John Olin, Ding Darling, Maynard Reece & King Buck: The Making of an Icon – Part One

Every hobby has its own folklore, often involving legendary figures in key roles. Fish and game lore is no different. The story I have chosen to begin telling today involves four of our greatest protagonists and will show how their lives became entwined to produce one of the most recognizable images in our hobby.

In part one of this series of posts, I am also going to take the opportunity to introduce some collateral fish and game items that are sought after by many collectors: ammunition boxes and advertising covers and calendars.

John M. Olin

Our story starts with John Olin. John has been described as a *visionary*. He was an entrepreneur and industrialist who went on to become one of the most prodigious of all American philanthropists. John was also an avid sportsman and a highly influential conservationist (see Figure 1).

Moreover, John was considered a guiding force in the conversion of subsistence hunting into sport hunting and the subsequent management of our wildlife resources on a scientific basis.

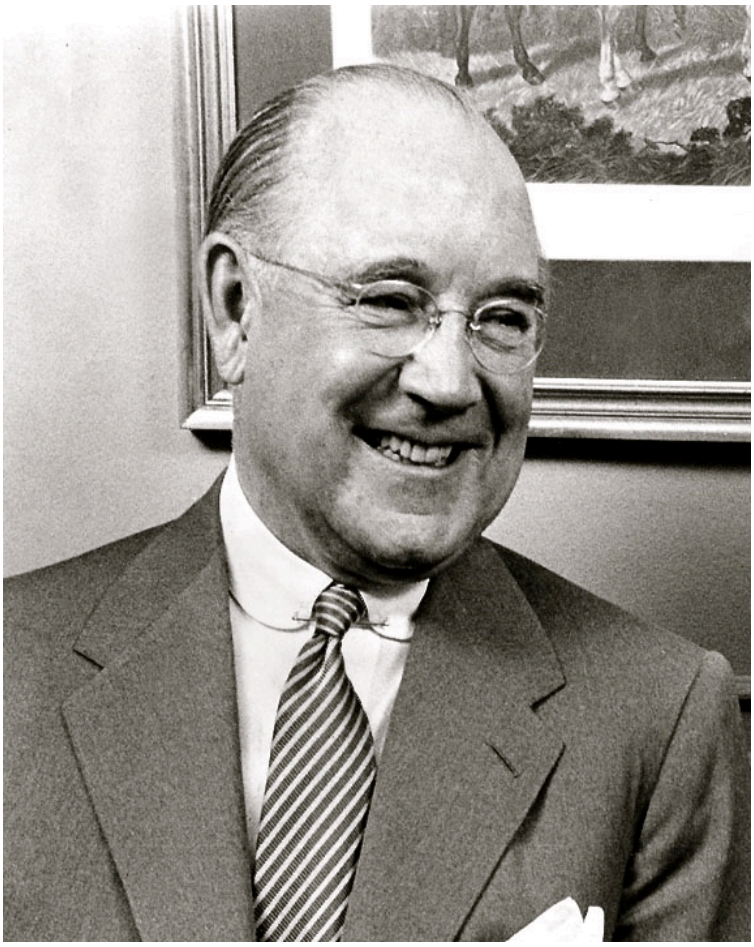


FIGURE 1. JOHN M. OLIN, AN AMERICAN VISIONARY.

John was born in East Alton, Illinois in 1892. He was the first child of Franklin W. Olin and the former Mary Moulton. Franklin was a businessman who owned a gunpowder mill. After high school, John attended Cornell University where he majored in chemistry.

John became very involved in campus life, founding a fraternity, and ultimately graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. Upon his graduation in 1913, he joined the family business as a chemical engineer. Along with his father and brother, Spencer, they grew the powder mill into the Western Cartridge Company, a maker of ammunition (see Figure 2).

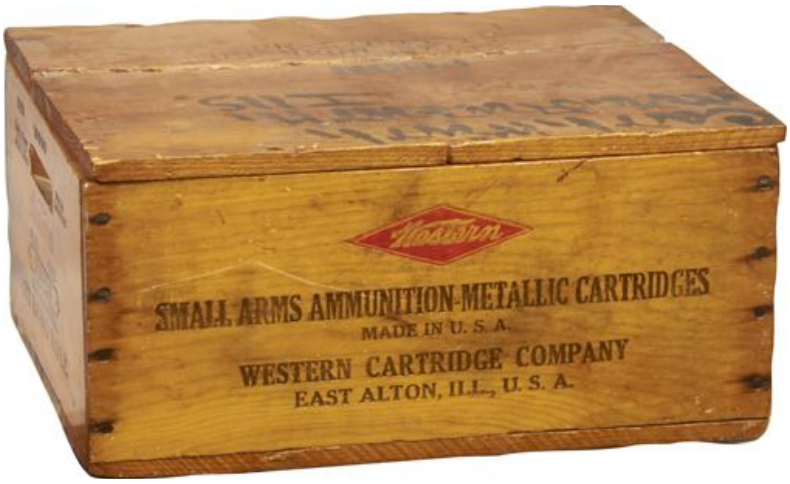


FIGURE 2. WESTERN CARTRIDGE COMPANY SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION BOX.

Early on, John showed a talent for developing new products. This resulted in 24 different patents for ammunition manufacture and design, including his best-known innovation – the Super-X shotgun shell (see Figure 3). The Super-X shell increased firing range by 20 yards and became very popular with hunters. John soon became an assistant to the president and, later, a first vice president.

FIGURE 3. WESTERN SUPER-X SHOGUN SHELL BOX.

Western competed directly with such giants as Remington and Winchester Repeating Arms (Figures 4 and 5). For a time, it was rough going. Their powerful competitors were able to persuade many suppliers to *not* sell them the raw materials they needed.

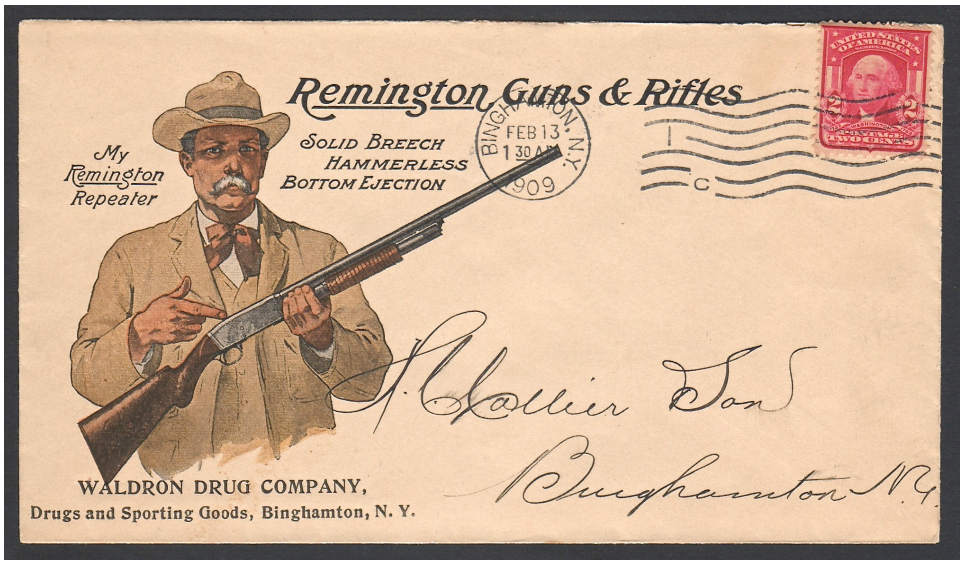


FIGURE 4. REMINGTON ADVERTISING COVER, EX BILL LITLE COLLECTION.

FIGURE 5. EXQUISITE WINCHESTER ADVERTISING POSTER, FEATURING MALLARDS IN FLIGHT. PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM MELCHER.

To survive, the Olins diversified. They bought a paper manufacturer, a lead shot facility, an explosive primer facility, a cartridge brass manufacturing facility, a fiber wad facility and started their own brass mill. Together, these companies became the *new* Western Cartridge Company and they subsequently made a fortune supplying ammunition during WWI.

Conservation Management Pioneer

During the 1920s, our nation's game supply was decreasing at an alarming rate. Subsistence hunting and changing agricultural practices had reduced once abundant populations to all time lows. People such as John Olin became concerned about he future of our wildlife resources.

It should be noted that while John demonstrated throughout his life that he was, in fact, a very altruistic and generous person – John had had *extra incentive* when it came to wildlife conservation, as did all ammunition and gun manufacturers.

The future of their industry depended on perpetuating game populations and this certainly was not lost on John. Among John's earliest conservation contributions was as a delegate of the Western Cartridge Company to the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI).

The purpose of SAAMI was to address such problems as the current and future markets for their products. John chaired the SAAMI Committee on Restoration and Protection of Game. It was this committee that directed Aldo Leopold's groundbreaking *Game Survey of the North American States*.

According to Senator Harry B. Hawes, one of the authors of the federal Duck Stamp Act of 1934, it was this investigative effort that brought Leopold into active work in the field of game management (see Figure 6).

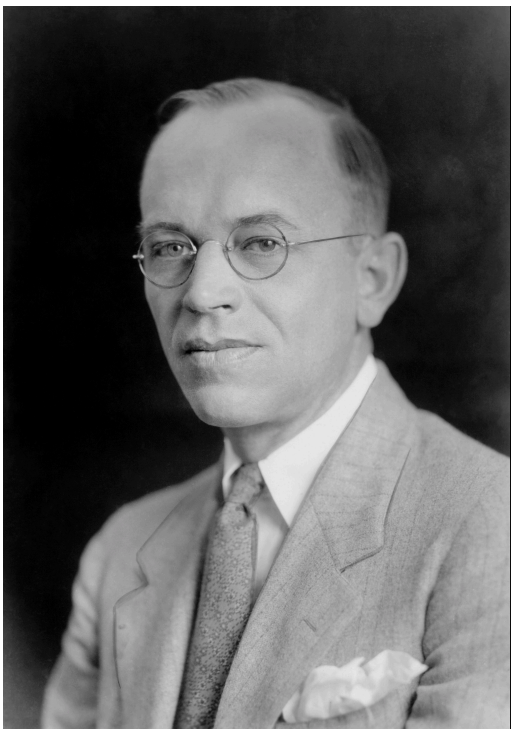


FIGURE 6. ALDO LEOPOLD, T HE FATHER OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT.

Begun on July 1, 1928, Leopold's monumental study was the first of its kind. Its purpose was to appraise the chance for the practice of game management as a means of game restoration in central North America. In his preface, Leopold noted that "the survey was financed by the sporting arms and ammunition industry".

Many of the findings in Leopold's study were used in developing *An American Game Policy*. It was one of the first and most important blueprints for game management and is thought to have marked the beginning of *scientific* game management. Leopold followed this effort with his classic book, *Game Management*, which became the bible of the game management profession.

In 1922, John became Director of Western Cartridge. The company became so successful under his leadership, that in 1931 (during the depression), **Western bought Winchester Repeating Arms.** Then, in 1935, John merged the two, forming Winchester-Western. During WWII, the Olin's company supplied much of the guns and small-caliber ammunition for the U.S and its allies.

The Dust Bowl years of the early 1930s had brought the plight of North American waterfowl into sharp focus (see Figure 7). Many concerned citizens were spurred into action. From 1931 until 1935, The Game Conservation Society (founded in New York in 1912), with the support of John Olin and SAAMI, operated a school in New Jersey to train people in game breeding and game management.

FIGURE 7. DEAD WATERFOWL ON THE GREAT PLAINS, VICTIMS OF THE DUST BOWL.

The **Clinton Game School** trained 145 men in all, and these became many of the first technically trained employees of state game and fish departments. The Game Conservation Society evolved into More Game Birds in America – and we now know it today as Ducks Unlimited.

John's SAAMI committee also initiated fellowships for game management research at four different universities and this was the beginning of cooperative wildlife research programs between the universities, the Bureau of Biological Survey (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and the state wildlife agencies.

Beginning in 1933, the gun industry was subjected to a 10% federal excise tax which, right in the middle of the depression, could (and probably did) turn away customers. The original excise tax was channeled into a general fund, relatively little of which was spent for wildlife purposes.

This changed in 1937 with the The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Known as the Pittman-Robertson Act for its sponsors, Nevada Senator Key **Pittman** and Virginia Congressman Absalom Willis **Robertson**, the act specified that the federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition would be earmarked *specifically* for wildlife restoration.

It was seen as a means to implement the findings of Leopold's work by the sporting arms industry and, therefore, John and SAAMI gave the program their full support. During WWII all excise taxes were increased, including the one on sporting arms and ammunition (to 11%).

Following the war, the excise taxes were rescinded – **but John and the sporting arms and ammunition industry requested that the tax on their products be retained**. They believed that scientific game management was worth investing in.

In 1944, the various Olin companies were reorganized under a new corporate parent, *Olin Industries, Inc.* John was named president. In addition to suppling sportsmen, the war production helped the Olin's to become one of the wealthiest American families (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. WESTERN MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT.

After the war, the Olin's acquired the Mathieson Chemical Corporation. In 1952, the Mathieson Chemical Company, as it was known then, acquired the pharmaceutical firm of E.R. Squibb & Sons (now a part of Bristol-Meyers Squibb). In 1952, Olin Industries and Mathieson Chemical merged to form the *Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation*.

The years following WWII brought great changes to the American hunting scene. Returning servicemen put immense hunting pressure on our country's game lands and wildlife populations. The newfound prosperity of the 1950s exacerbated this problem.

There was more discretionary money and a flood of consumer goods on which to spend it. Road systems were improved and expanded and they were soon filled with new cars full of hunters enjoying their release from wartime economic restrictions. Hunting was no longer seen as a means for putting food on the table – **the emphasis had shifted to the sporting aspects of hunting.**

All of the developments in game restoration, game management and conservation prior to the end of WWII were effective groundwork for the post war years. The impact on our game lands was greatly buffered by existing conservation programs and the small group of trained game managers " held the line and bought time" while new programs gained strength.

If the foundation of modern game management had not been laid by people like John Olin, effective game management on a national scale might not have been developed in time to preserve our wildlife resources.

Nilo Farms

John Olin was clearly a very competitive person, both in business and recreational pursuits. He was a passionate hunter and very much enjoyed *dogging*, wherein the hunter works closely with one or more hunting dogs. John believed, devoutly, in the retriever breeds and **the necessity of good dogs in reducing wasteful losses of both upland game and waterfowl during hunting**.

Believing very strongly in the value of both the hunting preserve concept and retrievers, John purchased three farms totaling 640 acres near Brighton, Illinois to serve as the future home for an experimental hunting preserve and for a Labrador kennels. The site was 12 miles north of East Alton and the Olin headquarters.

John's search in naming his new farm-preserve resulted in a corporate contest. An Olin employee, Stan Keonig, suggested the name Nilo as the name for the farms and kennels (Nilo was Olin spelled backwards). John loved the idea and Nilo Farms was born. The kennels were built in 1950 and the hunting preserve in 1952. The selected breeds were English setter, English springer spaniels and *Labrador retrievers*.

Olin's passion for Labradors began in the 1940s, when W. Averell Harriman, Secretary of State under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, introduced Olin to the black dogs. The devotion of both Harriman and Olin to Labradors promoted the breed to American sportsmen, advanced field trial competition and encouraged selective breeding.

In 1952, John formed the Winchester Conservation Department (WCD). The purpose would be to promote professional and scientific game management in all its aspects, especially as it concerned the *hunting preserve* concept. The main goal of the WCD during the mid 1950s was to have Nilo Farms serve as a demonstration area for potential preserve operators and for state wildlife officials.

For fish and game collectors, Nilo Farms would provide the setting for something *extraordinary* to take place toward the end of the decade (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. JOHN OLIN AND HIS TRUSTED COMPANION, KING BUCK, AT NILO FARMS. CIRCA 1950S.

