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Auction brings in nearly \$8.7 million

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Bad weather didn't stop collectors from spending nearly \$8.7 million at Rock Island Auction's final premiere sale of the year.

The auction at the Moline-based firm Dec. 2-4 saw nine lots sold for over \$100,000, the company reported.

"The star of the auction ended up being a magnificent factory cased Colt Paterson with accessories which sold for \$299,000," the company said.

A factory engraved, first-generation Colt single action army with box, which was estimated at \$50,000-\$70,000, sold for an "astonishing" \$143,750.

"With so many people interested in these rare guns, the competition was not always willing to back down," [the company](#) said in a press release. "A fine example of this was the WWII Liberator pistol with ammunition. So much interest was shown for this scarce piece that extra phone lines had to be brought in to accommodate all of the telephone bidders who wanted in on this piece of history. It is no wonder that the Liberator, which was estimated at just \$3,000-\$4,000, sold for \$9,200."

The auction featured other historically significant pieces. These included Civil War General R.B. Marcy's presentation Colt revolvers which sold for \$230,000.

Of local interest was the 1907 Savage pistol that belonged to LeClaire native Col. William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, which sold for \$126,500.

[\(See press release for a complete list.\)](#)

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Photo: Courtesy Rock Island Auction

The "National Treasure" factory engraved and inscribed Savage Model 1907 Semi Automatic Pistol presented to Buffalo Bill Cody by the factory. The pistol sold for \$126,500 at auction this month.

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News-byte:

Buffalo Bill gun fetches \$126K at Moline auction

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Buffalo Bill Cody's name retains its magic, 90 years after the death of the Quad-Cities area native who morphed from Great Plains adventurer into international superstar.

Mr. Cody's long-lasting aura boosted a pistol he received as a gift from the Savage Arms Corp. in 1907 to a sales price of \$126,500 at a recent gun auction in Moline.

Adding to the pistol's value: It's an automatic, the first ever owned by the man whose fame is rooted in the Old West of the six-shooter revolver.

The gun's manufacturer got a great boost in return for its gift to Mr. Cody. In a 1911 advertisement, Savage quoted Buffalo Bill as saying, "It is the first automatic I ever owned or fired. I had turned them down without trial and stuck to an old Army revolver. Today I took the old revolver and the Savage automatic out and fired each fifty times making, to my surprise, a much better score with the automatic than I could with my old pet gun." He recommended people switch to automatics.

Mr. Cody, who was born near LeClaire in 1846 and lived there until 1853, when his family moved to Kansas, rode for the Pony Express, scouted for the Union Army during the Civil War, hunted buffalo and protected railroad construction workers.

In 1883, he launched "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," a riding-and-shooting traveling show that eventually grew to include a cast of hundreds and elaborate staging. The show toured in Europe to enormous acclaim and was a fixture at the Chicago World Fair of 1893. ([Buffalo Bill Homestead website](#))

The Wild West performances continued for 20-plus years. Despite their popularity, the expense was more than could be managed, and Mr. Cody was broke when he died in 1917 at Golden, Col., where he is buried. The final performance of the show had been in Davenport, in 1913.

The Cody gun was but one of hundreds sold at the auction, conducted by [Rock Island Auction](#) of Moline, a major player in the field.

Several of the guns auctioned brought even heftier prices, topped by the \$299,999 paid for a factory-cased Colt Paterson with accessories, according to the company. Sales during the two-auction totaled nearly \$8.7 million, the company said.

[Company press release, listing lots sold and prices.](#)



Courtesy Rock Island Auction

The "National Treasure" factory engraved and inscribed Savage Model 1907 Semi Automatic Pistol presented to Buffalo Bill Cody by the factory. The pistol sold for \$126,500 at auction this month.

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