

# The Auction Seller's Cherry Picking Guide

The Auction Seller's Guide To Cherry Picking Antique Malls,  
Flea Markets, Antique Shows, Auction Sales, Book Sales,  
Thrift Shops and Garage Sales

By  
Gary Hendrickson

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# **Part I**

## **The Auction Seller's Guide To Cherry Picking Antique Malls, Flea Markets, Antique Shows, Auction Sales, Book Sales**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is simple. To provide you with the information and skills to be able to walk through an antique mall, flea market, or antique show and be able to pick out specific items that you can quickly sell on eBay for a healthy profit. To do that you're going to need a couple of things that don't come with this special report.

- Access to an antique market, a flea market, or antique show
- A willingness to devote some time learning the methods we will discuss here and to visiting these malls, markets, and shows
- Some imagination and creativity

By the time you're done with this report, you'll have a detailed road map for how to go about buying antique and collectible items at flea markets or antique malls and shows that you can quickly sell for a good profit on eBay.

Please don't look at this report as some type of intellectual exercise. This is a practical, hands on, report and is filled with information. But the information it contains only has value if you put the ideas and systems into practice.

They work. They've worked for me and they've worked for others. Don't let simplicity trick you into dismissing what you read here. They will work for you if you apply what you learn here to your own auction business.

At the same time, don't let the idea of having to invest a little time and effort stand in your way. Success requires time and effort.

## **An Overview**

These days it seems as though you can stand in just about any location in the U.S. and find yourself within a few miles of an antique mall. You will find them in small towns, major cities, and located along roads miles from the nearest population center.

The same applies to flea markets. If you don't know of one near you, it's probably just because you haven't bothered to look. Flea markets come in all sizes and shapes.

Some will have one or two-dozen dealers, while others have over 2000 dealers. Some last for half a day or less, while others may continue for as long as a week.

This phenomena isn't found just in the United States. You will find malls and flea markets in Canada, Australia, Japan, most European countries and many other place.

The increased popularity of antique malls and flea markets over the last few years has made it possible for anyone to become a dealer in antiques or collectibles. They don't need a brick and mortar storefront, they just need a few shelves or a few card tables. They don't need a huge inventory, they just need enough to fill their mall space or cover the tops of their card tables. They don't face high monthly operating costs, they just need a few dollars to pay their monthly rent at the mall or for their space at the market.

This increase in popularity also means there is an ever changing number of dealers with ever changing inventory and the knowledgeable eBay seller can take advantage of this. Here's why.

Over 95% of these part time dealers are general line dealers. They have a little bit of knowledge about most antiques/collectibles, but not a lot about any. Many have no real knowledge of values and price the articles they sell by using one or more of the popular antique price guides.

This means that if there isn't a price guide which covers a particular antique or collectible they are pretty much in the dark. Most of the time they will end up pricing these items either way above or way below their true value. It's these items that are priced way below their true value that we are going to look at in this report.

We're going to look at several different categories of antiques and collectibles in which you can commonly find under-priced merchandise. Because of the different nature of these categories, in some I'll give you specific items to be on the lookout for. In others, I'll give you more generic guidelines as to what type of item to look for. We'll also discuss what you can pay for each and be able to expect a reasonable profit.

Many of the types of antiques and collectibles we will be discussing in this report will be on, what some may consider, the periphery of the antiques/collectibles field. There's a good reason for this.

When most people think of antiques and collectibles they think of furniture, glassware, and pottery and this is what many dealers inventory primarily consists of. Because of this, these are the areas many dealers are most knowledgeable about. While it's possible to cherry-pick an under priced piece in one of these categories, it requires a lot of study and research.

The categories we will be looking at will be areas in which most dealers are much less knowledgeable and therefore easier to find bargains in. We will look at each category individually and provide specific hints and tips for each.

No matter what you are buying, condition is of utmost importance. Don't buy anything that is cracked, discolored, chipped, rusty, torn or incomplete.

Finally, before we get started, let's talk a little about pricing. In each of the sections that follow you will find a recommended upper limit of what you should pay for items in that category.

These prices have been included in an effort to keep you from losing money on your purchases. Because of this, the prices in each category are generalized and there will be some items in each category that you could safely pay considerably more for.

However, I strongly recommend that to start with you keep your purchases within the price ranges provided. They are in place for a reason. As you buy and sell more and more items within a category you will become more aware what items within the category you can safely pay more for.

To begin with however, don't be tempted to pay more than the recommended price when you come across a listed item. You'll find another one later within the recommended price range and also avoid leaving yourself vulnerable to a potential loss.

In the end the price limits given here are subjective. This is due to the nature of eBay itself. It's possible to list a specific item with a starting bid of \$9.99 for sale this week and get 20+ bids with a high bid of more than \$100.00. The very same item, in the exact same condition, with an identical headline and description may get only one bid for \$9.99 the next week. This is just one of the joys of selling on eBay.

I think we've covered the generalities so let's begin.

## Portable Transistor Radios

Transistor radios started to become collectible several years ago and have a rapidly growing collector base. They were manufactured by a large number of companies, some of which made only one model. Others made numerous models, some valuable and others not.

The list below consists of company names and, in some cases, model numbers (you may find the model number on the case, on the box if it's present, or on a paper or metal plate inside the case). You should be able to make a nice profit on any transistor radio manufactured by these companies as long as you don't pay more than \$25-\$30 for any of them.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when purchasing these.

