

Norman C. Heckler & Company, Woodstock, Connecticut

The Tom McCandless Collection

by Ralph Finch
Photos courtesy Norman C. Heckler & Company

With several bottle auctions happening this past fall, it would have been easy to lose sight of the big Tom McCandless collection that came up in three sessions. In fact, it would have been easy to lose sight of just how big the diverse collection was.

The glass alone is taking up three auctions, held by Norman C. Heckler & Company, Woodstock, Connecticut. Session I was held at Heckler's 12th annual Columbus Day Weekend Event. At 11 a.m. on October 8, 2011, an 800-pound 1848 church bell rang to signify the start of a live auction in the big Heckler barn, featuring early glass, bottles, flasks, advertising, pottery, and glass production tools.

Following that was the preview of the high-end early glass, bottles, flasks, advertising, and pottery for Session II (Absentee Auction 95), which accepted bids from October 5 through October 19. Session III of the McCandless collection (Absentee Auction 96), which opens for bids on January 18 and closes on February 1, will feature material similar to that offered in Session II.

Don't think that these three auctions were enough to disperse the collection of Tom McCandless, who died on August 1, 2010, at the age of 86. It's taking five

auctions, plus the rare items that he occasionally would put on eBay "just to watch the action" (and to add to the college funds of his grandchildren).

Crocker Farm, Sparks, Maryland, sold most of the McCandless pottery in a November 2010 sale, and Bertioia Auctions, Vineland, New Jersey, offered a small selection of antique advertising, paintings, and primitives from the McCandless home in its two-day toy sale in June 2011.

This report will focus on results from Heckler's Session II auction, with live photos taken at Session I. The value of the collections, as was noted by those who were fortunate to know Tom and his wife, Marion (who died in 2002), was secondary to the worth of the people themselves.

The lifetime, single-owner bottle and flask collection of Tom McCandless, a dedicated collector whose passing left a void in the bottle and glass collecting field, is indeed impressive. Over the course of 40 years, he accumulated the very best of flasks, bitters, whiskeys, medicines, milks, sodas, fruit jars, pickles, and more. These were kept—"displayed" is the better term—at the McCandless home in Hopewell, New Jersey.

"The quality and the breathtaking range of beautiful colors that exist in Tom's collection are immediately obvious," said Norman Heckler Sr. Color diversity "is accepted by collectors today as perhaps the most important characteristic of an important glass collection, but Tom was one of the first" to focus on it.

"Several items in this collection are so exceptional, in either color or mold, that few will come to the market again in our lifetime," Heckler noted.

The McCandless collection is hitting the market at a time when many areas of antiques are soft, yet high-end bottles and glass remain particularly strong. "Both in interest and prices realized,"

Heckler remarked. "The demand for flasks and bitters, especially, is insatiable, especially at the high end."

Five bottles in Session II carried estimates of \$10,000/20,000 each, including a "Genl Taylor" and Bust - "Fells Point/ Balto"

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and Monument portrait flask in puce with gray overtone. Made circa 1840 by the Baltimore Glass Works, it is extremely rare and sold for \$24,570 (including buyer's premium).

A triangular S.C. Brown's "Herb Bitters" figural bottle with beveled corners, strong embossing, and bright light to medium lime green coloration, Philadelphia, circa 1870, sold for \$10,530 (est. \$10,000/20,000). A light blue-green "Fairview/ Works" short-haired bust flask, made circa 1830 by Wheat Price & Co. Mfrs., Wheeling, West Virginia, sold for \$22,230 (est. \$7500/15,000). A circa 1870 "R. & G.A. Wright/ Philada" bottle in the form of a cannon barrel, one of only two known, this in a plum amethyst color, sold for an explosive \$43,290 (est. \$10,000/20,000)!

Yes, color is king, but often there was dissension among the previewers. Take the pontiled pint GIII-17 Cornucopia - Urn flask with sheared mouth, ex-David Goad, attributed to the Lancaster (New York) Glass Works, circa 1850. It was estimated at \$1500/3000; 28 bids pushed it to \$5850. The catalog described the color as yellow olive, but Jeff Noordsy of Vermont described it as "a bad ski-jacket green from the 1980's."

