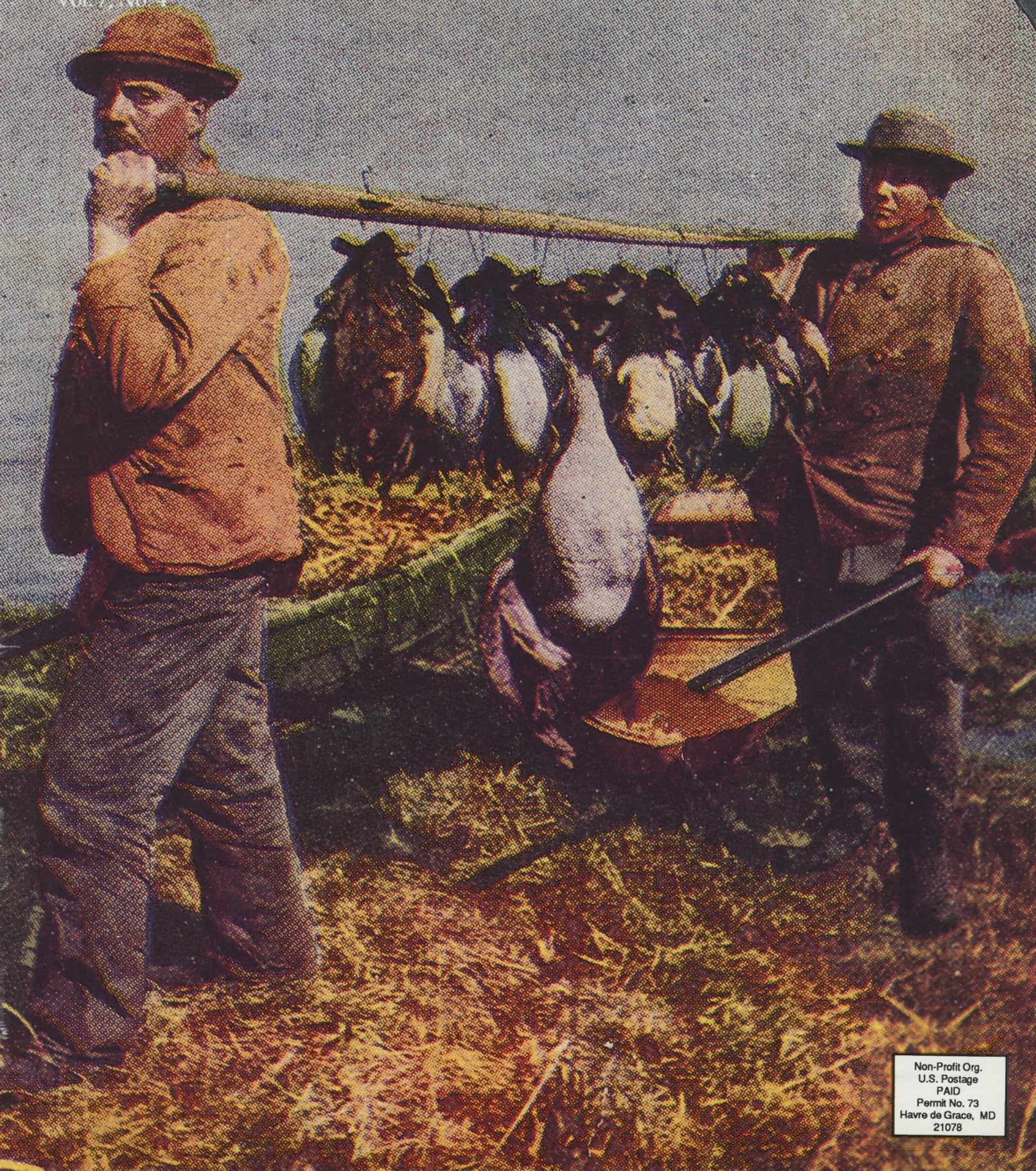


The Canvasback

Fall 1997
Vol. 7, No. 4

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

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On the Water's Edge

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum



FROM THE EDITOR

September 13, through October 13, 1997 marked the first time the Decoy Museum had a membership drive. This drive was to attract new members to the museum and to encourage lapsed members to return. If you stopped by the museum, a large banner announcing the drive welcomed everyone. Membership chairman Walter Smith actively promoted the membership drive at the Duck Fair on September 13-14 and at the auction on October 11, 1997. It was a successful attempt with over one hundred and thirty new members joining the Decoy Museum. That increased the total membership by 11% to a grand total of 1,370 members! But we must not stop there. Consider giving a gift membership for a holiday present. The museum provides a certificate to the purchaser.

The museum counts on its members for support in good times and in tough times. Thank you to all of the new members that joined the museum during this drive and special thanks to the members and the lifetime members that continue to be a part of the Havre de Grace Decoy museum.

Mary Jo Murphy

can•vas•back (kan'ves bak'), *n., pl. -backs*, (esp. collectively) - back. 1. A North American wild duck, the male of which has a whitish back and a reddish-brown head and neck. 2. A style of decoy made famous by carvers of the Susquehanna Flats region. 3. A quarterly publication of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

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ON THE COVER

An image from a stereo view called "A Big Day's Luck at Black Dog Lake." From the Decoy Museum's collection.

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1997

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The Canvasback

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From the President

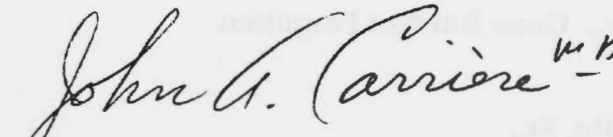


Dear Museum Member,

November marks the eleventh anniversary of the opening of the museum to the public. Our growth and improvement has been steady and enviable. This progress is due to the combined efforts of the Honorary Chairmen, carvers, volunteers, staff, and the Board of Directors, but mostly from the continued support of our members.

We try to increase the number and quality of our exhibits on a regular basis. Recent additions of Louisiana decoys and Ward Brothers decoys are evidence of this. In the foreseeable future, we plan on displaying examples of decoys from all major flyways in the U.S. We continue to increase our community involvement with educational programs for all levels of the public school system and senior citizens. We also conduct routine tours and offer adult and child carving classes.

In addition to your continued support we urge you to offer suggestions as to how we can improve any of our services. Please continue to be a part of our growth by participation in our functions, but mostly by your presence and continued involvement.


John A. Carriere, M.D.
President, Board of Directors

Tax deductible contributions can be made to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. The museum was incorporated in 1981 as a non-profit organization which exists to document and interpret waterfowl as this art form applies to the social and economic life of the upper Chesapeake Bay region.

H heads or tails, you will always win,
if you become a member

of the
Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Membership Application

Membership in the Museum offers you significant benefits not available to the general public. Each member receives four issues of *The Canvasback* magazine free of charge. Additionally, members gain free entry to the Museum, notification of Museum events and a 10% discount in the Museum's Gift Shop.

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Carving Contest

"HONORING THE MASTERS"

The 1998 Festival Committee is pleased to announce the **open carving contest**, which is dedicated to honoring the memory and carving tradition of Lem and Steve Ward.

From now until April 1, 1998, the Decoy Museum will be accepting entries of Ward decoy reproductions crafted by the entrant. Judging will be held on Sunday, April 5, 1998. Entries will be on display in the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum until May 2, 1998.

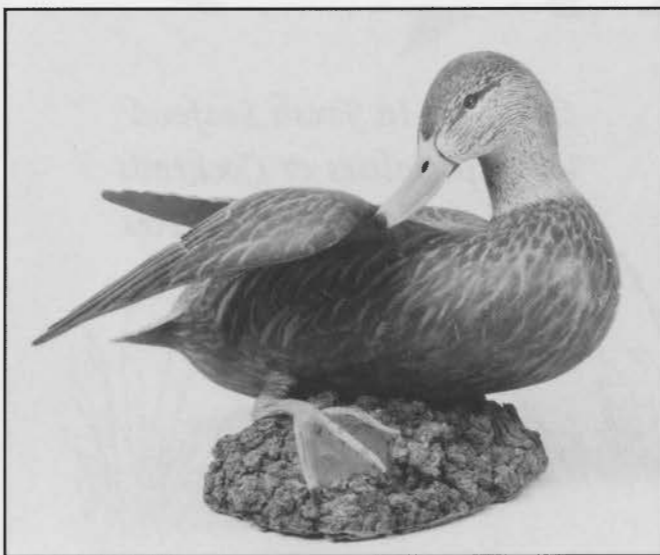
Entries may be working or decorative, full-size or miniature, and of any species the Wards were known to carve. All entries become the property of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and will be sold to benefit the Decoy Museum.



Preening Ward goose decoy. From the collection of the DeBaugh's. Photo by Joe Engers.

Awards will be issued as follows:

- 1st place receives \$300, a plaque, and a ribbon
- 2nd place receives \$200, a plaque, and a ribbon
- 3rd place receives \$100, a plaque, and a ribbon
- Honorable Mention receives a ribbon



Decorative Ward black duck, thanks to a donation from the Kramers. Photo by Joe Engers.



