



See following page for captions.

You might say that this story begins with a canary-yellow jug. As sunny as a Southern California day, the stout Staffordshire pottery vessel printed with black verse occupies the bottom shelf of an eighteenth-century Massachusetts desk-and-bookcase. A small part of a sprawling collection, the jug is a vivid reminder of a man whose presence lingers in these pages.

Russell Carrell (1916–1998) favored kelly green blazers and Bermuda shorts in madras plaid, a dubious combination in a man with less taste. But like Sister Parish, the designer who was his contemporary, the Connecticut antiques dealer had a knack for creating cozy interiors whose color-splashed charm depended on their slightly haphazard arrangement of country furniture and folk art.

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CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

A California family gathers its history in a coast-to-coast collection of Americana

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Fig. 1. A California couple honors their heritage in a coast-to-coast collection that mingles New England furniture with Western art and artifacts. Two mid-eighteenth-century ladder-back side chairs from Delaware or Pennsylvania bracket an oak and pine Hadley chest made in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, 1715–1725. Among the objects displayed on it are a pair of 1920s silver spurs marked by G.S. Garcia of Elko, Nevada; a miniature replica of a full-size sombrero by Tardan, Mexico City, c. 1890; a miniature saddle by N. Porter Saddlery of Phoenix, 1920s; and a Micmac birch-bark and quill canoe model from Nova Scotia, c. 1820–1840. The nineteenth-century oil depicting the Big Stump and the Mammoth Tree Hotel (Big Tree Cottage) in what is now Calaveras Big Trees State Park near Stockton, California, appears to have been inspired by *The Mammoth Trees of California (Calaveras County)* (*Sequoia Gigantea*), a color-printed wood engraving by G. K. Stillman (active 1840–1860) published by the *Cincinnati Weekly Times* c. 1852.

Fig. 2. Beverly Hills architect Gerard Colcord (1900–1984) designed the Spanish colonial style residence, completed in 1934. The collectors bought the house in 1988 from a Grammy Award-winning producer and his actress wife. The painted giraffe is a contemporary piece by North Carolina carver Clyde Jones.

Fig. 3. This English pottery jug with transfer decoration, c. 1810–1820, is a vivid reminder of the tastemaker Russell Carrell, who collected canary-yellow Staffordshire.

Fig. 4. These spurs, among the first custom examples crafted in the Hollywood shop of Edward Bohlin (1895–1980), were made for Orange County horsewoman Mabel Yorba (1895–1975) after 1928. They feature engraved sterling silver mounts; Yorba's MY brand and the cut and engraved horse heads on the silver conchos are solid gold. Bohlin used the spurs for advertising in his 1930, 1937, and 1941 catalogues.



Carrell, who often signed his displays with canary-yellow Staffordshire, launched the first flea market in the United States in 1958 and managed New York's Winter Antiques Show from 1960 to 1987. Having perfected the charity-show formula, he ran upmarket events from coast to coast. His presentations articulated a new American style, one urging a relaxed approach to living with antiques.

The California couple whose collection appears here were young when Carrell was in his prime.



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Fig. 5. One wall of the living room is dominated by a Dutch landscape by a follower of Meindert Hobbema (1638–1709). Between the sofas is a c. 1770 Massachusetts ball-and-claw-foot drop-leaf table, on which is an English George III silver tray holding a Gorham sterling silver tea and coffee service, 1880. The walnut corner chair is from Rhode Island, 1740–1760. Also from Rhode Island is the inlaid mahogany Pembroke table signed by Job Townsend Jr. (1726–1778) of Newport, made c. 1770–1778.

Fig. 6. The Massachusetts mahogany desk-and-bookcase, c. 1760–1775, is flanked by a pair of Massachusetts mahogany side chairs, 1760–1780. Above the one on the left is a California landscape by William Keith (1838–1911), a Scottish painter who settled in San Francisco in 1859. The niche holds a nineteenth-century Imari porcelain figure of a woman. The Massachusetts mahogany games table, 1740–1760, supports a silver cake basket by Christian Hillan, (active 1736–1742) London, 1742. Above hangs a boating scene by Bernard Lamotte (1903–1983). The Seichor Kuba runner dates to 1850–1875.