John Olin, Ding Darling, Maynard Reece & King Buck: The Making of an Icon – Part Two

In todays post, I will talk about Ding Darling and reveal his role in our story. Much has been written about Darling and I will attempt to summarize the literature and hopefully add a few insights not readily found elsewhere. When discussing Darling's early life, many writers point to a series of events that are seen as formative in his life.

I have found that while many biographies include these central themes, the details often vary from one account to the next. I will do my best to represent consensus, however, one should be aware that while some accounts differ in(for example) his exact age when moving from one place to another – the gist remains similar and does not effect the telling of the story in any appreciable way.

Many of you know that Darling was an editorial cartoonist whose career spanned many decades. Over this time he is estimated to have published 15-20,000 cartoons, two of which resulted in Pulitzer Prizes. He was also deeply involved in conservation efforts throughout his life and created the artwork for the first federal waterfowl stamp (see Figures 1 and 2).

FIGURE 1. JAY N. "DING" DARLING.

FIGURE 2. THE FIRST FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, ARTWORK BY DING DARLING.

That first federal stamp has become *iconic* in several worlds: waterfowl and fish and game stamps, wildlife art, wildlife refuge and conservation circles. What you may not know is that Darling had a profound influence on a young wildlife artist from his same town, Des Moines, Iowa and that this influence was itself *formative* in the life of one Maynard Reece.

Maynard would go on to win five different federal duck stamp contests and one of his entries would result in the only image to rival that of Darling's in terms of recognition and appreciation in our hobby.

Early Life

Jay Norwood Darling was born on October 21, 1876 to Clara Woolson Darling and Marcellus Warner Darling. His middle name was taken from the town in which he was born, Norwood, Michigan. Jay's father had been a civil war veteran, schoolteacher and principal before becoming a Congregational Methodist minister (or pastor). His mother was quiet and pious and spent much of her time in meditative silence.

The Darlings moved around a bit when Jay was young, following Marcellus from position to position in Cambria, Michigan and Elkhart, Indiana before finally settling in Sioux City, Iowa when Jay was eight to ten years old.

It was while living in Elkhart that everyone points to the first profoundly formative experience in Jay's life. A family friend, Lamarcus Thompson, was an entrepreneur who went to England to build that country's first roller coaster.

While there (approx. 1883), Thompson sent the Darlings a drawing of the roller coaster on a card (some accounts say that it was a postal card, however, it would have been very early for a postal card and, therefore, somewhat unlikely).

It was this fanciful image that is said to have inspired young Jay (then seven years old) to begin his lifelong passion for sketching. Jay tried to imitate the picture on the card and subsequently carried a sketch pad with him wherever he went and began sketching on a regular, if not daily, basis.

The Darlings moved to Sioux City around 1885, when his father accepted a position at First Congregational Church. Jay grew up in this town along the Missouri River and it was here that he spent a great deal of time playing outdoors with his brother, Frank, and fell in love with nature.

One of Jay's first lessons in conservation came in his teens, while working on his uncles farm. According to the story, Jay shot a wood duck during nesting season and his uncle came down on him hard – telling Jay that shooting ducks out of season affected the breeding population and was detrimental to keeping their populations viable. This was a lesson Jay was to take to heart and carry with him for the rest of his life.

Although maintaining a keen interest in sketching, this apparently was not thought to be a promising career by his parents and Jay decided that he would become a doctor. In 1894, at age 18, Jay left Sioux City to attend Yankton College in South Dakota as a pre-med student (see Figure 3). Some accounts say he was subsequently expelled for "taking the school president's carriage for a joy ride" or bad grades – or both.

FIGURE 3. PICTURESQUE YANKTON COLLEGE, SOUTH DAKOTA.

He ended up at Beloit College in Wisconsin. This proved to be another formative experience but not one having to do with medicine. As a junior he worked on the school yearbook, the *Codex*, and soon assumed the role of art editor. He illustrated the *Codex* with his sketches, which for the first time took on a political slant and were frequently aimed at the school faculty.

Although the faculty was impressed with the quality of his sketches, the subject matter not so much and Jay was expelled for a year. Once again, poor grades contributed to the decision (see Figure 4).

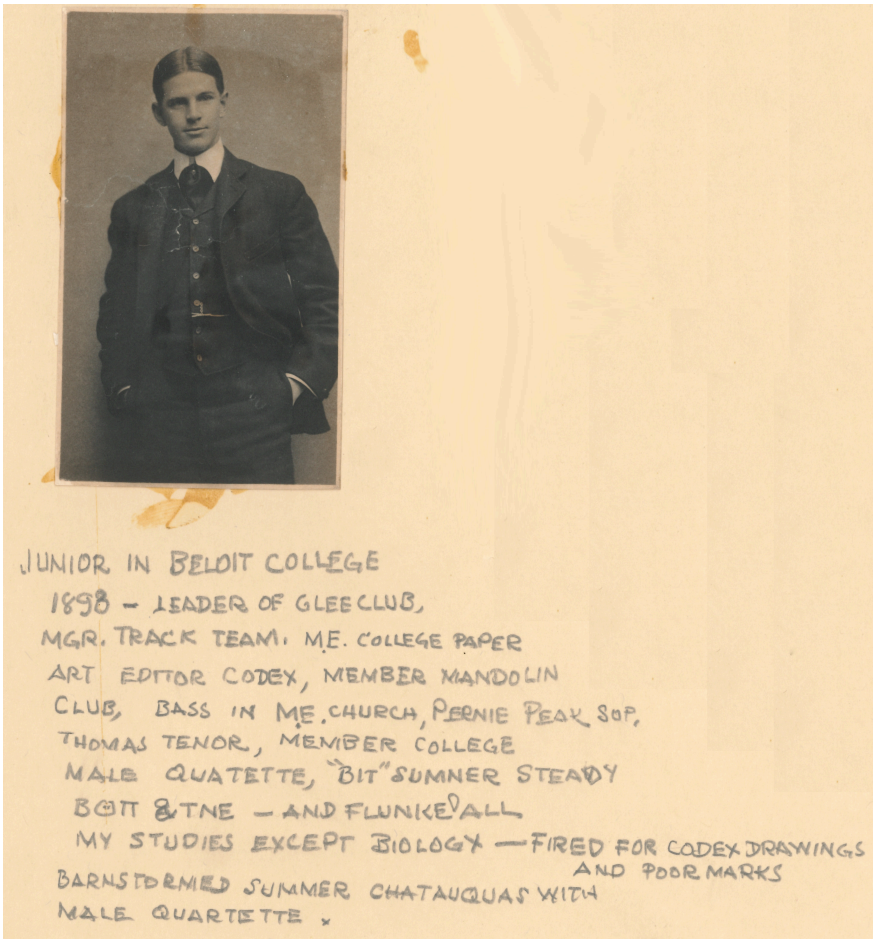


FIGURE 4. A PAGE FROM JAY'S SCRAPBOOK. THE NOTES ARE IN HIS OWN HAND.

He eventually returned to Beloit and graduated in 1900. **It was while sketching for the *Codex* that Jay started signing his work "D'ing"**. This was simply a contraction of his last name, Darling, wherein he substituted an apostrophe for the the 2nd, 3rd and 4th letters (see Figure 5).

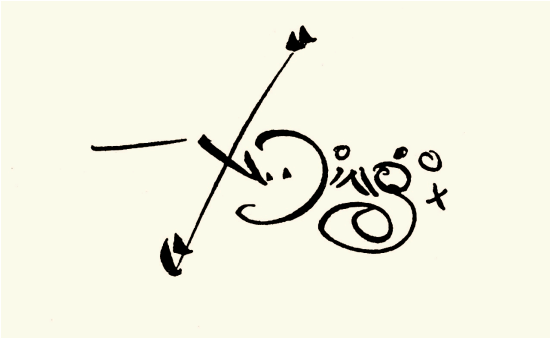


FIGURE 5. JAY N. DARLING'S CONTRACTED AND STYLIZED SIGNATURE.

Some accounts say that he first used the contraction in an attempt to keep his identity a secret from the faculty. I guess that did not work out the way he planned. The name, however, stuck. While at Beloit, Jay took a general biology course from a professor who taught him to view the world in ecological terms. This course would have a big impact on Jay's life.

First Newspaper Work

After graduating Beloit, Jay retuned to Sioux City. He still wanted to be a doctor but needed money for medical school. His financial situation at this time was likely compounded by the fact that his father was experiencing asthmatic trouble and so his parents left town – presumably leaving Jay to fend for himself.

Jay took a job at the *Sioux City Journal*, where he started as a reporter (see Figure 6). He sometimes illustrated stories with his sketches and it was while working at the *Journal* that Jay became involved in arguably the *most* formative experience of his entire life. This is perhaps the most ubiquitous Jay N. Darling story and has been repeated in virtually all accounts and biographies.

FIGURE 6. JAY AS A YOUNG REPORTER FOR THE *JOURNAL*, CIRCA 1904.

One day Jay was covering a trial at the local courthouse and he was attempting to get a photo of one of the attorneys to accompany his article. The attorney objected to having his picture taken and swung his cane at the surprised reporter, then chased him out of the building. As Jay was unable to get the photo, he decided to draw a picture of the enraged attorney swinging his cane – in the form of a *cartoon*.

His editor liked and printed it and from that point on, Jay's cartoons appeared in the *Journal* on a regular basis. His cartoons became very popular and were a daily feature for the next six years. During this time, Jay spent his free time hiking, hunting, fishing and enjoying the outdoors.

Jay felt that not enough was being done to protect land and wildlife. He frequently used his cartoons to draw attention to the need for conservation. This made him popular among like minded people and he started to make a name for himself.

It was while working for the *Journal* in Sioux City that Jay met future wife, Genevieve Pendleton (better known by her nickname, Penny) and they were married on October 31, 1906. Jay's cartoons were now starting to garner statewide attention, and while he and Penny were on their honeymoon in the West Indies, he received an offer from the much larger and more prominent *Des Moines Register and Leader* to be their regular cartoonist (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. LATER IN LIFE, DING TALKS ABOUT THIS CAREER AT THE *DES MOINES REGISTER*.

Jay would spend most of his career at the paper (which later became the *Des Moines Register*). However, as his stature as a cartoonist grew, he made a brief move to New York in an attempt to reach a larger audience at the *Globe*. He soon became unhappy working for the *Globe* for a variety of reasons and moved back to Des Moines and the *Register and Leader*.

The Iowa newspaper could not offer him syndication, so he worked out a deal with his editor, Gardiner Cowles, whereby he was permitted to syndicate his cartoons through the *New York Herald Tribune*. The contract required him to live in New York for a second period of time, after which he moved back to Des Moines for good in 1919.

The syndication through the *Herald Tribune* resulted in his cartoons appearing in 130 – 150 newspapers a day for a ten year period and it was during this time that he shot to world-wide fame. In 1924 he won his first Pulitzer Prize for a cartoon titled “In Good Old U.S.A.” (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. JAY WON HIS FIRST PULITZER PRIZE FOR THIS CARTOON.

Throughout the 1920s, Jay and his editorial cartoons continued to grow in popularity. This was before television and (for many) before radio. Everyone relied on newspapers for information. Soon Jay's syndicated cartoons came to have a huge impact on public opinion.

He met Herbert Hoover and as the two were both conservative Republicans, they developed a close friendship. During this time, Hoover was frequently the subject of Jay's cartoons. The one thing that disappointed Jay about Hoover is that he felt Hoover did very little for conservation while in office.

Becoming More Involved in Conservation

In the early 1930s, Jay became increasingly involved in conservation projects. He worked with the Iowa Fish and Game Commission and helped fund the Cooperative Wildlife Research Center at Iowa State College (now University). Later, he persuaded the two institutions to work together on developing one of the first long range conservation programs in the country (25 years).

When Franklin D. Roosevelt beat Hoover in the 1932 election, Jay was unhappy. He felt Hoover was unfairly blamed for the collapse of the economy and did not much care for the liberal FDR or his New Deal policies. FDR became the subject of many of his cartoons and unlike those involving Herbert Hoover, they were not so light-hearted. One thing he *did* like about the new President was his ideas on conservation.

Jay was greatly saddened by the unprecedented destruction to wildlife, especially waterfowl, caused by the Dust Bowl years starting in 1932. He continued to raise public awareness for conservation with his cartoons (see Figure 9). This would eventually catch the attention of FDR.

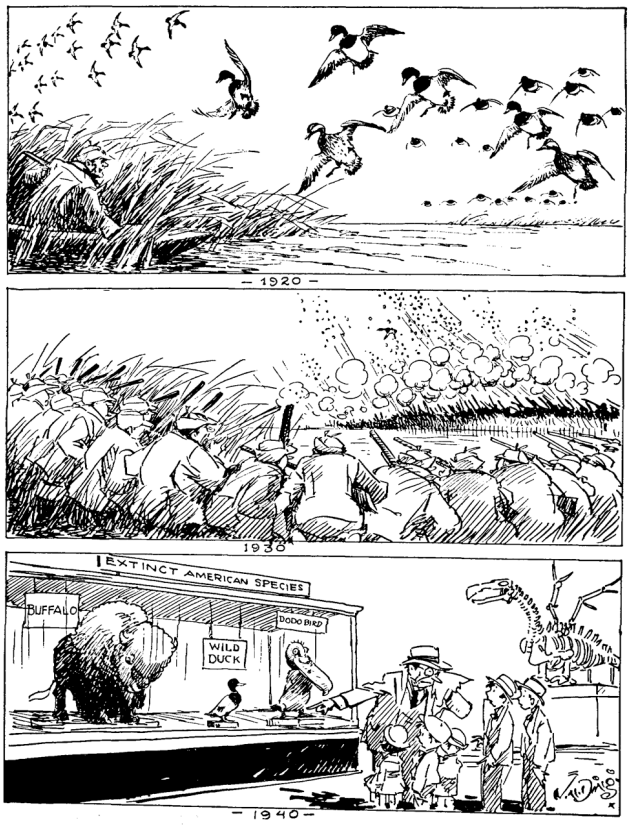


FIGURE 9. ONE OF DING DARLING'S BEST CONSERVATION THEMED CARTOONS.

Ding Darling Goes to Washington

In 1934 Jay was appointed by Roosevelt to The Committee for Wild Life Restoration. Many believe the appointment was an attempt to balance the committee politically, as FDR was well aware of Jay's politics and his friendship with Hoover. The committee consisted of Darling, Aldo Leopold and Thomas Beck, editor of Collier's Magazine and a close friend of FDR.

Beck had previously held the position of Chairman of the Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game, where he sponsored a six-year plan for statewide wildlife restoration. Now Beck desired to do the same on a national level, "particularly on behalf of migratory game birds".

Beck chaired the committee and wanted to replace the Bureau of Biological Survey with a new government agency that would oversee a massive (20-50 million dollar) program focussing on habitat acquisition, restoration and conservation – much of it for migratory waterfowl.

Jay and Aldo Leopold argued that the work could be accomplished by the Bureau with adequate funding and once again **proposed a national migratory bird hunting stamp**. Roosevelt had a good feeling about Darling and Leopold and supported *them* instead of his friend, Beck.

He offered Jay the position of Director of the Bureau of Biological Survey and Jay accepted on a temporary basis (the decision was announced on March 10th). The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act was then quickly passed through Congress and signed into law by FDR on March 16th, 1934 (see Figure 10). Jay subsequently began to implement new conservation policy based upon Leopold's work.

FIGURE 10. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT SIGNS THE MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING AND CONSERVATION STAMP ACT INTO LAW ON MARCH 16, 1934.

Although Jay Darling is widely credited for "guiding The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act through Congress" – and I have repeated the same elsewhere in previous articles and in other places on this website – the truth of the matter is, that in reviewing the literature for this post, I cannot find much evidence to show how he did this.

Jay was a *staunch* Republican and was opposed to most of the current administration's policies. The majority of Congress was comprised of Democrats at the time. It is not clear how much influence he could have had.

