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D-Day Flag Flies to \$386,500



An important flag, flown from an American LST-493 on D-Day, rose to \$386,500 during a June auction. The high bidder, who was anonymous during the Bonhams event, later announced himself as the lot winner.

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Recognizing Auction Drag - the Bane of Auctioneers

"Auction drag," when supply outstrips demand by a considerable amount, is a lever that bidders can use to squeeze the best deals from an auction. Auction drag is what auctioneers strive to avoid and bidders patiently wait for. Wayne Jordan shares a recent account and illustrates why those who persevere are the biggest winners.

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Collector Finds Delight in Versatile Harvard Wagon



In the return of the Picker's List, collector Roger Elliott sends out a summons for original Harvard Wagons.

■ Page 10

Photographer Slim Aarons Captures Life of Privilege

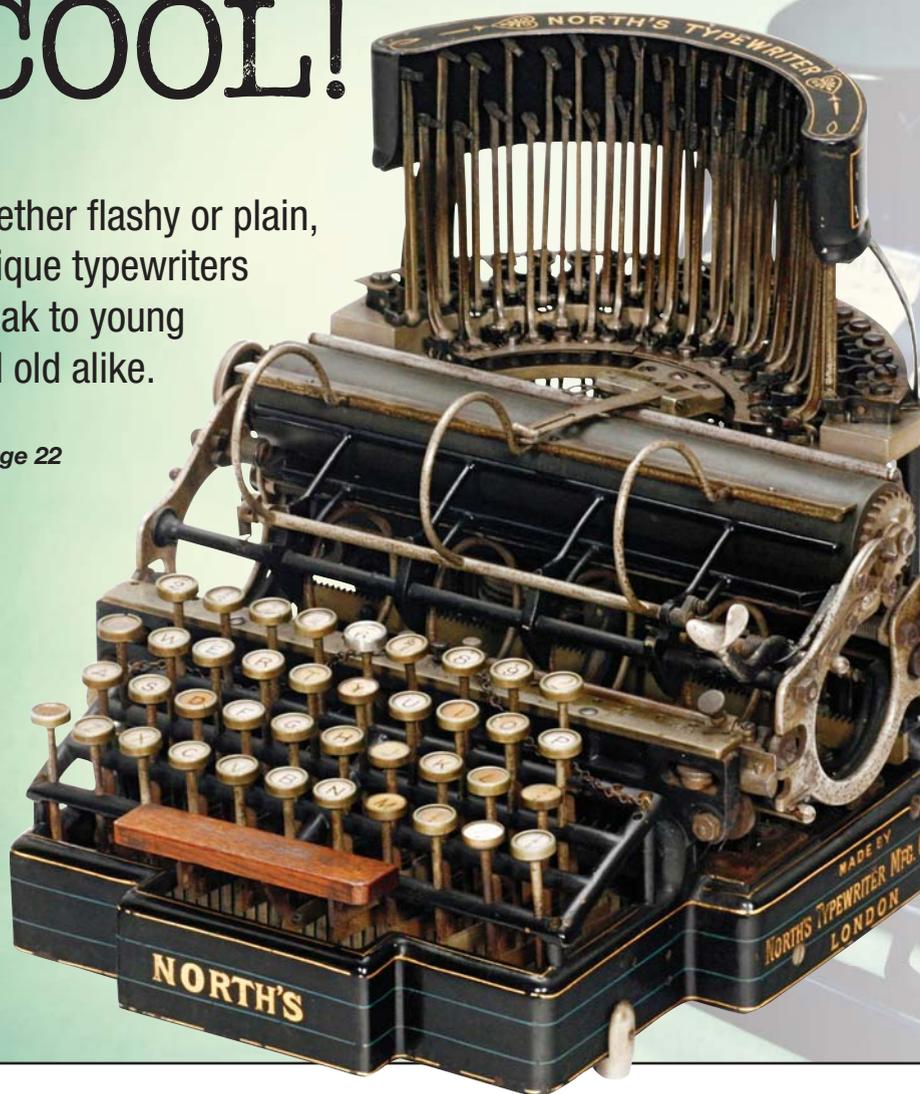
Slim Aarons' goal was to follow a "no more misery" motto and focus on the good life after his service as a World War II combat photographer. Welcomed by high society's elite, he and his camera were invited to capture glimpses of privilege and glamour.

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Click, Clack COOL!

Whether flashy or plain, antique typewriters speak to young and old alike.

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Tony Casillo's typewriter collection boasts rare examples such as the Oliver No. 1 (bottom left), the 1888 Boston typewriter and the Sholes & Glidden 1874. More of his collection can be viewed at www.typewritercollector.com. Photo courtesy Tony Casillo

Click, Clack, COOL!

From flashy to simple, antique typewriters captivate collectors

Chriss Swaney

A lot has changed in the United States over the past 60 years. A lot more changed in the 20 years before that.

