

Morphy's Santa Fe auction was a spirited tribute to America's Old West and Native art traditions

Hollywood highlights included Clayton Moore's screen-used Lone Ranger mask, \$27,060; while Western art was led by William Gaul's Indian by Campfire, \$39,360

SANTA FE, NM, UNITED STATES, July 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Collectors figuratively saddled up and traveled the historic Santa Fe Trail to Morphy's June 21 auction of elite Western art and antiques, a million-dollar-plus event that embodied the spirit of American adventure and reverence for Native culture in 472 diverse and exceptional lots. The evening sale was a well-attended special highlight of the Old West Show & Auction weekend held annually at the Santa Fe Community Center.

The high-end auction lineup included fine and decorative art, riding apparel and tack; silverwork, Native tribal art and relics; and Hollywood cowboy memorabilia, to name but a few of the categories. Top-lot honors went to an artist-signed oil-on-canvas painting by William Gilbert Gaul (NAD, 1855-1919) titled Indian by Campfire. Gaul was a well-credentialed artist known for his military scenes and Western subjects, including realistic depictions of



William Gilbert Gaul (1855-1919, Member of National Academy of Design), 'Indian by Campfire,' oil on canvas. Sold for \$39,360



Original black cloth and plastic mask screen-worn by Clayton Moore as the star of the TV series 'The Lone Ranger.' Sold for \$27,060

interaction between Native and Caucasian people. Born in New Jersey, Gaul studied in New York City at the Art Student League and the prestigious National Academy of Design (NAD), where, in 1882, he was elected a member. Gaul made many trips to the American West between 1882 and 1891, living on Army posts and with Indian tribes whose cultures and traditions he captured in his artworks. One of his best-known works is a portrait of Sitting Bull, which he painted from life. *Indian by Campfire* came with provenance that included a March 14, 2001 sale at Sotheby's New York. Against a pre-sale estimate of \$30,000-\$50,000, the beautifully executed oil was bid to \$39,360 at Morphy's.

One of the most talked-about lots had a direct connection to the classic TV series *The Lone Ranger* and were screen-used by its beloved star, Clayton Moore (1914-1999). Perhaps nothing was more essential to Moore's iconic role than the black eye mask his character wore to conceal his identity. The cloth-and-plastic mask was molded to fit Moore's face and became part of one of the most recognizable costumes in American TV history. Inextricably tied to a classic series that first ran on ABC Television from 1949 to 1957, the mask came with provenance from the estate of the show's producer, Jack Wrather. It sold within its estimate range for \$27,060.



Northern Plains / Sioux pictorial beaded vest. Front panels adorned with stunning images of two mounted warriors with feathered coup sticks. On back: two braves on horseback. Sold for \$19,200

A magnificent example of Native American artistry, a Northern Plains / Sioux pictorial beaded vest was a scene-stealer at the auction preview. Its front panels were decorated with stunning images of two mounted warriors with feathered coup sticks, while the back showed two mounted braves dressed in full regalia, including headdresses and coup sticks, with an upper portion adorned with two pole-mounted American flags. Described by Morphy's specialist cataloger as one of the nicest Native beaded vests ever to be offered by the Pennsylvania-based auction house, it rose to \$19,200 against an estimate of \$8,000-\$12,000.

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Nothing was more essential to the Lone Ranger's visual presence than the black eye mask he wore to conceal his identity. It defined one of the most recognizable costumes in American TV history.”

*Dan Morphy, President,
Morphy Auctions*

A visually compelling advertising piece, a rare lithographed pennant poster in an unusual trapezoidal shape promoted

"Buffalo Bill's Wild West / Pawnee Bill's Far East" shows. Extremely colorful and profusely illustrated, its motif featured an image of Buffalo Bill (William F. Cody) in the foreground. Copyrighted in 1910 and printed by Russell-Morgan, the 80-inch by 24-inch pennant was bid to \$16,800 against an estimate of \$8,000-\$12,000.

Another Old West advertising highlight was a Remington-UMC canvas banner with graphics of Indians on horseback hunting buffalo. Scarce and desirable, the 28¼-inch by 57-inch poster commanded \$14,400 against an estimate of \$5,000-\$8,000.

Masterfully executed, a Scott Rogers (b. 1960-) bronze tableau depicted in fine detail a Conestoga wagon crossing rocky terrain with people, livestock and a dog as its traveling companions.

Artist-signed Scott Rogers and 2021 in the casting, along with a copyright symbol and incised petroglyphs, the 4ft-long work was numbered CA 3/30. Bidders chased it to \$9,600.

More than five dozen pairs of antique spurs were offered, including unique German silver and brass-inlaid productions that had been crafted within the walls of the Colorado State Penitentiary. The mounted spurs had heel bands adorned with 1-1/3-inch engraved, inlaid circles with brass borders, each encasing a five-point star. Rare and atypical, they sold just below their high estimate for \$11,079.

A small selection of coveted lawmen's badges included examples from marshals, sheriffs and police from Arizona, Texas, California and Oklahoma. An extra-special entry was a Texas Ranger's badge originally worn by WM "Matt" Cawthon, a sergeant with the Rangers' Company 'F' at Fort Fisher in Waco, Texas. Attractively decorated with a Texas Star and "Texas Ranger" on the obverse, the badge was engraved on verso with Cawthon's initials "WMC." At some point, the badge had been gifted to Buster Brown of Houston, Texas. It conveyed to its new owner with an original signed letter to Brown on Texas Department of Public Safety letterhead. Against an estimate of \$1,500-\$2,500, it claimed a strong winning bid of \$7,200.

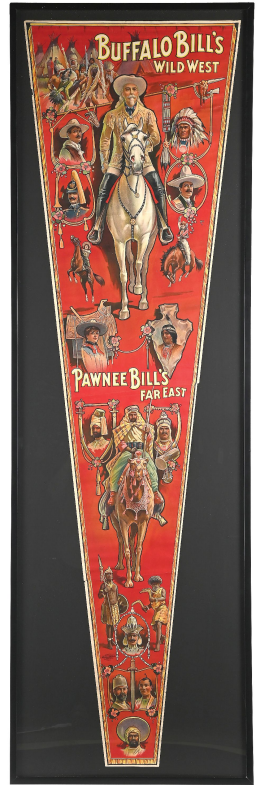
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Unique German silver and brass-inlaid Colorado State Penitentiary-made mounted spurs with heel bands adorned with 1-1/3-inch engraved, inlaid circles with brass borders, each encasing a five-point star. Sold just below high estimate for \$11,079

enquiries regarding consignments are kept strictly confidential, and there is never an obligation to consign. Online: www.morphyauctions.com

Dan Morphy
Morphy Auctions
+1 877-968-8880
[email us here](#)



Rare lithographed pennant poster in unusual trapezoidal shape advertising 'Buffalo Bill's Wild West / Pawnee Bill's Far East' shows. Copyright 1910. Sold for \$16,800

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