

Swann Galleries, Inc., New York City

# Printed and Manuscript Americana: Maps, Memoirs, and Mug Shots

by Jeanne Schinto  
Photos courtesy Swann

Swann scored a big price for a Bernard Romans map from the Revolutionary War period at its printed and manuscript Americana sale on October 10, 2013, in New York City. Published in Philadelphia in 1775, "Map of the Seat of the Civil War in America," showing most of eastern Massachusetts, parts of Rhode Island, and a bit of Connecticut, fetched \$173,000 (including buyer's premium). Willing to pay nearly six times the high estimate, winning phone bidder 456 was identified by the

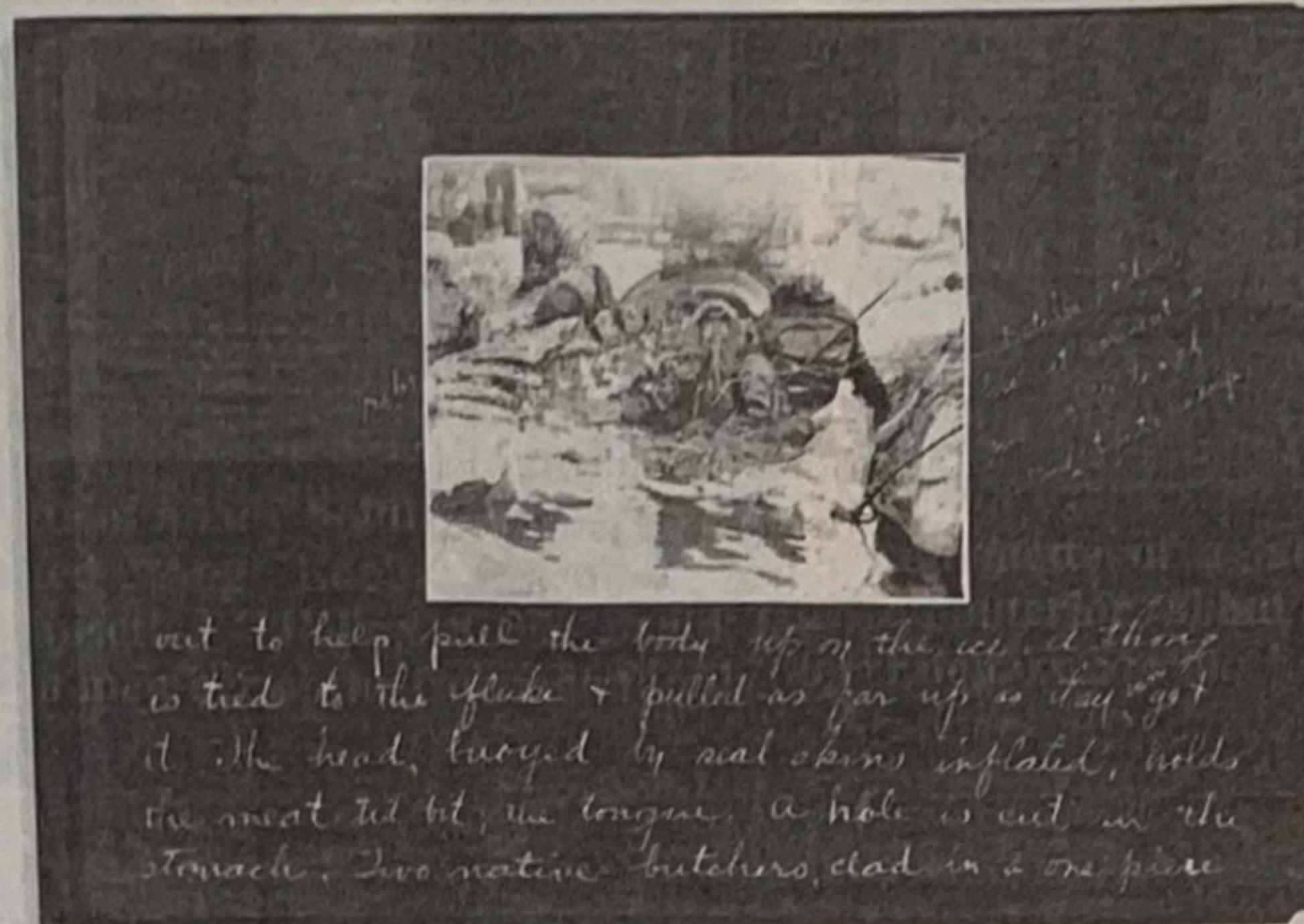
## Institutions made an unusually strong showing at this sale.

auction house as a private collector. According to Swann's research, only one other copy of this map has come to auction since 1976. At its sale on June 2, 2011, the Dutch-born Romans's map of Connecticut and parts adjacent sold for \$168,000.

The 39-page diary of a young Revolutionary War officer, John Hutchinson Buell (1753-1813) of Connecticut, brought another impressive price, going to a bidder in the room for \$75,000 (est. \$12,000/18,000). The buyer was a representative for the Society of the Cincinnati, according to Swann. Manuscript diaries are rare, and this one had the added attraction of rich content, e.g., a description of a dinner with George Washington, accounts of specific battles in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, rumors of Washington's peace negotiations in 1782, and news of the peace proclamation the following year. There are also mentions of other important personages, including Baron Von Steuben and Henry Knox.

Judging from the excerpts in the catalog, Buell's battle tales are dramatic. "We consealed [sic] our boats till dark," he wrote. "We covered [them] with bushes and consealed [sic] our men in the woods...." Accompanying the diary were a miniature portrait on ivory of Buell and a silver beaker engraved with his initials. A seamless provenance capped off the lot. All of these items descended through several generations of Buell's family and came to the sale through the estate of his great-great-grandson.

Institutions made an unusually strong showing at this sale. Seventeen different institutions



This album of 31 photographs of a whale hunt and other scenes of Inupiaq village life sold to a dealer for \$18,750 (est. \$2000/3000). Suzanne Rognon Bernardi and her brother, Jack Rognon, were the photographers in Wales, Alaska, in 1901-02. Pictured are two Inupiaq hunters butchering a whale.



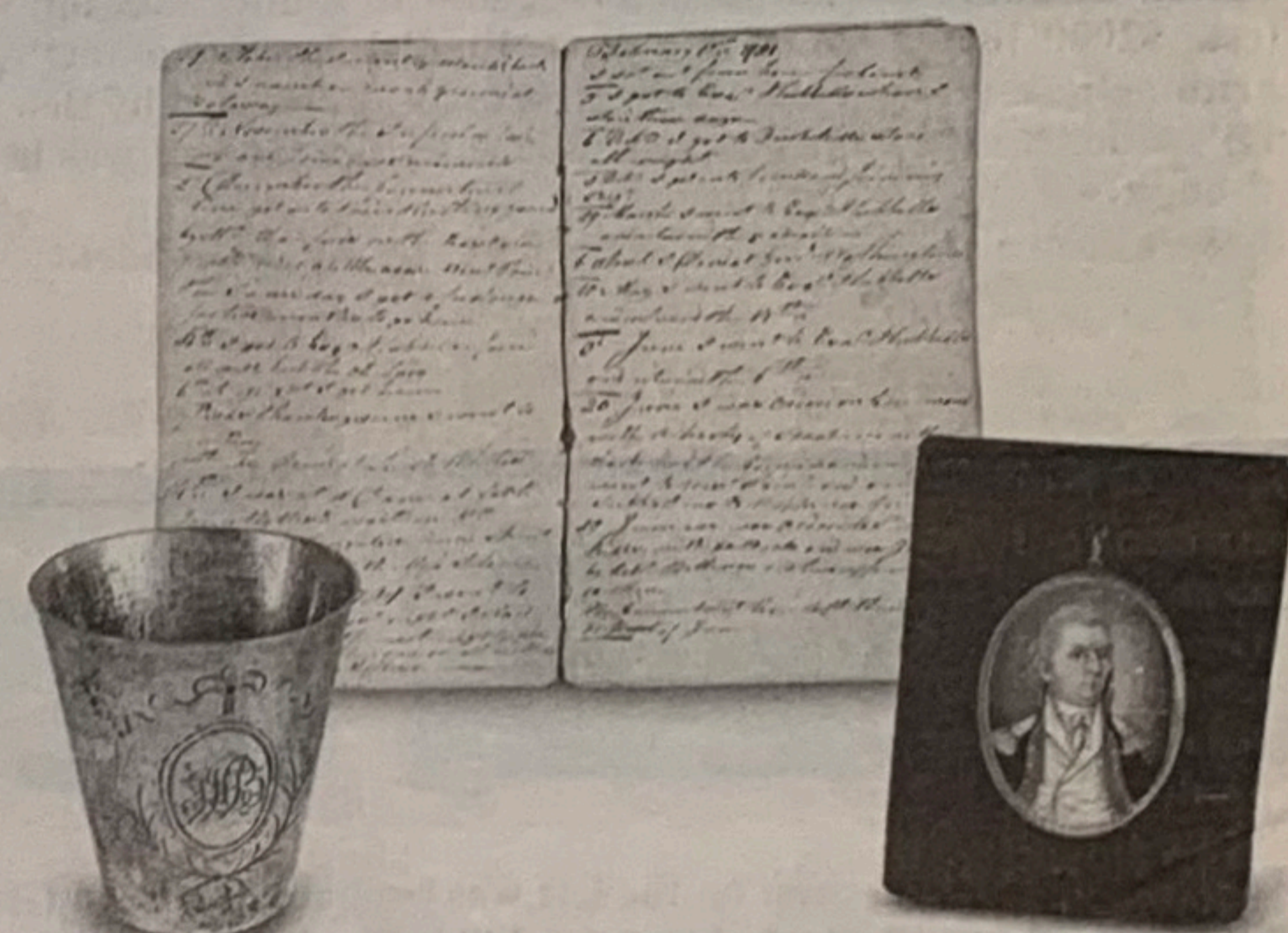
This album of approximately 376 albumen photographs from the 1901 Peary relief expedition sold to phone bidder 452, a dealer, for \$25,000 (est. \$3000/4000). Arctic explorer Robert Peary's African-American colleague Matthew Henson is pictured here.

