



# Swords

## Buff collects antiques, specializes in Japanese

Silas Messer was 13 years old when he acquired his first antique gun. In the 30 years since then, he has collected 249 other guns, along with American swords, uniforms, Indian artifacts and most recently, Japanese swords.

Messer believes Japanese swords are the "epitome in workmanship." His interest in the swords stems from his ability to appreciate their workmanship. He began collecting the Japanese swords a year and a half ago by advertising in the papers. Messer insists he is a novice when collecting Japanese swords, yet he will readily spend hours discussing the fine points of the sword.

Like other sword collectors, he has learned to describe the parts of the sword in Japanese. He also owns several books dealing with the swords, which are purchased, he says, because he feels it is necessary to read up on literature before investing any money.

Messer has one sword made in 1518, another dated 1538 and another dated 1661. But he claims the value of the swords depends on the maker rather than the age.

He hasn't figured out who the important makers are yet. He has literature describing the characteristics of the swords and their makers, unfortunately, the literature is written in Japanese and he can't read it.

The swords are "easy to come by if

you have the money," Messer says. He tells of a Japanese man who spent \$40,000 on one sword, only to find out it was worth \$20,000 on the sword market. He adds he has yet to reach that price when purchasing a sword.

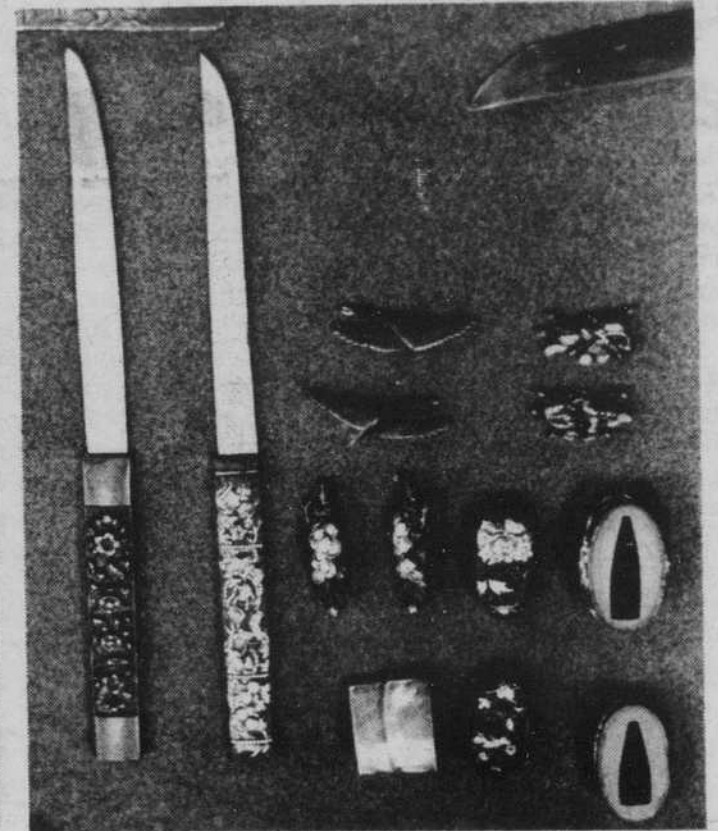
Although Japanese swords are his major concern, Messer also claims to have the "largest World War I collection in this area." He also believes his artifacts from the Spanish-American War may be the largest. Messer's American sword collection is on display at a branch of U.S. National Bank and he has the gun owned by Oregon's first Congressman on display at a Pacific First Federal bank.

Messer publicly supports the ownership of weapons. He recently appeared on television in rebuttal to a statement made by the Democratic platform on disarmament by Portland residents.

Messer displays his swords on a table. Some of them stretch from end to end. The solid gold on the handles shimmers in the light, streaming through the windows. Silas Messer stands looking down on his possessions.

"Swords have so much charisma to them."

Story by JOANNE BLAIS  
Photos by DENNIS HICKOK



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## Hot music offers dance chance

Those who like to get up, get loose and dance, dance, dance are in for quite a treat this week

when Montuno comes to the Eugene Hotel Lounge tonight through Saturday.

Montuno is an eight-piece Latin contemporary group from Portland headed by Gerry Rodriguez. Individual members of the group have, at one time or another, played and recorded with such varied and noted musicians as Richie Havens, the Henry Mancini Orchestra, Otis Rush, Della Reese, Peggy Lee and the Tommy Dorsey Band.

The group plays Salsa music, which is currently one of the hotter new musical sounds on the popular market.

On Thursday and Friday nights, in addition to the dance space offered in the Lounge, the Hotel will open up a large room adjacent to the Lounge, thereby creating Eugene's largest dance floor. Admission is \$1 tonight and tomorrow night and \$1.50 Thursday through Saturday. The music will begin around 9:30 p.m. each night.

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