

Swann Galleries, New York City

Slavery and Abolition Documents Are Highlight of \$1 Million-Plus Sale

by Jeanne Schinto
 Photos courtesy Swann Galleries

Swann Galleries’ printed and manuscript Americana sale in New York City on September 26 achieved some phenomenal results, particularly for archives, family papers, diaries, and other unique items in the categories of slavery and abolition, Mormons, Latin Americana, and the American West. Exceptional lots that represented topical subjects—immigration, presidents, politics—did well, too, seeming to express the mood and preoccupations of the country.

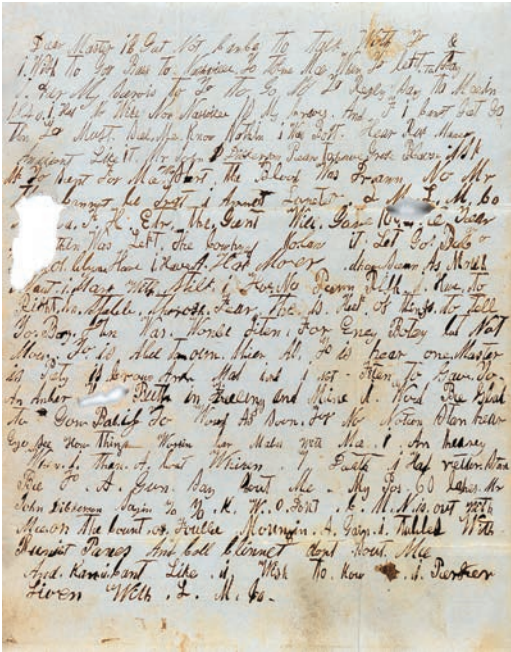
The sale’s top price-getter was its most sobering item. It was a massive archive of business records from the Dickinson & Shrewsbury saltworks of Kanawha Salines, West Virginia, that included extensive correspondence relating to the company’s enslaved laborers. The collection of more than 2000 items went to a phone bidder for \$173,000 (including buyer’s premium). Rick Stattler, Swann’s book department director and its printed and manuscript Americana specialist, said the buyer was the William Reese Company, acting as agent for an institution. The unnamed institution will announce the acquisition “in the near future,” the New Haven, Connecticut, firm said in a statement.

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Dating from 1801 to 1908, most of it from 1820 to 1865, the trove, unprecedented in its detail, not only provides documentation of a large industrial enterprise, the firm’s dealings with slave traders and slave catchers, and its handling of the enslaved laborers themselves, it also includes information about specific black Americans with connections to the saltworks, most significantly the extended family of Booker T. Washington (1856-1915). When Emancipation came, nine-year-old Washington went to work at the saltworks, packing salt into barrels for long hours before and after school. At age 11 he was able to leave that compromised life, employed as a household servant before going on to become the educator, orator, and advisor to U.S. presidents we celebrate today.

Swann made available a 60-page inventory of the records. The two key figures in the story that unfolds through the voluminous material are the firm’s principals, William Dickinson Sr. (1772-1861) and his brother-in-law Joel Shrewsbury (1779-1859). On February 22, 1833, Shrewsbury wrote to his partner about their labor force of 88 enslaved people, listing them as “4 furnaces, 12 hands each—48; Waggoneers—4; Engine attenders—4; [Coopers]—10; Black smiths—2; Cooks—4; Plantation boys—16.” A couple of decades later, the force numbered “140 to 150 negroes making 400,000 b’s of salt per annum.” In a September 17, 1854, letter Shrewsbury plans a hunt for escapees, having found a man who “promised to take his son and dogs with him and...hunt for the negroes tonight & tomorrow, as long as we may wish him to do.... If he can get upon their tracks, he thinks he can make his dogs follow them.” Shrewsbury seems no less bothered by what the enslaved people are doing on their free time. On October 22, 1854, he complains about some who attended a “frolic” (house party) with “free negroes” and plans a punishment: “Our own negroes that was there ought to be whipped for it well at once, to have no time to dodge & plague us, & their Sunday clothes taken from them.”