won a total of 25 lots, according to the count of department director Rick Stattler. Among those whose names he could divulge were Georgetown University, whose representative paid \$4500 for the Civil War archive of Daniel S. Curtiss of the 1st District of Columbia Cavalry; the East Hampton Library, which acquired a volume of early manuscript sermons by a Presbyterian minister from the Long Island town for \$2750; and Duke University, which purchased at \$3500 a large (approximately 1000-item) collection of 20th-century "Wanted" posters. Amassed by a police detective in Westchester County, New York, they included the mug shots of Baby Face Nelson, Mrs. John Dillinger, Weather Underground Organization member Cathlyn Platt Wilkerson, Symbionese Liberation Army member Kathleen Soliah, and Black Liberation Army member Joanne Chesimard.

Why Duke wanted them is a reasonable question. "A special collections department of a college archive is usually so wide ranging, it's difficult usually to tell from the outside what the boundaries of their collections policy might be," Stattler observed. "Often it's something that just might become the basis for a research paper for a student."



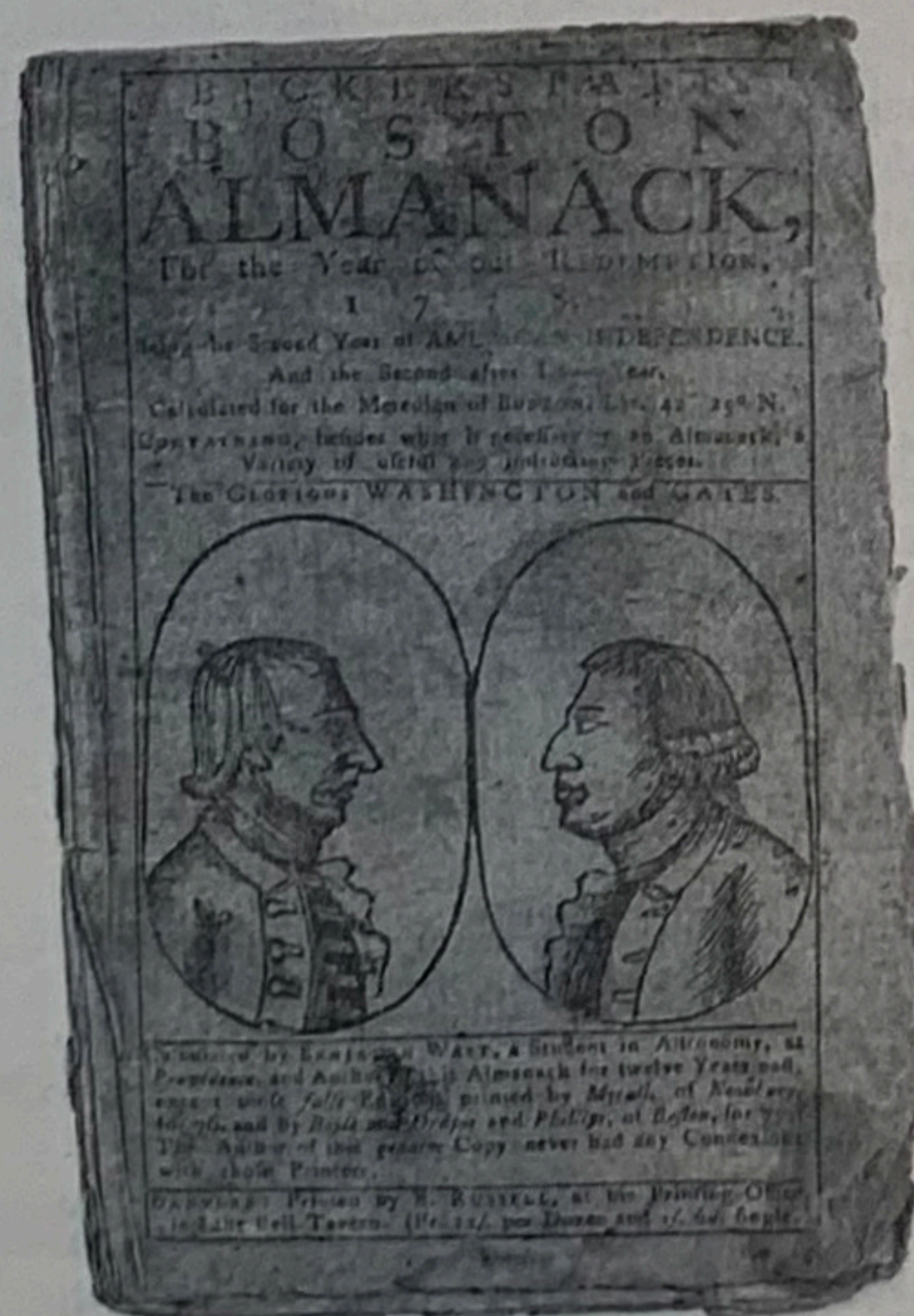
The top lot of the sale, going at \$173,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000), was "Map of the Seat of the Civil War in America" by Bernard Romans (1741-1784), mapmaker and officer in George Washington's army. Phone bidder 456, identified as a collector by Swann, was the winner. Published in Philadelphia by Nicholas Brooks in 1775, the 16½" x 19" engraving was about as fine a copy of it as one is likely to find, said Rick Stattler.



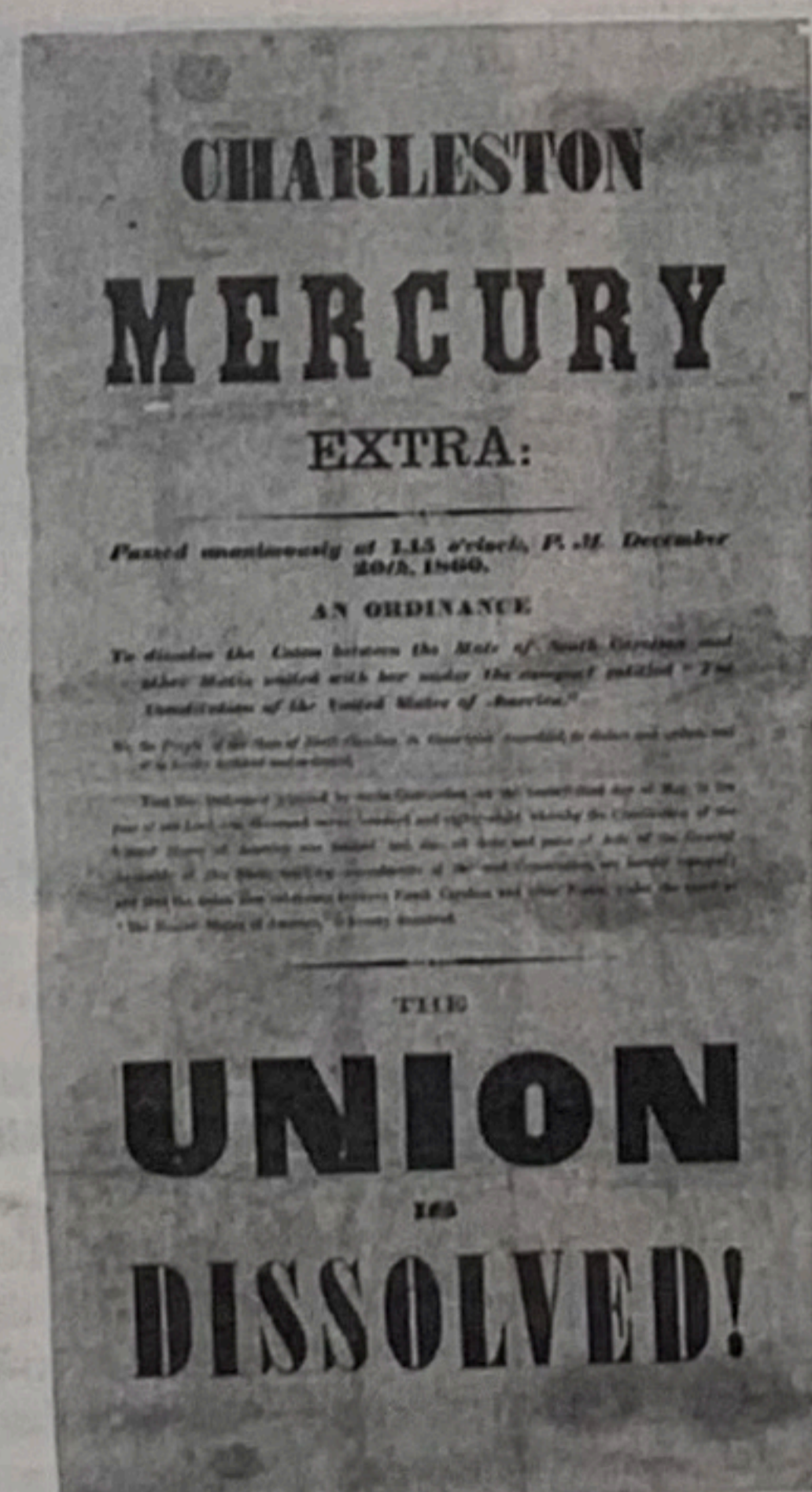
This Revolutionary War-era diary of Connecticut officer John Hutchinson Buell (1753-1813) sold for \$75,000 (est. \$12,000/18,000). The 39 manuscript pages were accompanied by Buell's miniature portrait on ivory and a silver beaker engraved with his initials. Swann identified the buyer as the Society of the Cincinnati, headquartered in Washington, D.C. According to its Web site ([www.societyofthecincinnati.org](http://www.societyofthecincinnati.org)), our nation's oldest patriotic organization was founded in 1783 by officers of the Continental Army and their French counterparts who served together in the American Revolution. Today it is a nonprofit educational organization "devoted to the principles and ideals of its founders."

