June 9th, 2011 Printed & Manuscript Americana:

Lincoln and Baseball, Fire and Brimstone by By Jeanne Schinto

Swann Galleries, Inc., New York

City By Jeanne Schinto

Americana sale on March 31 in

New York City offered 362

Photos courtesy Swann Swann's printed and manuscript

items so diverse they actually succeeded in refreshing that overused term. In fact, the whole field of paper Americana should be applauded for its continual replenishment of ideas about our culture. Where else but at a sale like this one could you find an archive of a 1930's burlesque stripteasedance star's correspondence and a trove of correspondence from evangelical Calvinist preacher Jonathan Edwards? A mid-19thcentury illustrated whaling journal kept by a young man with artistic genes and a late 18th-century manuscript diary by a follower of religious-sect leader Jemima Wilkinson? A political cartoon featuring Abraham Lincoln as a baseball player and a playbill advertising John Wilkes Booth starring as Richard III at a Boston theater? American furniture and decorative arts are a splendid part of our history to be sure, but they represent just a sliver of the pie. Paper items tell stories about the elites, the eccentrics, and everyone in between.

The six autograph letters of

and-brimstone preacher's

Edwards dating from 1752-56

concern the quintessential fire-

mission to the Mohicans at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. They also cover his personal disputes with the powerful landholding Williams family of that region. Feuding. Politicking. Effrontery. Power plays. It's enough for a television mini-series. The fact that this Colonial material was coupled with Native American material accounts for some of the bidders' fervor. In addition, Edwards letters appear very rarely on the market. According to dealer William S. Reese of New Haven, Connecticut, who buys for Yale University, the letters also have copious research potential. Yale has Edwards's papers, the bulk of which was donated by his heirs in 1900, but after \$30,000 (twice the high estimate), Reese was out. The letters went instead to another dealer for \$50,400 (including buyer's premium), making it the top lot of the sale. A collector took a large group of newspapers from the years of 1764-82. Once slated for somebody's kindling pile, they fetched a widely unanticipated \$38,400 (est. \$3000/4000). Of

the 90 issues of Rhode Island's Providence Gazette and Country Journal included in the lot, the most covetable ones were undoubtedly those from 1770-76 with Revolutionary War content. The catalog mentions that these included detailed coverage of the Boston Massacre; a letter from John Hancock warning of the impending British attack on New York; and a reference to the Sons of Liberty in Connecticut, asserting that liberty is "as necessary to the happiness of an African, as it is to the happiness of an Englishman." Swann's catalog also notes that there are references to the formation of Brown University, whose cofounder, the Providence abolitionist and industrialist Moses Brown (1738-1836), was the newspapers' first owner. "They descended to Moses Brown's

He asked for them, and they were retrieved from the kindling pile. Then ever since." potential of it was. So my estimate was a bit low." He laughed.

"I underestimated its potential because I am well versed in early baseball history-that's my avocation," said Stattler. "So I know that pretty much any book on baseball in the Civil War will reproduce that print. I've seen it probably a dozen times in various texts and assumed it was common. But all the printings are from the same Library of Congress copy. So it was widely reproduced, but the original is actually quite scarce, which I had trouble believing when I was writing the catalog."

A dealer paid \$14,400—nearly twice the high estimate—for the

manuscript diary of Ruth Pritchard (1761-1816), follower of Jemima

that drew from Quaker, Shaker, and evangelical influences, Wilkinson

died and a genderless spirit had taken over her body. Calling herself the

first American-born woman to found a religious group. Pritchard, a

schoolmistress in Connecticut, was one of those who fell under her

influence. She described in her diary her sudden conversion and her

the sect established the first permanent White settlement in what was

Currier & Ives lithograph showing Lincoln holding a baseball and a

railroad tie for a bat, with his foot on home plate. The winner of the U.S.

presidential election is pictured with the defeated "team"-i.e., candidates

John Bell, Stephen A. Douglas, and John C. Breckinridge. Estimated at

\$800/1200, the image sold to a dealer-one of 16 contenders-for \$10,800.

It is a new record for an uncolored Currier & Ives print, according to

the gardener spotted them, he thought they might be interesting to have.

"It's written in the spirit of great reverence," Stattler said of the diary. "Whenever the Public Universal Friend does anything, it's described with a hushed awe. She had both male and female followers. They never were more than a few hundred, but it was definitely a substantial community." Bill Reese said he tried and failed to buy that diary for Yale, but he was successful on what readers may find to be an unlikely object of the institution's affection: a stripteaser's archives. On the contrary, said Reese, who paid \$1560 for the letters written by Ann Corio (1909-1999) to her publicist Eddie Jaffe (1913-2003), "The Beinecke Library is very interested in building collections of gender-shifting things and popular entertainment."

that do gender history and they might not have seen this in the center of their field." He added, "It was great fun reading the letters, and you really got the impression this was a smart woman in control of her career." By the end of the sale, 90% of the lots had been sold for a total of \$442,829; by Monday afternoon, another 5% had been claimed in postauction deals. The adjusted gross was then \$446,496. The only major lot that didn't sell was a copy of Judah Monis's Dickdook Leshon Gnebreet.