"A neon green," countered Kim Kokles of Texas.

"Colors are so difficult," Heckler admitted. "Like anyone else,

we have the same challenge identifying colors...maybe it's a yellow forest green?"

Several bottles in Session II boasted incredible colored striations in their matrix—the series of ridges, furrows, or linear marks that create a colorful, streaking effect that is highly desirable to many collectors. Three in particular were expected to generate tremendous bidder interest, and they did.

Session III will have its colorful swirls too:

• Lot 146. A quart "Jenny Lind" and Bust - Factory calabash in a brilliant light to medium sapphire blue with deeper blue striations, probably Ravenna (Ohio) Glass Works, circa 1850 (est. \$5000/10,000). "This bottle is exceptional," Heckler noted. "The reason? It has as good a color as any, and it has the deeper blue striations. This is a typical Tom McCandless bottle."

• Lot 195. A rare quart Washington - Taylor portrait flask in an unusual ginger ale coloration with apricot striations, Dyottville Glass Works, Philadelphia, circa 1850 (est. \$5000/10,000). "Tom loved striated flasks," Heckler said. "He was a man after my own heart, as I have a number of similar bottles, but he went out of his way for these...This is probably the only known example in this color."

Rich Tucker of Newport Beach, California, is a major force in the glass hobby and is typical of the many "high-end collectors" who attended the Heckler preview and then the Keene, New Hampshire, bottle show the following day. Rich began collecting historical flasks in 1985, "but I dug old bottles with my grandfather beginning in 1960 when I was in junior high school up in the California gold country around Auburn, Placerville, and then in Virginia City, Nevada."

Rich and Kathy Tucker also attended the posh Deerfield, Massachusetts, antiques show that is held on Columbus Day weekend. "The things there are wonderful, and it is like visiting a museum of the very best antiques, and everything has a price tag, except, of course, the items that say 'Price on Request.' I do get worried a little when I look at a grand



"Genl Taylor" and Bust - "Fells Point/ Balto" and Monument portrait flask, by Baltimore Glass Works, 1830-50, puce with a gray overtone, inward rolled mouth, tubular pontil scar, pint, G1-73, rare color, ex-Edmund and Jayne Blasko collection (it brought \$1800 in the 1983 Blasko auction). A note on the bottom by McCandless indicates "one of my favorites." Estimated at \$10,000/20,000, it was pushed by 23 bids to \$24,570.

"We knew it was a great bottle, but...we were impressed by the price this important bottle brought," commented Heckler. "There may be another one, but..."



This quart Washington - Taylor portrait flask in puce, by Dyottville Glass Works, Philadelphia, 1840-60, sheared mouth, pontiled, G1-37, ex-Edmund and Jayne Blasko collection (it brought \$900 in the 1983 Blasko auction), sold for \$24,570 with 34 bids (est. \$5000/10,000).

"The Washington - Taylors did exceedingly well," noted Heckler. "There are more people collecting one or two groups where you can get a tremendous variety of color. Washington - Taylors form one of these groups. Amethyst and blue are strong."



The "R. & G. A. Wright/ Philada" plum amethyst figural in the form of a cannon barrel, U.S., 1860-80, 6 7/8" high, with tooled mouth, smooth base, and great condition, ex-Gordon Bass collection (auctioned at Skinner in 1971), sold for \$43,290 (est. \$10,000/20,000) with 43 bids. Only one other example is known, the blue one in the Dr. Charles Aprill collection.

"Tom bought this for four hundred dollars in 1971," Heckler explained. "There were two in the Bass sale, the other in blue. The story is that a man flew into Boston from Atlanta but was stopped for speeding on the Mass. Pike and was arrested. He was given one telephone call; he called Skinner's. He won it for five hundred fifty dollars."



