

# The Canvasback

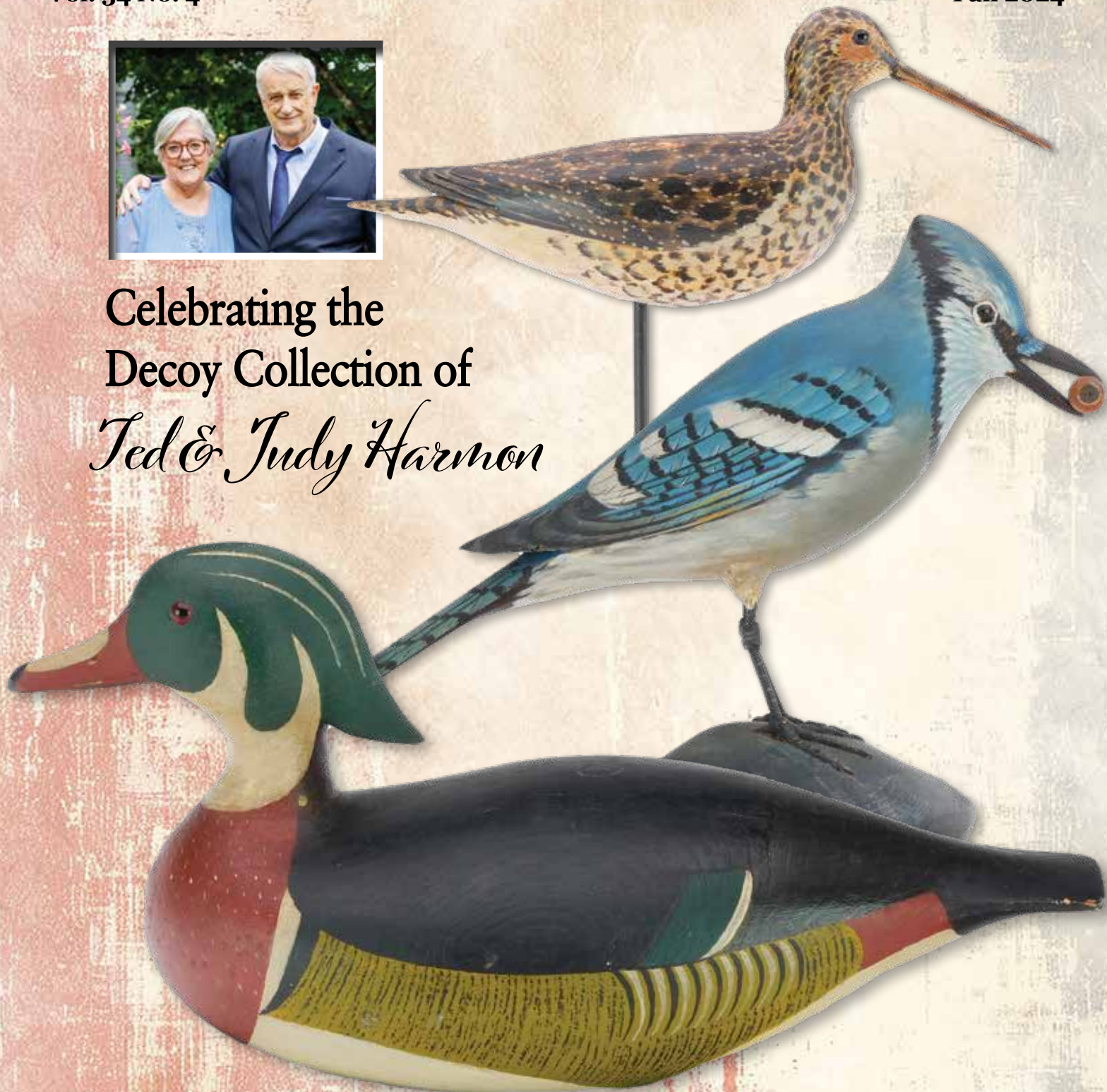
HAVRE DE GRACE DECoy MUSEUM

Vol. 34 No. 4

Fall 2024



Celebrating the  
Decoy Collection of  
*Ted & Judy Harmon*







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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.

THE MUSEUM WAS INCORPORATED IN 1981 AS A 501(c)(3) TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION TO COLLECT, DOCUMENT, PRESERVE, AND INTERPRET WATERFOWL DECOYS AS A UNIQUE FORM OF FOLK ART.

FUNDED IN PART BY



The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council ([msac.org](http://msac.org))



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*Photo by Eric Dusenbery*



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## From the President...

The Mission of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is to collect, document, preserve, and interpret waterfowl decoys as a unique form of folk art that is a distinctive element in the cultural landscape of this region -the Lower Susquehanna River and Upper Chesapeake Bay. The museum has operated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization since our founding in 1986. Like everyone else, the museum finds itself trying to do more with less. Inflationary pressures have forced us to cut some things back in order to continue to remain financially healthy. We are proud to say that we continue to have zero debt. It is imperative that the museum navigate through these challenging times and continue to preserve our cultural heritage by seeking various forms of financial support



Over the last three years, the Museum has applied for and received funding from state agencies such as the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA). These are matching-type grant funds and must be applied towards specific projects approved well in advance by MHAA. We have used this non-capital project funding to make the Decoy Museum more interactive through electronic touchscreens located throughout our "What is a Decoy" and "Gunning the Flats" galleries. The same project sponsored the implementation of QR Coding throughout the "Carvers Gallery" linking our visitors to a wealth of information about the exhibits that they enjoy in this gallery. A recent MHAA matching grant allowed for the creation of our new "Influences of African Americans on Decoy Making" exhibit. It is believed that this exhibit is the first of its kind.

The MHAA has also supported the Decoy Museum with a capital project grant for the "Preservation of the R. Madison Mitchell Decoy Shop." This represents an extensive effort to expand the current footprint of the museum, adding desperately needed additional exhibit space and creating a more interactive experience for our visitors. This expansion effort will allow for the encapsulation of the R. Madison Mitchell Decoy Shop, making it an indoor exhibit, and enabling it to be preserved for future generations to enjoy. This project is at an early stage and will be presented in much more detail as our design and planning efforts continue to crystallize.

The Museum continues to be supported by local, County, and State government with the lion's share coming from Harford County. The funding model for Harford County has changed over the last two years and awarded funding can only be used to sponsor our Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival and cannot be used for operational expenses. The museum is supported annually by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). MSAC funding is used for operational support. It is permissible to use local funding for operational expenses as well. Other sources of museum revenue just cannot keep up with escalating operational expenses.

Over the last two years, the museum has reached out to our membership through an annual appeal. The response has been favorable and all funds raised have been applied to offset operational expenses. Inserted in the fold of this magazine is an appeal for financial support. We appreciate your consideration to support the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum in any way that is comfortable for you. ***Our history is worth preserving***, so please help us ensure future generations are given an opportunity to appreciate our past. Thank you.



# INFLUENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS ON DECOY MAKING

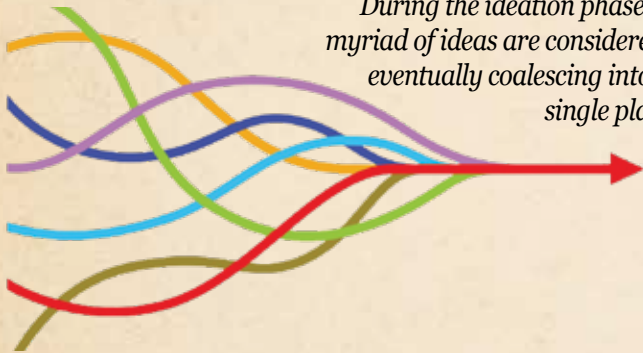
## THE MAKING OF A NEW EXHIBIT

### ... PLANNING, EXECUTION, AND INSTALLATION

By Mike Tarquini

After a period of time, it becomes necessary to reimagine the presentations within a museum's walls. Even the most historically significant exhibits need to be refreshed from time to time. Then, opportunities arise that make it possible to create new exhibits that focus on historically relevant topics where the museum can tell a unique story that perhaps has remained untold in the annals of history.

*During the ideation phase, a myriad of ideas are considered, eventually coalescing into a single plan.*



Initially, there is an ideation exercise that takes place where a team focuses on a topic and considers ideas on how to present that topic within the confines of a museum. From the ideation exercise, general concepts are developed that serve to guide the creation of the exhibit. It is during this stage that it becomes necessary to visualize the exhibit that the team is trying to create. Visualization involves locating space within a museum's floor plan, determining what artifacts might be presented, deciding on what type of exhibit cases to use to contain the artifacts, and evaluating whether electronic technology will enhance the overall messaging that the team wants to deliver.

Ideation is relatively inexpensive, but execution on the great ideas that emerge from that process can become quite expensive. It is paramount that a project budget be established containing each and every line item that will ultimately contribute to the overall cost structure of the new exhibit.

As challenging as it may seem to establish a budget at an early stage of a project, seeking adequate funding to execute on the project is where the hard work begins. Fortunately, there are numerous options for a museum to seek funding to help with historically significant presentations. In Maryland, we are fortunate to have Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, Maryland State Arts Council, Chesapeake Bay Gateways, and local heritage area organizations to name a few. Funding applications can be quite laborious, but the importance of getting funded far outweighs the effort to apply. All major sources of funding will require the creation of a project budget. Once funding has been awarded, the timer begins for the execution of the project. Most funding agencies allow two years to complete the proposed work.

The initial stage of project execution involves in-depth research where subject matter experts are identified. This group includes historians, collectors of artifacts that pertain to what your project seeks to exhibit, and if you are fortunate enough, the identification of subjects who engage in the practice of what you intend to showcase. It is especially helpful if the research enables testimonials, audio, and/or video of the identified subjects telling their stories in their own words. Although not as powerful, testimonials from third parties (family, friends, colleagues, historians) who may have knowledge of the topic make for great stories, but nothing tops speaking with those directly involved. The reality is that many projects cover stories of yesteryear and obtaining information directly from those who experienced those events first-hand is not possible. In that case, third party testimonials become much more important.

As the research is conducted, it is imperative to obtain continued buy-in from the organization that governs the museum to ensure that the project will succeed. The key to organizational buy-in centers around providing periodic progress updates to the management of the museum. By keeping key players within an organization in the loop, you share your progress, give the leaders of the organization the opportunity to question and contribute, and most importantly allows the management and project team to build enthusiasm for the end product.





*Lloyd Tyler & Sherman Jones artifacts at the home of Henry & Judy Stansbury are worthy candidates for an exhibit featuring the work of these two important carvers from the Crisfield, MD area.*



*Decoys adorn the shelves in the decoy shop of Doug Gibson awaiting selection to honor this Black carver.*

At some point, it becomes necessary to locate key artifacts that will be displayed in the new exhibit. It stands to reason that these artifacts can be purchased, if available, or loaned by collectors, or donated by those whose story is being told. Most projects take advantage of all of these channels as the display is being visualized. Pertinent artifacts can also be obtained from avid collectors who are often honored to have pieces of their personal collections publicly displayed in a museum. It is very important to set a targeted completion date for the research effort to allow ample time for the installation stage. Installation timing is very important because funding agencies don't release the final payment of award funds until the project is complete and a final report is written and approved.

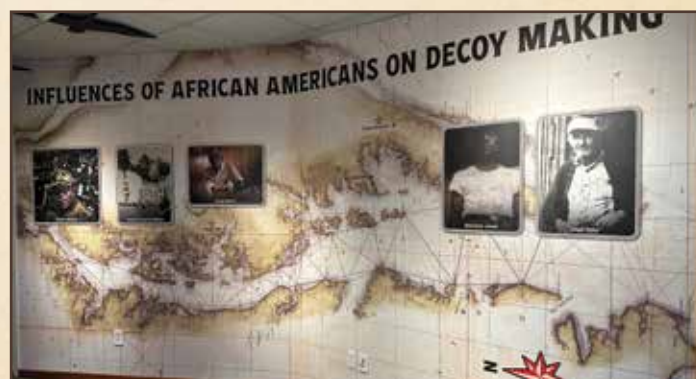
Once all artifacts destined for a new exhibit have been visualized, work begins in the targeted location within the museum. Background wall treatments need to be designed and installed. If the planned exhibit cases will have transparent side and back walls (such as acrylic cases), it becomes critical to design a backdrop graphic that adds to the exhibit presentation. More times than not, exhibit cases are customized to efficiently make use of available space. Customization needs to take into account how the targeted artifacts will be displayed. The position of shelving and stand alone props need to be visualized before an exhibit case layout can be finalized and constructed. Major changes after exhibit case construction can be very costly and sure to implode almost any budget.

It is necessary during visualization to imagine how the messaging of the exhibit will be delivered to the visitor. If electronic technology (such as a touchscreen monitor) is being considered, it will be necessary to specify the size of such equipment and determined how and where the equipment can be mounted in order to compliment, and not take away from the exhibit. Electronic equipment generally requires power and an ethernet cable. Understanding the source for both is important. The lighting within a proposed area needs to be considered. Proper lighting can make or break an exhibit.

Once all of the outsourced items have been installed, a different phase of work begins, namely populating the new exhibit area with the artifacts planned for the space. Initially, it is best to have all artifacts on site so the task of exhibit space management is a bit easier. Artifact loans and donations have to be properly documented by the curation staff. Documents need to be furnished to the donors and lenders in order to ensure there is a clear understanding of the circumstances concerning each and every artifact. Once all documentation is complete, the fun stuff begins.

