

Asheville, N.C., Salt Lake City, Utah,
Winchester, Va., Keene & the Norman
Heckler Weekend, Greensville, N.C.

Running the Roads with Ralph

by Ralph Van Brocklin

Well, I may not be able to live up to the "Old Traveler"'s forays into Europe, but I've certainly been trying to keep up with him here in the States! I thought that I would provide a little glimpse of what goes on at shows around this country with some wheeling and dealing news, show photos and collections which were viewed along the way.....

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA August 15-16, 2003

After a little hiatus from the National Show in Louisville, I took in Reno, reports of both shows appearing in the October issue of *Bottles and Extras*. I really had no plans to attend any other shows prior to flying to Salt Lake City in September, but a call from one of my friends, Rodney Leftwich intrigued me to the point that I just had to make a trip into the Asheville area. And, if I was going to be in the area anyway..... how could I resist not attending the show???

Rodney is an advanced collector of Casper and Company whiskey bottles, jugs and advertising. Over the years he put together a collection unrivaled by the many others of us who take a fancy to the items from this concern. So, when I heard that he was considering selling his collection I decided to make a run over to Asheville and then on to his home in the nearby town of Horse Shoe, North Carolina.

I missed the Friday set-up for the Asheville show and when I got there on Saturday it had all the markings of a show where the comment "boys, this show's been **picked!**" applies. I did not hold out much hope for purchasing anything, but sitting right there on Reggie Lynch's table

for all the Tennessee dealers to buy was a rare Spencer Medicine Company variant of the Bakers Vegetable Blood and Liver Cure from Greeneville, Tennessee! It seems that none of my buddies noted that it was not the more common Lookout Mountain and all the "will you take \$50.00 less" pleas had fallen upon deaf ears. So, I went on my way the proud owner of a beautiful light yellow amber cure that nicely compliments my embossed/labeled Spencer Medicine Company and my dark amber Lookout Mountain examples. And, Reggie went home happy as he flip-flopped the money into assisting the purchase of a choice strap-sided flask embossed F.A. THOMAS / LEADING BAR / OF / MARION, N.C. which had been hiding under Tom Collier's table!

The Asheville show has always been a hospitable one—Larry Glenn and his wife have hosted this show since its inception and they see to it that their dealers are comfortable and happy with their table arrangements. This show was a little different than the last of their shows I attended in the late 1990's, with the show jointly shared by members of the regional license plate collectors club. I did not peruse the offerings on the tables, but when they started an auction of several hundred license plates, I could not resist listening in. Quite an education—I would not have figured that there would be a market for the newer plates, but there obviously was. Specialty plates and plates with animals commanded well.

Total number of tables was approximately 80 and if you are a collector of sodas or North Carolina items it is certainly a show well worth attending.

From the show I made a short jaunt over to Rodney's home and pottery. His

property is a lovely one, mountainous and wooded, and a great location for creating and potting. My wife attends a lot of the local pottery and art shows and was well familiar with Rodney's work, but I had never had the opportunity to see his endeavors. So, I enjoyed the opportunity to see his workplace, kilns and the resultant beautiful glazes and custom pottery he creates. Too, I got to see the reason for his decision to part with his Caspers collection—a choice early model T-Bird!

The collection was remarkable, with approximately a dozen jugs and thirty bottles. Advertising included corkscrews, shot glasses, matches, pamphlets, advertisements and a 1904 calendar featuring nudes, peacocks and examples of the Caspers bottles. Among the jugs was an extremely rare half gallon cone-topped example stenciled FROM THE CASPER CO. / WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. / LOWEST PRICE WHISKEY HOUSE / WRITE FOR CONFIDENTIAL LIST and rare large sized (3 and 5 gallon) jugs of the 4-cities variety. A number of labeled bottles were featured, some with rather plain black on white and others multicolored and featuring the Zulieka reclining nude, apples, peaches and corn. Sample bottles included an embossed Checkers Medicine Company (a Casper concern) and labeled examples including a Zulieka. Several backbars, in a variety of forms, were included, as was a glass billy club that sported a label with a little boy peeing "Merry Christmas" in the snow. The collection was rounded out with the grouping of the bottles for which Casper is best known in the bottle collecting world—the clear and cobalt 4-Cities and the clear and cobalt Honest North Carolina People fifths. The clear



Honest North Carolina People cylinder was the bottle that really stood out, containing original contents, featuring original seal and still bearing the original label with still being fed by a black gentleman and a white gent sampling the goods.

