

# Secret found inside Lowcountry locket

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HOLLYWOOD — The cobalt locket likely had been hidden for decades, wedged in the groove between the antique walnut cupboard drawer and its sidewall.

Inside lay a two-century-old Lowcountry tragedy, braided in the fine weave of Gen. John McPherson's hair.

"Forgive the wish that would have kept you here," the inscription reads.

Discovering secrets is an odd part of the job for restorer Robert Sarco, of Hollywood, who specializes in antique woodwork and whose work graces homes and restaurants throughout Charleston. Among other stunners in his past work, he

found a bag holding diamond rings among "just a fortune in jewelry" taped in a nook under a dining room table.

But the find in a cupboard he is restoring for a private owner is "crazy interesting," he said.

It is a mourning locket, a sentimental attachment of wives, widows and families in antebellum times. They would keep locks of loved ones' hair when the loved ones went on a perilous adventure, as a good luck charm for a safe return, said June Wells, director of the Confederate Museum in Charleston.

McPherson was the grandson of James McPherson, a pre-Revolutionary War plantation owner in the Beaufort area.

If they died, the hair became a mourning keepsake.