

THE WILDFOWLER

JULY 2019

A PUBLICATION OF THE ATLANTIC WILDFOWL HERITAGE MUSEUM

Back Bay Wildfowl Memories

Don Lee Harris (July 11, 1941 – March 22, 2019)



By Gail Harris

Don- a native of Virginia Beach, Virginia began hunting when he was 17 years of age in Back Bay and later joined hunt clubs in Surry, Virginia and Amelia, Virginia. Hunting soon prompted his interest in collecting, studying, and learning to appreciate old decoys and the history behind them. Don was a collector of old decoys and artifacts for about 52 years and has a large collection of decoys, shell boxes, powder tins, etc. Don had a great respect for the beauty of decoys as well as for the carvers who spent hours upon hours dedicated to their skill and work of art.

Don had been asked on numerous occasions to identify old decoys and to judge decoys, which he considered an honor. He specialized in Back Bay, Knotts Island, Currituck and Mason decoys. His involvement in collecting decoys lead to Don carving decoys to hunt over. Later he expanded to carving of decorative decoys and shore birds. His carving of old style Gunning Shore Birds won him first place one year in Virginia Beach. He also won first place with his Root-Head Shore Bird one year.

Don was a very active member of the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild. He and Bud Coppedge were in charge of the Buy-Sell & Swap section way back when the shows started under tents and continued after the shows were moved to indoor location. Don greeted and met people at other shows, collected business cards and he created a list to send invitations to attend our show in the "Buy-Sell & Swap section". He also collected all the checks for table rentals. Later the list would be given to Bud for placement locations in the show. The lay out began.



Bud and Don worked well as a team. Don, Archie Johnson and Bud Coppedge were close friends and traveled to many a show together. They still continued their friendship.

Don and Bud attended shows together selling decoys, etc. Don also did pins, clocks, shorebirds, fish, frogs, etc. The week before Don passed away Bill Walsh called to tell him a large swan that he carved was on-line being bid on. That really pleased Don and made his day.

When Don's health began to make it impossible for him to travel, he had several dealers who would come to the house to purchase his decoys. Mr. Jester and Bud also sold decoys for Don. Some of Don's work is for sale in the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. Don had a professor from New Mexico that stopped by our home to collect Don's decoys for his personal collection as well as for the college. This professor returned home and wrote an article on Don and his work for the college. He was very impressed.

Don was a retired District Fire Chief in the Fire Department at the Norfolk Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia. He also served our country in the United States Navy. He also worked with his family in the motel business in Virginia Beach. Don was a life member of the Virginia Beach Rescue Squad. He served his country and his city well.

Don was a devoted family man and his family will continue to take great pride in the talents he had and the collection he created not just of old decoys, shorebirds and artifacts from the past but his own creative works of art. Consisting of canvas covered decoys, wooden miniature decoys, shorebirds, fish and frogs, clocks, pins, etc. He has left his mark!

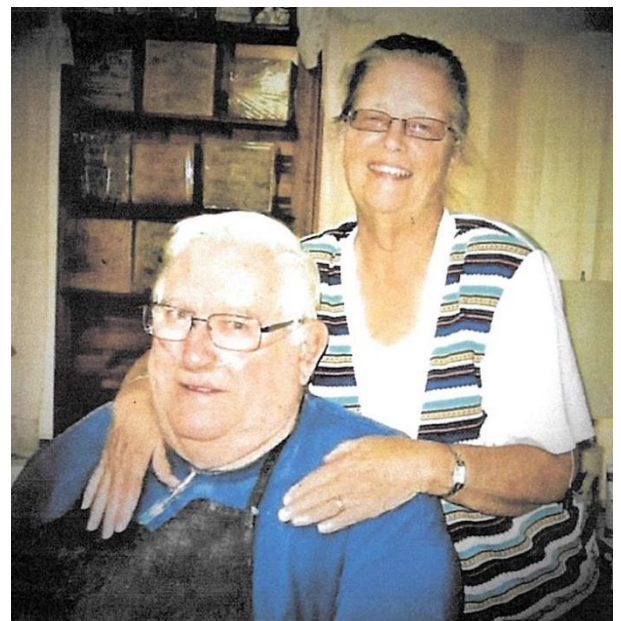
Don loved it when the younger generation began to stop by our home to view his collections from the past and his art work. He loved it when they asked questions and the conversation moved into hunting on Back Bay and other areas. Some of these young men wanted to come back and watch him from the beginning to the actual covering the canvas over the frame he had created. (the total creation from beginning to end!). He took great pride in his work and if he did not think it looked good – it did not leave the house.

Before closing I would like to send Bill Walsh a special "Thank You" for calling Don and telling him that his swan decoy was being sold on line (even showed his signature). What a blessing for Don. Bill made this call to Don the week before he passed away.

