

Christie's, New York City

Papers from the American Revolution's French Connection Soar at Fine Books and Manuscripts Sale

by Jeanne Schinto

Photos courtesy Christie's

Papers from the archives of François Jean de Beauvoir, the Marquis de Chastellux (1734-1788), were the uncontested highlight of Christie's fine books and manuscripts sale on December 5, 2017, in New York City. Chastellux was a French major general under Rochambeau during the American Revolutionary War. Offered as the first 21 lots of the auction, they included personal correspondence from George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and the Marquis de Lafayette, Chastellux's first cousin; original manuscripts; and maps and battle charts depicting some of the most consequential battles of the American Revolutionary War, in particular the Siege at Yorktown. The trove descended to the consignor directly from the archives. Christie's sold a previous group of papers from the same archives at its auction in December 2016. At that sale, nine lots sold for a total of \$1,138,750 (including buyers' premiums). This more recent batch achieved \$1,247,875. Christie's American furniture specialist John Hays presided over the veritable horse race that the material inspired.

A three-page autograph letter signed and initialed by Washington was one of the top two Chastellux lots, selling to a bidder in the room for \$275,000. The letter's content is remarkable for its expression of sentiment. Washington wrote it in Newburgh, New York, on December 14, 1782. As the war drew to a close and the French were soon expected to return home, he seized the moment to profess that Chastellux had evoked in him "a deep and lasting friendship which neither time nor distance [could] eradicate." Chastellux was called "trop Américain" (too American) by some of his fellow Frenchmen. Meant to be pejorative, the nickname belied a certain grudging admiration, too. Fluent in English, Chastellux was an astute observer and chronicler of New World ways. Portions of his *Travels in North America*, published in French in 1786, are as deserving of contemporary readers as the work of Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), the French sociologist and political theorist who authored *Democracy in America*. Perhaps these qualities, which ranged far beyond his prowess as a military officer, helped endear him to Washington, who declared in that same lengthy letter, "Never in my life did I part with a man to whom my soul clave more sincerely than it did to you...."

Selling to a phone bidder for the same price as the Washington letter was Chastellux's manuscript map of New York City waterways, including its harbor. The unsigned single sheet drawn on in ink and watercolor is dated July 21 and 22, 1781. It is attributed to cartographers attached to the comte de Rochambeau's forces, who would play a decisive role in the Yorktown campaign a little over two months later. The map was produced to aid the American and French forces in a massive ruse designed to convince the British that they were planning siege operations against the northern locales while, all along, Washington and Rochambeau were marching most of their forces south. Britain's General James Clinton refused Cornwallis's requests for reinforcements at Yorktown as a result. By the time Clinton realized what was happening, it was too late to react. The Yorktown operation began on the morning of September 28, 1781; the British surrendered on October 19.

Bidders also paid strong prices for Chastellux's map of Burgoyne's 1777 defeat at Saratoga (\$40,000); a manuscript of an official French account of Yorktown dated the day after the Cornwallis surrender (\$52,500); a French manuscript account of the Yorktown siege that gives detailed daily accounts of operations (\$75,000); and an unpublished and previously unknown manuscript journal of Lord Dunmore's 1774 expedition to the Ohio valley against the Shawnee and Mingo (\$93,750).

A proof of the so-called Stone-engraved Declaration of Independence broadside, one of only six paper copies known, was the most notable lot of the general Americana section of the sale. The copy had once belonged to Brigham Young (1801-1877). The second president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had 55 wives and 56 children by 16 of those wives; 46 reached adulthood, one of whom, Alfales Young, was the broadside's next owner. It descended to Alfales's son Stuart Young and then went to members of the Crader family. On January 31, 2002, it was sold by Christie's in Los Angeles for \$171,000. Estimated at \$400,000/600,000, it sold this time for



A phone bidder paid \$432,500 (est. \$200,000/300,000) for Albert Einstein's telescope. When Einstein emigrated from Germany to Princeton, New Jersey, in 1933, the instrument, made in Berlin by Paul Dörfel in the late 19th century, was among the possessions that were shipped to him. Five years later, he gave it to Leo Mattersdorf (1903-1985), his accountant and friend who was chairman of the Amateur Astronomers Association in New York. The telescope came by descent to the consignor.

