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Baseball Cards of the 1950s: A Kid's View Looking Back

By Tom Cotter

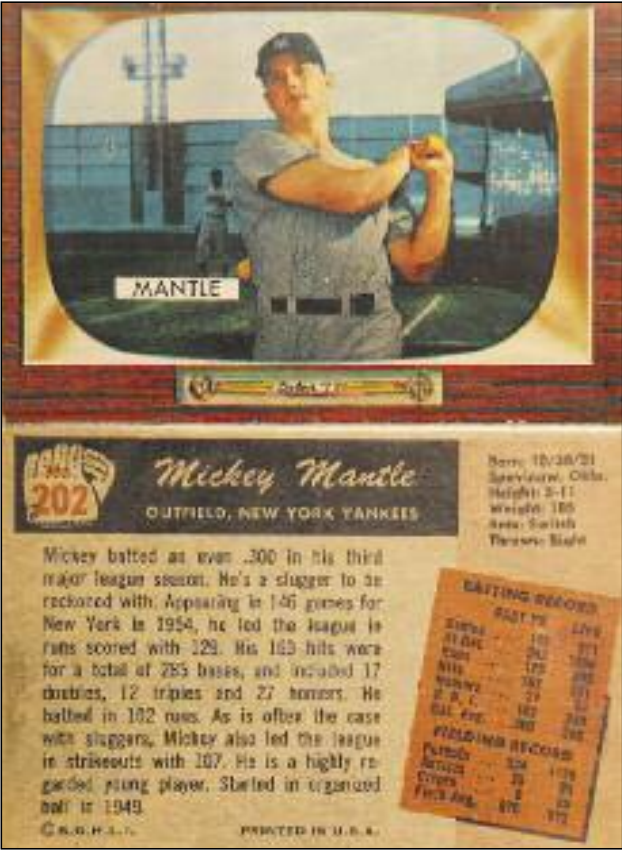
While I am not sure what got us started, about 1955 we began collecting baseball cards (my brother was eight, I was five). I suspect it was reasonably inexpensive and we were certainly in love with baseball. We lived in Wichita, Kansas, which in the 1950s had minor league teams (Milwaukee Braves AAA affiliate 1956-1958), although I don't recall that we went to any games. However, being somewhat competitive and playing baseball all summer, we each chose a team to root for and rather built our baseball card collections around those teams. My brother's favorite team was the Chicago Cubs, with perennial All-Star Ernie Banks at shortstop at the top of his player list. My team was the Milwaukee Braves, with Hank Aaron my number one player. Oh, and we both liked the Dodgers and hated the Yankees. So we collected cards at a nickel a pack (with bubble gum). We often practiced in our backyard, with ½ acre of lot. Baseball was our sport. And we were able to get St. Louis Cardinal radio broadcasts in Wichita via KMOX. In 1955, we got our first black and white TV with baseball a fundamental. Of course, at grade school we listened to World Series games during the fall, as most of the games were in the daytime, and baseball was an important part of our national history in the making.

During the 1950s, televisions exploded from 3 million to 55 million homes. From reliance on radio, ABC,

CBS and NBC all broadcast televised games in the 1950s and on. 1950 saw the first televised All-Star game; 1951 the premier game in color; 1955 the first World Series in color (NBC); 1958 the beginning televised game from the West Coast (L.A. Dodgers at S.F. Giants with Vin Scully announcing); and 1959 the number one replay (requested by legend Mel Allen of his producer.) In 1950, all 16 Major League teams were from St. Louis to the East Coast and mostly trains were used for travel. The National League contained: Boston Braves, New York Giants, Brooklyn Dodgers, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Pirates, Cincinnati Redlegs (1953-1960 no "Reds" during the McCarthy Era), Chicago Cubs, and St. Louis Cardinals. Boston Red Sox, New York Yankees, Philadelphia Athletics, Washington Senators, Cleveland Indians, Detroit Tigers, Chicago White Sox, and St. Louis Browns comprised the American League. In 1953, the Braves moved to Milwaukee, in 1954 the Browns to Baltimore as the Orioles, and in 1955 the Athletics to Kansas City. But the big twist came in 1958 with the Giants moving to San Francisco and the Dodgers to Los Angeles. Jet airplanes, improved radio, T.V., and fast growing markets all contributed to these moves, the precursors of expansion in the 1960s and beyond.

Over 500 major league players, coaches, and umpires served in the U.S. military during World War including Hank Bauer and Yogi Berra (pre-Yankees), Joe (Yankees) and Dom (Red Sox) DiMaggio, Bob Feller (Indians), Monte Irvin (pre-Giants), Stan Musial (Cardinals), Phil Rizzuto (Yankees), Jackie Robinson and Pee Wee Reese (Dodgers), Warren Spahn (Braves), and Ted Williams (Red Sox). Bauer served with the Marines in the Pacific, Berra at D-Day and Europe, Irvin and Spahn in the Battle of the Bulge arena (both with injuries), and Feller and Rizzuto manned guns on Navy ships. Williams flew for three years in World War II, then another two seasons with 39 combat missions in Korea. Some of these stars reached their peaks before 1950, but all played into the 1950s and several through the end of the decade.

Critical to reinvigorating post-War baseball was an ongoing group of superstars, starting with those who had served during World War II, including Musial and Williams. Many of the fans served in World War II and, after returning home, wanted to see their sport - baseball. The next generation began to appear in the late 1940s, including C Roy Campanella (Dodgers), 1B Ted Kluszewski (Reds/Redlegs), and P Robin Roberts (Phillies). Following rookie stars were: 1951 RF/CF Mickey Mantle (Yankees) and CF Willie Mays (Giants); 1952 3B Eddie Matthews (Braves); 1954 RF Hank Aaron (Braves), SS Ernie Banks (Cubs), and OF Al Kaline (Tigers). These stars became the focus of our collecting and trading



(though we did little of that), but each team always had an All-Star or several. Additionally, later 1950s "premium" rookies included: 1955 Roberto Clemente (Pirates), 3B Harmon Killebrew (Senators) and P Sandy Koufax (Dodgers); 1956 M Walt Alton (Dodgers) and SS Luis Aparicio (White Sox); 1957 P Don Drysdale (Dodgers), 3B Brooks Robinson (Orioles), and OF Frank Robinson (Reds - the only player to win MVP in both leagues); 1958 1B Orlando Cepeda (Giants) and OF Roger Maris (Indians); and 1959 P Bob Gibson (Cardinals) and 2B George Anderson (Phillies - a.k.a "Sparky," HOF Manager). Most of these gained their fame in the 1960s or later. Anyone in the Hall of Fame has a premium for their cards, as does any perpetual All-star such as Gil Hodges or 3B Frank Malzone (Red Sox). Many of the Negro League stars have Topps or Bowman cards in high demand, for though their MLB career might have been short, such as Satchell Paige, their reputation and status enhances card values.

After the end of World War II, the Bowman Gum Company of Philadelphia released the first bubble-gum card packets in 1948, with Leaf attempting a set in that year. Warren Bowman shrewdly signed players to exclusive contracts for the amazing recompense of \$10, with an option renewable by Bowman for the next year at \$100.

