

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COLLECTING

BY Herman P. Dean

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, nothing could have induced me to accept this assignment if it had not been for the honorarium that was offered to me by Harry Knode. Harry gave me a Lincoln penny and paid for my breakfast yesterday morning. I appreciate that very much - that's generous for Harry Knode - which suggested to me the story of a friend of mine in England who had addressed a gathering and he had traveled many miles to address this gathering and he gave them a long, and he thought, interesting and worthwhile speech. Nothing was said about honorarium - no money whatsoever. He finished his speech. Still there was nothing said about an honorarium so he pulled his hat out from under the table and passed it around thinking that everybody would drop in a few shillings in appreciation of what he had tried to contribute. The hat came back, after passing around from table to table, and there wasn't a damn thing in it - not a shilling - not even a Lincoln penny, and so he said, "Gentlemen, I'm just thanking God I got my hat back." You know sometimes you've got to talk rough to get things done. I don't like to do it myself but the one man that can do it with the most grace and the most ease of anybody I know is Harry Knode. He talked rough to me to get me into this assignment. In fact, he talked so rough that he suggested to me the story of little Jimmy just before Christmas. He was in a department store and he was up on the toy floor and little Jimmy got to riding a hobby horse and he got on the horse and he rode the horse, and he rode it and rode it and there was a group of kids lined up behind him to get on the horse and Jimmy wouldn't get off. Jimmy's mother said, "Jimmy, get off the horse - get off the horse and I'll get you an extra Christmas present." She couldn't budge Jimmy at all. She did everything. She tried to bribe him, she got cross with him; still Jimmy rode the horse, and finally old Santa Claus who was on the floor with the rest of the kids got a little tired of it too, so he walked up and whispered something in Jimmy's ear. And you know Jimmy jumped off of that horse and ran back to his mother's arms and that was it. So on the way home that afternoon his mother says to Jimmy, "Jimmy, what did Santa Claus say to you, what did he whisper in your ear when you jumped off of that horse so quickly." "Well," he said, "Jimmy you get off of that damn horse or I'll break your damn neck." So some times you know you have to talk rough to get things done. Harry talked rough to me to get this done.



HERMAN P. DEAN

I'm sorry that I was in the hospital for the Philadelphia meeting, but you know I think my life was nearly saved by the sense of humor of a man across the hall in the hospital. He was a man that I had never known before but he was in a lot worse shape than I was because he's not walking around now, but he had a wonderful sense of humor and I visited him often. One day he had a friend in to see him and he had a few things he wanted him to do, he wanted him to check with his secretary about his will and wanted him to do this, that and the other and he said to him, "John, another thing I want you to do is when I die," he said, "I want to leave this little bequest. I want it left up to you to do. He said, "I want to be cremated," and he said, "I want my ashes put in an envelope and then I want these words written on the envelope 'Now you've got everything' and address it to the Internal Revenue Department."

I know of two men in the audience, maybe more, but I know of two who can appreciate the humor of that and that would be my good friend Sam Dyke and Bill Lawrence, I'm sure they could. Nobody else knows what I'm talking about. But seriously, friends, the letters, the telephone calls, the wires that I received from you folks while I was in the hospital, received from you at Philadelphia after you got back to your homes, was a great lift to me and helped me to get out of a rather serious condition, and I appreciate it and I thank you publicly for it and I shall always be indebted to you, but the sense of humor of the man across the hall still, I think, helped me more than anything else. Just before I left the hospital I went over and he told me so many good stories so I said, "Well, let's have one more and I'm checking out today and I hope you will check out soon." Well, he did check out, never to return, not long after I did. So he told me the story of a man who had been out doing the town one night, and this man had got pretty well plastered; so plastered that when he did get home; I don't know how he got home, but he didn't even recognize his own home and he opened the door and fell right flat on his face after he opened the door and his wife came down the stairs. Well, his wife changed

her strategy. She use to just give him Hell, you know, and tell him that he oughtn't to do those things. She didn't do that. She walked up to him. He was prostrate on the floor. She put her arms gently around his neck and said, "Honey, kiss me." He didn't look up; he couldn't look, but he said, "I might as well, I'm going to catch Hell when I get home anyway."