Steve Schingler of Braselton, Georgia, who is a major collector of whiskey bottles, looks at a Washington-Taylor portrait flask. Janet Finch photo.



The quart Washington - Taylor portrait flask, by Dyottville Glass Works, Philadelphia, circa 1850, in light to medium gray-blue with profuse, deeper blue horizontal striations, sheared mouth, pontiled, G1-43, strong embossing, ex-George Austin collection, drew 41 bids and topped out at \$42,120 (est. \$10,000/20,000).

"Exceptional, probably unique," Heckler estimated. "It came through a long line of serious bottle collectors. The striations pushed it over the top."



Hands off, it's mine! Ferd Myer of Houston (left) and Steve Ketcham of Minnesota wrestle over an S.T. Drakes Plantation Bitters in light citron listed as lot 172 in Session III of the McCandless collection (est. \$10,000/20,000). Janet Finch photo.



Inside his renovated Civil War-era red barn, Norman Heckler and crew held a live/Internet sale for Session I of the McCandless collection, plus a preview of the material in Sessions II and III. The 82 lots in Session I were estimated to have been split 50-50 between Internet and floor bidders. Janet Finch photo.



Ted Krist of Ohio, normally a bitters man, admires a quart Jenny Lind calabash. Janet Finch photo.



The "Jenny Lind" and Bust - "Glass Work's/ S. Huffsey" and Factory portrait calabash flask, probably by the Isabella Glass Works, New Brooklyn, New Jersey, 1845-60, yellow with an olive cast, pontiled, sold for \$4095 with 22 bids.



The pint "Wheat · Price & Co Wheeling Va" and Short-Haired Bust - "Fairview/ Works" and Factory portrait flask in light blue-green, by Wheat Price and Company Manufacturers, Wheeling, West Virginia (Virginia), 1820-40, with sheared mouth, pontil scar, and strong embossing, GI-115, ex-Edmund and Jayne Blasko collection (it brought \$1750 in the 1983 Blasko auction), sold for \$22,230 with 22 bids (est. \$7500/15,000).



Sheaf of Wheat - Five-Pointed Star pictorial flask, possibly by the Bulltown (New Jersey) Glass Works, 1845-60, bright yellow-green with deeper profuse olive green striations, applied double collared mouth, iron pontil mark, quart, GXIII-38, ex-Robert Patridge collection (it brought \$700 at the 1982 Patridge auction). Estimated at \$4000/8000, it sold for \$12,870 with 41 bids.



A pint GI-44 Washington - Taylor portrait flask in yellow, by Dyoottville Glass Works, Philadelphia, 1840-60, with sheared mouth and strong embossing, pontiled, ex-Scholl collection, drew 53 bids that pushed it to \$21,060, despite its \$1500/3000 estimate.



A quart GI-54 Washington - Taylor portrait flask in sapphire blue (est. \$4000/8000), by Dyoottville Glass Works, Philadelphia, 1860-70, with applied heavy sloping collared mouth, smooth base, and great condition, ex-Scholl collection, sold for \$16,380 with 33 bids.



A half-pint cornflower blue scroll flask with anchor, probably by John Robinson & Son Manufacturers, Pittsburgh, 1830-50, sheared mouth and pontiled, GIX-41, ex-Nevil collection and ex-Charles B. Gardner collection, sold for \$3217.50 with 25 bids (est. \$1200/2400).

"They usually are aquamarine," Heckler explained, "but this has a deeper color than most. It's a cute little thing. And...a landlubber bought it."

"Rare, rare," Heckler repeated. "What was really good, beside the deep color and sharp impression, is that it was clean as a whistle. It was exceptional."

Among the Session III bottles with \$10,000/20,000 estimates:

• Lot 145. An exceptional Washington bust and sailing frigate portrait pint flask in sapphire blue with applied sloping collared mouth, Albany (New York) Glass Works, 1848-50, GI-28. "The Albany Glass Works was in business only two or three years," Heckler explained, "and all of its bottles are quite rare, the blue ones exceptionally so. This one has everything going for it."

