

Sugar Bowl (D)

Role of Buyer

By Gaylen D. Paulson

While browsing at a local artisan and antique fair, you spotted *the item* for which you have spent years searching! As a child, a relative bequeathed to you a silver tea service that, in its complete 4-piece setting, today may be valued as high as \$10,000-\$12,000. Unfortunately, your set was not complete. You have the tea pot, the coffee pot, the “creamer”, and spoons, but NO SUGAR BOWL. You have had this (incomplete) setting appraised, and though the appraiser was excited and impressed with your tea service, he suggested that the most value was in the full set, and that individual items and incomplete sets were perhaps 20-25% less valuable. He suggested that you might be able to sell your items through an antique consignment shop for \$4,000-5,000, and through an auction house for perhaps \$6,000 (though they tend to be less interested in showcasing incomplete sets). With the sugar bowl, you might be looking at around \$8,000 to \$8,500 at auction.

You examined the sugar bowl very carefully, and are absolutely certain that this is YOUR piece! It clearly states, “Langlands – Newcastle -- Reginald” on the bottom, which matches the artist, the location, and the setting style of the piece (circa the late 1750’s). Paul Langlands was reputed to be a highly skilled craftsman working in New England, and this was a part of his Reginald collection. Although the piece may be off by a year or two, you are 100% certain that this is the piece you need.

You’ve searched for this bowl on the internet, and in specialty magazines. As luck would have it, the sugar bowl seems to be the hardest piece to find. You’ve seen wide-ranging appraisals listing the sugar bowl individually at \$400 to \$1,200. But until now it has been impossible to find the item for sale on its own. Buying the item as part of a larger set made no sense to you since you already have the rest of the set.

You realize that you must seize this opportunity. In addition to the significant monetary value the bowl would add to your set, there is also a high level of sentiment involved. Based upon the appraisal, you could pay up to \$2,500 for the piece and still show a net gain. You realize that it may be many years (if ever) before you would happen upon this individual piece again. You have \$3,000 in your checking account, and if necessary you could get a certified check drawn up this afternoon.

The seller has seen your interest in the piece, and will likely be coming to speak with you about it. It’s undoubtedly for sale, but at what price? You know that prices at antique shows are generally negotiable. But how much difference will there be between the seller’s initial price and the “true” price!?