

John R. Gangel
(aka "Little John")
Auctioneer and Arms Expert

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Credentials and Biography

John started his professional career in 1968 by setting up Musket and Sabre Antique Arms with his father "Big John" Gangel in 1968 at Costa Mesa, California along with their partner and dear friend Moe Gronsky. Six years later, John and his father opened an additional store, The Arms Seller, in Westminster, California. That same year in Pasadena California they also opened a renowned arms dealership called the Arms Locker on 2569 East Colorado Boulevard which was managed by their partners Bill and Rita Molnar.

In 1975, John entered into partnership with Robert Elz the largest antique arms dealer in Southern California. At this time Bob Elz owned the iconic and nationally known Elz Fargo gun and antique store. The shop was located at 830 South Main Street in Santa Ana, California. John and Bob concentrated on antique arms of the highest quality with historical significance. They also sold exotic automobiles, jewelry, fine art and a wide range of collectibles in a 20,000 square foot location which was under the process of conversion to an auction gallery when Mr. Elz passed away in 1979.

In 1979, John opened Little John's Antique Arms, located at 1740 W. La Veta Avenue in Orange, California. He was the President of the firm until 2021, when the corporation was closed when John and Diana retired. From his meeting Robert Bob Green in his teenage years John was always actively involved in auctions as well as a premier dealer in high quality collectors firearms and antiquities.

Currently, Little John provides independent services as a firearms expert, appraiser of antiques and as a auctioneer of the highest caliber with extensive experience dating back to his beginning in 1968.

Professional Activities

- Appraiser of collectors' arms for estates and court use since the early 1970s.
- Guest Judge for the Colt Collectors Association, Winchester Collectors Association, Texas Gun Collectors Association, and most other major collectors clubs.
- Consultant at the request of many major authors and publishers - including Norm Flayderman, R. L. Wilson, and Dr. Ed Lewis and the Blue Book of Gun Values among many others.
- Expert witness regarding antique arms in numerous court proceedings and television productions which include "History of the gun" and other major media productions.

Auction Experience

John produced over 200 antique arms auctions that averaged over 1,000 guns each, personally describing and valuing all the major and important lots.

John also collected high-value Colts and Winchesters for over 30 years until he sold his personal collection in 1991 - 1992. Notable items John brokered include:

- The first million dollar Colt, serial number 1 Texas Paterson
- Engraved and branded Texas Paterson (belonging to Samuel Colt)
- The Herb Green Paterson Colt serial number 601 (the finest engraved Paterson Colt in private hands).
- The Pohamus Walker Colt (prototype pattern designer for Samuel Colt)
- Captain Walker's Walker Colt serial number 1010.
- The Emperor of Japan's gold-inlaid '92 Winchester.
- John along with his close associate premier antiquarian and firearms expert along with the firearms editor of the *Gun Report*, Eric Vaule were the first to discover the gold-mounted Boutet garniture given by Napoleon Bonaparte to the King of Spain. This garniture has recently changed hands for over \$7,000,000, making it the highest-priced and most expensive antique arms set ever sold in the known world.
- Sam Houston's bowie knife (sold by John for over \$400,000 in 1998).
- The James Gordon collection (sold in 1996 for over \$13 million total making this auction the highest grossing arms sale in the USA for nearly a decade - the most valuable Winchester sale to that date).

The Metropolitan and Smithsonian Museums both have recommended Little Johns catalogs and respect his appraisals as preeminent in the field.

John is also an expert in fine Western art: he sold the personal collection of Jimmy Fowler, founder of Period Galleries, Scottsdale, Arizona; publishing magnate Robert E. Petersen's collection; and has assisted Tom Matthews of Las Vegas Art Auctions in numerous similar sales and auctions. Frank Semmo of Sundance Trading was active with John in buying and selling major Western art throughout Southern California.

Among the many premier firearms collections sold by John are: The Lyle Corcoran Hollywood Gun Shop Collection; The William Gary Confederate Pistol Collection; the Stembridge Armory Movie Arsenal; the Johnny Woodard Collection; the Carl Cowles Collection; The Hugh Hayes Collection; the Charlie Schreiner II Collection, Robert B. Berryman Collection and The Frank Singer Colt Walker and Dragoon Collection as well as the Chris Anderson of Fort Carson Antiques personal Colt collection.

Little John's Antique Arms also produced over 100 Oriental art sales for the well-known "Eileen of China" (agent of the Fine Arts and Antique Council of China) and its principal, George Hsieh, who represented China in the sale of Asian arts and antiquities.

Apart from arms and art, in cooperation with Estate Jewelry Auctions, John evaluated jewelry and produced multiple jewelry liquidations for Pearson and Associates one of the nation's leading manufacturer of fine jewelry.

Professional Associations and Accomplishments

- Founder and President of Far West Arms Collectors.
- Member and guest Judge for Winchester Arms Collectors Association.
- Member and guest Judge for Colt Collectors Association.
- Member and guest Judge for Texas Gun Collectors Association.
- President and Founder of Soldiers' Second Hand (www.SoldiersSecondHand.com).
- Consultant to Gun Report magazine Editor Eric Vaule for over 30 years.
- Consultant for innumerable major collectors in the United States, including the most prominent, such as Robert Petersen, Johnnie Bassett, Dr. Greg Fisher, Jerry Anderson, Robert Lee, William Foxley, and many others.
- Catalogs of Little John's Auctions have won multiple National Awards for quality and design.