

# Antique Week

THE WEEKLY ANTIQUE AUCTION & COLLECTING NEWSPAPER

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APRIL 28, 2020



Above: With a little water and some TLC, these privy-found bottles appear as if they are new. The bottle tops are not vintage, but these bottles from the late 1800s certainly are. (photo submitted)

## Digging into old privies can lead to treasured bottles

BY DOUG GRAVES

There are many ways to add to a collection; but one of the most interesting may be going out and digging it up.

Pottery and bottle enthusiasts have engaged in the activity of digging for their treasures; but bottle lovers seem to do the most digging.

“Anyone can find rare bottles at flea markets, yard sales, antique shops or even bottle shows, but why pay for them when you can find them at no cost with a little research and some manual labor,” said Mike Binkley, who has been at this search-and-find practice for nearly two decades. “Privy digging is the most inexpensive and gratifying



SEE BOTTLES ON PAGE 16

Found in an excavated privy near Baltimore was this Lorrimer Medical Institute medicine bottle (1885-1890) with an uncommon hand-tooled ring top. The bottle stands 6 1/2 inches and is of deep amber color. It is rated in excellent condition. (Mike Binkley photo)

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# Tiger maple cupboard roared to \$9,790 at Lincoln Way auction

BY PETE PRUNKL

BUCYRUS, Ohio — Thanks to Dionne Warwick we know the way to San Jose. But do you know the way to Bucyrus, Ohio? The central Ohio town is home to Lincoln Way Auction and auctioneer Terry Agin made sure anyone who attended his quarterly sales knew how to get there. Directions from every direction were on his website. Agin's spacious gallery is south of Cleveland and north of Columbus and on Jan. 26 all roads led to Bucyrus.

This 400-lot sale was "like the old days," said Agin. "Prices were good, onsite attendance was 150 and there was lots of action." Like the 80s, this sale was free from internet interference. There were onsite, phone and absentee bidders, but no one in their pajamas was bidding from their laptop.

The sale's top lot gave hope to those waiting for the furniture market to recover from the Great Recession. An elegant tiger maple cupboard that belonged in the dining room, not a country kitchen, was the star of the sale. With two glass doors above, two blind doors below and a small drawer in between, the stunning cupboard sold for \$9,790. All selling prices include a 10 percent buyer's premium.

Of the four reverse painted lamps in the sale, only one had a lighted shade and base and that shade was reason alone to travel to Bucyrus. The metalwork that divided the shade's six glass segments came to a point at the rim giving it a batwing appearance. The attractive table lamp sold for \$2,860.

Below: The figures on this Ansonia Crystal Palace No. 1 are referred to as hunter and fisher. The movement is an eight-day bell and strike. Sitting on a walnut base, the 17-inch domed clock sold for \$1,980.



Above: This Victorian parlor set of matching love seat, armchair and three side chairs was one of the sale's bargains at \$385.

A hanging lamp with at least 100 prisms, elaborate pierced metalwork, a little cup for burnt matches and a pair of superbly painted owls on the shade, easily made it to the sale's top five. The massive lamp, now electrified, brought \$1,815.

The sale featured dozens of fancy metal clocks that may have been the center piece for a mantel garniture. But the top clock was a circa 1880 Ansonia Crystal Palace clock with double statues on a walnut base under an arched dome. It sold for \$1,980.

Glass, metal and wood were not the only materials that sold well. A plastic Pabst Blue Ribbon electric bar display sign from the 1960s came complete with an antique automobile with turning wheels and rocking chassis. It sold for \$797.

There were a few bargains. A full-size brass bed sold for a mere \$165. "Everyone wants new queen-sized beds," said Agin. A Victorian upholstered loveseat and four chairs in excellent condition brought \$385, an indication, said Agin, that young people today are not decorating with antique upholstered furniture. To check on the next sale at Lincoln Way Auction, visit their website at [www.lincolnwayauction.com](http://www.lincolnwayauction.com) or call (419) 562-4363.

Below: Meant to sit on your neighborhood bar and amuse the patrons, this Pabst electrified and animated display was destined for someone's man cave. It sold for \$797.



Above: The sale's top lot was a stunning tiger maple one-piece step-back cupboard. A masterpiece of simplicity, it sold for \$9,790.

Below: A quick internet search failed to find any reverse painted lamps with this type of batwing shade. Both the shade and base were illuminated. It was the best lamp in the sale at \$2,860.



