

SHARDS OF WISDOM

"Heard it Through the Grapevine"



Carole Wahler at Tennessee Turned (2011) and Made by East Tennessee Hands: Pottery (1996), at the Museum of East Tennessee History.

Highly Important "Hon. Fred Douglass" Face Jug

One of the feature lots in the **January 2025 Crocker Farm Carole Wahler Collection auction**. Listed as Lot #5 – Highly Important Salt-Glazed Stoneware Face Harvest Jug. Inscribed "The Hon. Fred Douglass" on reverse and "Negro" on underside. Stamped "J.A. ROBERTS / COOKEVILLE / POTTERY / TENN / 25 CTS," circa 1895. Ovoid form with individually-thrown and applied spouts on the front and reverse shoulder. The handle modeled in the form of a squared tree branch with incised bark, the front featuring a hand-modeled and applied clay face, including orb-shaped eyes within almondine lids, small C-scroll ears, a nose with upturned tip and carved nostrils, and open mouth. Depressions around the eyes and flanking the mouth add structure and realism to the face. Incised on reverse with the inscription, "The Hon. Frederick Douglass," and on the underside with the word, "Negro." The exceptionally large impressed maker's mark of John A. Roberts appears on the reverse of the jug, extending onto the vessel's proper right side. The base includes the large, impressed price of "25 CTS.," a rarely-seen treatment suggesting this piece may have been displayed for sale at a local event. The surface features a dipped, brown slip coating with overlying salt glaze, which together create a greenish coloration where the salt vapors adhered in heavier concentrations. Regarded as Roberts's masterwork, this jug was likely made to commemorate abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, upon his death in 1895. Only a handful of face jugs by this potter are known. An undocumented example, inscribed for a local African-American farmer, corroborates the potter's stance on civil rights. A third, lacking an inscription, maker's mark, and handle, resides in the collection of Colonial Williamsburg's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, gifted by Rockefeller in 1935. The sculptural quality, fine condition, and large impressed maker's mark found on Roberts's Frederick Douglass

jug place it among the finest face vessels known from the state of Tennessee. However, its extraordinary inscription honoring America's most prominent abolitionist establish this work as one of the most historically significant pieces of American stoneware known. Exhibited: Tennessee Turned, Earthenware and Stoneware Made in East Tennessee 1800-1900, Museum of East Tennessee History, May 16-October 30, 2011. Provenance: Purchased by Wahler at a James Gill auction in Northern Ohio. Chipping to tip of nose. Other minor chips to applied face. One chip to spout on front. Two chips and edge wear to spout on reverse. Light wear to handle. H 11". **Late note from Editor:** Lot 5, Frederick Douglass Face Jug, \$75,000. World Auction Record for Tennessee Pottery. Est. \$25k–\$40k.

Very Important Lidded Stoneware Water Cooler w/ Incised Decoration: "Made by John Floyd / June 30 1857 / Knox County Tenn"

Lot #46–Important and Possibly Unique Five-Gallon Lidded Stoneware Water Cooler with Incised Floral Decoration, Inscribed "Made by Jn Floyd / June 30 1857 / Knox Couty(sic) Tenn," John Floyd at the Graves Pottery, Knox County, TN, 1857. Ovoid cooler with narrow, semi-squared mouth, two ribbed vertical handles applied at the shoulder, and individually-thrown and applied bung-hole in the form of a jug spout; decorated at the shoulder with a delicately-incised and cobalt-highlighted design of a flower with hollow details to the blossom's petals. Reverse incised with the cobalt-highlighted inscription, "Made by Jn Floyd / June 30 / 1857 / Knox County Tenn," below an impressed five-gallon capacity mark. Cobalt highlights to handle terminals and bung-hole. Includes original domed lid with brushed cobalt swag decoration and a highlight to its pointed finial. One of the finest examples of Tennessee stoneware known, this vessel combines form, decoration, and an exceedingly rare

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Credit: Crocker Farm for all images and descriptions from the Wahler Collection auction.

signature to produce a Southern masterwork of great significance to the migration of American ceramic traditions. Sold \$70k.

Carole Carpenter Wahler

Collector • Curator • Dealer • Scholar (1937-2023)

The Lifetime American Ceramics Collection of Carole Carpenter Wahler Collector • Curator • Dealer • Scholar (1937-2023) – January 22 - 31, 2025. Our Winter 2025 auction speaks to the legacy of one woman's lifelong passion for American ceramics. As an ambitious collector, Dr. Carole Carpenter Wahler (1937 - 2023) amassed a vast assemblage of seminal examples of American ceramics spanning the Southern states and beyond. In terms of depth, breadth, and quality, her collection has few rivals past or present. As a guest curator, Wahler established herself as the recognized authority on Tennessee stoneware and redware while drawing deserved national attention to the state's rich ceramic tradition. As a dealer, she was a pioneer in the field of American primitive antiques, becoming an early specialist in stoneware. And as a scholar, Carole Wahler's painstaking research has forever shaped our understanding of stoneware and redware, fleshed out in books, articles, and her landmark collection. Born and raised in New Mexico, pottery spoke to Carole Wahler from a young age as she collected sherds of Native American pottery in the desert. This curiosity turned into a passion for collecting, as she and her husband, Robert, purchased finer porcelain and Native American ceramics while still in graduate school in Washington State. After the Wahlers moved to Knoxville, TN in 1965 to begin their respective careers in psychology, Carole Wahler became a collector and part-time dealer. It was there that she quickly encountered American stoneware. Wahler purchased her first stoneware jar for fifty cents in 1964. Without fanfare, this purchase set her on the course to become a legendary figure in the field of American utilitarian ceramics.

Let's be careful with what we call our bottles

Alice Seeliger asks if anybody has "Goose Turd Green" in their bottle or sweater collection? The magazine editor is sure one of his Greeley's Bourbon Bitters is an exact match but suggests we refrain from "Baby" colors such as referenced on the chart below.



Greeley's
Bourbon Bitters
Meyer collection

Alice's
knitting
yarn.



Baby Poop Color Chart

Normal		Brown baby poop Formula fed baby poop is often more brown or tan, and poop turns more brown once solids are introduced.
		Yellow baby poop Breastfed baby poop is often mustard yellow and seedy.
		Green baby poop Normal! Could be due to something baby ate, but isn't anything to worry about.
		Black baby poop Meconium (black, tarry poop) is normal in the first 5 days, but black poop could be a sign of dried blood beyond that, so call your pediatrician.
Check with your doc		Gray baby poop Very rare, but may be serious. Call your pediatrician.
		Red baby poop Could indicate blood or be from something they ate. It's worth calling the pediatrician just in case.



Ball Standard
jar. Hands
collection

GI - 81
"Lafayette" Bust
of Lafayette
"S & C" "DE
WITT" Bust of
Clinton "C-T"
Portrait Flask.
Cralli collection

