

Massive circus side show collection of photos and ephemera sells for \$37,500 in Holabird's Big Tent Auction, April 16-19

The collection – around 50,000 pieces in all and spanning over a century, from 1850-1960 – was the sale's top lot. About 3,200 lots in many categories were sold

RENO, NV, UNITED STATES, April 29, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A massive collection of [circus side show](#) original photographs and ephemera – around 50,000 pieces in all and spanning over a century, from 1850-1960 – sold for \$37,500 at a four-day, online-only Big Tent Auction held April 16th-19th by Holabird Western [Americana](#) Collections, LLC. The auction was packed with around 3,200 lots in many collecting categories.

The John Reynolds circus side show collection was the sale's top lot and had three main parts:

- The midget collection, nearly 3,000 pieces, a photographic history of how PT Barnum got the world to love midgets like the world-famous Nicu de Barcsy and Tom Thumb, and how circus and entertainment entities promoted the odd and curious to the world.

- The circus freaks side show collection, about 2,000 pieces, including cartes de visite of every sort of human disfigurement (circa 1860s-1870s), cabinet cards (circa 1880s-1900), real photo post cards, a Fat Lady collection (200 pieces), handbills, signed photos, more.
- The circus collection, including Ringling calendars, broadsides, tickets, promo material, circus programs from the 1940s, and a notebook of historical circus collectibles including many of the colorful letterheads of various circuses from the first half of the 20th century.

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Fred Holabird



The John Reynolds collection of circus side show original photographs and ephemera – around 50,000 pieces in all and spanning over a century, from 1850-1960 (\$37,500).

California) postal history collection of more than 10,000 covers, plus his Pioneer postcard collection. The collections contributed to a highly successful online auction.

"This may have been a record-setting auction," remarked Fred Holabird, president and owner of Holabird Western Americana Collections. "Over time, we have mined many statistical patterns associated with collector interests, bidding practices and Internet visibility. We used this data to guide our marketing for this sale, and it was a near absolute success. The numbers bore this out."

Holabird likened the auction room to "a war room," commenting, "With no live bidding in our gallery because of COVID-19, the room contained a complex array of computers and operators, with all phone participation handled by Zoom and our employees working remotely from home around the country. This high-tech approach to the business may well be the wave of the future."

Following are additional highlights from the auction, which attracted more than 6,000 registered bidders, with just under 600 successful winning bidders and over 550 people participating online live over the course of the four days (with a high of just under 1,000 people online live at a time). The sale had less than ten lots reserved. All prices quoted are inclusive of the buyer's premium.

Day 1 featured 754 lots of Native Americana, general America, art and books. The circus side show collection was offered on Day 1, as was the sale's runner-up top lot: a 1901 wanted poster issued by The Pinkerton Detective Agency for the capture of Harvey Logan, alias Kid Curry, a member of Butch Cassidy's famous 'Hole-in-the-Wall Gang' (\$8,437). The reward was \$5,000.

Other Day 1 highlights included a pastel on paper painting of a reptilian alien swallowing a phoenix by the noted Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo (1889-1991), signed and framed (\$4,250); and a desert landscape oil on canvas painted circa the 1950s by Reno, Nevada artist George Carter, with an image area of 26 inches by 36 inches, larger when including the frame (\$812).

Day 2 was just as busy, with 753 lots of mining equipment, minerals, mining artifacts and ephemera, stocks and bonds in multiple categories (to include mining and railroad), sports,



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Stock certificate for the Washoe Gold & Silver Mining Company in Comstock, Silver City, Nevada, dated Aug. 17, 1861 in the amount of ten shares, issued to Nathaniel Page (\$1,000).

militaria and firearms and weaponry. A top lot was the gold and quartz specimen, a native gold in quartz matrix with 0.75 percent gold content weighing 5.03 troy ounces that made \$7,320.

Also sold on Day 2 was a stock certificate from 1924 for the Mt. Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railway, "the Crookedest Railroad in the World," a scenic tourist railway operating between Mill Valley and the east peak of Mount Tamalpais in Marin County, California (\$1,562). The certificate, in the amount of 100 shares, was signed by the company's president and secretary.

Day 2 also featured an historic pair of telegrams from then-President Teddy Roosevelt to Nevada Governor John Sparks, dated Dec. 4 and 5, 1907, regarding Sparks's request that federal troops be sent to mediate a labor dispute in Goldfield (\$1,437); and a stock certificate for the Washoe Gold & Silver Mining Company in Comstock, Silver City, Nevada, dated Aug. 17, 1861 in the amount of ten shares, issued to Nathaniel Page, signed by the president and secretary (\$1,000).

Day 3 consisted of 764 lots of philatelic and postal history collectibles, to include ephemera, first day and commemorative, first flight, airships, philatelic covers and postcards. Top lots included a 1905 cover addressed to a party in Guadalajara, Mexico, in very nice condition (\$1,625); and a scarce, straight line cover from Carson City in the Utah Territory, dated July 21, 1861 (\$1,000).

Day 4 also topped the 750-lot mark, with categories that included tokens, [numismatics](#), cowboy and Western, and bargains and dealer specials in multiple categories. Coin lovers were drawn to lot 4270 – a nicely organized hoard of Indian head pennies covering the years 1858-1909, about 1,450 pieces total, all sorted (\$2,625). It was a wide variety archive, with most coins post-1880.

Also sold on Day 4 was an advertising mirror for The Owl in Mojave, Calif. ("Best Brands of Liquors and Cigars Only / John Cross, Prop."), from the John Reynolds collections (\$1,375); and the



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Gold and quartz specimen, a native gold in quartz matrix with 0.75 percent gold content weighing 5.03 troy ounces (\$7,320).

only known token for John Oliver in Llanada, Calif., near Panoche ("Good For 1 Drink / John Oliver / Llanada / Estate of Germain"), 23 mm wide with a graphic of a pool table (\$1,187).

Online bidding was facilitated by the popular platforms iCollector.com, LiveAuctioneers.com, Invaluable.com, AuctionMobility.com and Auctionzip.com. On Day 3, bidders were able to bid on philatelic lots via StampAuctionNetwork.com. Phone and absentee bids were also accepted. Holabird Western Americana Collections is actively seeking quality consignments for future auctions. Of particular interest are numismatics (coins, currency, ingots, tokens), rare postcards, postal history, rare art, rare three-dimensional antiquities (other than furniture), mining artifacts, gold specimens and nuggets, quality railroading (passes, stocks, bonds and artifacts), antique bottles, Native Americana, general Americana, cowboy collectibles, jewelry and other items. To consign a single piece or a collection, you may call Fred Holabird at 775-851-1859 or 844-492-2766; or, you can send an e-mail to fredholabird@gmail.com. To learn more about Holabird Western Americana Collections, LLC, please visit www.fhwac.com. Updates are posted often.
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