Stattler stressed that original manuscripts relating to slavery and those who were enslaved are not rare. What is rarely seen is an archive this large that “tells the story of one location and one group of people over time.” It is also unusual for such documents to describe an enterprise other than an agricultural operation—i.e., a plantation. As his catalog rightly claimed: “Sold piece by piece, hundreds of these items would be worthy of



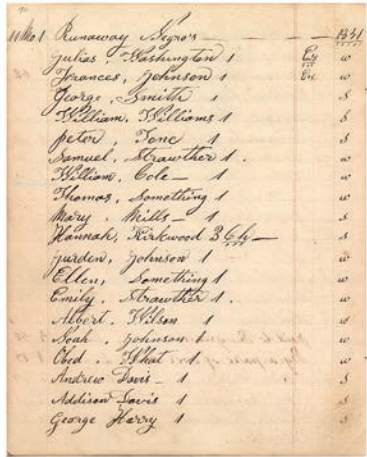
William Reese Company, acting as agent for an unnamed institution, paid \$173,000 (est. \$80,000/120,000) for the records of the Dickinson & Shrewsbury saltworks of Kanawha Salines, West Virginia.

individual sale. If kept together, several books and dissertations remain to be written from this evocative material.”

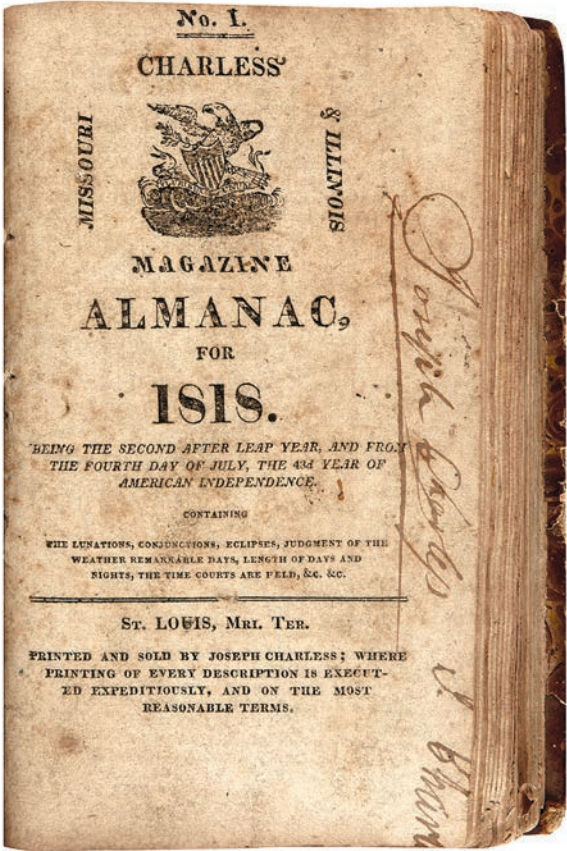
A second archive in the slavery and abolition category—the papers of Zachariah Taylor Shugart (1805-1881) and his extended family—went for \$100,000 to the same dealer who bought the saltworks archive. Among the 63 items were an account book kept by Shugart in which he kept a record of his involvement with the Underground Railroad. A professional genealogist I once spoke with about a purported Underground Railroad location in my Massachusetts town scoffed that “every house in New England with a root cellar” is touted as an Underground Railroad stop at some point in its history, especially when property changes hands, to enhance its value. Besides, by the time enslaved people got that far north, scholars have noted, there was less need for safe houses. Shugart’s Underground Railroad activities took place in Iowa, Indiana, and Michigan, and as the Swann catalog states: “Taken as a whole, we don’t know of any other Underground Railroad documents at auction that have approached the extent or detail of Zachariah Shugart’s account book. Offered in the context of Shugart’s other personal papers, its authenticity and power are beyond question.”

