



1. Adrian Tinline Antiques,  
Bowmanville ON, 905 718-9074

2. Peter E. Baker Antiques,  
Elgin PQ, 450 264-6794

3. Jamie McDougall Antiques,  
Kitchener ON, 226 989-1472

4. Blemora Heritage Antiques, Brace-  
bridge ON, 705 645-1611

5. Beaverdam Antiques,  
Oshawa ON, 905 431-0696

6. Shadyside Investments,  
Stouffville ON, 905 955-6710

7. Zegers Antiques & Design,  
Toronto ON, 647 973-7029

8. Peter Vernon Antiques,  
Toronto ON, 416 694-2587

9. Gary Dawson Antiques,  
Aurora ON, 905 727-3334

10. George Brown,  
Toronto ON, 416 964-9134

11. Chic Shack Antique,  
St-Basile le Grand PQ, 514 865-6645

12. Antiquite S.G.  
Terrebonne PQ, 819 383-3585

13. Montague House Antiques,  
Smiths Falls ON, 613 200-1483

14. Bowles Hilltop Antiques,  
Markdale ON, 519 377-2220

15. Michael Rowan,  
Green River ON, 905 471-5511

16. Ed Haldorsen,  
Ottawa ON, 613 799-7060

17. Promoters Choice Antiques,  
Ontario

18. Marlboro Antiques,  
North Gower ON, 613 447-4705

19. Kenneth A. Ross,  
Cobourg ON, 905 372-8113

20. Timber River Farm Country Antiques,  
Timber River NB, 603 748-3944

21. C. Benson Antiques,  
Port Hope ON, 905 885-7840

22. Rideau River Antiques,  
Merrickville ON, 613 720-5758

23. Scott Beasley,  
Bracebridge ON, 705 641-9621

24. The Vintage Crate,  
Arnprior ON, 613 296-8224

25. Land & Ross Antiques,  
Shakespeare ON, 519 625-8070

26. G&M Bourguet Antiquaires,  
Quebec City PQ, 418 694 0896

### The Book Birds: Cover to Cover, Some of the Finest Decoys Ever Made

Over the past 50 years, numerous books, exhibition catalogues and articles have been written about our decoys by Canadian and American collectors, auction houses and dealers. Their publishing achievements are the result of exhaustive research, collaborations with other enthusiasts, inestimable hours of travel and lengthy conversations with carvers still living, relatives and friends of the carvers. These chroniclers are motivated by their folk-art passion, their interest in discovery and education, their desire to showcase personal collections and their joy of sharing a deep interest with their peers. The main objectives of this exhibition are to honour their efforts and thank them for advancing our knowledge about these beautiful examples of painted sculpture.

Another important goal of this Bowmanville display is to encourage collectors of Canadiana to incorporate decoys and other outdoor collectibles into their collections. By showing truly unique and exceptional examples of this folk-art tradition and the books in which they appear, we hope to make potentially interested people aware that there are resources available to help build collector knowledge and confidence.

All the valuable Maritime, Quebec and Ontario decoys on display come from private collections. They are pictured in one or more of 20 books we referenced that were published between 1983 and 2017. Most are “working birds,” meaning that they are utilitarian tools actually used in a hunt, beautifully made by skilled carvers. A few examples are more decorative in form, freeing the artist from the practicalities required of hunting lures. All illustrate the differences between regional influences, species characteristics, carving styles (realistic, impressionistic and abstract) and painting techniques. The exhibition thus presents quite an iconic gathering of an important branch of Canadiana, unlikely to be assembled again.

These Canadian decoys are highly prized both above and below the 49th parallel, a border which migrating waterfowl conveniently ignore on the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. Because they were practical tools used by both sport and market hunters, it is quite remarkable they have survived harsh weather conditions, poor off-season storage and errant buckshot. But that is both the challenge and thrill of collecting, i.e., to find birds in the best condition, displaying the most appealing form and created by the most desirable carvers. It is hoped that the convergence of all these attributes demonstrated by the decoys on display will educate and enthrall Bowmanville attendees.

Acknowledgements: The Book Birds exhibition is presented and curated by the Canadian Decoy and Outdoor Collectibles Association (CDOCA). Another decoy display will be offered at the CDOCA show in Kingston, Ontario in October, 2022. Please visit [www.canadiandecoy.com](http://www.canadiandecoy.com) for details.

The CDOCA and the Bowmanville Antique Show would like to thank the collectors and authors who participated in the creation of this truly remarkable display of Canadian folk art.



Front cover: golden plover shorebird decoys by Michael Sark (1875-1943), Lennox Island First Nation, Prince Edward Island, circa 1925, from the Tuplin rig. Dale and Gary Guyette, *Decoys of Maritime Canada*, p. 144.

# Bowmanville Antiques and Folk Art Show

dealer guide and special exhibit



## Book Birds: Celebrating Our Finest Decoys and Their Chroniclers



## Welcome to The Bowmanville Antiques and Folk Art Show

The Bowmanville Antiques and Folk Art Show is Canada's premiere show of country furniture, listed pre-war Canadian art, folk art and decorative accessories.

Discerning collectors and decorators flock to Bowmanville each spring for an opportunity to buy from the top dealers in the country, many of whom save their best offerings specifically for Bowmanville!

The show holds a high standard as all offerings exhibited are vetted by a group of experts to ensure each item meets the standards of the show. It's a show unlike any other in Canada - museum quality treasures at every turn all available for purchase!

