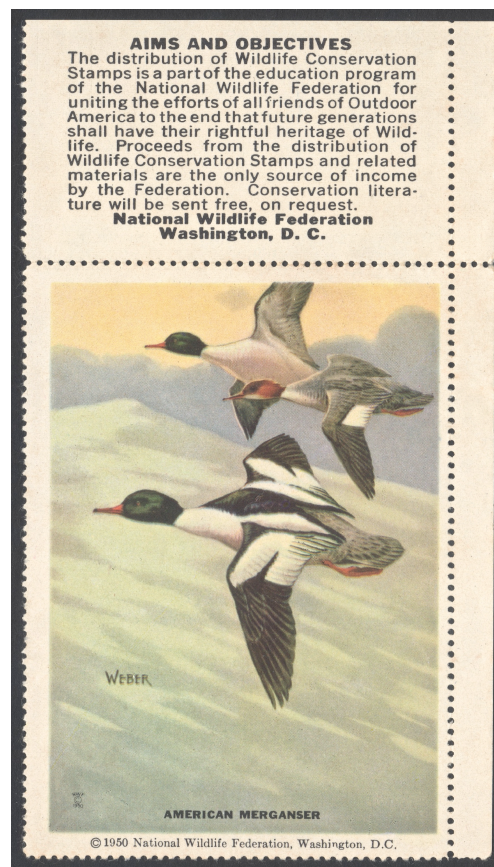


Walter A. Weber: Winner of the First Federal Duck Stamp Contest – Part One

Today we will start to look at the life of Walter Alois Weber, a very talented artist who holds the distinction of becoming the first person to design more than one federal waterfowl stamp. In the process, Walter was the winner of the first ever federal duck stamp contest, held in 1949.

Although fish and game collectors know him for the two federal stamps – and that will be our primary focus in this series of posts – Walter is probably better remembered by a much larger segment of the population for his illustrations that were featured in *The National Geographic Magazine* for three decades starting in 1939 and for the images of his paintings that appeared on some 250 stamps printed and distributed by the National Wildlife Federation (see Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1. AMERICAN MERGANSER
BY WALTER A. WEBER.**

Walter Weber was capable of creating the kind of wildlife art that stirred powerful emotions in the viewer. There was a softness about this work that has been variously described as “breathtaking”, “evocative” and “romantic” by art critics.

Early Life and Career

Walter Alois Weber was born in Chicago on May 23, 1906 to Antoinette Kreml Webber and Jacob Weber. By all accounts, his parents were poor immigrants who barely managed to care for their family of eleven children.

With regard to his skills as an artist, Walter was what they call “a natural” and showed great promise when he was quite young. By age nine he was taking classes at the the Art Institute of Chicago on weekends. It was at the Art Institute that he met and studied under renowned animal artists such as Allan Brooks and Carl Rungius.

In time, Walter would become known for his realistic drawings of creatures of all kinds and for the authentic backgrounds in which he placed them.

One of the most ubiquitous Walter Weber stories involves a ten year old boy who would frequent a local tavern, doing drawings and sketches of animals for bar patrons in exchange for sodas. He also used the money to buy art supplies.

According to the Stearns and Fink biography on Walter Weber in *Duck Stamp Prints*, “... there were three teachers in particular who recognized Walter’s talent and encouraged him to study art... One was Miss Miller who taught him in the fifth grade – another was Mrs. Jessie Thompson, his seventh grade teacher; the third was Dr. Clarence Holzman at Waller High School, who later introduced him to Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, then head of the Zoology Department at the Field Museum where Mr. Webber was eventually to be a staff member”.

After graduating from high school, Walter attended the University of Chicago. His interest in plants, animals and birds and his talent in drawing them led him to combine a major in zoology and botany with the study of art at the university. In 1927 he graduated with honors, earning a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in zoology and botany. During and after his time at the university, Walter continued to study art at the Art Institute.

From 1928 to 1931, Walter worked at the Field Museum of Natural History (now the Chicago Museum of Natural History) as a field collector and artist. After leaving the Museum, Walter took a position as biologist and artist for the upcoming Chicago World's Fair, also known as the Century of Progress International Exposition (see Figures 2 and 3).



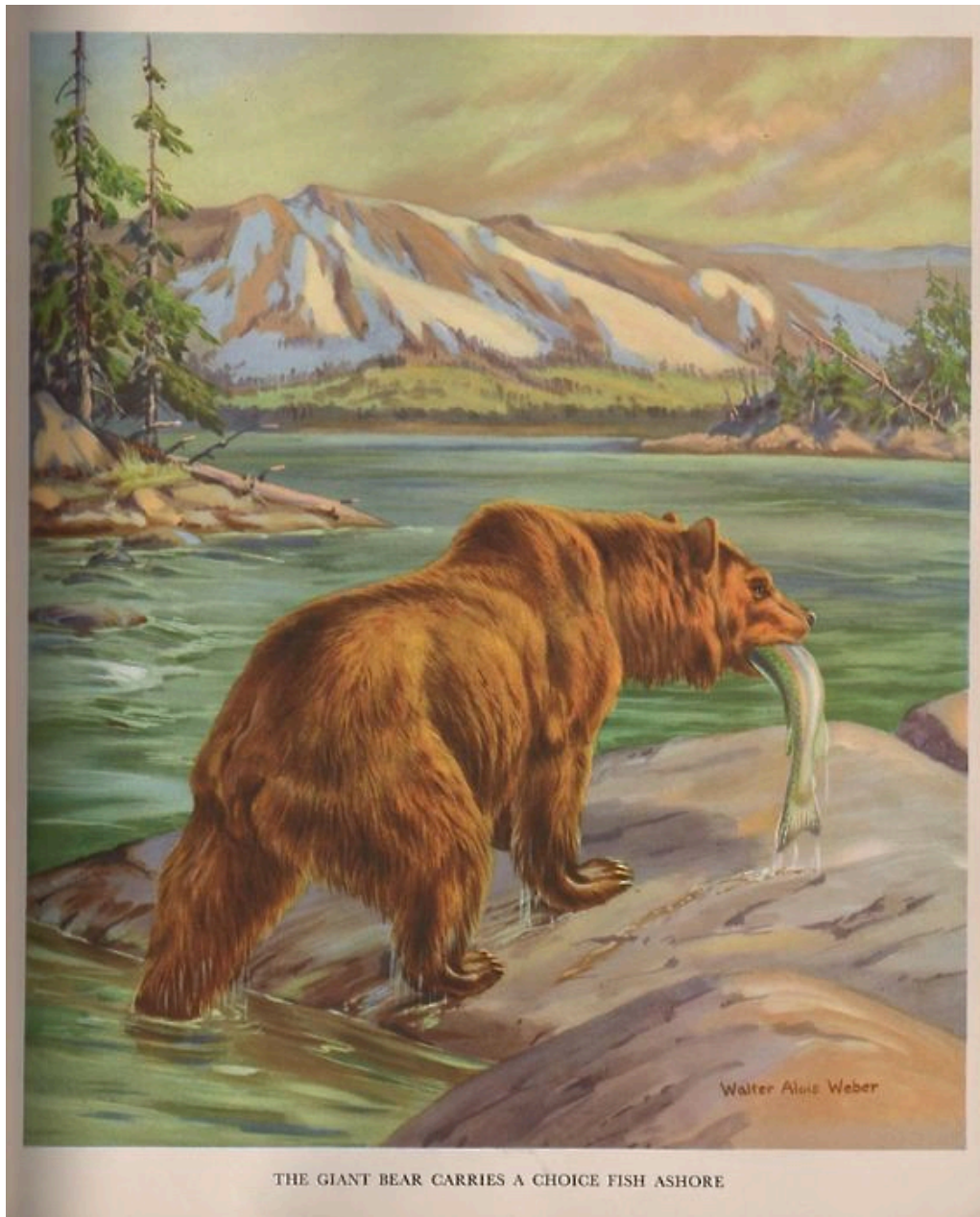
FIGURE 2. POSTER FOR THE 1933 CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR.



**FIGURE 3. SOUVENIR SHEET ISSUED TO COMMEMORATE
THE AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY CONVENTION,
WHICH TOOK PLACE IN CHICAGO DURING THE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION.**

Although the Exposition opened on May 17, 1933, Walter was involved in extended preparations for a two-year period leading up to the huge event.

After his work at the Exposition came to an end, Walter became a free lance commercial artist for a couple of years. During this period his art appeared in many books, including *Birds of Minnesota* by T.S. Roberts, *Traveling With the Birds* by Rudyerd Boulton and *Homes and Habits of Wild Animals* by Karl Schmidt (see Figure 4).



THE GIANT BEAR CARRIES A CHOICE FISH ASHORE

FIGURE 4. A COLOR PLATE FROM *HOMES AND HABITS OF WILD ANIMALS*, ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALTER ALOIS WEBER.

Starting in 1936, Walter started working as a field artist with the National Park Service. In 1937 he became the National Park Service's chief scientific illustrator in Washington, D.C.

It was while working for the National Park Service, in 1939, that Walter's work first appeared in *The National Geographic Magazine*. In the October issue, Walter wrote and illustrated a piece titled "Antlered Majesties of Many Lands" (see Figure 5).