The most rewarding aspect of establishing a new exhibit is actually seeing it appear before your eyes as artifacts are arranged within a newly designed space. Artifact positioning within an exhibit case is generally a consensus between the curation staff, an historian or subject matter expert, and other knowledgeable resources involved with the new exhibit project. Consensus decision making is very powerful and always yields the best result.

As you will read in the coming pages of this publication, the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has just completed a soft opening of a new permanent exhibit called "Influences of African Americans on Decoy Making." The project depicts the accounts of two living contemporary Black decoy makers whose beginnings were in the



*Wall coverings can provide an interesting backdrop for a new exhibit.*





*Exhibit case bases are positioned against the backdrop.*



*The walls and shelving are installed.*

Chesapeake Bay region and the stories of two vintage Black carvers from Crisfield, MD who left us in the twentieth century. The exhibit contains artifacts from both the vintage and contemporary carvers as well as video testimonials, utilizing interactive technology, from the contemporary carvers telling their stories in their own words.

**THE HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM INVITES YOU TO EXPERIENCE THIS NEW EXHIBIT AND DISCOVER A SELDOM-TOLD STORY OF BLACK CARVERS NATIVE TO OUR REGION. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS EXHIBIT IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AREA.**

***COME SEE FOR YOURSELF!***



*JEM Construction owner Marc Johnston "the boss" ensures that all smudges and fingerprints are removed.*



*Selected artifacts begin to make their way into the exhibit case. Optimum placement requires patience and expertise.*



# Influences of African Americans on Decoy Making Exhibit Opens

By Mike Tarquini



The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is proud to have developed a new permanent exhibit dedicated solely to the “Influences of African Americans on Decoy Making”, which had a soft opening in late August 2024. It is believed to be the first of its kind.



The exhibit features examples of carved decoys from **William “Pied” Jones** (1880 – 1953), **Sherman Jones** (1902 – 1964), Decoys and actual touchscreen video testimonials from living Chesapeake Bay Black decoy makers **Douglas Gibson** (Born 1923), **James Johnson** (Born 1948), and Louisiana black carver **Eric Hutchison** (Born 1956). This exhibit has been created to shed some light on a poorly documented history of African Americans in decoy making. This effort was partially funded by the **Maryland Heritage Areas Authority** (MHAA) in conjunction with the **Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway** (LSHG).

African Americans have been part of the documented history of the Chesapeake Bay region since colonial times. African Americans worked in the traditional industries throughout the Bay region as watermen and in seafood processing. They also made equipment that supported the maritime industries that were so vital to the many Chesapeake Bay communities. As we have all come to know, hunting became an important activity in the Bay region. African Americans were proficient hunters, guides, and some even made waterfowl decoys.

Maryland and Virginia’s Eastern Shore is well known for its waterfowl decoy makers and they have played an important part of the socioeconomic history of the area. Given the large population of African Americans on the Delmarva Peninsula, it’s surprising that there has been so little documented history of their involvement in decoy making, given their association with traditional Chesapeake Bay activities such as hunting, fishing, and seafood processing.



*Three known Pied Jones decoys, once owned by Henry & Judy Stansbury, have been donated to the former Ward Museum (Salisbury, MD), Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (St. Michaels, MD), and Tawes Museum (Crisfield, MD)*

**William “Pied” Jones** and **Sherman Jones** of Crisfield, MD represent two of the most documented African Americans that were known to make waterfowl decoys in the Delmarva region. Despite the fact that relatively little is known about their background and history, it is clear that they both had a variety of skills, were woodworkers, and avid hunters.



*African Americans tonging for oysters in the Chesapeake Bay*

Although these two famous Chesapeake Bay Black decoy makers are long gone, their contributions live through their body of work. Pied Jones lived outside of Crisfield, MD.

The seafood business brought prosperity to many in the towns that grew up along the Bay, but the economic gain did not necessarily trickle down to the workforce within that industry, causing that group to rely upon supplemental forms of income from hunting and fishing. Some were woodworkers. Pied Jones was skilled in woodworking and was considered a talented carpenter. He tackled home construction projects and actually built boats.

Perhaps the single most important fact about Pied Jones was that he was one of the earliest known African American decoy makers in the United States. A little known decoy carver, Pied Jones made birds that were distinct in having finely carved large heads on slender necks and round bodies. The birds were indicative of the early Crisfield style of having wide flat bottoms.

Pied’s decoys were made for hunting and were used almost exclusively in the field. As such, his focus was on the species indigenous to the area. Pied fashioned black ducks, canvasbacks, gadwalls, pintails, and bluebills. It is not known for sure if some of Pied’s decoy creations were provided to others, but it seems quite likely that they were.

**Sherman Jones** was one of four children of Pied Jones. Much like his father, Sherman was multi-talented and was an accomplished carpenter and outdoorsman. History shows that Sherman had his own boat, from which he hunted and fished. Sherman lived in an African American enclave in an outlying area of Crisfield, MD called “Freedomtown.”





*Sherman Jones (1902-1965)*

Sherman would hunt ducks and geese when in season. He turned to upland species in the fall and spring. He was a talented trapper, catching muskrats, foxes, racoons, and rabbits to supplement his income. During Sherman's day, demand was strong for skins to support the fur trade.

Sherman Jones was an accomplished waterfowl decoy carver, making birds mostly for his own use, but was thought to give some to family and friends. Unlike his father, he engaged his carving talents in a variety of folk motifs. He made waterfowl, shorebirds, and some upland species such as quail. Sherman's talent for producing "folk art" style decoys gave rise to his relationship with fellow Crisfield carver **Lloyd Tyler**.

Sherman was an employee of Lloyd Tyler, and as such had his fingerprints on many of the carvings that were produced in Tyler's decoy shop. According to famous Crisfield carver **Oliver "Tuts" Lawson**, "Sherman had a great imagination and was quite talented, but he was a victim of racism." Crisfield, MD was a racially charged town on Maryland's Eastern Shore during the 1950s



*Lloyd Tyler (1898-1971)*

-1960s and Sherman Jones, being a Black man, was not very successful at marketing his work. Lawson goes on to say, "Lloyd Tyler purchased many of Sherman's creations and resold them under the Tyler name."

Many of the pieces painted by Lloyd Tyler were actually carved by Sherman Jones in his front yard or workshop. Jones and Tyler worked together on untold numbers of carvings, and their similar styles and close working relationship rendered many birds unattributed to Jones. In some cases today, it is impossible to tell who actually carved a particular bird. Nevertheless, they had what seemed to be a productive friendship.

It is also known that African American **Douglas Gibson** (born in Trappe, MD and now resides in Milford, DE) crafted waterfowl decoys as did his father **Samuel Gibson** (Trappe, MD).

Doug Gibson was born as the ninth of ten children to Samuel and Harriet Gibson in Trappe, MD (Talbot County) on February 28, 1923. Doug attended an all-Black





*Douglas Gibson (born 1923)*

elementary school in Trappe where the students had to use old, tattered text books and were taught by Black teachers. He said, "Blacks did not feel neglected at that time, for that's all they knew."

When Doug was 7 years old, Samuel and Harriet moved their family from Trappe to a farm, owned by Billy Meyers, near Oxford, MD (Talbot County). Samuel, Harriet, and the children worked that farm as sharecroppers for many years.

Once discharged from his WWII service obligations, Doug used his GI Bill benefits to continue his college studies at Delaware State College, originally founded in 1891 as Delaware College for Colored Students. During his time at Delaware State (1946-1950), Doug pursued a bachelor's degree in industrial arts.

After earning his master's degree at the University of Delaware, Doug's first teaching job was at an African American school in Southern Maryland where he taught woodworking and mathematics. He then went on to teach a number of years within the Milford, DE School District at Benjamin Banneker Elementary School and Milford Junior High School.

Doug Gibson married Dorothy Henry in 1953 and moved to Milford, DE. When Doug moved to Milford, he found that



*The family of Samuel & Harriet Gibson*

most Blacks were not willing to rise up and challenge the "status quo." In his own words, "I was determined not to be that way." There were many other Blacks at that time in Milford that shared Doug's passion for change but did not share his fearlessness.

Hunting waterfowl during his youth was not the motivator for his entry into waterfowl decoy making. Although his father Samuel was the first to expose him to the folk art of making decoys, it was his love for woodworking and a visits to the World Carving Competitions (Ward Foundation) in nearby Salisbury, MD in the late 1960s that enticed him to try his hand at carving. Doug said, "as I made my way around the competition, I said to myself, I can do that."

In 1970, Doug embarked on his waterfowl decoy carving career. He would shape his decoy bodies and heads using a band saw. He would then refine them with hand tools. Doug's wife Dorothy gifted him a Fordham tool and the following Christmas, his son Darrald gifted him a Dremel tool. Both of these tools enabled Doug to carve his decoys in a more efficient way. Doug became obsessed with his carvings to the extent that with every carving he made, he wanted to make another. He made both full-size and miniature decoy carvings.

**James Johnson** (Temperanceville, VA) was born in 1948 on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Messongo, an unincorporated community in Accomack County. As a native of Virginia's Eastern Shore, he and his family worked in the seafood business with a focus on oyster shucking for H.V. Drewer Seafood (Saxis, VA), one of the Delmarva peninsula's seafood processing and packing houses.

James married his wife, Joanne, whom he met in elementary school and raised three children. Joanne





*James Johnson (Born 1948)*

worked for Holden Creek Gun Club, a nearby hunting lodge in Sanford, VA. owned and operated by non-other than master decoy carver **Grayson Chesser** and his wife Dawn.

Grayson asked Joanne if James would have any interest in helping him around his decoy shop. James' training as a carpenter and woodworker made him a natural to help out Grayson Chesser. James agreed and asked Grayson to teach him how to carve. James began working for Grayson in 2002. Grayson took James under his wing and taught him the folk art of crafting decoys. Chesser states "it's a pleasure to watch him. He truly loves it. He doesn't do it just for the money. For him, I think it's a form of expression, which is what it should be."

Today, James Johnson sits on the front deck of his home each day in Temperanceville, VA whittling on blocks

of wood creating a variety of waterfowl decoys as he surveys the traffic along Saxis Road. James also crafts walking sticks from tree branches.

Research indicates that Black waterfowl decoy makers from the Louisiana geography (especially in and around New Orleans) were more prevalent than those from the Chesapeake Bay region. According to Louisiana carver and collector **Cal Kingsmill**, "most of the famous Black decoy makers resided and operated out the 7th Ward in Orleans Parish. The most notable Black carvers from this region were **Mitchell Lafrance**, **George Frederick**, and **Charles Joefrau**. Lafrance and Frederick were avid hunters, but Joefrau was saddled with a disability that precluded him from joining them. All three of these carvers are considered the patriarchs of Black decoy makers in the Louisiana region and are now deceased.





*(L to R) Charles Hutchison, Rudy Hutchison, Eric Hutchison with Cal Kingsmill*

Mitchell Lafrance was a professional waterfowl guide who began making decoys in Louisiana in St. Sophie, south of New Orleans. Later, he moved to New Orleans. Most of the decoys associated with his name actually were created cooperatively, with Lafrance as “hatchet man” doing the shaping, carpenter Charles Joefrau of New Orleans tackling the more refined carving, and George Frederick, of Davant the painting.

Another prominent family in Louisiana waterfowl decoy lore were the Hutchisons. **Rudolph “Rudy” Hutchison** lived in the 7th Ward in Orleans Parish. **Eric Hutchison** is one of the Louisiana carvers still living today. The Hutchison family considers themselves of Creole descent when describing their genealogy. In Africa, the term Creole refers to any ethnic group formed during the European colonial era, with some mix of African and non-African racial or cultural heritage. Creole communities are found on most African islands and along the continent’s coastal regions where indigenous Africans first interacted with Europeans. According to **Cal Kingsmill**, Creole is best described as a mixture of European and Black descent.

Eric is the nephew of Rudy Hutchison and the son of **Charles Hutchison**. Although Rudy had his roots in working decoys, Charles and Eric Hutchison lived during the transition from working decoys to more decorative pieces in the late 1960s – early 1970s. With the advent of plastics and the more economic hunting decoys made from them, traditional wooden working bird carvers migrated to the more decorative styles.

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum cordially invites you to visit the Museum and see first hand the influences that African Americans had on the folk art of decoy making. The Museum is open to the public, seven days/ week, 361 days/ year. We plan to have a Grand Opening of the New Exhibit once we complete the soft opening and sort out any issues that we may discover.

We wish to thank the **Maryland Heritage Areas Authority** and **Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway** for their support of this effort. We also wish to thank Louisiana decoy collector **Don Weaver**, carver **Cal Kingsmill**, and carver **Eric Hutchison** for their contributions to our better understanding of Black Louisiana decoy maker history.



