

Profiles in History, Calabasas, California

Final Single-Owner Historic-Documents Auction Is “White Glove” Sale

by Jeanne Schinto

Photos courtesy Profiles in History

The fourth and final sale in the auction series called “The Property of a Distinguished American Collector,” conducted by Profiles in History in Calabasas, California, was that elusive thing, a “white glove” affair. That means every one of the 112 lots offered on July 11 sold.

Profiles in History is best known for selling Hollywood memorabilia, but just a few months before the first “Distinguished American Collector” sales took place on December 18, 2012, the firm’s president and CEO, Joseph M. Maddalena, contracted with Marsha E. Malinowski to become the auction

of those new bidders were Asian. On that subject, Malinowski said that as an 1841 John Quincy Adams letter, estimated at \$5000/8000, climbed to \$27,000, she was “sort of shocked,” until she realized what was happening. Two bidders from Asia were competing for it, undoubtedly because it contained a comment by the former president on the war between Great Britain and China (the so-called Opium War). Only the fourth lot of the sale, it turned out to be a harbinger.

"There were more Asian bidders this time than ever," she said. "As you know, in contemporary art sales the Asian fac-

“They’re so rare, and that’s what makes them so gratifying.”

house's consultant for books and manuscripts. It was Malinowski who landed the plum consignment and brought the distinguished American's collection to market. It was a hands-down success, even without the white-glove finale, and the tally for the quartet of sales that offered 875 lots in all was \$14,600,820 (including buyers' premiums).

One could say Malinowski brought good credentials to the task. She left Sotheby's in May 2012 as a senior vice president after 26 years with that firm, having been involved with some of the most extraordinary sales of manuscripts in auction history. They included the copy of the Magna Carta that sold to philanthropist David M. Rubenstein for about \$21 million and Barry Halper's baseball memorabilia that achieved a total of \$24 million. In addition, she is credited with pioneering a new specialty for the historic paper market—artists' letters, i.e., words penned by painters and sculptors such as Michelangelo and Monet and van Gogh and Giacometti.

Of this sale's white-glove aspect, Malinowski observed, "They're so rare, and that's what makes them so gratifying. As the auction nears its end, and as the idea of selling every lot approaches the realm of possibility, you think, 'Don't wish on it.'" That this auction also exceeded its aggregate estimate "was another wonderful feeling," she said.

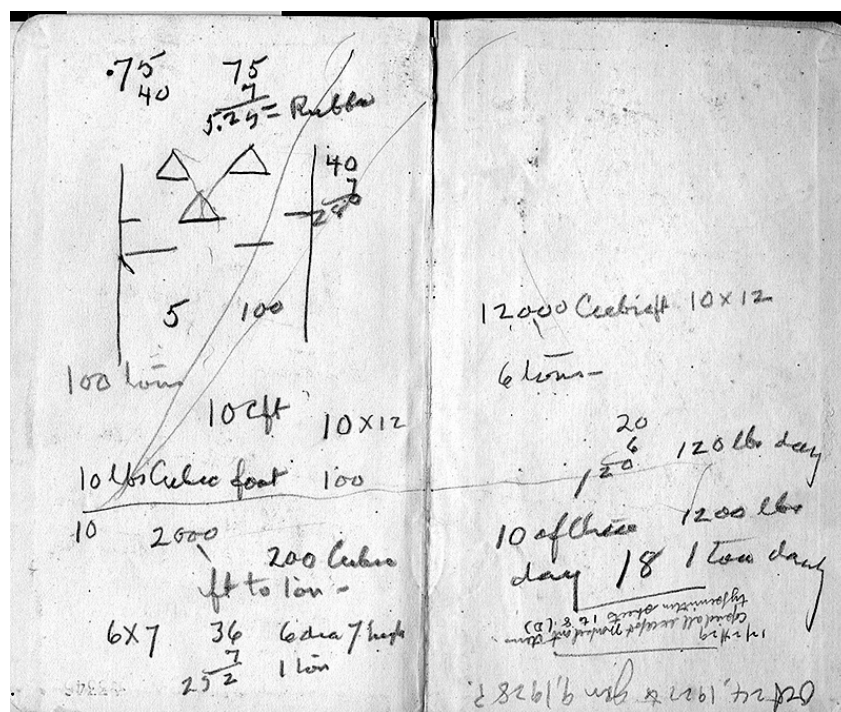
Probably because it was a July sale and many people were on vacation, the most common mode of bidding this time, about 40% by Malinowski's reckoning, was absentee, followed by about 35% on the phone and about 25% on the Internet. Asked how many were known clients and how many were new, she said the split was about 60/40. Interestingly, a number

tor has been enormous. Now it appears to be coming through in other areas, even in documents.” However, unlike the John Quincy Adams letter, some of the other purchases by Asians are not so easily explained. For example, Asians bought all eight lots of Victor Hugo material.