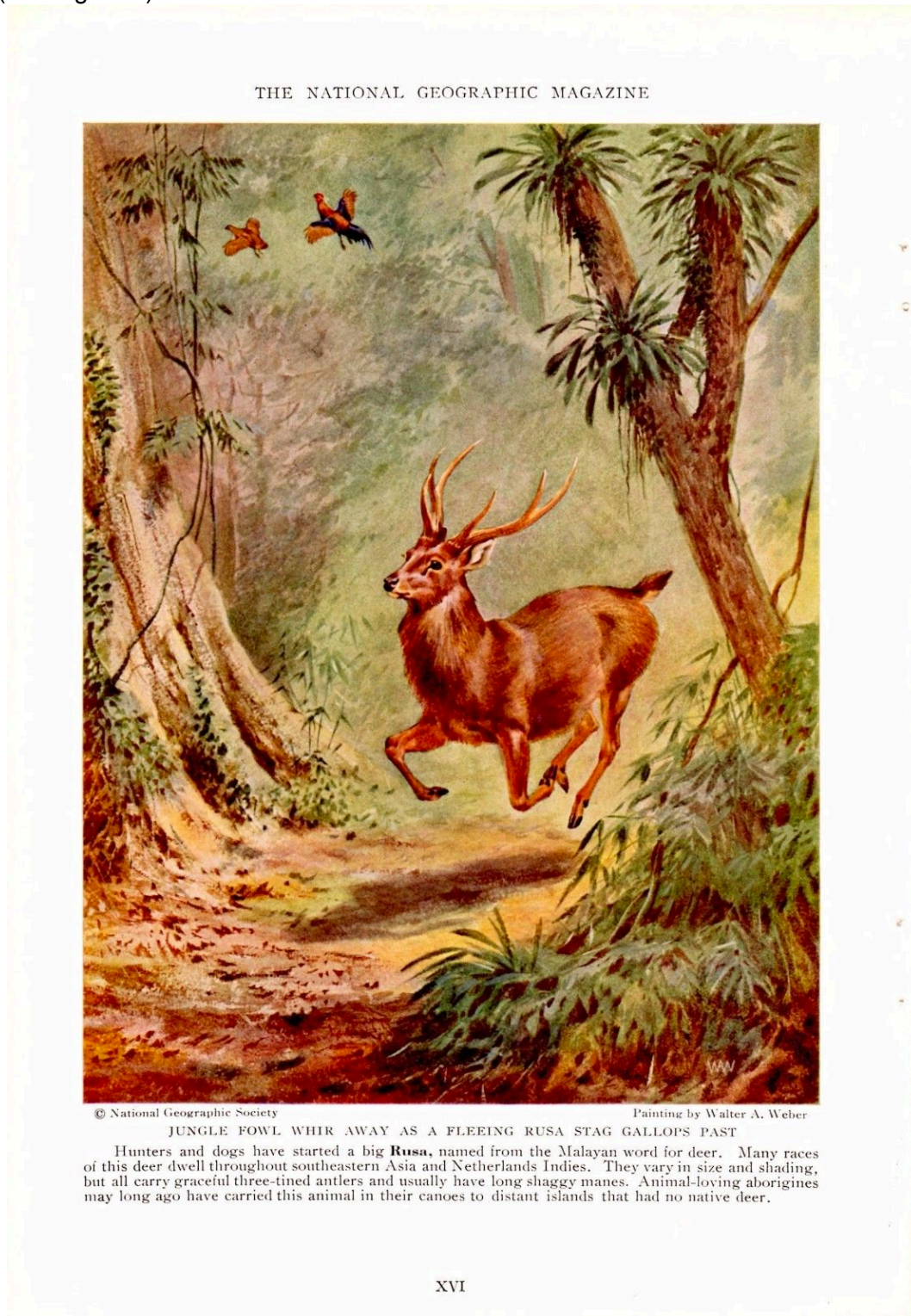


FIGURE 5. RUSA STAG BY WALTER A. WEBER.

In 1941, he left the Park Service and was employed as an ornithologist at the U.S. National Museum of Natural History, administered by the Smithsonian Institution.

Artwork Selected for the 1944-45 Stamp

In 1943, Walter returned to doing freelance work, full-time. It was in this year that his painting of White Fronted Geese was selected as the artwork for the 1944-45 federal waterfowl stamp. The medium he chose for the painting was a black and white wash (see Figure 6).



**FIGURE 6. THE ORIGINAL BLACK AND WHITE WASH PAINTING CREATED BY WALTER A. WEBER.
PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD PRAGER.**

A *wash* is a watercolor term for a flat layer of very diluted color (in this case black) laid across the paper. It can either be an even layer of color or a graduated layer of color which gets lighter.

The dilution is accomplished by using relatively little paint and a large amount of solvent. Paint consists of a pigment and a binder which allows the paint to adhere to the support. Solvents dilute the binding strength of the paint and, therefore, a combination of a *gum arabic* wash with a highly absorbent paper is often used to create the desired effect and also enhance long term stability.

As we saw in part three of *The Making of an Icon*, prior to the annual duck stamp contest, noted wildlife artists were first *invited* to submit waterfowl artwork by the Department of the Interior. Then a special committee appointed within, initially, the Bureau of Biological Survey and then its successor, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *selected* the art to appear on the next stamp.

In 1943, It would have been a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service committee that made the selection of Walter's White Fronted Geese.

1944-45 Stamps Issued

After the artwork was selected by the committee, it was sent to designer William K. Schronge. Schronge took Walter's artwork and used it for the central vignette. He then designed the finished stamp, complete with frame lines, lettering and denomination (see Figure 7).



FIGURE 7. 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP,
TOP PLATE NUMBER SINGLE SIGNED W.K. SCHRONGE – DESIGNER
AND WALTER A. WEBER – ARTIST.

Once Schronge was finished designing the stamp, it was turned over to the Engraving Department at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Two engravers were assigned to produce *die* proofs. The vignette was engraved by Mathew D. Fenton; the frame lines, lettering and numerals were engraved by George L. Huber (see Figure 8). For a detailed discussion on metal dies and die proofs, see *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp*.

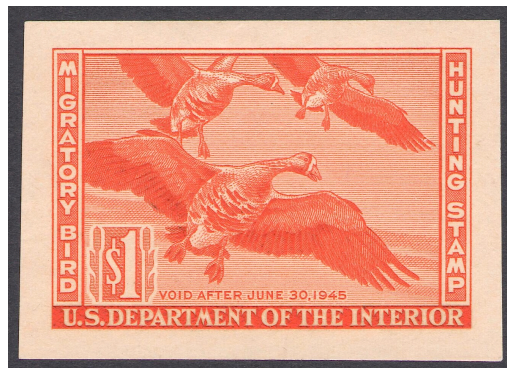


FIGURE 8. SMALL DIE PROOF FOR THE 1944-45 FEDERAL
WATERFOWL STAMP, EX RUDY COLLECTION.

Once the die proofs were approved, the die was copied many times to create printing plates of 112 subjects. For Weber's stamp, two such plates were created, numbers 155590 and 155603. At this point *plate* proofs were created and approved. Finally, regular sheets of 112 subjects were then printed, gummed and perforated.

The large sheets were then cut down into four panes of 28 for easy distribution to post offices. Each pane was imprinted with a plate number in the top or bottom selvage to indicate which metal plate was used to produce the larger sheet it was cut from (see Figures 9).

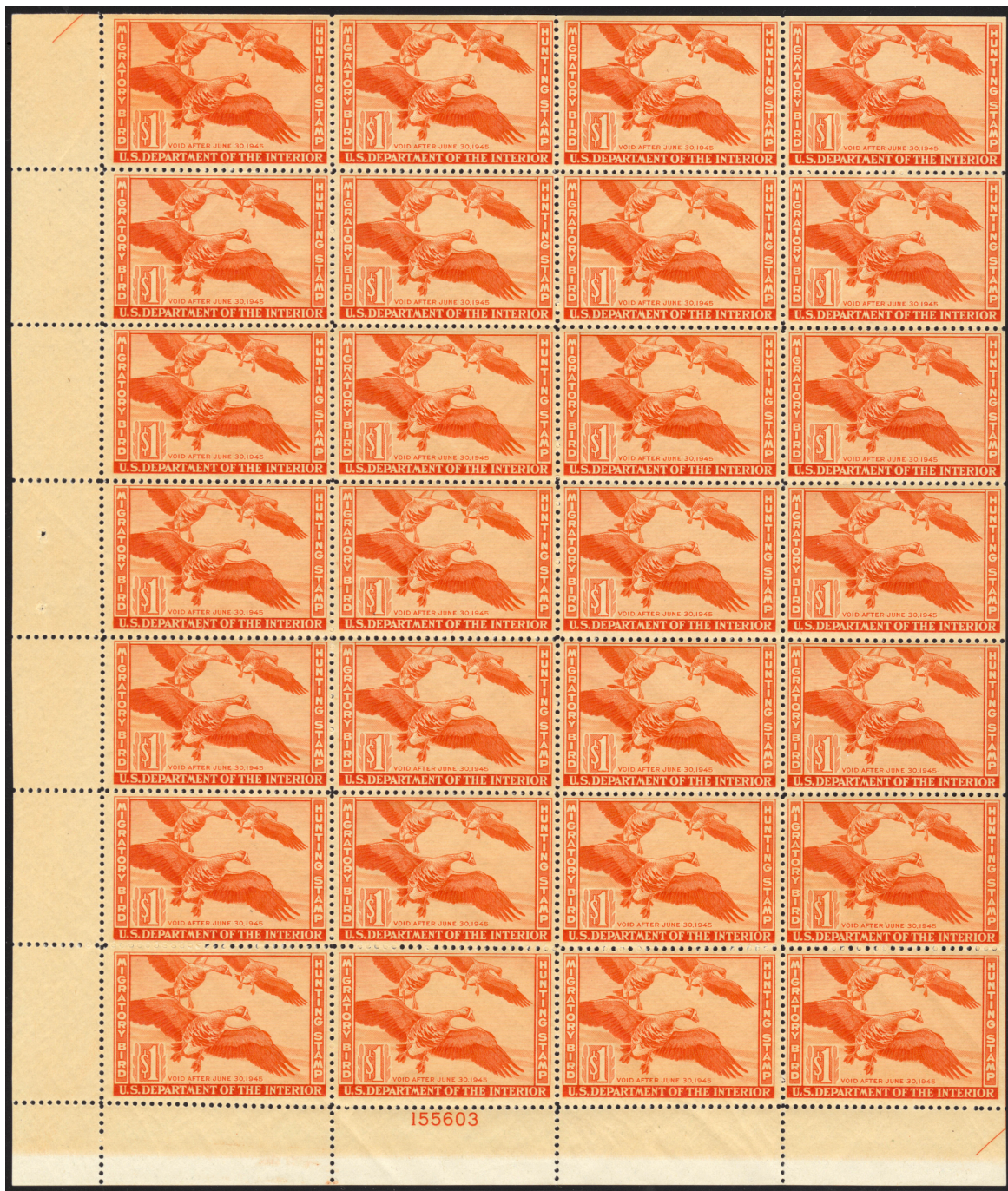


FIGURE 9. COMPLETE PANE OF 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMPS.
NOTE THIS IS THE LOWER LEFT PANE WHICH WAS CUT FROM THE ORIGINAL SHEET OF 112 STAMPS.
THE PLATE, NUMBER 155603, WAS ONE OF TWO USED TO PRINT WEBER'S STAMP.

The panes of 28 stamps were packaged and shipped to post offices around the country. The first day of public sale for the 1944-45 federal waterfowl stamp was July 1, 1944 (see Figure 10).



**FIGURE 10. BLOCK OF FOUR CANCELLED ON THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE, JULY 1, 1944.
NOTE THE BLOCK WAS PRINTED USING THE OTHER PLATE, NUMBER 155590,
AND SIGNED BY THE POSTMASTER OF THE ROCKVILLE STATION POST OFFICE.
EX HENRY TOLLMAN II COLLECTION.**

Walter A. Weber: Winner of the First Federal Duck Stamp Contest – Part Two

In today's post, we shall continue our survey of the 1944-45 federal waterfowl stamp – the first of two federal stamps featuring artwork by Walter A. Weber. When we get to usages, I shall introduce a new discovery that is relevant to our story and then provide an inside look at the prints made for the 1944-45 federal stamp.

Printing Errors

Two Major printing errors have been recorded on the 1944-45 federal waterfowl stamp. Both were acquired by famed duck stamp collector Jeanette Cantrell Rudy. In addition to assembling one of the finest collections of federal, state and local waterfowl stamps of all time, Jeanette was a hunter and expert marksman. She held the title of Tennessee Ladies State Trapshooting Champion for nine straight years and was twice named to the U.S. Women's All America Trap Team (see Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1. RARE EARLY PHOTO OF JEANNETTE CANTRELL RUDY
TAKEN AT A TRAP SHOOTING EXHIBITION.**

Jeannette enjoyed collecting and assembled impressive collections of not just waterfowl stamps but also gun and powder advertising covers and Tennessee postal history. Her legacy includes a substantial donation to the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum in order to make possible a room devoted entirely to waterfowl stamps. The Rudy Duck Stamp Gallery opened in 1996.