For contest info and entry form, call or write to:

Honoring the Masters Contest

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

P.O. Box 878

Havre de Grace, MD 21078

phone: 410-939-3739 fax: 410-939-3775

DUCKS UNLIMITED R. MADISON MITCHELL CHAPTER ANNUAL DINNER

The Thirteenth Annual Dinner presented by the R. Madison Mitchell Chapter of Ducks Unlimited was held at the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace, Maryland on September 27, 1997. This was the 60th Anniversary for Ducks Unlimited and many unique offerings were available for sale during the event.

The dinner's primary mission was to raise funds for the conservation, purchase and restoration of wetlands in North America: the 150 supporters present at this dinner raised in excess of \$16,000.00 net profit for this purpose. Chairman Michael Affleck and Co-Chairman Fred Gillotte attributed this amazing result to the commitment of the members of this chapter. Both men stated that, "Our supporters believe in Ducks Unlimited and most of all, they respect and honor the man for whom the chapter is named, R. Madison Mitchell".

This dinner is very special insofar as DU dinners are

concerned, in that there are such overwhelming contributions from the local carvers. There is no other DU event that has this selection of decoys available for purchase. Local business supporters such as Bill Smith, Charles Packard and Merrill Dougherty offered their unquestionable support by sponsoring programs, calendars and raffles.

Annual awards were given to notables who have offered their time and or donations to Ducks Unlimited. "Donor Awards" were presented to Mary Jo Murphy, The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum (Dr. John Carriere accepting), Patrick O'Neill, and Dan Carson. "Outstanding Committee Member Award" was presented to John Miller for his conspicuous service rendered to the chapter. The "Conservation Service Award," which is the highest honor DU can bestow, was presented to noted carver and gentleman, Charles Bryan who always has a donation for the Mitchell Chapter.



Fred Gillotte, Michael Affleck, and Mary Jo Murphy. Photo courtesy of Diane Affleck.



Michael Affleck, Charlie Bryan, and Fred Gillotte. Photo courtesy of Diane Affleck.

BIG DECEMBER CANVASBACKS

By Worth Mathewson

Reviewed by
Bill Smart

Big
December
Canvasbacks

BY WORTH
MATHEWSON

ART BY DAVE
HAGERBAUMER

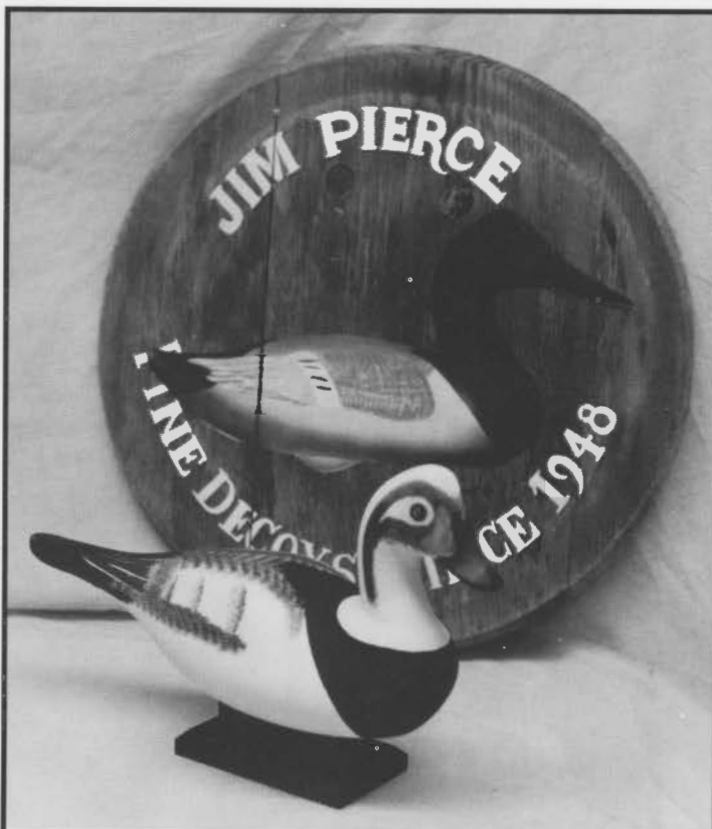
Recently, I was in the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum when one of the employees was preparing to place a new book in the gift shop. The deep wine colored jacket with an embossed gold picture of two dead ducks hanging on the side of a building caught my eye. After only a few minutes of browsing through this book, I bought it to review for *The Canvasback*. Captured initially by the title and art work, I became more pleased with the content.

Mathewson has written a rather unique book about hunting in the Northwestern United States. He weaves together a combination of personal hunting experiences, history and art. In seventeen brief chapters, Mathewson writes short stories that give us glimpses of the great Northwest while hunting with his wife and friends. The backdrop for his tales is an environment unlike what we are use to here on the East Coast or in the Midwest. Much of his writing is first person narrative, the kind of story that you might share with a friend. Intermingled with his personal accounts are historical references. Some of these stories were previously published in magazines such as *Wildfowl*, *Sporting Classics*, *Field and Stream*, *American Hunter*, *American Shotgunner*, and *Gray's Sporting Journal*.

While the content of Mathewson's book was enjoyable, I personally found two sections particularly interesting. The author recounts the history of the Barnegat sneak boat (developed around 1836 in New Jersey) and how a modified version was used in the Northwest. The other section which had a special interest for me addressed canvasback hunting in the West. Those of us that live on the Atlantic Flyway are often of the frame of mind that we are (or were) the only region to enjoy hunting the "Big Ducks."

Big December Canvasbacks is a quick read and enjoyable. It should add a great deal of relaxation to those cold and wintry evenings ahead. Look for the duck feather inside the cover.

Big December Canvasbacks is 171 pages and was published by Sand Lake Press, Amity, Oregon, 1997. This book is available at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.



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Duck Fair Review

Connie Daub

The 11th Annual Duck Fair, on September 13 and 14, proved to be an outstanding event. Over ninety exhibitors packed the lawn of the Bayou Condominiums making this one of the largest Duck Fairs ever held. Noble Mentzer, Duck Fair Honorary Chairman, delighted visitors with his beautiful work and charming personality. Ron Laber demonstrated carving decoys from cork in the R. Madison Mitchell Workshop. Visitors welcomed the opportunity to meet this talented carver and to see the Mitchell Shop as it was open to the public for the first time.

Everyone was pleased that Dave Hagan brought the "Upper Chesapeake Bay Goose Classic" and the "Susquehanna Flats Regional Duck Classic" calling competitions back to the fair on Saturday. The calling contests along with the Honorary Head Whittling and the Live Decoy Auction kept visitors constantly on the move. Maryland Public Television broadcasted "MPT On Location" live throughout the day and did an outstanding job

presenting the flavor and feel of the Duck Fair to the public at large.

Sunday brought "Spittin Willy Pawley," a 1918 waterfowl hunter, as presented by Richard Pawling and History Alive! "Spittin Willy" gave visitors a first hand look at what it was like to be a market game hunter before government regulations were enacted to bring an end to this livelihood. With conditions on the Flats near perfect, visitors received a treat as Kurt Gooch and his retriever teams worked their dogs on the water. The Children's Decoy Painting tent was, once again, a popular stop for both children and adults.

Our thanks to the many volunteers and participants who helped to ensure a successful Duck Fair. The crowds were steady, the weather was excellent, and everyone had a great time. Mark your calendars now for the 12th Annual Duck Fair on September 12 and 13, 1998. You won't want to miss it!



Director Mary Jo Murphy and Duck Fair Chairman Norm Smith present Noble Mentzer with a plaque for being the Honorary Chairman for the Duck Fair. Photo by J. Freeman Wright.

Rock Hall Recollections Part Two

THE DECOY MAKING LEGACY OF CAPTAINS JESSE AND ROGER URIE

Chad Tragakis

Author's Note: Part One of this article appeared in the Summer 1997 issue of The Canvasback. Among the areas examined and discussed were: Urie Family history, John Glen and the origins of the Rock Hall School, and an outline of Urie decoys, their design and production.

All Urie decoys were hand-chopped until 1955, when Roger designed and built a duplicating lathe. This practical enterprise was a natural progression for the Uries, as demand for their birds far exceeded their ever stretching capabilities. The new lathe-turned decoys were virtually indistinguishable from their famous handchopped fore-runners. Quality was not sacrificed with streamlined production. Roger based his lathe on Bob Lord's machine. Lord, from Chestertown, was the first carver to put

one together in the Rock Hall area. He had also turned out bodies for Jesse while Roger was in Korea. The gear box on the Urie lathe came from a Maytag washing machine, and Roger got his ideas for the belts and pulleys from the Montgomery Ward Catalog. Then Urie's friend, Martin Wagner, welded the lathe together. Since they would often turn out decoy bodies on their lathe at hunters' requests, over the years, the Uries turned out many Havre de Grace style decoys on their machine. Roger now



Widgeon drake decoy by the Uries, in second coat of Urie paint. Circa 1950. Note the flatness to the breast and the thickness to the bill. Photo and decoy, collection of Chad Tragakis.

regrets this. He wishes he had kept the Urie style consistent for reasons of his own integrity, as well as to aid in identification. But as he recalls, "you never think about things like that at the time."