Friends, in these days of stress and strain, I know of no therapy that is more desirable than a wholesome hobby. I'm particularly interested, and I've always been interested in the hobby of collecting. It's the collecting instinct that makes possible such institutions and such societies as we have here tonight. We all have certain vocations in order to be able to have shelter and clothes and food for ourselves and our families, but tonight I'm not giving one thought to these vocations; rather I would consider our avocations and there is a vast, vast difference between the two. A vocation is ones occupation, ones means of livelihood. An avocation is your hobby, the thing that you do for the fun of it without any hope whatsoever of gain. All of us at heart, all of us I say are at heart collectors. The herds of buffalo, the cattle on the plain, wild horses gather themselves into groups may collect themselves and may have a collecting instinct otherwise they would not do that. The schools of fishes in the sea don't swim singly; they swim in schools. They have a collective instinct given to them by God, and you know men and women are gregarious too. They collect themselves into societies, groups and tribes and lodges; they become Rotarians, Kiwanians, they join the P.T.A. and even they join the American Society, if they're invited, and they have that same propensity for collecting themselves together. And you know collecting is not a new thing by any means. Some of the finest collective objects that we find in this world today are the collected objects which were dug from the Egyptian tombs. It doesn't matter what you collect particularly if you enjoy it; if it adds something to your life. A boy starts out collecting marbles, knives, stones and even snakes. I recall one time when I was about 12 years old that I was in school and it was just about time for the noon recess and I wanted to get out and play baseball and I had a friendly little black snake stuffed in my shirt and I couldn't take him out to play baseball with me, so I put him in the teacher's drawer and when I got back from the game and had my lunch and I forgot all about the damn snake. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon while I was in my seat, the teacher dropped over backwards on the floor in a dead faint. She finally came to and I saw what was the matter; she saw the snake in the drawer. She wanted to know who was honest enough to admit that they put a snake in her drawer. Well, nobody said a word except one little girl, one little imp right in front of me. She said, "Well, you know teacher I saw Herman Dean put that snake in your drawer." Now friends that was the first time, I don't say its the second, third or fourth time, but that was the first time I got kicked out of school. I did. All of you, all people nearly everywhere and certainly all of you present tonight have collected things, and you collect a lot of different kinds of things, some of them make us feel very silly when we see the things that people collect that we don't collect, but all people collect I think, and some of the crazy things that people collect are these, autographs, coins, stamps, clocks, paintings, crutches, canes, dolls, buttons, furniture, glass, paperweights, bed quilts, etc. It sounds like an Ohio Gun Collectors Association, but you know people will collect the most insignificant things like my friend Harry Knode collecting miniatures, miniature guns. He does. Well, my friend Bud Roddy here, he collects yachts; he's only got one but you always start with one, so he's got one. Other things that people have collected that have been of very much interest to me are these. I knew a friend out in the West, the Northwest, who collected caskets, coffins, and I thought that was about the most macabre thing that I'd ever seen or heard of until I saw his collection --- housed in two big red barns and these coffins dated back for about 75 or 80 years, and he could tell you the whole story of burial rites, why people were buried in certain kinds of coffins, and I told him, I said that's very interesting to me, I said because I remember my grandfather use to build coffins for people and they would come to his house and when he saw somebody coming up the hill with a long staff about that high (six feet) in their hand, walking with that staff he knew what it meant. He had to build another coffin and that staff was the length of the person for whom he would build the coffin. I told this gentleman that little story when he showed me his coffins out in the West, and he said that's a very common custom everywhere. He said, "Coffins use to be built by hand," and he said, "they always carried the staff," and he said, "I'll tell you more about it. I spent many happy hours, well a dozen happy hours with him hearing the story of coffins. Macabre it is, sure it is, but it was interesting." Another thing, about the last thing that I could think about collecting with any great degree of interest would be timetables, and yet I knew a man not too far from Milwaukee, Wisconsin who collected timetables, railroad timetables and later he got to collecting airline timetables, steamship timetables, things of that sort and I thought well I certainly wouldn't be interested in his conversation or why he collected them but I was when I got the story. He could tell you how long it took a train 75 or 100 years ago to go from Chicago to Los Angeles, and then he would compare that to the Santa Fe or the Union Pacific today and say here's the difference. Then he would do the same thing with steamship lines. Well, I was greatly intrigued because his collection of timetables was really a story, a history to me, a story to me, a legend to me in the progress of civilization by collecting timetables, about the last thing that I would think about collecting.

