Heritage Auctions is excited to announce the sale of a significant collection of Journals of Congress, a 13-volume set covering proceedings from 1774 to 1788. This rare collection includes the signatures of prominent founding figures such as Roger Sherman, John Langdon, and Gunning Bedford, Jr. The set, which begins with the First Continental Congress on September 5, 1774, is signed by eminent early American figures, including important statesmen like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Jefferson.


The collection also includes the signature sale of 2021, June 9–10. Among a wide range of books and works on paper, one of the most significant lots to come to auction during this sale is the complete 13-volume set of the Journals of Congress, which covers proceedings from 1772 to 1788.

“This set covers the first 13 United States congresses, including the two Continental Congresses and the Constitutional Convention," said James Gannon, Director of Rare Books at Heritage Auctions. “It was put together by someone who was able to track down volumes from the private collections and personal libraries of Founding Fathers and Revolutionary War statesmen.”

The first volume, which begins with the First Continental Congress on September 5, 1774, is signed by General John Sullivan, a member of the New Hampshire delegation to that first Continental Congress. Also, a brigadier general during the Revolutionary War, Sullivan commanded troops both at the Battle of Trenton and the Battle of Brandywine. The second volume, which covers proceedings from the year 1776, is signed by eminent founding statesman Roger Sherman. "Sherman was a member of the Committee of Five, along with Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Livingston and, most famously, Thomas Jefferson, tasked by the Second Continental Congress with drafting the Declaration of Independence. He was the only person to sign all four founding documents of the nation—the Continental Association, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution," Gannon said. "He also served as the first mayor of New Haven, Connecticut, as a Justice of the Superior Court of Connecticut, and as a U.S. representative and senator from Connecticut.”

The third volume contains signatures from John Langdon, a member of the second Continental Congress from New Hampshire, delegate of the Constitutional Convention, from New Hampshire, and President pro tempore of the Senate, governor of New Hampshire, and Senator from New Hampshire; and Gunning Bedford, Jr., aide to Washington, delegate to the Continental Congress, Attorney General of Delaware, delegate to the Constitutional Convention from Delaware, and signer of the Constitution.

Other volumes include signatures from other notable early American figures such as Peter du Ponceau, secretary and aide to Baron von Steuben; Samuel John Atlee, a colonel in the Revolutionary War and member of the Continental Congress from Pennsylvania; and Richard Rush, the eighth U.S. attorney general, the eighth Secretary of the Treasury, running mate to John Quincy Adams in 1828, ambassador to Britain and France, and son of prominent founding father, Dr. Benjamin Rush.

The set last sold for $7,500 in 1977, but as values and inflation have risen, bidding for the volumes will begin at $10,000 in a live and online auction, though no bidders will be present in the room. "To find so many signatures of this caliber in one set is exceedingly rare," Gannon says. "Something like this only comes along once every three or four decades and it is gratifying to be able to show it to our bidders. It is essential for them to know that important primary materials are still available for private collections. Not all are housed deep in the holdings of major institutions."
Hindman Auctions’ 2021 sales kick off with fascinating finds in every price range.

Last year, Hindman reported an impressive $15.48 million in sales, and out of 1,100 lots offered in the house’s Chicago salesroom, 995 were sold, achieving a 90.5 percent sell-through rate for 2020. Meanwhile, individual book sales also achieved strong results: Hindman’s June Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts sale achieved a 94 percent sell-through rate, the November auction achieved a 91 percent sell-through rate, and the October single-owner auction generated $12 million in sales.

Following these results, Hindman has its sights set on ambitious goals for 2021. A single-owner literature sale on March 19 will kick off this year’s sale season. This will be followed by Hindman’s Fine Books and Manuscripts sale— including Americana—which will be hosted May 12–13. One highlight of the May sale will be a large collection of Currier and Ives prints.

“This large, very fine collection was amassed very carefully by a Midwestern collector who knew the material very well,” said Gretchen Hause, director and senior specialist of the Books and Manuscripts department at Hindman. “These prints are in great condition, and some of them are rarities at auction.”

Themes for the Currier and Ives prints include railroads, trains, and steamboats, as well as winter, night, and Western scenes. Individual estimates vary, but begin at $800 and go up to $15,000.

Fine press books will also be well-represented in the sale. One notable lot is a nearly complete set of Limited Editions Club books dated through 2010 from a fine private collection. This collection also includes fine examples of books from the Allen Press, Grabhorn Press, Aviron Press, Golden Cockerell Press, Bird and Bull Press, Prenroyal Press, and Westgate Press. Books from this collection will be offered in both the live May 13 auction, and in an online auction of Fine Press Books, which will run concurrently with the live auction.

The sale will also include a collection of Bibles, which range from the incunable period through the 19th century in America, printed in a variety of locations and languages, estimated between a few hundred and several thousand dollars.

