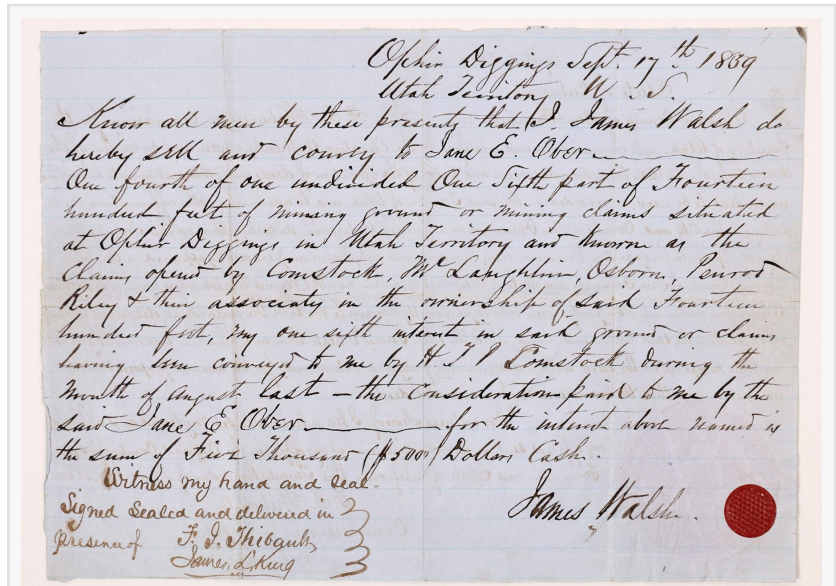


Earliest known Comstock Lode mining document from 1859 realizes \$16,875 at Holabird's Big Bonanza auction, Mar 30-Apr. 2

The auction featured more than 2,000 lots in many collecting categories that included mining, philatelic, numismatic, railroadiana, Native Americana and more.

RENO, NV, UNITED STATES, April 14, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An historic document from 1859, dating to the very beginning of the [Comstock Lode](#) silver rush in the U.S. and including mention of the most important [mining](#) claim – the Ophir – sold for \$16,875 at a four-day Big Bonanza auction held March 30th thru April 2nd by Holabird Western Americana Collections, LLC, online and live in Holabird's Reno gallery.



Historic document from 1859, dating to the very beginning of the Comstock Lode silver rush in the U.S. and including mention of the most important mining claim – the Ophir (\$16,875).

The Comstock Lode was a lode of silver ore located under the eastern slope of Mount Davidson, in Virginia City, Nevada (then western Utah Territory). It was the first major discovery of silver ore in the United States and was named after American miner Henry Comstock. The discovery, in 1859, sparked a big silver rush of prospectors to the area, all scrambling to stake their claims.

The document – a handwritten deed on blue paper – was datelined “Ophir Diggings, Utah Territory, U.S., Sept. 17, 1859.” Just 11 days later the San Francisco Daily Alta California would announce a name change from Ophir Diggings to Virginia City. The document also mentioned the Comstock Lode’s “Founding Fathers” (Comstock, McLaughlin, Osborn, Penrod and Walsh).

The auction overall contained over 2,000 lots in many categories that included mining, philatelic, numismatic, railroad, [Native Americana](#) and more. Since the auction featured Part 1 of what Fred Holabird called “the best Comstock mining collection ever to hit the market,” the auction name was chosen to honor the “Big Bonanza” ore discovery in Virginia City, Nevada, made in 1873.

Part 1 focused on mining stock certificates, ore specimens, ephemera and publications. Most were offered on Day 4. The session also featured a spectacular Comstock "Wash-Oh!" illustrated lettersheet from 1860, drawn and engraved by TC Boyd (San Francisco) and with a vignette showing a natty prospector (or mine investor) about to meet the devil in a cornucopia (\$5,750).

