



## FRANKLIN BARRETT - BETWEEN THE PAGES

By Lee Finley

As far back as I can remember I have always been a “book person”. The earliest memories of my things included a collection of Little Golden Books (mainly Disney titles). As time moved along books were always a major factor in my life. This includes both fiction and non-fiction titles. When I got into the aquarium hobby in the middle/late 1960s books came right along with it...up until today. During this time, I have collected aquarium books, had a book business (new and used) dealing with such titles, and written a monthly column (for almost 12 years) in Aquarium Fish Magazine reviewing them. And, over the decades, I have written more than a few free-standing articles dealing with various aspects of them.

One fascinating aspect of obtaining used books is the occasional finding in them of various mostly paper items that the previous owner(s) had stored between the pages. Over the years I have found a decent number of such items in various aquarium titles. These have included but are not limited to: clipped newspaper articles (unfortunately often without the date); some (obviously losing) raffle tickets; letters, sometimes from the author of the book (if you are lucky); and various pieces of aquarium product advertising. All such things may generally be classified as ephemeral items. These are basically items that were not meant to be long lasting. They serve their purpose and then, for the most part, disappear to wherever such things go, never to be seen again. But, by being preserved between the pages of a book they can be awaiting a new, unintended, life. And such pieces may often provide valuable little bits of history in various aspects of the aquarium hobby.

In what follows I would like to present a look at one such ephemeral item which is among some important pieces that I have encountered over the years. In one way this might be considered just a “show and tell” event, but I will attempt to take it past that and offer some of the aspects that make this item a potentially important addition to the overall history of the aquarium hobby.

I would like to share with you here a rare piece of aquarium advertising that I came upon quite a few years ago. I was on a trip from Rhode Island to South Florida to visit my mom and during this time my sister Carol (who is also a book person) took me out to visit a couple of her favorite used bookstores. (“There were a lot more of such stores in those days,” he thought sadly).

In one store I came upon a 1910 copy of the British book “The Aquarium: Its Inhabitants, Structure and Management” by J.E. Taylor. It was in nice condition, reasonably priced, and with a dealer discount well worth adding to my business stock. But what made the purchase even more worthwhile was a folded single sheet (making four pages) undated advertising

piece for Franklin Barrett's Philadelphia Pennsylvania goldfish and aquarium business. The four-page presentation of it may be seen below. This shows his available stock of fish, plants, and other related products. A pleasant addition is seen on page four which discusses aquarium management.

