

The Canvasback

Fall 1998
Vol. 7, No. 4

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

\$4

MARSHY POINT
DUCKING CLUB
1854.

COLLECTORS ISSUE

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Havre de Grace Decoy Museum



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

Journal from the Marshy Point Ducking Club, 1854. Photo courtesy of C. John Sullivan.



FROM THE EDITOR

Recently, I read an article about why people visit museums and it made me think about why I go. You might think that if you work all day in a museum, you may tend not to go to museums on your time off; but this is not true for me. I enjoy going to museums during weekends and vacations. I like to see what I will learn from them, and in a museum setting, it is an enjoyable way to learn. In this world of entertainment, museums encourage visitors to think, imagine, and to widen their horizons. You don't even have to travel far to go to museums, just look in your own backyard. For whatever reasons that bring you to the Decoy Museum, we welcome you and hope you visit often. *The Canvasback* is a wonderful way to keep in touch between visits.

This Fall issue of *The Canvasback* is dedicated to one article written about ducking clubs on the Upper Chesapeake Bay. In this article, author C. John Sullivan provides us with a glimpse of the atmosphere within these exclusive clubs. He takes us back to a time when being one with nature was enough entertainment and enjoyment. Tidbits of information taken from old club journals paint this picture. I thank Mr. Sullivan for his never-ending search for historic documentation and for taking the time to share it with us.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Murphy

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The Canvasback

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*From
the
President*



Dear Museum Member,

It's time to revisit your museum. The Jim Pierce and Bill and Allan Schaubert collections have been moved to the second floor gallery where they are displayed in specially designed plexiglass and wooden display cases. The Bob McGaw collection has moved closer to the R. M. Mitchell collection in the cases by the diorama. The cases on the first floor now contain representative decoys from Louisiana and the Pacific fly-way. It is enjoyable to compare decoys from different parts of the country.

The 11th Annual Duck Fair was again successful in all aspects. As usual, the weather was perfect. The highlight was an open and functioning R. M. Mitchell shop with Charlie Bryan demonstrating his decoy making skills. Few have ever helped the museum more than Mr. Bryan. Carver Steve Lay will man the Mitchell Shop December 13th during the Candlelight Tour. At this time all prices in the gift shop will be reduced 25% to museum members. It will be a good time to start your Christmas shopping.

Your Board of Directors added a new member, Ms. Barbara Osborn Kreamer, a practicing attorney in Bel Air and a former member of the Maryland House of Delegates.

The process of having the museum accredited by the American Museum Association is ongoing and proceeding well.

September was the museum's annual membership month. It went well, but we can never have too many members. Encourage your friends to join our museum.

Yours truly,

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

P.S. Don't forget the Anniversary Dinner on November 7, 1998.

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.



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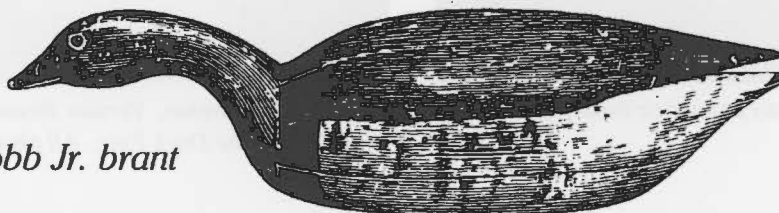
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Retriever demonstrations attract both duck and dog lovers.

11TH ANNUAL DUCK FAIR

September 12 & 13, 1998

In case you missed it, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum held its 11th Annual Duck Fair the second weekend of September. Held on the grounds of the Museum and the Bayou Condominiums, exhibitors set up their displays and sold their goods, all pertaining to the related topic of decoys and ducks. But exhibiting was not the only thing going on at the Duck Fair. On Saturday, there was a Live Auction with many rarities and finds. Retriever demonstrations were held on Sunday, and drew in quite a crowd. The silent auctions, held on both days, auctioned off items from exhibitors and local merchants alike. For the smaller waterfowling fans, the decoy painting tent proved to be quite a hit. Fair goers were able to witness head whittling at its finest with past honorary chairmen head whittling on Saturday, and the open head whittling contest on Sunday. Winners of Sunday's contest were: 1st place-Joey Jobes, 2nd place-Charlie Pierce, 3rd place-Bill Schaubert. Our honorary chairman, Vernon Bryant, was present both days, not only selling his carved birds and fish, but also shooting the punt gun. Thank you to all our members, volunteers, exhibitors, and friends who helped make the weekend a success.



Young decoy enthusiasts intently paint their birds at the Decoy Painting Tent.



Honorary Chairman, Vernon Bryant, was one of the many exhibitors at the Duck Fair. All photos by M.J. Murphy.

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Shovelers	\$40 ea
Snow Geese	\$65 ea

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Hooded Mergansers	\$150pr
Swan -Flat Bottom	\$350ea
Swan -With Keel	\$400ea
1/2 Swan	\$75 ea
Wood Ducks	\$350pr
Canada Goose	\$80 ea



Ducking Clubs of the Upper Chesapeake Bay



The Marshy Point Ducking Club, their Club House shown above in about 1928, was just one of many such hunting associations that could be found around the Chesapeake Bay.

C. John Sullivan

Some of us love history and long for days gone by. History is the core of our very fiber. It is all of the ingredients of our past that make us who we are. The passion to trace our heritage has caught the attention of our generation and intensifies as we approach the millennium. For me, gathering the waterfowling history of the Upper Chesapeake Bay and the Susquehanna Flats has become my primary avocation. The day I discovered that Thomas J. Hayward and Edward L. Bartlett cast their own ballast weights at the Bartlett and Hayward Foundry solved the mystery of those wonderful T.J.H. and E.L.B. decoys. The thrill was as good as finding a good early rig of Susquehanna Flats decoys. It was history; it tied those decoys once and for all to whom they belonged and where they were used. Such discoveries inspire me to continue my unending quest to explore our region's rich waterfowling heritage.

The Susquehanna Flats has been the focus of most historic writings of this region. Less emphasis is given to the other major rivers which flow into the Upper Chesapeake Bay. These rivers were the sight of fabulous gunning during the last half of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries. Wealthy "sports" purchased "gunning shores" or formed exclusive clubs. Membership lists are a virtual who's who of our nation's early financial markets and industrial revolutions. These clubs built elaborate houses for their meetings and accommodations. They established precise rules and guidelines for their memberships. Their rules, although self imposed, were strictly adhered to and became our earliest efforts at conserving an important natural resource.

