

O'Brien's final session sets more records at Copley's annual summer "Sporting Sale"

A HOLLOW-CARVED reaching Canada goose with a dovetailed neck by an unknown maker sold within estimate to a phone bidder for \$810,000 at the Copley Fine Art Auctions "Sporting Sale" on July 19-20, 2018 at Hotel 1620 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. From the collection of Donal C. O'Brien Jr., it was one of three rigmate Canada geese that were purchased by famed collector and author Adele Earnest in Columbia, Pennsylvania in the 1950s.

Not only was it the top lot in the auction, it was also the third highest price ever

By Decoy Magazine
Photos courtesy Copley Fine Art Auctions

paid for a decoy sold at auction. It was also one of seven lots from the O'Brien collection, which sold on day one of the auction, to make six figures, all of which qualified as among the top 100 decoy lots ever sold at auction.

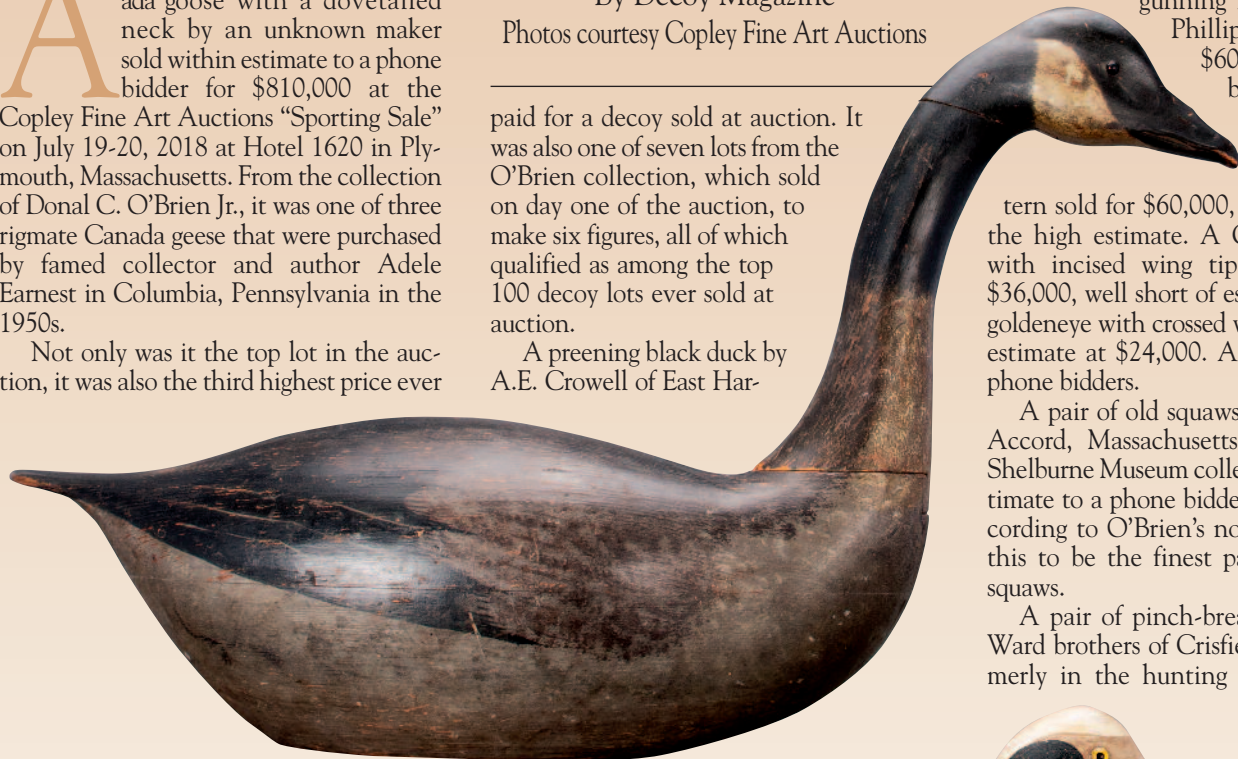
A preening black duck by A.E. Crowell of East Har-

wich, Massachusetts, formerly in the gunning rig of Dr. John C. Phillips, sold for \$600,000, exactly double the average estimate. A one-of-a-kind Crowell flying and calling

tern sold for \$60,000, more than double the high estimate. A Crowell dowitcher with incised wing tip carving sold for \$36,000, well short of estimate. A Crowell goldeneye with crossed wingtips sold under estimate at \$24,000. All four lots sold to phone bidders.

