

Rafael E. Osona, Nantucket, Massachusetts

Unusual Nantucket Basket Brings \$115,000

by Jackie Sideli
Photos courtesy Rafael Osona

Rafael Osona had a great sale at the American Legion Hall on Nantucket, Massachusetts, on August 6. Osona had assembled an impressive collection of whalebone items, Nantucket paintings and baskets, and quality American folk art.

The top lot was a stunning and unusual Nantucket lightship basket dating from the last quarter of the 19th century. The open basket was small, just 4" x 9 1/8", and had no handles. Each stave had a heart on the end that protruded through the hoops, so the rim of the basket was lined with hearts. It was a wild round of competitive bidding that pushed the price to \$115,000 (includes buyer's premium).

An 18th-century Philadelphia comb-back armchair in what appeared to be original surface with carved volutes on the comb and a beautifully formed "D" seat sold to a customer on the phone for \$34,500. The chair had come from the Bernice and Howard Friedman and Barbara and Barton Stevens collection of American folk art. Also from the same collection came a circa 1880 copper gamecock weathervane retaining lots of original paint that sold for \$4312.50.

Two bentwood oval utility boxes, both mid-19th century and in folky paint, were also offered from the Friedman and Stevens collection. The first, with old green as a base coat, had rose vine decoration. The second in old red paint had punchy yellow and black dots with black pinwheels all over. The boxes sold for \$3450 each. A wonderfully folky pastel portrait of a child in a white dress with a little red necklace and holding a rattle, dating

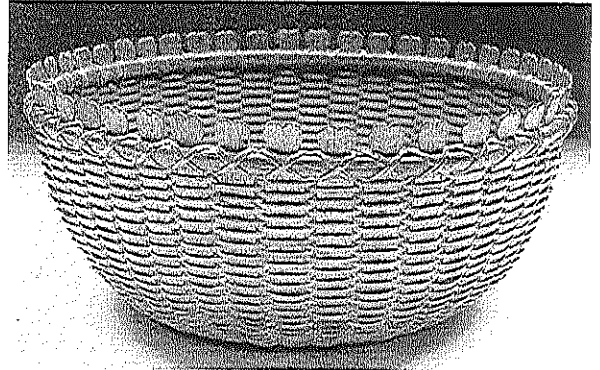
from around 1850, brought \$31,625.

There was plenty of material from Nantucket. An unusual free-form Nantucket basket, 1860-80, with flaring sides and carved wooden ears opened with a healthy \$2000 bid and sold quickly for \$8050. A pair of 1891 Wendell Macy (1845-1913) paintings on raised panels opened at \$7000 and sold for \$24,150. A George Herbert McCord (1848-1909) painting of *Old Wharf, Nantucket*, now known as Commercial Wharf, sold to a private collector at the sale for \$29,900. A view of the town of Nantucket by Anne Congdon (1873-1958), an oil on masonite signed on the lower right and dated 1938, sold for \$16,100.

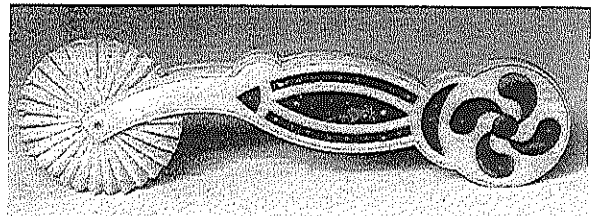
Among the folk art offered was a 48" high American flat sheet iron weathervane of an Indian with a bow and raised tomahawk from the Friedman and Stevens collection. It had been in the Richard Flanders Smith collection in Pennsylvania. After Smith owned the vane, it went to collectors Thomas and Nancy Tafuri of New York. It opened at \$5000 and sold for a reasonable \$10,350. A great folky oil on canvas portrait of a boy in red coat and white pants holding a black and brown dog on a leash, from the same collection, was very appealing and brought \$12,650.

A terrific prisoner-of-war bone model of an American frigate, dating from 1800, with 60 guns, a wooden deck, and a carved eagle figurehead, mounted on a bone and baleen base, sold for \$18,975.

For more information, call (508) 228-3942 or check the Web site (www.NantucketAuctions.com).



The Nantucket lightship basket from the last quarter of the 19th century was a perfect ten; it was drop-dead beautiful. The staves, with a heart at the top of each, protruded through the hoops at the rim of the basket. It was 9 1/8" in diameter and 4" high. The bidding didn't stop until it sold for \$115,000 to a collector in the room.



This was a day for sailor-made things. The whale ivory pie crimper dated from around 1850, was inlaid with tortoise, and had silver pins on both sides. It was exactly what collectors want, and it was no surprise that it went at a solid \$20,700.



