

Editor's Note: The first part of this article was published in the December, 2013 issue of the *Gazette*. Part 2 was scheduled for the next issue but was inadvertently omitted. Readers are encouraged to re-read Part 1 in order to get a sense of the entire Glo-Lure story.

The Glo-Lure Story - Part 2

Chris Olson

In Part 1 previously published, Steve Lumpkin covered the Chicago origins of the Glo-Lure Company from 1944 to 1948. Glo-Lure inventor Jesse Fisher had spent years in a career with X-rays and light emitting materials and had parlayed that experience into a small product line utilizing plastic materials compounded with phosphorescent pigment. He was working his lure business out of a North Clark Street address in Chicago while still employed at the General Electric X-Ray Corporation, but sometime in 1947, GE moved to a West Milwaukee, Wisconsin location. Exactly what happened with Jesse Fisher's day job is unknown, but we do know that the 53-year-old Fisher moved the Glo-Lure Company way "up-north" the following year.

Medford, Wisconsin, the new home of Fisher's company was nothing like Chicago. With a population just under 5000 in 1948, the many small mink farms in the area made it the "mink capital of the world," as proclaimed by the welcome sign on Highway 64. Incorporated in 1889, Medford sits on the southern edge of the beautiful Chequamegon National Forest. The Black River runs right through town, and the Medford Dam is a good spot to catch bass, perch and pike at the 100 acre city park. Local guides will take you out for musky on the Flambeau and Jump Rivers. Maybe Jesse had enough of city life and just wanted to take a breath of fresh air in God's country, where all the returning GIs were going to fish with his lures.

The famous psychic Jeane Dixon was born in Medford around 1910, and five years later, a man named George F. Meyer had also moved to Medford from La Crosse, Wisconsin. His parents were German immigrants and he was born in 1893,

one year before Jesse Fisher. By 1930, he was married with two sons and running a laundry in Medford.

Left: A two-color brochure, illustrating the basic Chicago product line plus several new products was contained in the 1948 shipping carton



Carton with July, 1948 postmark. Photo by John Ehlers. QuadPhoto-Sussex, WI.



During the next decade, the ambitious Meyer had worked his way up to business manager for the local hospital. Meyer became an important figure in Medford, serving four terms as mayor, and starting his own successful business. As we will see, he would also be important to Jesse Fisher's Glo-Lure Company. The earliest evidence of business activity from the Medford address is a mailing carton with a July 16, 1948 postmark. Inside was a two-color brochure, illustrating the basic Chicago product line plus several new products. The nature of the business relationship between Jesse Fisher and George Meyer remains a mystery. From documents obtained from the Taylor County Historical Society and signed by George F. Meyer, we do know that Meyer purchased the former Medford Brewing Company building and that the Glo-Lure Company, which was incorporated in Wisconsin, operated there. The old brick building was built in 1930 and had gone through several ownerships as a brewery until George bought it out of bankruptcy in the spring of 1951 and sold off the equipment. Meyer created the Sturdy-Craft Corporation at the same 109 Luepke Avenue address, manufacturing snow fencing, hardwood moldings, interior trim, outdoor furniture, chopping blocks and cutting boards. Sturdy-Craft operated until 1969 under Meyer. Interestingly, the building still stands and today is home to TBK Manufacturing of Wisconsin LLC, makers of fishing products like Fat & Sassy worm bedding, "The Bed & Breakfast for Your Worms, Crawlers & Leeches."

Since none of the original Chicago lures, like Glo-Hooks, Glo-Bugs, or Blinkin' Beauties, have been found with a Medford address on their packaging, the authors assume that Jesse started by simply shipping his Chicago-made stock out of the new Medford address, but his inventive mind had not stopped creating. During the next few years, he filed patents for four new items. Patent 2563522 was filed on March 30, 1949 and granted on August 7, 1951 to "Jesse Fisher, Medford, Wis., assignor to Glo-Lure Inc., Medford Wis., a corporation of Wisconsin."

This is for the Glo-Worm, which, "...can be made to simulate a worm in a very lifelike manner, is luminous, is quite certain to stay on a hook...and will retain a fish attracting scent." The patent describes the manufacturing process of dipping a red pipe cleaner in hot plastic, so that some of the red color and texture shows through, oven drying, and cooling. It even spells out the plastic and scenting material formulations. Of course, what makes it a Glo-Lure is that "the bait can also be made luminous by exposing it to sunlight or other strong light for a few minutes." Very much in keeping with the existing product line, except for the pipe cleaner center, it does look surprisingly like a real worm, but is so stiff that it's comical in comparison to modern plastic worms. These came packaged in an army surplus-looking khaki envelope of 12 in assorted sizes for \$1.00 (cheaper than the Chicago Glo-Hooks which were three for \$1.00).

