

THE WILDFOWLER

DECEMBER 2018

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

The Princess Anne Hotel – The Forgotten Icon of the Birth of the Virginia Beach Oceanfront



It was a bygone era when men would dress in fine linen suits and women would don beautiful dresses to take a summer's eve stroll along Virginia Beach's wood-planked boardwalk. Music would float in the air from the nearby dance hall and sounds of jubilant glee would crescendo from the nearby hotel's casino. It was a summer paradise where the outside worries of the gentry disappeared on the sands of the beach and new hopes glistened like the beautiful sparkles of the sun's reflection on the waves.

The Princess Anne Hotel marked the birth of this paradise, ushering a new era of resort life to Virginia Beach. Built in 1880 under the name Virginia Beach Hotel, it started as a modest hotel with only 50 rooms. What set this hotel apart was that it had a depot for the Norfolk & Southern Railroad that ran almost literally into its lobby. This opened up the oceanfront to residents in Norfolk and all other connecting cities. Soon, people started coming in from all around to bask in the sunshine and relax by the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1887, the Virginia Beach Hotel was sold and remodeled. It would then be baptized The Princess Anne Hotel, quickly becoming an elite retreat for the famous and wealthy that flocked to the Virginia Beach oceanfront in droves. Soon, new hotels began popping up but none could compare to the majestic grandeur that the Princess Anne Hotel held.

Aside from its proximity to the oceanfront (having its own private walkway to the boardwalk), the Princess Anne was a wonder to behold. It was so large that the hotel covered two blocks, between 14th and 16th Streets. Amenities included a post office, bowling alley, dance halls, casinos as well as fresh and salt

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water soaking baths. This all-inclusive refuge was known for its fine cuisine as well as the more fanciful dancing that was done in the dance halls

The Princess Anne Hotel had room for up to 400 guests and would often draw the rich and the famous. Amongst those that graced the hotel's hallways included: Presidents Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland, politician William Jennings Bryant, labor leader Samuel Gompers, Cornelius Vanderbilt and was a favorite vacation spot of Alexander Graham Bell and his family. The Princess Anne Hotel is where Bernard Holland was first employed as a Clerk for the railroad.

Guests would wake up at dawn and spend the early morning hours on the beach, avoiding the harsh exposure of the afternoon sunshine. Afterwards, they would often take the train into Norfolk to see and be seen by the rest of the local and visiting elite. After catching a late afternoon train back to the Princess Anne Hotel, they would dine on fine meals and dance to their hearts content to popular waltzes of the day. Then, they would retire to their luxury accommodations, preparing for the next morning.

In 1906, the Virginia General Assembly voted to allow the resort area of Virginia Beach to become a separate entity from then Princess Anne County. The first council of the newly-incorporated city met for the first time at the Princess Anne Hotel on March 15, 1906. It was there that many important community functions were established, including a police and fire department.



Early in the morning on June 10, 1907, a fire began in the kitchen of the Princess Anne Hotel and quickly spread throughout. Sergeant Carl Boescher (of the Richmond Light Artillery Blues) hurried to help get the 110 guests and employees out of the hotel. Within a few hours, the hotel that was the anchor of the Virginia Beach oceanfront had fallen completely to the ground, taking almost five blocks of other buildings with it. All guests and employees escaped except Emma Clark (the hotel's chambermaid) and the hotel's steward, John Eaton, both perishing in the fire. The manager was so emotionally overcome that he attempted to throw himself in the ocean to take his own life. However, friends and guests restrained him.

The estimated loss of the hotel's structure came to \$185,000 (approximately \$4,205,284 today). In addition, the hotel's safe had been left open and thousands of dollars worth of valuables belonging to the guests along with the hotel's hard receipts were completely lost. With only \$83,000 (approximately \$1,886,695 today), the owners decided not to rebuild the Princess Anne Hotel and the once famous and sought after landmark was lost to the ages.

Today, no trace of the beautiful hotel remains. The blocks in which it sat are now home to a fishing pier, high rise hotels and restaurants. The elegant life that defined and punctuated the world that the Princess Anne Hotel saw now merely haunt the streets. But standing on the cement boardwalk late one evening, you may catch yourself hearing waltzes floating in the breeze, harkening back to a forgotten time that disappeared in the ashes of the iconic resort.



