

Rare items brought to show

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Published: September 20, 2010



PETERSBURG - The third antiques and appraisal show on the ground of historic Battersea over the weekend attracted more than 500 visitors on Saturday.

The event, which was sponsored by The Progress-Index, was organized by the Battersea Foundation and Renaissance Promotions Inc.

Some of those who visited the show brought what they might have believed was junk, but were surprised to learn they were actually valuable antiques.

"We saw some great American furniture and decorative arts from the 18th- and 19th-centuries," said historian and organizer Ben Greenbaum.

Possibly the rarest piece was an early 19th-century folk-art, hand-carved powder horn, which a visitor from North Carolina had brought in for an appraisal.

"It was very attractively carved and it was kept in the family for a long time," Greenbaum said. He estimated the horn's value to be between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

Another valuable piece was a Tiffany pocket watch from the early 1920s that Greenbaum priced at \$8,000.

But the appraisers had trouble identifying the value of a German sword from the early 1840s. It was made in the city of Solingen. Under normal circumstances, it would be worth around \$400.

"But we also found an inscription in English, placing the sword in Philadelphia," said Fred Schneider, a Civil War antiques dealer from Hanover County.

The words on the sword's shaft said "For my country - Light Dragoons."

Schneider believes that the sword was made in Germany, but produced for a small Pennsylvanian militia.

"It's possible that only a hundred of those were made, which would increase the value by 10-fold," Schneider said.

Many items on display were already priced and up for sale. Joyce and William Subjack of Neverbird Antiques in Surry County wanted \$7,500 for a rare document signed by Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, during his short tenure as Virginia's governor.

The document, a land grant for William Hainser for a property along the James River, was signed by Jefferson on Sep. 1, 1780.

"There are few documents from Jefferson's time as governor," Joyce Subjack said. "Many were lost because Virginia's capitol moved so many times."

Renaissance's Bob Taylor said he had high hopes for the future of the show.

"We are extremely excited about the potential of this show to become one of the pre-eminent antiques events in Virginia," he said. "Battersea is such a unique property with 30 acres of surrounding grounds. Where else can antiques dealers actually set up their wares inside an historic 18th-century Palladian villa?"

The newly revamped show benefitted Battersea Foundation, whose mission is to preserve historic Battersea and offer educational, artistic and cultural experiences that inform, enrich and inspire the public.

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