1. Many models were made in various colors. As a rule, bright colors such as red and yellow will usually command higher prices than the darker colors like black or brown.
2. Original boxes, paperwork, and earphones will always add to the price you will be able to sell a radio for. If you don't see them, always ask if the seller has any of these for the radio.
3. Condition considerations for transistor radios fall into two general areas.
  - **Case condition.** You should only buy radios with all parts intact and having no damage to the case. "No Damage" means no cracks or hairlines of any kind; no chips; no dents or heavy scratches (very light wear is acceptable); no deep gouge marks around the coin slot or the seams; no missing pieces (logos, battery doors, etc).
  - **Electronically complete.** Most transistor radio collectors are more concerned with cosmetic or visual appeal of the case than they are with whether the radio actually works or not. However, even though a set may not be working, all the electronic components should be intact and a minimal amount of repair needed to bring it to operating condition.
  - Before buying any transistor radio, be sure to inspect the inside of the case for any signs of corrosion from battery leakage, and be sure to remove the battery cover to check there also. If you buy a radio with batteries in it, remove them immediately.

You should be able to safely pay \$25-\$30 for any of the following brand names.

Acopian  
Admiral – Buy any 7L series. Pass on all others.  
Airline – Buy any BR series. Pass on all others.  
Alpha  
Barlow  
Bell Kamra  
Bendix  
Bresco  
Buick  
Bulova – Buy only the 250 and 640 series. Pass on all others.  
Calrad  
Capri  
Champion  
Clarion (don't confuse with Claricon)  
Crest  
Crestline  
Crosley  
Daylite  
Delco  
Delta (must have the earphone)  
Emerson – Buy any 888 series except the Galaxy. Pass on all others.  
Excel  
Firestone – Buy any 4-C-29 series. Pass on all others.  
General Electric – Buy any 675, 676, 677, or 678 models. Pass on all others.  
Hi-Delity – Buy the 6T-330 series. Pass on all others.  
Hit Parade  
Hoffman – Buy any of their Solar, Trans Solar, or Solaradio models. Pass on all others.  
International  
Lamie  
Lark  
Lefco  
Lido  
Mantola  
Minute Man  
Oldsmobile  
PP-T  
Primotone  
Raytheon  
Regency – Buy the TR-1 or TR-4 series. Pass on all others.  
Robin  
Sentinel  
Sharp – Buy the BH352 (looks like a rocket or old bicycle light). Pass on all others.  
Shawa  
Starblazer  
Startone  
Stat

Sunpet

Tact

Toshiba – Buy the 3TP, 5TR, 6TP (except the 314 and 385), 6TR, and 9TM series. Pass on all others

Trav-Ler (don't buy the TR630)

Truetone – Buy the D3614A, D3614B, and D3715A series. Pass on all others.

Wales

Zenith – Buy the Trans-Oceanic” or “Golden Triangle” series. Pass on all others.

Zephyr

## **City and County Histories**

People have been writing city and county histories since the late 1800s and if you can pick these up cheap you will have a sure seller. But the ones we are interested in here are those that have been published in the last 30-40 years.

Most small to medium sized towns around the country hold celebrations on their 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, and 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays. Often, part of these celebrations is a community history written by a committee made up of townspeople. Individual counties also do this, usually in celebration of their centennials. At other times counties or towns celebrate their state's centennial or bi-centennial with similar publications.

These books are usually hardbound and many are quite large. Some even consist of 2-5 volumes. Nearly all of them have short family histories of the families who lived in the town or county since it's founding.

While not technically collectibles, genealogists, historians, amateur history buffs, and others interested in the history of the areas their families came from avidly seek these books out.

When you find these they are usually way over priced or way under priced. As long as you don't pay more than \$20 for one of them you should come out okay. While some may only sell for \$25 to \$30, the majority will sell in the \$50 and up range. Some for as much as \$150 or more.

This is one of those situations where for every 10 you buy, you'll make very good money on 6 or 7 of them; you'll break even or make a few dollars on 2 or 3 of them; and you may lose \$5 to \$10 on one of them. But that small loss will be more than made up for by the profits on the others.

## High School Yearbooks

Spend just a short period of time in any medium to large antique mall or flea market and one thing you are sure to find plenty of is high school and college yearbooks. Some will be a few years old and others will date back to the early 1900s.

The college yearbooks are normally the highest priced, but have little real value. Don't even bother looking at them. The high school yearbooks are usually lower priced and most, like their older college brothers, are generally of little or no value. However, some of these high school yearbooks sell for \$100, \$200, and as much as \$500 or more. These are the ones you're looking for.

The senior year high school yearbooks of well-known or famous people can normally be purchased for \$25 or less and will bring you very nice profits on eBay. The ones you want are those that picture celebrities of show business, sports, politics, infamy, military, etc. as seniors or the last year they attended high school if they didn't complete school.

Trying to keep track of which celebrity graduated from which high school in which year would be a daunting task. Fortunately there's a way around this.

Most of the high school yearbooks you see will be from the local areas that the flea market or mall you're at is located in. If you live in Minnesota and primarily frequent flea markets and malls in Minnesota 95% or more of the yearbooks you see will be from Minnesota schools. Therefore, all you need is a list of Minnesota yearbooks containing senior pictures of celebrities.