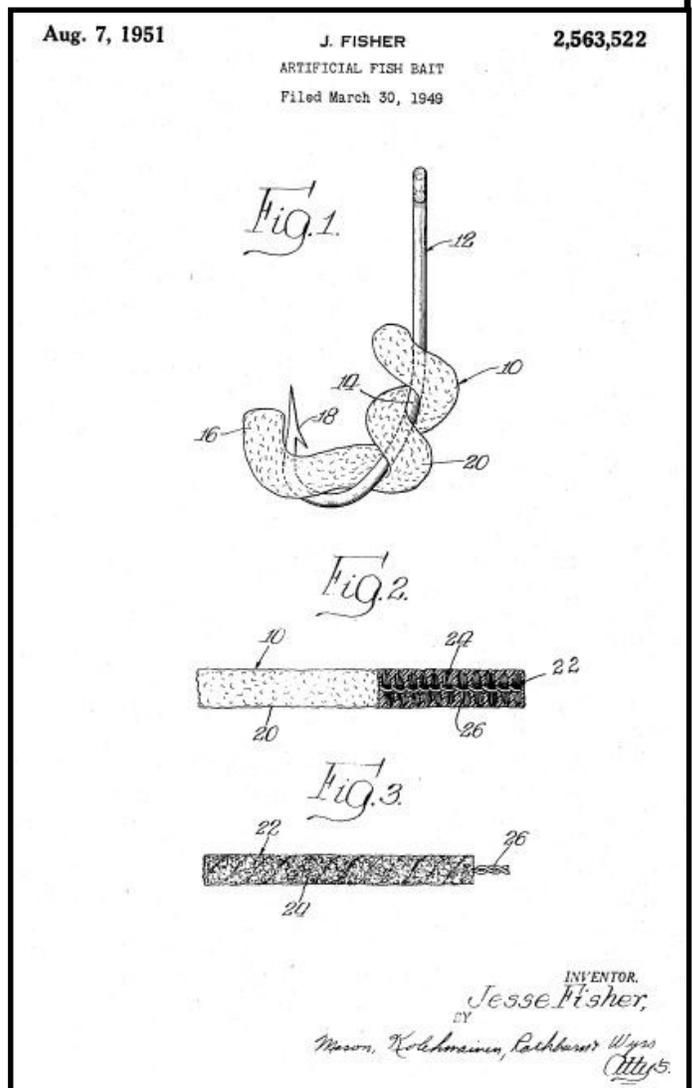




Photo by John Ehlers, QuadPhoto-Sussex, WI.

Next, Jesse takes a shot at something bigger. Patent, 2645418, filed on February 9, 1950, is the first Jesse Fisher invention that has nothing to do with glowing plastic. It is for the Gun Caster, also by Jesse Fisher, assignor to Glo-Lure Inc. I consider this one of the most flamboyantly creative fishing items ever imagined. Patented on July 14, 1953, it claims "...an apparatus for casting articles, whereby bait attached to one end of a fishing line may be hurled a satisfactory distance." Because "...many people are not sufficiently skilled in the...casting operation generally employed by fishermen...to enable them to fully enjoy the sport." Also, "... in a crowded boat...casting is difficult, and in fact is actually dangerous for any except the most expert casters."



The Gun Caster. Photo by John Ehlers, QuadPhoto-Sussex, WI.