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# Old Ocean City

...Revisited

## *A Sporting Adventure*

*By C. John Sullivan, Jr.*



**I**t was 30 years ago on a hot, steamy day in Berlin, Maryland, that my late dear friend, Henry A. Fleckenstein, Jr., and I took a break from writing decoy descriptions for the Ward Museum's decoy auction catalog. Richard Oliver had joined the Museum in a fund-raising effort by holding auctions to benefit the Museum, and Henry and I inspected the decoys and wrote descriptions. On a gamble, we made a house call to the home of one of the auction consignors. We had paid little attention to the 17 shorebird decoys that Donald V. Walker had consigned; our duty was to write an accurate description of the decoys, condition, paint, and maker if known. We were to discover much later that the decoys had been made by Walker's father

to be used on the beach in Ocean City. We knocked on the Walker family's front door; we introduced ourselves and were welcomed into the home. I will never forget asking Donald Walker the question that was to be life changing. I asked, "Mr. Walker by any chance do you have any photographs of your family's days in Ocean City?" He replied: "not that I am aware of." As he was answering me, I glanced around the dimly lit room and looked down to a coffee table in front of the living room sofa. Resting on the sofa was a leather-bound photo album. I asked for permission to have a look in the album. As I lifted it up, it fell open to a page of images of his mother in a pit dug in the sand on the Ocean City beach. His mother was standing in the pit with her double-barrel



shotgun resting against the sand in front of her and a group of shorebird decoys placed between her and the surf. If a single image can be called the “Holy Grail,” that was it at that moment, a breathtaking moment. Within the next several hours, Henry and I had been to the attic and retrieved boxes of photos; we sat on the front stoop of that house and went through photo after photo of incredible views of early Ocean City. The Walker family had documented every one of their sporting adventures of their family’s vacations to the beach. As a result of that very first visit, the seed was planted to write an article including images of young boys with decoys and guns. That article was published in the Maryland Humanities Magazine in the year 2000. Following that, Johns Hopkins University Press contacted me to publish a book of the journal and photographs of Robert Craighead Walker, and *Old Ocean City* was published in 2001.

In subsequent visits to the Walker home in Berlin, Henry and I visited the attic, the storage shed, and every nook and cranny of the house. I was allowed to keep the family’s taxidermy collection and a number of decoy patterns. But the key to the adventure was the discovery of Donald’s father’s journal, “My Vacation.” Robert Craighead Walker wrote a summary of his vacation of 1911 from July 1 to September 6. He wrote: “Beginning about July 20 I went hunting either up or down the beach nearly every day. Had varying luck and killed about 500 game birds all told during season. Used about 600 shells all season.”

As I read Robert Walker’s journal of 1912, I am struck with what that time in that place once was. Rarely did he ever walk to the beach or boardwalk without carrying his shotgun and shells. On August 5, 1912, Robert dug a blind in the sand and killed 29 greybacks out of one flock in 5 shots using his automatic shotgun with “bird” barrel and shells loaded with no. 9 chilled shot. At about 4 o’clock that afternoon, he killed a calico back plover flying over his decoys and then killed its mate a few minutes later. He was back home that evening about 8 o’clock with 68 dead birds. He had killed 63 of them with 31 shells.

The authors of many early gunning journals kept a record of the number of shotgun shells they would use during the season, but none that I have read maintained a more accurate and precise accounting of their shells.

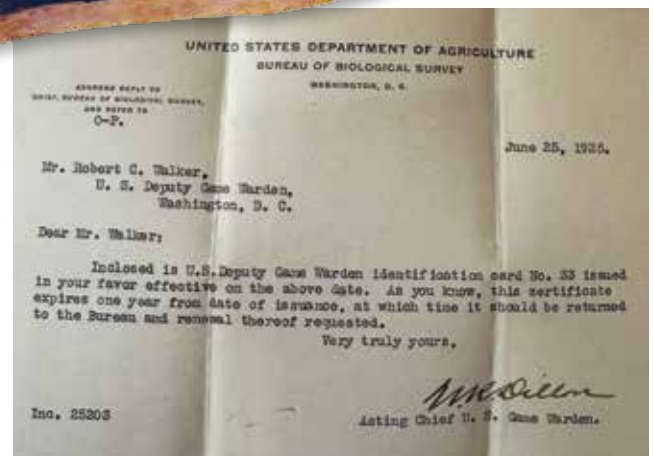
In addition to keeping close account of his bird harvest and shotgun shell use, Robert wrote often of his decoys. During the winter of 1911-1912, he made 6 flat decoys and 6 good round-body Robin Snipe decoys. He recorded that he had from 20 to 24 decoys, counting some that he had found



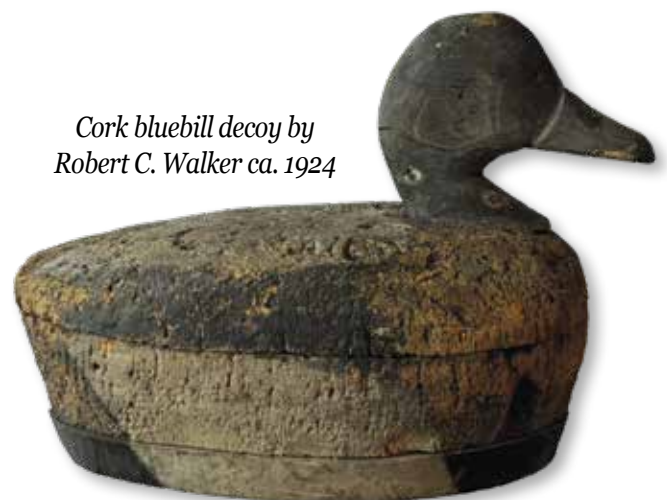
*Shorebird skin  
from Ocean  
City, Maryland,  
September 13, 1924*



*Tin shorebird decoy by  
Robert C. Walker*



*Department of Agriculture Game Warden certification for  
Robert C. Walker*



*Cork bluebill decoy by  
Robert C. Walker ca. 1924*



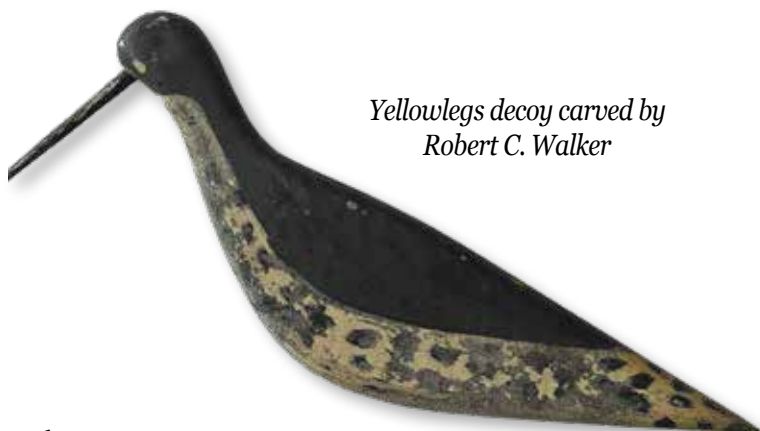
*Robert C. Walker placing  
decoys on the bay shore*



*Robert C. Walker after  
a successful hunt on  
the Assawoman Bay,  
December 29, 1916*



*Robert C. Walker's mother, Nannie Letitia Wheat Walker, in her  
blind with shorebird decoys along the beach, August 22, 1916*



*Yellowlegs decoy carved by  
Robert C. Walker*

from time to time along the beach. For each of the species of shore birds that Robert hunted, he recorded in his journal precise measurements from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail. He further described the color and number of coats of paint to best mimic the live birds. For creation of a jack snipe decoy, he said "edge the herringbones on his back with rusty red, lay a thin wash of olive over the gray, and white markings on his wings. Finally, give him a brown stick for a leg." He then adds "Be sure and put plenty of turpentine in the paint to kill the luster of the oil, as the flash of sunlight on glossy decoys is fatal." In the summer of 1912, he made the following entries in his journal regarding his decoy work: "June 26, 1912, "Spent all morning overhauling decoys and whittling two new ones." June 27, "painted decoys." June 28, "Painted decoys in morning." June 30, Sunday, "Sunday, mass at 7. Howard and I strung decoys on fish line and fixed them up during am .... Went up to beach to build blinds... we found that the old blind was all right, then we went up on Reedy Point and built a blind on the southern spit, using bay bushes and clumps of marsh grass." July 5, "cut a decoy out of yellow pine in afternoon." July 7, "went to early mass, 7 O'clock spent the morning at home, working some on my decoys." July 26, "Bought some wood and had a dozen decoys cut out on the band saw at Adkins Mill in Berlin .10 cents a dozen is cheap." September 3, "put out 6 wooden decoys and added about 10 oyster shells." September 7, "put out 6 wooden decoys and once again added 10 oyster shells and clam shells to the spread."

In the morning of July 21, 1913, Robert wrote the following: "Monday, started up the beach at 4:30 am. Walked about one mile above north end of the boardwalk and built a blind of driftwood on the crest of the surf bank. Put out a dozen sanderling decoys and half dozen yellow leg decoy all of sheet iron and waited for the birds. A flock of six or eight grey backs swung in and I shot twice; killing two with the right barrel and one with the left. Before I could get out of the blind to pick up, another sanderling flock swung over and I only fired the left barrel killing three. While picking up, a flock of twelve or fifteen greybacks came in sight traveling south but running back to the blind I whistled them in to the decoys and shot twice killing three with each barrel. A half hour later two hunters came up the beach and stopped to ask for the loan of some decoys but as they intended to build another blind just north of me and in the direction from which the birds were coming, I refused them. Then they walked up to the next point and started to shoot from a sand blind. A few minutes later two grey backs flew over the decoys without even slowing up. They must have been the survivors of some flock that the gunners up above had shot at. I shot the left barrel after they passed and hit about a yard



behind them in a wave. After a wait of about twenty minutes a bunch of four passed the decoys in safety but two of them dropped out for my right barrel at forty. Next a small flock of beach birds circled in and pitched among my decoys. I waited until three of them were feeding close together and then stood up in the blind. The whole flock flew straight out to sea but I dropped the three with my right barrel at about thirty yards."

That same day in the afternoon, the Berlin Gun Club held a trap shoot on the boardwalk. Robert had exchanged his auto-loading shotgun for a double-barrel Ansley H. Fox 12 gauge. He was shooting U. S. Climax Shells loaded with 1 1/8 oz # 8 chilled shot and 3 1/8 oz DuPont powder. At 18 yards, he broke 20 out of 25 singles and from 16 yards, 13 out of 25 doubles. He entered this note in his journal: "the trap was good and the ocean made a fine background to shoot against." This tournament was held on the beach between the farthest north end of the boardwalk and the Dominican College (in recent times, Phillips Crab House).

Building his reputation as a knowledgeable ornithologist and being familiar with the beaches and bays of Ocean City, Robert C. Walker was appointed a United States Deputy Game Warden and was issued badge number 33. Like the duck hunters and decoy makers of the Susquehanna Flats who were appointed by the State of Maryland as Ducking Police, the U. S. Department of Agriculture followed similar guidelines and found the most knowledgeable individuals to protect the migratory flocks. Walker's appointment with the Department of Agriculture fell under the direction of the Bureau of Biological Survey. By October of 1925, Talbot Denmead was the acting chief U.S. Game Warden; at that time, he wrote to Walker requesting a report covering his activities and asking whether there had been an increase or decrease of migratory birds, naming the species affected. Robert Walker's salary was \$3.50 per day and in addition \$3.50 per diem in lieu of subsistence expenses.

Robert Craighead Walker created perhaps the most unique gunning log when he penned "My Vacation." I am so very fortunate to have saved a copy in my archives. I have enjoyed having the ability to glance at segments of it and then pick up and admire one of his decoys. I can tie the decoy to a specific day and location where the decoy was used. The thousands of vacationers who visit Ocean City each year have no idea of how visitors there once enjoyed this special place. Robert Walker created an archive of words, artifacts, and images that allow us to imagine what used to be. For this I am forever grateful.



*Robert C. Walker and friend after a day's shorebird hunt*

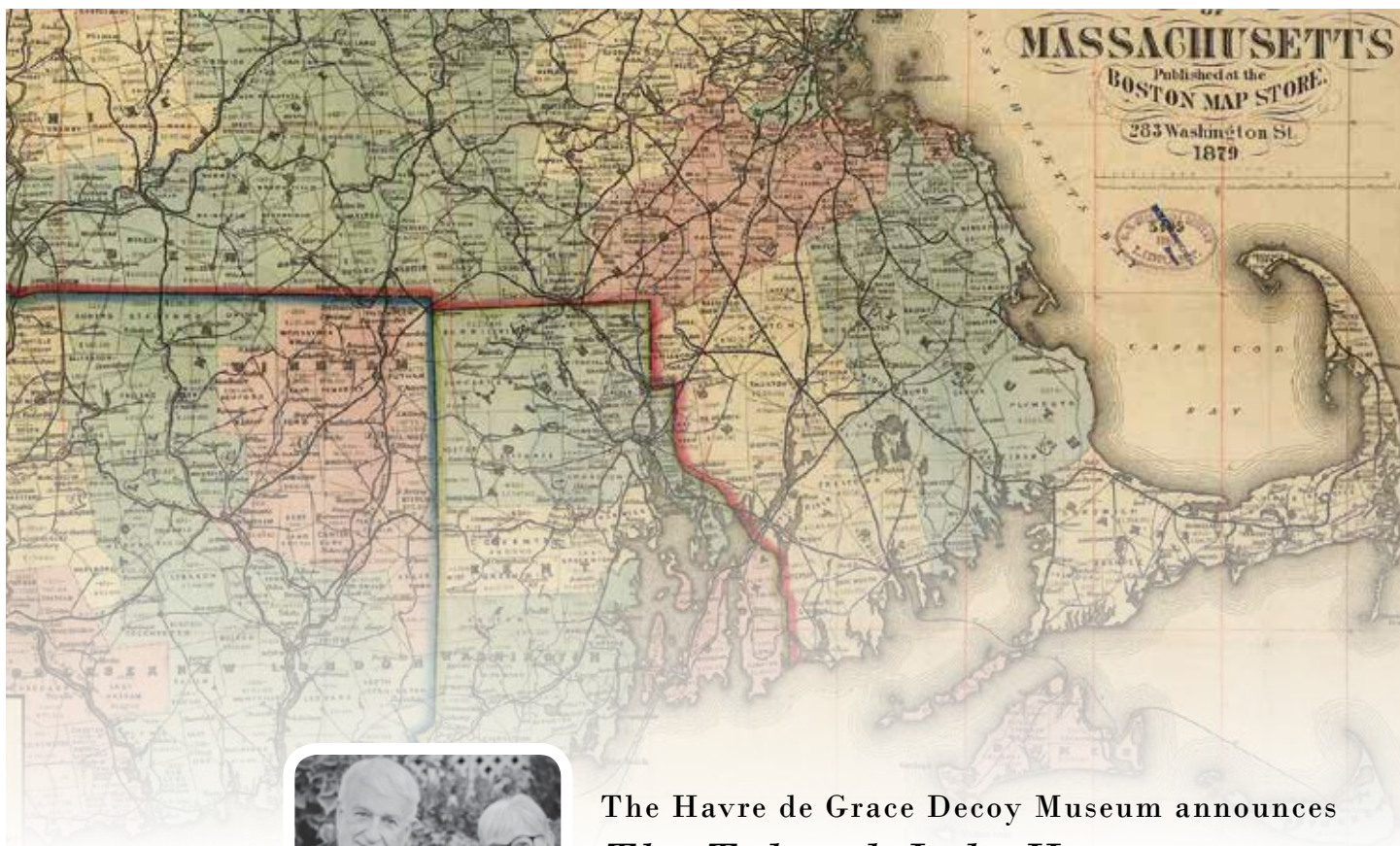


*Walker's offshore blind*

*Walker standing outside Romarletta cottage at the corner of 7th and Baltimore Ave., Ocean City, Maryland, ca. 1916*

