

Contact:

Kim Cabrera

212.794.2280

kcabrera@guernseys.com

The Mountain Star Ruby Collection

Sealed Bid Auction – Coming soon

Guernsey's will be reviewing bids tendered for one of the most compelling collections of rare gems discovered in America. The story of this extraordinary Collection follows:

In 1990, Jarvis "Wayne" Messer, a self-described "rock hound" living in the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina, made an incredible discovery. While combing the native woods for naturally occurring rarities, he unearthed four rough stones that sent shivers through him. From their outward appearance, he sensed that he had come across something very special. Through the efforts of a friend who happened to be an amateur stone cutter, the true impact of Messer's find became evident. This mountain man of modest means, who worked as a trout fishing guide to provide for his family, made the discovery of a lifetime.

Although Mr. Messer knew in his heart that his discovery was extraordinary, he needed scientific documentation to prove it. Unfortunately, the cost for the necessary gemological testing was well beyond his means. While contemplating his dilemma, word of the stones spread across the Appalachian hills. In short order, friends and neighbors approached Wayne. If they each "chipped in" what monies they could spare, perhaps he could pool enough to deliver his stones to New York City...to present them to the prestigious Gemological Institute of America.



And so it happened that these four stones made their way to the GIA which, in detailed reports, confirmed that what Wayne had discovered were indeed remarkably large Star Rubies! A ruby is rare. A ruby with a classic six-rayed star pattern — known as a "star ruby" — is one thousand times rarer still. To find four matching star rubies is nothing short of remarkable. To find them in the United States (when star rubies have been found in the past, they have been found in Southeast Asia), is virtually unimaginable.

In the simplest of terms, a "star" is formed when a stone is placed under a light. As noted above, this happens very rarely. When such stars appear, they are most often faint or somewhat fuzzy. The stars in Wayne's four stones are vivid. Sharp and bright, when viewing them it almost seems like an internal light switch is turned on. The stars are stunning.

It is a tradition that large and rare gemstones be given names; with this in mind, Wayne's stones became known as the Appalachian Star (139.40 ct.), the Promise Star (64.16 ct.), the Misty Star (52.36 ct.), and the Smokey Mountain Two-Star (86.54 ct.) which remarkably has stars on both its top and bottom. Together, the Mountain Star Ruby Collection weighs in at a staggering 342.46 ct! By

comparison, the Smithsonian Museum has on display a star ruby described as one of the world's largest. That ruby weighs 138 ct., about a carat less than the Appalachian Star.

As if the GIA reports were not enough, the stones were then shipped to London where the BGI (British Gemological Institute) confirmed the GIA's findings. Once in England, the Natural History Museum of London, considered by some to be the finest museum of its type in the world, asked to exhibit the largest of the stones — the Appalachian Star. And quite an exhibit it was. Approximately 200,000 visitors lined up to view the extraordinary stone over a two-week period, the largest audience that fabled institution has experienced in its multi-century existence. The institution's leading gemologist, Dr. Cally Oldershaw, described the stone as "quite breathtaking." In the Natural History Museum of London's Mineralogy Newsletter, Sept. 20, 1992, the Appalachian Star was described as "a perfect six-rayed natural star ruby... thought to be the finest in the world." London's Daily Mail was more succinct referring to the stone simply as "the world's finest ruby."

Bathing in the glory of his discovery, Wayne brought the four Star Rubies - the Appalachian Star, the Smokey Mountain Two-Star, the Promise Star and the Misty Star - back to the United States. A massive file of documents (viewable at www.guernseys.com) about the stones then grew, featuring comments from leading gemologists and scientists. And then the good news stopped. Wayne Messer was diagnosed with cancer.

Still a young man, Wayne battled the disease for a decade before succumbing to it. The Mountain Star Rubies then became the property of his widow on whose behalf Guernsey's is selling the Collection.

To place a bid, please call Guernsey's at 212-794-2280. Online bidding is available on liveauctioneers.com. Private viewing available by appointment.

ABOUT GUERNSEY'S

In its fortieth year, Guernsey's has built a reputation as the auction house known for representing the most extraordinary properties. From the largest auction in history (the ocean liner S.S. United States) to vintage racing cars on to artwork from the Soviet Union, pre-Castro Cuban cigars and the \$3 million baseball, the firm has few rivals when it comes to the presentation of wildly diverse artwork and artifacts. The John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, Princess Diana, Elvis Presley, Jerry Garcia, John Coltrane, Dick Clark, Mickey Mantle and the Beatles events were all conducted by Guernsey's. Guernsey's is particularly proud of its work with the Library of Congress in the preservation of the complete Rosa Parks Archive.

###