In fact, the national hunting license (stamp) idea had been shot down on many occasions since it was first proposed by George Lawyer in 1919. It is somewhat of a mystery how all of a sudden it was passed so easily (in a matter of days) in the Spring of 1934.

Somehow, the combination of Darling, Leopold and Roosevelt created some bipartisan magic at a very crucial time in conservation history – and the much anticipated stamp finally became a reality.

Jay, himself, designed the artwork for the vignette and was allowed to purchase stamps from the first sheet sold, at a special ceremony held two days prior to the stamps going on sale to the public on August 24, 1934 (see Figures 11 and 12).

FIGURE 11. DARLING PURCHASES STAMPS FROM THE FIRST SHEET ON AUGUST 22, 1934.

FIGURE 12. ONE OF THE STAMPS PURCHASED ON AUGUST 22, AFFIXED TO A FORM 3333 AND SIGNED BY DARLING ON THE REVERSE.

Jay would serve at the Bureau of Biological Survey for twenty months (accounts differ on how long he was actually employed by the government). During this period, he is said to have given up his $100,000.00 a year salary for a government paycheck of $8,000.00.

In addition to helping save and reorganize the Bureau (which became the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), helping to finally bring about the federal waterfowl stamp program, designing the artwork for the first stamp and modernizing wildlife conservation management based on the work of Aldo Leopold – Jay also appointed J. Clark Sayler II as first Chief of the Bureau's Wildlife Refuge Program.

The appointment was one of Jay's greatest achievements. Under Sayler's 30 year period of leadership, the number of refuges expanded tremendously. Jay N. Darling resigned as Director on November 15, 1935 and was succeeded by Ira N. Gabrielson (see Figure 13).

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information
Press Service
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Release - Immediate

November 14, 1935.

NEW ~~CHIEF~~ OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY
HAS 20-YEAR RECORD OF ADVANCEMENT

Ira N. Gabrielson, who succeeded J. N. Darling as Chief of the U. S. Biological Survey on November 15, has become the head of the organization in which he has spent all but three of the years since he was graduated from Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa, in 1912, says a statement by the Bureau. Mr. Gabrielson is the sixth chief of the Survey, which was established 50 years ago.

Leaving Marshalltown, Iowa, where he had been instructor in natural science in the high school for three years, Mr. Gabrielson, because of his interest in bird study, came to the Biological Survey on October 1, 1915, though the salary was less then that he had received at the high school. With this interest and with an experience gained in earlier investigations, however, Mr. Gabrielson gave such excellent service that his rise in the Bureau began almost immediately.

As an assistant in economic ornithology during his first years in the Bureau, he took a leading part in the investigation of the introduced starling and collaborated on the final report.

887-36

FIGURE 13. IRA N. GABRIELSON SUCCEEDED JAY N. DARLING ON NOVEMBER 15, 1935.

He returned to Des Moines and his job was a at the *Des Moines Register*. Ding continued to promote public awareness about wildlife conservation with his cartoons but longed to have a greater impact. In 1936 he convinced FDR to invite thousands of sportsmen to attend the first North American Wildlife Conference in Washington, D.C.

This resulted in the formation of the General Wildlife Federation, **which later became the National Wildlife Federation (NWF)**. The organization brought together many small groups that were already educating people about conservation.

Darling was elected the first president and served for three years. In 1938, in order to secure funding for the Federation, Jay went to the well and started the NWF conservation stamp program. Jay created the artwork for the first 16 stamps himself. One of the stamps, featuring a pair of mallards alighting, was very similar to Jay's first federal – but in multicolor (see Figure 14).

FIGURE 14. ONE OF THE FIRST NWF STAMPS, DESIGNED BY DING DARLING.

Serendipity… or Fate?

It turns out that Jay would play an important role in inspiring the creation another stamp of more significance to fish and game collectors than the NWF series – one that would some day rival his 1934 image in recognition and popularity.

Also in 1938 (while still President of the NWF), he was introduced to a young "up-and-coming" artist from Des Moines that shared his passion for wildlife, conservation – and especially waterfowl.

The young man was 18 years old and had started working for a publishing company. One of the editors knew Jay and decided the two should meet. The teenager's name was Maynard Reece.

John Olin, Ding Darling, Maynard Reece & King Buck: The Making of an Icon – Part Three

In todays post, I will talk about the legendary wildlife artist Maynard Reece. Still strong and sharp at 96 years of age, Maynard consented to a series of interviews this past week and through these, I gained some insights for our story. As with Ding Darling, there have been numerous accounts written about Maynard's life and, once again, I found the details often varied. Maynard and his son, Brad, were kind enough to clarify many of these points for me.

We shall take a look at Maynard's early career, his association with Ding Darling and some of his early achievements. I also want to explain how art was chosen for the federal waterfowl stamp prior to the federal "duck" stamp contest, then explain the origins of the contest itself. We have a lot of ground to cover, so grab some coffee.

Early Life and Career

Maynard Reece was born on April 26, 1920 to Waldo and Inez Reece in Arnolds Park, located on Lake Okoboji in northwest Iowa. Maynard was the youngest of four children and his father, like Jay Darling's, was a minister. In Waldo's case, for the Friends (or Quaker) Church.

Maynard spent the first ten years of his life in Arnolds Park,much of it outdoors. A neighbor showed him how to collect butterflies when he was only three of four years old and he "got very good at it". He began to study their flight patterns and this evolved into studying ducks and fish. Maynard also caught his first fish, a bluegill, with a cane pole when he was three. He especially liked to be in, on or near the water.

He soon began drawing and painting, with pencils and barn paints, mainly ducks and other animals. He then started hunting ducks (at first with a slingshot) and fishing. His early interest in ducks and wildlife allowed him to see the need for conservation at at a particularly young age.

The northwestern Lake Okoboji area was at one time the epicenter of Iowa's famous *duck country*. Growing up, Maynard heard old timers tell of the skies being "blackened by ducks". By Maynard's time, market hunting and over harvesting had greatly diminished the region's duck populations. However, when larger flocks passed, young Maynard was still, on rare occasions, able to witness the skies darken. This made quite an impression on him.

As with Jay Darling, his father's work meant the family moved around a bit, first to Lynnville, then to New Providence and finally to Earlham, located just west of Des Moines. While in the seventh grade, a teacher introduced Maynard to watercolors. Captivated and inspired by the new medium, Maynard made up his mind to be an artist.

In 1933, when Maynard was 12 or 13 years old, a teacher entered one of his sketches featuring a flock of Mallards into an art contest at the Iowa State fair. It won first place, including a blue ribbon and prize money in the amount of $1.50 – the most he had ever earned at one time. For the budding artist, this confirmed his career choice and he spent all of the the money on art supplies. In 1937, soon after turning 17 years old, Maynard graduated from Earlham High School (see Figure 1).

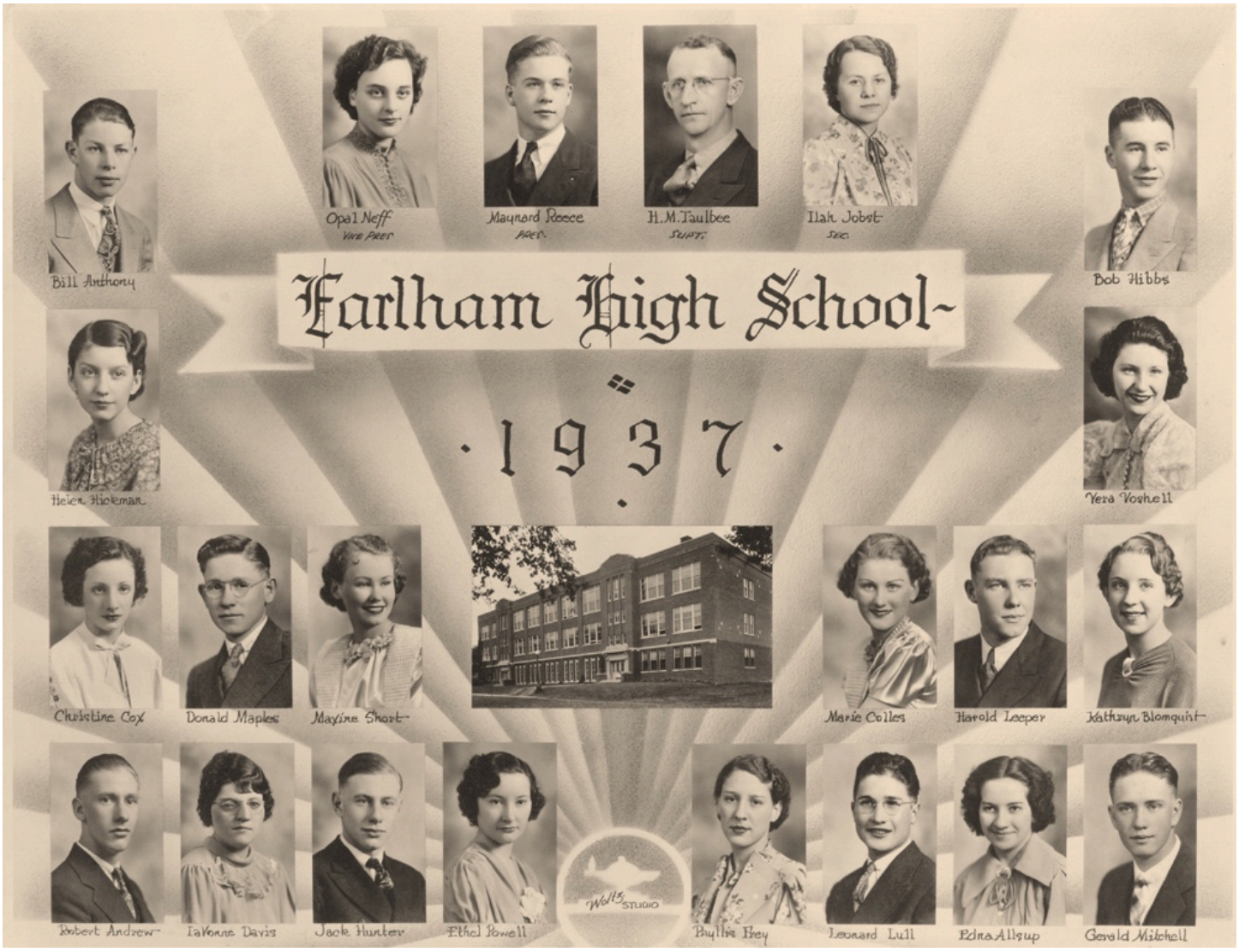


FIGURE 1. MAYNARD REECE'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS. MAYNARD IS IS PICTURED AT THE TOP, JUST TO THE LEFT OF CENTER.

According to Maynard, his family was poor. Therefore, he was unable to receive formal art training as a youth. After high school, Maynard's family did not have enough money to send him to college. He started hanging around the museum located at the Iowa State Department of History and Archives (later known as the Iowa Historical Society and now as the State Historical Society of Iowa), helping out and doing odd jobs.

He wanted to get on full time as an artist and follow in the footsteps of his boyhood idols, Francis Lee Jaques at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and Owen Gromme at the Milwaukee Public Museum – but that would have to wait for a couple of years.

One of his contacts at the museum was able to get him a steady job with Meredith Publishing Company (later Meredith Corporation) in Des Moines. He was finally a professional (graphic) artist. It was in in 1938, while working for Meredith, that one of the editors introduced him to Jay N. Darling.

The Two Iowa Artists Meet

At the time, Maynard was 18 years old and Jay was 52 or 53. Maynard was just starting out and barely a professional artist, while Jay was a world-renowned cartoonist and conservationist, having been the Director of the Bureau of Biological Survey, designed the artwork for the first federal waterfowl stamp and was currently the president of the National Wildlife Federation (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2. JAY DARLING AT WORK,
IN A PHOTO TAKEN AROUND THE TIME HE FIRST MET MAYNARD.**

In addition, Maynard remembers Jay had a deep, “booming” voice. At first, Maynard was somewhat in awe and even a little intimidated by Darling. However, despite the age and experience difference, the two had much in common: their father’s professions, their love of nature and interest in wildlife conservation, where they lived and worked (Des Moines) and their appreciation for ducks – both for for hunting and as a favorite subject for their art.

The two soon formed a deep connection and would remained close friends until Jay’s death in 1962. Darling saw great promise in Maynard as a wildlife artist and decided to “take him under his wing”. Over the next ten years (except while Maynard was in the service), the two would often meet and Darling, although not a wildlife artist per se, was able to consistently help correct *the accuracy* in Maynard’s painting and impart much in the way of general advice and encouragement.

Frequently this took the form of “work harder; do more research, study the animals and birds in more detail and spend more time drawing”. One of Jay’s pieces of advice was for Maynard to “make five sketches every day for five years, it (becoming a good artist) is 95% practice”. With Jay to push him, Maynard attempted to do just that and eventually became a self admitted “perfectionist”.

Maynard’s work would ultimately become known for its **lifelike subjects, true colors and authentic backgrounds**. This attention to detail led to water becoming his favorite thing to paint. Maynard found painting water challenging and rewarding – to be able to “capture all of its different moods”.

Maynard was not completely happy working as a graphic artist and wished to focus on wildlife art. In 1940, after two years with Meredith, Maynard returned to the museum as a full time staff artist. Jack Musgrove, current museum director, hired Maynard to paint many of the museum’s dioramas.

According to Maynard “I also worked on a lot of songbird and waterfowl sketches. Through the museum, I had obtained a special federal permit to harvest waterfowl at any time of the year and learned a lot about ducks. I also learned taxidermy, which gave me a better understanding of the anatomy of both birds and animals”.

In 1943, a previously completed series of watercolors became Maynard’s first published paintings. They illustrated a book by Jack Musgrove and his wife, Mary, titled *Waterfowl in Iowa*. The book was published by the Iowa Conservation Commission.

It was during this period of work at the historical museum, before and after WWII, that Maynard came into his own as a wildlife artist (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. MAYNARD REECE AS A YOUNG WILDLIFE ARTIST.

WWII Intervenes

In 1942 Maynard went into the army. Before shipping out to Europe, he spent some time stationed at an army base in New Jersey. This provided him with the opportunity to go into New York and, on several occasions, meet with his boyhood idol, Francis Jaques.

Maynard would later say that the work of Jaques heavily influenced his own. Maynard was especially interested in Jaques' backgrounds. He studied Jaques' museum work in New York and Minneapolis and bought all of the books featuring Jaques' work.

During WWII, Maynard served primarily as a photographer in the Army Signal Corps. When the fighting in Europe came to an end, Maynard was informed that he would then be shipped to the South Pacific. According to Maynard, "At that time the army had a point system for discharge. While waiting for a ship to take us to the South Pacific, my points for previous courses in radar came through and I had accumulated enough to get out".

So Maynard was able to return to Iowa before the end of the war. In 1946, he married June Carman. June had been born and raised in Des Moines. She graduated from Lincoln High School and had attended Drake University.

Maynard returned to the museum in 1946 and stayed until 1950, when he resigned to do freelance work full-time. In 1946, he began one of his first major assignments, to illustrate the color plates for *Iowa Fish and Fishing* (see Figure 4). Published by the Iowa Conservation Commission, the book brought Maynard much recognition, especially for his ability to accurately depict fish species.

FIGURE 4. ONE OF THE COLOR PLATES FOR *IOWA FISH AND FISHING*, BY MAYNARD REECE.

According to one review, "The Iowa fish were painted with such detail that they were scientific. The exact number of scales, the precise colors. It was if the fish had jumped from the cold water".

Artwork *Selected* for the 1948-49 Stamp

By 1947, Jay had come to believe that Maynard's work was getting to be on par with the country's leading wildlife artists. He then **encouraged Maynard to submit artwork to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, thinking it would have a good shot at being selected for a duck stamp.

