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MORMON MATERIALS, REVOLUTIONARY AND CIVIL WAR ITEMS HEADLINE SWANN
GALLERIES' PRINTED & MANUSCRIPT AMERICANA SALE

New York—Swann Galleries' **September 17** auction of **Printed & Manuscript Americana** brought in just over \$1 million, with Revolutionary War items and Mormon materials leading the top lots.

Book Department Director and Americana Specialist Rick Stattler remarked, "The mood on the auction floor was electric, with a wide variety of buyers hungry for unique and rare material, with particular interest in Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Mormon materials. The results showed that it was one of the best general Americana sales in Swann's history."

The top lot of the sale was a Manuscript book of furniture designs by Philadelphia joiner John Widdifield, circa 1700-20, which sold for \$75,000. The book included sketches of several furniture designs, as well as notes on Widdifield's preferred types of wood to build with and recipes for varnishes and stains. While the subject was far afield for most Americana buyers, the volume was of enormous interest to scholars of early American furniture.

Auction records included \$2,080 for a first edition of Alexander Hunter's Civil War classic *Johnny Reb and Billy Yank*, New York, 1905; \$20,000 for the 1829 *Speeches on the Jew Bill*; and \$3,000 for the first edition of Noah Webster's *Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*, New Haven, 1806.

The second highest lot was a first edition of *The Book of Mormon*, Palmyra, NY, 1830, which brought \$57,500. Released only days before the official establishment of the church, this was the only edition listing Joseph Smith as the "author and proprietor" rather than as the translator, and the only edition to include his 2-page preface. Many of the Mormon materials in the auction came from the collection of the late Milton R Slater. Other Mormon materials that sold well included a fourth edition of Joseph Smith's *The Doctrine and Covenants...*, Nauvoo, 1846, which realized \$27,500 and was the first of the three Nauvoo printings to appear at auction in more than twenty years; a group of four banknotes issued by the Kirtland Safety Society Bank from January to March 1837, which sold for \$16,250; *Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons, or Latter Day Saints, from the State of Missouri...*, Cincinnati, 1839, which brought \$12,500; and a second edition of Parley Parker Pratt's *A Voice of Warning, and Instruction to All People*, New York, 1839, which realized \$11,250.

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The demand for Revolutionary and Civil War items remained high, with several intriguing pieces selling well, including a printed circular recruitment letter for underground sleeper cells to oppose Lincoln and the draft, which realized \$5,500. Printed in Philadelphia in 1863, this circular is the only mention we've found of the "Decemvirates." Another great Civil War item was an illustrated manuscript magazine from the first months of the war, *The Club Room Gazette*, Boston, 1861, which sold for \$7,500 and will join the collection of the Clements Library at the University of Michigan. Revolutionary items included *Peace, Liberty, and Independence*, a letterpress broadside printed in Philadelphia in 1783, which realized \$35,000.

The buyers of the top lots were divided almost evenly between collectors and dealers. However, several institutions made out well in the sale. Most notably, the Hispanic Society won a 1764 Mexican Jesuit directory for \$6,500; the John Carter Brown Library won five lots, including a Spanish naval broadside relating to the American Revolution for \$1,875; and Kentucky's Filson Historical Society won a pair of notebooks tracking Civil War graves on Kentucky battlefields for \$1,625. The Huntington Library bought an archive of Samuel Barlow's letters on the Andrew Johnson impeachment for \$2,750, perfectly complimenting an important archive of letters received by Barlow already in their collection. The Society of Connecticut also saw success on two lots: Matthew and Mary Darly's *Bunker's Hill, or America's Head Dress*, a hand-colored engraving of a British satirical print depicting a comical battle taking place in the folds of a woman's fashionably enormous hair.

Complete results are available online via www.swanngalleries.com.

For further information, or to consign items to upcoming auctions of Printed & Manuscript Americana, please contact Rick Stattler at 212-254-4710, extension 27, or via email at rstattler@swanngalleries.com.

*Prices include buyer's premium.

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