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## Shoppers find deals on pieces of Tiffin history



By **JENNIFER FEEHAN**  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

**TIFFIN** - Larry Shook of Tiffin, picked up an antique chair for \$30 that he planned to use at his desk.

Antiques dealer Stacy Cooper, of Vanceburg, Ky., spent \$800 on a 10-foot, 19th century conference table he figures he'll resell for \$1,400.

And Bill Fletcher bought a pair of cherry doors with etched glass panels for \$750 because he still hopes his county's historic courthouse might be saved and the doors returned to their original location.

Scott Blymyer of Bettsville, Ohio, and his father, Norman Blymyer of Tiffin, carry chairs they purchased at an auction at the Seneca County Courthouse yesterday in advance of its demolition this summer. Mike Watson auctions bookcases that were once a part of the Seneca County Courthouse. **DEMOLITION BIDS TO BE SOUGHT: PAGE B5.**

(BLADE PHOTOS/JEREMY WADSWORTH)

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"We are the eternal optimists," Mr. Fletcher said. "I have so much confidence in this movement [to save the courthouse], I'll invest that much hoping there will be a great home for them."

Yesterday's auction of the contents of Seneca County's 1884 courthouse brought in \$28,910.50 - about \$1,242 of which will go to Tiffin auctioneer Mike Watson.

With 122 registered bidders standing by, Mr. Watson and his partner went up and down the courthouse lawn selling antique tables, chairs, and newer, but not so valuable com-puters and tires.

"It was extremely good because the simple fact is we had some of the best quality buyers who drove long distances to be here," Mr. Watson said after the two-hour auction.

Much of the profit was generated by the sale of about a dozen antique bookcases - the most valuable of which sold for \$2,600.

"I wish we could have sold more of those bookcases," said county Commissioner Dave Sauber after he heard the prices they were going for.

The commissioners decided to store the majority of the library cases that had been in the law library on the top floor of the courthouse because the law library association will need them to store its books when it moves into its new home - wherever that might be.

The auction was held in advance of the courthouse's planned demolition.

It was a sad day for preservationists who have been working - and still hope - to save the downtown landmark.

"I don't know what to think. I'm numb," said Theresa Sullivan, a member of the Tiffin Historic Trust, who led tours through the old courthouse prior to the failed March 4 vote on a bond issue that would have supported renovation.

"I talk to people from outside the county and they say, 'How can you as a historical community tear down your main historical asset?' I just tell them, I don't know," Ms. Sullivan said.

While the commissioners said they were only selling the "unattached" contents of the courthouse and no architectural features, there were some doors, shutters, shelves, even a marble-sided sink that county Administrator Cindy Keller said had been stored in the courthouse attic or closets.

"We did not detach anything," said Jim Barth, county maintenance supervisor.

Jackie Fletcher, one of six county residents who sued the commissioners last year to try to stop the demolition, initially was concerned about the items, some of which her husband, Bill, ended up purchasing.

She cheered when he was the high bidder for the double entrance doors that once graced the front of the courthouse.

"Hopefully, we'll put them back on the courthouse," she said.

"I have a vision of them going back on the courthouse, the completely restored courthouse."

Kristin Raudabaugh, of Tiffin, purchased an antique swivel office chair for \$40, she said, because she needed a desk chair and wanted a memento from the courthouse.

"I want the courthouse to stay, but I don't know," she said. "It's a beautiful building. It is. I just wish they would figure it out."

The commissioners say they have figured it out. They are proceeding with demolition and construction of a smaller courthouse that they feel is more within the county's budget.

Mr. Shook, who bought a chair from the courthouse because he needed one and because he appreciated its history, said he agreed with the commissioners.

"It definitely has to go," he said. "I've looked at all the options. I can't see it ever coming to what [preservationists] want it to be."

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