

For Immediate Release

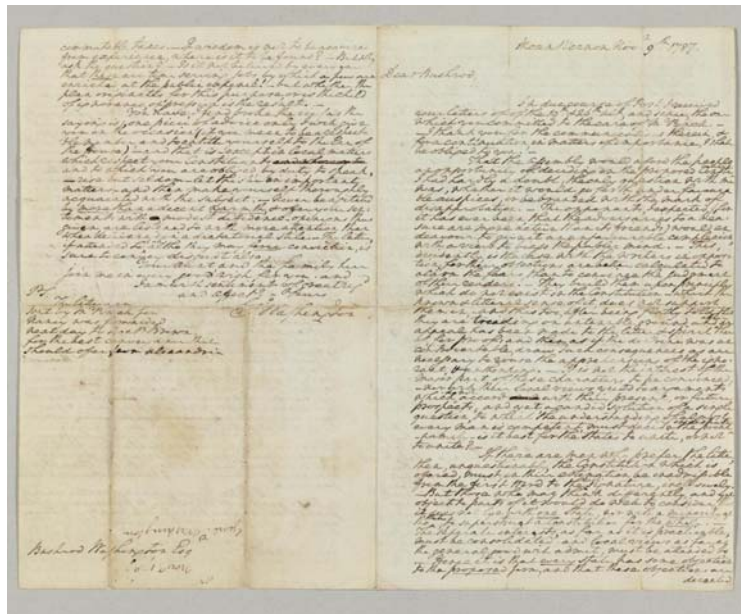
November 20, 2009

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**CHRISTIE'S TO OFFER ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
LETTERS FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON
ESTIMATE: \$1.5-2.5 MILLION**



"The powers under the constitution will always be with the people."
- George Washington

Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts including Americana

December 4, 2009

New York – Christie's is honored to offer a highly important George Washington letter to his trusted nephew Bushrod Washington, in the sale of *Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts including Americana* on December 4 (estimate: \$1.5-2.5 million). The revealing, four-page letter has never been publicly exhibited and has remained in the possession of English descendants of Bushrod Washington for over 100 years. In his very candid letter, George Washington eloquently endorses the newly proposed American constitution, and ponders the fundamental issue confronting the new nation: "is it best for the States to unite, or not to unite?"

In the Fall of 1787 and Spring of 1788 the very existence of the United States of America hung in the balance as American citizens—in newspapers, churches, statehouses and legislatures engaged in rancorous debate over a question with far-reaching implications: will the nation’s newly drafted Constitution be ratified? Or will the former colonies remain small, weak, realms without executive control? The new Federal Constitution was the work of a stellar assembly of the country’s finest statesmen. Washington had retired to his Mount Vernon plantation, but, alarmed by the crisis in government, had agreed to serve as chairman of the Constitutional Convention. In September the draft Constitution was unanimously approved by the Convention and sent to the states for ratification.

Washington professed neutrality in public, but to Bushrod expressed his unequivocal conviction that the new Constitution *must* be ratified, in spite of opposition from many special interest groups. Here, he observes that “it does not lie with one state, nor with a minority of the states, to superstruct a Constitution for the whole. The central issues must be consolidated -- and local views as far as the general good will admit, must be attended to.” A degree of compromise is essential, for “that which is most pleasing to one, is obnoxious to another, and vice versa. If then the Union of the whole is a desirable object, the parts which compose it, must yield a little in order to accomplish it...” Provisions for amending the Constitution, he observes, “allow the people (for it is with them to judge)” to decide upon amendments when warranted, “for I do not conceive that we are more inspired, have more wisdom, or possess more virtue than those who will come after us...”

Washington was gratified when, one by one, the states ratified the new Constitution, in some cases by narrow margins. Not surprisingly, Washington would become the first President under the provisions of the new Constitution that he had so warmly supported.

**Auction: *Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts*
*including Americana***

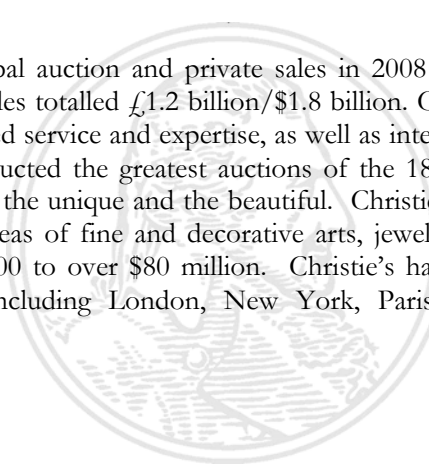
December 4

Viewing: Christie’s Rockefeller Galleries

November 28- December 3

About Christie’s

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Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the Middle East, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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