

THE WILDFOWLER

SEPTEMBER 2021

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

Paul deWitt

June 5, 1911 – November 27, 2008

Paul was the 9th of the 10 siblings and the last living that all lived in the deWitt Cottage. Paul was two years old when he lost his father Cornelius and only 12 when his mother Cecile passed away. His two oldest sisters, Cecile 22 years old and Elizabeth 20 years old took over as heads of household and raised the remaining eight children in their family home.

Paul graduated in 1929 from Maury High School in Norfolk, VA. He only missed one day of school in four years despite a daily round-trip commute of 35 miles by light rail and trolley from the deWitt Cottage to the steps of the high school. He graduated from Virginia Military Institute; Class of 1933. He served in World War II as a First Lieutenant in the 45th Division Thunderbirds, 157th Infantry Regiment, and fought in the Allied Invasion at Anzio Beachhead, Italy, in January 1944. In May he participated in the breakout battle for Rome; marching with his fellow soldiers and the liberation forces into Rome on June 4, 1944. He was buried with military honors in Arlington National Cemetery shortly after his death on November 27, 2008.



We were fortunate in 2018 to be gifted Paul's VMI Cadet Jacket. Mrs. Ewing Fears Best, a local resident and recent guild member, was at the deWitt Cottage in 1987 for a yard sale held by the deWitt sisters. She found the jacket waded up and purchased it for \$5.00. She had it cleaned and pressed; then mounted and framed as a present for her husband who was also a VMI graduate. Her husband passed away not too long ago and she felt like the cadet jacket should come home to the deWitt Cottage. Thank you, Ewing, for this most precious and valuable gift!

Paul was born June 5, 1911, in Virginia Beach, son of the late Cornelius and Cécile Amélie Mottu deWitt. His family home, deWitt Cottage, built in 1895, was the first brick cottage on the oceanfront, the last original one remaining and is on the Virginia Landmarks Register. It is now home to the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum and the Back Bay Wildfowl Guild. Following his honorable discharge from the Army in 1946, Paul and Naomi built the Blue Water Apartments in Virginia Beach and operated them for 48 years. He was employed by Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company for 43 years and received national recognition as top sales representative. He was a member of Galilee Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach and in his mature years, served as an usher for Sunday services. He served as a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, and was a charter member and past secretary of the Virginia Beach-Combers Kiwanis Club. He was also a charter member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Virginia Beach Post.





Upcoming Guild Events:

09/06/2021: Labor Day

~~09/07/2021 Back Bay Wildfowl Guild
Membership Meeting 7:00pm, Social at 6:00pm
Program to be announced~~

09/13, 20, 27/2021: de Witt Garden Club
10:00 am, at the museum
Meets every Monday
No meeting Monday September 6th

~~9/21/2021 Event Venue Open House
Tours for Event Vendors
3:00pm-5:00pm~~

09/28/2021: Board Meeting
6:30 pm at de Witt Cottage

~~Sunday 10/17/2021 AWHM Fall Barbeque & Oyster Roast
de Witt Cottage 1113 Atlantic Avenue
1:00pm until 6:00pm~~



Save these Dates

11/19/21 - Gingerbread House Exhibit - Preview Party

11/20/21 - 12/18/21 - Gingerbread House Exhibit open to the public



12/07/2021 Christmas Party

12/11/21 - Photos with Santa & the Red Truck,
and Holiday Craft Fair - Time: TBA



Have a great Labor Day weekend!



	<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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Friends of the AWHM,

As we move into September, I wanted to provide a brief update about where we are as an organization. As discussed at our last BOD meeting, we have weathered the COVID storm well. While activity at the museum has been slow and events have been put on pause, financially we are in a good place. Through the efforts of the BOD, Lynn's handwork identifying grants and loans, and the generosity of many of our members, we were able to make it through an unprecedented global pandemic and SLOW summer with very little impact to the financial foundation of the museum. Due to the aforementioned items, while we still have a ways to go towards some return to normal, we remain optimistic that our "rebound" will be smoother and quicker than others in our community.

With the uncertainty of fall/winter, and with the safety of all members and guests as our top priority, we have chosen to put things on hold. We have cancelled our fall oyster roast, one of our major fundraising efforts. We have cancelled our September Membership Meeting on September 7th. We will limit operation hours beginning September 13th to being open Wednesday through Sunday 10:00am until 5:00pm. With that said, we are turning our focus and planning efforts to Spring and Summer 2022. More exciting information to come about these efforts in the coming months.

I hope my message to you this month finds you all well and while brief, one of great promise for our future. I want to thank Lynn Hightower and Martha Davenport for their commitment to change and doing things differently.

