

Auction Action In Plainville, Conn.

Bidders Battle At Winter Auction For Revolutionary War Engravings



The Thomas B. Griffin oil on canvas "Delaware Falls" sold for \$2,070, while the Hepplewhite-style two-part desk went within estimate at \$431.



Auctioneer Linda Stamm shows off the top lot of the sale, one of two early colored engravings by Amos Doolittle of the Battles of Lexington and Concord that attained \$471,500.



This Gorham two-piece sterling set, decorated with repousse bears, performed well at \$546.

Review and Photos by Antiques and The Arts Weekly Andrea Valluzzo, Assistant Editor

PLAINVILLE, CONN. — Winter Associates started off a new auction year with a bang as a pair of early engravings of Revolutionary War battles soared at its January 13 auction, breaking a company record for the most expensive item sold here. Seven phone bidders and an in-house bidder chased the lot until the winning bidder prevailed at \$471,500, including the buyer's premium, to a rousing chorus of applause from onlookers in the gallery.

The auction, featuring Americana, miniatures, art, prints, silver, books and rugs, moved along well the first hour or so, but really heated up at lot 125, when a pair of colored engravings by Amos Doolittle (1754-1832), a renowned engraver from Cheshire, Conn., known for his Revolutionary War engravings, came up for sale.

The two engravings on offer here were deaccessioned from a Connecticut museum and had already attracted much presale attention. A gallery bidder got things rolling when auctioneer Linda Stamm opened the lot at \$5,000. Four of the seven phone bidders on the line quickly responded, sending the lot higher and higher until two phone bidders dropped out before they even got a bid in. Eventually, it came down to the floor bidder and one phone bidder, the latter prevailing. The buyer, requesting anonymity, asked to only be identified as a private collector.

The engravings depicted events from the Battles of Lexington and Concord, and were both laid down on cardboard: Plate II, "A View of the Town of Concord," showed British troops assembling in town, burning provincial stores, and surveying provincial movements from cemetery lookout; and Plate IV, "A View of the South Part of Lexington," showed battle lines and move-



Winter Associates' first auction of the year was diverse, with offerings across the board.

ments between British and patriots. "If you have it, they will come," quipped Stamm after the sale, making a reference to the movie *Field of Dreams*. "So when you have a wonderful piece and promote it properly ... they will come."

Considerable research was done by the auction house, which verified the engravings were not reproductions by Meriden Gravure or R.R. Donnelly and that the consigning museum was known to have acquired prints circa 1888-1900. These are believed to have been bought for the Peck Library in Norwich, Conn., by Henry Watson Kent, its first librarian, and a founder of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum.

The engravings so seldom come on the market that the auction house set a far-

reaching estimate range of \$5,000/50,000, yet Stamm said in the end, "the rarity would determine the market." And so it did.

The engravings were not the only artwork flying across the block either. The second highest grossing lot was Ivan Fedorovich Choultse's (Russian, 1877-1932), "Jour d' hiver, Haut-Engadine," an oil on canvas depicting a mountainous landscape in winter. The signed painting was purchased by the consigning museum while traveling abroad, prior to 1954. Three phone bidders and an in-house bidder vied for the lot, including two European bidders on the phone, with one claiming it for \$41,500.

"Needless to say, we are always excited. We specialize in estate liquidation and



The Soren Georg Jensen comma-form silver pieces Stamm is showing went out at \$7,750.

that's where the snow scene came from," Stamm said, noting the auction house also has strong relationships with many Connecticut museums and nonprofits, as in the case of the Doolittle engravings. "We're thrilled and delighted when people entrust us with such lovely and fabulous things and I'm pretty proud for a central Connecticut gallery to get such attention, all over the country and internationally."

Rounding out the fine art standouts was an Anthony Thieme oil on board titled "Rockport Fish Pier," showing small boats docking along a pier with a large red building at end of pier. The work sold near its high estimate at \$4,500.

A trio of very fine — and very different in style — silver lots was also noteworthy in the auction.

"What is interesting about the silver is the range of how different ... the midcentury design for the Soren Jensen and the somewhat restrained design for the French flatware and the elaborate rococo repousse," Stamm said.

The first across the block was a set of ten sterling pieces by Soren Georg Jensen in the 965 pattern. The set comprised eight comma-form salt and pepper shakers and two mustard jars that sold for \$7,750, nearly double its high estimate.

Next up was a French flatware set by Emile Puiforcat (1897-1945) of 94 pieces in a hardwood box, along with 23 pieces of a similar pattern that brought \$4,425. Lastly, a Gorham Old French sterling monogrammed flatware set of 148 pieces sold for more than \$2,500.

Prices reported include the buyer's premium. For information, 860-793-0288 or www.auctionspraisers.com.



A miniature cookstove pleased the buyer who paid \$747 for it.

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