

THE WILDFOWLER

AUGUST 2019

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

Back Bay Wildfowl Memories Virginia Beach Boardwalk (March 1888-Present)



Designed to accentuate the luxury hotel experience, the first boardwalk – a mere eight feet wide and built of wood decking - extended only the four blocks between the Princess Anne at Sixteenth Street and the Arlington Hotel at Twelfth Street. Each hotel was afforded access to the Boardwalk thoroughfare by way of a wood plank walkway, and allowed hotel guests to join visitors and socialites in leisurely strolls to take in the majestic beach beauty before them. The foundation of the wooden boardwalk was built on wooden creosote poles. When storms pushed ocean surge up on the beach; the water washed under the boardwalk doing little damage to the boardwalk.

First built in 1888, the boardwalk was designed in conjunction with the Princess Anne Hotel, one of the country's most luxurious resorts at the time. But, in 1907 tragedy struck when the boardwalk succumbed to a fire that began in the Princess Anne Hotel. Ironically, according to *The Beach: A History of Virginia Beach, Virginia* compiled by the Virginia Beach Public Library, a waterworks system, including hydrants and an 80,000-gallon holding tank, was in the process of being installed and was to have been in operation the next day; however, the system wasn't completed in time to save the hotel and boardwalk.

In 1926, residents and visitors were delighted at the construction of a new, concrete boardwalk along the same time as the opening of the Cavalier Hotel in 1927. The new walkway was three-and-a-half-miles long, but because of a concern for stroller safety, bicycles were prohibited in 1937. Later, the ban was lifted after construction of a separate side-road for cyclists.






Another accident struck in 1962 when a Nor'easter produced 20–30 foot waves that crashed into the boardwalk, breaking up the concrete and eating away many sections of the walkways. For more on the Ash Wednesday Storm, follow this link: <https://wtkr.com/2013/02/13/remembering-the-ash-wednesday-storm-of-1962/>


It wasn't until the 1990s that plans for a seawall came together so the boardwalk would be protected against the elements. The project took many weeks of demolishing and more than 125,000 truckloads of sand and 157 million pounds of sheet pile. At the end of it all, about 12 million pounds of rebar and 81,000 cubic yards of concrete were used to create the new boardwalk that now stretches between 40th Street and Rudee Inlet.

In order to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists to get from Rudee Inlet to the boardwalk, the Rudee Inlet Connector Walk was built. The Rudee Inlet Connector Walk is a 10-foot-wide concrete walkway that connects Winston Salem Avenue, under the Rudee Inlet Bridge, to the 4th Street parking lot, providing a lighted, direct linkage from the Marina district to the Oceanfront.

Though no longer built of wood, the now three mile long concrete Boardwalk stretching from First Street to Fortieth Street continues to host hundreds of visitors from around the world. Furthermore, thanks to the selfless efforts of the Beach's historical society, Boardwalk patrons are graced with priceless opportunities to experience some of the country's most significant historic milestones. From the bronze statue "[The Norwegian Lady](#)" and her story of tragedy at sea to the [1903 Life-Saving Station](#) that commemorates the birth of the U.S. Coast Guard, Boardwalk history is anything but lackluster. For over 120 years the Boardwalk has bore witness to the building of a nation and to the casualties of war. It has mended wounds inflicted of both storm damage and riot damage. The Virginia Beach Boardwalk offers its' patrons a window to the past, a pathway to treasured memories, and continues to play a significant roll in the character of [Virginia Beach, VA](#). The Boardwalk is just the beginning...



**Free Decoy
Identification and
Evaluation**
By Jeff Tinkham
Past President of The Atlantic
Wildfowl Heritage Museum
Call (757) 721-7131 or
jeff@tinkhamlaw.com







Upcoming Guild Events:

08/05, 12, 19, 26, /2019: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

Bring your work gloves and tools

08/13/2019: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

09/02/2019: Labor Day

09/03/2019 Back Bay Wildfowl Guild
Membership Meeting 7:00pm, Social 6:00pm
deWitt Cottage 1113 Atlantic Avenue

Speaker: **Chad Boyce (VA DGIF, Fisheries Biologist)**

"Back Bay, A Historical Perspective"

Bring an item for show and tell!

