

## Early Oushak rug brings \$11,000 at Hatch, Nov. 16-17

FLAT ROCK, N.C. – An early Oushak room-size Oriental rug hammered for \$11,000 at the annual Asian & Oriental Auction held Nov. 16-17 by Richard D. Hatch & Associates. More than 1,500 lots changed hands at a sale that was strong both days. The Oushak rug was the top lot. Prices quoted do not include a 10 percent in-house buyer's premium or a 15 percent on-line and absentee buyer's premium.

Early rugs did well overall. A Kord type runner, over 11feet long, realized \$1,900, while an early silk prayer rug crossed the block at \$1,100. A room-size Sarouk saw a high bid of \$1,300, and an early tribal rug soared to \$6,000. An early runner sailed past the high estimate of \$400-\$600, finally selling to a determined phone bidder for \$7,000.

Carved ivory piqued the interest of the crowd, and it seemed the bigger the piece the higher the price was realized. A massive 26-inch-tall goddess figure changed hands for \$5,000, while a 48-inch tusk exhibiting fine carving brought \$4,750. Carved mystery balls, with stands, sold for prices ranging from \$200 for the smallest to \$3,250 for the largest piece.



Large Chinese carved mystery ball on stand, over 18 inches tall, with twelve layers and great floral carvings (\$3,250).

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Netsukes (Japanese carved toggles, used to secure sagemono to the waist belt, or "obi," from a cord), hammered for prices ranging from \$70 to \$300. A fine collection of snuff bottles crossed the block quickly, barely keeping pace with Hatch's breathtaking average of 100 lots sold per hour, at prices ranging from \$40 for a modest ivory example to over \$200 for earlier carved stone examples.

A collection of early Japanese woodblocks was offered, most of them from a local mansion. Condition problems plagued several pieces, accounting for the final price range of \$50-\$150 each. Chinese plaques, however, excited the crowd by exceeding the high estimates. One pair, expected to fetch no more than \$500, brought \$5,500; and a couple

## Rock Island cards record-breaking 2007

FRED TAYLOR

Rock Island Auction Co. in Moline, Ill., closed out 2007 as the highest-grossing year in the annals of firearms auctions with the largest single sale in its history.

Prior to the sale, Rock Island had anticipated exceeding the industry record of \$25 million in gross annual sales but the results of the Dec. 8-10 sale at the Rock Island facility surprised even the management. The 2,800+ lot sale garnered nearly \$11 million, bringing the year's take to \$28 million.

"We knew we had a high-quality auction, yet the results surprised us all," auction owner Patrick Hogan said. "The stock market and uncertainty in markets in general have led people to seek 'hard assets,' and collectible firearms, in my opinion, are still very much under-priced."

"Under-priced," however, did not exactly come to mind for some of the top lots in the sale, which featured several outstanding collections including that of Frank and Karen Sellers, the William Powell estate and the Val Forgett Collection.

The top lot of the sale was described in the catalog as "The Finest Colt No. 3 Belt Model Paterson Known." The factory cased .31 cal pistol, carrying serial number 51 with square back cylinder, 5 1/2-inch barrel and spare cylinder with matching number, was made between 1837 and 1840 in the Paterson, N.J., plant. In excellent-plus condition, retaining 98 percent of the original finish, Mr. Colt's pistol lived up to its expectations and verified the catalog description by establishing a new world record for the genre at \$414,000 including the 15 percent buyer's premium.

Also not to be taken lightly was the Colt Model 1861 Navy Revolver known as the "Tears of Gettysburg." Produced around the time of the great battle in 1863, the steel weapon was fully engraved by Colt's premier engraver of the time, Gustave Young.

Young expressed the nation's grief over the massive losses in the battle by including 11 animal figures in the scroll engraving, including wolves, a bear, an eagle, a hound and a fox, each with tears in its eyes. The gun was enclosed in a rare rosewood case lined in scarlet velvet. In excellent condition, this poignant reminder of American history closed at \$368,000.

Another reminder of the event celebrated the Federal commanding officer Maj. Gen. George Meade. The "Victor of the Battle of Gettysburg" was honored for his role in 1864 with the presentation of a silver finished, highly engraved Remington New Model Army .44 cal revolver featuring the work of engraver Daniel Nimschke on the frame and gold plated cylinder and hammer. The revolver was formerly



This magnificently engraved Colt Model 1861 Army Revolver commemorates the Battle of Gettysburg. It sold for \$368,000.



The silver finished Remington New Model Army .44 cal revolver was presented to "The Victor of Gettysburg," Maj. Gen. George Meade, in 1864. It was presented to new owner for \$287,500.

in the estate of Meade's great-grandson. It entered a new collection for \$287,500.

While high-grade Civil War-era short arms did well throughout the sale, other areas also did quite well. A Kentucky rifle from the Sellers collection, attributed to Pennsylvania gunsmith John Sherry (1773-1859) and designated "One of Best Five" by the Kentucky Rifle Association in 1967, sold for nearly three times the high estimate at \$97,750 and a very rare World War II U.S. Singer M1911A1 .45 ACP cal semi automatic pistol closed well over estimate at \$80,500.

Association with famous names helped several lots achieve notable results. One was an exhibition quality pre-war Smith & Wesson Military and Police Target Revolver artfully engraved by Rudolph J. Kornbrath.

The elaborately decorated revolver with gold inlay was designed for presentation to Alf Landon, Franklin Roosevelt's opponent in 1936, but Roosevelt won the election in a landslide and Landon never received his revolver. It sold for \$57,500.

An outlaw's name rather than a politician's helped another lot. It was an early production brass frame Henry lever action .44 cal rifle manufactured in 1862. A notarized family affidavit and family tree traced the rifle to Sam Bass, a noted outlaw and train robber in the 1875-1878 period. While Bass was famous for robbing the Deadwood stage seven times, his most notable accomplishment was robbing the Union Pacific Railroad in Big Springs, Neb., of the relative fortune of \$60,000. He was mortally wounded by a Texas Ranger in 1878. His rifle sold for \$46,000.

Not all lever action weapons are rifles, as illustrated by the "Volcanic" series of pistols made by Volcanic Repeating Arms Company, reorganized as New Haven Arms. The Volcanics were very early lever operated pistols made in the 1850s. This sale featured "The Finest Known 3 Inch Volcanic Pistol," a new in the original box model made in 1857 following the reorganization that marked the beginning of Oliver Winchester's involvement in the manufacture of repeating weapons. This rare New Haven Arms No. 1 Pocket Pistol, in .31 cal., sold for nearly twice the estimate at \$143,750, another record mark for genre.

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