

Collecting Antiques Is Visit To The Past

BY CASSANDRA TAYLOR

(Cassandra Taylor is an avid antique collector who lives in Ocean Isle Beach.)

Whether you visit quaint little antique shops or indulge in Saturday morning yard sales, collecting antique items is a rewarding hobby.

Antiques are often mistakenly considered large and extremely expensive items. Perhaps that is one reason a lot of people don't visit antique shops: they feel they can't afford anything there, or couldn't drag home some oversized highboy or bedstead. So they don't even bother to look inside.

What they miss is an exciting, friendly visit to the past and a lot of small, interesting and inexpensive items called collectibles.

The first thing that grabs your attention when you walk in the door of an antique shop is the smell. There is the scent of a time gone by, the smell of Grandma's attic on a rainy summer day. It's a wonderful fragrance that catches you off guard and helps transport you to childhood.

The second thing you notice is everything. Most antique shops are

filled with so many lovely pieces, you could spend the day in one shop and not have seen them all.

Yes, there are many large, expensive pieces, but there are even more that are small and not so costly.

For example, candleholders are collectibles that make pretty knickknacks in the home. Glass candleholders come in all colors, shapes and sizes.

Cobalt blue ones are rare, and you can be sure they are valuable. If you like "Depression Glass," you can find candleholders in that style, too.

Mid-Victorian brass candleholders are more costly than glass. The "barley twist," a brass candleholder that looks like its name, has a classical design and a weighted bottom. This is worth the extra dollars you might pay.

You can enjoy pewter or pottery candleholders as well. Some collectors choose a range of various candleholders, while others prefer a particular time period, such as Vic-

torian.

Many candleholders got their shape in ancient Rome. The pressed-glass dolphin, whose body is dolphin-shaped, is said to have first been used by the Romans. In the mid-19th century it was revived and glass companies began mass-producing dolphin candleholders.

My favorite collectible is blue and white china. I have found three major types: Canton, Willoware, and Phoenix Bird. They were mass-produced in the 19th century, and until recently were not collected by many people. However, some pieces have become rare because of renewed interest in it.

All three types are oriental designs, but Canton was hand-painted, making it more valuable than the other two.

Bottles and jars are not quite as graceful as candleholders and china, but may be a more entertaining hobby for a beginning collector.

Bottles can often be deceptive as to their age, and you should do some research before spending a lot of money on an item. Old milk, Coca-Cola and Clorox bottles are favorites for beginners. About ten percent of all bottles were embossed, which makes them more valuable.

A friend who works at the courthouse in another county opened the vault one day to find a large collection of old Bay Rum bottles, which used to be in the medicinal area at the drug store. Winos would buy this for its alcohol content, and the bottles my friend found had been confiscated many years ago.

If bottles and jars don't appeal to you, there are other items that will. Consider advertising memorabilia, such as old wrappers, posters and calendars, that were once advertisements for merchants and now



STAFF PHOTO BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

ANTIQUe SHOPS are favorite haunts of Cassandra "Sandy" Taylor, seen here looking over the glassware collection at a shop on U.S. 17.

symbolize art to collectors.

Then there are books, doubly exciting because the contents may interest you, and jewelry that also gives twice the pleasure when it can be both worn and displayed as antique.

Once you have gotten a taste for antique collectibles and a little knowledge, you can check sources other than shops, such as yard sales, old buildings, and estate sales.

Yard sales usually take place early

on Saturday mornings. Check the local newspaper for them, as well as for estate sales.

Prices for collectibles I've mentioned could cost from \$2.50 up to hundreds of dollars. It's best to visit several places and do some library research before making a costly purchase.

In Brunswick County, there are several small antique shops on Hwy. 17 north, one on Hwy. 130, and a couple worth visiting in Southport.

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