

# Maxwell House Coffee's Kentucky Roots



By **SAM TERRY**  
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Sunday, October 22 marks the 110th anniversary of President Theodore Roosevelt famously requesting a second cup of coffee while dining at the Nashville's Maxwell House Hotel and commenting that it was "good to the last drop." Roosevelt's quip was seized upon by two southern Kentucky natives - Joel Owsley Cheek and Christopher Tompkins Cheek - who had turned their family grocery firm into a business focusing on their blend of coffee which became known as Maxwell House Coffee.

The Kentucky cousins - Joel from Burkesville and Christopher from Glasgow - had given the prestigious hostelry 20 pounds of their prepared coffee to try in the dining room. In time the supply of coffee was exhausted and regular diners noticed the change back to the old brand and complained. As a result, the hotel began using the Cheek's coffee exclusively.

In turn, the Cheeks acquired the use of the hotel's name to market their coffee and began using the famous "good to the last drop" comment as their timeless slogan. At one point, Maxwell House Coffee had gained one-third of the American coffee market. In 1928, the company was sold to Postum for \$42 million that was shared by extended Cheek family members who had invested in the company. The Postum company eventually sold to General Foods which was later sold to Kraft Foods.

Christopher T. Cheek



**GLASGOW NATIVE** Leslie Cheek and Mabel Wood with their wedding party on October 3, 1896.

married Ann Valeria Leslie, daughter of Gov. Preston H. Leslie of Glasgow. Their son, Glasgow native Leslie Cheek Sr., became an investor in the family business and in time, was president of the company.

## Romance leads to Cheekwood

While on a train traveling from New York to Nashville with a stop in Guthrie, Kentucky, Leslie Cheek noticed a beautiful young lady. He bribed the porter with a box of cigars to obtain her name, a ploy that failed. With a bit of maneuvering, Cheek found John Clemens, a friend of the young woman, who offered to introduce him but he refused. Instead, Cheek insisted he wished to meet her at her home and a few days later the gentlemen arrived in Clarksville, Tennessee to call on Mabel Wood.

According to family oral history, Mabel watched from an upstairs window as Cheek and Clemens approached and found she was pleased with Cheek's handsome and youthful appearance. Clemens explained Cheek's interest and of his special trip from Nashville to meet her. Apparently agreeable, they all went to church together.

For the next eighteen months Leslie sent Mabel a box of candy from Mitchell's Confectionary each Tuesday. On Thursdays, he sent fruit or a personally selected book while Sundays brought a weekly delivery of flowers. On October 3, 1896, Mabel Wood and Leslie Cheek were married at the Methodist Church in Clarksville.

When the company was sold to Postum, Leslie and Mabel Wood Cheek used some of their fortune to purchase 100 acres of woodland in west Nashville on which to build a new home. They retained the services of New York residential and landscape architect Bryant Fleming to design their mansion, its interior furnishings, and the landscaping of



**NASHVILLE'S** original Maxwell House where President Theodore Roosevelt quipped that the coffee was "good to the last drop."

the grounds. The result was "Cheekwood," a name combining Leslie and Mabel's respective

# 2025

## Happy Birthday, Kentucky!

June 1, 1792 - June 1, 2017

## My Kentucky

surnames. After three years of construction, the Cheeks moved into their country estate at

See **MY KENTUCKY** continued on page 12



**CHEEKWOOD**, the home of Leslie and Mabel Wood Cheek while under construction. Today, the mansion is used as an art museum while the grounds offer year-round delight as a botanical garden.



**MABEL WOOD CHEEK**



**LESLIE CHEEK, Sr.**

## 2 BIG WEEKEND AUCTIONS

**SAT., OCTOBER 28 at 9:00 A.M. • SAT., NOVEMBER 4 at 10:00 A.M.**

SELLING ON  
**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2017 at 9:00 A.M.**  
**ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES • GLASSWARE**  
**OLD HAND TOOLS • GUNS • PERSONAL PROPERTY**  
LOCATION: 104 MAGNOLIA STREET, TOMPKINSVILLE, KY. SIGNS POSTED.



### ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES - GLASSWARE:

2 Aladdin oil lamps; several other oil lamps; punch bowl; several cake stands & plates; #3 crock churn; 2 #8 crocks; smaller crocks; 2 Monarch view finders w/Keystone View Co. pictures; old scales; lots of ceramic & glass shoes; lots of Ky. Derby glasses; berry bowl; depression glassware (clear, green, pink, bowls, platters, compotes, plates, egg plates); lots of "Made in Japan" items; salt holders w/ spoons; bells; figurines; ladies head vases; lots of Fenton (vases, bowls, compotes, white hobnail, etc); old children's books; perfume bottles; Mickey Mouse figurine; old hand fans; lots of old jewelry; old gloves; antique purses & hats; hat boxes; old bonnets; collection of whiskey bottles & soft drink bottles; lots of bird figurines; glass vases; old metal boxes; metal tea pot; milk can; old pitchers; vinegar cruets; Sunflower carnival glassware; 8 pink Fostoria glasses; amber Fostoria glasses; pitcher & bowl; Pearl Harbor glasses; old salt & pepper shakers; several Pinky & Blue Boy pictures (different sizes); lots of old pictures & prints (Dexter Bowles, CJ Rowe, Don Enzor, RN Karl); old black Doctor's bag; old baskets; cast iron-skillet, cornbread skillet, bean pot, sm. covered pot, covered pot; lots of Moon & Star (purple, green, amber, blue, red); Ruby Red Anchor glass; green & 2 white hens on nest; white hobnail; lots of milk glass; old pitchers; several sets of dessert dishes; pink glassware (bowls, plates, glasses); ceramic pitchers; perfume bottles; several dresser sets; ceramic dolls; powder dishes; preserve stand; bells; figurines; vases; blue hobnail glasses; spoon holder; 8 Monroe Co. Sesqui-Centennial plates; old marbles; Fire King; clear,



### GLASSWARE:

blue, amber, & green jars w/glass lids; old Fiesta dishes; white enamelware; lots of old records; old globe; old oil lanterns; Big Red NCAA Champs bottle; "The Lightning Adding Machine"; Chalk horse; green & clear fence insulators; metal hotdog machine; Fire King; Die Cast Metal '32 Ford Montgomery Ward bank (in original box); other Die Cast old truck banks; cast iron toy riding tractor; old Tonka Toys; Old Western Comic ZigZag toy train; toy tractor; metal toys; reel lawn mower; 2 old RC & Coke cases; metal yard chairs; old meat grinder; old hand tools; old wood plane; old protractor; wooden handled wrenches; and many many other items too numerous to mention.

### GUNS:

4 Cap & Ball rifles; powder horn; leather powder horn; Malby Henley & Co 32 Cal. revolver; and a Revelation BB gun.

### PERSONAL PROPERTY:

8-place setting Harmony House Rosebud china w/serving pcs; 46" Emerson flat screen color TV; lots of lamps; decorative mirrors; clothes rack; sets of stoneware; sets of dishes; silverware; Corningware; lots of bird figurines; pots & pans; canister set; lots of bird figurines; microwave; food chopper; coffee pot; sm. Elements TV; lots of flower arrangements; cookbooks; children's books; metal trays; glass trays; silver pieces; pole lamps; fireplace set; lots of Christmas, Easter, & Halloween decorations; Twin ceramic heater; collection of bird pictures; Oreck & Bissell vacuums; lots of flower stands; ice cream dishes; Princess House; Pyrex; sets of glasses; 6 concrete flower pots; dishes of all kinds; lots of watermelon items; lots of jars; and many other items.



### TOOLS:

2 Black & Decker weed eaters; ice coolers; push mower; hand power tools; electric grinder; carpenter tools; hand tools; electric chain saw; fishing equipment, rod & reel; leaf blower; hedge trimmers; electric lawn mower; lots of nuts & bolts; log chains; hand grinder; hand sprayer; pipe cutter; vise; battery charger; and many, many other items.

### TERMS OF SALE:

Cash or approved check on the day of the sale with proper ID. Buyers must register with a driver's license to bid on the merchandise. All items will be selling "As Is" with no warranties expressed or implied and all bidders should satisfy themselves as to the description and quality of each item. There will be a 6% Kentucky sales tax collected on all purchases unless buyer presents a Kentucky resale certificate.

### AGENT'S NOTE:

Proffitt Real Estate Agency is honored to have been chosen by the Helen McCauley Heirs to conduct this auction which includes a lifetime collection. We will be having a sale on Saturday, October 28 and another auction on November 4. At this 1st auction, we will be selling a large selection of antiques & collectibles, glassware, prints, household items, and a lot of unique and hard to find items. The list we have prepared in this ad is just a partial list and we have lots more. All items have been well taken care of. There is something for everyone at this auction, so come on out and be with us on Saturday, October 28 at 9:00 a.m. for a fun day at our auction.

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