The husband's connection to the promoter was through his mother, a Woodstock, Illinois, antiques dealer who loved what Carrell loved: quirky painted furniture, simple domestic articles worn smooth by use, humble objects endowed with nobility by makers of small means and great imagination. An exhibitor at Carrell's Lake Forest Antiques Show in Illinois, she passed to her son a passion for antiques along with an appreciation for dealers and collectors—their communal but

Fig. 7. The living room retains its original beams and massive open hearth, above which hangs a 1714 oil portrait by the English painter James Maubert (1666–1746). The couple began collecting the modernist pottery of Clarice Cliff (1899–1972), arrayed on the mantel, after discovering her work at a London auction. At the left is a tall-case clock, c. 1785–1790, with an eight-day brass movement by John Avery (1732–1794) of Preston, Connecticut. Beside it is a Massachusetts veneered walnut dressing table, 1730–1740, that was illustrated in Albert Sack's *New Fine Points of Furniture*. To the right of the fireplace is a mahogany dwarf clock made by Joshua Wilder (1786–1860) of South Hingham, Massachusetts, c. 1810–1820.

competitive nature and their annual peregrinations to gatherings in places such as New York and New Hampshire. Boyhood vacations in the Ford wagon were busman's holidays, with stops to see the Samahas in Ohio, the Kindigs in Pennsylvania, and the Liverants and John Walton in Connecticut.

After earning his law degree at Stanford, the husband, a rangy man with a direct, personable manner, took up practice in Los Angeles, where he met his future wife, a gracious brunette active in a host of charities. A native Californian who remembers an Orange County of endless groves, she grew up surrounded by fine European art and antiques. When the couple married and settled in Los Feliz, each brought along pieces steeped in family memories.

Their move to a new neighborhood twenty-five years ago set the stage for what would come. In a lush hollow in one of the city's most desirable



Fig. 8. Assisted by Philadelphia dealer Elle Shushan, the wife collects portrait miniatures, several of which are seen in this assemblage in the front hallway. She particularly admires likenesses by Connecticut painter James Sanford Ellsworth (1802–1874); visible here are two that are illustrated in Lucy B. Mitchell's *The Paintings of James Sanford Ellsworth, Itinerant Folk Artist, 1802–1873* (1974): a signed and dated 1841 watercolor and graphite portrait of three-year-old Elizabeth Vannenberg (top row second from right) and one of young Edmund Davison of Otis, Massachusetts, seated in a red and green armchair and holding a flower. The watercolor and ink fraktur at bottom right, probably from Lancaster or Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, is inscribed to Barbara Wenger and dated 1830. At the far left is a watercolor and ink birth record for Alfred Stober by the Reverend Henry Young (1792–1861), who was active in Centre County, Pennsylvania, 1830–1860. The Connecticut Windsor side chair, one of a pair, preserves its original black over red paint.



canyons, they happened on a vintage house with old-time charm and a dusting of Hollywood glamour. Commissioned in 1933 by an attorney and his wife, the residence was designed by Gerard Colcord, an École des Beaux-Arts-trained architect who worked out of a small office in Beverly Hills for more than four decades. Colcord's conservative clientele clamored for "country colonials," as he called them, or fanciful Tudor, country French, and Hollywood regency designs. Harrison Ford, Zubin Mehta, and Bob Newhart are latter-day enthusiasts of the architect. The couple acquired their Colcord house from a Grammy Award-winning producer and his then-wife, a star of a hit television series of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Low and rambling with a tile roof, the brick and stucco-clad Spanish colonial style residence is a series of intimately scaled rooms with whitewashed walls, hewn beams, and graceful *nichos* for displaying sculpture and ceramics. It has been altered and expanded over the years with an eye toward preserving its original character. There is a sunny gallery where the loggia once stood; the old garage and maids' rooms are now guest quarters. Newly carved and painted Santa Fe-style mantels, doors, and cabinetry, and colorfully tiled bathrooms evince the couple's flair for design. The terraced property climbs to a pool house whose vaulted ceiling shelters a spirited blend of American folk art and formal furniture (Fig. 18).