Maynard told me that by this point "he was quite interested in waterfowl and thought – why not?".

Some accounts have Maynard submitting artwork two years in a row before being selected. Maynard does not recall that this was the case. I asked Russell Fink and he recalls that Maynard (first) submitted artwork in 1947 and that it was subsequently selected to appear on the 1948-49 stamp. The artwork featured a trio of Buffleheads in flight (see Figure 5).

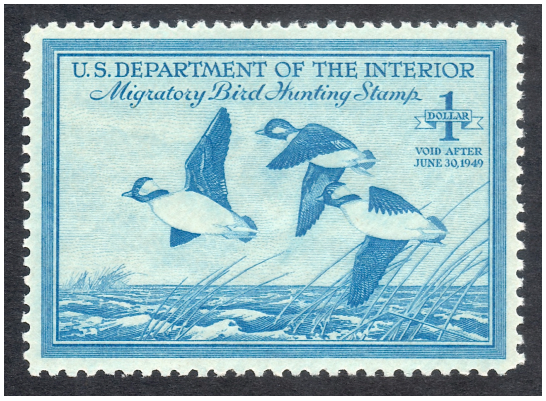


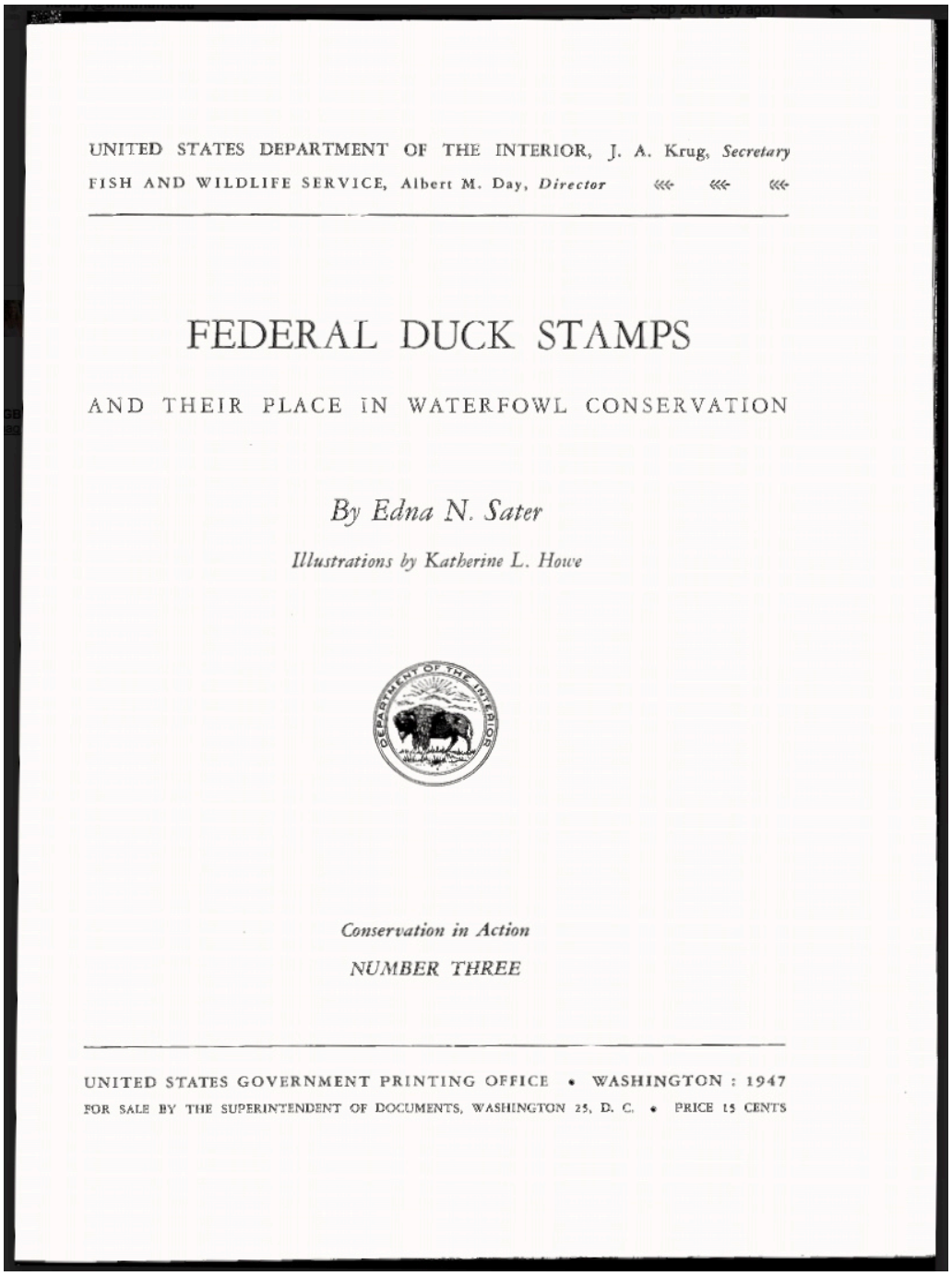
FIGURE 5. THE 1948-49 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP.

The first federal duck stamp contest was held in 1949, with the winner (in this case Walter Webber) having his artwork chosen for the next year's stamp (the 1950-51 issue). Prior to the first open art contest, how was the artwork chosen?

It was selected by a special committee appointed within, initially, the Bureau of Biological Survey and then its successor, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

In 1939, under Reorganization Plan No. II (53 Stat. 1433), the Bureaus of Fisheries and Biological Survey were moved to the Department of the Interior. Reorganization Plan No. III (54 Stat. 1232), consolidated the two into the Fish and Wildlife Service under a Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife.

According to *Federal Duck Stamps and Their Place in Waterfowl Conservation* (a Department of the Interior publication by Edna N. Slater in 1947 – see Figure 6), "This committee invites outstanding Wildlife artists to contribute drawings [one of which is] to be used as the design of the new stamp".



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, J. A. Krug, *Secretary*
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, Albert M. Day, *Director*

FEDERAL DUCK STAMPS

AND THEIR PLACE IN WATERFOWL CONSERVATION

By Edna N. Sater

Illustrations by Katherine L. Howe

Conservation in Action
NUMBER THREE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE • WASHINGTON : 1947
FOR SALE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, WASHINGTON 25, D. C. • PRICE 15 CENTS

FIGURE 6. INFORMATIVE PUBLICATION ABOUT FEDERAL DUCK STAMPS, RELEASED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR IN 1947.

The fact that the committee *invited* "outstanding" wildlife artists suggests that Jay Darling may have done more than encourage Maynard to submit artwork – he may have also put in a good word, enabling him to get an invitation to participate. In 1947 (at age 27) is is not entirely clear that Maynard would otherwise have been on the committees's radar.

1948-49 Stamps Issued

The medium used by Maynard was tempera with a black and white wash. After the artwork was selected by the committee, it was sent to designer Robert L. Miller. Miller took Maynard's artwork and used it for the central *vignette*. He then designed the stamp, complete with frame lines, lettering and denomination (face value).

Once Miller was finished designing the stamp, it was turned over to the Engraving Department at the BEP. Two engravers were assigned to produce die proofs. The vignette was engraved by Arthur W. Dintaman, while the frame lines, lettering and numerals were engraved by Axel W. Christensen (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. LARGE DIE PROOF FOR THE 1948-49 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, EX RUDY COLLECTION.

Maynard's design was selected two years after that of Robert Hines. This is noteworthy for two reasons, the second of which we will discuss shortly. First, the 1946-47 stamp designed by Hines is known for being the first federal waterfowl stamp to have a message printed on the reverse.

Further, an offset plate number (41750) was added to the reverse of each sheet of 112 stamps. It was placed in the upper right pane margin (or selvage) of stamp number UR24, and in no other position. The same holds true for the 1948-49 stamp (see Figure 8).

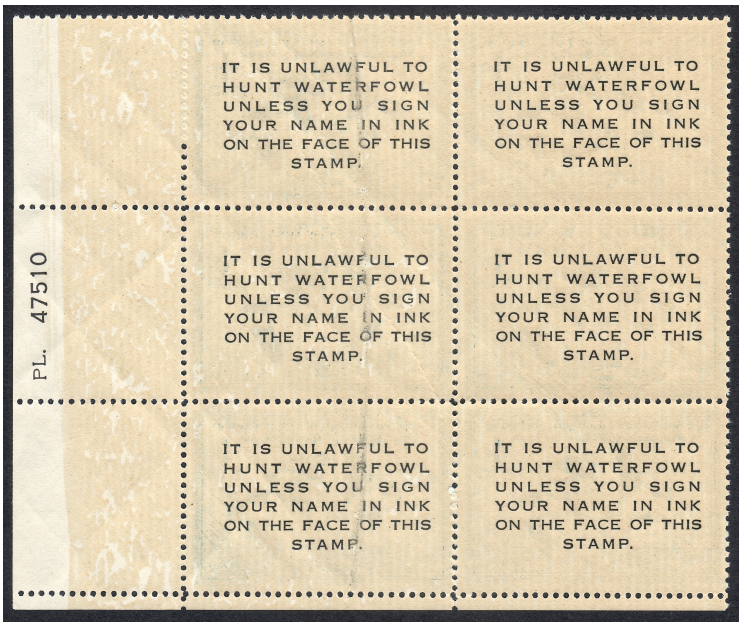


FIGURE 8. REVERSE OFFSET PLATE NUMBER BLOCK OF THE 1948-49 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP.

The large sheets were then cut down into four panes of 28 for easy distribution to post offices. The first day of public sale for the 1948-49 federal waterfowl stamp was July 1, 1948 (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. BLOCK OF FOUR CANCELLED ON THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE, JULY 1, 1948. NOTE THE BLOCK WAS SIGNED BY THE POSTMASTER OF THE ROCKVILLE STATION POST OFFICE. EX HENRY TOLMAN II COLLECTION.

One of my favorite usages of the 1948-49 federal waterfowl stamp is in combination with a Kansas quail stamp, a Marion County, Kansas duck stamp and a Marion County fishing stamp – all used on a license issued to former Marion County Park and Lake Supervisor John Waner (see Figure 10).

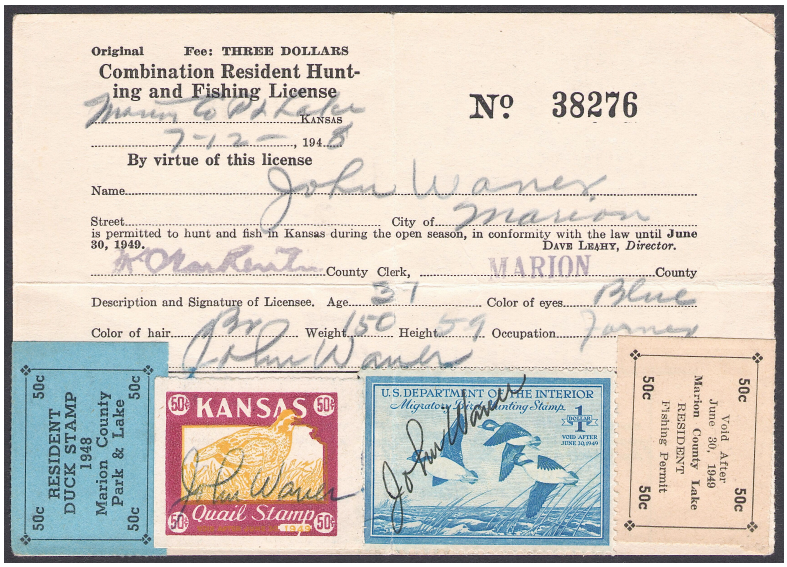


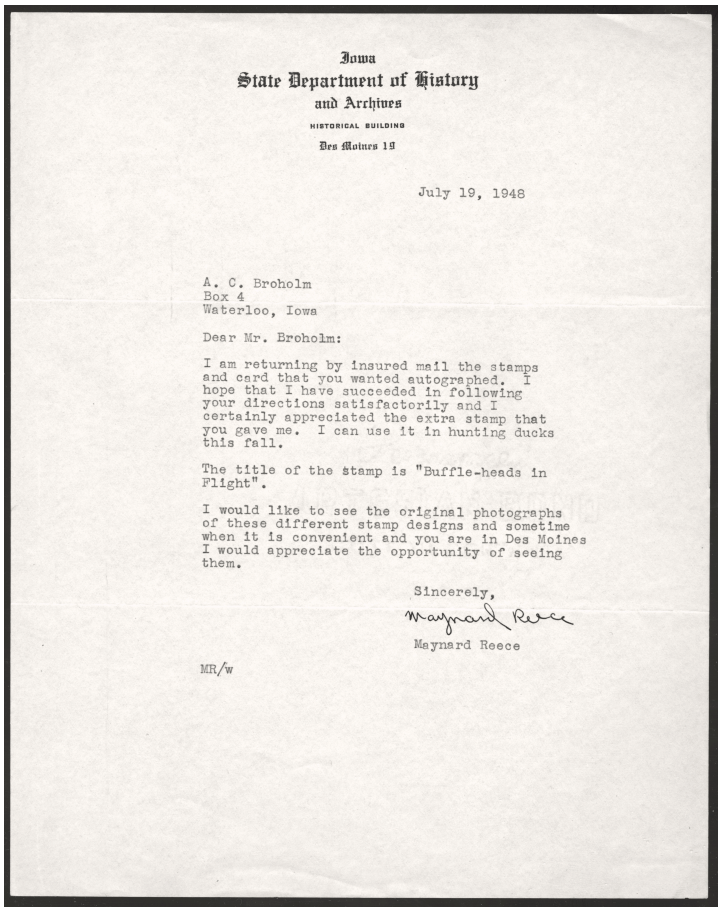
FIGURE 10. LICENSE ISSUED TO MARION COUNTY PARK AND LAKE SUPERVISOR, JOHN WANER.

A striking usage is shown in Figure 11. Military personnel were *not* required to purchase a new license each year. They were, however, required to purchase a new federal stamp if they intended to hunt waterfowl.

FIGURE 11. STATE OF IDAHO RESIDENT FISH AND GAME LICENSE WITH FOUR DIFFERENT FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMPS AFFIXED (A 1949-50 STAMP IS AFFIXED TO THE REVERSE AND IS VISIBLE AT THE UPPER LEFT).

Those who read the series of posts titled *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp*, may remember that pioneer waterfowl stamp collector Alvin C. Broholm lived not far from Des Moines, in Waterloo, Iowa.

Alvin specialized in collecting artist signed federal stamps. After the 1948-49 stamps were put on sale, Alvin enclosed some with a letter to Maynard requesting he please sign them. Maynard's letter in reply and the signed plate number single are shown in Figures 12 and 13.



Iowa
State Department of History
and Archives
HISTORICAL BUILDING
Des Moines 19

July 19, 1948

A. C. Broholm
Box 4
Waterloo, Iowa

Dear Mr. Broholm:

I am returning by insured mail the stamps and card that you wanted autographed. I hope that I have succeeded in following your directions satisfactorily and I certainly appreciated the extra stamp that you gave me. I can use it in hunting ducks this fall.

The title of the stamp is "Buffle-heads in Flight".

I would like to see the original photographs of these different stamp designs and sometime when it is convenient and you are in Des Moines I would appreciate the opportunity of seeing them.

Sincerely,
Maynard Reece

Maynard Reece

MR/w

FIGURE 12. MAYNARD'S REPLY TO ALVIN BROHOLM, DATED JULY 19, 1948.

FIGURE 13. THE TOP PLATE NUMBER SINGLE MAYNARD SIGNED FOR ALVIN BROHOLM.

There were *five* print editions of Maynard's Buffleheads image. The first edition was a lithograph, pulled from a stone in the manner described in part four of *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp*. The image is 6.75″ x 9.125″. The litho was pulled in black ink on white paper and was titled and signed by Maynard Reece in pencil. The first edition size was 200 (see Figure 14).

