

LINCOLN LORE

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE BARRETT COLLECTION

The sale of the Oliver R. Barrett's Lincolniana by the Parke-Bernet Galleries at New York on February 19 and 20, 1952 will go down as one of the major events in the memory of American autograph collectors. The total amount realized was \$273,632, or an average of \$325 a lot. The 842 items offered consisted mostly of autograph material—letters Lincoln penned, manuscripts he wrote and documents he signed.

Autographs

The top price realized for a single lot was \$35,000, which purchased 14 letters written by Lincoln to his most intimate friend, Joshua Speed. They were acquired by the Barrett Lincoln Collection Fund for presentation to the Illinois State Historical Society. The fund bought at the first day of the sale 31 items for a total of \$60,000. Some of the other important letters purchased by the fund and sum paid follows: Lincoln to Mary Todd \$4,500, Mary Todd to Lincoln \$3,500, Lincoln to Sarah Bush \$3,500, Lincoln to Gen. Halleck \$3,000, Lincoln to Pickett \$2,900, Lincoln to Grant \$2,700.

A few other letters Lincoln wrote which brought prices of \$1,500 or more were written to the following individuals: Major Ramsey \$2,000; Matthew S. Marsh \$1,600; John D. Johnston \$1,500; Henry Asbury \$1,500; Brig. Gen. Buell \$1,600. Three letters written by Mary Lincoln brought \$2,000 and a letter penned by Willie Lincoln, son of the President went at \$2,600. Space would not permit the listing of the large number of other letters which were sold for more than a thousand dollars apiece.

Among the manuscripts written by Lincoln, four holograph pages containing the conclusion of his Springfield speech delivered on Oct. 30, 1858 brought \$6,000. A nine page manuscript on his address entitled "Discoveries and Inventions" went at \$4,000. A single page writing in which Lincoln applied a Euclid formula to the slavery question was sold at \$4,100 and another one page fragment on slavery passed over the auction block at \$1,850. Abraham Lin-

coln copied on two sheets of paper his favorite poem "Mortality" and it brought the sum of \$3,000. A scrapbook profusely annotated in Lincoln's hand and which served as the copy for his publication in the Lincoln-Douglas debates should be included among the manuscripts. It brought the second highest price of the sale, \$24,000, and was acquired by Alfred W. Stern of Chicago who will present it to The Library of Congress.

A document brought the third highest price at the sale. The sum of \$18,000 was paid for the first engrossed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Lincoln and Seward. Another document, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, signed by Lincoln and 148 members of Congress drew a bid of \$4,400. A document sent to Congress in Lincoln's own hand relating to the abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia was secured for \$3,750.

Among Lincoln's writings there should also be mentioned the two pages from the family Bible containing vital statistics in Lincoln's hand which sold for \$1,700. Also two leaves from a school copy book bearing Lincoln's earliest writings extant were sold. One page badly mutilated brought \$3,600 and the other \$2,000. Nine lines of greeting which Lincoln penned for a girl's autograph book brought \$1,500. A little note which Lincoln wrote to Jesse W. Fell to accompany a brief autobiographical sketch was valued by some buyer at \$2,000.

Books

The individual collector of Lincoln books had little opportunity to take home even a souvenir of the collection except the catalogue which he purchased at \$3.50. All the books with but few exceptions were arranged in lots of from six to forty-five in a bundle and there were twelve such lots that brought a total of \$585, or an average of \$3.20 for each book. Pamphlets were also sold in lots from a dozen to a hundred. Of the few Lincoln books which sold separately the Meserve's "Lincolniana, Historical Portraits and Views" brought \$625 and the only other bound Lincoln volume to bring over \$100 was the Oakleaf bibliography.

Broadsides

Some interesting broadsides associated with Lincoln's assassination were offered: Three variants issued by the War Department and offering \$100,000 reward for the capture of the assassins brought \$425, \$300, and \$200 respectively. A Ford's Theatre playbill, Polkinham imprint, was disposed of for \$175. A broadside "Courier-Extra" announcing the President's assassination brought \$150.

Pictures

The outstanding picture of Lincoln offered at the sale was an oil painting by James Read Lambdin. The price realized was \$2,500. Two very fine autographed photographs, Meserve 6 and Meserve 9 brought \$550 and \$750 respectively.

Relics

The Waltham Watch Co. was the successful bidder at \$1,600 for the Waltham watch the President presented to Dennis Hanks, and a watch chain made of California gold and worn by the President brought \$1,300. The Chicago Historical Society was the successful bidder for several of the museum pieces offered including a pair of spectacles, a watch chain and a pair of colored moccasins which were acquired at a total cost of \$775. While an axe handle inscribed "A. Lincoln New Salem" brought \$300, the famous Lincoln-Rutledge betrothal stone went for \$75.

Miscellaneous

Among the miscellaneous items dispersed the top figure was secured for a book entitled *The Kentucky Preceptor* read by Lincoln in his Indiana days. The price was \$3,500. Lincoln's copy of the *Laws of the State of Illinois* sold for \$900. A seal of the United States used by Lincoln while President brought \$650. A bronze cast of the life mask by Volk was secured for \$450 and a bronze cast of Lincoln's right hand by the same sculptor was obtained for \$400. It might be of interest to recipients of *Lincoln Lore* to know that a file of the bulletin lacking the first 200 numbers together with a set of *The Lincoln Kinsman*, formerly published by the Foundation, brought \$120.

Although there were about 500 people in attendance at the auction sale most of the purchases were made by dealers in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. The collector with small means seldom had an opportunity to bid. No item sold for less than \$5.00 and not more than a half a dozen lots at that figure. Two items sold for \$7.50 each and half a dozen others for \$10.00. Fifteen and twenty dollars were extremely low starting bids.