Fortunately, someone has already compiled that list for you. A gentleman by the name of Seth Poppel, one of the most active yearbook buyers in the country, has compiled just such a list for each of the fifty states. All you need to do is email him and he will be happy to send you a free copy of the list for your state or local area.

Also included are the prices Mr. Poppel will pay for each book on the list. It should be noted that many of these books will bring considerably more on eBay, but the prices will give you a good idea of what you can reasonably pay and still make a comfortable profit.

To get a copy of the list for your area simply email Mr. Poppel at [sethpoppel@aol.com](mailto:sethpoppel@aol.com). This email address is valid at the time this is being written. If for some reason this address is no longer working, you can contact him through eBay by going to his About Me page and using the link there. His About Me page can be found at:

[Http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/sethpoppel](http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/sethpoppel)

One final think to keep in mind. While there is an active market for celebrity senior high school yearbooks, the same cannot be said for their college yearbooks. My best advice to you is to avoid college yearbooks. Normally they don't sell for anywhere near the money high school yearbooks do.

## Condom/Prophylactic Tins

Between the 1920s and 1950s, nearly all condoms were sold in small tin containers that held three condoms. Some of these tins are quite colorful and graphic; others are rather plain. Whatever they look like, they have two things in common:

- They have a solid collector base always searching for the harder to find ones
- They were made by a large number of companies providing a wide variety of tins

These tins have been collected for several years so you're not going to find examples of even the more common ones that often. However, when you run across a harder to find example, in many cases it will be priced well below its actual value providing you with an opportunity to make a handsome profit.

As with all collectible items, condition is important and greatly affects an individual tins value. While an example of an extremely rare tin in terrible condition will sell for a very nice price, it's recommended you pass on anything that is dented, severely scratched, or missing some of its litho.

You can safely pay \$75 for the following condom tins in nice condition.

Aristocrat – rectangular  
Caravan  
Carman – round  
Chariots  
Derbies  
Drug-Pak+  
Gems  
Gensco  
Gold-Pak  
Gold-Tex  
Napoleons  
Radium Nutex  
Romeos  
Saf-T-Way  
The Transparent Nutex  
Trojan – Le Transparent  
Trojans – Le Transparent  
X-Cello's

You can safely pay \$150 for the following examples.

Ace High  
Akron Tourist Tubes  
Altex

Aristocrat – round  
Blue Goose  
De-luxe Blue Ribbon  
Double tip  
Esquire  
Feather Tex  
Gold Dollar  
Hercules  
Keystone  
Merry Widows – rectangular  
Naturals  
Nunbetter  
Nutex Lifeguards – round  
Oriental  
Parisians  
Patrol  
Peaches  
Polly Brand – round  
Rainbow Brand  
Rajah  
Regards  
Rough Rider  
RX 96  
Safeway  
Shield – round (this tin doesn't say anything about condoms on it. It says 'Shield' on a plaque between two candles and 'Exceptional Quality' underneath the shield)  
Shorts  
Silk-Skin  
Silver Knight  
Smithies  
Sovereigns  
Sphinx  
Tally-Ho  
Thins  
Three Graces – round  
3 Honeys – round  
3 Pirates  
Trey-Pak  
Trianon

Several brands of condoms were also packaged in cardboard boxes and in foil containers. Some of these are worth quite a bit of money while others aren't. I would recommend that you avoid this type of packaging until you have gained considerable experience or done your own research on them.

If you're interested in learning more about condom tins there's a good reference book available titled 'Remember Your Rubbers' by G.K. Elliot, George Goehring, & Dennis O'Brien. It's readily available on eBay for around \$25.

## Aspirin Tins

Similar to condom tins, for many years aspirin were sold in small tins that could easily be carried in your pocket or purse. The majority of these tins held a dozen tablets although there were some that held six, twenty-four, and thirty-six.

Over the years aspirins were packages and sold in these tins by hundreds of different companies – both the large national brands and small local companies. I know of collectors who have over 400 varieties in their collections and are adding new ones all the time.

Two years ago, a visit to a flea market or antique mall would yield a dozen or more of these tins priced at less than \$5 each. Unfortunately, those times have passed but it is still possible to pick them up one at a time without too much trouble.

Because they were sold by such a large number of small companies, the market for these little tins is somewhat different than most tins. Rather than there being lots of common brands and few hard to finds ones, the exact opposite is true. The vast majority of brands are worth buying for resale if the price is right.

For that reason the list below is made up of the brands you should **NOT** buy. If you come across an aspirin tin not on the list don't hesitate to pay up to \$10 for it. You'll be rewarded with a hefty profit. As you become more experienced or conduct research in this niche on eBay, you will find there will be some examples you can pay considerably more for.

Before we get to the list, there's one thing that should be mentioned. Aspirin tins come in two general categories. Those that actually say 'aspirin' on them and those that don't. Since this list doesn't give the names of the tins to buy, when considering a tin that doesn't have 'aspirin' on it, be sure you're not buying a laxative tin instead. While laxative tins have a collector base, they don't command anywhere near the prices aspirin tins do. Some will say 'laxative aspirin' and these you can buy with confidence.