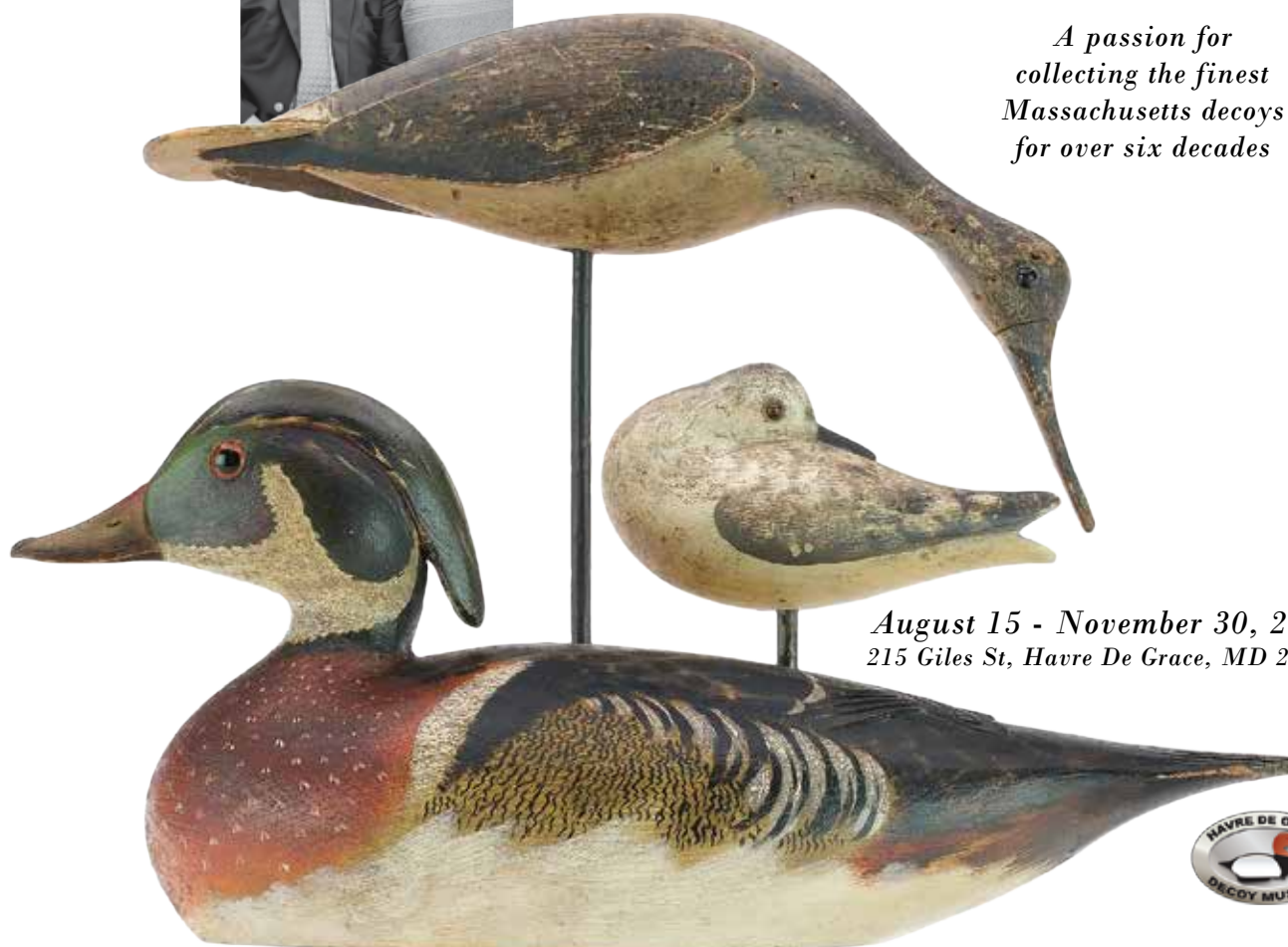






The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum announces  
*The Ted and Judy Harmon  
Collection Exhibit*

*A passion for  
collecting the finest  
Massachusetts decoys  
for over six decades*



*August 15 - November 30, 2024  
215 Giles St, Havre De Grace, MD 21078*





# Celebrating the Decoy Collection of *Ted & Judy Harmon*

By Michael Daley

*Photos courtesy  
of the Harmon  
family and  
Guyette & Deeter*



*Marthas Vineyard Maker - Henry Keys Chadwick (1865-1958) - Oak Bluffs - Red Breasted Merganser Pair*

**T**he Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is now featuring many of the Bay State's best. A splendid selection of decoys from the collection of Massachusetts residents Ted and Judy Harmon is on display. The exhibit opened late in August and runs until late December 2024. Once it closes, the St. Michaels, MD auction firm Guyette & Deeter will market and auction these pieces of the collection.

We have upwards of 150 decoys in this display. Of note are two rare Massachusetts drake wood ducks in original paint. One made by East Harwich carver A. Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) and the other made by the Village of Acord carver Joseph Lincoln (1859-1938). Ted loved mergansers and this display shows some awesome antique mergansers. The collection includes everything from large to small decoys. Exceptional shore birds, mini carvings and full size songbirds are included. There is a must-see A Elmer Crowell full size blue jay with an acorn in his mouth. There are also antique goose and brant decoys.

The world lost a connoisseur collector of Massachusetts decoys when Theodore Steven Harmon (1943-2023) passed away last year. In addition, his family lost a patriarch and the American bird decoy and sporting arts community lost a highly regarded and knowledgeable expert. Many lost their friend and some of them lost a mentor. Personally, Ted was an especially good neighbor in our special Cape Cod Town of Barnstable, MA.

Ted was not born on Cape Cod. His family came to the Cape when he was quite young. He grew up here in Barnstable's Village of Osterville. Our town is 64 square miles with nine zip codes. We have significant coastlines on both Cape Cod Bay to the north and Vineyard Sound to the south. As a young man, Ted enjoyed his life in rural Barnstable. We have both marshy and beach shorelines totaling approximately 120 miles. The coasts and marshy inlets travel along various parts of our seven villages and their sub-villages.





*Judy and Ted Harmon*

In addition to our coasts, the town of Barnstable owns over 11,000 acres of conservation land. This land is public for various purposes, including preserving natural habitats, providing recreational opportunities, and protecting water resources. The acreage encompasses diverse ecosystems such as beaches, woodlands, wetlands, and salt marshes. Barnstable is one of 15 Cape towns with similar geography. In addition, Cape Cod has the National Seashore with almost 44,000 acres of land and about 40 miles of coastline. The Cape is a natural paradise for birds of all kinds.

Theodore was age seven and living in his family home on Main Street in Osterville during the US Census of 1950. He was one of about 11,500 residents. At that time, the 15 towns on the Cape had around 95,000 year round residents. The future President Kennedy's family also had a home in Barnstable.

By JFK's time as president, Ted the teenager was driving a jeep. That vehicle transported him down trails leading into the woods, through the marshes and onto the beaches of the Cape. This is how and where our neighbor learned to love the outdoors. He gunned, fished and shell fished our cherished town and the entire peninsula. He was still a teen ager when he found his first decoy in a hometown marsh. That started his collection.

Judith A. Lynch grew up in a Massachusetts coastal town near Rhode Island. Her hometown was Swansea, MA. The geography there is similar to Cape Cod. Her town had a brackish marshy coastline near where the mouth of the Taunton River meets Mount Hope Bay. Ted and Judy met by chance in 1967. They married that same year.

Family is important to the Harmons. It is for me also. I use genealogy to understand the human subjects I capture in print. My journey through Ted and Judy's individual family histories gave me new insight into their characters. It also helped me understand how our good neighbors built their collection.

I traced Ted's early family back to Thomas Harmon (1532-1592). This resident of England's Suffolk County fathered Captain Thomas Harmon (1554-1604). Captain Harmon married Katherine Dudley (1554-1634). The brutal execution of her parents occurred the year she was born.

Captain Harmon's mother-in-law was Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554). She was the granddaughter of King Henry VII through her mother, Frances Brandon, who was the daughter of Mary Tudor, Queen of France, and Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Jane Grey is most famously known as the "Nine Days' Queen" due to her brief reign as Queen of England in



*Massachusetts  
Cape Cod and Barnstable Maps*



*Lady Jane Grey*



July 1553, following the death of Edward VI. Her reign was part of a complex struggle for the English throne. Only her supporters proclaimed her "the queen". They opposed the Catholic claims of Mary Tudor (later Queen Mary I).

This Mrs. Harmon's parents, Lord Guildford Dudley (1536-1554) and his wife Lady Jane died on the same day from decapitation in the Tower of London. They were conspirators in a plot to overthrow Queen Mary I shortly after she ascended the throne in 1553.

The plot, led by Jane's father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, aimed to place Lady Jane on the throne instead of Mary. Jane actually served as Queen of England for nine days before the attempt failed. Both Guildford and Jane went on trial for treason in February 1554. Their execution on February 12, 1554 tragically ended their young lives. The year old future Mrs. Captain Thomas Harmon became an orphan on that February day.

Captain and Mrs. Harmon were parents to a 16th century London resident named Philip Harmon (1574-1624). Two more generations of Harmons with 16th century English births and American Colony deaths in Maine and Massachusetts respectively gets us to the first of Ted's family born in the Colonies.

Nathaniel Harmon (1616-1693) was a lifelong resident of the Massachusetts Colony. He lived in Norfolk County. His son, John Harmon (1648-1742) moved his colonial family to Cumberland County in the Maine Colony. Of note is Ted's Cumberland County GGGG Grandfather Joshua Harmon (1767-1855) of Scarborough, ME. Joshua's mother and Ted's GGGG Grandmother was Elizabeth Small (1728-1800). Her GGGG Grandfather was Sir Walter Raleigh of Fardell.

Sir Walter Raleigh was a prominent English statesman, soldier, poet, writer, and explorer. He lived during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. We know Sir Walter for his expeditions to the Americas, particularly for establishing the first English colony in the New World, at Roanoke Island (in present-day North Carolina).

Sir Walter also played a significant role in the English court as a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, and later fell out of favor during the reign of King James I, eventually leading to his imprisonment and execution. His life includes adventurous exploration, literary achievements, and complex political intrigues. Risk taking seems to be an early Harmon family trait. It also helps understand how the Harmon collection came to be what it is.



*Sir Walter Raleigh (1521-1618)*



*Cape Cod Maker -  
Anthony Elmer Crowell  
(1862-1952) - East Harwich -  
Dowitcher*



Ted's family lived in Maine until his great grandfather David Ingalls Harmon (1841-1913) moved his family to Norfolk County in Massachusetts. Mr. Harmon was a farmer in Brookline. David's son is Ted's grandfather George Albion Harmon (1873-1943). He was born, raised and buried in Brookline, MA. George's son Theodore Stanley Harmon (1898-1994) is Ted's father. Ted's father was a painting contractor. He moved his family from Newton, MA to the Cape Cod Village of Osterville in Barnstable during the 1940's.

Ted's mom was Amy Zwicker (1912-1966). This branch of Ted's maternal family tree is rooted in Germany and then Nova Scotia. I found her fifth great grandfather, Samuel Peter Zwicker (1685-1751). He and his wife Susanna Barbara Zeckering (1685-1746) were born and buried in Germany. Samuel's son, Johann Peter Zwicker, Sr. (1710-1789) was the first of Amy's family to migrate from Germany. He came to live in Lunenburg County Nova Scotia, Canada at a spot called Mahone Bay.

Until the nineteenth century, the term "endogamy" did not exist. However, the practice did. There are many groups of families around the world who descend from a very small gene pool and are classified as 'endogamous'. Furthermore, most of us at some point will find some sort of intermarriage in our own family trees. Ted Harmon's maternal tree is an example.

The small rural area of Nova Scotia where multiple members of the Zwicker family remained for the next four generations resulted in Zwicker family intermarriages. As it turns out, Ted's maternal grandparents Allister Morton Zwicker (1876-1958) and Lucinda Catherine Zwicker (1878-1922) are directly descended from that very first Nova Scotia settler from Germany named Peter Zwicker.