The methods of taking fowl during this era on rivers of the Upper Chesapeake differed somewhat from methods used on the Susquehanna Flats. "Pass shooting" was popular among these early fowlers. This method would place the shooter in the direct path of the fowl as they traded from one feeding or resting ground to another. It was one of the most difficult and sportsmanlike methods. The speed of the fowl required great skill from the shooters. Another method was "bar shooting." This method placed the shooter on sand bars which jutted into the rivers from the shore line. On the "bar," the fowl were typically a direct overhead shot, intensifying the need to be highly skilled. Wooden decoys were widely used in shooting off of points. "Point shooting" was a pleasing and truly artistic method of taking fowl. With proper weather conditions, it was a successful enterprise for fowlers. Large bore shoulder guns were utilized in these methods. Most clubs had shooters who excelled with the big bores. Such shooters were given nicknames making reference to their expertise, "4 Bore Blogg" and "Big Gun Percy" to



Unidentified lady gunner in a blind at Maxwell's Point, circa 1890.

mention two. The clubs each had numerous blind locations with the best blinds being greatly coveted.

Another highly effective method used by the clubs was "toling." This tactic is described in the earliest histories of duck shooting and was most deadly for the curious fowl. J.S. Skinner described this technique in his book *The Dog and The Sportsman* in 1845. He stated he first heard of toling in 1800. The gunners would hide in the marsh grasses along the shore while their "dog man" would toss an object to a playful trained dog. The dog would prance along the shoreline with his "toy" in his mouth. Skinner went so far as to recommend that a bushy tailed dog is best for this sport, and a dog red in color is of great advantage. The resting fowl could not resist making a closer inspection of these antics on the shore. They would swim in for a better view not anticipating the waiting ambush. Canvasback and redheads were the easiest species to tole. Duck dogs behind the blinds often marked the flight or flocks of incoming wildfowl as anxiously as any sportsman himself. Guided by their instincts, they would often give evidence of approaching ducks well before they were observed by the waiting fowlers.

Below Havre de Grace, the Upper Chesapeake, with its coves and broad rivers, was prime territory for the fowl who fed on vallisneria, the succulent "wild celery grass." For those local fowlers who had no advantage of ownership or membership to the numerous clubs along the shores, bridge shooting became an alternative. The rail-

road bridges which crossed the rivers provided great sport. The shooting was for the most part all overhead. The element of danger was also a factor in this sport due to passing trains and overzealous shooters. These factors, along with the claiming of downed fowl, made this endeavor a sport not for the timid duck hunter.

The best gunning shores in Harford County, those on the Gunpowder Neck, were lost forever by the Presidential Proclamation signed by President Woodrow Wilson on October 16, 1917. The Cadwalader family owned 7000 acres out of the 13,000 comprising the Gunpowder Neck. From 1884 until 1893, The San Domingo Club, a group of New York sports, paid John Cadwalader \$2000 per year for their gunning shore. This figure is quite substantial today, yet consider what \$2000 per year was worth over 100 years ago.

Crossing over the Gunpowder into Baltimore County, the gunning clubs continued to thrive after the government had condemned the gunning shores of the Cadwaladers. Here was located the Millers Island Ducking Club, off the mouth of Back River. The Bowley's Quarter Gunning Club was located on a tract of 822 acres with nine miles of shoreline. Along the Bowley shore were also located the Seneca Point Club and Briar Point. On Middle River the Biddisons had their club house at Log Point. This location was sold to John E. Hurst, brother of William B. Hurst, who also owned a large shore on the Bush River in Harford



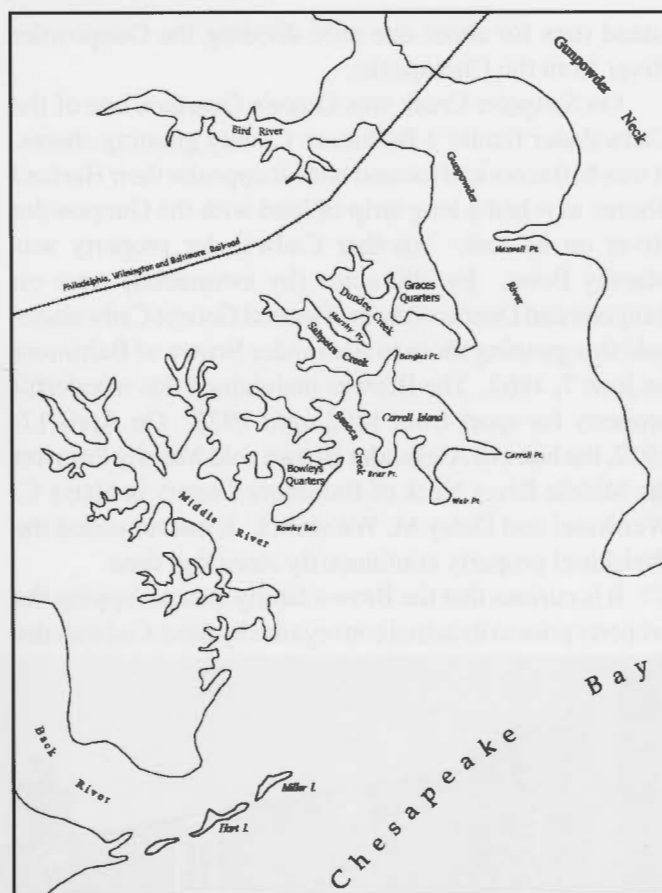
Mr. Cadwalader, circa 1880, in his gunning attire.



North shore of Maxwell's Point, circa 1901.



Underside of a James T. Holly bluebill drake decoy, circa 1880, showing the brand "RSDFC." This represents Charles Raymond, president of the San Domingo Farm Club, who leased shores from the Cadwaladers.



Map depicting rivers and gunning points near Maxwell's and Marshy Point.

County at Legoe's Point

The Club House at Benjie's Quarters is most famous for being one of President Benjamin Harrison's favorite gunning shores. The Carroll's Island Club is undoubtedly one of the most famous gunning clubs in this country. It consisted of 1212 acres which were granted to Dr. Charles Carroll in 1746. Carroll's Island was as renowned for its Chesapeake Bay dogs as it was for its great gunning. The

President Harrison duck-shooting at Bengies, Maryland. Photo taken by H.M. Howe, of Philadelphia.



Underside of a James T. Holly redhead hen decoy, circa 1880, showing the brand of the Carroll's Island Gunning Club.

island runs for about one mile dividing the Gunpowder River from the Chesapeake.