\$432,500 to an Internet bidder in Pennsylvania.

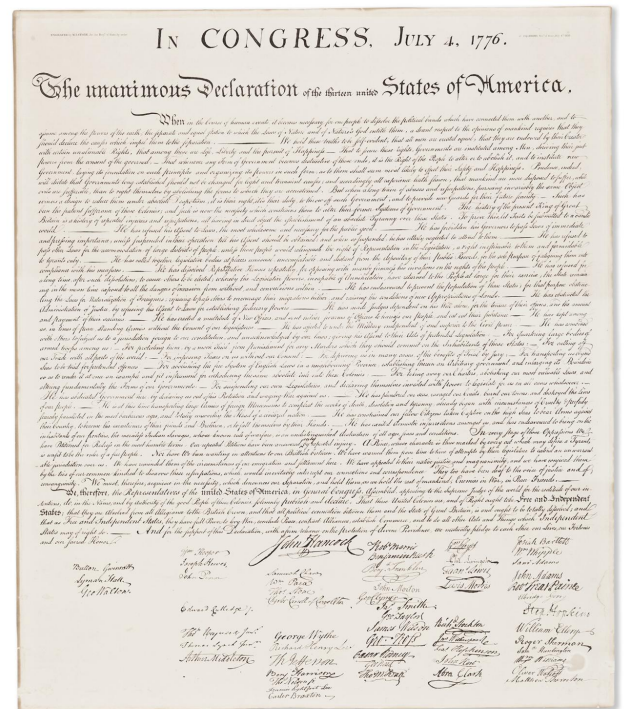
For those who need a primer, William J. Stone was authorized to engrave his actual-size (30" x 24") facsimile in 1823. It was meant to preserve the image of the original, which by that time had already suffered some fading and wear. Only 200 authorized Stone facsimiles were printed on vellum, by order of then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. (An unauthorized copy was kept by the printer, bringing the total to 201; that one was subsequently donated by his family to the Smithsonian Institution.) At the time of the facsimile's printing, the three living signers of the original—Adams's father, Thomas Jefferson, and Charles Carroll—each got two; so did Lafayette; President James Monroe; his vice president, Daniel D. Tompkins; and former President James Madison. Additional copies went to members of both the House and Senate; state executives; and colleges and libraries.

Christie's sold another of the paper copies on February 12, 2009, for \$698,500. That copy is now on display at the U.S. State Department, courtesy of philanthropist David Rubenstein. The buyer of the copy at this sale was not identified.

Another of the most successful Americana lots was a first edition, first issue, of John Smith's *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*. Published in London in 1624, it is Smith's personal account of the first settlement of Virginia, in Jamestown, including the story of how his life was spared by the actions of Pocahontas—yes, the Native American woman whose name has been lately used in unfortunate ways in the political world; narratives of Smith's explorations of the New England coast; his history of the Bermudas; and four illustrated engraved maps. Smith's opus came to the sale from Philip and Betsey Caldwell's Rosebrook collection, whose bulk was American decorative arts. Estimated at \$50,000/70,000, the book sold to a phone bidder for \$162,500.

Two heftily estimated Abraham Lincoln lots did not find buyers. One was a two-page autograph letter signed to Henry Asbury, an Illinois attorney, on July 31, 1858, and annotated by Asbury in 1883. The subject is the Freeport Question on the expansion of slavery in the territories. An important letter to be sure, it sold at Christie's auction of the Forbes collection of American

A proof of the so-called Stone-engraved Declaration of Independence broadside, one of only six paper copies known, was the most notable lot of the general Americana section of the sale.



Brigham Young's paper proof of Stone's Declaration of Independence broadside sold online for \$432,500 (est. \$400,000/600,000).

