Three room

the month-

astronomical

regulator in an

841/2" tall figured

by M. Allard circa

1825 in Paris, it

sold to a phone

(est.

There is handwriting is on the inside

back door, and it says "à M. Allard/

This Ferrari Dino 246 GT, built April

\$140,000/240,000). Schinto photo.

1972, sold for \$216,000 (est.

Rue St. Antoine."

bidder for \$96,000

\$20,000/40,000).

walnut case. Made

duration

bidders and three

on phones vied for

November 2nd, 2013 A "Perfect" Clock and a Bright Red Ferrari by Jeanne Schinto

Massachusetts Photos courtesy Skinner

Skinner, Inc., Marlborough,

Precision timekeepers, historic militaria, and Civil War photography were among the categories that caused buzz in

collecting circles during the weeks leading up to Skinner's sale of clocks, watches, and scientific instruments in Marlborough, Massachusetts, on November 2, 2013. The auction offered 755 lots, enough to furnish innumerable man caves and a few woman caves too. It achieved nearly \$1.9 million (including buyers' premiums) with a sell-through rate of more than 86%. During a gallery walk the night before the sale, department director Robert C. Cheney, a

third-generation clockmaker and horology scholar, highlighted what turned out to be the top clock lot. It was a French floor-standing astronomical regulator in a figured walnut case. Made circa 1825 in Paris by M. Allard, it is capable of running for one month on a single wind, has a temperature-compensating gridiron pendulum, and shows hours, minutes, seconds, and the equation of time (briefly, the difference between sun time and

clock time). Estimated at \$20,000/40,000, it went on the phone to an overseas bidder for \$96,000, underbid in the room by a representative of a European museum. "How many opportunities come around for you to see what something should really look like?" Cheney rhetorically asked his audience that night at the preview. The Allard was, in other words, the very essence of

"right." No one here, in France,

or anywhere else had monkeyed

with its movement or its case.

"The woodwork on this is

absolutely original," he said.

"The patina is wonderful. The

nails, fixtures, hinges, you name

it—this clock is exactly the way it's supposed to be." Many people, he added, "would look at the inside of this clock and say, 'Oh, it's brand new.' Well, it's not brand new. It's just perfect. And to see a survival like this is a great opportunity." For those who need a primer, astronomical regulators are clocks known for their extreme accuracy. They were primarily owned by places such as observatories, jewelry stores where watchmakers and clockmakers worked, and railroads. Several other examples

were in this sale including two

by E. Howard & Company of

Boston. A circa 1890 No. 100

wall-hanging model opened at

the desk at \$9000, three times

the beginning. The clock with

an eight-day time-only movement in a mahogany case went at \$42,000 to phone bidder 946. Like the Allard, this was a clock in remarkable condition. "You would never know that clock had ever even been wound," Cheney said. "It's also extremely rare, and many people, including myself, had never seen one, and with me that goes back more than forty years. We knew it would do better than the estimate, but I don't think anybody guessed it would hammer that high." The same bidder bought a Howard No. 25 regulator with a 30-day movement in an 80" tall

drum-head mahogany case.

stood in the office of the

president of the New York

and CEO of Penn Central

Railroad. Estimated at

more, ending at \$58,800.

Having a 30-day movement,

which requires a monthly wind,

made it rarer than an eight-day

version. "If it had been a thirty-

Made circa 1875, the clock once

Central Railroad. Later, after a

merger, it went to the president

\$60,000/80,000, it opened from

the desk and went just one bid

day in perfect condition, the price would have doubled," Cheney said. "Thirty-day helped it, but condition held it back." The "bumps and bruises" were "honestly" earned —after all, it had been in a work environment—but today's collectors are very fussy, Cheney noted. "Hence, the seemingly less-than-usual price tag. Actually, I thought it was about right for its sorts of condition issues." Two mammoth tubular-chime clocks came from the same consignor. "Rarely do you see one, much less two," said

Cheney. Retailed circa 1890 by

Tiffany & Company of New

horological pieces in the sale,

carved with figures, fruit, florals,

and other filigree attributed to

standing 112" and 121" tall

respectively. Each was in a

R.L. Horner. Who would have bought something like this new? "The richest man in Cincinnati," quipped an American museum curator who was at the preview. True enough, said Cheney, but they were found more frequently in hotels. "I gave a lecture a couple of summers ago at a decorative arts conference in New Orleans" (i.e., the 2012 New Orleans Antiques Forum) "and I walked into the Hotel Monteleone and—my God! there was one of these enormous clocks standing in the front lobby. I was told it was the only object removed from the hotel when Hurricane Katrina came through." The case of the smaller one was

dark as charcoal with a pierced

movement was by the Waltham

and carved griffin crest and

Father Time figures. The

Clock Company, Waltham,

Massachusetts. The tubular

estimate.