Fourteen of the Mormon-related lots came from the collection of Herbert S. Auerbach (1882-1945). Auerbach, an heir to his family’s eponymous Salt Lake City department store, was a collector of Western Americana with a special interest in Mormons and the state that Mormons are most identified with, Utah. The core of his collection had previously been dispersed at auctions in the late 1940s and late 1950s. Auerbach’s sister Madeline Auerbach Werner had handled the estate at the time. The items sold by Swann apparently got handed down to the son of a friend of Werner. “The Auerbach provenance did help,” said Stattler. “Auerbach is still remembered as one of the earliest collectors of this material.”

Among them was a Nauvoo Legion Association stock certificate signed by Brigham Young and two other Mormon leaders. These stocks were issued by the state of Illinois in 1844 and 1845 to raise funds for the defense of the city of Nauvoo, where Joseph Smith and his followers relocated in 1839 after facing hostility in Missouri. Swann was able to trace only three other



The Zachariah Taylor Shugart family papers, including documentation of the family’s connection to the Underground Railroad, sold for \$100,000 (est. \$30,000/40,000) to the William Reese Company acting as agent for the same institution that acquired the saltworks archive. According to the catalog, the papers were passed down to Shugart’s widow, Susannah, then to her grandson Grant Overturf (1868-1936).



“They’re all going to go like that, right?” Alexandra Nelson quipped to her audience after the first lot of the sale inspired a bevy of active bidders and soared to \$27,000 (est. \$4000/6000). The single bound volume of 21 early 19th-century almanacs was bought by an unnamed institution. The almanacs were printed and sold in Pittsburgh and St. Louis between 1813 and 1833 by Joseph Charles (1772-1834). An Irish immigrant, Charles was active in Pennsylvania as early as 1796. In 1818 he produced the *Missouri & Illinois Magazine Almanac*, the first almanac printed in the Missouri territory. The most coveted prize in the group, it is a true rarity. Swann could find only one other in the marketplace in more than six decades, and given Charles’s ethnic heritage, it seems not totally random that the listing was in the 1956 catalog of Midland Books, County Offaly, Ireland. An excellent resource on early American imprints is available online, thanks to the American Antiquarian Society. Its listing for Charles can be found at (<http://link.americanantiquarian.org/resource/8jp-kl3YoE4>).



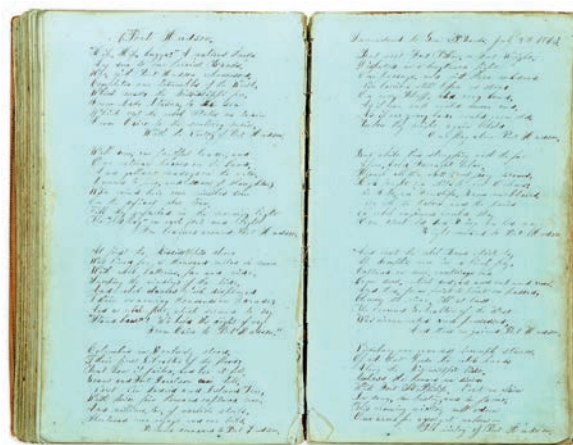
This cross collectible—optical toys and Civil War—is a myriopticon made by Milton Bradley Co. in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1866. The printed, hand-colored box, which measures 5¼" x 8¼" x 2¼", contains hand-colored paper scrolls of panoramic scenes on two spindles that a viewer turns a metal key to see revealed. The scenes include Fort Sumter and an adaptation of Winslow Homer's *Sharpshooter* print. The novelty went to an Internet bidder for \$2000 (est. \$700/1000).