Amy's father and mother were descended from two of Peter's grandsons. Casper Zwicker (1785-1846) is great grandfather to Amy's father. Casper's brother, Johann Valentine "John" Zwickler (1774-1871) is great grandfather to Amy's mother. John moved his family from Mahone Bay to Blockhouse where Ted's mother Amy was born.


Amy was 16 years old when she left Blockhouse, Nova Scotia in 1928. She was 17 and living with her brother on Jerome Street in Boston during the 1930 US Census. Amy married Ted's dad during 1934. The couple lived in Newton, MA with three children during the 1940 census.

At this time, Ted's dad was a painter. Ted had two older half-brothers. They were John at age eleven and Robert at nine years old. They were both born in Maine to Mr. Harmon's first

*Cape Cod Maker - Anthony  
Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) -  
East Harwich - Yellowlegs*







*Islands Carver - Attributed  
to Franklin Folger Webster  
(1895-1980) - Nantucket -  
Golden Plover*

wife. Their mom passed away young. Ted's older sister Clair was three years old. She was the first in the family to be born in Massachusetts.

Judy's paternal family came to the United States a bit later than Ted's. Daniel Lynch (1789-1865) was born and buried in Ireland's Kerry County. His son Dennis Daniel Lynch, Sr. (1802-1874) migrated from his Ireland home to Fall River, MA around 1850. His son Dennis Daniel Lynch, Jr. (1873-1948) was the first of Judith Lynch's family born in America. He is her grandfather. He located the family to Swansea, MA.


Judy's maternal family story is longer. Her Courtemanche family history goes back to mid-sixteenth century France where Pierre Courtmanche dit Joliceaur was born around 1555. He may have ventured off to Colonial Canada's Quebec, as there is some evidence of a son born there. It is not until Antoine Courtmanche dit Joliceaur (1640-1671) that we find an ancestor of Judith's firmly in Quebec. Antoine married Elisabeth Aquin (1644-1718). The couple traveled to Canada together and are both buried in Montreal.

Five generations of Quebec born and buried Courtemanche grandfathers later, we meet Judith's great grandfather Georges Courtemanche (1849-1921). He is her first relative in the US. He was a carpenter and brought his family to Fall River. His son Daniel Dennis Lynch (1873-1948) is Judith's grandfather. He worked in an iron foundry and moved his family to Swansea.


Judy's father Raymond Everette Lynch (1917-2000) grew up on Stevens Road in Swansea. His father, Daniel Dennis Lynch (1873-1948) was working as a school janitor at the time of the 1930 US Census. He owned the home valued at \$3,000. The then thirteen-year-old Raymond was in school. The household included his parents, two brothers, three sisters and a nephew who was not quite two years old.

Raymond was age 23 and the only other occupant in his parents' home during the 1940 census. His father and mother still owned the same home. His dad was 66 and still worked a school janitor. His mom was 61 and not working. Ray was working full-time as a battery hand in a cotton mill.

Ray married Julianne Courtemanche (1921-2011) during April of 1942. The couple lived with their four children when the U.S. did the 1950 census. Judith was four years old. She had a seven-year-old brother and her younger male sibling was two. She also had a one-year-old sister. Ray was a die setter in a steel plant. Julianne was keeping house.

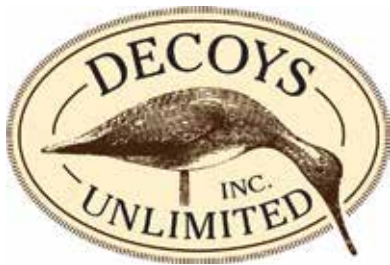


*South Shore Maker - David  
Goodspeed (1863-1943)  
- Duxbury - Red Breasted  
Merganser Pair*



*Cape Cod Maker - Anthony  
Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) -  
East Harwich - Drake Wood  
Duck*





*South Coast Maker -  
Walter Burgess Savery  
(1855-1936) - Wareham -  
Dowitcher*

*North Shore Carver -  
Fredrick Melville Nichols  
(1854-1924) - Willet*

From 1950 forward until Judith met and married Ted in Swansea during 1967, she got a new brother, Robert Lynch, born in 1951. She had also gained and lost a new sister named Susan during 1962. She finished her education and started working as a registered nurse. Judy also has about 35 years of experience in geriatrics and nursing facility administration under her belt.

Once married, Mr. and Mrs. Harmon settled on Cape Cod and set about to build a family and a business. They settled into their home on the Old King's Highway in the Village of Barnstable. The business began in 1976. However, family came first. By 1980, the fledgling Harmon family numbered five. Two boys, John and Robert came first. Then came their little sister Amy.

It was during this time my wife June and I first interacted with Ted and Judy. We were married during December of 1978 and bought our first home in the Village of Marstons Mills two months later during February 1979. It was a saltbox style home with high open ceilings and wide exposed beams. June suggested we decorate the beams with decoys.

We would regularly attend an old time Saturday night auction held in a barn down the Cape in Harwich. We were newly married and had two mortgages. We both worked and the accountant in me kept us on a tight budget. One particular night there were many decoys at the auction. We bid on each one. We were also the under bidder on each one. We would get to our \$15 limit and Ted's bid would take the bird for \$5 over ours. Finally, it was near the auction's end and we bid \$15 against Ted who was at \$10. We were at our limit again.

We, along with the entire room, quietly waited for Ted to bid \$20. He never said a word. We won the bid and the barn went wild. The joyous laughter, applause and cheering was very vigorous. That was the only decoy he ever let us have. It was the thought that counted. We quietly held our good neighbors in high regard ever since that night in Harwich. Eventually we told the Harmons our story. That is how they built their collection.

I saw our good neighbor at the Bourne Auction House decoy events and the buy, sell and swaps that came to our town during the 1980's. I met fellow decoy authors Henry Fleckenstein and J Evans McKinney and I learned to love Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys. Ted was no longer our rival at auctions. Eventually, we became good customers of Decoys Unlimited once they got going in the late 1980's.

His early life's love of nature lured Ted down a path that led to art. He got his interest in decoys as a teenager when he found that derelict decoy in the Barnstable marshes. The dual mix of passion for nature and art in his DNA drove Ted into a life as an art and antiques dealer. By 1990, the Harmons' business was growing. That is how they curated this wonderful collection.

During July of 1993, Ted and Judy officially incorporated their company called Decoys Unlimited. The rest is history. During 1994, Ted ran classified ads in the Boston Globe. By 2003, Ted's reputation was national. That year, just shy of 10 years to the day that Decoys Unlimited (DU) incorporated, we find Ted mentioned in Wisconsin's "Dunn County News". This is how they continued to build such a museum worthy collection.

King Features Syndicate, Inc. was a national news organization that sold mass appeal copy to large community papers around the country. One advice column offered by King Features was "Collectors Corner" written by Larry Cox. Mr. Cox answered questions from readers all over the country. The 2003 Wisconsin paper carried Mr. Cox's Collectors Corner that day. A female reader from Village, NC wrote, "I have a collection of decoys and understand certain ones have become quite valuable. Can you direct me to someone who can help me find out more about the ones I own?" The answer Larry Cox gave to her was "Ted Harman (sic) is an expert and owner of Decoys Unlimited, Inc. His address is 2320 Main Street, P.O. Box 206, West Barnstable, MA 02648. A second source is Frank M. Schmidt, P.O. Box 522 West Farmington, ME 04992."

That same year of 2003 Ted was back in the Boston Globe again. Nine years after he ran those classified ads, the Globe ran a story in the Arts and Collectables section of their Sunday Magazine. The title was "You don't need a weatherman...". The magazine piece was about that summer's auctions in the Commonwealth.

The article started with weather vanes and moved on to paintings and Jaguar autos. Then came Ted and Judy. The Globe reported on August 24, 2003; "A record for the highest grossing sale by a Massachusetts decoy auction house was set last month by Decoys Unlimited, Inc. when its annual summer auction of decoys, sporting art and related artifacts brought \$959,387." That year the DU auction saw an A. Elmer Crowell life-sized turned head quail take the highest bid at \$39,600.

A year later, we see another DU auction featured in the Antiques and Collectables section of the Boston Globe's Sunday Magazine. The story reported: "Decoys from the



*South Shore Carver - Joseph Whiting Lincoln (1859-1938) -  
Hingham (Accord) - Drake Wood Duck*

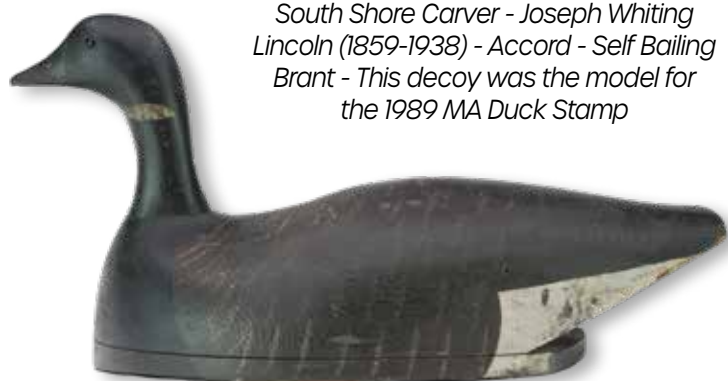


*North Shore Maker - Charles Howard Hart (1862-1960) -  
Gloucester - Black Duck*





*photo courtesy of Cape Cod Times*



*South Shore Carver - Joseph Whiting  
Lincoln (1859-1938) - Accord - Self Bailing  
Brant - This decoy was the model for  
the 1989 MA Duck Stamp*



*Cape Cod Maker - Anthony  
Elmer Crowell (1862-1952) - East  
Harwich - Blue Jay with Acorn*

Louisiana bayous were among the top price getters at the auction held by Decoys Unlimited of Barnstable in conjunction with the Ohio Decoy Collectors and Carvers Show in Westlake, Ohio. A rare Domingo Campo widgeon brought the highest price of \$11,200 at the March 19 auction."

The Harmons had some good help. In addition to the auction company's workers from the immediate family, their employees were also family. For example, Dr. Larry Carter was the DU auctioneer. The summer auction of 2004 on Cape Cod made news within the News and Record Newspaper located in Greensboro, NC. The September 5, 2004 issue reported: "Dr. Larry W. Carter recently conducted an auction for Decoys Unlimited, Inc. in Cape Cod, Mass. The two-day auction grossed \$1.25 million. The top decoy sold for \$64,000. Carter a retired Greensboro veterinarian free-lances as an auctioneer."

The Globe's Sunday Magazine reported on the 2005 DU auction. The auction had 887 lots, including more than 90 of Mr. Crowell's decoys in the mix. There were 100 antique shorebirds and 300 or so miniature bird carvings and decoratives. One prize at this auction was a crate of Mason Factory Detroit Grade glass-eyed model bluebills in unused and unrigged condition. The auction grossed just over \$1.6 million. The top lot was a Joe Lincoln goose. This Massachusetts carver's goose set a record for his work at \$78,200.

The Harmon's auction business continued with multiple auctions in various USA locations for the second half of the first decade of the new millennium, the entire second decade of the 21st century and into the early portion of the third decade. This is why the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is proud to display some of our good neighbor's collection.

During 2019, a portion of the Harmons' collection went on display at the Peoria Riverfront Museum in Peoria, IL. The exhibit called "American Decoy" was sponsored by a local investment firm called DVI. The museum celebrated the uniquely American art form with decoys from the museum's permanent collection.

Several other collections provided key works to enhance the display. The collections of Ted and Judy Harmon, Tom Figge, Joe and Donna Tonelli, The Ward Museum, The Shelburne Museum and the Illinois State Museum provided articles. The Pantagraph is Peoria's local newspaper. They reported the display of decoys is the most valuable collection of art since 1988 when the museum's predecessor, Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences exhibited "The Passion of Rodin."

Also during 2019, the Harmons sold from their collection. They let go of three A. Elmer Crowell plover decoys known as the "Dust Jacket Trio". The auction house records show \$396,000, \$420,000 and \$324,000 as the prices realized for the three individual lots. The prices indicate the quality and condition of the decoys in their collection.

Ted collected decoys for over sixty years from his teenage period right up until his death at age 80. Judy certainly did not expect anything different. One story I have heard in town is about Ted heading out to the Local Sears, Roebuck store in Hyannis. It was quite some years ago. I believe he had \$200 in his pocket that Judy gave him to buy an appliance. When he came home, he only had a decoy. That was how they built their collection.

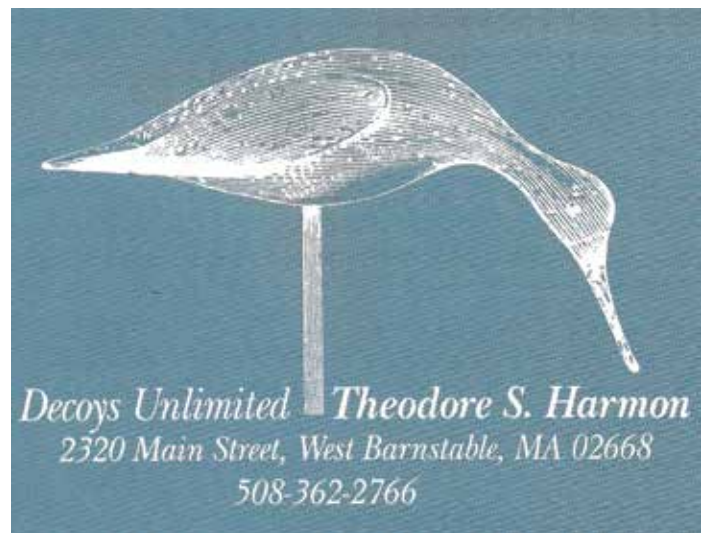
Another Ted and Judy story I got from a local police officer goes further to their fine collection of decoys. Back in the days of local banks, the largest commercial bank across our sandy peninsula was Cape Cod Bank & Trust Company. They had multiple branches up and down the Cape.

