



Frank Resop

(1894 – 1968) Berlin, Wisconsin

Frank Resop was born in Poland in 1894 and moved with his family to Berlin, Wisconsin in 1897. While growing up in some of the finest waterfowl hunting areas of the Midwest near Berlin, much of his duck hunting was done on Lake Poygan in Waushara County.

Frank began carving decoys in 1910 for his own use. Lake Poygan had huge migrations of canvasbacks and bluebills, so large decoy spreads were necessary. He made decoys for his own use, as well as for all of his hunting buddies, in addition to boat paddles, duck skiffs, sink boats and marsh skis.

After he was married, Frank lived in a large house on the corner of Union and Wisconsin street in Berlin. Almost all of his carving was done in the basement of this house. No power carving tools were available back then so he used a hatchet to shape his decoy bodies, a rasp to smooth them and a jack knife to shape the heads.

Most of his decoys were made from cedar with pine heads. His early decoys are very rough textured with many rasp marks. Later, they were very smooth and sanded. Many of Frank's decoys were branded "FR" on the bottom in scroll type lettering and some had wing carving. His heads were attached with glue and a handmade dowel. He also toe nailed the head to the body and countersunk the nail heads. Glass eyes were used exclusively.

Frank's painting style was very subtle with few sharp lines and blended colors. Some of his decoys had a painted speculum while some did not. His carvings are said to have a very folksy style with high heads and eyes near the top of the head. He used long narrow lead strips nailed to the bottom for ballast.

While Frank carved 800-1000 decoys, very few were actually sold. Most were given to family and friends as gifts. He was known to have carved canvasbacks, bluebills, mallards, blue wing teal, coots and Canada geese. Although his decoys were very folksy looking, thousands of ducks and geese were killed over his decoys on Lake Poygan. Frank died in 1968 in Berlin, WI at the age of 73.

Today, Frank Resop decoys are very much in demand by collectors and dealers. Past auction values on his decoys were reported to exceed \$1000. Internet sales currently value Resop decoys in well used condition from \$500-\$600. (Wisconsin waterfowl association)