

RM Smythe & Co.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

ORIGINAL OF INSCRIPTION ON STATUE OF LIBERTY

“ . . . GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR, YOUR HUDDLED MASSES, YEARNING TO BREATHE FREE . . . ” SOLD BY R.M. SMYTHE

Auction brings \$97,750 for handwritten patriotic text by poet Emma Lazarus

New York, NY, May 15, 2002— The New York-based auction house, R.M. Smythe, Co., Inc., announced today that it had received a record price of \$85,000 plus a 15% buyer’s charge, from an anonymous client for a rare copy of the powerful poem “New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. The well-known text, emblazoned on the base of the Statue of Liberty, was one of 367 lots, including many other patriotic items, sold at auction by Smythe in its Spring Autograph Sale on Thursday, May 9, 2002. No complete copy of the Lazarus poem has come on the market in over forty years.

“Patriotic items continue to be of particular interest,” said Diana Herzog, President, R.M. Smythe, “including this remarkable and poignant piece of American history.” “The Statue of Liberty inscription was written by an accomplished, but little known, poet and essayist who died in 1887 when she was just 38 years old,” she added. “The intense bidder interest in this piece was aided by the fact that Lazarus, a Jewish woman, had a firm faith in America as the home of the oppressed,” comments Herzog. “If Lazarus had lived, she would have seen her inscription dedicated on the Statue of Liberty in 1903 and would likely have produced a body of work that would have made her a household name in this country, but that was not to happen.” she added.

Other items of Americana sold at the Smythe auction included:

- Pair of historic documents signed by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, \$17,000
- Valley Forge documents including an endorsement by George Washington, \$20,000
- Thomas Jefferson signature on a defense of his Embargo Act of 1807, \$11,500
- First verse of the song *America*, penned by clergyman and author Samuel F.I. Smith, \$900

The above prices do not include the 15% buyer’s charge.

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R.M. Smythe specializes in researching, auctioning, buying and selling historic paper collections from around the world. In addition to its business in autographs, Smythe is an international authority in manuscripts, photographs, stocks & bonds, banknotes, and coins. The firm, established in 1880, is based in the Wall Street area of New York City. The next Smythe auction, for 19th and 20th century photographs, is scheduled for Friday, June 7, 2002 in Strasburg, PA.

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