

SHARDS OF WISDOM

“Heard it Through the Grapevine”



Memories of a good man, by George!

By Ralph and Janet Finch

We met Minden, Nevada's George and Edna Mross in Amsterdam, while on one of Jim Hagenbuch's overseas antiques trips, about April of 2011. And as we did on many of the trips we enjoyed, we came back with more than just cold glass: A warm and lasting friendship. Jim's trips always consisted of bottle collectors as well as antiques collectors, of which George was both.

George collected pristine bottles, and always said, color was king. The following year, we went with Edna and George to one of Jim's trips to Alan Blakeman's Summer National bottle shows in Elsecar, England. After Elsecar, the whole group moved on to Dover, and over to France. We toured antique shops and visited historic sites, like Mont Saint Michel and Normandy. Back in the States, George and Edna came to our home—where they became smitten by the mitten (that's a Michigan joke)—and the four of us toured Greenfield Village to sample the great glass there.

Next, we flew to the 2013 FOHBC National show in Manchester, New Hampshire, then took a week through New England and through Maine. Later, in return, we went west to visit George and Edna and partake of the 2012 national show in Reno. Our last trip with them was to Alaska in 2017, where we traveled via a cruise ship, a train, a plane, a bus—everything but an optional dog sled.

When we were at their home, George showed off his cooking skills, when we enjoyed a very fancy Beef Bourguignon dinner—it took George four days to prepare! George was a teacher of English and enjoyed good writing. (Despite that, he said he enjoyed my articles.) And he liked the history of glass, the diversity in glass: He had a few whiskey pigs, a few colognes, flasks, bitters. George even bought several target balls from American Glass Gallery's auction of my target ball collection. George said he wanted reminders of our friendship.

George liked diversity in life—in good food, good travels, good bottles and good friendships. All of these things he could connect and enjoy through his bottle collecting. He, in turn, represented what is good about being a collector.

George died on July 20, at the age of 87, surrounded by his family, and well remembered and respected by his many friends.

Information About ACL Soda Bottles

By Mike Dickman

Although there are good reference books about national soda brands like Coke, Pepsi, Mountain Dew and others, the most useful book about the vast range of local mom-and-pop ACL soda bottles is *Collecting Applied Color Label Soda Bottles* by Rick

Sweeney, published by the PSBCA. It has nice color photos of hundreds of ACL sodas and information about sizes, dates and cities where bottled, as well as prices realized from 1993-2001 and a rarity scale. Unfortunately, the last edition (3d) was published in 2002 and the prices of many bottles, and in some instances their rarity, are sorely out of date. The books appear for sale on eBay from time to time.

There are also some very good online resources. “Weide's Soda Page” by Chris and Catherine Weide (ca-yd.com) has photos of thousands of ACL sodas from their massive, 50+ year collection along with detailed information about each bottle, all listed alphabetically in an easy-to-use format.

Another outstanding resource is VintageSodaCollector.com by FOHBC member Tom Pettit, which has photos of groups of ACLs from Tom's collection (Sports, Ladies, Native Americans, etc.) along with interesting articles about cleaning bottles and specific topics such as the Royal Palm Beverages of Florida and African-American soda bottlers.

Finally, the newly reconstituted Painted Soda Bottle Collectors Association has created a nice site for members which is a work in progress, with photos of many ACL soda bottles and interesting features such as “Top Shelf” which lists and comments upon current eBay sales of ACL sodas that exceed \$100.

Kent G.II-6 Blown Three Mold Bowl

By Paul Kirk

Many collectors dream of discovering a pristine piece of historic American glassware. Glass is inherently fragile, and its survival rate is perhaps lower than that of other antiques. What one generation treasures might not be valued by subsequent generations, and items often end up neglected and unappreciated. It is interesting to muse where the antique glassware we collect and love has been prior to our acquisition of it. Were the items valued and treasured as much as we value and treasure them today, or were they neglected in the backs of dark, dusty cupboards? Leaving items untouched in the back of cupboards for generations often protects them from use and breakage, but all it takes is one unfortunate mishap, and a historic item can be lost forever. Considering the latter, it is almost a miracle that fragile, 200-year-old American glassware has survived. For it to survive in as perfect condition as possible for its age is truly remarkable. The Kent G.II-6 bowl that Norman C. Heckler & Company will be featuring at auction is such an example of an extremely rare and remarkable piece of early American glassware.