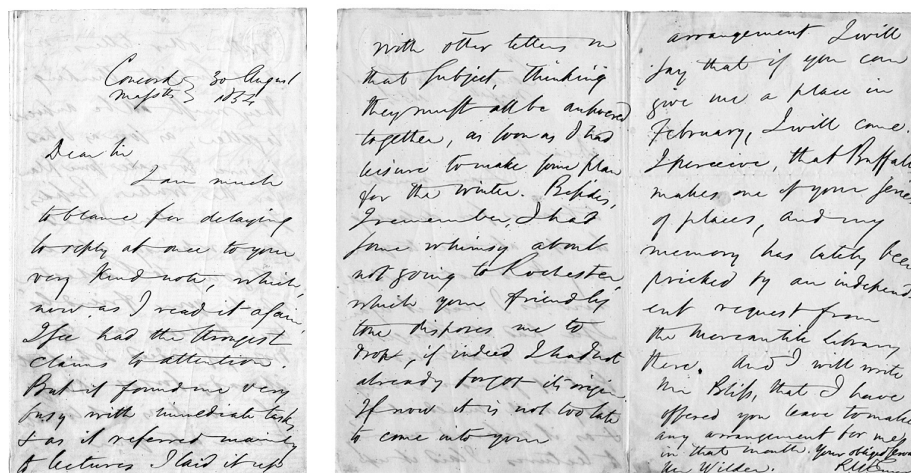
A collection of Hugo letters, written in exile by the author of *Les Misérables* after the coup d'état by Napoleon III, achieved one the biggest prices of the sale, \$51,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000). The sale's other top-priced lots were a Thomas Jefferson letter (\$180,000); a letter secretarial-signed by the Sons of Liberty (\$60,000); a small archive of Ronald Reagan correspondence (\$60,000); a laboratory notebook of Thomas A. Edison (\$60,000); and a massive cache of Herbert Hoover material (\$54,000). In addition, a lot of three Mark Twain letters pertaining to his lecture circuit experiences brought \$57,000, and a single Twain missive, in which the author recounts the derivation of his pseudonym, made \$36,000.

Given that the distinguished American's mega material had already been sold, writing this catalog presented challenges that the other three did not. "It was much more labor intensive than the others," Malinowski said. That's because there were many more manuscripts to be presented. The Hoover archive alone comprised over 500 letters, speeches, memos, and notes spanning nearly five decades. The other kind of challenge Malinowski faced this time was a more creative one. It required her to organize many, many seemingly disparate items into consistently interesting, unified group lots.

Highlights of those groupings included an assemblage of 21 letters relating to American Revolutionary War officers that brought \$42,000 (est. \$6000/8000)



A Thomas Edison laboratory notebook sold to a private collector for \$60,000 (est. \$50,000/75,000). Dating from October 1927 through January 1928, it is 121 pages in the inventor's hand, including drawings, detailing his attempt to find alternate sources for the production of rubber for automotive tires at the urging of Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone. From the collection of Edison's granddaughter, it had gone into the distinguished American's collection. A group lot of Edison items (not shown) brought \$30,000 (est. \$8000/12,000). Of the 14 letters in that lot, one of the most significant was typed on imprinted stationery "From the Laboratory of Thomas A. Edison" and signed by the inventor. Dated October 31, 1911, it is about bringing electricity to areas outside metropolitan areas. "The business I refer to which is now ready is the Electric Lighting of Country Estates lying beyond the lines of the Lighting Companies in towns and cities," Edison wrote to Harry V. Herrmann of New York. "This unoccupied territory is very great and the present systems of kerosene, gasoline or acetylene are undesirable." That lot went to another private collector.