Not limited to one period or style, the couple has gathered choice but disparate objects that, imaginatively grouped, define their aesthetic stance and philosophical approach to collecting. "We love



Fig. 9. *Encampment on the Upper Missouri* by Ralph A. Blakelock (1847–1919) is one of several Midwestern views in the collection.



Fig. 10. The watercolors in the front hallway are by the German-born folk artist Paul A. Seifert (1840–1921), an itinerant who depicted Wisconsin farms between 1860 and 1915. The paintings were formerly in the collection of Jean Lipman, who brought Seifert to a wider public after discovering his work in the 1940s.



color and design. That's what got us started," the wife says. "Collecting has become a major pastime for us. Beyond the objects, it's the stories, experiences, and the people. Each piece tells a story," the husband explains.

Subtly autobiographical, the collection is an idiosyncratic blend of East, West, and Midwest stretching from pilgrim New England to cinematic California. "I bought my first antique, a drop-leaf table, at a country auction when I was fifteen," the husband says. In the den, a Pennsylvania step-back cupboard in blue and yellow paint traveled from his family's Illinois farm. *Encampment on the Upper Missouri*, an oil by Ralph Blakelock (Fig. 9), and two watercolor farm scenes by the Wisconsin folk artist Paul A. Seifert (see Fig. 10) are further references to the heartland.

The husband's first love is eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century New England furniture, espe-

cially pieces from Massachusetts and Connecticut. "Its simplicity appeals to me," says the collector, who buys widely but works closely with a New York-based furniture conservator who reviews his choices. One of the earliest pieces of furniture in his collection is a one-drawer Hadley chest, made of oak and pine in Hampshire County, Massachusetts between 1715 and 1725 (see Fig. 1). Sinuously carved scrolls, tulips, and leaves enclose the initials "ND" on the iconic piece, one of roughly 125 examples of the form known. Possibly made for a member of the Dickenson family, the chest was consigned to auction by the estate of Barbara Belding Clapp.

Fig. 11. The dining room table is set with four silver candlesticks by William Gould (active 1723–1763), London, 1750; a pair of silver sauceboats by Paul de Lamerie (1688–1751), 1739; and a silver epergne by Emick Romer (1724–1799), London, 1767. Above an inlaid cherry server from Vermont, c. 1810, are paintings by Marguerite Zorach (1887–1968) and Max Weber (1881–1961).



Another Connecticut River valley piece—with ties to Wethersfield, Connecticut—came from Nadeau's Auction Gallery in Windsor, Connecticut (see Fig. 17). Dating to about 1770, the cherry high chest of drawers with a scrolled bonnet top is from a group of pieces published by Thomas P. and Alice K. Kugelman and Robert Lionetti in *Connecticut Valley Furniture: Eliphalet Chapin and His Contemporaries, 1750–1800*.

A cherry tall-case clock of about 1765–1790 with a silvered dial and works signed by John Avery of Preston, Connecticut, surfaced at the Winter Antiques Show in 2006, where the couple purchased it from Nathan Liverant and Son (see Fig. 7). Another prize of the collection is a serpentine-front chest made around 1780 that is attributed to Thomas Needham Jr. (1755–1821) of Salem, Massachusetts. Surviving Salem chests of this kind with blocked ends are among the rarest

of American eighteenth-century furniture forms.

