

King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

New Tradition Born at the Pennsylvania Antiques Show at Valley Forge

by Lita Solis-Cohen

In celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary, the Pennsylvania Antiques Show at Valley Forge debuted April 24-26 and established a new tradition. Built on the long and illustrious foundation of The Philadelphia Show, which brought generations of collectors from all parts of this country to Philadelphia each spring, this new show seems like a rebirth.

Lisa Minardi, director of Historic Trappe and the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies, picked up the reins when she learned that, for 2026, the Philadelphia Museum of Art had paused The Philadelphia Show. The museum had taken over the show from Penn Medicine, who had run the show as a major fundraiser for half a century. With a hard-working committee, Minardi and show manager Diana Bittel put together a show designed for today's audience. Well-known dealers supported the newly designed show, and a group of young dealers signed on for a show that focused on Americana. (Yes, there were a few dealers with English and French furniture, silver, and paintings who were well received.)

A show designed for today's audience.

The venue, the Valley Forge Casino Resort in King of Prussia, is in just the right place geographically—close to Philadelphia's Main Line, 20 minutes from Chestnut Hill, and with easy access from highways to the surrounding countryside, where many people furnish their 18th-century stone houses with antiques. There was plenty of free parking, a hotel attached for overnight stays, other cheaper motels nearby, and a huge space below the gambling rooms for the big bazaar. Booth rental fees were reasonable, and 63 dealers from a dozen states, four from the U.K., one each from France and Portugal, set up shop. The only low mark was the food. It was awful. Better food is promised for future shows.

At four o'clock before the April 23 preview, there was a memorial service for collector Dr. Robert E. "Bob" Booth Jr., the renowned knee surgeon, who performed 50,000 knee surgeries during his long career, curated eight loan exhibitions for The Philadelphia Show, and assembled one of the great collections of Americana. Fellow collectors and dealers heard moving talks by Bob and Kathy Booth's three children and some close friends. The tributes ended promptly at five o'clock, when shopping—Bob Booth's favorite sport—began.

Major collectors from near and far were at the show and their presence brought back memories of Philadelphia shows at the Engineers Armory. The momentum continued on Saturday. Preshow publicity in every media—snail mail, email, and social media—had reached out to a wide audience. Instagram postings began in January! People came from surrounding communities and adjoining states. A contingent of dealers drove down from New Hampshire, arriving the night before to be first in line in the morning. A couple from Georgia came every day and bought from many different dealers. Curators shopped, and institutions made purchases, taking memos back to their trustees. During setup and during the show, dealers did some buying too. Some dealers said they had sold well before the doors opened, finding buyers through their ads leading up to the show and demonstrating the essential role a show plays in the antiques marketplace.

More than 1500 tickets were sold. Any ticket was good for return visits. The show never seemed crowded. Wide aisles provided plenty of room to step back and have a look. The largest crowd came on Friday, and sales continued on Saturday, and until the last minute on Sunday. Most dealers were pleased. What was fresh sold first. David Schorsch said he made ten sales at the show and four in the days after it closed. Early in the show people lined up to buy Betty Bell's largest Santas. She said she sold holiday decorations to regular customers and made a



Show manager Diana Bittel of Diana H. Bittel Antiques, had five 18th-century bonnet-top case pieces with prices from \$11,000 to \$14,000. The Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, dealer sold one and had interest in others. The sailor's valentines were priced from \$4500 to \$15,000 for the largest ones, and she sold a few. She said she continues to manage the Delaware Antiques Show and will share the management of this show with Huntley Platt, who had managed The Philadelphia Show and who came on to help with the launch of the 2026 Pennsylvania Antiques Show at Valley Forge.



Collector Marjorie McGraw carries one of a pair of eagle-back chairs she bought from New York City dealer Frank Levy of Levy Galleries.

new client who returned with his wife and bought four items on Saturday. She said she continued to sell rare and expensive Dresden tree ornaments to European clients after she returned to Dallas.

