



#36

36 \$477,650
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Printed by William Stone, 1823
Sold by Raynor's Historical Collectible Auctions
(Burlington, North Carolina), March 22
Estimate: \$250,000 to \$350,000

Alongside the old microwave ovens, cardigan sweaters that didn't fit, and the rusty golf clubs in dusty bags at the Music City Thrift Store, in Nashville, Tennessee, there sat an old copy of the Declaration of Independence. Copies of the Declaration are so plentiful that people hardly give them a second glance. For some reason, the Music City copy caught Michael Sparks's eye, and he bought it for \$2.48. It turned out to be an official 1823 William Stone engraving printed on vellum. Stone finished only 200 copies on commission from John Quincy Adams, either tracing the original or making a wet-ink transfer, a process requiring the original to be dampened and then pressed against another sheet of paper so that some of the ink would offset. There were only thirty-five—now make that thirty-six—copies of the first printing from Stone's engraving known to exist.

After realizing what he had, Sparks turned the document over to Raynor's Historical Collectible Auctions, which sold the thrift-store Declaration to the investment firm Bray-Conn for \$477,650. It is the highest price ever paid for a Stone printing. Bray-Conn, with offices in Reno and Salt Lake City, plans to use

#37

the Declaration to educate children about American history.—JS

37 \$473,000 (€228,500)
BOOK OF HOURS

Paris: Jean du Pré for Antoine Vêrard, 1485
Sold by Sotheby's (London), November 28
Estimate: \$125,000 to \$165,000 (€60,000–€80,000)

When Sotheby's offered the Vêrard Book of Hours this past November, it should come as no great surprise that the Morgan Library & Museum, in New York, presented the winning bid (via London booksellers Quaritch).

"The Morgan has the largest collection of Books of Hours in America," said John Bidwell, the library's Astor Curator of Printed Books and Bindings. The Morgan's collection includes more than 130 printed and about 240 manuscript copies of these devotional books. The Morgan Library continues "to acquire printed editions for research purposes and exhibition," Bidwell said.

The Vêrard Book of Hours appears to be the first publication by Antoine Vêrard, who was, according to the auctioneer, "the dominant force in French book production until his death in 1512." The book is also the first printed Book of Hours with a full program of illustrations and the only known copy of the earliest dated Book of Hours printed in France. (Some scholars believe an undated version may have been printed near Paris in 1480.)

#38

The Vêrard Hours was printed on vellum, with rather crude woodcut illustrations and borders. The initial letters are printed in red and blue. The book is a shadow of the more familiar illuminated manuscript Books of Hours. "We have been seeking out editions showing how the genre declined, just as this one shows how [printed Hours] began," said Bidwell.

The book was purchased with help from the foundation set up by the late bookseller Bernard H. Breslauer. Breslauer owned the book in the 1960s. This time it was sold by a German library.—KE

38 \$456,000
THE PRINCIPAL NAVIGATIONS...
By Richard Hakluyt

London: George Bishop and Ralph Newberie, 1589
Sold by Christie's (New York), April 16
Estimate: \$40,000 to \$60,000

When Anthony Payne of Quaritch compiled his census of this book for the Hakluyt Society in 1997, this copy in English blind-ruled calf was identified as one of only two first edition copies still in private hands that retained its original binding as well as both the world map and the six leaves describing Drake's circumnavigation, which were separately printed and are not found in all copies. Quaritch sold the other faultless copy just fifteen years ago for less than \$60,000. This copy, from the Frank Streeter collection, went to New York dealers Martayan Lan.—IM