A pair of old squaws by Joe Lincoln of Accord, Massachusetts, formerly in the Shelburne Museum collection, sold over estimate to a phone bidder at \$360,000. According to O'Brien's notes, he considered this to be the finest pair of Lincoln old squaws.

A pair of pinch-breast pintails by the Ward brothers of Crisfield, Maryland, formerly in the hunting rig of California's



Hollow-carved Canada goose with a dovetailed neck by an unknown Pennsylvania maker (est. \$600,000/960,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$810,000, the top lot in the auction and an auction price record for its maker.



Pair of old squaws by Joe Lincoln of Accord, Massachusetts (est. \$180,000/300,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$360,000.



Preening black duck by A.E. Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts (est. \$240,000/360,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$600,000.

Pair of pinch-breast pintails by the Ward brothers of Crisfield, Maryland (est. \$240,000/360,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$252,000.



White Mallard Gun Club, sold for \$252,000. A pair of Ward 1936 model canvasbacks sold separately, the drake for \$27,600 and the hen for \$25,200. An early wigeon with a turned head brought \$26,400. All four lots sold to phone bidders within estimate.

A pair of canvasbacks with "angel wing" paint patterns by John Graham of Charlestown, Maryland sold to a phone bidder over estimate at \$216,000, an auction price record for the maker. Never rigged and spared the exposure of the hunting grounds, the pair was originally picked from the mantle of a Charlestown home.

A standing hollow-carved Canada goose by Charles Schoenheider Sr. of Peoria, Illinois sold over estimate to a phone bidder for \$204,000, an auction price record for its maker.



Standing Canada goose by Charles Schoenheider Sr. of Peoria, Illinois (est. \$120,000/180,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$204,000, an auction price record for its maker.

A breast-preening eider by Gus Wilson of South Portland, Maine sold well short of estimate to a phone bidder at \$186,000. An eider by Arthur Poland of New Harbor, Maine sold to a phone bidder for \$57,000, nearly double the high estimate and an auction price record for its maker.

Eider by Gus Wilson of South Portland, Maine (est. \$240,000/360,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$186,000.



Hollow-carved black duck by Nathan Cobb Jr. of Cobb Island, Virginia (est. \$16,800/21,600) sold to a South Carolina dealer for \$66,000.

A hollow-carved black duck by Nathan Cobb Jr. of Cobb Island, Virginia sold to a South Carolina dealer for \$66,000, more than triple the high estimate. A club model canvas-



Pair of canvasbacks by John Graham of Charlestown, Maryland (est. \$150,000/210,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$216,000, an auction price record for its maker.

Top 25 lots at the Copley Fine Arts Auction Plymouth, Massachusetts, July 19-20, 2018

Rank	Description (catalog no.)	Av. Est.	Price
*1.	Pennsylvania HC reaching "Slot Neck" Canada goose (12)	\$780,000	\$810,000
2.	A.E. Crowell (MA) preening black duck (14)	300,000	600,000
3.	Joe Lincoln (MA) old squaw pair (39)	240,000	360,000
4.	Ward Bros. (MD) pinch-breast pintail pair (33)	300,000	252,000
*5.	John Graham (MD) canvasback pair (9)	180,000	216,000
*6.	Charles Schoenheider Sr. (IL) standing Canada goose (20)	150,000	204,000
7.	Gus Wilson (ME) eider (54)	300,000	186,000
8.	Massachusetts running yellowlegs, Phillips rig (195)	102,000	132,000
9.	Nathan Cobb Jr. (VA) HC black duck (38)	19,200	66,000
9.	Lee Dudley (NC) canvasback (66)	48,000	66,000
11.	A.E. Crowell (MA) flying tern (1)	24,000	60,000
11.	Maine standing wood duck (21)	60,000	60,000
*13.	Arthur Poland (ME) eider (73)	25,200	57,000
14.	Obediah Verity (NY) feeding black-bellied plover (27)	48,000	54,000
14.	Charles Perdue (IL) HC sleeping mallard hen (235)	72,000	54,000
16.	Lou Rathmell (CT) sleeping cork-bodied black duck (40)	25,200	48,000
17.	Albert Laing (CT) HC sleeping canvasback hen (255)	42,000	45,000
18.	HC black-bellied plover with dovetailed neck (13)	48,000	42,000
19.	A.E. Crowell (MA) dowitcher (2)	54,000	36,000
19.	Lou Rathmell (CT) cork-bodied black duck (41)	25,200	36,000
19.	Mason factory (MI) curlew (237)	42,000	36,000
22.	Ferdinand Bach (MI) canvasback (59)	36,000	27,600
22.	Ward Bros. (MD) 1936 model canvasback (35)	30,000	27,600
22.	Shang Wheeler (CT) Atlantic salmon plaque (306)	30,000	27,600
#25.	Three lots tied for 25th place	17,600	26,400
TOTALS		\$2,995,800	\$3,529,200
	#Ward Bros. (MD) wigeon (86)	30,000	
	#John English (NJ) HC black duck (45)	15,000	
	#Shang Wheeler (CT) black-bellied plover (172)	7,800	