• Lot 183. A very rare quart Washington - Classical Bust portrait flask in a beautiful yellow with topaz tone, Bridgeton (New Jersey) Glass Works, circa 1850, GI-25, with strong embossing. "I think this could be the star of the show," Heckler said. "It's probably the rarest bottle in color that Tom had...It could exceed the estimate by one hundred percent or more. Everything about it is exceptional. This bottle could go bonkers."

• Lot 196. A brilliant light blue-green "Hard Cider" and Flag, Barrel, and Plow - Log Cabin historical pint flask, Pittsburgh, circa 1830, GX-22—a great example in mold strength and color.

The final installment of the McCandless auction takes place January 18 through February 1. To learn more, contact Heckler at (860) 974-1634; Web site (www.hecklerauction.com).

"Again," Heckler said, "these striated flasks—and there were four in this sale (a fifth in the next sale isn't quite up to the four)—are impressive. Tom had an eye for this kind of thing; they have always been popular, but these were exceptional. When you look at lot twenty-one, you don't even see the sheaf of wheat and star for the striations, yet the embossing is very strong. It's a two-hundred-dollar bottle in its common aquamarine color."



Fourteen bids pushed this "Isabella/ [Anchor]/ Glass Works" - Factory half-pint flask in a rare blue-green, GXIII-57, to \$8190. By Isabella Glass Works, New Brooklyn, New Jersey, 1840-60, with sheared mouth, pontiled, with some light exterior high point wear and a 3/8" shallow chip from the base that barely shows to the edge, it brought \$400 at the 1975 Charles B. Gardner collection auction.

"I don't know if there is another of these—in color," said Heckler. "It's exceptional, but the chip hurt it; we sold a quart Isabella/ Anchor a few years ago for fifteen thousand dollars."



A handsome and very rare pale yellowish green Columbia Bust and "Kensington" - Eagle and "Union. Co." half-pint flask, by Kensington Glass Works, Philadelphia, 1825-40, sheared mouth, pontiled, GI-118, the glass brilliant and strongly embossed, ex-Mattatuck Museum auction, drew 33 bids and sold for \$11,700 (est. \$2000/4000).

highboy chest of drawers that looks like it belongs in a museum and was made when George Washington was a boy, and the price is far less than some of the flasks I have bought lately. Are some of our bottles exceeding the price point where, if a few buyers drop out, we will face a repositioning of the market?

"I am interested in what others who sell have to say about the economy and the impact on the bottle sales. What is 'moving'? It seems like the high-end stuff is moving, based on a comment I heard from Vermont's Jeff Noordsy, who sells high-end bottles. But what do the other folks think? Norm's Session Two sales look good for the higher-end flasks that I know about, but what about the other aspects of the hobby, such as sodas, whiskeys, inks, jars, bitters? Most antiques have suffered during the last three years."

In Session II Rich won "three flasks, including the midnight blue pint scroll flask [\$14,040], a yellow half-pint scroll flask



Robert Hinely (left) of Newnan, Georgia, fights with Jim Hall of Gurnee, Illinois, over a half-pint blue-green Isabella Glass Works flask from New Brooklyn, New Jersey, circa 1850. Hinely said, "We are arch rivals—north versus south. I collect half-pints."

"Me too," replied Hall, "and it's a northern bottle and should stay up north."

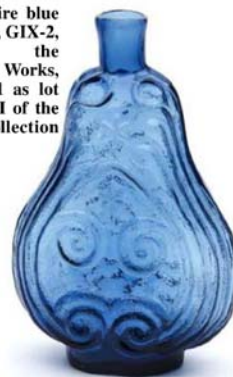
It sold for \$8190, with 14 bids, and ended up going south. Janet Finch photo.



Kim and Mary Kokles of Garland, Texas, were interested in the deep sapphire blue Louisville, Kentucky, scroll flask slated for Session III. Why? "I need a third quart scroll," explained Mary. "I like everything in threes."

