

Lynda Hammond
THE GARAGE SALE GAL
Garage Sale Gal



Iron Clad Finds
Lynda Hammond

There's no doubt garage sales are a lot of work---the sorting, the organizing, the set up—Oh my! It all takes time and patience. But Margaret Ellsworth agonizes over something else when it comes to having a garage sale. “It’s hard for me to part with stuff. I’m a saver-- especially of old things because it’s a connection to my past,” Margaret says.

Margaret is hooked on antiques. But she and her husband just downsized into a smaller home so some of her collectibles must go.

When I walked up to her recent garage sale in Mesa— a couple of her antiques caught my eye. When I asked about them Margaret curled her bottom lip under in a pout and said “I know. I hate to get rid of them.” They were old irons from the 1900s--not just any old irons, though. These were those really heavy, solid ones--the type your grandma might have used. No plug to warm them by--instead they were heated the old fashioned way--in the fireplace.

When Margaret and I got to talking about the irons she told me about more of her fond memories—including one of the sweetest stories I’ve ever heard. (I tell you—*this* is why I love garage sales so much---everybody has so many heartfelt stories to share.)

Margaret loves irons and anything associated with them---ironing boards, fabric and sewing. Why? Turns out, her mother, Jean Snow, loved that serene whooshing sound associated with ironing each morning. “She’d get up at five am everyday and iron. She ironed everything but underwear. It was her way of relaxing and thinking.” It’s understandable why her mom needed time to herself. After her chore was done that quiet time ended—in a big way. Growing up in Roosevelt, in northeastern Utah, Margaret had nine brothers and sisters! Mom woke the rest of clan at six, so that one hour was mom’s all-important tranquil time.

Margaret is convinced her mother might have been a bit “obsessed” with—what most of us would consider---- the mundane chore of ironing wrinkles out of clothes, sheets, table cloths and much more. So, it was only fitting that when her mother died eleven years ago, Margaret had plans for that very used, bent, dented and scratched metal ironing board—including the spray-starched-stained cover. She took it to the florist in the small town in Utah, close to the Colorado border, and asked them to make a floral arrangement incorporating the ironing board as a base. The unique arrangement sat atop the casket during her mom’s funeral. “It was odd. But everyone knew my mom would’ve loved that. She was a real joker.”

Those irons up for grabs at the garage sale, by the way, didn’t belong to her mother. Margaret bought them at antique stores and garage sales because they brought back such fond memories.

Margaret still has plenty of things that were her mother's such as the old, 1940s sewing machine and cedar chest.

Now, how's this for a bit of irony? Margaret doesn't like to iron. When I asked her about it she seemed genuinely surprised to realize this fact. "Wow that's weird isn't it? Mom taught us all how to cook, clean and sew but we never did the laundry. That was mom's thing. So, today I hate laundry and I hate ironing."

But she sure does love reminiscing about what were once *pressing* issues for mom.



(pic provided by Lynda Hammond) Margaret Ellsworth, 49 holds two of her prized possessions-- antique irons. She sold them both for \$10 each at her recent garage sale in Mesa.

Talk to the Garage Sale Gal!

Do you have a question or comment about garage or estate bargain sales? Email the Garage Sale Gal: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com.

Lynda Hammond is a former television anchor who left the anchor desk for the love of garage sales. Contact her at Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Lynda also does garage sale segments on local TV stations.

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