

# E. Norm Flayderman

(July 1928-May 2013)

Norm Flayderman was born July 11, 1928 to Benjamin and Shirley Flayderman. His life's vocation was in part predetermined by his father's and grandfather's vocations. In the early 20th century, his grandfather became a renown antique dealer, later, his father the same.

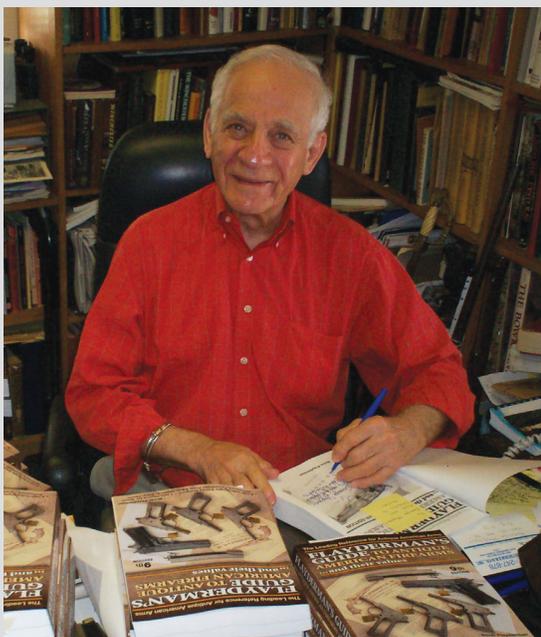
Norm graduated from Boston University and distinguished himself in the service of his country by serving in 3 separate branches of the military before attending college! In 1952, he began what was to become one of the most famous antiques and firearms businesses in the world. Within a few short years, he began the production of his renowned arms catalogs, producing over 118 consecutive editions (from 1954-1998). After which he began his online business which continues to this day under the supervision of his wife Ruthie, his daughter Judy, his son John and longtime executive assistant Victoria Turvey.

Norm was a passionate collector and dealer throughout his entire life. He was a major player at shows and gun events throughout the country, while acquiring items for his collections. His most notable purchase was made early in his career. It was the famed Philip Medicus collection of rare American swords considered to be the largest and finest ever assembled (over 800 pieces). The \$20,000 asking price in 1955 was more than what most leading antique dealers, at that time, would consider paying. A gutsy move certainly on young Norman's behalf.

Norm was a great scholar and offered a number of definitive books, but is best known for *Flayderman's Guide to Antique American Firearms and Their Values* which he began over 33 years ago. His guide today is considered the foremost of its type on antique firearms currently in production. Norm also produced numerous articles and was a tremendous supporter



*Norm Flayderman & Baron*



of scholarly publications by others. Additionally, he authored forty-one forewords for noteworthy books on arms and militaria. Norm shared his collection with major institutions and museums all over North America, but also of great note was his willingness to share his prolific knowledge with all other passionate collectors, dealers and scholars. Norm had a brilliant mind, was a great husband and father, and was known for the generous sharing of his knowledge within the industry. He was an extraordinarily astute businessman, but more importantly he was an honest businessman and an admirable one. Norm's stature as the most iconic figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the field of antique firearms, is well deserved and most certainly a legacy that will live on for many years to come. If Norm is watching we know he would be proud that Ruthie, Judy, John and Victoria have committed to continuing the name, the reputation and the business of N. Flayderman and Co. into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's important to note, that the collection of arms offered in this catalog were a special private collection of Norm's and not part of the "business inventory." If you check the N. Flayderman and Co. online catalog today, you will see that the spirit of Norm Flayderman and his business is still alive and very active, as it had been in Norm's lifetime.

I first learned of Norm Flayderman sometime in the late 1960s to early 1970s when I was just beginning in the antique business. I stumbled upon one of his fabulous catalogs, and at the time, there was a dearth of price guides or information about the value of antique arms, etc. These detailed catalogs replete with prices, were a great source of knowledge for me as I'm sure many others. In the years to come, I saw Norm's name and heard stories of he and his business on numerous occasions. I eventually learned that his business for many years, had been managed out of his palatial early 19<sup>th</sup> century early American mansion, in Kennebunk, ME, (less than 2 hours from where I live). When I began to specialize in the auction of antique firearms, Norm Flayderman and his prolific scholarly writings began to impact me and my business even more. (How could you deal with antique firearms and not regularly use the Flayderman price guide?) Norm and I communicated on various occasions in the years to come and I was always impressed by what a gentleman he was and how generous he was with his knowledge. Eventually, I became great friends with the immortal Jack Malloy, another icon in the firearms world. Rarely was I in the presence of Jack that Norm's name did not come up on one or more occasions. After learning what great friends Jack and Norm were, and having such high regard for Jack, further esteemed Norm into my mind. I knew Jack Malloy to be a most honorable, passionate and scholarly businessman in the world of firearms, and if Norm was his best friend, I reasoned "he must be cut from the same cloth". A few years back, I called Norm and made an appointment to come meet him. It was not so much an attempt to do business as it was to get to know someone I had developed great admiration for over the years. True to my expectations, my first meeting with Norm was a wonderful experience. His knowledge, his passion, his business acumen, were all immediately apparent. As I walked around his house and office, I, like so many before me, was enthralled with the images displayed of him, his great friends, Jack Malloy and Peter Tillou as they hunted and fished in some of the most exotic spots in the world. I learned about Norm's patriotic fervor and how he had served his country in 3 branches of the military. I was in awe of his story of the Medicus collection, this young upstart made a decision to do something none of the other great dealers of the day dared to do. Pay the unbelievable sum of \$20,000 for a collection of antique American swords. Norm explained to me that he went to various members of his family soliciting the financial backing for his endeavor. Their generosity and confidence financed him to acquire what today is considered the most important collection of early American swords ever assembled. Norm's business model was considerably different from what I had developed over the years or the approach frequently used by most dealers. If I invested a large amount of money in a collection, I wanted to recoup my money as fast as possible. The first I'd market would be the most expensive items relying on the lesser items for my profit. Norm, did this exactly the opposite, he wisely sold the lesser items to recoup his investment holding the great rarities until a point in time when the demand in value had escalated enormously. In doing so, many of the swords from the Medicus collection he eventually sold, each individually realized greater than what he had paid for the original entire collection of 800 pieces.



*Young Norm Flayderman in May of 1956, as he was portrayed in Life Magazine amongst a "field" of American swords from the renowned Philip Medicus collection.*

In March of this year we sold Norm's personal collection of rare antique firearms. Today we are honored to offer these spectacular Civil War Recruitment Posters from Norm's private collection. Included are some extremely rare & desirable examples. We hope you will enjoy them.

I miss Norm very much, I wish I had met him many years earlier and spent more time with him. His legacy and iconic statue will certainly persevere for years to come. One of his greatest qualities to me, however was the admirable and honorable way in which he conducted business and it is my hope and aspiration to conduct my business now and in the future as Norm did.

Sincerely,

Jim Julia