There were some high prices for special things, but generally prices seemed reasonable and dealers were willing to deal. Collectors once priced out of the market said they had fun collecting again. The consensus was that Delaware Valley needs two high-end Americana shows a year: the Delaware Antiques Show in November, benefitting educational programs at Winterthur, and the Pennsylvania Antiques Show at Valley Forge in April, benefitting educational and public programs at Historic Trappe in spring. They feed each other. The Delaware Valley has long been looked on as the mother

This composition stone snail with a coiled shell, circa 1980, 17½" high x 21½" long, was \$5750 from Barbara Israel Garden Antiques, Katonah, New York. It was once in the collection of Lynn Chase of Money Pit Farm, Southfield, Massachusetts. The English composition stone fountain bowl, circa 1960, 13½" high x 54" diameter, was \$9500.



Paul Vandekar of Earle D. Vandekar of Knightsbridge, Inc., Downingtown, Pennsylvania, asked \$15,000 for this rare mid-19th-century pair of sailor's woolworks depicting two different three-masted merchant Navy ships under full sail on a checkerboard sea. One is viewed from the port side and the other the starboard. They are each 14¼" x 18¼".

lode, where great things turn up and where those with a passion for history enjoy living with antiques and the sport of the hunt.

Ever the educator, Minardi arranged for booth talks and panel discussions, book signings, a treasure hunt for kids, and tours of Historic Trappe, just ten miles away every day.

A huge Conestoga wagon from the collection of Michael Baltozer, a Lancaster County farmer and collector, was the loan exhibition at the front of the show. Mike was on hand to talk about the wagon, the art of its iron hardware, his dated wheel jacks, and the story of transportation in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

For more information, visit the website (www.PAAntiquesShow.com).

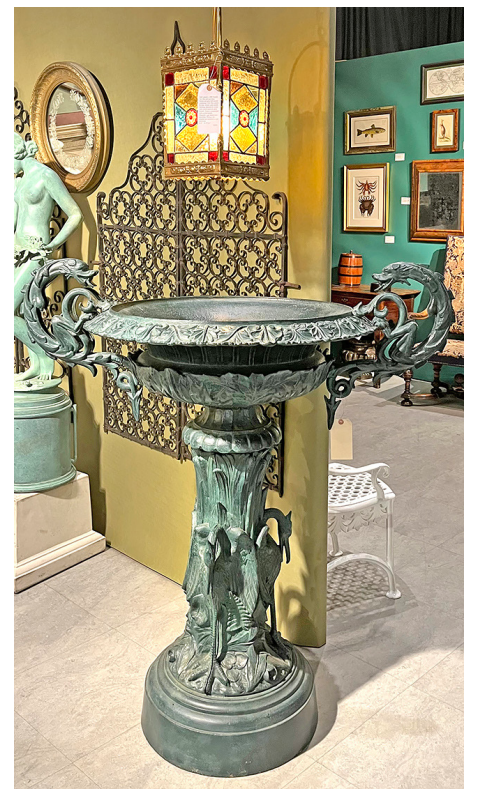


Gary Sergeant of Woodbury, Connecticut, asked \$12,500 for this maple Hepplewhite dining table, 39" x 86" x 38", painted green, with cleated tiger-maple top, and molded-edge square tapered legs, New England, circa 1800. On the table is a brass and mahogany Dollond telescope, made in London, tagged \$4950.

One of a pair of cast-iron urns, with griffin handles and three bitterns, was tagged \$32,500 from Francis J. Purcell Inc., Philadelphia. The brass, bronze, and stained-glass gas lantern, now electrified, hanging over the urn is English, circa 1880, and was tagged \$2850.



Betty Bell of Dallas, Texas, asked \$9500 for this Dresden coach drawn by horses. It sold after the show to a German collector.



Landscape with Glacier by Hermann Herzog (1832-1932), oil on canvas, 24¼" x 37¼", signed and dated "H. Herzog 186[8?]", was tagged \$45,000 from Robert Schwarz of Schwarz Gallery, Philadelphia. Trained at the Düsseldorf Art Academy in Germany, Herzog came to America in the 1860s and settled in West Philadelphia. He traveled widely in the United States and painted many views of the Pennsylvania countryside, the West, Maine, and Florida.