Continued on page 10



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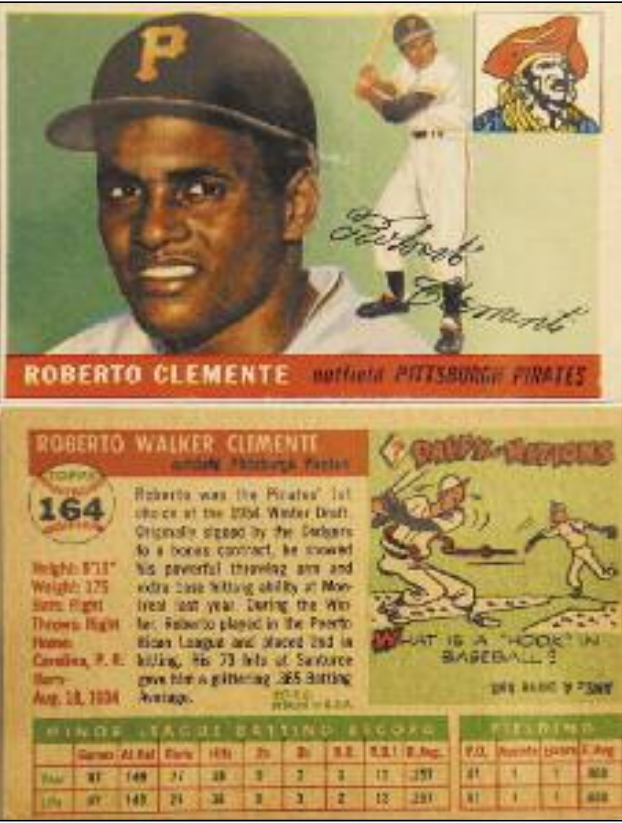
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SHOW CALENDAR

May Events

FIRST FRIDAYS: SIX FIFTY ANTIQUES invites you to visit them at the Art District on Santa Fe, 870 N. Santa Fe, Denver, a great date night, the streets are full of people and food trucks. They will have food, music and drink at their shop. More info, call 720-561-9278.

MAY 3: **MOTHER'S SWEETHEART PINS** Discussion led by Cheryl Miller at 2:00 p.m. at The Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More information, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

MAY 5 & 6: DENVER POSTCARD & PAPER SHOW AND SALE, at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall (15200 W. 6th Ave., Golden, CO 80401), Fri. 11-7 and Sat. 9:30 to 4:30, \$5 Admission, good for both days, Contact Carol Mobley at 720-308-1516 or email her at camobley@ephemeranet.com, www.facebook.com/denverpostcardshow, www.DenverPostcardShow.com Upcoming show July 14 & 15.

MAY 6: A PARIS STREET MARKET, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. rain or shine, an open-air vintage antique and artisan market is celebrating its 16th anniversary this year, at the Aspen Grove, 7301 S. Santa Fe Dr. in Littleton, Call 303-877-9457 or email them at tsvandel@msn.com for more information. Tim and Sandi Vandel are the Managing Members. Future dates are June 3, July 1, August 5, Sept. 2 and Oct. 7.

MAY 6 & 7: PINE FOREST SPRING SHOW & SALE, sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC). It will be held at Lewis-Palmer High School in Monument, Colorado. This event includes antiques, home and garden decor, our very popular bakery and new this year, an Artist, featuring art for all ages. Also, there will be food trucks and glass repair available. All proceeds go to the Tri-Lakes Community in the form of grants to non-profit and service organizations. More info, go to www.TLWC.net.

MAY 8-13: LA CACHE SPRING 'RDF' SALE Cleaning house once again during the Spring Clearance Sale at LaCache. All "RDF" items in our Building 404 will be reduced 50% with new items added each and every day. No reductions will be taken prior to these dates so mark your calendars now for big savings. All proceeds benefit Children's Hospital Colorado. La Cache is located at 400 Downing in Denver and open 10 AM to 4 PM. Call 303-871-9605 with any questions.

MAY 17: WOODEN OBJECTS Discussion led by Alice Kibele at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More information, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

MAY 20 & 21: **47th ANNUAL STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**, presented by The St. Vrain Historical Society, to be held at the Boulder County Fairgrounds, Exhibit Building, 9595 Nelson Road, Longmont, 80501, admission \$5. children 12 and under free. 80+ Antique and Collectible Dealers, glass grinder, cafe service, free parking, For more information call 303 776-1870 or go to www.stvrainhistoricalsociety.com

Upcoming Events

JUNE 14: LICENSE PLATES Discussion led by Larry Gatterer at 2:00 p.m. at The Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More information, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

JUNE 28: COLLECTIBLES OF WWI Discussion led by Michael Finney at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

JULY 14 - 16: THE WORLD WIDE ANTIQUE AND VINTAGE SHOW, Friday and Saturday 10-6, Sunday 11-4, at the Denver Mart Expo Building, I-25 and 58th Ave. Both local and national dealers will help you find art and artifacts, furniture influenced by American craftsmen and European artisans, china, glass, copper, silver, Southwest jewelry, and the list goes on. Go to Findyourantique.com for more information. Next Show: October 20-22.

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SEPT. 15-17: VINTAGE AT THE HANGAR, a partnership between Nancy Johnson Events and Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum, Friday 10-7 (enjoy wine and cheese 5 - 7 p.m.) Sat. & Sun. 10-5. More info: www.antiquesatwings.com Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum is located at 7711 Ea. Academy Blvd., Denver, CO 80230.

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Auctions

MAY 6, 13, 20, 27: FAMILY ESTATE AUCTION, 8032 W. Jewell Avenue, Lakewood, CO 80232, Open at 10 a.m., auction starts at 11 a.m., on Saturday. Previews will be from 10-5 on Fridays before auctions. Call 303-953-2087 for more info.

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A Military Art Show in Florence

The Florence Merchants Association is sponsoring the First Annual Armed Forces Art Show in May. It is open to all active duty, Veteran, and retired military personnel in the state of Colorado. They are excited to have this opportunity to show our appreciation to our military men and women.

This is an exhibit to showcase the artistic talents of active duty, Veterans and retired military personnel in Colorado. Hosted by the Florence, Colorado Downtown Merchants Association, this exhibit will be displayed in the storefronts of participating businesses. The Show will open with a reception(s) on Saturday, May 13th and will run through Memorial Day, May 29th.

The Florence Merchants would like to thank and honor military personnel during the month that observes Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day. We know there is some great artistic talent out there and we would like the opportunity to share it with public.

Call 719-372-1016 or 303-717-1977 for more information.

Car Show in Florence May 21

Don't miss the Florence Merchants' Vintage Car Show, Sunday May 21. Four blocks of vintage cars, door prizes, a valve cover car race, and more...

More From Florence

Another Florence happening is that **Florence Antiques** is expanding to 132 E. Main on the Corner of Petroleum and Main. They are looking for antique dealers to join this venture. Call Larry at 719-338-1628 for more information. Larry tells us he will be charging \$100 rent per month. You can place your items anywhere in the store.

And one last piece of information you should know about in Florence is that **Fox Den** located at 123 West Main is going out of business. They plan a blowout — everything-must-go sale throughout the month of May. We will miss this great antique store. Thank you for advertising all these years in *the Mountain States Collector*.

Anniversary Sale at Antique Gallery in Colorado Springs

26 years of delighting customers in downtown Colorado Springs' oldest and largest award winning antique mall. To celebrate they are having a great sale in May.

They are located at 117 So. Wahsatch Avenue in Colorado Springs. 719-633-6070 for more info.

