

Rafael Osona Auctions, Nantucket, Massachusetts

# Americana, Fine Arts, and Marine Auction

by Jackie Sideli

Photos courtesy Rafael Osona Auctions

"It was very good," said a pleased Rafael Osona after his big sale on August 3 in Nantucket, Massachusetts. "The market is strong on Nantucket... We are the last to feel it—the effect of a weak economy—and the first to rebound."

A dining room set of two Queen Anne tiger maple tables and an assembled set of ten 18th-century American Windsor dining chairs was offered at the sale. According to an article that appeared in the *Cape Cod Times*, the set was used at the Hyannis Port home of President John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy. The tables were "kissing tables," which together made an extended size of 112" long and 47" wide, and their tiger maple top boards were all from the same tree. "Boy, if this table could talk," said Rafael Osona in an interview with the *Cape Cod Times*. The set was passed at the auction but sold afterward for \$70,000 to a customer who had been at the sale, according to Gail Osona.

An oil on canvas portrait of the U.S. corvette *Ranger* in full sail on the open sea was signed on the lower left by Tim Thompson (English, b. 1951). It measured a substantial 36" x 48". According to notes from the catalog, Thompson spent his childhood living on the tiny Channel Island of Herm, where he developed a strong love and respect for the sea. In 1982 he met Ted Turner at a regatta in Cowes, England.

## "The market is strong on Nantucket."

Turner subsequently commissioned him to paint ship portraits. After some serious, competitive bidding, this painting sold for \$55,575 (includes buyer's premium).

There were several iconic small oil paintings on wooden door panels by Wendell Macy (1845-1913). One of them was *Brant Point*, which was signed by Macy on the lower left, dated 1884, pencil signed on the reverse "Brant Point, Nantucket," and measured 10½" x 6". The simple and evocative painting of a sailboat, with a sunset, lighthouse, and two small buildings behind, sold for \$5265. Another Macy that sold was an oil on door panel called *South Shore Shipwreck*. It was signed and dated "'91" on the lower right and inscribed on the reverse, "To Uncle William from his loving niece, Helen Spring, Nantucket, Sept. 2, 1891." It, like most of the Macy paintings, was small, measuring just 7¼" x 8½". It brought \$4095.

"All the armorial went to London," said Rafael Osona. An armorial 5½" tall 18th-century mug, displaying the arms of the Marquis of Donegal, sold to a buyer in London bidding by phone for \$4095. Another armorial mug from the 18th century, with unidentified arms and measuring 5", brought \$3159 from a buyer on the phone from London. A pair of 9" diameter armorial dishes from the 18th century with the arms of Dugdale brought \$3276.

Early in the auction, a 19th-century 12¾" sailor's valentine with a heart on the left and "Forget Me Not" on the right sold to a buyer on the phone for \$4972.50.

Silver, which was offered early in the sale, was primarily Nantucket in origin. A Nantucket coin silver ladle by J. Easton 2nd (1807-1903), stamped "J. Easton 2nd pure Coin," was monogrammed on the handle "George and Sarah Alley." With a length of 12", it sold for \$2223.

Rafael Osona Auctions does not use the Internet for its sales, which seems to work favorably for its customers and consignors. The auction hall is usually packed full throughout, and there is plenty of phone activity. Much, if not most, of the material is related to Nantucket, and much of it stays there after the sale. For more information, check the Web site ([www.RafaelOsonaAuctions.com](http://www.RafaelOsonaAuctions.com)) or call (508) 228-3942.



Dealer Hilary Nolan of Falmouth, Massachusetts, is shown examining a circa 1780 Connecticut River valley chest-on-chest before the August 3 auction. Sideli photo.



President John F. Kennedy's dining set, which was used in Hyannis Port, included two tables and an assembled set of ten Windsor chairs. Initially the set was passed, but it sold after the sale for \$70,000. The tables and chairs had sold in February 2005 at the Sotheby's sale "Property from Kennedy Family Homes." At the 2005 sale, the tables brought \$22,800, and eight of the chairs brought \$20,400.



