


# THE ANTIQUE DETECTIVE

Anne Gilbert



# Cookin' Up The Past

## Affordable Old Chinese Paintings Still Around

Surprisingly one of the most affordable art categories is Chinese paintings from the 18th and 19th centuries. Even in antique shops, prices can range from a few hundred dollars to under \$3,000. They have never lost their appeal to American collectors since they were first introduced to our shores by China traders in the early 18th century.

The subjects were as varied as the materials used.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as more Americans traveled to China, they brought back what they thought were old paintings. Especially popular were the ancestral portraits. Lesser known these days, but showing up at auctions more often, were the so-called "rice paper" paintings. Throughout the last part of the 19th century, they were exported in huge quantities and sold in America.

In the 1950s brushwork paintings, old and new, as well as cop-

ies, were fashionable decorator items. One of the most common subjects were the black and white horses, copied from early art.

Another form of art combined calligraphy with small paintings to tell a story. It is still popular with interior designers. There are also pages taken from calligraphy books and framed. Other examples are strictly religious and combined dieties with Chinese calligraphy.

During the Boxer Rebellion (1900), when homes were looted, these religious books, (Siutras) were brought back to America by servicemen. Elaborate examples with gold ink illustrations of dieties can sell for thousands of dollars.

**CLUES:** Paintings from the early Chinese dynasties are in museums and private collections. However, there are still plenty of ancestor portraits still around. These were often done by commercial artists, using photos of the deceased, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Before photography, the artist keep a supply of facial features on hand.

The client would work out a composite and the artist would dress the "ancestor" in a Mandarin costume. However, as they became popular in America, artists created their own versions for export. Prints also flood the market, with details accented with hand painting. The largest can sell for \$3,000 or more in a gallery. They weren't signed.

"Rice paper" paintings were originally made into albums, with four or more paintings on a page. The albums were in different sizes; 7x5-inch to 8x12-inches."

They used watercolors and gouache on pitch paper made from the papyrus plant. Since it was quite fragile, examples may not be in good condition. However, the paintings have retained their vibrant colors. The earliest examples depicted members of the Imperial Court, using much gold, silver and pearl dust in their costumes.

A most charming and unforgettable old stove-related column written by columnist Jack Mabley (titled Nowadays Clashes With Her Old Ways) which ran in the Chicago Tribune on September 8, 1980, tells about Mary Walley and her old wood-burning stove that Mabley wrote saying "An Environmental officer knocked on the door of Mary Walley's Park Ridge, IL home and told Mrs. Walley it was OK for her to burn wood and paper in her wood stove, but she had to stop burning other materials, which created an odor and a health hazard. Mrs. Walley (who was 83 at the time) said she would continue to burn whatever she pleases in her beloved stove.

By the late 19th century subjects included festivals, landscapes, birds, animals and flowers. The albums were painted in a series and often named. A complete album can sell at auction for \$600 or more. Originally they sold for a few dollars to tourists.

Rice paper paintings aren't signed. However, some have the shop labels or signatures of well-known Chinese painters. They were, after all, studio productions with several artists working each painting. The album covers themselves were works of art, covered in brocade. Gold pheasants, flowers and fruit were depicted. The pictures were often framed in colored ribbons. Other times the pictures were sold separately.

Another category are religious paintings in scroll or banner form.

Generally they were done on paper or brocade. At auction they can sell for as little as \$200. Things to consider are age, condition and subject appeal. Are the paintings really prints? Are they painted on quality paper or textiles?

If you are serious, get help from experts.

Carefully examine any you see at the next antique show.

"All day, anything I don't like — wrappers, junk mail — I put in the stove," she said. In the morning I light a match to it. It burns so dry that when I throw potato or banana peels in it, there's nothing left.

I've been doing it here for 58 years and all of a sudden this bird comes over and says I'm causing a health problem and an odor. I've used this stove before these officials were born, and I'm going to keep using it."

Mrs. Walley has loved wood stoves all her life. When she and her late husband and two children moved to Park Ridge, they found a house with a chimney in the kitchen. So they bought a wood and coal-burning kitchen stove. Mrs. Walley said her earliest recollection from childhood was the comfort and pleasure derived from the warmth of the black wood-burning stove in her mother's kitchen.