Kim and Mary are longtime major dealers and once managed the Indianapolis Advertising Show. "This is a flask Mary likes that I will try for," Kim added. "Even though we've been married since '84 and have collected a ton of things, Mary didn't catch the bottle bug until 2009, and I want to keep her happy." Janet Finch photo.

This deep sapphire blue quart scroll flask, GIX-2, probably by the Louisville Glass Works, 1845-60, is listed as lot 185 in Session III of the McCandless collection (est. \$4000/8000).



California's Richard Tucker admires the striations in a striated Masonic Arch and Emblems - Eagle flask. Janet Finch photo.

The quart GI-97 Benjamin Franklin portrait flask, by Kensington Glass Works, Philadelphia, 1830-50, in bright yellow-green with sheared mouth, pontil scar, some minor exterior high point wear on the cheek and nose of Franklin, and a 1" body "fissure" went at \$2691 (est. \$2500/5000), pushed by 12 bids.



Mark Vuono of Connecticut looks for a "fissure" on a Benjamin Franklin portrait flask. "Norm doesn't like the 'C' word—crack," Vuono explained. Several people looked for it, but they had a hard time finding it. Vuono possesses the finest collection of historical flasks known, begun by his father, Charles, and now assisted by his sons, Andrew and David.

"It was hard to see, I grant you," commented Heckler. "It needed the right light to show up. And, to me, a crack is far more substantial than a fissure." Janet Finch photo.



The pint Masonic Arch and Emblems - Eagle flask, probably by the Keene (New Hampshire) Marlboro Street Glassworks, circa 1825, in light bluish green with wide, profuse amethyst striations, a heavy tooled round collared mouth, pontiled, probably GIV-8, ex-Sam Laidacker, went at \$19,890 (est. \$5000/10,000) with 27 bids.

"It's certainly a beautiful color," Heckler noted. "There are a number of these that came out of the Keene factory, and they have always been popular. This Masonic design has such history."



Californians Rich and Kathy Tucker admire a beautiful yellow half-pint scroll flask, which they won for \$2925. The catalog described it as "Scroll Flask, probably Louisville Glass Works, Louisville, Kentucky, 1845-1860. Yellow with a light olive tone, sheared mouth - tubular pontil scar, half pint. GIX-31 Rare, unlisted color. Beautiful. Ex-Fred Salisbury collection."

"A great little bottle in an unlisted color," Heckler noted. "The provenance of Fred Salisbury makes it extra special." Janet Finch photo.



From atop a stone wall that runs throughout his farm, Norman Heckler takes a moment to survey the action. The stone walls on this property were once rubble, due to the passage of 100 to 150 years, but "in 1987, '88 we started our barn sales, and the whole family began to rebuild the walls. Since then we have reconstructed about one mile of stone wall on our property," Heckler explained later. "Over that period of time, as many as twelve to fifteen people have laid sections of it, and you can see different styles of reconstruction.

"I collect glass, rocks, and old tractors—I love them all—and as long as I keep the glass and rocks separate, it's OK." Ray Burke photo.

Crocker Farm's Salute to Tom McCandless

"We sold forty-five pieces for Tom after he passed, as well as a small number of pieces before he died," said Tony Zipp, co-owner of Crocker Farm, Sparks, Maryland, which bills itself as "America's premier auction house of stoneware and redware pottery."

"Tom was very much interested in western Pennsylvania stoneware, particularly canning jars. The best examples we sold for him fell in the one-thousand-, fifteen-hundred-dollar range. We sold a Manhattan stoneware 'QUINCES' jar for sixteen hundred fifty dollars; a Pruntytown, West Virginia, stoneware canning jar for seventeen hundred twenty-five dollars; and a stenciled eagle tobacco jar from Greensboro for fourteen hundred ninety-five dollars." (All prices include the buyer's premium.)

