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KOVELS ANTIQUES AND COLLECTING

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PHOTO CREDIT: Hyde Park Country Auctions

PHOTO CAPTION: Homemade rugs like this

penny rug have long been a favorite way to

keep fabric scraps from going to waste.

Homemade Rugs

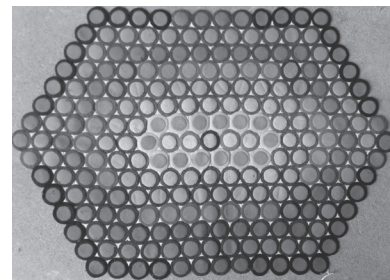
The environmentalist movement popularized the saying “Reduce, reuse, recycle” in the 1970s, but the sentiment goes back much farther than that. Historically, people avoided buying new items to save money, or simply because said new items were not as readily available to purchase as they are today. Reusing and recycling materials was done out of necessity, too, but the effect of saving resources remains the same. Rug making is one of the best examples.

Throughout the 19th century, American families had many ways of transforming fabric scraps into useful rugs. The earliest were tongue rugs, consisting of overlapping tongue-shaped scraps that completely covered a background. Button rugs, made from circles of fabric, let the background show. Penny rugs were also made from small, flat fabric circles, but, like tongue rugs, they completely cover the backing fabric.

Despite their name, penny rugs were rarely used as floor coverings; they were more likely to decorate a table, bed or mantel. Fabric scraps could also be made into pictorial hooked rugs, pulled through the backing with a hooked tool, or into braided or crocheted rugs. Rugs like these are still made by hobbyists today, and antique examples sell as folk art. This hand-sewn penny rug, probably made to be used on a table, sold for \$125 at Hyde Park Country Auctions.

Q: I am looking for assistance in appraising a rare antique 25-inch Handel table lamp. We also have several additional antique lamps and stained glass.

A: Handel lamps, made from about 1885 to 1933, are prized for decorative glass shades. They were made in several styles, including leaded glass reminiscent of Tiffany lamps, but their reverse-painted designs are the most distinctive. Handel lamps typically sell for high prices, usually more than \$500. Some sell for sever-



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al thousand dollars. The shade’s size, shape, design, and base material can affect the value.

Because Handel lamps are often very valuable, we recommend contacting a national auction house specializing in decorative arts. They can provide free appraisals or advice. They may also be able to provide information about your additional lamps and glass. If you get an appraisal from an auction house, you are not obligated to sell with them.

TIP: Natural dyes were used in early rugs, but the chemical aniline dyes aren’t new. They were used as early as 1870.

CURRENT PRICES

Clock, advertising, Dr. Pepper, Distinctively Different ..., red oval logo, chevron, wood grain style border, 10, 2, 4 bar indices, square, electric, 15 inches, \$120.

Furniture, stand, umbrella, Alfred Corneau, Rococo Revival, cast iron, pierced flower scrolls, figural supports, center plaque, Gornau Foundry, 31 x 28 inches, \$225.

Music, box, singing bird, two birds, dome cage, wind-up, Germany, early 1900s, 10 inches, \$310.

Basket, egg, oak, splint, rib woven, top handle, double woven rim, Mary Causby, 5 1/2 x 6 inches, \$2,050.

For more collecting news, tips and resources, visit www.Kovels.com

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