FIGURE 14. 1948-49 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, FIRST EDITION.

The second and 3rd editions were also stone lithographs. The first edition has one clump of grasses to the lower left of the lead duck, while the second edition has two. The 3rd edition is marked as such. The fourth and fifth editions were printed in full color. The 4rd edition is numbered out of 350, while the 5th (or Master) edition is numbered out of 125.

The First Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest

In 1948 Robert Hines left his position as staff artist for the Ohio Division of Conservation, moved to northern Virginia and went to work as an artist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He was recruited by Frank Dufresne, who had recently become Director of Information for the USFWS.

When he first arrived in Washington, D.C., Hines worked directly under the legendary Rachel Carson (see Figure 15). Carson was a marine biologist, ecologist and writer who is now considered to be the **"Mother of the Modern Environmental Movement"**.

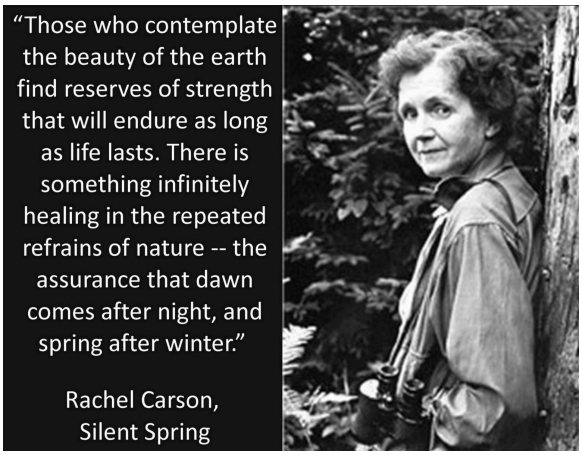


FIGURE 15. THE LEGENDARY RACHEL CARSON.

She wrote several influential books such as *Silent Spring, Under the Sea wind, The Edge of the Sea and The Sea Around Us*. The books raised public awareness for conservation, environmental protection and human health. Rachel Carson first warned of the dangers of pesticides such as DDT. *Silent Spring* is credited with saving the American eagle and peregrine falcon from extinction.

In an interview conducted by Russell Fink, Hines expressed his enthusiasm to have the opportunity to work with a scientist of Carson's stature (see Figure 16).

FIGURE 16. BOB HINES CONDUCTS A MARINE BIOLOGY STUDY WITH RACHEL CARSON.

As a recent duck stamp artist, Hines was also quite interested to observe the committee's selection process for the annual stamp. After doing so, it may come as a surprise to learn that Hines is reported to have been "appalled by the casual, subjective nature of the procedure".

He subsequently proposed an open contest with stated rules, guidelines and impartial judges – the format that is still used today. For this reason, Hines has become known as the "Father of the Federal Duck Stamp Contest". For many years, the contest was judged in private, in a room at the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 17. ROBERT HINES, LEFT SIDE OF THE MEN STANDING (RIGHT SIDE LOOKING AT THE PHOTO), PRESIDES OVER AN EARLY DUCK STAMP CONTEST. THE FOUR MEN TO HIS RIGHT (LEFT SIDE OF THE PHOTO) ARE JUDGES. CIRCA LATE 1950S-EARLY 1960S.

I know this may be a lot of to process, so let's break it down. First, I want to make it clear that in 1948 he was observing the selection process for the 1949-50 stamp – Roger Preuss' American Goldeneyes – not Maynard's Buffleheads selection.

Second, it should be noted that Hines benefitted from a similar process just a few years earlier – and I didn't find any evidence that he was "appalled" then.

Third, *something* happened during the selection process for the 1949-50 stamp that upset him greatly and so he devised a new system for choosing the annual duck stamp design.

The contest was opened for public viewing in 1966. It has evolved into a much anticipated, oftentimes *dramatic* event that has created a tremendous amount of positive energy and publicity (buzz) for the federal duck stamp program.

For more information about the current contest, see *The Million Dollar Duck* (2016).

Reece Wins the Second Open Art Contest

When the open contest was initiated, Hines made all previous duck stamp artists eligible again for the first time since their artwork had been selected by the committees. Following Walter Webber's win in 1949, **Maynard Reece won the contest for the *first time* in 1950** (see Figure 18).

FIGURE 18. JUDGES POINT TO MAYNARD'S WINNING ENTRY DURING THE 1950 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP CONTEST.

Maynard's winning entry featured a pair of Gadwall ducks, taking off from the water that he loved to paint (see Figure 19). Once again, Maynard chose tempera with a black and white wash. After the artwork was declared to be the winner by the judges, it was sent to designer William K. Schrage. The engraving was accomplished by Richard M. Bower (vignette) and Ruben K. Barrick (frame lines, lettering and numerals).

FIGURE 19. THE 1951-52 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP. THIS EXAMPLE SHOWS A "GUTTER SNIPE" AT BOTTOM, THE FULLY PERFORATED SELVAGE THAT IS FOUND BETWEEN PANES ON THE LARGER SHEET.

The first day of issue for the general public was July 1, 1951. An interesting "usage" is shown in Figure 20. A husband and wife purchased and signed a pair of stamps and kept them intact while hunting.

FIGURE 20. PAIR OF 1951-52 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMPS, SIGNED BY A HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Another nice piece is literally that; a portion of a Kansas Combination Resident hunting and Fishing License with a 1948-49 federal waterfowl stamp and a 1951-52 Marion County fishing stamp affixed. The waterfowl stamp has been signed by the legendary Jerry Mullikin (see Figure 21).

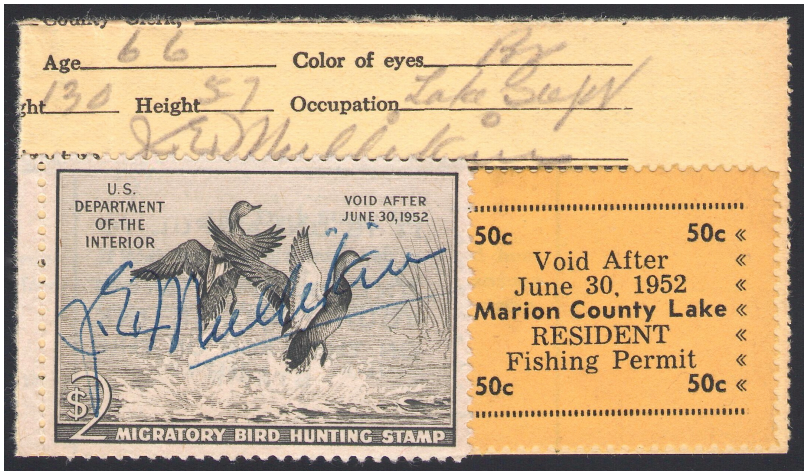


FIGURE 21. 1951-52 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP ON PIECE, SIGNED BY JERRY MULLIKIN.

There were three print editions of Maynard's Gadwalls image. The first edition was a stone lithograph. The image size was 6.75″ x 9.125″. The litho was pulled in black ink on white paper and was titled and signed by Maynard Reece in pencil. The first edition size was 250 (see Figure 22).

FIGURE 22. 1951-52 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, FIRST EDITION.

The second edition was also a lithograph and is marked as such. The edition size was 400. The 3rd (or Master) edition was printed in full color and is numbered out of 125.

Freelance, Full-Time

After Maynard won the 1950 federal duck stamp contest, he resigned his position at the museum to do freelance work, full-time. He did illustrations for calendars and magazines such as *Outdoor Life, Sports Afield* and *Sports Illustrated*. He did paintings in his free time.

In 1952, Maynard and June started their family. Their first son, Mark, was born in 1952, followed by Brad in 1954. Maynard kept working (often traveling great distances for assignments) and steadily building his reputation.

In 1955, Life Magazine commissioned him to paint a portfolio of 73 different freshwater fish and they followed this up with a subsequent portfolio of saltwater fish in 1957.

It was in 1957 that Life published a seven page photo essay with Maynard's fish illustrations. With two federal waterfowl stamps to his credit and the Life Magazine spread, now Maynard Reece was on everybody's radar – including John Olin's.

John Olin, Ding Darling, Maynard Reece & King Buck: The Making of an Icon – Part Four

Today I will talk about King Buck, arguably one the most famous sporting dogs that ever lived and certainly the most important dog in the fish and game hobby. Then, in the culmination of our story, we will see how the iconic 1959-60 federal waterfowl stamp came into being. In a surprising narrative – and perhaps for the first time – Maynard Reece reveals the exact sequence of events that led to a once in a lifetime encounter.

Throughout the 1950s, John Olin was concerned with the long-range effect of the tremendous postwar hunting boom on already dwindling wildlife populations. He strongly believed that one solution would be to educate both hunters and conservation officials to the value of trained dogs in recovering lost and crippled game.

John also believed in replenishing wildlife populations through artificial stocking and improving habitat based upon the scientific work of Aldo Leopold. He decide that all these ideas needed *practical demonstration* and this was the motivation behind Nilo Farms (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. ACTOR ROBERT TAYLOR AND HIS WIFE, (GERMAN ACTRESS) URSULA THIESS, RECEIVE INSTRUCTION ON THE USE OF A RETRIEVER AT NILO FARMS, CIRCA EARLY 1950S. PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES.

One of his goals was to develop the finest retrievers in the country to demonstrate, both at the Nilo kennels and at field trials, **the importance of using trained dogs in hunting**.

As explained in part one of this series, the first kennels at Nilo Farms were built in 1950. In January of 1951, John hired T.W. Pershall (better known as Cotton) to be his head dog trainer and handler. The remaining staff was “carefully selected with an emphasis on dedication and loyalty”. A house was built for the Pershalls at Nilo and then Cotton and his wife, Mayrene, moved onto the farm.

By May of 1951, the project was well under way and John decided to buy himself a field trial dog. For those unaware, field trials are competitions for hunting dogs. They were developed to test the dog’s skill and training in retrieving or pointing.

Needless to say, John Olin was not going to settle for just any good dog.

Fragile Early Life

King Buck was born on April 3, 1948 at Storm Lake, Iowa. This is notable for two reasons. First, storm Lake is located only 53 miles away from where Maynard Reece was born, in Arnold’s Park. It turns out that not only is northwestern Iowa famous for being *duck country* – but as a center for fine retrieving dogs. This is probably not a not a coincidence.

Second, King Buck was born in 1948, the same year that Maynard’s Buffleheads was selected to be on his first federal waterfowl stamp.

King Buck was born to Timothy of Arden, owned by Ed Quinn of Storm Lake and Alta of Banchory, owned by Merle Cadwell of nearby Alta, Iowa. His litter included four brothers and three sisters. All of the dogs were born healthy and their obedience work was begun in June.

Ed Quinn managed initial training for the puppies, which included introducing them to water in a spring-filled gravel pit, several times a week. At this point, all the puppies looking promising but none of them stood out.

Neither Quinn nor Cadwell kept any of the puppies. They were all sold in the fall, when they were six months old. Two of the puppies, including the one that would later be named King Buck, were sold to men in Omaha, Nebraska.

According to Quinn, all of the puppies were immunized for distemper, hepatitis and rabies before leaving Storm Lake. However, within a few days after arriving in Omaha, both puppies developed acute symptoms of distemper. The one that had been sold to E. J. Karnes was taken to a veterinarian and soon died.

The one that had been sold to Robert Howard showed no signs of improvement and Howard was advised to put him to sleep. But Howard and his wife had different ideas. They kept him in a warm basement and tried to nurse him back to health.

For over a month the puppy was too weak to stand and often near death. It is believed that Mrs Howard’s love and devotion to the sick puppy made the difference. She said, “one night I went downstairs to have a look at him and he managed to stand in his basket and greet me. I knew then that he was going to make it”.

Soon after the puppy started to recover and was able to take light exercise, Howard named him. He had previously owned several dogs named Buck (as he liked *calling* that name) and in the optimistic hopes that the fragile little puppy would someday rise to fame – named him “King Buck”.

King Buck had lingering health problems for the first eighteen months of his life. It was not until the fall of 1949 that he began his first hunting in the field. King Buck was always a very smart dog and quickly showed promise, winning a couple of entry level field trials soon after becoming healthy.

He was not an overnight sensation, however, and for some time produced mixed results. He sometimes did so poorly that Howard became worried the distemper may have permanently affected his eyesight. King Buck gradually improved, showing Howard that he was a hard worker and very strong in the water.

Howard sensed the dog could have a great future. Knowing he could not afford to run his retriever in top-flight field trials, he sold King Buck to Byron “Bing” Grunwald (also of Omaha) for $500.00. Howard sold the dog in order to give him a fair chance to prove himself – with one stipulation; that he could continue to train him and handle him in trials.

King Buck continued to produce mixed results, sometimes winning and sometimes doing poorly, in mid level trials. In 1951, at three years of age, he finally won two top level trials and started to make a name for himself (see Figure 2). Now people started paying more attention to him at the trials and one of the people watching was John Olin.

FIGURE 2. A YOUNG KING BUCK, CIRCA 1951-52.

King Buck Comes to Nilo Farms

For over a year John had been studying the competitive performances of young retrievers on the field trials circuit. He began paying particularly close attention to King Buck, who had begun to win “more than his share of trials”. John was coming to the conclusion that this was the dog for him.

Cotton Pershall, with years of field trial experience behind him, thought differently. He reminded John of the dog’s checkered past. In addition, he did not believe the dog was worth its asking price of $6,500.00 (apparently Howard had already turned down many offers, including one of $5,000.00). Cotten came up with what *he* thought was a much better dog for less money, Freehaven Muscles.

John’s response was to buy both dogs for the Nilo Kennels. Although Cotton handled and trained both dogs (see Figure 3), Muscles became known around the kennels as Cotton’s dog and Buck became known as John’s. Within a year, Muscles won a major championship and justified the confidence Cotton had shown in him. It was John’s dog, however, that would make field trial history.

FIGURE 3. COTTON PERSHALL TRAINING KING BUCK (ENLARGE TO MAKE PHOTO CLEAR).

In November of 1952, under Cotton Pershall's expert handling, King Buck won the National Retriever Field Trial Championship, the most coveted prize in field trial competition. The following year he did it again – becoming only the third dog to repeat in the history of the event (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4. KING BUCK AND JOHN OLIN, REPEATING AS NATIONAL CHAMPION IN 1953.