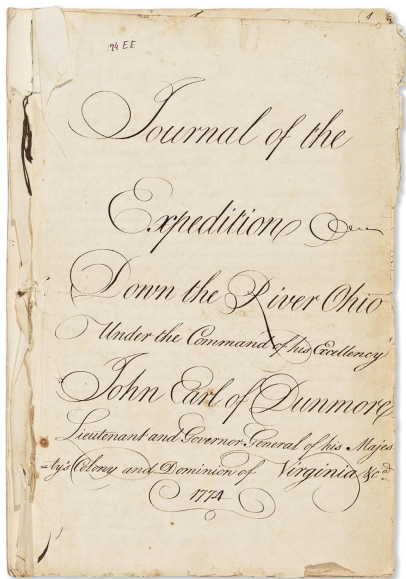


historical documents, part one, in New York City on March 27, 2002, for \$127,000. This time it was estimated at \$500,000/700,000.

The other unsold Lincoln lot, estimated at \$300,000/500,000, was an odd but evocative one: a wooden bench mallet purportedly made by Lincoln from a burl of a cherry tree that had originally been a rail-splitting maul. The mallet bears the initials "A.L."—"For you-know-who," said John Hays from the podium when the lot came up. There is also a date, "1829," in inlaid iron filings. That is said to have been the year Lincoln gave the mallet to Barnabas Carter Jr., a friend and neighbor in Indiana. It then descended in the Carter family along with the extensive lore relating to it.

Two Franklin Delano Roosevelt autograph notes written in pencil and signed in initials ("FDR") to none other than Winston Churchill on September 12, 1944, sold to a phone bidder for \$40,000. The subject of each note was the Second Quebec Conference, where the anticipated postwar situation was the immediate subject along with agreements about the subsequent occupation and demilitarization of soon-to-be-defeated Germany. The lot included three photographs, one of them showing Roosevelt and Churchill at the conference. It was rounded out by a menu for September 24, 1944, for a dinner aboard the Cunard White Star Line. It was signed by Churchill; his wife, Clementine Churchill; John "Jock" Colville, who was both Churchill's and Neville Chamberlain's private secretary; and others. The material had come to the consignor by descent from Sir Colville.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy's personal copy of a 1961 Government Printing Office item sold to a phone bidder for \$62,500. *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington, 1789 to John F. Kennedy, 1961* is nothing special in itself, and it's printed on cheap paper, as these types of government publications usually are. But this copy has been annotated by both JFK and Jacqueline Kennedy. A penciled note from Jackie on the title page reads: "Hyannis July 1963, J. marked his passages in Inaug—& corrected it." Indeed, he had, correcting a line in blue ballpoint. To his mind, the final phrase in "The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service are found around the globe" would have been better as "the call to service surround



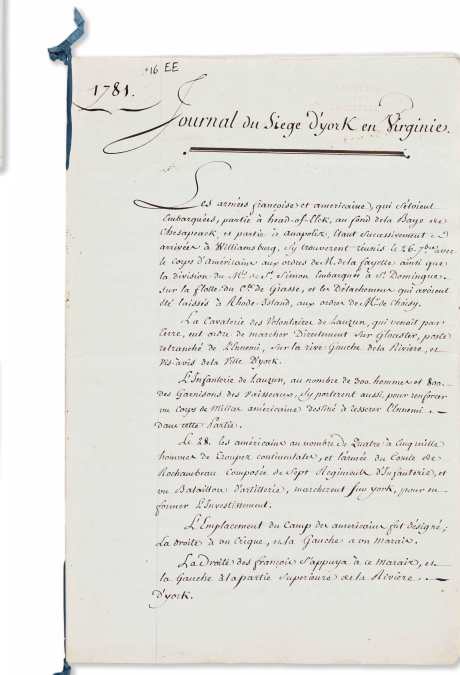
A 28-page manuscript, “Journal of the Expedition down the River Ohio Under the Command of his Excellency John Earl of Dunmore Lieutenant and Governor General of his Majesty’s Colony and Dominion of Virginia 1774,” sold to a room bidder for \$93,750 (est. \$12,000/18,000). The unpublished, previously unknown journal is believed to have been kept by an aide to Lord Dunmore. Chastellux archives.