**Don't** buy any of the following brands.

Allen's  
Anacin  
Antikamnia  
Axar  
BC Brand  
Bayer  
Blackstone's  
Bonded

Bukets  
Certified  
Cloverine  
Empirin  
Excedrin  
Genuine  
Gold Medal  
Hexin  
Laymon's  
Leon's  
McKesson's  
Norwich  
Premo  
Puretest  
Ramon's  
Reed  
Rexall  
St. Joseph  
St. Mary's  
Sendol  
Soovain  
Spartan  
Squibb  
Surety  
Tabcin  
Thacher  
Twenty Grand  
Tylenol

## Quack Medicine Tins

During the late 1800s and the very early 1900s there were numerous types of quack medicines sold that were packaged in tins of various sizes. Most of these tins were about the size of an aspirin tin or a little larger and were what today are known as two color tins.

A two-color tin has a solid background color with all design and lettering in black. The most commonly found background colors are red, blue, green, yellow, and orange.

In almost all cases these quack medicine tins contain what we would consider today outrageous claims on them along with fairly detailed graphics. Some claimed when rubbed on the stomach of a woman in labor, their salve would completely do away with the pain of childbirth. Other's claimed to be instant cures for tuberculosis. You get the idea.

Reading the claims made on these tins will provide you with a good laugh, and when you find one it will provide you with a nice profit if you can buy it for \$25 or less. Just be sure that, like the other recommended tins, the tin is in acceptable condition.

## Catalogs

When most antique and flea market dealers think of catalogs they think of Sears and Montgomery Ward. While early examples of these catalogs have value, it's extremely difficult to find them at a price that allows you to make a profit when selling them.

However, there are thousands of catalogs from other companies that were produced in the late 1800s to present day. Some of these are worth hundreds of dollars and most dealers aren't aware of what's valuable and what isn't.

In the early 1900s nearly every company produced some type of catalog. Some were extravagant 400-500 page hardcover editions; others were smaller 20-30 page issues with heavy paper covers. Many of these were profusely illustrated and are highly sought after today. There is also a market for some types of contemporary catalogs from the last 20 years.

Due to the wide variety of catalogs issued, it's impossible to list individual examples that you should look for. Instead we will look at various categories and sub-categories that have wide collector appeal.

No matter what the category, when making a decision whether to buy, or not to buy, a particular catalog there are a few generalities that you should keep in mind.

- Generally, a hard cover catalog will sell for more than a soft cover one from either the same company or within the same category. Keep in mind however that many companies never issued hard cover editions.
- There are not a lot of catalog collectors per se. Collectors purchase catalogs that are related to the niche they collect. For example, someone who collects fountain pens would be interested in a Schaeffer fountain pen catalog. Those who bid on a Lionel train catalog are already toy train collectors.
- In nearly all categories, the more narrow the focus of the catalog, the more sought after it will be. While there is some interest in tool catalogs, those that were put out by specific companies are more sought after than general line tool catalogs. The narrower the niche the more interest and, consequently, the higher the price in most cases.
- As a general rule, nearly any catalog produced prior to 1900 will have appeal to some sector of the collecting fraternity.

- The more illustrations a catalog contains the more desirable it is. From the 1930s onward, the more color illustrations it contains the better.
- As a rule, within a specific category, the earlier the catalog the better price you will receive.
- When listing catalogs on eBay, many times you will get a better response by listing it in the category or sub-category dealing with the items it contains rather than the catalog category. For example, a catalog of Ronson lighters will normally garner more bids under the Lighter category than under the catalog category.
- Catalogs can be a very lucrative niche on eBay. If this is an area you want to explore further, I suggest you type the words 'catalog' and 'catalogue' into eBay's search engine, go to completed sales, and sort by high to low prices. This will give you a good overview of what kind of prices you can expect for various kinds of catalogs. While I've given price limits below they are somewhat on the low side for your safety. In every category there are catalogs you can safely pay much more for, and some research of past sales will show you what ones they are.
- If you look at eBay's closed auction archives you will see numerous listings with the word asbestos in the headline. A year ago these were selling for hundreds of dollars each to organizations doing research on products that contain asbestos. This market has pretty much dried up. Occasionally one will sell for \$200-\$300 but these days most get no bids. Don't buy any of these unless you want to sell one out of every twenty and use the rest for doorstops around the house.

In general you should do well if you restrict your buying to these categories of catalogs to begin with.

**Heavy equipment catalogs from the 1940s and earlier.** Feel safe in paying up to \$40 for these.

**Scientific and engineering equipment catalogs from the 1920's and earlier.** Feel safe in paying up to \$40 for these.

**Medical equipment catalogs for doctors and hospitals from the 1920 and earlier.** You can pay up to \$40 for these.

**Large hardcover musical instrument catalogs for music stores from the 1950s and earlier.** These should consist almost entirely of various instruments. Avoid those made up primarily of accessories and supplies. You can safely pay up to \$75 for these.

**Musical instrument catalogs from name brand guitar and drum manufacturers from the 1960s and earlier.** You can safely pay up to \$25 for these.

**Toy catalogs from individual manufacturers from the 1950s and earlier.** The more widely collected the particular toy is, the better the catalog is. You can safely pay up to \$25 for these.

**Farm equipment catalogs from the 1920s and earlier that have a large number of color pictures in them.** If the manufacturer is well known, you can pay up to \$100 for one of these. If it's a smaller, less well-known manufacturer, don't pay more than \$25.

**Lighting fixtures catalogs from the 1920s and earlier.** You can safely pay up to \$50 for one of these.

**Bicycle, scooter, or motorcycle catalogs from the 1930s and earlier.** You can safely pay up to \$25 for bicycle catalogs. Up to \$75 for scooter and motorcycle.