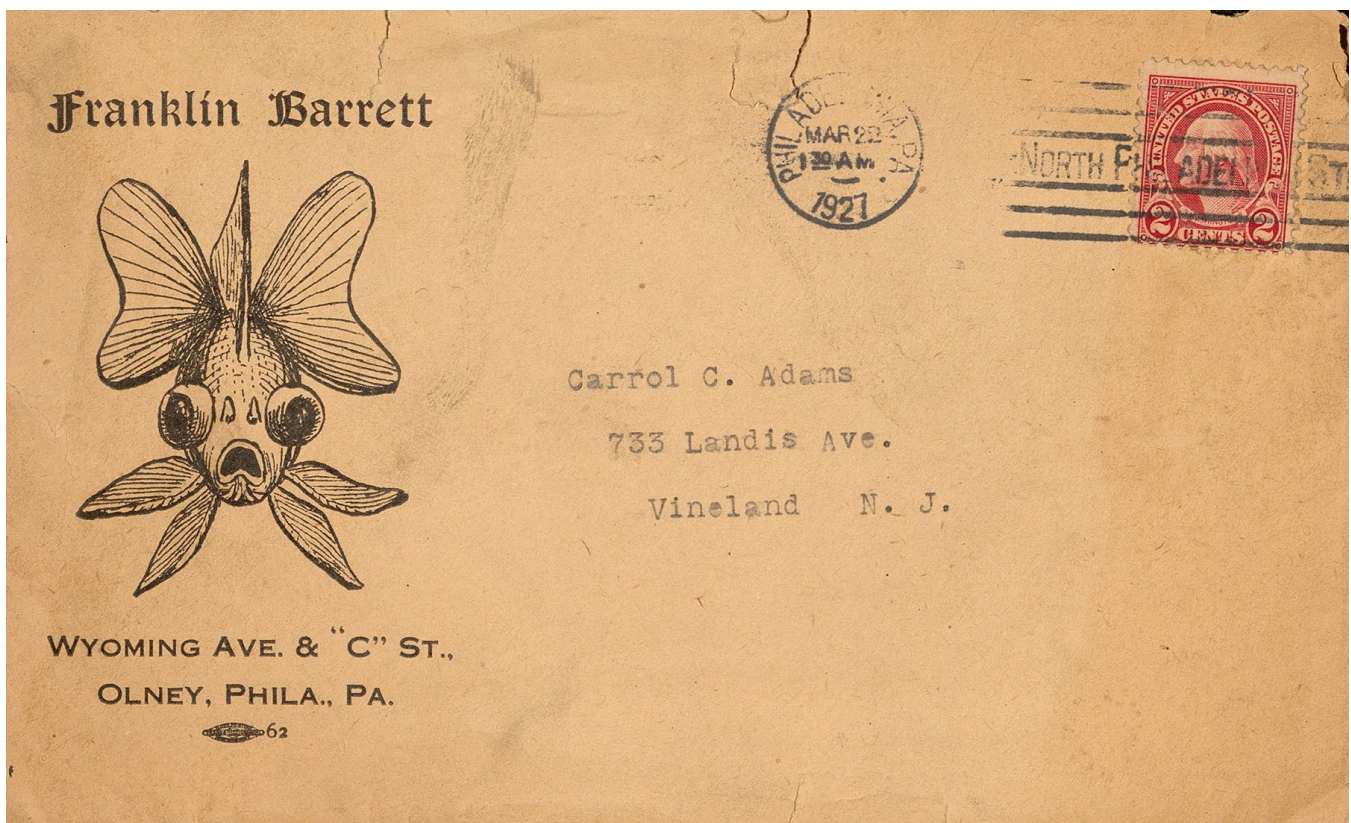
Barrett (1871 – 1958) has been called "...the pioneer Philadelphia goldfish breeder..." by hobby historian Al Klee in his 2003 book "The Toy Fish – A History of the Aquarium Hobby in America – The First One-Hundred Years". Barrett, along with others, formed a Philadelphia nucleus for the U.S. goldfish hobby in the late 19th and well into the 20th Century - and in keeping with the times tropical fishes were included in his business as the availability of them increased, especially in the 1920's and 30's. His advertising is well known in "The Aquarium" magazine which was put together by a varying number of aquarium societies (in the teens) and later in the William T. Innes "The Aquarium" magazine but both were at different addresses than on the piece under discussion. I was unfamiliar with the address on the piece under discussion. So, a looking I went and ended up pleasantly surprised.

Going into back issues of a local newspaper title (The Philadelphia Inquirer) I discovered, by examining classified ads, that Barrett was doing business at the 1324 North Front Street address as early as February 1901. I will note that it might have been even earlier as another piece of source material noted Barrett as having been in business since 1894. In any case, Barrett was at that address until October 10, 1909, when he relocated. This relocation was initiated in that Barrett noted that he was going to change to an exclusively wholesale business. This he did for several years, but for the benefit of the hobby he later backtracked and ran a combined wholesale and a retail business. In most of his newspaper ads is noted the following: "Send for descriptive catalogue" or "Send for descriptive price list." So, I am feeling very confident that what is presented herein is one of these descriptive lists which would date it to from 115 to 123 years old. This is the only such copy that I have seen. Gary Bagnall, the director of MOAPH, is also unfamiliar with the publication (personal communication). The copy seen here had gone into the library of Wayne Leibel, and subsequently will go to the MOAPH research library for permanent placement. I will state that hopefully other examples may be found to exist and should anyone be familiar with such a document I would love to hear from you.