their money into something tangible. We've also been getting some good p.r. for a lot of these sales, which certainly helps." Swann is holding for later some news about its next printed and manuscript Americana sale, which will feature a single owner's collection. For more information, contact Swann at (212) 254-4710 or see the Web site (www.swanngalleries.com). The Josiah Gardner Abbott THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH COMPANY.
PRINCIPAL OFFICE, SO STATE STREET. family papers of 1815-91, many

1864), was one of the key figures : 10 col 93 in the 20th Massachusetts Infantry and fought in the battles of Ball's Bluff, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg, and he died at the Battle of the Wilderness.

Gardiner Jufts

Mara State agout

The illustrated whaling journal kept by Robert Weir Jr. (1836-1905) sold to a dealer for \$13,200 (est. \$5000/7500). Bill Reese was the underbidder. Weir was the son of Hudson Valley landscape artist Robert Walter Weir; Robert Jr.'s younger brothers John Ferguson Weir and Julian Alden Weir also became artists. The journal, dating from 1855

to 1858, chronicles in words and pictures the young Robert's time on the whaling bark Clara Bell out of Mattapoisett, Massachusetts. A revised and edited version of this journal is in the collection of Mystic Seaport. "It was very different from your typical whaling journal in many ways," said Rick Stattler. "It was difficult to follow as a chronological account." For example, if you were looking to find the ship's ports of call, it was not the best source. "But the artistic quality of the drawings was much, much higher than you're accustomed to seeing in a whaling journal. He obviously had some training, and the genes probably helped too." A grouping of 94 newspapers

from the Colonial and abolish slavery.

THE NATIONAL GAME, THREE DUTS AND ONE RUN.

A 13½" x 18" lithograph

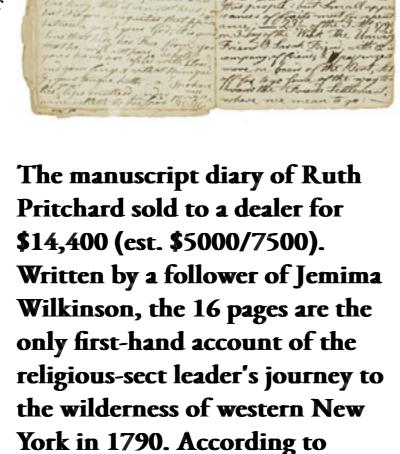
Ives—"The National Game.

published in 1860 by Currier &

Three 'Outs' and One 'Run'"—

sold to a dealer for \$10,800 (est.

\$800/1200). The price is the new world record for an uncolored lithograph by the firm, according to Swann. Besides being the year that Lincoln was elected president, 1860 also marked the moment that baseball became our national sport, said Rick Stattler, an early baseball history expert. Besides sports and politics, scarcity also fueled the bidding. There is a Library of Congress copy of this first baseball-themed print by the famous firm, but Swann found no other copies on WorldCat.org or at auction.



Swann, the other Pritchard

"Public Universal Friend."

family papers included in this lot

shed more light on the sect led by

Wilkinson, who called herself the

A 9½" x 7½" platinum print of Kicking Bear, a Lakota Sioux who fought Custer at Little

Bighorn and helped spread the

\$2880 (est. \$600/900). The

is from circa 1900.

Ghost Dance movement, sold for

photograph by Frank A. Rinehart

A copy of Verbum Sempiternum —a "Thumb Bible"—sold to an institution for \$4080 (est. \$1500/2500). Published in

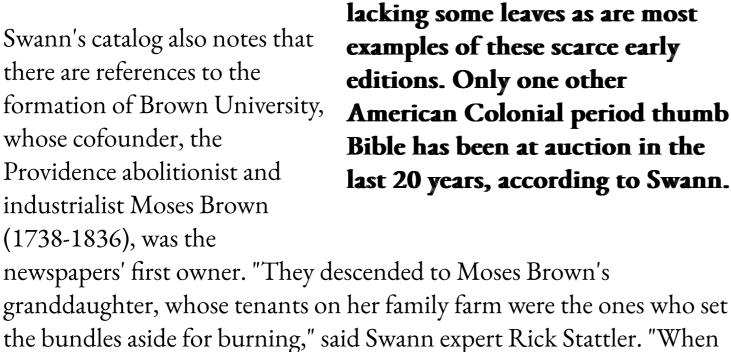
1¾" x 1½" and the third or fourth

Taylor's abridgment in verse for

children. Swann noted that it is

Boston circa 1768, it is

American edition of John



he or somebody else had them bound up, and they've been in that family Their fateful past is why they're not the typical bound newspaper volume of consecutive issues. Indeed, there are four non-Providence newspapers tucked in there. As for the price they made, Stattler said, "It was one of the last lots to arrive before we went to press with the catalog, so I was able to make a nice description but hadn't quite figured out what the sale Stattler was wrong again, pleasantly, on the market value of an 1860

Swann.

then the frontier.