On Saltpeter Creek was Grace's Quarters, one of the Cadwalader family's Baltimore County gunning shores. It was 610 acres and located almost opposite their Harford Shores as it had a long strip of land with the Gunpowder River on its east. Another Cadwalader property was Marshy Point. Its 300 acres (by estimation) were on Saltpeter and Dundee Creeks. General George Cadwalader sold this gunning shore to Alexander Brown of Baltimore on June 7, 1862. The Browns maintained this wonderful property for sport from 1862 until 1922. On April 17, 1922, the heirs of Alexander Brown sold Marshy Point on the Middle River Neck of Baltimore County to Harry C. Weiskittel and Daisy M. Weiskittel. It has remained the Weiskittel property continuously since that time.

It is curious that the Brown family was occupying the property prior to its actual conveyance by deed. Cadwalader

was obviously leasing Marshy Point to Brown by 1854. The 1854 Marshy Point Ducking Club Journal includes these names:

A. D. Brown
Gen. Geo. Stewart Brown*
Isaac Freeman
J. Lee Carroll
Col. Chas. Carroll
Harry Carroll
H. Oelrichs
Jacob Brandt
Rob J. Lehr
J. B. Morris
Wm. Sperry
Frank Sullivan, Treasurer
Wm. Graham Bowdoin
J. J. Sullivan
Dr. Chas. H. Tilghman
John Stewart

Wm. Gilmor
T. Harris Hodges
Francis Cooke
Wilmot Johnson
Wm. Hoffman
Capt. Kane
Dr. A. Tyson
Wm. Denison
Wm. Williams
Wm. Young
Otho H. Williams
James H. Barney
Thomas C. Harris
Dr. J. H. Thomas
T. N. Lee
Capt. Wm. Graham

* General refers to paymaster general for the State of Maryland.

Our earliest gunning clubs were frequently referred to in the first waterfowling histories. In *The American Sportsman* by Elisha J. Lewis, M.D., Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1857, the author said: "The principle sites on the Chesapeake Bay where sportsmen resort for this kind of pastime are the points immediately about Havre de Grace, The Narrows of Spesutie, a few miles



Grace's Quarter Gunning Club, circa 1900.

farther down, Taylor's Island, Abbey Island, Legoe's Point, Marshy Point, Bengie's Point, Robbins's and Ricket's Point, Maxwell's Point and Carroll's Island."

In 1901, George Bird Grinnell, in his book American Duck Shooting, New York, Forest and Stream Publishing Company, mentioned four clubs: Carroll's Island, Spesutia Island, Maxwell's Point, and Benjies.

Ferdinand C. Latrobe's Iron Men and Their Dogs, published in 1941, includes references to Edward L. Bartlett (of Bartlett and Hayward fame) supplying Chesapeake Bay dogs to the clubs at Grace's Quarters, Marshy Point, Maxwell Point, Benjies . . . in the mid-1800s. Latrobe also makes reference to the great clubs whose records go back to the early 1800s: Grace's Quarters, Marshy Point on Saltpeter Creek, Bengie's, and Carroll's Island.

The records of these early clubs kept in the form of a log or journal are much more than a simple tally of the harvest of fowl. They are a picture of society in those times, a social commentary. The October 1, 1855 entry at Marshy Point set forth charges to members for the necessities of life on Saltpeter and Dundee Creeks: Board per day \$1.25, Champagne \$2.00, Brandy \$1.50, Whiskey \$1.00, Horses per day \$0.50, Ale per bottle \$0 .12, and Saratoga water \$0.02.

The log recorded the toll on ducks directly adjacent to the collection of fees by the members. On December 30, 1855, "Frances Cooke: Rivers tight as bricks not a duck. pd. \$4.00." On April 6, 1856, fees are noted for various members along with this entry: "all sober except _____ we will not say who — whilst you —?"

On November 4 and 5, 1857, W. Keith, J. Brandt, J. S. Oelrichs, and Frank Sullivan shot 129 ducks all on the

wing. A side note is entered in the margin of the log with illustrations of three hands with a pointing finger indicating that W. Keith and F. Sullivan shot 101 of the 129 ducks. A most interesting aside to this harvest is found in The Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman by Frederick Gustavus Skinner compiled by Harry Worcester Smith and published in 1936. Skinner tells the tale of a day he was toling for ducks near Carroll's Island with others when they had great shooting. After the sport, "more than an hour was consumed in gathering the spoil and when counted it mounted to one hundred and twenty head, chiefly redheads and canvasbacks." "When it is remembered that this slaughter was done with double guns fired from the shoulder and not with a swivel (gun), it may be pronounced to have been the heaviest toll ever made upon the Chesapeake waters within the memory of man."

While the carefree and adventurous sportsman's life was thriving, the country was in the midst of turmoil. On April 19, 1861, a mob of Baltimoreans opened fire on the Sixth Massachusetts Union Army as they passed through the city streets on route to Washington. The citizens of Baltimore believed the troops should have marched around the perimeter of Baltimore, saying "these Northern troops should not be allowed to pollute the soil of the state of Maryland by their march to the rendezvous." These were to be the first casualties in the bloody War of Northern Aggression. The Massachusetts troops fired on the men from Baltimore, leaving the toll of four soldiers and nine civilians dead plus many others wounded. A Maryland delegation demanded that no more Union troops be sent through the state. Lincoln responded that he must have troops in Washington, but no more troops were to come through Baltimore. Almost four years of this horrible war passed when General Robert E. Lee surrendered on April 9, 1865 at Appomattox, Virginia. Throughout those awful times, the shooting at Marshy Point never stopped; the northern invaders from the sky were killed both spring and fall. "On October 11, 1862, Alexander D. Brown killed the first pair (of ducks) of the season. On October 18, A.D. Brown, Wm. Young, and F. Sullivan killed thirty-eight ducks, October 24, forty-six ducks. An easterly storm on Sunday last the 26 of November caused great shooting at all the points around Marshy for the 27th, 28th and 29th a very large number of ducks were killed on Benjies Pt. and the surroundings while no one was shooting at Marshy Point."

"On November 9, 1863, Mr. Young, Mr. E.M. Greenway Jr., A.D. Brown, and George Brown, Jr., harvested six ducks, one crow, two blackbirds, five gulls, and two partridges." The guests and members liked to shoot; this is obvious. But they also liked birds and enjoyed



Note the pointing fingers.

watching them. They recorded putting up the martin boxes with such entries as this: "The Great raising of the Morris and Sperry Martin Boxes took place today after great labor wren boxes placed likewise." In addition to "birding," the Marshy Point Club enjoyed picnics at the point. As it does today, life went on at Marshy Point in spite of national turmoil. Twelve days after the death of Abraham Lincoln, a picnic took place at Marshy Point. On April 27, 1865, a small party set the table with "turkey, fried oysters, crabs, and snipe," the delicacies of the shooting point.

