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April 16th, 2013

## Bully for You, Peter Scanlan

by Jeanne Schinto



Swann Galleries, New York City

Photos courtesy Swann

The Theodore Roosevelt (TR) collection of Peter Scanlan (1941-2012) was the featured consignment of Swann's 432-lot printed and manuscript Americana sale at its galleries in New York City on April 16. Scanlan "often joked that he had married Teddy Roosevelt," said Gregory Wynn, a longtime friend and protégé of lifelong bachelor Scanlan. Judging from the breadth and depth of this 30-year collection, it's easy to believe that, in the words of Wynn, TR was "the love of [Scanlan's] life."

Wynn, a trustee and executive committee member of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, gave a slide lecture on Scanlan at Swann Galleries one week before the sale. "Pursuing Theodore Roosevelt: A Life's Passion" was standing room only as Scanlan's friends, associates, and others, many in town for the New York Antiquarian Book Fair, gathered to preview.

Over a lifetime, Scanlan, a raconteur and dealer in political items who lived in Albany, New York, and bore an uncanny resemblance to his hero, amassed what Wynn called a collection that was as "stunning" as it was "important." With a particular emphasis on books and pamphlets by and about Roosevelt, the 109 lots included the so-called high spots as well as many items related to Roosevelt's children and other relatives who aren't normally considered part of the canon. "Peter felt it was important to collect the family as well," said Wynn.

An extremely scarce pamphlet, *In Memory of My Darling Wife Alice Hathaway Roosevelt and of My Beloved Mother Martha Bulloch Roosevelt*, was the lot expected to bring the most. It did, selling for \$38,400 (including buyer's premium). Self-published in a very small print run, it is a memorial tribute to Roosevelt's wife and mother, who died on the same day, February 14, 1884, in the same house; his wife Alice died of Bright's disease, his mother of typhoid. Only one other copy is recorded, and none has previously been known at auction.

Another rarity from the collection was at auction for the first time, according to Swann. Selling to a room bidder for \$3120, it was a three-page *President Roosevelt's List of Birds Seen in the White House Grounds and about Washington*. The 1909 list was intended to be bound into a revised edition of Maynard's *Birds of Washington and Vicinity*, published in the nation's capital in the same year. Only a small number of copies of the list, probably fewer than 20, were left unbound, said Swann's department expert, Richard Stattler. A copy of the Maynard title with the list bound in was included in the lot.

Birds were the theme of two other good sellers from the Scanlan collection. Fetching \$5040 was *The Summer Birds of the Adirondacks in Franklin County, N.Y.*, a copy of which had not been seen at auction since 1958. Inevitably its price, \$5040, set a new auction record. Roosevelt and H.D. Minot compiled the four pages—TR's first appearance in print—when TR was in his late teens in the mid-1870's. *The Natural History of Selborne* by 18th-century British pioneer birdwatcher Gilbert White brought \$4320. Once part of TR's personal library, this 1864 edition accrued added value with its inscription: "Theodore Roosevelt from his sister Bammie XMas 1871." Bammie was TR's older sister Anna, who gave him the book as a Christmas present when he was 13.

Roosevelt loved the wilderness and quiet contemplation of nature, but as many of the best TR caricatures show, he also loved to hunt big game. A first edition, second issue, of *The Wilderness Hunter: An Account of the Big Game in the United States*, published in 1893 with 24 plates, made another new auction record when it sold at \$5040. Bidders also liked *Outdoors Pastimes of an American Hunter*, which sold for the same amount.

Swann announced that a collector and an institution together bought *Outdoor Pastimes*, but the auction house did not elaborate on the deal. It did, however, announce an institutional purchase by the Society of the Cincinnati, which paid \$2640 for a letter by Roosevelt that praised a children's play about George Washington. Presented in Manhattan in 1915, the play was a springboard for Roosevelt's musings on our first president and on Lafayette. That's the true importance of the letter, which was typed, then almost completely rewritten in TR's own hand.

Swann did not get one part of Scanlan's collection—Roosevelt-related menus. In 2008, when I interviewed Scanlan about that portion of his collection, he told me he had 60 or 70 different menus, some with signatures. (See "Bully Price for TR Menu," *M.A.D.*, July 2008, p. 22-B.) One of the more elaborate examples was printed on copper. It dates from about 1903 and commemorates a dinner given in TR's honor in Montana, where they were obviously very proud of their copper mines. Naturally, I wanted to know what happened to the menus. I heard from a menu-collecting friend that Scanlan had told him he would never sell that part of the collection. But he did sell it to pay his medical expenses in the last six months of his life. My friend thinks he knows where the menus went, but until they resurface, we'll have to assume they're in a place that Scanlan deemed worthy enough for them.

