

junk is worth something

that those are usually worthless.

"If a seller is willing to forge an autograph, he's not going to have a problem forging the certificate of authenticity, so I think those things aren't worth the paper they're printed unless they come from a major company; the main thing is to consider the source of the autograph," he said.

The sale itself can be facilitated using any of the resources listed, but sellers should consider which of the outlets best suits their particular item or collection. A George Brett rookie card could be sold to a local shop owner quickly, or on eBay to garner the best price. However, the sale of a soccer jersey signed by, say, Pele would best be left to experts at professional auction houses.

All of this is not to say that every guy with a few signed baseballs from the '73 Rangers and an unopened pack of 1989 Fleer cards could or should run right out and hawk his collection for a few hundred bucks. Sometimes, the most value a card or collectible is ever going to have is in your own hands, and it may make better financial and/or nostalgic sense to hold on to those things.

You never know, they could be worth something someday.

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There are several resources you can use to find out whether your collection is filled with trash or can bring you some substantial money.

Online Resources:

• Beckett Media

www.beckett.com

This site is your one-stop shop for pricing, selling and buying sports cards and other collectibles. They set the standard in the industry.

• Leland's

www.lelands.com

The New York based auction house, according to their site, has sold over \$40 million dollars in memorabilia and trading cards over the past five years.

• The Pit

www.thepit.com

Think of the Pit as the e-Trade for sports fans. This site's set up is similar to the stock market and serves more than 200,000 registered users.

• eBay

www.ebay.com

Everyone knows that you can sell just about anything on Ebay, but the site also has helpful, informative guides to buying and selling sports memorabilia and/or cards. It's a great place to get started if your new to the collectibles world.

• Heritage Galleries:

<http://sports.ha.com>

If you just pulled that box down from the attic and found a 1952 Topps Mickey Mantle then, (a) pop the champagne, you've hit the jackpot, and (b) call Heritage Galleries immediately.

Ask the Experts: The State of the Collectibles Industry

We polled some area collectibles experts on how they think the industry is faring.

1. How strong is the industry now as compared to years past?

Josh Wulkan

VP Auction Operations, Huggins and Scott Auctions

That answer really depends on which industry you are talking about. For newer cards, the market was much stronger back in the mid-to-late 1980s and early 1990s. Once the strike of 1994 happened, it put a huge hit on the new card market. What we specialize in are vintage cards, autographs and memorabilia and those prices are certainly higher today, thus a much stronger market, than they were years ago.

Chris Ivy

Director of Sports, Heritage Auction Galleries

The industry has never been stronger. Collecting has become increasingly more mainstream over the past several years, due in part to factors like eBay and the television program "Antiques Roadshow" (which often features Heritage staffer Mike Gutierrez on-air) really broadening the visibility of the collecting hobby. And, at the risk of sounding immodest, Heritage, as the World's Largest Collectibles Auctioneer, has played some role in this change as well.

Blake Meyer, Lone Star Sportcard Company

Up versus last year; down versus the early 2000s.

2. What's the most desirable/expensive item in your inventory?

WULKAN: We have several tremendous items in an upcoming auction; however, Lot No. 1 is going to blow the rest away. It is a single-signed Christy Mathewson baseball that is expected to bring more than \$100,000.

IVY: The vast majority of the material we sell is consigned rather than owned by the house, and the inventory is constantly changing. Our recent sale of Babe Ruth's 1933 All-Star Game jersey for more than \$650,000 represents our largest single auction result. Our upcoming auction will be of particular interest to Dallas residents, though, as we have literally dozens of game worn Cowboys jerseys and helmets from current and past players, including the entire Ring of Honor.

MEYER: The most desirable inventory we have are the short prints from the modern sets (2000-2006). They are priced from \$2.50-\$15.00 each and are very collector driven by those completing sets. We don't carry a lot of expensive cards because the inventory cost is too high and they sell too slowly.

3. Where do you see the industry going?

WULKAN: Our industry is definitely on the rebound and heading north. There are lots of collectors and dealers buying vintage items right now, especially because of the resale opportunities that eBay and other online auctions present.

IVY: One can't help but be optimistic about the future of the collectibles industry, which has outperformed just about every other commodity over the past decade. If you bought a Babe Ruth autograph five years ago, you've tripled your money. Now clearly this tremendous rate of increase can't continue forever, but we've yet to see any sort of downturn from one auction cycle to the next. So until that happens, the forecast is sunny.

MEYER: The direction of the industry is definitely heading up, albeit it at a very slow and controlled pace, which is a better scenario for the long-term health of this business.




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If you have VINTAGE (PRE-1970) cards or collectibles that you would like to consign to our auction, contact our local representative: Steve Phillips 817-454-4344 or email: sphillips@hugginsandscott.com



Actual Home Plate from the 1986 World Series at Shea Stadium