Welcome back to Found on Wadsworth in Wheat Ridge

Found is located at 4501 Wadsworth Blvd in Wheat Ridge. This antique and artisan mall is much fun to visit. They will also be having a great sale in May.

More Events To Put on Your Calendar

Don't forget **La Cache** at 400 Downing Street in Denver has their Spring RDF Sale, May 8-13. Denver's "best kept secret" is fully volunteer run since 1982 and donates all net proceeds to Children's Hospital Colorado. Call 303-871-9605 for more information.

May 5th and 6th the **Denver Postcard & Paper Show** is being held at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, 15200 W. 6th Avenue in Golden This show provides a great historical perspective. Don't miss it. Call Carol Mobley at 720-308-1516 for more information.

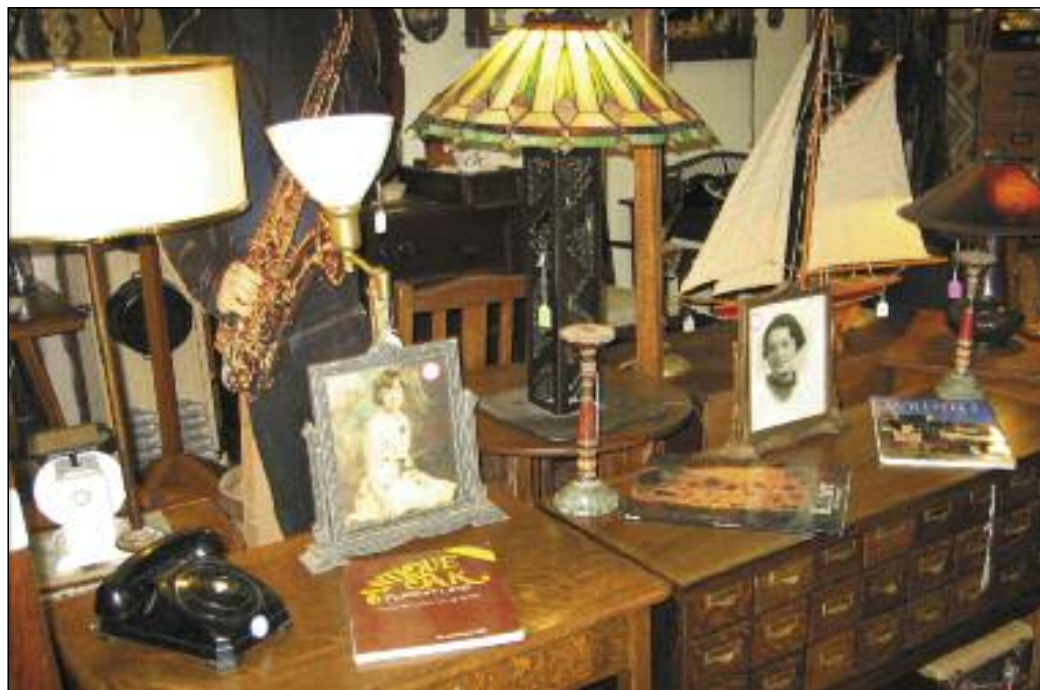
Pine Forest Spring Show & Sale is May 6th and 7th at Lewis-Palmer High School in Monument, Colorado. This is the Tri-Lakes Women's Club's 41st annual Show and Sale. All proceeds benefit non-profit organizations and public schools in the Tri-Lakes area. Be sure to go.

The 47th Annual Strawberry Festival, put on by the St. Vrain Historical Society, is May 20th and 21st at the Boulder County Fairgrounds, 9595 Nelson Rd in Longmont. This vintage market will have many antiques and collectibles to choose from. They will also have a glass grinder and cafe services available. 303-776-1570 for more information.

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toon Dizzy Dishes, an episode in Fleischer's Talkartoon series. He fashioned Betty Boop somewhat in the likeness of singer Helen Kane (1904 -1966).

Kane filed a \$250,000 lawsuit in 1932 against Paramount and Fleischer, charging unfair competition and wrongful appropriation. The case dragged on for over two years until the judge ruled against Kane because she could not prove that Betty Boop represented traits that were

Kane's alone. There was a notable resemblance of the animated Betty Boop to Helen Kane.

Betty Boop was subjected to censorship in the mid-1930s as a result of the Hays Code applied to motion pictures released by major studios from 1930 to 1968. Judging from Betty Boop's popularity today, she doesn't seem to have lost any of her charm.

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The Mountain States Collector, a tabloid newspaper dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of antiquing and collecting in the Rocky Mountain region, is distributed the first weekend of every month through shops, auctions, flea markets and antique shows, and is mailed to subscribers.

(Opinions of the writers contained herein are not necessarily the opinions of the publishers.)

Advertising information: call Jon DeStefano at 720-276-2777 or email him at jondestef@gmail.com or for any other information, call Spree Enterprises, 303-674-1253 or email us at customerservice@mountainstatescollector.com.

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Baseball Cards of the 1950s:

Continued from page 1

After losing in court to Bowman, Leaf did not make a second set. Cards were normally printed in “series”, blocks of numbers in a single printing cut apart for circulation. During the ‘50s, some series were printed in greater volume than others, creating shortages for the lesser produced blocks. 1950 Bowman created 252 hand-painted cards from photos as a pure monopoly at 2 1/16” by 2 1/2”. Brooklyn’s Topps Chewing Gum, maker of Bazooka Bubble Gum, entered 1951 with a “Blue Back” and “Red Back” sets of 52 cards each at 2” x 2 5/8” plus a piece of taffy that absorbed card varnish and was inedible. Bowman still monopolized bubble gum with baseball cards. Bowman’s 324 cards of 1951 grew to 2 1/16” by 3 1/8”, followed in the same size by only 252 cards in 1952. Topps realized their mistake and turned negotiations to a youngster named Sy Berger. Berger had two advantages; he was a baseball fanatic about the age of many players and he went into the clubhouses throughout 1951 meeting players, particularly player representatives and youngsters. Berger developed relationships with many players by leaving cards, lots of bubble gum, and obtaining exclusive and non-exclusive contracts on site. By early 1952, Warren Bowman sold his business to much less astute capitalists (Haelan Laboratories) and Topps began its ascent in the business. Topps’ 1952 set (with bubble gum) blew Bowman’s set out of the water; the card 2 5/8” x 3 3/4”, with carefully rendered artist-colored photos of each of 406 players, representing most everyday players as well as stars. Also, Topps introduced “Past Year” and “Lifetime” statistics on the card reverse. Facsimile autographs adorned both companies’ cards in 1952. Lawsuits of player exclusivity with Bowman bounced around the courts, with some success for Bowman, but the more popular Topps’ set created a sharp decline in Bowman’s 1952 revenues.

