

THE WILDFOWLER

DECEMBER 2019

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

Back Bay Wildfowl Guild Memories

IT WAS APRIL 1914 and Bernard P. Holland, in his second term as mayor of Virginia Beach, was fighting to save the site of the Princess Anne Hotel -destroyed by fire seven years before -from being chopped into lots and sold for cottages.



From a 2010 story by Paul Clancy for Virginian-Pilot

But Norfolk Southern Railroad Co. was on the brink of receivership and couldn't wait any longer for a hotel deal to come through. The company, a distant relative of the present Norfolk Southern Railway, had absorbed another line that ran trains to the Beach, built the hotel and sold land for cottages. Holland had worked for the railroad as superintendent, selling land for development, but now the shoe was on the other foot.

"It would be disastrous to us as well as to the company," Holland wrote to company President C. H. Hix. "The hotel and the Pavilion have been the sole inducement to the investors who make the Beach their homes and to businesses here."

The letters are part of a collection of Holland's papers that have been given to the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society, in the care of Virginia Wesleyan College, by Ann Holland, his granddaughter. They provide a rare glimpse into the personal and business dealings of Holland, a former railroad superintendent who became the first mayor of the small town of Virginia Beach in 1906. He served two years, then returned for another term in 1913.

When he first came to the Beach in the mid-1880s one of Holland's papers says, there was just one cottage and a partly built hotel, the luxurious Virginia Beach Hotel, later the Princess Anne, would soon open, attracting the rich, famous and powerful. Holland was in the thick of it, selling off





lots for the railroad. The papers include deeds he signed on property along Atlantic Avenue, including 1,200 acres north of Rudee Inlet for \$125,000.

One deed is for an "Infant Sanatorium. There's an 1893 train schedule (leave Virginia Beach 7:30 am, arrive Norfolk 8:20 am.), and a brochure for the Princess Anne touting "the most beautiful beach on the Atlantic Ocean, a site of about 1600 acres, one thousand of which is covered by a primeval pine forest, many of whose trees are more than a century old." There's a list of property owners that includes Barton Myers, a

prominent Norfolk businessman and former mayor. There's also the 1909 deed of sale for Holland's own commodious cottage on 12th Street to Cecile Amelie and Cornelius de Witt. The de Witt Cottage remained in that family for decades until it became the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum.

After retiring from the railroad, Holland became a shop keeper, telegraph operator, and postmaster. He also rented out a portion of his store for the town's first library. For history buffs, there are minutes of a 1903 property owners' meeting that included B.P. Holland and C. de Witt. The sense of the meeting was they wanted to "incorporate Virginia Beach as a town." A committee was appointed to draft a charter permitting the town to levy taxes, lay out streets, make bylaws, and provide for fines and penalties and "imprisonment for violators thereof."

There's even a yellowed Norfolk Landmark newspaper clipping with the headline, "May incorporate resort as a town." This, of course, came to pass and eventually the tiny beach town became a city that swallowed Princess Anne County whole.

The loss of the hotel would be a huge setback for the new town. Holland urged the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce to step in, then tried to gather a group of residents to buy the land and hold it for a "first class hotel." But he couldn't pull it off. There are letters from a real estate company pressing for a decision, and finally one from Norfolk Southern's Hix regretting that "on account of our financial condition we could not see our way clear to accede!"

Stephen S. Mansfield, archivist for Virginia Wesleyan, said the Holland papers fill several gaps in the historical record of the resort city, they also show "the eclectic nature of his influence and interests. He really did personify the Beach back then and provided a bridge between the railroad and the community that came about."



Bernard Holland in front of his store 1940



Upcoming Guild Events:

12/03/2019 Christmas Party 6:00pm – 9:00pm
FOP #8 961 S. Birdneck Road – Potluck Supper

12/02, 09, 16, 2019: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
Bring your work gloves and tools
(No Meeting on December 23rd, 24th or 31st)

12/07/2019: Photos with Santa
At the deWitt Cottage
11:00am to 2:00pm

12/17/2019: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

01/06, 13, 20, 27, 2020: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
Bring your work gloves and tools

01/21/2020: Board Meeting
6:00 pm

Save these Dates

Dine Out for The de Witt

Monday 01/13/2020 IL'giardino 910 Atlantic Avenue 5:30pm-8:00pm

Tuesday 02/11/2020 Surf Rider 1375 Oceana Blvd 5:30pm-8:00pm

Monday 03/??/2019 Waterman's Surfside Grill 415 Atlantic Avenue 5:30pm-8:00pm

Tuesday 04/07/2020 The Pub 1001 Laskin Road 5:30pm-8:00pm

Lucky Oyster May 5, 2020

DINE OUT FOR THE DEWITT

Dine out for the deWitt starts on **January 13, 2020** 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.



