

# MCCOY LIGHT – “Speculating About Lamps”

**By Mal Anderson**

Many of you who collect McCoy know by now that I am a collector of McCoy, Brush-McCoy and Brush Lamps. I have been collecting these lamps for at least 25 years if my memory serves me correctly. When I got hooked on collecting lamps, it was by chance that I took a liking to them. My wife Nancy and I were buying pottery at yard sales for my uncle and nephew to sell at a weekly Sunday flea market in New York City. Pottery was a good seller there and we were glad to help them. We kept finding “McCoy” on the bottoms of many pots that we found and as time wandered forward, we found the Huxford’s McCoy book and soon after, Nancy took an interest in the stoneware pieces we found. Not surprisingly, she started keeping some of them.

We were always looking to do things together but this “pottery collecting” was something I did not expect to be doing. Antique or Hot Rod cars, antique wooden clocks and maybe guns were more interesting to me. I’ve been down that path with all three. Anyway, I have always been inquisitive about many things and pottery struck a nerve in my thinking. It seemed like a light bulb went off in my head and I said to myself, “If there are so many McCoy pottery pieces around, why have we not come across any pottery lamps that we could attribute to Nelson McCoy?”

Having seen a scarce few lamps in Huxford’s book, I started investigating all aspects of “How, When, Where and Why” the lamps made especially by Nelson McCoy were so elusive. I studied the features of lamps that I found and especially the glazes McCoy offered.

Soon, I was on my way to being a collector of McCoy just like my wife. Only thing was that “I” was on the hunt for lamps. I bought many lamps thinking that someday they may turn out to be McCoy thru some miracle of the Pottery God. I was wrong!!! This was my lesson learned and I guess the “Dues Paid” as most of us collectors have experienced early in our collecting days.

This article is really about how you can find happiness in your search for that elusive piece. Maybe it’s not a hard to find piece or one that is too high priced to buy when you find it but just one that you have been hoping to come across for some time.

My latest interest is about a lamp that I bought at least five years ago when we were out “Antiquing” with our close friends Frank and Sandy Poolas. We had gone out into Pennsylvania and maybe Maryland for an extended weekend of searching. We were in Columbia, PA in a very large antique shop when as we were looking under tables and behind all that was being offered in each vendor’s booth that I came across the lamp shown to the right. At the time, and I have to admit it has happened many times before, I saw this gloss green lamp looking at me from behind some other items. Not being too excited, I picked up the lamp and looked it over as I usually do for its condition. No chips, cracks or glaze pops here. Then, as I looked more closely at the lamp, I realized that I had seen the shape before but wasn’t sure where. To add to my confusion, the lamp had a shiny sticker



on the top of the pottery that said "Coronet". (See photo right) This was where my speculation kicked in and I bought the lamp because it was somewhat reasonable, I thought. The other thing that intrigued me was that I remembered that I had another lamp of a known McCoy shape that had an identical sticker on it. As years passed, we lost Frank and Sandy but I always remember Frank saying, "You never know what is going to turn up".



I kept looking at the lamp and finally remembered that I saw this shape in a red book about McCoy Pottery. This past October, my wife and I were going thru the many tubs of pottery that we had collected to thin down our collection when out of the blue, a matte blue vase shown below jumped out at me. I thought, "OMG, this is the shape I've been looking for to verify that my gloss green lamp is McCoy". I was really happy. You all know that little details in the height, weight, shape, design features and glaze colors all point toward us collectors accepting that a piece was produced by Nelson McCoy.

As you can see in the comparison photo, the vase and the lamp have identical features. The height is the same. The features of and in the handles are the same. The weight is very similar as the enclosed top replaces the enclosed bottom of the vase. Even the thickness around the dry ring at the bottom is the same. Case closed. This is certainly a McCoy Lamp copied from a 1920s shape.



So the point and basis of this article is that if you have a "hunch" and you have that "good feeling", even though you're not sure, go ahead and speculate on that piece of pottery you think might be. You never know. In my case, especially with this lamp, I've gotten it right. Now I'm on a quest to find out about its' shiny "Coronet" sticker.

Mal Anderson