Another gentleman whom I knew very slightly in New York collected, above all things else, he collected spider webs and he took spider webs that he'd find on the doors on frosty mornings and various and sundry other places and he'd take those spider webs and put them between two panes of glass and he had a whole stack of those spider webs. I didn't see them but I know the story is true. And so finally one day a lace manufacturer in New York heard about this man that had this tremendous collection of spider webs that he had preserved. This lace manufacturer bought those spider webs at a price of \$80,000. Maybe you say he was silly to collect spider webs. I don't think so and that would be about one of the last things that I would hope to collect.

I even knew a man, and I did know this man, this is a personal experience, a man one time who collected chamber pots. Now your grandmother would call them potties. Down in West Virginia, in the hills of West Virginia, we call them thunder mugs, but whatever it is, I was up in New England one time on a wintery night and had been driving through about two feet of snow and was getting rather tired; I'd used up all the Scotch in my glove compartment and I thought well, I'm gonna have to stop and I pulled into a little village that looked like it was a friendly village. It had one hotel. I stopped at the hotel and parked my car, checked in and had a nice dinner and after dinner I still had time on my hands and I went down to the gentleman at the desk and I told him that I was stranded in his beautiful village and I'd like to have something to do tonight. Well, he said, "Mister there's nothing to do in this village at all." "Well," I said, "Do you have anybody in the village that collects anything - doesn't matter what it is." I said, "especially powder horns, engraved powder horns or books or guns or whatnot." "No," he said, "we don't have anybody who collects things like that - the only thing we have is one old S.O.B., a very peculiar sort of man that lives out on the edge of town that collects, we are told, I've never been there myself, but he's supposed to collect chamber pots." "Well," I said, "I'd like to go out and see him." He says, "I don't think there's any use. I don't think he will receive you at all." But, he said "we've got a taxi driver in this town, one taxi driver, one." He called the taxi driver and I told the taxi driver where I wanted to go and the gentleman I wanted to see. Well he said, "Mister there's no use your going out there." He said, "There's no use whatsoever. That man is so tough he plays Russian Roulett with an automatic pistol." He says, "You can't get in the door when you go out there." "Well," I said, "You leave that to me." So I got in the cab and we went out there and as I went through the gate I was greeted by two dogs that were rather vicious and - but they weren't hungry and they didn't bite me. I went on up to the door; knocked on the door. A man cracked the door about that far and he said, "Who are you and what do you want?" Well, I said - in the meantime though this taxi driver says to me, "I know you're not going to stay here, so I'll just hold the cab and wait until you come back." Well, I said, "you hold the cab until I shut the door." He did, so I told this man; he said "Who are you and what do you want?" Well I said, "I'm just a country boy from down in the hills of West Virginia," and I said, "I've heard about you and I want to meet you. I've heard that you have some very fine porcelain and I'm interested in porcelain." I'd lied about that, I didn't know anything about porcelain, I didn't know Dresden from Wedgewood, or Meissen or anything else but I said, "I'm very much interested in porcelain." And finally - it was a cold night and maybe his heart mellowed a little bit and he invited me in. Well, after I got my toe in the door, I heard the taxi drive off. The old man didn't say very much. We sat in front of the fire and I didn't know what to say to make the conversation interesting to him but finally he brought out a Chevis Regal and a J & B Scotch and we had a few drinks together and it mellowed him up wonderfully. I didn't have to be mellowed because I was mellowed before I got there hearing about these things, but he told me, he says, "You're interested in fine porcelain." I said, "Very much so." Well, he said, "If you're seriously interested. I don't entertain guests ordinarily, but if you're seriously interested I'll be glad to show you some of the things I have." So we went in two rooms, the rooms were longish, each one of them, longer than this room is here and nearly as wide, perhaps not as wide, and the two sides of that room were lined with beautiful mahogany shelves - a perfectly gorgeous thing and on these shelves was the greatest array of chambers or potties or whatever you want to call them that I've ever seen in my life. Not the little white kind that we have down in the grocery stores or the mountains of West Virginia - not those at all, but they were works of art. I could see immediately they were works of art, and so I got interested from scratch and I told him, "I want to hear the story, I want to know more about these." I said, "I do know a little something about porcelain. My wife collects a few pieces, but not chamber pots." We didn't know there was such a thing as fine art in chamber pots," but I found out there was, so he showed me - he showed me some of the most remarkable things I've ever seen in my life. He showed me one that was so sacrilegious that I asked him for another drink before I took a second look at it. I'll tell you what that one was. That was a beautiful Wedgewood pottie, about so big, beautiful Wedgewood and painted in the bottom of that pottle was the eye of God. You know how you'd feel. You'd feel a little sick at heart. That's why I asked for a drink, and so he told me, "That's a real work of art." I said, "I'm sure that it is." He showed me a lot of others, and he told me a lot of stories. He said, "It used to be in the early European times that one of the choice gifts to give people on their anniversaries or on any important occasion, especially at their weddings, was fine porcelain chamber pots made by Meissen, de Grafton or Wedgewood or whatnot. He says "That's one of the reasons but few of these have been preserved." He says, "I think I have the finest collection in the world of these," so he showed me them and I was tremendously impressed with them. He showed me a lot of different things and told me a lot of different things that I'm not going to take the time to tell you about tonight, but he showed me one pottie that did impress me greatly. Some of these were on legs, that high, more convenient than just a pottie that high, but he showed me one that was sort of out of this world and this is a double-barreled affair - it was two potties cast into one piece of porcelain - one here, one there, all joined together. Well, you know I never understood exactly the reason for a thing like that - the intimacy of two potties like that. I never understood that until the year of 1964 when Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphries ran for president. The explanation that this old gentleman gave me was - Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphries weren't in the picture at that time - he said it's just presumption on my part but I imagine they must have been made for a pair of Siamese twins. Don't you? Well, do you think he was right? And I think we've got a pair in the United States today.

