

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Winter 2015
Vol. 25 No.1

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CHELSEAPEAKE CANVAS-BACK (MALE)
HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND
1949



Bob
McGaw
—Decoy Artist—





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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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City of Havre de Grace • Harford County

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is funded by an operating grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. Funding for the Maryland State Arts Council is also provided by the National Endowment for the arts, a federal agency.

The Museum was incorporated in 1981 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which exists to document and interpret waterfowl decoys as this art form applies to the social and economic life of the upper Chesapeake Bay region. Contributions made to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Tax may be deductible.



— IN MEMORIAM —

John Andrew Shank

As this issue of *The Canvasback* was being finalized, we were shocked and saddened to learn that John Andrew Shank, 20, of Havre de Grace had been killed in a tragic accident in North Carolina on January 9th.

Drew was the son of Decoy Museum co-founder and former Director Mitch Shank and his wife Jessica, the grandson of Decoy Museum Director Madelyn Mitchell Shank and her husband Ellsworth, the grandson of Gene and Sonia Hartmann, and a great-grandson of the late R. Madison Mitchell and his wife Helen. Drew had helped us as a volunteer on a number of important projects — the fourth generation of a family whose support has made the Museum possible.

We will miss Drew and stand with his extended family in this time of great loss and grief. ■

"The art of the craftsman is a bond between the peoples of the world."

— Florence Dibell Bartlett

ON THE COVER

In this picture, Bob McGaw is putting the finishing touches on a pair of what became known as his "postage stamp" style canvasbacks with their slightly-raised neck shelves.

Joel Barber made architectural drawings of McGaw's 1929 canvasbacks, now part of the Shelburne Museum's collection, for his classic book, "Wildfowl Decoys", first published in 1934 and considered by art historians to be the first on the subject.

Barber's rendering, as reproduced here, was later used by the U. S. Postal Service as the basis for one of four 22-cent stamps on a block depicting duck decoys. The stamps were issued on March 22, 1985, in Shelburne, Vermont as part of the USPS Folk Art Series.

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From the President

Dear Museum Member,

We are now hard at work preparing for the 34rd Annual Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival – on the first weekend of May. Congratulations to Joe Engers who will be the 2015 Honorary Chairman. Joe is well known to all decoy lovers as the owner and Editor of the bi-monthly *Decoy Magazine*. He is also a great friend of mine and a longtime friend of the Decoy Museum. We will have a thorough article about Joe in the spring issue,



Photo by Leo Heppner

We are hoping for a great turnout at the Festival this year. As always, we are grateful to Mayor Wayne Dougherty and the Havre de Grace City Council for their support of the Decoy Museum's key fundraising event.

The winter's two big events are always the Susquehanna Flats Vintage Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show that was held at the Level Volunteer Fire Company on Saturday, January 24th and the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet coming up on Friday, March 6th at the Bayou Restaurant.

This was the eighth year for the Level show, which has been growing nicely. This year we had so many new exhibitors that we had to move some fire trucks

in order to expand the table space! Lots of volunteers, from the front door to the kitchen, helped to make it another fun and excellent day. A big "thank you" to everyone at the Level VFC and the Decoy Museum for the time and effort that went into this successful joint event, with a very special shout-out to Chuck and Lynn Usilton and my wife and partner Jeannie for their leadership roles.

It is well known, but is worth reminding everyone, that the primary source of funds for the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust is the annual banquet. The Board members of the Trust and other volunteers are currently working on plans for the 22nd annual banquet. It is a fun time for all and a great opportunity to meet and greet other Museum supporters, decoy collectors, and waterfowlers.

It is also important to remember that the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust was established to carry out Mr. Mitchell's vision for the Decoy Museum. Although the Trust is independent of the Museum, its sole mission is to aid the Decoy Museum's acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys and related waterfowl artifacts. The Trust has also been a reliable "safety net" for us in other special and unique circumstances to enhance the visitor experience.

The fall raffle and the Annual Appeal were both very successful, and we are currently getting the spring raffle organized. Please give us a call if you have a decoy or other piece of waterfowl art to donate to the museum.

We have been very persistent in encouraging our members to renew and upgrade, and I make it a point to personally appeal to each lapsed member. I cannot overstate the importance of membership participation. Please be active, attend our events, introduce your friends and family, and remember the Museum and the Trust when you have surplus items to donate. Please also consider including us in your estate plans.

You keep us strong, and we are grateful for your loyalty. We are here for you and because of you. Save the dates: Endowment Trust banquet on March 13th and the Decoy Festival the first weekend in May. Please attend and show your support. Thanks, and see you there!

Sincerely,

Pat Vincenti
Pat Vincenti

Save The Date

The 22nd Annual R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust Banquet

Friday, March 6, 2015 at
the *Bayou Restaurant*
Route 40, Havre de Grace, Maryland

Cocktails at 6:00pm
Dinner at 7:00pm
Program at 8:00pm

SAVE THE DATE for the 22nd annual R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust banquet. The Trust exists solely to benefit the Decoy Museum and to aid its acquisition, interpretation, and preservation of decoys, waterfowl artifacts, and other appropriate projects.

Please join us on Friday, March 6th for this important fundraiser and support both the Museum and the Trust. As we finalize our plans, see RMadisonMitchell.com, DecoyMuseum.com, and [Facebook.com/DecoyMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/DecoyMuseum) for details.

Tickets are \$55.00 per person and are available at the Decoy Museum, Vincenti Decoys, or by calling (410) 734-6238.



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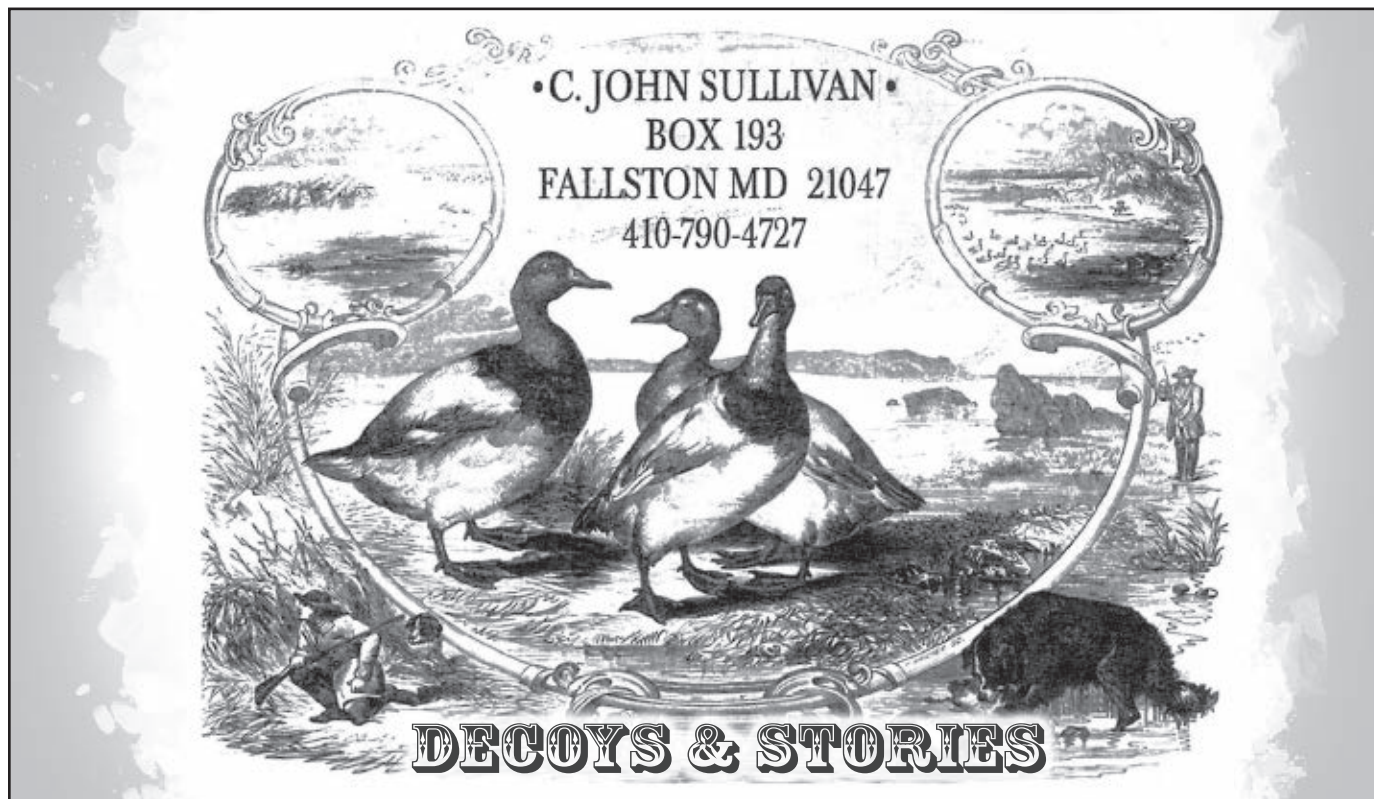
or

Jim Trimble

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Everyone is Welcome to Join in the Fun!



J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest 2015 COMPETITION

The 13th annual J. Evans McKinney Old Decoy Contest will be held on Saturday, May 2nd at the Middle School Gym in conjunction with the 2015 Havre de Grace Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival.

Entries will be accepted at the stage area from 10:00 a.m. until judging at noon. Joe Engers, Editor and Publisher of *Decoy Magazine* as well as the Festival's 2015 Honorary Chairman, will head up a three-member judge's panel. A blue ribbon will be awarded for each of the following ten competition category winners, and the panel will select a Best-in-Show winner.

Winners are requested to display their decoys and ribbons at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum for the three months following the Festival.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Best Upper Bay Hi-head | 5. Best Wood Wing Duck |
| 2. Best Upper Bay Matched Pair | 6. Best Eastern Shore Redhead |
| 3. Best Upper Bay Canvasback— with old known market gunner, gunning yacht, or gun club brand | 7. Best Delaware River Pintail or Mallard |
| 4. Best Jim Holly Puddle Duck | 8. Best Doug Jester Duck Decoy |
| | 9. Best Back Bay VA/NC Diving Duck |
| | 10. Best Unknown |

Rules: Last year's winning birds are ineligible for entry, regardless of category. There are no restrictions as to those who can participate or number of categories entered; however, participants are restricted to no more than three birds per category and each decoy will be limited to one category only. Participants must make a good faith effort to ensure that their decoy entries were made prior to 1950. Matched pairs entered in other than a Matched Pair category will be considered as one entry. Competition decoys will be kept in a highly visible roped-off secure area and will not be handled by the public. Once the judges have made their selections, at approximately 1:00 p.m. the public will be invited to view the roped-off and secure tables. Competition issues will be resolved at the sole discretion of the Contest Chairman and/or the Chief Judge.