A retirement was noted on November 8, 1865. "The worthy ex-president H. Oelrichs departed, leaving on a memento, his shooting box and his Ducking Coat, which he said had been imported by him and served him faithfully twenty-eight years." Some club members owned sailing yachts, and on July 3, 1866, this entry is listed: "The Yacht Rapidan, Capt. Young commanding, left Baltimore at 1:24 pm and arrived at Marshy Pt at 5:24 making the run from Chases Wharf in the unprecedented time of four hours. The party on board consisting of Capt. Tighbractry as star mate and O.H. Williams, H.D. Carroll

and Wm. Gilmor, on the same afternoon F. Sullivan drove T.H. Hodges down by the road making the drive in one hour and thirty minutes to the door. Immediately after, A.D. Brown arrived having driven his mares Empress and Kate Howard down in one hour and nineteen minutes the fastest road ever known." Such entries give us an insight into the sport these gentlemen enjoyed, not the yacht or the mare, but the speed of travel needed to set records for the fastest journey.

"Nov 29, 1875 Mr. A.D. Brown and C.H. Tilghman killed 28 baldpate at Point, Hughes (killed) 10 Redheads" "Nov 30, 1875. Very cold wind N.W. and freezing Bitters all gone and the ducks going and so are we " "Dec 1st 1875 Geo. Brown and Tilghman got up at day light went to Marshy Point to find nothing but ice which extends to Graces Quarter. Numbers of ducks flying up the Gunpowder — No shooting two days like the last with out bitters or ducks didn't suit this party so all left for town on 12 o'clock train."

The Baltimore American Newspaper reported on major sporting events of these times. The Brown's, in addition to being avid duck hunters and yachtsmen, followed the



Alexander Brown, M.F.H. and members of his Field taken by Professor H.A. Rowland on Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1883 at General Brown's ducking shore, Back River, Baltimore County. Top row: John Gill, Miss Virginia MacTavish, Gen. George S. Brown. Bottom row: Joseph H. Voss, Fred Shriver, Hoffman Gilmor, T. Swann Latrobe, Alexander Brown, Harry Harwood, Cary McHenry, Frank S. Hambleton.



The parlor at John Cadwalader's Maxwell's Point, circa 1880.



Mr. John Cadwalader and Charles Rembold after a morning of shooting ducks at Maxwell's Point, circa 1890.

hounds as well. The Elkridge Fox Hunting Club was founded March 6, 1878. It was not until 1880 when George S. Brown and his son Alexander Brown returned from fox hunting in England that the English style and method of hunting was introduced by them in Maryland. Alexander Brown was elected Master of Fox Hounds and his father elected President of the Club. This report was found in the Baltimore American on Friday, November 30, 1883:

REYNARD'S THANKSGIVING DAY

Rejoicing That He Escaped from the Hounds of the Elkridgers

The Elkridge Hunt held their annual Thanksgiving meet yesterday at Gen. George S. Brown's ducking shore. Quite a large party left the city on Wednesday morning and spent the night as the guests of General and Mrs. Brown. Among these were Mr. John Gill, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Brown, Miss MacTavish, Mr. Cary McHenry, Mr. Hoffman Gilmore, Mr. Fred Shriver, Prof. Rowland, Mr. Frank Hambleton and Mr. Joseph Voss. On Thursday morning the party was enlarged by the arrival of Messrs. Harry Harwood, T. Swann Latrobe, T. Edward Hambleton, Francis S. Hambleton, Walter Brooks and Colonel Blackistone. The horses of the members had been sent down with their grooms on Wednesday. The meet was at 8:30 o'clock yesterday morning. Mr. Brown hunted the hounds. The first covert was drawn on Mr. Gillespie's place. This proved a blank, but Mr. Williams' covert turned out a fine red fox. He gave the hunters a sharp run for a short time, but took to the water, and in this way baffled the hounds for a time. They however, afterwards struck his trail again in a dense wood, and swinging around to the right Reynard made for Middle River, and skirting the shore for some time, he at last broke cover, and for some distance led them across grass fields at a rattling pace. Many stiff jumps were taken, which brought one or two of the members to grass. Finally making for Holly Neck, the fox once more threw the hounds off his trail. After casting them around for some time, Mr. Brown again got them right, and away they went at a breakneck pace through the woods, but about half after one o'clock the fox finally succeeded in escaping, and hounds were called in after a run of near two and a half hours. Returning to Gen. Brown's a bountiful lunch was served, and the members of the hunt returned to the city last night. One of the pleasant features of the day was the photographing of a number of spirited groups. Prof. Rowland, of the John Hopkins University, had

taken his fine camera with him, and was successful in securing a number of negatives of the members, the hounds and the scenes.

Two weeks after the fox hunt at Marshy Point, a good duck hunt was enjoyed by all but the ducks. "Dec 4, 1883 Splendid shooting wind south west, ducks flying gloriously killed 113 Ducks and would have killed more but for the amount."

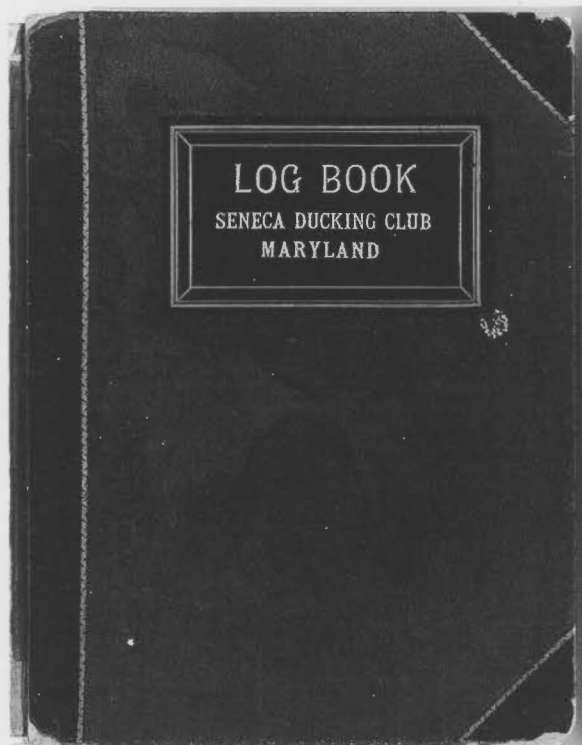
The last entry in the 1st Marshy Point Ducking Club Log reads as follows: "1884 Dec 19th After having spent two weeks at the Point we concluded to return to Brooklandwood for Christmas. There was no shooting the Ducks all having left the River. Yesterday it commenced snowing and the thermometer rapidly fell to eight degrees and this morning the river is frozen over from shore to shore Mrs. B. and the two dogs drove to Baltimore in the Coupe. Jerry the Tabby Cat is to be sent by Express."