Friends, you know in this game of collecting you get a lot of things on the fringes - they are not necessarily collecting fine guns or making money off of guns. You get a lot of humor, you even get a lot of corn. I remember a piece of corn I got from my friend Harry Knode just after Lyndon Johnson went in the White House. Harry even got generous enough to waste an airmail stamp on me to tell me that - he said, "Did you hear that the Johnsons moved into the White House - they took out all the carpets - they heard Lady Bird was coming in and

put papers down on the floor." I think that's corn but still it's one of the extra curricular dividends you get out of an association like this. There's a lot of others that I could tell you about that's interesting to me.

One collector friend of mine told me about being over East, went to visit a gun collector and they were in the Gun Room and a little girl, Suzi, about 7 years old, just made a nuisance out of herself and the host tried to run Suzi out but she wouldn't budge, and this guest said, "Suzi, haven't you got something to do." She didn't have anything to do. Well, he said, "What do you have that's interesting?" "Well," she said, "the only thing that I have right now is a new encyclopedia that my daddy has just given me that tells everything - it answers all the questions." Well, he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do - you go out and take that encyclopedia and write a little biography for me and bring it back in about a couple of hours," he wanted to talk to this gentleman, and he said, "I'll give you five dollars." Suzi said, "who shall I write it about," "Oh," he said, "you can write it about Samuel Colt or Smith or Wesson, Horace Smith or Daniel Wesson, who ever you want to." "Never heard of 'em - never heard of 'em at all." Well, he said, "did you ever hear of Benjamin Franklin." "Yes, I have, I think he'd be in the book." So Suzi went out and she wasn't gone two hours at all, she was back in just a few minutes and said, "Mr. I've got the biography, do I get the five dollars." Well, he said, "read the biography of Benjamin Franklin." Suzi read the biography, "Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston on January 17, 1706. He was a printer and a newspaperman. He lived in Philadelphia and when he was 48 years old he got married to a very young woman and discovered electricity."

Friends, I treasure many of the letters that I have received from gun collector friends over the country, over the years and some of the contents have been about guns and some about other things. There's one letter in my files that I treasure particularly. We had a man in this Society, well known to most of you who was a member of this Society, who addressed us on one occasion and did an excellent job, Claude Fuller of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Claude Fuller was a member of this Society. I had the pleasure of publishing four books that Claude Fuller wrote, and he wrote these letters very seriously, telling me what he wanted in the books and what he wanted and didn't want and so forth, but Claude had a rather sly and subtle sense of humor that maybe you folks that didn't know him as well as some of us do or did, and he exercised that by putting a postscript on each letter that he wrote to me and some of those are choice. I have them in my files today with Claude's books. A little quip, one little quip like this, he said "A reporter went to a man one day, a very wealthy man, a very successful man, and asked him to what do you attribute your success." "Well," he said, "I've just been trying to make an honest living and I don't find any competition."