Questions? Please contact contest chairman Jim Trimble (703-768-7264 or potomacduck@cox.net).

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2nd Prize Winner
Ken Stevenson
One free night at the
historic Vandiver Inn
in Havre de Grace



3rd Prize Winner
Verna Cunningham
Mallard Hen decoy
made by Jim Pierce



4th Prize Winner
Jack Harris
Brant Goose decoy
made by Charles & Bob Jones



5th Prize Winner
Louis Friedman
Print of Charlie
Bryan Pintails
by Paul Shertz (56 of 250)

**Don't Miss Your Chance
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Spring Raffle!**

Look for Details Online at
www.decoymuseum.com

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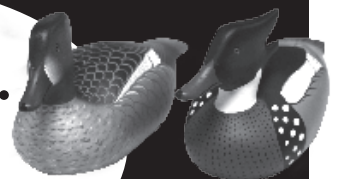
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Collector's corner

BY C. JOHN SULLIVAN, JR.

*C. John Sullivan, Jr.
holds his prized "Les
German" shotgun*

Gun Collection

Is it just my collector's mind or is it the mind of all collectors? I can walk to the hallway in my home where some of my favorite decoys are displayed and pick up my very first decoy. Can you recite and describe your first "collectable"?

Parker Brothers CHE hammerless 12-gauge double-barreled shotgun, serial number 138627, custom made in 1906.

I can walk to another shelf and examine the pair of Madison Mitchell miniature canvasbacks that my father bought from Mr. Mitchell in 1948. When I visit my son's home I see the first decoys that I recall in my life. They rested on the fireplace hearth in my family's living room from the time I was 3 years old. And so it is with the guns in my life. I remember them all, from that first pressed tin pistol that made a metallic "click" when the trigger was pulled. It makes that same "click" today only enhanced a bit by the rust on the old spring. I am fortunate in having kept all of the "stuff" that made a young boy's life complete. It all surrounds me here in my home; from tin guns to plastic ones to the one where the barrel would drop at least ¼ of an inch when I drew a bead on some nasty hombre. It saddens me that guns take such a bad rap in today's world.

As many of my readers know I have been extremely fortunate in life to have developed many wonderful relationships with fellow old-time collectors, waterfowlers and sporting families. One of my closest waterfowling mentors was the late John M. M. Pusey. Not only was John the source of many great old decoys and waterfowling artifacts, a number of his early ducking guns came into my collection. John would shoot most every morning on his family's farm on Swan Creek. I was never in John's company when he was without a shotgun. We would ride around the farm in his pickup with his ever faithful retriever "Dash" seated between us. Adjacent to "Dash" would rest either a Winchester 12 gauge Model 12 or an earlier Winchester Model 97. He trusted those shotguns and in the shotgun world, they are held in high regard as reliable and efficient. They are pump guns and they rarely fail the shooter. Each of the Winchesters

that John sold me over the years was well used and worn and, it seemed, was reinforced about the grip with some variety of tape. On one early morning visit, John had in the truck a gun to show me, a double barrel Parker. It was well used and had a sleeve which fit around the barrel to keep the shooter's hand from being in direct contact with the hot steel during repetitive shots. The only information that John shared with me was that it was a gift from an Aberdeen friend many years before and was used by the DuPonts. I bought the shotgun and headed home with it. It rested on a rack until I decided to show it to one of my Parker collector friends.

At the Baltimore Gun Show in March of 2013 I took the Parker along and had my friend Kevin McCormack examine it. Kevin knows Parkers and is a long time collector. He made some notes and said he would get back to me. In a few weeks I was most pleased to receive a letter from Kevin. He had the Parker Gun Collector Association research the history of my Parker and the results inspired my collector's mind yet again.

The Parker was ordered by a gentleman from Illinois in 1906. Every detail of the shotgun is listed in a handwritten ledger kept by the factory. According to Order Book No. 71, it was a CHE hammerless 12. It featured Acme steel barrels with a length of 32 inches. Special instructions included: right hand pull 3 lbs, left hand 3 ½ lbs, extra-full comb, chamber 2 ⅞", pitch 1 ½", front trigger



Les German holds his Parker Brothers shotgun, a workhorse that served him well for many years.

nearly straight, and shoot high. The price was \$150.00 plus \$25.00 for ejectors. That would be about \$4,700 in today's dollars. The order book continued with many other details of every feature of the gun.

Sometime after 1906 the gun left Illinois and arrived in Aberdeen in the hands of Lester German. German returned his Parker to the factory in January of 1910 for what appear to be a complete refurbishment. According to the Parker Brothers Order Book No. 80, the gun was returned to the factory on January 25, 1910 by Lester German of Aberdeen Maryland to: solder on ribs, rebrown barrels, blue all iron parts, redress and recheck stock and tip, tighten action, see that locks and spring and all parts are as good as new. Trigger pull right hand 3 ½ lbs., left hand 4 lbs. No drag. Return shirts whole gun came. There was no charge. The

shotgun was returned to the Parker factory three more times by German. The last trip to the factory was in December of 1916.

I wondered what was going on with this shotgun and why the Parker factory was so concerned with it being in near new condition. It was Parker's reputation at stake, hence the great attention to details. Lester German, the gun's owner, was born in 1869. He was a major league pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles in 1890, the New York Giants from 1893 to early in 1896 when he was traded to the Washington Senators. His baseball career ended in 1897. German was a professional shooter for the Parker Gun Company and for DuPont. As it turns out German was apparently a much better shooter than a baseball pitcher. He won many more trapshooting tournaments than baseball games. In 1915 he established a new world record by breaking 499 of 500 singles targets at the Westy Hogans shoot in Atlantic City New Jersey. At that contest

From the *SPORTSMEN'S REVIEW* June 26, 1909; page 722

Lester German's Remarkable Record.

Mr. Lester German at Bellairs Grove, St. Louis, Mo., shooting the day's program of 200 targets on June 5, broke 198 and finished with a straight run of 131 on June 6, shooting second day's program of 200 targets, finished without a miss, making an unfinished run of 331 at said place. At Moberly, Mo., in the Grand Missouri Handicap he started in on the program and lost his ninth target, making a straight run of 339; he also made a run of 104 straight.

At the Missouri State Shoot in St. Louis on the St. Louis Trapshooters' Association grounds he made a straight run of 311 and finished the program with 548 out of 550, winning the high average at the Missouri State Shoot, and also at this shoot he made a run of 157. At the two tournaments here in St. Louis June 5 and 6, and 11, 12 and 13, he shot at 450 targets and broke 946, an average of 99 ½ per cent. The above shoots were registered.

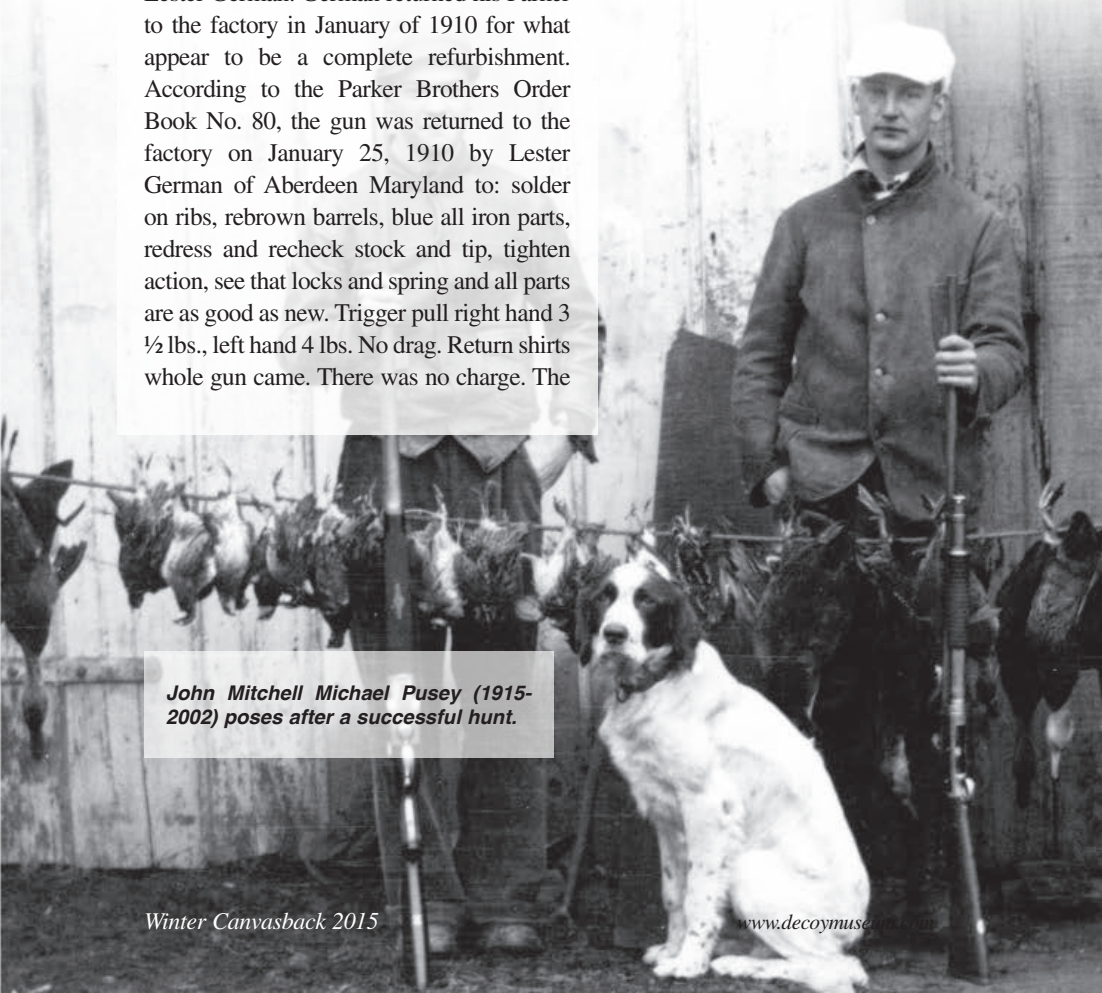
FAMOUS EX-BALLPLAYER AND CHAMPION SHOT DIES

Lester German, Native Of Aberdeen, And Former Professional Ballplayer, Buried Here Tuesday.