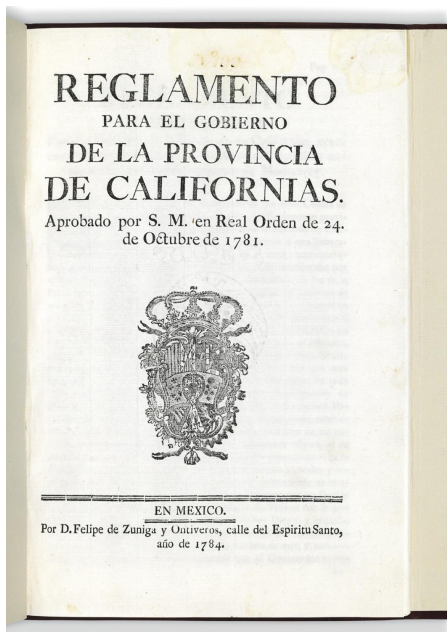
A phone bidder paid \$40,000 (est. \$15,000/20,000) for Chastellux’s 1781-82 map of Burgoyne’s defeat at Saratoga. The two conjoined sheets, approximately 19" x 14½", were drawn on in ink with gray wash and watercolor. The writing at the top says, “battle won by the honorable major general gates commander in chief of the army of the united states, in the northern département of america, over Lieutenant général Burgoine [sic] commander in chief of his Brittanic majestis forces. near Still-water 7th october 1777.”



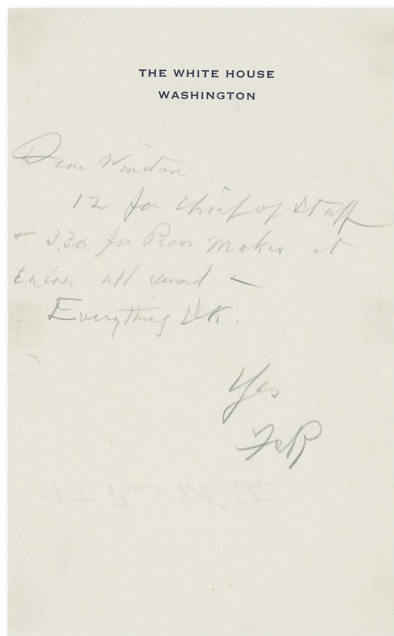
A 1781 manuscript map of New York City waterways relating to the ruse that foiled General Clinton and led to the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown sold to a phone bidder for \$275,000 (est. \$150,000/200,000). The single sheet, approximately 25" x 16", shows two aspects of the region. The larger section shows New York harbor; the smaller and less detailed one shows Spuyten Duyvil Creek. The map, executed in ink and watercolor, is unsigned but presumably drawn by cartographers attached to Rochambeau’s forces. Chastellux archives.



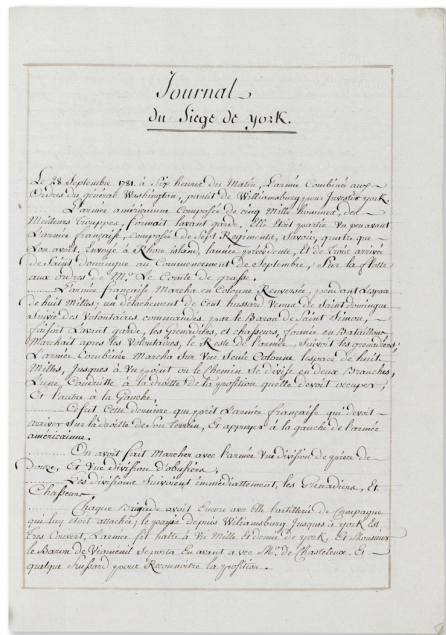
An eight-page manuscript in French, “Journal du Siege d’york en Virginie,” went to a phone bidder for \$52,500 (est. \$15,000/20,000). Dated October 20, 1781, the day after Cornwallis’s surrender, it is the official French account. Chastellux archives.