When the Weiskittel family moved into Marshy Point Farm, they totaled the statistics from the early days of the Browns. They compiled the kills for twenty-three seasons between the years of 1857 until the end of the Alexander Brown years:

688 shooting days, 1787 guns, 11,697 ducks	
Average no. of ducking days per season	30
Average no. of guns per day	2 1/2
Average no. of ducks per day	17
Average no. of ducks per gun	6 8/10
only 2 days with over 100 ducks	

For comparison purposes, records are provided to show game shot from the Rough Ashlar, a gunning scow gunning a sink box rig out of Havre de Grace. The Rough Ashlar Club members were gentlemen sportsmen, not shooters for the market:

Total of game shot on Rough Ashlar 1883 to 1893.			
1st Season	1883-84	367	
2nd Season	1884-85	490	
3rd Season	1885-86	721	T.L. Harrison joined club
4th Season	1886-87	731	
5th Season	1887-88	511	
6th Season	1888-89	624	
7th Season	1889-90	286	three months
8th Season	1890-91	503	two months
9th Season	1891-92	396	two months
10th Season	1892-93	390	two months
Total		5,019 ducks	



Marshall House, 1888

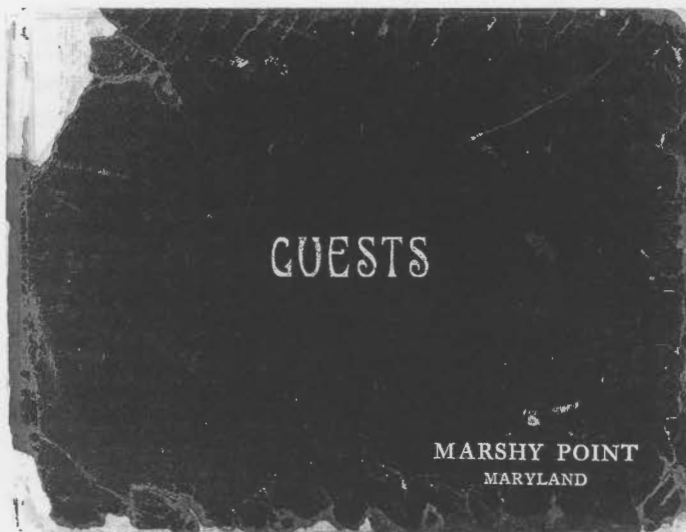
MEMBERS SHOOTING.

Total of game shot as Rough ashlar
1883 to 1893

GUESTS.		
1 st Seneca	1883-84	367
2 nd "	1884-85	490
3 rd "	1885-86	421
4 th "	1886-87	731
5 th "	1887-88	541
6 th "	1888-89	624
7 th "	1889-90	286
TOTAL		303
REMARKS:		2 sur.
8 th "	1890-91	396
9 th "	1891-92	390
10 th "	1892-93	2 sur.
<i>Total</i>		<i>5,019 ducks</i>

*J.C. Harrison
Janet club.*

Rough Ashlar log book page showing total number of ducks killed.



The Cadwalader house, Thomas F. Cadwalader with his bird dogs and Chesapeake bay dog, circa 1880.





Charles Rembold, one of the Cadwalader family's game keepers, circa 1880.

Across the Gunpowder in Harford County at Maxwell's Point, the Cadwalader Family was filling their gunning logs with some interesting entries. On April 18, 1892, "John Cadwalader, Jr., walked to Waterson's Creek and found an old man shooting cattails!" There must have been few birds flying that day, or perhaps the gentleman had rather poor vision. Another interesting entry appears on April 6, 1893, "Game Shot: two swans, 2 blackbirds, and 1 nondescript."

Several of the early sporting books make reference to "pot-hunters" shooting large numbers of bedded ducks at night. Elisha J. Lewis, M.D., in his book The American Sportsman, Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1857, says this: "a pothunter is the most disgusting, the most selfish, the most unmanly, the most heartless ... without regard to etiquette, humanity, law, or even the common decencies of life." John Cadwalader, Jr., wrote in his journal on March 21, 1901, "arrived Friday afternoon to start the spring season ... got (just) three ducks. Much disgusted by night gunners making their large bags in the clear moonlight on an absolutely calm river."

Thomas Cadwalader made this interesting notation on Friday, December 4, 1903: "Waterfowl everywhere, but not a duck to shoot. Fired towards contingent of sixty geese on Middle Ground. *De ribber done Fruzf from Day's Pint clar down to Carroll's.*"

A better day of shooting took place at Maxwell's Point



Thomas F. Cadwalader and his bird dogs, circa 1901.

on Saturday, March 19, 1904:

Saturday's bag		
Blackducks	23	
Green Mallards	4	
Bald pates	7	2 Hawks
Ring billed blackheads	2	
Springtail	1	
Redhead	1	
	38	

Five years later on Saturday, March 20, 1909: "a bag of fifty-one ducks including six redheads, six blackducks and springtails, balance widgeon or baldpate." A colder day was Friday, December 18, 1909: "Game thirteen ducks, Creeks frozen but we broke ice for the decoys One crippled cygnet escaped from Thomas F. Cadwalader and Flint."

The gentle life at Maxwell's Point included not just

sport, but fun as well: "May 23, 1910 The Family Circle acted scenes from Hansel and Gretel with orchestra! Strawberries (ready) May 24, Peas May 25th, May 27, 1910 Best view of Halley's Comet ever seen."

The United States Government negotiated with the Cadwaladers over the period of several years to purchase Maxwell's Point for an Army installation. The Cadwaladers tried to persuade the Army to locate their new Arsenal on Kent Island with no success. Maxwell's Point, with its 7,000 plus acres, vast waterfront, and direct railroad access all worked against the family. President Wilson signed a Proclamation on October 16, 1917, taking their land. The final and saddest entry is written on November 24, 1917:

*"The End of Everything"
"Finis"*

The whereabouts of a gunning log of Marshy Point from 1885 to 1922 are unknown. The Weiskittel family continued the tradition after they moved into Marshy Point Farm in 1922. The Farm was now enjoyed by Harry C. Weiskittel and Daisy M. Weiskittel in the same manner as the Browns



Duck hunters at Maxwell's Point, circa 1901.

had enjoyed it, ducking, hunting, fishing, and picnicking. Where the family of Alexander Brown had a long history in the financial world, the Weiskittel family engaged in iron works. The family patriarch, Anton Weiskittel, had located his iron foundry in Baltimore City by 1850. The family had a long history working in iron in Germany prior to immigration to the United States in the mid 1830s. The iron works were on Aliceanna Street. The iron business



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From the Baltimore News-Post: THE BABE COMES HOME—Baseball is a thing of the past for Baltimore's Babe Ruth. No longer is there the crack of the Bambino's bat against a speeding white pellet. These days it is the sharp report of Babe's shotgun at the Marshy Point blinds of Harry C. Weiskittel. And instead of a baseball, Ruth's targets are the mallards, redheads, and baldplates which inhabit the Gunpowder flats. Here is the former St. Mary's boy and his friend, Bob Edge, radio announcer, patiently awaiting the arrival of Mr. Duck. Photo copyright, 1939.