## AntiqueWeek

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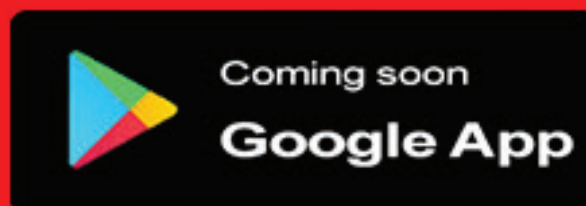
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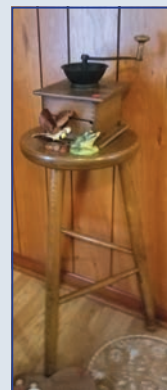
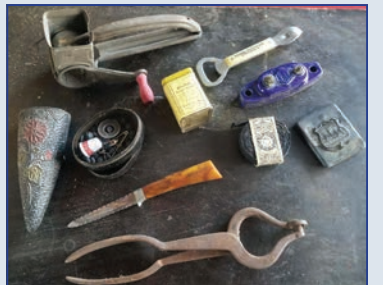
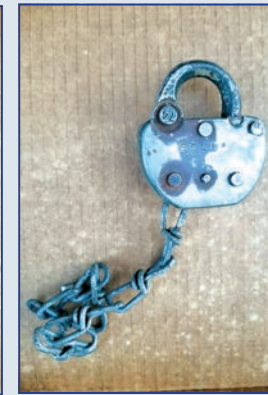
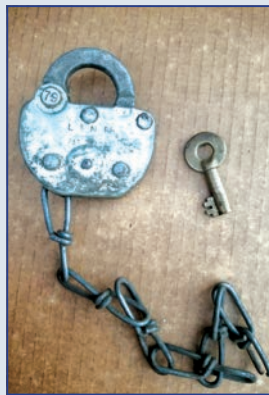
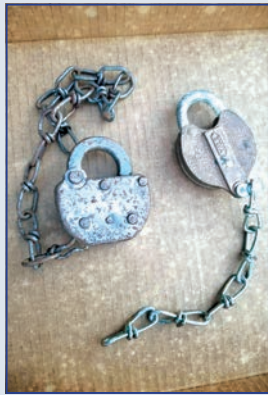
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# Cowan's auction proves new bidders willing to try online auctions

BY SUSAN EMERSON NUTTER

CINCINNATI, Ohio — Want to gauge the staying power of your company? Host an auction amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and check the results.

Cowan's Auctions, LLC, had their March 19-20 Americana and Country Americana as normally planned, though nothing seemed normal when the auction took place. Still, with several online bidding platforms in place, this event went off without a hitch and, in the end, the effects of COVID-19 did not devastate the outcome.

When asked about the circumstances surrounding the March event, Wes Cowan, Vice Chair

Hindman LLC; Principal Auctioneer, Cowan's Auctions, LLC, explained, "Overall we were very pleased with the sale. The sell-through rate was 85 percent. To put this in perspective, this was higher than our last Decorative Arts auction in September 2019, when we achieved an 80 percent sell-through rate, keeping in mind that bidding for all of



Above: These six cobalt glass vessels including four bottles, a carafe with a stopper, and a lidded jar surprised when the lot sold for \$5,938.



Right: Bringing \$18,750 this circa 1835 folk art, oil on canvas portrait of Jonathan Southwick in Red with Hoop Toy had an image of the subject in the background playing with the hoop being held in the portrait.

our auctions opens at one half the low estimate for the lot."

Concerning the lack of an in-house audience, Cowan states, "We suspect that not having live gallery bidders probably did have an impact, but the sale was carried live on four

different platforms: Cowanslive; Liveauctioneers; Bidsquare and Invaluable. Bidding was active on Cowan's Live bidding platform with sales of \$136,000. The combined total for the other three platforms was \$182,000. Prior to the auction, our marketing department sent multiple emails encouraging customers to participate online through our bidding platform, and I think the results suggest our efforts worked."

Cowan added, "There weren't any real 'blockbusters' in the sale, but \$481,000 for the two days was respectable." The highest priced lot; the *Portrait of Jonathan Southwick* failed to sell, but sold post-auction for \$18,750 which includes the buyer's premium, as do all prices listed here.

The circa 1835 oil on canvas *Portrait of Jonathan Southwick in Red with Hoop Toy* had a wonderful hidden detail. The full-length portrait shows Jonathan dressed in red, holding a hoop and stick. Through the window, the artist painted Jonathan running along the sidewalk playing with the same

hoop. Cowan's catalog listing notes, "A search of birth records for 'Jonathan Southwick' discovered one born in Bolton, Mass., in 1831, and another born in Danvers, in 1841."

Several paintings by Alfred Montgomery, (1857-1922) also sold this day with *Still Life with Corn*, a late 19th or early 20th century oil on canvas making \$5,938.

"Montgomery is known for these still life's focusing on corn," Cowan explained. "The Montgomery paintings we offered were property of a Midwestern consignors who had recently moved to Texas, and were refocusing their collection. We have two additional Montgomery paintings from the same consignment that will be sold in our Fall Americana auction."

Two Regina music boxes fared well. A Regina Upright 15½ inch disc music player with the serial number 67001 sold with 29 discs for \$9,375, as did a Regina Corona floor model 27 inch disc changer music cabinet. Cowan explained, "The Regina boxes were from a collector of advertising from Dayton, Ohio, who was downsizing. Both Reginas sold to private collectors."