The insides weren't what made it the also-ran, however. "I think people what the hotel or wealthy homeowner's place was like." Frank Wildes (1843-1903), U.S.N, who had commanded the cruiser Boston during the capture of Manila Bay. Bohy did some research and learned that Wildes had been given a presentation sword by the city of Boston in gratitude

The steel blade was inscribed to

name of the retailer, Bigelow, Kennard & Co.

"After the battle, they retreated down South, and he was married in Alabama. Three weeks later, he was back out, at Chickamauga, and he died. He was shot and killed. And his friend brought him back home with the pistol to his wife, who was now a widow." The gun for which bidders went as high as \$23,000 was a similar Colt model 1851 that had no history whatsoever. It had never been fired. Made circa 1861, it came to the sale from a consignor whose family had handed it down. Never before on the market, it was thought to have sold

("occupationals"). The sale of a vintage Ferrari took place at the start of the sale. While automobiles are not the usual fare for this department, the outcome was a significant percentage of the bottom line. The bright red 1972 Dino 246 GT was the top lot overall. A friend who belongs to a Ferrari club in California said in an e-mail that these cars are "going through the roof" lately. He opined that it would be a steal for under \$200,000. ("Grab it if you can.") Estimated at \$140,000/240,000, it sold for \$216,000—not, alas, in my price range. But I did once drive a Ferrari, in 1975, while writing an article exploring the "sports car mystique." It was a pre-owned 365 GTB, known as the Daytona. The dealer took me for a drive, then I

somehow persuaded him to let me take the wheel. This was in Virginia,

out near the F.B.I. headquarters in Langley, on a fine autumn afternoon.

In youth, one doesn't realize that opportunities like that may never come

around again.

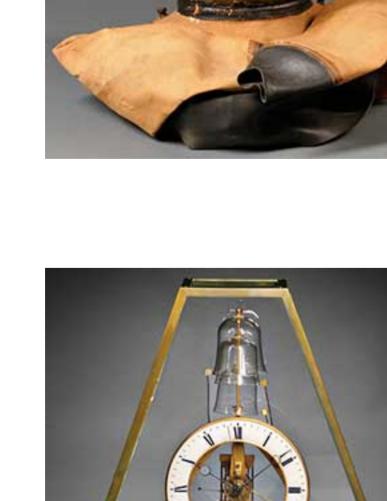
This circa 1880 astronomical regulator by J.W. Benson of London sold in the room for \$14,400 (est. \$5000/7000). The walnut round-top case is 75" tall. The dial is engraved "J.W. Benson, London/ By Special Appointment to her Majesty the Queen." The eightday movement has a deadbeat escapement and mercury temperature-compensating pendulum. The clock has retained its original winding key.

engraved to a Confederate officer who fought at Gettysburg. The inscription says, "T.J. Eubanks 48th Regt. Ala. Vols. from the Officers of his Company." It is further engraved "for Gallantry July 1-3, 1863." Captain Thomas James Eubanks "attacked Little Round Top three times with major losses, and he's mentioned in the official reports," said Bohy. for \$27,600 (with buyer's premium). Bohy said, "It was just pristine. I was really taken aback when I saw it for the first time." Later, he reported, "There was some issue with it, so the sale didn't go through." The word on the street was that the Abraham Lincoln people, along with the elite of the Civil War crowd (rather than collectors of vintage

was "good" and its content was "very good quality overall." Included guessed it had been assembled by a Lincoln scholar over the last few decades rather than by a family of the period. Bohy said that was correct. Other lots of cartes de visite and cabinet cards made very competitive prices, going at \$3480, \$2400, and \$4305, against three-digit estimates. The examples were mostly related to the Civil War but also included postwar figures and tradesmen pictured with their tools

engraved "Chas. Frodsham, 84 Strand London, escapement and maintaining power, two-jar mercury pendulum, and elaborate six-crossing pulley suspending a single brass-case weight.