Though not available in person, bidding will take place through traditional channels, such as absentee and telephone bidding, as well as through Hindman’s new online bidding platform, called the Digital Bid Room, which includes a new app. “We’re going to have a strong first half of 2021,” Hause said. “In addition to a single-owner sale of fine literature to be held in March, the May sale will feature interesting finds fresh to market from private collections and wide selections of printed books and Americana in a variety of price ranges. There will be something for every collector.”

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Upcoming Auctions

Sale 873
Books & Manuscripts
May 12, 2021 | 10am CT

Sale 904
Fine Press Books, Online Only
May 13, 2021 | 10am CT
A Sale of Literary Importance

Potter & Potter Auctions’ March sale will include a wide range of significant books and letters.

On March 13, Potter & Potter Auctions will host its first rare book auction of 2021, which it has dubbed “A Sale of Literary Importance.” The main focus of the sale will be literary titles, both modern and early,” said Christopher Brink, director of the Fine Book department. “The sale will commence at $1,200–1,600).

“The sale will include a wide range of significant books and letters.”

Also in the detective portion of the sale are several Arthur Conan Doyle items, including all major works relating to Sherlock Holmes and a fine autograph letter by Dashiell Hammett written in the 1930s. An important collection of letters including an undated autograph letter signed by James Baldwin with an unpublished essay estimated at $2,000–3,000, which will be highlighted in the Civil Rights section, and an autograph letter signed by Albert Einstein regarding the Communist Party and the state of democracy estimated at $4,000–6,000. Additionally, the sale will contain a strong selection of modern first editions, including a substantial Edgar Rice Burmah collection, which features several presentation copies from the author to his brother-in-law, Eddie Gilbert. Brink says one of his personal favorites from this section is a pristine copy of The Call of the Wild in the scarce original dust jacket” estimated at $5,000–6,000.

Finally, several other highlights of the sale include an artful binding of Sir John Skelton’s Poems from the Hampstead Bindery (1948, estimated at $2,000–3,000), a first issue of Uncle Tom’s Cabin with an autograph note signed by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1852, estimated at $3,000–5,000), and a copy of William Shakespeare’s sonnets from the Shakespeare Head Press printed on full vellum and limited to just 12 copies (1905, estimated at $1,000–1,500).

There will also be an important collection of letters including an undated autograph letter signed by James Baldwin with an unpublished essay estimated at $2,000–3,000. The platform will include a video livestream of the sale. “This past year has really proven that we have solidified ourselves in the Midwest as a predominant auction house known for its fine book sales,” Brink said. “This is probably the most important sale I’ve had the pleasure of curating, and we’re very excited about the quality and scarcity of the items we’re bringing to the market.”

To view the catalog, visit AuctionsPotterAuctions.com/Catalog.aspx?auctionid=1110.

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LONDON, Jack. The Call of the Wild. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903. FIRST EDITION, FIRST ISSUE in the scarce original dust jacket. Est. $3,000/5,000
At auction March 13, 2021
Fascinating Finds

Swann’s April sale promises a wide selection of items rarely seen at auction.

On April 15, Swann Auction Galleries will host its Printed Manuscript and Americana sale, which will feature a noteworthy collection of American historical prints, as well as a variety of books and manuscripts. “We will begin with a special collection of prints covering the early period of American history,” said Rick Stattler, director of printed and manuscript Americana at Swann. “It traces the national narrative from the Colonial years through the start of the Civil War, and includes items referencing the American Revolutionary War, portraits of the founding fathers, allegorical pieces about the rising stature of America in the world, and examples of early American engraving.”

One of the sale highlights is an engraving of the Battle of Bunker Hill based on an actual eyewitness view of a battle which was a seminal moment in the creation of the nation,” Stattler said. “The engraving is also extremely scarce. Only one other example has been traced at auction since 1973.”

Another highlight is a pair of hand-colored engravings of George Washington. The first, G. Washington in his Last Illness, Attended by Doc’rs Craik and Brown depicts Washington on his deathbed surrounded by doctors and his wife, Martha. The second, Lt. Genr. Washington in his Lamented and Rever’d—Respected and Fear’d—Died Lived and Died, Lamented and Rever’d, shows Washington’s portrait on a funeral urn with mourners. Both images were published in Philadelphia in 1800 (estimated $6,000–9,000).

A set of letters by Dr. Harlow Brooks regarding the 1918 influenza pandemic are up for auction (1917–1919 and 1936, estimated $1,200–1,800). In the afternoon portion of the sale, Stattler says Swann will feature works mapping the history of the Americas, including Canada and Latin America, materials from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, American Judaica, and a large selection of materials on the American West. One prominent lot is a set of letters by Dr. Harlow Brooks regarding the 1918 influenza pandemic are up for auction (1917–1919 and 1936, estimated $1,200–1,800).

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