A note on the examined newspaper ads: Some classified types of newspaper ads are rather static and change very little, if at all, and consequently are of minimal historical importance. The ads by Barrett are the opposite of this. His ads constantly changed depending on what goldfish he was importing, breeding or otherwise obtaining. He also regularly highlighted the various types of aquarium plants that he mostly produced in his greenhouses. He regularly included prices for such noted items. These varied over the covered period due to various factors including availability of stock and special sales especially for times like Christmas.

From the ephemeral point of view the noted piece is an important document. It is one of those advertising pieces that is meant to come and go. I feel sure that Barrett would have updated it as he did with his regular classified ads in the newspaper. So, seeing any additional copies could prove interesting with any changes that might have been made. And there is another important feature that adds to the ephemera status that needs to be mentioned: this is the paper that it is printed on. The paper used on this piece is the then inexpensive acid-based paper. Over the years such printed material on this paper literally falls apart and tears easily... and keeps doing so with any use. You can note on the first page of the publication the flaked falling apart shape of the right-hand edge where it was originally folded. I am almost sure that if I stare hard enough at such an edge, I can mentally make a piece of it flake off. I know that Yoda could. Such paper can be treated but this is an expensive proposition. Another preservation technique is to place such publications into available acid free rigid plastic holders. This makes them available for study without any further direct handling which will lead to additional paper loss.

So, without any additional chat, on the following four pages I present for your possible interest the noted Franklin Barrett catalog/price list.



The following four pages are a Franklin Barrett catalog from the 1890s-1909.

# Franklin Barrett

BREEDER AND DEALER

—IN—

Imported

and Domestic

GOLD

FISH



OF ALL

KINDS.

1324 NORTH FRONT STREET,

Philadelphia, Pa.

Have now on hand the following named varieties marked with a dash.

→:GOLD FISHES:←

- |                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Common Gold Fish,           | 5 cents each       |
|                             | \$2.50 per hundred |
| Common Gold Fish,           | 10 cents each      |
|                             | \$5.00 per hundred |
| Japanese Comets,            | 25 cents to \$1.00 |
| Japanese Fantails,          | \$1.00 to \$5.00   |
| Japanese Fringetails,       | \$1.50 to 25.00    |
| Japanese Scaled Telescopes, | \$2.00 to \$15.00  |
| Japanese Scaleless          | 2 50 to 25.00      |
| America Fantails,           | 25 cents to \$1.00 |
| Golden Orfes,               | 25 cents each      |
| Paradise Fish,              | 25 cts to 1.00     |
| Breeding Pairs,             | 1.50               |
| Chacterdons,                | 25 cts to 50 cts   |
| Sticklebacks, Breeding pair | 25 cts             |

→:AQUARIUM PLANTS:←

**MYRIOPHYLLUM**

One of the Finest Oxygenators in the Aquarium, similar to the Cabomba, but with feathery stems, excellent for spawning purposes, 10 cts. each 1.00 dozen.

**CABOMBA VIRIDIFOLIA**

The most pleasing of all the submerged plants; leaves brilliant, glossy green, fan-shaped, regularly cut and more beautiful than the most delicate fern, 10 cents each, 1.00 dozen.

**LUDWEGIA**

A Beautiful Aquarium Plants, with ovale shaped leaves of a Reddish Bronze and Green Color, good Oxygenator, 25 cts. each, cultivated.

**SAGITTARIA NATANS.**

This plant is indispensable for the Aquarium; its long strap-like green leaves resemble the Valisneria, it is highly preferred by the Aquarists on account of its fine oxygenating qualities, one plant will put out runners which will cover the whole aquarium in a short time, 10 cts. each 1.00 dozen.

**SAGITTARIA GIGANTIC.**

Similar to Sagittaria Natans, but with broad ribbon like leaves, good oxygenator and free grower, 20 cts each.

Specimen Plants, 35 and 50 cts.