The majority of the wood that the Uries used was cedar/cypress from old telephone and electric poles. It was good wood in that it was relatively easy to work with, and didn't absorb much water. Roger remembers that nearly everyone was using it for their decoys at that time. When they could get their hands on white pine, it was the wood of choice, but they really, "took what [we] could get." Pine was also the standard wood used for all heads. Basswood was virtually unheard of in the early days, but Roger's contemporary and decorative decoys are made from bass, primarily from North Carolina. While not widely used by the Uries, Roger recalls some very early decoys made from balsa. "We also made some cork decoys," he recalls, "not too many of 'em, but [I've got] the old pattern out there that we used for cork birds." Roger was able to turn out cork decoy bodies on his lathe, although he was not familiar with any other maker doing this.

Urie decoys were handsomely painted. The patterns, while not intricate, are realistic in their subtle randomness and proved extremely effective for gunning. Several conditions contributed to the fact that so many of them have survived in original paint. Roger explains, "We used what Mr. Johnny Glen used as a base coat. First we used shellac on a knot. That was standard procedure for Johnny Glen before he primed it. Orange shellac. Then you let that dry, and then you prime it. That's one thing, our paint would stay on a bit better than the boys' up in Havre de Grace. I think in those days they were using some of that Japan paint, and we'd see, after maybe one season or so, it would wash off. So [gunners] would bring 'em to us and have us repaint them. Johnny Glen in particular, used linseed oil in his paint, so a lot of it will almost have a sheen to it. If you want a hard coat, that's what you used. It made it more water-resistant if you had linseed oil in your primer." The Uries mixed all their own paints, resulting in occasional variations in the more prevalent colors. Roger smiles, remembering, "Daddy, he could fly through painting, and if he got a little cigar ash on the paint, it didn't bother him none."

After painting, weights and rigging were attached to the decoys. Like most Chesapeake Bay makers of their day, the Uries employed the ring and staple for anchor-line attachment. In their early years, the Uries used Glen's weights, cast by Captain John's son, Miltie. While in high school, Roger fashioned his own mold, which produced the semi-rounded weights he and Jesse used on their

decoys from then on. Weights were attached with two nails. While many collectors believe a Rock Hall decoy must have an unpainted ballast weight to be considered in "original paint," this is not always the case. The vast majority of Urie birds, and presumably Glen and Heinefield decoys, were weighted after painting (Roger remembers performing this duty with a tub of water in his yard). However, Roger recalls there were instances when he and Jesse would weight a rig of decoys (which were already primed) and then paint them.

Over the years, the Uries made many species native to the Chesapeake Bay including: canvasbacks, redheads, bluebills, blackducks, widgeons, goldeneyes, mallards, pintails, and coots. This was because they made whatever they were gunning at the time. Roger does not recall ever making teal, mergansers, shovelers, or ruddy ducks. Although they made many geese (including a few snow geese), they made very few full-size swans. In the 1950's, they experimented with oversized canvasback and blackduck decoys. They soon concluded however, that what little enhanced visibility their size afforded them, was not justified by the increased weight and heft.

Besides making new decoys, the Uries earned a reputation for first class repair and repainting. Hunters, as well as guides and club managers, would bring their rigs to the Uries for overhaul year after year. Roger recalls that in the early days, Glen's wife "Miss Tilly" was especially good at puttying shot holes. He recalls that though her fingers were a bit gnarled from such constant strain, she had a talented, delicate ability with a paintbrush. One particularly heart-wrenching story for any collector is Roger's account of what was actually a fairly typical practice in those days. Roger recalls: "I can remember one time [the guides] bringing in some ducks. I could see they had about four or five dozen, all Johnny Glen's. Almost perfect canvasbacks, hand-chopped, hand-painted, sittin' there. And they hardly needed anything done to them. And you'd say to 'em, 'they don't need paintin', and they'd say, 'well, my boss said paint 'em - so you paint 'em right?'" Over the years, Roger recalls repainting countless wonderful decoys that certainly did not need it.

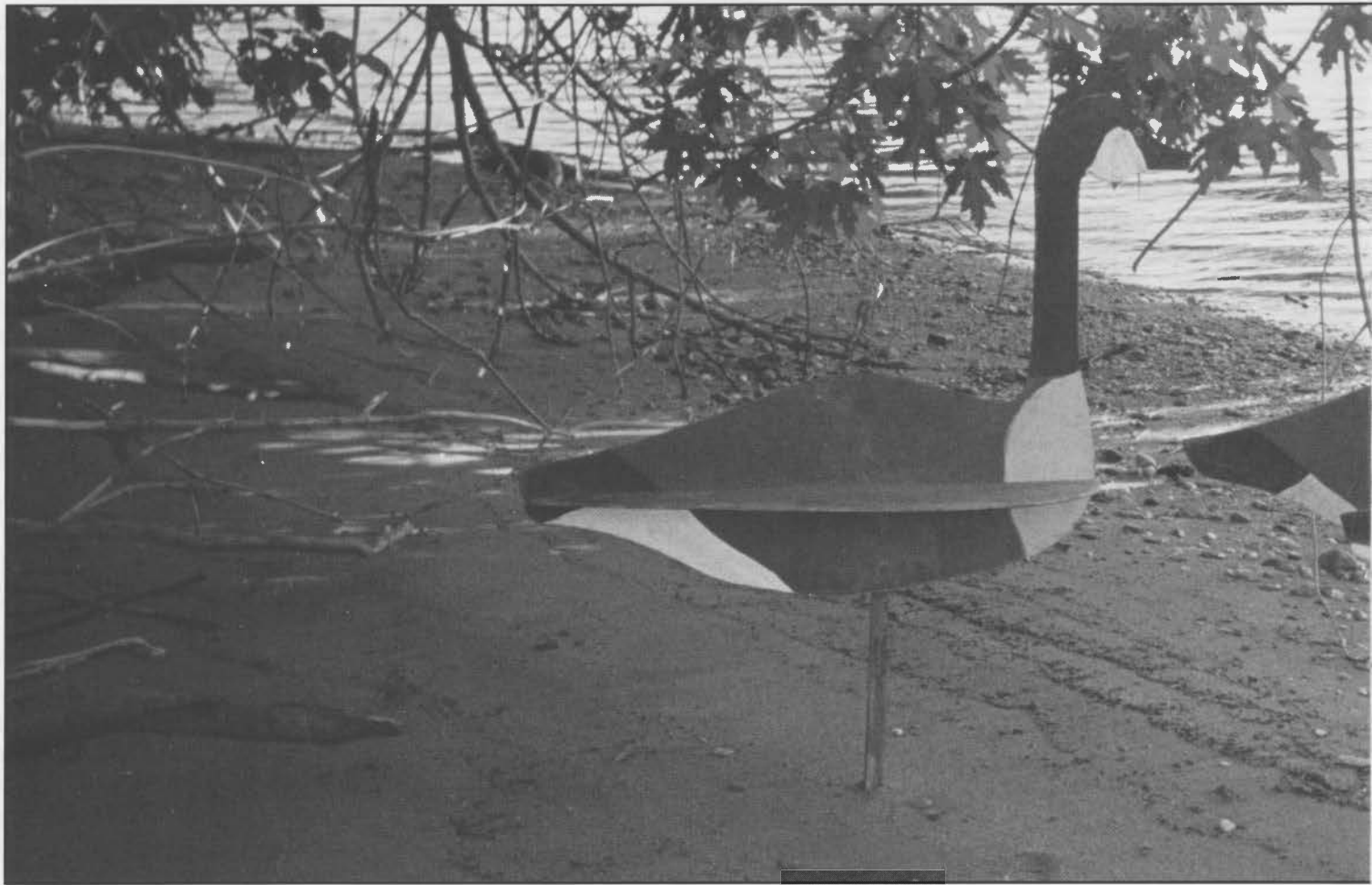
One product the Uries became especially famous for, and one that guides and gunners would come from far and wide to purchase, were their geese silhouettes. These two-dimensional, life-sized decoys are also known as "Maryland flatties." They made a standard model and a version with a flat wing, which slid into place through a slot on the body. The Uries probably made more of these over the years than any other maker on the East Coast. Their origin on Maryland's Eastern Shore can be traced back to a gentlemen who brought one in to Glen's shop, sometime

in the 1920's-1930's. The man's silhouette had been used with great success on the mud flats in Louisiana, and he inquired as to whether or not Glen might be able to produce more. He did, and their sudden proliferation in Maryland fields (and with longer poles, in shallow water) attests to their effectiveness.

As demand for the silhouettes grew, the Uries moved swiftly into action. Roger recalls, "We made an enormous amount of those. We just got better and better as it went along. Started off back when Johnny Glen was doing it. He was makin' 'em out of plywood, and he'd have somebody [Doug Hill of Skinners Neck] saw 'em out. During the war he had the old oak stands, 'cause he couldn't get no metal stands. That was a slow process. He'd charge about a buck for each one of 'em though. I don't recall us makin' 'em out of plywood at all. We went straight to Masonite [and Duron, a hard particle board from Oregon]. In fact, I was workin' up at the engineering company when Daddy started makin' these geese after Mr. Johnny Glen."

Three Urie goose silhouettes on the banks of the Potomac River. Collection of Chad Tragakis. Photo by Christine Tragakis.

