

Buried Treasure

by Pinkney Gage

Frosted Background Adds Much to Pitcher's Value

We had been hunting in the Indian summer weather and decided to stop at a little farm-house.

The milk came in the place of a loaf of hot bread, and she would stuff it with country butter and give us a pitcher of milk too—provided we felt a fair exchange would be a brace of partridge.

The milk came in a two-quart pitcher of apple-green color. Something about the pitcher attracted me. The design was a rather uncommon one. It consisted of a series of full blown roses, each spray separated

from the others by a tiny sprig of a bud and a couple of leaves. The design, I knew, was a product of the 1880s, but beyond that I could recall nothing of it or its value.

I looked the design up when I got home. Such a pitcher, without a frosted background, is worth from \$35 to \$50. It was known only in clear glass.

The one I had seen, therefore, was worth a lot more. How much, it is difficult to say. But so far as I'm concerned, anyone having such an item in apple green, or any other color, would be foolish to part with it for less than \$80 to \$100.

WATCH FOR INVERTED FLAG ON 1875 STAMP

The cancellation marks overlapping the stamp were heavy ones, blurred somewhat but clear enough for one to see the letter had gone through the New York mails in 1876.

The stamp was a 30-cent item, of a bright blue and carmine color that has long seemed to me one of the better color combinations in our earlier stamps.

I looked regretfully at the torn envelope end on which were still a few of the last letters of the name and address of the long-gone addressee. The letter must have been an important one to merit 30 cents postage. Quite possibly both the addresser and addressee were important people, too. In which case...

But that line of thinking never gets one anywhere. I was looking over an accumulation of stamps a friend of mine had inherited, and this was the first

item of consequence I had come across.

It turned out to be the only one of some 2,000 stamps there wasn't one worth so much as a dollar. In fact, \$40 for the lot would have been a good price.

The 30-cent item, however, was another matter. A study of the report on it in Scott's Catalogue showed it to be an 1875 re-issue of the original that had been first put out in 1869.

Its value, used, was given as \$75, but owing to the heavy cancellation marks it turned out to be worth not more than \$50. The stamp is one of the most important to remember, though. It shows an eagle over a shield behind which rise several flags on either side. Some of the stamps have been found on which the flags are inverted. The value of those is \$4,000 to \$8,000 respectively for used and unused.

DEATHBED SCENES CHEAPEST CURRIER & IVES PRINT

There were 30 or 40 prints worth looking at in the gallery, but Jim spent so long staring at a small one that I finally went over to see why.

It was a picture of Washington on his deathbed.

"What are you so interested in that for?" I asked.

"For several reasons," he replied. "One is that Dec. 14 is Washington's death day, and almost nobody realizes it. Another is that this happens to be one of those done by Nathaniel Currier, some years before James Ives joined the firm in 1857, just a century ago, as partner."

"But who would want..." I began.

"I want it," he said. "And I'm going to buy it. The price is only \$10."

While we waited for the small 9-by-12 inch print to be wrapped up, the clerk said that they happened to have another, showing a different interpretation of Washington's deathbed scene.

and if Jim would care to have it, she would throw it in for only an additional \$7.50.

Jim asked to see it. That print also was by Nathaniel Currier, dated in 1852, as I recall it.

"I'll take it," he said, having given the piece a brief study. "And by the way, any more deathbed scenes you get of great Americans, let me know. I might be interested."

"Why?" I asked, once we were outside.

"Deathbed scenes," Jim said, "are among the cheapest of Currier & Ives prints. Almost nobody wants them. I'm going to make a collection."

At this point he has acquired 23 different ones—including four of Washington's—at an average price of a little less than \$11.

And already he has received an offer for his collection of \$450, just a shade under \$20 each.

(Released by McClure Newspaper Syndicate)

Top Cowpuncher Costs More Now

Amarillo, Tex. — Once upon a time, a cattle baron could hire a top cowpuncher for \$40 a month, plus room and board. Now some owners of the few west spreads still in operation are paying \$40 an hour for helicopters to ride herd on their cows.

The Waggoner ranch has been using helicopters for some time. The ranch said the first 'copter 'paid for itself' within a few weeks because of the large number of cattle driven from mesquite thickets which otherwise probably wouldn't have been recovered.

Another Texas ranch has a utility type 'copter and two plush craft such as are used at the White House.

Sam Chapman, Bell Aircraft engineer who accompanied a helicopter to a ranch near Ama-

ricillo for demonstration purposes, said prices range from \$33,000 to \$75,000 for the smaller craft.