Harry C. Weiskittel and two unidentified gunning companions, circa 1930.



The steel reinforced, factory manufactured Weiskittel blind at Marshy Point, circa 1930.

produced cast iron stoves, bath tubs, sewer and water pipes, ornamental and structural iron. Harry C. Weiskittel produced an iron base and frame work for his shooting blind at Marshy Point.

As a sales promotion and gift for the dealers and friends who sold Weiskittel products, he manufactured miniature cast iron ducks in the form of paper weights and ashtrays as early as the 1920s. Ducking was such an enjoyable recreation for the Weiskittels that cast iron duck decoy ballast weights were produced in the foundry. Some Weiskittel employees produced decoy bodies and heads similar in style to rough lathe turned factory decoys. By 1940, the Weiskittels were producing stoves from a lighter metal alloy. The miniature decoys of this era included the words "Real Host Gas Stoves."

It was also at this time that they began production of a cast metal alloy duck decoy head. Decoy head loss and breakage had been a common problem since the first head was carved. Harry Weiskittel set out to solve this problem

at Marshy Point once and for all. The heads were fastened onto older, headless bodies with three inch-long wood screws, one at the base of the neck and two in the front. These heads had indented eyes, were hollow and left open on the underside of the bill. Lead paint adhered well to the unprimed metal alloy. The heads were not only highly utilitarian, they were a well formed and an attractive style as well. In addition to the iron ballast weights cast, cast iron anchor weights were produced in different sizes and weights. One bell-shaped model was cast with the raised letters "H.C. Weiskittel." The Marshy Point decoys were all branded in one inch high letters "H.C.W."

Shooting at Seneca was the choice of the Weiskittels prior to purchasing Marshy Point. Those entries appear in the Seneca Ducking Club Log Book. On Nov. 10, 1915, "H. C. Weiskittel, M. Jos. Bryne, and Percy Thayer Blogg (see *The Canvasback*, Winter, 1998) shot at Briar Point in morning and killed one hen redhead at 9 am., went after rabbits killed fourteen rabbits, two doves, one field lark."



Harry C. Weiskittel and an unidentified gunning companion, circa 1930.



Grouping of cast iron Weiskittel miniature gift decoys surrounding the iron anchor weight with raised name "H.C. Weiskittel," circa 1930.

Season 1917

Tuesday November 1st

Good wind from southeast in morning shifting to north-west in afternoon late

Denmead

Hartman in morning

Blogg

Mr. Harry Weiskittel

Anton Weiskittel in afternoon

Dr. Dunot

From 6:30 until 11 o'clock killed ducks

30 Blackheads

16 American coots (crowbills)

6 Butterballs (dippers)

2 Whistlers

3 Ruddy

1 Blackduck

2 Red breasted mergansers

60 Total

Tuesday

Nov. 20, 1917

H. C. Weiskittel with his son Anton

35 ducks in all

1 Canvasback

3 red heads

2 Black mallards

2 Gray mallards

27 Black heads

wind south water very rough

The official log maintained by the Weiskittels was kept in a guest register format. Listing name, residence, arrival, departure, and a column for remarks. The remarks area was the location of most comments concerning duck shooting. On November 29, 1923, John Hoefgen of Bedford, Pennsylvania said, "Ducks plentiful, shooting bad, killed three." On January 17, 1924, James P. Gorler commented, "Perfect Day and perfect sport." The register shows the return of one Alexander E. Brown on February 7, 1924.

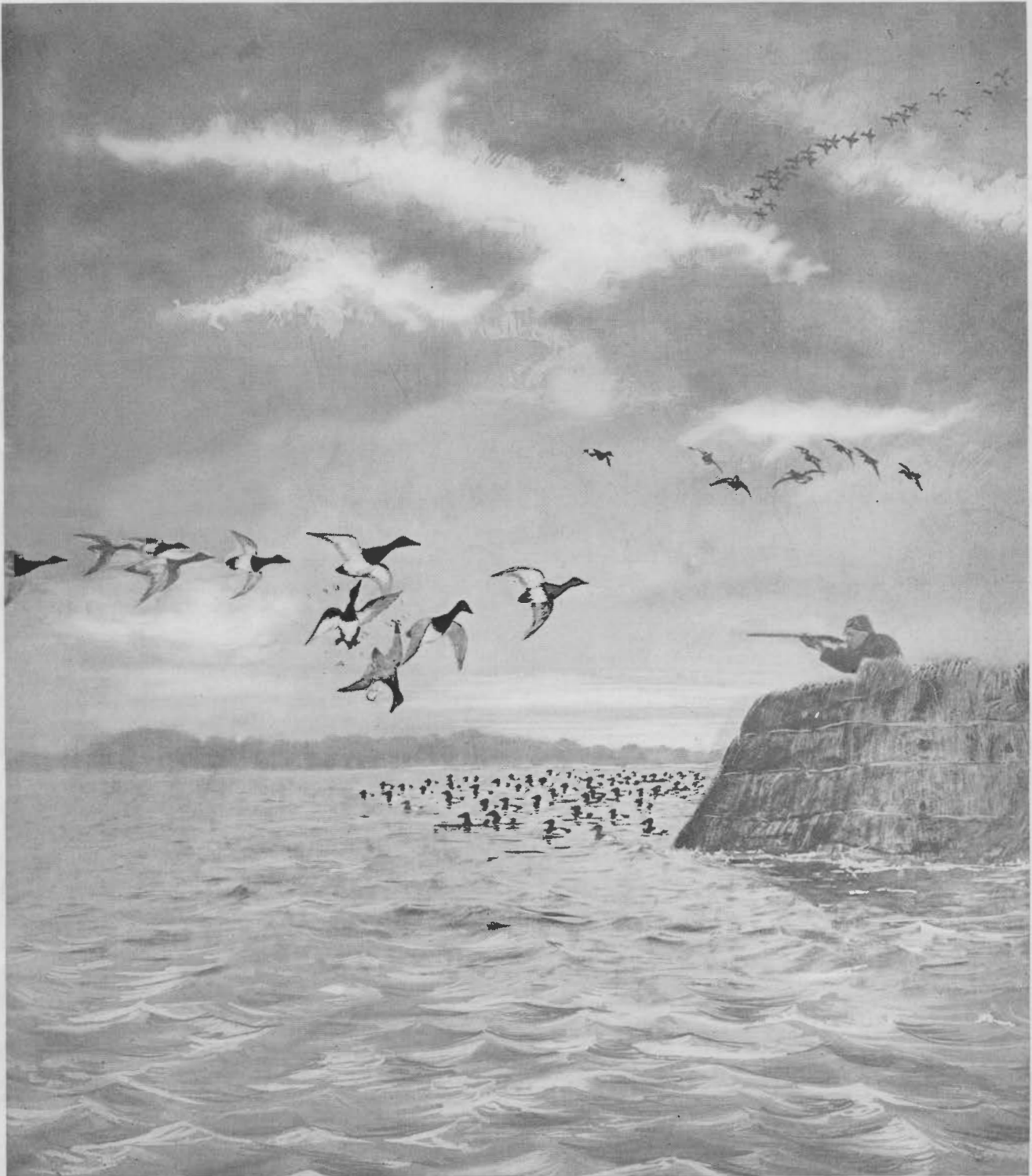
Bob Edge, a nationally renowned radio announcer, visited Marshy Point in December of 1939. His partner in the blind was the former home run king, Babe Ruth. This comment appears in the log of December 9, 1939: "When

