depression levels. Sales continued to improve doubling by the end of the decade. Then came the second hard blow - World War II! Since brass and copper materials were needed for the war effort, the production of lures almost ceased. The few lures that were produced were made out of cheap steel substitutes and fished poorly. The retail store's sales fell as the supply of saleable products dried up and the taxidermy shop was shut down as a non-essential business - certainly a bleak period for Eppinger.

By contrast, the post-war period was a time of pent-up demand as servicemen returned home and sales flourished for Eppinger. The Cadillac Square facility was outgrown and the retail store moved to 4404 Woodward, across from the Detroit convention center. A wholesale sporting goods business was started at the same time. By 1952, lure sales had increased to the point that lure production was moved to a separate facility at 1757 Puritan Avenue.

Lou started easing out of the business during WWII, spending more of his time in Florida. He left Ed Jr. in charge and made him a partner during this period. They worked out a buy/sell agreement in the early 1950s permitting Ed to purchase Lou's holdings, a reorganization that conveyed ownership of the retail store and the wholesale company to other family members and gave Ed, Jr. ownership of the lure manufacturing side of the business. Lou's death on March 29, 1958 at his home in West Palm Beach, Florida marked the passing of one of the major pioneers in American fishing tackle.

Ed Jr.'s hard work and special talents for manufacturing, promoting and selling fishing tackle brought increased sales

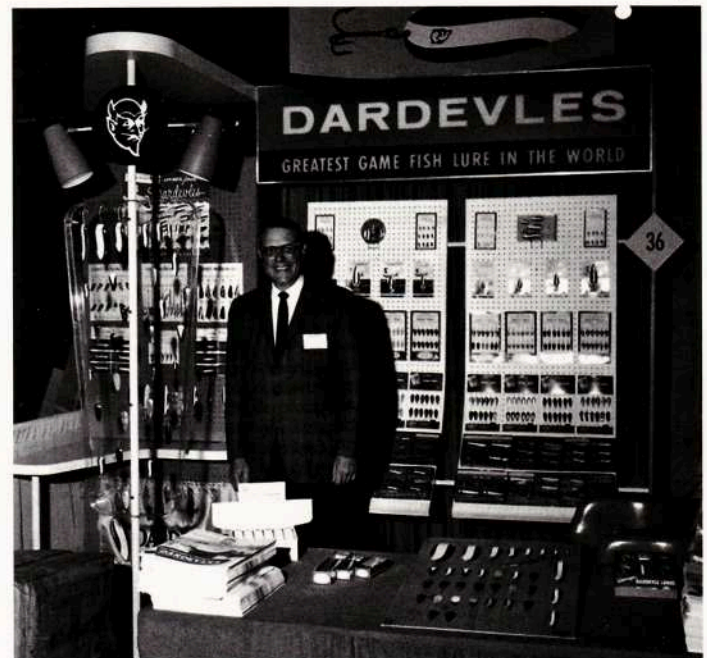
to the company. The lure selection was significantly increased, key acquisitions were made, and aggressive advertising was scheduled. Soon more production space was required, and in 1960 the plant moved to its current site at 6340 Schaeffer in Dearborn, Michigan, more than doubling its floor space. Ed Jr. successfully ran the company until his death in 1987. Today, his daughter, Karen Eppinger, the grandniece of the founder, runs the company with the help of the fourth generation of Eppinger's - her daughter, Jennifer, and her son, Wesley.

There are a number of factors that made the Dardevle spoon a success from the beginning. The weight of the lure made it easy to cast even for a beginner, and the aerodynamic shape allowed the angler to fish into the wind. The most important factor was that the Dardevle was hammered out of brass or copper, so that it was thinner in the middle and thicker towards the edges. The lure, whether cast or trolled, would swing from side to side, nearly turning over, but always righting itself. This action simply caught fish! Today, Eppinger Dardevles are all still made in the U.S.A. They are hand painted and hooked and then hand polished - each lure reflecting Eppinger's time-honored quality and craftsmanship. 🐟

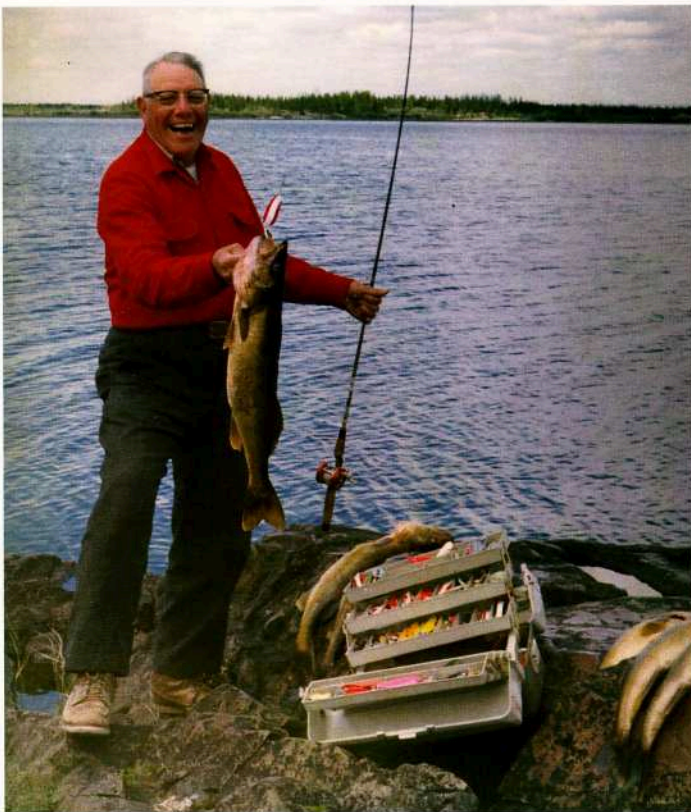
The author would like to thank Frank Baron for allowing me to photograph his Eppinger collection; Jerry R. Martin for lending me his collection of Eppinger catalogs and ads; and Gary Miller for his help in researching family history and patent information. A special "thank you" goes to Karen Eppinger for her time and patience answering seemingly endless questions as I dug through the Eppinger archives.



A collection of Dardevle boxes and lures. The box at the upper left is considered to be the earliest known version.



Ed Eppinger Jr., known to sportsmen as "Mr. Dardevle," appeared at many sport shows, on television and in outdoor films.



A beaming Ed Eppinger with a trophy Canadian walleye.



The Dardevle Team today, Karen Eppinger and daughter, Jennifer Bustamante.