**CERATOPHYLLUM DEMERSUM**

Hornwort, A beautiful Aquarium Plant, something similar to the Myriophyllum, but the foliage feels tough and hard to the touch, it bears a fruit with two horns near the base, 10c. each.

**MYRIOPHYLLUM PROSERPINACOIDES**

Parrot's Feather. Long trailing stems, clothed with whorls of the most exquisite foliage, as finely cut as the leaves of the Cypress Vine, and much more delicate. Planted in a water tight hanging basket so water can be kept standing on the surface it will trail finely, 10 cts each

**TRIANIA**

Rosettes of Light Green heart-shaped floating leaves and pendant silky roots, flowers white 10 cts each.

**LIMNANTHEMUM INDICUM**

Water Snowflake. A very pretty floating species, with light green, roundish leaves, and pure white flowers most beautifully fringed. 20 cts each. 1.00 dozen.

**OUVIRANDRA FENESTRALIS**

Lace-leaf or Lattice-leaf Plant. The chief interest of this plant lies in the remarkable singularity of the leaves, which are of a dark, olive-green color, merely a network of vascular tissue, resembling lace, or a skeletonized leaf. A compost of good, rich soil, as recommended for water lilies, is suitable for this plant. The pot or pan should be placed in a tub of water and kept clean and sweet, and from direct sunlight. Price 2.50 each; specimen plants 5.00 each.

**PISTIA STRATIOTES**

A very curious floating plant. It forms a rosette of light green velvety leaves, about 6 inches across; likes plenty of heat, and should be shaded from the direct rays of the sun. 15 cts each.

**LIMNOCHARIS HUMBOLDTI**

The Water Poppy. A pretty little aquatic, with oval leaves, and yellow, poppy like flowers, standing out of the water. Fine for growing in shallow water or an aquarium. 15 cts each; 1.50 dozen.

TERMS STRICTLY CASH WITH ORDER.

### SALVINIA BRAZILIENSIS

This pretty little floating aquatic is suitable for all aquaria. The leaves are a soft green, covered with a delicate hairy surface, 10 cts. dozen.

### STRATIOTES ALOIDES

Water Aloe. This resembles a Pandanus, but grown under water instead of above; it has long spiny recurving leaves and spikes of white flowers, which are produced above the water. 25 cts. each

### TRAPA NATANS

Water Chestnut or Water Caltrops. An aquatic annual, producing white flowers with purple claws, floating among the foliage on the surface of the water. The fruit is very curious. 25 cts. each.

### VALLISNERIA SPIRALIS

Tape or Eel Grass. Ribbon-like. A submerged plant with leaves about 6 inches long; free-growing and desirable, 10 cts.

### EICHHORNIA CRASSIPES MAJOR

Water Hyacinth. A very showy aquatic, bearing very freely flowers of a delicate lilac rose in trusses like a Hyacinth. The individual blooms are 2 inches in diameter. It should be grown in about 6 inches of water, so that the ends of the roots can enter the soil, 15 and 25 cts.

### CYPERUS ALTERNIFOLIUS

An excellent plant for growing in rock-work so that the palm like leaves extend out of the water, 25 cts each

### CYPERUS GRACILIS

A pretty new form with very narrow foliage, 15c

### CYPERUS PAPYRUS

Papyrus Antiquorum. This is the true Egyptian Paper Plant. From the snow white pith of its triangular stalks the first paper was made. They are 5 to 8 feet high, and support at the top a tuft of long thread-like leaves, which give the plant a graceful and striking appearance. It grows finely in shallow water with rich soil, and makes a splendid companion for flowering aquatics. It will also flourish and make a fine clump in the garden, with no more water than Cannas require to make them do well. 25 cts each; extra size 50 cts and 1.00 each.

### POTAMOGETON

A fine oxygenator and much desired by the Aquarists, broad leaves, 10 cts each.

Sand, Pebbles and Grit, quart box 5 cts  
Fish Food (Wafers) box 10 cts  
in original packages 8 x 12 inches 75 cts  
100 sheets.