Roger recounted why he adopted rivets in assembling their geese. "Glen [and] Mom and Daddy would bolt them up with these stove bolts and old square bolts and a screwdriver. You know, if you fool with that all day long, you've got your hands bleedin'. So then I came up with these, [pointing to rivet] trust head rivets, little 3/8 inch high rivets. First we just used to hit 'em with a hammer, [but] that was hard on the wrist. So then we went to usin' an air gun, and you could do about fifty dozen, I guess, a day." Paint patterns on the silhouettes were simple and slightly exaggerated. Roger recalls, "Now, [Daddy] didn't paint 'em like Johnny Glen, he painted them like I would paint our [floating] geese. He'd paint 'em gray in the front and a dark brown along the sides and back. Mr. Johnny, he would kind of blend in the grays and all. It was a different game altogether." It was not uncommon for Mrs. Urie to help apply white paint to the silhouettes in an assembly line fashion. Roger remembers well the tiresome monotony of painting the geese, "Man, you'd get out here and work ten hours a day, just puttin' the black on. Next day you'd put the white on. Next day you'd brush the gray in the breast on one side of it, then flipped it over, did the other side. Then you come back with the brown and do



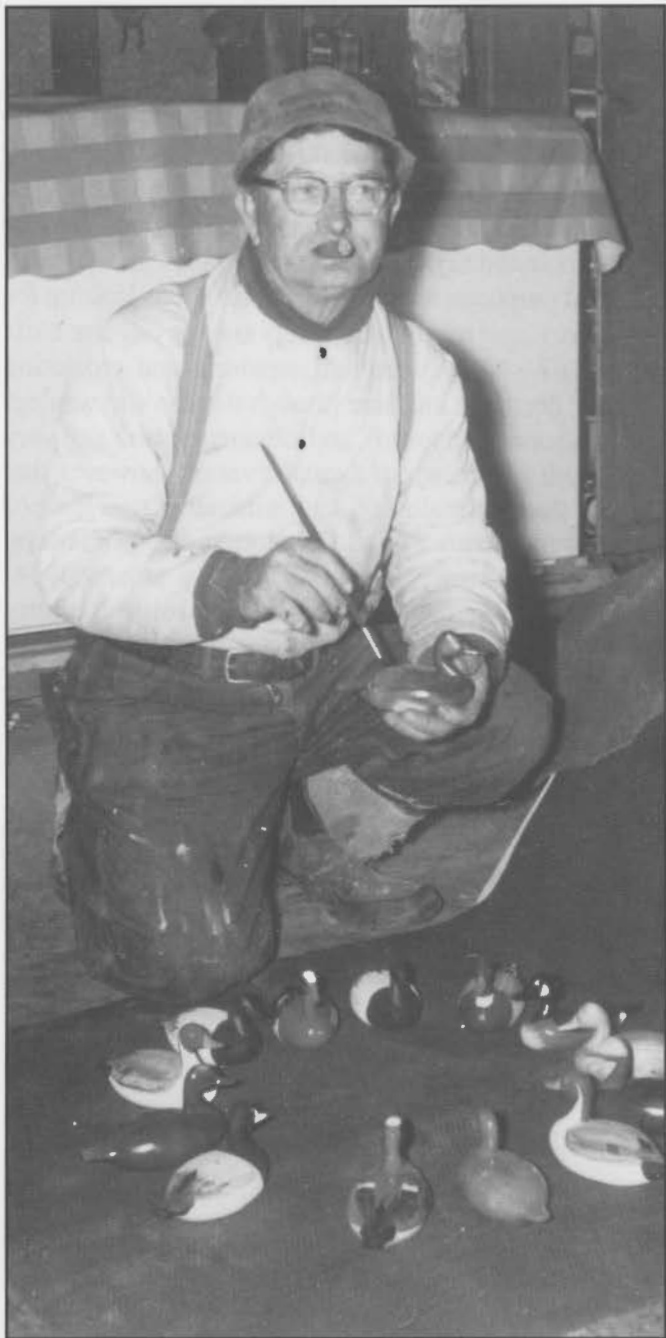
that, and let that dry. Then you put the feathers on the next day. But you'd pile 'em all up, and when we stacked 'em up, they'd be 800 high - you know they're only about 1/8 inch thick. But we got to doin' that pretty good. We were pretty good at doin' that." Over the years, Urie silhouettes earned a reputation for quality, durability, and value. The last silhouettes they made cost \$25.00 a dozen for the standard model and \$35.00 a dozen for geese with removable wings.

Roger vividly remembers the many afternoons he spent gunning with his father. "There was the time when I was thirteen," he recalls, "Dad got me to shoot my first duck, which was mid-way [up] the creek. He then rowed me across to a little cove on the other side. Being excited, I ran about twenty-five feet across the mud after the duck, when I heard Dad shouting at me. I looked back and seen my brand new hip boots standing in the mud a couple steps from the boat. I was going so fast, I never knew when they came off my legs!" One humorous illustration of Jesse's view of work and play, Roger recalls, is how good friend, "Roy [White] and Dad could be [at work] hammering and sawing like mad, when up comes a little rain. They would say to the straw boss, 'We gotta' get out of here. Our tools

are getting wet. Don't want to ruin them. Besides, this is pneumonia weather!' Then they come home and get three or four hundred dollars worth of shotguns and stand them up in the rain all day and freeze to death!"

The years 1957-1958 marked the beginning of a deep depression for Chesapeake Bay duck hunting. This slow period (in the early 1960's), coupled with competition from plastic and Styrofoam decoys, brought about, for all practical purposes, the end of full-size decoy making for the Uries. Roger recalls them rarely making full-size birds after 1967. They were still repairing and repainting hunter's decoys at this time (though that too was waning, and was soon abandoned), and silhouettes were still very popular. It was decoys of a smaller variety, however, that became their real mainstay. Urie miniatures, now some of the most sought after of all Chesapeake Bay miniatures, became increasingly popular beginning around 1964-1965. Jesse had made his first miniatures in the early 1950's, (that were very similar to the three to four inch ones John Glen was producing at the time), but made them only occasionally until Roger created a pattern and began making them again in the mid 1960's. This occurred when Roger realized there was a market for such decoys, after





Jesse painting miniatures in his shop, circa 1960's. Note the ever-present cigar. Photo courtesy of Roger Urie.

some ladies inquired about them in early 1964. Following this, he created a set of miniature patterns and paint schemes. At first, Jesse was opposed to the new venture, saying as Roger recalls, “‘I’ve got enough to do with all this’... he didn’t want to fool with ‘em. I remember that must’ve been about 1964.” Soon after, however, “he said, ‘yeah, that’s a gold mine — that’s the best thing you ever did,’ he turned around 180 degrees,” Roger remembers, laughing.

Perhaps more than hunting, and even more than fish-

ing, Jesse enjoyed talking. “He was a talker,” Mrs. Urie states emphatically. “He’d talk you deaf, dumb, and blind, easily for two, three hours at a time” adds Roger, who remembers his father as, “halfway in between a jokester and Harry Truman.” Jesse could pontificate on nearly any subject: hunting and fishing, politics, history, and one of his true joys, baseball. One of his greatest loves, and greatest gifts it should be added, was storytelling. Mrs. Urie remembers that, “He could tell a yarn that nobody heard of. Very entertaining... he could entertain you! There was nothin’ he didn’t know. He’d make it so interesting, and he’d say so many lies, that he’d start to believe them himself.”

Those who knew Captain Urie, and who were able to witness a man in his element — spinning the yarns, telling the tales — are truly fortunate souls. “Well, Daddy had a way of talking,” Roger reflects, “He’d smile most of the time he was talking, so you couldn’t tell when he was lying and when he was telling the truth.” Jesse had a true concern for the enjoyment and interest of his friends and of the visitors to his shop. Once, after the tallest tale he’d ever heard his father tell, Roger had to ask, “Why did you say that?, and he said, ‘well, I know it ain’t true,’ he says, ‘but it gets a laugh out of ‘em anyway,’ you know?” “They were really yarns,” Mrs. Urie remembers, “but when I found out after that some of ‘em were true — I didn’t believe it!” He also enjoyed telling jokes of all colors and perpetuating the gossip that comes with a small town. “I remember some of the ladies up at the Rock Hall Lumber said, ‘What does your daddy do?’ And I said he makes decoys, and they said, ‘well, he’s in here talkn’ most of the time,’ Roger laughs. Jesse enjoyed the many write-ups and publicity his local fame brought him, beginning with the first such interview in 1959. “I think he had a real big ego,” Roger reflects, “He liked to take the credit, but he talked about me later.” On the other hand, Roger admits, “Daddy’s the kind of man, he didn’t want to take too much credit. He was just kind of laid back.” Over the years, Urie decoys have been purchased by and for politicians, CEOs, and even the Prime Minister of Australia and the Apollo 7 astronauts. Still, the Uries were just as proud of the decoys they made to ride the icy waves of the Chesapeake, as they were of the birds made strictly for collectors’ shelves.

Jesse passed away in his sleep on August 12, 1978, fifteen days before his seventy-seventh birthday. He was buried in the Wesley Chapel Methodist Cemetery, just outside of Rock Hall. Roger recalls that he was happily sanding miniatures the day he died. Jesse’s vigorous and active life, even up to the end, was remarkable when one considers the challenging lifestyle of a waterman. Even

*Roger in his shop, with an early pair of hand-chopped mallards.
Photo by Chad Tragakis.*

more so when you factor in his almost constant cigar smoking, and his favorite breakfast of scrapple. Jesse truly lived a very full life. He had a loving family, supportive friends, and he lived long enough to experience the appreciation countless people had for his art, and the recognition that he and Roger so richly deserved.

