



CLARKE MUSEUM

Spring 2014

FLOATING SCULPTURES FROM BEHIND THE REDWOOD CURTAIN Highlighting Decoy Carvers

The decoy exhibit is on display until May 2014. The popular exhibit features the artistry of Humboldt County's carvers. This newsletter highlights a couple of these men. Information and biographies are provided by Mike Miller, author of the forthcoming book 'Wildfowl Decoys of California'.

William Franklin "Bill" Hale (1905-1991)



Postcard circa 1910, William Carlson Collection, Photo # 2008.31.50

Bill Hale was born in Arcata to Ben and Nora Hale and grew up on the family ranch in the Arcata Bottom (Moxon Road). A direct descendant of early pioneer William Haugh who arrived from Ireland in the 1860s, Bill attended the Bay School, Arcata High and Humboldt Normal School (now Humboldt State University).

Bill spent the time between his graduation from Humboldt State in 1927 and America's entry into WWII teaching in Dunsmuir and Red Bluff. He joined the US Navy in 1942, entering as a Petty Officer and getting out as a Commis-

sioned Line Officer.

He moved into school administration after returning to civilian life and was a principal in both Concord and Berkeley. In the late 1940s he returned to Humboldt County as principal of Fortuna Elementary School. Then, coming full circle, he took on the job of overseeing the construction of a new school and establishment of the Pacific Union School District, which consolidated his first school, Bay, and the other three schools on Arcata Bottom (Canal, Warren Creek and Janes) into one entity. He retired in 1970 and became very active in the community, receiving HSU Alumni's "Who's Who" award for community service.

Bill Hale was an outdoors man from his earliest days on Arcata Bottom. Note that the stock of his Model 12 Winchester was first shortened to accommodate a young shooter, then lengthened as he grew up. He carved small rigs of Teal and "Cackling" geese in the Arcata High wood shop in about 1923. The Teal in this exhibit are some from that era and carved in solid redwood. They were most likely used on the home place on Moxon Road where there are a couple wet depressions with rushes and cattails.

Continued on page 4

CALENDAR

- Sat., March 1st ~ Katie Ohlheiser Book Signing ~ 6 to 9 pm
- Sat., March 8th ~ Ken Anglin "Invention & History of Gun" talk ~ 1 to 3 pm
- Sat., April 5th ~ Meet the Artists Phyllis Reynolds & John Gates Book Signing ~ 6 to 9 pm
- Sat., April 26th ~ Donkey Days at Fort Humboldt ~ 9 to 5 pm
- Sat., May 3rd ~ Trombones at Four Arts Alive ~ 6 to 9 pm
- Sat., May 10th ~ Loleta Wildlife Refuge Talk ~ 1 to 3 pm

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The Mission of the Clarke Historical Museum is the acquisition, preservation and educational display of objects relating to the history of Eureka and Humboldt County, in order to further appreciation by residents, visitors and school children of the area's rich and diverse heritage, and to promote increased visitation to our historic region.



CLARKE HISTORICAL MUSEUM



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ORIGINS OF THE EUREKA-ARCATA AIRPORT

by Art Barab

Have you ever wondered why Humboldt County's main airport is inconveniently located on a hill north of McKinleyville well away from 101? If so, read on . . .

WWII difficulties landing military aircraft safely due to fog led to a joint US Navy – privately funded collaboration charged with developing means to overcome this impediment. According to Daniel Kain, who in 1945 was the San Francisco personnel director of United Airlines, United was asked by the Navy to hire and manage employees for this task. Transoceanic Airlines was the business firm most involved in private funding. The USN, searching for the foggiest site in the US outside of the Aleutians, selected the Arcata area. Starting from scratch, a facility was constructed that included barracks, hangars, office and communications buildings and runways at the location where Humboldt County's only airport suitable for commuter traffic into the greater world would someday exist. The facility was named the Landing Aid Experiment Station (LAES). Its director was William H. Levings. Putting the station together was labor-intensive and almost every able-bodied man at the facility, including Levings, took part.