Corio, who began in burlesque in the 1930's and later broke into acting roles on stage and in film, was ambitious and opinionated, to judge from the snippets quoted in the Swann catalog. She believed, for example, that "99% of American women would jump at the opportunity to do a strip. They are all strip teasers at heart...." She also asserted that fan dancing, like that performed by her rival Sally Rand, was cheating. "Fan dancing is a camouflage—you might as well have on long red flannel underwear," she wrote. When Stattler learned that Corio was going to the Ivy League, he said, "I would congratulate Yale on that one, because there are many institutions

A Grammar of the Hebrew Tongue (est. \$15,000/25,000). Published in Boston in 1735, it is America's first Hebrew grammar, written by a Portuguese-Italian who converted from Judaism to Christianity and then taught Hebrew at Harvard using this as his textbook. A copy sold at Christie's on June 21, 2005, for \$31,200, but that was then, and this is now. What the economy takes away with one hand, it gives with the other. "We had quite a few new faces in the room and new absentee bidders from all over the country, so it was a fresh crowd overall," said Stattler. "It's hard

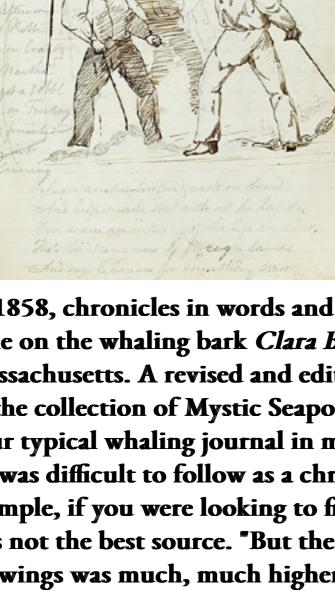
to know why. It could be the economy, with more people looking to put

dealing with the Civil War, sold to a dealer for \$7800 (est. \$1500/2500). Abbott, a Harvard graduate (class of 1832), was a lawyer in Boston and Lowell, Massachusetts, and later a judge

and member of the U.S. House of

Representatives. His son, Major

Henry Livermore Abbott (1842-



Revolutionary War periods, most of them the Providence Gazette and Country Journal, 1764-82, sold to a collector for \$38,400 (est. \$3000/4000). In the issue pictured, dated March 17, 1770, there is detailed coverage of the Boston Massacre. Other issues have content pertinent to Rhode Island state history, including a the general assembly in 1775 to

proposed bill being considered by

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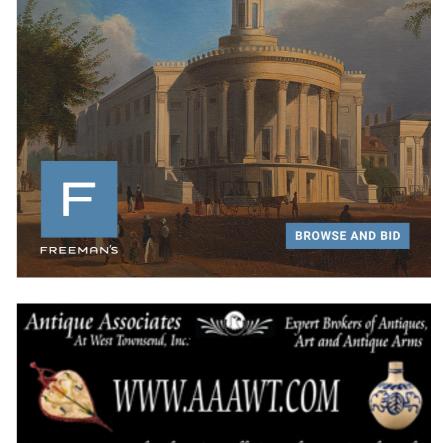
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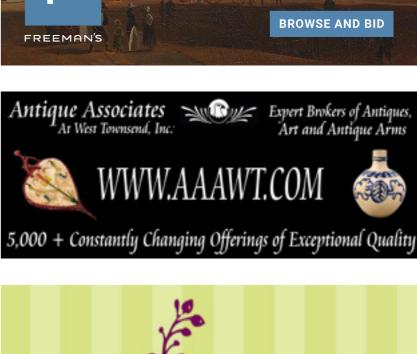
Call 1-877-237-6623 for details.

From SATURDAY, Misca so, to SATURDAY, Misca 15, 1770.

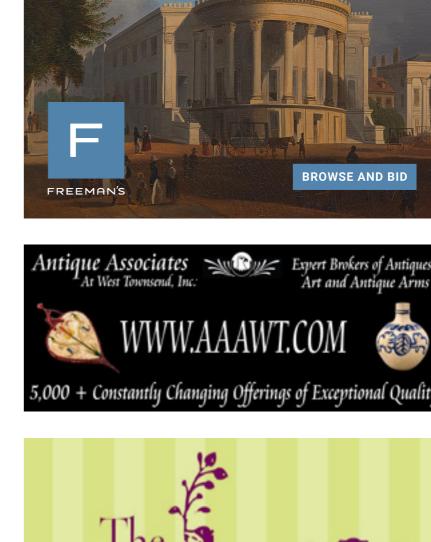


and quality









Wilkinson (1758-1819) of Rhode Island. The founder of a religious sect woke up one morning after an illness at age 18 to announce that she had "Public Universal Friend" thereafter, she is generally considered to be the experiences traveling with Wilkinson to Yates County, New York, where

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