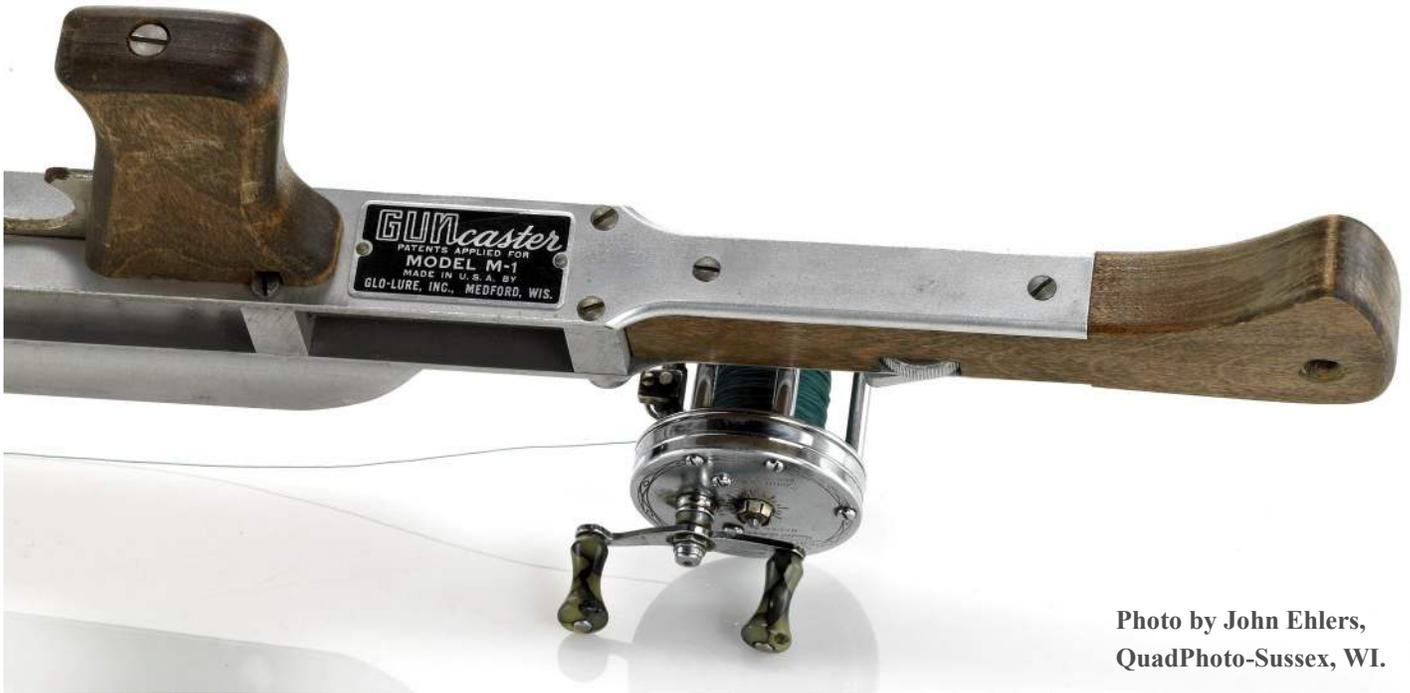
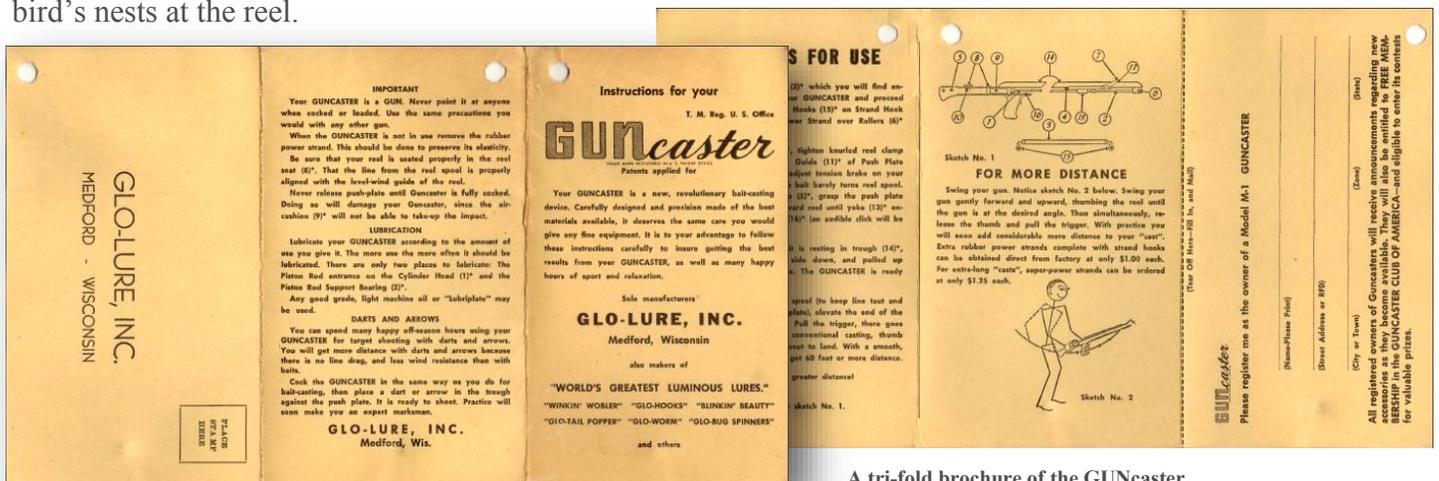


Photo by John Ehlers, QuadPhoto-Sussex, WI.

