

THE WILDFOWLER

APRIL 2020

A PUBLICATION OF THE ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM AND THE BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

Back Bay Wildfowl Guild Memories

March 9, 2020

Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19 Shuttters Museum Doors and Operations Shuts entire State of Virginia down until June 10th

This is not the first pandemic that the Historic deWitt Cottage has seen in its 125 year history. Just over 102 years ago the deWitt family had to endure the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918. The children, all ten of them, were living with their widowed mother, Cecile. Cornelius, their father had died suddenly (age 53) 5 years earlier while on a business trip to Minnesota. As the pandemic was just beginning, the United States and its allies were desperately trying to put an end to World War I. The [Spanish flu](#) pandemic of 1918, the deadliest in history, infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide—about one-third of the planet’s population—and killed an estimated 50 million to 100 million victims, including some 675,000 Americans.

All eleven members of the deWitt family were able to survive these horrific statistics associated with this pandemic.

The following is from an article by [Rebecca Grant | Fox News](#)

Spanish flu, like coronavirus, wasn’t really a single national crisis. It was a set of hundreds of crises that played out differently in major cities, towns, states and Army and Navy World War I training camps.

Pittsburgh reeled. Indianapolis coped well. New York City, with a 1918 population of more than 4.7 million, was twice as big as Chicago in those days but kept its flu mortality rate in check.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur and Robert Frost all caught Spanish flu. Americans in 1918 were facing a “silent foe” and a wild trajectory of new cases, just like we are. The Spanish flu strain is not the same as the coronavirus. But you’ll recognize the drastic measures taken back then.

The Spanish flu epidemic came in three major waves, with the worst being the death spike over roughly six weeks in the “second wave” from late September until early November 1918. The flu hit lungs. Victims turned blue in the face due to lack of oxygen, a condition called cyanosis. Makeshift hospitals filled and cities ran out of coffins. Response by local health officials was key as communities fought to interrupt human-to-human transmission of the Spanish flu and surge medical treatment for victims. Some places did better than others. Spanish flu first appeared in New York City in August 1918. Starting in mid-September, Dr. Royal S. Copeland created social distancing with closures, staggered business hours, and a massive public information campaign on preventing transmission. Copeland also set up 150 emergency health stations to dispatch nurses and keep track of cases. New York City hired more nurses – and more gravediggers. Copeland famously kept schools



open, making each classroom a mini-clinic with teachers checking children's health daily.

The 1918 Spanish flu also tells us what to expect next. Right now, America is watching coronavirus cases multiply and praying for the curve to bend. Health officials in 1918 were looking for that same big indicator.

Sadly, in Philadelphia, the response was not so complete. Flu deaths at the Philadelphia Naval Yard began Sept. 7, 1918. Still, officials let 200,000 assemble for a Liberty Loan parade and war bond drive on Sept. 28, 1918. By the time Philadelphia banned public gatherings, it was too late. The city was burdened with additional war workers and could not keep up. Daily flu deaths in Philadelphia passed 500 on Oct. 6 and reached 837 on Oct. 12, on the way to a total near 13,000 in that wave.

In 1918, New York City's flu mortality rate was 582 deaths per 100,000 people. Chicago's was 517. Philadelphia's was 932. On average, American cities saw their flu death rates go up 300 percent to 500 percent in 1918. Philly hit the top of that range, with 490 percent more deaths over the 1915 baseline. In contrast, New York City's faster, tougher measures held expansion to 270 percent. Chicago's rate was 300 percent.



Worst off was Pittsburgh, where wartime steel and munitions production made officials reluctant to shut down and isolate. Pittsburgh didn't confront the epidemic in time. As a result, Pittsburgh recorded one of America's highest mortality rates at 1,243 deaths per 100,000 in 1918, according to a 2007 study from the St. Louis Federal Reserve.

Shutting down Army and Navy training camps was out of the question and the Spanish flu ravaged them in the fall of 1918. As with cities, the danger zone typically lasted for about four weeks before abating. One Army camp in Illinois held 40,000 men and registered 10,713 cases with 1,060 deaths – all this among a young cohort.

Then there was Wisconsin – the only state to enact aggressive, statewide measures, according to historian Steven Burg. Wisconsin State Health Officer Dr. Cornelius A. Harper closed everything down on Oct. 10, 1918. True, Wisconsin by then knew of the decimation back East. But fast steps kept flu escalation lower in Milwaukee, where City Health Commissioner Dr. George C. Ruhland roped in businessmen and doctors to set policy that even won over Socialist Mayor Daniel Hoan.