In 1990, Roger received one of the true great honors the decoy community can bestow, when he was selected as the Honorary Chairman of the Havre de Grace Decoy Festival. This honor forever placed the Urie name in the company of the elite group of Maryland decoy makers, who are among the true pioneers of this American art form. Today, overcoming bouts of chronic back pain, Roger continues in the tradition his father, John Glen, and August Heinefield set before him. He has accepted his place in decoy-making history, and he understands the need to preserve its legacy. For what has been, will never be again.



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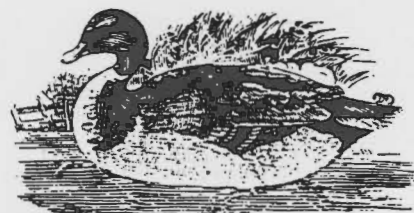
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The Rollover Duck Boat

A Unique Niche in Waterfowling History

Kermit Henning

Mike Sanderson, one of the last stalwarts on the Susquehanna River still using a rollover duck boat, puts his agile craft through its paces. Photo by Kermit Henning.

The rollover duckboat, unique to the upper Susquehanna River, has been as much a part of local waterfowling history as the men who built and used them. Like the sinkbox and punt boats of the Susquehanna Flats, the rollover has all but disappeared from use.

The rollover is a "local" boat, used exclusively by gunners on the Susquehanna River between Sunbury and Highspire, Pennsylvania, and scarcely heard of outside this small stretch of river. The earliest accounts of rollovers come from the 1920's, but it seems like the heyday was up through the 50's and 60's. Interestingly, not at the time when migrating ducks were most plentiful.

Gone too, are most of the men who built and used them, except for Ed Myers and Mike Sanderson. Sanderson, of West Fairview, Pennsylvania is one of the last stalwarts still using a rollover to hunt ducks. Ed Myers, from neighboring Enola, Pennsylvania, is the only one still alive who built them, and who in fact, built the one Sanderson uses today. The very first rollover was the brainchild of Arlanda Pierce "Apple Pie" Dintaman who was born in 1858. He was a pattern maker at Bethlehem Steel in Steelton, who lived for a time on Hill Island in Middletown, Pennsylvania. He moved his family to the "Hardscrabble" area of Harrisburg which is located along Front Street between Herr and Calder, site of the present day Sunken Gardens, sometime before the turn of the century. Here he opened the Dintaman Boat Livery, along the river at Front and Forster Streets, and rented canoes and dock space to other boaters. The residents of Hardscrabble were forced out of their homes between 1919 and 1923 by legislation sponsored by M. Harvey





The duck's view of Mike Sanderson's rollover duck boat. Photo by Kermit Henning.

Taylor, in order to continue the gardens along Front Street. Dintaman died shortly thereafter in 1926. His son Charles C. "Hop" Dintaman continued to operate the business until he retired in 1945.

Exactly when Dintaman built the first rollover still remains a mystery. However, it was from his original patterns that most of the subsequent boats were built. Most were builders from the community of West Fairview, men like Louis "Pappy" Stewart, Charles Glessner, Arby Dissinger and Ed Myers' father Bill, who was assuredly more famous for his career as an all-star shortstop with the Cincinnati Reds. Ed helped his father build over a dozen

rollovers but built the last three by himself in 1971. As the number of ducks declined, so did the demand for new rollovers.

Rollovers built on the Dintaman pattern were 15' 3" in length, with a few further north in the Sunbury and Millersburg area going to 16 feet. The stem, keel and ribs were made of green oak, which was easily bent to the required shape. The white pine planking was fastened with copper rivets and then the entire hull covered with canvas.

The rollover is named for how it is used. The gunner sits to one side of the boat, actually rolling it over on its



A look down inside the the rollover duck boat of Mike Sanderson. Photo by Kermit Henning.

side. The bottom of the boat pushes up and out of the water, then acts as a floating blind, hiding the shooter from the ducks.

The hunter sits in the boat about 200-300 yards off from his decoy spread and waits for the ducks to come into the decoys. A usual spread consisted of three dozen or so black duck decoys and another two or three dozen canvasbacks placed 200 feet downriver. Black duck decoys were favored over mallards because they were easier to paint; canvasbacks draw in every other diving duck.

When the ducks settled in between the decoys, the gunner would start his run. The boat was rolled over as far as possible, just so the water didn't come in the side, and the gunner could just barely see over the top. Using a short paddle, an expert could not only sneak right up on the ducks, but actually cut them out of the decoys into open water before shooting.

When it came time to shoot, the gunner would "open" the boat, quickly turning the inside of the rollover toward the ducks. Most guys tied a string to their paddle so they could just drop the paddle in the water, saving precious time when reaching for the gun. Occasionally, two men would hunt together in a rollover. The man in the back paddled, while the one up front did all the shooting.

Running a rollover was as much of an art as building them. Taking into account strong river currents and high winds during the gunning season, it took an accomplished paddler to use a rollover safely and effectively.

Some techniques to running a rollover are shifting

your weight forward or backward to fight the wind and paddling faster to make the boat easier to control. Men like Don Oyler and the late Larry Wagner, whom Ed Myers considered the best, made it look easy.

It's evident that Mike Sanderson, too, has spent a lot of time in the rollover. I had an opportunity to watch Sanderson in action this past season and came to realize just how effective the rollover is. Mike has been running a rollover ever since he was old enough to hunt on his own, which is evident by the ease with which he runs it. Upriver or down, windy or calm, he deftly maneuvers the boat right into the decoys, opens the boat, and has his gun mounted before the unwary ducks realize their predicament.

Traditionally, most of the old gunners, including Dintaman, carved their own decoys for use on the river. Sanderson too, is an accomplished carver who often uses his own birds in his spread. Myers has just recently taken up decoy carving, using various patterns including those of his father. He is also making scale models of his rollovers as well as the other "batty" boats, skiffs and cut-down canoes he used to build. This spring, he intends to build another full-size rollover using the same old Dintaman pattern. With all the new technology of modern boats, calls, decoys, and weapons, coupled with dwindling numbers of migrating ducks, I'm not sure there will be a big demand for new rollovers. But as long as Ed Myers and Mike Sanderson are around, a unique part of our waterfowling heritage is sure to survive.



Mike Sanderson demonstrates "opening" the boat. Photo by Kermnit Henning.

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Decoy carvers exhibiting and offering their work

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From the Collection

Views From the Past

Kim Martin

Last year, the museum received an unusual donation from Doug and Becky Rhodes of Fallston, Maryland. Unusual because unlike the majority of artifacts in the museum, the donation was not a decoy, gunning skiff, or hunting accouterment. Instead, the donation was a collection of twenty stereo views.

While these stereo views were clearly never hunted over, they are decoy related. The views, accompanied by explicit captions, offer insight into waterfowling practices of the early 1900's.

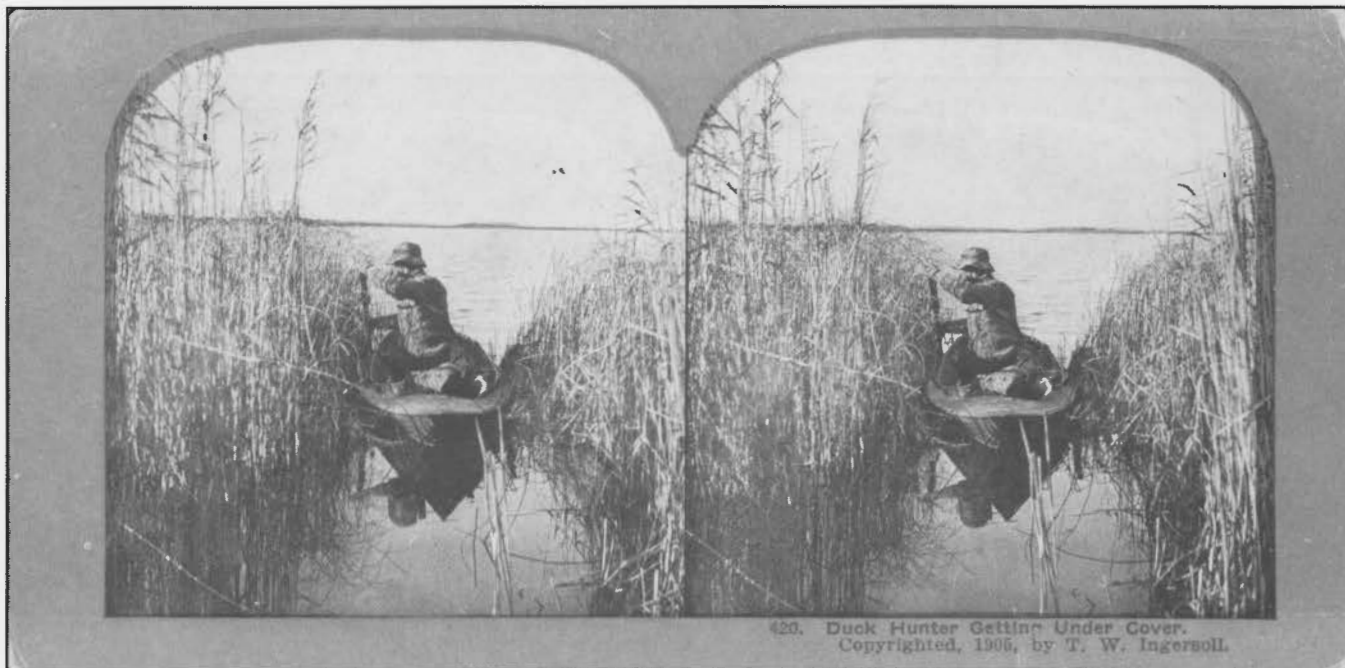
The following is a sampling of the stereo views donated by the Rhodes.