Upcoming Guild Events:

12/04/2018 Christmas Party 6:00pm – 9:00pm
FOP #8 961 S. Birdneck Road – Potluck Supper

12/03, 10, 17, 2018: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
Bring your work gloves and tools
(No Meeting on December 24th or 31st)

12/18/2018: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

01/07, 14, 21, 28, 2019: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
Bring your work gloves and tools

01/21/2019: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

Save these Dates

Dine Out for The de Witt

Monday 01/28/2019 IL'giardino 910 Atlantic Avenue 5:30pm-8:00pm

Tuesday 02/12/2019 The Pub 1001 Laskin Road 5:30pm-8:00pm

Tuesday 03/26/2019 Surf Rider 1375 Oceana Blvd 5:30pm-8:00pm

Monday 04/24/2019 The Raven 1200 Atlantic Avenue 5:30pm-8:00pm

Tuesday May 7, 2019 Lucky Oyster 5:30pm-8:00pm

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE HONOREES

L. Clay Camp, Jr.

John Childs

Mark & Margie Comwell

Herb and Carolyn Culpepper

Dominion Energy, Max Bartholomew

ESG Corp., Edward Garcia, Michael Gelardi, Brittney Jeffries,

Joshua Kellam, and Andrea Kilmer

Thomas and Sandra Giroux

Land and Coates, Inc.

Williard Insurance Agency, William Williard

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!



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 Assor.

DINE OUT FOR THE deWITT

Dine out for the deWitt starts on **January 28, 2018** at IL'Giardino's Restorante 910 Atlantic Avenue (one block south of the deWitt Cottage). This is the program where you take your spouse out to dinner and the restaurant donates a percentage of what your meal cost to the museum. Easy peasy; you go out to dinner with your friends, family, or potential new guild members and the museum receives a nice donation. So let's see how many people we can pack into IL'Giardino's Restorante.

FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

Well, we are about to put another calendar year in the archives of the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. We have accomplished a great deal over the past year. I have included a complete list in this edition of the newsletter. The two accomplishments I am most proud of are the continued outreach to local youth groups and the opening of our online gift shop. Now I just need to get all of you to go to it and shop. It's a great way to support the museum.

I want to thank everyone who came out for the Fall Barbecue and Oyster Roast. It was a great party. In an update of that event, Parke Atkinson had donated a full day deer hunt on the Eastern Shore for our silent auction. It was purchased by a friend of our new President Elect Jason Seward and an active duty member of the United States Navy who had just returned from a tour in Iraq. Unfortunately, Jason couldn't make the trip but Evans and a fellow Naval officer drove over at 3:30 in the morning to get in a full day of hunting. They ate raw, steamed, fried oysters, crab cakes, venison, and burgers while trading stories and hanging out by the woodstove between morning and afternoon hunts. The wind left them empty-handed in the morning but after calmer conditions prevailed in the afternoon the boys were able to put three in the meat locker. An incredible day was had by all. Thank you Parke for your unending support of our museum.

I hope to see every one of you at the annual Christmas Party on Tuesday December 4th in the Fraternal Order of Police 961 S. Birdneck Road Virginia Beach, VA 23451 – 6:00pm. Please make you plans now to attend and reserve your place by calling the director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org.



Tiny U.S. Island is Drowning. Residents Deny the Reason

Water will one day swamp historic Tangier Island, in the Chesapeake Bay. But its inhabitants argue that it's erosion, not climate change.

By **Simon Worrall** Reprinted from National Geographic Magazine



Few of us could find [Tangier Island](#) on a map. A tiny sliver of mud and marsh grass in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay, it is one of the most isolated communities in America. But many of us, if we are lucky, will have tasted its most famous product, [soft shell crab](#), a delicacy that has made the island famous worldwide. But as Earl Swift explains in his new book, [Chesapeake Requiem](#), the future for the island, and numerous other [low-lying communities](#) across the world, is not looking bright, as a result of rising seas due to climate change.