Bartman's Imported Natural Fish Food 15 cts  
1.50 dozen.

Natural Fish Food, in tin boxes 10 cts. each,  
1.00 dozen.

Tad Poles 2 for 5 cents.

Pond Snails, 10 cts 1-2 dozen.

Large Potomac Snails, 5 and 10 cts.

## GLOBES, AQUARIUMS AND CASTLES

of all kinds constantly on hand.

All information pertaining to the management of The Aquarium, and to the breeding of Gold Fish, etc., cheerfully furnished upon application.

Roof Gardens for the Aquarium. Something new; composed of suspended boxes in the Aquarium, containing, Umbrella Plants, Parrot's Feather, Striped Grass,

Moss, etc., 50, 75 cts. 1.00, 1.50 and 2.50.

## DIRECTIONS FOR THE REGULATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE AQUARIUM.

A well regulated Aquarium with growing plants and healthy Gold Fish, is a never failing source of pleasure and delight in studying from nature the maneuvers of its finny inhabitants, and cultivation of all varieties of Water Plants contained therein.

In using a globe for Gold Fish, care should be taken in not placing too many fish in the same Aquarium. About one fish for a six inch globe, two fish for a eight inch, three for a ten inch and four fish for a twelve inch globe.

The fish should be not more than 3 inches long, when smaller fish are used you can add one more to each globe.

In feeding the fish care should be taken not to give them more than they will eat, giving them about half inch square of Prepared Wafer Food for one fish every day, if they do not eat that in a short time; take it out, as it will sour the water and cause the fish to be diseased and eventually die. If you follow the above directions you do not need to change the water in a globe for months at a time, only changing, if the water becomes dirty and the globe needs a cleaning. A bunch of Cabomba or Myriophyllum should be placed in the globe to keep it fresh and oxygenated

In using the modern angle iron, slate bottom Aquarium, the best plan is to procure pure white sand, and after washing it thoroughly place it in the Aquarium along with a few pebbles, then introduce some Sagittaria by planting in the sand, and some Ludwegia, Cabomba, Myriophyllum, etc., to suit the taste, with some floating plants on top of the water, then let the Aquarium set for two or three weeks, so that the plants gets rooted and the water is settled, adding a few snails and tad poles in the meantime to clean the plants and glass, after this is done you will have a self-sustaining Aquarium, and then you can introduce the fish one or two at a time until you see you have enough in, never allowing more than a three inch fish for one gallon of water, if the fish comes to the top sucking for air, it is an indication that you have too many in, or the water is foul.

When the fish swim around with their fins compressed against their sides it is an indication that they are sick and should be immediately removed from the Aquarium and placed in an eight or ten inch globe with about two inches of water in it, and a teaspoonful of salt added. Keep them in this until they recover, than place back in the Aquarium.

*Respectfully Yours,*

**Franklin Barrett.**



GRAY & CO PRINTING HOUSE,  
1740 N. FRONT STREET.

Several other pieces of Barrett advertising are shared below from the MOAPH collection.



## BARRETT AQUARIUM *Retail Department*

VISITORS are always welcome to this, the oldest, largest and most interesting aquarium plant in Pennsylvania. We have a very large stock of all popular varieties of aquarium fishes, including a number of rarities not to be found elsewhere.

A complete assortment of modern accessories, including the Chambers Water Testing Kit, with which we furnish exclusive information regarding the best pH condition for different species. No extra charge. Only \$2.00.

Plants, ornaments, heaters, thermostats, nets, scrapers, foods, etc., etc.

We make our own aquariums and are in a position to quote very attractive prices.

Let us know your wants for anything in the line, either wholesale or retail, and we will give you some surprising quotations.

**FRANKLIN BARRETT CO.,** Wyoming Ave. and C St., Philadelphia

### TEN YEARS

*of reliable service, enable us to offer*

12 varieties tropical fish, each.....\$0.25  
18 varieties aquarium plants, postpaid..... 1.00

**T. H. CAMPBELL**  
6957 N. W. 4th Avenue, Miami

### HEADQUARTERS

for goldfish, aquarium plants, general supplies for tropical and goldfish.