As did most of the rare lots on offer, two photograph albums of views taken in Arctic regions did extremely well. An album of 31 photographs of a whale hunt and other scenes of Inupiaq village life in Wales, Alaska, in 1901-02 sold to a dealer for \$18,750 (est. \$2000/3000). Suzanne Rognon Bernardi, a missionary and teacher, was the principal photographer, with additions by her brother, Jack Rognon. Folklorist Susan W. Fair has published an essay about Bernardi and these photos in *Indigenous Ways to the Present: Native Whaling in the Western Arctic* (2003).

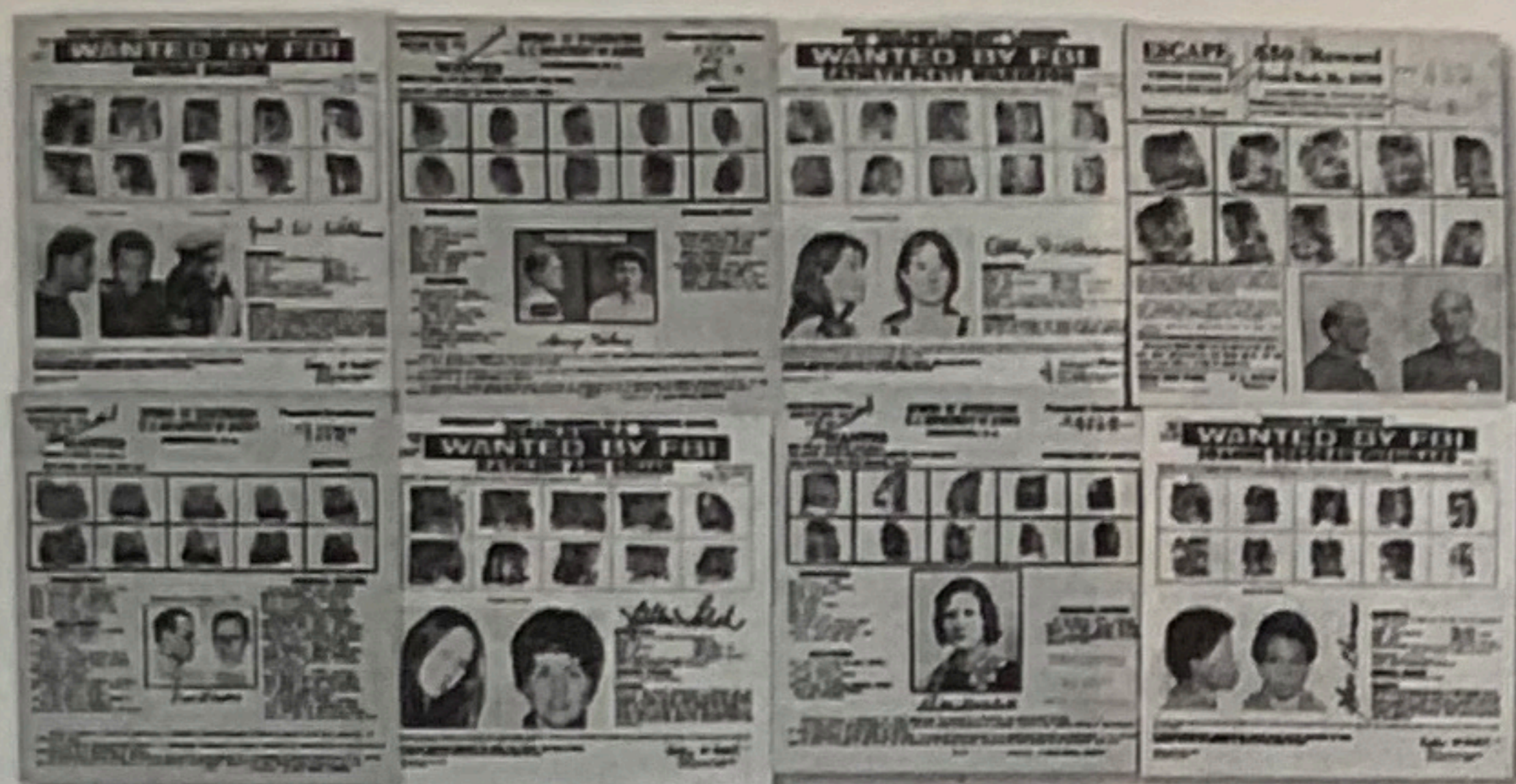
The other album, approximately 376 albumen photographs from the 1901 Peary relief expedition, also went to the trade, for \$25,000 (est. \$3000/4000). Explorer Robert Peary, accompanied by his African-American colleague Matthew Henson, was in northern Greenland struggling to reach the North Pole and refusing to come home. This album documents a third and unsuccessful attempt to convince him otherwise, while bringing fresh supplies. Besides Peary, Henson, and their Inuit crew, the images show the relief workers and some paying guests who came along for the adventure and got pressed into service for the cause. The album was apparently presented after the voyage to Herbert "Burt" Berri, the 19-year-old son of a Brooklyn newspaper reporter who appears frequently in the photographs. Included with the lot was *Boreal Ties: Photographs and Two Diaries of the 1901 Peary Relief Expedition* (2002), edited by Kim Fairley Gillis and Silas



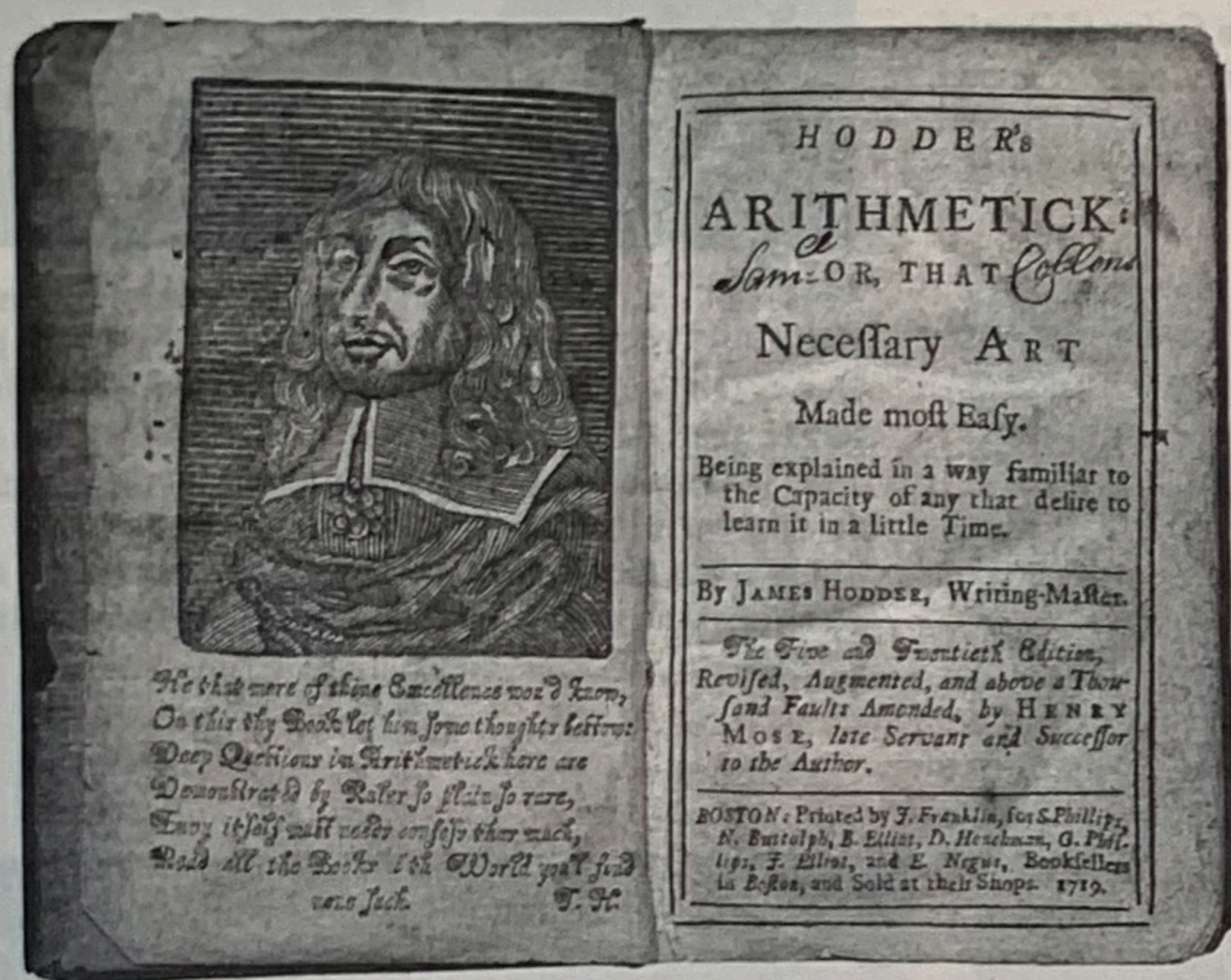
This copy of astronomer Benjamin West's *Bickerstaff's Boston Almanack*, interleaved with seven pages of manuscript memoranda and diary entries by an unknown Bostonian, sold for \$5500 (est. \$2000/3000). The almanac was published in Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1777, illustrated with early, if not the earliest, depictions of George Washington in woodcut form.