419. A Convenient Hunting Boat Outfit.

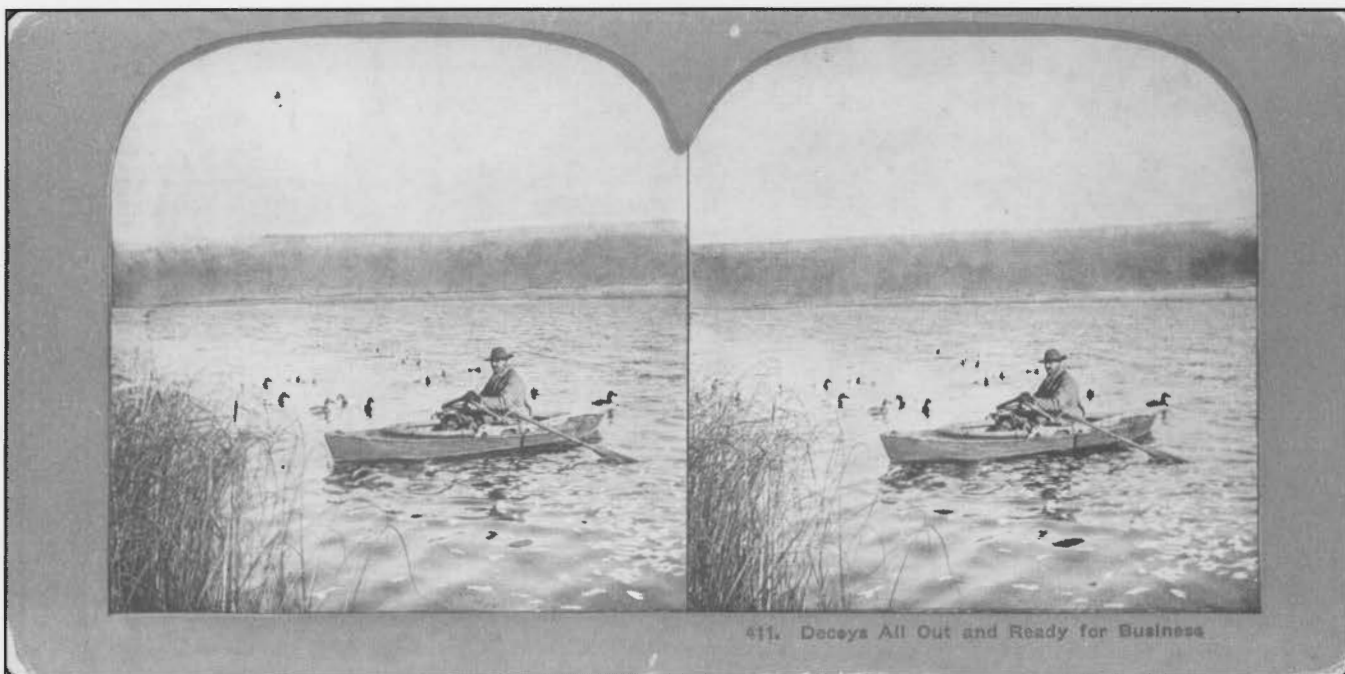
A CONVENIENT HUNTING BOAT OUTFIT.

The past few years have shown wonderful progress in the way of hunting equipment. The boat shown in this picture is made from steel, solidly braced. It has air chambers in its bow and stern so that it is absolutely unsinkable and withal, it is so light that two men can readily carry it almost any distance.



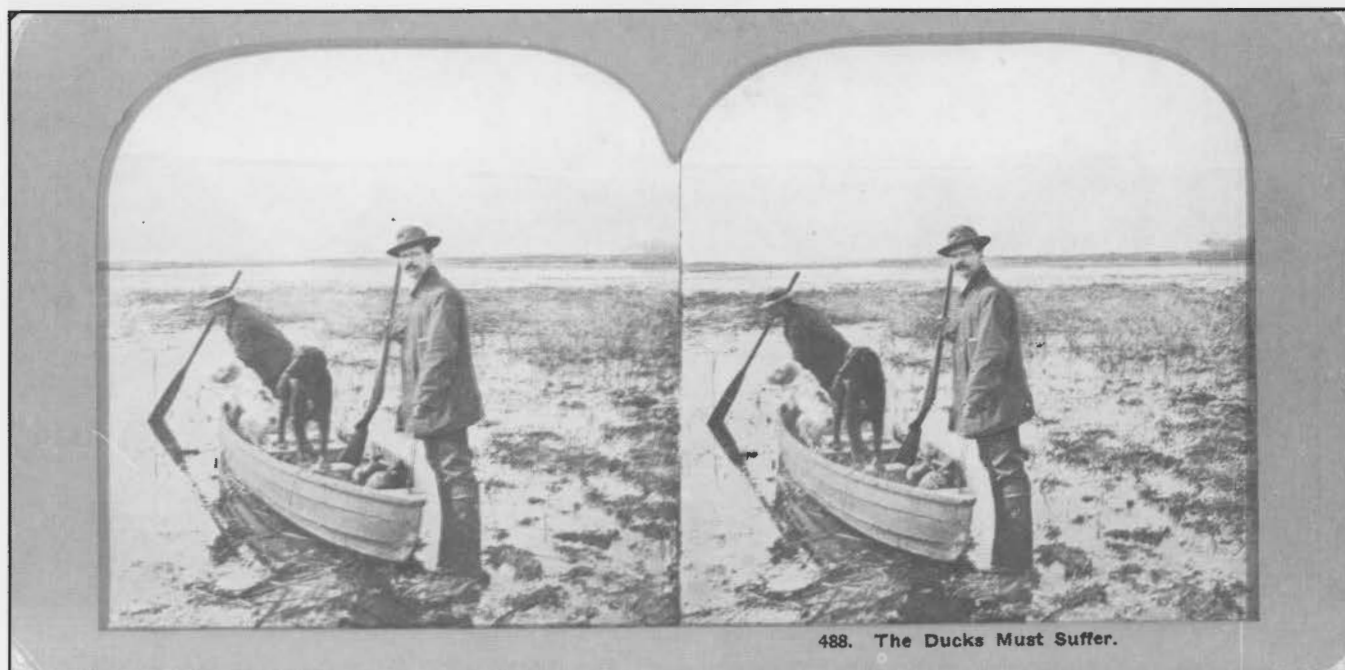
DUCK HUNTER GETTING UNDER COVER.

This hunter has not yet completed his preparations for the morning's sport, but is pushing under cover in hope of securing a shot at a flock which he sees swinging his way at some distance down the lake. As soon as opportunity arises he will put out his decoys and take his morning's stand ready for the flight.



DECOYS ALL OUT AND READY FOR BUSINESS.

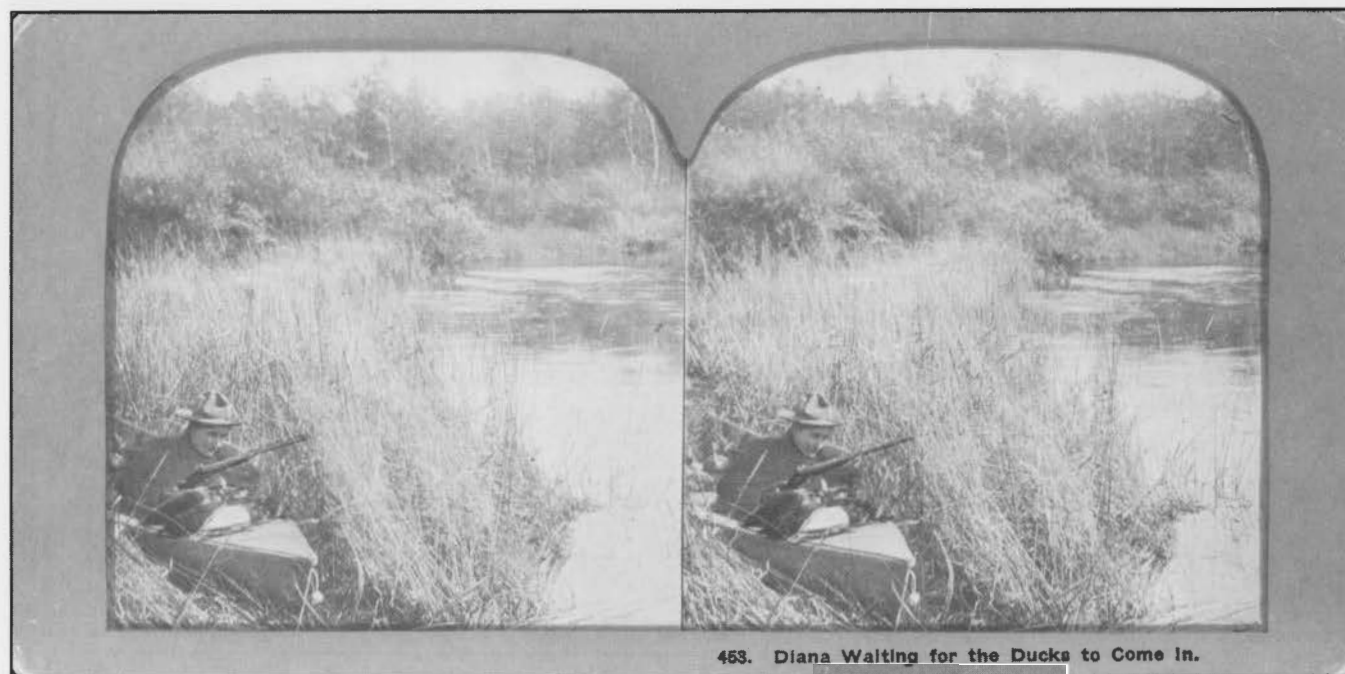
Just at the first break of day, before the sun has risen and when the sky in the East is red with the approach of full dawn, the skillful duck hunter will have his decoys placed twenty to fifty yards away from his blind, and before it becomes light enough to see to shoot he will have pushed his sharp-pointed craft far out of sight among the rushes and wild rice and there await the coming birds.