**Fountain pen catalogs from the 1930s and earlier.** You can safely pay up to \$50 for one of these.

**Furniture catalogs from the 1930s and earlier that are specific to one manufacturer or one type of furniture that has a defined collector following.** You can safely pay up to \$20 for these.

**Automobile dealer's accessory catalogs from the 1940s and earlier.** You can safely pay up to \$30 for these.

**Firearms and fishing tackle catalogs from the 1930s and earlier from specific manufacturers.** You can safely pay up to \$50 for these. Don't buy generic catalogs carrying several different brands.

**Catalogs for off beat/strange things from the 1920s or earlier.** Look for things like blacksmith tools, airplane propellers, safes, restaurant ranges and coolers, etc. These are catalogs that were originally meant for a very tightly niched market. What you can pay for these varies, but you should be safe paying up to \$50 for them.

**Tool catalogs from well know, quality companies from the 1960s and earlier.** Look for brands that are perceived as quality lines – Stanley, Craftsman, Snap-On, etc. (Avoid larger general line catalogs). You can safely pay up to \$15 for these.

**Certain general line hardware/department store catalogs from the 1930s to 1940s.** The ones you want to look for are those that are in loose-leaf format. These are usually good sized and made up of individual 5-20 page catalogs and single loose product info sheets. You should be able to buy them for \$25 or less. What you want to do is take them apart and sell the individual catalogs and sheets separately. For example, if there's a 15 page General Electric catalog sell it separately. If there are 6 loose-leaf sheets of Sunbeam appliances, sell those sheets together. By breaking these up you can easily realize several hundred dollars in profit from a catalog that, if you sold it in it's entirety, you would only get \$20-\$30 dollars for.

**High-end fashion catalogs from recent years.** Catalogs from such companies as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Versace, Prada, and Hermes from as little as 5-10 years ago sell well. Don't pay more than \$2-\$5 apiece for them.

**Edgy or sexy catalogs such as Victoria's Secret from recent years.** If one of the models inside went on to become famous or well known they will sell for even more. Don't pay more than \$2-\$5 apiece for them.

**Catalogs for other high-end items from recent years.** Look for things such as Christopher Radko Christmas ornaments, Lladro and Hummel figurines, and Waterford crystal will sell well. Don't pay more than \$5 for any of them.

The following are some general types of catalogs you should avoid.

- School supply catalogs
- Seed and plant catalogs
- Large general line tool and hardware catalogs
- Book catalogs
- Record catalogs
- Women's fashion catalogs (with the exception of those mentioned above)
- Men's fashion catalogs (with the exception of those mentioned above)
- Craft and needlework catalogs
- Catalogs of asbestos products
- Most catalogs for which there isn't any collector interest in the contents
- Most catalogs from 1970 to the present
- Catalogs of any type that aren't well illustrated

One final word about buying and selling catalogs. This is one of two different niches in this report in which values vary significantly and which there are thousands of different examples. Most dealers are not knowledgeable about catalogs and have no idea of what they are really worth. They either price them way too high or way too low.

By spending some time researching eBay's closed sales archives and gaining a working knowledge of the prices catalogs actually bring, you can make a lot of money in this niche over a period of time. It will be time well spent.

## 1 Quart Pyro Milk Bottles

Over the years milk has been packaged in a wide variety of different types of milk bottles. While nearly all of them are collected to some extent, there is one specific sub-niche which attracts the most collector attention and that is 1 quart pyro bottles with dairy, town, and state names on them.

Pyro refers to the method by which colored graphics are added to a bottle. Pyro bottles are found with various colored graphics, but mostly in red, green, blue and black. They were made in all sizes and shapes but our focus here will be on a very narrow sub-niche of these bottles.

The only ones you should consider will have **ALL** the following characteristics. If they are missing even one of them don't buy them.

- They must be the 1 quart size
- They must have a round body
- They must be at least 8" high
- They must have both a town and state name on them
- They must have the a dairy, creamery, or farm name on them
- These town, state, and dairy names must be in colored pyro

If even one of these six requirements is not there, don't buy the bottle.

These bottles were used by thousands of dairies across the country making it nearly impossible to catalog all the varieties that exist. The value of individual bottles ranges from \$10 upward to \$500 and more.

Additionally, because of the large variety of bottles made, it's been impossible for anyone to really do the research to determine values for them all.

If you're interested in this sub-niche it's necessary to take somewhat of a shotgun approach that involves some risk and this should be considered before making a final decision. Here's what I've been doing for the last two years.

I will buy any milk bottle that meets the above six requirements if I can buy it for \$30 or less. I've found that, on average, for every ten bottles I purchase I'll get the following results.

- 3 of them will sell for high prices allowing me a profit of \$100 or more
- 5 of them will sell for prices that allow me a profit of \$20 to \$100 each
- 2 of them will sell for prices that allow me to break even on them or that I loose \$10 to \$20 on.

As you can see at times I lose a small amount of money on some of these bottles. However, I'm willing to take those losses due to the much larger profits I make on some of the others. In the end I make money overall.

If you're going to buy these it's important that you realize you are going to end up taking some small losses on a few of them. If you don't feel comfortable with that happening, then this is a niche you should avoid.

Here are some general hints when purchasing these bottles.