Jeffrey Tillou of Litchfield, Connecticut, asked \$55,000 for this portrait of two calico cats by an unidentified New England artist, oil on canvas, 22½" x 26½". It was from the collection of his father, Peter Tillou.



Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, slant-lid desk, 1820-30, poplar and pine with rare paint decoration with tulips, original eagle brasses, 44½" x 40" x 21", was \$35,000 from Olde Hope, New Hope, Pennsylvania. It is inscribed on the center drawer, "Mr. Noah Steigerwald...Schuylkill County." The portrait of a young lady, artist unknown, probably Baltimore, Maryland, oil on canvas, 30½" x 24¼", from the Dittmar collection, accompanied by the original mother-of-pearl buckle seen in the painting, was \$21,000. The stand with one drawer (left), Pennsylvania, 1800-29, was \$1800. The two-gallon stoneware crock with a cobalt chicken decoration, New York or Vermont, 1860-80, was \$18,000.



Philip Mead of Mead Americana, Ambler, Pennsylvania, asked \$175,000 for this recently rediscovered painting of the USS *Lexington* vs. the HMS *Alert*, 1777, attributed to Robert Dodd, circa 1778. The rare depiction, painted during the American Revolution, records the first Continental ensign or flag. Prior to the Flag Act of June 1777, the nascent nation displayed the 13 stripes as red, white, and blue, while retaining the Union design in the canton as seen here. The painting records the action between the Continental Navy brigantine *Lexington* and the *Alert*, a Royal Navy cutter off Brittany at the mouth of the English Channel on September 19, 1777. The first captain of the *Lexington*, named for the first battle of the Revolution, was Captain John Barry.

Stepback cupboard by Christian Shively Jr. of Wolf Creek Settlement, Montgomery County, Ohio, circa 1800, cherry with contrasting maple beading, 96½" x 63" x 22", was \$38,500 from Kelly Kinzle of New Oxford, Pennsylvania. Less than a dozen cupboards were made by Shively (1770-1836); at least five were found within a small radius of the Shively homestead.



SHOW



Elliott and Grace Snyder Antiques, South Egremont, Massachusetts, sold six pieces of furniture, four at the show and two in the days immediately after. The New England veneered high chest, the black-painted stool, and the black-painted high chair were among them, and they all went back to New England or to the Midwest. The Snyders also sold rare early brass candlesticks, early New England redware (not shown), and the oval needlework picture of a young black servant with a tea kettle. Still for sale were the large hooked rug and the English needlework picture (inset above). The circa 1820 cradle, with carved woman's hands, was found in Cambridge, New York, and was \$25,000. It is pictured in *Crib Quilts and Other Small Wonders* (1988) by Thomas K. Woodard and Blanche Greenstein. The circa 1760 New England banister-back side chair with an extraordinary crest and an old red surface over black, probably Connecticut, was \$3700. The armchair with the pierced splat and rush seat, circa 1760, was made in the Midwest.



Sign for G. DeWitt's Crocodile Inn, Hurley, New York, circa 1800, white pine and paint, original wrought-iron hanging brackets, was tagged \$225,000 by David Schorsch and Eileen M. Smiles of Woodbury, Connecticut. A large crocodile-shaped boulder found in the basement of the inn inspired the name. The sign sold immediately after the show. The Queen Anne grain-painted child's desk, Massachusetts, circa 1760, maple and white pine, 26" x 24" x 13½", was \$75,000. Schorsch said they made ten sales at the show and half a dozen afterward to people who had attended the show.



Arabian horse molded-copper weathervane by L. W. Cushing & Sons, Waltham, Massachusetts, is a design originated by Alvin L. Jewell (1821-1867). After Jewell's death, Cushing bought his inventory and molds and made slight modifications. Measuring 15" tall x 19" long, the weathervane was tagged \$5850 from A Bird in Hand Antiques, Florham Park, New Jersey.