Two more unnamed institutions bought major lots during the non-Roosevelt parts of the sale. One lot, going at \$5760, was a pair of turn-of-the-20th-century project logs from the Crimmins excavating and paving firm of New York City. Founded by Irish-American John Daniel Crimmins (1844-1917), the company poured the foundations for the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (future site of the Empire State Building), a Schaefer beer brewery on 51st Street, two Barnard College buildings, a Tiffany lamp factory/studio, and the New York Athletic Club, among many other landmarks. The logs also detailed information about hundreds of other Crimmins projects, including pay lists on some projects. Crimmins, whose diary of 1891-97 was also part of the lot, employed as many as 12,000 workers at the company's peak, Swann's catalog said.

The other major purchase by an unnamed institution was the first German edition of Louis Hennepin's 1683 *Description de la Louisiane*. Passed at the auction at \$19,000 on the hammer, the volume apparently sold afterward for one bid more, which brought the final price to \$24,000. The German edition, published in Nuremberg in 1689, includes two important maps. One is the first to hypothesize accurately the flow of the Mississippi River. It was also the first to use the name "Louisiana." The other map names Lake Michigan for the first time.

A dealer paid \$31,200 for a Civil War trove consisting of the letters, diaries, and regimental histories of two Connecticut men who joined the 1st California Infantry Regiment after having gone west to seek their fortunes. Boyhood friends Julius C. Hall (1840-1913) and Jared T. Kimberly (1840-1917), who encountered far more Apaches and Navajos than Confederates, described scalplings and other gruesome scenes of their adventures as miners and soldiers to friends and family back home.

Bidders may have been Joe McCarthy's chief counsel during the infamous Army-McCarthy hearings of the 1950's. Stattler said he was unaware of substantial collections of Cohn's papers in public or private hands, and very little Cohn-related material has ever come to auction.

Cohn was a man who did not endear himself to many, even after the infamous hearings were over. Much of the correspondence to Cohn was hate mail. Six Western Union mailgrams were addressed to "Roy Scum Cohn." A rare letter in praise of Cohn was written by Barbara Walters, his longtime friend who he sometimes claimed was his fiancée. There were also such mementos as an engraved invitation to Cohn's bar mitzvah on Saturday, March 2, 1939; papers of his grandfather Joseph S. Marcus; and photographs, including Cohn as a boy and as a man in his late 40's in 1975 with five younger men, identified on the back. One of them, his longtime personal assistant Russell Eldridge, died of AIDS in 1984. Cohn always maintained that he himself was suffering from liver cancer before his own death two years later. The archive, dating mostly from 1954 to 1986, sold to a collector for \$15,600.

The same collector paid another \$3360 for a lot of Cohn memorabilia in 14k gold. The items were a folding pocket knife and key with case engraved "Roy," a mechanical pencil engraved with the same, and a memo pad case engraved "RMC" on the front and inside "April 1958. Dear Roy, You and us against the world. With all our love and best wishes, Averill & Moe & Suzy."

Moe is Moe Dalitz; Averill, his wife; and Suzy, their daughter. On the daughter's Web site ([www.mocdalitz.com](http://www.mocdalitz.com)), her father (1899-1989) is characterized as "the legendary casino boss" who "owned several of the early iconic hotels" in Las Vegas. That, however, needs to be balanced with Swann's catalog description of the "renowned mobster turned Las Vegas mogul" and his portrayal in his *Los Angeles Times* obituary as a Prohibition-era bootlegger who grew up to become a "crude kingpin" of the underworld.

America Dotta love it. It produced not only Teddy Roosevelt but also America and Galitz. It also gave rise to William Cooper, namesake of the Cooper's hawk, and his son James Graham Cooper. An archive of scientific and family papers of the two Coopers was the surprise top lot of the entire sale. Estimated at \$1500/2500, the collection of letters, diaries, manuscripts, photographs, and original ornithological artworks sold to a collector on the phone for \$40,800.