Cynthia Gill Collection, Photo #2013.70.34

Once assembled, experiments began aimed at fog dispersal. Most notable among them was a system of high pressure burner heads installed along the edges of runways. Burning low grade fuel in them produced enough heat to disperse fog to some degree. Another method tested used supersonic sirens which were, depending upon variable conditions, capable of causing fog to condense into rainfall. Unfortunately, the sirens, above human hearing-range frequencies, killed birds and caused great pain for other animals, including family dogs, for miles around. High-intensity lighting was also used along airport approach lanes and runways. Eventually, scientific developments in radar and instrument landing systems alleviated landing difficulties related to fog to a great extent. Commercial connector flights at the airport began in December, 1946 through a new airline, Southwest Airways (not to be confused with Southwest Airlines). In 1947, a Southwest DC-3, landing in Arcata, made, historically, the first blind landing by a scheduled commercial airliner using technologies noted above.



Airplane lands with aid of High Pressure Fog Dispersal System & SCS-51.

Daniel Kain Collection, Photo # 1992.37.37

Director Levings was an employee of the Bank of Nevada in Las Vegas at the time of America's entry into WWII. He enlisted in the Navy and was eventually transferred to Arcata, receiving his discharge there. In 1944, he became head of the LAES, a role he maintained until active work at the facility ceased.

He was hired in 1950 as Humboldt County's first Director of its new Department of Aviation, created to administrate, operate and maintain Humboldt County owned airports (which were located north of Eureka and at Garberville, Rhonerville and Shelter Cove.) Levings held this post until 1956. He subsequently became personnel director for Southwest Airways and its successors (through mergers), Pacific Airline and Hughes Airwest. These 'feeder' lines connected Humboldt County with the main arteries of US air traffic.

As far as the main Eureka-Airport is concerned, an airport at hand is understandably worth two on the planning board amid the costs of building a new facility.

TEN WINDOW WILLIAMS

Antiques ~ Novas ~ Estates



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Exciting New Products in the Gift Shop

If you haven't been to the Clarke Museum gift shop in a while then you are missing out! New products from local artists are arriving every week. The shop now features hand crafted jewelry by Opera Alley Designs. These necklaces are works of art, and feature unique stones and metal work that are sure to be complemented whenever you wear them. The museum also received new pieces by Native American artist Laurie Yalung, including earrings and necklaces that incorporate basket designs. We also have new products by fiber artist Jennifer Mackey, including a photo study book of her art installations in fiber and landscape. Fiber pieces from her artwork are used in lavender eye pillows now for sale in the gift shop, which are made from hand-dyed fabric she makes locally.



If you are a looking for a St. Patrick's Day gift, why not give a bottle of Humboldt Hotsauce's Emerald Sauce. For the bibliophiles out there, we have the second edition of *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song* back in stock. There are also copies of *Falk's Claim*, which explores the life and death of a redwood company town. Author Jon Humboldt Gates will be at the museum on Saturday, April 5th between 6-9 pm to sign copies of the book. The museum also has copies of the new book *Northwestern Pacific Railroad: Eureka to Willits* for sale. Remember that museum members receive a 10% discount whenever shopping in the gift shop.



Fortuna Meat Market, Don Gould Collection, Photo # d90.13.004

Redwood Coast Beer and BBQ "Up in Smoke"

Mark your calendar and clean your grill. The Clarke Historical Museum and Redwood Acres Fairgrounds are hosting the inaugural Redwood Coast Beer and BBQ "Up in Smoke" fundraiser on Saturday, May 31, 2014. This BBQ competition has hobby and professional categories. You pick pork ribs, chicken thighs, or both on your application. The \$50 entry fee is to cover the cost of the meat, so we'll supply you with the food and you'll do the grillin'. Teams will be given a 10x10 space at the fairgrounds to tempt the public with their grill creations. The people will choose the winner with their taste buds.

If interested in competing for the coveted trophy and County-wide bragging rights please fill out an application: Clarke Museum; 240 E Street; Eureka, CA 95501. Applications can also be filled out online at <http://www.clarkemuseum.org/redwood-coast-beer--bbq-cook-off.html>.

Leaving your Legacy at the Clarke Museum

Would you like to ensure that the Clarke Museum's educational exhibits are on display for generations to come? Please consider making a charitable gift of property, stocks or cash in your will or living trust to benefit the Clarke Historical Museum. No matter how large or small, a planned gift will contribute to the preservation and conservation of Humboldt County history. If you would like to find out more, please contact the museum, a financial planner or attorney for more information about how you can create a lasting legacy through a donation or bequest.

