



Courtesy of Theresa Taylor One of the two parlour in the Robert Glasgow House.

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PRESCOTT - One of the most historic houses in town - and the artifacts of its last owner - are being auctioned off in coming weeks for charity.

John B. Hartry, who died in October without heirs, left the 182-year-old Robert Glasgow House and a vast array of his collectibles and antiques to a foundation that will benefit local charities.

Randy Pelehos, executor of the estate, said Hartry instructed him to keep the names of the charities private until the estate is settled, so he would not reveal the beneficiaries.

It was no secret that Hartry, who died childless, had a soft spot for children and that he was a Big Brother and active in the Brockville Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization, Pelehos said.

Aside from the stately stone house, the estate of Hartry, an avid lifelong collector, includes such automobiles as a 1955 Morgan and a 1956 Austin Healey, along with artwork, textiles, chamber pots, pottery and furniture, some of it well more than a century-old.

The online auction of the artifacts, which has been advertised internationally and its catalogue viewed online more than 50,000 times, started Wednesday this week. Bids are open for the first lot until March 1 at which time the second lot goes on the online block. The house itself will be auctioned in Prescott on April 7.

Theresa Taylor, owner of Theresa Taylor and Associates Auctioneering, bills the sale as one of the best collections to hit the local auction block in more than 20 years.

Hartry, a federal civil servant from Nova Scotia who travelled extensively and lived mostly in Ottawa, had an exquisite eye for collectibles, Taylor said.

His estate runs the gamut from his cars to toys to foot warmers to Royal Doulton spittoons to pine and oak furniture to jewelry, she said. Because of Hartry's maritime roots, much of the artwork has a nautical theme but it also includes sculptures and ivory-framed portraits. Some linens and textiles date to 1600.

Hartry retired from the federal government and purchased the Glasgow house in 1997.

The house dates to 1835 when it was built by Robert Glasgow, a prominent Prescott shipbuilder responsible for many of the wooden steamboats that plied the upper St. Lawrence from 1820 to 1850.

The house is a 4,500-square-foot rabbit's warren of rooms based on a centre-hall plan that includes four bedrooms upstairs, two parlours, kitchen, dining room and a two-storey maid's quarters.

There's even a walk-in bank vault off the dining room dating to when it was rented to the Merchants Bank in 1868.

A stone addition to the original house at 388 Centre was built about 1845 and became what in today's real estate parlance would be called townhouses. Robert and later his widow, Mary, rented out the properties in the wing, which runs along Dibble Street.

Robert Glasgow lived in the house until his death in 1856 when the house went to his six children. His son Samuel Glasgow, a well-known local merchant who owned the Glasgow House general store on King Street, bought out his siblings.

Fraser Laschinger, a town historian, councillor and great-great-grandson of Samuel Glasgow, said the house is a great example of Georgian architecture. Laschinger said Samuel died in 1866 leaving the sprawling property to his wife, Mary, who rented the house and its townhouses to various tailors, sailors, tellers and other tenants, including the bank.

After Mary Glasgow died in 1880 the house went to Dr. William Justice Jones, son of one of the founders of Augusta, who owned it until his death in 1914.

In 1920, the house was bought by Dr. Charles McPherson, who is still remembered fondly by many longtime Prescott residents, Laschinger said.

McPherson, who lived in the house with his extended family, died in 1969, leaving it to his sister, who died in 1977 and willed the property to her housekeeper. The housekeeper sold it to Hartry 20 years later.

Sue Torrance, who knew Hartry from Prescott, said her friend was a man of boundless curiosity, who was fascinated by history. A natural storyteller, Hartry would regale listeners with tales of growing up in Nova Scotia during his Second World War childhood, she said.

Both Torrance and Pelehos remember Hartry's sense of humour and how he always had a smile on his face. Pelehos remembered Hartry's passion for antique auctions and garage sales.

The online auction of Hartry's effects continues until March 1. The second lot goes on the block online on March 1 and continues until March 8.

The house at 388 Centre will be sold live on site at 6 p.m. April 9.