SEE COWANS ON PAGE 8



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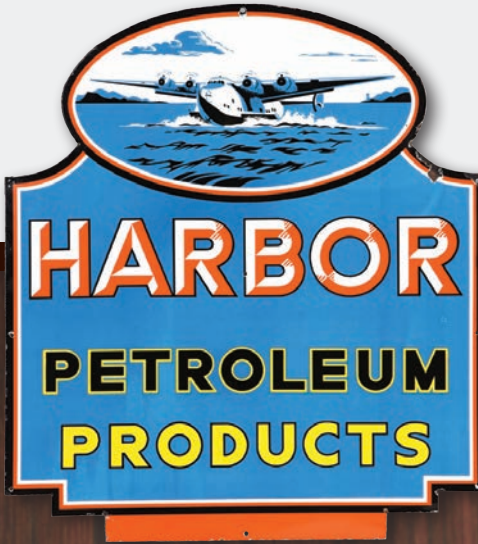
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# Cowans

FROM PAGE 5

Where furniture offered was concerned, "The softest area of the sale was formal period furniture," Cowan noted. "Given the current market (absent COVID-19) we were probably a bit too aggressive on some of the pieces that had been refinished, or were otherwise not desirable forms. Frankly, I think you'll find we fared about as well as expected."

A circa 1815 Massachusetts Federal figured mahogany desk-and-bookcase by Thomas Needham having a bottom drawer behind the prospect door with a label reading Cabinet Work of all kinds / Made & Sold by / Thomas Needham, / Charter Street, Salem, sold within estimate at \$2,625. And though not formal period furniture, a 19th century red-painted and punched tin decorated step-back cupboard sold above estimate making \$3,625.

Smaller decorative items had a wonderful showing. A Bristol, Rhode Island school, 19th century pictorial needlework sampler with text reading "What conscience dictates to be done / Or warns me not to do / That teach me more than Hell to shun / That more than Heav'n pursue" sold for \$6,875. The dark ground of this sampler made the colorful, intricate needlework pop.

A coastal New England, mid-19th century copper and brass, full-bodied, fishmonger's trade sign made of heavy gauge copper with forged brass fins and hanger rings and leaded seams was 42 inches long and sold for \$4,688.

And a pair of 10½ inch high, carved and painted wood horses made to display Baker blankets sold together for \$3,125. Cowan said, "These were probably made as counter-top displays for a general store or saddle shop specializing in horse tack. The Baker company of Providence, R.I., has been making the same blankets since 1866. Despite the fact that each horse suffered losses (their legs were made in two pieces originally, and both had lost their lower portions), the horses were still charming."



Above: Selling for \$2,688, this 19th century painted and carved "flying horse" gameboard's motif was possibly inspired by the flying horse weathervanes produced during the second-half of the 19th century.

The second day of this two-day auction; the Country Americana session went off as Cowan's had expected. "This portion of the auction was comprised primarily of good, collectible smalls, many estimated very attractively. We've seen small, easily shipped items to hold their ground against a softening market even before COVID-19."

One lot of note was the offering made up of six, 19th/20th century cobalt glass vessels that included four bottles, a carafe with a stopper, and a lidded jar. Estimated to bring between \$200 and \$400, the group realized \$5,938. "Two pieces in the group – the lidded sugar bowl and the cruet – drove the price," Cowan noted.

Summarizing sales that took place, Cowan was pleased to see new bidders participating. "We found of the 485 bidders who participated, 33 percent were new to Cowan's. About the same percentage of winning bidders were new to Cowan's, as well. Overall; considering the time we held the sale, we were quite pleased, and are already building for our fall sale."

Contact: (513) 871-1670  
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Above: A bid of \$4,688 won this Coastal New England, mid-19th century copper and brass, full-bodied, fishmonger's trade sign; possibly representing an Atlantic salmon. It was 42 inches long and 14 inches high.

Below: Circa 1900, this pair of carved and painted wood counter top display horses made to display Baker blankets, probably from the S.W. Baker Company showroom, sold for \$3,125.



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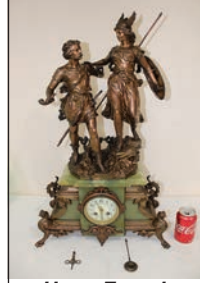
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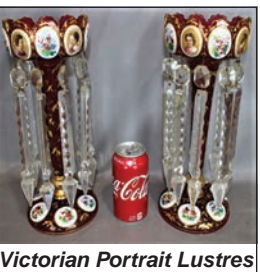
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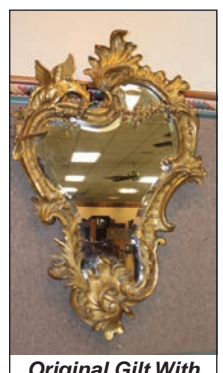
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# Musical boxes play sweetly to bidders at John Moran auction

