



LIFETIME COLLECTION OF RONALD E. HAMMER, NEW OXFORD, PA

Ron was born on June 13, 1950. He lived his entire life in New Oxford, PA. Ron's Aunt Gladys and Uncle Charles lived in Waynesboro, PA. At least two Sundays a month, Ron's parents would take him to their home so that they could discuss their antique collections with Ron. Ron's Aunt was very knowledgeable on glass, china, and especially John Bell redware pottery, which was made in Waynesboro. His uncle had an antique gun collection, specializing in Kentucky rifles. Charles was a very close friend of the iconic Kentucky rifle collector Joe Kindig, Jr. from York, PA. In the early years, Uncle Charles took Ron to York to see Kindig's collection. Stepping into one of Mr. Kindig's collection rooms and seeing the rifles hanging on the wall – there were so many, that he couldn't begin to count them. Between his Aunt and Uncle, they laid the groundwork for what Ron's collection has evolved into today.

In June of 1962, at the age of 12, Ron lost his father. Those were very tough times. Charles took on the role of his father. The learning continued by having Ron read books on antique guns. Gladys also had Ron reading books on antiques, especially on John Bell and his redware pottery. Bell and his sons had a pottery shop in Waynesboro. He is part of the Shenandoah Valley Bell family. It is important to mention John Bell because of the many pieces that Ron collected over the years. One of the pieces represents a one-of-a-kind small jug that was signed by Charles Frederick Bell dated 1857, son of John Bell.

Also in 1962, Ron started riding his bicycle to public sales, traveling to towns such as Bonnevillle, Littlestown, Gettysburg and East Berlin. In those days, a man named Clair Slaybaugh

was an auctioneer and good friend. He conducted most of the public sales in Ron's area. He would call Ron to let him know about the auctions and if there were any good antiques in the sale. On bad weather days, one of Ron's friends and Ron would ride a bus from New Oxford to Hanover. The Lincoln Bus Company would run a bus back and forth from Hanover to New Oxford each Saturday. Ron will never forget upon arrival in Hanover, heading to the Hanover Public Library to meet up with his good friend, the Librarian. She would have books on antiques for him to look at and read that had been donated to the library by local people. They contained information about the local makers and proved to be very helpful.

At age 12, Ron also took a job at the local shoe factory in New Oxford. Livingston was the owner and like a second father to Ron. He was the former owner of the home in which Ron lived. This job was so important to him as it enabled Ron to support his collection. Ron's family lived next door to James Stock and his wife, Doris Jean, who were avid antique collectors. Ron had many discussions with Stocks on antiques whose parents were also old-line collectors and dealers in New Oxford. They were instrumental in encouraging Ron to build his collection.

In 1966, Ron parked his bicycle and started driving to the local public sales. He would meet up many times with his good friends, Dorothy and Eugene Elgin, from East Berlin, PA. Dorothy was his Economics school teacher. Both her and Gene were very helpful in Ron gaining knowledge of local antiques. However, they were also friendly competitors at these events as well.

Over the years, Ron had the privilege of attending many iconic auctions and had the good fortune of being able to purchase a number of items from those sales. There are many included in this 2-day auction.

Karen Johnston, Ron's long-time partner, would accompany him to auctions. There was a love between them that is "Seldom Seen by Two." Even though Ron was taken from her, she will never forget his love for her and how well he treated her.

Ron was an active member of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, the Hanover Kiwanis Club and the Hebron Masonic Lodge in New Oxford for 50 years. Ron was also a board member of the New Oxford Cemetery Board.

Hess Auction Group is honored to offer at auction the collection of Ronald E. Hammer.