

Title:

Walking Sticks - A Money Making Hobby

Word Count:

504

Summary:

Walking sticks became a money making hobby for me one summer. Here's how I made them and sold them.

Keywords:

money making hobby, unusual ways to make money, walking sticks

Article Body:

Carving walking sticks wasn't meant to be a money-making hobby for me. I sometimes made them when backpacking, and I had always enjoyed taking my pocket knife to a piece of wood to see what I could make. I just hadn't thought of doing anything more with the hobby.

One summer, when my wife Ana and I briefly got into the flea market business, I noticed the occasional vendor selling walking sticks. If the event was more of an arts and crafts show than a flea market, they sold for as much as \$50 each. Ana suggested that we could sell them too, so I went to work.

I could cut 20 or young poplars in an hour with my "shortcut" saw, and get two sticks out of half of them. My favorite wood, however, was white cedar. In the Cedar swamps near home, it grew straight and died young from overcrowding. Cedar wood remains solid for many years after dying, so I could quickly cut many straight and perfectly dried sticks.

There was soon a pile of wood shavings behind the house, as I cut the bark off and carved each stick into various forms. Many were just rounded off on top. Others I cut into a spiral, or pyramidal shape. I put padding and leather covers on some, and drilled out the tops to inset nice stones on others. This is a hobby that lets you really exercise your imagination.

I wrapped the walking sticks with leather near the bottom, to prevent splitting, and most also had leather handgrips. The leather came from old leather coats I bought at thrift stores for \$5 each and cut into strips. It was attached with glue and small nails. Each stick had about fifty cents in materials in it at most.

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They sold for as little as \$6 each to as much as \$24. This was less than others sold walking sticks for, but then we were mostly selling them at flea markets, rather than arts and crafts shows, where they would get a higher price. I also wholesaled them to a vendor who sold them at gun-and-knife shows, and to a friend who sold them at Native American pow-wows.

How much could you make selling walking sticks? Who knows. I sold about \$1200 in walking sticks that summer, before we moved on to try an internet business. They were a nice addition to our other crafts and the stuffed animals we sold at various flea markets. My advantage was that I was very efficient in making them, spending less than an hour even on the most elaborate ones.

The most I sold was \$250 in walking sticks in a day. However, I saw vendors who paid \$300 to rent a space for the weekend (we typically paid \$10/day for a flea market space), and sold only walking sticks. They were undoubtedly selling much more than I, but in any case, doing something you enjoy AND making a profit is a nice advantage of any money-making hobby.