I want to thank Jacky Richards for her leadership in the Garden Club. I also want to thank Tom Richards, and Martha Davenport for their hard work and dedication to the cottage gardens. I want to thank our carvers Roy Carlson, Ed Morrison, The Boathouse Boys (Jamie, John, and Pete), and Susan Moritz. I want to thank Parke Atkinson, Larry Davenport, and Jim Menhe for their service and leadership as the Executive Committee of the BOD. Lastly I want to thank Jim Briggs, Jeff Tinkham, Bill Walsh, Jr., Mark Cromwell, and Phil Davenport for their service to the museum and guild BOD during this difficult time.

Until we can be together in celebration again, cheers!

Jason Seward



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

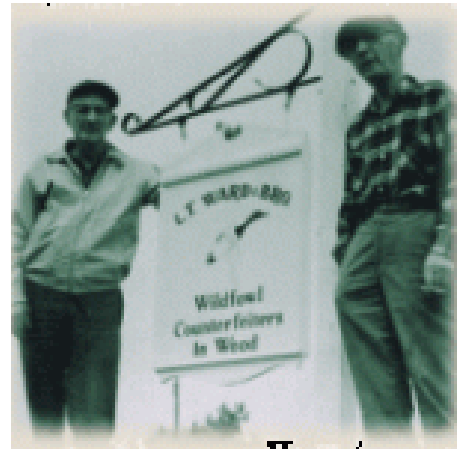
BY MARK CROMWELL
(757) 721-2746

Member North Carolina Decoy Collectors Assoc.

COLLECTOR'S SHELF

For more than fifty years, the carving partnership of L. T. Ward & Bro. of Crisfield, Maryland created waterfowl decoys and decorative bird carvings that established and maintained a unique standard of realism and artistic expression. Stephen Ward (1895-1976) and Lemuel T. Ward, Jr. (1896-1984) were makers of hunting decoys until the early 1950s, when the introduction of plastic, factory-made hunting decoys and a growing collector demand for their realistic carvings prompted them to switch to the production of miniature and life-sized decorative birds.

Crisfield, on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, was literally created by the seafood industry. Located on a marshy peninsula, the town was built on a base of discarded oyster shells and prospered when the railroad and steamship lines became available to carry the town's rich harvest of seafood to eastern cities. Market hunting of waterfowl was not as widely practiced around Crisfield as it was in the upper Chesapeake Bay, and those Crisfielders who hunted for the market used methods that relied less on large spreads of decoys like the elaborate gunning rigs of the upper bay. Thus the typical round-bottomed upper bay decoy never became established in the Crisfield area.



With the outlawing of market hunting and the increasing numbers of sport hunters in the early 1900s, a distinctive style of decoy carving developed in the Crisfield area. These decoys were flat-bottomed, often oversized, with a nicely carved head that exaggerated the bird's characteristics. The overall effect was a very lifelike decoy that was highly visible and rode the water like a duck, quite differently from the upper bay decoys that rolled and danced to the movement of the waves. One of the pioneer carvers of the Crisfield school was L. Travis Ward, Sr. (1865-1926), the father of Lem and Steve.

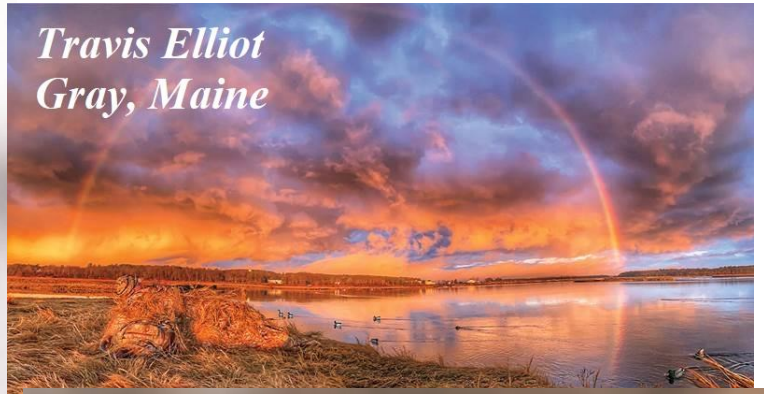
Decoy making for the Ward brothers started about 1920 between customers in the old barbershop near Asbury Church, and gradually moved to their home workshop as their decoy business increased. The Depression years of the 1930s brought an increase in the demand for their decoys as more people hunted simply to feed their families. When better economic times returned, a growing interest in sport hunting, especially at the gunning clubs that flourished on the waterfowl-rich marshes and islands of the Bay, provided a demand for their decoys from hunters who could afford the best. Many clubs sent their decoys back to the Ward's shop annually for repair and repainting.