Jeannette succeeded in concentrating a high percentage of the recorded key waterfowl stamp items into one collection and especially sought out errors. For this reason (in addition to her generous support of the hobby) she was an initial inductee into the Fish and Game Collectors Hall of Fame. In the future, a series of posts shall cover her life, collections and philanthropy in a comprehensive manner.

Toward the end of her life, Jeannette decided to disperse her various collections. She donated portions to the National Postal Museum and engaged the firm of Sam Houston Philatelics to sell some of her key waterfowl items directly to collectors and exhibitors.

The same firm then printed and distributed a sales brochure offering additional highlights for outright purchase. The balance of Jeanette's extensive waterfowl stamp collection was sold in a series of public auctions conducted by Sam Houston Philatelics starting on September 16, 2006.

One of the 1944-45 errors was a top left corner block of four, printed from plate number 155603. The block is unique in that it contains a major pre-printing paper fold that, when unfolded, is quite striking (see Figure 2). This item was sold to a private collector soon after he received the brochure.



**FIGURE 2. TOP LEFT CORNER BLOCK OF THE 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWLSTAMP
WITH A PRE-PRINTING PAPER FOLD.
PHOTO REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL BROCHURE
DISTRIBUTED BY SAM HOUSTON PHILATELICS.**

The second error was included in the September, 2006 auction as lot #277. It was a bottom plate number single – gummed on both the obverse and reverse (see Figure 3). This error was won by the Csaplars and included in the national version of their exhibit, *A License and Stamp System for Waterfowl Conservation in the 20th Century U.S.*



FIGURE 3. 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP,
GUMMED ON THE OBVERSE AND REVERSE.
EX RUDY COLLECTION.

This type of error has always fascinated me, as the sheet would have to have been fed through the gumming process twice – once upside down. While this is known to have occurred on several different issues that were printed on a flatbed press, the 1944-45 is the earliest that I am aware of.

A Spectacular Usage

This section was going to look quite different until just a few weeks ago. At that time, a startling new fish and game discovery was made. A collector called from Ohio and informed me that a friend of his father had finally decided to part with a 1945 Pymatuning waterfowl stamp on an Ohio resident hunting and trapping license, a piece that was previously unknown to me.

It is exciting to learn of any new Pymatuning discovery and since I did not have a 1945 hunting stamp on license, I made an offer that was quickly accepted. When the package arrived I was surprised to find it was an even rarer 1944 hunting stamp – only the second recorded example – then shocked when I realized it was printed on *yellow* instead of manila paper (see Figures 4 and 5).

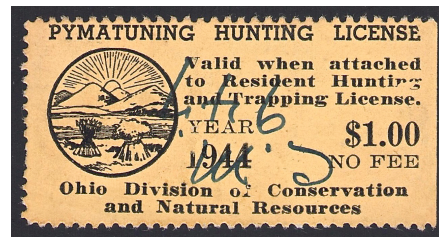


FIGURE 4. TYPE I 1944 PYMATUNING WATERFOWL STAMP
PRINTED ON MANILA PAPER.



FIGURE 5. TYPE II 1944 PYMATUNING WATERFOWL STAMP,
PRINTED ON YELLOW PAPER,
AFFIXED TO THE REVERSE OF AN OHIO RESIDENT HUNTING AND TRAPPING LICENSE
IN COMBINATION WITH A 1944-45 FEDERAL.

As soon as I held the license in my hands, it immediately became my favorite 1944-45 federal waterfowl stamp usage. Not bad timing either, as I was then preparing for this series of posts!

Signed Stamps Benefited The Red Cross

On May 29, 1944, Alvin C. Broholm contacted Walter to see if he would sign some stamps (for more on Broholm, see *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp – Part Three*). Walter replied that he would be glad to, however, he informed Broholm he was charging \$1.00 per stamp with the proceeds going to the [American] Red Cross (see Figure 6).

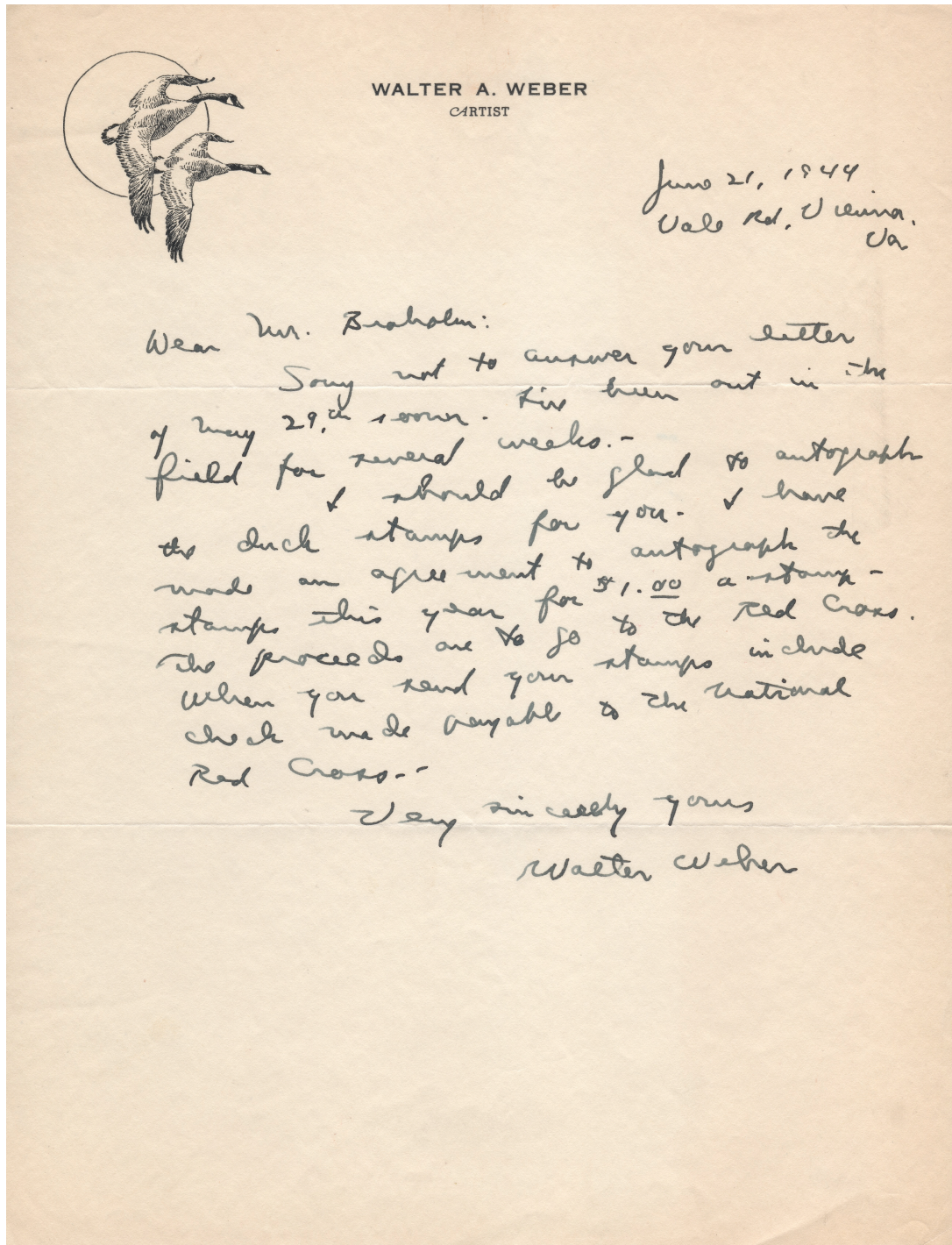


FIGURE 6. WALTER WEBER'S REPLY TO ALVIN BROHOLM, DATED JUNE 21, 1944.

Broholm readily agreed and upon receiving the signed stamps back from Walter, added the top plate number single to his exhibit (see Figure 7).



FIGURE 7. TOP PLATE NUMBER SINGLE
SIGNED FOR ALVIN BROHOLM.

In researching this post, I learned the National Postal Museum has a top plate number block of six 1944-45 federal waterfowl stamps, with each stamp signed Walter A. Weber. Whoever submitted this wonderful piece for Walter to sign made a \$6.00 donation to the Red Cross – no small sum in 1944 (see Figure 8).



FIGURE 8. 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, TOP PLATE NUMBER BLOCK OF SIX
WITH EACH STAMP SIGNED BY WALTER A. WEBER.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM.

The 1944 Federal Print – First Edition

There were three editions of Walter's White fronted Geese image. The first edition was a lithograph, pulled from a stone in the manner described in *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp – Part Four*. The image size was 6.5" x 9.25". The litho was printed in black and sepia ink on white paper and was titled and signed by Walter A. Weber in very fugitive black ink. The print was not numbered but records indicate it was an edition size of 100. As in 1941-42, **The image on the first edition print is a mirror image of the original** (see Figures 9 and 10).



FIGURE 9. FRAMED 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, FIRST EDITION.
NOTE THAT THE IMAGE IS REVERSED OR FLOPPED AS OPPOSED TO THAT OF THE STAMP.



**FIGURE 10. ENLARGEMENT OF THE PRINT ABOVE.
THIS PRINT HAS NEVER BEEN RESTORED,
THEREFORE, THE SIGNATURE IS BOLD AND SOLID.**

The stone for the print was *not* drawn by Walter Weber. Rather, it was “ghosted” by an artist employed by the printing firm George C. Miller and Son, in New York City. According to Russell Fink, a close personal friend of Walter’s as well as being a leading wildlife art dealer, Walter was very unhappy with the first edition prints for two reasons.

First, unlike (as I have previously speculated) Edwin Kalmbach, Walter was dismayed the stone was incorrectly drawn – resulting in an image that was reversed or “flopped” from his original artwork. Second, he wasn’t satisfied with the artist’s interpretation of his work.

Walter immediately requested that a new stone be drawn.

The 1944 Federal Print – Second Edition

The second edition was also a stone lithograph. The image size was the same as the first, as was the color of ink used for both the printing and the signatures. The edition size was 200. The obvious difference is that the image has the White Fronted Geese flying toward the right, as in Water's original painting and on the stamps, themselves (see Figures 11 and 12).



FIGURE 11. FRAMED 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, SECOND EDITION. NOTE THE IMAGE MATCHES THE STAMP.