This mid-18th-century Japanese doublefoliot *dai tokei* ("clock tower") with weight-powered iron movement and alarm sold on the phone for \$16,800 (est. \$5000/8000). Including its hardwood stand, it measures 32" tall. This and two other Japanese examples came out of a collection of Japanese and Chinese clocks.



This 23" tall petite sonnerie skeleton calendar clock with remontoire sold to a phone bidder for \$45,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000). It was made circa 1830 by Texier, Paris, France. "This clock had a somewhat major hiccup in that it was not with its original dome," Cheney said. "But how often do you see a perpetual skeleton calendar clock with remontoire and glass bells to boot?"

This early 20th-century diving

suit in copper and canvas sold

for \$6600 (est. \$400/600). No

size was given. The small

window has multiple ports,

"Telephone." Even back then,

some people just couldn't

seem to put down their

phone.

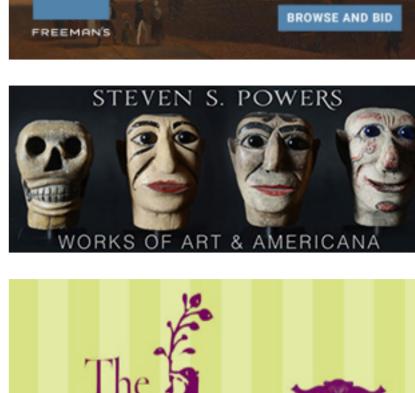
hinged glazed viewing

including one marked

This circa 1890 E. Howard & Company No. 100 wall regulator fetched \$42,000 (est. \$3000/5000). The Boston clock is in a 47" mahogany case. The signed, painted zinc dial has a 14" diameter. The eight-day movement is time only.

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\$31,200 (est. \$20,000/30,000), along

with an archive of memorabilia that

belonged to presentee Frank Wildes

War hero. The photo, included in the

presentation in 1902. The gloves he's

(1843-1903), a Spanish-American

lot, shows him on the day of the

wearing in the photo were part of

the lot. The sword box was closed

and locked after the ceremony. It was reopened at Skinner for the first time on July 17, 2013, revealing the contents to the consignor. This carte-de-visite album relating to the Civil War sold to an Internet bidder for \$23,370 (est. \$4000/6000). Included were 58 Lincoln-related examples, among them one of Mary Todd Lincoln with two of her sons.



Here's a 5'3"

tall clocks in

previewer with the

colored of the two

Tiffany & Company

quartersawn oak

RJ. Horner. This

and quarter-

for \$72,000 (est. \$60,000/80,000).

Skinner put it out in the stairwell,

room. Schinto photo.