The 1918 Spanish flu also tells us what to expect next. Right now, America is watching coronavirus cases multiply and praying for the curve to bend. Health officials in 1918 were looking for that same big indicator: the plateau and decline in new Spanish flu cases. When it came, they reopened fast, with Chicago back to normal operations by Nov. 4. Astonishingly, the economic impact of the Spanish flu closures was sharp but didn't last. From looking at the Dow you'd never know anyone was sick. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose from (don't laugh) 74 in January 1918 to stay above 80 all during 1918 with only routine volatility.

You bet small businesses like those saloons and theaters suffered. Economic data for 1918 is patchy, but the St. Louis Federal Reserve study found retail and entertainment hard hit, with Midwest stores losing 40 percent to 70 percent of their business during the fall flu peak. Mattress and bedsprings sales soared, though.

Of course, that 1918 economy didn't have airlines, fast-food restaurants, casinos, giant pension plans and integrated global supply chains. The pain here in 2020 is real. Still, the business lesson of the 1918 Spanish flu, if there is one, was that several weeks of public closures didn't do lasting macroeconomic damage.





Upcoming Guild Events:



~~04/04/2020 Artisan Festival
Historic Frances Land House
3131 Virginia Beach blvd
Virginia Beach, VA 23452~~



04/10/2020: Bizconnect Morning Coffee
Virtual Tour and Meetup
1556 Laskin Road #138 Virginia Beach, VA 23451
8:30am-9:30am



~~04/07/2020 Dine Out for The de Witt
5:30pm—8:30pm Raven Restaurant
1200 Atlantic Avenue~~



04/21/2020: Board Meeting
Virtual Board Meeting 6:00 pm



~~05/07/2020 Back Bay Wildfowl Guild
Membership Meeting 6:00pm
Lucky Oyster Spring Celebration~~



05/21/2019: Board Meeting
Virtual Board Meeting 6:00 pm

~~05/25/2020: Memorial Day
Museum begins opening on Mondays & Sundays~~



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“After all of the dumb things I have done in my life;
If touching my face kills me, I’m going to be pissed!”

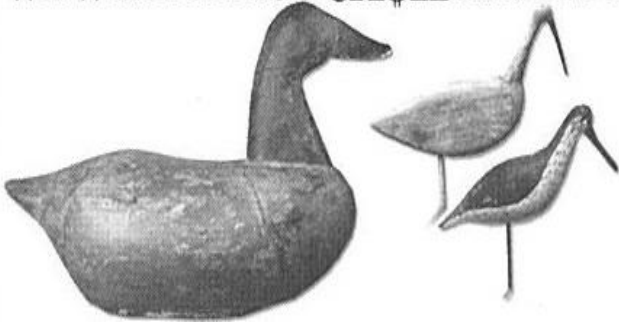
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DECOYS WANTED

WE BUY WOODEN OR CANVAS DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS & SHOREBIRDS...
WHAT IS YOUR DECOY WORTH? IT COULD BE WORTH THOUSANDS!

WE WILL PAY YOU **CASH** FOR ANY OLD DECOYS AND HUNTING ITEMS



FREE DECOY IDENTIFICATION
AND EVALUATIONS
of Single Decoys or Entire Collections

BY MARK CROMWELL

(757) 721-2746

Member North Carolina Decoy Collectors Assoc.

COLLECTOR'S SHELF

Nathan Cobb, Jr.

(1825 - 1905) Cobb Island, VA

Nathan Cobb, Jr. market hunted and formed a salvage team with his father Nathan, Sr. and his two brothers Warren and Albert. The Cobb family owned and operated a sportsmen's resort, the Cobb Island Hunt Club, on Cobb Island off the Eastern Shore of Virginia. While it is possible that the Cobb men carved their own decoys, it is probable that Nathan, Jr. did the carving for the whole family, identifying each decoy with the respective hunter's initials. Carving styles reminiscent of New England and Barnegat Bay reflect Nathan, Sr.'s former residency in New Jersey and his sons' travels along the coast. Further influence from New Jersey can be attributed to Harry Shourds of Tuckerton, NJ who sold hundreds of his decoys to the Cobbs to fulfill their needs. Cobb carved the family decoys from the masts of wrecked ships, transforming the flotsam into well-rounded hollow decoys. The seams of these two-piece lures lie just below the mid-line. Relief-carved V-shape wingtips lie over a notched V-shape tail. Lead weights are attached to the flat bottoms with brass screws. Cobb carved goose and brant necks from holly branches to create a virtually unbreakable neck. He only used glass eyes imported from Germany, but utilized the copper nails from salvaged wrecks. Bold paint patterns simplified seasonal maintenance. Minor details like the curve of a neck or the tilt of a bill make Nathan Cobb, Jr.'s decoys unique. Unfortunately, storms that ravaged the unprotected island claimed many of his fine pieces.



The classic split-tail curlew sold for \$390,000 on November 8, 2006, establishing a record price paid at auction not only for Nathan Cobb, but also for a Virginia decoy.

