

“Flask & Glass Rarities Surface at Recent Connecticut Bottle Shows”

By Rick Ciralli

First in a series for Bottles and Extras.

Last May, the Museum of Connecticut Glass held its annual antique bottle and glass sale on the grounds near historic Coventry Glassworks. The show was well-attended and, as usual, some great glass made its way there.

I decided that I'd like to share a few examples of some rarities with readers of Bottles and Extras. Left to right are a small, free-blown pocket inkwell featured in Bill Covill's Ink Bottles and Inkwells (it's considered a unique example); a small handled and threaded mug with an old McKearin sticker on it and a larger free-blown, handled and threaded pitcher. All are attributed to the Coventry Glassworks.

It was fun to have friends and attendees come up to my table to check them out and talk about them.

At past shows, there have been such rarities as an aqua Lafayette pint (GI-85 mold), a Pitkin-type metal mold, a J.P.F. inkwell and a Dr. H.W. Jackson / Druggist / Vegetable Home Syrup in olive-amber and pontiled to boot.

Another rarity surfaced at this show. A Rhode Island



collector-dealer pulled an aqua GI-32 Washington-Jackson pint out of his box and sat it on his table. Another collector-dealer from Vermont was looking around, actually handled it and put it back down, no doubt thinking it was a common GI-24 Bridgeton, N.J. mold. Finally, a New Hampshire collector-dealer saw it and acquired it with several other much more common cornucopia urn half-pints.

When noted flask collector Mark Vuono, who attended the show, heard about it and saw it, he immediately recognized the mold and spoke of its rarity. It turns out that the only other known example of the GI-32 in aqua is in his family's private collection. It was acquired by his late father, Charlie, back in 1991 from the late Bob Heath. Charlie paid \$145 for it then and Mark was the one who told his father to buy it, or so the story goes.

Well, a month went by after that show and I received a phone call from that collector-dealer, who offered me the flask. We did some ol' Yankee trading and I was

fortunate enough to get it.

Here it is next to another known Coventry rarity – the tumbler listed in Wilson's New England Glass and Glass Making. As you'll note, the glass in each is practically identical, and the few rare examples of the GI-85, GI-85a and GI-86 molds tucked away in private collections prove that Coventry did indeed produce aqua glass. I have even heard of an aqua GI-82, but have never seen one.



The Southern Connecticut Antique Bottle and Glass Collectors Club show was held last June 27 in West Hartford.

I was able to acquire an extremely rare, double-patterned Pitkin-type flask. This was not the example that was vertically ribbed and swirled to the left or right. This one's ribs swirl to the left and right, creating an almost diamond-like effect and is spectacular to see. As far as I know, there are three known examples. The one whose picture is below was sold for \$1,100 plus buyer's premium at the John Tiffany Gotjen sale through Dave Arman in 1985. Nine years later, it surfaced in a Harmer Rooke auction and sold for \$3,750 plus premium. Another one resides in another prominent Connecticut collection and the third is in an important New Hampshire collection.

My example is special to me since I own an inkwell that also is double-patterned and the ribs swirl both ways. It is the only known example.

So great examples of rare glass continue to show up at these two shows and I encourage readers and collectors to check them out next time.

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