The bank's largest property was their main office in Hyannis. My cop friend told me that Ted and Judy had more safe deposit boxes in the main branch than any other clients of the bank. That was where they kept their best pieces. This display allows you to see what Ted and Judy were protecting in our local bank for all these years.

Ted and Judy Harmon managed to acquire many of the best decoys that came their way. Much of the collection is from Massachusetts. Even during the last years of his life, Ted was a collector. Once he got sick with cancer, his schedule was not his own. He could not make a Waterfowl Festival a couple of years ago. He asked me to pick up an order for him from Reggie Birch while I was at the show. The box of six carvings was so large; I could not see it was Reggie when he walked up to me carrying it. Once home, Ted came by our house to pick them up. As he left, he promised us a dinner with him and Judy.

One of my life's biggest regrets is that when Ted passed away, the Harmons still owed us a dinner that we never were fortunate to share with them. Please do not miss this exhibit at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Like us missing that meal with our good neighbors, missing this exhibit could become one of your life's biggest regrets.

**The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum wishes to express our gratitude to Judy Harmon and Guyette & Deeter for allowing this historic collection to be shared with our visitors.**







# Close to Home

## *"Like a Good Neighbor"*

*By C. John Sullivan, Jr.*

In many of my writings or remarks, I have made reference to growing up in old Fallston, Harford County. For newer residents, it would be difficult for them to imagine what this rural community once was. In the late 1940s and the 1950s, we actually knew one another. Not just a wave as we drove by but a bond of generations. The families I knew were families that my parents and grandparents knew. We knew each other and cared about each other in the ways that small communities once did. I vividly recall an incident when my next door neighbor and I were trying our best to push my father's old Farmall tractor to get it started; after many failed attempts, the neighbor across the road came to the rescue with his tractor to provide the much-needed tow to get the old machine started. In 1962, my father passed away in the midst of a powerful snowstorm. Once again,

our neighbor appeared with his tractor and snow plow to dig us out. No one had to ask neighbors, they just showed up and did what was necessary at the moment.

Fast forward to a recent gathering of some old friends and neighbors from the community where we grew up; I shared the Spring issue of the Canvasback with them. This issue contained a profile of me and my collection. Sitting beside me was my childhood neighbor, Marshall "Sonny" Starr, who had rescued me in earlier times. He is now 90 years old. As he glanced through the magazine, he said "I never knew that you liked decoys; my father was a serious duck hunter. He had about 250 decoys at one time. Sadly, he loaned them to a friend of his and they were never returned." The sinkbox never left the farm where it rested

from its days on the Susquehanna Flats. It was stored in the corn crib, where Sonny and his brother, Bob, played in and on the box until it just went to pieces. "All I have is just a couple left from his rig." And then he said those oh so magic words: "come get them—they're yours." A day later, I drove to my friend's house and we walked to his storage shed. He pointed to a plastic laundry basket resting on a high shelf. He said "there they are if you want them." I took down the basket holding five old wooden decoys. There were two rather clumsy looking mallard drakes and three old canvasback drakes. The canvasbacks wore faint traces of their original paint, their original heads remained tightly affixed, and each wore their original ballast weights. I quickly recognized them as the work of James T. Holly from Havre de Grace. These five decoys had been tucked away on my neighbor's farm for over 100 years quietly waiting for me, only 200 yards from my childhood home. So now they have joined their brothers and sisters in my collection. They were so very close yet so far away and in good hands for all of these many years.

Among my historic journals, I am the caretaker of an ancient leather-bound ledger. The old book wears a printer's mark, "Arden Index Pat. 1871." I discovered it in the attic of the Starr family homestead. The opening entries list: Buildings (newly erected) Big Shed \$250, work and carriage bldgs. \$150, Horses, Cattle, etc. Brown Mare Nora \$175, Bay Mare Kate \$175, Swiss Cow \$58, 2 small pigs \$4. The entries for machinery, tools, carriages, etc., are too detailed and lengthy to enumerate. At some point, my neighbors, the Starr family, repurposed the ancient ledger and began recording the sale of eggs and berries. These notations list by last names most all of the families living in our small community. Included in the list are the Amreins, Sewells, Stirlings, Standifords, Watters, and the Sullivans. We took care of one another, shared good wholesome family values, and were good neighbors in the truest sense. This most recent act of kindness and generosity means more to me than I can express in these few words. These newest old decoys now rest on my shelves and add yet one more story to share and cherish.

*Early R. Madison Mitchell canvasback drake. This Mitchell was part of the once extensive Starr rig. It was one of those decoys loaned to another waterfowler. It was discovered by me in the "other" waterfowler's rig over 40 years ago.*



*This James T. Holly canvasback drake from the Pusey rig exhibits similar form and original paint but the neck rest is on a raised shelf.*



# Workshop Window

*By Cindy Currier*

## **Dick & Linda Robinson** (Bel Air, MD)

In this installment of Workshop Window, we take a peek into the workshop of Dick and Linda Robinson. They are long-time supporters of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and Decoy Festival. Dick started carving in 1982, learning from carver Jimmy Pierce where he began by draw-knifing heads. Linda began carving in 1988, learning from Jimmy Pierce, Allan Schaubert and her husband.

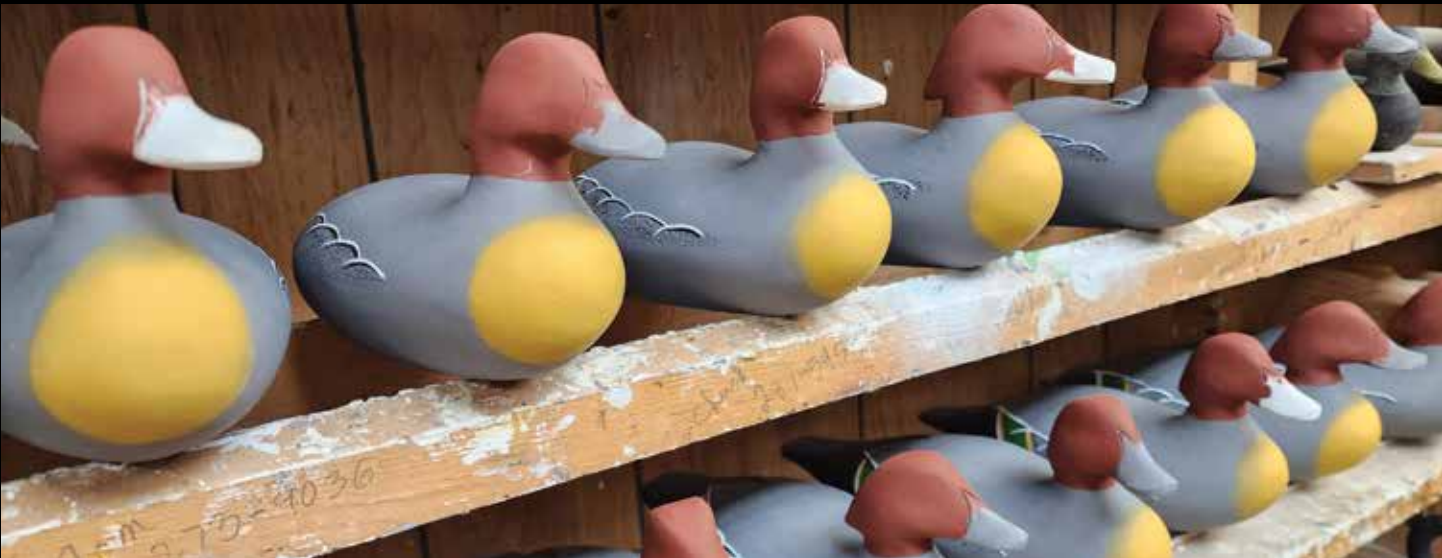
The 12 x 32 workshop was built by hand by Dick and Jimmy Pierce and is located at the back of the Robinsons' yard. The carving takes place in the shop and the painting is done in a dedicated room in the basement of their home.

While Dick carves and paints mostly traditional-type decoys, Linda concentrates mostly on shore birds. She has established her own style in a mostly male-dominated craft.

Please enjoy this visual tour!











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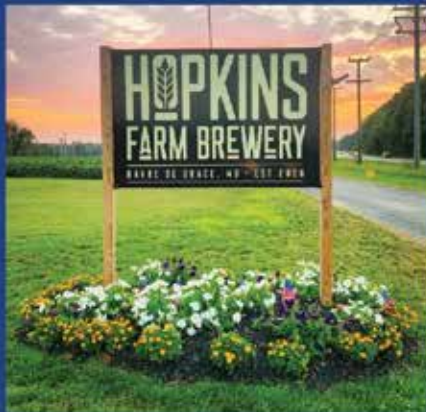
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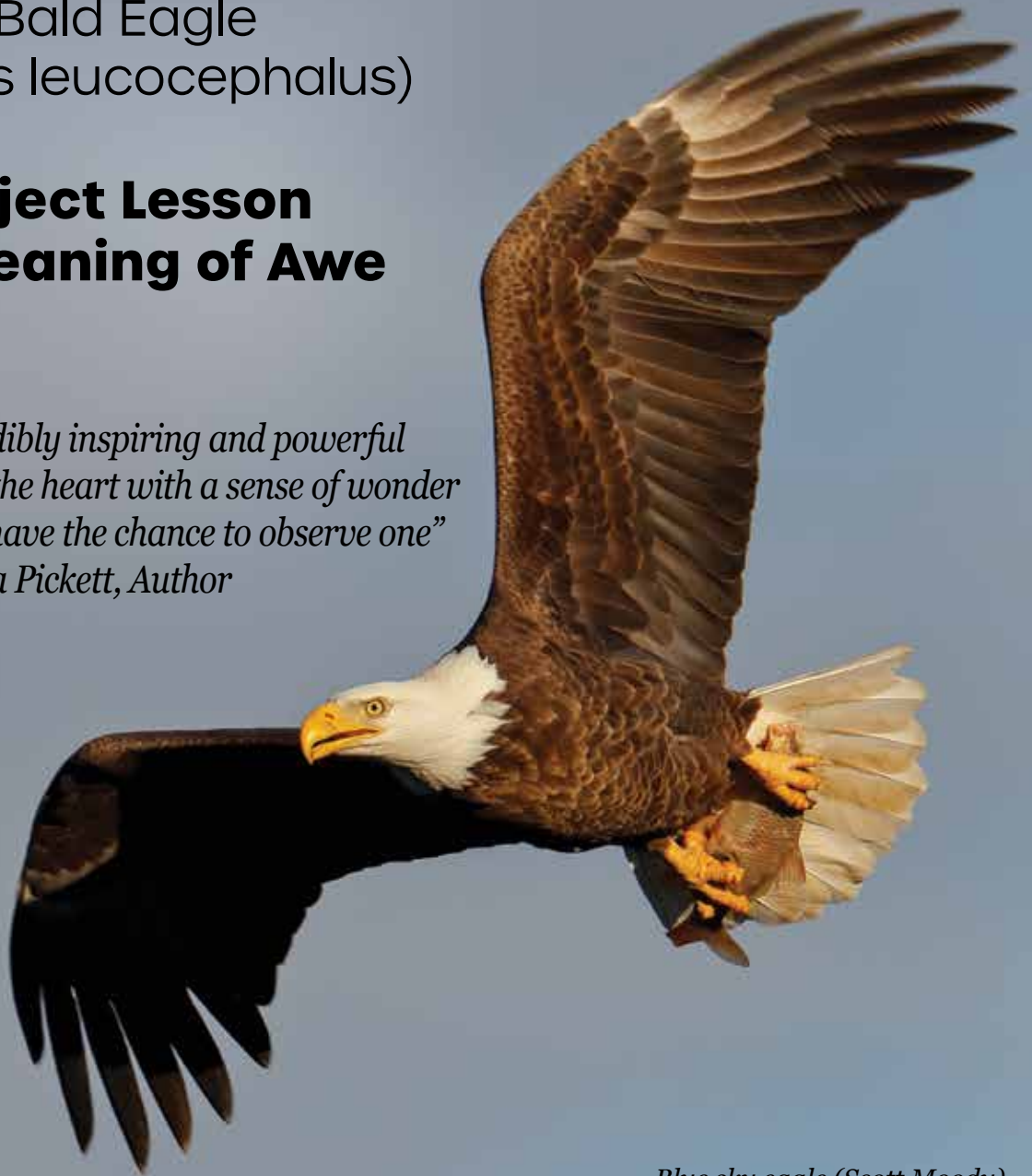


# Blue Sky Eagle

The Bald Eagle  
(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

## An Object Lesson in the Meaning of Awe

*“Eagles are incredibly inspiring and powerful animals. They strike the heart with a sense of wonder and awe when you have the chance to observe one”*  
– Lola Pickett, Author



By John Hughes

Blue sky eagle (Scott Moody)

## CANVASBACK NATURALIST

Each edition will feature a natural history topic relating to the mission of the museum. The author, **John E. Hughes, Jr.** is a retired science teacher from the John Carroll School (1972-2015). His subject areas included Chesapeake Bay Studies, Ecology (freshwater and marine) and Environmental Science. As a naturalist, John helped to develop natural history programs for a myriad of environmental organizations and schools. As a field educator and canoe guide, he led trips throughout the Eastern United States (especially the Southeast), Central America and the Caribbean. He presently serves as a member of the Museum's Board.