Lillian Nassau LLC, New York City, offered two Tiffany Studios lamps, each 29" high, both shades 14" in diameter, tagged \$145,000 each. The Rookwood vase was drilled to be a lamp at the factory and was \$12,500. Under it is a piece of Tiffany mosaic, tagged \$75,000, from the Farwell Building in Detroit, Michigan, 1914-15.



James L. Price of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, sold this Augusta County, Virginia, secretary to auctioneer Jeffrey Evans, who posted his purchase on Facebook. The York County clock was one of five tall-case clocks in Price's stand. The flat-top Pennsylvania walnut highboy, circa 1770, was tagged \$14,000. The 1765 Philadelphia Chippendale dressing table with a carved shell by Hercules Courtney, pictured in Israel Sack's *American Antiques*, was \$75,000. The five rare Philadelphia Chippendale mahogany side chairs, with carving attributed to John Pollard and Richard Butts, circa 1775, were \$32,500.



Marcy Burns American Indian Arts, LLC, New York City, asked \$39,000 for this Navajo eye-dazzler rug of Germantown wools, 66⅞" x 53⅞", published in the catalog for *A Burst of Brilliance: Germantown, Pennsylvania, and Navajo Weaving*, a 1994-95 exhibition at the Arthur Ross Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania. Below and in the center foreground, the Hopi globular jar with flower design by Rondina Huma, 1984, was \$1250; to its right, the Zuni frog jar, late 19th to early 20th century, was \$6800; and to the right of the Zuni jar, the Tlingit berry basket, with flying geese between bands of arrows, early 20th century, was tagged \$8500. It was from the Fred Boschan collection sold at Sotheby's in 2006.



Skip Chalfant of H.L. Chalfant American Fine Art and Antiques, West Chester, Pennsylvania, asked \$11,000 for each of the walnut Philadelphia Queen Anne highboys, circa 1770, with cabriole legs, shells on the knees, trifid feet, and original brasses. The walnut William and Mary low chest of drawers, three flush drawers over three, ball feet, made for Edward Hamersly, New York, circa 1740, was \$9500. The pair of Philadelphia Chippendale mahogany side chairs, 1765-75, was \$29,500 for the pair. A small corner cupboard (not shown) with scalloped shelves, original bracket feet, one of three known, was \$6200. A circa 1740 hanging corner cupboard (not shown) with a raised panel door was \$5200.



This pair of shell-edge creamware tureens and plates was \$750 from Joy Hanes of Hanes & Ruskin Antiques, Niantic, Connecticut.



David Kurau of Collegeville, Pennsylvania, asked \$2850 for this circa 1900 silk needlework eagle banner. The punch pot or barge pot was tagged \$750. The fruit bowls and tray picture the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Boston, on the interior, and the Charleston Exchange, Charleston, South Carolina, and the Bank of Savannah, Savannah, Georgia, on the exterior; the one without the tray was \$1150, and the one with a tray was \$1450. The platter on the left depicts the head waters of the Juniata River, a tributary of the Susquehanna River in central Pennsylvania, and was tagged \$1250. The "Peace & / Plenty" platter by James and Ralph Clews on the right was \$1400. Kurau is one of a large group of specialist dealers. His specialty is historical china and historical items. "The show was good for us," he said.



Richard Worth of Centerville, Delaware, asked \$9500 for this box made out of wood from the Treaty Elm, under which William Penn made his pact with the Indians. It came from the Morris family.



Gratz Gallery of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, asked \$45,000 for *Jean* by Rae Sloan Bredin (1880-1933), oil on canvas, 30" x 26".



Randi Ona Antiques, Wayne, New Jersey, asked \$4400 for this rare pair of appliquéd and embroidered textiles, which may once have been joined. The black and red grain-painted dressing table, with stencil decoration, was made in Maine, ex-Allan Katz, and was tagged \$4200. The wall box with a Stephen Score provenance was \$3750. Ona sold a pair of Quaker sewing pockets, some ceramics, a hooked rug, and said she also bought well. The black folk-art doll with original silk dress and underclothes was \$1800. The late 18th-century child's chair the doll is sitting on is painted black and was \$2150.



Dower chest painted with birds and tulips by a fraktur artist, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, circa 1800, was \$29,500 from Thurston Nichols of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.