**AUBURNDALE GOLDFISH CO.**  
1449 W. Madison St. Chicago

### Home Bred Tropical Fish

*(Wholesale only)*

**JAPANESE GOLD-FISH HATCHERY CO., INC.**

NORTH BRANCH, NEW JERSEY

*Please mention THE AQUARIUM when writing to advertisers*

From the December 1932 edition of *The Aquarium*, series 3.

# FRANKLIN BARRETT

4815 D Street, Olney, Philadelphia, Pa.

Largest Greenhouses in the World  
Devoted to the Breeding of Fancy,  
Chinese and Japanese Goldfish and  
Propagation of Aquarium Plants

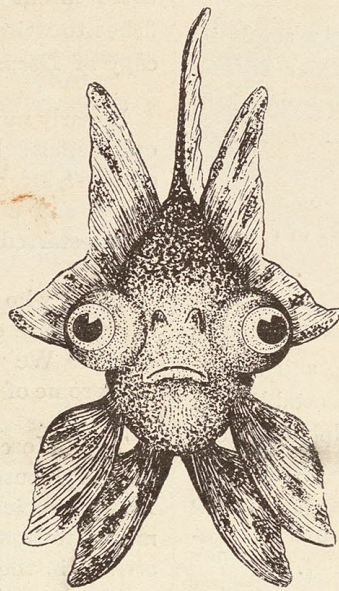
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

## FISHES

COMMON  
SCALED  
SCALELESS  
COMET  
FANTAIL  
FRINGETAILED  
TELESCOPES  
CELESTIALS  
LION'S HEADS  
SHUBUNKINS  
PARADISE  
GOLDEN-ORFES  
GOLDEN-TENCH  
GAMBUSIA-AFFINIS  
STICKLE-BACKS

## SNAILS

COMMON  
RAM'S HORN  
POTOMAC  
AFRICAN  
JAPANESE



DRAWING BY H. T. WOLF

## PLANTS

CABOMBA  
MYRIOPHYLLUM  
ANACHARIS  
SAGITTARIA  
LUDWIGIA  
VALLISNERIA  
HORNWORT  
POTAMOGETON  
SNOW FLAKE  
WATER POPPY  
WATER HYACINTH  
SALVINIA  
WATER FERN  
LACE LEAF  
WATER LETTUCE  
UMBRELLA PALMS  
CYPERUS PAPYRUS  
CYPERUS  
ALTERNIFOLIUS  
GRACILIS  
LAXUS FOLVA  
VARIEGATED  
BOSTON FERNS  
PTERIS FERNS  
WATER LILIES

## Submerged and Semi-Submerged Plants FOR PONDS ON ESTATES

### Manufacturer of the Celebrated "SUPERIOR" AQUARIUMS

Rustless corner pieces. Marbleized slate bottoms. Made in galvanized sheet iron, wrought iron and brass nickel plated.

### Manufacturer of the Celebrated "AMERJAP" FISH FOOD

Made from the purest of materials. For fish only. Keeps your fish in good condition, keeps your aquarium pure and sweet and does not injure the plants in the aquarium. Eaten by the fish with avidity. Once tried, always used.

We carry the finest line of aquarium ornaments in the country. No rough, sharp edges to injure and maim the fish, but every ornament glazed with a smooth and beautiful finish, and in harmonious colors, creating an artistic effect in the aquarium.