Lester German, well-known throughout the United States as a champion amateur and professional shotgun expert, and a former major league baseball pitcher, died at the home of his sister, Mrs. Steele, at Germantown, Montgomery County, on Sunday morning of this week. Mr. German was a native of Aberdeen, the son of the late David and Mary German, and was 65 years of age.

Curve pitching was just being introduced in baseball circles at the time he reached his majority and young German so well mastered this art that he became a member of the famous New York Giants as a pitcher and became well known throughout the baseball world of that age. His control and eyesight carried him into another vocation a few years later, the sport of breaking clay pigeons with a shot gun. The DuPont Company, well known manufacturers of shot gun shells and other ammunition, offered him a roving commission as their special representative and so well did Mr. German master this sport that he became both amateur and professional champion of the United States. He was one of the best known men in the country in the sporting world, from his connection with these two sports, competing in both fields in most of the principal cities of the country. While a young man, he built a home for his parents on Broadway, in Aberdeen, which is one of the oldest in that section of the town.

He was twice married, his first wife



John Mitchell Michael Pusey (1915-2002) poses after a successful hunt.

he broke 647 out of 650 singles, doubles and handicap targets. In addition to the Parker Company, Lester German was hired by the DuPont Powder Company to do exhibition matches. German often performed in shooting exhibitions with another famous person with strong Maryland ties, Annie Oakley.

To further tie my Parker to my collection and the history of these objects that I keep close to me, a photograph of Lester German appears in the book, *The Grand*. He is shown standing with other shooters as a member of a squad during the Grand American at the

National Cash Register Gun Club in Dayton Ohio in 1913. The butt of the stock of my Parker rests on German's right foot. I look back to the day when John Pusey thought I may be interested in owning that Aberdeen gun. All of the information that he gave me was that it was given to him by a friend from DuPont. I wonder, no, I know that John thought that someday this collector would connect the dots and realize the importance of this gun. It is connected to Maryland, to the history of shooting, to John Pusey's daily morning shoots and now to my pressed tin toy that still "clicks". ■

LESTER STANLEY GERMAN

Major League Baseball Player in the 1890's — The Ty Cobb of Trapshooting

Lester Stanley "Les" German (June 1, 1869 – June 10, 1934) was a Major League Baseball pitcher for the American Association and its successor, the National League. He played first for the Baltimore Orioles in 1890, then four seasons pitching for the New York Giants (1893 to 1896) under the legendary John McGraw, and finished his MLB career in 1897 with the Washington Senators.

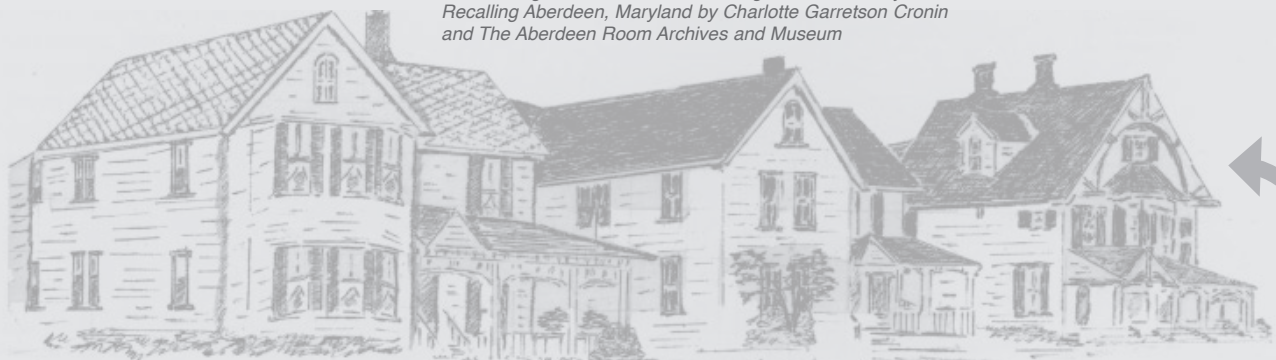
Les played in 147 major league games, pitching in 129 games with a lifetime pitching record of 34 wins and 64 losses. He also appeared in 14 games as a third baseman, two as an outfielder, and two as a second baseman. Les German's earned-run-average for six years was 5.49, and he had a lifetime batting average of .206, with 408 at bats, 106 hits, including eight doubles, three triples, three home runs, and 48 runs-batted-in. His best season was 1894 when he won nine games and lost eight for the Giants. His worst season was in 1896 when he won only two and lost 20. Three of the eastern teams and two of the western did not win a game against him.

Following the 1897 season, Les was traded to a team in San Francisco, as a result of which he left MLB and began a new career as a trapshooter. A born competitor, Les was hired by the DuPont Powder Company and the Parker Brothers Gun Company of Meriden, CT to do trapshooting in exhibition matches, often performing with the famous Annie Oakley.

Lester Stanley German and Alice Mary Garretson were married in 1895 and built a large Victorian home at 17 North Philadelphia Boulevard in Aberdeen, MD. They had two children who did not survive infancy. Alice died at the age of 34 in 1908, and Les later married Grace Pritchard Evans and had two children. Much of their time was spent in Florida, but they kept the home in Aberdeen, which still stands.

Les German's second career as an exhibition shooter was far more remarkable than the eight years he spent in Major League Baseball. The forend grip of Les German's Parker shotgun is worn to the point that very little of the original checkering is visible and one can see where his fingers lay on the wood—silent testimony to its intense use 100-years ago by "the Ty Cobb of trapshooting".

*Acknowledgements: Sketches of Village to Town to City:
Recalling Aberdeen, Maryland by Charlotte Garretson Cronin
and The Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum*



The German's Victorian home in Aberdeen, Maryland.

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What Is Folk Art?



- *Folk Art* is the art of the everyday.
- *Folk Art* is rooted in traditions that come from community and culture.
- *Folk Art* expresses cultural identity by conveying shared community values and aesthetics.
- *Folk Art* encompasses a range of utilitarian and decorative media, including cloth, wood, paper, clay, metal and more. If traditional materials are inaccessible, new materials are often substituted, resulting in contemporary expressions of traditional folk art forms.
- *Folk Art* reflects traditional art forms of diverse community groups—ethnic, tribal, religious, occupational, geographical, age, or gender-based—who identify with each other and society at large.
- *Folk Art* is made by individuals whose creative skills convey their community's authentic cultural identity, rather than an individual or idiosyncratic artistic identity.
- *Folk Artists* traditionally learn skills and techniques through apprenticeships in informal community settings, though they may also be formally educated.
- *Master Folk Artists* demonstrate superior levels of craftsmanship and creativity, often introducing new materials and innovations that express both traditional and contemporary imagery and values. In this way, traditional folk art forms evolve as dynamic living traditions.
- *Folk Art* fosters connections between art and people with a creative spirit that unites all the cultures of the world. ■

Courtesy: The Museum of International Folk Art; Santa Fe, NM

Photo by Matt Button





— In Memoriam —

Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr.

1940–2014

by C. John Sullivan, Jr.

*“He was my best friend, my teacher,
my mentor, my advisor, my big brother,
the one person that I could share
everything with.”*

We traveled as young boys along the tracks of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad. We traveled those tracks through Fallston, down to Laurel Brook, over the trussels, through the tunnel—an arched brick culvert that ran under the railroad tracks in Fallston behind my family’s childhood home—the tunnel we named “The Tunnel of Love” decades before we knew the meaning of the word love. The Fleckensteins moved to Fallston in 1953. Our families attended a wonderful little Carpenter Gothic frame church in Fallston. The Fleckenstein and Sullivan families were friends. We went to the same church; we shopped in the same country store; we lived in the same bucolic county. Henry and his brother Charles, being a few years older than I, had cool stuff before I did. They had cool bicycles, then 22 rifles, then really cool cars. Henry had 1953 Mercury, a wonderful teal color hardtop with dual exhausts that produced a perfect tone. Henry had the best flat top that I ever saw and a great gray window-pane checked suit that he would wear to Midnight Mass. Henry, and sometimes Charles, would always stand in the rear of the church, but the neatest thing to me was when he would take up collection when the parish was one usher short. Henry went into the Army and jumped

out of airplanes for a couple of years. When he returned to Fallston, he bought a used bright red Austin Healy 3000. That was the coolest car ever. I mentioned that roadster to Henry the last time we spoke, and he told me he never realized while he had it what a great ride it was. Henry and I drifted apart after he returned from his tour of duty and were reunited by those old wooden duck decoys. When we got back together, it was a pair of Ward brothers’ bluebills that tied the bond. After 1974, we started on a great trip together. Our trips included side ventures to see a locomotive, a trolley car, and birds. Henry was a master at identifying a single songbird or a flock of them. He knew their songs better than any song on a radio. As we drove the interstates or the side roads, we played. If there was an accident or a flat tire, we offered our prayers for those we could not help. Henry’s faith was powerful; we never missed Mass on our trips. One evening in Maine, we went to Mass three times: one in Latin, one in Spanish, and finally one in English. Walking out of one of those beautiful New England churches, I noticed that there was no Poor Box. We agreed that there must not have been any poor people in New Hampshire. When I said we shared everything, there was nothing that was left out. On our annual trips to Maine and sitting side by side at decoy shows, we

talked of life, of loves, of our mothers, our children, and one other thing: DECOYS. It never stopped. We spoke of his books—the books that were to become the ultimate textbooks for anyone who wants to know anything about a decoy—his books, which are now known as the ultimate references for decoys. On my last visit with Henry, it was as if nothing ever changed: Holly, Barnes, brands, bill carving, paint styles and our loves, all of them. Henry would say, “Look under the bills on those decoys; no one else bothers with that. Look at the carving at the top of the bill; they never pay attention to those details!” Henry’s ability to focus on “the details”, and his uncanny ability never to forget a decoy once he viewed it, puts his contributions to the “Decoy World” along with the likes of Joel Barber and Bill Mackey. His contributions will live on as long as decoys are admired and collected. Many years ago, another good decoy friend of mine referred to me as a graduate of the Henry Fleckenstein School of Decoys. I hope and I pray that I have graduated from that school and the other school that Henry conducted, the School of Life: be kind to one another, love others and treat them as you would want to be treated, be good to your mother, be faithful to Mother Nature, take care of the love of your life, and worship your Lord. ■

Jennings & Herrick map (1858) of Spesutie Island showing McGaw homestead and ferry.