Friends, there should be a serious note in this talk somewhere. The collecting interest, and this is a serious note, the collecting interest satisfies a lot of different needs. I could perhaps name twenty, more than that perhaps, but I shall mention only five. The collecting instinct gives a financial investment - instead of playing the horses if you invest wisely in collecting nearly anything you're going to be better off in the long run because you can't beat the game. A man walked into a little Post Office one day in Maryland some 25 or 30 years ago and asked for an airmail stamp. When the Postmaster handed him an airmail stamp he noticed that the airplane on this particular stamp was upside down, so he told the Postmaster, said "I'd like to buy the whole block of 100 stamps," and he did. He was a collector at heart. He was a stamp collector. He bought the whole block of stamps at 5¢ each. They were 5¢ then, and later he sold those for exactly \$30,000. They multiplied over the years and today I think it would cost you about 6 or \$8,000 to get one of the stamps. It's just an illustration of the financial investment that can be in collecting most anything and another thing the collecting instinct provides an achievement in investing. There's a lot more fun in building a sled than there is in going down to the corner hardware store and buying a Flexible Flier. The fact that you put yourself into that - it provides a lot more. Any collection and especially I would say gun collecting provides that achievement investment. I'll have more to say about that in a moment. Another thing, any intelligent pursuit of collecting provides a cultural investment and you know I even have a woman, a friend that collects buttons and I couldn't imagine any culture in buttons, but when she tells you the story of buttons you can imagine there is a certain culture to be derived in collecting even such an insignificant thing as buttons.

The fourth thing I'd mention is the happiness investment. I often wonder and I'm sure you folks wonder too what people do to have fun that don't collect something, and I say that sincerely because if they don't collect what do they do. Well, they may fish but you get tired of fishing after you've had good luck in fishing but if you're collecting in a broad field like these folks here tonight represent you never tire of it, you'll never exhaust its possibilities.

And the fifth point that I'll make and I'll elaborate a bit more on these in a moment is the historic investment. You know the best way that I know of to learn history is collecting - collecting something. In my case it was collecting guns. You know I didn't know much about the history of my home state of West Virginia until I started collecting guns and found out that Daniel Boone was an inhabitant one time of Kanawha Valley in West Virginia. I happened to be fortunate enough to come across one of his guns and a beaver trap that he owned and I got to studying Boone, got everything that I could on him, as much original work as I could, original work and paintings and to me it opened the door of history to my own state. And you know associations such as these help to preserve history. It preserves these investments, and you know my own state of West Virginia was for many, many years woefully deficient in museums. We do have today a museum of which I am tremendously proud. Some of you gentlemen had the privilege of visiting the Huntington Gallery in Huntington, West Virginia, where a good portion of my collection went, but up until that time we had only one museum in West Virginia and that was a museum in the basement of the State Capitol of Charleston. I went up there one time

to see this museum and asked for the Curator and this man came of there looked like he'd just walked out of a coal mine or something and I told him I wanted to see some of the old things and he said, "Let me ask you a question mister why do you want to look at all these old things when you can go down to Corem and Richardson's Department Store and see nice new stuff." Well, I said, "I just happen to want to look at them." Well, he was about the worst Curator, the worst Director, the worst Guide that I ever saw in my life, and I became so much enamored with him that after my visit in the museum I tried to find out why he'd ever been appointed to that place, and I'll tell you why he was appointed. He had caroused, stolen more votes in his home county of McDowell County, West Virginia than any other man and his award was that he was made Curator of the museum and you know the way he stole these votes was interesting to me too. I heard about that afterwards. You know there was a bulldog, Bob Buskirt's bulldog in McDowell County, West Virginia, that he voted three times in an election. He didn't get into too much trouble about that until after the election but got out very easily. After the election somebody found out that the bulldog wasn't even registered to vote. But the Character was the Curator of a museum.

I mentioned a while ago about collecting, collecting anything, especially guns, books and things of that sort as a financial investment as a means to physical security. It's the only way that I know of to collect, the only way that I know to eat your cake and have it too. I mean that literally - that you can eat your cake and have it too when you collect. The chances are if you have bought wisely that someday you can sell it a profit and, of course, give 26% of that Capital Gain to the Income Tax Department, but it is true that one way to eat your cake and have it is to collect something. You know my trips to the Artic and in the many years that I lived with the Eskimos up there to me were some of the dearest experiences in travel that I've ever had and still the only thing that I have to reward me about those experiences now is to sit in front of my log fire on a winter evening and dream. That's my soul collecting. Your collecting is one of your surest assets. You never have to give it up even if you sell your collection you don't give up the interest in it, if you've collected wisely and you know since I have retired, 3 years ago from active business and since I've liquidated the larger, by far the largest portion of my collection, I still find a certain payoff that I never anticipated before and that is this, I can look on a collection, on collections like we find out here in the hall more objectively than when I was collecting. It used to be when I saw a fine gun, a nice pair of Boutet Pistols, I'd want to buy those guns and even trying to be as unselfish as I could I had a yearning for those guns. Today I don't have that. I can enjoy the ownership of those guns by one of my friends, and whenever you do liquidate one of these days and put your guns into the hand of some reliable dealer like Bob Abels or Red Jackson, when you do do that you'll find there's a certain reward that you'll have that you didn't anticipate before in being able to enjoy other people's collections unselfishly, at least that's been my experience.