488. The Ducks Must Suffer.

THE DUCKS MUST SUFFER.

Unlucky ducks. Luck ducks and lucky sportsmen. Was there ever a man with a particle of sporting blood in his veins who would not thrill with pleasure in anticipation of a morning like this, as, accompanied by a bosom friend and two retrievers, he sets out for the hunting grounds.



453. Diana Waiting for the Ducks to Come In.

DIANA WAITING FOR THE DUCKS TO COME IN.

There are some splendid sportswomen in this country, and most of them can give pointers to the male hunters for clean sportsmanship and downright skill in getting their game. That this lady is a successful shot and a skillful huntswoman is evident from the pile of ducks before her on the bow of the boat.

CALENDAR

November

8

11th Annual Decoy Museum's Anniversary Dinner at the Bayou Restaurant, Havre de Grace, Maryland. Hors d'oeuvres start at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., and an auction at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each. Please R.S.V.P. by calling the museum at (410) 939-3739.

8-9

5th Annual Wildlife Art and Carving Expo to be held at the Olde Byfield Expo Center in Byfield, Massachusetts. Contact Jim White, (508) 768-7218 or Michael Britt, (508) 459-2650.

14-16

27th Annual Waterfowl Festival in Easton, Maryland. World's Premier Wildlife Art Show and Sale featuring 450 of the country's finest artists displaying paintings, sculpture, carvings, duck stamps, photography, crafts, and antique decoys. Free shuttle service to eighteen exhibit locations throughout this charming historic town. Call (410) 822-4567.

20-23

Decoy and Wildfowl Carvers Association Wildfowl Arts Festival at the San Bernardino County Museum, San Bernardino, CA. For more information call Lydell Lambeth, (909) 793-9445.

22-23

23rd Annual Decoy and Craft Show. Carvings, paintings, crafts, decoys, and refreshments. Held in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited and Delaware State Wildlife. Nur Temple Ritual. Free parking. For more information write: Nur Temple Mosque, State Road, U.S. 13 & 40, New Castle, DE. See ad on page fifteen.

22- January 1, 1998

Chesapeake Carvers and Artists Exhibit at the Ward

Museum of Wildlife Art. Includes works by Josh Brewer, Robert Hostetler, Bill Bowman, and Ronald Clements. Call (410) 742-4988 for more information.

December

14

25th Anniversary Candlelight Home Tour of Historic Havre de Grace and Carver's Celebration at the Decoy Museum. Visit the Decoy Museum to see the decoy head Christmas tree and purchase decoys from carvers on the second floor. 25% off sale in the museum's gift shop for members.

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MARYLAND DUCKS UNLIMITED 3RD ANNUAL COMPETITION FOR MARYLAND STATE ART PACKAGE

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- ♦ The State Committee will announce selections on March 1, 1998. All work will be showcased at the State Convention, April 1998.

For further information or to submit samples, please contact:

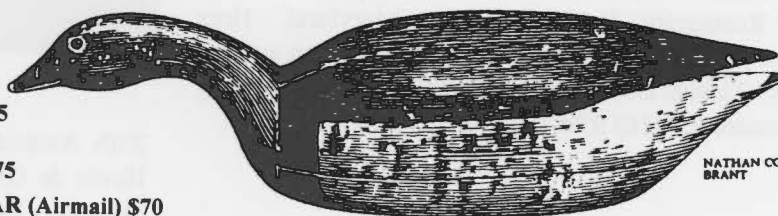
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Frank Kelly, Jr.

Gone But Not Forgotten

Allan Schaubert

The state of Maryland has been blessed with many pioneers in the decoy world. The names that come to mind are usually Lem and Steve Ward, Paul Gibson, Robert McGaw, and R. Madison Mitchell. A name that many may not know is Frank Kelly, Jr. of Chestertown, Maryland. Frank Kelly was a pioneer in his own right when it came to decorative decoys. Frank was always looking for ways to improve his techniques by trying new ideas and new products.

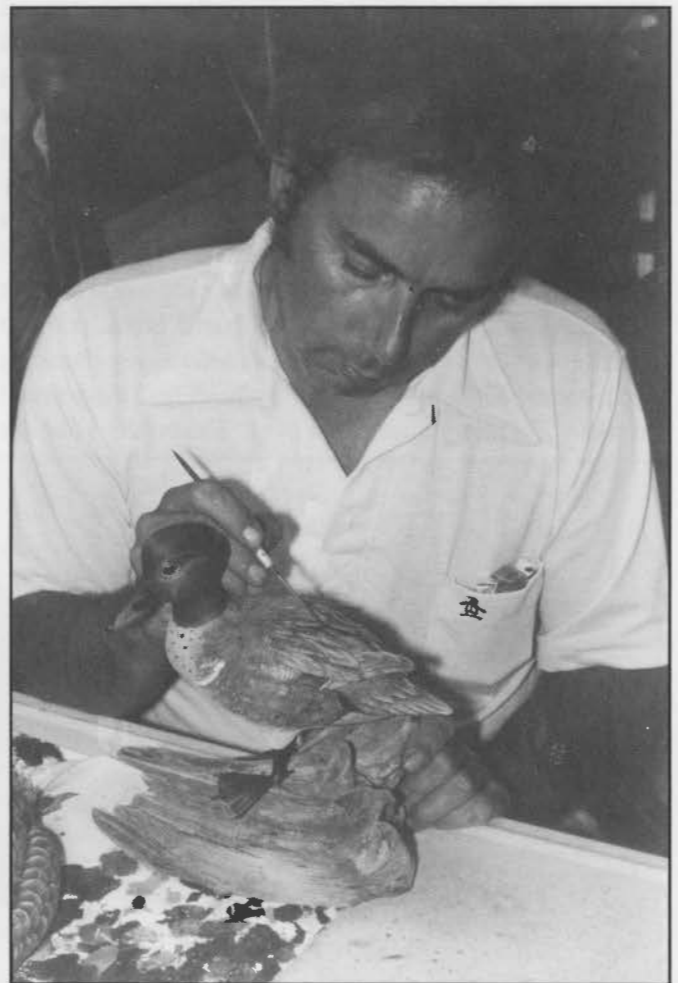
Frank Kelly was born in Queen Anne's County, Maryland on October 9, 1935, in the town of Sudlersville. Mr. Kelly also had two sisters, Emma and Angelean, and a brother Ward. As a young man, he enjoyed hunting, fishing and training bird dogs. He was also an excellent ball player. Frank married Marlene Scheeler and had two children, Susan and David. Mr. Kelly worked as a boiler mechanic for D&R Supply Co. in Chestertown, Maryland for many years. On the side, Mr. Kelly liked to dabble with wood and in 1969, he carved his first three ducks. These miniature canvasbacks were not painted to his satisfaction so he called his friend, Bill Schaubert, for some tips on painting. Bill agreed to show Frank what he knew about decoy painting only if he could have one of the canvasbacks. After a few moments of thought, Mr. Kelly agreed and so started his carving career.

In just a short period of time, Frank began experimenting with new carving and painting ideas that he had seen at various decoy shows. It did not take very long for Mr. Kelly to develop his talent and become known for his decorative, life-like birds. Frank became friends with the late George Walker from New Jersey, and George gave him many ideas about using foredom tools and wood burning equipment. Another friend, Bob Coleman, saw Frank's talent and helped him open a decoy shop in Chestertown called "The Flyway" in 1974. The Flyway was probably one of the very first decoy stores in the state of Maryland and remained open until 1980.

