

THE WILDFOWLER

APRIL 2026

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



On Friday the 13th of March, The Creeds Ruritan Club came to Life for the Annual Back Bay – Knotts Island Waterfowl Festival. The Festival was open Friday evening and Saturday from 9:00am until 3:00pm.

The festival was a great success with over a 1,000 patrons and volunteers attending. The event benefits the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum.

***We wish to Thank
Chris Ludford, Jimmy Coppedge and
All of the many volunteers who
worked so hard to make this event
successful!***





Upcoming Guild Events:

de Witt Cottage Garden Club

10:00 am, at the museum

Meets every Monday

Bring your work gloves and tools

04/10/2026 – Meet the Author

Danielle Boyce

“Tucker’s Big Virginia Adventure”

10:00am until 2:00pm

04/21/2026: Board Meeting

6:00 pm in person and on Zoom

At deWitt Cottage

05/25/2026 – Monday

Museum reopens seven days a week

Monday through Sunday

10:00am – 5:00pm

DECOYS WANTED

WE BUY WOODEN OR CANVAS DUCKS,
GEESE, SWANS & SHOREBIRDS
WHAT IS YOUR DECOY WORTH? ... IT COULD BE WORTH THOUSANDS!





**WE WILL PAY
CASH FOR ANY
OLD DECOYS AND
HUNTING ITEMS**

FREE DECOY IDENTIFICATION & EVALUATIONS
OF SINGLE DECOYS OR ENTIRE COLLECTIONS
BY MARK CROMWELL 757-721-2746
Member North Carolina Decoy Collectors Assoc.



Wildfowl Heritage

(Revisiting) William Pancoast Clyde

(1839-1923)

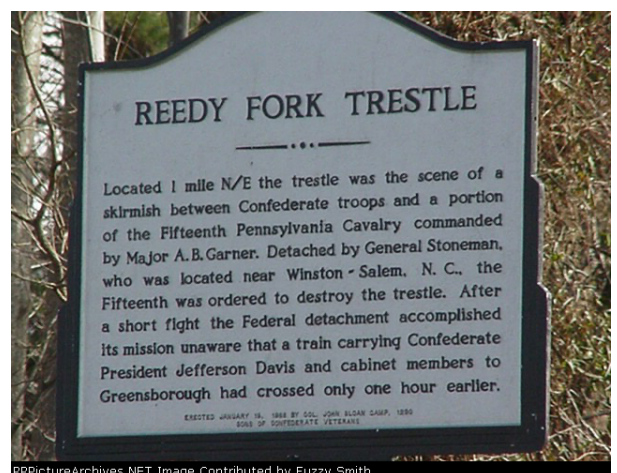
Readers will recall in our May 2024 newsletter the Wildfowl Heritage piece regarding William Pancoast Clyde, who hunted at the Currituck Club. Clyde was another of the wealthy Gilded Age sportsmen. His wealth derived from his steamship and railroad (RR) lines. Among other things in that earlier piece, we learned about Clyde's Richmond to Danville RR and the limited, but critical non-role it played near the end of the Civil War. More specifically, we learned that after the Battle of Petersburg, Confederate General Robert E. Lee intended to put his army on Clyde's Richmond to Danville RR, where they would then transfer to the Danville to Greensboro (NC) RR to connect with Confederate General Joe Johnston's army scattered between North and South Carolina. Had the combined total of 90,000 men under Johnston's command been consolidated and joined forces with Lee's army, one is left to wonder how history might have changed.

Lee's plans were dashed by Union cavalry under the command of General George Stoneman (later, a governor of California). Stoneman's objective was to destroy railroad assets in central/western North Carolina. As noted, Lee's intention was to get his army to Danville, VA on Clyde's railroad line, where they would then use the Danville to Greensboro (NC) line to connect with General Johnston's troops. However, Union General Stoneman's 6,000 cavalry were already busy destroying both track and the critical Reedy Fork Trestle on the Danville to Greensboro line north of Greensboro. As the depicted historical marker indicates, a skirmish between the Union and Confederate forces and concurrent destruction of the trestle occurred a mere one hour after Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet members had already passed by train in their escape to the south from Richmond. Obviously of greater import than Davis's narrow escape, the destruction of the trestle/bridge forced Lee and his forces to change plans and retreat westward from Petersburg towards Appomattox. As all know, Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. General Johnston, recognizing the futility of further efforts after Lee's surrender, surrendered his army to General Sherman at Bennett Place near Durham (NC) on April 26, 1865. Johnston's capitulation ended the organized military operations by the South.

So how did this greater detail regarding the railroads come to our attention? Recently, I invited an old college chum to my home for dinner. During the visit, I was showing my friend the 'W.P. Clyde' branded decoy seen in the attached photos and explaining the near crucial role Clyde's RR could have played in the Civil War. Serendipitously, my friend recognized the story's connection to the well-known folk song classic by Joan Baez, "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," written by Robbie Robertson. My college friend, a person of near musical genius, noted that the first stanza of that song goes:

*"Virgil Kane is the name
And I served on the Danville train
'Til Stoneman's cavalry came
And tore up the tracks again"*

So how is it that readers are now aware of this little piece of relatively obscure but critically important piece of our nation's history? It began with our museum board member Mark Cromwell acquiring decoys from the Currituck Club



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Fuzzy Smith





bearing the brand 'W.P. Clyde.' It advanced with our earlier research and piece on William Pancoast Clyde, who proved to be a historical figure of notable interest. Finally, it was furthered by my friend's recognition of Clyde's railroad and its relationship to the popular Joan Baez folk song, prompting me to do further research.

While you may not now know all of the rest of the story, you at least know more of it...and, once again, our unique little museum has demonstrated that the stories of waterfowling by sportsmen on Back Bay and Currituck Sound are intertwined with our nation's history. We have also proven again the truism, "The more you know, the more you can learn."

Larry W. Davenport



**Free Decoy
Identification and
Evaluation**
By Jeff Tinkham
Past President of The Atlantic
Wildfowl Heritage Museum
Call (757) 724-7131 or
jeff@tinkhamlaw.com





Tucker's Big Virginia Adventure



By Danielle Boyce

Join us April 10th at 12 PM at the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum for a special children's book reading of Tucker's Big Virginia Adventure with author Danielle Boyce. Part of the museum's Spring Break Children's Event (10 AM–2 PM), it's a delightful coastal story and a perfect outing for young readers.



BACK BAY WILDFOWL GUILD 2025 MEMBERSHIP GUIDE

☒ Membership Level (please check one):

☐ \$35 / Individual

☐ \$200 / Silver

☐ \$50 / Family

☐ \$500 / Gold

☐ \$100 / Bronze

☐ \$1,000 / Presidents Circle

Renew your membership online at www.awhm.org or, text WILDFOWL to 44321

MEMBER INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

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☐ Cell ☐ Home

Please pass this newsletter on to any potential new member.

Mail this form and payment to:
Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum
1113 Atlantic Avenue,
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

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Questions?

Email the Director at director@awhm.org

