

MCCOY LIGHT – “A Tale of Two Lamps”

By Mal Anderson

It was a beautiful day, a Friday or maybe a Thursday some years ago when my wife Nancy and I were going to venture out to Kutztown, Pennsylvania for the Renninger’s Spring Extravaganza. For those of you who have not attended this giant flea market, let me first say that it covered many, many football field sized acres and always had a variety of diverse vendors. We usually go on the first or second day as our schedules permit to get those earliest finds that may not be there on the third or fourth day. We try to get there by 8 am.

The sun was shining brightly and the morning dew was still on the grass as we walked from vendor to vendor. Not long after starting thru the gates, we found a piece of antique oak furniture that we admired and bought. Further down the row, Nancy came across a light matte blue dollar vase that had to go home with us. As the day wore on and hours passed, it was lunch time and we needed to stop for a bite to eat at one of the food vendors. We were about two thirds of the way thru the show at that point so after some food and a short rest, we were going searching again.

After shopping for about an hour, I stopped at an interesting booth and was looking thru items on the vendor’s table. As I stepped back from that one table so another buyer could enjoy looking thru what I just previewed, I happened to look under the table from where I had just backed away and what was peeking out at me from the obscure shadows was the early gloss black 10 inch lamp shown here. My lesson of the day was to always look under tables. Pottery may hide there! Lesson learned.



It looked like the lamp was hiding back under there until I just happened to come to this booth to find it. OMG! When I asked if it was for sale, the vendor said “Of course” and “The price is \$15 - Firm”. I couldn’t get a 20 dollar bill out of my pocket fast enough. As a lamp collector, I thought that I had gone to heaven but I remembered it was Kutztown. I wanted to haggle about the price but couldn’t bring myself to do it even though he said Firm”. What a deal. As we left the booth, Nancy was patting me on the back for getting such a wonderful bargain. I got a feeling that the vendor was just waiting for me to show up so I could take the lamp home.



We shopped down the row and at the end, we turned to start another row hoping to find another magnificent deal. About half way down the new row and from a distance, I saw a silhouette mixed in among other sale items of what I thought could be another 10 inch lamp just like the one I bought in the previous row. I tapped Nancy on the shoulder, pointed to my discovery and said “Let’s Go Over There”.

The booth was littered with a lot of different pottery and my discovery somewhat blended in with the other colors but of course, I had my focus on something special. When we approached the table, we saw that it wasn’t a lamp but a 10 inch vase in that glossy light blue that I’m sure many of you have seen. It was the exact size and shape as the black lamp I had just, should I say “stolen”. The price was reasonable, or at least I thought so, I had to get out a few

dollars over the twenty I pulled out when paying for the lamp but what a find only a few yards away from each other “as the crows fly”. I was happy as ever with my finds that day. Continuing thru the rest of the flea market, we found some small things other than pottery to buy. Oh! I think Nancy found a Brush frog to put in her collection of frogs. As the afternoon hours passed, we finished our adventure and headed home. Tired.

In the fall of that same year, we of course had to go to Renninger’s Fall Extravaganza. They are held three times a year but the summer dates conflict with Pottery Week and we wouldn’t miss a chance to see and enjoy all of our friends in the McCoy Pottery Collectors Society and traveling to Zanesville again. So, again we had gotten an early start to Kutztown and I remember it was Friday this time. Same beautiful day with the same dew coating our shoes. After parking, we ventured in and I was on the hunt for lamps >>>>>>>>again.

We followed our usual route thru the market where we always thought the best vendors set up. Not long after going thru the gate and beginning our search, I was shocked to come across a gloss light blue 10 inch lamp base identical to the black one I had gotten at the spring show. The blue glaze was just like the vase I had gotten earlier that year too. Again, I was lucky I guess as the vendor didn’t try to rob me with the price so of course I had to have this lamp and it was going home with us. We wandered thru the morning hours finding little things for home and a few McCoy pottery pieces we just had to have. After our hunger signaled it was time for lunch, we stopped as usual to regain our energy and be ready for the second half. With lunch over and a short “pit stop”, we struck out again determined to find more treasure. It was getting near the end of the show for us with only a few rows to complete before our two hour ride home. In the next to the last row, we found some vendors were starting to close up for the day. It was about 3 o’clock.



Just when we were thinking about calling the day “a wrap”, low and behold Nancy spotted another 10 inch vase in gloss black. She waved to me and said “ I think you need to see something over here”. We don’t always shop next to one another so this wasn’t out of the ordinary. As I approached her at a booth across the row and down two spots, she jokingly said, “Can you imagine, another 10 inch vase to go with the black lamp you got in the spring”. The bags we were carrying had gotten heavy and adding the black vase stretched the fabric of the handles. I was all smiles.

Isn’t it ironic that at Renninger’s two shows, one in the spring and one in the fall of the same year and both in the same location that we had found two identical lamps, one black and one blue and two vases, one black and one blue of identical glazes at four different vendor’s booths. The real irony was that they were found black lamp and blue vase at one show and a blue lamp and black vase at the other show.



Finding McCoy Pottery is such fun. Searching for it is really fun, especially with a person you love and sharing your finds, stories and knowledge with friends and fellow collectors. This is the pinnacle of our collecting interests. Let’s get out there, find McCoy and see our adventures develop into some great stories to tell.