The three pages of drawings and five pages of text describe the basic components: a pistol grip, a trough-shaped device for guiding the bait, a moveable carriage, an energy device (surgical tubing), a buffing or stopping means (cushioning piston cylinder), and a reel attaching plate. “Casts of 50, 75, or 100 feet or more may be obtained by the appropriate choice of power strand.” A small tri-fold that comes packaged with the Gun Caster shows a simplified diagram, describes how to cast, get even greater distance by swinging your gun, and for extra long casts, how to order super power strands direct from the Medford factory. With the attached mail-in card you could register as a Gun Caster owner to receive free membership in the Gun Caster Club of America, and be eligible to win valuable prizes. This awesome device (basically a spear gun with a reel), is the scariest item I own, and I am not brave enough to try it, for complete certainty of bodily injury or at least major bird’s nests at the reel.



A tri-fold brochure of the GUNcaster.

On July 18, 1950, Fisher filed for a patent on a related item, a “crotch type arrow projector.” The patent was granted in 1953 and lists “Jesse Fisher, Medford, Wis., assignor to George F. Meyer, Medford, Wis.” This device, which we believe was never manufactured, is like a sling-shot that can be easily carried by a hunter to shoot arrows! We have not seen any advertisements for the Glo-Lure Gun Caster and it does not appear in the 1948 brochure, although both Glo-Worms and Fishers next patented invention do.

The final patented product by Jesse Fisher also mentions George F. Meyer's name. Patent 2686382 was filed on August 9, 1951. This is for the Glo-Tail, but this time Jesse Fisher has moved to Long Beach, NY, and is the "assignor to George F. Meyer, Medford, Wis." Remember that in the Spring of 1951, Meyer had purchased the old brewery building.

Now in his late 50s, it appears that Jesse Fisher moved back to big city life on Long Island, New York, and left the Glo-Lure Company in the hands of George Meyer.

The Glo-Tail is an improvement of the famous Arbogast skirt patent, 2111020 in 1938. Once again, the rubber material is specified, and "...the material may include a phosphorescent material if desired and also a scenting material". The basic improvement claimed is two overlapping skirts made into one piece. The Glo-Tail in my collection is a fat sheet of rubber, rolled and sliced into rubber band-like strands on both ends, with a solid band left in the middle and reinforced with a fabric tape. The tips on one end are colored pink, and flopped over so all the strands face one direction. It still glows well, and sold for 39 cents. On February 4, 1954, Jesse Fisher filed an application to divide this patent, again with George F. Meyer as assignor. Granted on July 10, 1956, patent 2753651 is basically the same patent already granted, but claims the manufacturing process itself for the rubber skirt Glo-Tail.

Were Jesse Fisher and George Meyer partners in the company from the time it incorporated in Wisconsin? Did Jesse Fisher go belly up and George Meyer buy him out, just as he had done with the Medford Brewery building? Did Jesse Fisher sell out to George Meyer when he decided to move out of the area? We don't know, but from this patent document, we know that a relationship of some kind still existed between Fisher and Meyer as late as 1954.



Glo-Tail. Photo by John Ehlers, QuadPhoto-Sussex, WI.



The Glo-Lure Master Musky Wiggler. Photo by John Ehlers, Quad-Photo-Sussex, WI

George had plenty of business experience, having managed a laundry, hospital, and his own Sturdy-Craft Company, and he added at least one more item to the Glo-Lure product line, the Master Musky Wiggler spoon. Since it was not listed in the early Medford Glo-Lure brochure, nothing glows, and the packaging and paperwork is identical to a spoon of the same name manufactured by Augies Bait Company of Milwaukee, the authors believe that this is stock that George Meyer bought from Augie Byerosky after the departure of Jesse Fisher. The Glo-Lure package even appears to have it's label pasted over the Augie's address. And this is where the Glo-Lure story ends. By the mid-1950s, the U.S. economy was booming. It was the era of the Cold War, mass Polio vaccinations, TV diners, and the highest Dow Jones averages since before the 1929 crash. Thousands of new mass-produced fishing lures and products were available as the United States settled into a new era with time for leisure activities that had not been seen for decades. Maybe there was too much competition, maybe updating the army surplus-style packaging and advertising would have been too expensive, or maybe George & Jesse had simply moved on to better things, but the authors have not found any reference to the Glo-Lure Company after 1956. Like so many post-WWII bait companies, the Glo-Lure Company just seemed to fade away.