- Never buy a bottle that has any chips or cracks no matter how small
- The condition of the pyro is extremely important. Avoid any bottles that have faded or scratched pyro.
- These bottles were meant to be returned to the dairy where they were cleaned and reused. After many cleanings they developed numerous small scratches to the glass. You should avoid bottles that exhibit severe scratching.
- Don't let the fact that a bottle is from a state that is known as a dairy state dissuade you from buying it. Many of the bottles from these states are rare and command high prices.
- Bottles with more than one color will nearly always bring higher prices.

If you're interested in learning more about these bottles there are two books currently available that excellent information about how they were made and used. They are 'Udderly Beautiful' and 'Udderly Splendid.' John Tutton wrote both. Both give some rarity and pricing information, but because of the large number of bottles produced they don't cover even a small fraction of the bottles produced. Both can be found for sale on eBay.

Mr. Tutton also gives some prices for embossed bottles and bottles of other sizes and shapes. I strongly recommend that you don't buy any of these unless you have researched them extensively.

Finally, this is another of the two different niches in this report in which values vary significantly and which there are thousands of different examples. Most dealers are not knowledgeable about these bottles and have no idea of what they are really worth. They either price them way too high or way too low.

By spending some time researching eBay's closed sales archives and gaining a working knowledge of the prices many of these bottles actually bring, you can make a lot of money in this niche and cut down on the lower priced bottles you buy. It will be time well spent.

## **Special Interest Books**

In any decent sized antique mall or flea market one thing you can be sure of finding is at least one dealer who specializes in books. Most of these should be of little interest to you, but there are a few specific categories of books you should be on the lookout for.

### **Self-published company histories**

Most of these come from the 1920s and 1930s when it was popular for companies to publish extensive well-illustrated histories about themselves. Many were printed on heavy glossy paper with fancy bindings. . These were often meant to be promotional pieces that were distributed to employees and the company's larger customers. Because of this, most were published in very limited quantities and bring good prices on eBay. You can pay up to \$10 each for these.

### **Vintage books dealing with the martial arts**

Anything written about the martial arts prior to 1940 should sell. After that year look for books which are about specific disciplines of martial arts. The ones you are interested in are normally smaller books of 100 pages or less. You can pay up to \$10 each for these.

### **Books published before 1940 that deal with the Klu Klux Klan**

Pay up to \$20 for any of these you find.

### **Any book or pamphlet related to the ice industry**

As niches go, this one is a 10+ on the interest meter, and books that make even a passing reference to it often sell quite well. Of particular note here, are local history books that portray ice harvesting or contain photographs of tools or the event itself. You should also be on the lookout for ice cutting tool catalogs, brochures and photographs. You can pay up to \$15 for books or catalogs. Also buy brochures and photographs for \$10 or less.

### **Books written about the early years of logging**

This niche is only a degree or two cooler than it's ice industry brother. The same guidelines regarding what to look for apply here as do to the ice industry. Use the same price guidelines also.

### **Any books about pigeons, doves, falcons or falconry published prior to 1930**

All these have significant collector appeal and sell well. You can comfortably pay up to \$15 apiece for any of these.

## **Selected book about horses and horse racing published prior to 1940**

Most books written about horses have little or no collector interest. However, within this niche there is a smaller niche consisting of collectors looking for anything that relates to either horse racing or breeding and bloodlines. Within this sub-niche there are four type books you should be looking for at prices of \$25 or less.

- Books that deal with the careers of individual racehorses published prior to 1940. These will always find ready bidders.
- Histories of well-known races published prior to 1940. An example would be a history of the Kentucky Derby. Many of these races, while well known at the time, are no longer run, so just because you've never heard of it doesn't mean it wasn't significant years ago. You can safely assume that if a book was written about it, it was well enough known that there are people still interested in it today.
- Books that either include detailed bloodline information, or are made up entirely of this information. Any of these will find ready buyers.
- Books written about individual breeds of horses such as quarter horses, Arabians, thoroughbreds, etc.

## **Early books dealing with one specific sport**

People have been writing about sports since before the printing press was invented. Just in the last one hundred years there have been thousands of books written about just about every sport imaginable.

I recommend you stay away from the major sports such as baseball, football, basketball, hunting, fishing and golf for two reasons:

- First, because of the widespread popularity of these sports many of the related books published over the last one hundred years were printed in large numbers. This means they are relatively easy for someone interested in the sport to find.
- Second, unless you specialize, it's hard to find books about these subjects at prices you can make a decent profit from. Because of the huge collector interest in these sports, most sellers automatically put a big price on them – many times well above what they are actually worth.

Where you can make money is with the sports that aren't as popular and have a much smaller, but just as fanatical, collector base. In fact, many people either might not consider them sports at all, or believe there would be no collector interest in them at all. Some examples of these are:

- Archery
- Mountain climbing
- Soccer
- Rugby

- Ice hockey
- Tennis
- Croquet
- Volleyball
- Badminton
- Table Tennis
- Boxing
- Martial arts (as mentioned above)
- Yachting
- Boat racing
- Automobile racing
- Dog racing
- Wrestling
- Fencing
- Swimming or diving
- Any other sport without a huge following

#### **Any paper ephemera associated with the sports above**

Any paper items associated with the smaller sports mention above should do well. Look for things like small pamphlets, programs, tickets, small booklets, promotional giveaways, etc. When you find them they are normally priced at only \$1 or \$2 and will often sell in the higher two figure or into the three figure range.