Tangier Island is a squiggle of mud and marsh in the middle of the [Chesapeake Bay](#), which is about 30 miles wide at that point, and a dozen miles from the nearest mainland port, Crisfield, Maryland. It is home to roughly 460 people, all of them descended from the first settler on the island, a guy named [Joseph Crocket](#), who moved there in 1778. Though it's only 100 miles from Washington, D.C., it's among the most isolated communities in the East. The island's isolation has spawned a [style of speech](#) that you'll not hear anywhere else in America.

For 240 years the islanders have earned their sustenance from the waters surrounding the island, which are rich in fish, crab, and oysters. They've especially made a name for themselves in harvesting the [Chesapeake Bay blue crab](#), which is the chief ingredient for Maryland-style crab cakes. They are also the world's primary source for soft shell crab, a delicacy that many restaurants on the Eastern seaboard serve.

I don't think the islanders find the rising water around them to be a hoax. They can see it happening with their own eyes. But they believe that simple erosion, caused by wind-driven waves, has been the cause of the [island's shrinkage](#), which has lost an average of 8 acres per year since 1850.



Clearly, if you take a step back and look at what's happened here, wind-driven erosion does not explain what's occurring. Not only do you have water chipping away at Tangiers' edges, you also have it percolating up through the ground. This is an amphibious place to live. The slightest storm brings water up out of the marsh and the roads, and an astronomical high tide will make ponds of everyone's yards. A lot of what's happening—the ponding, the drowning of marsh, the widening of internal waterways—are [standard by-products of climate change-induced sea level rise](#).



Tangier lives a calendar defined by sea life. From March until November, the men fish up crab. From December through the end of February, they go after oysters. The crabbing fleet is divided into two. Some Tangier men fish up hard-shell crabs, which are the kind you see at backyard crab boils, and whose meat winds up in crab cakes. A perhaps greater number chase soft shell crabs, or “peelers,” which are hard crabs about to molt.

A crab will offer several physical signals that it's approaching that molting time, so a peeler crabber will pull up his pots, look for those signs and, having identified a crab as a peeler, put it in a saltwater tank, wait until it molts, then pluck it out of the water, put it on ice, and send it to market. As long as you pull it out of the water, its new shell, which is as soft and pliable as skin for the first several hours, will not harden.

You have to work really hard at [both kinds of crabbing](#) in different ways. A hard crabber has to catch *a mess* of crabs to make a living, because he's paid by the bushel. At the height of the season, he might make \$100 per bushel. Meanwhile, a soft-shell crabber—a peeler crabber—will sell by the dozen, so he makes a lot more money per crab, but catches far fewer crabs. He also has to work around the clock to fish them up because you can't let them sit in the water after they've shed; their new shell will harden and then they'll be worthless.

It's a deeply religious place, peopled by old-school Methodists, more akin to the old [Shouting Methodists](#) of pre-Civil War U.S. And sometimes faith is all a Tangier man has. When you're out in a shallow crab boat in five-foot seas and the deck is pitching like a bad carnival ride, faith is a natural thing to turn to because at times like those you only have so much control of your circumstances. Tangier men—and that term refers to both men and women, by the way—find themselves in those circumstances routinely.





Weather factors into everything they do, whether it's going out to harvest crab or oysters, or just getting to the mainland to do some grocery shopping or go to the doctor. As their reliance on the water increased through their history, so did their reliance on the scripture and they became strident in their religious beliefs.

Warner Bros. was looking for a location for some of the outdoor scenes in the movie "Message in A Bottle." They sent location scouts up and down the East Coast and some came to Tangier and found it was ideal. So they approached the town council and gave them copies of the script, which featured scenes of beer drinking

and PG13 sex. The town council responded by insisting that, if the movie was going to film in Tangier, those scenes had to be altered to make them palatable to the religious people of Tangier. Warner Brothers said, "Thanks, but we'll look elsewhere." And they did.

What communities like Tangier represent is the earliest chapter in what is going to be a very painful story, not only in the American experience, but the experience of governance and civilization around the world. Places like Tangier force us to confront a problem that's going to grow exponentially in the next few years: *how to decide* what is saved and what is surrendered to the sea because we lack the time, money, and technical means to save every place.

There are big cities, like New York or Miami, which clearly are efficient uses of our money and efforts to save. But places like Tangier abound, small places that are sacred ground in one way or another due to their history and the spice that they bring to the national dish. And there are similar places all over the world, like [the Maldives](#).



