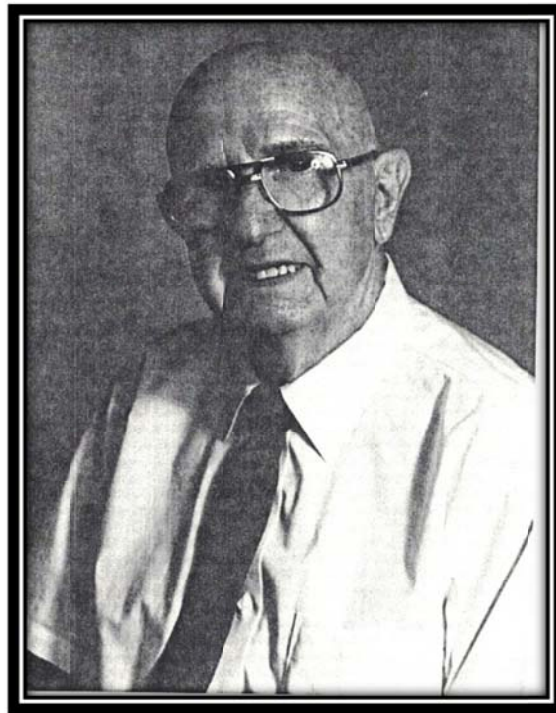


Houston A. Jones

(As nominated by Gibby Gibson)

While accompanying a friend, who as a duck call collector was in the process of compiling information to be used in a book on his specialized field of collecting, I had the pleasure to be introduced to a gentleman that had not only revolutionized the call making industry but the fishing tackle as well. His contribution has principally been of a "behind the scene" nature but through the application of his mechanical genius and craftsmanship the ability to mass produce at an economical cost was realized by many fishing lure companies. That gentleman is Houston A. Jones.



Houston A. Jones

Mr. Jones was born on August 19, 1909 in Mountain Home, Arkansas. As a young man he entered the carpentry trade later owning and operating several saw mills in the north Arkansas area. He established one of the first commercial boat docks on Lake Norfolk near Canfield, Arkansas. In 1940 he entered the manufacturing business with H. A. Jones Woodproducts Co. and began building boats and mobile dwellings. Within the first year of operation Mr. Jones was approached by the Dixon Klauson Company to manufacture a cedar aromatic tackle box to be marketed under the Dixon Klauson name. The production of that cedar tackle box heralded the expansion of his company into the business of wood turning.

The Clark Tackle Company inquired to the possibility of Mr. Jones producing the wooden bodies for their lures. Mr. Jones had the raw stock from his mills, the facility at his Woodproducts Co., and all he needed would be a method to mass produce the wooden bodies in any shape or size. Traditional lathe systems were too slow and had many limitations. Using his mechanical genius, Mr. Jones developed a process, built the machinery and tooling, and put into production an advanced lathe system that would produce multiple, finished lure bodies in only seconds. I will not go into detail other than saying it is a rotary knife system for fear of giving away any trade secrets, however, even to the layman it is a fascinating process. Forty-eight years later this process is still supplying wood bodies at tolerances of "within 5" to major lure companies. Word of this process spread through the industry and orders arrived from such companies as South Bend, Heddon, Wood Bait Co., Gilmore, P&K, and more recently Cordell, Strike King, Zebco, and Smithwick.

In the late '40s Mr. Jones joined in partnership with Pop Adams, then national casting champion and factory representative, to form the Twin lakes Bait Company. Together they manufactured several wood lures such as the Ace High, Betty Boop, and Deep-O. Again I would like to stress that Mr. Jones' innovation of mass production at economical cost came at a time of rapid expansion of the lure industry. As Mr. Jones' son, Royce stated, "The greatest contribution of my dad was his expertise in designing and

building of custom production machinery and tooling. It is the reason for his success in this industry.”

Honorary Member - 1990