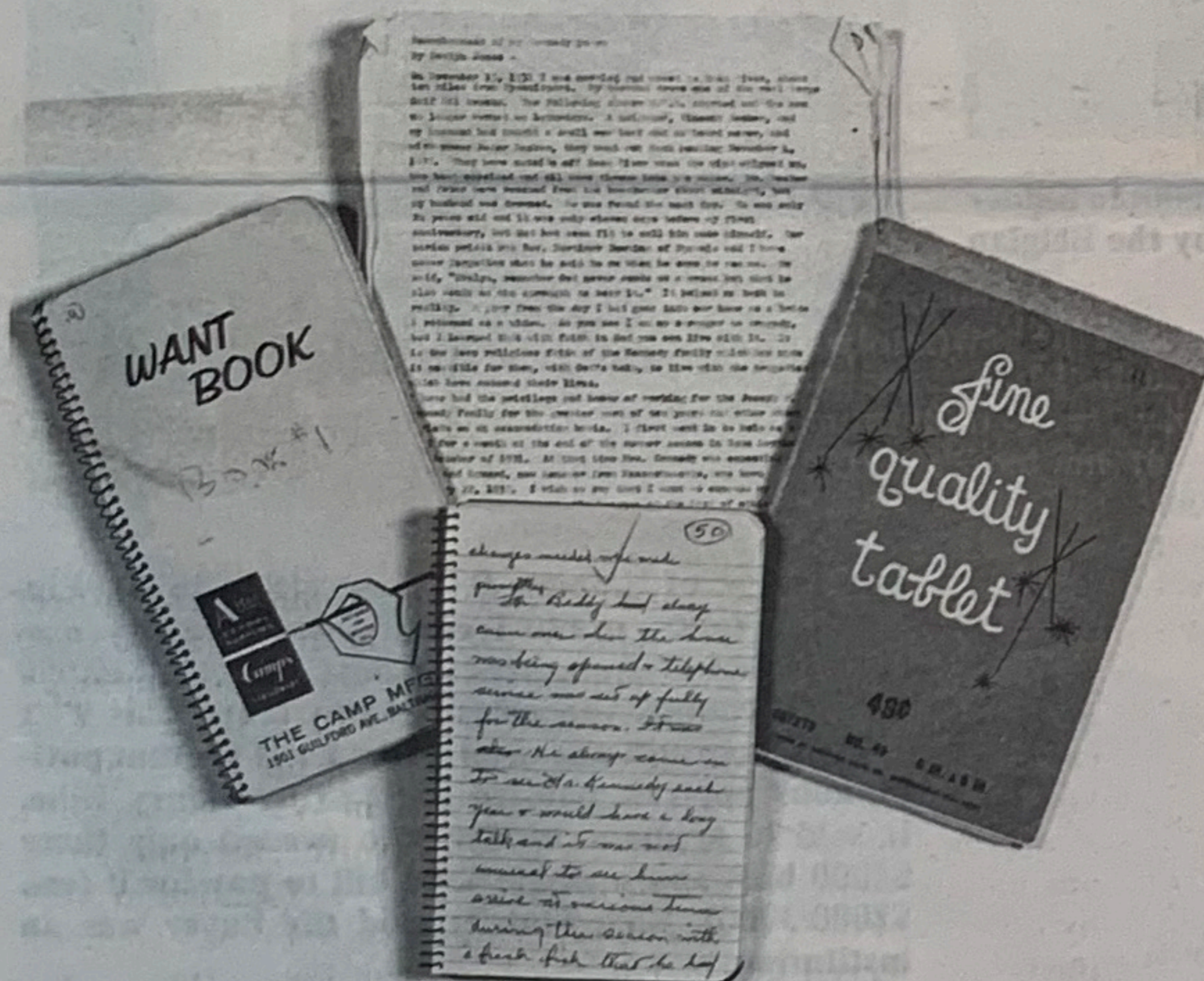
This 23½" x 12" letterpress broadside, issued by the *Charleston Mercury* as an "Extra," and dated December 20, 1860, sold to a collector for \$37,500 (est. \$10,000/15,000). Announcing the dissolution of the Union, it was the first printing of the first act of secession.



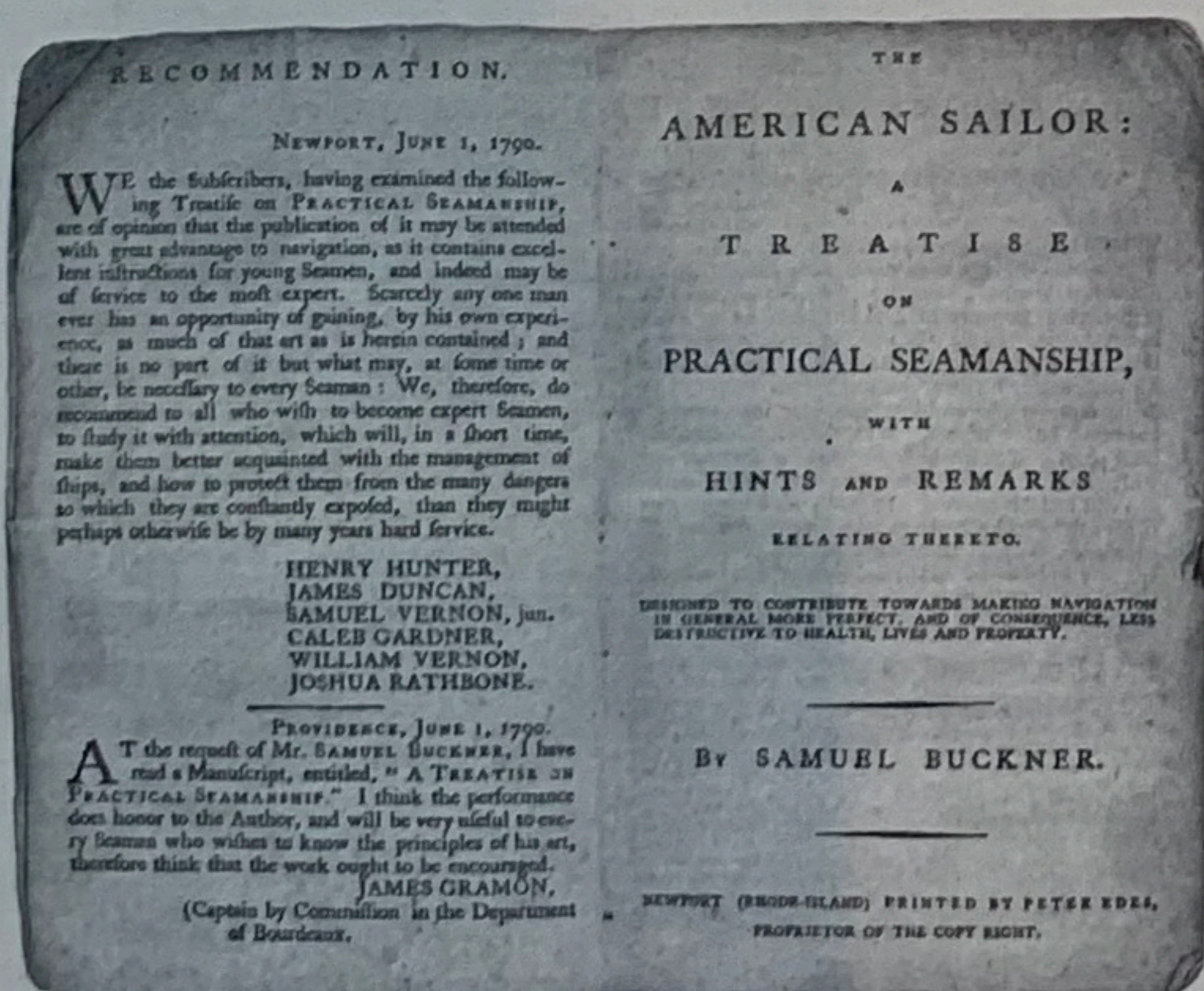
A lot of approximately 1000 small-format (8" x 8") 20th-century "Wanted" posters sold to an absentee bidder for \$3500 (est. \$3000/4000). The buyer was identified by Swann as Duke University.



The first American edition of Hodder's *Arithmetick*, published in Boston by James Franklin in 1719, sold to bidder 203 for \$15,000 (est. \$2000/3000). America's first English-language textbook on arithmetic, it was also one of the first books published by Ben Franklin's older brother. "It's conceivable that Ben himself was involved, though we can't really prove it," said Rick Stattler. "And there hasn't been a copy up for auction in many, many decades."



The unpublished memoirs of Evelyn Marsh Jones (1906-1978), a domestic who worked for the Kennedy family intermittently from 1932 to 1964, sold for \$6500 (est. \$2000/3000) to a collector.