Frank's choice of wood was bass or tupelo and he liked to paint with acrylics. When he first started carving, Frank would carve the bird and then hand it over to Bob Coleman to paint. As his experience grew, he started painting the birds himself. One of Frank's most cherished

accomplishments was being invited to show in the gold room at the Easton Waterfowl Festival

Most everyone in the Chestertown area either knew Frank from working at the oil company or for the duck pins and tie tacks he made for the Christmas season or the decorative works of art that he created for doctors, lawyers, and businessmen. If alive today, his talents would surely have continued to grow to the height of a Tad Burnett or John Scheeler. He is dearly missed by all who knew him for his talent and willingness to share his discoveries in decoy carving with everyone. Thanks go out to Marlene Kelly Starkey, Ward Kelly, and Bob Coleman for information contained in this article.



Many people have a few unknown decoys in their collection. These decoys have been purchased for their intrinsic value or perhaps have just been obtained by chance. No matter how these decoys have been acquired, their makers remain unknown. This of course happens for the simple fact that there have been thousands of individuals that tried their hand at making a few decoys or who have even completed a rig of decoys to hunt over. In order to help you identify some unknown decoys you may have in your collection, here is a brief article and photos on one of these "unknown" decoy makers. Though this carver may never make it into the pages of history, it might be nice to finally put a name with that "unknown" decoy.

Edward Costello, Sr.

November 26, 1911- September 18, 1973

Michael E. Bodner



Ed Costello. Photo courtesy of Michael Bodner.

Ed Costello lived in Burlington, New Jersey and made decoys from the 1930's to approximately 1945. The number of decoys he made is quite low, between eighteen and twenty-four. A man named Ridgway Marter taught Costello how to carve. Costello was a duck hunter who made a small personal rig of black ducks and a few mallards. Costello not only hunted for blackducks but also railbirds in a place called Shedaker's Flats on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River. Ed Costello's worked for the Marter's trucking company, the Florence Foundry and as a maintenance worker of the Tacony-Palmyra bridge, which spans the Delaware River.

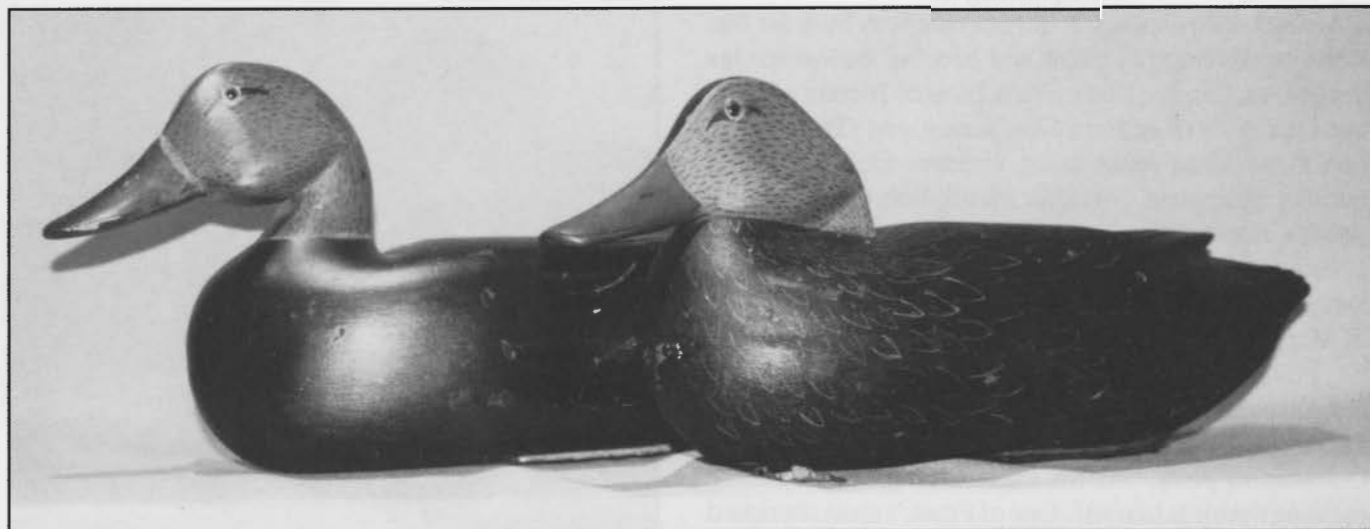
Costello's decoys are made out of pine wood and are hollow. Costello used ordinary oil-based house paint to coat the decoys a flat black and then added a grey checking and a green bill. Some of the decoys have feathers painted on them and many have glass eyes. The boldness of the

raised wing feathers and the individual shaping of the tail feathers make the decoy quite attractive. Some of the decoys are carved in a resting position. A large rectangular lead weight is attached near the bottom back of the decoy. Like Ridgway Marter, Ed used small brass screws to attach the pads. The thin leather loops have screw eyes and brass swivels. An assortment of anchor weights were attached to four feet of line. Overall, Ed Costello carved his decoys in the typical Delaware river style.



Detail photograph of the tail. Photo courtesy of Michael Bodner.

Two blackducks in both positions. Photo courtesy of Michael Bodner.



Weekend Carving Demonstrations at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

November 1, Michael Gleason
November 2, Bill Weaver
November 8, Ken Clodfelter
November 9, Bill Streaker
November 15, Barb Wachter
November 16, Bryon Bodt
November 22, Butch and Mary
Carol Larrimore
November 23, Linda and Dick
Robinson
November 29, Bill Veasey
November 30, Wayne Thayer

December 6, Noble Mentzer
December 7, Michael Gleason
December 13, John Ingolia,
December 14, Carvers on 2nd floor
December 20, Butch and Mary
Carol Larrimore
December 21, Art Boxleitner

Call Pat Vincenti at (410) 734-6238 if you are interested in any OPEN carving dates.

EXHIBIT UPDATE

Carvings by Frank Kelly Jr.

A collection of waterfowl carvings by Frank Kelly Jr. of Chestertown, Maryland is presently on display in the museum. The exhibit was coordinated by Allan Schaubert, a carver and former Havre de Grace Decoy Festival Honorary Chairman, and is comprised of carvings owned by the friends and family of the late Mr. Kelly. Highlights include: a miniature canvasback, c. 1969, First carving; a flying Canada goose, c. 1971; and a preening wood duck, c. 1977. The collection will be on display through December 1997.

Ward Decorative Carvings

To correspond with Lem and Steve Ward naming Honorary Chairmen for the 1998 Havre de Grace Decoy Festival, the museum will feature an exhibit of Lem's decorative carvings. The pristine carvings are from the collection of Dr. Morton and Carol Kramer and have not been placed on public display for over 20 years. The exhibit is scheduled to open in January and will run through the festival.

Santa Claus Carving Class at the Decoy Museum

*Carve and complete a Santa
in one class!*

Classes will be held on
November 9th, 16th, and 23rd.
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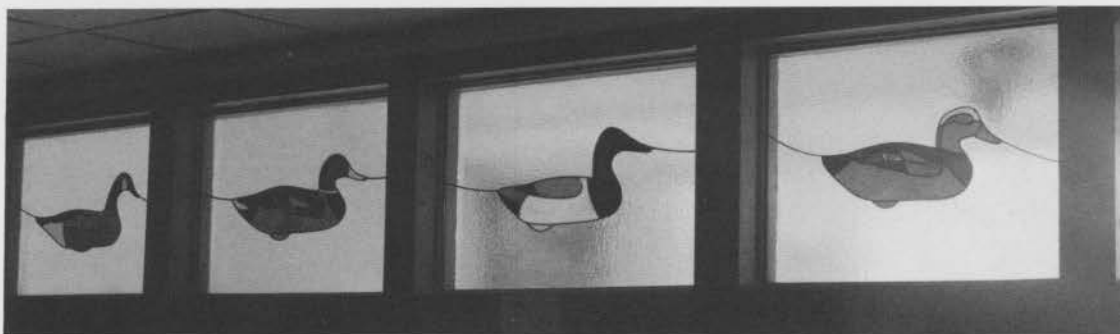
CLASSIFIED

For our members we offer free classified ads to buy, sell, and trade decoys or related objects. Please keep it under 15 words. For non-members, it will be \$5.00 for 15 words. Mail your classified ads to: Decoy Museum, P.O. Box A, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

WANTED: Charles "Buck" Crawford miniatures. Contact Lou Nolan, 1123 Penshurst Lane, Penn Valley, PA 19072 or call (610) 664-5938.

NOTICE: *Free Decoy List* New red list, Masons, Evans, Canada & East Coast decoys. Send SASE to: John Freimuth, 12123 S 71st Avenue, Palo Heights, IL 60463. (708) 361-4343.

ATTENTION VA, MD, & DC decoy collectors: The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association (PDCA) will hold its next meeting in mid-November. PDCA members meet once a month to socialize; examine decoys; exchange information on makers, history, care, and preservation; buy, sell, & trade decoys and related items; and just plain talk ducks! For more information please call Tom East at (703) 866-1735, or Chad Tragakis at (703) 768-2949.



Stained Glass Windows at the Decoy Museum

The Decoy Museum offers friends of the museum, the opportunity to purchase a specially designed stained glass window. The window features a single decoy.

The purchaser selects a message to be inscribed on a brass plaque, which will hang beneath the window.

Only three windows are available for purchase at \$500 each.

Please call the Decoy Museum at (410) 939-3739 or call Ken Lay at (410) 939-3489

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