

Antique Appraisal
By
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Date of Appraisal: January 26, 2010

Owner/Client: Dr. Glenn Hamilton, 53 West Monterey, Dayton, Ohio 45419

Item: Horse-drawn Doctor's Buggy

Date of Manufacture: Circa Late 19th Century

Location of Manufacture: Unknown, but believed to be Midwestern United States.

Construction and Details: Wood body with cast iron brackets and supports. Wood chassis with cast-iron brackets. Spring steel leaf springs. Wood artillery style wheels with solid, rubber tires. Black diamond tufted upholstery. Black leather front splash board. Black folding top with steel and wood top bows and supports.

Exterior Color: Black with red striping

Interior Color: Black

Size: Approximately 7' long (length of buggy only) and 9-10' tall with the top in the up position.

Historical Background:

The history of the horse drawn wagon is almost as old as the invention of the wheel itself. By the early 17th century, the horse drawn wagon was being used all over the world as a means of transportation for people, goods and services. In earlier years, these wagons were often hand crafted and individually made by owners who built a particular wagon to suit whatever needs they might have. Seeing the need for such conveyances, professional manufacturers of wagons began to exist all over the world and produced wagons ranging from very simple buckboards to ornate and highly detailed carriages that were produced and sold to wealthy consumers. By the mid-17th Century, the commercial wagon building trade began to flourish in all parts of the world.

By the early 1800s, the carriage manufacturing trade in America was a growing and thriving business. Most of the well known carriage manufacturers located themselves in areas of strong, local economies such as the larger cities in the northeastern parts of the United States. Some of the most prolific carriage and buggy manufacturers located themselves in or near areas such as Boston, Philadelphia and New York City. As the

industrial revolution began to grow and populations began to expand, other carriage manufacturers built and located their factories near other thriving cities such as Detroit and Chicago and, with the expansion of populations into California and the western states during the mid-19th centuries, other companies grew in places such as San Francisco and Sacramento.

The carriage trade continued to prosper world wide through the 19th century. With the advent of the automobile, the popularity of the horse drawn carriage was beginning to fade. Many of the famous carriage builders began experimenting with automobile manufacturing by the turn of the 20th Century and by 1910, the carriage building trade was almost non-existent.

ITEM DESCRIPTION:

This horse drawn carriage is a commercially made unit that was designed to be a doctor's buggy. Unlike other carriages which were larger and longer, the doctor's buggy was designed with a short wheelbase (this refers to the short distance in between the two axles). As these buggies were used to transport doctors quickly to their patients, they were built to be very light weight which enabled a single horse to be used. By being light weight in design, a single horse could rapidly transport the doctor to his desired location. The short wheelbase enabled the buggy to be pulled over a variety of terrains as well as could easily be turned and maneuvered as needed. Since the doctors generally did not need to bring heavy or large items-other than a doctor's bag-with them to appointments, there was little provision made for storage.

This example is a typical doctor's buggy. The body is a simple unit with a double bench style seat which could carry up to two people. The base of the body as well as the seat is made of wood with steel and iron brackets for support. The chassis features fully elliptical front and rear springs which helped to reduce road shock. The springs are made of hand hammered, spring steel. The chassis also features a rotating front axle for ease of steering and large diameter wood wheels that have a hard rubber "tire" covering them. This example could be considered a deluxe model as it has a diamond-tufted upholstered seat as well as a folding top with side curtains and "windows" built into the fabric. These "deluxe" features are rather unusual as most of these types of buggies did not have upholstered seats or a protective top.

While its early history is unknown, this doctor's buggy is believed to have been made during that later part of the 19th century and is American in origin based upon research and examination. The prior owner discovered the complete and original buggy in a barn in Barry County, Michigan during 2000. It is believed that the buggy had been stored in this barn since prior to World War II and also believed that it was used by a physician in this area. Upon purchasing the buggy, it was found to be complete and original but in need of a total restoration.

This original doctor's buggy was entrusted to the Justin Buggy Company of Nashville, Michigan where it was given a thorough and exacting restoration to period correct standards. The wooden body panels that were found to be damaged were replaced as needed. The wood artillery wheels were restored and the chassis was checked for soundness and structural integrity. The body was repainted in the period correct color of black and was accented with hand painted, red striping as would have been done during the period. The diamond tufted upholstery was replaced in a period correct pattern and

the top was recovered to resemble the original top. The front splash guard was also restored to original.

Today, this early doctor's buggy remains in excellent restored condition. The paint, upholstery and top are excellent and the chassis also remains in excellent condition as are the wood wheels. It is ready to be used again as a carriage or to be displayed as a historical artifact that represents a reflection of medical car and transportation from a time gone by.

Early horse drawn vehicles, such as this doctor's buggy are highly prized by collectors who use them either for display or demonstration purposes. Many horse enthusiasts enjoy using vintage carriages behind their prized horses at equestrian events. It should be noted that reproductions of such horse drawn vehicles do exist and, even as reproductions, can cost several thousands of dollars to manufacture. True collectors and historians, however, prefer original horse drawn vehicles and pay premium prices to acquire and restore them to original condition.

PRICE EVALUATION:

There are many factors which contribute to the appraised value of an antique object. These factors include rarity, originality, quality of restoration (if applicable), history and desirability in today's collector marketplace. Based on these factors, I place an appraised value of 6,000.00 to 7,000.00 on this 19th Century Doctor's buggy.

Appraised on January 26, 2010 by

Guy Zaninovich

REFERENCES AVAILABE UPON REQUEST