BY CAROLE DEUTSCH

MONROVIA, Calif. – An outstanding selection of mechanical music boxes, from the collection of Ralph and Gloria Schack, claimed a high percentage of top lots at the John Moran Traditional Collector auction. The highly anticipated sale did not disappoint. Although the music boxes were the standout segment of the sale, other unique articles of special interest from well-known collectors also brought strong prices.

est because the lifetime collection was known worldwide. Not only were the items selective, but pristinely well-maintained, and in working condition as well,” said Roland Rynkiewicz, Vice President, Furniture & Decorative Arts Director. “The Schacks were long time members of the Music Box Society International, which is the premier organization for people interested in antique and contemporary mechanical music machines, whose origin predates electrically ampli-

“The music boxes drew so much inter-

SEE MORAN ON PAGE 12



Above: The sum of \$118,750 was achieved for this 1961 Mercedes-Benz 190SL Convertible with 38,777 miles.



Above: This M. Welte & Sohn style 3 "Cottage" orchestrion, from 1886 topped the sale when it realized \$237,500.



Left: A captivating Charles Bruguier vermeil and enamel fusee bird music box from the first half of the 19th century flew past the high estimate of \$15,000 to achieve an impressive \$28,750.

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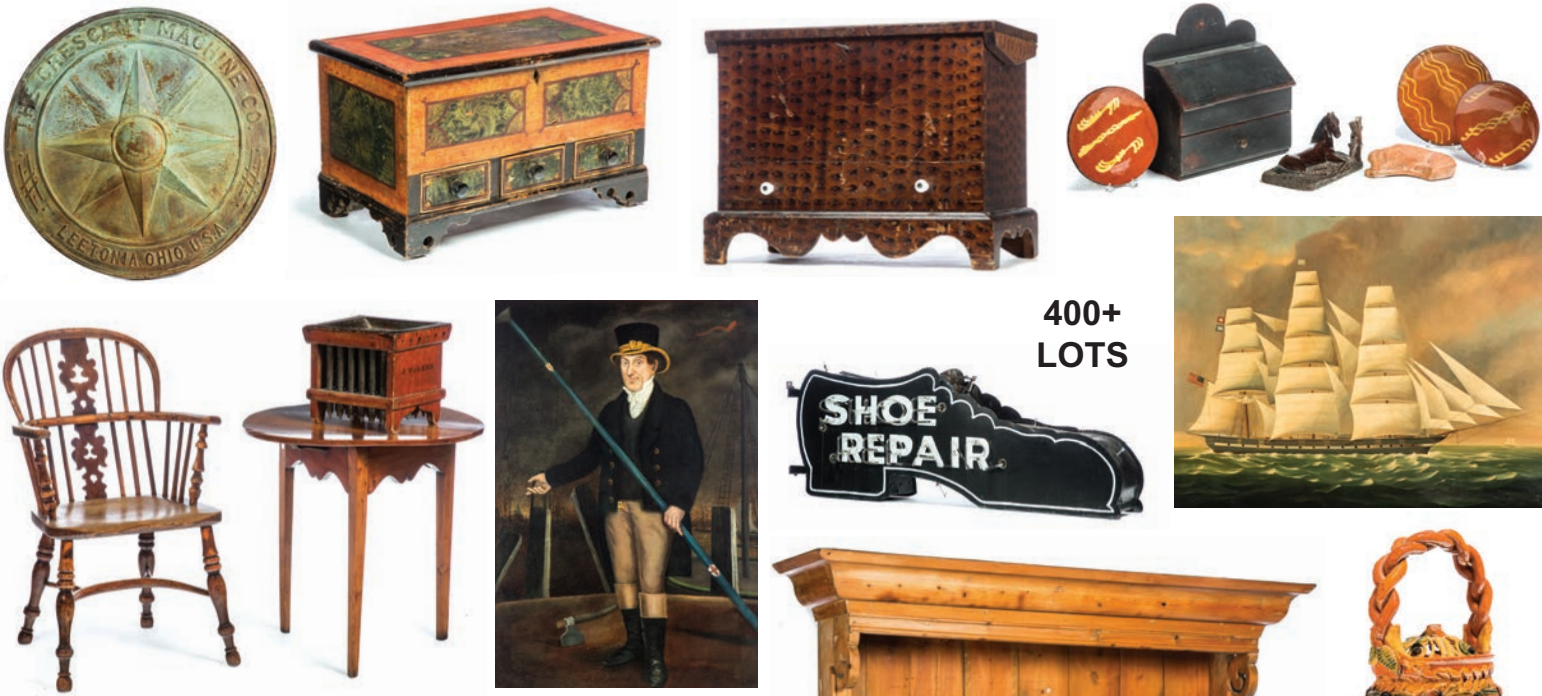
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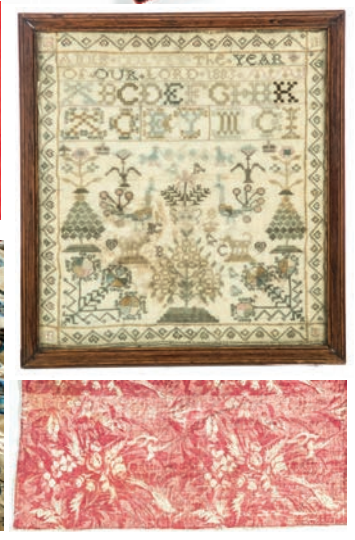
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# Moran

FROM PAGE 10

fied music. Ralph Schack was actually the president of MBSI for a time. His son came to us with approximately 30 iconic pieces that attracted local, national, and international collectors, and everything sold except for one item.”

