



Museum of Chincoteague Island

Press Release

For Immediate Release – September 27, 2017

Suggested headline:

Miles Hancock Workshop Moves to Museum of Chincoteague Island

Submitted article

In 2015, the Museum of Chincoteague Island was awarded a \$30,000.00 grant by the Eastern Shore of Virginia Community Foundation to move the historic Miles Hancock Workshop to the grounds of the museum. After careful planning and preparation at the museum, the move is finally taking place this fall.

Hancock's workshop will be moved to a space just outside of the museum's front doors. Visitors to the museum will have the chance to walk into and explore the workshop where they'll see many of Hancock's possessions including the chair he sat in while carving. A permanent exhibit will illustrate the many sides of Miles Hancock (1887-1974): as decoy carver, terrapin farmer, hunting guide, and actor.

The workshop has been donated to the museum by the Beitzel family. Craig Beitzel stated, "We wanted to share the workshop with others, not just keep it to ourselves". The museum is grateful to the Beitzel family for being such great stewards of the workshop while it was under their ownership. Much of the interior of the building remains exactly as it was when Hancock was using it. "Visitors to the workshop will really get a sense of who Miles Hancock was," mentioned museum executive director Maria Grenchik. "He was known as a sort of 'jack of all trades' and everyone who interacted with him remembers his entrepreneurial talents but also his genuine kindness towards others."

After receiving several bids for the project design and completion, Island contractor Drew Jorgensen was selected to oversee the project. Jorgensen's plan includes stabilizing the historic structure, moving it to the museum in several sections, and restoring the workshop once it is on site. The move will happen in several stages throughout October and November of this year.

Grenchik stated, "While Miles Hancock is the primary focus of this workshop restoration, we are really preserving and presenting information about the entire community of Chincoteague decoy carvers. This craft is an important part of Chincoteague history and culture which we don't want to lose". The museum hopes to host decoy carving demonstrations and talks near the workshop so visitors get the full sense of the time and talent that goes into decoy carving.

How can you help? The museum is still collecting items, photos, and stories relating to Miles Hancock and his workshop for exhibits inside the building. Please contact the museum if you have anything you'd like to share. The museum is also still raising funds to cover the cost of the interpretive exhibits and the long term care and preservation of the workshop building.

If you have information, memories, stories, photographs, or items to share please contact Maria Grenchik by emailing museumofci@gmail.com or call (757)336-6117.

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