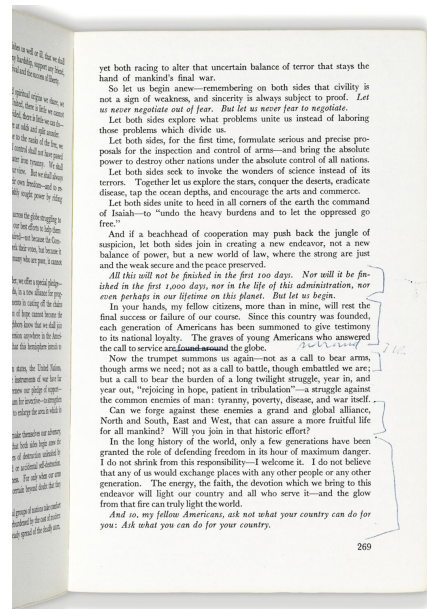
The first edition of *Reglamento para el Gobierno de la Provincia de Californias*, the first printed laws of Alta California, sold on the phone for \$106,250 (est. \$70,000/90,000). Written by Spanish colonial governor Felipe de Neve, the document was produced in Mexico in 1784.



Two penciled autograph notes—two pages total—written by Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, along with related materials, went to a phone bidder for \$40,000 (est. \$10,000/15,000). The notes, dating from September 12 and 24, 1944, pertain to the anticipated end of World War II and plans for its aftermath in Europe.



A 19-page manuscript in French, “Journal du Siege de york,” fetched \$75,000 (est. \$15,000/20,000). It offers a detailed day-to-day account of the operations at Yorktown. Chastellux archives.



John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s annotated copy of *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington, 1789 to John F. Kennedy, 1961* brought \$62,500 (est. \$60,000/80,000). Without the annotations of both JFK and Mrs. Kennedy, it is an unexceptional 1961 Government Printing Office publication.

the globe.” He bracketed several other paragraphs, including the famous concluding imperative, “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not....” The item had last been sold at the sale of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis collection at Sotheby’s in New York City April 23-26, 1996.

A charming group of Jackie juvenilia—18 pages of autograph letters signed to a girlhood friend in 1943, when the future First Lady was 13, plus photos from the same period—was passed at \$12,000 on an estimate of \$20,000/30,000. No one was willing to go for a poem she wrote and illustrated at age 11, either—at least not for the reserve reflected in the \$10,000/15,000 estimate.

Albert Einstein’s telescope sparked a tug-o-war between an Internet bidder in Portugal and a phone bidder, who prevailed. What was cataloged as “apparently the only scientific instrument owned by Einstein ever offered at auction” sold for \$432,500 on a \$200,000/300,000 estimate.

An unpublished group of 21 mostly single-space typed and autographed letters signed by J.D. Salinger went to a bidder in the room for \$68,750. Salinger wrote them to Toody Maher between 1979 and 1996. The correspondence began when she was 18 and Salinger

was 60. The two met in Cornish, New Hampshire, outside Salinger’s post office while Maher was on spring break from her freshman year at the University of California at Berkeley. The content is wide-ranging, covering topics such as the nature of love, friendship, and other types of connections between people, as well as more personal matters, such as Salinger’s son, Matthew, who, born in 1960, was approximately Maher’s age.

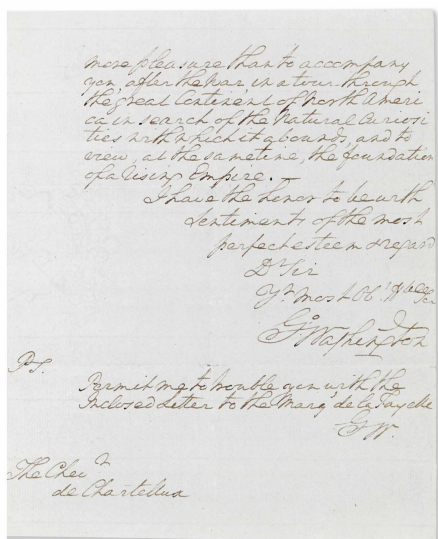
Ironically, there is at least one letter that mentions a pending lawsuit that, given the letter’s 1983 date, was very likely Salinger v. Random House, Inc., which sought to bar Salinger’s unauthorized biographer Ian Hamilton from quoting Salinger correspondence deposited in the libraries of Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Texas by its recipients. “Am so sick of contending with crooked types,” Salinger tells Maher. “It goes on and on.” The suit was successful. Hamilton produced the book with the letters paraphrased in 1988.