Bowman countered in 1953 with actual photographs at 2 1/2” x 3 3/4”; first a 64 card black and white ver-

sion followed by a very production-expensive 160 card color set, both with statistics. The color version contained several multi-player cards for the first time, two cards with Yankees, of course, but without Ted Williams (military), Willie Mays (military), and Jackie Robinson. Although the 1953 Topps was similar to its 1952 design, they added “trivia” questions but cut back to 274 cards (numbers through 280, but 6 numbers not issued.) Bowman lost money and market, while Topps flourished. By 1954, Bowman made 224 full-color cards, initially with a Ted Williams, but lost Williams to Topps during the year and had to fill in with Jim Piersall. Williams, back from Korea as a decorated hero, graced the 1954 Topps set (all vertical designs) as #1 and #250, both first and last cards. Also in 1954, Topps created a large torso or head shot color photograph with a smaller overlaid action shot fielding, hitting, or pitching. Once again, Topps won the battle by design innovation, signing young new stars, and changing to a more exciting format, selling \$1M plus to Bowman’s \$600K. Bowman had lost inspiration, players, creativity, and kept losing money. For 1955, both companies’ designs went horizontal, maintaining their slight size differential. The Bowman “color TV” set of 320 included more stars, along with umpires, but used their prior year pictures and again missed out on key rookies and second year players. Topps, with only 206 cards



(four never released, therefore numbers through 210) again outsold Bowman. Later that year, Connelly Containers purchased Bowman owner Haelan Laboratories. Connelly settled with Topps in early 1956, leaving Topps the only player in the bubble gum card game. To Topps credit in recognizing their growing market, they enhanced and expanded their sets: 1956 to 340 cards (with two checklists and numbered team cards); 1957 to 407 2 1/2 “ x 3 1/2” new “standard” vertical cards with select multi-player cards and more unnumbered checklists; 1958 to 490 with 20 Sport Magazine All-Star cards; and 1959 to 572 with a “Highlights” series and “Rookie Prospect” series. Ted Williams became a bubble gum card free agent before 1959, prompting Fleer to print an 80 card biographical set of him, leaving him out of Topps that year. “Book values” in this article are estimates only, based

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on reviewing the 2015 Beckett Baseball Price Guide and the 2015 Standard Catalog of Vintage Baseball Cards, reflecting player/coach/manager status and quality, and are not offers to buy. Even if not star cards among older sets, card #1 and the final number card generally have a premium; the first and last cards protected the remainder of the deck from moisture, rubber bands and other environmental impacts and therefore be much rarer without significant damage. Production series volume, mid-season changes, and errors all impact cards values. For example, there exist three different 1959 #40 Warren Spahn versions based on birthdates on the back; one with 1931 (wrong), one with semi-legible 1931 (still wrong), and the final corrected one with 1921 (Right!). Starting with the 1950 set, the two most expensive “book values,” dependent on quality, would be Jackie Robinson (\$450-\$1,500), followed closely Ted Williams (\$275-1,000). New York teams created the most attraction; Bronx Yankees C Lawrence Peter “Yogi” Berra seemed often to have his own tier in the 1950 (\$135-\$535), with teammates SS Phil Rizzuto, 1B Johnny Mize, rookie LF Hank Bauer, and M Casey Stengel accorded ranges about 1/3 Berra value. Oddly, the Yankee Clipper CF Joe DiMaggio had no 1950s baseball cards for his last two years through 1951. Of course, Yogi is recognized as one of the great figures in Major League Baseball, catching many Yankee championship teams, winning three American League MVP awards (1951, 1954, and 1955), coaching and managing, and dropping quotes like rainwater in a desert (e.g., “He hits from both sides of the plate. He’s amphibious.”). In 1950 Flatbush (Brooklyn), after Robinson in “book” and in the same range as Yogi’s teammates were C Roy Campanella (Yogi’s three-time National League MVP counterpart), 1B Gil Hodges, SS Pee Wee Reese, CF Duke Snider, RF Carl Furillo, and P Don Newcombe (rookie); all but Furillo in the MLB Hall of Fame. Also in 1950 besides Giants’ M Leo Durocher and CF Bobby Thomson (a year before his famous home run), other “pricey” star cards include Red Sox’ 2B Bobby Doerr and CF Dom DiMaggio, Braves’ P Warren Spahn, Phillies’ P Robin Roberts and CF Richie Ashburn, Pirates’ LF Ralph Kiner, Indians’ OF Larry Doby, P Bob Feller, P Bob Lemon, and P Early

Wynn, Tigers’ 3B George Kell, Reds’ 1B Ted Kluszewski, White Sox’ SS Luke Appling, and Cardinals’ OF Enos Slaughter. No premium player “book prices” that year for the Cubs or the Browns. Notably missing was Cardinals’ Stan “The Man” Musial (appearing finally on Bowman in 1952-53) who, along with Ted “The Splendid Splinter” Williams, probably represented the greatest two hitters in the Majors during the combined 1940s and 1950s. This takes nothing away from DiMaggio, Mantle, Mays, Snider, Aaron, Banks, or others. The stats speak for themselves. Musial’s career: 22 active years (one season lost to military service), three-time NL MVP, 3,630 hits, 725 doubles, 475 homers, 1,951 RBIs, .331 batting average, .417 on-base percentage, .559 slugging percentage, and 2.3 walks per strikeout. Somebody once asked Spahn how to pitch to Stan Musial. Spahnnie responded, “I throw him my best stuff, and then go back up third base.” Williams’s career: 17 active years (five season’s military service), two-time AL MVP, 2,654 hits, 525 doubles, 521 homers, 1,839 RBIs, .344 batting average, .482 on-base percentage, .634 slugging percentage, and 2.85 walks per strikeout. On Williams, Bobby Shantz stated, “They said he had no weakness, won’t swing at a bad ball, has the best eyes in the business, and can kill you with one swing. He won’t hit anything bad, but don’t give him anything good.”

New York opened the post-war era as the center of the baseball world. Under the quirky but effective managing of Casey Stengel, the Yankees won the American League Pennant eight of the ten years, claiming the World Series crown 1950-1953, 1956, and 1958 (six times). Of course, the Yankee stars represent many of the most prized and expensive cards from the 1950s. Particularly prized are Mickey Mantle’s “Rookie”, or a company’s first year of printing, cards from 1951 with Bowman “book” priced from \$5,000-\$15,000, depending on demand and condition, then with the first Topps Mantle (still viewed as a “Rookie” card) from the highly popular 1952 Topps set might ranging from “book” of \$15,000-\$75,000. Oddly, Joe DiMaggio did not have a baseball card in the 1950s, retiring after a painful, injury-filled 1951. Mantle generally dominates card prices throughout the 1950s, but the

Aaron, Banks, Berra, Feller, Kaline, Musial, Reese, Roberts, Jackie Robinson, Snider, Spahn, and Williams’s cards carry their premium whenever available. The Cy Young Award to the best pitcher(s) did not start until 1956 and was not given in both leagues until 1967, so does not figure prominently in 1950s prices. There are services that provide authentication of sports cards and other memorabilia, the primary one being Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA) which evaluates card conditions on a scale of one (poor) to ten (mint). When shopping in stores and on-line, one pays a premium for a PSA-authenticated card, which is placed “...in its own tamper-evident case. A label within the case displays the card’s pertinent information and unique certification number.” In 2014, Larry Pauley, a noted dealer, developed “figured values” (FV) from sales and auctions, including EBAY, and condition (PSA 9 Gem Mint or 8 NM-Mint*, if 9 not available), to list the following as the top 15 prices for 1950s cards: #1 1952 Topps #311 Mickey Mantle (FV \$254,196, very high compared with the above range from a Beckett book); #2 1951 Bowman #253 Mickey Mantle RC (FV \$156,050); #3 1952 Topps #1 Andy Pafko (FV \$69,442)*; #4 1951 Bowman #305 Willie Mays RC (FV \$61,092); #5 1953 Topps #82 Mickey Mantle (FV \$59,423); #6 1952 Topps #407 Eddie Mathews RC (FV \$53,912)*; #7 1953 Topps #244 Willie Mays (FV \$35,173)*; #8 1955 Topps #164 Roberto Clemente RC (FV \$30,536); #9 1954 Bowman #65 Mickey Mantle (FV \$29,147); #10 1951 Bowman #1 Whitey Ford RC (FV \$28,919); #11 1954 Topps #128 Hank Aaron RC (FV \$28,608); #12 1955 Topps #123 Sandy Koufax RC (FV \$26,671); #13 1954 Topps #94 Ernie Banks RC (FV \$25,146); #14 1952 Topps #261 Willie Mays (FV \$18,117); #15 1952 Bowman #218 Willie Mays (FV \$17,391). Before you say “Andy WHO?” at #3, Andy Pafko happened to be on the very on the first card of the most popular and expensive set of the decade, which ups his high-quality card disproportionately. He was a 4-time All Star, 17 year MLB outfielder for the Cubs, Dodgers (in ’52), and Braves.

