

Chinese Export Painting Tops Osona's Summer Auction

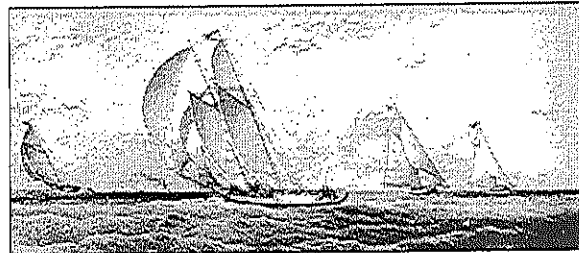
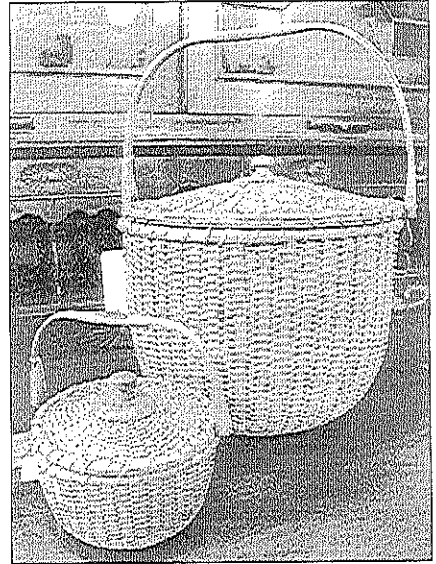


Auctioneer Rafael Osona with the top lot of the auction, a rare Chinese Export interior genre scene depicting a reclining mother and daughter in elaborate clothing, accompanied by a naked infant with genitalia showing. An unusual feature of the painting was a view of the Hong with a paddle wheeler and other vessels seen through a window. The rare painting sold for \$230,000.



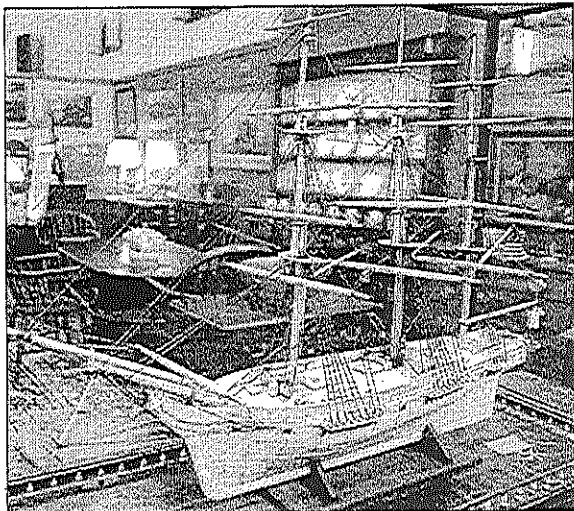
Auctioneer Rafael Osona chats with a client during preview.

"My efforts failed," said a bittersweet Osona, "they did not stay together." The star of the Nantucket baskets came as a pair of baskets by A.D. Williams brought \$43,700 for the smaller example, and \$20,700 for the larger of the pair.

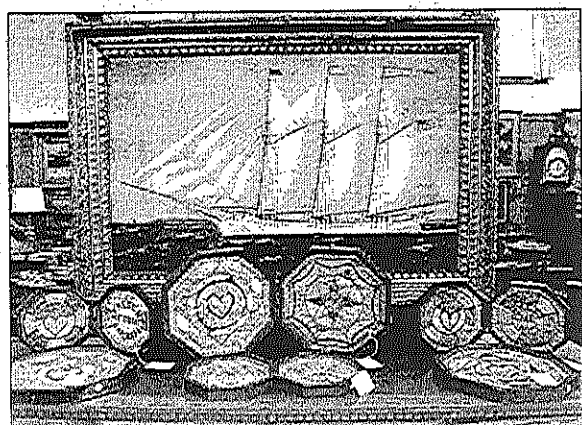


James Buttersworth's oil on panel titled "Yacht Race" sold at \$172,500.

Review and Photos by
Antiques and The Arts Weekly
David S. Smith, Associate Editor



A rare American whale ivory and whalebone model of a merchant ship sold for \$74,750.



The portrait of the *Eliza Pendelton* by William Pierce Stubbs sold for \$31,625. Sailor's valentines included the large hinged double cased example with heart and star motif, center, selling at \$10,925, while a single cased example, bottom right, sold for \$8,050.

Auction Action In Nantucket, Mass.