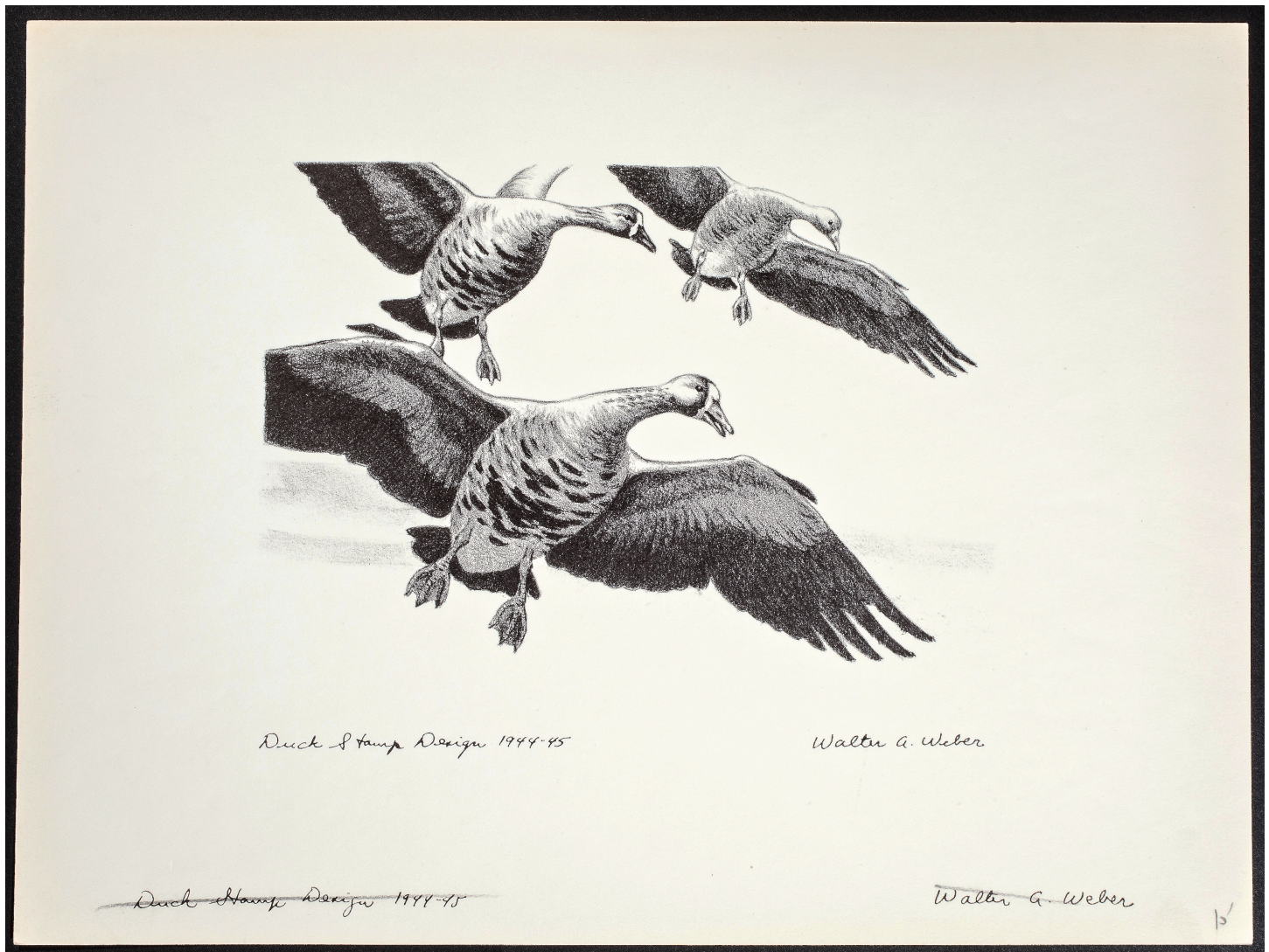


FIGURE 12. 1944 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, SECOND EDITION.
NEVER FRAMED, THIS PRINT RETAINS IT'S FULL, ORIGINAL MARGINS.
THEY ARE SO LARGE THAT WALTER FIRST SIGNED IT TOO FAR AWAY FROM
THE IMAGE. EX BILL WEBSTER COLLECTION.

It is important to understand that *prior* to a print from the first two editions being conserved or “restored”, **the signature must first be fixed with wax**. This step is a time-consuming and expensive process that, if skipped, will result in the signature becoming reduced to an outline or completely lost. Even with fixing, the color of the ink signature will change from black to brown-black or often brown. *This is to be expected*.

When Walter saw the second edition prints, he was still not completely satisfied with the the image. After living with it for a number of years, he finally asked Miller and Son to ship a litho stone to him in Virginia and drew the stone for the third edition himself.

1944-45 Federal Print – Third Edition

The third edition print is a stone lithograph with greenish gray background tint-block. The stone was drawn by Walter Weber, then shipped back to George C. Miller and Sons in New York, who pulled the prints from the stone.

The edition size was 90. The prints were numbered (3rd Ed), titled and signed by Walter A. Weber in pencil (see Figure 13). As the stone was actually drawn by Weber, the third edition is referred to as an *artist's print*.



FIGURE 13. UNFRAMED 1944-45 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, THIRD EDITION.

Although today the background often strikes collectors as different or even somewhat unusual, **Walter experimented with several different colors** before ultimately choosing the greenish-gray. In other words, it was the third edition – as issued – that finally allowed him to reach peace of mind with the print.

Walter A. Weber: Winner of the First Federal Duck Stamp Contest – Part Three

We continue our story about Walter Weber by first taking a look at two of the paintings he had published in *The National Geographic Magazine*, in 1949 and 1950 – around the same time he painted his winning federal duck stamp entry. It is for this exquisite wildlife art that Walter is, perhaps, best remembered.

Then, it will be necessary to amend some of what we believe to know about the first federal duck stamp contest. After wrapping our minds around this new information, we shall begin our survey of Walter's trail blazing 1950-51 stamp – and set the stage for a real treat in the next and final post in this series.

The National Geographic Society

The National Geographic Society was founded in 1888 “to increase and diffuse geographic knowledge”. The Society believes in the ability of exploration, science and storytelling to impact the world in a positive way. **It's stated purpose is to illuminate, inspire and teach.**

The National Geographic Magazine was first published in October of 1888, nine months after the Society was founded. The magazine contains articles about culture, geography and history and features artwork and photography of places and things from around the world.

Walter returned to working freelance from 1944 to 1949. During this time he did contract work for the National Geographic Society and also for private collectors. In addition, he found time to create a group of pen and ink drawings that were used to illustrate the book *Meeting the Mammals*, by Victor H. Cahalane (see Figure 1).

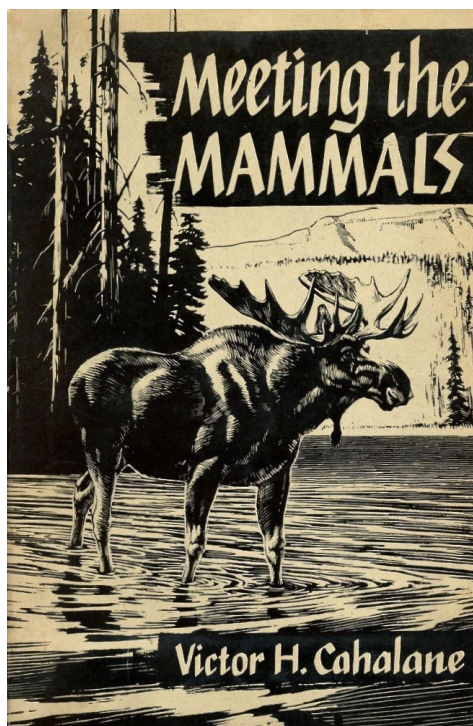


FIGURE 1. DUST JACKET FOR *MEETING THE MAMMALS*,
ARTWORK BY WALTER A. WEBER.

In 1949 Walter accepted the position of chief staff artist and naturalist for the National Geographic Society. He would remain with the Society in this capacity until he retired in 1971. It was in 1949 that Walter completed one of my personal favorite paintings, titled *Snowy Egrets* (see Figures 2 and 3).



FIGURE 2. WALTER WEBBER WORKS ON ONE OF MY FAVORITE PAINTINGS, *SNOWY EGRETS*, CIRCA 1949.



FIGURE 3. SNOWY EGRETS DISPLAY THEIR COURSHIP PLUMAGE IN A MANGROVE SWAMP, BY WALTER A. WEBBER.

While Walter was employed by the Society, he traveled the world as part of scientific expeditions and painted exotic wildlife (see Figure 4). These expeditions caused Walter to be away from home for up to three years at a time.



**FIGURE 4. AN EVOCATIVE PAINTING USED TO ILLUSTRATE
PEERLESS NEPAL – A NATURALIST'S PARADISE, CIRCA 1950.**

The First Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest

In *The Making of an Icon – Part Three*, I revealed that after observing the 1948 selection process for the 1949-50 federal waterfowl stamp (Roger Preuss' American Godeneyes), Robert Hines proposed an open contest with stated rules, guidelines and impartial judges – the format that is still used today.

In researching this post, I made a startling discovery that forever changes one of the central tenets of waterfowl stamp dogma. Everything I had previously heard or read stated that Walter A. Weber won the first art contest, **held in 1949** (for the 1950-51 stamp).

Even the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service website, under **Duck Stamp Contest & Event Information**, states “The first art contest, in 1949, was open to any U.S. artist who wish to enter”.

In *The Making of an Icon – Part Three*, I stated “Following Walter Weber’s first win in 1949, Maynard Reece won the contest for the first time in 1950”.

In fact, the first contest was held to select artwork for the 1950-51 stamp. However, it was not held in 1949 — it was held in 1950 (see Figure 5 and b).

Whiting or Sater - Int. 2879



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1949

DUCK STAMP DESIGN CONTEST ANNOUNCED

Waterfowl artists — amateur and professional — are all eligible for the 1950-51 "Duck Stamp" Competition for the selection of next year's design for the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp, Albert M. Day, Fish and Wildlife Service director announces.

An impartial judging committee will review all entries and select the design to be used on the new duck stamp, explains Director Day. The artists' names will be covered and the designs judged solely on their merits.

The entries, which are to be submitted on or before January 2, 1950, must be 5 by 7 in size and in black and white only. The pictures should be protected by being placed on a mat and covered with cellophane — no pictures in wooden frames or under glass can be accepted.

The artists will be given a wide latitude in the choice of medium — pen and ink, oil, watercolor, etching, pencil, etc. — and in their subject. The subject, of course, must be a true-to-life portrait of wild waterfowl. Most of the winning entries in previous years were of ducks and geese in action. At any rate, the birds should be in position and plumage "as the hunter sees them."

The design must bear no lettering or scroll work. The name of the species shown and the author's signature should appear below the picture so as to be readily visible when photographic prints are made of the accepted design for distribution.

The sixteen species that have been represented on the stamps, and the dates of issue, are: 1934, mallards; 1935, canvas-backs; 1936, Canada geese; 1937, scaup; 1938, pintails; 1939, green-wing teal; 1940, black ducks; 1941, ruddy ducks; 1942, widgeon; 1943, wood ducks; 1944, white fronted geese; 1945, shovelers; 1946, red-heads; 1947, snow geese; 1948, buffleheads; 1949, goldeneyes.