Key: HC- hollow-carved * - auction price record for this maker

The top 25 lots (6.2% of the 404 sold) accounted for \$3,529,200 (74.8.0% of the \$4,718,470 gross) and were 17.7% over their total average estimate.

back with glass eyes by Lee Dudley of Knotts Island, North Carolina sold to a phone bidder over estimate at \$66,000.

A standing wood duck by an unknown Maine maker, formerly in the collection of Barton Blum, sold to a phone bidder for \$60,000, exactly as estimated.

A feeding black-bellied plover by Obediah Verity of Seaford, Long Island, New York sold for its high estimate \$54,000. A hollow black-bellied plover with a dovetailed neck by an unknown maker sold within estimate at \$42,000. A dowitcher from the Phillips rig sold below estimate at \$24,000. A running golden plover by Lothrop Holmes sold well short of estimate at \$18,000. All four lots sold to phone bidders.

A sleeping cork-bodied black duck by Lou Rathmell of Danbury, Connecticut sold for \$48,000, nearly double the estimate. A high-head Rathmell cork-bodied black duck sold over estimate for \$36,000. A hollow-carved black duck by Albert Laing of New York City and Stratford, Connecticut brought \$22,800, over double the high estimate. All three lots sold to phone bidders.

A canvasback by Ferdinand Bach of Detroit, Michigan sold to a phone bidder for \$27,600, just short of estimate. A pair of canvasbacks by Capt. John Schweikart of Strawberry Island, Michigan sold to a Maine collector at its high estimate \$21,600.

A hollow-carved black duck by John English of Florence, New Jersey sold to a phone bidder for \$26,400, nearly double the estimate. A hollow-carved pintail by Charles Perdue of Henry, Illinois sold to a phone bidder below estimate for \$20,400.

A dowitcher by Ira Hudson of Chincoteague, Virginia topped estimate at \$15,600. A Hudson flying red-breasted merganser with a fish in its bill, sold for \$12,000. Both lots sold to phone bidders.

Five lots on day two of the auction qualified for the top 25 list, including a running yellowlegs with raised wingtips from the Phillips rig that sold over estimate to a phone bidder for \$132,000. A tucked head black-bellied plover by Shang Wheeler of Stratford, Connecticut sold to a phone bidder for \$26,400, more than triple its high estimate.

A hollow-carved preen-

Massachusetts feeding yellowlegs from the Phillips rig (est. \$90,000/114,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$132,000.



Canvasback by Lee Dudley of Knotts Island, North Carolina (est. \$36,000/60,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$66,000.



Feeding black-bellied plover by Obediah Verity of Seaford, New York (est. \$42,000/54,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$54,000.





Standing wood duck by an unknown Maine carver (est. \$48,000/72,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$60,000.



Canvasback by Ferdinand Bach of Detroit, Michigan (est. \$30,000/42,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$27,600.

ing mallard hen by Charles Perdew in Charlie's paint sold to a phone bidder just below estimate at \$54,000. A hollow-carved sleeping canvasback hen by Albert Laing also sold to the phone, making estimate at \$45,000.

A long-billed curlew by the Mason factory of Detroit sold to a phone bidder for its low estimate \$36,000. A black-bellied plover salesman's sample with "Black Breast Plover, \$7.50 Dz." written under the tail sold to a phone bidder for its low estimate \$12,000.

Lots of note by the Ward brothers in-


cluded a Bishops Head model Canada goose at \$20,400, a decorative "sunbathing" black duck at \$15,600, a pair of 1936 model pintails at \$13,200 and a swimming wigeon for \$10,200. A swimming red-breasted merganser by Lloyd Tyler of Crisfield, Maryland sold to a Cape Cod collector for its low estimate \$18,000.