NANTUCKET, MASS. — A wonderful selection of Nantucket baskets and a select grouping of marine paintings once again highlighted the popular midsummer Americana auction conducted by Rafael Osona. With strong prices posted throughout the August 5 auction, the baskets were clearly the most coveted lots offered; the marine paintings, however, achieved the top prices.

The auctioneer reported an overflow crowd in the auction gallery and an unusually large number of absentee bids registered. As is becoming the norm, the Internet also had a huge impact on the auction with bidders worldwide participating. "We have had a huge amount of interest expressed for the Nantucket baskets, and from some strange places," stated Osona prior to the sale. "There has been a lot of interest expressed via the Internet from Austria. I have no idea why they suddenly have an interest," commented the auctioneer, "but they seem very serious."

While the electronic bidders fought long and hard for items, the crowd at Osona's is serious, primarily made up of retailers. "Almost everything went privately," commented the auctioneer, "that is generally what happens at these sales." When asked about the bidding, Osona commented that the auction was strong "from the beginning to the end. And we had some fireworks at the very end. The last lots of the auction were books and they sold at \$250, \$250, \$250, and then bang, one sold for over \$5,000. It was just electric from start to finish."

The auction featured a diverse selection of materials, heavy on nautical and local themed items, but also offering pieces such as a rare Tiffany double student's lamp, Continental and English furniture, Americana and a general line of paintings.

The sale got off to a quick start with a Lincoln Ceely oil on canvas depicting the "Old Mill, Nantucket" that sold in the gallery for \$2,875, a pair of Regency mahogany inlaid games tables followed shortly after, bringing \$10,350.

It was not long before the first of the marine paintings was offered with a "Portrait of the

Passenger Liner *Augusta*" by Antonio Jacobsen hammering down at \$13,800.

Other ship's portraits included a large oil on canvas by James Gardiner Babbidge titled "Portrait of the Schooner *Lottie Ames*, Captain Robert G. Wooster off Gay Head" that sold for \$16,100, while the portrait of the *Eliza Pendelton* by William Pierce Stubbs sold for \$31,625.

The top lot of the auction came as a rare Chinese Export interior genre scene was offered. The rare painting depicted a reclining mother and daughter in elaborate clothing, accompanied by a naked infant with genitalia showing. Another unusual feature of the painting was a view of the Hong with a paddle wheeler and other vessels seen through a window. The rare painting, thought to have been commissioned by a Western client, created quite a stir as it crossed the auction block with bids coming fast and furious from both the gallery and the telephones. Bidding came from several in the room with Pennsylvania dealer Diana Bittel underbidding the lot as it sold for \$230,000.

Another painting in the sale to attract quite a bit of attention was a James Buttersworth oil on panel that depicted several yachts in choppy seas. Titled "Yacht Race," the painting captured the attention of the art world with it selling for \$172,500.

Other paintings in the auction included a picture of the *Provincetown* fishing boat at sea by Jack Gray, titled "Off Provincetown," which sold after an active bout of bidding for \$92,000. An Alfred Thompson Bricher oil on board and titled "Rocky Coastline" also did well, selling at \$19,550. A pair of pastel portraits attributed to Micah Williams reportedly depicted Samuel and Lucy Harris Hoburn of New London, Conn., circa 1825. The rare pair were well received, selling at \$23,000.

Woolies that had been made by sailors attracted a great deal of attention with a Nineteenth Century example depicting the HMS *Clio* under a full moon sky selling at \$10,925. A British example depicting a clipper ship and two smaller vessels was knocked down at \$5,750, and a

French woolie depicting the *Philippe and Rosalie* with trapunto sails realized \$8,050.

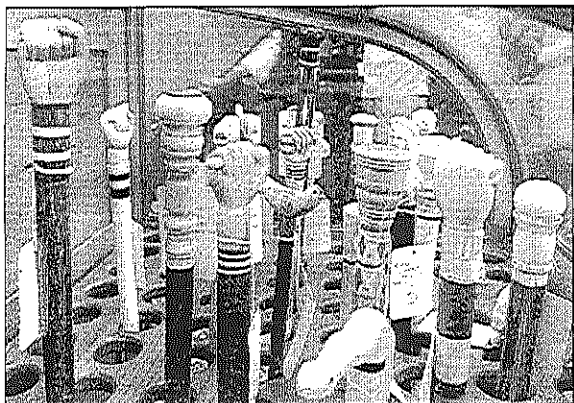
Nantucket baskets always attract a great deal of attention at Osona's, including a record price paid at auction established during last year's sale. The record price paid for the basket with a rare heart-shaped lollipop rim brought out a similar example that was consigned to this most recent auction. The rare low open basket with circular-shaped lollipop rim caught the attention of numerous collectors, yet, in the end it failed to meet reserves. Osona reported negotiations underway after the auction and a sale was expected.