Other species, which have never been used and which the artists may wish to consider, are: blue geese, emperor geese, cackling geese, American brant, black brant, trumpeter swans, whistling swans, coot or mud hen, bluewing teal, cinnamon teal, gadwall, ringneck duck, American merganser, red breasted merganser, hooded merganser, old squaw, harlequin, white-wing scoter, surf scoter, American scoter, king eider, spectacled eider, Pacific eider, or any other species of wild waterfowl in North America.

Office Distribution
9-1-49

Competition entries should be mailed prepaid and well-wrapped to the Duck Stamp Contest, Division of Information, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C. The artist's name and address should be carefully marked on the package.

The winning artist will receive no direct compensation, but the distinction is unique and worthwhile. Many of the winning artists in former years have been able to capitalize on their designs by selling autographed prints; all such projects, however, are subject to the terms of the contract the winning artist signs with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Few events have ever exerted a more profound effect on the conservation of American waterfowl than the passage of the original duck stamp legislation. Besides providing funds to be used directly for refuges, the interest in the whole problem of waterfowl conservation has been greatly increased by the duck stamps.

x x x

P.N. 62015

2

FIGURES 5A (TOP) AND B (BOTTOM). USFWS PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THE FIRST FEDERAL DUCK STAMP ART CONTEST.

As we can see from the press release above, the first contest was *announced* in 1949 but paragraph three clearly states "... entries, which are to be submitted on or before January 2, 1950 ..." After discovering this, I decided I better do some more homework.

First, I check a letter in my possession that was written by Robert Hines and describes how he went about establishing the contest. He states "... and we were able to establish such a contest in time to select Walter Weber's Trumpeter Swan design for the 1950 stamp, the first to be selected by open competition." Period. He does not actually say in what year the contest was held.

Next, I checked records for the contests held in subsequent years. I found that it was **not until 1954** that the contest was held in the year *prior* to that in which the stamp was issued. (see Figure 6).

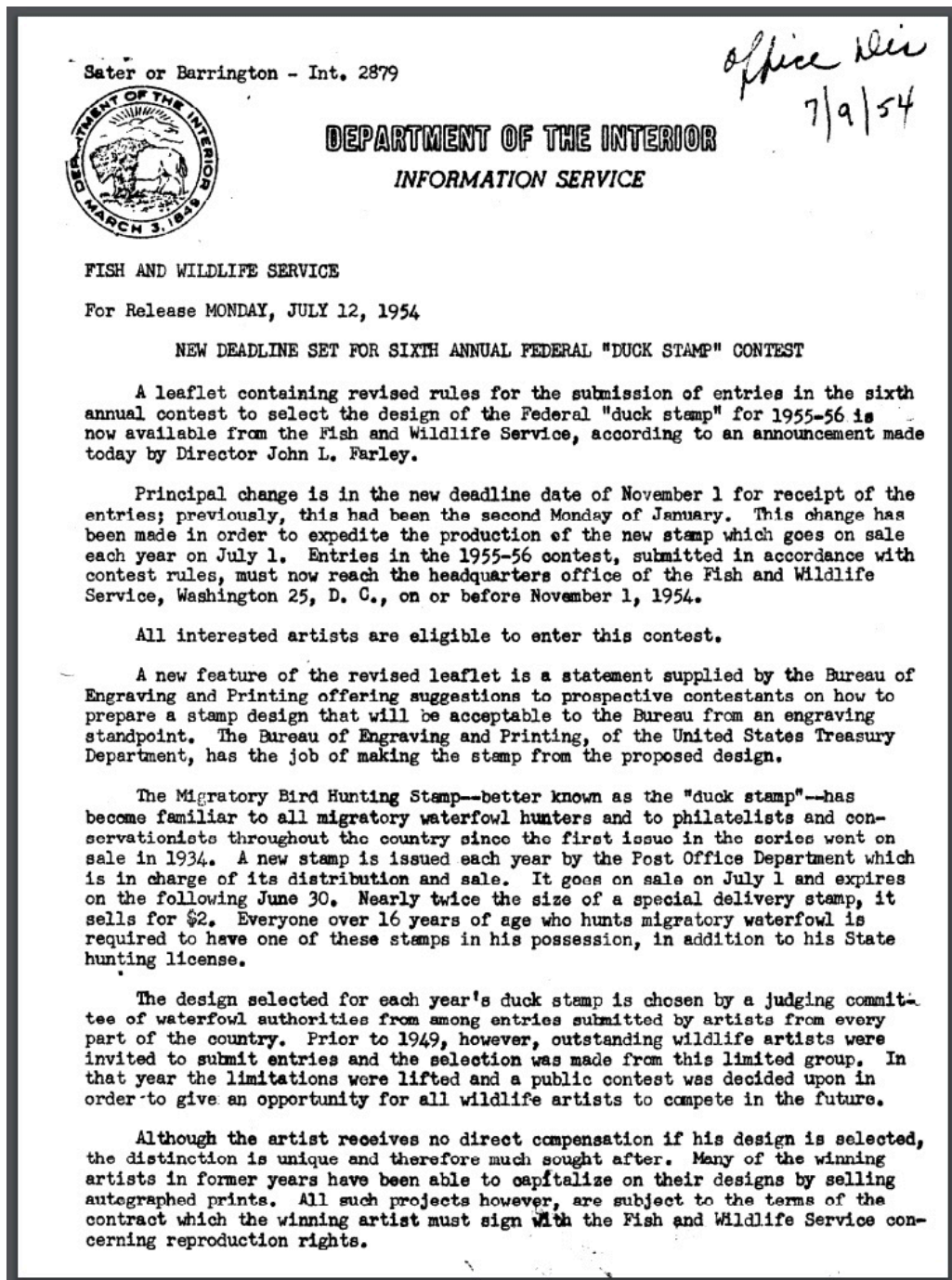


FIGURE 6. USFWS PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING
A NEW DEADLINE FOR THE DUCK STAMP CONTEST.

This document is interesting for several reasons. First, aside from the obvious, it provides evidence that in 1954, **two federal duck stamp contests were held in the same year!** Second, the official press release states the [second] 1954 contest will be the “SIXTH ANNUAL”, when, in reality, this was not the case.

It should be noted that in *The Making of an Icon*, I was not only incorrect about Weber winning in 1949 – but also about Reece winning for the first time in 1950. We now know the contest that Reece won was actually held in January of 1951.

How did everyone miss this for over 60 years? Well, I guess since the contest has been held the year prior to issue for *so many years* – and it become such an established tradition – that everyone, myself included, assumed it was always so. In other words, everyone just *incorrectly assumed* that the first contest was held in 1949.


Walter Weber is the First Contest Winner

On Wednesday, January 18, 1950, the USFWS announced "A picture of two trumpeter swans flying over Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana was chosen today for the 17th duck stamp in the U.S."

The press release went on to say that "Walter Webber is the first former duck stamp artist to win the competition a second time" (see Figures 7a and b). In fact, it was Walter's first contest *win*. As we saw in part one of this series, his 1944 his artwork was *selected* by a committee.

Whiting or Sater - Int. 2879

Office Distribution
1-20-50



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

PICTURES AVAILABLE ON LOAN

For Immediate Release, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1950

WALTER WEBER WINS DUCK STAMP CONTEST AGAIN

A picture of two trumpeter swans flying over Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana was chosen today for the 17th duck stamp in the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's annual duck stamp competition in Washington, D. C. The artist of the winning design is Walter A. Weber, of Washington, D. C., Director Albert M. Day today notified Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman.

Walter Weber is the first former duck stamp artist to win the competition a second time. His first design was used for the 1944-45 duck stamp. That design showed three white-fronted geese. This year's winner -- of trumpeter swans -- is the first design to show a species of waterfowl completely protected by law. There were only 73 trumpeters in the U. S. in 1935, and they were thought to be approaching extinction. Under the protection of the Fish and Wildlife Service -- principally at Red Rock Lakes Refuge -- the swans had reached a population of 451 in 1949.

Runner-up in the competition was A. H. Shortt, of St. Vital, Manitoba, Canada. Mr. Shortt's picture of two blue-winged teal marks the first time that an artist from outside the U. S. has entered the competition. Receiving honorable mention was J. Laurence Murray, of Compton, California, with his picture of three pintail ducks.

This is the first year that the competition has been opened to all artists -- professional and amateur. In former years, outstanding waterfowl artists were invited by the Director to submit entries and the selection was made from this limited group.

Five artists whose designs had been selected in previous years sent in entries again this year in the open contest. Like all the other artists' entries, these five were handled with complete impartiality; the artists' names and other distinguishing features were masked by mounting the entries at random behind large boards which each contained 5 by 7 inch openings.

The five former artists were: Richard E. Bishop, 1936-37; J. D. Knap, 1937-38; Lynn Bogue Hunt, 1939-40; Walter A. Weber, 1944-45; and Jack Murray, 1947-48.

A total of 88 designs were sent in by 65 contestants. Of these, a number were from children and at least a dozen were from women. Only a few women have

submitted entries in former competitions. Twenty-five states, the District of Columbia, and Canada were represented among the entries.

Pennsylvania contestants were the most numerous, with 15 -- which probably represented the good publicity given the contest in that state by Johnny Mock, editor of the "All Outdoors" column in the Pittsburgh Press. New York and Wisconsin were in second place with six contestants each, and Minnesota third with four entrants.

Other states represented are: Arkansas, Maine, Massachusetts, South Dakota, California, Oklahoma, Texas, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Washington, Wyoming, Florida, Missouri, Arizona, Nebraska, Virginia, Kansas, Indiana, Iowa, and Kentucky.

On the judging committee were the Regional Directors of the Fish and Wildlife Service, who are in Washington for their annual conference, several of the Service's branch chiefs, and several other wildlife authorities and friends of the Service who have been invited to attend, including: Carl Shoemaker, Washington correspondent, National Wildlife Federation; J. Hammond Brown, Executive director, Outdoor Writer's Association; Honorable Clark W. Thompson, Congressional Representative from Texas; Bob Wilson, Outdoors Editor, Washington Times-Herald; Mike Hudoba, Washington Editor, Sports Afield; and Richard Westwood, Editor, Nature Magazine.

Weber, the winning artist, receives no direct compensation with his award, but he is free to capitalize on his design by selling autographed prints, etc.; all such projects, however, are subject to the terms of a contract he signs with the Service. All entries are to be returned to the contestants.

x x x

P.N. 69156

2

FIGURES 7A (TOP) AND B (BOTTOM). USFWS PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF THE 1950 DUCK STAMP ART CONTEST.

A total of 88 designs were submitted by 65 contestants. Here again, there is a pronounced difference in the way the contest was originally set up as compared to the way we know it today. At some point, each artist was limited to only one entry.

It should be noted that Walter's painting was chosen over what must have been some pretty stiff competition -- coming from the likes of Richard Bishop, Joseph Day Knap and Lynn Bogue Hunt, among others. Many of our greatest wildlife artists were vying for the honor of becoming the first duck stamp contest winner.

1950-51 Stamps issued

The medium chosen by Walter was gouache with a black and white wash. This is the same medium that was used by Maynard Reece to create his painting of King Buck. For a description of gouache, see *The Making of an Icon – Part Four*.

