

MOM'S JOY ROOM

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF DESCRIPTION & VALUATION

Antique Hand-Carved Solid Wood Hobby Horse on Wheels — Glass Eyes — c.1900–1920



MARKET VALUE

\$275–550

Hand-carved solid wood, glass eyes, wheeled base intact — early 1900s construction

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$550–950

Collector ceiling for a heavily carved, glass-eyed wheeled hobby horse of this age and weight



Antique Hand-Carved Solid Wood Hobby Horse on Wheels, c.1900–1920

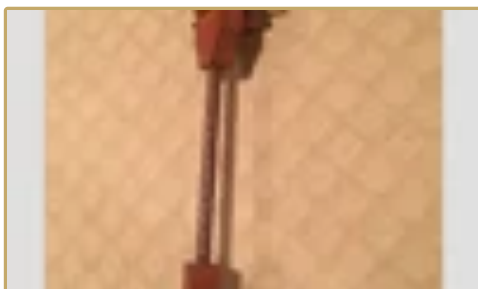
Glass Eyes — Painted Mane & Bridle Detail — Turned Stem Post — Spoke Wheel Base

Heavy Solid Wood Construction — No Maker's Mark — Stylistic Attribution

HISTORY

The hobby horse is among the oldest and most enduring children's toys in Western history — predating the rocking horse by centuries. Where the rocking horse invited the child to mount and ride, the hobby horse invited a different kind of play: the child grasped the pole or handle and ran, pulling or pushing the horse alongside them, or in the case of wheeled versions, rode it seated and propelled it with their feet. The wheeled hobby horse — a carved horse head mounted on a turned post set into a wheeled platform base — was the dominant form of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, produced by toymakers across Europe and America for a market hungry for imaginative, durable, beautiful playthings.

This example is a superior specimen of the form. The horse head is **hand-carved from solid wood** — not pressed, not cast, not assembled from multiple components, but carved by hand from a single substantial piece of hardwood. The carving is confident



Antique hand-carved solid wood hobby horse

on wheeled platform base — c.1900–1920

Turned post stem, spoke wheels

Glass eyes — painted mane & facial detail

Heavy solid wood construction throughout

and accomplished: the horse's anatomy is rendered with genuine understanding — the flared nostril, the set of the jaw, the defined neck musculature, the alert ear position. The surface is painted in warm chestnut and dark brown tones with black detailing on the mane, bridle lines, and facial features. The **glass eyes** — a premium feature that sets this piece clearly above the ordinary — give the horse a startling lifelike quality. Glass eyes on a carved wooden horse head required additional craftsmanship to set properly and were reserved for higher-quality pieces intended to last a lifetime.

The construction is notably **heavy** — consistent with solid hardwood throughout, not hollow or thinly constructed. The turned stem post connects the head to a wheeled platform base with **spoked wooden wheels**, the spoke construction itself a mark of quality woodworking. The overall form — heavy carved head, turned post, spoke-wheeled base — is characteristic of American and Northern European toy production from approximately **1895 to 1920**, the golden era of the wheeled hobby horse before mass-produced pressed-steel and injection-molded toys began to displace hand-crafted wooden forms after World War I.

No maker's mark has been identified on this piece, which is typical for wooden toy production of this era — most American and regional European toymakers did not mark their wooden pieces, as marks were reserved for pressed-steel, cast-iron, or paper-labeled items. The quality of the carving and construction is consistent with American craftsman production or a high-quality European import.

♦ *"A hand-carved, glass-eyed wooden horse head of this weight and carving quality is not a factory toy — it is a craftsman's work, made to outlast the child who first rode it by a century or more."* ♦

NOTABLE INFORMATION

- ♦ Form: Wheeled hobby horse — carved head on turned post, spoke-wheel platform base
- ♦ Construction: Hand-carved solid hardwood throughout — notably heavy
- ♦ Eyes: Glass — set into carved sockets, premium feature for this form
- ♦ Surface: Painted chestnut/dark brown — mane, bridle, and

facial detail in black

- ◆ Stem: Turned wood post connecting head to wheeled base
- ◆ Wheels: Spoked wooden wheels — quality woodworking construction
- ◆ Era: c.1900–1920 — peak production period for wheeled carved hobby horses
- ◆ Maker: No maker's mark — typical for wooden toy production of this era; attribution stylistic
- ◆ Condition: Heavy solid construction intact; consistent aged patina throughout

Collector's note: Antique wheeled hobby horses are collected within the broader antique toy market, with value driven primarily by four factors: quality of carving, presence of glass eyes, integrity of the wheeled base, and overall weight/solidity of construction. This example scores highly on all four. The glass eyes are particularly significant — they are the single feature most associated with premium-quality antique horse toys, and their presence on a hand-carved piece of this construction places it well above the average wheeled hobby horse seen in the market. Attribution to a specific maker is not possible without a mark, which was not standard practice for wooden toy production of this era. Market Value reflects realistic shop/private-sale pricing; Estimated Worth reflects what an antique toy specialist or folk art collector would pay for a glass-eyed, hand-carved example of this quality and age.

"Heavy as memory, and just as hard to let go of."