BEST OF DUCKS UNLIMITED 2021 PHOTO CONTEST



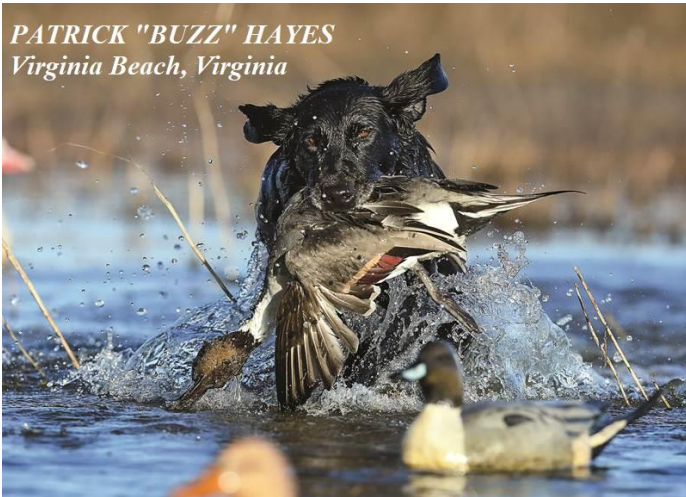
Best over All
Brandon Kessler,
Havre de Grace, Maryland



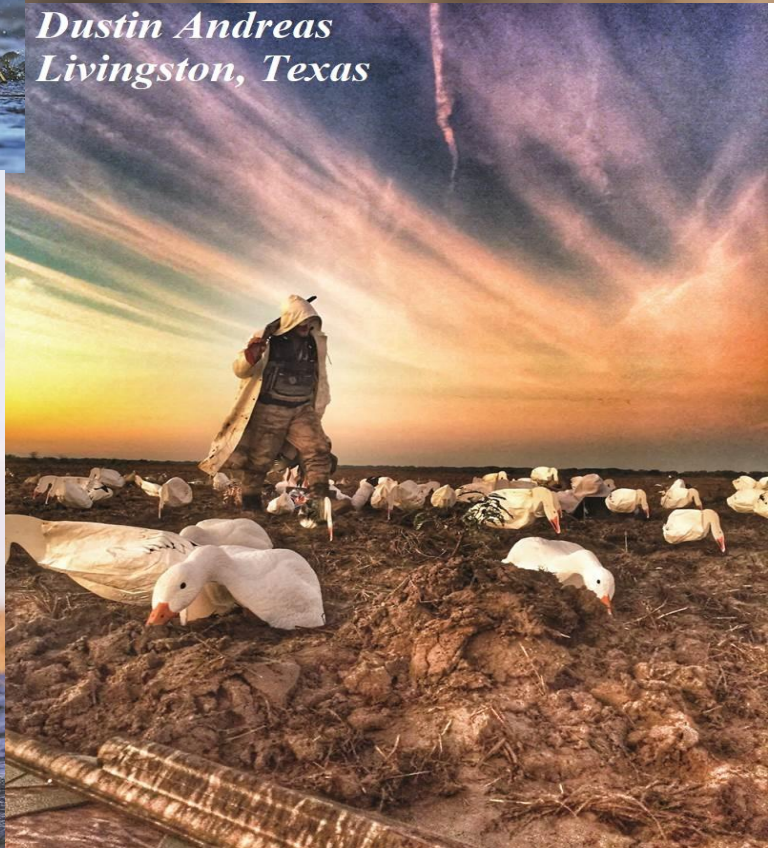
Travis Elliot
Gray, Maine



Kyle Lopez,
Kennewick,
Washington



PATRICK "BUZZ" HAYES
Virginia Beach, Virginia



Dustin Andreas
Livingston, Texas



AUSTIN
MOFFET
Loveland,
Colorado



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 Phil Davenport
William Walsh, Jr., Curator
Fletcher Bryant, President Emeritus

MUSEUM CARVERS

Monday Open
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

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

Tuesday: OPEN
Wednesday: OPEN
Thursday OPEN
Friday: OPEN
Saturday: OPEN
Sunday: OPEN

Museum Grounds: Jacky & Tom Richards, Martha Davenport

MUSEUM STAFF

Lynn Hightower, Director Joe Leo, Operations Mgr.

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 !

Please understand that we depend on every dollar to operate the museum. If you have not paid your 2021 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

2021 DUES

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

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



**BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD
2021 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

NAME: _____ AMOUNT PAID _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ [CELL] _____

January 1, 2021 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!