Martyn Edgell Antiques Ltd., United Kingdom, asked \$12,000 for this slip-decorated tyg from the Wrotham pottery in Kent. It is 5 7/8" tall, and dated 1648.



This Boston wing chair, signed on the back of the crest rail by John Cogswell (1738-1819), was offered for \$6750 from The Hanebergs Antiques, East Lyme, Connecticut. The front of the crest rail is marked for Dr. Ball or Bell. It was upholstered by Walt Mullen so that the signature can be seen by pulling back the upholstery.

SHOW



Ziebarth's Antiques, Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, asked \$18,500 for the 19th-century wooden cigar trade sign with a painted owl of the finest quality. The tab-handled burl bowl, late 18th or early 19th century was tagged \$9500. The cast-zinc eagle architectural ornament by M.J. Frand Co., Camden, New Jersey, was \$1900.



Jeffrey Ricketts, age 24, of East Nottingham Antiques, North East, Maryland, was the youngest dealer at the show. Ricketts had a veritable fruit stand with stone fruit and nuts for sale at \$25 each, and a few cut figs, which were \$165 each. Ricketts sold much of the fruit and sold the wagon and the table on which he displayed them. He also sold two samplers to Amy Finkel at the preview and continued to sell furniture, stoneware, redware, and smalls all four days.



Greg K. Kramer & Co., Robeson, Pennsylvania, asked \$44,500 for this blanket chest decorated with a painted pot of tulips, York County, Pennsylvania, second quarter 19th century. He sold a Mahantongo hanging cupboard (not shown) and lots of smalls.



Levy Galleries, New York City, asked \$35,000 for the secretary bookcase, left, by Barnabas Comins, a follower of Nathan Lumbar, in Charlton, Massachusetts. The wing chair on the left, with trifold feet, Philadelphia, 1760-70, sold on Sunday; and the Boston wing chair (right), circa 1750, was tagged \$22,500. The striped maple chest, far right, was made in Rhode Island, circa 1780, and was \$18,500. The Connecticut flat-top high chest with matching dressing table (behind the wing chair) were \$85,000. The pair of portraits of George and Mary Channing Gibbs by Gilbert Stuart was \$125,000. The chest underneath was made in Connecticut, circa 1790, and it sold. The Chippendale chair with the green seat, far right, sold, and gone was a Duncan Phyfe window seat, a Duncan Phyfe tripod table, a pair of chairs with eagle carved backs, two paintings, and some ceramics.



Elizabeth Kelly-Griswold of Bluemango Books and Manuscripts, New Hope, Pennsylvania, asked \$3100 for this hand-illustrated book of botanical watercolors illustrating Psalm 23 by Martha Nancy Wiswall, 1865-70, in Albany, New York. Kelly-Griswold also sold a Pennsylvania German 1820 weaver's manuscript pattern book, and a song book with a fraktur book-plate to the Pennsylvania Historical Society. As a result of postings on Instagram before the show, she sold a miniature silhouette by Martha Ann Honeywell (1786-1856) to Brown University. Honeywell was born without forearms and hands, creating art with her mouth, toes, and residual arm. Kelly-Griswold said, "I did the show because I am a member of Historic Trappe. I usually do book fairs."

A Conestoga wagon, circa 1800, with all its gear, was the educational loan exhibition at the front of the show. It was from the collection of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, collector Michael Baltozer.



Jonathan Trace of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, sells silver-form brass as well as silver. From left: a sauceboat made in London by Anthony Christian, one of the first makers of silver form brass; a two-handled cup made in the first quarter of the 18th century; and a 1750-60 three-footed creamer. All were once silvered and have traces of silver remaining. They were in the range of \$2000 each. "It was a terrific show," said Trace.

Brian Cullity of Sagamore, Massachusetts, asked \$2400 for this New Jersey redware plate from vice presidential candidate John Tyler's campaign on the Whig Party ticket in 1840 alongside presidential nominee William Henry Harrison. It's the only one Cullity had ever seen with the 10th vice president's name on it.