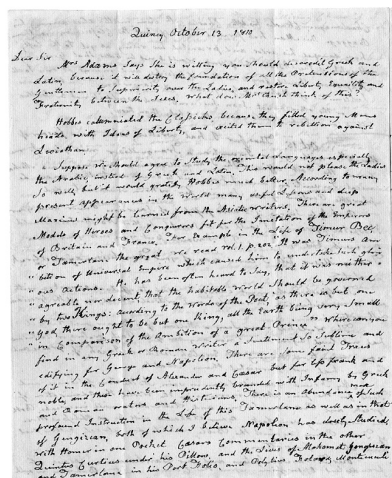
A group of eight letters and documents by American and English writers including Jack London, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Fenimore Cooper, and Rudyard Kipling sold for \$16,800 (est. \$5000/8000). London's letter to a high school friend says in part that he often harks back to those teenage years, "but the majority of those I knew then seem to have forgotten me." The buyer was a private collector.

and a group of 11 letters written by signers of the Declaration of Independence and generals in the Revolutionary War “that outline financial matters of the Continental Congress” that fetched \$33,000 (est. \$5000/8000). Even more impressive, for the cleverness of their themes, were nine groups of Civil War items with titles such as “Financing the Confederacy” and “the Ladies of Robert E. Lee,” the latter a collection of three wartime letters by Mrs. Robert E. Lee and the Lees’ daughter Agnes.

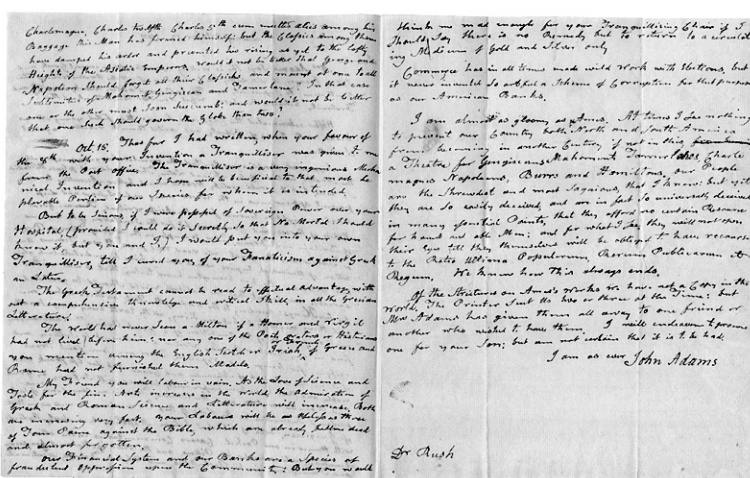
"I thought there would be more successful bidding from dealers on group lots, but private collectors kept outbidding them," Malinowski said.

Not surprisingly, a revelation of the identity of the distinguished American was not part of the finale. The gentleman remains anonymous, although he can be defined by his vast interests, ones that ranged from Henry James to Frank James, Frank Lloyd Wright to Orville Wright, Louis Pasteur to Louis Armstrong, and from George Washington to George Bernard Shaw to George Sand. He can also be defined by his membership in a generation of collectors who started collecting 30 years ago.

Asked her advice for those who would like to begin collecting historic documents now or who have already begun to collect a little, Malinowski had three points to make. "First, I would find a couple of dealers and experts at the auction houses and develop a rapport with them. You can't work in a vacuum. Second, I would subscribe to *American Book Prices Current* for auction records. I think it's healthy to get as much information as possible and as much education as possible on your own, so you'll have that strength when you then go ask for advice. Third, I would never, ever get just one opinion on a manuscript. You need to have a set of opinions."



A three-page autograph letter signed by John Adams to Benjamin Rush fetched \$15,600 (est. \$12,000/15,000). Dated October 13 and 15, 1810, it represents Adams's ongoing argument with Rush about the merits of a school curriculum that includes Latin and Greek. "My friend you will labour in vain," Adams wrote to his fellow signer of the Declaration of Independence. "Your Labours will be as useless as those of Tom Paine against the Bible, which are already fallen dead and almost forgotten." Another section of the letter is about the American character when it comes to political matters. It is "the shrewdest and most sagacious," yet so "easily deceived," in Adams's opinion. The buyer was a private collector.



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For myself, I'd like to live long enough to write about a major collection of historic documents assembled by a gentlewoman rather than a gentleman. Inarguably, "paper" is a male-dominated collecting universe.