To Archie Johnson -Thank You for being a faithful and devoted friend to Don all of these years. Don treasured your friendship and always looked forward to your visits.

We – Don's family -will always treasure special stories he told, his carving talents, his knowledge of so many things, his sense of humor, his laughter, his smile, his presence and especially his love and total commitment to his family. Love never dies. He will live on in our hearts forever.

“Mr. Duck Man” can now Rest In Peace.
I will love you always and forever
Your Loving Wife
Gail Harris
I am proud to wear your name.





Upcoming Guild Events:

07/04/2019: July 4th Holiday

07/16/2019: Board Meeting

~~6:00 pm~~ **Cancelled**

07/1, 8, 15, 22, 29/2019: de Witt Garden Club

10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

08/20/2019: Board Meeting

6:00 pm

08/05, 12, 19, 26,/2019: de Witt Garden Club

10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Tuesday

09/02/2019: Labor Day

09/03/2019 Back Bay Wildfowl Guild

Membership Meeting 7:00pm, Social 6:00pm

Speaker: TBA

09/9, 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

Save these Dates

10/13/2019 Fall BBQ & Oyster Roast

12/03/2019 Christmas Party

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

Lucky Oyster May 5, 2020



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

George S. Waterfield 1885-1926

George was born and raised on Knotts Island, NC. He was a market hunter and hunted the waters south of Knotts Island. His decoys were made out of juniper wood and were mostly small and rounded with chipped tails and nicely carved heads. Most of his decoys have G.W. carved in the bottom.

George also carved a stand of decoys for Cliff Johnson the founder of Johnson & Johnson. These decoys are larger and have a raised head shelf with a curve back neck and his signature long chip tail.



Cliff Johnson had a hunting lodge at the southern end of Knotts Island and George Waterfield would be Cliff's personal hunting guide.

In the summer of 1926 George Waterfield killed himself after discovering that his wife, Blanch was having an affair.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Friends of the AWHM,

My best to you for the upcoming July 4th holiday. As we fire up the grills and enjoy time with family and friends, please pause to honor all those that have served, are serving, and will serve in the United States Armed Forces. The sacrifices made by so many allow us to enjoy the freedoms we enjoy every day.

Let us also take this time to remember our community members that were taken on May 31st at Building 2 of the Virginia Beach Municipal Center. Our hearts go out to their friends and family, who wish for one more day with their loved ones that never returned home from work. You will never be forgotten.

Laquita C. Brown, Ryan Keith Cox, Tara Welch Gallagher, Mary Louise Gayle, Alexander Mikhail Gusev, Joshua A. Hardy, Michelle "Missy" Langer, Richard H. Nettleton, Katherine A. Nixon, Christopher Kelly Rapp, Herbert "Bert" Snelling, and Robert "Bobby" Williams.



As always, I share my deepest appreciation for the support you provide to our museum and guild. We continue to evaluate and adjust our operations to position the AWHM to be a premier cultural and community center serving Virginia Beach and Coastal Virginia.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Jacky Richards, Martha Davenport, Cheryl Garvey, Jan McGuire, Evie Fetterolf, Mary Ann Biagetti and the rest of the De Witt Garden Club for all of their time and efforts on the museum grounds. We have the most attractive facility at the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Again, this is all due to their loving care and attention.

All for now. Again, I always welcome an opportunity to connect with you. Your input and feedback is important to moving forward. Happy 4th of July!

Cheers.

Jason Seward

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|  | <p>Free Decoy Identification and Evaluation By Jeff Tinkham Past President of The Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum Call (757) 724-7131 or jeff@tinkhamlaw.com</p> |  |
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Do you love to garden?

Thank You for all the hard work: Jacky, Martha, Cheryl, Evie, Jan, and Mary Ann!

deWitt Cottage Garden Club



If you enjoy gardening in a challenging environment; then we have a project for you!

Join with us and be a part of history here in Virginia Beach!

Contact the Director – Lynn Hightower

director@atwildfowl.org (757) 437-8432



FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

I hope everyone is having a great 4th of July week. If you are traveling I hope you will exercise great care and be especially safety conscious.



On May 31, 2019 our hometown suffered a horrific tragedy! The workplace shooting in Building #2 of the Princess Anne Municipal Complex! It changed the lives of hundreds of people forever; but, it especially changed the lives of the families who lost loved ones and it impacted the families of those who were critically injured. A Tragedy Fund was established by the City through the United Way to financially assist all of the families that were impacted. So far that fund has collected more than 3.5 million dollars. We here at the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum want to do our part to help these families heal. We are producing a black enamel ribbon pin trimmed in gold with the gold letters #VBSTRONG on it. (Picture left). The ribbon pins will be available through our Website: awhm.org and online gift shop, in the museum's Shore Gallery Seaside gift shop, from an Atlantic Wildfowl

Heritage Museum Board Member, or at The Shore Gallery Store located at 1556 Laskin Road Suite 138 in Hilltop North Shopping Center. The pins will be free. We simply ask that you make a onetime donation for the Virginia Beach Tragedy Fund. We want to make sure that the flow of money into this fund never stops and that we never ever forget these families.

The Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum's online gift shop is one year old! Please visit awhm.org/giftshop and browse our collection of items for sale. We will be adding new items daily throughout the summer. 10% of every online purchase goes to help rescue injured wildfowl or protect environmentally sensitive wetlands. Shipping on every purchase is **FREE!**

The museum gardens are in full bloom and absolutely gorgeous; please come by and visit with us soon!

Thanks, Lynn Hightower



HAPPY 4TH OF JULY



Ducks for Sale – Part I

The rise and fall of market hunting in America



By Mark Petrie, Ph.D.

Rowing alone in the dark, he reminded himself that there was no money to be made on shore. Beside him lay the gun, two hundred pounds of well-arranged iron and wood that stretched nearly 10 feet in length. He used it only at night and in a narrow skiff that offered six inches of freeboard in the best of weather. Forged in England, the big gun had passed through three generations of men who supplied the Baltimore and Philadelphia markets with ducks shot on Chesapeake Bay.

Except for a small raft of scaup, he saw no birds on the journey out. He reached the island just as the tide turned, thankful that the wind hadn't turned with it. It was his sister's boy, fishing blue crab, who'd seen the cans. If still there, they'd be off the southwest shore where the lee was best and the wild celery thickest.

Stowing the oars, he lay prone in the boat. The muzzle of the punt gun rested on the bow, the stock lying on his empty seat. Hanging one arm over the gun, he began to maneuver the skiff using two small hand paddles. The boat's narrow beam allowed him to extend his wrists over the gunnels and work the paddles forward while offering no silhouette to the birds. Face down with eyes closed, he listened in complete darkness. The sound of a thousand canvasbacks diving on the celery reached him. The boy had been right; the birds were here!

Moving toward the sound he'd heard, he passed through a small group of cans that drifted, unconcerned, off his path. These were birds feeding on the edge of the great flock. The real prize lay just ahead. In a minute he was among them, cans so dense they covered the water. Pointing the skiff to the spot where the canvasbacks were thickest, he turned his eyes away from the breech and slapped the three-inch trigger.

No matter how many times he went out, he was never prepared for the sound of the gun. Nor did he ever remember the gun's recoil as it slid under his shoulder and came to rest in a bag of sea oats that protected the boat's thin transom. It was only the roar of ducks taking wing that restored his sense of time and place. Straightening up, he reached for his lantern and began the methodical work of retrieving the dead birds. It was New Year's Eve, 1911.



Waterfowl Lantern





English Made Punt Gun

Nobody alive in America today has legally sold a wild duck. That bit of commerce ended with the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, a law that expressly forbids the sale of wild waterfowl. But two important books offer us a detailed portrait of market hunting from the early 1800s to 1918. The first is Harry M. Walsh's *The Outlaw Gunner*, a classic description of the men who hunted ducks for profit, the tools they used, and the dangers they faced. The more recent book is R.K. Sawyer's *Texas Market Hunting*. Although focused on the history of market hunting in Texas, it gives a superb account of how this trade evolved at the national level. In its final years, market hunting developed distribution networks and marketing strategies characteristic of the modern food industry. It also pitted sport hunters against commercial hunters, in a battle similar to the one that continues today between many sport and commercial fishermen.

Prior to the Civil War, the impact of market hunting on continental duck populations was probably small. Duck populations were three to four times larger than they are today and sport hunting was almost nonexistent. Most market hunters were limited to black-powder muzzleloading shotguns and the demand for ducks was localized.

That was the farmers' market era of commercial hunting. After 1865, however, market hunting joined the industrial age, with predictable consequences for waterfowl.

The catalyst for change was the American public itself. As the country became more affluent, the demand for wild game increased. At the same time, two factors related to industrial progress made it possible to increase the supply of ducks from marsh to table. The first was America's expanding rail system. By the late 1800s remote waterfowl hunting grounds were linked by rail to the country's major cities.



Second was the development of commercial ice-making plants, which allowed birds to be shipped from distant ports with little risk of spoiling. Factor in a burgeoning population with a growing appetite for ducks, and the die was cast.

AIMING THE PUNT GUN SKIFF



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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 Director

MUSEUM CONTACT INFORMATION

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Virginia Beach, VA 23451

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Facsimile: 757.437.9950
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!