Just for kicks sometime, try to make up a 1950s All-decade team. Several have. Using Wins Above Replace-

Continued on page 16

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A Bullish Look At Bull Collectibles

By Robert Reed

Historians will tell you that the bull was a sign of good economic news even back in the 18th century. The unanswered question really is why it was so.

Dealers on the London Stock Exchange were called bulls if they thought the value of stocks and bonds would be rising. They believed stocks and bonds they had immediately acquired would eventually climb to a higher price in the future.

One theory is the bull was selected as a term for a positive market because of the typical upward tossing of its horns. Another thought was that the bull-represented strength and power moving forward seemingly unrestrained.

At any rate a fondness for the bull symbol soon spread to Colonial America. The familiar bull became a standard for trade and tavern signs during the latter part of the 18th century. While many potential customers were not educated enough to read, they certainly could understand the meaning of such signs.

The National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. has a tavern sign depicting a bull, which was likely, crafted in the 1790s. It marked the operation of Captain Aaron Bissell's friendly tavern. Gallery experts suggest the choice of a bull's head, "probably reflected his pride in the successful endeavors of the family through the years." Later a name was added when the place changed ownership.

Laws in much of Colonial America at the time required that establishments offering food and lodging to provide a public sign, and there are indications that the bull was used in a number of places.

At the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center in Colonial Williamsburg there are carved wooden toys depicting bulls, cows, and other animals. The figures were likely crafted and painted by skilled but untrained folk artists around the 1850s and range from six to 10 inches in length. Later in the century a few folk artists, such as Wilhelm Scheme scratched out a meager living hand-carving animals from wood. Scheme mostly made birds and dogs, but on occasion he also crafted farm animals including cows and bulls which he sold in his wanderings for a few cents or traded them for food and drink.

Back in England potters of the latter 19th century sometimes fashion striking ceramic figures of bulls and applied delicate paints and completed the works with fine glazes. Today some of the works of Wedgwood potters and other British craftsmen of that period are highly prized.

From the 1870s through the 1890s and perhaps even longer, the bull became a major symbol on American weathervanes.

To those who may wonder why the popularity of a bull's image on the equally popular weathervane, an explanation is offered by William Ketchum Jr. in the book All American Folk Arts and Crafts:

"A simple board swinging freely in the wind would have been sufficient, but few farmers were content with that. The farmer carved his weathervane from wood or shaped it from metal or purchased as an elaborate vane as he could afford. The shape of the weathervane the farmer made or bought was often related to the type of farm he ran. Most farm families had a few cows, and the cow, steer, or bull was a frequently seen type of weathervane."

Homemade weathervanes were typical made of wood or sheet iron and then painted in bright colors. As a rule they did not withstand the elements of harsh weather as well as the store-bought versions and were subject to frequent repairs.

Farmers could on the other hand, purchase factory made weathervanes depicting a cow or bull. The cost was \$20 to \$40, which was a very substantial sum down on the farm in the latter 19th century. More elaborate over-sized bull weathervanes – some up to four feet wide – made in the New York factories of J. W. Finke of E. G. Washburn with shining gilded metal trimmings might well sell for twice the regular amount.

From a commercial product standpoint the most famous bull of the 19th century was one that sold smoking tobacco to millions.

During the Civil War enterprising John Ruffin Green of Durham's Station, North Carolina began selling "bright tobacco" to soldiers and others. The product was packages in small cloth bags, and by 1868 the image of a bull became a part of the packaging and the tobacco's name fully became Bull Durham.

Dr. Gerald Petrone, author of the book Tobacco Advertising, The Great Seduction suggests Green may have copied the idea from a British trademark for mustard. Others offer it was simply a masculine image designed to appeal to a rugged male market.

Regardless, "the popularity of the bull gave impetus to the growing national trend for smoking tobacco and using hand-rolled cigarettes," concludes Dr. Petrone.

By the 1880s Green's massive efforts at promotion and marketing had paid off. The workforce had grown from 10 in 1865

Continued on page 15



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COLLECTIBLES

Bull Collectibles

Continued from page 14

to more than 800 in 1885. Bull Durham, with its bull image on everything from posters to watch fobs, was the world's best-selling tobacco.

Bull Durham continued to be a popular selling product well into the 20th century. Today collectors remain fascinated with the wealth of advertising memorabilia once offered in the name of Bull Durham from trade cards to trolley signs.

Late in the 19th century and early in the 20th century the bull image was again a popular symbol of American farms, this time as a windmill weight. Firms like the Fairbury Windmill Weight Company and the Simpson Windmill and Machine Company, both located in Nebraska, made great numbers of bull-image cast-iron weights. Typically they were painted bright red or silver and mounted on a rectangular base. They often ranged in size from 18 to 24 inches, not counting the base.

The bull left the farm for the carnival mid-way in the years that followed.

Supply catalogs of the 1930s and 1940s offered the likes of chalkware and plush "jumbo comical bulls" in bright colors. The plaster images could be standing or seated and be nine to 12 inches in length. Cloth stuff bulls were slightly larger, around 15 inches with black or orange colored bodies.

In 1949 the Heisey Glass Company issued a four-inch tall, seven-inch long crystal glass bull. Production of the glass bull continued over the next few years. The clear-looking glass item was marked underneath near the base. Elsewhere in the early 1950s, American Bisque produced a friendly looking bull cookie jar. The un-



marked bull, in two different versions, was part of the company's Hands-in-the-Pocket series that included other animals as well.

Breyer Animal Creations began operations in the 1950s by producing and marketing toy versions of Western horses. Eventually the unique operation expanded to include dogs, cats, and farm animals such as the bull. Over the next few decades bull issues included the Black Angus, Polled Hereford, and the Texas Longhorn Bull.

Today many forms of bulls of the past remain attractive and collectible.

That original Heisey Glass Company bull of the late 1940 and early 1950s may well command a price of more than \$2,000 presently. As noted in the comprehensive volume *Glass Animals* by Dick and Pat Spencer, a lavender ice colored version was issued by Heisey Collectors of America many years later as a limited edition tribute to the original piece.

Meanwhile original bull weathervanes that have survived the ages in proud condition can bring \$3,000 or more at leading auction houses today proving the bull is back with collectors. If indeed it was ever gone.



