

A NEW NELSON McCLOY POTTERY DISCOVERY – OIL JAR

By R. U. Real

After decades of literally thousands of people collecting Nelson McCoy Pottery across the country, once again a new piece of Nelson McCoy has surfaced. At the delight of McCoy Collectors everywhere, it seems it has wonderfully become an unplanned annual event! What a treat for all of us to even see it! This beauty was being sold this last February on Ebay after the sellers had bought it at an estate sale in Zanesville, Ohio. The final price offered was a “Buy It Now” price of \$2499.99 with free shipping. It did not sell but shortly after sold privately so all we know is the price was something under that figure.



Let’s examine some of the detail on this wonderful piece:

It stands 15-1/2 “ to 16” tall.

It has a glaze similar to what Brush McCoy called Art Vellum.

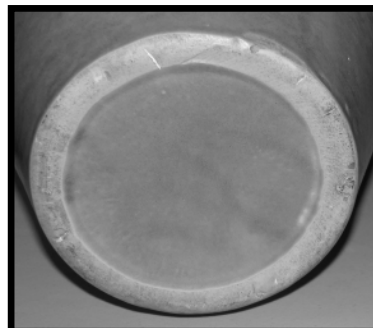
It has handles on either side which are similar in design flavor to that of the Nelson McCoy Lizard Handle Vase.

The head of the handle figure is similar to that of a non-production Nelson McCoy Pottery piece.

The general shape of the Oil Jar is consistent with other Nelson McCoy Oil Jars.

It has a glazed bottom with unglazed resting ring for the kiln and it is not marked.

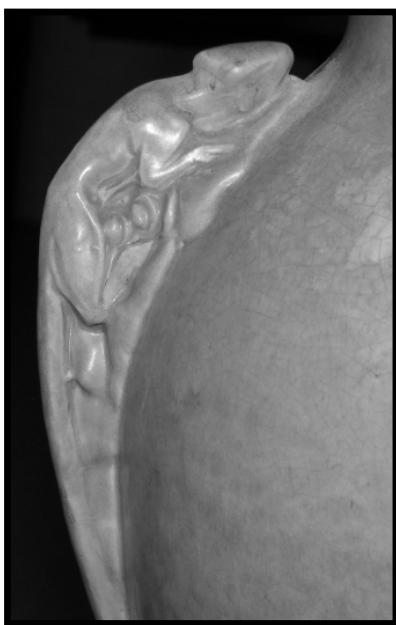
Review the following images. On the right, you have a Nelson McCoy catalog image from a 1938 catalog sheet for 16 and 18 inch Oil Jars. On the left is a photo of two Nelson McCoy Oil Jars. In the back with handles is a 15-1/2 – 16 inch tall Oil Jar and an 18 inch Oil Jar in the front with the drip glaze style as shown in the catalog sheet image. If you visualize the handled Oil Jar in the left photo without the handles, the silhouette appears a match to the same shape of this newly found Oil Jar.



The bottom is clearly a style of unglazed ring and inner glazed area that is consistent with almost all Nelson McCoy Oil Jars produced. The only exception that immediately comes to mind is the 12" Oil Jar that is almost always found with an "NM" mark on the bottom.

While Brush McCoy had a specific line of ware with this style glaze called Art Vellum, several other potteries in and around Zanesville made pieces with a similar style glaze. This included not only Nelson McCoy but Burley Winter, J.B. Owens, Peters & Reed, Roseville, and Weller; all knew how to make this type glaze.

When looking at the handle design, one need only look at the McCoy Lizard Vase to see the handle similarity. However, the head on the handle figure certainly is more consistent with that of the non-production McCoy figure. This one shown in a white glaze is owned by a Society member and was found at a garage sale in the late 1980s in Crooksville. A couple other examples were part of the Cope Gallery collection. See HNH Vol. II page 211.



In summary, there seems no doubt that this handled Oil Jar is indeed another very special piece of Nelson McCoy Pottery. The shape is right, the glaze is right, the size is right. the bottom configuration is right and the handle design simply screams Cope !

So one last question might remain; what about era? Although there are some inconsistencies when comparing reference books, it is fair to say that the majority of collectors would agree the Lizard Handle Vase was produced in the late 1930s (1938 and 1939). The Art Vellum line by Brush McCoy dates to the 1920s and later, a "New Art Vellum" in the early 1930s. Nelson McCoy did not make any ware with this glaze in the 1920s as production was mainly Utilitarian style ware. So putting these facts together, it seems this beautiful non-production piece of Nelson McCoy Pottery was likely created sometime in the later 1930s.



Congratulations to the new owner of this spectacular piece & a note to all: Never say Never !

