

Have you ever heard of the Canvasback Hunting Club?

By Tom Whitlock

The history of the Canvasback Hunting Club and its connection to the Ohio Decoy Collectors and Carvers Association is very interesting to collectors.



Nine canvasback decoys from the Canvasback Hunting Club near the Marblehead Peninsula in Ohio.

Located in Ohio on Lake Erie, the Canvasback Hunting Club was situated on the southeast tip of the Marblehead Peninsula on East Bayshore Road, west of Bay Point, and just east of historic Johnson's Island. The club was formed in the 1930s. Then 10 years later it incorporated on Nov. 20, 1946. The club ceased operation on Sept. 13, 1976 when the property was sold for residential use.

The club members were all local from the Marblehead area. The officers were George W. Earls, Louis E. Smith and agent Olin F. Gardener.

The decoys used at the club were canvasbacks and most were carved by member Clarence "Bud" Sauvey (1909 - 1982). Bud's son, Gary L. Sauvey, said Clarence lived at 114 Cherry St. in Marblehead, and was a welder for the local quarry, the American Slag Co.

Made from split logs, "Bud's" canvasbacks were distinctive heavy humpback decoys. They had large wooden keels and lead strips for added balance because of the north-east wave action. Many of the decoys were branded "CS" before they were painted.

A group of decoys was stolen from the club in the 1970s, but none surfaced in the local area. To further describe the decoys, all are canvasback drakes in original condition and paint.

Decoys from the 1940s had a high head, humpback, bobtail, and were last of the split log decoys. Decoys from 1942

were more true to form. And decoys from 1953 had mixed wood, with one 1940 head and four similar heads with "puffy" checks. Gary also said his father helped other club members with carving and painting, thus there could be mixtures or slight differences.

ODCCA member and long-time collector, Dennis Forthofer, said he acquired ten drakes in the spring of 2022. He noted that the lettering on one of these decoys is "CHCCS" which he believes means Canvasback Hunting Club, Clarence Sauvey."

Another connection to the ODCCA is that Gary and his wife, Roseann, owned and operated Kaspar's Lake Breeze Cottages for many years, ceasing in the spring of 2022. Gary was related to the Kaspar family who built the "cottages" in the early 1950s. Gary and his wife continue to live there, and the hunting club was located less than a mile from the Sauvey home and cottages.

And many ODCCA members will remember Bob and Bonnie Kaspar, who were long-time members and dedicated volunteers at our annual shows. Well, Gary Sauvey and Bonnie are cousins. Sadly, Bob Kaspar passed away on Feb. 26, 2022.

When asked about how many decoys were made for the club, Gary Sauvey said, "Oh, a lot! The decoys were made as needed for the life of the club."

Then later since 1953, the decoys had Bill Enright style keels and recessed lead weights. A filler material was used to seal between the cork and wood bottom.

Both Gary and his dad knew Bill Enright (a 1940s Ohio carver from Toledo).

In 1953, Gary found used freezer insulation panels and thought the material would be good for decoy bodies. "Bud" carved the heads, bottom boards, keels, and also painted the decoys. Five 1953 decoys were found in 2022 and one had a 1940 head.

In total, Dennis Forthofer now has ten Canvasback Hunting Club Decoys. Nine of the decoys are from Gary L. Sauvey. The other is from long-time ODCCA member, John Purvis, from Michigan, who is deceased.

So now you all know about the Canvasback Hunting Club, and an expanded history of duck hunting here in Ohio, and how it is all related to the ODCCA.

Ohio Decoys From Famous Ohio Hunting Clubs

Chairman, Tom Whitlock, is asking you to enter your favorite ***Ohio Decoys From Famous Ohio Hunting Clubs*** in his contest on Saturday.

Registration begins Friday starting at 6 p.m. across the hall from the Ballroom, and Saturday morning.

The public is invited to vote for their favorite in the People's Choice Award, and 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place ribbons will be awarded. No entry fee.

Del Herbert Canada Goose Pickleweed to be Auctioned



No collection can be complete without this unique Canada goose Pickleweed painted by Del Herbert master artist and ODCCA supporter.

This, along with an appealing selection of decoys and waterfowl art, will be featured in the Ky Kraus Memorial Auction starting at 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

ODCCA members are encouraged to consider donating some of their decoys. Fresh-to-market finds for beginners to seasoned collectors can be found at the auction. ***Thank you Del for your generosity and support!***