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Baseball Cards of the 1950s: A Kid's View Looking Back

Continued from page 11

ment (W.A.R.), website Saber Analysis identifies the following 11: C Yogi Berra, 1B Stan Musial (with some outfield played), 2B Jackie Robinson, 3B Eddie Matthews, SS Ernie Banks, LF Ted Williams, CF Mickey Mantle, RF Hank Aaron, LHP Starter Warren Spahn, RHP Starting Robin Roberts, and Reliever Hoyt Wilhelm. Richard Barbieri in The Hardball Times agrees and also cites E.R.A.+ statistics for pitchers. Tyler's Think Tank, a blogspot, offers eleven, with C Berra, 1B Gil Hodges, 2B Nellie Fox, 3B Matthews, SS Banks, OF Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, and Duke Snider (position not given, but all Center Fielders!), Utility Stan Musial, RHP Roberts (over Early Wynn), and LHP Spahn (over Whitey Ford). Consider, if you would, missing names, like C Roy Campanella (his career shorted by a devastating car accident in January 1958); 7-time All-Star and winner of the first 3 Gold Glove Awards 1B Gil Hodges, 2B 9-time All-Star, twice Gold Glove winner and 1959 AL MVP Nellie Fox (though picked by Tyler), SSs Pee Wee Reese, 1950 NL MVP Phil Rizzuto, and 7-time All-Star Harvey Kuenn, LF Ted Williams, CFs (both picked by Tyler) 1954 MVP, 1951 Rookie of the Year, 6-time All-Star, and 3-time Gold Glove winner Willie Mays and 7-time All-Star Duke Snider (the most competitive position of the 1950s), RF 5-time All-Star Al Kaline, and pitchers Whitey Ford, 1954 MVP Bobby Shantz, and many others. Lest you wonder, the Gold Glove was first

awarded in 1957 (given to one player in MLB by position, then by league and position from 1958 on).

I can tell you from experience it is easy to get caught up in the glamour of reliving youth through sports memorabilia. Certainly the recollection of these stars, their lives, and their accomplishments breathes a moment of "WOW" into my day. I discovered that Hank Bauer was one of only six in his Marine Platoon landing group of 64 to survive the taking of Okinawa, that he earned two Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars, 11 campaign medals, and that he survived several major injuries and 24 malaria attacks in 32 straight months of combat, then became a Major League star. I imagined Monte Irvin and Warren Spahn returning after heavy combat in 1944-1945 Europe to star in MLB. Back then, they just vaguely mentioned shell shock or battle fatigue; now it is officially PTSD. I contemplated Ted Williams returning from Korean War injuries and an unknown viral infection to stardom at age 35, leading the American League in Walks, Slugging Percentage, and On Base Percentage. Card #28 in the 1959 Fleer Ted Williams set describes the defensive shift and left-handed hitting Williams, so that is nothing new in baseball. I found out how curmudgeon Casey Stengel went from idiot (managing the Dodgers in the '40s) to genius (managing the Yankees in the '50s) and back to idiot (managing the expansion Mets in the '60s). I continually ponder the difficulties Jackie Robinson, Larry Doby, Roy Campanella, Monte Irvin, Satchell

Paige, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and others have endured over the last 70 years with racism in and out of baseball; it is staggering. I ached for Roy Campanella, his career cut short while he was driving to his home on Long Island just months be-

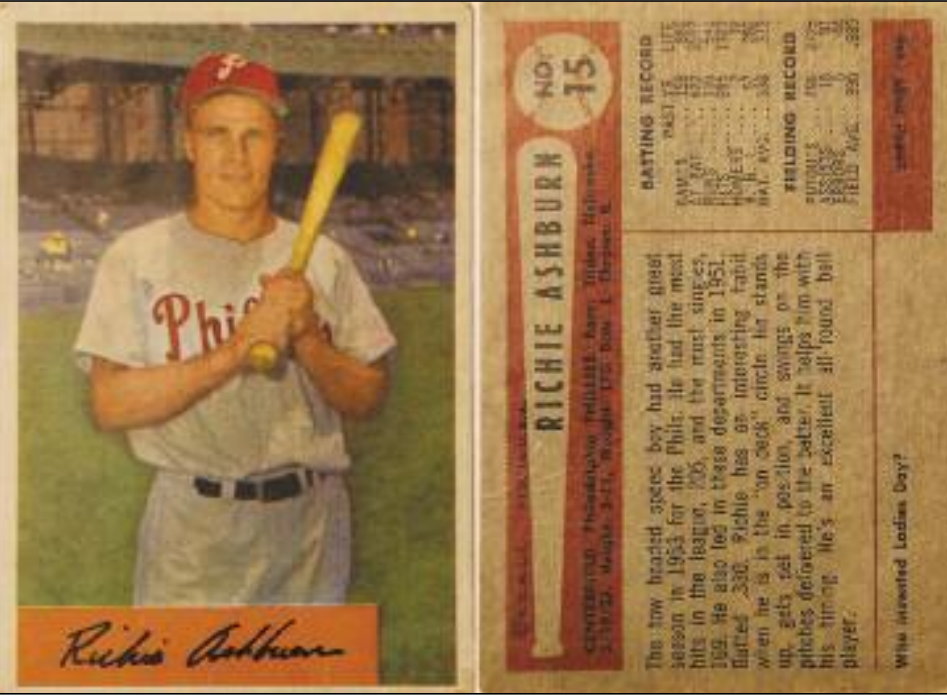
fore the Dodgers moved to L.A., then teared up when I read of his tribute on May 7, 1959, at a special Yankees vs. Dodgers exhibition game when 93,103 people lit matches and lighters in the darkened L.A. Memorial Coliseum during a 5th inning break after Campy's friend Pee Wee Reese wheeled his chair to the mound. People in L.A. never got to see Campanella play live, but they honored and loved him as one of their own, with the game proceeds helping defray Campanella's medical costs. I marveled that after the 1952 Yankee World Series victory, Mickey Mantle went back to work in the Oklahoma lead and galena mines to support his family after his father's death (his mother, three brothers, a sister, and his pregnant wife), that he had multiple injuries and surgeries from high school on, and that despite nearly debilitating damage, is still one of the greats of all time. There are thousands of stories behind the baseball cards of the 1950s just waiting to be explored. Have fun.

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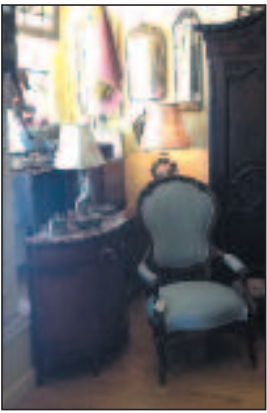
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Collectible Hook Rugs Can Be Costly

By Anne Gilbert

I know you love your dog or cat, but could they be sleeping on a hooked rug worth several hundred dollars? Is such a rug where you wipe your feet when you come in the front door?

These days, even with repairs, an antique pictorial hooked rug can fetch several thousand dollars at auction; more from a specialty dealer. Even vintage hooked rugs are like money in the bank.

Historically, the technique of hooking rugs can be first traced to the northeastern section of New England, in



Maine and Vermont. From there it spread to nearby areas of Canada. By the end of the 18th century they were also made in England, Scotland and France.

Like quilt-making, hooking rugs was often a family or community activity, during long winter evenings. Not only women but sailors hooked rugs with a diversity of subjects.

