



# Record Results at Smythe Autograph Auction

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*Letter Written by President Lincoln at Smythe Autograph Auction Sees Heavy Bidding and Brings Final Hammer Price of \$14,500.*

PR9.NET January 25, 2008 - Manhattan, New York – New York auction house RM Smythe & Co, Inc held one of the most successful autograph auctions in its 125-year history on Thursday, January 17, 2008. The sale, featuring the collection of Steven Lee Carson, saw an unprecedented 77 percent of offered lots sell. Although the auction suffered a few delays due to technical problems with E-bay Live Auctions, in the end bidders on the floor, on the phone, and at their computers were able to take home a remarkable variety of historical autographs and Americana.

Not surprisingly, the highest hammer price was won by a letter written by President Abraham Lincoln, asking Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to approve the resignation of a cavalry captain at the request of the officer's wife. Lincoln, typically a "soft touch" in such cases, makes the argument that "we are rapidly getting an over-proportion of officers." The letter sold for \$14,500, not counting a buyer's premium. The Great Emancipator wasn't the only family member bringing high prices. A pair of 1869 letters (one incomplete) from his widow, in which she refers to him as having been "from my eighteenth year – Always – lover – husband – father and all, all to me – truly my all," brought nearly as much, \$13,000.

One of the most exciting possibilities at any auction is watching a lot begin at a modest opening price only to rise and rise. That is just what happened with an extremely rare autograph note signed by beloved artist Norman Rockwell that had on it an original concept sketch for one of his covers for the Saturday Evening Post. A typical autograph note by the author might bring about \$200-300, and the lot had been given a modest estimate of \$650. Due to mail bids received before the auction, the lot opened at \$2000; furious bidding drove it to a final price of \$5500. Another high climber was a fascinating typewritten letter signed by Theodore Roosevelt as president during his negotiation of the treaty ending the Russo-Japanese War, complaining about the stubbornness of both sides. Estimated at \$2500, it sold for \$8500. Also shooting well beyond its estimate was a signed copy of Woodrow Wilson's book *Why We Are at War*, which was estimated at \$700 and sold for \$3000, a record price. According to *American Book Prices Current*, it was the first copy to sell at auction in thirty years.

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