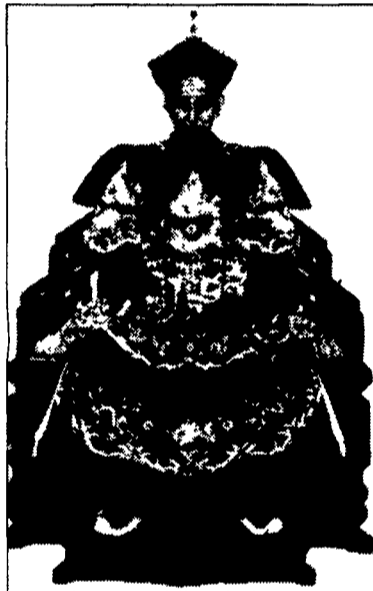
"While the dinner was cooking on the top," she said, "the meat roasting or the bread baking in the oven, the water for the dishes was heating in the reservoir, and the tea kettle was humming

away. "On blistering hot days its warmth dried the humidity in the air and made life more comfortable. Returning from school on bitter cold days, we hung up our clothes, took off our shoes and boots, and gathered around the stove with the oven door open. The family cat made herself comfortable behind the stove among our boots, shoes, and socks that were drying.

"In 58 years," Mrs. Walley said, "this stove has consumed tons of refuse, and saved me miles of steps to the garbage cans in the alley. The ashes have served as fertilizer in the garden. Shall I now, after all these years, be denied the use of this stove because someone does not enjoy the smoke from its chimney?"

Park Ridge has not been too sticky about it, and I think Mrs. Walley will continue to enjoy her stove, if she doesn't throw any old tires in it," said Mabley.

To receive the entire article, send an addressed, stamped envelope marked "Old Stove" to Anita Gold, P.O. Box 597401, Chicago, IL 60659.



Ancestor portrait of the six Prince Yi (1816-1861) c.1905 is on a hanging scroll with ink and color on silk. Photo credit: Sackler Gallery, purchased by Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions Programs and by a partial Pritzlaff gift.

**TOYS TOYS TOYS TOYS TOYS**

## Public Bankruptcy Auction

**Sat. Nov. 15th, 2003 @ 9:00 AM**

Murray Auction Emporium  
23 North Water/Lititz, PA 17543

### ONE STOP CHRISTMAS SHOP !!

Smarty Pants, Inc. of Shillington, PA - entire contents of retail store with all types of learning toys and supplies, new display racks, shelving, Royal cash register

**Brief listing:** games, large variety of puzzles, paint and create, phonies, matching games, dart ball, Star Wars items, tie dye kits, greeting cards, 7 in one super game sets, learning maps, stickers, building blocks, play boards, flower presses, Disney items, Science and Fiction books, ABC blocks, magnetic learning calendars, small erector sets, Breyer horses, various popular Brio educational toys, hundreds of elementary educational toys not listed.

Please note that all items are without reserve.

Auction by Order of  
**Robert H. Holber Trustee**  
Bankruptcy Case #03-22668

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## PUBLIC COIN AUCTION

- JMI COINS -  
Selling 400+ Lots of Collector and Investment Quality Coins  
Half Cents thru Gold - Raw and Certified  
**SAT., NOV. 1, 2003**  
9:30 AM

At the Holiday Inn - Arsenal Rd. in York, PA  
Preview 7:45 AM

**DIRECTIONS:** PA Rt 83 Southbound take Exit 21. Northbound use Exit 21A (Rt. 30 East, Arsenal Rd.) Right at first light. Hotel is on the left.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** 24 pcs. US Gold incl. 1907 \$20 PCGS MS62; 19 Half Cents, Cents - 1798, 1799, 1804, 1810/9, 1861 XF, 1866 XF, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1908s BU, 1914d XF/AU. Dimes - Rare 1822 VG, 1837 Bust AU, 1942/1 Quarters - 1932s, 1950d/s. Halves - 1806 VF, 1936 Rhode Is. NGC MS65, BU Dollars - 1878cc, 1883cc, 1889s Cert. MS63. Also 1889cc F, 1921, 1928, and 1934s Peace, 58 piece set of BU Silver Dollars (sold as one lot).