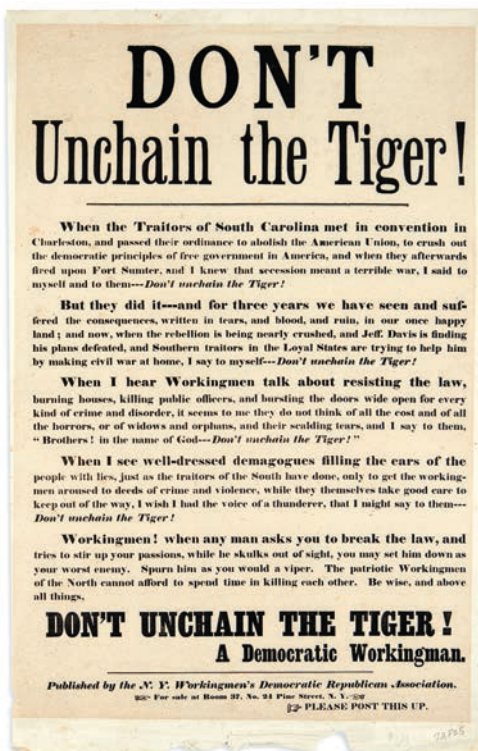
This first edition and final state of *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* by Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall sold to a dealer mid-estimate for \$30,000. Published in Philadelphia by Daniel Rice and J.G. Clarke, 1842-44, the book contains 120 of some of the finest hand-colored lithographs of the period.

examples. This one went to a phone bidder for \$9375. Auerbach's first edition of *The Pearl of Great Price*, one of the standard works of the Mormon canon, realized \$10,625. The successful record-breaking bid for the book, compiled by Franklin D. Richards and published in Liverpool in 1851, came from the Internet. Auerbach's file of letters to *Salt Lake Tribune* editor Fred Lockley (1871-1958) sold for \$6500. Auerbach's early (1851) Salt Lake City imprint, Brigham Young's "First Annual Message of the Governor to the Legislative Assembly of Utah Territory," brought \$6000.

Obscurity—or what seems obscure to the uninformed—rarely proves to be a stopper for bidders who participate in the Latin Americana portion of Swann's sales. Estimates are often ignored. This time, an essay in Latin on the life of conquistador Hernán Cortés was estimated at \$400/600 and got \$10,000. It was believed to be from the late 18th century and unpublished. A 128-page Mexican manuscript cookbook that was dated 1812—i.e., 19 years before the first published Mexican cookbooks appeared in 1831—fetched \$13,750 (est. \$6000/9000). An 1810 letterpress broadside in Nahuatl—the language of the indigenous Uto-Aztec people—that announced an end of their payment of tribute taxes to the New Spain viceroys made the same price as the cookbook, \$13,750 (est. \$5000/7500). And an 1814 tract denouncing



This 197-page Civil War manuscript diary kept by Navy seaman Samuel Walker (1835-1881) of Harwich, Massachusetts, while aboard the gunboat U.S.S. *Kineo* on the Mississippi River sold to a collector for \$15,000, the high estimate. Descriptions of battles (at Baton Rouge, Port Hudson, and Donaldsonville) are vividly rendered. Walker also included incidents involving enslaved people. Indeed, he had ties to a celebrated abolitionist, his uncle Jonathan Walker, who, after being caught aiding runaways trying to make their way from Florida to the free West Indies, had his hand branded "SS," for "slave stealer" or, as his fellow abolitionists would have it, "slave savior." Rick Stattler said the price was "the most we've ever sold a Civil War diary for."



This 19" x 12" letterpress broadside printed in New York City in 1863 by the N.Y. Workingmen's Democratic Republican Association sold to a phone bidder for \$4750 (est. \$3000/4000). Issued shortly after the city's draft riots, it is a plea for patriotism and calm consideration of the costs of resisting the Union cause.

Napoleon that was translated from Spanish into another Uto-Aztec language, Ópata, which is rarely written and is now extinct, realized \$10,625 (est. \$4000/6000). This list could go on. In dollar terms, Latin Americana was the largest and among the most successful parts of this \$1,053,748 sale, with seven of the top 19 lots coming from it.