In past articles which I have written for “The Canvasback” magazine, I have either directly or through inference considered the concept of awe as it related to the subject area of the given article. As examples, I refer to an article I had written about tundra swans launching themselves airborne over my approaching canoe and the awe this bird and event inspired in me. In another article, I discussed the awe I and others in my group experienced as our canoes floated onto a group of wood ducks in Okefenokee Swamp in southeastern Georgia. The sounds of the drakes vaulting away, their and our own excitement at being so close to one another, and the incredible color patterns they exhibited juxtaposed to the orange of the aging bald cypress needles was truly “spiritual” to witness. In another scenario, the image of “dropping in” morning canvasbacks framed by the low morning, winter sun... and other examples seem to continue to be present in almost every one of my written pieces. Looking back, I would say that awe was a theme that developed itself to some extent in every article, although I cannot say there was a deliberate intent on my part to that end.

In writing this particular article, which considers the natural history of the bald eagle, it immediately became apparent to me how the concept of awe was so significant to my analysis and discussion of this magnificent bird. But what is awe? As a naturalist, I think the emotion or sense of awe brings an intensity to my science that alone, at least for me, isn’t provided in the objective rigor of the scientific method, even in the field. As an educator, to provide my students with an opportunity to experience awe is hopefully a catalyst to produce a lifetime sense of wonder and desire to learn on their part, especially in the out-of-doors. I do know that in later interactions with many of these former students, they still remember special awesome moments we shared in the wild and what they meant to them then and now.

Recently, over the winter, I read an interesting new book entitled “Awe – the New Science of Everyday Wonder” by Dacher Keltner. (Published January 2, 2024) The book explained the new discoveries and theories of awe as they relate to individuals, groups, and overall human well-being. It was a fascinating read for me, and it intensified my desire to learn more. I asked myself: what was awe; when did I first experience it; was it innate or learned behavior; did it occur in a variety of circumstances had there been attempts to foster it by my parents and educators; what was its impact on my overall life and experiences; was awe an emotion, excitement, or a feeling; and how did it make me feel? And the questions went on and on!

Awe can be defined as a feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear or wonder. It is produced by that which is grand, sublime, extremely powerful, or the like. It is a feeling of being a part of something greater than ourselves – a sense of wonder, an experience of mystery that transcends our understanding. Awe provides an overwhelming feeling of reverence, fear, or admiration. It generally exceeds our current understanding of the world and our position in it, leading to a feeling of humility and an inspiration to act more altruistically. Self becomes minimized and a cascading of good and positive emotions such as joy and gratitude occurs. It can reduce stress and quiet our inner critic leading to better health and well-being. It seems to be hard-wired. And the efforts at answers also continued on and on!

For me, the above definition of awe really works at least in regard to my experiences. I cannot remember my first experience of awe, although I have challenged my memory to do so. Perhaps it was when I first realized living things die, or maybe as a 5-year-old catching my first bluegill and sensing its desire to not to want to be on a hook, or possibly being unable to accept how much my teachers and parents knew. One thing I can remember for sure was being overwhelmed by deep blue skies. Why, I don’t know. Did my parents or teachers foster this reaction? I really don’t think so. Also, whether in a boat or a canoe, I had a great fear and reverence for the “water.” In addition, I was really inspired by wildlife early on in my life and developed a lifetime respect for it, especially birds such as ducks and eagles. As a teenager in the 60s, everything was “awesome” or “far out”, whether in the real or an altered state. Girls and what could happen with their interaction provided another sense of “feeling alright” but joy wasn’t always the outcome of the experience. Awe was probably present more than I remember, but it is only in adulthood that I really began to intensely think about it and its impacts on me. In personal considerations, I was awed by meeting, falling in love with, marrying, and living with my wife and best friend, Ann, for the past 52 years. Professionally, the many educational moments both in the classroom, on the playing field, and in the out-of-doors proved to provide amazing opportunities to experience awe. Also, I would be remiss to leave out the many moments of interactions with all the wonderful dogs of my lifetime and their ability to make me smile, keep me active, and inspire joy. In short, I have been lucky to have had a life of encounters that were awe inspiring and made me who I am. Whenever I could, I tried to create opportunities to make this possible for others.

To ground-truth my personal considerations about awe over the past several months, I have been collecting data from a variety of friends’ responses to these same questions. They all more or less shared the same thoughts as to the definition of awe. Most felt strongly that awe was innate but agreed it could be enhanced through education. Most found it difficult to remember their first experience of awe but willingly gave examples of awe in their lives. Michael, a retired art teacher and friend, and his wife Kate gave me deep, thoughtful responses to the questions. Michael remembered being emotionally struck at an art viewing of landscape paintings by the artist Edvard Munch (The Scream). He was forced to sit and catch his breath and began to weep in awe upon his viewing of the paintings. Kate emphasized how visceral awe could make her feel and how memorable the event was to her. Debbie, a retired Harford County speech and language therapist and wife of my friend Tom, mentioned childbirth as an event which inspired awe in her. Dan Hopkins of Hopkins Brewery felt the birth of his two sons was an awe moment he could never forget. Many other considerations were presented and shared by friends; too many to cite. So, some things became obvious: awe occurs in a great diversity of scenarios, it can happen at different times in our lives, it is memorable for our lifetimes, and it is an extremely powerful force. So many further questions and responses arose from my original questions that unfortunately they cannot be addressed adequately in this short discussion.

The final assignment for each participant in the awe survey was to consider the image of an adult bald eagle soaring on the wind on a deep bluebird sky day and share their reaction to it and how it made

them feel? I've already shared my reactions to blue sky days with you, but I want to emphasize just how powerful a reaction they induce in me. These are the days I want to never end, the days I wish I could live forever, or as Native Americans suggest good days to die. I don't need big skies or open horizons, just deep blue above me and I feel elation with life, wonder, joy, and satisfaction with my existence. In short, I feel "comfortably numb" in an energized way and this can happen over and over, not on just one occasion. If you add in a soaring adult bald eagle, one of my favorite bird species with its huge dark wingspan, gleaming white head and tail feathers, framed against the blue sky, well I'm "already gone". Companions, friends, and wife tell me to calm down, but they don't realize where I am and how I feel at that moment. I've been captured by awe, but I don't really know how or why. It happens nearly every time, and those that witness it a second time see it is for real. As Kate earlier suggested, it is visceral and extremely intense when awe strikes. Over my lifetime career as a naturalist, I have observed many bald eagles in flight, some on a blue-sky day. The results for me are still a reinforcement of that original sighting of an eagle that generated the experience of awe of which I cannot remember when or where. Is it the majesty of the great raptor soaring, seeming free, the color of the sky, or some combination of both that ignites the response in me? I wish I knew the answer, but I don't. However, I'm nonetheless thankful it happens. As I start my 74th year of life, my greatest hope is that it still continues to happen until the biological brings me to my end.

As for the others that I gathered thoughts from on this final question, most felt that they experienced a great deal of excitement and joy while observing a soaring eagle against the backdrop of blue sky, but few went as far as to suggest my type of awe response. It made them feel good and they were glad to still see our national emblem in our environment, but they overall felt it fell short of awesome. Dan felt his frequency of sightings may have, over time, somewhat diminished his original level of response although he still had enhanced energy when he watched an eagle in flight. Tom Trafton, jokingly, was tired of those damn white-headed varmints. I think he was just harassing me! Whatever their individual thoughts were, all said it was a most positive, humbling happening. As for me, the intensity level of response is off the charts, every time I witness the soaring eagle. Higher still on a blue-sky day!

***The Bald Eagle: "Though he'd be a poorer boy if he never saw an eagle fly" – John Denver, Rocky Mountain High***

I'd like to think that most Americans have witnessed a bald eagle in flight. The majesty of this second largest, North American bird soaring across the skies of our country is an event that is possible today only because of concern and compassion for our national emblem. In the late 1950s and throughout the 60s, 70s, and early to middle 80s, the sighting of a bald eagle was a somewhat rare occurrence. If you knew where to go, it was possible to see one, but bald eagles were in a precipitous decline throughout the continental range. There were many reasons for this downward spiral and many scientists felt that the bald eagle was doomed to extinction. Pesticide contamination, especially DDT, which impacted the bald eagle's reproductive capability was of major concern at that time. The bald eagle was officially declared an endangered species in 1967. Fortunately, because of citizen outrage,

government activism, and effective wildlife management, the bald eagle experienced a remarkable recovery in a relatively short period of time. Today it is no longer endangered and can be very commonly viewed almost anywhere near the ubiquitous waters of America. The present successful numbers of bald eagles proves our nation is capable of preserving not only our national emblem in particular, but our wildlife resources in general.

In 1782, the bald eagle was chosen as America's national emblem. The Continental Congress chose Secretary Charles Thomsen to develop an emblem for our early nation. Thomsen spread-eagled our bird and gave one of its fierce talons 13 arrows suggesting strength and the capability of war, as well as 13 olive branches with leaves in the other talon representing the potential and desire for peace. Through its beak, a banner with the inscription "E pluribus unum" waved. This image has appeared on every official document in U.S. history since its adoption as the emblem on our Great Seal.

### **The following is a brief description and biography of the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*):**

**Size:** The bald eagle is only slightly smaller than the California condor, our nation's largest bird. Adult bald eagles have a wingspan of 71 to 96 inches and a length from head to tail of 27 to 35 inches. The bald eagle weighs between 4.4 and 14.5 pounds. Females are up to 40% larger than males and immature birds can be larger than adult females. The typical pose or demeanor of the bald eagle, whether perched or in flight, makes it appear quite large. Bald eagles possess long, broad wings and protruding large heads.

**Plumage:** Adult bald eagles are one of the easiest birds to identify. They possess a dark blackish-brown body and bright white head and tail feathers. They have a yellow beak and eyes capable of 8 power vision. They have huge yellow talons with black claws. Their legs are not feathered like those of the golden eagle.



*Adult vs juvenile  
(Bart Roberts)*

It may take 4 to 5 years for bald eagles to achieve this adult

plumage, although sexual maturity occurs much sooner at about 2 to 3 years. Juveniles go through various distinguishable stage patterns of mottled black, brown, and white. They can easily be confused with golden eagles during these stages. There is no plumage difference between northern and southern subspecies.





*Eyrie toddler (Frank Marsden)*



*Scavenging (Frank Marsden)*

**Flight:** Bald eagles soar in wide arcs with their wings held flat and “plank-like” (*Crossley, Crossley IDGuide: Raptors. p.183.*) They appear slow moving and steady in flight. They have powerful wingbeats with strong strokes.

**Range:** Bald eagles can be found throughout North America from northern Mexico to Canada. Bald eagles can be found in almost every state with appreciable populations in four areas: Alaska, Pacific-Northwest, Chesapeake Bay region, and Florida and the Gulf coast. Northern birds are known to migrate south and mix with resident birds in the lower 48 states. Key determinants to migration are ice-free waters and food availability. Bald eagles are solitary migrators but have high concentrations in preferred winter destinations.



*Stealing (Frank Marsden)*

Bald eagles can be found throughout the Chesapeake Bay region on a year- round basis. During winter, a heavy influx of bald eagles can be found on and around the Conowingo dam and lower Susquehanna River region. Even the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum’s grounds yield good observable opportunities for wintering bald eagles. Almost any shoreline throughout the bay can give a possibility for bald eagle sightings. The extensive marsh areas of Dorchester County, Maryland are also a favorite viewing area for bald eagles, especially at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.



*Hunting (Frank Marsden)*

**Habitat:** Bald eagles are rarely found far from water (usually less than a mile from shoreline), but exceptions have been noted in the literature. Bald eagles prefer close-by open water for feeding areas to their nest sites. Clear and shallow water seemed to be preferred with nearby forest for nesting possibilities. The 8,100 miles of shoreline in the Chesapeake proper provide ideal opportunities for bald eagle lifestyle preferences. Bald eagles will build and use nests, year after year, on duck blinds, piers, channel markers, power transmission poles, etc., but they nest in trees more often than any other spot. They tend to use any large tree, whether deciduous or coniferous and usually like trees with a notched crotch pattern in their growth. In our region, they seem to use Loblolly pines extensively. My experiences suggest that bald eagles prefer wetland habitats within close proximity to mature forests.



*Fishing (Frank Marsden)*

**Courtship, Nesting, and Reproduction:** These factors are very much associated with the location of the individual bald eagles, especially their latitudinal position. Two key factors influencing the timing of the events are the presence of ice-free waters and the

*"In an eagle, there is all the wisdom  
of the world." – John Fire Lame Deer,  
Seeker of Visions*

*Landing in snow (Bart Roberts)*

availability of food. For example, in Florida egg laying occurs in early November while in Alaska it doesn't happen until after March. In the Chesapeake, late December and through January and February are egg-laying dates.

Bald eagle courtship, whether a pair bonding of new mates or a reinforcement of past mates, is filled with ritual. Aerial displays such as high-speed chases, sky dancing, and cartwheeling begin the bonding. Perching together, preening each other, and bill and neck touching help to cement the commitment. Finally shared nest building, with the male bringing large sticks and other materials and the female arranging them, completes the pair bonding. Bald eagles mate for life with the same partner. If a mate is lost, the remaining individual will seek a new mate.