The most coveted piece, a M. Welte & Sohn style 3 “Cottage” orchestrion, was cataloged as having “an impressive sound, evoking the feel of an orchestra.” The large 9 ½ foot tall piece was almost 6 feet wide and over 3 feet deep and housed in a wood case with a glass viewing window, creating an imposing presentation. The case had a pierced spindle gallery, a molded cornice, and five gilt scroll-work glazed-panel doors. The mechanism was fitted with a patented pneumatic system with 75-key paper rolls playing a 44-note range with 134 pipes. It was made in 1886, refurbished in 1901, and sold with 80 music rolls under aggressive bidding to a European buyer for \$237,500.

A Mermod Freres Swiss cylinder music box from the third quarter of the 19th century was made in a walnut veneer case with ebony and satinwood trim and mounted on a five drawer cabinet that stored 18 additional cylinders. It had six airs and a lever wind and brought \$40,000 under active bidding.

One of the charmers of the sale was a captivating Charles Bruguier vermeil and enamel fusee bird music box from the first half of the 19th century. The silver box was a mere 3 ¾ wide and showed an enamel coastal scene on the lid which enclosed a singing bird automaton. The work was signed in script ‘Charles Bruguier Geneve per au grande’ and flew past the high estimate of \$15,000 to achieve an impressive \$28,750.

Select items from the maritime and China trade collection of Richard Kelt-

on included an exceptional Lao Yan Qing He silver and gold teapot from the late 19th to the early 20th century. The gourd-form teapot had a yellow gold handle that was at least 18k gold. It stood 14 ¾ inches high and more than doubled the high estimate when a bidding war erupted and it realized \$13,750, against a \$3,000 to \$5,000 estimate.

Another standout item from the Kelt-on Collection was an American John Duplee quadrant backstaff from 1754. It was made of carved and shaped hardwood with hand-carved measurements. The piece was signed and dated, was in overall good condition, and sold for \$8,750, outdistancing the presale estimate of \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The sum of \$10,000 was paid for a painting by Antonio Jacobsen (1850-1921 West Hoboken, NJ), of a Kroonland steamship, 1905. It depicted the ship in a choppy sea foreground and a dark cloudy sky background. The oil on canvas laid to canvas was signed, dated, and inscribed with the artist’s address. It measured 30 inches wide by 18 inches high and was derived from the Kelton collection.

Autos were also represented, and the headliner among them was a 1961 Mercedes-Benz 190SL Convertible, which dazzled auction previewers. It sported a black exterior with black leather interior, had a 1.9L/4 inline four-cylinder gasoline engine, and sold with the original Mercedes-Benz service book, a radio instruction manual, and catalog for \$118,750. The mileage gauge showed 38,777.

Contact: (626) 793-1833,  
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An exceptional Lao Yan Qing He silver and gold teapot from the late 19th to the early 20th century realized \$13,750 against a \$3,000 to \$5,000 estimate.



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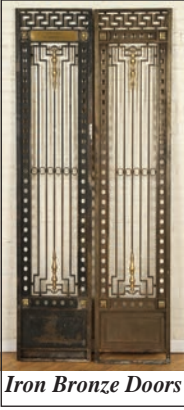
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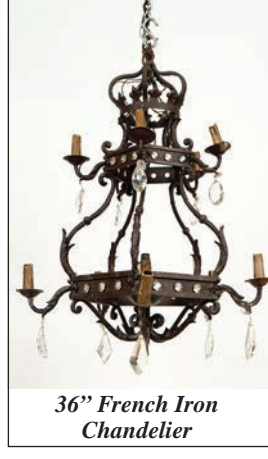
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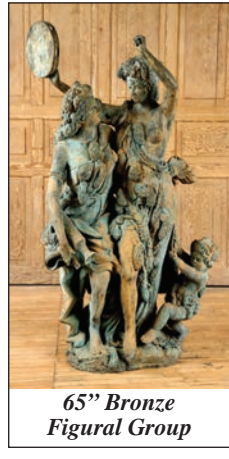
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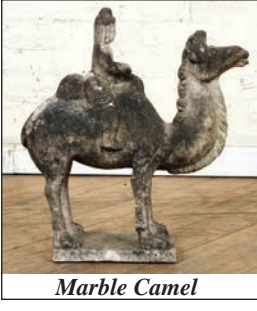
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## Bottles

FROM PAGE 1

way to find old bottles and you might even find other artifacts from a time period from the past."