09/09, 16, 23, 30/2019: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

No meeting Monday September 2nd

09/17/2019: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

Sunday 10/13/2019 AWHM Fall Barbeque
deWitt Cottage 1113 Atlantic Avenue
1:00pm until 5:00pm

Save these Dates

10/12/2019 Lynnhaven River Now Festival
Saturday, October 12, 2019 from 11 am - 3 pm

Mount Trashmore Park located at
310 Edwin Dr. Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Volunteer Carvers and Docents needed

Sunday 10/13/2019 AWHM Fall Barbeque

12/03/2019 Christmas Party

Dine Out for The de Witt January, February, March, and April 2020

Lucky Oyster May 5, 2020



NEW EXHIBIT ADDED TO THE MUSEUM

The Historic deWitt Cottage opened its doors to reality television on Saturday, August 20, 2019. Producers from Sharp Entertainment in conjunction with Virginia Beach Weddings by Primo Events filmed the season finale of a reality TV show inside and in the gardens of the Cottage. Reality shows are known for drama and thankfully ours was minimal, missing wedding bands. They were quickly found and the ceremony and reception continued as planned. Our bride was the first to enjoy our new “Bridal dressing room” designed in the style and time of the deWitt sisters. The episode will air this fall. This was a huge opportunity for the Cottage and Museum to gain visibility as a preferred venue for the television and film industry. A huge thank you to Museum and Shore Gallery Gift Shop staff, our Custodian, Thomas, and our Garden volunteers. In addition, I would like to thank Ron and Shawn Form of Primo Events for providing this opportunity to us. (Due to confidentiality, we cannot reveal the show until the week it broadcasts.)



LYNNHAVEN RIVER NOW FALL FESTIVAL

The Lynnhaven River Now Fall Festival will be held on Saturday, October 12, 2019 from 11:00am until 3:00pm. It will be held at the Mount Trashmore Park, 310 Edwin Dr. Virginia Beach, VA 23462. We have rented space at this festival to demonstrate wood carving and other wildfowling arts. It is an opportunity to tell a couple of thousand people about the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. If you or someone you know would like to demonstrate a wildfowling art or simply inform people about our museum, please contact the museum Director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org.



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

Ivey Stevens 1876-1947 Creeds, VA

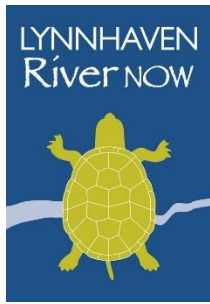
Ivey Stevens was a waterman and worked for John Williams at Cedar Island in Back Bay where he quickly developed his hunting, fishing, guiding and decoy carving skills. Ivey made a unique style of decoy with rounded cheeks, thick necks with a flair on the back and compact bodies. The only problem that I've observed with his decoys is that many have broken bills. The photo shows his miniature carvings that he made for family members, neighbors and hunting guests. Ivey's miniature carvings reflect his full size decoys and they are rare and hard to find.

For a free evaluation or identification of your decoys, contact Mark Cromwell at (757) 721-2746

4TH ANNUAL FALL BARBEQUE & OYSTER ROAST

Our 4th annual Fall Barbeque & Oyster Roast which will be held on Sunday, October 13, 2019 from 1:00pm until 5:00pm. It will be held on the Historic deWitt Cottage grounds at 1113 Atlantic Avenue. Tickets go on sale August 15, 2019. They will be \$40.00 each or \$70.00 for a couple in advance. Tickets will be \$50.00 each at the door! There are also four sponsor packages available. If you or someone you know would like to be a sponsor, please contact the museum Director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org. We are also in need of volunteers to help with setup before the event and take down after the event.





LYNNHAVEN RIVER NOW FALL FEST 2019

Mount Trashmore Park, 310 Edwin Dr.
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Volunteer Docents and Carvers needed

Saturday, October 12, 2019 11 am - 3 pm

For more information please contact the museum Director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org.

