

Buried Treasure

by Pinkney Gage

Collier Flintlock Guns Now Worth Up To \$2,000

Undoubtedly there are some things that have gone up faster in value in recent years than old firearms. But if there are, I don't know about them.

A case in point is that of the Collier Flintlock revolver, a weapon that was manufactured in London under a patent granted in 1818.

The first of these that I saw was one which Larry, a friend of mine, bought at an auction back in 1935.

It is an odd looking gun, and I must confess that the price he paid for it then, \$300, seemed to me quite a bit too high.

The weapon, invented by an American, Elisha Haydon Collier, looks somewhat like one of the later pepperbox types. It is a five-shot affair with a smooth-bore barrel, rarely over six inches long and never less than four. The cylinder has to be turned by hand. Calibres range from .44 to .60.

The one Larry bought had a barrel a little over six inches, with an over-all length for the

weapon of 14. It was a heavy gun, engraved with the name of the maker and the bore number, 160.

When the auctioneer knocked it down to Larry, after some spirited bidding, I was convinced that he had made a poor investment—that the chances of ever realizing a real profit on it were negligible. I said as much and he laughed at me.

And he had another good laugh when I ran into him again recently and asked if he still had the old cannon.

"No," he said, "I was finally persuaded to sell it."

He didn't look as if the subject were a painful one, so I asked for details.

"Gage, old boy," he said, "I refused \$900 for it in 1945. And \$1250 for it last year. But finally I met a man who offered me \$1850 for it and I took it."

I looked up the values of Collier weapons. The figures more than bear Larry out. Collier arms now sometimes bring over \$2000 each.

BEARDED LINCOLN PORTRAIT WORTH MORE

I backed away from the picture as if to view it from a different light, but actually I was merely stalling for time.

Time to appraise the seller, not the picture. There was no doubt in my mind about the validity of the latter.

It was unquestionably a genuine Currier & Ives, and one of the best which that famous firm ever put out showing the martyred President.

The caption read: "Hon. Abraham Lincoln, Candidate for Sixteenth President of the United States. From a photograph by Brady."

The great photographer, Matthew Brady, had taken the picture almost full face.

"I'll give you fifty dollars for it," I said.

The proprietor shook his head. "Make it \$100," he said, and we haggled a while, finally compromising at \$75.

Don envied it, until I disclosed the price.

"Really, Gage," he said, "that was quite generous of you."

"Why do you put it that way?" I asked.

"Because that's a little better than the usual retail price for most of the Currier & Ives beardless Lincolns. . . . Of course, if the caption of yours read 'Hon. Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, National Republican Candidate,' that would be different. Why I myself would give you \$250 for it, in that case."

COLLINS DIRECTORIES WORTH MORE THAN TOP AUTHORS

If you ever come across an old book, something published in the past century, and see the name of Charles Collins on it as author or compiler, watch out.

The chances are you will have hold of something a lot more valuable than many of the first editions of such famous writers as Mark Twain, or Charles Dickens, or—well, name any other of the famous writers of the past hundred years.

And who was Charles Collins? Well, he was a man with no literary aspirations whatever, or practically none. And he didn't have to, because most of what he wrote was directories, or biographical studies of the vanity type.

I became acquainted with Mr. Collins' work the hard way. It pains me even now to think of it.

Lovelock, Nev.—I went into a little store that had some magazines and even a few books for sale. And there I saw—priced

at a dollar—a battered book. It was titled "Mercantile Guide and Directory for Virginia City, Gold Hill. . . ." I noted that it was published in "Virginia, Nev.," and the date was 1864 or 65, I forget which.

And I also noted that it was compiled by one Charles Collins, a name that stayed with me because it was the same as a guide's we used to have in Maine.

But I didn't buy the book. It didn't interest me. Maybe it was the heat, I don't know. I didn't even think about it much until after I was some hours out of town when suddenly the thought struck me that I ought to have bought it.

I stopped the car and hunted through some bibliographies I had in the back. I should have bought it, all right. The value of that book was from \$100 to \$200.

I turned around and headed back, but it wasn't there when I arrived.

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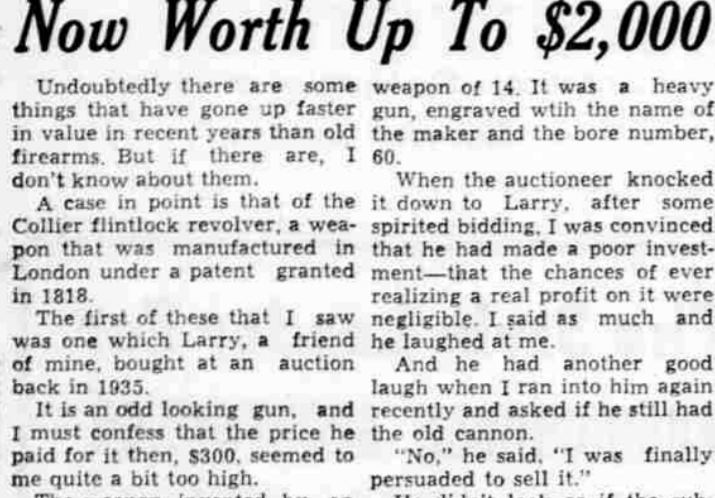
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A Nichol's Worth of . . . Comment On This and That

Washington—(U.P.)—Most political candidates these days don't hand out cigars. They hand you something to light a stogie with—a paper pack of matches.

The makers of match books ought to do right well in 1956. And so will collectors of same like Dr. Charles J. Higgs of Pa., the world's champ. He has 2,500,000 match books stored in a two-car garage and hires a librarian to sort and file them. Higgs' own car rests while idle at the curb in front of the house.

Anecdotes about the collectors of match pads are legend. The per candidate to cover 254 counties.

The "have-a-match-on-me" campaign, Betty found, paid off pretty handsomely.

One match book manufacturer has 75 prepared "stock" designs for match covers. They run a dizzy gamut from "My ability has been proven" to "For the American home."

Young John C. Angellis, who was campaigning for a state Senate seat in Kentucky last year, heard about matches and bought himself a bundle. He passed out 75,000 match pads. Young John must have been wearing pretty big pockets. Anyhow he won over one of the blue grass country's outstanding politicians.

Reverse Plan Alderman Carl Hoffman of Milwaukee used the match trick in reverse. He ran around collecting as many match pads handed out by his opponents as he could. He set all of these on fire—just to get them out of circulation. Apparently the

So there! An alert reporter for the San Antonio Light, Betty Scheibl, ran down the figures in Texas and found that an average gubernatorial campaign in the state requires 1,000,000 match books

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