

On September 1st and 2nd, Garth's Auctions held their annual Labor Day weekend auction. Encompassing three different sessions and a wide variety of quality merchandise the 805 lot two-day event brought an impressive \$937,356.75.

Friday's first session consisted of the medical and scientific instrument collection of Dr. Sherman Katz. Though expected to do well, many items brought over estimate prices. An extraordinary seagoing surgeon's kit in a walnut case with approximately fifty instruments and a surgeon's kit labeled "Sharp & Smith...Chicago" with twenty-seven ivory handled instruments each carved their way to high bids of \$10,350. A kit in a walnut case marked "G. Tiemann & Co...NY" sold for \$6,900 and a kit in a mahogany fitted case marked "S.Maw, Son & Thompson, Aldersgate St., London" brought \$2,530.

Leech jars were a hit with buyers as well. A Staffordshire jar with sea green and gilt decoration brought \$8,625, a Royal Doulton jar in cobalt with a handpainted gilt banner realized \$8,625 and a moss green jar with a crown and banner label sold for \$5,980.

Vampire kits, popular at the turn of the century and possibly sold as novelties in upper class European hotels and exhibitions in response to the publication of Bram Stoker's "Dracula", were as sought after now as they were then. A kit in a wooden case with a purple velvet fitted interior with a variety of bottles, a handheld crossbow and bolts and a wooden stake took a healthy bite out of the winning bidder's pocket when it sold for \$10,062.50. Another kit in a book shaped box with an ivory veneered cross, a brass barreled flintlock pistol, wooden stake, silver bullets and a variety of vials brought \$5,462 and a third kit in a fitted box with an unusual ivory veneered cross shaped firearm that shoots silver colored bullets realized \$1,897.

Friday's second session consisted of Garth's usual outstanding variety of Early American furniture and smalls, paintings and folk art. The top lot of the evening was a carved wooden eagle with spread wings carrying a red, white and blue banner stating "Don't Give Up The Ship." Attributed to Kittery/Portsmouth, Maine carver John Haley Bellamy and once exhibited in the Taft Museum show "American Signs and Symbols", this extraordinary folk art example soared to a high bid of \$25,300.

A maple butterfly table with pegged construction, worn, mellow finish, a stretcher base and beaded edge brought \$10,350, a banister back armchair with old black paint over an earlier red paint and a paper rush seat sold for a comfortable \$9,775, a cherry slant front desk with cabriole legs, detailed interior with block drawers and four graduated drawers realized \$8,050 and an early six-board blanket chest with a worn dark finish and rosehead nail construction put away a high bid of \$7,475, handily beating its \$350-\$700 presale estimate.

Among the smalls a beautiful gaudy Welsh plate with a butterfly design fluttered its way to a not-so-dainty winning bid of \$4,485, a historical blue Staffordshire open vegetable with the States Arms of North Carolina brought \$5,175, easily doubling its \$1,500-\$2,500 presale estimate and a large stoneware inkwell with molded beading and handpainted cobalt leaves and accents signed "P.J. Houghtaling" sold for \$3,335.

Two paintings that had once been shown in the Cincinnati Museum of Art exhibit "Fine Art of Folk Art" each did well. The large oil on canvas full-length double portrait of a brother and sister realized \$14,950 and the small folk art painting originally from the Huntington Estate, Mount Vernon, Maine, titled "Independence Day" and depicting a countryside picnic with a band playing in the foreground sold for \$6,900.

The next morning, the Saturday session started on a high note when the first lot of the day, an Extra Grade Wooden desk in mahogany with bird's-eye maple and ebonized veneer easily reached its presale estimate of \$15,000-25,000, selling for \$23,000.

Paintings brought high prices throughout the day. An oil on canvas mourning painting depicting a baby layed out on an Empire sofa with red upholstery realized \$12,650, an oil on canvas portrait of a young girl in a blue dress brought \$5,865, an Indiana mixed media drawing of three sheep signed "From Life by Henry Dousa Lafayette, Ind. 1892" sold for \$5,175 and a large, full-length oil on canvas portrait of a girl in a green dress holding a straw hat fetched \$4,600.

The real draw on Saturday though was the wonderful selection of folk art, most of which was from the collection of the late Richard E. Guggenheim of Cincinnati, Ohio. The top lot of the day was a large folk art carving by Elijah Pierce depicting various scenes of slavery with a freed slave in the middle and Uncle Sam in a red, white and blue striped suit. Titled "Slavery Time, it was once on exhibit at The Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati, Ohio in the "Ties That Bind: Folk Art in Contemporary American Culture" show. Setting a new auction record for the artist this wonderful piece of art sold for \$74,750.

With the success of the large plaque, the fact that the next three lots did extraordinarily well themselves was not as much of a surprise as it might have been as each lot easily beat their pre-sale estimates, the highest of which was \$1,500-\$2,500. A small plaque depicting a dancing couple between two flowers brought \$10,062.50, a carved sign "Courage" with red, blue and silver paint realized \$10,350, and another carved sign, "Faith" in a shadow box frame with green and yellow paint fetched \$10,637.50.

Other Folk Art in the sale also did extremely well. A 46.5" h cast iron full-length figure of George Washington with original paint that was originally patented as a stove radiator elicited heated bidding from the audience and eventually selling for \$18,112.50. A carved wooden cigar store Indian maiden brought \$6,612.50, a wooden sea horse silhouette weather vane with old blue paint realized \$3,565 and a pair of carved circus wagon figures depicting female figures draped in blue with raised arms went for a high bid of \$3,220.

Garth's next Early American Antiques and Decorative Arts auction will be the annual Thanksgiving auction on November 24th and 25th. For more information please call (740) 362-4771 or visit our website www.garths.com.