Kent, Ohio is the largest city in Portage County and was settled as part of the Connecticut Western Reserve in 1805. It encompasses areas known early on as Carthage and Franklin Mills. The area

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drew settlers because of its location along the Cuyahoga River which was ideal for water-powered mills. During the mid-nineteenth century, Franklin Mills was noted for its involvement with the Underground Railroad. In 1864, Franklin Mills was renamed Kent in honor of Marvin Kent who was responsible for bringing the railroad through the town in 1863. This played a major role in the development of the village. Kent was incorporated as a village in 1867 and became a city after the issuance of the 1920 Census. Kent is now best known as a small college town. It is the home of the main campus of Kent State University which was founded in 1910.

Glass factories were established in Kent, Ohio in the early 19th century. In their book, *American Glass*, George S. and Helen McKearin make mention of a glass house called Park, Edmunds & Parks. They refer to the pattern on the Kent bowl as G.II-6 and attribute it to that specific glass house due to excavations done at the site. G.II-6, as described by the McKearins, is a "band of vertical ribbing between bands of diamond diapering and at the top a band of gadrooning."

The classification "blown three mold" was coined in the 1920s when the glass, then approximately a century old, was being noticed by collectors. In August 1924, *The Magazine Antiques* published an article by Helen McKearin which was apparently the first that dealt exclusively with this type of glass. At that time, "Three Mold" was the name used by collectors. The addition of the word "blown" came from discussion and agreement between Homer Eaton Keyes and Helen McKearin. In December 1929, she wrote another article for *The Magazine Antiques* titled "*Fiction of Three-mold Glass*." Though collectors fully understood that "Three Mold" referred to the glass being discussed, McKearin and

Keyes felt that adding the word "blown" to the name would eliminate any confusion with collectors between it and pressed glass made in three-part molds. To this day, due to the association with this early glass, many collectors feel that all pressed glass made in three-part molds is "early," but the number of mold marks on pressed glass has more to do with the design itself rather than its age.

Blown Three Mold glass was made in full-size metal molds, and the period of its production began about 1820. The designs were modeled after much more costly imported English and Irish cut glass. Two-part and four-part molds were also used, but the vast majority of molds were three parts, and though full-sized molds were used, hand tooling was utilized for many items. The McKearins aptly describe the visual impact

of three mold blown glass in an eloquent manner: "Blown Three mold pieces typically show softened forms and angles and an uneven fidelity to the mold. However, the way in which the concavo-convex surfaces refract the light increases the effect of diffuseness and largely accounts for the typical brilliance, popularly called 'liquid brilliance.'"

The McKearins mention that bowls, usually flared, in the G.II-6 pattern are mostly found in light green, but more straight-sided ones are known in what they refer to as "olive-yellow." The Heckler G.II-6 Kent bowl might be described as "olive-yellow," but other early glass aficionados have referred to the color as "citron." Color can be quite a subjective thing. I have had the pleasure of handling the Heckler bowl, and the color in natural light certainly could be called citron. In addition to its vivid color and "liquid brilliance," the form is very appealing.

The Kent G.II-6 bowl, auctioned by Heckler, was found in Byler's Flea Market, which was located in Hartville, Ohio, in the late 1990s or early 2000s. Byler's Flea Market was part of the old Hartville flea market complex. It is amazing that the bowl was discovered approximately fifteen miles due south of where it was made nearly two centuries prior. The seller had various items from his aunt's home on his table and was set up in a parking lot about twenty feet away from the entrance of an antiques mall. The bowl was priced \$5.

This bowl was offered at HecklerAuction.com, Auction #210, August 17-31, 2022.