“I know a number of women who collect, but their collections tend to be very narrowly focused—female British writers, for example,” Malinowski said. “Yet, I have always thought there could be an extraordinary collection built around the theme of ‘women of power’ or ‘women of substance’ throughout history. You could start with Elizabeth the First, Catherine

the Great, Catherine of Aragon, then go on to Madame de Staël, Marie Curie, and Ayn Rand. That would be a stunning collection. It would involve the thrill of the hunt to find some of these things, and some would be very expensive, but there would be plenty of things in the accessible price ranges.”

On that note, Malinowski said she is already putting together “what is looking like an incredible various-owners sale for December.”

For more information, contact the auction house at (310) 859-7701 or see the Web site (www.profilesinhistory.com).

my friends & children chiefs of the
Cherokee Nation

Having now finished our business, of which it
thinks to mutual satisfaction, I cannot take leave of you
without expressing the satisfaction I have received from you
and I will with my own eyes that we ourselves we have been
making to incourage I lead you on in the way of impro-
ving your situation have not been unsuccessful it has
been also given some in your ground specimens annually.
You are becoming farmers learning the use of the plough
the hoe, increasing your grounds employing that labour
in their cultivation which you formerly employed in ha-
ving & on land, a few handsome specimens of cotton cloth,
received from you, woven by yourselves, you are also raising cat-
tle & hogs for your food & horses to draw your labours, so
on my children, in the same way, do I opened the question you
appeared in it the happier & more respectable you will
be than brothers whom you have happened to meet
here from the west & the north west, have wanted you
to compare your situation now with what it was
formerly, they also make the comparison, they rec-

or to obtain justice for you, & we will support them in it.
 If any of your bad people injure your neighbors, be ready to re-
 know ledge it & do them justice. It is more honorable to re-
 cognize than to resist on it. Tell all your chiefs, young men,
 women & children, that Slaves them by the hands & feet & last,
 that I am their father, wish their happiness, & will be good,
 & am always ready to promote their good.

My Children, Thank you for your visit
 & pray to the great Spirit who made us all & planted us all
 in this land to live together like brothers that he will con-
 duct you safely to your homes & grant you to find your
 families & your friends in good health. -

W. L. Garrison
 Jan. 10. 1866.

Four manuscript pages, with a big, bold signature by Thomas Jefferson writing as president, brought \$180,000 (est. \$150,000/250,000). The four 8" x 10" pages, dated January 10, 1806, are his famous and widely published address that begins, "My Friends & Children, Chiefs of the Cherokee Nation." Jefferson wrote the speech as the Louisiana Purchase was forcing Native Americans further west. He implored them to leave and in doing so to give up hunting for farming. He urged them to be peaceful, to stop warring, and learn to cultivate the earth instead. In his words, "The Mississippi now belongs to us, it must not be a river of blood." The buyer was a private collector.

Dear Carl:

Hope you and house had
a good trip - Just got these
and am sending them to you on
the Bremen - I don't think worth the
negatives that were developed on
the boat - you can see how
much better the painted is
in the buffalo picture -
I'll have the others washed
and have a complete set printed for you
- Better to get them printed in
America - French painted this
after 2-3 attempts as to the quality of the
print - Give our love to Uncle Gus,
Arlene and Max -

See you soon - Best to you
both

Trust


If you and is better and that you're better
better

just sent a
 letter, pal.
 Best always
 from Mary and
 me.
Ernesto

✦
 Best wishes
 for
 Christmas
 and the
 New Year

ERNEST AND MARY HEMMINGWAY

An Ernest Hemingway archive that dates from a tumultuous period in the author's life—the years leading up to and succeeding his divorce from his third wife, Martha Gellhorn, in 1945—sold for \$15,600 (est. \$12,000/18,000).

 **P. T. BARNUM.**
NEW & GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH
P. T. BARNUM, General Manager and Sole Proprietor.
New York Nov 14 - 1878.
Dear Sir - I have con-
sulted my managers about the Exhibition build-
ings they feel out of this is our best asset here, this
makes those that we have lost very hard to replace
I up. The expenses of this building are far too big
for these times, the building requires many repairs the
roof leaks badly and the inside work needs paint
Very Yours
P. T. Barnum


Barnum & Bailey
 Greatest Show on Earth
 BRIDGEPORT, CONN.
 THE SHOW OF
M. J. Dutton - Agent
 The wonderful story of
 THE
 PEQUENOCK NATIONAL BANK
 BRIDGEPORT, CONN.
 No. 23418
Apr 29 1901
 \$12.50
 DOLLARS
Wm. J. Dutton


The distinguished American collector's interests ranged from American bankers and financiers to another sort of money man, P.T. Barnum. A collection of six letters and documents pertaining to the maker of popular museums and circuses brought \$7200 (est. \$6000/8000).

