

Bainsville Women Auctions a Cherished Piece of Her Life

By Rachele Labrecque - Standard-Freeholder

Treasured Collection: Marylyn Baker, 62, of Bainsville, admires her autographs of entertainer Bob Hope and group Buddy Holly and the Crickets. Baker had her collection of 115 celebrity autographs auctioned off on the weekend, at the Martintown Community Centre.

Her collection of autographs documents a slice of entertainment history.

Marylyn Baker, 62, of Bainsville, spent many of her teen years in England writing to musicians and other entertainers for their autographs.

Baker said it was a common hobby in the 1950's, particularly for young girls.

"Growing up in England, I enjoyed current music and the arts," Baker said.

"You could go to a concert or play back then and get an autograph from the musician or actors back stage."

With 115 autographs stored and sealed in plastic bags, her nostalgic collection has been tucked away for more than 40 years.

Recently, Baker made the difficult decision to part with her collection.

Consulting with local auctioneer Theresa E. Taylor, she put each autograph on the block.

On Saturday, the auction was held at the Martintown Community Centre, and Baker's collection sold for more than \$1,000.

By far the biggest single item, her Buddy Holly and the Crickets autograph, went for a whopping \$550, a big surprise for Baker.

Parting with her collection wasn't easy.

"It's tough," she said.

"But I still have the memories."

Baker moved to Canada in the late 1960's, with her husband. They had five children.

Baker said raising a family put an end to her hobby of collecting autographs.

Stored Collection Away

"My kids came first, so I stored away my collection."

One of her most prized stories about an autograph involved working with Dolores Hope, wife of comedian Bob Hope.

Baker was chosen to be a hostess for an exhibition Dolores Hope was chairing.

For her help, she received Bob Hope's autograph.

Rubbing shoulders with Mr. Hope is a treasured memory.

Baker also adores her autograph of Buddy Holly and the Crickets.

She wrote to them in her teens and received the autograph in the mail.

Other autographs in her collection included British actors, comedian Benny Hill, and Canadian singing star Paul Anka.

Baker also put her personal collection of Johnny Ray memorabilia up for grabs.

She met Ray, a heartthrob in the 1950's, several times.

The Johnny Ray collection, Baker said, is by far her favorite.

Baker said she hopes the new owners of her collection will enjoy the pieces.