The star of the Nantucket baskets came as a pair of baskets by A.D. Williams were offered. "Funny story regarding these baskets," said Osona in regard to a large and small covered examples. "I got a call from a gentleman who wanted to sell a small lidded Nantucket basket and once it arrived here, I recognized it right away. I just happened to know where the mate to it was so I called the lady and asked her if she wanted to sell it. She told me that she didn't own a lidded Nantucket basket and I reminded her that it was in the upstairs bedroom. She put the phone down and went upstairs and found it," he said.

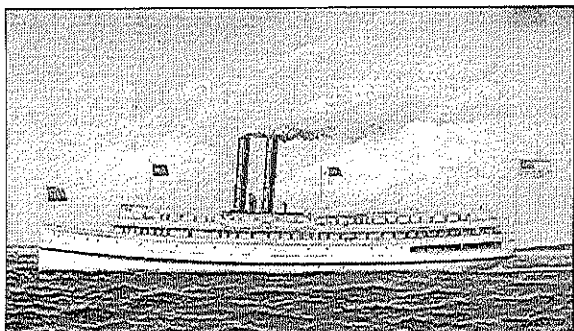
"I asked her to get her book on Nantucket baskets out and I told her that she could see the two together, the small basket that I had and the large one that she had. She agreed that they should be brought back together and consigned it to be sold along side of its mate," stated the auctioneer.

Retaining the original paper label on the base that read "Lightship basket made by A.D. Williams, 120 Orange St., Nantucket Mass., Nov. 17, 1918," the basket measured 5½ inches tall and was nearly as wide. With a dark wooden knob in the center of the lid, the contrast between the original finish on the reeds and the knob was particularly pleasing. The basket, along with its mate, had been illustrated in Katherine and Edgar Seeler's book, *Nantucket Lightship Baskets*. Bidding on the lot was brisk with it selling at \$43,700.

The mate, measuring 10 inches high and 11 inches in diam-



Canes were plentiful with prices ranging from \$920 to \$7,475.



The "Portrait of the Passenger Liner *Augusta*" by Antonio Jacobson did well, hammering down at \$13,800.

eter, also illustrated in the book, did not attract the same level of attention, nor the attract the same buyer as it sold for \$20,700.

"My efforts failed," said a bittersweet Osona, "they did not stay together, but I am pleased that the two of them sold for over \$60,000."

A rare nest of three oval baskets made by Isaac Hamblin did well. Retaining a label that read, "Made on Board South Shoal Lightship by Isaac Hamblin," the baskets attracted significant interest. Hamblin lived at 4 New Street and was appointed assistant keeper of Nantucket New Shoal (lightship) on November 25, 1881. Bidding on the lot of three baskets was brisk with it selling for \$40,250.

Other baskets included a diminutive oval swing handle example made by Captain A.J. Sandsbury that was hammered down at \$6,325, while a William Appleton sewing basket with delicate heart handles realized \$5,750.

Jose Formoso Reyes cocktail purses did well with a ebony topped ivory example with two carved ivory seagulls selling at \$7,475, while a pair of "sister" purses with a relief carved ivory top with seagull decoration brought \$20,700.

A rare American whale ivory and whalebone model of a ship attracted a great deal of attention. Pictured in Flayderman's book and incorrectly cataloged as a prisoner of war example made of bones, it was discovered by Osona that the piece was in fact made of whalebone. "This is a major find for anyone collecting scrimshaw," commented Osona. "It is a well executed example with a fine whale ivory figurehead, planked deck and inlaid gun ports." Osona commented that the example was particularly important because "not only was it sailor made, but it was whaler made." The rare model of the merchant ship, circa 1840-1860, was actively bid with it selling for \$74,750.

Scrimshaw included a circa 1850 whale tooth with "bank note" engraving and that was decorated with a formally

dressed whaling captain and companion on one side with the reverse engraved with a depiction of his mansion and his ship. The lot was subjected to vigorous bidding with it eventually selling for \$28,750.

Other pieces of Scrimshaw included a whale ivory and whalebone captain's walking stick, circa 1850, with a paneled and reeded reverse bell knob as well as mother-of-pearl and silver diamond inlays that sold for \$10,925. A whale ivory and whalebone swift supported by an elaborately carved hand-form table clamp was also sold at \$5,750.