I did not end up purchasing the collection, but I spent a wonderful afternoon enjoying a collection that had taken years to assemble and the hospitality of Rodney and his wife. Good coffee, great company, bluegrass music and a fine collection— hard to improve on that!

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH September 13, 2003

This is the second year running that I have made the jaunt out to Salt Lake. The show is a small one, comprising less than 40 tables, but it has at times had some wonderful Western glass offered and it is a nice show to get an idea of what Utah offers in the way of bottles and stoneware. Among the items of note was a Sunnyside, Utah, gallon jug. A variety of Utah hutch sodas and Territorial sodas were offered by several dealers. David Emmett had his usual three or four tables laden with goodies, including Utah whiskeys from several enterprises. (I did not land my California Wine Depot Salt Lake City flask, I am sad to say!)

The show featured several displays, including a grouping of early, applied top J. Moore E. Chielovich and Company fifths presented by Reid and Glenn Groberg and a fine array of “Wyoming dug” bottles presented by Warren Borton. Each display had enough great bottles to make any whiskey collector drool!

As at any show, the opportunity to visit with friends makes the trip worthwhile. Caught up with Shauna Murie and David Bone and found out that they had just been down to Jack Tapp’s to pick up his collection. Talk about a great grouping of IXL bitters, flasks and fifths— I have to admit tremendous envy and really look forward to seeing the bottles at David’s



Glenn & Reid Groberg showing Ivan Okeson the choice large design Miller’s Extra flask.

some trip in the future (next year?) Discovered that much of the Lynn Carty collection of Utah stoneware went to a collector in Wyoming but that Steve Burgess had managed to land several of the ones he wanted before the final deal was cut. The Payson, Utah, mini-jug— well, that ended up in the hands of Jerry McKinley of Shelbyville, Kentucky.

In addition to the nice display of fifths, Reid and Glenn Groberg could not resist displaying to me the lightest, greenest and most whittled large design Millers flask I have seen! I own 9 of the rascals, but none that compare to theirs. All I got was laughs when I asked what it would take to fly the bottle back to Tennessee with me!

Enjoyable as the show has been to me each of the two years I have attended, the real reason for the trip was to spend time with my friend Stan Sanders and newlywed friends Ivan and Katherine Okeson. Ivan and I had a nice time discussing his thoughts of getting married when I stayed with him in 2002 and I was sure happy for him that when I stayed with him this year it was with him **and** his new bride!

Did a little digging while in the city, as a pit had been opened up downtown. Visions of an intact California Wine Depot kept running through my mind as we were in the proper area of town and the right age of trash, but nothing any better than a “slickie” black turned up. Digging has been a little more productive since I left, from what I hear... ah, well, it was fun!

Stan Sanders and his wife graciously hosted me and my camera for the better part of two days. I was smart enough to enjoy the hospitality extended for a longer period, this year, having had no clue that



Stan Sanders (seated) with Dave Emmett.

I could not come close to seeing the entire collection in the Stan Sanders Bottle Museum in the half day I visited last year. I consider myself a lucky fellow to be included among their friends— the collection is incredible to behold, but the visiting is the reason to make the trip! And, when it was time to make the return trip to Tennessee, I was given a send-off of my favorite meal—roast leg of lamb! Wow!!!

WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA September 21, 2003

After flying back from Salt Lake City, I had the urge to take in a Southern show and see what I might add to that portion of my collection. My digging buddy, Charlie Barnette, indicated that he’d be interested in trying Winchester, a show neither he nor I had set up at in a number of years. So, last minute plans were made to head the three hundred miles north and see what it had to offer.

The show had been moved to a completely different venue since I had last been there in the mid-1990’s and I found the change to be a positive one. The show was held in a banquet room at the Hampton Inn and it was a warm and well-lit facility. The 6:00 am Sunday set-up was to my liking, eliminating the extra day that so many shows entail and allowing me to make the show without having to schedule out of work on Friday afternoon.

The Show Chair, Ginny Bowers, was learning the ropes as she went, but she really did a nice job of running the show for the dealers who took a total of 45 tables and the 35 early admission /197 general admission collectors who came through



Display at the Stan Sanders Museum.

the doors. Hurricane Isabel kept many of the Coastal Virginia dealers and buyers away, and I know that that was a disappointment to her, but those of us who made it to the show were certainly pleased with her efforts!

Attendees included collectors from the states of West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida. They were treated to a nice variety of local bottle and jugs and collectors interested in jars should have been especially happy at this show. A lot of rare jars, including a large number of wax sealers were available for purchase.

The Hampton Inn has already been reserved for the Apple Valley Bottle Collector's next show, to be held on Sunday, September 19, 2004.

**KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
The Norman Heckler Weekend
October 11 -12, 2003**

For several years Norman Heckler has been kind enough to invite me up to see his collection and to attend the auction/ tailgate dealing at his place held the day prior to the Keene Show. Always I have had other obligations that kept me from going and those obligations were no less imposing this year. But..... it really was time for me to check out what many in the hobby consider the best weekend in the bottle-collecting hobby! So, a flight into Manchester a couple of days prior and a most enjoyable weekend to follow!

Everything kind of works together for this show and auction combination. The color change of the leaves is at its peak in New England in mid-October and, if the weather cooperates, it is vivid and an inspiring spectacle! Unlike last year, when the weather was absolutely wicked, this year brought warm and sunny skies to the Heckler estate and the weekend was off to a start that would make one want to return again and again and again!!!

I was happy that I flew in a day early, allowing me to stop in at Norms before the crowds arrived. Friday was a quiet day, with most who were in visiting also

assisting with making arrangements for the festivities the following day and/or previewing the items to be offered in the mid-November absentee auction. Norm gave me a tour of the home, his office and the grounds and — most importantly — showed me the outstanding glass and pottery that comprise his collection. Freeblown creamers and pitchers, early New England glass, pattern molded Midwestern glass, impressive flasks and stoneware Colors that would knock your eyes out! Crudity and rarity without equal! What a totally unbelievable treat to behold this collection!!!

Norm and Norm, Jr., have a group of friends who assist in the auction and the tailgating in the pastures above the home. John Pastor and Liz Maxbauer, Jeff Burkhardt and Jeanine Kral, Leo Goodreau, Rick Ciralli, Jeff and Holly Noordsy and Jim and Jodi Hall were all there helping to make a great time of it. It was nice to finally get the opportunity to spend a little time chatting with Jeff, Holly and Rick, folks whom I had met but never really had the opportunity to visit with. In particular, it was great to have Rick's input on the New England glass, a subject of which I knew next to nothing. Norm's collection took on a whole different look with a little tutelage from him.

Fridays set-up led to a great time on Saturday! The fields were lined with dealers who offered a variety of items ranging from 'just cleaned out of a barn' to high-end, top-notch colored glass. This is an event that certainly offered a little something for everyone! Buyers from across the country were in attendance, including a number of my Western and Southern friends. Bob Ferraro was there hoping to duplicate his success in adding more of the type of barrels he had acquired the previous year. George Mross, who is known for the quality glass he puts on his table at the Western shows was there as both a buyer and a dealer. Ran into Billy Kiebalala whom I had not seen since the last party I made on his houseboat in Sausalito—had no idea about his New

England roots and love for the glass of that region. Bill Ham, Jim Scharnagel, Jim and Jack Hewitt.... It was home-away-from-home!

Following two hours of wheeling, dealing, sipping coffee and visiting it was time for the auction in the barn! Norm had assembled 78 lots comprising items in all categories and over two hundred folks crowded about to try to add some items to their shelves or sales stock. It is a large barn, but be forewarned— if you go, get there early enough to look things over before the auction starts, as you won't get much opportunity to see once the calling begins! A number of historical flasks hit the auction block, as well as New England chestnuts and inks. A Diamond Dyes advertising cabinet went at a very reasonable \$275.00 and an Abrosial BM & EAW & C applied seal flattened and handled whiskey went at a steal for \$100.00. In addition to the individual bottles offered, several nice lots of hair bottles and jars were offered, with my friend Larry Munson of Montana giving no quarter on the jars. I did not buy anything, in large part due to the difficulty shipping anything in a plane these days, but it was fun watching all the happy winners. An event to remember in a day and age where live auctions of bottles are now so infrequent! I hope to make the Norman Heckler Show many times in the upcoming years!

Norm's office was open to the



Creighton Hall, Show Chair in Keene.



Some of the crowd at Keene.



Young collector obtaining funding from his dad for his purchase.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

collecting public throughout the two days I was there and many took advantage of the opportunity to personally preview the items he was to offer in the November catalogued sale. One of the discoveries made at the viewing is why Ed and Kathy Gray never seem to have a problem with undiscovered flaws—meticulous to the tee, there was Ed “louping” every bottle and Kathy noting the results. When I note the number of flaws I suddenly discover after an item has been on my shelf for ten years I think a lesson should be learned!