Twelve examples of decorative printings of the Declaration of Independence came to the sale from a single, unidentified private collection. They included a Peter Force broadside of the William J. Stone engraving that was, in the words of Rick Stattler's catalog entry, "as crisp and clean an example as we've seen." Force's prints were printed on rice paper in Washington, D.C., in 1833, although not released until 1848. This one went to an order bidder, identified by Swann as a collector, for a mid-estimate \$20,000. Another highlight from this group was William H. Pratt's lithograph of the founding document's text arranged calligraphically to form a portrait of George Washington and various state seals. From the press of Augustus Hageboeck of Davenport, Iowa, the 1865 print sold for \$3000. The buyer of the Pratt also paid \$4500 for a printing on a handkerchief, possibly a Glasgow production from the 1820s.

Seven lots of political cartoons from the 1820s through 1860 got bidders' attention. Whether they were collectors of presidential material or mere citizens seeking comic relief from our own time's political troubles—or both—who can say? A group of four cartoons published in 1844 by James Baillie of New York sold in a single lot for \$4500. One of them featured ex-President Andrew Jackson and his former vice president, Martin Van Buren, portrayed as a dog on a leash. Jackson is being offered two other dogs whose faces are those of James Polk and his running mate, George Dallas—the team that prevented Van



This handkerchief printing of the Declaration of Independence made \$4500 (est. \$3000/4000). The 32½" x 27" textile in red on cambric is early, possibly one of those made in Glasgow for the American market in the 1820s. Two other less decorative cotton handkerchiefs (not shown), undated but likely older than the cambric one, sold together for \$938 (est. \$400/600).

Buren from securing a second term in the White House. "Here, Almighty sir! are a couple of pups well broken, who will come when you whistle for them, & go where you wish," says the man holding the Polk-Dallas pair. "That dog"—i.e., Van Buren—"has too much of the fox in him."

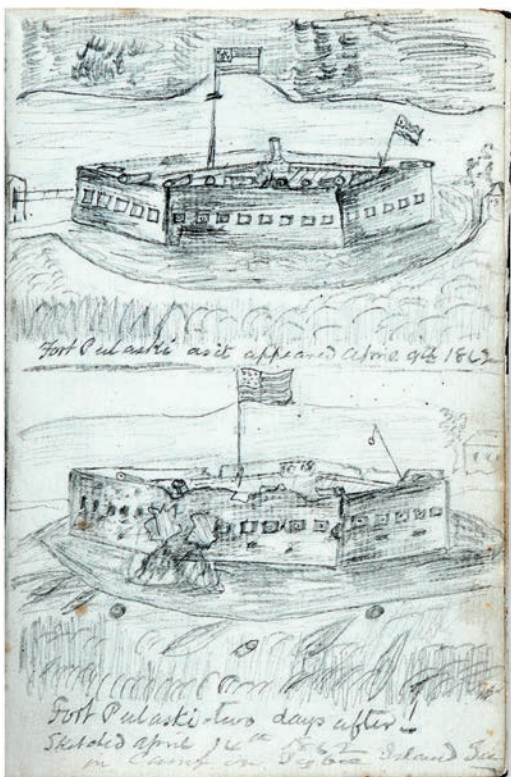
Swann seems always to do well with the New York City-related material it presents. This time, the record books of Sag Harbor, Long Island, whaling merchant Luther D. Cook (1794-1866) enjoyed the benefits of being a cross collectible. The seven manuscript volumes sold to an unnamed institution for \$30,000 (est. \$1500/2500).

A group of various Long Island-related items, among them a juvenile drawing from 1851 that was the work of the son of a friend of merchant Cook, went for \$2750 (est. \$400/600). Earlier in the sale, a notebook of legal work performed by Manhattan lawyer John H. Remsen at the end of the 18th century brought \$3500 (est. \$600/900).