The *American Sailor: A Treatise on Practical Seamanship* by Samuel Buckner sold to a dealer for \$10,625 (est. \$3000/4000). The volume was published in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790. Only one other copy is known to have come to auction since 1924, and it was sold by Swann on December 4, 2003, for \$13,800. That more expensive copy was signed by early American astronomer, navigator, and mathematician Nathaniel Bowditch and was in better condition, Rick Stattler said.

Hibbard Ayer III.

A collector bought a rare Confederate broadside for \$37,500 (est. \$10,000/15,000). Dated December 20, 1860, the *Charleston Mercury* "Extra" shouts "The Union is Dissolved!" in a big black headline. Cranked out on a letterpress just 15 minutes after the final vote (their version of Facebook or Twitter), the single page was the first printing of the first act of secession. As such, it was, as the catalog pointed out, both a birth announcement for the Confederacy and the beginning of the Civil War.

Another unique Confederate piece was a tear-jerker. A letter written by Varina Howell Davis, wife of Jefferson Davis, from Savannah, Georgia, on July 9, 1865, was a desperate plea with Union Major General Henry W. Birge for the return of her late son's dog, Tippy. The son had died at age five the previous May. A year later, the dog was "lost in the hurry of the evacuation of Richmond." Mrs. Davis believed the terrier was with the officers who occupied the executive mansion. "I cannot write to them for it. Will you ask them to let me have it?... The dog cannot be much to them, it is a great deal to me." The three pages sold in the room for \$2250 (est. \$1500/2500), a very reasonable price, especially considering that Stattler could not find any record of its publication.

A first edition of Louis Hennepin's *Description de la Louisiane*, with folding map, sold for \$30,000 (est. \$30,000/40,000) to bidder 203 in the room. Issued in Paris in 1683, the volume is the first published account of La Salle's Illinois explorations, written by the Belgian missionary who accompanied him, and its map surmises the flow of the Mississippi accurately for the first time. At Swann's sale on April 16, 2013, an unnamed institution bought the first German edition for \$24,000.

Bidder 203, identified by Swann as a dealer, bought numerous other serious lots. One unserious purchase that he or she might do well to break up and give as gag holiday gifts to friends in the trade was a group of pamphlets about what's described as the New York auction house "menace" of 1817-28. Going for \$1188 (est. \$250/350), the group included some pro-auction house essays (e.g., "The Beneficial Tendency of Auctioneering, and the Danger of Restraining It") and some con (e.g., "An Exposition of Some of the Evils Arising from the Auction System").

"It wasn't related to book auctions, so we're in the clear," said Stattler. "Retail merchants in New York City, mainly in textiles, were finding auctioneers undercutting their prices. It was apparently a pretty hot topic at the time—whether auctions drive prices down and destroy the market or are, as we believe, the engine in establishing value."

The unpublished memoirs of Evelyn Marsh Jones (1906-1978), a housekeeper who worked for the Kennedy family intermittently from 1932 to 1964, is not a tell-all, according to the catalog description, and it didn't need to be to fetch \$6500 (est. \$2000/3000) from a collector. "Even leaving the Kennedy connection aside," the catalog said, "this is a worthy account of life as a parlor maid and household manager for one of America's most distinguished families." Rather, the 49 typewritten pages, along with three manuscript notebooks of Jones's draft, discuss details of work, staff, and famous guests.

The papers of the Maury family of Virginia sold on the phone for \$18,750 (est. \$1000/1500). There are approximately 275 items, the bulk of which consists of correspondence dating from 1831 to 1847. Included are letters written to James Maury, whose father had been Thomas Jefferson's teacher. Maury was a merchant later named consul to Liverpool, an important trading destination in the early to mid-19th century. Among his correspondents were two of his sons, who remained active in the Liverpool trade. A second large cache is made up of letters to James's daughter Ann Maury, a memoirist and the genealogist of this distinguished family.

A very early printing of the Emancipation Proclamation fetched \$37,500 (est. \$15,000/25,000) from a bidder on phone. The two 13" x 8 1/4" pages comprise the fourth separately printed edition of the final version. Published in Washington, D.C., it is dated January 3, 1863. The catalog said: "No printing this early has been seen at auction since Eberstad's third edition appeared at the Jay Snider sale in 2005." Included was the transmittal letter addressed in manuscript and signed by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

Among the sleepers of this sale was a four-page issue of the *Gazette of the United States*, dating from March 17, 1790, that sold for \$4500 (est. \$300/400). What the competing bidders clamored for was a printing of John Carroll's "The Address

of the Roman Catholics to George Washington" and Washington's famous pro-Catholic response, "To the Roman Catholics in the United States of America," in which he thanks Catholics for their role in the Revolution.

"I suspected that would have interest, but I didn't know how much," said Stattler. "I hadn't found any records of it having been sold in newspaper form before."

Another surprise was the price that a phone bidder paid for an advertisement for Samuel F. B. Morse's telegraph estimated at \$500/750. According to Swann, no other copies are recorded of the 8 1/2" x 5 1/4" letterpress broadside that was printed in Albany, New York, in 1845. A price of \$2500 now sets the auction record for subsequent discoveries of the same.

It should no longer be unexpected that people are willing to pay well for good culinary items. Indeed, the University of Iowa, whose culinary collection is strong, paid \$3000 (est. \$1500/2500) for *Manual del Cocinero y Cocinera*, a cookbook published in Mexico in 1849. Believed to be only the second cookbook published in the country, this first edition includes 11 lithographic plates, two of them hand-colored.

In the same category, a manuscript book of Mexican recipes, cataloged as "circa 1825 (?)"—i.e., from the era before Mexico's first cookbook was published—went to a collector at \$5250 (est. \$1500/2500). It contains 72 manuscript pages with recipes for such dishes as "tortillas de chile verde" and "chiles reyes de picadillo." For Swann's blog, Stattler wrote about and photographed his experience preparing the chiles rellenos recipe. See ([www.swanngalleriesinc.blogspot.com/2013/09/chiles-rellenos-circa-1825.html](http://www.swanngalleriesinc.blogspot.com/2013/09/chiles-rellenos-circa-1825.html)).

"It was great fun to prepare that recipe," said Stattler, who mentioned that he'd spent some years as a line cook in restaurants, "before I entered this business." He reported in the blog, however, that the dish was very labor intensive to make, requiring about three hours' work, and that the result, while very tasty, bore "no resemblance whatsoever to the cheese-filled fare you will find in a typical Mexican restaurant here in the states." In fact, he told us, it was "one of the strangest things I've ever cooked."

