



Delbert Lee "Cigar" Daisey

(March 6, 1928 – April 19, 2017) Chincoteague, Virginia

He was known as "**Cigar**" **Daisey**, an American waterfowl wood carver and decoy maker. He was the son of Herbert Lee Daisey and Emma Jane Daisey. He was born, lived and worked in Chincoteague, Virginia, and was the resident carver at the Refuge Waterfowl Museum. His decoy carvings are recognized for both their artistic value and functionality as working pieces for waterfowl hunting. His works include black ducks, mallards, redheads, ruddys, red-breasted mergansers and often crafted in drake (male) and hen (female) pairs. He had carved about 1900 ducks in total, and he generally used cork or wood as his medium. He carved his first duck out of balsa wood in 1940 at his father's wood shop. The Smithsonian has his works in their collection. He was given his "Cigar" nickname in 1945 by a federal game warden John Buckalew and first manager of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Seemingly when he lost some cigars while poaching ducks from the warden's traps on Assateague Island. Some say he left the cigars to taunt the warden, but we may never know. One of the last surviving people who made a living as a market hunter, Later in life, Daisey became an avid conservationist as the resident carver at Chincoteague Island's Refuge Waterfowl Museum." Daisey's carvings are recognized for both artist value and as working decoys.

One of the most valuable pieces he ever made was a pintail in 1973, as a present for his wife. That was the only fully decorative decoy he had ever made, and was featured

in *National Geographic* magazine, June 1980, page 826. The decoy was estimated to be worth \$150,000.

In addition to the Ward Museum, his work appears in the Smithsonian Institution and the Chincoteague Refuge Waterfowl Museum. Daisey was also known for his keen sense of humor