Another thing, as an achievement it's an investment. It's a means of collecting anything, especially collecting things as important as guns, Americana and books, powderhorns and things of that sort is a means to distinction immortality. You know we can't all write books that are classics, we can't all even write books that are good, we can't paint like a Rembrandt, we can't do sculpture like a Michael Angelo, but still we have in our hearts the inherent instinct to somehow leave our footprints in the sands of time. I think that's inherent with everybody that's like everybody wants to write a book; not many people get around to it, not many who do get around to it even could. But there is that inherent instinct to wanting to leave our footprints on the sands of time. I think you can do that. You can do it nearly automatically by collecting. Every serious collector does leave some kind of a worthwhile contribution. You add something to the knowledge of mankind and in doing that you make your contribution; often time unconsciously on your part.

Another thing that I mentioned a while ago that I'll elaborate on just for a paragraph is collecting as a means of knowledge and esthetic satisfaction and cultural investment. You know I never took history very seriously in college and not 'til I began to collect and to collect guns did I know there was such a town as Paterson, New Jersey, and certainly I didn't know it was spelled with one T instead of two, but I did get interested in Colts in my early days when I grew up and got interested in Kentucky Rifles and Kentucky Pistols in addition to Paterson. I learned a lot of things about New Jersey, about the eastern seaboard, about Paterson itself because of my interest in these guns. New Orleans, to me, was just another place on the map until I got interested in the use of guns in the War of 1812 on the site of New Orleans. I went to New Orleans on my first trip and just tramped over some of the sacred ground where our boys won from the British. And you know Harpers Ferry, West Virginia was not even a dot on the map to me. I didn't even know it existed in my state until I was fortunate enough to get hold of a Harpers Ferry pistol or two and to me it meant something. I have spent, in years past, a good deal of time in Harpers Ferry. It led me through the gates, that interesting Harpers Ferry gun led me through the gates of history that I never would have otherwise known. Kings Mountain is just another mountain in North Carolina but after I got interested in the Ferguson rifle and found out that Colonel Ferguson died in the Battle of Kings Mountain it meant a great deal more to me. It made it real, I could see it, I could sense it and it added a tremendous lot to my knowledge, my historic knowledge of that area and of the war itself. You know, down in Harrisberg, Kentucky I found a man that I didn't know of course died a great many years before I did, by the name of Glenn Mills who was the maker, the finest maker perhaps in Kentucky of pistols and guns. I went to his grave. I copied the inscription from his tombstone. I found out he was not only a gunsmith but he was a moonshiner. I found out that he had a lot of different attributes that I would have never know about if I hadn't gotten interested in Glenn Mills' guns. I was interested just as much, and I am today, just as much in fine engraved powderhorns as I am guns, and my interest is so much that in years past I have gone up the Mohawk and Hudson and traveled in the very towns that are listed on these French and Indian and Revolutionary War map powder horns that we find in that area. I know that country

pretty well. I even know the spelling of Schenectady. I know a lot of things that I wouldn't have known otherwise if I had not been interested and I wasn't driven into that, I was led into that interest in history.