"Today let the record show that naturalists drew more interest than Mormons," auctioneer Nicholas D. Lowry told his audience after the Cooper lot was hammered down. "Draw your own conclusions."

His remarks referred to the material that had directly preceded the Cooper cache. It was an archive of statements damning Mormon founder Joseph Smith that did not sell (est. \$60,000/90,000). A run of the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* periodical from the early days of the church in the 1830's also failed to find a buyer (est. \$100,000/150,000).

Phone bidders did buy two other Mormon lots. One was a third edition, first state, *The Book of Mormon*, that went for \$13,200 (est. \$4000/6000). The other, which sold for an above-estimate \$3600, was the archive of Maria Bidgood Jarman Ford (1832-1924). According to the catalog, Ford emigrated from England and married a scoundrel who became a Mormon to justify his polygamy with a second wife. In 1869, she divorced him; she raised her three children as Mormons while working as a milliner, and married another Mormon. While her first husband denounced Mormons upon his return to England after their divorce, she defended her religion for the rest of her life.

For more information, call (212) 254-4710 or see the Web site ([www.swanngalleries.com](http://www.swanngalleries.com)).



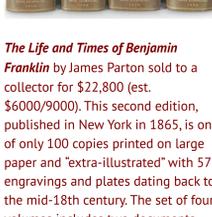
Collector C. Peter Scanlan (1941-2012)



This signed real photo postcard of President Theodore Roosevelt brought \$1140 (est. \$800/1200). Scanlan collection.



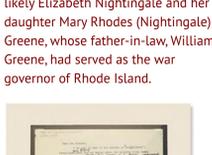
*In Memory of My Darling Wife Alice Hathaway Roosevelt and of My Beloved Mother Martha Bulloch Roosevelt* sold to a collector for \$38,400 (est. \$25,000/35,000). It was printed by G.P. Putnam's Sons in 1884. Scanlan collection.



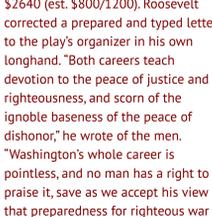
*The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* by James Parton sold to a collector for \$22,800 (est. \$6000/9000). This second edition, published in New York in 1865, is one of only 100 copies printed on large paper and "extra-illustrated" with 571 engravings and plates dating back to the mid-18th century. The set of four volumes includes two documents signed, one by Franklin as president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania and the other by Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state. It is also signed by author Parton.



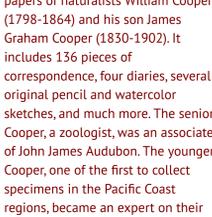
This 31" tall life-size bust of Theodore Roosevelt by Percy Bryant Baker fetched \$1440 (est. \$600/900). The white-painted plaster likeness was cast by P.P. Caproni of Boston, copyright 1919. Scanlan collection.



This 2½" x 4½" partially printed invitation to dine with President George Washington and the First Lady in Philadelphia on January 25, 1796, sold to a collector for \$6600 (est. \$1500/2500). It is addressed to "Mrs. & Miss Greene's [sic] and Mrs. Nightingale." Swann said they were likely Elizabeth Nightingale and her daughter Mary Rhodes (Nightingale) Greene, whose father-in-law, William Greene, had served-in-law, William Greene, was father-in-law, the war governor of Rhode Island.



The Roosevelt letter about *The Children's Revolution*, a play that prompted his musings about Washington and Lafayette, sold to the Society of the Cincinnati for \$2640 (est. \$800/1200). Roosevelt corrected a prepared and typed letter to the play's organizer in his own longhand. "Both careers teach devotion to the peace of justice and righteousness, and scorn of the ignoble baseness of the peace of dishonor," he wrote of the men. "Washington's whole career is pointless, and no man has a right to praise it, save as we accept his view that preparedness for righteous war is the only way to secure righteous peace." The words came with a photograph of him with ten of the cast members in costume. Scanlan collection.



A collector paid \$40,800 for an archive of scientific and family papers of naturalists William Cooper (1798-1864) and his son James Graham Cooper (1830-1902). It includes 136 pieces of correspondence, four diaries, several original pencil and watercolor sketches, and much more. The senior Cooper, a zoologist, was an associate of John James Audubon. The younger Cooper, one of the first to collect specimens in the Pacific Coast regions, became an expert on their geological, biological, and zoological aspects.

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