

Journey to the Ouachitas:

A PHOTO ESSAY BY RUSSELL GRAVES

In his novel *Trout Bum*, John Gierach writes, “Just to be on the road is good in a deep American way, but to be on the road going fishing is almost too good for words...”

With that sentiment in our hearts, I traveled to eastern Oklahoma one Friday afternoon with fishing pals Silas Ragsdale,

John Wilson, and G.D. Sanders. For all of us, the waters of the Mountain Fork River were tempting and, at the same time, foreign. We’d done our homework and learned as much about the river and the mountains and the trout as we could. Fishing, however, is a sport of proximity. No amount of advanced knowledge can substitute for being there with your feet in the water and a five weight rod slicing through thick air.



“I remember us wondering then if we weren’t getting too busy for our own good and speculating generally about the nature and meaning of success. Is a man who’s too busy to go fishing a success?”
—from *Trout Bum* by John Gierach





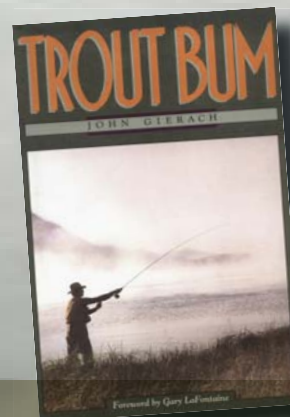
“Fly-fishing is a sport in which fish are caught properly only in a certain way, often against all odds, and that using rods made from a weird kind of grass that grows in China seems somehow appropriate...”

—from *Trout Bum* by John Gierach



“Fly-fishing for trout is a sport that depends not so much on catching fish as on the mere presence of and on the fact that you do, now and again, catch some. As for their size, the bigger they are, the better, to be honest about it...”

—from *Trout Bum* by John Gierach



Originally published in 1986, John Gierach’s *Trout Bum* includes a number of humorous essays about the way of life that is trout fishing. A 20th Anniversary edition is available for \$29.95 on through pruettpublishing.com. ISBN: 0-87108-944-0.