Now, one other thing I mentioned, collecting as an investment in happiness. Collecting is, collecting whatever you will is a means of escape from the dull and sordid realities of life. It's an avenue of fellowship with kindred souls such as we have had here during this meeting, such as we have at every meeting, and certainly such as we have here this evening. Collectors have more fun than most people and I say that in all sincerity, and I'm glad the wives have come to enjoy the meetings of this kind because it gives them more sympathy with their husbands and their collecting. Collecting teaches us, and I think this is one of the most important things that I can possibly say tonight if anything is important, collecting teaches us to use our leisure intelligently and you know when people get down to a 30 hour week, things like that like we're drifting to now in the world at large, you know the big problem is not the leisure time that you have on your hands but how are you going to use that leisure to advantage. How are you going to use that leisure to contribute to your happiness? That's exactly what wise collecting does. In your collecting, it would be my suggestion that you certainly, above all else, keep your sense of humor and don't take your hobby of collecting too seriously and don't take life as a matter of fact too seriously. Don't live to collect, I don't think that's the way to do that's the way the fast buck artists do, but rather collect to live and to live richly and fully. It's a wonderful escape valve, collecting anything, it's a way to forget it all. I remember one time, some several years ago, I was in my office and the plant called up and said I had a shipment in from a Mr Keith Neal in England, whom I knew very well and in whose home I had visited several times, and they said I had an important shipment. I knew what the shipment was because I had ordered a gun I was very much interested in from Keith Neal, about one o'clock in the afternoon, I had the gun sent to my car at the garage and went down to the garage, got in my car about one o'clock and drove to my home ten miles out in the country from Huntington, and I was so enthused about that gun that I could hardly see the road. I got home; I went into the bedroom not thinking what I was doing, where I was or anything about it and the first thing I did was pull off my clothes and put on my pajamas, take that gun lay it on the bed and fondle it and just drool over the fact that I had finally got this gun that I wanted so bad. Well, about an hour after that or so, I heard a knock at the front door. I went to the door and it was my wife. I had my pajamas on at two o'clock in the afternoon. She says, "Well, honey, have you gone just completely berserk, are you sick?" I said, "No, I'm not sick, I never felt better in my life," and she said, "what's the matter." I told her this story. The question I ask you is how else in the world could you so completely forget yourself, forget what you were doing except your interest in something like that? It's a way to completely lose yourself in something that you are interested in.

Another thing. I'll mention this in just one sentence. A man that's a true collector, and a collector with a wide group of friendships, is never lost in a strange city. You couldn't be planted in any city in this United States, any city of any size, but what you could find somebody that's interested in guns or whatever else you collect if you search and you should. And you know you never are isolated if you're a collector and even if you go abroad you'll find the same thing is true. So you should make collecting an activity, make it a happy adventure in itself. You should enjoy it yourself and help others along the way. You know the greatest tragedy, and I'm sure that Dr. Funderbird and other doctors present here tonight will agree with me on this, that the greatest tragedy or one of the greatest tragedies in life is the tragedy of retirement without something to sustain you. I've had friends, I had a friend about four years ago that had been associated with me in business for years, had not a single solitary interest in the world except his work. He was a wonderful man to work with and worked, well the first time before I bought the business, worked for, but he had not a thing in the world to hang on when he died. I tried to get him interested in binding books as a hobby, fine editions, tried to get him interested in various things, well, the only thing that he could possibly do was go down to the Elks Club and sit in a leather chair and look at TV. He didn't live over 3 or 4 years and I'm sure that these doctors present here tonight will agree with me that people who die - people who retire without a hobby to sustain them, don't live too long; certainly they don't live as long as people who do have something to fall back on when the day of retirement comes. It's a spiritual, rainy day fund, collecting is, and the reason why I can talk with some assurance on that is because I have been through the mill - I've collected for 45 years, for 45 years up until 1961. In 1961 I retired and now I know what collecting has meant to me. I put a lot into life in those 45 years that today is paying off. I'm about as busy today as I ever was doing the things I want to do - not necessarily collecting but collecting has a great part to do with it.

Now, I have a word of advice here to - I shouldn't give it to a group of finished collectors like you - it should be to a group of neophytes, a group of boys that are just starting in collecting, but I'm going to mention very briefly three or four things that, advice to young collectors, that I would give. There's no use to advise you. I think that every collector should own at least, perhaps more, at least one good gun book for every gun he collects. I don't care if he has 5,000 guns, he should have 5,000 books. I won't elaborate on that. I think another thing you should do is to share your knowledge with others. You should learn the lesson that lighting someone else's candle from yours doesn't detract a bit from your candle. I think we should do that. It doesn't take away from the flame of the first candle at all. Another suggestion that I mention to younger collectors coming along, there's no use in suggesting it to the members of the American Society, is to keep out of the horse trading class and don't be a fast buck artist. Enjoy the guns that you own. Enjoy them thoroughly. Let that be the primary purpose, and, of course, if you sell with profit on occasion that's perfectly all right but it should be done with a high ethical standard. You should keep adequate records for your estate and for your pleasure. Some of you folks maybe have had, some of you will have certainly, experiences with the fact that you haven't kept accurate records. Sometimes the day of reckoning comes. The Internal Revenue man comes

in and says well you've sold these guns, where did you get them and what did you pay for them. In all sincerity you'll say, "Well, I bought them off of tables around collector's meetings around the country." "We don't care about that, who did you buy 'em from and what did you pay for them?" You don't have the records and all you can say honestly to them is I don't know. That doesn't help at all in a situation like this. You should keep accurate records. Let's learn to do that better.