"Postage stamp" style canvasbacks with slightly raised neck shelves.

C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



Bob McGaw

BOAT MECHANIC & DECOY MAKER

By James L. Trimble

"Accosted by news-hawks in Baltimore, where he had gone to have his eyes examined by famed ophthalmologist William Holland Wilmer, financier J. Pierpont Morgan explained: 'You see, if I expect to get any ducks my glasses must be right.' Next day, from a New York Rod & Gun Club blind on Spesutie Island, he shot four black ducks and eight canvasbacks."

—As reported in the December 4, 1933 issue of *Time Magazine*

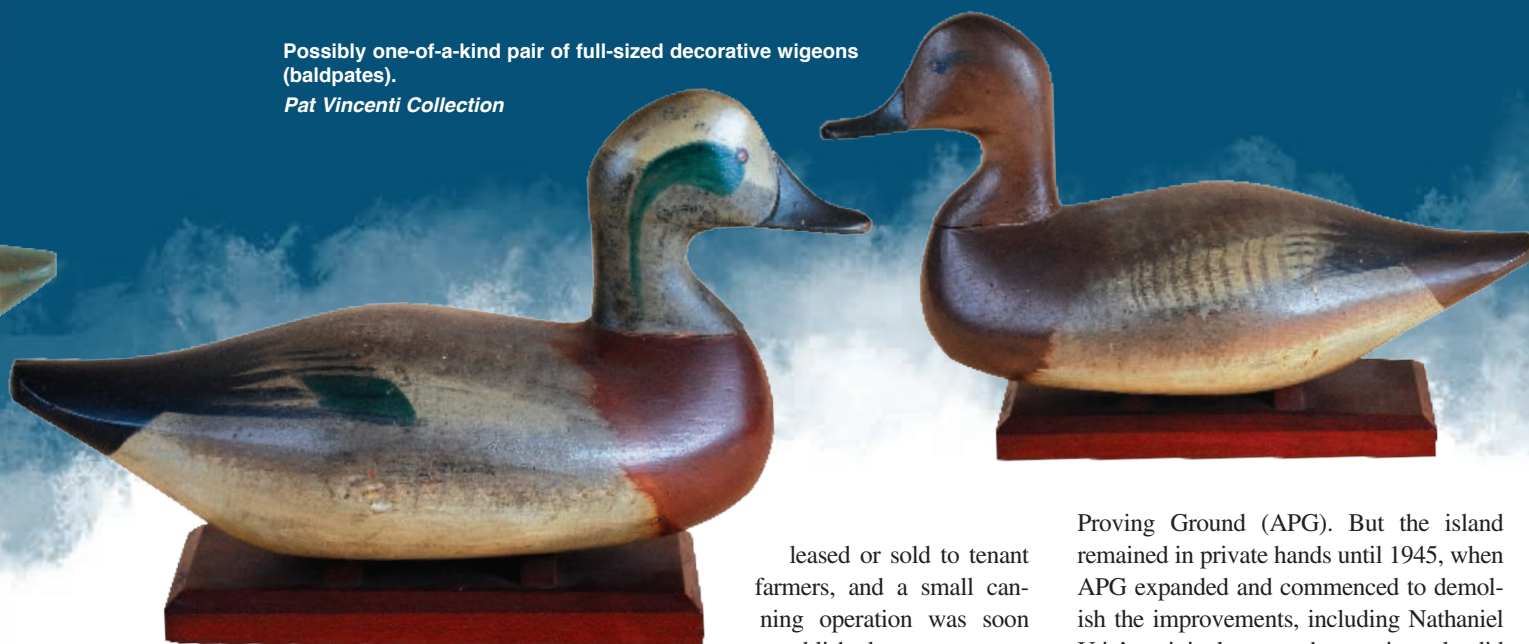


SPEsutIE ISLAND, comprised of 1,500 acres, is located off Maryland's western shore in the Upper Chesapeake Bay, just below Havre de Grace, at the southern boundary of the famed Susquehanna Flats. An ancient hunting and fishing ground for the Susquehannock Indians, it was also a prime waterfowling paradise by the middle of the 18th century. Many East Coast sports took advantage of its vast shoreline properties, which were ideal for duck hunting, and many famous sporting clubs acquired land and gunning rights, which attracted wealthy patrons to its shores.

The then-2,300 acre island was surveyed in 1658 for Col. Nathaniel Utie (1635-1675) and conveyed to him by Lord Baltimore in 1661 as a

Possibly one-of-a-kind pair of full-sized decorative wigeons (baldpates).

Pat Vincenti Collection



manorial grant. Utie's revealing name for the island joins his surname and "spes", the Latin word for hope—"Utie's Hope"—and a manor house was soon under construction. During the War of 1812, the island was raided by Admiral Cockburn's British squadron for fresh food and livestock, before proceeding north to attack and burn Havre de Grace. With time, the manor house, located on Bear Point, was converted to a hunting lodge and land was

leased or sold to tenant farmers, and a small canning operation was soon established.

Island children attended school on the mainland, crossing the Spesutie Narrows at the northwest corner of the island by boat. At that spot, a ferry with a rope and pulley system pulling a scow large enough to convey horse and buggy was soon established; it was one of the earliest ferry crossings in the state. This was later to be the site of J. Pierpont Morgan's hunting and fishing club.

The character of the surrounding land changed in 1917, when the Federal Government acquired 35,000 acres of mainland that became the Aberdeen

Proving Ground (APG). But the island remained in private hands until 1945, when APG expanded and commenced to demolish the improvements, including Nathaniel Utie's original manor house, its splendid waterfowling past left to the romance of historians.

But during its heyday, Spesutie Island was the boyhood home of Robert F. McGaw Jr., a third generation islander who was born there in 1879—the son of a canner, farmer, and waterfowl gunner.

McGaw's grandfather, also Robert F. McGaw, died the year before he was born. He had purchased the island's "Upper Farm" in 1864, a plot of land bordered by the Chesapeake Bay, Back Creek and Spesutie Narrows. Along with their agrarian pursuits, the McGaws operated the main-



William E. Moore, McGaw's father-in-law (left), was the captain of the famed gunning yacht *Reckless*. His pair of redheads in Severin Hall repaint (below) is very similar to McGaw's hand-chopped decoys with straight-line bills and dog-bone weights; however, the backs are somewhat flatter and the chine is somewhat sharper. There's no doubt that he taught McGaw the decoy business. In this photo, Moore's amputated left hand is evident as he raises the shotgun with his forearm.



land ferry and were purveyors of supplies for island inhabitants. And like other men on the island and surrounding waterfront communities, they were waterfowl hunters, killing migratory ducks each year as they arrived by the hundreds of thousands to the nutrient-rich wintertime feeding waters of the Upper Bay's Susquehanna Flats. It was a source of both income and sustenance.

In 1872, the state of Maryland passed conservation legislation that effectively limited yields on the Flats and established a "ducking police" force comprised of notable early gunners from both Cecil and Harford Counties to enforce the law. McGaw was eleven years old in 1890 when his father was sworn in. Other well-known policemen included William E. Moore, captain of the gunning yacht *Reckless*, Robert H. Mitchell, father of future decoy maker R. Madison Mitchell, and William Barnes, father of decoy maker and future ducking policeman Sam Barnes. As a young island boy in the late 1800s, McGaw was steeped in the ways of a waterfowler, watching the local gunners each fall prepare for the migration of southbound hungry ducks that would soon fill the skies.

As a young man, McGaw, who had moved to the mainland, worked as an insurance collector, picking up the weekly life insurance premiums from local watermen. Public records also indicate that he served in the National Guard from 1909 to 1911. Local historians feel this is when McGaw started making decoys. He is also known to have worked early in his life as a substitute letter carrier for the U.S. Post Office in Havre de Grace. Along the way, he developed mechanical skills for small engine repair. His September 1918 draft registration card lists his occupation as "marine gas engineer" with the U.S. Ordnance Department, presumably at APG.

In 1918 McGaw married Carrie Polhemus Moore, the daughter of Capt. Billy Moore, a waterman and captain of the famed gunning yacht *Reckless* and a contemporary of his father. Polhemus was the name of the New York family that owned the 62-foot, 31-ton *Reckless* before Moore inherited it. The 1920 census lists the 40-year-old McGaw with

his 35-year-old wife living with 69-year-old Moore and his wife on Washington Street in Havre de Grace. Moore is listed as head of household and the owner of the two-story home with a large lot. McGaw is listed as "son-in-law". Under occupation, Moore is listed as "Pilot—Boat", although the name of the vessel is illegible, and McGaw is listed as "Engineer on Vessel", leading one to believe he worked for his father-in-law. The 1930 census contains basically the same data, except that Moore's occupation is "None" and McGaw's is "Manufacturer—Decoys". Home ownership eventually passed to the McGaws.