For example, take a look back at 1950: The Census Bureau found that more than a third of all U.S. households lacked indoor plumbing. Fewer than 10 percent had televisions. But most dwellings had a typewriter.

The thought was that typewriters afforded children critical manual dexterity, a shot at a better life and escape from jobs marked with an asterisk – those which required heavy lifting or lots of climbing.

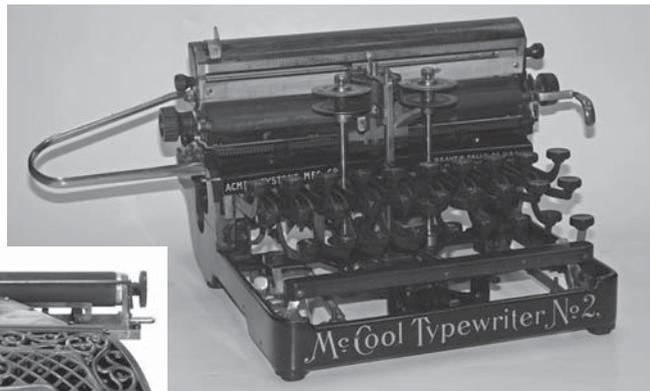
Yes, the typewriter set workers free, gave them more time to find better jobs and to streamline communication.

“Clack, clack, clack, ding” were the sweet sounds of journalist Erie Pyle’s typewriter as he composed wonderful reports from all corners of this country during the latter years of the Great Depression and into World War II, revealing the curious idiosyncrasies that defined and enriched America in that era.

“The typewriter is a recorder of history,” said Jack Smith, 91, who drove milk wagons during the Great Depression in Kansas.

► Invented by William McCool as early as 1904 and patented in 1910, the McCool consisted of as little as 319 parts.

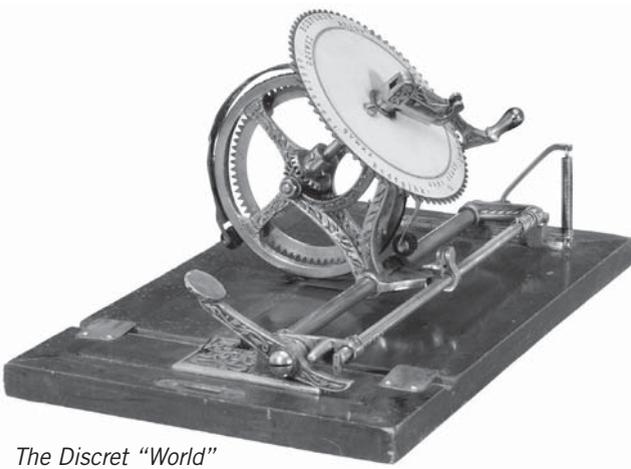
Photo courtesy Tony Casillo Collection



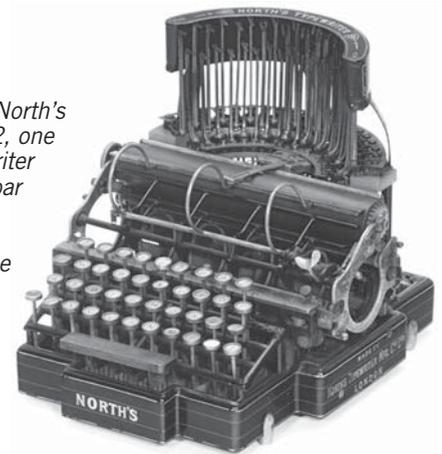
◄ “The Ford Typewriter,” 1895, American thrust-action, three-bank double-shift ribbon typewriter with beautifully decorated copper-plated typebar cover. Serial no. 110. Sold for \$31,250 by Auction Team Breker in May 2013. Photo courtesy Auction Team Breker

“I still have my old 1920s Underwood typewriter my grandpa gave me, and I can type all my records on it. It is a wonderful, timeless machine.”

Richard Polt agrees. In fact, Polt, a collector for 20 years, argues that “Using the typewriter in today’s electronic age is an act of rebellion.”



The Discret "World" model typewriter, 1899, designed by Dr. Friedrich Rehmann of Karlsruhe, Germany, incorporates a type wheel and scale; this example sold for \$11,000 at Auction Team Breker's May 24, 2014, auction.
Photo courtesy Auction Team Breker



► *North's typewriter, North's Co. Ltd., London 1892, one of the only four typewriter designs with the typebar behind the platen for visible writing. This well-preserved example sold at Auction Team Breker's May 24, 2014, sale for \$13,000.*

Photo courtesy Auction Team Breker



Dedicated typewriter restoration specialist Tony Casillo stands amid his typewriter collection. Photo courtesy Tony Casillo



Collector Richard Polt is currently writing "The Typewriter Insurgency: A Field Manual for the Typewritten Revolution." The author is shown here with some of his collection. Photo courtesy Richard Polt

Polt, of Cincinnati, owns some 300 typewriters and is writing a book dubbed: "The Typewriter Insurgency: A Field Manual for the Typewritten Revolution."