I want to tell you the story of a colored barber down in the Ohio Valley, north of Huntington, West Virginia, who is a very astute man, had a fine barber shop and he had 5 chairs in his barbershop and was worth some money. He was a gun collector and he bought good guns, and he had about 4 or 5 Patersons, he had a flock of Dragoons, and he had a tremendously fine collection of guns and he'd drag a gun home about every few days, this was some several years ago, and his wife would say, "Where did you get that one?" "Oh," he said, "somebody brought it into the shop today" "What'd you pay for it?" "Oh, I got this one for \$4.00." She said, "that looks like pretty high for me." Well, he'd bring another one in the next day and thought maybe he'd better reduce the price and he'd make it \$3.00, \$5.00 and so forth, and so she kept a record of all these prices that he'd pay for these guns. The day of reckoning came one day and this man died, and he died and this woman wanted to settle the estate and unfortunately she got in touch with a fast buck artist, who is known to many of you people here who is not a member of this Society, incidentally, thank God, and she told him she had these guns for sale. He came up there and said, "What do you want for them?" "Well," she said, here's a list of the costs I've got and I'd like to get the cost and a little profit." And he had a tremendously fine collection of guns. She sold those guns, - there was a Colt Paterson that went out in the lot that I knew very well, the Colt Paterson went out in the lot for \$20, and she sold those because - because this man had failed, well he hadn't been honest with his wife to begin with, and he failed to keep proper records.

Another thing that we should do is to cultivate friendships with people that know more about guns than we do and that's the greatest opportunity, gentlemen, that you folks have in this organization here. This is a tremendously fine organization, nearly 200 members, and you can find a lot of people in this organization, who know a lot more about maybe the guns you collect than you do yourself, and it's worthwhile to cultivate friendships with men of that type. And in short, you should use your collecting experience to make life happier for you. If you fall down on that, you fall down on the great purpose of collecting, and you want to make your life more useful to your fellowman and to God and collecting can do just that if you pursue it in the way that you should.

Now in conclusion, we've considered collecting from five different viewpoints. I mentioned financially once, which means security and you know there is nothing that you have and I say this for the benefit of your wives more than you, there is no security you have that's better. There is no investment you have that's more worthwhile than the guns that you have. I mean that very much. Some women don't appreciate that. They think well it's just a bunch of old guns but if you've handled your collecting activities wisely, it's one of the finest financial investments you've ever made, and if you've bought good guns and not tried to get high prices guns for cheap prices.

I mentioned another thing, it's a means to distinction and immortality and that's exactly what it is, and I'm sure that you folks have experienced that and know exactly what I mean. It's an opportunity for cultural growth and for educational investment. You know you never cease to grow, your mind never ceases to expand if you are interested in collecting. At every meeting like this you'll find a great number of things that are new. It broadens your horizon and I don't know of any other field of fun or hobbies that provide more of a challenge of that kind than does the collecting of guns. It's a historic development. I mentioned that and have gone into a little more detail on that previously in this talk. The things that you have found out about your guns has added immeasurably to your understanding of history and to the understanding of the things that made our country great. It's a historic investment, definitely.

And finally, it's an investment in happiness itself, and I don't know of anything that you could do that will be more of an investment in happiness than to collect wisely and to share your knowledge with other people. From any angle that I can think of, collecting is a wholesome and a good thing. My own hobbies, collecting engraved powderhorns, guns, Americana, books and things of that sort, my own hobbies have brought me a lot of fine friends and fellowship such as I find here this evening. My invitation to address you is a typical example of this extra curricular dividend, and so in closing, may I express the sincere hope that if you have a yen toward collecting that you will always be lucky in your finds, and that in the pursuit of those finds you may find above all else, happiness; bearing in mind always that happiness is something akin to a fine perfume - you can't spread it generously on other people without getting a few drops on yourself. Thank you.