

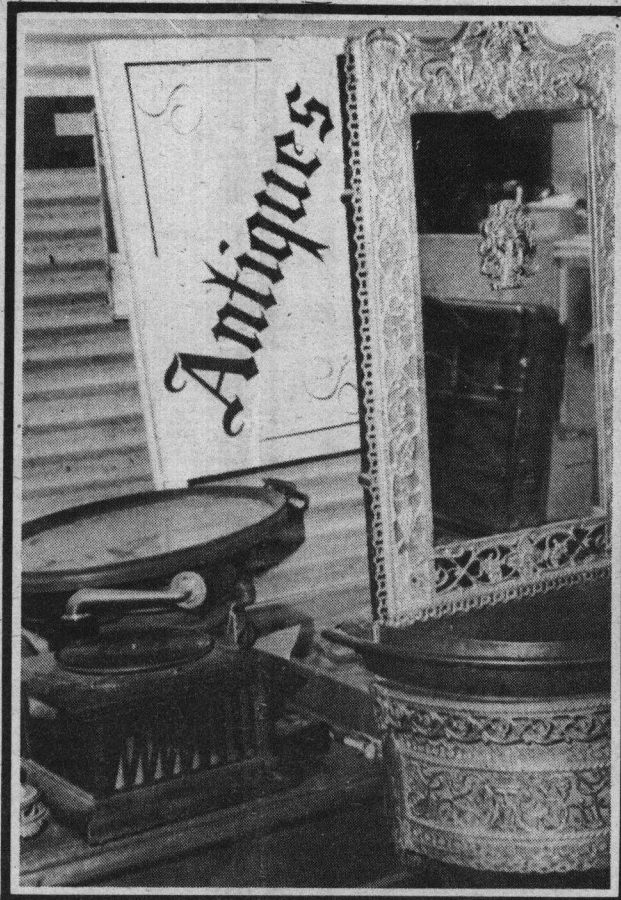
Santa Cruz Antiques: Booming Biz

by David I. Sheaffer Jr.

The oldest, continuously operated antique shop in Santa Cruz is Hall's Surrey House Antiques which has been in business under the same ownership for 22 years. Polly Chuk of Polly's Antiques, who has been in operation for 19 years, laughs and says, "I really don't think I qualify; mine have only been poor man's antiques." Elsie West's The Forge is next in longevity, followed by David Karmann's Way Back When Antiques, in operation for 16 years. There have been a number of fine shops in the past, which for various reasons are no longer in existence. Where 20 years ago there were less than two dozen shops in the county, the Santa Cruz County telephone directory now lists more than 70 shops and dealers.

What is it about Santa Cruz that has preserved it as a center for good antiques? Recently Santa Cruz has been singled out in national and regional publications as an area where good antiques are to be obtained. As one dealer explains it, "during the migration to California, easterners and mid-westerners who settled the inland and bay areas brought with them their most prized pieces of furniture, art objects, etc., and when they finally retired to Santa Cruz these same pieces followed them. When the owners passed on and estates were broken up and sold, most of the items were disposed of locally and these same sources have never completely dried up."

This explanation is certainly a romantic one, and may have been true in the distant past. However, it becomes increasingly evident that the majority of antiques now sold in the area are sent directly from



these same eastern and mid-western sources, to be processed, repaired and refinished in Santa Cruz (see box at the end of article). Why this trend has not only taken place but accelerated remains somewhat of a mystery.

The key to success in the field is embedded in the Surrey House slogan, "a good antique is a good investment." This is one of many answers as to why people collect antiques; they never go down in value. An investment in a good antique is a hedge against inflation. Good paintings, Oriental rugs, fine furniture, objects of art, jewelry, etc., all fit into this category. It can be studied like the stock market and become fully as profitable, without many of the pitfalls. But first you must know your antiques and invest wisely.