[illegible]

The sale featured four lots pertaining to Victor Hugo that together totaled \$128,400. All were bought by Asians. This unsigned one-page autograph manuscript fetched \$18,000 (est. \$5000/8000). Dated October 31, 1852, it discusses the author's continuing, vehement opposition to Napoleon III.

A Thomas Mann archive of 14 letters dating from 1934 to 1953 sold for \$24,000 (est. \$10,000/15,000). Four are autograph letters signed; the rest are typed. Seven are in English, two in German, one in French. The buyer was a European.

The contents of his memos were
 given over by myself to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~honorable~~
 on June 5th. To Col Hoare June 7th
 To Mr White June 6th - To the American
 delegates on the reparations Commission
 on June 7th.


 Joy to the Christmas Season
 and Welcome to the New Year
*Peggy Ann
 Head of the
 Headcut House*

An archive of Herbert Hoover material—over 500 letters, speeches, memos, and notes, spanning the period February 1918 to June 1964, mostly typed and most with full signature—brought \$54,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000). One of the highlights is a long series of letters to Lewis Strauss, Hoover's private secretary, who later attained the rank of rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. The subject matter is largely policy and political matters but also revealing of the friendship that grew between the two men. Asked who the buyer was, Marsha Malinowski said, "It's going to a very, very good home. You may hear about it." My translation of her cryptic answer is that it went to an institution.

[illegible]

Gentleman
 Your favour of February 19th came to hand by a letter from Liberty
 in acknowledgment of which, have come to London general who
 readily concurred with your desire that we should immediately
 receive in from your Committee of the 1st of January
 representative in John Cargill. They were graciously read
 and fully adopted by the Committee of this town Liberty
 in many who this day voted the Liberator to Committee
 of Correspondence to whom your Committee shall ever most
 agreeable with the greatest esteem &c
 Gentlemen Your most Obedt
 humble Serv^t
 David Pagan
 Agent for
 John Humphreys
 Thomas Young
 Esq
 Albany March 17th 1846
 to Mr J. P. Robinson
 care New
 John Lamb
 Wm Wily
 Gephom Mass

A group of three Louis Armstrong letters, a signed contract, and an inscribed and signed photograph brought \$6600 (est. \$5000/8000). The photograph and accompanying letter are each signed by Armstrong to Chris Clifton, at the time a young trumpeter who was playing with the Tuxedo Brass Band, Satchmo's band of 50 years earlier.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

To Phineas Clapton I think these letters are just what you need Love Phineas

Louis Armstrong

The Great American Music Company
New York, Chicago, Hollywood

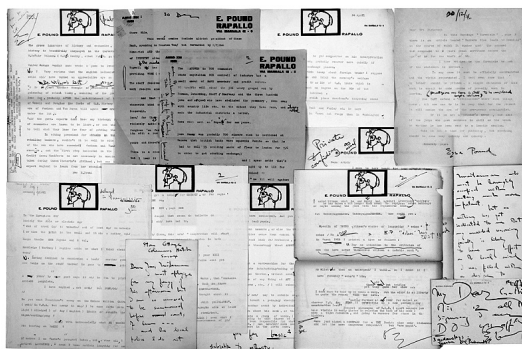
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playing with Lil will do you
some good. She's from the old
school and can do wonders for
you. Don't let you thrive?
I am looking to hearing you playing
with your own band some day.
You have everything to work with.
You are young & strong and know
your Horns so there you are.
Take advantage of it Kate. And
you know that I am with you
all the way. Love sent regards.
Thanks again for everything.
From your Boy,
Satch
Don't Counting

A letter signed with secretarial signatures by the Society of the Sons of Liberty—Thomas Chase, William Lux, D. Chamier, Robert Alexander, and Robert Adair—sold for \$60,000 (est. \$10,000/15,000). The intended recipient of the letter from the group that formed to oppose the Stamp Act is unknown. Even though the names aren't as famous as, say, Benjamin Rush's and a secretary signed them, competition was considerable for what appears to be a document from a letter book. "The fact that it was so early and so rare got two private collectors just fighting for it, and the one who didn't get it is so disappointed," Malinowski said.