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.

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.

I want to thank everyone who came out for the Fall Barbecue and Oyster Roast. It was a great party! Thank you all for your continued support!

I hope to see every one of you at the annual Christmas Party on Tuesday December 3rd at Horizon's (Formerly 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.

Dine out for the deWitt starts on Monday January 13, 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 member and the museum receives a nice donation. So let's see how many people we can pack into IL'Giardino's Restorante.



Stop!

Don't be a Grinch this Christmas!

Join Us

Tuesday, December 3, 2019 6:00 p.m.

At Horizons

Formerly 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.

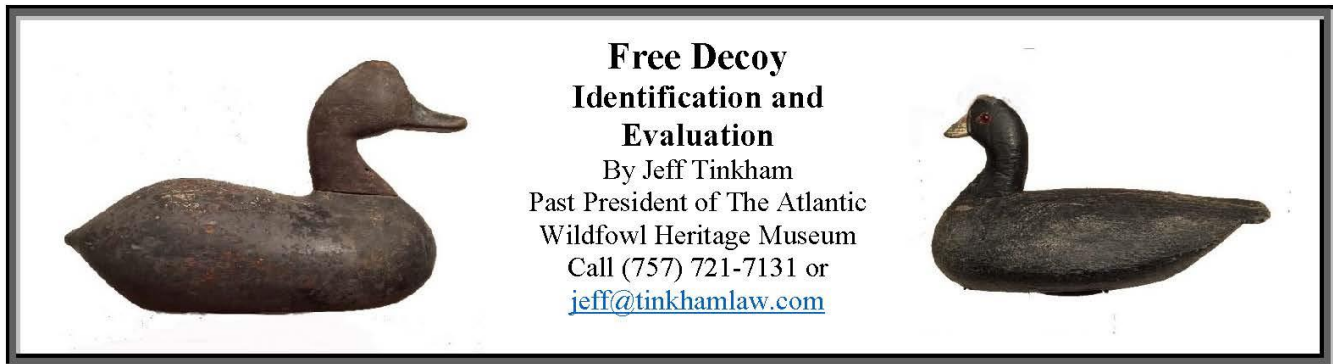
Live Music by The Tiki Bar Band



Let's Party!

Silent Auction!





ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2018/2019

- Held an offsite Full-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 (Phil Davenport and Jim Briggs this year) (Parke Atkinson and Tom Richards last year).
- B3, Beer and Bourbon at The "Brickhouse" Festival last Spring.
- 4th consecutive annual successful BBQ & Oyster Roast (new social and fundraiser).
- Had our second formal gallery opening here at the museum
- continuing to secure very interesting and informative speakers Chad Boyce, Mark McNair and Zack Jester
- 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 3 years in a row.
- Irrigation system upgraded and fully operational.
- Hired part-time employees for 3rd year in a row.
- Grants-Dominion Energy \$3,500.
- Restaurant socials; Dine Out for The deWitt.
- Invested savings in mutual funds.
- Requested a Conditional Use Permit for Wedding Venue.
- 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.
- 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).
- Operated our online gift shop (see our website at awhm.org)



SATURDAY • 7 DECEMBER 2019 • 11AM TO 2PM

PHOTOS • WITH • SANTA & THE RED TRUCK

ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM



**\$10.00
DONATION**



**ACTIVITIES
FOR KIDS**



**GIFT SHOP
OPEN HOUSE**

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HISTORIC DE WITT COTTAGE



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

MUSEUM CARVERS

Monday Closed
Tuesday: Closed
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

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

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

January 1, 2020 will kick off our Annual Membership Campaign. If you have any questions about Membership please call the Director at (757) 437-8432 or email him at director@atwildfowl.org .

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 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!