Prior to the 1920, almost every house would have had a privy, or outhouse. Because there was no trash collection, many things such as empty bottles, broken dishes and worn out shoes were thrown down the privy. When the outhouse became full, the homeowner would dig a new one.

Binkley, of Delaware, Ohio, was among those who attended The Central Ohio Antique Bottle Club's 50th Annual Show & Sale held in Columbus, Ohio, on Feb. 9.

"I love attending these shows and meeting other collectors and sellers, and I've crossed paths with several privy hunters like myself here at this Columbus show," Binkley said.

According to Binkley, researching a potential area is the first move. He suggests going to a local library, which will provide information such as plot maps and insurance maps. City directories can offer information as well, such as who the person was and where they settled.

"In Indiana and Ohio there are family farms honored as Century Farms," Binkley said. "There are even farms that have been in the same family for 150 and 200 years and these states provide records of who these families are and in which county they reside in."

"I've had success in heading to houses that were built between the 1800s and 1880s as these are good years for old glass."

Binkley admonishes to always gain permission from the landowner before digging. And as a little enticement, perhaps offer to share some of the find with the landowner.

"I tell people I meet that bottle enthusiasts like myself who dig into a privy are just like those with metal detectors looking for coins," Binkley said. "And just like those with metal detectors, I've come up with old marbles, ivory toothbrushes, an old pistol, porcelain dolls and much more. Privies were the spot the people discarded just about anything and atop the list are old medicine bottles, bitters bottles, milk bottles and others."

"Contrary to what many believe, there is no bad smell, germs or bacterial to worry about," Binkley said. "Mother Nature has turned all the biological contents back into pure earth compost."

Upon gaining permission to dig on one's property, the real work begins. Bottle hunters like Binkley look for slight depressions in the ground where the pit has sunk over the years. It was customary, he says, that homeowners dug new holes after 10 to 15 years as many privies has wood-lined pits.

**Below:** Yep, there are many old privies (or outhouses) still in existence. Modern plumbing made these structures obsolete. (photo submitted)



**Above Left:** Very good condition for a dug specimen is this L.Q.C. Wishart's Pine Tree Tar Cordial (Philadelphia 1859). This yellow olive bottle stands 7 3/4 inches tall. (photo submitted). **Above Right:** Privy digs can be fun yet laborious. Experts stress the importance of gaining permission of the land owner before beginning any privy dig. (photo submitted)



Others were lined with stone and oftentimes brick.

"The probe is the main tool in privy digging," Binkley said. "We make our probes out of spring steel. You begin by slowly sticking the probe in a likely spot. If it goes down easily without much effort it may be a privy."

Binkley says most privies measured 3 1/2 by 3 1/2 feet, and were roughly 5 feet deep. They also included a cap, a six-inch layer of clay, ash or sand. The purpose of the cap was to stop the smell of the pit.

Once approaching a four foot depth, hand shovels and other small hand tools take the place of shovels.

"Now the fun begins," Binkley said. "Digging from this point on has to be slow or you'll be breaking glass. Once the bottom is felt it's time to fill the hole back in. Keep in mind to keep the owner happy with a clean fill and to make sure it's level. We even take the time to plant new grass seed as a way of thanking the owner."

Mike Schaff, of West Lafayette, Ind., has a vintage bottle collection numbering around 1,000 bottles. Half, he says, came by way of the privy, or outhouse. He also has luck in his search when knowing where dump sites were located.

"Most cities and towns started having dump sites in the 1870s and were getting more popular by the 1890s," Schaff said. "The dump was usually within a mile from the city or town. If you can locate the original dump site you'll likely find the oldest bottles. Many times they were located at the end of a field,

**Below:** Excavated from a 5-foot privy was this Ayer's Hair Vigor bottle from the 1880s. This deep cobalt bottle measures 6 5/8 inches and sold for \$75 at this year's Central Ohio Antique Bottle Club's 50th Annual Show and Sale. (photo submitted)



just inside a wooded area, or ravine.

"But my best finds come from old farm homesteads as they often had a fruit cellar. Under an old farmhouse porch is another good spot. Many old barns had a ramp made out of dirt to enter the barn. I've dug old bottles on the sides of these ramps."

Both men attest to have excavated many valuable whiskey bottles, old flasks and bitters bottles through their efforts. Binkley unearthed a deep olive Horse flask, dated 1830-1844, with an open pontil scar. The day of this show he sold it for \$550.

Other unearthed treasures from Binkley include an early (1820-1840) Columbia-Eagle B pint flask, which he sold for \$450; several E.J.F. Brands, olive green gin bottles (circa 1865), appraised at \$150 apiece; a pair of Pontiled Hunter/Fisherman Calabash flasks (circa 1845-1850), asking price of \$125 per bottle; and a trio of large quart Schnapps in a limey olive green bottle (circa 1870), valued at \$90 per bottle.