FEATURED PRODUCTS FROM SHORE GALLERY SEASIDE GIFT SHOP

On May 1, 2019 Shore Gallery and Design took possession of the gift shop in the deWitt Cottage. Using the new name of "Shore Gallery Seaside Gifts" Sean and Kathleen Rooney have created a unique collection of sea shore related items that are primarily made by skilled local artists. If you are down at the ocean front this week, make sure to stop in Shore Gallery Seaside Gifts at the historic DeWitt Cottage. Need a break from Sand and surf? Stop in our second location on the boardwalk. 1113 Atlantic Ave, Shore Gallery at the DeWitt Cottage.

Free gift with a \$10.00 purchase. SEE YOU AT THE SHORE!!!



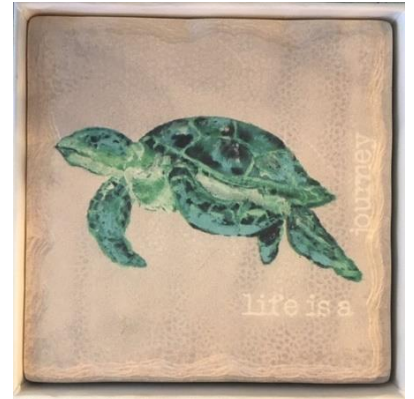
GET YOUR MERMAID ON



**BEAUTIFUL JEWELRY BY
LOCAL ARTIST
SHEREE MYERS**



**BEAUTIFUL ART BY
LOCAL ARTIST
CINDY HARRISON**



A SET OF FOUR COASTERS

Your support and generosity is always appreciated!



Ducks for Sale – Part II

The rise and fall of market hunting in America *By Mark Petrie, Ph.D.*

Market hunting in its most destructive form appeared first in the Chesapeake Bay region. Back then much of the country's population lived a relatively short distance from the bay, and transportation systems that relied on rail and boat were highly advanced. The punt gun, once despised by those who hunted ducks for sport, has become a nostalgic icon of the region's heritage.

The largest punt guns had a two-inch-diameter bore and could shoot two pounds of shot-the equivalent of about 25 12-gauge shells-each time they were fired. All these guns were muzzleloaders, and like other black-powder guns their effective range was about 50 yards. Some men mounted kerosene lamps on the bow of their sneak skiffs to hold the birds

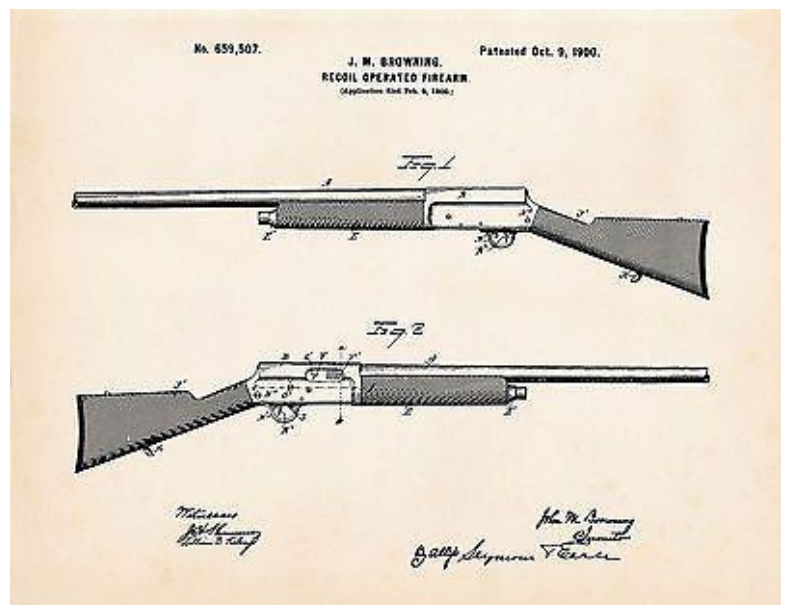


in place before shooting, a method akin to spotlighting for deer. Although the earliest guns were made in England, many were also manufactured in the United States. As Walsh points out in *The Outlaw Gunner*, the old story that nuts, bolts, and glass were substituted for shot is a complete fabrication. Real shot was cheap, and such haphazard alternatives would have damaged the barrels of these highly prized guns. And besides, can you imagine that customers paying top dollar for a canvasback dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria would willingly tolerate picking glass out of their teeth? Although we often associate punt guns with large kills, the reality was somewhat different. Forty to 50 birds was considered a good shot, and one shot a night was often the norm. Although punt guns offered the best means for killing birds at night,

better daytime options were evolving for the market hunter. Descriptions of market hunting west of the eastern seaboard rarely mention the big guns, proof that commercial hunters exploiting these new areas had turned to better technology.