Maryland Conservationist

Vol. V (FIFTH YEAR)

FALL ISSUE, 1928

No. 4



Canvasback on the Famous Old Seneca



Underside of factory decoys, circa 1928, showing the brand "HCW." This was Harry C. Weiskittel's brand.



Group of cast metal alloy miniature gift decoys after the introduction of Real Host Gas Stoves, circa 1940.



Susquehanna Flats canvasback drake decoy with cast metal alloy head manufactured at the Weiskittel foundry.

better ducks are bred Marshy Point will produce em. Bob Edge." Mr. and Mrs. John P. Stelle of St. Michael, Maryland, wrote in the log on December 12, 1939, "A most enjoyable day watching Bob Edge and Babe Ruth banging away." Two clever entries appear on January 7, 1941 from friends from Pennsylvania. "When the ducks quack I want to come back" and "I always feel that I'm in luck when asked to eat a Weiskittel duck."

On December 18, 1965, this entry is found: "shot nineteen ducks at Post Hollow Blind low tide in morning but rising in afternoon weather partially cloudy and warm (50) we quit shooting at 2.30 because we felt bad about shooting so many"

The records of these early days of our waterfowling heritage are an extremely rare and valuable insight into this area's rich history. I am confident that the entries were made as accurately as possible, and numbers were not exaggerated nor tolls assigned incorrectly.

President Grover Cleveland, one of our most sporting Presidents, said the following about the Serene Duck Hunters in his book Fishing and Shooting Sketches, The Outing Publishing Company, New York, 1906:

The Serene Duck Hunter

How True Duck Hunters Stand Together

"When the ducks have ceased to fly for the day the serene duck hunter returns to camp in a tranquil, satisfied frame of mind befitting his fraternity membership. He has several ducks actually in hand, and he has fully enjoyed the self-deception and pretense which have led him to the belief that he has shot well. His few confessed misses are all satisfactorily accounted for; and he is too well broken to the vicissitudes of duck shooting, and too old a hunter, to be cast down by the bad fortune which has thickly scattered, over distant waters and marshes, his unrecovered dead."

These thoughts from a gentle sportsman ring true today in most endeavors that we enjoy. Perhaps we missed a great decoy at a yard sale or arrived at an unadvertised auction just after a wonderful Ben Dye was sold. Whatever the case may be, the chase is the most important. To find the best and to be able to tell about it is the most gratifying of all. But, when we miss one, we can at least talk or write about it. Hopefully, now we can better understand where it all began.

Edward Jones

Gary Cecchine

Peggy Cecchine

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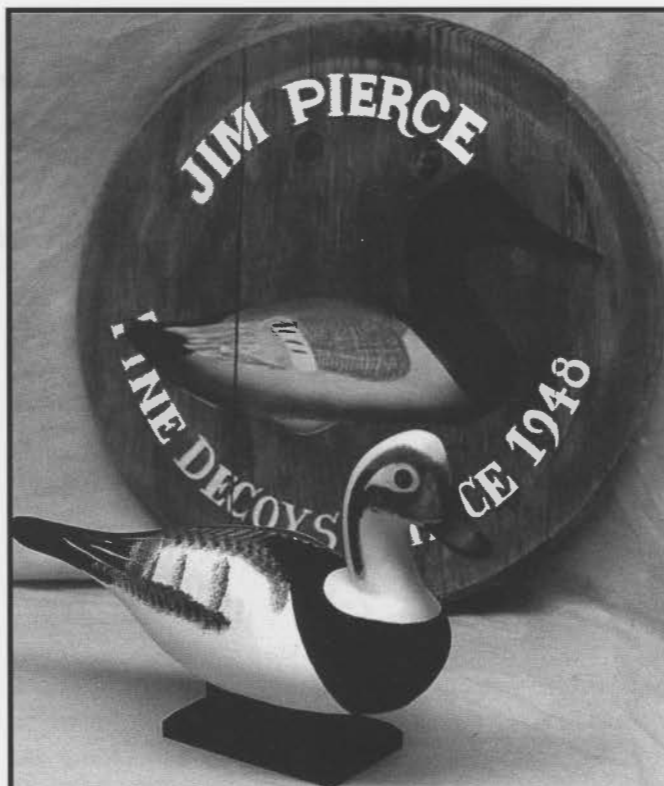
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CALENDAR

November

7

Decoy Museum's Anniversary Dinner. Held at the Bayou Restaurant. Dinner and an auction. Call (410) 939-3739 for ticket information.

7-8

6th annual Wildlife Art and Carving Expo sponsored by the Wildlife Artisans Association to be held at the Old Byfield Expo Center in Byfield, Massachusetts. For more information contact: Wildlife Artisans Association, P.O. Box 2335, Rockport, MA 01966. (978) 768-7218 or (978) 774-1702.

11-12

Annual fall decoy auction by Guyette & Schmidt to be held at the Talbot County Community Center in Easton, Maryland. For more information contact: Guyette & Schmidt, P.O. Box 522, W. Farmington, ME 21601. (207) 778-6256.

13-15

28th Annual Waterfowl Festival to be held throughout the town of Easton, Maryland. For more information contact: Waterfowl Festival, P.O. Box 929, Easton, MD 21601. (410) 822-4567.