Elsewhere Salinger expresses sensitivity about what people who were not his friends or acquaintances were able to learn about him through the mails, even inadvertently. Referring to himself in the third person as “The Earl of Cornish,” the author

gently reprimanded Maher: “His Lordship fondly requests that her Ladyship will kindly refrain hereafter from scrawling intimate and/or highly private messages on the backs and fronts of public envelopes. His Lordship isn’t that matey with the local Post Office staff.” He signed it cryptically: “Thine, Hanso Kupperman.”

On July 17, 1982, Salinger rejoins what was apparently an amorous wish of Maher’s with these words: “I think of you, too, O tall, upstanding, and juicy girl, and your big kiss is welcomed with pleasure, and returned.” To say the least, it’s a little unsettling, given their age difference. In any case, the last missive in the group, dated January 2, 1996, is rather distant, and after having signed mostly “Love, Jerry” for many years, this time Salinger merely affixes his initials: “JDS.”

For more information about the approximately 250-lot sale, which all told brought \$5,218,500, see the Christie’s website (www.christies.com).



No 1820. B. Long Oct 20th 1796

OBSERVATIONS
ON
CERTAIN DOCUMENTS
CONTAINED IN NO. V & VI OF
"THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE YEAR 1796,"
IN WHICH THE
CHARGE OF SPECULATION
AGAINST
ALEXANDER HAMILTON,
LATE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
IS FULLY REFUTED.
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR JOHN FENNO, BY JOHN EISEN.
1797.

It is probable you will receive
the Count de Borchgrevink's order to move
with your regiment to West Point. Should
this be the case, you will only come on
with just officers as are to remain in
service on the new arrangement and
perhaps never be engaged for the war, not
least for a term that will last through
the next campaign. The other men you
may employ, unless the Count de Borchgrevink
deems them good for any employment, in
which case they need not. In this case
one percent of it is presumed you have
already agreed upon the arrangement.

Yours
affectionately
and
humbly
your friend
Eug. W. Washburn

Genl. D. W. C. G. 1890

I have nothing to add
except to send your letter
of the 17th.

Col. Greene

This is a highly detailed historical map of Virginia, titled "THE VIRGINIAN SEA" at the bottom. The map is oriented with North at the top. The coastline of Virginia is clearly delineated, with major rivers such as the James River, York River, and Rappahannock River shown. Numerous Native American tribes are labeled across the land, including Powhatan, Mannahoacks, Meherrin, and many others. The map is framed by a decorative border. At the top, the word "VIRGINIA" is written in large, stylized letters. At the bottom, "THE VIRGINIAN SEA" is written. The map includes a compass rose in the bottom left corner, a sailing ship in the bottom left, and a fort in the bottom center. The map is dated "1600" in the top left corner. The map is a reproduction of a historical map, likely from the 17th century.

"Suddenly, everyone wanted to map DNA and use any available restriction enzymes to examine their favorite genome"

7
Philadelphia, June 22

My dear Rev. P.

I cannot inform you
yet, as we have not yet
received the bill of exchange
for the money, but I shall
write you as soon as I hear of
my friend's return. —

I have just returned
here by express to a perfect
bush of the most beautiful
flowers, and I am happy to find so favorable
a disposition in that body to pro-
ceed experimentally for it. — They
have devoted to keep up the
same number of troops as ever.
The army of planters, and
have called upon the States
to a proper measure to be
taken. — Regiments of men, and
also made, but then for the
title, a relaxation of the
individuals, and covered with
the demand, is more than
able, at this early period, to
be a great success. — A further
aid from your generous
patron

entreat you to present me to the
circle of your friends, as I hear
my archad you, with all that
surround and attend me at Lan-
ceter - and to believe that, with
sentiments, of the purest friend-
ship & regard,
I have the honor to be
Dear Sir
Yr^o affec^td friend
Edw^d Waghorn

Neal^B. Cartellus

A black and white portrait of a man in 18th-century military uniform, likely a general, with a powdered wig and a dark coat with ornate epaulettes.