Bald eagles build large, conspicuous nests usually in treetops. Males as noted bring the materials and females construct the nest. The females line the nest with mosses, grasses, plant stalks, lichens, and possibly seaweed. The typical nest has a diameter of 4 to 6 feet and a depth of about 3 to 4 feet. The birds will use the same nest over and over. One of the largest nests ever studied was on the edge of Lake Erie in Vermillion, Ohio. Dr. Francis Herrick studied this nest and its birds for well over two decades. The nest became over 20 feet deep and 13 feet across. After blowing down in a storm, the debris making up the nest weighed over two and a half tons. Bald eagle nests are known as eyries.

When laying occurs, 1 to 3 fairly large eggs are deposited in the nest, over a period of days. Incubation begins immediately and lasts for a period of 35 days. The newly born eaglets mature rapidly and at first seem to be all talons and beak. Adults share in parental responsibilities and are constantly challenged to meet the insatiable food demands of the young. First born eaglets will in a Cain and Abel effect kill their siblings. By 12 to 15 weeks the young birds have fledged. They are still dependent on their parents for food and stay close until they have learned their own food gathering techniques.

**Diet:** When it comes to feeding, bald eagles are opportunistic, generalists. They find food by scavenging, fishing, hunting, and thievery from other bald eagles or osprey. Bald eagles will eat fish, small mammals, turtles, snakes, frogs, birds, waterfowl, and carrion

(especially road-killed deer). In short, bald eagles will eat just about anything they come upon. About 70 -90% of their diet is fish such as gizzard shad, menhaden, white and yellow perch, American eel, catfish, crappie, bass, croaker, spot, flounder, carp, and salmon. Mammals include muskrat, nutria, rabbits, and squirrels. Waterfowl consumed range from coots to any crippled ducks.

**Population, Threats:** Bald eagles live from 15 to 25 years in the wild and longer in captivity. They are sexually mature as early as 1½ years and generally reproduce yearly with positive recruitment to their populations. According to statistics from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 1970 there were less than 1,000 individual birds and 400 breeding pairs in the lower 48 states. The Chesapeake Bay region had fewer than 60 breeding pairs. Today (2024), there are 316,700 individual birds and over 71,400 nesting pairs. In the Chesapeake, there are as many as 5,000 individual birds and 3,000 nesting pairs. Truly, a remarkable recovery story.

Threats to our contemporary bald eagle numbers include loss of habitat, lead poisoning (especially from deer and elk scavenging), chemical contamination, illegal hunting, electrocution, wind turbines, and collisions. Global warming is also a generalized concern to future bald eagle success.

The present seems to be a good time for most Americans to be able to experience the sighting of a bald eagle in the wild. A viewing of our majestic national bird should give pause to the commitment Americans made to keep it from becoming extinct in the 20th century and making it possible for posterity to observe it in the 21st century. Perhaps, the opportunity to witness this bird today can still allow the potential for our citizenry to have an "awe" moment and to make them feel good, have a sense of something greater than themselves, react with joy, reduce their stress, and quiet any internal concerns. Besides the intrinsic value of its presence to the overall environment, perhaps its ability to inspire our souls is its greatest asset.

Now, if you see a big man "lunatic" viscerally awe-inspired watching a bald eagle soar in a bluebird sky, you will understand what is happening to him in that moment!!!





Earl Blansfield

# SHOTS

## From the Wild

**Are you a photography enthusiast who loves snapping pictures of the local wildlife?**

**If so, submit your shots from the wild to [wildlifephotography@decoymuseum.com](mailto:wildlifephotography@decoymuseum.com).**

**Only high resolution photos will be accepted. (i.e. at least 2,500 pixels wide and 300dpi)**



Bateleur Eagle,  
South Africa



Antonio Toplin



Earl Blansfield

Richard Scovira



Richard Scovira



Ralph Hockman

Brown Snake  
Eagle, South  
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Tawney Eagle,  
South Africa



Antonio Toplin  
White Headed  
Hawk Eagle



Scott Kreiger







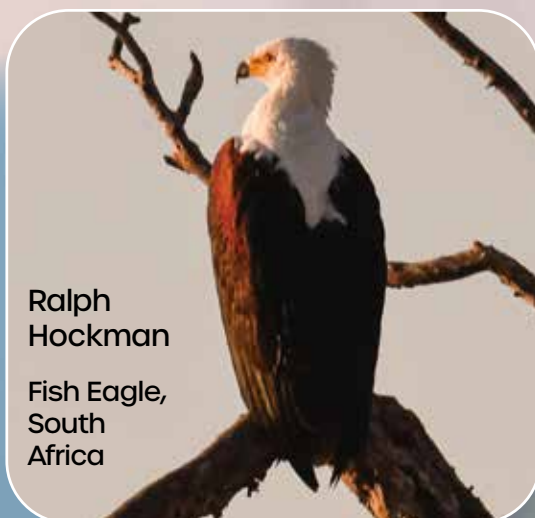
Antonio Toplin

Fish Eagle,  
South  
Africa



Ralph  
Hockman

Fish Eagle,  
South  
Africa



Robin Bell



Jerome Mitchener







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Harry Kenney  
Donald Kirson  
Scott Krieger  
Logan M. Lowers Jr  
Daniel Lozano  
Peter MacGaffin  
John Manning Jr  
John Merredith  
LeRoy Metker  
Larry Ortt Jr  
Linda Tolley Parker  
Chris Pitman  
Judith Rettich  
William F Rienhoff III  
Ted Rineer

Tom Rogers  
James Ross  
Bill Schlegel  
Rod Schwarm  
Jane Scocca  
Harry Segner III  
George Shinn  
Joanne Sissum  
Kim Smith  
Ronald Smith  
Rich Smoker  
Jay & Dixie Stauffer  
James Tolmie  
Carl Tosi  
Mark Wagner  
Bill Waibel  
Robert Wolfe  
Andrew Zielinski Jr

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Ron Browning & Mark Vervalin  
John & Janet Butterfield  
Thomas & Margherita Coudon  
John Cox  
Jeremy Crossland  
Gerald & Jean Dames  
Peter Darwin  
Louis & Phyllis Friedman  
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John Popowski  
Peggy Reel  
J Lloyd Sanders Jr  
Kevin Siple  
James VanNess  
Bruce & Elizabeth Vansickle  
Ray & Joyce Watkins  
Chris Worch

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Jim Brackbill  
Maryann Dick  
Tat Fung  
Ralph Hockman  
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## **Student**

Elver Gonzales

**Fall 2024**

# Raffle

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Four tickets will be drawn.

**Tickets are \$5.00 each**  
**6 for \$25.00 • 10 for \$40.00**



**1st Prize:**  
**\$500 Cash**



**2nd Prize:**  
**Redhead by John Eichelberger, Jr.**



**3rd Prize:**  
**Pintail pair by Joe Cook**



**4th Prize:**  
**"The Decoy as Art" by James A. Warner & Margaret J. White**

**Drawing on Saturday, December 14, 2024 @ 7:30 pm at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum**

For tickets call **410.939.3739** or email: [information@DecoyMuseum.com](mailto:information@DecoyMuseum.com)

(Additional tickets will be available at the Museum.)

## UPCOMING DECOY SHOW INFORMATION

**October 19, 2024**

**55th Annual Upper Shore Decoy Show**

Minker Banquet Hall, Perryville, MD  
Info: decoyshow@upperbaymuseum.org

**November 8-10, 2024**

**Easton Waterfowl Festival**

Easton, MD • Info: (410) 822-4567

**January 25, 2025**

**Level Vintage Decoy & Collectibles Show**

Level Volunteer Fire Company, Havre de Grace, MD  
Info: Chuck Usilton (443) 252-0685

**February 1, 2025**

**The Eastern Shore of Virginia Decoy Show**

Pearl Events Center, Cape Charles, VA  
Info: Tommy O'Connor (757) 620-8520

**February 22, 2025**

**4th Annual Upper Bay Decoy Collectors Club  
Sportsman & Decoy Show honoring Jim Pierce**

Minker Banquet Hall, Perryville, MD  
Info: Gary Armour (667) 365-0268

**April 2 -5, 2025**

**East Coast Decoy Collectors Club Show**

St. Michaels Inn, St. Michaels, MD  
Info: Kevin Peel (410) 937-2218



**May 3 & 4, 2025**

**43rd Annual Decoy &  
Wildlife Art Festival**

STAR Centre,  
Havre de Grace, MD  
Info: Mike Tarquini  
(410) 459-8487  
[www.decoymuseum.com](http://www.decoymuseum.com)

## ATTEND THE 55TH ANNUAL UPPER SHORE DECOY SHOW

**SATURDAY  
OCTOBER 19, 2024**

**9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**EARLY BIRD ADMISSION**

**AT 8:00 AM: \$10**

**REGULAR ADMISSION: \$5**

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PERRYVILLE, MD**

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continuously running  
decoy show in the  
United States*

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THE UPPER BAY MUSEUM**

**[www.upperbaymuseum.org](http://www.upperbaymuseum.org)**

*For information contact:*

*Rick Bouchelle*

**443-206-5129**

***[decoyshow@upperbaymuseum.org](mailto:decoyshow@upperbaymuseum.org)***





# Decoy Club News

## Four Regional Decoy Collector Clubs Meet at Decoy Museum

*By Mike Tarquini*

Traditionally, the Potomac Decoy Collectors Association (PDCA) holds their August meeting at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. This year was no exception as the PDCA met at the museum on August 3, 2024. Joining them were members from the Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association (DDCA), Upper Bay Decoy Collectors Club (UBDCC), and the Delaware Valley Decoy Collectors Association (DVDCA). In all, the joint event boasted approximately sixty participants.

Prior to the start of the meeting, all guests mingled throughout the Carvers Gallery of the Decoy Museum reviewing the John “Daddy” Holly, C. John Sullivan, Decoys of Delmarva, and Blair Family temporary exhibits in addition to the vast number of Upper Chesapeake Bay carvers showcased as permanent displays. Guests also enjoyed an early glimpse of the “Influences of African American Decoy Makers” exhibit located in the “What is a Decoy” gallery. This new permanent exhibit was under construction and opened a few days after the joint club meeting.

The meeting began as PDCA President Chad Tragakis greeted all guests and made a few general announcements. Likewise, Joe Engers, Treasurer of the Delmarva club followed suit. Gary Armour, President of the UBDCC and Lou Nolan, President of the Delaware Valley club did likewise.

As is traditional for the PDCA meetings, a decoy contest was held for all those interested enough to engage. The categories were old decoys, contemporary decoys, and Sam Barnes decoys. Contestants were so numerous that nine total tables were required to display all of the entrants.

In addition to looking at all of the decoys, the real value of the joint meeting was the fellowship among members of the various clubs. The PDCA provided lunch for all participants. The same four decoy clubs will again have a joint meeting on October 5, in Harford County at the home of East Coast Decoy Collectors Club (ECDC) President Kevin Peel.



*Chad Tragakis shares comments*



*Contest Decoys*



By Chad Tragakis

## Historic John "Daddy" Holly Exhibit Extended and Expanded

The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association's special exhibit at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has been so popular, that PDCA and the museum have jointly agreed to extend it for at least another year. Installed in March of 2023, the exhibit titled: *Innovation, Industry and Influence: The Decoys of John "Daddy" Holly – Pioneer of the Havre de Grace Style*, pays tribute to one of America's earliest and most important decoy makers, John W. Holly, Sr. (1818-1892), best known to his family and the decoy collecting community as "Daddy" Holly. More than 100 outstanding examples spanning five decades and representing every phase in Holly's long and influential career are featured in the display.

The historic exhibit is also being updated with more than 10 new pieces – spectacular and rarely seen examples that include a ruddy duck, a redhead drake from a rig used on Lake Champlain, Vermont still in original paint, a canvasback hen in sleeping or preening position, and an outstanding blue-winged teal from the rig of the famed gunning scow, *Reckless*. In addition to the Holly decoys, the expanded display now features the only documented decoy by Daddy Holly's protégé, Dick Howlett, a drake canvasback originally collected by Bill Mackey and featured in his book, *American Bird Decoys*.

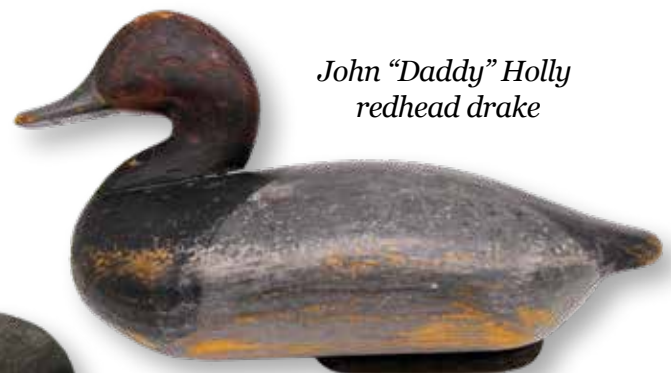
In addition to enabling more museum visitors to see the exhibit, the extension allows for additional research to be conducted, including comparative measurements, analysis of construction and hardware, and multi-view photographs of every piece in the display. Additional articles on the exhibit and the decoys it contains are planned for future editions of *The Canvasback*, as well as additional collector roundtable discussions to be hosted by PDCA members and guest curators, Chad Tragakis, Kevin Peel and C. John Sullivan, Jr. The "Daddy" Holly display is just one of several must-see exhibits now on display at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. We hope you can stop by and see it!



*John "Daddy" Holly Exhibit Case at  
Havre de Grace Decoy Museum*



*Dick Howlett canvasback*



*John "Daddy" Holly  
redhead drake*



*John "Daddy" Holly ruddy duck decoy  
(Rob Knight collection)*



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