The cost of operating a utility type 'copter, he said, would run about \$43 an hour of operation, including the pay for a pilot, gas and oil, maintenance and depreciation over a five-year period.

Bell pilot Steve Spaulding said he sees little chance of helicopters coming into widespread use.

If we toolled up to build 10,000 of them in a year the price would come down to maybe \$8,000, but demand for them isn't enough now to prompt any company to mass production basis," he said.

For this reason, a good many Texans still earn their living on horseback, although the pay scale for cowhands has risen considerably since the old days.

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BASKERVILLE'S POOR WIFE WORKS
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HOUSE, AND HE NEVER SEEMS TO NOTICE...

By Jimmy Hatlo



Study Being Made of Basic Food Source of Marine Life

Houston, Tex. — Dr. Leonard Roy Freese, University of Houston biologist, has completed two-thirds of a 10-year study of a basic food source of marine creatures.

Dr. Freese is studying diatoms of the Arctic tundra. Diatoms are microscopic yellow algae — one-cell, glass-walled members of the vegetable kingdom which make up the principal part of the sea's floating or drifting organic life. They are so minute they serve as sea food for microscopic sea fleas.

The salt water versions passively drift with the currents and reproduce by splitting to form two new units once every 36 hours.

Fresh water varieties are more enterprising and move around on their own, although how they do it is still somewhat of a mystery. Apparently their movement involves changes in pressure between the surrounding water and the protoplasm within the delicate membrane of the channel which runs down their middles like zippers.

Dr. Freese captured diatoms in eye droppers from 150 pools, streams and lakes of the tundra within 200 miles of Point Barrow, Alaska, on a field trip in 1951.

Paper Due In 1960
The diatoms were boiled in acid which consumed the living protoplasm within the tiny glass cells and other living matter found in the water samples.

What was left was mounted on 300 microscopic slides, two from each sample. Pinstaking scrutiny must be used on each slide to classify the shells.

An average diatom is two-thousandths of an inch in length. A sea diatom may be disk-like with radiating ridges or etchings. The typical fresh water diatom is an elongated, flat pod

'See-It-Yourself' System Being Used

Chicago — The "see-it-yourself" system can be used when inspecting urban renewal projects in Philadelphia, Chicago and Denver.

Demand for guided tours of urban renewal areas in those cities proved too much, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment officials reported, so the cities prepared maps showing the urban renewal story.

Depicted are traffic improvements, slum clearance, rehabilitation, recreation facilities and housing problems yet to be solved.

The urban renewal sightseer, on his own or with a group on a bus, can take a map and be off.

82-Year-Old Dallas Man Finally Finds His Sister

Dallas, Tex. — An 82-year-old Dallas man has finally found his sister after 44 years.

John Baston and his family came to Dallas by covered wagon when Baston was 20, from Somerset, Ky.

"It was a long walk," the agile, quick-thinking man remarked, "but I had a shotgun and I hunted all along the way. There wasn't a bridge across any river along the way, except for the Arkansas. We crossed the rest of them on ferries or forded them in our wagons."

It took 51 days to make the journey in those days. After a couple of years, part of the family moved on to what was then called Oklahoma Territory.

"My father and a friend started up a town there, called it Blair," Baston said.

Baston was a cowboy around Dallas for years and in 1897 delivered the Star Route mail three days a week on horseback. For reasons of health his doctor advised him to move to a drier climate.

"How about Oklahoma?" Baston asked. The doctor told him he "had never heard of water more than a foot deep up there, even during a flood," so Baston headed for the Sooner state.

Back To Kentucky
During that time his father remarried and in 1910 his half-sister Gertrude was born. He saw her for the last time in 1913 when she was three years old.

Baston moved to North Dakota where he began 31 years of farming, ranching and business. "I tried to locate her during all those years, but I just could not pin her down," he said.

"Finally I retired in 1946. Sold out just like you sell a shotgun, lock, stock and barrel, and headed back to Texas."

He again settled in Dallas. On a visit to his native Kentucky,

Baston barely missed seeing his sister. She had left town before he arrived. He kept looking and finally in August he located her through the town his father had started, Blair, Okla.

"I had been in town a couple of minutes when I met a nephew who told me that Gertrude was in Turkey, Tex. I dropped everything and started looking for her."

Finally they met, for the second time in their lives, in Blair. Gertrude had become Mrs. Gertrude Crawford of Somerset, Ky. Everybody's happy and Baston said he'll keep her visiting him in Dallas as long as she'll stay.

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