Collectors search for pre-Civil War examples that depict commemorative designs or historical events and people. After the Civil War, patterns were available printed on burlap. When E.S. Frost offered mass-produced hook rug patterns, it marked the beginning of the end of their charming naïve quality.

CLUES: The age of a rug can be identified by the techniques used and the subjects. The earliest were yarn sewn. The term “hooked” came from the use of a metal hook that was used to pull the yarn into loops, through homespun linen, burlap or factory-woven cotton. As with quilting, leftover woollens or scraps were cut into strips.

Since floral, animal and other patterns are still available today in kits, before spending too much money, examine the rug carefully for the materials used and the almost primitive look of



the art. 20th century Vintage examples can sell for over a thousand dollars, in a retail setting. The price depends on the subject.

That many early rugs have survived, in good condition, is related to what was used for their backing. Linen and hemp sacking outlasted burlap.

Considered a “find” would be a rug identified from a specific area by its’ style, or maker.

Many collectors hang them as wall art. You can still find great examples at flea markets and garage sales at affordable prices if you have done your research.

PHOTO CAPTIONS: (1) Dog and pup hooked rug, Vintage. (2) House portrait hooked from a stamped pattern Turn of Century. PHOTO CREDIT: laurafisher Quilts.com/ shop/rugs

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Comfort Food Goes Fancy In Old Tureens

By Anne Gilbert

Its time to bring the almost forgotten tureen back to the dinner table. Give a little elegance to crock pot food with a vintage or antique tureen.

When they were first introduced in the late 17th century, tureens of silver and fine porcelain graced royal tables. At the same time pottery tureens appeared on peasant’s tables, primarily for soup.

The earliest tureens came with platters or stands that have long since disappeared. Smaller tureens were used for gravy or sauces. By the Victorian era they were an important part of a huge dinner service. In the 20th century they were no longer a part of everyday dining.

Over the years their materials varied from sterling silver and Sheffield plate to porcelain, pottery and pewter. These days collectors look for those made of Majolica pottery with colorful, raised motifs, and often in animal, fish or vegetable shapes.

Early pottery and porcelain tureens often copied the current silver shapes. Tin glazed(faience) pottery was made in many countries during the 18th century. Colorful examples were made in Spain, France and Germany. By the 19th century shapes included round and oval.

Chinese export porcelain dinner services had become popular in America and elsewhere by the late 18th century. Inex-

pensive at the time, when soup tureens from those dinner services show up at auctions and shows, prices can run into the thousands of dollars.

Most familiar these days are the tureens made in Staffordshire, England in the 19th century for the American market. They are known as “American Historical Views,” depicting famous American landmarks, events and places. The scenes were transfer printed with borders and rims in floral and shell motifs that were unique to each factory. While dark blue is the color most associated with the wares, they also came in purple, black, brown and rose.

CLUES: Reproductions of antique tureens are a problem with blue and white Chinese Export and 18th century “Chelsea” rabbit tureens. The rabbit tureen was faked by Emile Samson during the late 19th century. However, fakes by Samson have become collectible in their own right.

Many English firms have reproduced the early Staffordshire types, However they will say “England” on the bottom.

PHOTO CAPTION: C. 1900 Meissen soup tureen. Blue onion pattern. PHOTO CREDIT: grandmasattic3. eBay.



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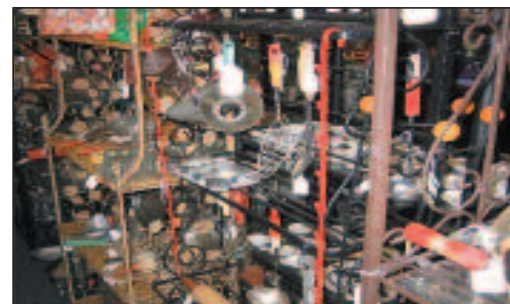
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COLLECTIBLES

Cowboy Memorabilia

By Barry Krause

Age, workmanship and provenance (ownership history) give added value to American cowboy collectibles. If it's old, beautifully crafted by hand of the best materials,



Two outstanding saddles in the Overton Collection. At left is an example with matching saddle bags, sterling silver trim and full leather covered stirrups, made by the late Charlie Baker of Baker, Oregon, valued at \$5,000 to \$6,000. At right is another nicely carved and worked saddle, built in the prison at McCallister, Oklahoma, valued at \$1,200 to \$1,700. Both illustrated in "Cowboy Equipment" by Joice Overton.

or can be traced as owned and used by famous cowboys, the price escalates.

When all cowboys still rode horses to get around on their jobs, the saddle was their most prized possession, often custom-made to their own specifications and sometimes costing up to a year of their salary. Their boss at the ranch would supply a horse for them to ride, but rarely a saddle.

"When down on his luck, a cowhand would pawn his watch (if he had one) or even his pistol, but never his saddle," said William C. Ketchum, Jr. in "Western Memorabilia: Collectibles of the Old West" (1980).

Vintage old cowboy saddles start at a few hundred dollars for plain, worn out examples, and reach many thousands of dollars for the best specimens once owned by movie star cow-

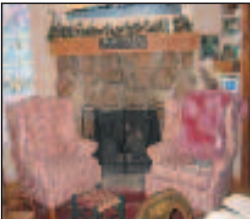
boys or traced to Confederate origins in the Civil War. To preserve and protect old leather saddles, keep them in a dry place with moth ball protection if they have a sheepskin lining, but never use water, vegetable oil or motor oil on them, "no matter what anyone tells you," advised Joice Overton in "Cowboy Equipment," an inspiring hand book for beginning collectors of old cowboy artifacts, published in 1998 for \$39.95 and well worth finding at

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Overton also recommended to protect old saddles by wiping them down with a good liquid glycerin saddle soap, applied with a piece of sheepskin, and, "as a final step, rub it down well with Neatsfoot Oil on a soft cloth."

Nice old saddle bags can go for hundreds of dollars a pair and up in today's market. Look for U.S. Cavalry saddle bags that were popular with cowboys because of their large size, soft leather, sturdy double or triple buckle closures and canvas liners that could be removed and cleaned.

Look for hand carved saddle bags with fancy designs. Look for elk hide or bear skin saddle bags, well preserved.

Cowboy horse bridles and reins, separate bits and spurs are specialized fields of collectibles, admired greatly if they are very old and Mexican style with silver trim, hand-tooled to perfection. Overton wrote a whole book of "Cowboy Bits & Spurs." with over 400 color photos, so it is easy to see the wide variety and price range of these interesting objects.

If you've never paid attention to horse bits before, you might not recognize them in antique shops or elsewhere offered for sale. Overton mentions an old Mission style "spade" bit in original condition "except for added patina," now worth \$3,000 to \$4,000, but unmarked, "as no marks were ever used by the early Missions."



Many rare spurs are worth thousands of dollars per pair. All American *A cowboy vest made by the Ogallala Sioux, fully beaded, the result of many hours of work, valued at \$3,500 to \$5,000. Courtesy of Paul and Marlene Snider, as illustrated in "Cowboy Equipment" by Joice Overton.*

cowboy spurs evolved from their Mexican Vaquero roots that came to the New World in 1520 with Cortez. Genuine 16th century Spanish Conquistador spurs are unlikely to be found for sale today, but California style spurs with their fancy silver overlays and inlays, two piece construction, large rowels and sometimes double heel chains go for thousands of dollars for the best examples.