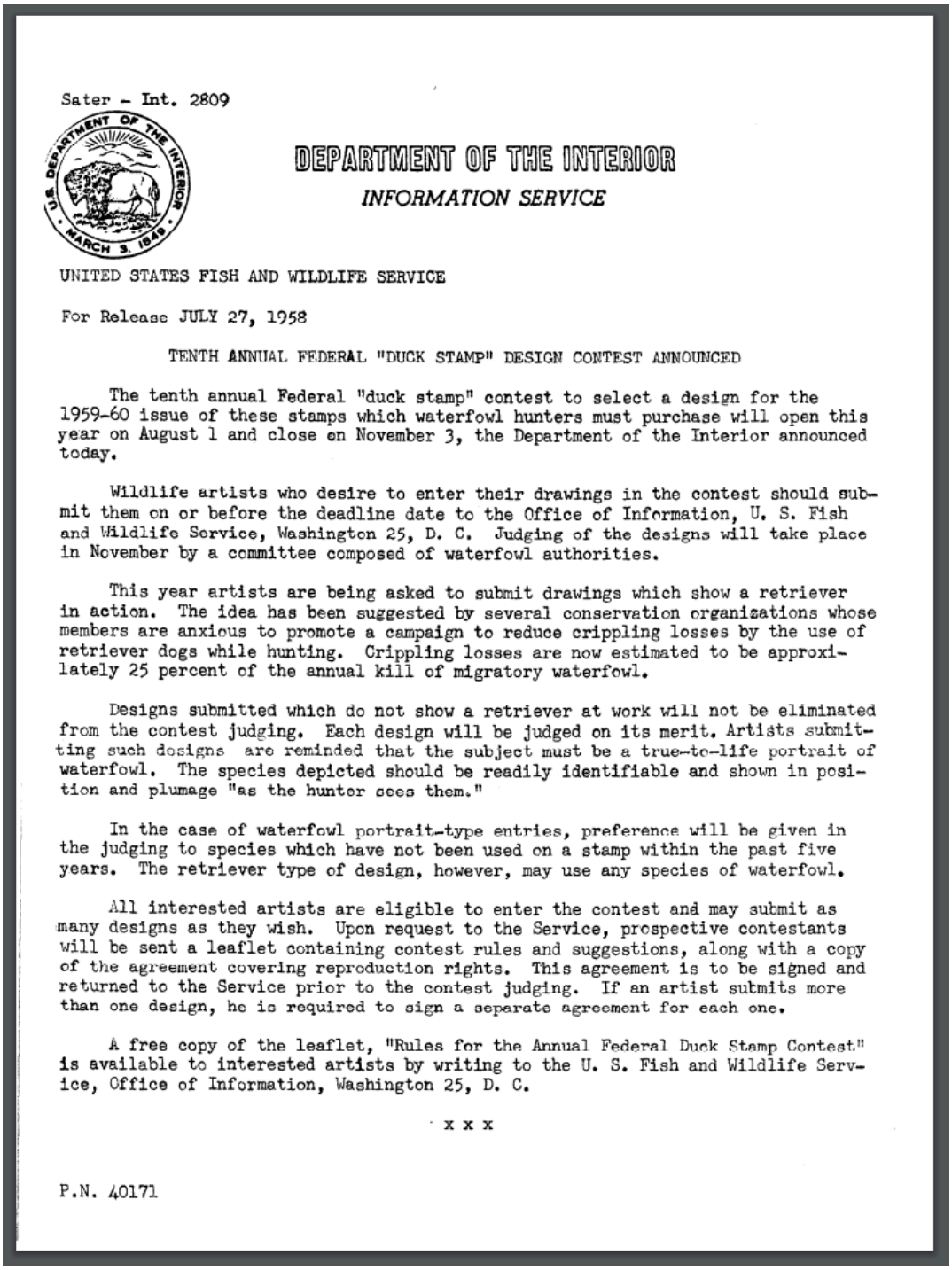
King Buck stayed active in field trials for the next four years, often competing with much younger dogs. As late as 1957, when King Buck was nine years old, he not only qualified for the National Championship again – but almost won it. Through the decade, he became somewhat of a national celebrity and (within sporting circles) reached international fame.

To learn more about Nilo Farms and see King Buck in action, watch the film at this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jj-qTo7LLbs

The 1958 Duck Stamp Contest

On July 27, 1958, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that prospective artists for the annual duck stamp contest should submit artwork “which show a retriever in action”. The press release went on to state “The idea has been suggested by several conservation organizations whose members are anxious to promote a campaign to reduce crippling losses by the use of retriever dogs while hunting” (see Figure 5).



Sater - Int. 2809

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release JULY 27, 1958

TENTH ANNUAL FEDERAL "DUCK STAMP" DESIGN CONTEST ANNOUNCED

The tenth annual Federal "duck stamp" contest to select a design for the 1959-60 issue of these stamps which waterfowl hunters must purchase will open this year on August 1 and close on November 3, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Wildlife artists who desire to enter their drawings in the contest should submit them on or before the deadline date to the Office of Information, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington 25, D. C. Judging of the designs will take place in November by a committee composed of waterfowl authorities.

This year artists are being asked to submit drawings which show a retriever in action. The idea has been suggested by several conservation organizations whose members are anxious to promote a campaign to reduce crippling losses by the use of retriever dogs while hunting. Crippling losses are now estimated to be approxilately 25 percent of the annual kill of migratory waterfowl.

Designs submitted which do not show a retriever at work will not be eliminated from the contest judging. Each design will be judged on its merit. Artists submitting such designs are reminded that the subject must be a true-to-life portrait of waterfowl. The species depicted should be readily identifiable and shown in position and plumage "as the hunter sees them."

In the case of waterfowl portrait-type entries, preference will be given in the judging to species which have not been used on a stamp within the past five years. The retriever type of design, however, may use any species of waterfowl.

All interested artists are eligible to enter the contest and may submit as many designs as they wish. Upon request to the Service, prospective contestants will be sent a leaflet containing contest rules and suggestions, along with a copy of the agreement covering reproduction rights. This agreement is to be signed and returned to the Service prior to the contest judging. If an artist submits more than one design, he is required to sign a separate agreement for each one.

A free copy of the leaflet, "Rules for the Annual Federal Duck Stamp Contest" is available to interested artists by writing to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Information, Washington 25, D. C.

x x x

P.N. 40171

FIGURE 5. USFWS PRESS RELEASE DATED JULY 27, 1957.

Although I do not know this for a fact, I am going to take a stab in the dark here and suggest that John Olin supported this idea. It had been eight years since Maynard Reece had entered a duck stamp contest. His career was in full swing and he was being kept quite busy.

In a recent interview for this series of posts, Maynard revealed to me that **it was Olin Industries who first approached him**, told Maynard they had learned the USFWS desired to have a dog on a stamp for the first time and, further, requested that he drive over to Nilo Farms to be introduced to King Buck – not the other way around.

In a subsequent interview, Maynard told me that one of John Olin's employee's had worked at the Des Moines Register with Jay Darling before moving on to Olin Industries. He knew Maynard from his days in Des Moines and was the one that suggested they contact Maynard and ask if he would be interested painting the dog for the duck stamp contest.

According to Maynard, "Prior to the contact I was not even thinking of entering that year". After thinking it over, he then decided "it would be a great idea", as he had done paintings of dogs before and had always enjoyed the experience.

The Visit to Nilo Farms

After first meeting King Buck at Nilo Farms, Maynard instinctively felt he was "an interesting dog". Some time later, Olin employees took Maynard and King Buck down to a pond, where they threw a dead duck into the water for the dog to retrieve. The first time, King Buck was swift to respond and delivered the duck to the men's feet.

Then one of the men threw the duck into the water again and **this is when the *magic* happened**. According to Maynard, instead of going into the water for a second time, Buck turned to Maynard and looked him in the eyes as if to say "Really? I just did this and am not going to do it again".

It was this momentary gaze that provided the the opportunity for Maynard and King Buck to *connect*. Maynard subsequently captured the dog's expression in a way that would captivate and move viewers for generations to come. In so doing, he cemented legendary status for both of them.

Maynard was invited to visit King Buck's "dog house", where all of his awards, trophies and other mementos were on display. He made several sketches of King Buck in the dog house and then returned to his studio to create the artwork for his entry. The chosen medium was gouache with a black and white wash (see Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6. ORIGINAL ART FOR THE 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE REECE FAMILY.**

How does gouache differ from tempera? Tempera is a powdered color pigment mixed with a water soluble binder such as egg yolk (traditionally), milk or glue. Gouache is a water soluble opaque paint made up from pigment combined with gum arabic.

Improvement on a Classic Theme

The placement of the duck in King Buck's mouth was not an original idea on Maynard's part. Rather, it was a tried and true theme, used in sporting art and merchandising going back to the 1800s. Such images were prevalent at the beginning of the 20th century (see Figures 7 and 8).

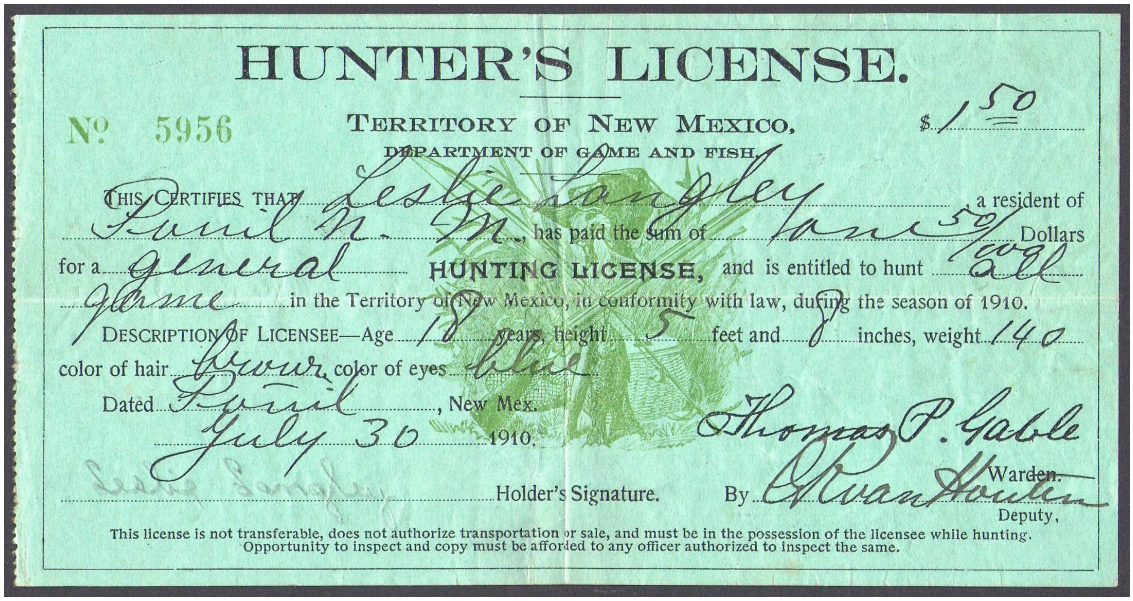


FIGURE 7. THE SECOND TERRITORY OF NEW MEXICO HUNTER'S LICENSE (ISSUED IN 1910) FEATURED A MIXED SPORTING MOTIF WITH A DOG AT THE TOP CENTER. THE DOG HELD A BIRD IN ITS MOUTH.

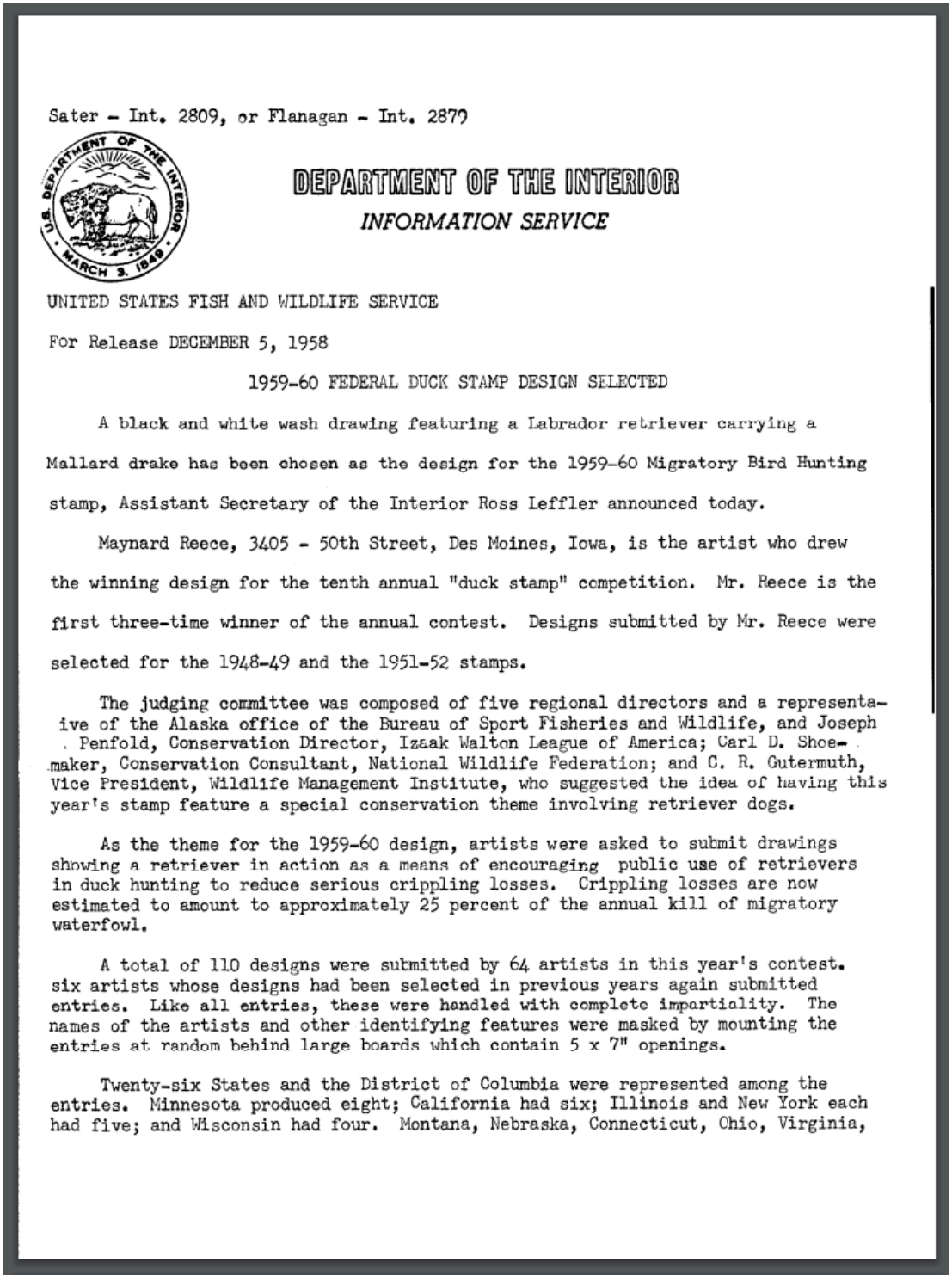
FIGURE 8. ADVERTISING COVER FOR THE HUNTER ARMS CO., CIRCA 1912.

What made Maynard's image *one for the ages* is the way he, especially, and later the vignette engraver, **rendered the look in the black Lab's eyes** (see Figure 9). The viewer cannot help but feel a strong fondness for the dog.

FIGURE 9. ENLARGEMENT OF MAYNARD'S ORIGINAL ART, SHOWING THE EXPRESSION IN THE DOG'S EYES.

Reece Wins Contest for the Second Time

On December 5, 1958, the USFWS announced “A black and white wash drawing featuring a Labrador retriever carrying a Mallard Drake has been chosen as the design for the 1959-60 Migratory Bird Hunting stamp…” The press release went on to say that “Mr. Reece is the first three-time winner of the annual contest” (see Figures 10a and b).



Sater - Int. 2809, or Flanagan - Int. 2879

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release DECEMBER 5, 1958

1959-60 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP DESIGN SELECTED

A black and white wash drawing featuring a Labrador retriever carrying a Mallard drake has been chosen as the design for the 1959-60 Migratory Bird Hunting stamp, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler announced today.

Maynard Reece, 3405 - 50th Street, Des Moines, Iowa, is the artist who drew the winning design for the tenth annual "duck stamp" competition. Mr. Reece is the first three-time winner of the annual contest. Designs submitted by Mr. Reece were selected for the 1948-49 and the 1951-52 stamps.

The judging committee was composed of five regional directors and a representative of the Alaska office of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and Joseph Penfold, Conservation Director, Izaak Walton League of America; Carl D. Shoemaker, Conservation Consultant, National Wildlife Federation; and C. R. Gutermuth, Vice President, Wildlife Management Institute, who suggested the idea of having this year's stamp feature a special conservation theme involving retriever dogs.

As the theme for the 1959-60 design, artists were asked to submit drawings showing a retriever in action as a means of encouraging public use of retrievers in duck hunting to reduce serious crippling losses. Crippling losses are now estimated to amount to approximately 25 percent of the annual kill of migratory waterfowl.

A total of 110 designs were submitted by 64 artists in this year's contest. six artists whose designs had been selected in previous years again submitted entries. Like all entries, these were handled with complete impartiality. The names of the artists and other identifying features were masked by mounting the entries at random behind large boards which contain 5 x 7" openings.

