



Mark “McCool” Whipple

(1888 - 1961) Bourg, LA

Mark belongs to a third branch of Whipple immigrants: his father, Charles Frederick Whipple, born in Baden-Baden (in today's Germany) February 20, 1841, immigrated from the U.S. to Louisiana (?) in 1844. Charles' occupation appears as "hunter" in the 1900 Census.

Mark McCool Whipple, born July 21, 1884. The 1900 Census of Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, gives 15-year-old Mark's birth in Jul 1884. Mark died May 25, 1961 and is buried in Bourg.

To earn extra income, Mark Whipple and his son Max worked as a team carving decoys. Whipple made decoys of cypress knee which is a tough material to carve, but one that yields durable lures. With a hatchet, chisel, pocketknife and drawknife, rasp, hammer, rattail file, plane and rough and fine sandpaper, Whipple crafted his birds in confident, restful postures. To strengthen the neck-to-body joint, Whipple exaggerated the attitude of the head and neck. Clean horizontal lines, elongated chests and downswept tails characterize Whipple's work. Whipple's initial decoys have painted eyes. He continued to paint the eyes of ringnecks and

coots, but other later decoys see with the heads of ladies' hatpins. Whenever possible, Whipple modeled his plumage patterns after those of a penned yard duck. Speculums adorn broad blocks of color, and stippling and sponging in some areas soften the edges of the paint.

Whipple encouraged all his children to help in the carving process, often giving them the task of sanding. During his carving career, he produced an abundance of canvasbacks, coots, mallards, pintails, redheads, ringnecks and teal. In 1940, Whipple decoys sold for eighteen to twenty-five dollars a dozen, but increased in price to fifty to sixty dollars. For fifty years, he sold his decoys on a commercial basis (Haid 222). Mark Whipple's brothers, sons and nephews maintained his style by carving and painting according to the patterns he created. (Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art)