That technology was the repeating shotgun. Pump guns made their first appearance in the 1880s, and by 1900 John Browning had developed the semiautomatic shotgun. Loaded with new smokeless-powder cartridges, these guns allowed market hunting to be practiced on an industrial scale from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Between 1910 and 1918, Atley Lankford of Elliot Island, Maryland, would kill 35,000 ducks with his Model 11 Remington semiauto. And he wasn't the only market hunter to make the most of the latest advancements in firearms.

For those who couldn't afford the new shotguns, or who preferred a quieter approach, there was



always the duck trap. Such traps were simple to build and were usually constructed of chicken wire and wooden stakes. Most were baited with corn. Catches of 40 to 50 ducks a night would have been common since a single man could easily maintain a dozen or more traps. The economics of this method are obvious when weighed against the punt gun-as are the safety advantages. Most of the ducks banded today are either captured in traps identical to the ones used by market hunters or are netted off the bow of an airboat at night using powerful lights to confuse the birds. Both these methods were invented by the market hunter, which is an interesting irony for modern-day waterfowl managers.

As repeating shotguns and rail lines encouraged the spread of commercial hunting, virtually all the great waterfowl migration and wintering areas came under fire. The Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana, Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee, the Illinois River Valley, Minnesota's Heron Lake, California's Central Valley, and even the Klamath Basin in Oregon were all heavily exploited. Put the right market hunters in a room and you'd get the first map of our nation's most important waterfowl habitats.

By the 1890s, the level of commercialization had become astounding. Game merchants and shipping companies began to employ 'commission hunters,' who were paid a percentage of the proceeds from their kill. These men hunted nearly year-round and followed the birds throughout their migrations. Employers supplied them with repeating shotguns, some of which held up to 11 shells, and shipped ammunition to their bases of operation. At the pinnacle of this highly organized commerce sat the canvasback.

Most of us are generally aware of the value placed on canvasbacks during the market hunting era. Brother, that ain't the half of it. If the market was right, a pair of 'prime' canvasbacks might be sold for the equivalent of \$100 in today's currency. That was many times the price paid for 'lesser' species such as pintails or wigeon. But even more fascinating is the national trade that grew up around the canvasback and the regional distinctions in flavor and price that drove the market, all of which is so well chronicled in Sawyer's book. Though waterfowl routinely appeared in humble kitchens and in the country's best restaurants, the quality of the birds varied widely among these venues.



Let's just admit it. Many of us who have dined on a canvasback duck are a little disappointed in the culinary experience. Sure they're good, but no better than a corn-fed mallard or a pintail that's stuffed itself with rice for three months. Why all the fuss? Well, the fuss has a Latin name-*Vallisneria americana*, or wild celery. Canvasbacks are very partial to this plant, and those that dined on it acquired a flavor like no other duck in the world. Wild celery is highly sensitive to changes in water quality, and pollution has eliminated much of it since the market hunting days. At present, your odds of shooting a canvasback that has ordered only from the wild celery menu just aren't very good.

Where a canvasback was shot was of keen interest to game merchants, fine restaurants, and food critics. Areas that harbored large amounts of wild celery, such as the Susquehanna Flats on upper Chesapeake Bay, Wisconsin's Lake Koshkonong, and Lake Surprise in Texas, were well known, and birds shot on these waters fetched the highest prices. These birds were destined for the finest restaurants in New York, Baltimore, and Chicago, while cans shot outside areas of wild celery production were more likely to enter local markets. Hindsight and modern biology tell us that this trend couldn't last. But it was social pressures rather than biological statistics that ended market hunting, or at least forced it underground. The same affluence that produced such widespread demand for ducks also produced something else; leisure time and the means to enjoy it. The number of people hunting waterfowl for sport increased dramatically after the Civil War. At first, the



line between sport and market hunters was blurred. Bag limits were nonexistent and sport hunters routinely killed far more birds than they could eat. Many of these birds were sold to defray the costs of the hunt.