The circa 1760 American Windsor armchair, from the Friedman and Stevens collection, had its original old brown surface. In impeccable condition with very strong turnings and an exceptionally tall comb with ears, the chair sold to a dealer, bidding by phone, for \$34,500. Sideli photo.



Osona had assembled some impressive pieces of American folk art for his August sale. This large and folky pastel portrait from the Friedman and Stevens collection dated from the first quarter of the 19th century and was backed with an 1824 Rhode Island newspaper. Measuring 25 3/4" x 20", it sold for a solid \$40,250.



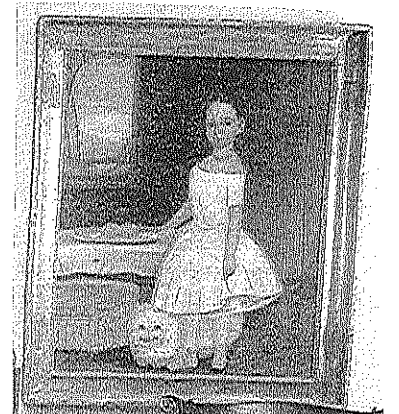
A delighted private collector won this as-found George Herbert McCord (1848-1909) oil on canvas view of Nantucket's Commercial Wharf as it appeared in the 19th century. Signed on the lower right G.H. McCord, it opened for bidding at \$18,000 and quickly sold to a private collector for \$29,900.



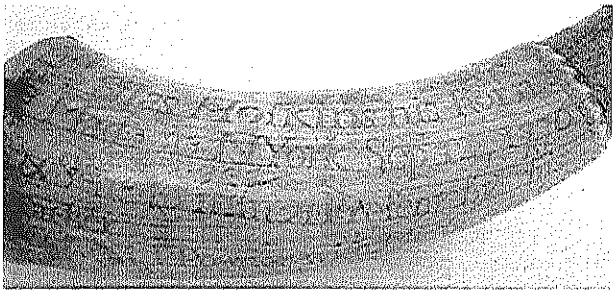
The rare free-form Nantucket lightship basket with carved wooden ears, 1860-80, opened at a solid \$2000 and sold for \$8050.



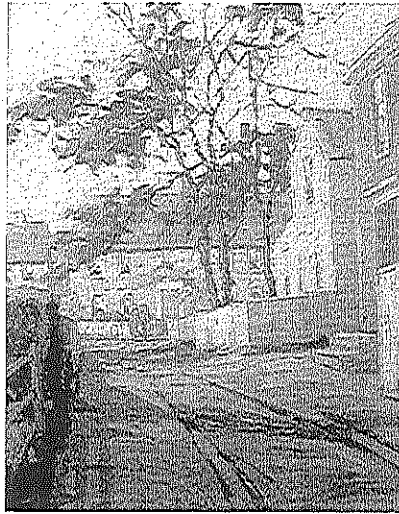
The oil on canvas by Emile A. Gruppe (1896-1978), 25" x 30", was vivid and dramatic and sold for \$18,400.



This oil on canvas portrait from the Friedman and Stevens collection, circa 1835, of a Creole child with a dog and a platter of fruit, 41 3/4" x 36", was very folky and unusual. It sold to a buyer at the sale for \$40,250.



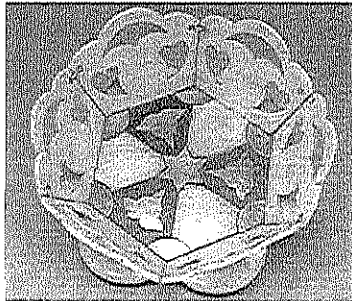
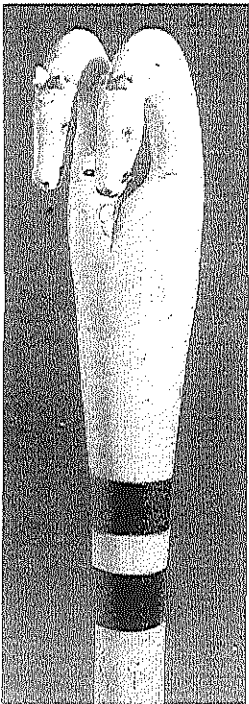
The engraved powder horn was from the Bernice and Howard Friedman and Barbara and Barton Stevens collection of American folk art. Its inscription reads, "Silas Hoskins, his horn, made in New York, September 12, 1776 and sent to him a present by his father. I powder with my brother ball all hero like to conquer all success to America." With the hard-to-beat provenance of Guthman Americana, Westport, Connecticut, it sold to a determined buyer on the floor for \$13,800.