**Proof Type** - 1867, 1878, 1896 Dimes, 1883 Quarter, 1843 Half Dollar. **40+ Lots of Currency.**

**BU Rolls:** Cents - 1939, 1939s, 1948s, 1955d, (4) Rolls 1954 Quarters, (2) Rolls. 1948 Halves, Dollars - 1896, 1901o

**\*\*\*\* Mint Sets** - 22 original Double Mint Sets (1948-1958), 12 Commemorative sets (1986-1993) with gold, 1979s Type 2 Proof Set, 5 lots of Stamps including a Mint Set of Graf Zeppelin (65c., 1.30, 2.60) and 1893 Columbian Expo \$5. Catalog and info. call Mike @ (717)993-2588 or leave message at (888)632-1914

Auctioneer: Martin Heaps  
(PA License #AU0002762-L)

## PUBLIC AUCTION

### COMPLETE LIQUIDATION OF IMPORTANT COLLECTION OF ADVERTISING MEDIA AND ANTIQUES INCLUDING FURNITURE

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2003 - 9:00 am**  
**PREVIEW - NOVEMBER 14, 2003 - 3:00-6:30 pm.**

**AUCTION HELD AT:**  
**106 Kelly Court - Grantville, PA 17028 - Dauphin County**

Presenting, for complete liquidation, a collection of single owner vintage advertising, country store and other misc. related antique items including: a magnificent oak 40' cabinet - circa 1919 from a pharmacy in Elwood City; upper section with Greek Key molding - adjustable shelves & original glass doors over a bowed glass mid section over paneled glass door lower shelf bottom. In Wonderful Condition! To be sold as a complete unit (photo available upon request). Important bar/mirror back and marble front unit from Grantville PA Hotel; 10' Ligonier oak vintage refrigerated display case - operable cooling units; 2 oak seed counters; grained store counter; marble base store display cabinet; oak Colgan's display cabinet, assortment of early varied type floor and table display cabinets; ribbon display cabinet; brass National cash register; collection of ice cream parlor items; fine Spencer's Jersey Ice Cream sign; Hopalong Cassidy ice cream container along with many other early ice cream containers; dippers, cone and straw holders; marble top ice cream table along with ice cream parlor chairs & tables; early double sided Hershey's ice Cream enameled sign; fine ice cream tray; Hines Root Beer items; Green River and other ice tea dispensers; large amount of paper, metal, and enameled ice cream signs; hundreds of tin adv. containers of all types; early Coca Cola tray; Lancaster Peanut tin; various tobacco, tea, and spice tins; Polar Bear tobacco store display unit; great oak adv. Mirrors; cheese cabinets; fine 1860-63 bound storage ledger; old country store wooden display tables; bakery cabinets; blind 3 drawer step back cupboard; oak extension table, drop leaf tables, one drawer stands; pine gallery desk; oval marble top table; late Victorian arm chair and table; fine mirror back oak buffet; easel; great painted wheelbarrow; brass buckets; wooden biscuit boxes; Lightning Glider sleds; along with many interesting country store and ice cream parlor advertising items. **HERSHEY ITEMS:** Rare salesman's sample Hershey Products presentation portfolio; rare 7 bottle salesman's sample case of cocoa beans; Haverstick "The Hershey Flower" Book; scarce counter advertisement Hershey Chocolate, soldier form.



AUCTION ORDER:	
9:00 am	Misc. Unnumbered Lots
10:00 am	Numbered Lots of Small Ice Cream Items
11:00 am	Numbered Lots of Advertising Items Along with Misc. Small Furniture
12:00 NOON	Hershey Items

Antique Display Cases will be in Separate Numbered Lots at the Conclusion of Small Items and 40' Display Unit

**DIRECTIONS:** From Hershey take Rt. 743 North to Route 22, Cross Over Rt. 22 and go 300 yards to Auction on Left. Look for signs.

**AUCTION HELD IN TENT**  
**Over Four Hundred Lots To Be Offered For Complete Liquidation Of The Collection**

Conditions By: **THOMAS & PATRICIA BURROWS**

**AUCTION CONDUCTED BY:**  
Roy D. Shirk, Auctioneer - License #: AU-003248-L  
Any Questions Call: Ken Fegan - License #: AA-002867 (717) 867-1572  
**PHONE (717) 867-1119 - FAX (717) 867-5606**  
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