Gemini Antiques Ltd., Oldwick, New Jersey, brought these tin toys by Pratt & Letchworth, Buffalo, New York. The hook and ladder was \$3300, and the hose reel, \$1800.



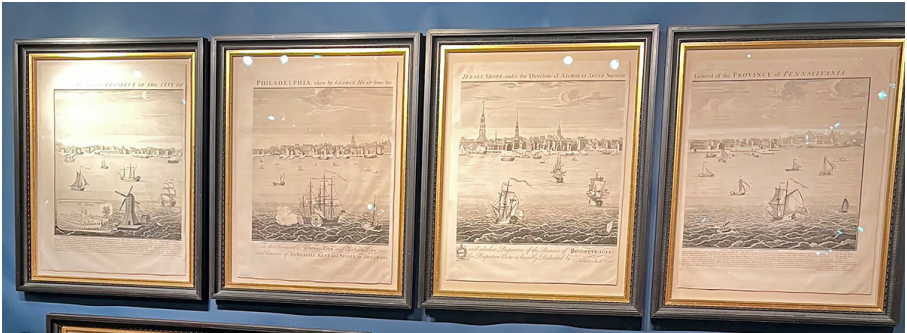
Dixon-Hall Fine Art, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, asked \$12,500 for *Della Robbia* by Mary Townsend Mason (1886-1964), oil on canvas, 24" x 26" (sight size), in its original frame. Owner Audrey Hall said she sold five paintings and had other sales in the works.

Jeff Bridgman of Jeff R. Bridgman American Antiques, Historic York County, Pennsylvania, sold this vertically oriented parade flag, printed on cotton, with 39 stars, which was produced for the 1876 Centennial by S.H. Greene & Sons, Warwick, Rhode Island, a prominent textile bleaching and printing firm that made patriotic flags and political textiles. The flag's unique attribute is the presence of a textile maker's paper label applied to the flag that would have presumably been from the beginning of the bolt. The larger label in the top right features the S.H. Greene & Sons name and location beneath an engraved image of George Washington. The firm was founded in 1828 by Simon H. Greene, son of Christopher Greene (1737-1781), the famous Rhode Island legislator and Revolutionary War officer, who led the defense of Fort Mercer at the 1777 Battle of Red Bank, then led the 1st Rhode Island Regiment—the first “black battalion,” comprised largely of black and Indigenous soldiers—during the Revolution. Colonel Greene fought with distinction at the 1778 Battle of Red Bank and was killed in 1781 at the Battle of Germantown near Yorktown, New York. The firm's “Washington” line of printed fabrics, denoted on the flag's label, became nationally known. “I have owned thousands of parade flags, which are a personal obsession. Labels such as this are virtually unknown,” Bridgman said.



Colette Donovan of Merrimacport, Massachusetts, asked \$8500 for *William Penn Champion of Liberty* by Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911), published by Curtis & Cameron, Inc. of Boston. The original mural scenes were commissioned for the Pennsylvania State Capital. This trio depicts William Penn's voyage from Quaker theology school in England to the founding the Province of Pennsylvania. Abbey died and the mural project was taken over by Violet Oakley (1874-1961).

Elle Shushan of Philadelphia, offered a painting of Catherine the Great's favorite dog for less than \$12,000. The Italian greyhound was named Zemira, the Russian word for beauty in *Beauty and the Beast* by Francesco Bianchi, which was the empress's favorite opera. “Catherine's favorite” is inscribed in French on the frame. The dog is also pictured with the empress in the empress's last state portrait.



Lori Cohen of Arader Galleries, Philadelphia, offered this large framed George Heap and Nicholas Scull, *An East Prospect of the City of Philadelphia: taken by George Heap from the Jersey Shore, under the Direction of Nicholas Skull [sic] Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania*, one of eight known to survive. It was offered for \$1.2 million. An entire wall of the booth was filled with engraved portraits of George Washington (not shown), and there was still room for botanicals and Audubons, which sold. “We did just fine and saw a lot of museum clients who are considering purchases. There was a remarkable turnout of seasoned collections and new younger people,” said Cohen.