**Note:** Both the hunting and fishing book niches offer huge opportunities to make money if you are willing to take the time to learn what sells well and what doesn't. There have been thousands of books written about smaller sub-niches within this larger niche and many of them bring good prices, but you will need to do a fair amount of research to learn what authors and books to buy and what to pass on.

The special interest book field is another niche in which condition of extremely important in determining value. I would recommend you pass on any books that have any of the following problems until you have developed some experience in this field:

- Have a loose binding
- The binding is broken or split
- The covers are warped
- Show any signs of water damage
- Have staining on the covers or pages
- Have lots of dog-eared corners
- Have worn corners or edges on the cover

## **Selected Special Interest Magazines**

One of the staples of any antique shop, mall or flea market seems to be National Geographic, Life and Saturday Evening Post magazines. Along with these offerings you will also find a wide variety of other magazines dating from just a few months ago back to the early 1900s. The vast majority of these have little or no real value. However, there are a small group that sell for anywhere from \$30 to well over \$500 per issue.

Most of the magazines in this small group are specialty magazines dealing with obscure subjects that most dealers see little value in and as a result are usually priced at well below \$10. Often you will find them for as little as \$1 or \$2 each. It's the magazines within this small group that you should be watching for.

### **Field & Stream magazines from 1910 and earlier**

This magazine is a little different from most of the ones we will look at here. Nearly all hunting and fishing magazines are widely collected. As a result, most dealers have a pretty good knowledge of what they are worth and most that you will see are priced such that there is no profit in them.

However, these early issues bear closer attention. Nice copies sell regularly on eBay for between \$200 and \$600+ with the higher prices being brought by issues from before 1900. When you find these in most shops or flea markets many times they are priced around \$50 because most dealers seem to think of their value as the same as later issues. This leaves you with room to make a very nice profit and you should pick good copies up if priced in the \$50 range.

Other magazines that you should watch for are those, which were published in the 1940s or earlier and were targeted at a small specialize market. Until you become familiar with the prices they bring I suggest you don't pay more than \$5 or \$6 each for them. Some of these niche markets include:

- Magazines published for the boating enthusiast
- Magazines published for the private pilot or the aircraft industry
- Magazines published for the home decorating professional about such things as wallpaper, lighting, design, etc.
- Magazines published for beauticians and the beauty trade from the 1940s (some of these had 4 page pull out sections showing one of the current hairstyles with detailed directions for cutting and styling. These add considerable value to the magazine if they are still present).
- Car magazines (the best ones are from 1920 or earlier)
- Magazines relating to the martial arts
- Magazines meant for the radio/television broadcast industry

- Magazines published for dog owners
- Magazines published for horse owners
- Wrestling magazines (anything dated from the mid 50s or earlier)
- Magazines published for the heavy equipment industry
- Magazines published for the construction industry
- Body building and fitness magazines published from the 30s and earlier (don't pay more than \$3 each for these)
- Magazines published by large businesses in the 1930s or earlier and meant for their employees if the business is either still in business or produced a product that is collectible today
- Almost any magazine devoted for enthusiasts of any other sports mentioned in the previous section
- Almost any other magazine meant for a small trade or industry

Additionally, there are two other segments of the magazine market you should at least be knowledgeable about.

First, there is a market for the first issue of almost any magazine no matter what the subject - even those that have been in publication for only a few years. As long as you don't pay more than \$5 each for them you should do well.

Second, there's an active market for extended runs of current magazines that are published for a specific targeted market. To get an idea of the type magazine to look for just take a look at eBay's closed sale archives for magazines – back issues. Some that have particular appeal are:

Specialty cooking magazines

Magazines devoted to a particular collector niche

Fan magazines published for teenagers and young adults. Some examples are:

- Professional wrestling
- Skateboarding
- Star Wars
- Video and computer gaming
- Tattoo art
- Freestyle biking
- Guitars and drums

When dealing with magazines you will find condition if of utmost importance. Never buy a magazine that has missing pages, coupons ads that have been cut out, torn covers, loose bindings, or staining to the covers. Magazines can also become musty smelling if they have been stored for many years. If your nose turns up when you pick up a magazine, I would recommend you don't buy it unless you know with certainty that it would otherwise sell for well over \$100.

## **Vintage Tourist/Resort Brochures**

This niche is somewhat different from the others discussed here because your potential profits aren't as large dollar-wise as they are for the others. However, these brochures can often be picked up for \$1 or less and if you are careful about what you buy, you will be able to make a \$5 to \$10 profit on nearly every one you find.

Tourist brochures are usually found in two, three, four, six, or 8 page fold out formats and, when closed, usually measure approx. 3-4 inches wide and 7-8 inches tall. The majority of them are made up primarily of pictures and a small amount of text. Various states, cities, tourist attractions, theme parks, resorts, spas and tour providers have produced brochures since the early 1900s.

You should only consider those that are printed in color and from the 1950s or earlier. The ones that sell consistently are those that fit into one of the three following categories:

- Cities located in areas that are or were considered tourist attractions
- Small less well-known theme parks
- Resorts or spas located anywhere

While your actual profit from these won't be large, there's a certain satisfaction that comes from paying fifty cents for something that you can sell for \$5 to \$10 or more. In general you will find that the older they are, the more money they will bring.

## **Researching Your Own Special Situations**

When discussing a few of the above niches, I've mentioned the idea of using eBay's closed auction archives in order to learn more about the prices these items bring.