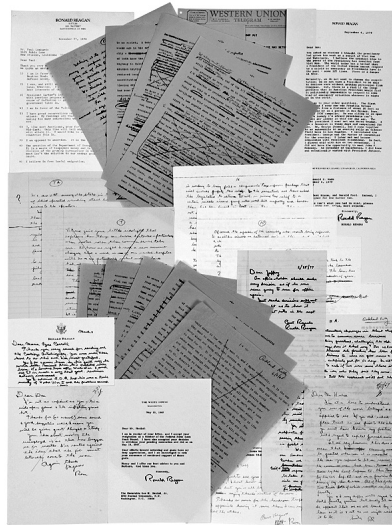
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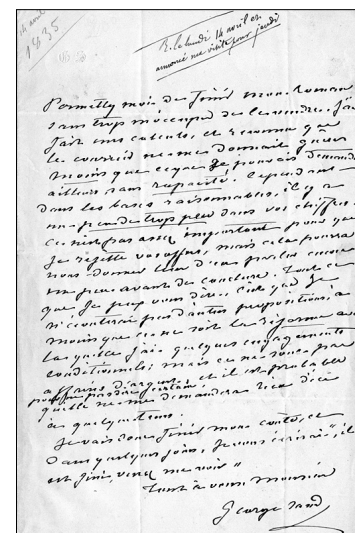
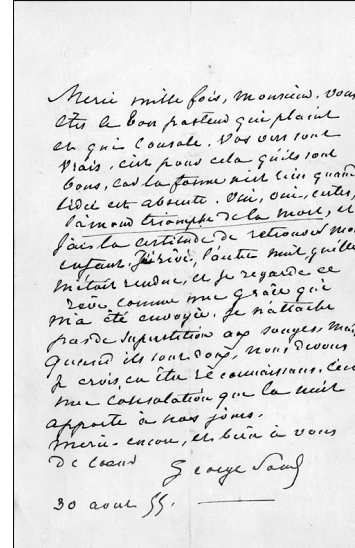
An extensive H.L. Mencken archive of 57 letters and publications by or about the sharp-witted journalist, satirist, cultural critic, and author of *The American Language* sold for \$18,000 (est. \$15,000/25,000).



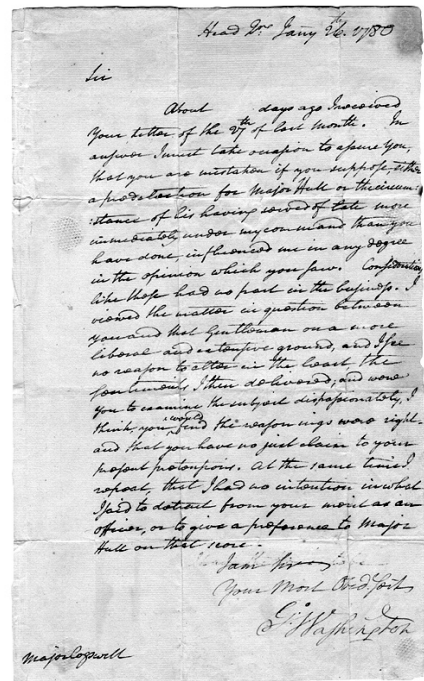
A collection of 12 typed and autograph letters signed by Ezra Pound realized \$24,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000). The imprint of Pound's profile that decorates his stationery was designed by Pound's friend Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, an artist whose death in the First World War led to the poet's depression that devolved into psychosis.