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Highlighting Decoy Carvers - *Continued* George William "Bill" McLellan (1897-1987)

Bill McLellan was born in Eureka to Canadian-born Gordon and Laura McLellan. A lifelong resident of Eureka, Bill married Olga Johnson in 1928. They resided at the home he built at 2313 G Street until his death. He registered for the draft at age 21 in 1918. He was an enthusiastic waterfowl hunter during his active life and he celebrated the end of WWI by Brant hunting on the famed South Spit on the southwest side of South Humboldt Bay.



Kara Lynn Klarner Collection,
Postcard # 2010.069.12

A McLellan floating Brant decoy is a solid redwood sculpture of simple flowing lines. In typical Humboldt Bay style, the decoys are heavily weighted to prevent swamping in high seas. Eyes, if present, are copper tacks painted over with the same black paint used on the bodies. The bill is a hardwood dowel inserted into the head, a practical touch to prevent breakage. He used patterns of his own making and they are as aesthetically pleasing as the decoys themselves. Bill made 40 floaters in 1933. They all had upright necks that he later replaced with shorter versions. In 1938, McLellan carved another 25 Brant. These have heads and necks in various feeding and turned positions. McLellan also carved nine tip-up Brant. In addition to the many floating Brant decoys, Bill made nine flying Brant that are extraordinary in form and craftsmanship, brilliant achievements in artistry, workmanship, and construction.

Researching the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Clarke Museum welcomed Megan Weese as a new intern for the Spring semester. As a history student at HSU, one of her first projects was researching the Migratory Bird Treaty Act for the Decoy exhibit. Below is her experience working on this project.



Postcard from the William Carlson Collection,
Photo # 2008.31.94

With the Decoy Exhibit I was asked to do some research on Humboldt County citizen's reactions when the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 was passed. The first place I decided to look was at the Humboldt County Public Library's newspapers on microfilm, including the *Humboldt Standard*, *Humboldt Times*, *Blue Lake Advocate*, and the *Arcata Union*. While there was plenty to look through and some interesting articles, I was not able to find anything that was related to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 except for one small article. This small piece was found in the *Humboldt Standard*, titled "Commission Gives Law of Pidgeons [sic]." The article comments on some notices sent out by California Fish and Game commission to local wardens

about the law concerning the killing of pigeons. The notice states that "carrier pigeons are being used commonly by the War Department and recently an act was passed by Congress providing a penalty of \$100 and imprisonment of anyone killing carrier pigeons that are owned or used by the United States Army or navy." This was very exciting for me to find after many hours of searching because it provided a glimpse into 1918 and the importance of pigeons during wartime. This article also states that another local pigeon, the Bandtail, was also protected because of this *new migratory bird act*. After finding this article, I decided to continue my research to see if there were other articles I might be able to dig up, even extending the dates to 1917 & 1919, but with no success. This lead me to conclude that World War I (for obvious reasons) dominated and influenced our local newspapers of the time. I found this research project very interesting, exciting, and insightful into what the people of Humboldt were reading and talking about in 1918, which was *not* the migratory bird act.

~Megan Weese





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Jane & Richard Wilson	Nina Thorwaldson	Bette Buscher

In Memory of Dick Nash

The Dick Nash family has long supported the museum. Dick's wife, Jeanne, was a past board secretary, and his son, Jack, has curated several exhibits at the museum, including his extensive beer bottle collection and the Arthur Johnson men's clothing store exhibit. Dick was there for the exhibit opening reception last fall and enjoyed seeing friends and old customers. Dick was also serving the museum as a financial trustee for the Clarke Trust. He will be missed. The Museum has received memorial donations in honor of Dick Nash from the following people:

Wendy Wahlund & Ben Shepard	John & Sandra Winzler	Robert Munther
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Memorial Donations

In memory of *Tom Woods*, from Gary & Janice Albee

In memory of *Tom Woods*, from Connie Hill

In memory of *Ellis Hemenway*, from Connie Hill

In Memory of *Bob Kay*, from Connie Hill

Correction - The photo in the last newsletter (Winter 2013) was a memorial service for President McKinley held at the Court House in Eureka NOT City Hall (Photo # 2002.13.1). Thanks Bob Liebershal for the correction.



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