"The demand for antique typewriters is amazing, and that demand continues to grow," said Polt.

Peter Frei, a veteran dealer and buyer of typewriters, reports that demand is almost outstripping supply. "Twenty years ago you could only get about \$25 for a portable Corona, but today that same machine hits the auction blocks at \$300," said Frei of Brimfield, Massachusetts.

Freelance writer Susan Brock of Vermont just paid \$500 for a 1941 Streamliner Remington typewriter for her home office. Even officials at The Vermont Country Store say popular demand spurred them to offer a portable manual typewriter and an electronic typewriter in their Spring 2014 catalog.

And Chuck Dilts of Boston is so attached to his typewriters that he houses his collection ranging from the 1870s to the 1930s in a climate-controlled shed. "All collecting runs in cycles, and the typewriter cycle is hot right now," he said. Most collectors report that antique typewriters can reach prices from \$5 to more than \$5,000, depending on condition and brand. A 1930 American silver-encased L.C. Smith & Corona typewriter was valued by Sotheby's between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

Not all typewriters have that kind of flashy appearance. Early typewriters can be as simple as a wheel with letters attached, or as complicated as having two sets of keyboards.

But no matter how complex or simplified, Tony Casillo is a master at servicing and restoring old-fashioned writing machines. Famed *Cosmopolitan Magazine* Editor Helen Gurley Brown was one of Casillo's regular customers until her death at age 90 in 2012.

For more than 30 years, Casillo has kept typewriters in letter perfect condition at TTS Business Products in Garden City, New Jersey. The avid collector services, repairs and restores both manual and electric models, along with their contemporary counterparts – computers – since the 1980s.

"In a perfect world, I could just sit here and fix typewriters," said Casillo, who repairs several dozen typewriters a month. "The hunt for antique typewriters simply thrills me." In fact, Casillo has driven coast-to-coast to rescue some of his most prized typewriters from dust-covered shelves and demolished buildings. His collection is both rare and unique.

Casillo boasts about his collection, which includes an 1874 Sholes & Glidden typewriter and a Lasar typewriter – the only one known to exist. His massive collection also includes an Oliver I and a very rare McCool typewriter. The love for type-

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This Lasar typewriter is the only one known to exist. It was stored in the basement of a building that was slated to be demolished. Casillo drove to St. Louis from New York to get it. Shown at left is a page from the May 15, 1892, edition of the Railway Telegrapher advertising the model for \$75 (approximately \$1,916 at today's currency rate). Photo courtesy Tony Casillo

writers is part of Casillo's DNA.

His fixation with typewriters began in 1974 when he completed a year-long International Business Machine (IBM) course and learned how to repair the company's 3,000-part Selectric model, which helped him develop an appreciation for all kinds of typewriters. Five years later, he opened his own repair shop and began accumulating typewriters and stockpiling parts.

Casillo admits that he has been on a buying spree for the past couple of decades. "There is a story behind every one of these typewriters, and I'm still thrilled to be collecting and repairing them."

"Typewriters are still around and they are still used in many third-world countries," said Darryl Rehr, who edited the first 49 editions of the Early Typewriter Collectors' Association [www.etconline.org] newsletter.

Ed Michael, general manager of Swintec Factory Distributions Centers of New Jersey, reports that funeral directors and prisoners still use typewriters. And many offices still sport typewriters for typing addresses on envelopes.



Darryl Rehr wrote the book on antique typewriters — namely "Antique Typewriters & Office Collectibles Identification & Value Guide" (Collector Books, 1997). This photo shows the author/collector at a museum opening next to his 1874 Sholes & Glidden typewriter. Photo courtesy Darryl Rehr

"I have the first typewriter my late father took to college in the 1920s as a living room decoration," said Patty Prince of Cleveland, Ohio. "They can be neat pieces of furniture to dress up a room if you don't want to use them," she said. Still, Burt Roth of New York City says he types his daily grocery list on his 1920s Underwood. "I couldn't exist without it."

Even the younger generation is starting to get interested in typewriters. Johnny Ritz, 14, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, says he uses an old IBM Selectric to type notes to his grandmother who has eye problems. "She seems to be able to see the typed notes much better than my sloppy handwritten ones," he said. Then there is Kristie Jones, 18, of Hershey,

Pennsylvania, who uses her antique typewriter to send notes to ailing veterans at the local VA hospital. "I think those typewritten notes help them to connect with the past," said Jones, who wants to be a nurse practitioner. ■

Chris Swaney is a Pittsburgh-based freelance journalist for Reuters, The New York Times, Pittsburgh Engineer and Horse World, and an avid antique collector.