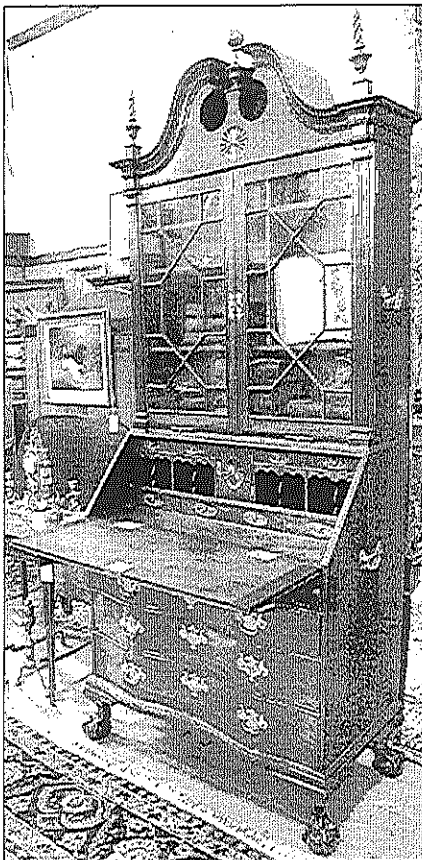
Numerous sailor's valentines were offered in the auction with a large hinged double cased example with heart and star motif selling at \$10,925, while a single cased example with heart and flower decoration brought \$8,050.

The top lot of the furniture came as a Chippendale slant front secretary desk was offered. "We had a gentleman come out here and buy a house on Main Street that he promptly filled with a good selection of antiques," explained the auctioneer. "He had bought this secretary desk from Ron Bourgeault a couple years back and also bought the Connecticut secretary desk. He soon discovered that Main Street was much too noisy for his likes, so he sold the house and gave us the contents." A nice circa 1770 example with well defined ball and claw feet, shell carved lid and bonnet-top, the case piece sold for \$40,250.

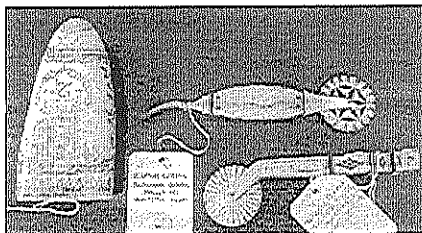
Folk art in the sale included a pine trade sign figure of a ship captain holding sextant that sold for \$34,500.

An unusual jeweler-made maritime theme desk clock, circa 1890, by W.H. Farnham, was made of silver plate, vermeil and bronze. Fashioned on upright base with an anchor, pulleys, masted sail and braided line, the unusual clock sold for \$17,750.

Prices include the buyer's premium charged. For further information contact Rafael Osona, 508-223-3942, www.nantucketauctions.com



The top lot of the furniture came as a Chippendale slant front secretary desk was offered. Fresh from a local home, it sold for \$40,250.



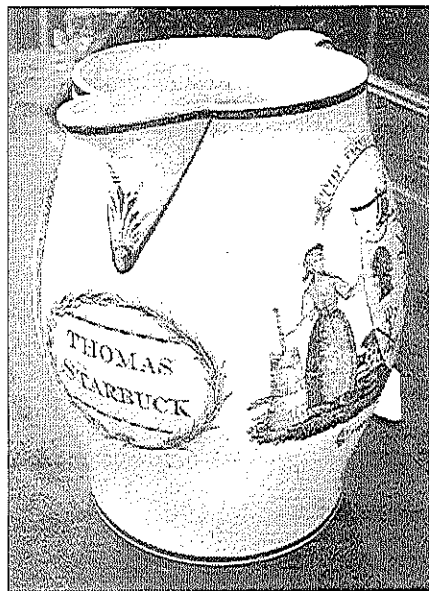
Scrimshaw included a circa 1850 whale tooth with "bank note" engraving and that was decorated with a formally dressed whaling captain and companion on one side with the reverse engraved with a depiction of his mansion and his ship. The lot was subjected to vigorous bidding with it eventually selling for \$28,750. The two jagger wheels sold for \$2,905, top, and \$2,875.



The telephones were active throughout the auction.



The rare Tiffany double student's lamp with a pair of pleasing green and yellow wavy glass acorn shades, stamped Tiffany Studios, New York, sold for \$14,950.



The rare Liverpool pitcher with Thomas Starbuck, a scenic farm scene and "The Farmer's Arms" transfer did well, selling at \$11,500. Starbuck, a native on Nantucket, was born in 1742 and died in 1830.



The pine trade sign figure of a ship captain holding sextant was in a pleasing weathered surface with traces of an old white wash. It was actively bid selling for \$34,500. The late Eighteenth Century open barrel-back cupboard in old blue paint, thought to be Continental, attracted interest with it selling for \$6,325.