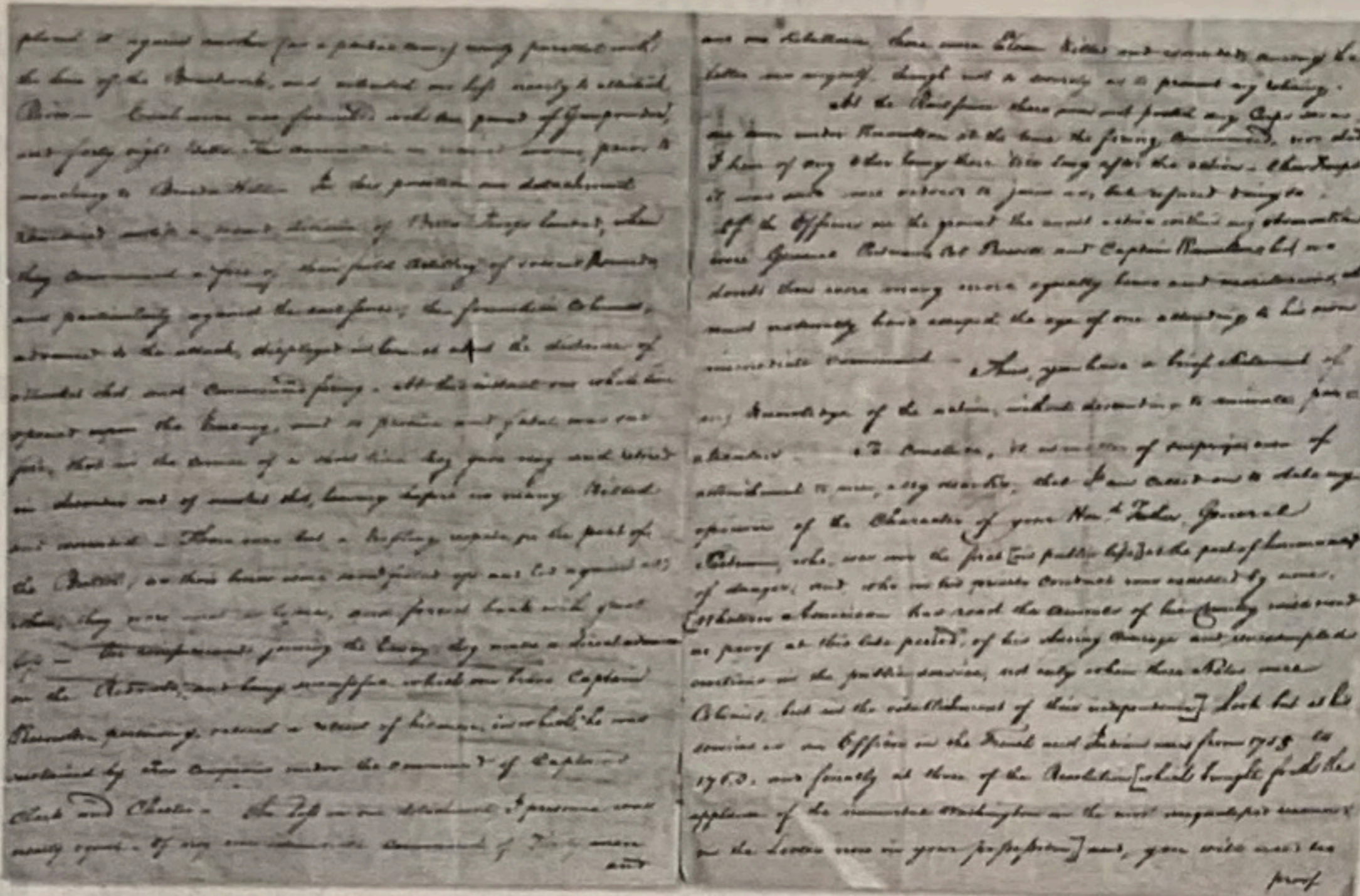
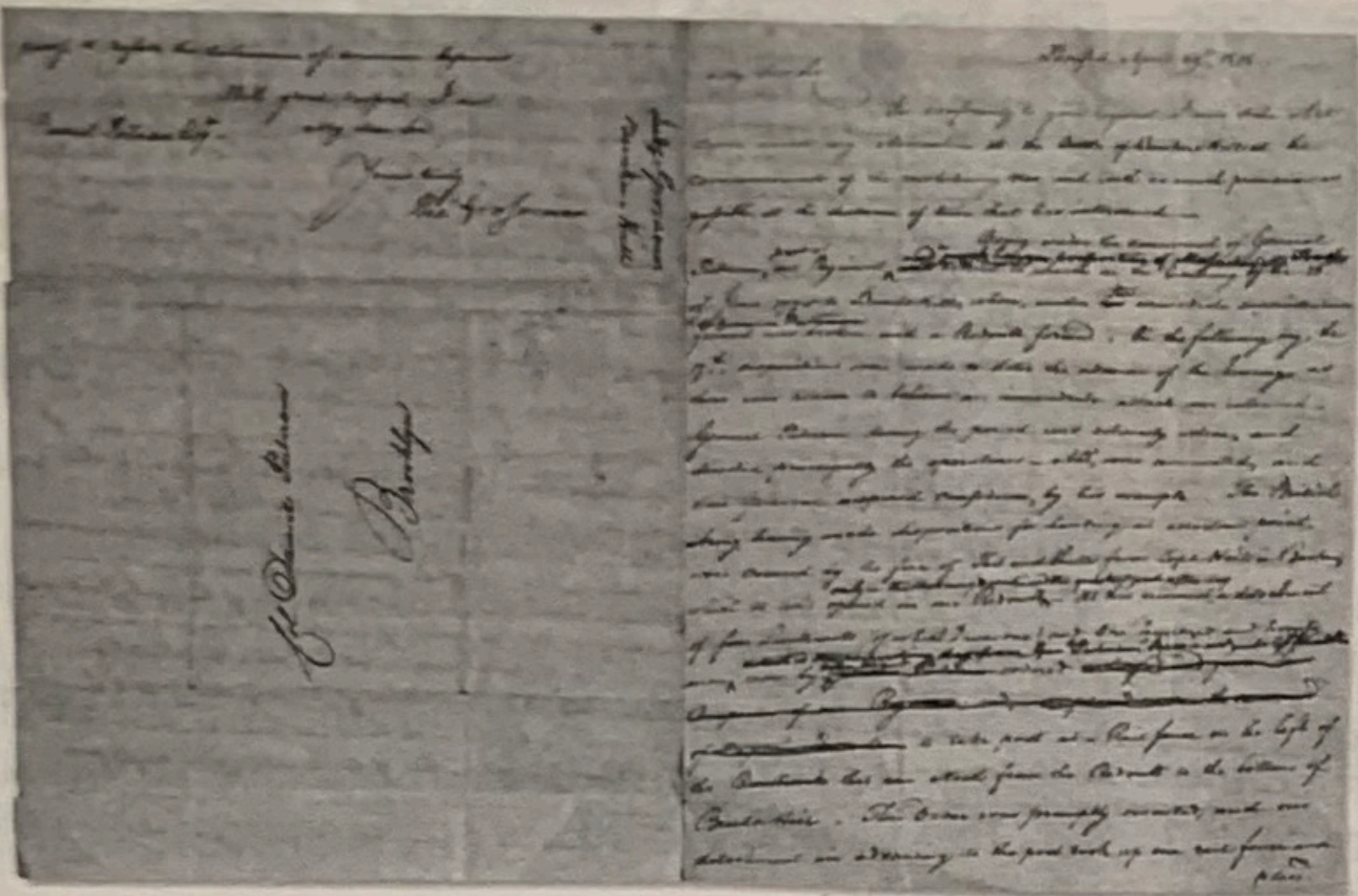
Two items related to Herman Melville came close to the end of this 414-lot sale (85% of which sold). The first, the 1837-39 whaling journal of Obed Chase, sold to an Internet bidder for \$6912 (est. \$5000/7000). The writer of these 103 pages was part of a successful hunt on the whaling ship *Helvetia* in the South Pacific. Captained by Shubael Cottle, the ship sailed out of Hudson, New York, around Cape Horn, stopping at Tahiti and New Zealand, as well as Mocha Island off Chile, in whose waters Mocha Dick, prototype of Moby Dick, used to roam.

The second item, from the estate of collector Kristina Barbara Johnson (d. 2013) of Princeton, New Jersey, has a much closer tie to the great American novelist. Going to a phone bidder at \$10,625 (est. \$1500/2500), it was the original of a well-known letter written on November 2, 1842, by John Brown Coleman of Nantucket describing the hire of Melville as his boat steerer. Coleman was the master of the *Charles & Henry*. Melville was on Mo'orea, an island near Tahiti, having escaped from prison. He had been imprisoned by order of the British consul for having deserted a previous whaling ship. He finished out his time at sea with Coleman, was discharged in Hawaii, and arrived in Boston in October 1844, ready to begin his literary career.

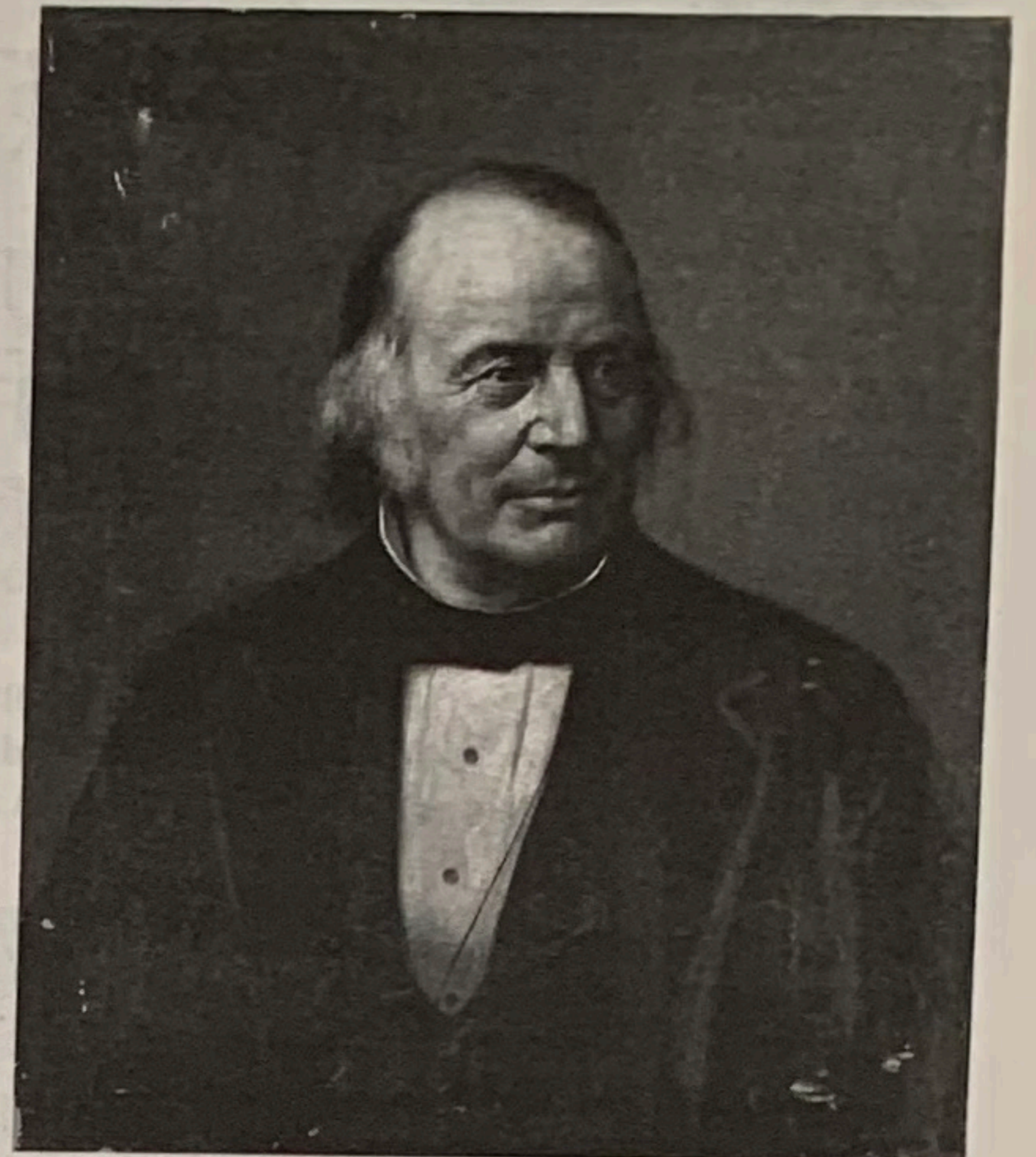
Asked to characterize the sale in general, Stattler noted that while overall results were certainly strong, things seemed "more volatile" than usual, with an unusually low number of items going within their estimate ranges. As he calculated it, nearly half of the lots sold over the high estimate, while "quite a few" of the other half went for under. "Now, that might be because I've become worse at estimating over the years," Stattler said.