As far as my experience is concerned, I came away filled with admiration. I've been a journalist for 40 years and I don't recall a story in which I've been so deeply embedded in another culture as I was here. In many respects, it is a foreign culture to what I experience daily in Charlottesville. I don't know that I would want to change places but I admire the people of Tangier Island and envy their connection to place. This is a place where the concept of "home" is alive and well, and far stronger than in the vast majority of places on the mainland. They feel a deep, personal connection to that little dome of mud.



Stop!

Don't be a Grinch this Christmas!

Join Us

Tuesday, December 4, 2018 6:00 p.m.

Virginia Beach FOP #8
961 S. Birdneck Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23451



Menu is Pot-Luck Supper. **Free** for all members and their guests!

Meat, setups, coffee, tea, lemonade, Beer & Wine Provided
BYOB on all other alcohol.

You must call the Museum Director at 757-437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org to let us know what dish you are bringing.

We also need to know how many people are coming with you.

Live Music by The Tiki Bar Band



Let's Party!

Silent Auction!





ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2017/2018

- Held an offsite half-day retreat (strategic planning) For the Board of Directors.
- The Curatorial Committee (Bill Walsh, Jeff Tinkham and Mark Cromwell) has procured fine exhibits – some of the best Virginia and North Carolina Antique decoys in the nation.
- New Board Members (Parke Atkinson and Tom Richards this year) (Mark Cromwell and Jason Seward last year) (in the New Year Jim Briggs, Jimmy Coppedge and Andrea Kilmer).
- B3, Beer and Bourbon at The “Brickhouse Festival last Spring.
- 3rd consecutive annual successful BBQ (new social and fundraiser).
- Had our first formal gallery opening here at the museum
- continuing to secure very interesting and informative speakers Jack Cox and Billy Crockett
- Security surveillance system upgrade.
- Great monthly newsletter.
- Garden Club joined the Virginia Beach Council of Garden Clubs and won an award of merit for our outstanding coastal gardens
- Irrigation system upgraded and fully operational.
- Hired part-time employees for 2nd year in a row.
- Grants – Dominion Energy \$2,500.
- Restaurant socials; Dine Out for The deWitt.
- Invested savings in mutual funds.
- Hot dog vendor failed miserably.
- Added to our Advisory Board.
- 5 Open houses and 6 facility/grounds rentals.
- Brick and Plaque sales continue to improve.
- Continued a year-end fund raising letter.
- Did an inventory and took pictures of all carvings and flat art owned by the museum.
- Revised our mission statement.
- Stabilized the finances of our operational account.
- Put in place business practices that address important performance metrics
- Gift shop operations are being evaluated and optimized.
- School children – groups – community outreach.
- Website updated and revised (ongoing annual task).
- Opened our online gift shop (see our website at awhm.org).



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

, President Wayne Jarman, Vice President
Jim Mehne, Secretary Roger Shope, Treasurer
Mark Cromwell Jeff Tinkham
Parke Atkinson Jason Seward
Tom Richards William Walsh, Jr., Curator
Fletcher Bryant, President Emeritus

MUSEUM CARVERS

Monday: Closed
Tuesday: Pete DiPietro
Wednesday: Roy Carlson & Ed Morrison
Thursday: Hank Grigolite
"The Boathouse Boys" Carving Club: Al, Jamie, John, Pete & Charlie
Friday: Susan Moritz
Saturday: Gentry Childress & Ben Purvis
Sunday: Closed

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Tuesday: OPEN
Wednesday: Archie Johnson 10a-2p
Thursday: Joe Leo 10a-2p
Friday: OPEN
Saturday: OPEN
Sunday: Closed
Museum Grounds: Nancy Lekberg, Lori Bagley, Lois Stickles, Jacky Richards, and Lena Lindsay

MUSEUM STAFF

Lynn Hightower, Director Ann Smith, Gift Shop Manager

MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Telephone: 757.437.8432
Facsimile: 757.437.9950
Website: www.awhm.org
Email: director@atwildfowl.org

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

January 1, 2019 will kick off our Annual Membership Campaign. A lot of changes in the dues structure have been approved by the Board of Directors for the coming new year. Each of you were mailed a brochure outlining the changes for the coming year. If you have any questions about the changes please call the Director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org .

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 will kick 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!

