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Contact: Alexandra Nelson
Communications Director
212-254-4710 ext. 19
alexandra@swannalleries.com

Mexican Imprints Bring Significant Interest in Swann Americana Sale



PRINTED & MANUSCRIPT AMERICANA Sale 2505; April 16, 2019

All prices include Buyer's Premium

New York–Swann Galleries' **Printed & Manuscript Americana** sale on **Thursday, April 16** was the house's third straight sale in the category to finish over \$1,000,000, bringing several significant records. Institutions made up the bulk of the buyers. Specialist Rick Stattler commented: "The market remains vigorous for scarce and important material, with five-figure highlights in all of our main subject areas: early American imprints, the American Revolution, Civil War, Mormons, the West, and Latin Americana."

Mexican imprints proved to be popular with six earning top prices in the sale. Highlights included a first edition 1674 pamphlet by famed Mexican poetess **Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz**, consisting of Christmas carols to be sung in honor of the thirteenth-century St. Pedro Nolasco. It set a record for the author at \$45,000. Juan Navarro's 1604 *Liber in quo quatuor passiones Christi Domini continentur*, the first music by a New World composer printed in the Americas, earned \$32,500, and a first edition of Alonso de Molina's 1565 full-length confessional manual with instructions on the administration of the sacraments, written in Nahuatl and Spanish, brought \$21,250. Mexican manuscripts featured an extensive illustrated file detailing a land dispute between a ranch owner and his Nahua neighbors, with 350 manuscript pages (\$30,000).

“The successful sale of the Holzer Lincolniana collection last fall brought in a strong group of related material for this auction, including our top lot, a beautiful portrait of Lincoln by **Matthew Henry Wilson**,” said Stattler—the artist’s copy of the last portrait rendered from life set a record for Wilson at \$55,000. Other Lincoln and Civil War material of note included a newspaper extra from Detroit announcing Lincoln’s assassination, which topped its high estimate at \$15,000, a likely record for any newspaper with that news, and Benson Lossing’s *Pictorial History of the Civil War of the United States of America*, 1866-68, (\$15,000).



Texas material was led by the manuscript diary of William Farrar Smith documenting the 1849 Whiting-Smith Expedition to form a trail from San Antonio to El Paso (\$47,500) and a first edition of Batholomé Garcia’s *Manual para Administrar los Santos Sacramentos*, 1760, the only early work published in the Pakawan language (\$13,000).



Lots relating to the early days of America included the May 6, 1775 issue of the *Virginia Gazette* which reports first-hand accounts of the battles of Lexington and Concord, at \$12,500, and a journal of contemporary manuscript notes dated 1788, from the Massachusetts convention to ratify the Federal Constitution, emphasizing the need for a Bill of Rights and for sovereignty of the states, at \$16,250.

Additional auction records included a rare corrected variant of the 1852 Liverpool Book of Mormon, which brought \$41,600, a record for any European Mormon publication, as well as an 1850s whaling diary kept by captain’s wife Alida Taber, which earned the highest known price for a woman’s whaling diary, at \$15,000.

The next auction from Swann Galleries’ Books & Manuscripts Department will be 19th & 20th Century Literature on May 14. Visit swanngalleries.com or download the Swann Galleries App for catalogues, bidding and inquires.

Additional highlights can be found [here](#).

Captions:

[Lot 274](#): Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Villancicos que se cantaron en los maitines del gloriosissimo Padre S. Pedro Nolasco*, first edition, Mexico, 1677. Sold for \$45,000, a record for the poetess.

[Lot 113](#): Matthew Henry Wilson, *Abraham Lincoln*, oil on canvas, an artist’s copy of the last portrait rendered from life, 1865. Sold for \$55,000.

[Lot 17](#): Issue of the *Virginia Gazette* with coverage of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Williamsburg, May 6, 1775. Sold for \$12,500.

Specialist: Rick Stattler • rstattler@swanngalleries.com • 212-254-4710 x 27

Press: Alexandra Nelson • alexandra@swanngalleries.com • 212-254-4710 x 19

Social media: @swanngalleries

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