Joking aside, there is a more likely explanation. In Stattler's view, "It's a volatility that may have to do with the government shutdown and the impending debt crisis. It seems that people have money and want to buy, but they're not really sure where the market's going. That's my best explanation. I hope by the time your readers actually pick up the magazine, the whole thing will have blown over, and it will seem like a very silly occurrence in a time long ago."

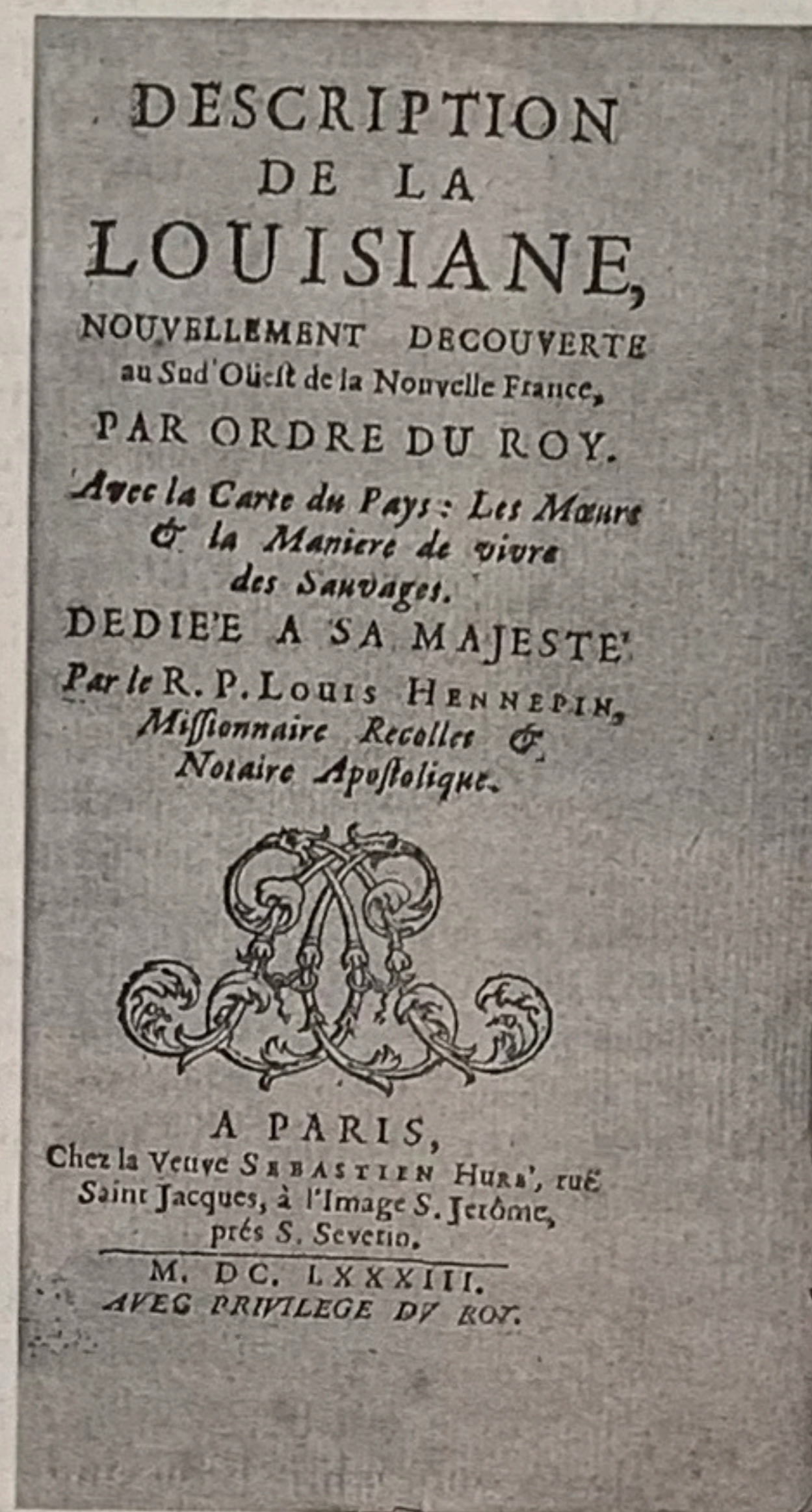
For more information, phone Swann at (212) 254-4710 or see the Web site ([www.swanngalleries.com](http://www.swanngalleries.com)).



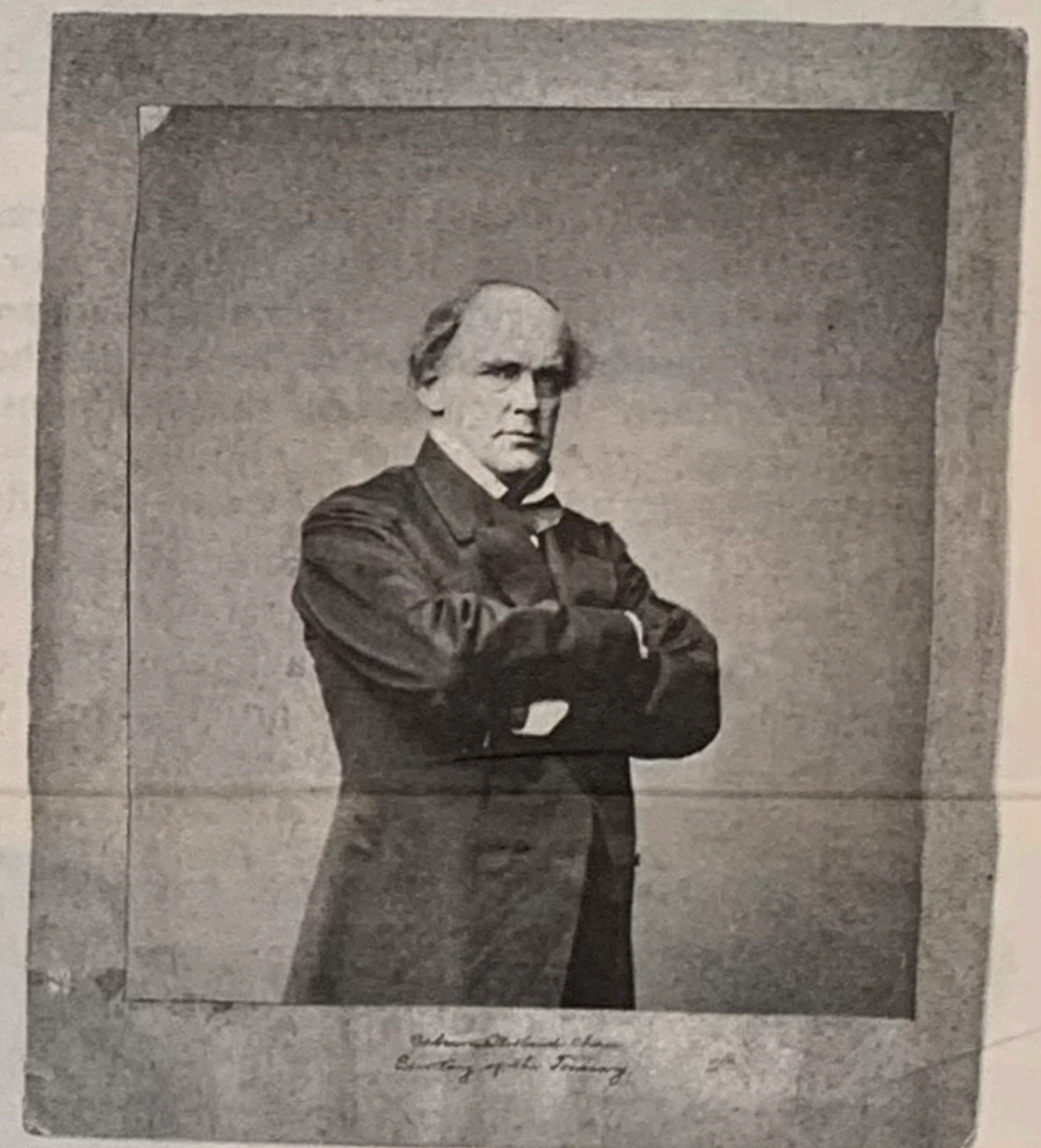
This detailed four-page account of the Battle of Bunker Hill, written in 1818 by Thomas Grosvenor in a letter to Colonel Daniel Putnam, sold in the room to a dealer for \$7250 (est. \$2000/3000). Grosvenor had served under Daniel's father, General Israel Putnam. He wrote it when he was a Connecticut judge. He'd been asked to write it in response to a besmirching of General Putnam's reputation. The contents have been published and widely reprinted. This is the original with Grosvenor's scratch-outs and other editing marks on the pages.