Globes, Nets, Pebbles, Sand, Foods, Etc. Everything Pertaining  
to the Aquarium and Pond

Send for Price Lists

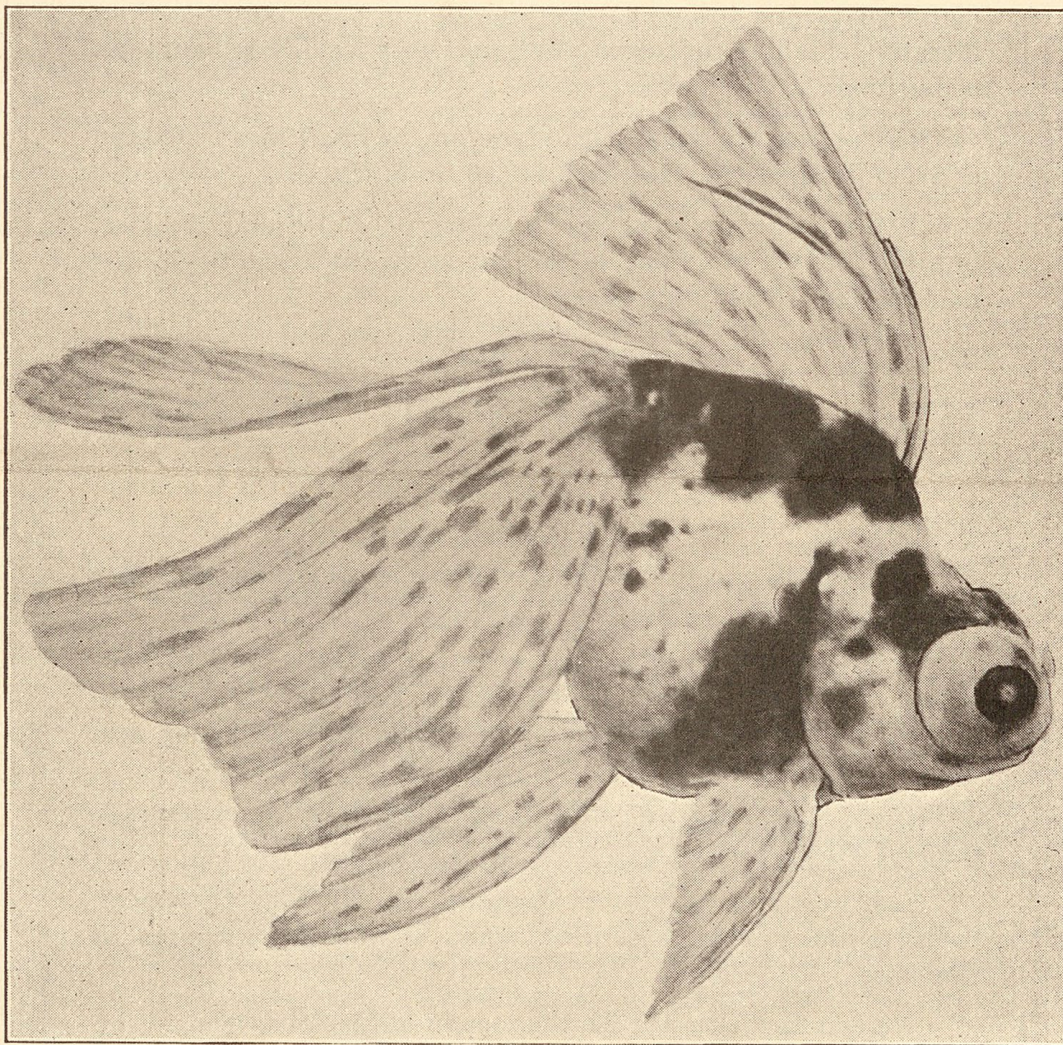
From the June 1912 edition of *The Aquarium*, series 2.

The following four pages are a Franklin Barrett catalog/price list from 1927.

# FRANKLIN BARRETT

WYOMING AVENUE AND "C" STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PA.



Healthy Fish and Plants—Quick Service

**MANUFACTURER :: BREEDER :: PROPAGATOR**

Established 1894

# DEALERS, ATTENTION!

An opportunity to add a good paying line to your regular line of business.

We have Pet Shops, Florists, Druggists, 5 and 10 Cent Stores, Cigar Stores, Department Stores, etc., who have been buying from us for years and intend to continue doing so, as they find it a lucrative side line that does not interfere with the regular line of business.