NOTE: As a result of the October 1896 severe storm and destruction to Cobb's Island, Nathan F. Cobb's grave was removed from Cobb's Island in 1897, and reinterred in the same cemetery as his son, Albert F. Cobb (1836-1890): Cape Charles Cemetery, Cape Charles, Northampton Co., VA.



From the Events Desk



What a difference a few weeks makes. As a nation, we were on top of the world. Stock market doing well, events being planned, and we were free to come and go as we pleased. Then COVID-19 hit and like that, our world has changed. As expected, events and wedding reservations have cancelled for the Museum. So, this too shall pass, and we will be ready for when we can reopen the Museum and start accepting reservations again. In the meantime, we are focusing our efforts on social media and the development and launch of the new de Witt Cottage website and blog. The website will be focused on the history of the cottage and its use as an event and wedding venue. More information to follow.

UPCOMING EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

Mark your calendars with these upcoming events and happenings. Events are located at the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum/Historic de Witt Cottage, unless otherwise noted.

- TBA The original artwork of the **2020 Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp** will be on display at the Museum, in partnership with the Virginia Beach Ducks Unlimited Chapter.
- TBA The Cottage will be a start and end stop for a **BIG** beach cleanup in conjunction with the 24 Hours of Open! VB – City of Virginia Beach’s kickoff tourism campaign.

APRIL – all events cancelled.

- 7 **Dine Out for de Witt**, The Pub, 5:30-8:00 pm
- 20-27 **Something in the Water**, The Museum and Cottage will be included in the footprint of this year’s festival.

MAY – Subject to change

- 1 **Under the stars Friday Movie Event** – in conjunction with the Surfrider Foundation, TBA
- 5 **Dine Out for de Witt**, Lucky Oyster, 5:30-8:00 pm

JUNE – Subject to change

- 3 **Garden Club Open House**, 11:00 – 3:00 pm, free admission
- 5 **Under the stars Friday Movie Event** – in conjunction with the Surfrider Foundation, TBA

JULY – Subject to change

- 4 **Fireworks Celebration at the Beach** – Celebrate the 4th as a VIP with the best unobstructed view of the fireworks.
- 17 **Under the stars Friday Movie Event** – in partnership with the Surfrider Foundation, TBA

AUGUST

- 21 **Under the stars Friday Movie Event** – in partnership with the Surfrider Foundation, TBA

SEPTEMBER

NEPTUNE FESTIVAL WEEKEND

OCTOBER

- 11 **5th Annual Oyster Roast & BBQ** - de Witt Cottage & AWHM Anniversary Celebration
- 24 **Fall Festival** Who are you going to call? **Ghostbusters!** The mighty ghost catchers will be visiting the Cottage for a fun filled afternoon.



NOVEMBER

7 **Gingerbread Competition Extravaganza** begins and will be on exhibit until December 6, 2020

DECEMBER

5 **Photos with Santa** 1:00 – 4:00 pm

RENT THE COTTAGE

Did you know that the de Witt Cottage is available for rental? We would love to host your upcoming special occasion, ie. wedding, baby shower or reveal party, anniversary, or birthday party. community meeting, or social club. The Cottage is also available for wedding bridal party pictures for a small fee. Contact Martha Davenport, thedewittcottage@awhm.org for more information.

ONE LAST THOUGHT.....

Don't forget to like and follow The Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum and the Historic de Witt Cottage on Facebook and Instagram.

*“Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there some day.”
— A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh*

*Stay healthy,
Martha*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Friends of the AWHM,

Due to the current international emergency surrounding COVID-19, the doors to our beloved de Witt Cottage are closed. We continue to monitor the situation and follow recommendations and guidelines provided by the City of Virginia Beach and Governor Northam's Office. Please stay safe and healthy as we navigate this difficult time.

I would like to thank Mark and Margie Cromwell for their vision and support for the very successful fundraiser hosted at the museum. Their generosity raised just over \$16,000 for our organization as well as exposed new members of our community to our museum. Again, I send my sincere appreciation and gratitude.

