

Louisiana decoys add some Cajun spice to Eldred's summer Americana auction

A BLUE-WINGED TEAL by Mark Whipple of Bourg, Louisiana sold to an Internet bidder for \$19,200 at Eldred's Americana auction on August 2, 2017 at their auction gallery in East Dennis, Massachusetts. It was the top decoy lot in the auction, an auction price record for its maker and sold for over ten times the low estimate, in which a handful of Louisiana decoys added some Cajun spice to a sale that was otherwise overwhelmingly comprised of Massachusetts birds, the majority of which were miniatures.

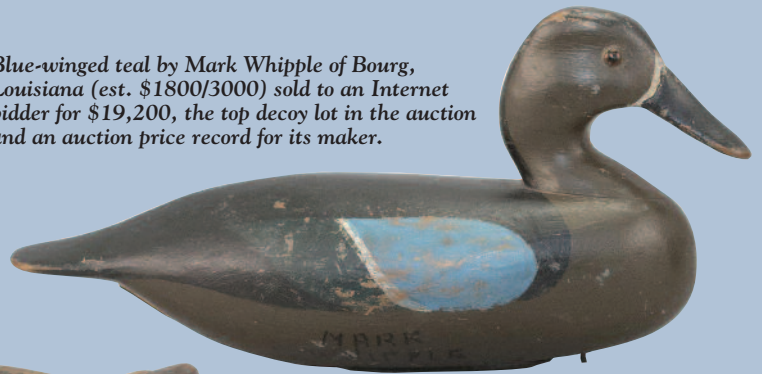
A mallard hen by Nicole Vidacovitch of Sunrise, Louisiana sold for \$13,200 and a

pintail by Eddie Granier of Vacherie brought \$5700, both lots over triple the low estimate. A mallard by Nick Trahan of Lake Charles sold for \$2750 and a mallard by Domingo Campo brought \$2640, both lots well over estimate. All were formerly in the collection of Jimmy Hannemann, a well-known and early collector from New Orleans.

A hanging yellowlegs by A.E. Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts, formerly in the

collection of John S. DuMont, just missed estimate at \$10,800. A decorative lesser yellowlegs on a simulated clamshell sold for its low estimate \$9600. Two of Elmer's gunning decoys, a goldeneye hen and a black duck, sold for \$3480 and \$3360, both lots under estimate. There were over six dozen Crowell miniatures in the auction, topped by a curlew at \$4800. Others included a chipping sparrow at \$2640 and a green heron for \$2400.

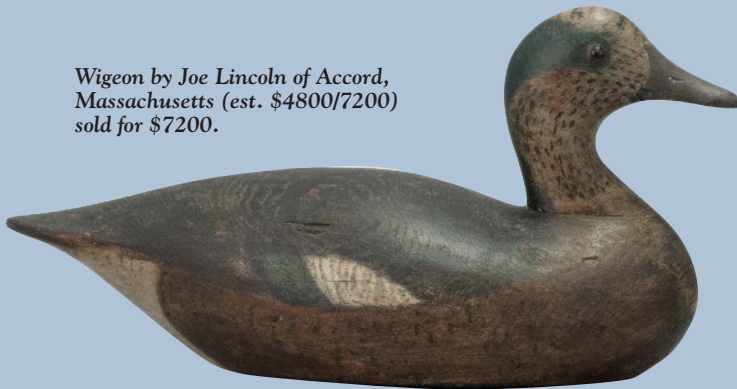
Blue-winged teal by Mark Whipple of Bourg, Louisiana (est. \$1800/3000) sold to an Internet bidder for \$19,200, the top decoy lot in the auction and an auction price record for its maker.



Mallard hen by Nicole Vidacovitch of Sunrise, Louisiana (est. \$4200/6600) sold for \$13,200.



Wigeon by Joe Lincoln of Accord, Massachusetts (est. \$4800/7200) sold for \$7200.



Curlew attributed to Nathan Cobb Jr. of Cobb Island, Virginia (est. \$4800/7200) sold for \$8400.



Canvas-covered Canada goose by George Boyd of Seabrook, New Hampshire (est. \$6000/8400) sold for \$6000.