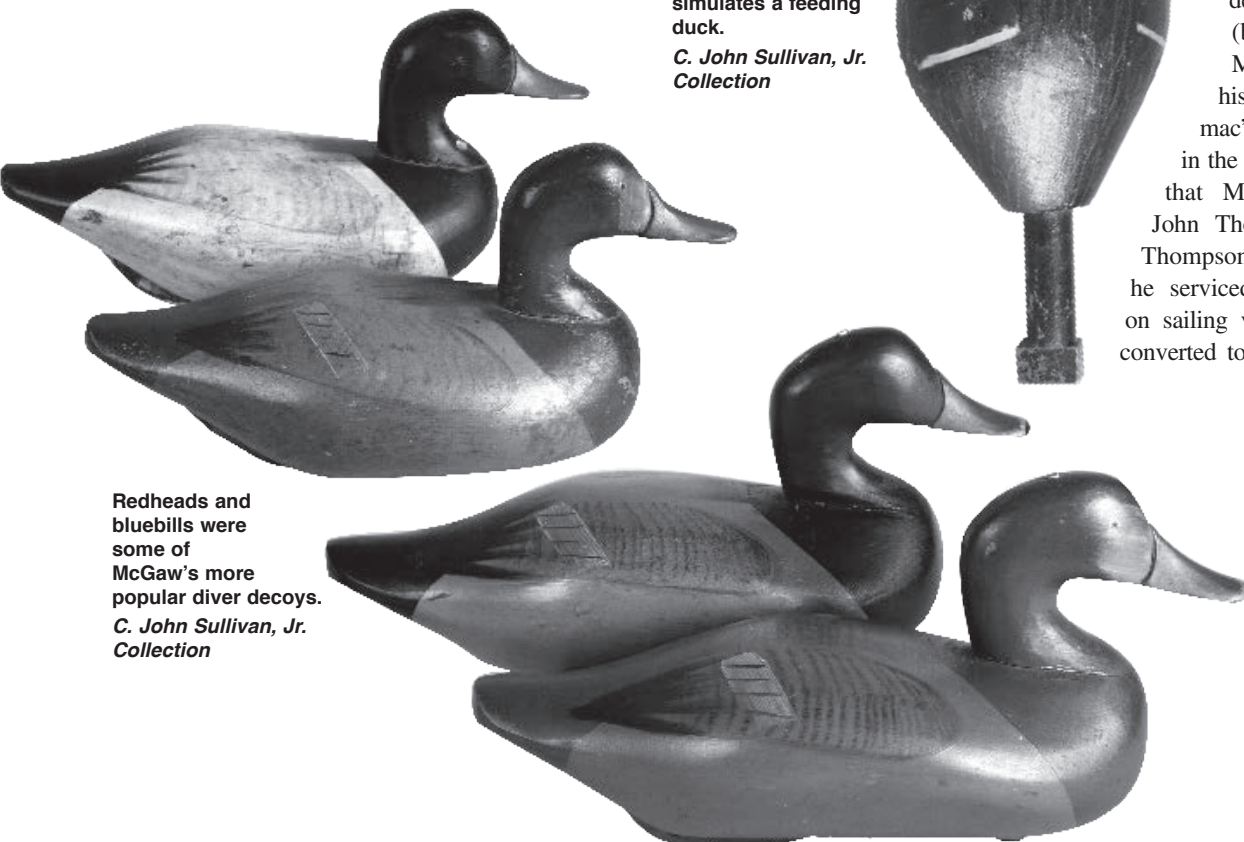
The Baltimore Sun's outdoor editor Peter Chambliss gave a snapshot of Moore in this November 7, 1920 report: "T. Coleman du Pont (powder manufacturer) of Wilmington, DE, who hasn't missed an opening day on the flats in years, was running true to form this year. The du Pont party, which included a number of well-known Eastern Shoremen, shot with Capt. W.E. Moore's outfit on the opening day and bagged 76 ducks."

Local historian and decoy maker Jim Pierce (b.1934) believes that McGaw likely learned his motor work or "motor mac" skills during his time in the National Guard. He said that McGaw had befriended John Thompson at the nearby Thompson Boat House, where he serviced and installed motors on sailing vessels that were being converted to power. Apparently, the

Scratch-painted black duck tip-up decoy simulates a feeding duck.
C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



Redheads and bluebills were some of McGaw's more popular diver decoys.
C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



arrangement with Thompson went on for quite some time, even well after McGaw started his decoy business, as Washington Street neighbors remembered him walking the three blocks to Thompson's business.

The Thompson Boat House also ran a sinkbox operation, where McGaw, in all probability, worked for them taking out sports. There is a photo hanging on a wall of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum's gunning display of a young Thompson sitting outside with a brush in hand painting a canvasback taken from a large pile of old decoys yet to be refurbished. According to Pierce, McGaw also helped service his father-in-law's boats. "In all probability," he said, "McGaw, as a young man, sailed as a deckhand with Moore and, in all probability, helped paint and refurbish decoys for both Thompson and Moore."

Although he can't pinpoint the exact date when McGaw began making decoys, Pierce is convinced that Moore taught McGaw the decoy business. "After all," he said, "McGaw and Moore were living under the same roof, and McGaw's decoy bodies, heads, paint applications, and "dog-bone" weights are patterned after his father-in-law's." We don't know when, but at some point in time, Moore's dexterity had been impaired with his left hand amputated at the wrist as the result of a sinkbox accident, which could have caused him to encourage his son-in-law to help in the decoy making process. Moore could have continued to paint decoys, but it would have been nearly impossible to work a drawknife or spokeshave under such circumstances.

McGaw's decoy bodies are wide-hipped with a gentle cambered back. Some of his earlier decoys were made with slightly raised neck shelves. The cheeks are carved to the inside of the bill and, especially on his later production decoys; there is an almost straight line from the end of the bill to the point where the neck turns downward towards the body. According to Pierce, the straight line head cut could be done more quickly with a reciprocal saw as opposed to a curling cut with a band saw. Moore's decoys also have straight line cut heads, however the wide-hipped bodies tend to have a sharper chine and the backs tend to be flatter. It's likely that many of McGaw's early customers

included Moore's well-heeled and well-connected gunning clientele.

While many Havre de Grace decoy makers relied on scavenged utility poles for a source of wood, it appears that McGaw got most of his from the lumber and mill yard owned by decoy maker and boat builder Edwin Pearson (1863-1932). Pierce believes the decoys were made from standard cut pine boards. "His decoy production was most divers—canvasbacks, black heads and redheads—along with a few scratch-painted black ducks," he said. "Other species and miniatures came later." There is also a similarity to Pearson's wide-hipped body style and pounded dog-bone weight, however the similarity ends there, as Pearson's heads tend to be large and cheekier.

According to Pierce, the dog-bone weights on McGaw's decoys originally came from an auto body shop that used a mold to pour strip lead for filling body dents. He would cut the strips with a tobacco cutter then pound the ends for easy attachment, creating a dog-bone look. The decoys were floated in a small pan for balance and the weight was affixed using five nails. Along with Pearson and McGaw, similar dog-bone weights are found on early Madison Mitchell decoys, another young maker who Capt. Moore influenced. (Potomac River decoy maker James Baines (1915-1971) used dog-bone weights on his decoys, causing many later day collectors to wrongly attribute his J.E.B. branded coots to McGaw.)

When McGaw's Washington Street neighbor Sam Barnes died in 1926, his young helper Madison Mitchell set about finishing orders for about 1400 decoys, with Capt. Moore lending a hand. He taught Mitchell how to mix and blend colors and applied the same feathered wing patterns found on his son-in-law's decoys. McGaw's signature dog-bone weight and the McGaw style paint patterns is a good indication of Moore's influence. Locals report that McGaw was upset that his father-in-law would help this new upstart, who would eventually prove to be a formidable competitor in the decoy business.

As a kid, Pierce was in and out of McGaw's shop, as his grandparents were contiguous neighbors. He remembers two

large buildings with double doors, shaded by several large maple trees, at the back end of the yard. One was used to store wood blocks and finished decoys. The other was more like a carpenter's shop, complete with power lathe and saws, workbench, chopping block and various tools. Roll-up canvas blinds protected the finished decoys on racks from sawdust. A work chair and cot were located in the back end of the shop and a pot-bellied stove provided warmth. The large lot contained several fruit trees and a large vegetable garden, where he and his wife loved to toil. Seasonal yields were canned and stored for future consumption. The yard also contained several dog boxes and penned runs for his dogs, German shorthairs and Irish setters, used for hunting upland game and waterfowl.

McGaw hunted from both a sinkbox and bushwhack boat, sometimes within sight of his Spesutie Island boyhood home. The decoys in his personal rig carried a R.F. McGaw brand. He also hunted upland game, primarily quail and rabbits, on a regular basis with Luc Claire, the owner of the general grocery store, and in his later years with Paul Gibson, a younger decoy maker. A. Aubrey Bodine, the noted photographer for the Baltimore Sun, took photos of several Havre de Grace decoy makers at work in their shops in the 1940s, including McGaw. One well-known photo shows him with Claire, Mitchell and Gibson in his shop gabbing around the pot-bellied stove, perhaps after a day's hunt. Gunner Joel Pusey was also a frequent visitor, and his J.P. brand can be found on some of McGaw's earlier decoys. The shop was a favorite meeting place and visitors were always welcome.

A photo section of the January 8, 1928 edition of the Los Angeles Times includes a collage of six wire service photos of duck hunting in Havre de Grace, including one of McGaw at his workbench, spoke shave in hand, smoothing the back of a high head canvasback. The commentary in part reads, "Ducks and decoys—Bob McGaw, who specializes in articles to fool the water navigators, is shown in his wood working shop."

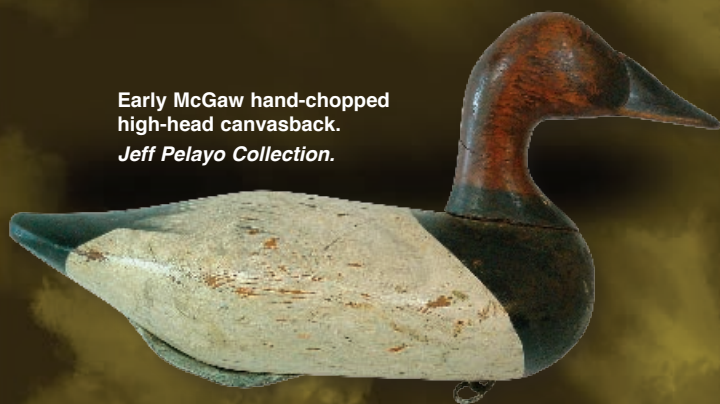
McGaw was the first in Havre de Grace to introduce a lathe for producing bodies, acquiring an old duplicating lathe in 1929 that reportedly had been used to turn rifle



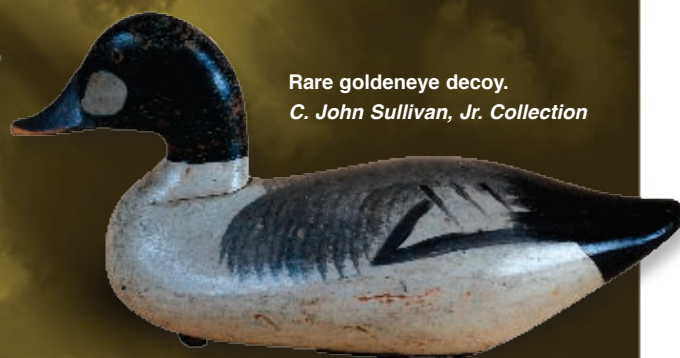
Full-sized decorative high-head pintails with wonderful scratch feather paint.
Jeff Pelayo Collection



Early mallard pair.
C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



Early McGaw hand-chopped high-head canvasback.
Jeff Pelayo Collection.