Many people dismiss these archives' usefulness as a serious research tool because their availability at any time is only for the previous two weeks. I encourage you not to do the same thing.

Closed sales archives can be a very helpful tool when searching for items within niches and/or sub-niches that display price disparities between eBay and antique malls or flea markets. I encourage you to do your own research to find additional areas in these and other niches you can make money in.

It's unlikely you are going to come up with a half dozen profit areas by spending an hour on your computer. However, by devoting an evening every week or two to research you will be able to come up with your own profit areas every once in a while.

It's quite simple to do once you know what niches or categories to ignore and where to look.

The three basic categories of an antique business are glassware, pottery, silver and furniture. Since these four things make up the majority of most dealers' inventory they are going to have a very good idea of what things in these areas are actually worth. So we will eliminate anything that falls into these three areas.

Next there is a group of collectibles that have a large collector base that has been collecting them for many years. Because of this large longtime interest, once again, dealers are normally well versed regarding prices. Niches included in this group include such things as quilts, toys, dolls, folk art, etc. We will need to eliminate these also.

What we are left with is a large number of smaller niches that many dealers pay little attention to because they view them as being on the periphery of the antiques/collectible market. In many cases, the only reason they have these items in their shops or booths is because they end up with them when buying entire estates, collections or by the box at auctions.

Because so many dealers view glass, pottery, furniture and silver as their bread-winners, they pay little attention to what's happening with these shirt tail relatives. If they do have a working knowledge of these niches, it's usually very general and not specific to individual items within the niche.

As long as this attitude remains, it provides a huge window of opportunity for the person who is willing to take the time to do a little research and learn more about them.

A classic example of this right now is the advertising tin niche. While nearly all dealers realize these have collector interest, most have no specific knowledge of many of the smaller sub-niches within this larger one.

Two good examples of this are the aspirin tins and condom tins we discussed earlier. A few similar sub-niches that will yield significant profits to the canny seller are:

- Oyster tins
- Spice tins
- Coffee tins (particularly 1 lb. key-wind coffee tins)
- Typewriter ribbon tins

By keeping an eye on eBay's closed sales archives for a few weeks you should be able to easily develop a good sized list of higher priced tins that you can occasionally pick up at prices that will allow you to make significant profits on eBay.

This same research can be conducted in many other eBay sub-categories with equally profitable results.

## **Some Additional Thoughts**

I want to emphasize again that the maximum prices I've recommended you pay for the items in each niche have been intentionally set on the low side to insure there's a lesser chance you will pay too much for an item. The prices different recommend items within a niche will bring varies considerably, but I would rather you pass on a few items that might prove to be profitable than pay too much for several items and not make a profit on them.

I recommend that once you have a little experience, you do some research in the closed sale archives to learn which items you can safely pay more for. Ultimately, the time you spend doing this will only serve to increase the profitability of your business.

Never be afraid to ask for a discount on any item you're thinking about buying. If the original price is already within the limits you're working with, you'll just save a little money. Many times if the price is higher than your maximum, a discount will bring the price down to an acceptable level.

Remember, due to the type of items you will be buying, many of them have been in a dealer's inventory for quite a while. Additionally, as far as most dealers will be concerned, they are the 'little sisters' in his inventory and he would just as soon be rid of them.

Flea market dealers expect buyers to negotiate prices, as do most individual dealers located in shops.

Antique malls are a little different because, in most cases, you're not dealing with the actual owner of the item. However, most malls have some type of set discount policy in place and if you ask you can normally get at least a 10% reduction in the price. Also, if an item is priced at around \$50 or higher, many mall employees will be willing to make a phone call to the item's owner and convey a reasonable offer you have made for it.

Whenever I talk with other eBay sellers about the niches discussed in this report, I almost always hear the same two questions.

Is there a particular type of shop or mall that this works best in?  
Are you more successful in large cities or rural areas?

After doing this for several years I honestly don't feel that the shop or the location makes one bit of difference to your overall success.

Small one-dealer shops, large city mega-malls, 1000 dealer flea markets, and 12 dealer flea markets – they all produce saleable items at cheap prices over time.

It might seem obvious that your chances of finding merchandise in a 200 dealer mall in a large city are better than in a small one-dealer shop in the middle of nowhere. However, experience has shown that you can spend an entire day going through two or three of those large malls and not make a single purchase.

Then, the following day, 1 hour spent digging around a small one-dealer shop will yield a huge box of old catalogs purchased for \$50 that bring in over \$3000 on eBay over the next three weeks.

Never prejudge a shop, flea market or location. Many times the best deals come out the strangest places. Give them all a chance.

One final thought. I've been using the ideas and thoughts presented in this report for nearly five years. They worked for me five years ago and they work for me today. They will work for you. But in order for them to work for you, you have to be willing to give them a chance.

That means you must go out and look for the items we discussed here; and, you must give it all a chance.

You may well end up empty handed after going through your first flea market. You may walk out of the huge antique mall located near where you live with all your money still in your pocket. Days like that are to be expected. Fortunately, you can also expect days when you go home with the back of your van or trunk of your car filled with enough things to keep you listing on eBay for several weeks. You just need to give it a chance to work.

I see too many people buy an eBay related book or report, read it, talk about implementing what it says, and then a week later purchase another book and completely forget about what was in the first one. In order for any resource to work for you, you need to apply what you learn from it and give it a chance.