This vivid oil on masonite by Anne Ramsdell Congdon (1873-1958) of Nantucket was offered early in the Osona sale. It was signed and dated on the lower right, "Anne Congdon, 1940." A very similar picture is in the Nantucket Historical Association collection and is illustrated in *Picturing Nantucket* on page 90. Bidding opened at \$45,000 and escalated quickly to the selling price of \$87,750 to a customer at the sale. When asked, "Are you a collector?" he replied, "No, I am just a homeowner on Nantucket."



This carved ivory and ebony cat-head walking stick, dating from around 1870, had glass eyes, a walrus ivory and ebony shaft, and a bone ferrule. It measured 37½" long and sold for \$3217.50.

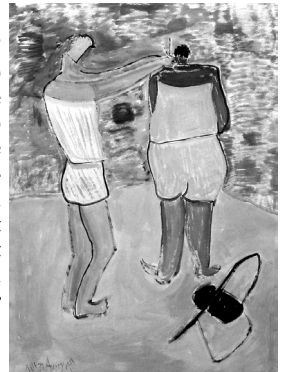


This beautiful whale ivory and bone "peace" walking stick dated from around 1860. The carved ivory bird-form grip was perched on the bone shaft with scrimshawed lines simulating sections. This elegant walking stick sold to the phone for \$2925.



This Mogul-style pale celadon jade baluster vase and cover, dating from the 18th-century Qing Dynasty, possibly came from the imperial workshop. The carving on this piece was "exceptionally thinly carved" and translucent. Measuring 10" tall, it sold for \$20,475.

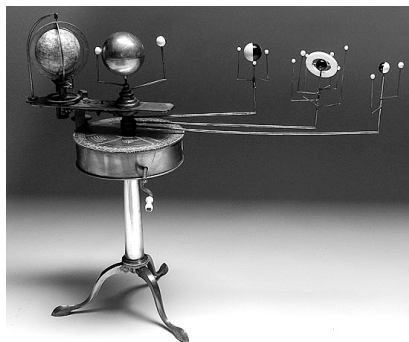
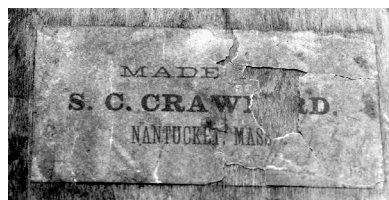
The same "homeowner" on Nantucket who bought the Anne Congdon painting also purchased an example by Milton Avery (1885-1965). It was signed on the lower left "Milton Avery 1963." It measured 30" x 22" and sold after the auction for \$45,000.



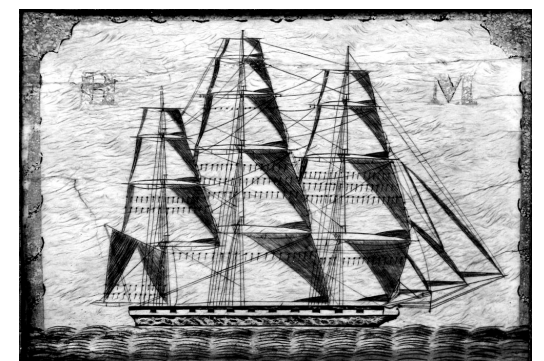
This pair of Nantucket portraits depicted Captain Robert Joy (1793-1862) and Sally Hussey Joy (1797-1882). Captain Joy was a well-known ship owner on Nantucket. For many years the paintings hung in the Folger Mansion on Center Street. The paintings, which were oil on board and measured 27" x 23", sold in one bid for \$29,250. They sold to descendants and are "staying on the island," said Osona happily.



Extremely rare and desirable, this Samuel Crawford (b. 1827) labeled baleen and cane woven Nantucket basket, 4" tall and 8¼" diameter, dated from 1850. It retained its paper label "Made by S. C. Crawford, Nantucket, Mass." It sold to a customer at the sale for \$12,051.