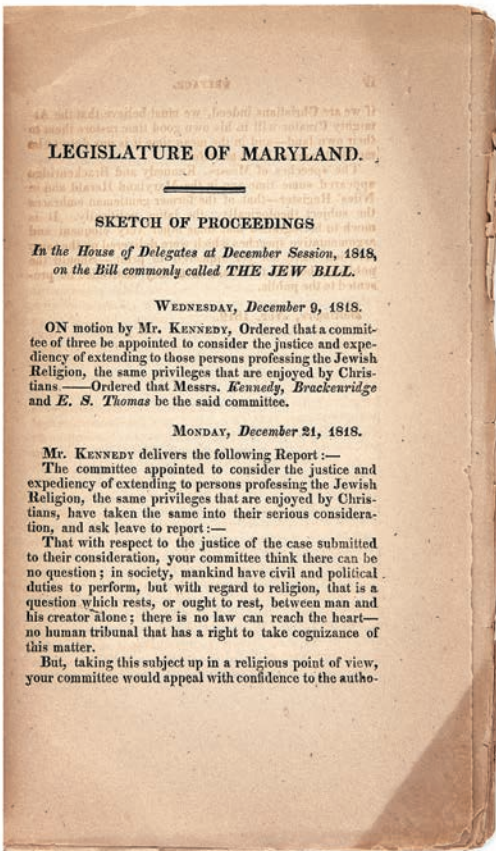
And then there were the lots that, for whatever reasons, certain bidders simply had to have. The most obvious exemplar of this phenomenon was a printed report on import duties issued in 1791 by Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the Treasury that achieved \$6750 (est. \$400/600). Surely the columns of numbers and other data printed in Philadelphia on a folding table and two leaves are duller than dull. They also bear a dastardly paper-clip mark, the bane of archivists and collectors everywhere. But as Swann auctioneer and communications director Alexandra Nelson said from the podium after she hammered it down, "The magic of Hamilton—about the cost of a ticket."

For more information, see the website (www.swanngalleries.com).





This 177-page Civil War manuscript diary kept by Adam C. Reinoehl (1840-1900) of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, from February 6, 1862, to September 6, 1863, fetched \$6500 (est. \$2500/3500). A member of the Keystone Zouaves, Reinoehl was at Fort Pulaski in Georgia and at St. Helena Island, Fort Wagner, and Hilton Head, South Carolina. Eyewitness accounts are one thing; someone who can actually write (and in this case, draw, too) is something else again. Rick Stattler, noting that Reinoehl was a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College and that his letters home were frequently published in the local newspaper, wrote in the catalog that “Judged solely by its literary quality, this may be the best Civil War diary we’ve seen, and we’ve seen a few.”



This copy of *Legislature of Maryland*. / *Sketch of Proceedings* on the so-called Jew Bill sold to a collector for \$13,750 (est. \$12,000/18,000). Published in Baltimore in 1819, it is 86 pages of legislative debates on the subject of Maryland’s prohibition against Jews holding public office—a restriction not lifted until 1826. According to Swann, no other copies have been at auction since 1982. At its sale on September 17, 2015, Swann sold a related item, *Speeches on the Jew Bill*, a 236-page collection of orations by legislators in support of the act that eventually passed. That volume, published in Philadelphia in 1829, sold for \$20,000.



A collector paid \$20,000 (est. \$15,000/25,000) for this pristine copy of Peter Force’s 29¼" x 25¼" broadside of the William J. Stone engraving of the Declaration of Independence.