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Le salon d'antiquités et d'arts populaires de Bowmanville est le salon le plus prestigieux au Canada en matière de mobiliers anciens, d'art canadien d'avant-guerre, d'arts populaires et d'accessoires de décoration.

Les grands collectionneurs et les décorateurs avertis affluent chaque printemps à Bowmanville pour avoir l'occasion d'acheter auprès des antiquaires les plus réputés du pays, dont plusieurs réservent leurs meilleures pièces pour le Salon!

De grande qualités, le salon présente des pièces validées par un groupe d'experts qui s'assurent que chaque pièce proposée respecte les normes de qualités du salon. C'est un Salon unique au Canada - des trésors de qualité muséale toujours disponibles à l'achat!



Canada goose on an ice platform by John Ramsay (1858-1934), Summerside, PEI, circa 1890. Ramsay's geese are hollow with a seam running from the breast to just under the tail. He carved most to represent actions: breast and side preeners, attack positions, etc. He was an artist among carvers. Dale and Gary Guyette, *Decoys of Maritime Canada*, p. 78



Standing mallard drake by Bob Burke (1892-1962), Wolf Island, ON, circa 1940. Burke is considered one of the best Thousand Island carvers because of his distinctive, elegant style and paint work. He made a half dozen standing decoys for field and beaver-pond shooting. Jim Stewart and Larry Lunman, *Decoys of the Thousand Islands*, p. 54



Yellowlegs by William Rowlings (1891-1962), Musquodiboit Harbour, NS, circa 1925. Few other carvers along the Atlantic coast made shorebirds. The most well known sculptor of decoys in the area, he made between 50 and 60 rothead yellowlegs and plovers. He was a postmaster and a decorated World War I veteran. Dale and Gary Guyette, *Decoys of Maritime Canada*, p. 92.



Drake canvasback by Ivar Fernlund (1881-1933), Hamilton, ON, circa 1916. He was a foreman at the Westinghouse pattern shop and transferred this skill to his decoy making. His decoys are finely sculptured with flowing lines and mellow paint. Paul Brisco, *Waterfowl Decoys of Southwest Ontario*, cover.



Pair of bluebills by James "Bud" Tully (1918-1973), Peterborough, ON, circa 1950. Supple necks, careful rasp-work and deeply textured wings are characteristic of Tully's lifelike decoys. He experimented with balance weights in his spare time at the Peterborough Westclox plant. Patricia Fleming with Thomas Carpenter, *Traditions in Wood*, cover.



Merganser by Orran Hiltz (1901-1978), Indian Point, NS, circa 1940. Hiltz's distinct Lunenburg style brought him quick notoriety. His mergansers have scalloped wooden crests where other carvers used leather, horse hair or tin. His racy body style is characteristic of Nova Scotia mergansers. Joe Engers, *The Great Book of Wildfowl Decoys*, p. 275 (bottom).



Mallard drake PMP #56 by Peter M. Pringle (1878-1953), Dunneville, ON, circa 1940. Pringle was an avid outdoorsman, carver and amateur archeologist. His capabilities as an excellent commercial artist are reflected in the high realism of his carving, rasp-work and meticulous painting. William C. Reeve, Peter M. Pringle, *Master Decoy Maker*, cover.



Sleeping bluebill drake by Will Rundle (1861-1920), Bloomfield, ON, circa 1880. Rundle decoys are known for their smooth, round bodies and small heads. Like other Prince Edward County birds, they are hollowed out to a very light weight, maybe the lightest in the region. In spite of their thin walls and their age they were very durable. Jim Stewart, *The County Decoys*, cover (at back.)



Pair of bluewing teal by Bill Cooper (1886-1975), Verdun, QC, circa 1940. Cooper's skill as a CNR pattern designer shows in the finesse and uniform quality of his decoys. Because he was in such demand as a carver, it is estimated that his commercial production exceeded 6,000 made up of bluebills, goldeneyes, black ducks and bluewings. Francois St-Onge, *Sculpteurs D'Appellants Du Quebec*, p. 71.



Bluebills by Addie Nichol (1865-1929), Smiths Falls, ON, circa 1915. Addie worked for 48 years as a pattern maker in the carpentry shop at Frost and Wood in Smiths Falls. This accounts in part for his reputation as a skilled decoy carver and co-founder of the famous "Smiths Falls School." Bernie Gates, Jeff Mewburn and William C. Reeve, *Nicol Decoys, The Smiths Falls School of Carving*, cover.



Hooded mergansers attributed to the Hutchings family, Jones Falls, ON, circa 1900. No one is absolutely sure whether Sam Hutchings (1894-1995) or Freeman Jackson (1844-1933), a relative, made these unique, cross-hatched, round-bottomed decoys. A number of goldeneyes were also carved in this manner. Larry Lunman, *David W. Nichol and the Decoys of the Rideau Canal Waterway*, p. 18.



Hooded merganser by Orel Leboeuf (1886-1968), St-Anicet, QC, circa 1950. Probably the only Merganser sculpted by Leboeuf, it is in keeping with his 40s and 50s style of ornate feather carving. His oval-bodied bluebill, goldeneye, mallard and black duck decoys are typically made from a solid block of wood. Pierre Fidiadis, *Quebec decoys, the essential*, p. 211.