Twenty-six States and the District of Columbia were represented among the entries. Minnesota produced eight; California had six; Illinois and New York each had five; and Wisconsin had four. Montana, Nebraska, Connecticut, Ohio, Virginia,

and the District of Columbia were tied with three each. Texas, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey had two apiece. Other States represented by one contestant apiece were South Carolina, Missouri, Georgia, Kansas, Arizona, Pennsilvania, Oregon, Louisiana, Delaware, South Dakota, and Iowa.

This will be the 26th stamp to be issued in the Federal duck stamp series. The first stamp went on sale in 1934. The 1959-60 stamp will be the first of the series, as authorized by Public Law 85-585.

A new duck stamp is issued each year by the Post Office Department which is in charge of its distribution and sale. It goes on sale on July 1, and expires on the following June 30. Every individual who has attained the age of 16 years and who wants migratory waterfowl is required to have on his person a stamp of current issue with his signature written across the face. This stamp is required in addition to a State hunting license.

More than two million duck stamps are sold annually. Duck stamp revenues have been used in past years to supplement other funds appropriated to the Fish and Wildlife Service for the purchase, development, administration, and maintenance of waterfowl refuges throughout the country. Effective July 1, 1960, all receipts from the sale of duck stamps, other than funds needed to reimburse the Post Office department for the actual stamp costs, are to be used for the acquisition of suitable areas for migratory bird refuges under the provisions of the Migratory Bird conservation Act.

x x x

(NOTE: Glossy prints of the winning duck stamp design are available on a loan basis for reproduction in newspapers and magazines from the Office of Information, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington 25, D. C.)

P.N. 46792 2

FIGURES 10A (TOP) AND B (BOTTOM). USFWS PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF THE 1958 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP ART CONTEST.

As we have seen in part three of this series, the second statement is not accurate. Maynard's artwork was selected by committee for the 1948-49 stamp. This was his *second* contest win and he had three stamps to his credit (at this point) total.

A Masterpiece of Wildlife Art

This would turn out to be more than just another stamp, however, this would prove to be a masterpiece of wildlife art. The King Buck image with a Mallard in his mouth would come to stand with Ding Darling's Mallards alighting as the two most recognizable – and the most popular – waterfowl stamps of all time.

The image is truly *iconic* and has been reproduced on everything from coffee mugs to T-shirts to license plate holders – you name it. The composition, colors – everything – is pleasing to the eye (see Figure 11).

FIGURE 11. 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, ARTWORK BY MAYNARD REECE.

The winning artwork was sent to a team of two designers, Robert Hines and Victor S. McCloskey, Jr. **The design team is compelling**. As we saw in part three, Robert Hines already had a federal duck stamp to his credit (1946) and conceived the federal duck stamp contest in 1948. He designed four commemorative postage stamps to draw public attention to wildlife conservation, three in 1956 and one in 1957.

The 1957 stamp featured a whooping crane and was one of the first U.S. commemoratives printed in multicolor. It was selected as one of the "top ten stamps in the world" for that year. Interestingly, the 1957 commemorative has a similar *feel* to the 1959-60 duck stamp (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 12. 1957 COMMEMORATIVE DESIGNED BY ROBERT HINES.

Victor McCloskey was a veteran at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing with a distinguished past, especially with regard to duck stamps. Victor designed the classic 1940-41 duck stamp; the artwork for the stamp was created by Francis Jaques – one of Maynard's boyhood idols and whose art heavily influenced his own.

Once Hines and McCloskey were finished designing the stamp, it was sent to the Engraving Department at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Arthur W. Dintaman engraved the vignette and Howard F. Sharpless engraved the frame lines, letters and numerals.

Each of the men named above deserves some measure of credit for the finished product and I, for one, would like to acknowledge them. Producing a great stamp like this is truly a *team effort*.

The 1959-60 stamp is known for many firsts: 1) The printed fee was raised from two to three dollars; 2) it was the first multicolored stamp; 3) the printing press changed from a flatbed to a Giori rotary press; 4) the sheet size changed from 112 subjects to 120, therefore, each individual pane consisted of 30 stamps (see Figure 13) and 5) the plate number was moved to the corner on the 30 stamp panes, creating plate number blocks of *four* as compared to plate number blocks of six on the previous issues (see Figure 14).

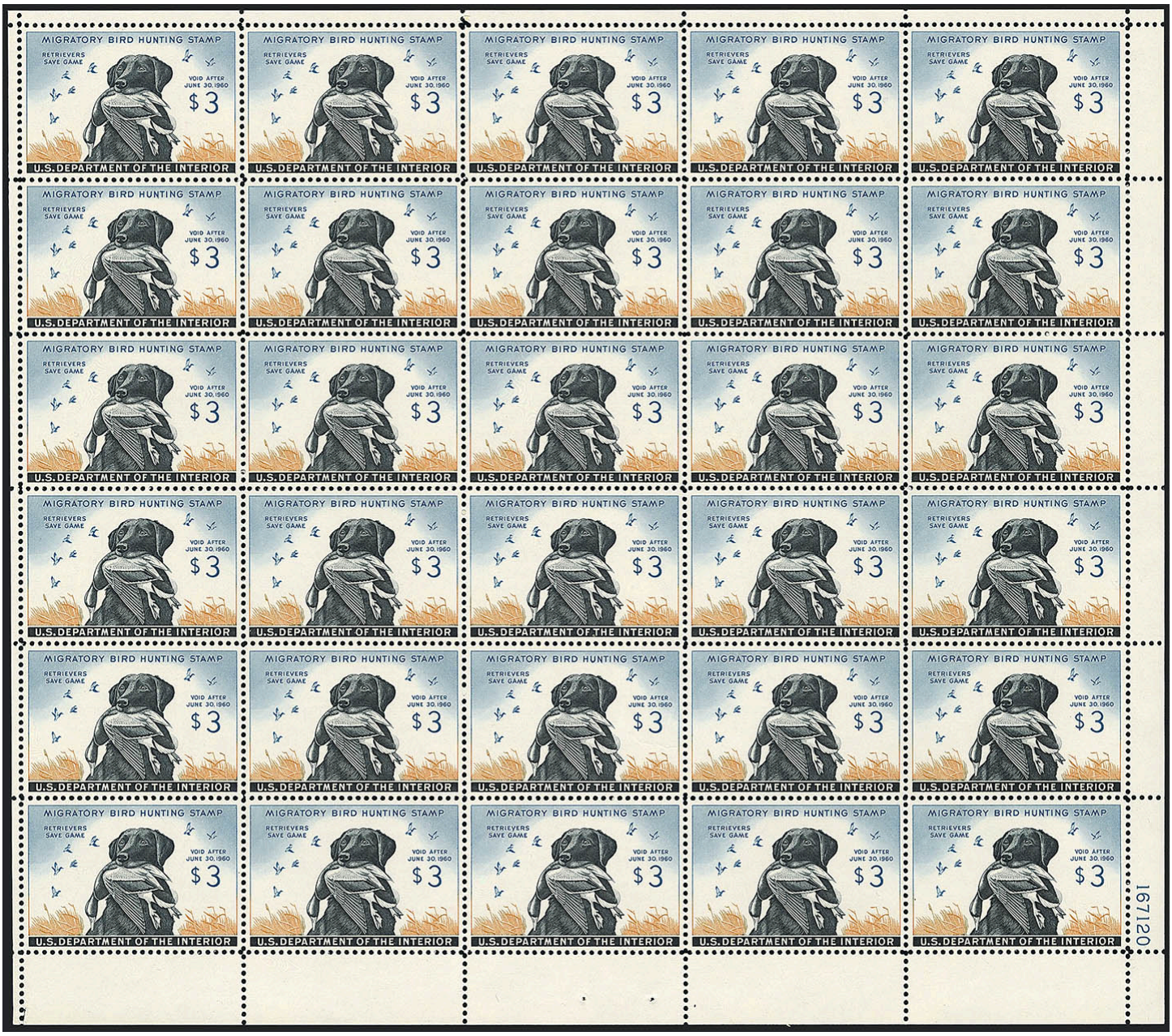


FIGURE 13. STARTING WITH THE 1959-60 ISSUE, INDIVIDUAL PANES CONSISTED OF 30 STAMPS. EX BILL WEBSTER COLLECTION.

FIGURE 14. ENLARGEMENT FROM THE PANE ABOVE.THE THE SERIAL NUMBER IS LOCATED IN THE LOWER RIGHT CORNER OF THE PANE, CREATING A PLATE NUMBER BLOCK OF FOUR.

In addition, the 1959-60 issue was the first stamp with a conservation theme, using a dog with the message “RETRIEVERS SAVE GAME”, rather than a waterfowl as the primary subject. Subsequent issues saw the conservation messages continue, with “WILDLIFE NEEDS WATER – PRESERVE WETLANDS” printed on 1960-61 stamps and “HABITAT PRODUCES DUCKS” on 1961-62 stamps.

The 1959-60 issue is also known for a major printing error. Occurring on at least one sheet of stamps, the inscription on the reverse was inverted. Very few of these stamps have surfaced, in part due to the fact that the error is on the reverse and not readily apparent. If you own one or more copies, you might want to check them (see Figure 15).

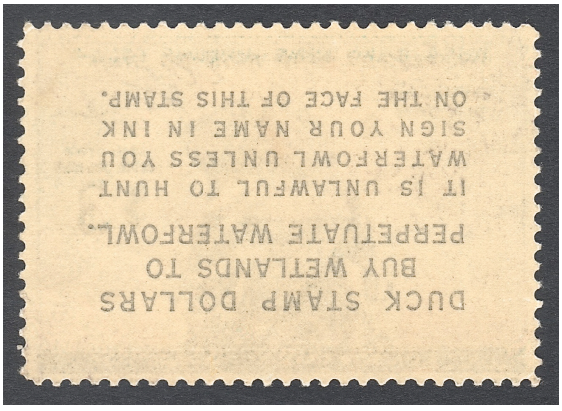


FIGURE 15. 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, REVERSE INSCRIPTION INVERTED.

One of my favorite 1959-60 usages is in combination with the first 1959-60 Honey Lake (California) waterfowl stamp sold (see Figure 16).

FIGURE 16. 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP USED IN COMBINATION WITH A 1959-60 HONEY LAKE WATERFOWL STAMP. NOTE THE HONEY LAKE STAMP IS NUMBER 1 OF 500.

After the design featuring King Buck was announced as the winner, John commissioned Maynard to paint a large copy. This painting hung over the mantle in John's house and it was one of his prized possessions throughout his life (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 17. THE PAINTING COMMISSIONED BY JOHN OLIN.

Then, for Christmas, John and his current wife, Evelyn, turned the stamp image into an oversized greeting card and sent it to family, friends and clients (see Figures 18 and 19). The card, when folded, measures 7.5″ x 9″. I love this piece!

FIGURE 18. JOHN AND EVELYN'S GREETING CARD, FRONT COVER.

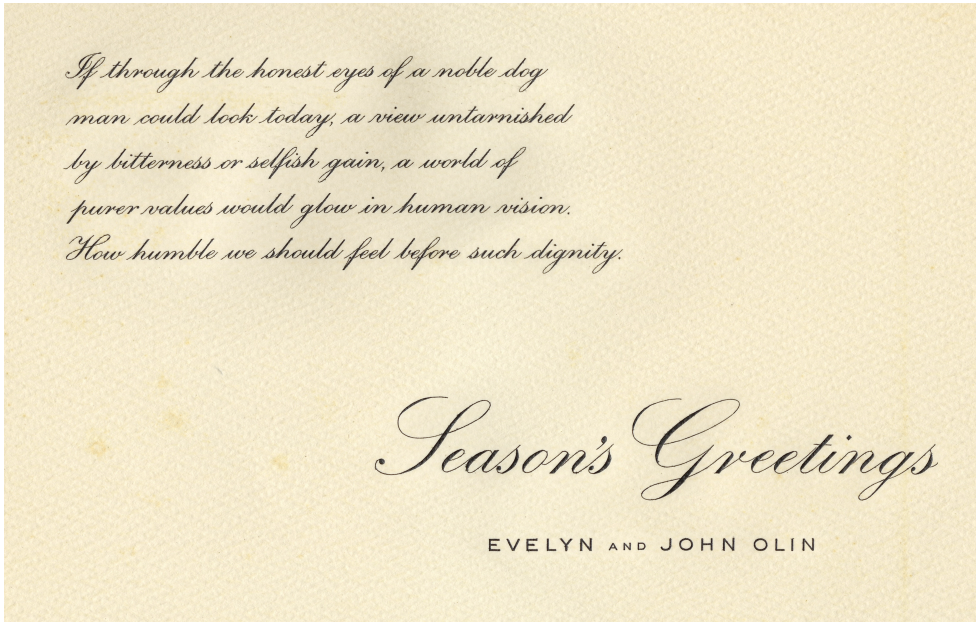


FIGURE 19. ENLARGEMENT OF THE INSCRIPTION PRINTED ON THE INSIDE.

Certificates of Appreciation

The 1959-60 huntings seasons saw revenue from duck stamp sales fall by 25%. This was the result of an extended drought during the previous few years which adversely affected breeding grounds and led to a sharp decline in many species of waterfowl. Seasons needed to be shortened and bag limits reduced. Many hunters decided not to participate.

To make up for the lost revenue from hunters, the Department of the Interior (in cooperation with the National Wildlife Federation) looked to stamp collectors, wildlife art lovers and conservation minded citizens.

The National Wildlife Federation supplied the Department with attractive certificates of appreciation. The certificates were 5″ x 7′ and printed on imitation parchment (see Figure 20). The certificates were intended to reward buyers who bought the stamp after the hunting season was over.

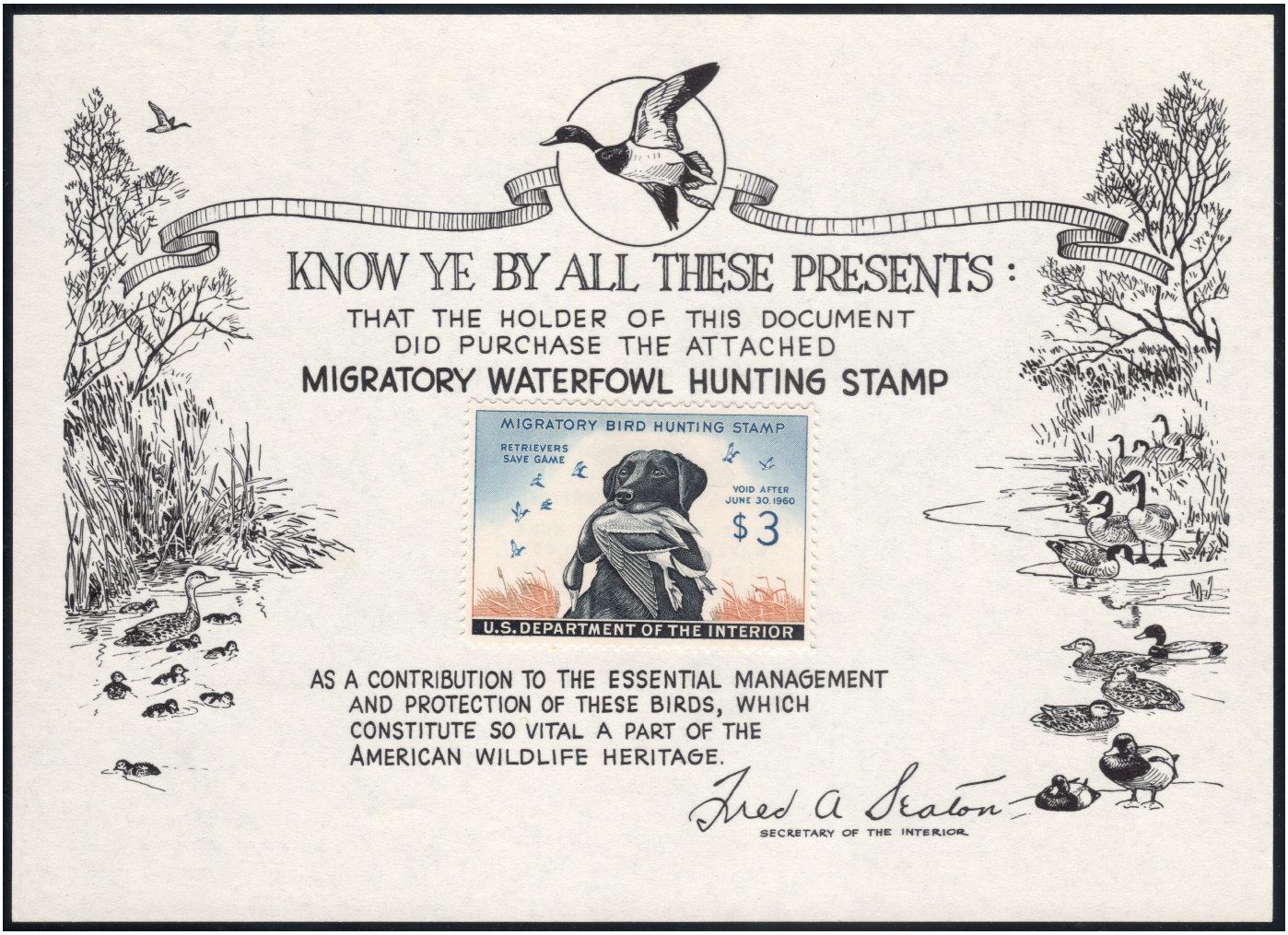


FIGURE 20. CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION, WITH A 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP AFFIXED.