"Of course, I've mostly run across medicine bottles from the late 1800s, ink bottles, poison bottles, food jars, bitters bottles and soda bottles of all shapes, sizes and colors," Binkley said.

Schaff's collection is filled with mostly medicine bottles, taken from many agriculture privies in western New York, like a 7-inch Lyon's/Kathairon pontiled hair bottle from 1850, with distinct embossing on all four sides (sold that day for \$150); a Smith Green Mountain Renovator bottle of deep root beer amber hue, an 8 3/4 inch bottle with a hand tooled double collar (valued at \$85); and several 5 1/4-inch Kaesbey & Mattison Co, Chemists of Ambler, Pa., bottles of medium sapphire blue, valued at \$25 apiece.

"Part of the thrill of the dig is that first look of the bottle's shape and color," Binkley said. "Bottles that are clear, amber or aqua have the least value while those that are black, teal blue, green, olive or milk glass carry medium value. When we dig up glass that is pur-

ple, yellow green, cobalt blue or puce we know we have something special. Colors are appeal to most all collectors."

Until around 1850, bottles were mouthblown through a blowpipe and finished with a process known as empon-tilling, where a separate rod tipped with a hot glass was attached to the bottom of a vessel so the blowpipe could be removed from the bottle's top. A completed bottle was finally broken from the pontil rod, leaving a so-called "pontil scar," which could be removed by carefully grinding the bottom.

"Seams and pontil marks are two of the ways you can determine a bottle's age," Schaff said. "The pontil mark is the mark at the bottom. Open pontil bottles were made from the 1600s to about 1855. The iron pontil bottle came about between 1840 and 1865. Smooth-based bottles were made just after the Civil War to about World War I (between 1865 and 1917). The automatic bottle machine (ABM) bottles were made from 1914 onward. Collectors often seek particular pontil marks and rare colors. And, as always, condition is paramount."

Binkley, Schaff and a dozen other privy diggers shared stories as well as tips at this year's bottle show in Columbus. All agreed that it makes finding a vintage bottle much more rewarding when you've put a little effort into finding them.

"The bottles that we find at our sites tell a lot about the people who used them," Schaff said. "The medicine bottles they bought and discarded show the diseases these people caught and tried to cure. Glass inkwells in the pits indicated their owners could read and write. A large number of liquor bottles strongly suggest they sometimes drank to excess. A stash of certain medicine bottles hint that the owners had an unhealthy taste for opiates."

Schaff suggests anyone wanting to venture into privy digging first go to [www.bottlebooks.com](http://www.bottlebooks.com) and purchase a copy of the book *The Secrets of Privy Digging* by John Odell.

**Below:** Privy digging can result in finding not only bottles but china, porcelain dolls, old combs, brushes, bones and much more. (Mike Schaff photo)





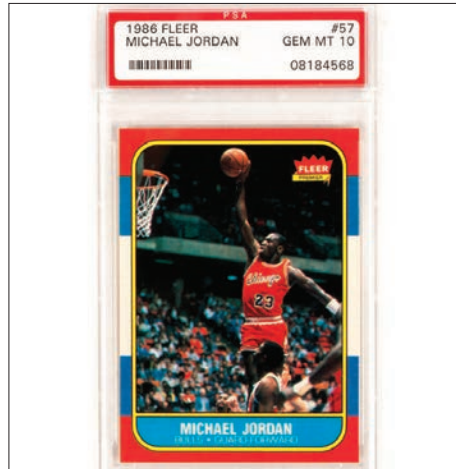
# COTTONE AUCTIONS

120 Court Street, Geneseo, New York 14454

## ONLINE: Art & Antiques Auction

Saturday, May 16 at 12PM EST.

1986 Fleer Michael Jordan #57  
PSA Gem Mint 10  
Est. \$25,000-\$35,000



Rolex Prince Imperial 14k Gold  
Pocket Watch & Fob  
Est. \$1,000-\$1,500



Austrian Cold-Painted Bronze Parrot  
Est. \$500-\$800



Tiffany Studios, New York Tulip Lamp  
Ht 23" Shade D 16"  
Est: \$8,000-\$12,000



Tiffany Studios, New York  
Daffodil Table Lamp  
Ht 23" Shade D 16"  
Est. \$25,000-\$35,000



Duffner Kimberly Water  
Lily Leaded Glass Table Lamp  
Ht 26" D 20"  
Est. \$5,000-\$8,000



