

SHANKS HOTEL ESTATE ITEMS FOR SALE

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Want to buy a piece of history?

An estate sale at the home of a historic hotel owner in Cookeville will be held this weekend.



The North Maple Avenue home of the late Pip and Polly Shanks will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday and Saturday, for those looking for antique furniture and household items. Some came from the Shanks Hotel.

The Shanks Hotel was known as the best place to stay between Nashville and Knoxville.

A flyer shared on social media for the estate sale lists Henredon, Baker, and Davis Cabinet Co. furniture, Haviland china, Francis I sterling, Kilmare Waterford crystal, Oriental art, Woodard wrought iron and other miscellaneous items.

In 1920, the Shanks family bought what was known as the Duke House across the street from the Cookeville Depot, and added onto it, making it a prime destination for important visitors passing through the city as well as Sunday lunches after church.

“There were marble walls and floors, chandeliers and red leather furniture,” Cookeville Museums Manager Beth Thompson said. “There was a drug store, barber shop and beauty shop.”

The landmark, which faced what is now Depot Street, is actually where a new hotel and convention center is being planned. For several decades, the three-story Shanks Hotel was the town center.

A room in the hotel was the Ike-Nixon election headquarters for Putnam County in 1956.

In 1943, the hotel was the site for an agent from the U.S. Employment Service seeking ship workers at a major Pacific Northwest Coast shipyard.

In November 1933, the newspaper reported that “The new Ideal Beauty Shoppe this week advertised that it ‘dispenses nothing but the latest word in beauty.’ Located in the Shanks

Hotel, it's the place to get your hair permed or waved, your nails manicured and your face rejuvenated."

The Upper Cumberland Chamber of Commerce met at the Shanks Hotel in 1941 to hear from a delegation that went to Washington to check on getting a federal defense plant for the region, and in 1950, a rally to "stimulate interest in voting among Democratic women in the Fourth Congressional District" was held there.

Shanks Hotel had approximately 50 rooms, as well as office space, until it burned in May 1970.



"The fire was discovered at approximately 3:10 p.m. and within minutes, the Cookeville Fire Department was pumping water into the building," the Herald-Citizen reported on May 14, 1970, which also noted that the office of Dr. Walter Derryberry was in the building immediately below the third-floor area of the hotel.

"Dr. Derryberry said he was able to get many of his records out, but the furnishings were not removed until the fire was brought under control," the newspaper reported.

Firefighters turned out from Cookeville as well as Algood and Sparta, and some Tennessee Tech students saved much of the hotel's furniture.

Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton, who is the nephew of the late Pip and Polly Shanks, said his aunt kept furniture, drapery and paintings from the hotel in the couple's home.

"It looks like it's looked for 40 years," Shelton said. "She's got some really neat artwork. They were really fancy."

Friends of the Cookeville History Museum were looking at purchasing a piece of that artwork, a copy of a Claude Monet, that was saved from the fire, according to a handwritten note on the back of the painting from Polly Shanks.

Shelton noted that his aunt and uncle were friends of former Tennessee Gov. Frank Clement, who stayed in the couple's home.

The North Maple Avenue structure itself is historic.

"It was built in 1959," Shelton said. "It's probably the only mid-century modern architectural style home in Cookeville."

The home has a large floor to ceiling window entrance in the back and front, each of which opens to a large area for entertaining.

The front area has a grand staircase next to a formal dining area that leads to the second floor.

Putnam County Archivist Glenn Jones said the county archives has a few items from the Shanks Hotel including cloth napkins, a deed, blueprints and stationery.

*Read more about the history of Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>