"I first met Tom at the Bucks County Antiques Show around 1985 and was immediately impressed with his smiling face and his excep-

tional love for antiques, especially bottles and stoneware. My wife, Barbara, and I exhibited at the show for about ten years, and whenever he attended, he would always make a point of stopping by to share his latest stoneware stories. Later, I would run into Tom almost every March at the Baltimore bottle show, and he was always as enthusiastic about collecting as ever.

"Tom consigned a few pieces to one of our early auctions, and we traveled up to New Jersey to pick up his consignments. We were honored to see his incredible bottle collection, and, as always, Tom showed us his pieces with the same smiling face and enthusiasm that I came to appreciate.

"Tom McCandless was one of the most gentlemanly and fun people to be around. I feel very privileged to have known him. My trips to the Baltimore bottle show will certainly not be the same without my visit to Tom's table."



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A View of the McCandless Home in Hopewell, New Jersey



Some of the 123 lots making up Session II of the McCandless auction on view in Heckler's Civil War-era barn. Janet Finch photo.

The "General Washington" and Bust - "E Pluribus Unum" and Eagle "T.W.D." pint portrait flask in bright medium bluish green, by Kensington Glass Works, Philadelphia, 1820-30, sheared mouth, pontiled, GI-14, had beautiful color and good embossing—a fine example of a colored "firecracker" flask. Tom McCandless noted that "this was the first of many good bottles purchased from Sam Laidacker." Estimated at \$5000/10,000, it sold for \$10,530 with 19 bids.

"It's always been a popular bottle," Heckler explained, "and comes in four colors. The ambers are the rarest."

How rare? we asked. How much would you value an amber one?


"I'm guessing," Heckler replied, "between one hundred and one hundred fifty thousand dollars."



"I have the best feet in the world," claimed farmer/auctioneer Norman Heckler Sr. "If you've got 'em, flaunt 'em." Janet Finch photo.



Jim Hall of Illinois holds the 15-diamond pattern-molded flask known as "Marion McCandless's favorite flask" (est. \$5000/10,000). Janet Finch photo.

A ruby red pontiled flask, 5½" tall, with a similar pattern to color plate II #2 in McKearin and Wilson's *American Bottles & Flasks and Their Ancestry* (Crown, 1978), ex-Mrs. Samuel Riddle collection, exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, ex-Sam Laidacker, and sold at a Freeman's auction, went at \$6435 after 13 bids. A note from Tom on the base reads: "Marion's favorite, she wouldn't handle it, but when we had visitors she would always say 'show them the red one.'" 



I had the good pleasure of traveling with Tom McCandless several times to England and France in search of anything to add to his vast collections. In his 80's, he always expressed concern that he was holding our younger group back, but when he caught scent of an antique, we could rarely keep up.

Although I never made it to the home that Tom shared for many years with his wife, Marion, Bob Strickhart did. I asked Bob, also of Hopewell, New Jersey, and a close friend of Tom, for his personal memories. He wrote, "Here is a small glimpse into a visit at Tom and Marion's."

"I remember clearly that when I first visited I was amazed that there was such a wide array of collecting interests throughout the house. As you entered through the front door, your eye caught the barber bottles in the bay window. Huge (at least three to four feet high and two feet wide) stoneware crocks were scattered about the fireplace area. Next, your eyes traveled to a nice display of advertising mirrors on one wall, tobacco tags on another, and children's ABC plates neatly displayed on yet another wall. Going down the hallway, board games were displayed on the wall, and on the floor against a tall narrow wall you found the parade horns, some as tall as five feet! Now is a good time to remind you that you're barely in the door...the bottle room was still a ways off!

"MINI FLASHBACK: Off the hall is a full bath. Now, Tom and Marion never used this tub for bathing, as they had another they preferred. A young girl who once visited Tom and Marion around the Christmas time was shocked to find a fully decorated Christmas tree in the tub. Marion, as you may know, was a super fan of Christmas and all things Christmas; feather trees and others could be found in their home around every turn. Anyway, the little girl was upset and reported to her parents that she didn't think that Tom or Marion ever bathed as there was a decorated Christmas tree in their tub! (This was one of Tom's favorite stories, and he told it several times!)