Day 4 ore specimens included a 55-pound boulder of Comstock silver-gold ore, reportedly found in the basement of the Virginia City, Nevada Bonanza Club in the 1980s, 16 inches by 13 inches by 10 inches (\$4,375); and a cut and polished slab of gold-in-quartz ore from Goldfield, Nevada (Esmeralda County), 51.4 grams (\$3,500). Wyatt and Virgil Earp both spent time in Goldfield.

Day 1, on March 30th, featured railroadiana and steamship (including railroad and steamer passes and transportation ephemera); bottles, brewing and saloon items; and general Americana (including political, jewelry, musical instruments, tobacco and gaming, sports, miscellaneous).

Railroad and steamer ship collectibles were a big hit with collectors. Top lots included these:

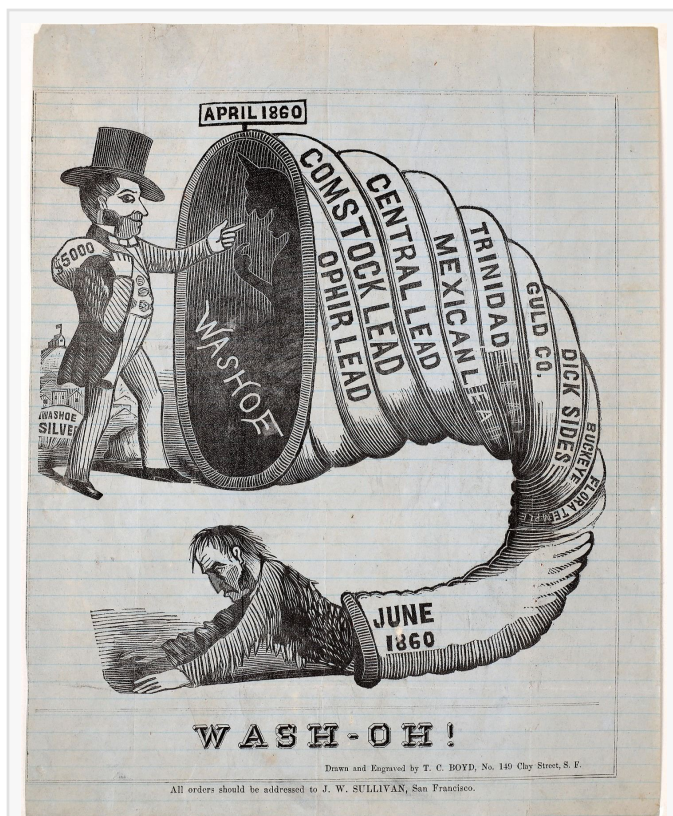
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The auction featured the best Comstock mining collection ever to hit the market. The name was chosen to honor the 'Big Bonanza' ore discovery in Virginia City, Nevada, made in 1873."

Fred Holabird

- An 1870 Central Pacific Railroad pass No. 511, issued in New York for travel "Going West" to Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and his wife and signed by CP Huntington, as vice-president of Central Pacific Railroad of California and one of its four founders (\$3,875).
- An early, unissued 1859 pass for the Great Northern Railway (which operated in Ontario 1853-1882), with a beautiful design and vignette of a train crossing a bridge (\$1,250).
- A Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers pin badge with six stones (an emerald, a ruby and four diamonds), issued

to Oscar L. Crockett, a conductor from 1873-1891 (\$1,625).



Comstock "Wash-Oh!" illustrated lettersheet from 1860, drawn and engraved by TC Boyd (San Francisco) and with a vignette showing a natty prospector, the devil and a cornucopia (\$5,750).

Other Day 1 standouts included a two-page letter written by baseball legend Connie Mack in 1949 on letterhead from the American Base Ball Club of Philadelphia, discussing black players and mentioning Ty Cobb and Stuffy McInnis (\$1,800); and a collection of six Oklahoma I. T. crown top bottles, each one 8 inches tall, some clear and some colored, with no cracks (\$3,000).

Day 2, on March 31st, featured art, militaria and firearms, and stocks and bonds (to include mining, featuring the Comstock collection, railroad and miscellaneous), for a total of 548 lots.

