

Buried Treasure

by Pinkney Gage

Old Sofa Re-Upholstered Then Sold as an Antique

"You two are just in time to take this in for me," said Anne holding the door open.

"You mean you want this beat up old wreck inside?" Fred looked doubtfully at a sag-bottomed sofa sitting on the porch.

Fred took one end and I the other and somehow we managed to get it down the hall in a half-empty storage room near the garage entrance.

It was heavy and awkward, and it looked like something that wouldn't be given room at a fire sale.

"I know what you're thinking," Anne said. "But I'll just point out the frame is as sound as a nut."

She was right on that score. It was a Victorian style sofa in heavy walnut. The three crests along the back were carved in roses and leaves, and the central crest of the apron—that was what she called the piece connecting the two legs in front—was ornamented with a massive carving of fruit and nuts.

She produced a tape measure from somewhere and asked us to help in getting the dimensions. She was going to start re-upholstering the next day, she said.

I expressed surprise at learning that she knew anything about upholstery.

"I don't," she said. "Not really. But I'm learning. And this afternoon when I saw this old piece come out of Aunt Jean's attic, I knew the time had come for a practical project. She was going to give it away to a salvage shop. Can you imagine?"

When I called on them four months later, there was no sign of the sofa, but Anne was working busily away upholstering a chair. The sofa, however, had turned out quite well. So much so that she had sold it for \$250, less commission, through an antique shop.

FEAR OF COUNTERFEIT CUT PRICE OF RARE STAMP

The customer of a stamp dealer friend of mine wrote to him recently as follows:

"Cross me off your want list for the inverted railroad train stamp of the Pan American issue. I found one here in Paris."

"I had just come out of a philatelist's shop and walked about half a block when a man touched me on the arm and said he would like to show me something."

"I was shrugging him off when he practically shouted that he had overheard me in the stamp shop and had an item he wanted to show me—the two-cent rose and black of the 1901 commemorative 'twiz the Empire State Express running upside down.'"

"I saw no reason why I shouldn't step into a nearby cafe for a look at it. It occurred to me, of course, that the stamp would probably be an unused one and very likely one that was turned out by the great De Sperati—there's been so much about his counterfeiting lately—and I prepared to make an offer on that basis."

"But it wasn't an unused one."

NAZIS MADE DEADLY BELT BUCKLE PISTOLS

"According to one authority only 12 of them were ever made, but I don't believe it. As a matter of fact, I have excellent reason to think the Nazis turned out twice as many."

The belligerent note in Harry's voice indicated a willingness to defend his position against all comers.

"Twice as many what?" I asked.

"Belt buckle pistols," put in Sig, a mutual friend and very much of an arms collector.

Harry launched into an explanation of one of the rarest and most potentially deadly personal weapons.

It looks like an ordinary belt buckle of the type worn by Hitler's fighting men. On its face, measuring approximately four inches by two is the standard Nazi insignia of the eagle with outstretched wings standing on a wreath which, in turn, contains the hated swastika.

But its appearance is as deceptive as any of the promises which the late Fuehrer broadcast to the world. By a gentle squeeze on two tiny outside levers on the left end of the piece, the false buckle front swings up like a gunport exposing four chambers. From each of these, a little pressure on the opposing grooved trigger throws a slug that would be just as deadly as a few feet as anything fired from a regulation pistol.

"I'll tell you this much," resumed Harry finally. "I have learned from a most reliable source that three have been brought into the country during the past month, and I'm certainly going to have one of them by the end of the week."

Harry, in possession of a handsome pile of money for years, parted with \$1,000 for the belt buckle gun he showed us a week later. And he would have paid twice as much if he had to, he said.

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