"My husband brought me into the antiques world. It's something that we have enjoyed together. We've had fun and have met wonderful people," says the wife, whose past leadership role

Fig. 12. The collection mixes East and West. Animal carvings by New Mexico sculptor Felipe Benito Archuleta (1910–1991) complement a triple-decker birdhouse made of found objects, rear wall, by E. G. James of West Virginia. The saddle at the right is by Main and Winchester of San Francisco, 1870s–1880s. The brace-back Windsor continuous armchairs are a matched pair signed by Colonel Ebenezer B. Tracy Sr. (1744–1803) of Lisbon, Connecticut, c. 1780. The Windsor writing armchair, c. 1770, is also attributed to Tracy. California artist Norman S. Chamberlain (1887–1961) painted the three-panel screen depicting Taos, New Mexico, where he lived briefly in the late 1920s. On the Mexican chest-on-stand, c. 1820, is a carving of Adam and Eve by Edgar Tolson (1904–1984). Above hang four early nineteenth-century birch-bark and quill Micmac canoe models.



Fig. 13. The guest quarters house a portion of the couple's collection of Western Americana. Three leather saddles include Edward H. Bohlin's parade saddle for Mabel Yorba (foreground; see Fig. 15); one by Main and Winchester, San Francisco, 1865-1875 (left); and a silver-mounted leather saddle custom-made by Bohlin in the 1920s for Los Angeles businessman Ivon Parker (background). The nineteenth-century blue-painted *trastero*, left, is from New Mexico. On the back wall hang *Rodeo Riders*, a watercolor of c. 1920 by Jan Matulka (1890-1972), and *Pitching Paint*, a 1961 oil by Olaf Carl Wieghorst (1899-1988), who also painted *Los Charros* (1980), partially visible at top right, commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary ride of Los Charros del Desierto in Arizona.

in the Los Angeles Antique Show exposed her to a range of specialties and a host of experts, many of whom have spent time in the couple's home. Her eclectic interests and appraising eye have contributed to an imaginative series of collections within collections. In London the couple met Richard Green and Des Jones, authors of *The Rich Designs of Clarice Cliff*; a chance encounter that led her to collect Cliff's modernist English pottery of the 1920s and 1930s (see Fig. 7).

Working with Philadelphia dealer Elle Shushan, the wife has assembled a significant collection of American portrait miniatures, including eight watercolor likenesses by the itinerant folk artist James Sanford Ellsworth (see Fig. 8). "Isn't this wonderful?," she says, producing the small, solemn image of Theodore Crawford, a Guilford, Connecticut, man painted in 1851 in his blue and white striped waistcoat.

Named a director of the Bank of California, where he was the youngest and, later, the longest serving member of the board, the husband revels in the history of his adopted state, a tale retold in the couple's collection of California paintings, spurs, and saddles. "The bank's history is the history of the West itself. It was a product of the Gold Rush," he explains.

Linda Kohn Sherwood and her husband, Joseph Sherwood, founders of the Los Angeles-based firm High Noon Western Americana and the annual January auction and show of the same name in Arizona, recall their first sale to the husband in the 1980s, a pair of twentieth-century spurs embellished with silver hearts. Since then, he has acquired about fifteen antique saddles and dozens of spurs distinguished by their ornate tooling, elaborate metal mounts, and distinguished provenances.

"It's a world-class collection," says Joseph Sherwood. Three saddles are by the preeminent nineteenth-century San Francisco saddlery Main and Winchester, which flourished during the Gold

Figs. 14, 14a. Beginning in the 1920s, the Hollywood shop of Edward H. Bohlin made saddles for California's rich and famous. Among his most lavish creations is this gold- and silver-mounted, floral-carved black leather saddle set handcrafted after 1928 for Orange County horsewoman Mabel Yorba. It bears Yorba's initials in gold. The earliest Bohlin maker's cartouche is impressed on its seat.