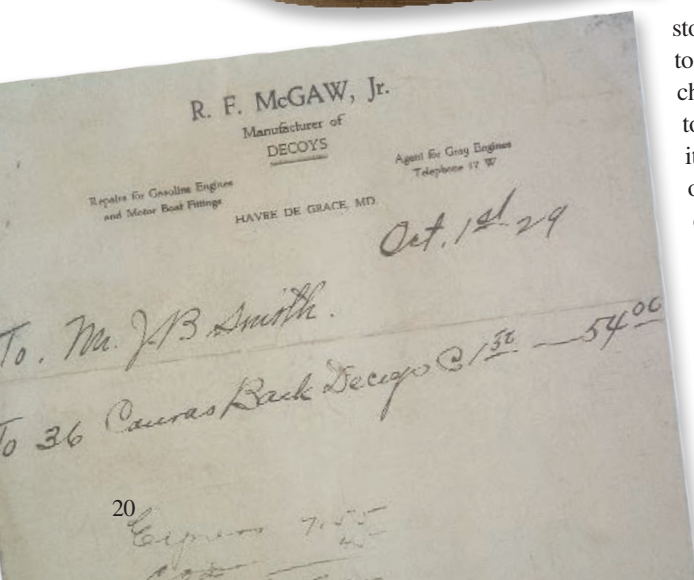
Rare goldeneye decoy.
C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



Finely scratch-painted blue-winged teal.
C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



Early black duck.
C. John Sullivan, Jr. Collection



stocks during World War I. Prior to then all of his decoys were hand chopped. In 1941 he sold this lathe to Madison Mitchell, who used it to produce tens of thousands of bodies over the following decades. Part of the transaction required that Mitchell turn bodies for the aging McGaw. The McGaw/Mitchell duplicating lathe is now in the collection of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

Initially McGaw sold decoys primarily out of his shop. Many were sold in vast quantities to gun clubs, gunning yachts and guides with sinkbox operations, often up to 500 at a time. The introduction of his lathe allowed him to increase production as well as his bottom line. Individual waterfowl, some who bushwhacked, also were frequent customers, but they purchased decoys in smaller quantities.

On October 1, 1929, on McGaw's stationery, he sent an invoice to a J.B. Smith for 36 canvasback decoys priced at \$1.50



Well-known photograph from McGaw's shop, which is depicted in the Decoy Museum's life-sized display of waxed figures; left to right: Havre de Grace grocer Luc Claire with carvers McGaw, R. Madison Mitchell, and Paul Gibson. *Courtesy aaubreybodine.com*

apiece or \$54 in total, plus \$8 in shipping charges. Under his name, it reads: "Manufacturer of Decoys". It also indicates that he did "Repairs for Gasoline Engines and Motor Boat Fittings" and was an "Agent for Gray (Marine) Engines". It's likely that in many cases he was working on problematic engines for the same waterman that were buying decoys as they readied for the ensuing hunting season.

In 1934 the state of Maryland outlawed sinkbox hunting, thus eliminating the need for vast rigs of decoys. It was a kick in the teeth for McGaw and other area decoy makers. Piles of decoys soon filled area sheds, and their disposition allowed many area waterfowlers and out of town sports to acquire birds on the cheap. Times were hard for those in the decoy making business, with many turning to miniature decoys and other novelty items as a source of income. However, there was a fair wind blowing for this particular maker.

Three years earlier, during the fall of 1931, New York City's Abercrombie & Fitch, the supplier of sporting goods to the

rich and famous, including U.S. Presidents Teddy Roosevelt and Grover Cleveland, displayed regional decoys at their famous Log Cabin Sportsman Center. The decoys were from the collection of Joel Barber, a New York architect who was among the first to research and document early decoy makers. The display included McGaw decoys that he had acquired from the maker during a visit to his shop in the late 1920s.

In 1934, the same year that Maryland outlawed sinkbox shooting, he published his book, *"Wild Fowl Decoys"*, describing and identifying a variety of regional decoy makers. He memorialized his trip to McGaw's shop, providing positive comments about the quality and visibility of McGaw's decoys. Barber no doubt was pleased with his purchases, as the book includes two architectural drawings to scale of a drake and hen canvasback decoy that he identifies as "Chesapeake Canvas-Back, Havre de Grace, Maryland, 1929, identifying the maker as Robert F. McGaw. One can only imagine the impact this book,

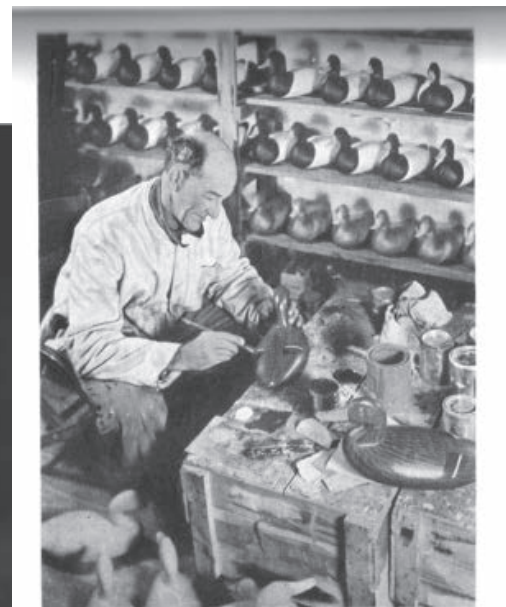
which appealed to both the collector and waterfowler, had on McGaw's business.

There's also a small blue-winged teal by Charles T. Wilson, a local high school principal, pictured in Barber's book that he described as "found on a shelf in a small room at the rear of McGaw's paint shop, surrounded by miscellaneous gear of a waterman's belongings." Bobby Wilson, a railroad policeman and son of the principal, worked on a part-time basis for McGaw during the 1940s and 50s, primarily sanding and priming decoys. He became very close to McGaw and his wife. Perhaps his employment was a result of close family connections between the McGaw, Moore and Wilson families, as the teal would have been made early in the century.

McGaw, who was developing mail order sales, also adver-

tised in the Thomas Register of American Manufacturers, and quite likely, in the city newspapers of both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. He received additional exposure though an article in a July 1938 issue of *National Geographic Magazine*. It featured a color photo of McGaw at his workbench scratch-painting black ducks, with a rack full of finished bluebills in the background. Outdoor columnists at nearby newspapers also mentioned McGaw and his decoy business from time to time.

About this point in time the U.S. was gearing up for the war in Europe, which brought an influx of personnel to APG. After the country entered the war on December 7, 1941, APG added additional land and the workforce continued to swell. Soldiers came from all corners of the country, many of them

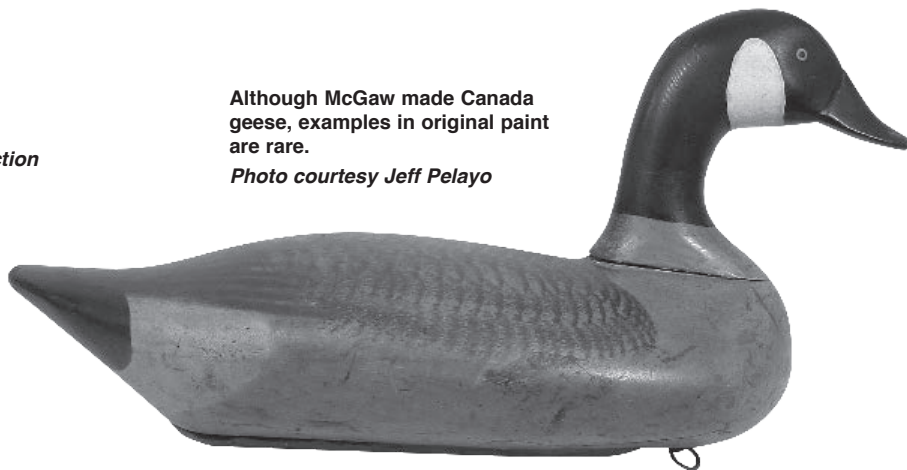


Dulapian Photographs by Willard R. Culver
IT'S AN UNLUCKY DUCK THAT KNOWS ITS OWN IMAGE!
To lure game birds within shotgun range, Robert F. McGaw, of Havre de Grace, Maryland, manufactures decoys of nine varieties of migratory waterfowl. Set out in long strings or anchored individually around the blind, the wooden ducks bob and tip on the waves as if alive.

McGaw applies the speculum to a scratch-painted black duck in this photograph from a 1928 issue of *National Geographic*. Note the bluebills on the shelf behind him.

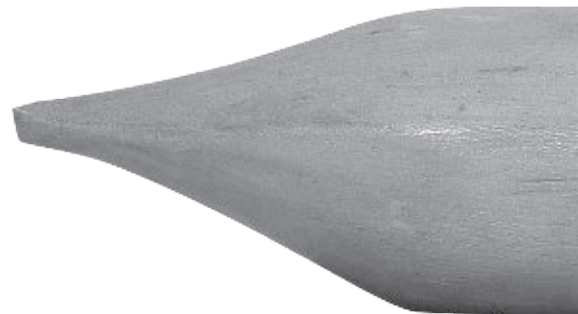


McGaw miniature
canvasback pair.
Jeff Pelayo Collection



Although McGaw made Canada
geese, examples in original paint
are rare.

Photo courtesy Jeff Pelayo



duck hunters, who eventually found their way to the doorsteps of the Havre de Grace makers, and McGaw's shop was one of their destinations. As these soldiers hunted in the vicinity, relationships were established, and after the war ended Havre de Grace makers shipped their decoys to destinations far and wide, many via Rail Way Express. The familiar "poison brand" of the Officer's Club is found on many of McGaw's surviving decoys.

"A Chronicle of Letters, Robert F. McGaw Jr., Decoy Maker", published by John Sullivan in 1986, contains many letters, most written in the 1940s, that provide additional insight to his mail order business. The correspondence, mostly addressed to Mrs. McGaw, is from hunters all over the country, many military personnel, others corporate brass, often on their official letterheads. Along with orders and re-orders for decoys for the upcoming season, many inquire about his miniatures that were mounted on small wooden bases, including retailers, such as Wanamaker's in Philadelphia. Many of the letters reflect a long-term relationship, as some ask about the condition of his arthritis.

