

Don't Sell Grandma's Jewelry at a Yard Sale...What's It Worth?

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By JoAnna Gilford

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IDENTIFICATION

Before you can find out what a piece of jewelry is worth, you need to find out what it is. This can be as simple as turning it over and finding a maker's mark or complicated as in "hours of research". First thing first: Examine your jewelry for a maker's mark. Look on the back or on the clasp. Thoroughly examine every inch of the piece. If you see a maker's mark, start your research! Not finding a maker's mark doesn't mean it's not valuable, on the contrary; many fine pieces of jewelry were never marked. It does mean you will need to put in a little more effort in research.

If you received your jewelry from a family member, ask them about it's history. Did your grandfather give it to your grandmother right before he went off to war? Was it handed down from her mother? Answers to these questions will give you a general idea of how old it is.

Look at the style of the piece. Although many styles come back into fashion after a time, it is still possible to ID an older piece by the style and material.

Does it appear to have gemstones? Determine if they are real gemstones. You will need some sort of strong magnifying glass or ideally, a jeweler's loupe. A loupe is a small magnifying glass in various degrees of magnification. A 10X loupe should be all you need and they are relatively inexpensive. Craft and hobby stores usually sell them. Go to a well lighted place and look at the stone through the loupe. Do you see tiny bubbles in the stone? Tiny air bubbles mean it is made from glass or plastic. It's not a real gemstone. Is it open backed? Can you see the back of the stone when you turn the piece over? Does the back of the stone look shiny as in gold or silver colored foil? These are foil back rhinestones and not real gems. Foil was often added to reflect the light and create a better sparkle. Most real gems contain some type of natural inclusion. Unless you are familiar with gems and diamonds, your best bet is to take it to a jeweler or appraiser if you think it is real.

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Look at the construction of the piece. This can be extremely helpful in dating a piece! Look at the clasp or pin. Are the stones individually riveted on? Is the clasp rather ornate? Does it have a layered look? What type of style is it? Does it remind you of old black and white movies? Perhaps Bette Davis or Katherine Hepburn? Does it look Victorian?

By now, you should have a general idea of age and you are ready to start your research in earnest!

RESEARCH

Head for your local library or heat up an Internet search engine! I can spend hours in my local library poring over books and books and more books. There are plenty of good jewelry reference books. Stop by your library or bookstore and check them out before buying. No sense in buying a book you will hardly use! If you choose the library, bring your jewelry with you. You can also make copies of any pages you wish to take or check out the book and bring it home. As with other research, libraries are

extremely helpful. Searching on the Internet is also a quick and easy way to get fast information.

Some search terms to try are:

maker's mark

vintage jewelry

the name of the maker's mark you found on your piece

the decade i.e. "1930's jewelry"

antique jewelry

collectible costume jewelry

This will give you hours of research and hundreds of pages to sort. Look at anything relevant, look for similar pieces or styles. Visit online vintage jewelry shops. Look for forums where you may be able to post a picture and ask for identification help.

If you love to research like I do, this is right up your alley! It can take hours, days sometimes weeks to find out about a certain piece. As you go, you will gain more knowledge about old jewelry and hopefully you will be as enchanted as many other collectors and dealers. It's a fascinating world of "junky jewelry"!

We are always here to help you with your pieces, so feel free to send us an email if you have questions.

Junky Jewelry buys, sells and offers consignment options for vintage, antique and collectible costume jewelry. All their licenses are current in the state of FL. Receive Junky Jewelry updates and articles in their free newsletter by going to

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Six Steps To Yard Sale Success

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By Jude Wright

It's now officially summer and for many people, that means yard sale (or garage sale) time. Have a yard sale and get rid of all those things that you have tossed during your Spring cleaning "spree."

Now that you have all of this "stuff," what do you do with it?

Step One: Get it organized. Put books with books and dishes with dishes. You get the picture. All like items together.

Step Two: Write the ad for your yard sale and get it to your local newspaper and Recycler publication. When writing your ads and your yard sale signs, remember that the words that sell the best are "Collectibles" and "Everything Must Go!" Your yard sale sign should be written with a bold black marker on a bright yellow card stock. It really catches the eye and makes it easier to read. Don't make the mistake of writing too small. Make your printing large enough that people can see it when they drive by. Add a large arrow – and don't forget to put your address on it.

Step Three: Price your items. Some things like books and sweaters or other clothing, will sell better if you sell them as two-for-one or three-for-one. Create small cards to place on your set of books say, "3 for \$5.00." Now, aren't you glad you already have all your books together?

Step Four: Set up your tables and other areas for your sale. Set up a table especially for smaller items such as jewelry. Antique dealers have a secret for selling small items: display them on a dark colored tablecloth. This shows them off better than light colors or bare tables. Also, sorting jewelry into individual baggies gives the idea that each item is special – even if it's not!

Step Five: Ready, Set Go! You have everything ready so now you can sit back and rake in the cash. Well, not really. If you want to really sell, you need to join the crowd and talk to your customers. Make them happy. Give a toy to a child. Dicker over the price of an item. Throw something in for free and tell them, "The more you buy, the cheaper you can get it." Your goal here (besides making money) is to get rid of your clutter!

Step Six: When the yard sale is over, don't put everything that's left back into your house. It's tempting to save it for the next yard sale but you'll usually just end up selling the same items over and over again. Take everything to a charity such as Good Will or the Salvation Army. That will make your yard sale a true success – cleaning out all of your unwanted stuff!

Jude Wright is the webmistress of 30 websites, most of which relate to Home Management. This Network of sites is based at

where you'll find everything from cleaning to

gardening to money management.

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