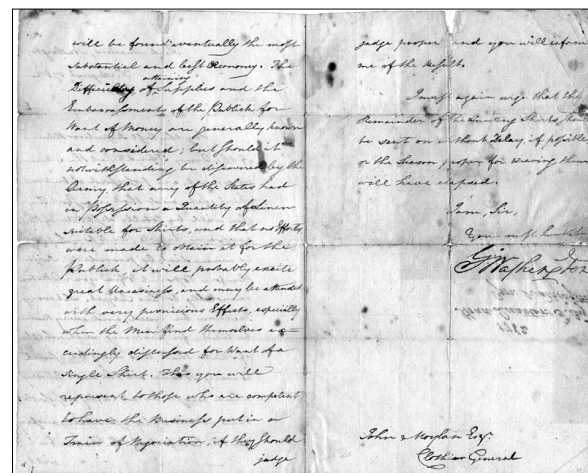
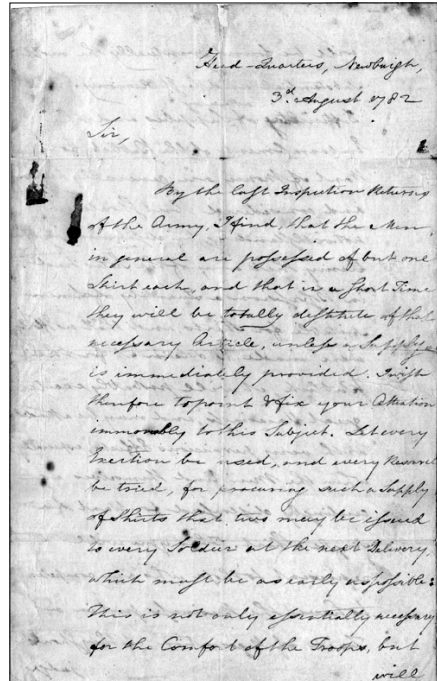
A Ronald Reagan archive of both autograph and typed manuscript pages (unsigned), 17 pages in all, sold to a private collector for \$60,000 (est. \$10,000/15,000). The lot includes a heavily annotated 1968 speech discussing the cost of government, its burden on taxpayers, and the failure of Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society." The speech was reworked in Reagan's hand—evidence of his collaboration in the writing process.



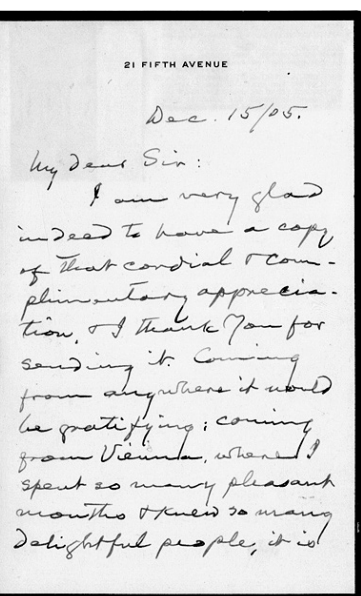
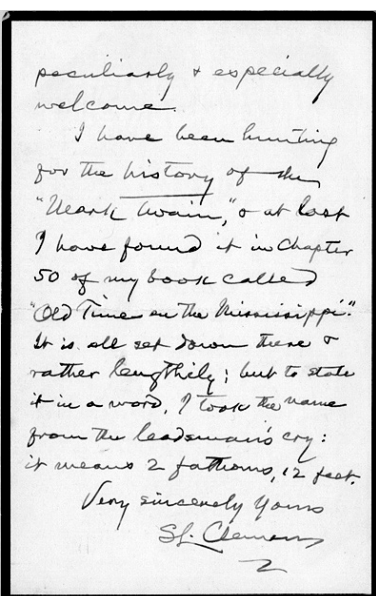
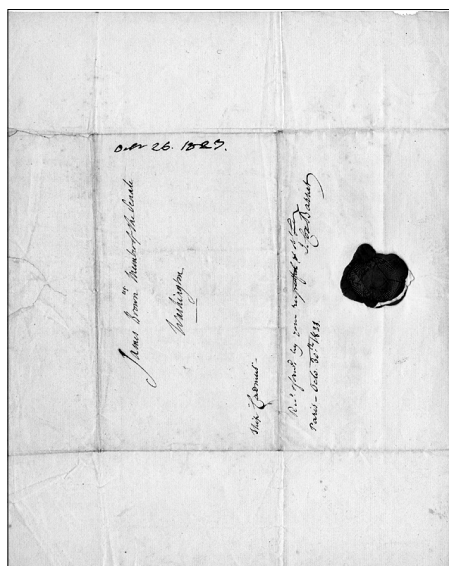
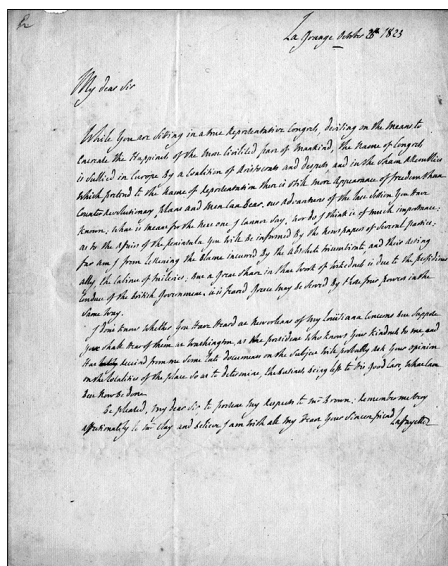
Nine autograph letters signed by George Sand fetched \$27,000 (est. \$10,000/15,000). Comments on literary matters include this one, in English, to her publisher: "I beg you to make sure that my punctuation is observed; without it my style, (by its very nature) is incomprehensible. Thus, I am very careful in my corrections, but most newspapers couldn't care less...I admit that I am extremely sensitive to a comma which distorts an idea..." [Ellipses are the cataloguer's.] Despite the French author's plea, I for one am itching to remove the unnecessary comma after "style." The lot went to Europe.