In view of the free publicity provided by Barber's book, which literally put him on the map at a critical time when he was building his mail order business, one letter, dated December 15, 1941, is of particular interest. Bob Edge, the Outdoor Editor for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), was responding to a December 11 letter from Mrs. McGaw. After an exchange of niceties, and comments about McGaw's failure to respond to two previous letters attempting to order a duck-head gun rack, he writes: "About the Barber matter and

the subject of my broadcasting a portion of the material contained in his book, please believe me when I say that I am completely flabbergasted to learn that certain statements made by Mr. Barber and broadcast by me, in good faith, were not true. I therefore hasten to express my personal apology to you and trust that you will understand that I would never have made the statements unless I had felt sure that Mr. Barber knew what he was talking about."

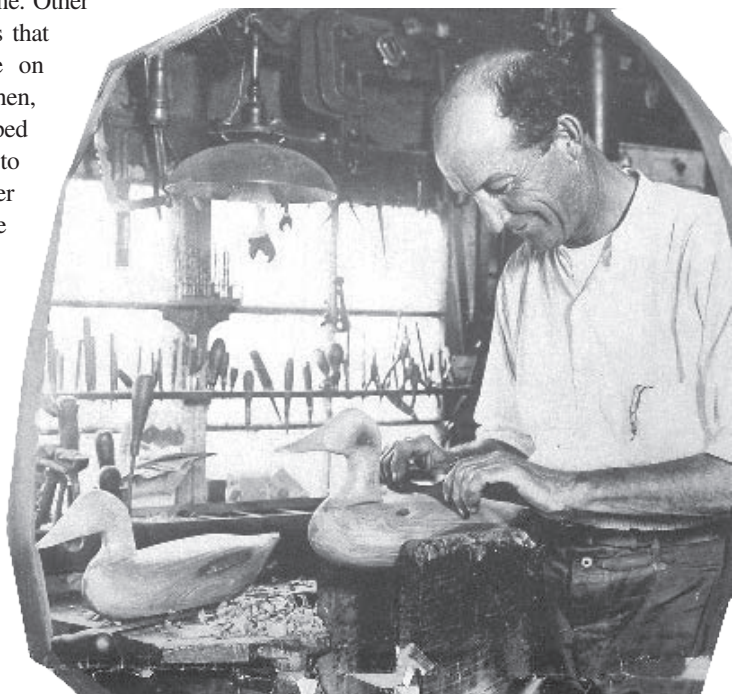
What was that about? Pierce believes it may have had something to do with Barber, an educated wealthy collector with time on his hand, who was not a waterman or gunner, snooping around a workman's shop, asking questions that might have seemed stupid or intrusive. We will never know.

After the war, and with the influx of paper, plastic and cheap factory decoys, McGaw, like other Havre de Grace carvers, saw demand for his decoys wane. Other than the miniatures, the decoys that he was then producing were on Mitchell or Gibson bodies. By then, his arthritic hands, often wrapped in cloth, were no longer able to perform their duties. His later years, particularly after his wife died, were quiet ones, with time often spent alone. Some of his personal effects were given to Bobby Wilson, who now lived in Baltimore, and he took the ducks, mostly miniatures, and attempted to sell them, hoping to raise a few dollars for his old friend. McGaw died in 1958.

Pierce attended his funeral, as did a few other locals, but mostly, "It was a

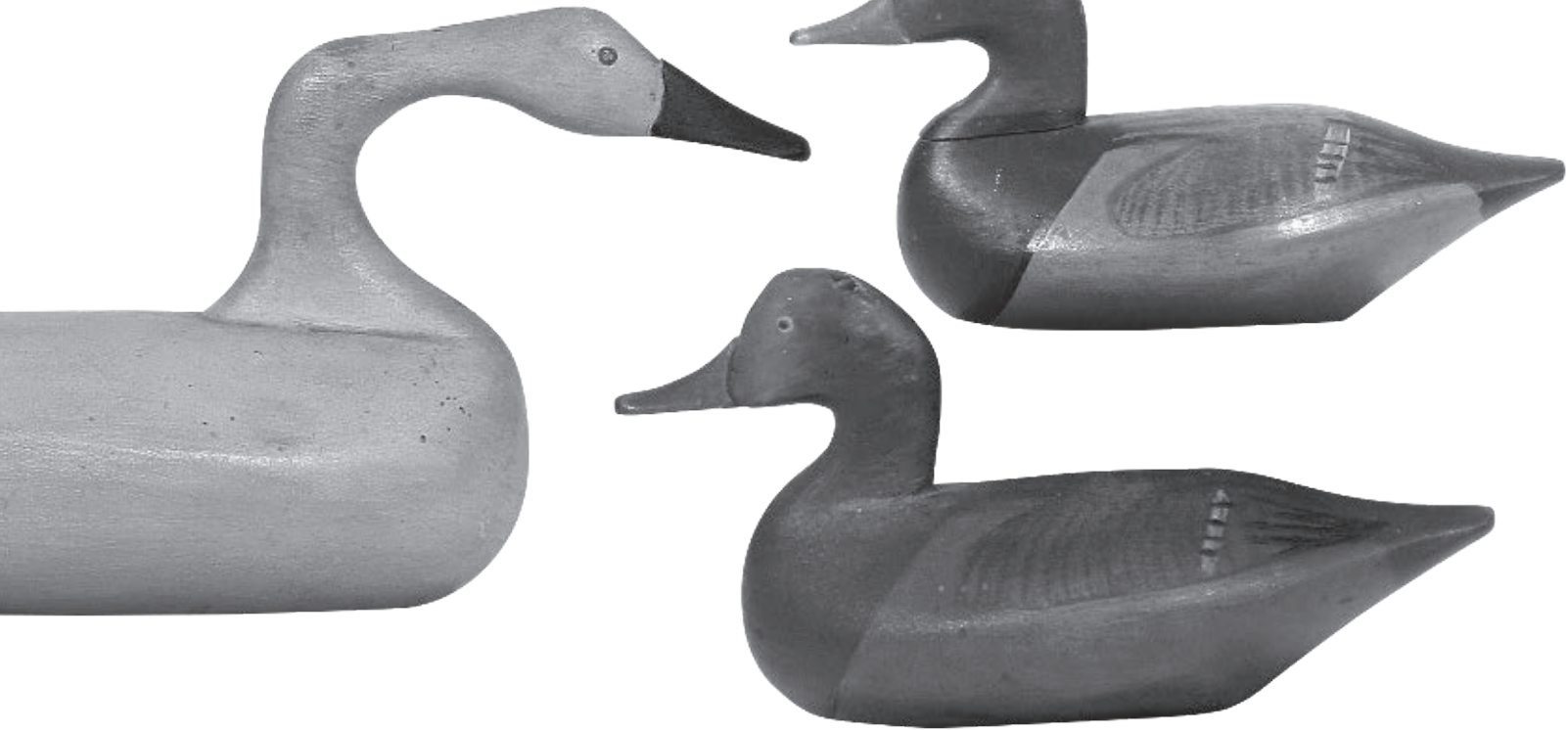
quiet passing," he said. Many assume that Mitchell handled the burial of his fellow decoy maker, but it was Pennington Funeral Home that laid him to rest. Without immediate heirs—he had no children—and the

McGaw spokeshaves a high-head
canvasback in this photo reprinted from
a 1928 article in the Los Angeles Times.



McGaw made hundreds of miniatures of a variety of species from the 1930s to the 1950s, which greatly supplemented his income after the demand for full-sized decoys lessened; left to right: swan and redhead.

Jeff Pelayo Collection



passing of time, the house and shop began to deteriorate. "Things started disappearing from his shop, some of it carted off," Pierce remembers. "It was sad to watch." The property was eventually sold to a developer who divided the property. He renovated the house and built a second one facing the side street in what formerly was the large backyard.

After Joel Barber's death in 1952, the Shelburne Museum in Vermont acquired his collection of decoys and hand-drawn renderings, including the pair of canvasbacks that McGaw made in 1929. They are illustrated in the 1961 pamphlet that features their collection. The description reads: "The pair of solid decoys have the general shaping of all canvasback decoys from the Chesapeake Bay are, but when they are compared with those shown (others in the booklet), it is obvious that more time and skill went into the carving of the bills and the painting of the feather pattern."

On March 22, 1985, the U.S. Post Office issued a block of four 22-cent stamps reflecting different species of decoys on display at the Shelburne. One was a rendering of McGaw's 1929 canvasback illustrated

in Barber's book. While most of McGaw's production decoys were made without a neck shelf, as were most Upper Bay decoys, the pair Barber acquired were his finer birds, purportedly from his personal hunting rig, with high alert heads attached to well-defined shelves. Collectors now refer to them as his "Postage Stamp" style.

In 1994 the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum recognized his contribution to the community, the self-proclaimed "Decoy Capital of the World," when they named him the Honorary Chairman of their annual Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival, the first carver to be named posthumously. The Museum now displays a permanent collection of his decoys. Besides being a gifted artisan, he was an innovator, introducing lathe production to his Havre de Grace community, a production method that his competitors adopted, with generations of later decoy makers following suit.

As one stands on the promenade deck of the Decoy Museum, facing south over the broad expanse of the Susquehanna Flats, Spesutie Island lies in the distance. Just maybe, looking into the past, you might see a lone gunner in a sinkbox

or bushwhack boat, finishing his morning hunt. Surrounded by a rig of wide-hipped canvasbacks, he quietly checks his watch. A freshly made and painted rig of decoys he crated last evening sits in his Havre de Grace shop, ready for delivery. A smile slowly creases his face. There is still time to get them on the late morning southbound train. ■

A special thanks to Jim Pierce, John Sullivan Jr., Lou Nolan, Jeff Pelayo, Sandy Switzer, Tom East and Research Historian Ray Yingling for their assistance. The author, Jim Trimble who specializes in Chesapeake Bay and Chincoteague area decoys, can be reached at (703) 768-7264 or potomacduck@cox.net.

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Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2013 — JUNE 30, 2014

MISSION

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum exists to collect, document, preserve and interpret waterfowl decoys as this art form applies to the heritage of the Chesapeake Bay. Within this context, the Museum will strive to study styles of decoys, seeking to understand the decoys' artistic and social values and to pass on this heritage to our future generations. The Museum will also educate, present, and document the influence that the surrounding environment, the Susquehanna Flats, and the Chesapeake Bay has had on decoy history.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

TOTAL ASSETS \$1,178,999

Includes cash, investments, inventory, land and leasehold improvements, furniture and equipment, accumulated depreciation, and the value of the Museum collection.