In order to stimulate non-hunter purchases of the 1959-60 stamp before it went off sale in June, the Department of the Interior announced (via a series of press releases) that “Each purchaser of a stamp during the campaign will receive one of the certificates signed by Secretary [of the Interior] Seaton (see Figures 21a and b).

Flanagan - Int. 2879 or Sater - Int. 2809

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release FEBRUARY 20, 1960

BENNETT OPENS SPECIAL DRIVE FOR DUCK STAMP SALES

A nationwide campaign to promote the after season sale of the 1959-60 duck stamps to conservation minded persons was "kicked off" this week by Under Secretary of the Interior Elmer F. Bennett.

The purpose of the special drive is to offset the loss of revenue from the regular sales--down an estimated 25 percent--which finance the Fish and Wildlife Service acquisition of wetlands for waterfowl refuges.

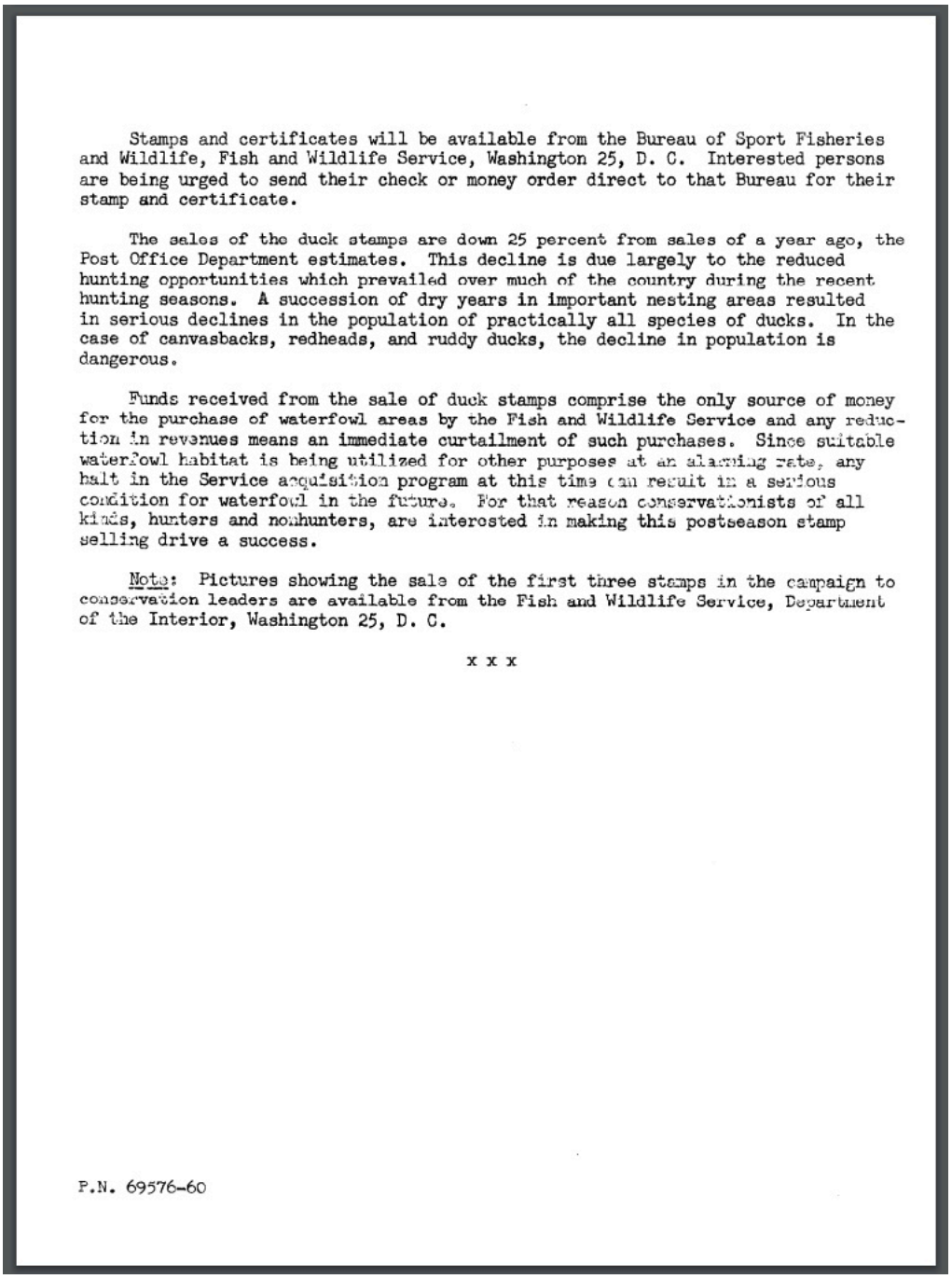
The first three stamps of this post-hunting campaign were purchased from Under Secretary Bennett by C. R. Gutermuth, Wildlife Management Institute; Joseph W. Penfold, Izaak Walton League of America, and Stewart M. Brandborg, National Wildlife Federation.

Each received a certificate signed by Secretary Fred A. Seaton, showing that the "holder of this document did purchase the attached Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Stamp as a contribution to the essential management and protection of these birds, which constitute so vital a part of the American Wildlife Heritage".

This is especially true since the seasons for hunting migratory birds in the United States have been closed since early in January and the expenditure of the $3 for the 1959-60 duck stamp is a direct contribution to the cause of waterfowl conservation.

The special drive is sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service with the support of the various national conservation organizations. The help of local conservation groups, newspapers, TV and radio stations is being solicited in every part of the Nation.

Each purchaser of a stamp during the campaign will receive one of the certificates signed by Secretary Seaton. The certificates are provided at no cost to the Government through the courtesy of the National Wildlife Federation, a national organization representing State sportsmen's and conservation groups.



Stamps and certificates will be available from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington 25, D. C. Interested persons are being urged to send their check or money order direct to that Bureau for their stamp and certificate.

The sales of the duck stamps are down 25 percent from sales of a year ago, the Post Office Department estimates. This decline is due largely to the reduced hunting opportunities which prevailed over much of the country during the recent hunting seasons. A succession of dry years in important nesting areas resulted in serious declines in the population of practically all species of ducks. In the case of canvasbacks, redheads, and ruddy ducks, the decline in population is dangerous.

Funds received from the sale of duck stamps comprise the only source of money for the purchase of waterfowl areas by the Fish and Wildlife Service and any reduction in revenues means an immediate curtailment of such purchases. Since suitable waterfowl habitat is being utilized for other purposes at an alarming rate, any halt in the Service acquisition program at this time can result in a serious condition for waterfowl in the future. For that reason conservationists of all kinds, hunters and nonhunters, are interested in making this postseason stamp selling drive a success.

Note: Pictures showing the sale of the first three stamps in the campaign to conservation leaders are available from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C.

x x x

P.N. 69576-60

FIGURES 21A (TOP) AND B (BOTTOM). THE FIRST PRESS RELEASE ON FEBRUARY 20, 1960, ANNOUNCING THE CERTIFICATE PROMOTION.

In a press release dated March 22, the Department appealed directly to stamp collectors, “From the viewpoint of the philatelist, the annual duck stamp is one of the most artistic stamps issued today… The design for the 1959-60 stamp, being sold during the drive, features a Labrador retriever carrying a Mallard drake. The black retriever used as a model by artist Maynard Reece is the famous King Buck belonging to John Olin of Nilo Kennels in Illinois.

… Stamps will be mailed in glassine envelopes so that the purchaser can then hinge-mount his stamp on the special certificate or place it in his collection”.

The Most Popular Stamp Print, Ever

Known affectionately as “the dog”, prints made from Maynard’s original artwork are exceedingly popular. There tends to be two types of buyers for federal duck stamp prints; the first attempts to acquire one print from each stamp image and works toward someday completing the set. The second wants only one or two individual prints, often to frame and place on a wall.

When it comes to the second type of buyer, Maynard Reece’s 1959 print was for decades the most requested – by far. In recent years, its popularity has been tempered by the availability and cost of obtaining a print from the first three editions.

There were five editions of Maynard’s King Buck image. The first edition was a stone lithograph. The image size was 6.625″ x 9.125″. The litho was pulled in black ink on white paper and was titled and signed by Maynard Reece in pencil. The first edition size was 400 (see Figure 22).

FIGURE 22. 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, FIRST EDITION. NOTE THE UPPER WING OF THE BACKGROUND DUCK FURTHEST TO THE LEFT IS BELOW THE TIP OF THE PLANT.

The second and 3rd editions were also stone lithographs, very similar to the first. The easiest way to tell the difference between the first and second editions is that the upper wing of the background duck furthest to the left is *below* the tip of the plant in the first (see Figure 22), while it is *overlaying* the tip of the plant in the second (see Figure 23).

FIGURE 23. 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, SECOND EDITION.
NOTE THE UPPER WING OF THE BACKGROUND DUCK FURTHEST TO THE LEFT OVERLAYS THE TIP OF THE PLANT.

The size of the second edition was 300. It should be noted that a large portion of the second edition was handled by Abercrombie & Fitch in New York City. When they framed the prints, they trimmed them severely. Therefore, prints from the second edition with margins greater than one and a half inches on all four sides generally sell for a premium.

The 3rd edition was label by Reece as such and numbered 400 plus 15 artist proofs. For the 4th edition, a new stone was drawn in which the expression in the dog's eyes was clearly changed. For this reason, *uncolored* fourth edition prints are not considered as desirable but remain in demand due to their relative affordability.

The size for the 4th edition was 330 regular *plus* 90 prints that were hand colored. The hand colored edition is considered to be *very* desirable and is difficult to acquire (see Figure 24).

FIGURE 24. 1959-60 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, 4TH EDITION – HAND COLORED.

The 5th (or master) edition was released as part of a set of all five Reece duck stamp images, in 2006. For the first time, all five were available in full color. They were packaged in high quality folders, a special box and 125 sets were produced.

Summary

As you can see, a lot of things had to come together for the 1959-60 federal waterfowl stamp to come into being. John Olin developed a serious interest in wildlife conservation and became a leading advocate for the use of retrievers to limit the loss of crippled and otherwise unclaimed game birds that had been shot.

Jay Darling grew up with a profound interest in wildlife conservation and used his syndicated cartoons to raise public awareness for the cause. This attracted the attention of FDR and, along with Aldo Leopold, they were somehow able to get a resistant Congress to change its opinion on the national hunting license and the federal waterfowl stamp finally became a reality.

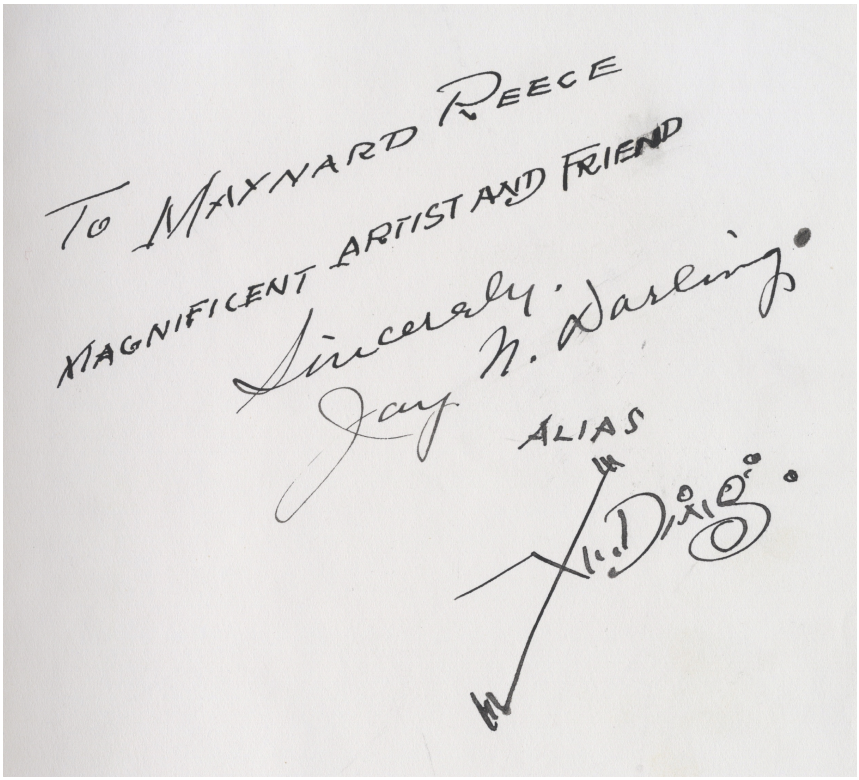
Maynard Reece grew up in Iowa and was introduced to Darling, who took him under his wing, helping Maynard on his way to becoming a great wildlife artist and encouraging Maynard to follow in his footsteps as a federal duck stamp artist in 1948.

John Olin saw something in a young black lab with a checkered past. He brought the dog to Nilo Farms where, under the talented handler Cotton Pershall, King Buck matured into a two time National Field Trials Champion and a national celebrity.

In 1958, conservation organizations anxious to promote the use of retrievers – undoubtedly supported by Olin – influenced the Department of the Interior to request that artists submitting entries for the 1959-60 stamp "submit drawings which show a retriever in action".

Olin Industries invited Maynard Reece, an accomplished wildlife artist with two federal duck stamps and a seven-page Life Magazine spread to his credit, to visit Nilo Farms and meet King Buck, a black Labrador retriever they believe would be perfect for the upcoming stamp.

The second time the Olin employees throw the duck in the water, the dog turns to Maynard and their eyes meet for a few moments – allowing Maynard to capture the dog's expression in such a way as to *enchant* not only the duck stamp contest judges – but generations of stamp collectors, wildlife art aficionados, conservation devotees, sportsmen and dog lovers.

I would like to thank Maynard and Brad Reece for answering all of my questions and providing a photo of the original artwork for the 1959-60 stamp; Russell Fink for helping me to sort out some of the intricate details in the story and Jen Pope, Librarian at Penrose Library on the Whitman College campus, for providing a key piece of the puzzle – the Department of the Interior publication by Edna Slater stating that in 1947, a committee invited artists to submit their work.

I would especially like to thank my lovely wife, Kay, for her patience and support as I build the content on this website.