As market hunting intensified, however, conflicts between these groups were inevitable. Many in the sport hunting community were wealthy businessmen with strong political contacts. As their duck hunting declined, they began to focus their political clout on the market hunter and his allies. Until the 20th century birds were the sole responsibility of the states, and federal regulation was absent. Laws to regulate hunting appeared as early as 1832, when Virginia banned the shooting of waterfowl at night. Other states enacted similar laws, but they were rarely enforced. What's more, these laws were aimed not at ending market hunting but at restricting where and how it might be practiced. They did nothing to stem the increasing commercialization of waterfowl.

By the early 20th century, sportsmen had been joined by groups such as the Audubon Society and even several of the nation's newspapers in calling for an end to market hunting. Federal involvement finally came in the form of the Lacey Act. Passed in 1900, the act outlawed any interstate bird traffic that violated existing state laws. Constitutional challenges to federal authority and a lack of funds for enforcement guaranteed its failure. A market hunter might have looked over his shoulder, but never took his finger off the trigger.

The feds tried again in 1913 with passage of the Weeks-McLean Act. This law transferred responsibility for migratory birds from the states to the federal government. The final chapter was written in 1918 with passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which was signed by the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada). The act increased federal jurisdiction over migratory birds and finally provided the dollars necessary for enforcement. Market hunting quickly moved from a profession to a criminal enterprise.

Looking back a hundred years, it's hard not to speculate about the toll market hunting took on waterfowl. Sawyer cites several examples of the slaughter-5,000 ducks shot in a day on the Susquehanna Flats, 1,000 ducks shipped every day from Reelfoot Lake, 100,000 birds marketed from Currituck Sound, 1,300 mallards killed by



one man in seven hours, 3 million ducks killed in one year in Louisiana. Even given these numbers, it's difficult to pinpoint the impact that market hunting had on continental duck populations. The damage done by commercial hunting would have varied widely among species and would have depended on their flavor, their wintering distribution relative to major markets, and their reproductive capacity to replenish the ranks. That said, there seems little doubt that canvasbacks paid a terrible price.

So much of the narrative around market hunting centers on the canvasback. Compared to many species, the bird seems ill suited to the demands placed on it. Since 1955, when we began estimating the size of duck populations, canvasback numbers have fluctuated between 400,000 and 800,000 birds. That's not a large number when you consider that over the same period mallard numbers fluctuated between 6 million and 11 million birds. Canvasbacks typically breed in permanent or semi-permanent wetlands, while most dabbling ducks rely on seasonal wetlands that often go dry. Permanent wetlands are also much more difficult to drain, and we've lost fewer of these habitats. If canvasback breeding habitat has fared better than that of most duck species, you have to wonder whether their numbers were ever that large to begin with. I'd wager that breeding canvasback populations didn't top 2 million or 3 million birds in many years, far fewer than our most common duck species today. There's simply no way they could have withstood the pressure of commercial hunting.

Market hunting would persist between the two world wars. Economic hardship and underground markets kept many men in the game, and the 1918 law only drove up the price. Still, the days of unfettered slaughter were over. In the end, the American people recognized that waterfowl were to be valued but not sold. For that we can be thankful. *Based in Vancouver, Washington, Dr. Mark Petrie is director of conservation planning in DU's Western Region.*



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

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Jim Mehne, Secretary Larry Davenport, Treasurer
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Mark Cromwell Phil Davenport
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MUSEUM CARVERS

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

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Tuesday: OPEN
Wednesday: OPEN
Thursday: OPEN
Friday: OPEN
Saturday: OPEN
Sunday: OPEN
Museum Grounds: Jacky Richards, Martha Davenport, Cheryl Garvey, Jan McGuire, Evie Fetterolf, Mary Ann Biagetti

MUSEUM STAFF

Lynn Hightower, Director Joe Leo, Operations Mgr.
Martha Davenport, Activity Coordinator

MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

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1113 Atlantic Avenue
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

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

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 2019 dues, please give serious consideration to sending them into the museum right away. Beginning March 1, 2019, any listed member who has not paid their dues will receive an invoice from the museum director requesting payment of their annual dues

2019 DUES

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

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



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD 2019 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

NAME: _____ AMOUNT PAID _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ [CELL] _____

January 1, 2019 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!