The primary reason for the collecting of fine antiques in the past has been their aesthetic and intrinsic value. Throughout the centuries and in all cultures, humans have treasured that which is beautiful because beauty satisfies a basic need. Wars have been fought and empires have crumbled and the booty was always measured in artifacts, objects of art, golden adornments, statues, paintings and sometimes women. Where would the Louvre be today were it not for the conquests of Napoleon?

Very often the age of an antique has relatively little to do with its worth. Craftsmanship, quality, usability and rarity are factors that determine desirability as well as the price that an antique will bring. As an example, Roman and Greek coins predating the birth of Christ are less rare and in far greater supply than many coins issued by the US Mint. Here



**WILDFLOWER
TRADING
COMPANY**

Fine Used & New Clothing
at FINE Prices

19

6560 Hwy 9, Felton, CA. MAP PAGE 17

A selection of clothing from the 20's and 30's



**Summer Cottage
Antiques**


9400 Hwy 9
Ben Lomond, Ca.
336-8759

TIM & DEBBI JEFREY
We're tucked behind Ben Lomond Antiques

16

MAP PAGE 17

Quality European Antiques



*fine european & american
antiques, brass, beveled glass.*

Open:
12-5 Wed-Sun.

720 Capitola Avenue
Capitola by the Sea

475-1175

14

MAP PAGE 17

SQUARE MATH

ANTIQUES

AN ACRE TO BROWSE
IN A GARDEN SETTING



4 Show Rooms
Quality American &
European Furniture

MAP
PAGE 17

15

Wednesday thru Sunday 11 to 6
5870 SOQUEL DR., SOQUEL, CA 475-4393

WE SPECIALIZE IN
AMERICAN OAK & PINE

3


MAP PAGE 17

Ben Lomond Antiques

"WE BUY ESTATES OR SINGLE ITEMS"



9400 Hwy. 9
P.O. Box 203
Ben Lomond, CA. 95005
(408) 336-2441
Closed Fridays



Go on a spree with Marie
at

**Marie's
Collectables**

delectable collectables
from the ridiculous to the sublime
anytime between 11-6 Tues-Sun.

9

MAP PAGE 17

*natural jewelry 50% off

5670 Soquel Dr. Soquel, CA. 462-1437

**NEW BEGINNING
FURNITURE STRIPPING
& REFINISHING**

Featuring Chairs \$7-\$12 Tables \$10-\$35

"PRESERVING YESTERYEARS"

WOOD-METAL-veneers - WICKER



CALL 475-5123
EVES 722-8235

CORNER OF 41ST
& SOQUEL

11

MAP PAGE 17

Adam's

MAP PAGE 17

Old n' Golden

Antiques

Featuring Fine American Oak Furniture
BUY & SELL • Oriental Rugs
Come see me for fair prices
3001 Main Street, Soquel • 475-0544

MEZZANINE

Antiques

Large Selection
of Antique Furniture
For Prices YOU LIKE

MAP PAGE 17

10

1110 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz
Opposite JC Penney's

**CARRIAGE TRADE
ANTIQUES**

AMERICAN and EUROPEAN
FURNITURE • ART
and ACCESSORIES

- Buy
- Sell
- Trade



Bob Shockley, Proprietor

421 Capitola Avenue, Capitola
(Across from City Hall) 476-6998

5

MAP PAGE 17

... Finds a Happy Home



contrasted with modern."

In the last five years a new term has come into common usage in the advertisements and signs of antique shops. The word is collectables. This in effect says that the age of an item or antique has really nothing to do with the fact that it is collectable. Items from the roaring '20s, depression '30s, recovery '40s and the weird '50s are collected by someone, somewhere. In other words, if they will buy it we will sell it. Campaign buttons, political posters, beaded bags, depression glass, photos of film stars, advertising items, novelties, etc., are increasingly finding their way into many shops. It is all part of Americana.