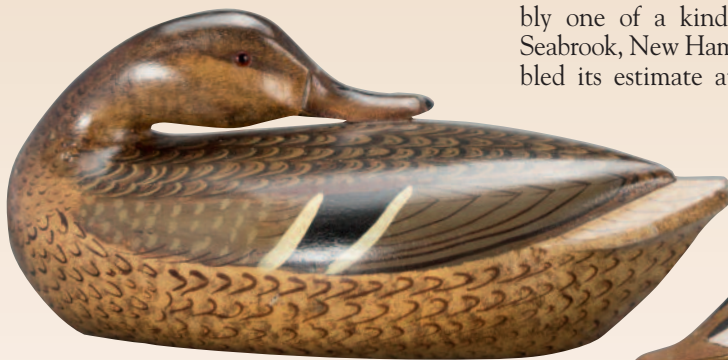
A curlew by Nathan Cobb Jr. of Cobb Island, Virginia sold to a phone bidder at its low estimate \$18,000. Two Northampton County, Virginia curlews, one from Cobb Island and the other from Hog Island, brought \$12,000 and \$9600.

A rare miniature bobwhite quail, possibly one of a kind, by George Boyd of Seabrook, New Hampshire more than doubled its estimate at \$7800. A miniature

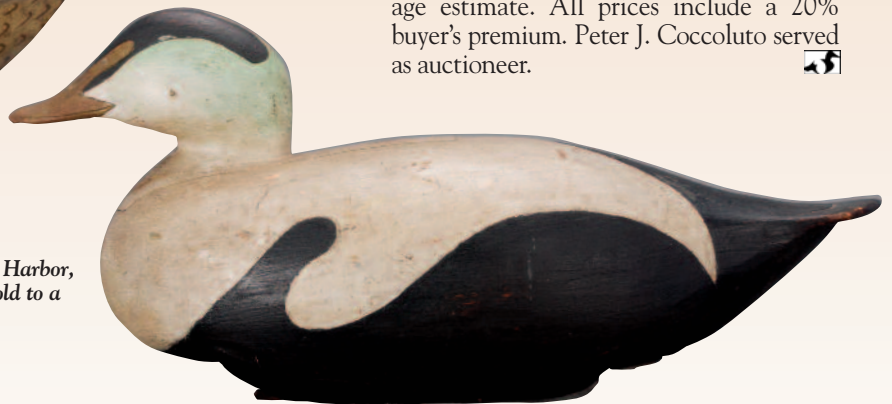
preening mallard hen by Charles Perdew sold well below estimate at \$4800. An Atlantic salmon plaque by Shang Wheeler of Stratford, Connecticut made estimate at \$27,600.

This was the final session of the O'Brien collection, of which 117 decoy lots sold for \$3,749,940, averaging over \$32,000 per lot. There were 287 decoy lots on day two, which grossed \$968,530, and six of them qualified for the top 25 list (27 due to a tie for 25th place). For the two days combined, there were 50 lots that sold for \$10,000 or more, including eight that made six figures, and only 23 lots with a total low estimate of \$194,400 failed to sell.

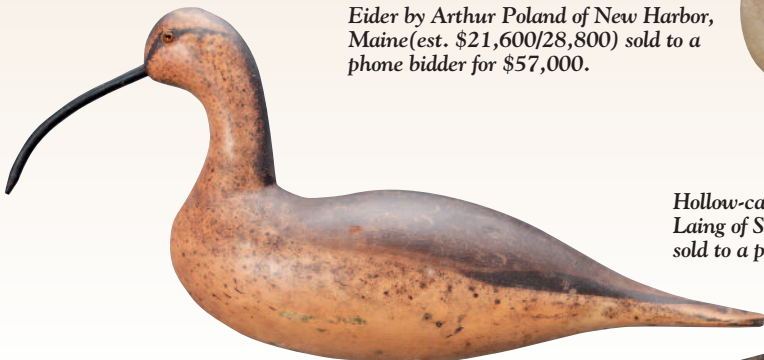
In summary, of 427 decoy lots offered 23 failed to sell, leaving 404 lots that sold for \$4,718,470 for an average of \$11,679 per lot and were 30.5% over their total low estimate. The top 25 lots (6.2% of those sold) accounted for \$3,529,200 (74.8% of the gross) and were 17.7% over their total average estimate. All prices include a 20% buyer's premium. Peter J. Coccoluto served as auctioneer. 



Hollow-carved sleeping mallard hen by Charles Perdew of Henry, Illinois (est. \$60,000/84,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$54,000.



Hollow-carved sleeping canvasback hen by Albert Laing of Stratford, Connecticut (est. \$36,000/48,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$45,000.



Eider by Arthur Poland of New Harbor, Maine (est. \$21,600/28,800) sold to a phone bidder for \$57,000.

Curlew by the Mason decoy factory of Detroit (est. \$36,000/48,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$36,000.