because it wouldn't fit in the preview

chiming tubular

bell system. It sold

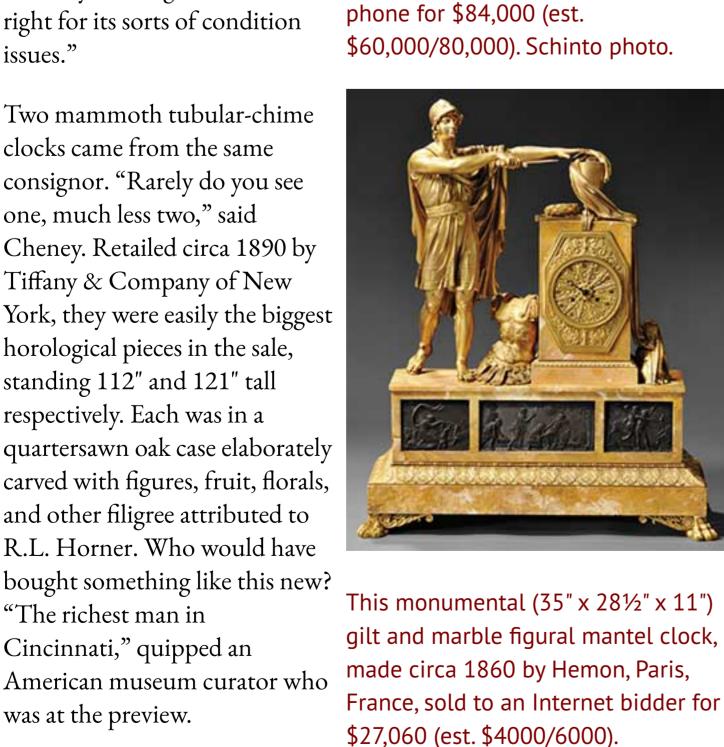
to a phone bidder

cases attributed to

one is 121" with a

German movement

taller and lighter



At 112", this is the shorter Tiffany

quartersawn oak case attributed to

R.J. Horner and with movement by

Durfee tubular bells. It sold on the

Waltham Clock Company and Walter

quarter-chiming tall clock in a

lots, and they took a while to sell. Estimates were low, and there was a lot of bidding. This single circa 1781 button in pewter with "MAS VII REG" (i.e., 7th Massachusetts Regiment) in raised lettering on its face sold in the room for \$2520 (est. \$400/600).

bells were by Walter Durfee, who revived popular interest in tall clocks

during the Victorian era by marketing examples like this one as status

symbols. It went to a phone bidder for \$84,000 on a \$60,000/80,000

The case of the taller one was lighter colored with a pierced crest that

featured maidens. Lower down, there were more maidens with arms

crossed over bare breasts. The movement was German, not a preferred

American or English one; the tubular bells were German too. The clock

sold for the low estimate to a different phone bidder, who paid \$72,000.

for his role in the war. Bohy called in the consignor and a locksmith for

the opening of the case. Inside was a sword with a dazzling 18k gold hilt.

black leather with an 18k gold throat and other ornamentation. The case

"Wildes was from Boston, and the city wanted to do something for him,"

said Bohy. "They had thought of giving him a house. They came up with

the sword idea instead, and I'm glad they did, because if it had been a

itself was lined inside with red broadcloth and marked in gold with the

Wildes and engraved with a scene from the battle. The scabbard was

There were over three dozen button

preferred the darker one," Cheney speculated. "They both, remarkably, were in original finish. I think these were finished to order, depending on Joel Bohy is Skinner's historic arms and militaria specialist, and the lot in his section that caused one of the biggest stirs came to the auction house last May in a locked case without a key. The case was a rectangle several feet long. The consignor had no idea what was in it. She brought it in with other items that had belonged to one of her ancestors, Rear Admiral

house, it would have been long gone." Including memorabilia related to Wildes, such as his epaulets, white kid gloves, calling cards, a photograph, and a flag, the lot sold to a collector of naval swords for \$31,200. Sold for \$15,600 was a circa 1853 Colt model 1851 that was factory-

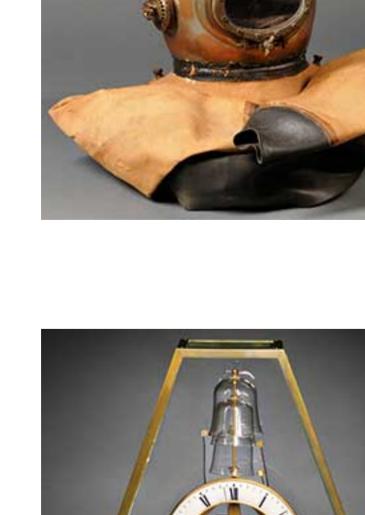
Lincoln in it. With competition from two people in the room, it brought \$23,370 from a bidder on the Internet. One of the album's highlights was a CDV captioned "Mrs. Lincoln & Sons." The threesome is Mary Todd Lincoln with Will and Tad. That rarity alone was valued at approximately \$5000 by an expert who attended the auction. Skinner's modest estimate for the whole lot was \$4000/6000. (Postscript: The buyer listed the Mrs. Lincoln CDV on eBay, and it sold for \$6900.) The expert, who asked for anonymity, added that the album's condition were many common CDVs, but, besides the Mary Todd Lincoln, there were also some good views of Lincoln's funeral procession. The expert

photography per se) were the major contenders for the star photography

lot. Hammered down during Bohy's section of the sale, it was an album

of 98 cartes de visite relating to the Civil War. There were 58 images of

This department's next sale is scheduled for May 4. For more information, phone Skinner at (508) 970-3000 or see the Web site (www.skinnerinc.com). This Frodsham astronomical regulator, with dial 1876," sold to an Internet bidder for \$23,370 (est. \$10,000/15,000). Height of the mahogany case is 51". The six-pillar brass movement has a deadbeat



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