For those who desire fun in collecting and those with a minimum of capital, there are always the fun shops, second-hand shops, junk shops, flea markets, auctions, rummage sales, garage sales, yard sales, lawn sales, ad infinitum. While "treasures" may be found (and they often are), one usually gets what one pays for. Small investments are usually rewarded with small returns.

At the top of the list are the quality shops, whose proprietors adhere to very strict principals and belong to the National Antiques Dealer Association. Connoisseurs of fine antiques, and those with money to invest, seldom shop elsewhere. Then there are specialty shops for those with special interests, collectors of antique guns, clocks and watches, musical instruments, Oriental rugs, fine furniture, etc. One Santa Cruz dealer handles and collects only paperweights. In other words, whatever turns you on, somewhere there is a shop waiting for you. Santa Cruz is fortunate in having a variety of antique shops from which to choose. Much collecting is done through advertising and by mail. The field is as broad as it is wide, get out, look around, investigate and learn to know your antiques. An exciting world and a profitable one awaits you and the possibilities are unlimited. □

For a period of six years (1956-62), the writer of this article operated first the Hidden House Antiques on Soquel Avenue, followed by The Brass Spittoon on Ocean Street. Though the times and the city have both changed dramatically since then, Santa Cruz is as well known today as a center for antiques as it was when I first arrived on the scene some 22 years ago. The antique field is so vast that the above is but a running commentary highlighting Santa Cruz involvement with antiques and can answer but a few of the questions asked about antiques in general.

Old to New

There are two antique operations in Santa Cruz that deserve special focus, since they provide their customers and fellow dealers with much needed services in the rebuilding, repair and refinishing of antiques. They are also unique in that both operations funnel into Santa Cruz great quantities of furniture from eastern and mid-western sources, much of it sold from warehouses before ever reaching a showroom.

The Estate Antiques, with warehouse and refinishing at 371 Coral St. (Harvey West Industrial Park), is especially adept in the reweaving and renovation of wicker furniture. This also includes the hand caning of seats, flat weaving, rushing, bamboo and all phases in the restoration of wood furniture. An added plus is the rewiring and electrification of lighting fixtures and chandeliers. Estate Antiques has opened a new showroom and retail shop at 910 Soquel Ave., where the finished products are priced and on display. Owner Dr. Peter Isgro gives personal attention to work at the warehouse, while his wife Pat oversees the retail shop. The warehouse and showroom are open to both customers and dealers.

Possibilities Unlimited and The Santa Cruz Stripper, a combined operation at 2575 Mission St. (near Wrigley's) owned by Henry Robinson, has a mammoth stripping machine that uses the Chem-Clean method for the softening and removal of old paints and varnishes from both wood and iron furniture. There are only six of these patented machines in existence. This shower process of organic solvents is so gentle that even a violin can go through the cycle without risk. All of this is accomplished without recourse to acids, caustics, water or heat. Furniture is also rebuilt to order, with caning and upholstery services offered. Possibilities Unlimited will open a showroom on the second floor of 1110 Pacific Garden Mall on September 1st.

Neither Estate Antiques nor The Stripper ever use the "dip" method in their operations, which bleaches, raises the grain and is particularly damaging to veneer and inlay. Customers who prefer to do their own refinishing can buy old furniture "as is" at both establishments and receive personal advice and instruction in restoration. There are other established shops and studios in the Santa Cruz area offering similar services, using a wide variety of methods and techniques (see map). All should be checked out before consigning any prized piece to restoration. □

rarity, rather than age or beauty, is the determining factor.

At what age does an item acquire antique status? Many Americans use the yardstick that if an object is a hundred years old it must therefore be an antique. For a country that has just celebrated its bicentennial, this may seem not only justifiable but very old indeed. US custom laws have contributed to this misconception by establishing a date for the importation of antiques duty free. Yet to Europeans and those of the Orient, a hundred years may scarcely qualify an item as a true antique. According to one dictionary definition, antiquity dates from before the Middle Ages. But for our own purposes, and that of today's market, an antique may be considered as any item "belonging to former times as

Antique Guide