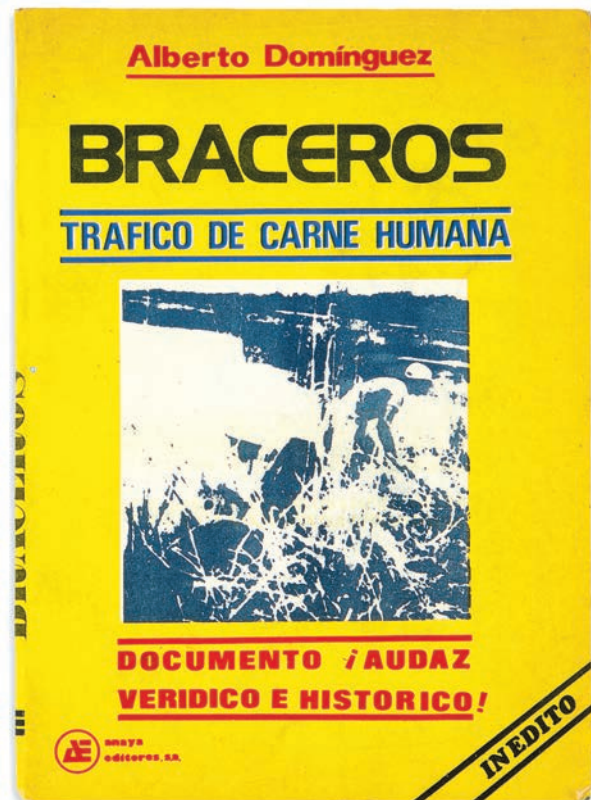
This 3" x 7½" Nauvoo Legion Association stock certificate dated February 13, 1845, was signed by Brigham Young as lieutenant general and by two other Mormon leaders, Charles C. Rich and Edmund Ellsworth. The certificate, issued to David Dutton Yearsley Sr., sold to a phone bidder for \$9375 (est. \$8000/12,000).



This unused 1¼" x 5" ticket for the last game played at Brooklyn’s Ebbets Field on September 24, 1957, sold to an order bidder for \$1750 (est. \$800/1200). For the record, the Dodgers defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates, 2-0.



“The ‘Old Hack’ Turned Out to ‘Grass!’” by Thomas F.C. (F.G.?) Miller sold to a room bidder for \$3250 (est. \$500/750). The 11½" x 15¾" lithograph depicts William Seward after losing the 1860 Republican nomination for president to Abraham Lincoln. Swann traced only one in the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and none at auction. The date of the print is unknown, as is the location of its printer. Nor could the auction house find another cartoon credited to Miller. Perhaps the winning bidder can fill in these blanks.



Braceros: Trafico de Carne Humana, Alberto Domínguez’s history of the ill treatment of seasonal immigrant laborers in the United States, sold to an order bidder for \$2750 (est. \$600/900). Published by Anaya in Mexico in 1978, it is extremely scarce, with only one copy noted in the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), according to Swann’s research.



A room bidder paid \$7000 (est. \$1500/2500) for 15 issues of *The Blue Badge*, a manuscript magazine created by a Kentucky literary society in 1836-37. Manuscript magazines, popular in the 19th century, are unique products circulated by the private groups, usually clubs, that create them. Pieces of writing and artwork are submitted for inclusion in these one-of-a-kind compilations that are often rife with inside jokes designed to entertain their limited readerships. According to Swann, this one, which was exceptionally well illustrated, was apparently the work of the Transylvania Whig Society of Transylvania University in Lexington.



This first edition of *De Septem novae legis Sacramentis Summarium* by Bartholomaeus de Ledesma sold to a collector for \$21,250 (est. \$15,000/25,000). The treatise on the seven sacraments was printed in Mexico by Antonio de Espinosa in 1566. On November 6, 2014, Swann sold another copy in better condition for \$42,500.



A phone bidder paid \$9375 (est. \$8000/12,000) for a scrapbook of material on early (1893-95 and 1931) Stanford University football, including letters from Walter Camp (1859-1925). Known as "the Father of America Football," Camp played and coached for Yale before briefly coaching Stanford teams. Fun fact for clock people: his family's business, where he worked at least for a while full time, was the New Haven Clock Company.



Letters and photographs relating to the life of Jenkins A. "John" Fitzgerald (1839-1879), who served as a surgeon during the Civil War, then for the U.S. Army during the Indian Wars of the 1870s, sold to a collector for \$11,250 (est. \$4000/6000).



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