After the artwork was chosen by the judges, it was sent to stamp designer Victor S. McCloskey. For more on this consummate designer, see *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp*. McCloskey took Walter's work and used it for the central vignette. He then designed the finished stamp, complete with frame lines, lettering and denominations (see Figure 8).

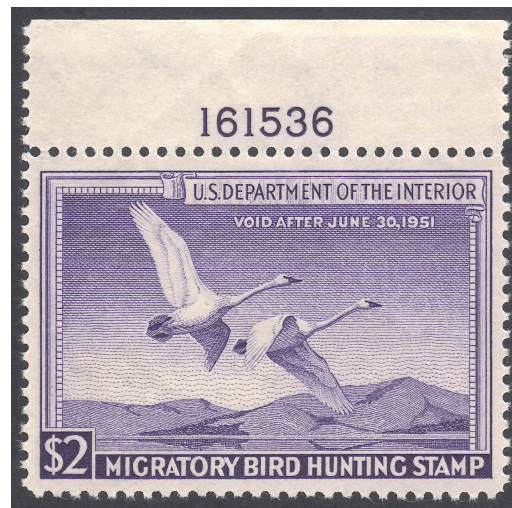


FIGURE 8. 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, TOP PLATE NUMBER SINGLE.

Once McCloskey was finished designing the stamp, it was turned over to the Engraving Department at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Two engravers were assigned to produce die proofs. The vignette was engraved by Arthur W. Dintaman; the frame lines, lettering and numerals were engraved by Reuben K. Barrick. No large or small die proofs are known to be in collector's hands.

Once the die proofs were approved, large printing plates of 112 subjects were created by duplicating the metal dies. For Weber's 1950-51 stamp, four plates were created, numbers 161533, 161534, 161535 and 161536. After plate proofs were pulled and approved, regular sheets of 112 subjects were printed, gummed and perforated.

The large sheets were cut down into four panes of 28 for easy distribution to post offices. Each pane was imprinted with a plate number in the top or bottom selvage to indicate which metal plate was used to produce the larger sheet it was cut from (see Figure 9).



FIGURE 9. COMPLETE PANE OF 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMPS.
NOTE THIS IS THE UPPER LEFT PANE WHICH WAS CUT FROM THE ORIGINAL SHEET OF 112 STAMPS.
THE PLATE, NUMBER 161536, WAS ONE OF FOUR USED TO PRINT WEBER'S STAMP.

As we saw in *The Making of an Icon – Part Three*, the 1946-47 stamp designed by Robert Hines was the first to have **a printed message on the reverse**.

An offset plate number (47510) 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.

While the 1946-47 stamp was the first occurrence of an offset plate number on the reverse selvage of a federal waterfowl stamp, the 1950-51 stamp was the last (see Figures 10 and 11). Of the five possibilities, the 1950-51 issue is the most difficult to acquire – especially an example that shows the entire number and which has not been partially trimmed.

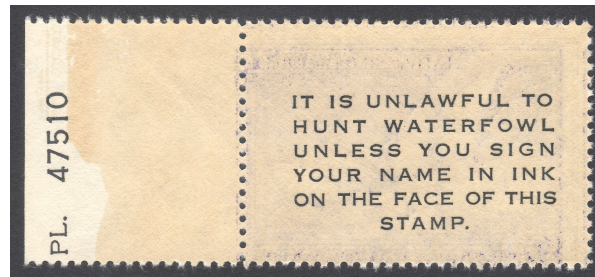


FIGURE 10. REVERSE OF A 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP SHOWING INSCRIPTION AND COMPLETE OFFSET PLATE NUMBER IN THE ATTACHED SELVAGE.



FIGURE 11. REVERSE OFFSET PLATE NUMBER BLOCK OF THE 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP. NOTE THE PLATE NUMBER (47510) IS ONLY PARTIALLY VISIBLE. FOR THIS ISSUE, THE NUMBER SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY REMOVED WHEN THE SELVAGE WAS TRIMMED.

The reverse plate number block in Figure 11 is believed to be the only recorded example and has a rather impressive provenance. It was originally in the collection of Jeannette C. Rudy; then went to the Csaplars and was included in the national version of their award-winning exhibit; then I acquired it from them in a trade for my own collection. Currently, it is owned by Michael Jaffe and can be seen in his new exhibit, *A Philatelic Survey of Waterfowl Hunting Jurisdictions*.

Walter A. Weber: Winner of the First Federal Duck Stamp Contest – Part Four

In today's conclusion to our series about Walter Alois Weber, winner of the first federal duck stamp contest, we shall start by looking at two errors that occurred when printing the 1950-51 stamp. Then we will see how Alvin Broholm once again plays into our story, look at some amazing usages and finish the fish and game portion of this post with a discussion of the prints that were made of Walter's winning entry. For many readers, one final surprise awaits you.

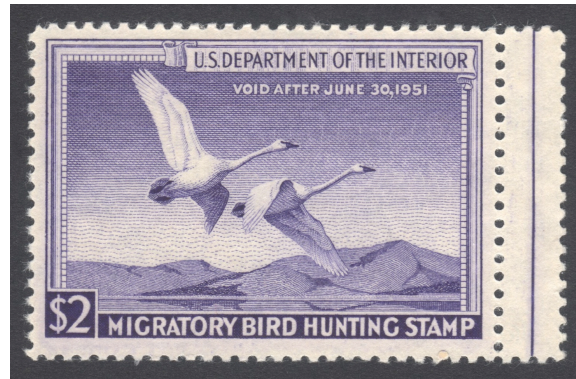
Printing Errors

One major and one minor error have been recorded on the 1950-51 federal waterfowl stamp. As with the 1944-45 issue, at least one example has been recorded with original gum applied to both the obverse and reverse (see Figure 1). It is currently featured in the international version of the Csaplar's exhibit, *A License and Stamp System for Waterfowl Conservation in the 20th Century U.S.*



FIGURE 1. 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP,
GUMMED ON THE OBVERSE AND REVERSE.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CSAPLARS.

The second error is relatively minor – but with great eye appeal, nevertheless. In this case, the stamp shows a “gutter snipe” at the right, the full perforated selvage including the guide line, that is found between panes on the larger sheet (see Figure 2).



**FIGURE 2. 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP
WITH GUTTER SNIPE AT THE RIGHT.**

Normally, the panes are cut along or close to the guide line, resulting in selvage with a straight edge opposite the stamp side (as in the top plate number single in Figure 1). These kinds of errors are, as a rule, not especially rare and it is likely many of these are in collections today.

The Alvin C. Broholm Connection

In 1950, Alvin C. Broholm plays a much more significant role in our story than in most years – directly contributing to one of the highlights in this series of posts. As he had done with other artists previously, Alvin wrote to Walter during the summer to ask if he would sign some stamps.

However, Walter was not home to receive his letter. According to his wife, Grace, he was on a field assignment in Alaska and would not return home until October (see Figures 3 and 4).

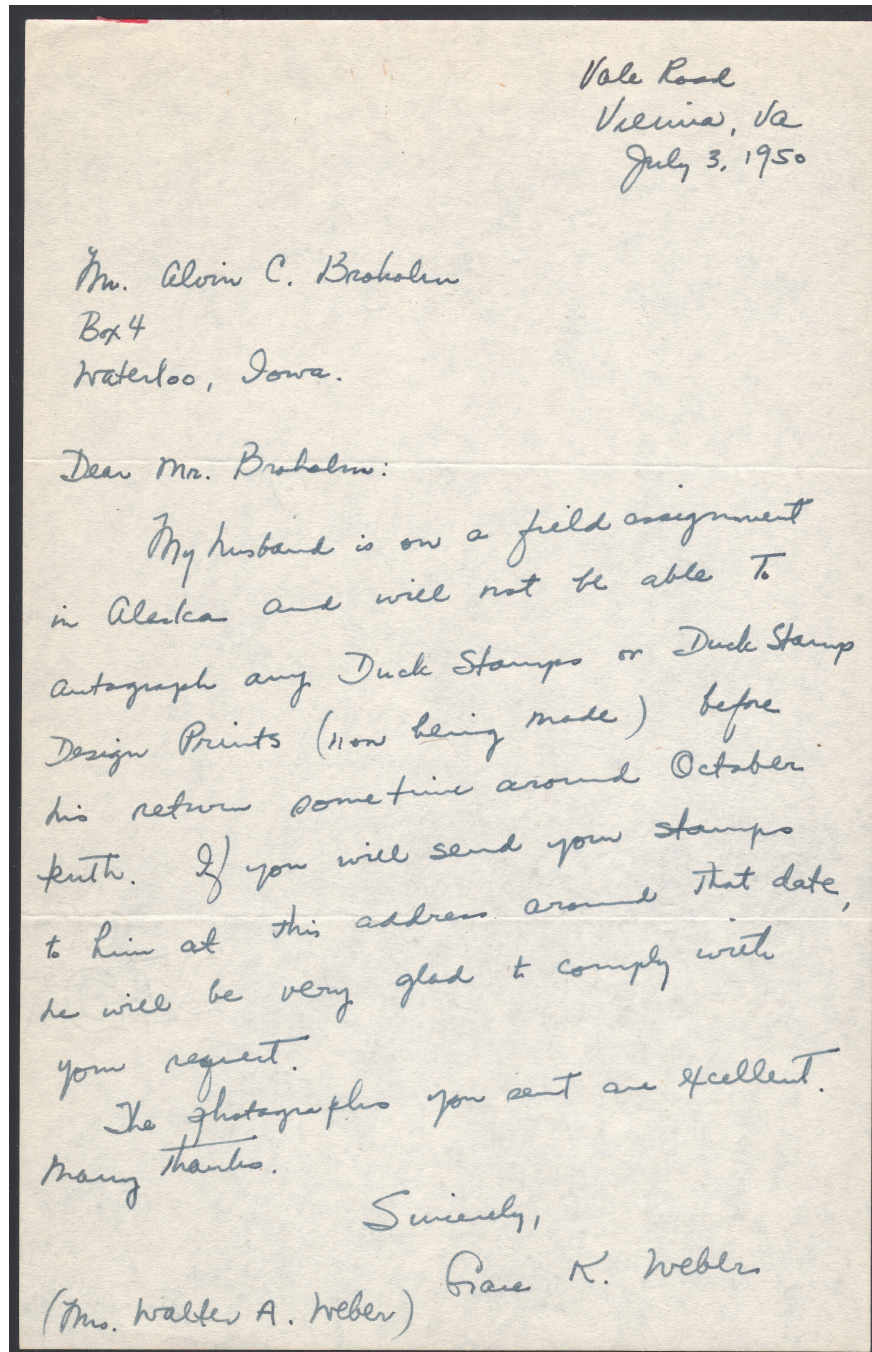


FIGURE 3. LETTER FROM GRACE WEBER TO ALVIN BROHOLM,
DATED JULY 3, 1950.



