



The Sale of the Roy Rogers Museum Collection

"A Thousand Points of Light"

**by Nick Pernokas,
Southwest Media Coordinator**

The story of Ohio farm boy Leonard Slye's long journey to become "The King of the Cowboys," Roy Rogers, reached its epilogue recently. On July 14-15, 2010, the famed Christie's in New York City sold the Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum Collection at auction. The event was a bittersweet one as it marked the closing of the museum in Branson, MO, on December 12, 2009. The collection itself had been on display for nearly four decades.



Roy Roger's Pontiac Bonneville convertible brought \$254,500. The interior was covered with silver dollars and chrome plated western items. Photos courtesy of Chirstie's Images LTD. 2010

Like many museums in recent years, the Rogers Museum had felt the pinch of the recession. In this time of instant internet gratification, the long family vacations to see America seem to be fading as fast as some of the abandoned motor courts along Route 66. However, from the size of the turnout at the sale, it appears that the spirit of Roy Rogers hasn't endured the same fate.

Rogers family for the last ten years," says Linda Kohn Sherwood of High Noon. "Last summer, the Rogers asked us to help them disburse the contents of the museum. We felt that they needed an international venue for a sale of this importance. That's why we teamed up with Christie's."

The collection contained memorabilia dating back to Roy and Dale's childhoods and followed Roy's musical climb during the Depression, to the B-Westerns of the Forties, and finally to the new frontier of television in the Fifties and Sixties.



This plastic saddle was built in the Forties and used by Dale Evans for parades. It sold for \$104,500.

Linda said the mood of the people who came to the auction was "beautiful." People who came to the sale recounted stories and memories. Even bidders over the phone would take time to share their stories.

"My impression is that all of that joy that was in that museum spread out into the crowds that were there," says Linda. "I hope these pieces will keep Roy's legacy, and what he stood for, alive as they spread out through new owners."



The Bohlin saddle shown on this picture of Trigger, was the high selling item for \$386,500. Trigger brought \$266,500 from RFD-TV.

I hope these pieces will keep Roy's legacy, and what he stood for, alive as they spread out through new owners.

Prices ranged from \$300 for Roy's bowling paraphernalia to the Bohlin saddle worn by Trigger for \$386,000.

One of the most interesting items to sell was Roy's Pontiac Bonneville convertible. It had been customized by the famed Hollywood tailor, Nudie, who designed many of the clothes that Roy wore. The inside of the car was tooled leather with hundreds of silver dollars mounted on the leather. The door handles were replaced with chrome plated revolvers,

and chrome plated miniature horses were mounted wherever they would fit.

"To actually see the car in person was a feast for the eyes," says Sung Hee Park of Christie's.

Clothes that were worn on the screen were sold as well as some incredibly detailed Nudie suits. Personal and studio photos were also sold.

Five saddles sold in all, including one of Roy's Bohlin Saddles that went to England. The other Bohlin saddle was purchased by the same person who bought Roy's famed jeep, Nellybelle. Three Forties era plastic saddles were sold as well.

Probably the most unusual items to sell were the preserved animals most identified with Roy and Dale. These were Roy's horse, Trigger, Dale's horse, Buttermilk, and their faithful dog, Bullet.

RFD-TV bought Trigger and Bullet. Both animals are on display at their studio in Omaha. RFD runs Roy Rogers' television shows as part of their regular programming.

The Rogers family and High Noon attempted to place Trigger, Buttermilk, and Bullet with a national museum so that they could be enjoyed by the public. Unfortunately, many museums are struggling just to keep their current staff, let alone expand their exhibits.

Learn More About Us



This Bohlin saddle has conchos that depict all the rodeo events, and was the one used on Trigger Jr. It sold for \$242,500.

"The collectors of Western memorabilia came out," says Sung Hee, "but we also had a lot of people who grew up with Roy Rogers who just came to see the memorabilia. The sale was quite crowded and we had a record number of clients registering."

The last items to sell were the words and music to "Happy Trails." They were mounted on 6' by 8' foam backed cardboard. As they were being auctioned off, for \$22,000, the crowd spontaneously began singing Roy's anthem one last time.

Roy Rogers was a icon of the American West that we had not seen since Buffalo Bill. He was more than that though. In the era before the "anti-hero," he was a symbol of American virtue that an idealistic America hoped it could live up to. With these tokens of a special cowboy's life now spread out among new hands, maybe a little bit of the straight shooting fairness that they represent will go with them. Maybe.

You can find out about High Noon's many Western memorabilia auctions from Linda Kohn Sherwood at 310-202-9010. High Noon is also on Facebook and www.highnoon.com.



Nellybelle was Roy's beloved jeep and it sold for \$116,500. All Roy Rogers photos courtesy of Chirstie's Images LTD. 2010.

Happy Trails to you...

FREE 3 Month Trial Subscription Shop Talk!

Serving Professional Leather Workers & Manufacturers Since 1984

- Shoe & Boot Repair
- Saddle Makers
- Harness Makers
- Holster Makers
- Custom Leather Goods
- Auctions
- Wholesale Sources
- Classifieds
- Industry News
- Monthly Specials



Give Us A Try! Free!
Contact: Shop Talk!

(207) 495-3600 • Fax (207) 495-3601
www.proleptic.net • shoptalk@proleptic.net
(Not available to current or former subscribers.)

LEATHER CARE MADE EASY

Kali Leather Life

Protein Lotion
Cleaner/Conditioner for Fine Leathers

Cleans and Brightens

Kalico Products
P.O. Box 28, Milton, LA 70558 (337) 856-8772



NEW

Halter Making:

A Step-by-Step Guide

5

sizes with both flat & rounded throat latches

- Pony
- Cob
- Yearling
- Stallion
- Horse

Size Charts for Quick Reference

\$16.50

+shipping

Proleptic, Inc. • P.O. Box 497 • Belgrade, ME 04917
ph: 207-495-3600 • Email: shoptalk@proleptic.net
www.proleptic.net

WHOLESALE DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE