

Antique or Junque: Reverse paintings popular a century ago

by Anne McCollam

Q: This is a framed, reverse painting that belonged to my grandmother around 1914. It is one of three that I inherited. The other two are scenes of the Titanic and a castle. The one in this photo measures approximately 30 by 18 inches. Other than some wear on the frame it is in good condition. I could not find an artist's signature.

REVERSE PAINTING - This reverse painting on glass was probably done in the late 1800s or early 1900s and would probably be worth from \$75 to \$125. CNS Photo. SYRACUSE CHINA MARK - The Syracuse China Co. has been in business in Syracuse, N.Y., since 1871. CNS Illustration. What can you tell me about my painting?

A: Reverse painting on glass is a technique that is traced back to the 1200s. Most paintings seen today were the work of artists in the late 1800s and early 1900s and usually not signed. Landscapes, portraits, floral arrangements and patriotic scenes were the subject of most paintings of that vintage.

The value of your painting would probably be \$75 to \$125.

Q: This mark can be seen on a set of dinnerware that belonged to my mother in the mid-1940s. The set is a service for 12 and each dish is decorated with pastel flowers and gold trim. What is the value of my set?

A: Syracuse China Co. has been in business in Syracuse, N.Y., since 1871. The "Federal Shape" was a line that can be recognized by the scalloped edges of the dishes and an ivory body. It was decorated with decals of an abundance of rose inspired designs. By 1970, cheap imports drove Syracuse China Co. out of the home china competition. They quickly found producing hotel, restaurant, commercial, and airline china to be more lucrative.

Your set of dinnerware would probably be worth \$400 to \$500.

Q: I have had a Little Sprout phone for more than 25 years. He stands approximately 13 inches tall and 9 inches wide. The figure is made of pea green hard plastic; his hair and clothes are dark green. He is holding the phone in his left hand and is in excellent condition.

Does my Little Sprout have any value or should I just give him away?

A: Your Little Sprout" phone was a novelty item sold by Pillsbury Co. in 1984. Little Sprout was introduced by Pillsbury in 1973 as a companion to the Green Giant animated figure. Little Sprout clocks, dolls, dishes, and radios were some of the novelties that were available.

Your phone would probably be worth \$100 to \$125.

Q: In the 1970s we bought an antique oak china cabinet for \$125. It has curved glass sides, a single glass door with a key lock, four glass shelves, ornate carving across the top, and paw feet. Rope-twisted columns flank the door. The oak is quarter-sawn, has the original finish and is in mint condition. It measures more than 5 feet high, 45 inches wide, and 20 inches deep.

When was it made and what is it worth today?

A: Judging from your clear and comprehensible description, you have a Victorian Golden Oak cabinet that was made around 1895.

Quarter-sawn oak logs are cut at the sawmill in quarters lengthwise forming pie shaped wedges then sliced across the growth rings. The rays that appear with this method are highly prized by collectors. Quarter-sawn oak is structurally stronger than plain-sawn, but is wasteful and more expensive. Quarter-sawn oak was also in demand by Arts and Crafts designers and manufacturers.

Your china cabinet would probably fetch \$1,500 to \$3,000 in an antiques shop.

Address your questions to Anne McCollam, P.O. Box 247, Notre Dame, IN 46556. Items of a general interest will be answered in this column. Due to the volume of inquiries, she cannot answer individual letters.

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