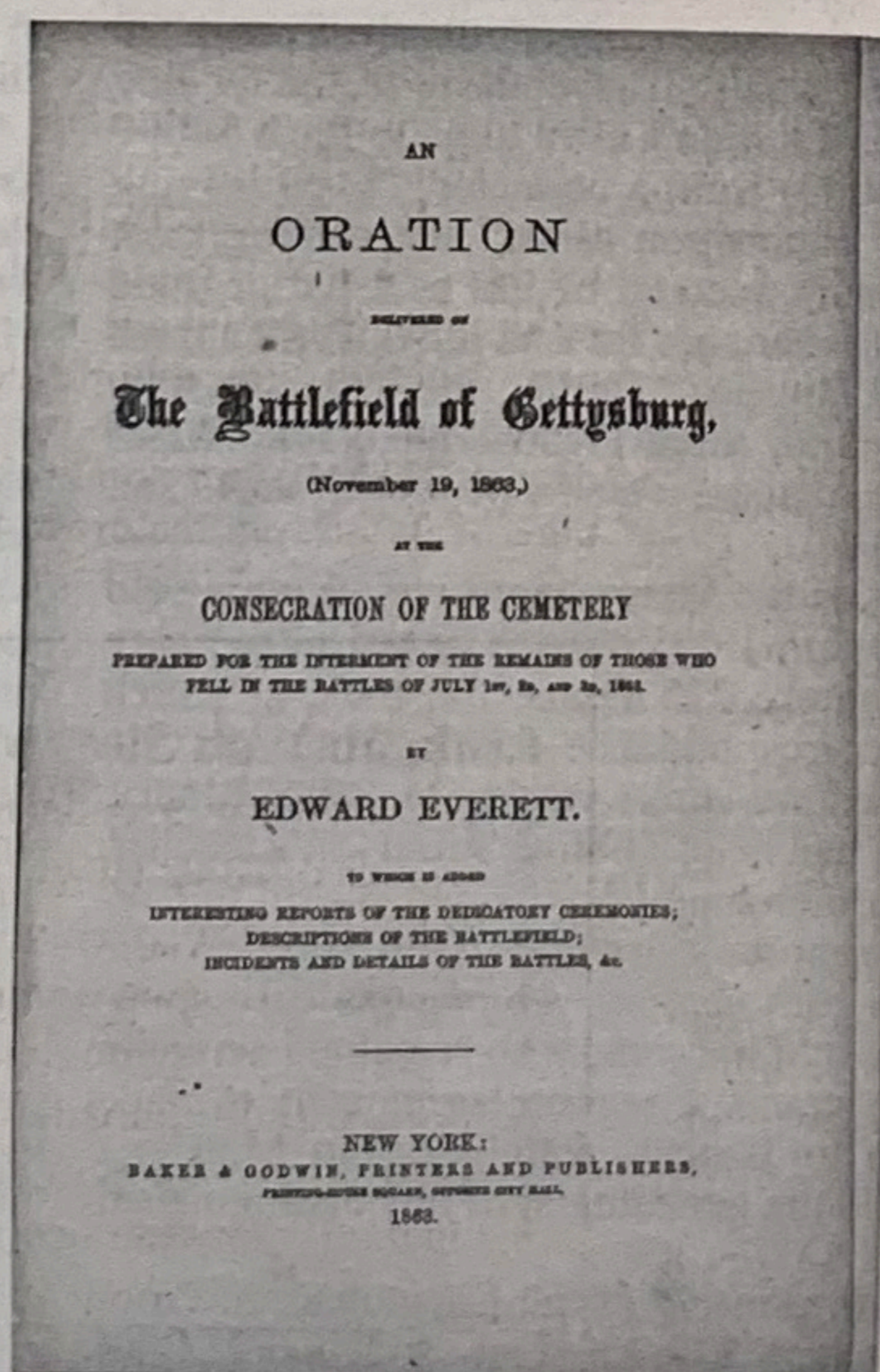
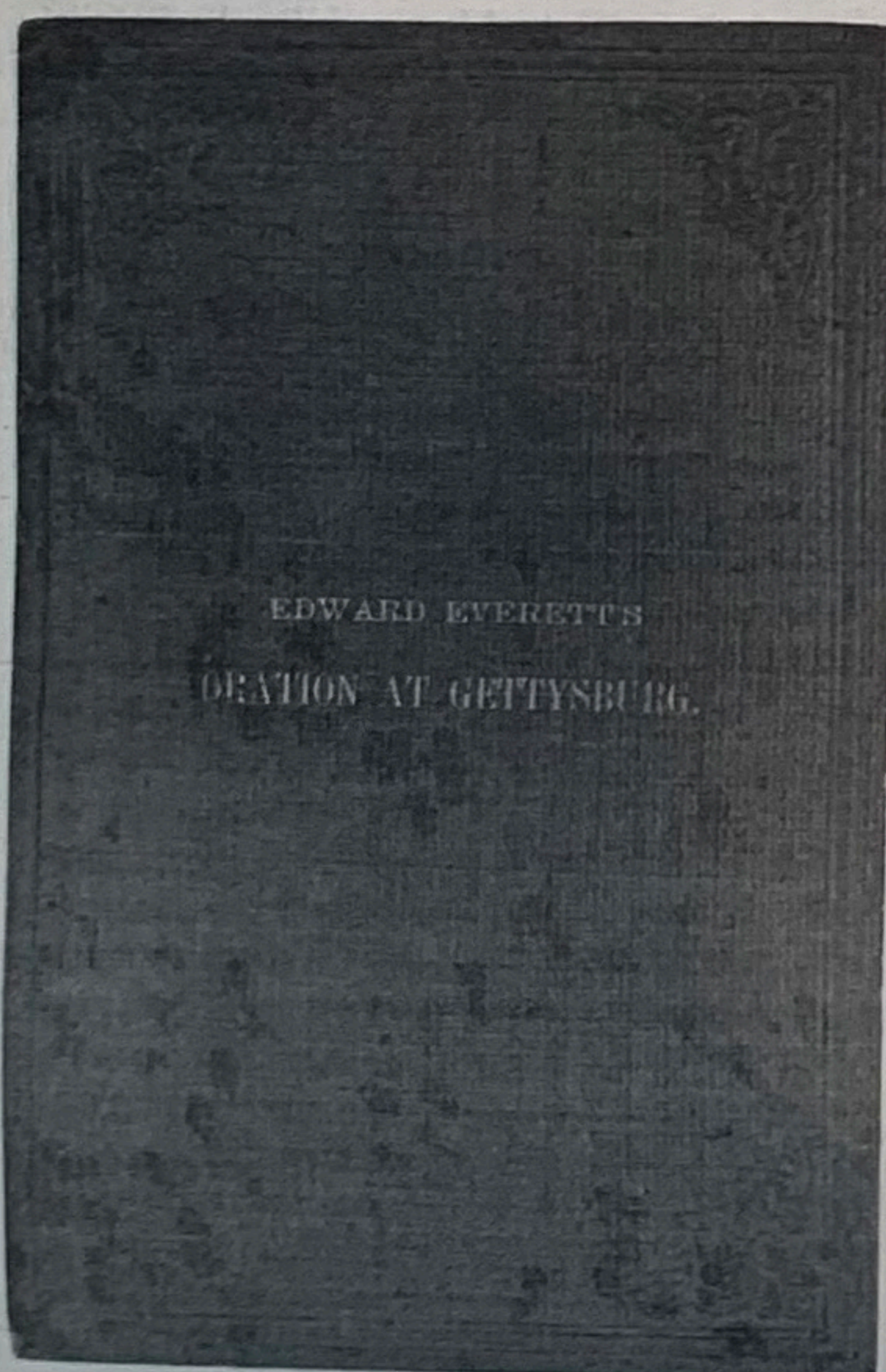
This 30" x 25" oil portrait of Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), painted posthumously in 1876 by Henry Ulke (1821-1910), sold to a collector for \$6912 (est. \$800/1200). The U.S. Capitol has an 1877 Ulke portrait of the naturalist, who taught at Harvard University for many years. This is likely a duplicate that Ulke kept for himself. The painting was sold with the apparent model for the painting, a carte de visite.



This first edition of Louis Hennepin's *Description de la Louisiane*, with folding map, sold for \$30,000 (est. \$30,000/40,000) to bidder 203, a dealer. Issued in Paris in 1683, this is the first published account of La Salle's Illinois explorations, written by the Belgian missionary who accompanied him.



The visage of Salmon P. Chase (1808-1873), Lincoln's secretary of the Treasury, who also served as chief justice of the Supreme Court, is on the \$10,000 bill. (Of course, you already knew that.) This 9" x 7 1/4" photograph was used as the basis for that posthumous portrait painted in 1880 by Henry Ulke. It sold to a phone bidder who needed only three \$1000 bills and a single \$500 bill to pay for it (est. \$2000/3000). Rick Stattler said the buyer was an institution.



What was described in the catalog as "possibly" the first pamphlet printing of the Gettysburg address sold for a bargain \$13,750 (est. \$20,000/30,000) to a dealer. An *Oration Delivered on the Battlefield of Gettysburg* features Edward Everett's speech, but Lincoln's also was reprinted as a seeming afterthought, since its greatness had not yet been recognized. The 48-page pamphlet was published in New York by Baker & Godwin on November 25, 1863, six days after the speeches were made. Usually found in paper wrappers originally offered at 25 cents, this version is in "limp cloth," which was priced at 50 cents.