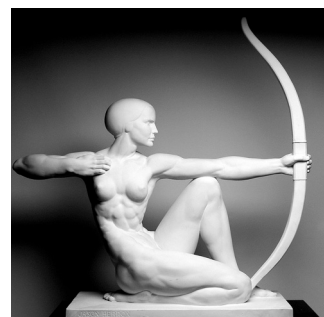
This scarce and beautiful 19th-century planetarium, engraved "G. Adams Mathematical Instrument Maker - To His Majesty, Fleet Strt. London," on an engraved mechanical brass tripod base and measuring 24" x 28", brought \$14,040.



This polychromed engraved portrait of a full-rigged ship, with sails set on a starboard tack, dated from 1830. It was made from a piece of sperm whale panbone with a later surface applied. Measuring 15 x 20.5 mm, it sold after the auction for \$48,000.



This rare Nantucket carved and painted flying merganser plaque by Aletha Macy (1901-1971) was done in the style of a carved plaque by James Walter Folger. It was inscribed on the reverse "Made by Aletha Macy, June 15, 1942." It opened with a \$5000 bid and sold for \$6435. "It stays on the island. I like that," said Rafael Osona happily.



According to catalog notes, after she studied in the U.S. and in Europe, Jason (Jessie) Emerson Herron (1900-1984) of California created this impressive plaster sculpture of a female archer. The sculpture, sitting on a contemporary marble base, measured 57½" x 58" x 16" and sold in one bid to dealer Stuart Feld from Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York City, for \$2925.



## - AUCTION -



The Captain Elihu Goodman Arms Connecticut River valley cherry chest-on-chest dated from around 1780. The 86" tall chest retained its original finish and had 19th-century replaced brasses. With a brief round of competitive bidding, this chest-on-chest was sold to a customer at the sale for \$28,080. Dealer Hilary Nolan was the underbidder.



These folksy Nantucket watercolor portraits, depicting Seth Starbuck, Ruth Swain Starbuck, and their daughter Hannah Starbuck, were framed in later tiger maple frames. They dated from around 1810 and sold to a buyer at the sale for \$8190.



This Nantucket Easton & Sanford (1830-38) coin silver creamer and sugar bowl were both monogrammed "E" and stamped "Easton & Sanford" upon the base. According to notes from the catalog, the firm of Easton & Sanford was established on Nantucket in 1830 and dissolved in 1838. The lot sold for \$819.



This pale celadon jade Shouxing group, 18th-/19th-century Qing Dynasty, had a stone with striated russet inclusion, finely carved with a sage seated facing forward in long robes and holding a gilt bronze vessel in his left hand. He is seated amongst a group of recumbent rams. Measuring 7" long, this jade sold for \$22,230.



From top: A 19th-century narwhal ivory tusk walking stick with a reeded carved mushroom screw top and a silver collar and metal ferrule, 37½" long, sold for \$6435 after action from three phones and from some on-site bidders; a circa 1840 carved whalebone and whale ivory walking stick with ivory knob grip and baleen and ivory spacers on a carved bone shaft with openwork columns and hatch and twist carvings, 37½" long, sold for \$5850; and a whale ivory and whalebone inlaid serpent walking stick, dating from 1830, with a double coiled ivory serpent with rosewood spacers, above an ivory section with hardwood spikes, 34½" long, sold for \$936, which seemed like a good deal.



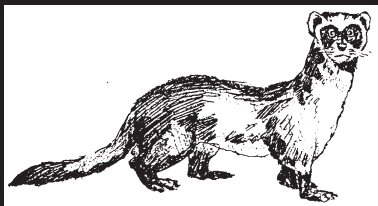
This 20th-century depiction of Miss Gladys Wood's Living Room, watercolor on paper, an interior scene of 139 Main Street, Nantucket, measuring 21" x 17", by Edgar W. Jenney, had been exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It sold for \$9945 to a customer at the sale.