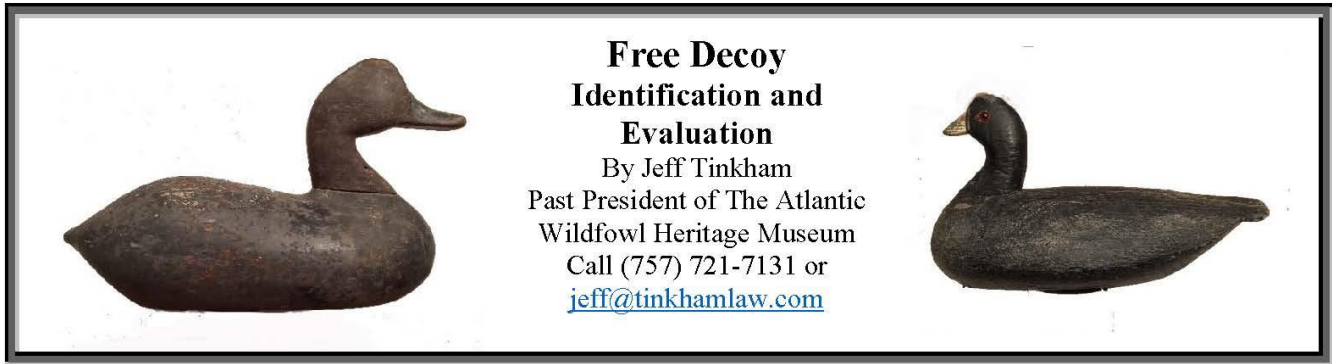
All for now as we weather this storm together. As always, should you have questions, please feel free to email me at HUDSONOUTDOORS@GMAIL.COM.

Stay safe and healthy.

Cheers.

Jason Seward





FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

I drove around my little section of Virginia Beach yesterday, to two grocery stores, four pharmacies, a gas station mini-mart, and a big box store, to obtain hand sanitizer, toilet tissue, and paper towels. I found none. Not even a travel sized bottle or package. On top of that scarcity, and despite living in an area where hurricanes can keep people inside for days, the cashier at one grocery store told me that their store registered the highest one-day sales ever, this past weekend. So far, COVID-19, known as coronavirus, has not yet created a crisis in our town, but the panic certainly has set in and all we've been asked to do is stay home.

As I consider this unfolding national crisis, I find something else at play that's quite remarkable: the spread of the coronavirus proves to me that as much as we might try to shut ourselves off from each other – whether by walls or border patrols or exclusive clubs or coded language or even the shield of hand sanitizer – our collective humanity is inescapable.

Witnessing how the virus can't be contained even within a country with strict barbaric laws and a Great Wall, I began reflecting on what it means to say, "Humanity is one." As an optimist, I am attracted to how our oneness is played out in beautiful ways, like the universal languages of love and laughter, or through art and access to education. The example of coronavirus, though, illustrates another, and equally valid side of our humanity, as we are forced to come together to devise solutions amidst our shared vulnerability.

My recent research on pandemics and communal disease tells me that there is only one common factor that each of us as individuals can control; that is opportunity. If we limit the opportunity for the disease to spread to us; we will likely survive this unfolding crisis.

"A time of crisis is not just a time of anxiety and worry. It gives a chance, an opportunity, to choose well or to choose badly."

- **Desmond Tutu**

So I will close now with the recommendation that each of you stay home, stay safe, and stay well. I look forward to seeing each of you when this crisis has passed and our hope for a brighter tomorrow has arrived. Spring is already arriving as the picture here suggests.



MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Wednesday: OPEN
Thursday: Joe Leo 10:00am-2:00pm
Friday: OPEN
Saturday: OPEN
Sunday: OPEN

Museum Grounds: Jacky Richards, Martha Davenport,
Nancy Lekberg Cheryl Garvey, Jan McGuire, Evie Fetterolf,
Mary Ann Biagetti, Tom Richards

MUSEUM STAFF

Lynn Hightower, Director
Martha Davenport, Events Coordinator

MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM
1113 Atlantic Avenue
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Telephone: 757.437.8432
Facsimile: 757.437.9055
Website: www.awhm.org
Email: director@atwildfowl.org

BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jason Seward, President Parke Atkinson, Vice President
Jim Mehne, Secretary Larry Davenport, Treasurer
Jim Briggs Mark Cromwell
George Powell Tom Richards
Jeff Tinkham William Walsh, Jr., Curator
Fletcher Bryant, President Emeritus

MUSEUM CARVERS

Monday Elaine Polizos
Tuesday: Open
Wednesday: Roy Carlson & Ed Morrison
Thursday: Open
"The Boathouse Boys" Carving Club: Al, Jamie, John, Pete
Friday: Susan Moritz
Saturday: Open
Sunday: Open

You can now pay your dues online at awhm.org !

Please understand that we depend on every dollar to operate the museum. If you have not paid your 2020 dues, please give serious consideration to sending them into the museum right away. Beginning March 1, 2020, any listed member who has not paid their dues will receive an invoice from the museum director requesting payment of their annual dues

2020 DUES

\$35/YR INDIVIDUAL
\$100/YR BRONZE
\$500/YR GOLD

\$50/FAMILY
\$200/YR SILVER
\$1,000/YR PRESIDENTS CIRCLE



**BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD
2020 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

NAME: _____ AMOUNT PAID _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ [CELL] _____

January 1, 2020 kicked off our Annual Membership Campaign. Each member is encouraged to find one new member to join the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild. Our very existence depends on growing the membership of the Guild. Please encourage everyone you know to become a member!

Please pass this newsletter on to any potential new member!