A wigeon by Joe Lincoln of Accord, Massachusetts sold at its high estimate \$7200. A Lincoln black duck and an early brant each sold under estimate at \$5400. A miniature Canada goose by his hand also missed estimate, selling for \$2040.

A canvas-covered Canada goose by George Boyd of Seabrook, New Hampshire sold for its low estimate \$6000. A Boyd yellowlegs also made its low estimate, selling for \$3000. One of his miniature Canada geese sold under estimate at \$1800.

A curlew attributed to Nathan Cobb Jr. of Cobb Island, Virginia sold over estimate at \$8400. A black-bellied plover by John Dilley of Quogue, Long Island, New York made estimate at \$4800.

A life-sized goshawk by Al Jordan of Rochester, New York was the top contemporary lot, selling within estimate at \$4500. A life-sized Eskimo curlew by Bill Gibian of Onancock, Virginia sold within estimate at \$1000. A pair of miniature loons by James Lapham Dennisport, Massachusetts, one of 20 lots by this Cape Cod miniaturist, fell short of estimate at \$960.

This was the first collaborative effort between Eldred's and Decoys Unlimited, with Ted and Judy Harmon providing the majority of the decoys and decoratives that were sold on day one of this three-day Americana auc-

tion. While the great majority of lots were of New England origin, and nearly 30% of those were miniatures, a small group of Louisiana birds led greatly to its success. There were, however, a high number of lots, 129 with a \$168,888 low estimate, which failed to sell.

In summary, of 346 lots offered 129 failed to sell, leaving 219 lots that sold for \$288,446 for an average of \$1317 per lot and were 16.6% over their total low estimate. All prices include a 20% buyer's premium plus an additional 5% for on-line purchases, which does slightly inflate the totals. 🐾



Greater yellowlegs in hanging position by A.E. Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts (est. \$12,000/14,400) brought \$10,800.

PDCA donation to Crowell Barn Museum



The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association donated this Elmer Crowell black duck to the Harwich Historical Society's Crowell Barn Museum on Cape Cod.

During a ceremony and reception on August 4, 2017, the Potomac Decoy Collectors Association donated an original paint Elmer Crowell black duck to the Harwich Historical Society's Crowell Barn Museum on Cape Cod. The decoy, which features the brand of a wealthy hunter, "J.B. Chase," was made in the 1920s and has Crowell's oval brand on the bottom.

"We are thrilled with this fabulous donation," said Patti Smith, a member of the Crowell Barn Committee. "This represents our first donation of a full-size Crowell decoy and it will become a cornerstone of the museum's collection."

During a trip to Cape Cod during the summer of 2015, PDCA president Chad Tragakis visited the newly reconstructed Crowell barn and workshop. "I must admit that as a lifelong decoy collector, this was as special as a baseball fan's first visit to Wrigley or a naturalist's first view of the Grand Canyon," he said. "Like the Ward brothers' workshop in Crisfield, Maryland, Crowell's barn is a very special and important monument to our hobby."

Although the well-preserved and meticulously recreated workshop depicts Crowell's life and work, and includes period furnishings, tools and artifacts, Tragakis was surprised to learn that there were no full-sized Crowell decoys on display.

Realizing that the decoys were "pretty central to the story," he presented this dilemma to the PDCA membership, who have donated over \$15,000 to numerous decoy museums over the past 20 years, and

the club agreed to secure and donate a Crowell decoy to the historical society. After a year of searching for the right example, at a price the club could afford, they secured this black duck, which is now in the museum's collection.

"We are delighted to accept this wonderful example of Elmer Crowell's art and will exhibit it proudly," said Janet Cassidy, Director of the Brooks Academy Museum and Elmer Crowell Barn. "It was so special to be able to welcome this decoy back 'home' where it was made."

The Potomac Decoy Collectors Association, a club based in Maryland and Virginia, but with a national membership, is dedicated to preserving and celebrating decoys and their history. It is fitting that they took the opportunity to provide a classic decoy to the historic Crowell workshop. For more information on the PDCA, visit www.potomacdecoy.org.

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