

The Harrodsburg Herald Mercer's Magazine

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July 07, 2016



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Personal Effects

By Jerry Sampson
Contributing Writer

(To request an appraisal, send clear digital photos, detailed descriptions, measurements and condition to jsampsonantiques@bellsouth.net. Only one item per person. Items will be selected on an individual basis and may or may not appear in Mercer's Magazine. No coins, money, stamps, weapons or sports memorabilia will be considered. No emailed photos or information will be kept. Information discussed in Personal Effects is not intended to be a substitute for an in person appraisal of an item. Exact valuing can come only from actual viewing. Jerry Sampson, J. Sampson Antiques, Books and Appraisals, The Harrodsburg Herald and its staff and management cannot be held responsible for misinformation or incorrect estimates. These featured appraisals are intended for entertainment purposes only and are not valid for insurance coverage or estate settlement.)

Tolkien Book

Question: Jerry, Love the columns and I don't think that you showcase enough books. Here is one that my Dad treasured. It's a copy of "Farmer Giles of Ham" by J.R.R. Tolkien. It's in very good condition with a dust jacket in a plastic sleeve. The jacket has some chips on the edges and corners but not too bad. It's marked first edition and first printing. Or I think it's in good shape. But here's the real kicker. It's signed by Tolkien. What

would this be worth? He bought it in the 1970s for \$ 15. Thank you for taking the time to look at this.

Answer: I agree, I love to talk books and encourage the readers to send in more "desirable" books for me to value. I would treasure this book too. You have a copy of the second book J.R.R. Tolkien wrote. He finished it in 1937 and it was first published in 1949, so it wasn't too terribly old when your father bought it. It's a comedy, a Medieval fable, set in the dark ages. It

tells the story of Farmer Giles and a clever dragon named Chrysofylax. It originally was a tongue-in-cheek essay in English mythology.

It has little to do with Tolkien's more famous pieces, like the Middle Earth series. Critics and Tolkien scholars have sneered over it for decades. However, it is a rare and wanted book by the collectors of Tolkien. Its rareness is furthered by the addition of a signature. Boy, that makes all the difference, that and this colorful, gorgeous dust jacket. You sent me many good, clear photos and you do indeed have a first edition and a first printing. So it's a true first edition. It does have some condition issues, they are minor, but they are there. Small chips to the jacket and a little staining inside, nothing more.

I would expect at a fine book show this book be priced at about \$950. However, without a jacket and signature it would be about \$100. Also, I think this price would be much less if the phenomenon of "the Lord of the Rings" trilogy hadn't taken off. It's a wonderful book. Thank you for sharing it.

Fiesta Candle Holders

Question: Jerry, I got these out of an old house. I was told an old lady had them for years. I think that they are Fiesta. What are they worth?

Answer: Well, I hate to break it to you. They look like Fiesta, but they are fake. Fiesta is a pattern name created by the Homer Laughlin China Company. Homer Laugh-



lin introduced this line to great fanfare in 1936. It was an immediate success.

What you have, or almost had, are the tripod candle holders. They are very scarce and are a coup in any Fiesta collection. There were available in the original six colors: red, yellow, cobalt blue, green, ivory and turquoise. Turquoise was introduced in 1937, but it's often included in the earliest of Fiesta color charts.

Collectors love these tripod candle holders, even if they don't collect Fiesta. It's that sexy, Art Deco styling that reaches across many collector lines. The tripod

candlestick holder was discontinued around 1942/1943. So they've been out of production for a long time.

Then something really groundbreaking happened. In 1985, the famous New York store, Bloomingdale's, asked Homer Laughlin about reproducing dinnerware from the past.

The line debuted in 1986 with a new color palette and improvements to the body of the clay, including the novel concept of making the glaze lead-free. Over the next 25 years, new colors have been introduced to great success. In its 75-year history,

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