One of the Day 2 top lots was a Winchester Model 1876 .45-.60 caliber buffalo gun with a 28-inch octagonal barrel, Winchester's answer to the Sharps rifle for hunting buffalo. The gun sold had serial # 14871 and both "1's" looked like hoof prints, with a birthdate of Jan. 1881 (\$6,000).

Otherwise, old, visually arresting stock certificates were what bidders coveted, including these:

- Rare stock certificate No. 9 for the Colorado-Philadelphia Reduction Company, dated Aug. 14, 1899 in the amount of 33,250 shares, issued to Charles Penrose, an officer of the company, and signed by two other officers, Charles Tutt and Charles MacNeill (\$2,125).
- Stock certificate No. 12 for the Cripple Creek & Colorado Springs Railroad Company, issued for one share to Charles L. Tutt in 1925 and signed by Spencer Penrose as president and E. Hartwell as secretary, with a nice locomotive vignette (\$750).
- Very early stock certificate No. 2288 for the Sierra Nevada Silver Mining Company (incorporated when the Comstock was still part of the Utah Territory), datelined San Francisco 1866, issued to Thomas Quinn for 10 shares, signed by officers (\$750).

Day 3, on April 1st, featured Native Americana, numismatics (including Nevada banknotes); and



U.S. \$10,000 gold certificate, cancelled and not redeemable, printed in Washington, D.C. and dated May 3, 1917, with the signatures of Teehee and Burke as register and treasurer (\$2,875).



Stock certificate No. 12 for the Cripple Creek & Colorado Springs Railroad Company, issued for one share to Charles L. Tutt in 1925 and signed by Spencer Penrose as president (\$750).

philatelic (Express and U.S. covers, U.S. stamps; and foreign stamps and covers); 531 lots in all.

A group of 23 mostly canceled Columbian Expo stamps from around 1893, in denominations ranging from one cent to five dollars with a few duplicates, the paper money fairly well centered, overall a nice complete set, hammered for \$3,375. Also, a Copley & Company Miner's Express cover, with a Red Miner's Express oval top left and blue Oct. 1 circle bottom left, 10-cent green and white entire U17, fetched \$2,375. The express only ran for about a year, from 1855 to 1856.

A U.S. \$10,000 gold certificate (Fr. 1225), cancelled and not redeemable, printed in Washington, D.C. and dated May 3, 1917, with the signatures of Teehee and Burke as register and treasurer, very attractive with bright white paper, hit \$2,875. In the Native American category, a beaded buckskin vest made for a small child circa 1870s-1880s, the buckskin base fully lazy-stitched with red, blue, green and turquoise glass beads, framed in a Plexiglas box, reached \$2,375.

A U.S. gold piece struck at the Philadelphia mint in 1947 for the Arab American Oil Company (ARAMCO), as payment to the Saudi Arabian government for its oil rights, 30mm in diameter and weighing 32 grams, changed hands for \$2,770; while a gold coin minted in Santiago, Chile in 1792 for 8 Escudos, a bust of Charles III on the obverse, one of 38,000 minted, made \$2,250.

The auction was held online (via iCollector.com, LiveAuctioneers.com, Invaluable.com and Auctionzip.com), as well as live in the Holabird gallery located at 3555 Airway Drive in Reno.

Anyone owning a collection that might fit into a Holabird Western Americana Collections auction is encouraged to get in touch. The firm travels throughout the U.S., to see and pick up collections. The company has agents all over America and will travel to inspect most collections.

Holabird Western Americana Collections, LLC is always seeking new and major collections to bring to market. It prides itself as being a major source for selling Americana at the best prices obtainable, having sold more than any other similar company in the past decade alone. The firm will have its entire sales database online soon, at no cost – nearly 200,000 lots sold since 2014.



Collection of six antique Oklahoma I. T. (Indian Territory) crown top bottles, each one 8 inches tall, some clear and some colored, with no cracks (\$3,000).

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, visit www.holabirdamericana.com. Updates are posted often.

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