Gorham Sterling Silver  
Kettle and Stand  
Est. \$600-\$800



E. F. Caldwell & Co. Lapis  
& Bronze Cabinet Clock  
Est. \$400-\$600



Fine Austrian Desk Cabinet  
Ht. 8 1/2" W 8 1/2" D 5 1/2"  
Est. \$1,000-\$1,500



Raphaël Nannini (Italian, 1870-1895) Bronze  
Ht 12"  
Est. \$500-\$800



Flemish Verdure Tapestry  
7'3" x 9'1"  
Est. \$2,000-\$4,000



Carl Hirschberg (American, 1854-1923)  
"A Thirsty Day"  
Oil on artist board. 1906.  
23 1/2" x 18"  
Est. \$1,000-\$1,500



Early Gustav Stickley Bookcase  
Original finish and hardware.  
Case: Ht. 56" W 54" D 13"  
Est. \$4,000-\$6,000



T. Harrington 5 Gallon  
Stoneware Star face Crock  
Est. \$3,000-\$5,000



Vintage Louis Vitton Wardrobe Trunk  
Ht. 44 1/2" W 21 1/2" x 16"  
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# Bidders will fuel up at Morphy Petroliana auction

DENVER, Pa. – For well over a century, the partnership of commercial art and groundbreaking technology has propelled American companies to global prominence by means of advertising signs. Whether depicting popular mascots like Mobil's Pegasus and Sinclair's Dino, or the neon-illuminated likenesses of automobiles and gasoline logos, signage is a classic form of Americana that shows off the best of our nation's ingenuity.

Advertising collectors from coast to coast, and beyond, revel in the opportunity to bid in Morphy Auctions' exciting Automobilia & Petroliana sales, the next of which is scheduled for May 13-14. While Morphy's continues to comply fully with state and federal guidelines for businesses during the pandemic, the auction is primed and ready to run with the precision of a finely tuned Ferrari. A beautiful, fully illustrated catalog appears on Morphy's website, and all forms of remote bidding are offered, including absentee, phone, and live online through Morphy Live. Private gallery previews are available by appointment only.

More than 800 premium-quality examples of gas, oil and automobile-related collectibles are lined up and waiting to

step into the spotlight on auction day. The breakdown includes 530 signs, 35 gas pumps, 46 gas pump globes, 51 cans, 30 license plates, and dozens of additional items.

Among the top signs in the sale is an elusive circa-1940s porcelain sign that advertises Harbor Petroleum Products, of Long Beach, Calif. Boasting 8.9+ condition, the eye-catching sign exhibits outstanding color and high gloss with an image of a Boeing 314 Clipper airplane coasting over water. Measuring 39 by 35 inches, it is estimated at \$40,000-\$60,000.

Another acknowledged rarity is 72-inch diameter double-sided round porcelain service station sign issued by Rebel Gasoline & Motor Oil. In 8.75+ condition, it bears the image of a Confederate Flag with the brand name "REBEL OIL" emblazoned on both sides.

The neon section is led by two outstanding signs, including one that promotes Pacific Bait & Tackle. With Art Deco styling and letters that illuminate in four colors on each side, the focal point is a painted, neon-outlined fish leaping from a neon-detailed body of water. This visually appealing West Coast sign is expected to reach \$15,000-\$25,000 at auc-

tion. The second highlight of the neon section is a 61- by 54-inch two-piece Shell Gasoline porcelain sign that retains all four original mounting brackets. Morphy Auctions' founder and president Dan Morphy observed, "This is one of the best examples of its type that we've ever offered. It would be very hard to upgrade." The pre-sale estimate is \$9,000-\$13,000.



Above: District of Columbia Inaugural license plate #10 from 1933, the first year plates were issued to commemorate presidential inaugurations (in this case, FDR's). Estimate \$7,500-\$12,500

A Sinclair Aircraft Gasoline one-piece baked globe with shadowed lettering and a crisp biplane graphic is set to soar on auction day. Finished in bright red and graded 8.0, it comes to auction with a \$6,000-\$10,000 estimate.

Additionally, a finely restored Wayne 50 illuminating showcase gas pump with Super Shell one-piece cast globe, Shell side decals, and central glass shelving is entered with a \$12,000-\$20,000 estimate.

Of the 30 license plates in the sale, the most valuable is a 1906 porcelain plate #1, the very first one issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Absolutely unique and authentic, it is accompanied by an extensive archive of supportive documentation. Morphy's catalog notes that only one or two true #1 license plates exist from any of the United States. An absolute gem, the Virginia plate could command \$20,000-\$40,000 at auction. Also noteworthy is District of Columbia Inaugural license plate #10 from 1933, the first year that DC issued plates to commemorate presidential inaugurations (in this case, FDR's).

Contact: (877) 968-8880, [www.morphyauctions.com](http://www.morphyauctions.com)



Above: Beautifully restored Wayne 50 illuminating showcase gas pump with Super Shell one-piece cast globe, Shell side decals, and glass shelving. Estimate \$12,000-\$20,000



Bright and colorful neon sign advertising Pacific Bait & Tackle with image of fish leaping from water, crate size: 76 x 104 x 24in. Estimate \$15,000-\$25,000



Outstanding Shell Gasoline two-piece porcelain neon sign with all four original mounting brackets.