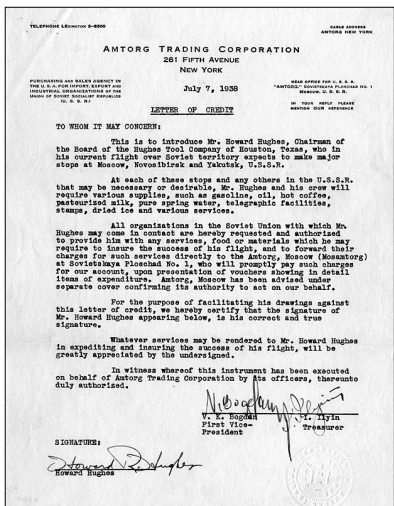
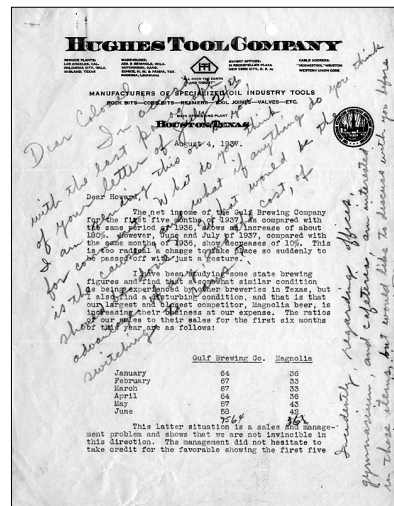
A two-page George Washington letter, in the hand of the commander-in-chief's secretary Tench Tilghman, to Colonel George Baylor, on May 1, 1778, sold for \$39,000 (est. \$15,000/25,000). Written from headquarters at Valley Forge, after the terrible winter of starvation and cold due to military mismanagement, this letter is about moving forward cautiously. In another letter, written years later in Newburgh, New York, Washington was still discussing terrible conditions. "I find that the men in general are possessed of but one Shirt each, and that in a Short time they will be totally destitute of that necessary Article..." he wrote. The three pages, signed to John Moylan on August 3, 1782, went for \$27,000 (est. \$20,000/30,000).



A three-page autograph letter signed in Le Havre by the Marquis de Lafayette sold for \$19,200 (est. \$5000/8000). Dated August 4, 1779, it is addressed to Louis XVI's minister of foreign affairs. The subject is Lafayette's impatience as he waits on the coast of France for the invasion of England that never took place. The buyer was, again, a private collector.



A two-page autograph letter signed by Samuel Clemens to an unnamed recipient in Vienna and explaining his Mark Twain pseudonym sold for \$36,000 (est. \$5000/7000). "I took the name from the leadman's cry: it means 2 fathoms, 12 feet," the author wrote, noting that a lengthier explanation had been published in *Old Times on the Mississippi*. The letter, on his 21 Fifth Avenue stationery with a mourning border, was dated December 15, 1905. His wife, Olivia "Livvy" Langdon Clemens, had died on June 5, 1904.



An archive of six letters from Howard Hughes sold for \$13,200 (est. \$8000/12,000). One of the letters is "excessively rare," as the catalog stated, because it is from the period 1960-61 when the eccentric American industrialist and aviator suffered his two mental breakdowns, after which he ordered correspondence from that period destroyed. The buyer was "a private collector who really loves American history," said Malinowski.