The profits are very attractive—on an investment of \$2.00 or \$3.00 you generally get back \$10.00 in return.

You not only make money in selling Gold Fish and Supplies, but they attract more people to your store, consequently selling more of your regular line also.

## HOW TO KEEP FISH TO SELL

The best plan is to set up an aquarium about 3 feet long, so that it can be seen through your show window.

This can be piped up so as to allow a small stream of water to run in and out.

This aquarium will always attract a lot of people to your window, as the Brilliant Colored Fish swimming continually to and fro are a never ending source of delight to both young and old.

These aquariums we can furnish to the trade at an average price of \$25.00 each.

Fish can also be kept in ordinary wooden tubs or wooden tanks in the yard or basement, when your room is limited in the store.

We can furnish you with the regular glass globes sold in the stores at the lowest prices.

Get into this well paying business now, as almost every home in the country has Gold Fish, or is contemplating buying them, and they are continually buying Fish Foods and Supplies to feed the Finny Pets and Decorate the Aquariums.

Shubunkins 4 to 5 in. 30.00 per 100  
Pearl chuffs 5.00 per 100 lbs.  
Colored " 8.00 " " "  
Colored Shells 8.00 " " "  
White " 7.00 " " "  
Guppies 1.80 per doz.

# ANNOUNCEMENT

JANUARY, 1927

## FRANKLIN BARRETT

Wyoming Avenue and "C" Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

We offer the following for immediate delivery:

Small Gold Fish, 1½ to 2 inches . . . . .	\$ 2.00	per 100
Medium " " 2 " 3 " . . . . .	4.00	" "
Long Tailed Comets . . . . .	20.00	" "
Japanese Fantails . . . . .	25.00	" "
Large Japanese Snails . . . . .	3.00	" "
Red Copenhagen " . . . . .	10.00	" "
Cabomba Plants . . . . .	4.00	" "
Myriophyllum Plants . . . . .	4.00	" "
Anacharis " . . . . .	4.00	" "
Fancy " . . . . .	6.00	" "
Blue Ribbon Wafer Fish Food . . . . .	5.00	" "
Amerjap Natural " " . . . . .	5.00	" "
Japanese Special " " . . . . .	5.00	" "
Ground Shrimp " " . . . . .	5.00	" "
Aquarium Sand . . . . .	5.00	per 100 boxes
" Pebbles . . . . .	5.00	" "
" Pearls . . . . .	8.00	per 100 lbs.
Dip Nets with Wooden Handle . . . . .	1.80	per doz.
" " " " large . . . . .	3.00	" "
Waxed Carrying Pails, 1 pint . . . . .	1.00	" 100
" " " 1 quart . . . . .	1.25	" "
Aquarium Cement . . . . .	.25	" lb.
Shipping Cans for 100 Fish . . . . .	.50	" can

Shubunkins 4 to 5 in. 30.00 per 100  
 Pearl chips 5.00 per 100 lbs.  
 Colored " 8.00 " " "  
 Colored shells 8.00 " " "  
 White " 7.00 " " "  
 Jewels 1.80 per doz.

These fish are in excellent condition.

Orders for any amount taken care of immediately.

Our facilities for growing and handling fish and plants are unequalled, our outfit comprising some 60 cement ponds, hundreds of acres of plant ponds and innumerable wooden tanks and glass aquariums.

We also have a very large collection of fancy gold and tropical fish of the very highest types; all prize winning stock.

Awarded Silver Medal Sesqui-Centennial Exposition.

- " Gold " National Flower Show.
- " 35 Silver Cups " " "
- " Gold Medal Penna. Hort. Soc Show.
- " 10 Silver Medals Penna Hort. Soc Show.
- " Diploma Brooklyn Aquarium Society.

PRICES FURNISHED UPON REQUEST AND CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED.

**TERMS—Cash with Order or C. O. D.**