This 12" x 18" painting by Charles Drew Cahoon (1861-1951) of Massachusetts, *A Good Day's Catch*, is signed on the lower right and sold for \$17,550.



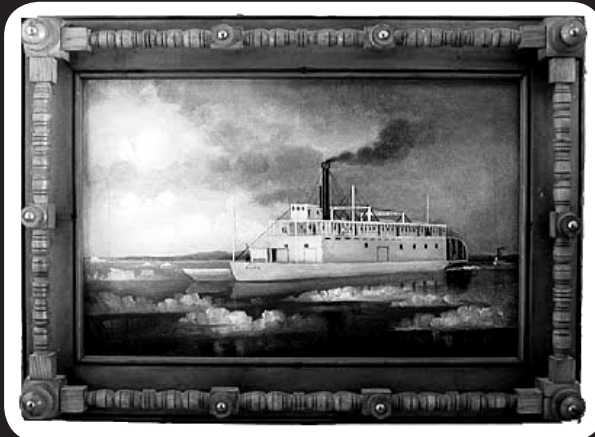
Mary Coffin's whale ivory and whalebone swift, dating from 1835, with red wax inlay "Mary W. Coffin 1855" and four red wax stars, sold quickly to a customer at the auction for \$8190.



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**This Oil on Canvas of the Sternwheeler Alice** is a wonderful Folk Art Painting that depicts the *Alice* on the Yukon, probably in the May/June time period when the ice was breaking up and the river was once again navigable. Being of shallow draft and being a sternwheeler, she was able to operate on the Yukon more efficiently than the sidewheelers. It was said that she could "turn on a dime and give 9 cents change!" This painting was obviously painted by a folk artist of some considerable talent, who, without a doubt, had first-hand experience of life on the river and the vessels that plied it. It depicts a part of our history that "movies are made of." It talks to all who will take the time to listen of a time when life was lived to the limits . . . a realization of the quest for the ultimate great adventure and GOLD! This painting has it all. While folksy, it is also extremely well done and has a very painterly quality about it. The frame is totally outrageous but complements the work beautifully. You can tell my thermostat is high on this wonderful painting. Dimensions are 12½" high x 18¼" long (sight) and 18¼" x 25½" overall. The turned spindle Folk Art Frame gives the painting a depth of 4". It is in excellent condition.

**19th C. Anniversary Tin Top Hat** to commemorate a couple's 10th Wedding Anniversary. In Victorian America, the Tin anniversary became an occasion of riotous celebration, and whimsical gifts made of tin were presented to the married couple. Often they were over-sized items or humorous pieces with personal meaning. In this case the Anniversary Tin Gift is a very special Tin Top Hat . . . Special because it has a wide copper band. It is 7 inches high without the stand, which is not included. It is in excellent condition with a great patina. Very well formed, demonstrating the art of the tinsmith.



### Early 18th-Century Dual Purpose Lighting Standard.

It was designed to use the homemade rushlights. Grease from cooking was used to soak splint rush stems, which were held in the iron jaw and lit, creating an inexpensive lighting source. Alternatively, a candle could be burned in the candle socket. Candles were quite expensive in those days, and not everyone could afford to burn them all the time. This is a well-made unusual design piece from a fine ironsmith. The design puts much weight at floor level, virtually eliminating the tipped-over fire hazard. The adjustable lighting holder is cleverly designed and well executed. The stand is in fine condition with good color and stands 36½ inches tall.



**Pair of Portrait Miniatures** of a handsome young couple with a Da Lee Family attribution. The portraits are in profile and very sensitively rendered. The work of the Da Lees are honest chronicles of the working people of western New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, and Ohio and often displayed their finest lace and fancy chairs. While both portraits are excellent representations of this handsome couple, the woman is particularly wonderful with the three-quarter length view, the applied hands and belt buckle and the image of her face filled with a quiet beauty. They are framed in a lemon gold rope twist frame with old wavy glass, 6 inches x 7 inches overall, and 3½ x 2-2/3 inches, sight.

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