19th century American cowboys often purchased their leather clothing from nearby Indians, especially hand-made buckskin jackets, vests and gloves. That's why we often find such vintage cowboy clothes decorated with beadwork.

An authentic Native American Indian-made fully beaded cowboy vest is a thing to behold, worthy of display in a museum exhibit. New collectors to cowboy memorabilia may think that such an article of clothing was made for a woman to wear, not realizing that real cowboys often wore very colorfully embellished clothing, including brightly colored neckerchiefs, despite the drab "rough look" conveyed in the mythical cowboy image in fictional Old West movies.

In fact, unlike movie cowboys who also seem to double as professional gunslingers, real cowboys preferred to carry a Winchester repeating rifle instead of a pistol because the rifle was more practical in hunting game and fighting off marauding Indians and cattle rustlers.

These old Winchesters start at about \$500 and rapidly rise in price for better condition and custom engravings. The short barrel Winchester carbines were especially sought by cowboys who fit them snugly in a scabbard attached to their saddles. Original scabbards add value to the weapon.

When cowboys did carry pistols, they were hopefully of large caliber such as the legendary Colt .45 single action six-shot revolver, known as the "Frontier Model" and later as the "Peacemaker." Nice old Peacemakers go for a couple of thousand dollars or more, but there are beat-up rusted examples worth little without fantastic provenance, such as once owned by a famous gunman.

Overton lists a Colt .38 caliber revolver that was once owned by Tim Holt, the movie cowboy, with his name tag still attached to trace provenance, and valued at \$2,000 to \$2,500 in 1998. Watch out for weapons with faked stories



A Colt .38 caliber revolver, once owned by Tim Holt, the cowboy movie star, with the initials "T.H." under the grips. Its barrel and cylinder were changed for the movies, and modified to shoot one to five blanks. Valued at \$2,000 to \$2,500, courtesy of Paul and Marlene Snider, as shown in "Cowboy Equipment" by Joice Overton.

behind them.

Those fancy silver belt buckles are mostly a 20th century creation for rodeo awards and movie cowboys, but they are still beautiful and quite collectible, although often overpriced for the tacky specimens that we see too commonly today in junk shops and swap meets.

Original early 20th century sterling silver rodeo buckles are what we want, or hand-crafted one-of-a-kind Indian silver buckles made for the long ago tourist trade at Fred Harvey shops, or prison-made buckles with cowboy themes and originating in old Western state prisons, but be careful they aren't recent replicas, mass-produced to feed the insatiable demand for decorative cowboy gear.

Overton mentions several early 20th century trophy buckles done in gold and silver, priced at \$150 to \$300 each, and says they were often donated to events by local merchants, and "are very collectible, but beware of many fakes."

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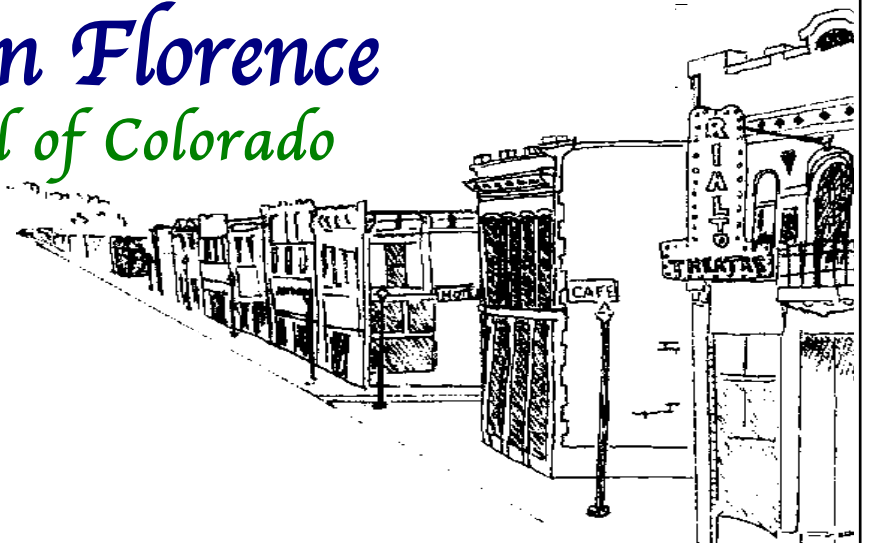
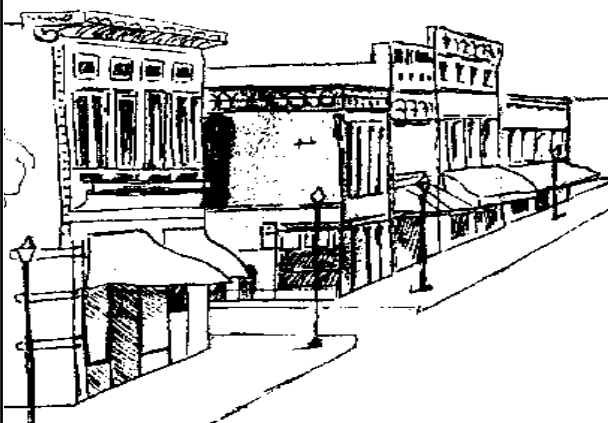
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Florence — Quaint, Charming

By Sandy Dale

What makes a dusty old southeast Colorado town into the quaint, charming Antique Mecca that it is? It didn't happen overnight. When oil and coal were discovered in Fremont county, the mining industry flourished. Miners flocked here as well as those hoping to make a better life than they'd had "back east." They didn't just throw up shacks to make a buck then move on, they "settled." They built buildings that would last with as much style and craftsmanship as they could afford.

But it wasn't just the bricks and mortar that made Florence what it is. It was the diversity of the people. Merchants, miners, farmers, cattle ranchers, apple growers...Italians, Welsh, Hispanics, Irish, Japanese and the list goes on. They brought their traditions and their art and culture with them.

Today, we see a bit of that diversity in the antiques, the architecture, and the art of Florence. From the beautiful European pieces at Willie's Antiques at the west end of town to the Western art at the east end of town at Blue Heron Gallery and the Native American art at Florence's newest gallery – Rolling Designs, diversity reigns.

I enjoy the creativity, inventiveness, and diversity that Florence merchants not only present in their products but in their displays and the décor of their individual shops.

Thank goodness, not everyone likes the same things. Maybe antiques are not your cup of tea. Maybe picking is, or creating your own heirlooms. (We call it "recycled" art here.) Try Salvage, Antiques, Vintage, Etc. on the west end of Main Street. At the east end of Main, check out Virginia's unique lamp creations at the Antique Warehouse. Or find the bits and pieces you need for that mosaic planter or steampunk lamp at the new flea market.

By now, you probably get my drift. From one end of Florence to the other, you will find a diverse array of antique styles, treasures, arts and even just plain great junk (often treasure in the eye of the beholder). Come see for yourself.

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CONTEST

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April's What Is It is a coal bucket. Its background is anything but humble. It dates to the Arts and Crafts period.

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By 1905 the Arts and Crafts look in metal ware was popular and being made in everything from lamps to decorative accessories and utilitarian items.

Though we had several guesses, we only had one correct guess. Violet Robinson Easterling of Edgewater, Colorado guessed that it is a coal scuttle. She is right!

Violet has won a year's subscription to *the Mountain States Collector*.

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