FIGURE 4. A PROUD WALTER WEBER HOLDING A PAIR OF SHEEFISH. FOUND ONLY IN ARCTIC AND SUBARCTIC NORTH AMERICA AND ASIA, THEIR LARGE SIZE, FIGHTING ABILITY AND FINE EATING QUALITIES MAKE THE SHEEFISH ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE FISH IN NORTH AMERICA. PHOTO COURTESY OF RUSSELL FINK.

Upon Walter's return from Alaska, he found about 200 stamps that had been sent for him to sign. The letter he sent to Alvin, dated October 18, 1950, is illuminating for several reasons. First, it reveals the number of stamps being signed by a duck stamp artist during this period in time.

Second, it indicates the reason Alvin sent in numerous stamps for each artist to sign was because they were not only for himself – but also for his friends. The third and most intriguing reason (as it concerns today's post), is that Walter extends his gratitude to Alvin and his friends for being the only ones to send him a stamp for his own personal use.

Walter states "Since I have not as yet got around to buy one for the coming waterfowl season, I shall affix this one to my hunting license. It will probably bring me good luck." (see Figure 5).

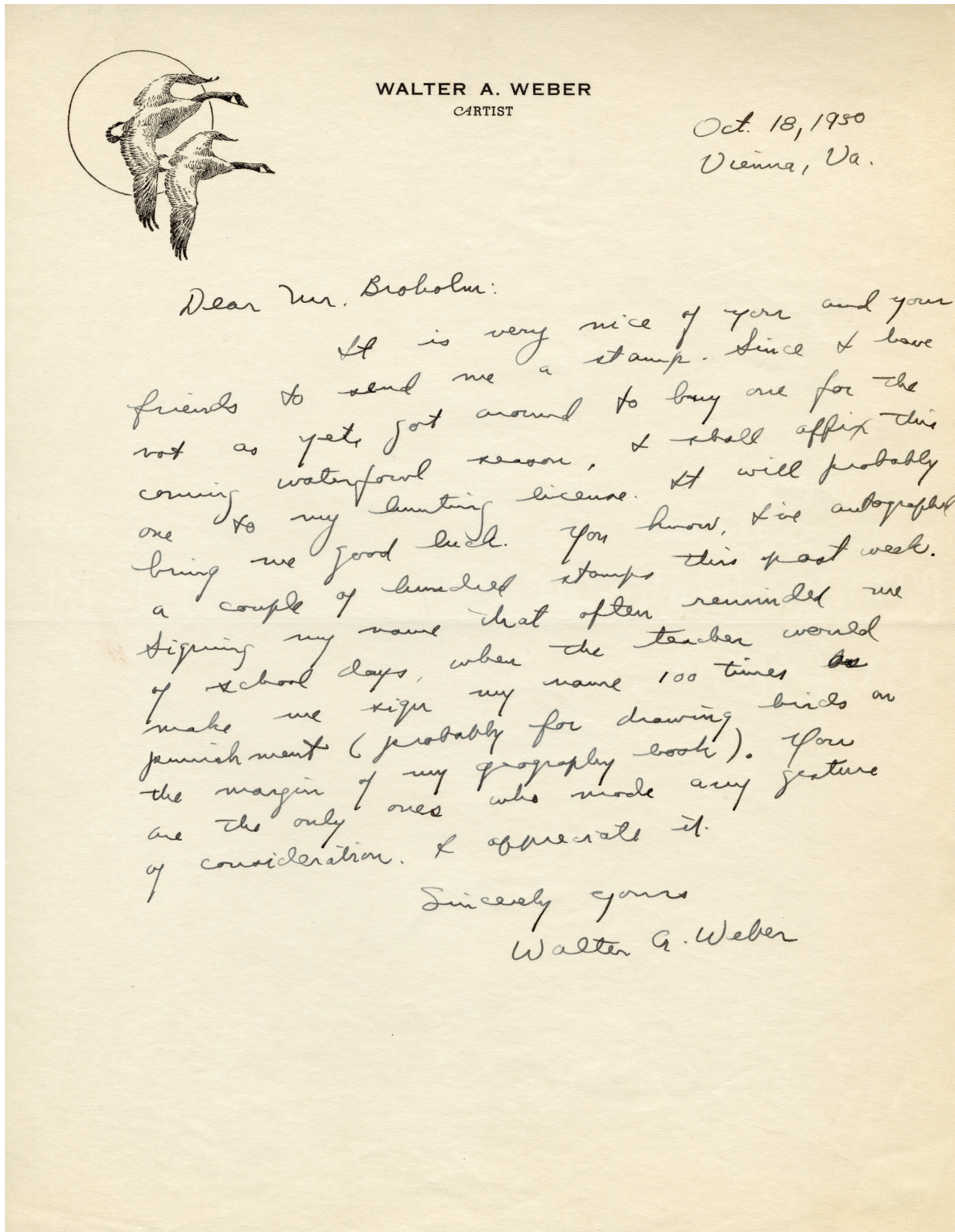


FIGURE 5. A REVEALING LETTER FROM WALTER A. WEBER TO ALVIN C. BROHOLM, DATED OCTOBER 18, 1950.

Upon receiving the signed stamps back from Walter, Alvin once again added the top plate number single to his expanding exhibit (see Figure 6).



FIGURE 6. 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP, TOP PLATE NUMBER SINGLE SIGNED FOR ALVIN C. BROHOLM.

Coming up next, we have the treat I have been promising. Walter subsequently took the stamp he received from Alvin and his friends as a gift, signed it and affixed it to the reverse of his own hunting license. By an amazing stroke of good luck (as Walter predicted), the license has not only survived – **but entered the collector market** (see Figures 7 and 8).

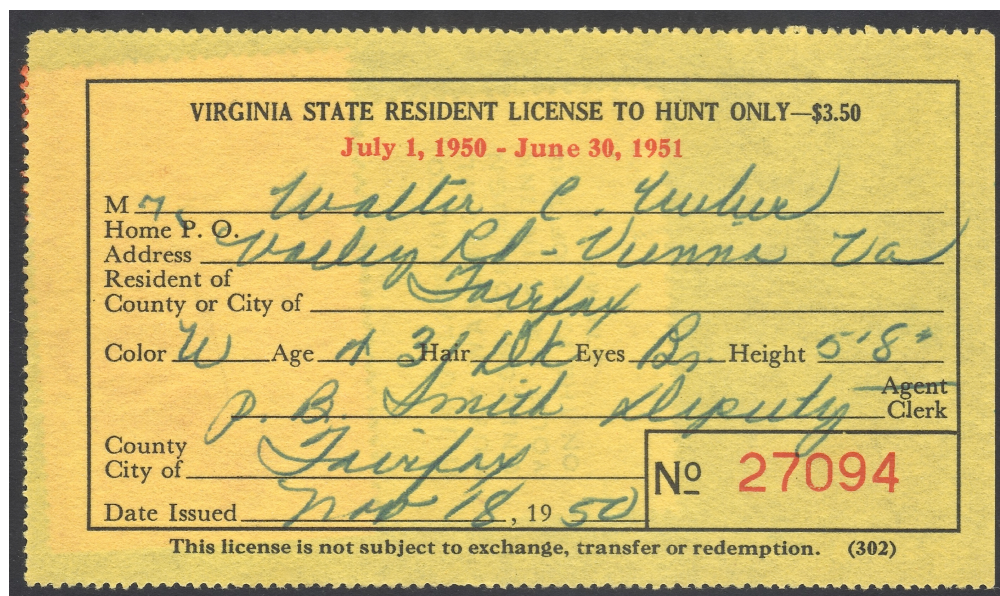
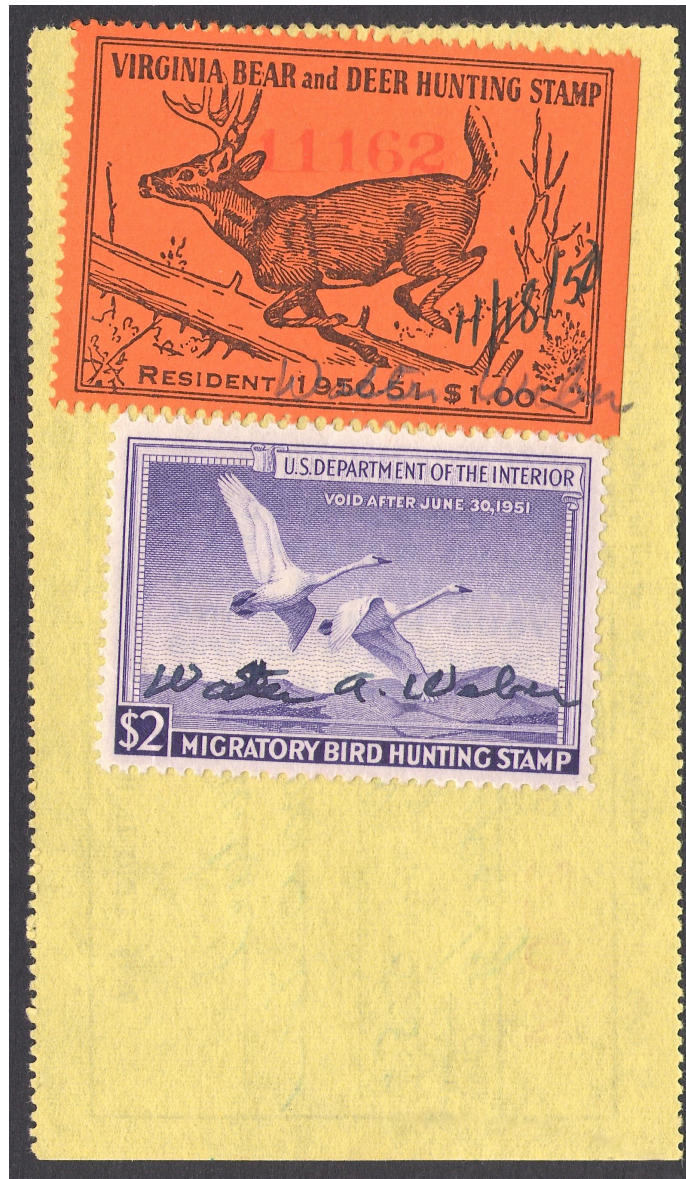


FIGURE 7. WALTER WEBER'S 1950-51 VIRGINIA RESIDENT LICENSE TO HUNT ONLY, OBVERSE.



**FIGURE 8. REVERSE OF WALTER'S HUNTING LICENSE
SHOWING THE SIGNED FEDERAL STAMP HE WAS GIVEN BY ALVIN BROHOLM,
AS WELL AS HIS VIRGINIA BIG GAME STAMP.
EX RUDY, EX CSAPLAR.**

Originally in the Rudy and then Csaplar collections, it is now in mine and I am able to share it with you via this post. The license, bearing a 1950-51 Virginia resident big game stamp in addition to his own personal copy of the stamp that won the first federal duck stamp contest, serves as an elegant remembrance not just for Walter Weber the acclaimed artist but also the avid sportsman.

Jerry Mullikin Buys one of Walter's Stamps

Jerry E. Mulliken, then serving as the Park and Lake Supervisor for Marion County, Kansas, purchase one of Walter's 1950-51 federal waterfowl stamps and affixed it *to his own license*.

It was a Kansas Combination Resident Hunting and Fishing License, to which he also affixed the current Marion County duck and fishing stamps, as well as a 1950-51 Kansas quail. The federal and the quail stamps are both signed by the fish and game legend (see Figure 9).

Original Fee: **THREE DOLLARS**
Combination Resident Hunting and Fishing License
Marion Co. Lake KANSAS
 7-4, 1951
 By virtue of this license
 Name *J. E. Mullikin*
 Street *RR 2* City of *Marion*
 is permitted to hunt and fish in Kansas during the open season in conformity with the law until June 30, 1951. *DAVE LEAHY, Director.*
Francis R. Roberts County Clerk, *MARION* County
 Description and Signature of Licensee. Age *26* Color of eyes *Br*
 Color of hair *gray* Weight *130* Height *5-7* Occupation *Lake Dept.*
 Cancel stamp by writing your name in ink across the face Signature *J. E. Mullikin*

50c RESIDENT DUCK STAMP 1950 Marion Co Park and Lake
 50c

50c KANSAS 50c Quail Stamp VOID AFTER JUNE 30, 1951

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR VOID AFTER JUNE 30, 1951
 \$2 MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING STAMP

50c Void After June 30, 1951 Marion County Lake RESIDENT Fishing Permit 50c

FIGURE 9. JERRY MULLIKIN'S 1950-51 KANSAS COMBINATION HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE.

This is the last of his remarkable licenses that survived the catastrophic flood that hit Marion in 1951. At this time, the water rose to eight feet on Main Street and nearly all paper items were lost. For more on Jerry Mullikin and the historic flood, see *The Fish and Game Stamps of Marion County*.

The 1950 Federal Print – First Edition

There were two editions of Walter's Trumpeter Swans image. The first edition was produced using the fine grain gravure technique, better known as *photogravure*. This is essentially a photographic reproduction process. For a detailed explanation, see *My Favorite Federal Duck Stamp – Part Four*.

The first edition image was 5" x 7". The photogravure was printed in blue-gray ink on white paper. The print was not numbered. It has been reported that the original edition size was 500. Of these, only 200-250 prints were titled and signed by Walter A. Weber, in black ink (see Figures 10 and 11).



FIGURE 10. FRAMED 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWLSTAMP PRINT, FIRST EDITION.

"Copyright 1950 Walter A. Weber"



Duck Stamp Design 1950

Walter A. Weber

FIGURE 11. ENLARGEMENT OF THE PRINT SHOWN ABOVE.

The ink Walter used to sign the first edition 1950 prints is not as fugitive as that used to sign the first and second editions from 1944. Having said that, it is still good practice to *fix* the signatures of all waterfowl stamp prints that have been signed in ink prior to restoration. Better safe than sorry.

The 1950 Federal Print – Second Edition

The second edition was also produced using the fine grain gravure process. The image size was increased to 7" x 10.125". The edition size was 300. The prints were titled (2nd Edition noted), numbered and signed by Walter A. Weber in pencil (see Figure 12).



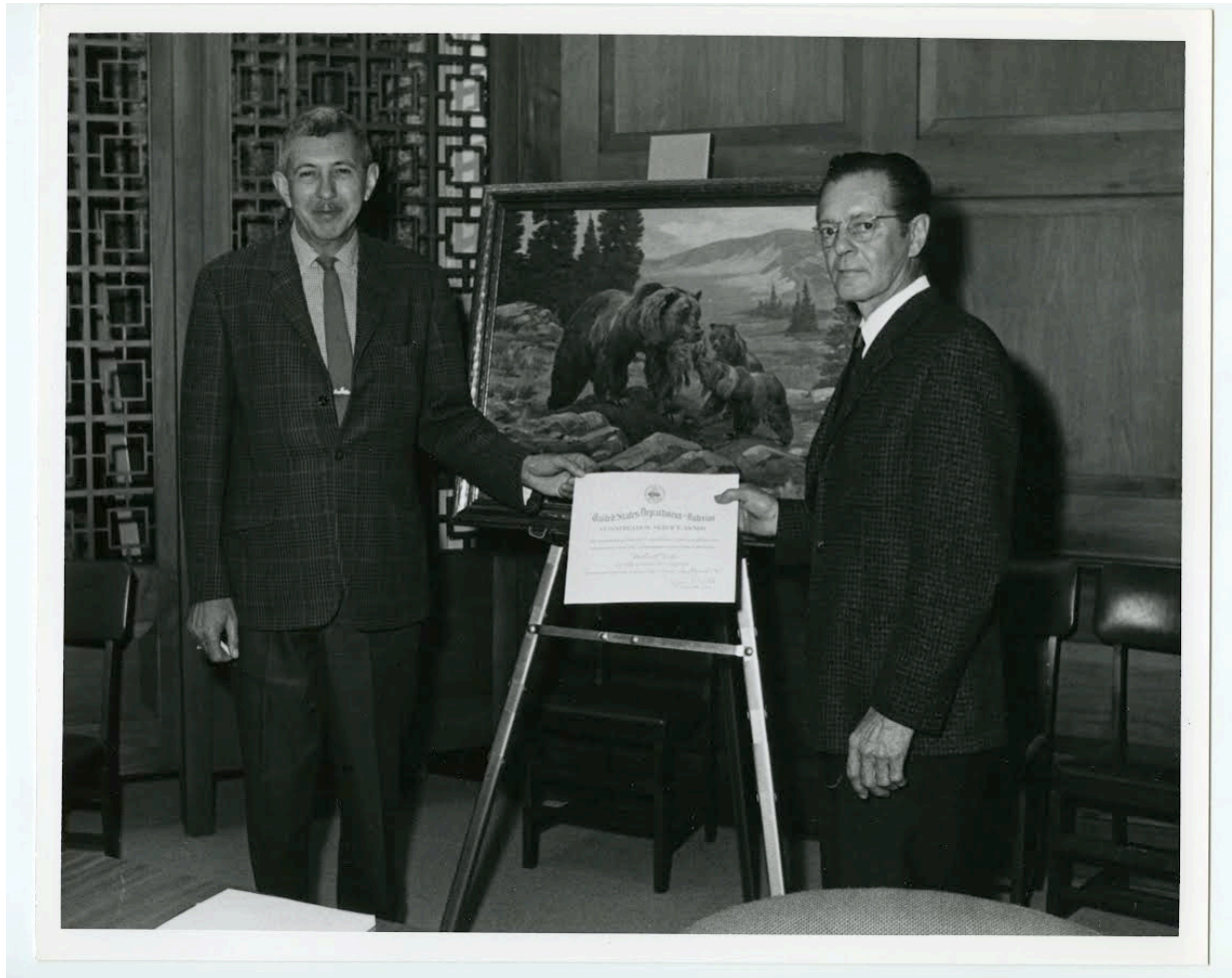
FIGURE 12. UNFRAMED 1950-51 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP PRINT, SECOND EDITION.

Appearing at the upper left of each first and second edition 1950-51 print (just above the image) is a line that reads "Copyright 1950 Walter A. Weber". This is printed in the same color ink as the image.

The Conservation Award

Following the great honor of becoming the first art contest winner, Walter continued to collect field specimens and paint. His artwork was featured in *The National Geographic Magazine* through 1968 (by then titled simply *National Geographic*).

In 1967, The Department of the Interior presented Walter Alois Weber with its highest civilian honor, The Conservation Award (see Figure 13).



**FIGURE 13. WALTER WEBER (RIGHT) RECEIVES THE CONSERVATION AWARD FROM STANLEY CAIN.
PHOTO COURTESY OF RUSSELL FINK.**

According to Walter's biography in *Duck Stamp Prints* by Stearns and Fink, at the presentation Cain stated "As staff artist for the National Geographic Society, you are truly one of the outstanding wildlife and nature artists in the nation today. You acquaint persons in all walks of life with the conservation goals of this Department and inspire them to a wider interest in our native wildlife".

For most naturalists, the Conservation Award would be the apex of their career. For Walter, it would prove to be his penultimate source of pride and recognition.

Walter's Artwork Used For the Apollo 11 Patch

Apollo 11 was the first spaceflight that landed humans on the moon. It was during this historic event, in July of 1969, that Neil Armstrong made his unprecedented "*one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind*". Just about everybody knows this. Probably not as many know the patch that became symbolic of this event was **based on artwork by Walter A. Weber** (see Figure 14).



FIGURE 14. FINAL ARTWORK FOR THE ICONIC APOLLO 11 PATCH.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA.

Following in the tradition set by the crew of the Gemini V, the Apollo 11 crew was given the task of designing its own mission patch. Astronaut James Lovell suggested using an eagle, the national bird of the United States, as the focal point of the patch. Crewmate Michael Collins then found a picture of an eagle he liked in a book published (in 1965) by the National Geographic Society about birds, *Water, Prey, and Game Birds of North America*. He traced it using a piece of tissue paper.

The artist whose painting illustrated that book? You guessed it – Walter A. Weber. The illustration appeared on page 236. NASA took the image, cropped it, flopped it and rotated it 40 degrees to incorporate the eagle into the patch design (see Figures 15 and 16).



**FIGURE 15. WALTER'S MODIFIED ARTWORK,
TAKEN FROM *WATER, PREY, AND GAME BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA*.**



FIGURE 16. AN ACTUAL PATCH WORN BY THE APOLLO 11 ASTRONAUTS.

NASA's final artwork for the Patch, including Walter's eagle, was subsequently used on the reverse of the U.S. Eisenhower \$1.00 coins, starting in 1971 (see Figure 17).



FIGURE 17. 1971 IKE \$1.00 COIN OBVERSE (LEFT) AND REVERSE (RIGHT) WITH WALTER'S EAGLE.

So there you have it. Not only did Walter Alois Weber win the first federal duck stamp contest and become the first artist with multiple duck stamps to his credit – he also created the original art that later served as the focal point for the Apollo 11 patch and the reverse of the Eisenhower dollar. Pretty heady stuff.

Last Years Spent in the Company of His Peers

In the late 1960s, Walter gradually painted less frequently until he was, effectively, retired from his career as a professional nature and wildlife artist. Not long after the Apollo mission, in 1971, Walter was elected into a group of his peers – the Washington Biologists' Field Club.

The club was founded in 1899 (some accounts say 1900) by botanist Charles Louis Pollard and is composed of persons interested in the biological sciences and also in researching the fauna and flora of the District of Columbia area. Walter remained with the Club, enjoying his retirement, until he passed away from a stroke on January 10, 1979 (see Figure 18). He was 72 years old.



FIGURE 18. WALTER ENJOYING HIS RETIREMENT.

I hope you have enjoyed learning about Walter Weber, one of this country's greatest nature and wildlife artists. These series of posts are often a team effort and I would like to thank the following for helping to clarify various points and also for providing images used to illustrate the text: Will and Abby Csaplar, Michael Jaffe, Russell Fink, James O'Donnell and the NPM and Richard Prager.



BIRDS EYE VIEW BY WALTER A. WEBER.