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCES

Bryan/Joiner\$51,099

C. J. Sullivan\$18,772

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL\$1,178,999

TOTAL LIABILITIES:\$12,358

Includes accrued expenses, and sales tax payable.

TOTAL CAPITAL: \$1,166,641

Includes unrestricted net assets, restricted net assets, and net income.

REVENUE

Earned Revenue\$111,056

Contributed\$21,507

Grant Revenue\$77,500

TOTAL REVENUE \$210,063

EXPENSES

Program\$52,665

General & Administration\$153,895

Fundraising \$27,160

TOTAL EXPENSES* \$237,720

**This report does not reflect disbursements for the 3-year joint grant project with the City of Havre de Grace and other museums for the War of 1812 commemoration. The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum administered a portion of that grant money and therefore paid a portion of the expenses from those funds.*



OPERATING SUMMARY

MEMBERSHIP

Life and Charter	461
Renewing Annually	438
Other	7

TOTAL MEMBERS906

PERSONNEL

Volunteers

Officers and Directors	16
Administrative Support.....	6
Program Support	42

Staff

Bonnie Castillo.....	Membership
Samantha Castillo.....	Gift Shop
Holly Doran	Gift Shop
Mindy Elledge	Finance
Kassie Farkas.....	Gift Shop
Margaret Jones	Events and Education

VISITORS

Paid Admissions.....	3,538
Other.....	3,989
Total	7,527

Of those:

School Groups	6
School Children.....	650
Other groups	21
Classes/workshops.....	15
Attending Classes or Workshops.....	162

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Permanent Exhibitions	4
Temporary Exhibitions	7

PUBLICATIONS

<i>The Canvasback Magazine</i>	Quarterly
Estimated Distribution	4,123



— IN MEMORIAM —

Shirley Knott Alger

September 15, 1927 - January 4, 2015



The Directors and staff at the Decoy Museum were saddened to learn that our newest Director, Shirley Knott Alger died on Sunday, January 4, 2015 after a sudden illness. We were delighted to welcome Shirley to the table last year, and even in that short time, his contributions were significant.

We will miss not only his amiability and collegiality, but also his wise counsel borne of the life experiences that made him a valued contributor. A native of Charles Town, West Virginia, Shirley graduated from Charles Town High School in 1946, enlisted in the Marines, and later attended the US Naval Academy in Annapolis. He graduated from Shepherd College with a degree in English, received his Master's in Public Administration from the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA, and was only a dissertation shy of his PhD from Cornell University. Shirley was an officer in the US Navy on active duty and retired from the Naval Reserves as a Lieutenant Commander. He was a Systems Analyst for the Social Security Administration, retiring in 1993.

Shirley was an avid hunter and fisherman, and he shared with us the experiences from his trip to South Dakota for pheasant hunting only a few months ago. His other activities reveal his love of the outdoors and community service. He was an active member of the Second Presbyterian Church, where he had served as a Deacon, Elder, and Treasurer; a member of St. Andrew's Christian Community in Roland Park; a Mason and Past Master of the Mt. Moriah Lodge, AF & AM; and a member of the St. George's Society, where he served several terms as its President. Shirley was also a member of both Ducks Unlimited and the Izaak Walton League; a member and past president of the Loch Raven Skeet and Trap Center; and a past Maryland State Skeet Champion.

We will miss our friend Shirley, and we extend our condolences to his wife Ruth, who accompanied him to the Decoy Museum and supplemented his scanty navigation skills on the streets of Havre de Grace, and to his extended family. We share your loss. ■

The Butterballs are Here!



COME SEE the Potomac Decoy Collectors Association's new exhibit of bufflehead decoys. Over the past ten years, PDCA's displays in partnership with the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum have featured mallards, redheads, ruddy ducks and, most recently, the teal decoys that were the subject of the fall issue of *The Canvasback*. Now, a great group of plump and diminutive "dippers" have joined the flock.

PDCA's newest exhibit features a wide array of carvings representing the *Bucephala albeola*, the smallest of all diving ducks, and one of the smallest ducks in North America. The exhibit includes antique, contemporary, working, decorative, full-size and miniature examples, all from the collections of PDCA members.

Swift and elusive, for centuries the bufflehead has been called the "spirit duck" by hunters and bird watchers alike. This exhibit aims to pay tribute to the spirit of this remarkable and adorable bird. ■

The Coudon Teal

NOW ON DISPLAY in the library is a green-winged teal that was carved in the 1930s by Joseph Coudon of Aiken, Maryland for Dr. McGraw in Perryville, Maryland.

Coudon (1860-1947) was the Honorary Chairman of the 2007 Havre de Grace Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival.

This important decoy was a gift to the R. Madison Mitchell Endowment Trust in 2014 from renowned New Jersey decoy collectors Jim Doherty, who passed away in 2013, and his wife Pat who have both been dear friends of the Decoy Museum. A picture appears on page 31. John Clayton, writing in *Decoy Magazine*, said that the Doherty's decoy collection was well rounded and "would be considered one of the finest in the country, but his New Jersey collection, without a doubt, is considered the best."

It is just this sort of collaboration and support for the Museum that Mr. Mitchell had in mind when the Trust was established. We are very grateful to both the Dohertys and to the Trust for this important piece. Don't miss it! ■

HONORARY CHAIRMAN

of
the

2015 Decoy Festival: Joe Engers



The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is delighted that the Honorary Chairman of the 34th annual Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival will be Joe Engers, owner and publisher of *Decoy Magazine*. Joe is well known and highly regarded for his enormous contributions to the decoy world through his bi-monthly magazine, book publishing, active participation in the dozens of shows held coast to coast each year, and his strong support for clubs and institutions that celebrate the art of the decoy.

Decoy Magazine is the sine qua non among serious decoy collectors worldwide and provides exclusive information on decoys and makers from the golden age of waterfowling all the way through to contemporary carvers. His comprehensive coverage of decoy auctions, shows, and other waterfowling events takes the reader into the heart of the decoy market! Stay tuned to find out more about Joe and his interesting accomplishments in the Festival issue of *The Canvasback*.

The 2015 Decoy and Wildlife Art Festival will be held on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd—the first weekend in May (see page 13 for details). Save the dates and make your plans now to join us in Havre de Grace and to meet Joe. ■

"Joe Engers (right) with Decoy Museum president Pat Vincenti at the 2014 Decoy Festival."



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Museum Members

Thank you and welcome to the following members and businesses that recently renewed their membership or newly joined us. Your continued support and contributions are essential to the overall success of the Decoy Museum:

Key: I=Individual, F=Family, L=Legacy, LS=Legacy Silver

Carol Abrams (I)	Griff Evans (I)	Nicholas H V Miele (I)
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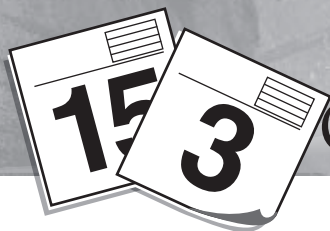
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CURRENT EXHIBITS

- ▶ POTOMAC DECOY COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION BUFFLEHEAD EXHIBIT
- ▶ THE NEW DISPLAYS OF BOTH FULL-SIZE AND MINIATURE CANADA GEESE FROM THE COLLECTION OF C. JOHN SULLIVAN, JR.
- ▶ THE EXTRAORDINARY PAIR OF "DADDY" HOLLY CANVASBACKS, A GIFT FROM THE MICHAEL FAMILY.
- ▶ "TOOLS OF THE MARKET GUNNER" EXHIBIT FEATURING A NUMBER OF PUNT AND BATTERY GUNS
- ▶ THE "GUNNING THE FLATS" EXHIBIT
- ▶ THE "WHAT IS A DECOY?" EXHIBIT
- ▶ AN EXHIBIT OF FACTORY DECOYS, A GIFT FROM DR. MORT KRAMER
- ▶ "POP" SAMPSON'S HOMEMADE DUPLICATING LATHE FOR MAKING MINIATURE DECOY BODIES
- ▶ COUDEN TEAL CARVED IN THE 1930s



- ▶ A BEAUTIFUL DECORATIVE EASTERN BLUE BIRD CARVED BY MASTER CARVER BARB WACHTER
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AROUND TOWN

March 14: North Park Trail Walk. 10:00 am – 11:30 am.

March 22: Sunday Breakfast @ American Legion. 8:00 am – 11:00 am. 4th Sunday of Every Month! Everyone's Invited, public welcome!

April 3: Good Friday Way of the Cross. 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm.

April 3: Annual American Legion Fish Fry and Games Night. 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

April 3: First Fridays! 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm. The first Friday of every month, from April to October

April 4: Historic Walking Tours. 10:00 am. The first weekend of every month April through JANUARY

April 18: River Sweep—Shoreline Clean-up.

May 1–May 3: 34th Annual HdG Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival.

May 2: Farmers Market. 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Every Saturday, May through October

May 7: National Day of Prayer. 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm.

May 16: North Park Trail Walk. 10:00 am – 11:30 am.

May 16: Annual Plant Sale and Garden Mart. 10:00 am – 6:00 pm.

May 16: Secret Garden Tour. May 16 @ 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

*While you are out and about in town,
come visit the Decoy Museum!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

www.explorehavredegrace.com



Tour Reservations

Talk to your children's or grandchildren's teachers and scout leaders about educational programs and tours of the Decoy Museum. Harford County school system classes are free, and we will also welcome your home schooled children! Tours can be tailored to the curriculum and different age/grade levels.

Book your tours early by emailing Margaret Jones at information@decoymuseum.com or by calling (410)-939-3739.



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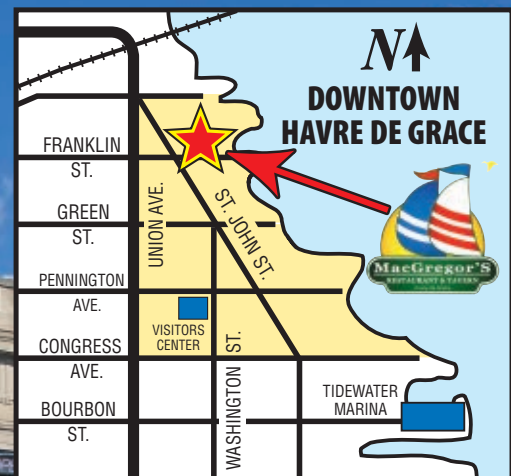
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