21-22

Annual Shrine Decoy, Art and Crafts Exhibit to be held at the Nur Temple Mosque in Wilmington, Delaware. Contact: James H. Lemon at (302) 998-8085 or Frank Minder (302) 328-5863.

27-28

Waterfowl Show Sponsored by the Deborah Hospital Foundation to be held at the Chincoteague High School in Chincoteague, Virginia. For more information contact: Waterfowl Show at (757) 336-3478.

December

12

Candlelight Tour, Sale & Carver Celebration, Havre de Grace, Maryland. Tour historic sites in Havre de Grace. Visit with carvers working and selling their works on the second floor of the Decoy Museum. Take advantage of special gift shop sales on items perfect for gift giving. Free admission to museum. Call (410) 939-3739 for more information.

February

6-7

The 15th Annual Toms River Wildfowl Art & Decoy Show, Competition, and Seminars. Held at the Brick High School in Brick, New Jersey. For more information contact Janet Sellino, Ocean County YMCA, (732) 341-9622 ext. 214.

13-14

The 26th annual "California Open" — Wildlife Art Festival, featuring carvers and wildlife art competition. Held at the Del Mar Fairgrounds, Del Mar, California. For more information contact Bryn and JoAnne Watson, (760) 731-9717.



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Exhibit Update

Carvers Gallery

The second floor's Carvers Gallery is quickly filling up with Honorary Chairmen collections. The latest additions are Jim Pierce's 1991 collection and Bill and Allan Schaubert's 1993 collection. The two new cases share the Carvers Gallery with decoy collections from Jim Currier, Charlie Bryan, Bob Litzenberg, Paul Gibson, Ronald Rue, Lem & Steve Ward, Evans McKinney, and Captain Roger Urie.

Before the end of the year, the museum is hoping to have installed yet another case for the collection of decoys carved by Honorary Chairman, Harry V. Shourds II. So if you haven't dropped by the museum recently, you owe yourself a visit. We are certain you won't be disappointed!

Broadening Horizons

Changes continue to abound at the museum with the installation of two new exhibits featuring decoys from the Pacific, Central, and Mississippi Flyways. The decoys displayed in the exhibits, "West of the Mississippi" and "Lower Mississippi Decoys," offer nice representations of different carving styles from other regions of the United States.

Visitors will now be able to compare and contrast the carving styles and techniques used in California to those utilized in Louisiana or Maryland. What are the differences? What are the similarities? More importantly, what is the common thread that makes decoy carving a true American folk art? These are just some of the questions that the museum hopes to explore with each visitor as we broaden our horizons.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Decoy Museum was pleased to have Mr. Julius Wall, President of Ducks Unlimited, visit the museum on September 26, 1998. Mr. Wall, of Clinton, Missouri was given a tour of the museum by the President, Dr. John Carriere, the Vice-President, Ken Lay, and board members Fred Gillotte and Michael Affleck. Ducks Unlimited has contributed to the museum in the past when former chairman of the R. Madison Mitchell Chapter, Mark Gorham, was successful in obtaining \$1,500 towards the museum's elevator. The purpose of Mr. Wall's visit to Havre de Grace was to present Mr. Charles Joiner with a special appreciation award from DU National Headquarters for raising over \$40,000 for the R. Madison Mitchell Chapter of Ducks Unlimited. This took place at the 14th annual membership dinner held at the Bayou Restaurant later that same day.



President, Dr. Carriere, presents a gift to Mr. Julius Wall while Ken Lay looks on.

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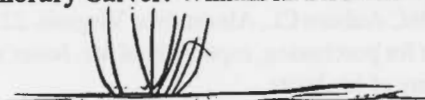
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Weekend Carving Demonstrations at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

November 14,	Barb Wachter	December 6,	Roger Urie
November 15,	Tom Kilbourne	December 12,	Mike Gleason
November 21,	Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore	December 13,	Steve Lay
November 22	Joey Jobs	December 19,	Joe Cook
November 28,	Ted Mayne	December 20,	Barb Wachter
November 29,	Bill Weaver	December 26,	Butch and Mary Carol Larrimore
December 5,	George Stram	December 27,	OPEN

If you are interested in becoming a weekend carver on any of the OPEN dates, please contact Pat Vincenti at 410-734-6238. Thanks!

Don't forget to visit our web site!!

www.decoymuseum.com

CLASSIFIED

For our members we offer free classified ads to buy, sell, and trade decoys or related objects. Please keep ads under 15 words. For non-members, the cost is \$5.00 for 15 words. Mail your classified ads to: Decoy Museum, P.O. Box 878, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

FOR SALE: Full size, Havre de Grace style swan bodies. Western Cedar. \$35-\$50 each. Call Parkers' Decoys (717) 284-3273.

WANTED: Daniel Baker III Goose full-size decoy 1990. Call Matt at (410) 257-1053.

WANTED: Decoy or body with Reckless Brand. Call Dan at (410) 586-2378.

WANTED: Old waterfowling & shorebird hunting photos. Duck, goose, and swan neck and leg bands. Old duck hunting books. Dean Dashner, 349 S. Green Rd., Neenah, WI 54954 or call (920) 725-4350, e-mail at - dashner@athenet.net, or visit our webpage at <http://www.athenet.net/~dashners>

FOR SALE: R. Madison Mitchell collection for sale. All ornamental decoys "Christmas Birds." Call Bakers Decoys (410) 586-4670.

BUYING: Any decoys, including miniatures, pictures, photos, and memorabilia of Douglas Jester (1876-1961) of Chincoteague, Virginia. Call Fitz Godwin at (703) 528-9800 or write to 26C Auburn Ct., Alexandria, Virginia 22305. All is of interest for purchasing, especially of Mr. Jester's carving decoys or any of his boats.



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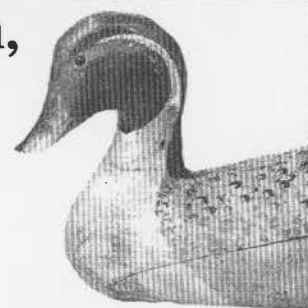
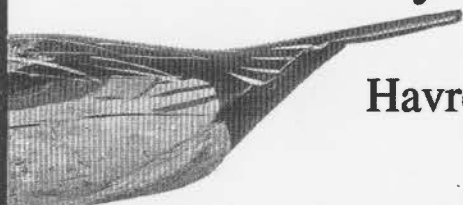


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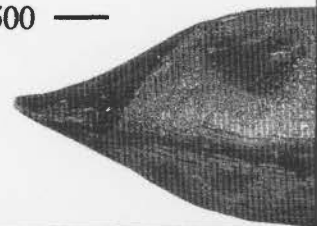
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