The Nantucket painting of Plumb Lane by Anne Ramsdell Congdon (1873-1958) was signed and dated 1936. It opened at \$20,000 and in just a few bids sold to a left bid for \$32,200.

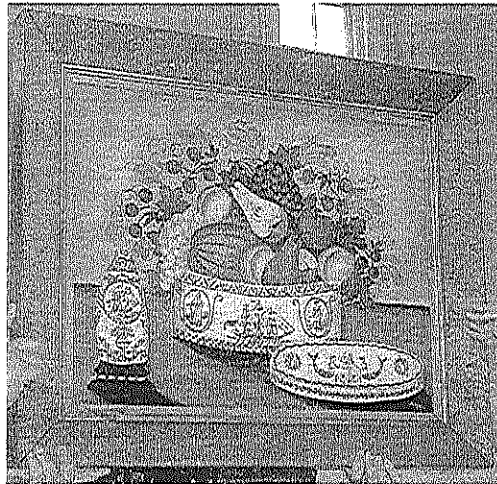


This Nantucket view by Anne Congdon, an oil on masonite, sold for \$16,100.

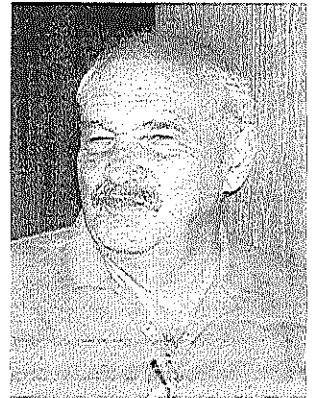


The delicate little basket was sailor-made of whale ivory, ebony, and silver with heart cutouts. It opened at \$10,000 and sold to a phone bidder for \$13,800.

Every phone was in play and many hands were in the air to try to buy this rare circa 1850 sailor-made walking stick with two sea horse heads. It opened at \$8000 and sold for \$23,000 to the phone.



The punchy and folksy still life by Ralph Cahoon (1910-1982), an oil on masonite signed on the lower right, was just fabulous. The fruit was depicted in a scrimshaw ditty box. The air was just electric when this beautiful painting was put up for sale. After intense bidding, Nantucket and Woodbury, Connecticut, dealer Wayne Pratt won it for an impressive \$74,750. Sideli photo.



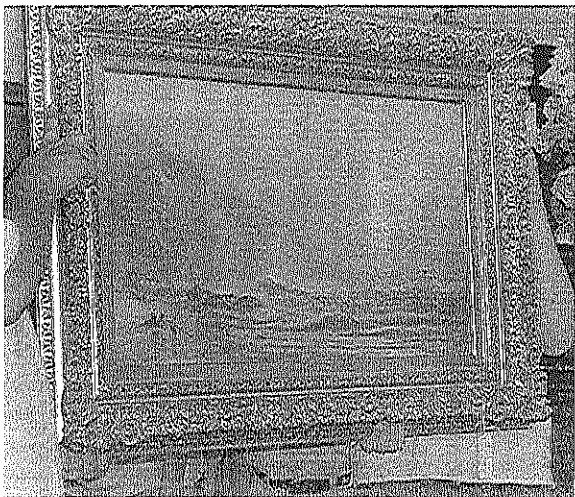
Dealer Wayne Pratt was present for the sale. Sideli photo.



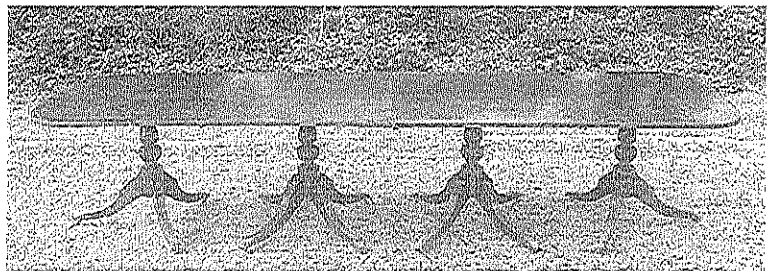
This was a great example of an engraved whale's tooth. It was engraved with the starboard view of an American whaling ship and two boats doing battle with a whale. Dating from around 1830, it quickly sold for \$20,700.



An energetic Rafael Osona. Sideli photo.



This luminous painting, a view of Grand Manan by Charles Henry Gifford (1839-1904), was signed and dated 1901. The ornate carved gilt frame was original and still retained the paper label from Hutchinson's Picture Department, New Bedford, Massachusetts. It sold to the phone for a solid \$27,600. Sideli photo.



An English Regency four-pedestal mahogany dining table with a burl banded reeded edge, dating from the early 19th century, with vase-turned pedestals and cast bronze casters, 160 1/2" x 47 3/4", sold to a retail couple at the sale for their home for \$27,600.

