



A General Washington portrait flask from John Robinson's Sturbridge Flint Glass Works fetched \$18,000. The flask from a Philadelphia collection is clear with a lavender tint.



A Washington bust and "Albany Glass Works/Albany NY" sailing frigate portrait flask, 1847-50, in a rare brilliant yellowish-olive color, went out at \$44,000.



The top lot of the auction was this General Jackson eagle portrait flask, marked "J.R./Laird. S.C. Pitt." in a rare yellow-green color with robust embossing. The flask sold for \$41.80 in 1971 and attained \$151,000 at this auction.



A Washington bust portrait flask, Albany Glassworks, in golden amber fetched more than double its high estimate at \$34,000.



A rare eagle cornucopia historical flask, Pitkin Glass Works, Manchester, Conn., in a pale yellow-olive brought \$31,000.

Jackson Portrait Flask Soars At Norman C. Heckler Auction

Auction Action In Woodstock Valley, Conn.

Review and Photos by
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Antiques and The Arts Weekly

WOODSTOCK VALLEY, CONN. — High expectations are sometimes dashed, but in the case of a General Jackson portrait flask, reality soared far above expectation when the bottle crossed the block at Norman C. Heckler & Company's absentee auction that closed October 27.

The 1820-40 historical flask with a bust of General Jackson on one side and an eagle on the other was made by John Robinson Manufacturers, Pittsburgh, Penn., and is noteworthy for its condition and even more so for its rare color, a brilliant yellow-green, as well as very strong embossing.

The flask was boldly estimated at \$40/80,000 after several "experts" looked at it, and advance interest was nearly at the boiling point. Even that high estimate was not prescient enough. The item had a dozen bidders on it that chased the bottle for most of the auction. After callbacks, bidding narrowed down to the three top bidders, and shortly after, a well-established collector prevailed for a record-breaking \$151,000. Heckler's March auction had previously set the record for a bottle of this type, a General Washington/eagle flask, GI-14, circa 1820, in a deep sapphire blue, that realized a now-puny \$100,620.



A General Washington bust and eagle portrait, Kensington Glass Works, Philadelphia, in a deep sapphire blue, made \$59,000.

"I was amazed because I had not seen the bottle in this color," said Norman Heckler Sr, recalling the day about three years ago when he first learned of this bottle. Its consignor showed him a photograph of the flask while he was set up at an antique glass show near the Ohio-Indiana state line. He and Norman Jr were sufficiently impressed and readily accepted the woman's invitation to see the bottle in person at her home in Dayton, which was but a 45-minute drive.

She was an avid bottle collector as had been her parents. She politely declined the Hecklers' invitation at the time to sell the bottle for her, saying she wanted to hang onto it as it reminded her of her father. She had many bottles on display in her home but kept this one stored away safely in a box. "We were in great awe. For something we are used to seeing [antique bottles], this was something exceptional," Norman Sr recalled.

Her father had purchased the bottle, with her in tow, in 1971 from Ernie Burger, an antiques dealer, for the price of \$41.80. According to the catalog notes, several major collectors tried unsuccessfully to acquire the bottle over the years, with Edmund Blaske offering \$750, and later, Roy Brown tendering a new Cadillac. Both were rebuffed.

After the sale of the Washington "firecracker" flask in his March auction, Norman Sr sent the woman a catalog with a note suggesting the bottle could easily do \$30/60,000. She called him and suggested he pick up the bottle. He and Norman Jr eagerly made the return trip to Dayton.

The Hecklers also brought back with them another bottle from her collection, her second-best bottle, which was a "hard cider" log cabin historical flask with flag, barrel and plow in a brilliant aquamarine. Selling here for \$14,000, the bottle was raptly described in the catalog as having "Fine color, superb condition, possibly the strongest impression we have ever seen on both sides of the flask. If you want the best, this may be it."

Historical flasks depicting men dominated the auction's top ten. The second-highest grossing lot was a General Washington bust and eagle portrait, Kensington Glass Works, Philadelphia, in a deep sapphire blue, that achieved \$59,000, followed by a Washington bust and "Albany Glass Works/Albany NY" sailing frigate portrait flask, 1847-50, in a rare brilliant yellowish-olive color that went out at \$44,000.

Breaking the run of male flasks, however, was a "Jenny Lind" bust "(Glasshouse)/S. Huffsey" portrait calabash flask, probably Isabella Glass Works, New Brooklyn, N.J., 1845-60. The sapphire blue quart flask with applied sloping collared mouth sold for \$31,000.

Other historical flask standouts were a Washington bust portrait flask, Albany Glassworks, in golden amber, which fetched more than double its high estimate at \$34,000 and a rare eagle cornucopia historical flask, Pitkin Glass Works, Manchester, Conn., in a pale yellow-olive, which took \$31,000.

Besides flasks, the sale featured a pleasing variety of salts, free-blown glass, bitters and more. Standouts included a pattern molded creamer in a ten-diamond pattern, Zanesville Glass Works, Zanesville, Ohio, 1820-50, that sold comfortably within estimate at \$15,000,



This pattern molded creamer in a ten-diamond pattern, Zanesville Glass Works, Zanesville, Ohio, 1820-50, realized comfortably within estimate at \$15,000.



Breaking up the run of male flasks that performed well in this auction was this "Jenny Lind" and bust "(Glasshouse)/S. Huffsey" portrait calabash flask, probably Isabella Glass Works, New Brooklyn, N.J., 1845-60. The sapphire blue quart flask with applied sloping collared mouth sold for \$31,000.

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THANKSGIVING DEADLINES

Due to the holiday closing on Thursday, Nov. 25 (Thanksgiving Day), deadlines for the issue of "Antiques and The Arts Weekly" dated Dec. 3, 2010 are as follows:

EARLY AUCTION: Wed, Nov. 24, 10 AM
DISPLAY: Fri, Nov. 26, 10 AM
REGULAR AUCTION: Mon, Nov. 29, 10 AM

*The paper will be mailed on
Tuesday, November 30, 2010*