

More Artifacts from The S.S. Central America, Which Sank in 1857, will be Auctioned March 4 in Reno

News-Press Release

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Summary

The historic items, recovered from the 1857 sinking of the legendary "Ship of Gold," the S.S. Central America, represent a time capsule of Gold Rush life.

Message

Reno, NV, USA, January 26, 2023 -- The second and final auction of never-before-offered, historic California Gold Rush artifacts recovered from the 1857 sinking of the fabled "Ship of Gold," the S.S. Central America, will be held on Saturday, March 4, 2023. It will be conducted in Reno, Nevada and online by Holabird Western Americana Collections, LLC (www.HolabirdAmericana.com). The public auction features exquisite Gold Rush jewelry; vintage clothing including an early Brooks Brothers shirt; ship's objects such as cabin and dining plates, bowls, and bottles; a recovered porthole; the only still-intact Gold Rush treasure shipment box; and an intriguing 1850's photograph of an unknown young woman now nicknamed "Mona Lisa of the Deep." The six-ton remote-controlled submersible scientists successfully used between 1988 and 1991 to locate and retrieve the Central America's legendary sunken treasure nearly a mile-and-a-half under the Atlantic Ocean will also be offered. "This is the last opportunity for collectors to acquire previously unoffered, historic artifacts from what Life magazine proclaimed, "America's greatest treasure." The 420 lots in the auction represent an incredible time capsule of the California Gold Rush-era," said Fred Holabird, president Holabird Western Americana Collections. One of the important items is a large 18-karat gold quartz engraved brooch that prominent San Francisco businessman Samuel Brannan -- California's first millionaire -- was sending to his son in Geneva, Switzerland, as a gift to the son's teacher. Among the 45 other recovered jewelry pieces in the auction is a REGARD ring, named for the first letter of each of the five gemstones it contains: ruby (missing from the ring), emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby, and diamond. Other highlights include: - A superb resolution, 19th-century daguerreotype metal plate photograph of a young woman. The scientific mission recovery team nicknamed the unidentified woman, "Mona Lisa of the Deep," after retrieving the photo in 2014 from the seabed where it was discovered in a scattered pile of the ship's coal. - The only known, complete treasure box from the 1850s California Gold Rush period. An embossed wax seal on the box is still easily readable as "Alsop & Co.," renowned merchants and gold treasure shippers of the era. - Clothing items, including an early Brooks Brothers shirt discovered in the trunk of first-class passenger John Dement, a merchant and military veteran. There are also items found in the trunk of first-class "royalty" passengers, Ansel and Adeline Easton, who were on their honeymoon trip to New York. She survived in a lifeboat; he clung to debris in the water for hours after the ship sank until the crew from another vessel rescued him. - The remotely operated underwater vehicle nicknamed "Nemo" that was used by scientists and engineers to locate and recover the SS Central America treasures deep on the Atlantic Ocean seabed four decades ago. The six-ton submersible was displayed at the 2022 World's Fair of Money after being stored in an Ohio warehouse since 1991. - A massive 32.15-ounce gold bar created in San Francisco by prominent Gold Rush assayers John Glover Kellogg and Augustus Humbert. - An 1851 Colt Navy pistol. - Thirty-seven Cuban cigars apparently brought on board when the ship stopped in Havana on the voyage to New York. "The auction also offers recovered coal and portions of the S.S. Central America itself, including a porthole from what is believed to be Captain William Lewis Herndon's topside cabin," said Dwight Manley, managing partner of California Gold Marketing Group, consignee of the sunken treasure. "The S.S. Central America was carrying tons of Gold Rush treasure from San Francisco and the northern California area when she sank 7,200 feet deep in the Atlantic off the North Carolina coast in a hurricane while on a voyage from Panama to New York City in September 1857. Recovery from the shipwreck site occurred in several stages between 1988-1991 and again in 2014," explained scientist Bob Evans who was on each of the recovery missions. For additional information about the auction, visit Holabird Western Americana Collections of Reno, Nevada at www.HolabirdAmericana.com, call 775-851-1859, or email info@holabirdamericana.com.

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