



John Schweikart

(1870 - 1954) Detroit, MI

Walter Schweikart was a successful stonecutter and woodworker that emigrated from Germany to the United States to start his family. His son John Schweikart was the third of five children and possessed a natural skill for both boat building and decoy carving. In their day, he and his brother Carl built the fastest racing yachts on the Detroit waterfront. In competitions, John sailed his own boat, "The Huntress," and claimed quite a few victories.

As far as decoy carving is concerned however, Schweikart was most active from 1900 to 1920 carving canvasbacks, coots, redheads and whistlers (Engers 210). These decoys are oversized with broad bodies to enhance visibility. The necks are thick, and the expressions of the decoys are commanding. An innovative carver, Schweikart clipped crescents and triangles from aluminum sheets and nailed them to the body to represent wingtips. On the bottom of the decoy, Schweikart attached hinged brass keels that hung down in water but folded up for storage.

John Schweikart lived and worked in Detroit and needed time to himself on occasion. When he had the opportunity, he frequented his cottage on Strawberry Island in the St. Clair Flats to hunt, fish, sail, and just relax.

