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Friday, 01/11/08

Know Your Stuff: Family bedroom set not quite Eastlake, but still a keeper

By CONNIE SUE DAVENPORT
 For Williamson A.M.

Connie Sue: We are curious about the value of three pieces of furniture we own that we believe to be quite old. We actually do use these pieces. They are all in excellent condition and are structurally very sound. We bought this furniture 25 years ago just prior to our wedding. It has seen and heard many things in its time with us that we hold dear. We look forward to getting some insight into what it may have seen and heard prior to joining our family.

— Sincerely, Mark

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Dear Mark: Antique dealers



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Ash bed (SUBMITTED PHOTOS)

Contact Connie Sue Davenport with questions about your antiques and collectibles, and we'll discuss them here. Send to curios@conniesueinc.com or by mail in care of Williamson A.M.

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often describe a bedroom suite like this as Eastlake. It has a bilateral front (equal designs on each side), simple incised floral patterns and parallel lines. But true Eastlake would be much larger and taller, made of walnut and have applied ornaments as well as incised

designs. This little ash bedroom suite is a later line of very functional and sturdy furniture manufactured around 1890-1900. It is difficult to even dent ash, so this set will easily survive you and Pam in addition to future generations if it is spared tornado and fire.

The method of making the florets is often called chip carving or spoon carving, although the work was done with the help of steam-powered machinery. All three pieces have paneled wood sections rather than solid slabs of wood. This confirms the date I have given because, generally speaking, the thinner the wood the later the piece. Fortunately for you, the brasses (pulls) are all original and matching. I also like the fact that the bed has its original rails. Standard beds are a little harder to sell because many buyers aren't as close as you and Pam!

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Many people would call this an oak bedroom suite. Although it is impossible to confirm without seeing the tree's leaves, to me ash is brown in the marrow, or dark grained area. Oak is a bit more golden; I like to think it is winking at me. And chestnut is similar in grain but has a reddish tinge in the marrow.

This set has passed through three to four generations since it was first purchased, and it is remarkable to have remained intact. Children often divide parents' personal property so that each heir can have an estate piece. Your three-piece set would be priced around \$2,000 in an antique mall. If you and Pam should decide to cash in on the goods at a sale, you would start at \$2,000 and engage the hugglers until you've had enough.

Mrs. Davenport: This item is a man on a goat, and it is 9 inches tall from the bottom of its base to the tip of his hat. Note that part of his right hand is broken and missing near the wrist.

— **Barb and Deacon Dave**

Dear Barb and Deacon Dave: This German bisque, or biscuit porcelain, figurine was made in the Victorian era after 1891 and before 1914. This whimsical man on a goat might be a bit rarer as a figurine subject than babies, ladies and children. But all were mass produced in the millions in Germany and exported to a willing

world of buyers.

The blue crown over an "N" is the much reproduced and borrowed Italian, Capo Di Monte mark. It appears the German producers were only implying age and attribution because they covered themselves by adding "Germany" to the base in a different color of blue. I do believe, however, that this was an export requirement imposed by the United States for products to be sold to circa 1900 bric-a-brac hungry consumers.

The value in a nice shop would be \$350. The lost hand will forever hamper this well-dressed man on a goat! In a home where he is loved, that side could be turned against the wall, but as a purchase, he might be the last chosen.

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