

# Your home may be hiding timeless treasures

One hundred ten years ago, in 1897, Tennesseans were attending an international fair on the outskirts of Nashville at Centennial Park. To celebrate Tennessee's statehood, a great fair with exhibitors, musicians, speakers, contests, an x-ray machine, fireworks, rides and wonders from around the world drew visitors from May until October. A million and a half people paid up to \$1 each to attend. More than 50,000 people came the day President William McKinley was in attendance. It was the largest one-day crowd at the exposition. Today, souvenirs of this exhibition perhaps lurk in our china cabinets and piano benches.

A small collection of souvenirs from the historic exposition is on permanent display at the Parthenon in Centennial Park. Wearing white gloves, Parthenon Events Manager and Gallery Assistant Laura Carrillo showed me a pressed glass saucer, sheet music and souvenir spoons. Although the fair took place more than 100 years ago, these items can often be purchased in estates and antique malls for less than \$50. Laura and I agree that these 19th-century treasures of the exposition are an excellent value for collectors.



**Souvenir plates and spoons commemorating the Tennessee Centennial Exposition held 110 years ago in Nashville's Centennial Park are now popular and valuable collectors' items.**

The 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville attracted more than 11 million souvenir buyers! If you were breathing and in Tennessee in '82, you probably have a brightly colored salt and pepper shaker, pin dish or ceramic bell from that modern fair. They sell at garage sales for a few dollars or appear as donated "stuff" in thrift stores. A limited issue, mint-in-box pocket knife or opening-day pin could cost more than \$50! Values for antiques and collectibles are controlled by supply and demand — just

like hay for the horse or gas for the car.

For many years, I've been in the business of appraising antiques and personal property. Contemplating trends of collecting and examining the items we keep and treasure has fascinated me since 1977. I was very excited when *The Tennessee Magazine* gave me the opportunity to share some of my knowledge and stories with you. I invite you to contact me with your questions, photographs and stories about antiques and collectables. Letters and pictures that appeal to readers with a heart at home in Tennessee will be chosen to be printed in the magazine. I'll answer questions about preserving, conserving, downsizing, insuring and liquidating antiques and personal property. And, of course, I'll answer the very important question of value.

Your photographs should clearly show details and condition. Include photos of the markings, from both exterior and interior angles. This will be such fun. It may give you a good reason to go through your garage or attic. Your memories await you. ☺

Find an interesting piece while cleaning out the attic? Want some more information on a prized heirloom? Then send your detailed inquiries to Connie Sue Davenport and look for her answers in future issues of *The Tennessee Magazine*.



**Tennesseans gobbled up a variety of souvenirs from the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, including these copies of sheet music.**

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