"MINI FLASHBACK II: Tom and Marion had Jewish friends with children, and they wanted these children to enjoy the Christmas season just like Christian children, so Marion invented the 'Jew Tree.' They decorated it with the children and had a great time of it. These children stayed in touch with Tom and Marion for life, and I remember meeting them at Tom's 85th birthday party. While collecting and collections were important, Tom and Marion taught us that it's the people that this is all about.

"OK, off to the bottle room. Added on to the house specifically for the bottles, this room had knotty pine walls and backlit cabinets down two walls. From left to right you saw some of the best of the best colored historical flasks, target balls, bitters, fruit jars, and other bottle categories anyone could imagine. I remember being awe-struck when I first saw all this. Stoneware wax sealer fruit jars lined the top of the cabinets, while appropriate period advertising and go-withs were found on the other walls. At the far end of the bottle room was the mousetrap collection and all things rodent! And Tom always loved to show you how they worked!

"On one visit, Tom pulled out a handled black glass wine bottle. Badly cracked, someone many years ago thought enough of this bottle to repair it with staples! I looked at Tom and said that I wondered if it held water. Off to the kitchen we went and then back to the bottle room, checking periodically for leaks! (It never leaked, by the way!)

"When the bottle room was built, it formed another room, which Tom later had finished off, and this was where you could find the toys—penny toys, mechanicals, you name it! In Hopewell there was at one time in the early 20th century a toy manufacturer, and Tom enjoyed collecting those toys in particular. Marion's Christmas lights were in a triangular window, above the sliding doors, designed to catch the day's sunlight.

"It wasn't a big house, but there was a lot to see. Fortunately, I have many, many fond memories of times spent in that house."

This Tops Everything!

During the preview of McCandless Session III bottleless, inside the old Heckler barn, Jeff Noordsy of Vermont was involved in the most unusual occurrence of the day. As he was holding lot 135, a circa 1850 cobalt blue Washington - Taylor quart flask with a square collar from Philadelphia's Dyottville Glass Works (est. \$5000/10,000), something happened that sent a chill—then a nervous laughter—throughout the crowd.

"It was scary," said Jeff of the flask that "doesn't usually have a lip like that. As I handed the bottle to someone, he took it, but I still had the top of the bottle in my hand!"

"Tom was a dear friend," Jeff commented, "and one of the first collectors to welcome Holly and me to the hobby. I clearly recall buying a National Bitters ear of corn from him at the then heart-stopping price of two hundred dollars—far and away the most money we had ever paid for a bottle at the time. Tom candidly observed that he was selling the bottle 'under the money,' and he was correct, as we quickly turned the piece for a fifty-dollar profit—a ton of money for us at the time!

"Tom was honest, earnest, and a true ambassador of the hobby. He would never knowingly misrepresent an item, and I am one hundred percent certain that he was never aware that the top of the blue Washington - Taylor had an epoxy repair; in fact, he would have been mortified to realize that was the case.

"Tom's collection was assembled lovingly and this...oversight—and one that fooled many others as well—

will not negatively color his unassailable personal legacy and the otherwise fabulous collection that he assembled."

Another collector added that Tom would say that this was a good reminder to even the sharpest of collectors that one *must* be very, very careful in any area of antique collecting. As Jeff said, it fooled many others as well.

Norman Heckler added, "No matter what I say can't be good...we will reduce the [estimated] value to two thousand to four thousand dollars. It is still a beautiful, rare, and important bottle.

"And other damaged items brought good money. The blue Columbia - Eagle (lot 60) with a four-inch epoxy patch still brought an impressive amount."

"Three of us looked at the bottles practically with a microscope...It was amazing that this got away from so many people. It's unfortunate, but...I should have black-lighted it; then I would have seen it."

On the Washington - Taylor flask, Heckler commented, "I would leave the top off. It looks pretty good as is."

*Lot 60, a pint Columbia - Eagle portrait flask in cobalt blue (est. \$1500/3000) brought \$9945!