I had a secret reason for wanting to view the items in this sale—someone I know had picked up a beautiful bright amethyst GIV-1 Masonic flask off of an “instant buy” on EBay and I just had to see what that flask looked like! And.... What a gorgeous bottle!!! Crisp, flawless and just a super color—unbelievable!

Keene was a treat, as well. I spent Saturday evening at a bed and breakfast place named Pillars and Porches which had just opened in Walpole, a few minutes north. The proprietors had spent a couple of years getting the home completely remodeled and their alpaca farm up and running. Interesting combination, but it seemed to work pretty well and they were certainly hospitable. I was up and out before I could take advantage of my breakfast in order to be in line for early admission Sunday morning at 7:00. Early arrival put me at the head of a very long line when the doors opened and gave me the opportunity to get some perusing done before the lines really got long.

I have to admit that I was not at all prepared for the quantity of good glass that I saw in the show. It seemed that every table had items that you just never see at Southern shows and seldom see in the West. I came to an understanding regarding why the Northeastern collectors do not really understand why those of us

Photos:

1. Norman Heckler's private office, Woodstock Valley, Conn.
2. Recording bids, Leo Goodreau, Norm Heckler, Jr. and John Pastor.
3. John Pastor and Rick Ciralli in the Heckler barn.
4. Line of Heckler auction items.
5. Norman Heckler obviously enjoying his live auction at Woodstock Valley.
6. Collectors admire GIV-1 flask.
7. Viewing in the Heckler office, catalog sale for November, 2003.
8. Viewing the Heckler field of offerings.
9. Ed Gray (left) and Leo Goodreau enjoy the weather in Woodstock Valley.
10. Demi-johns lot at Heckler Auctions.

from newer areas put such stock in our clear flasks and amber cylinders. Color and crudity, color and crudity and rarity, color and crudity and rarity and age..... remarkable! I am pleased that I finally made the trip and got to experience this show. And, with folks like Jack Pelletier taking some time to show me some of the things to look for in the early New England glass..... this was a weekend to hold in fond memory! I hope that all our members and readers make it there at least once!

(I have several photos from John Pastor for use with this section and am awaiting others with my photos due back on Monday. Included: viewing inside the barn, a couple of folks checking out items at the tailgating, collectors admiring the GIV-1, viewing in the Heckler office, Norman Heckler outside of the barn, Liz Maxbauer decorations. Some of these would make great use of color— inside or on the cover.)

GREENSBORO, N.C. November 9, 2003

My four hour drive to Greensboro was one of the more interesting night-time drives I have made. I **had** to watch the Tennessee-Miami game (got 'em Vols!) and so could not leave early on Saturday for this Sunday morning show. Getting on the road about 5:30 allowed me to watch the entirety of the total lunar eclipse, an event I have never previously had the fortitude to watch other than in little spurts. An important Vols win and the viewing of this celestial event kept me energized and rolling down the road!

Held at the Greensboro Farmer's Curb Market, a comfortable indoor market, David Jackson and Reggie Lynch put on a very nice show. This is a show which has a great deal of appeal to those who collect from the region. I have never seen as many North Carolina hutch sodas in one show and there was a smattering of pharmacies and large groupings of milk bottles from the state. Sodas and Whitehouse were in ample supply.

Howard Crowe and Jim Scharnagel provided bitters and other early glass from out of region. All told, 50 dealers took 114 tables.

David Jackson provided a lot of the excitement at this show, placing his collection of approximately 25 North Carolina strap-sided flasks up for sale. Had I not just added a very nice green bitters from Los Angeles to my collection, I do believe I would have had to bring them all home with me. But.... A modicum of sense prevailed and, instead, a number of other folks were happy that they had made the drive to the show! In addition to the flasks, he put a number of good bitters and whiskeys out to entice. As can happen, the shows came full circle for me at Greensboro. The Leftwich collection, which pulled me over to the Asheville show in August was placed out at the show and, just as David Jackson's flasks put smiles upon a lot of collectors faces, so too did Rodney Leftwich's offerings. A choice show for the North Carolina whiskey collector!!!



Photos:

1. David Jackson at his table, holding a Casper Company jug.
2. Lindsay Tuttle takes a moment to pose for the camera behind his table.
3. Reggie Lynch, and family.
4. Kevin Kissel had a good assortment of embossed and painted label soda bottles for offer on his table.

Greensboro photos by Reggie Lynch.

Other photos by Ralph Van Brocklin and John Pastor.