Fig. 15. Among the chaps on the daybed are pairs by Bohlin, 1930s; R. T. Frazier of Pueblo, Colorado, 1915-1925; N. Porter of Phoenix, 1940s; and Hamley and Company of Pendleton, Oregon, 1920s. Above the fireplace are a woven fiber jacket and hat acquired by the couple on a trip to China. A Navajo rug covers the floor.



most celebrated saddles and a matching set of spurs, custom-made in the late 1920s for the Orange County horsewoman Mabel Yorba, a native Nebraskan who married the scion of a California land-grant family (see Figs. 4, 14). His self-assured patron in mind, the craftsman decorated the saddle with gold and sterling silver mounts depicting a woman lassoing a bucking bronco (see Fig. 14a). Her hapless cowboy companion manages to ensnare only a cactus tree. “Hundreds of people have told us about meeting Bohlin, who inspired reverence with his perfectionism and showmanship. His saddles were always expensive. In the early 1950s, a Bohlin saddle could cost as much as \$7,500, about the price of a house in west Los Angeles at the time,” Sherwood says.

Late in their lives, the husband’s normally cautious parents approached him with a business proposition: buy the collection and inventory of the late Peggy Krupp, a Barrington, Illinois, antiques dealer who was a family friend. The husband obliged. “We sold a house and barn full of antiques, cash and carry, and sent the rest to auction. I kept a dozen things, including an early eighteenth-century Queen Anne high chest of drawers, probably from eastern Connecticut or Long Island. It remains one of my favorite pieces,” he says, noting the joy that the venture gave his parents and the satisfaction he still feels each morn-

Rush. Another is by Marcus Stern (d. 1905), who began making saddles in San Jose, California, in 1854. The collection’s oldest spurs—decorated lavishly with silver filigree, silver thread, and cast and applied silver conchos—are Mexican and date to around 1860. Shanks fashioned as toucan birds hold in place their sharp-toothed wheels, called rowels.

Saddles have special meaning in Southern California, where film stars and other early twentieth-century luminaries owned saddles made for show. The foremost maker of dress and parade saddles, Swedish-born Edward H. Bohlin, opened his first shop in Cody, Wyoming, before moving to Hollywood. Encouraged by the movie cowboy Tom Mix (1880–1940), Bohlin became the “saddle maker to the stars,” with a clientele ranging from Buck Jones and Roy Rogers to William Randolph Hearst and Ronald Reagan. Last year, the collectors, who actively support the Autry National Center of the American West, acquired one of Bohlin’s



ing as he sits at his breakfast table, admiring the chest from across the room.

Having inherited the collecting bug, the couple has passed it to their son and daughter. The children’s first passion was for vintage war posters. Now, with houses of their own, they embrace their parents’ love of Americana. Collecting is a family affair. Mother and son added folk art to the beach house where the generations gather, and last August father treated daughter to a set of six Pennsylvania plank-seat Windsor side chairs painted in vivid azure blue at Northeast Auctions.

Many dealers and collectors share a deep concern that history, or at least our memory of it, is endangered, and that by forgetting our past we cramp our vision of the future. But in one California family, at least, antiques are keeping the everyday past alive while serving as a generational bridge to tomorrow.

Small at first glance, the canary-yellow jug holds more than you might imagine.

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Fig. 16. This Schoenhut Humpty Dumpty Circus toy of c. 1910 is among about a dozen pieces that came from Barrington, Illinois, antiques dealer Peggy Krupp, a family friend.

Fig. 17. The husband favors eighteenth-century New England furniture, exemplified by the cherry high chest of drawers in the master bedroom, attributed to the Willard group of Wethersfield, Connecticut-trained craftsmen, c. 1770. The two walnut side chairs (from a set of six), probably Massachusetts, 1735–1750, were formerly with Israel Sack Inc.

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Fig. 18. New England furniture and folk art fill the pool house, at the top of a terraced garden overlooking the residence. The four walnut side chairs are from the same set as those in Fig. 17. At the back left is a maple chest-on-chest, Rhode Island or southeastern Massachusetts, 1770–1780. To the right of the fireplace is a Massachusetts dressing table, 1760–1780. The carved and painted giraffe in the center is by Bynum, North Carolina, folk artist Clyde Jones.