

*For Immediate Release*

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**LONG LOST JEFFERSON LETTER HEADS  
BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS SALE AT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK**

*Estimated at \$600,000-800,000, the 1801 Letter will be Sold to Benefit the  
Historic Elk Landing Foundation, Elkton MD.*

*Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts Including Americana*

*June 17, 2003*

*New York – Christie's sale of Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts Including Americana, taking place on June 17, will be highlighted by a recently rediscovered letter by Thomas Jefferson (estimate: \$600,000-800,000) in which he affirms the profound importance of freedom of thought and belief as guaranteed by the first amendment to the Constitution. The letter was found by a volunteer of the Historic Elk Landing Foundation, Elkton MD and the proceeds of the sale will benefit the restoration projects carried out by the Foundation.*

*The Jefferson letter (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), one of the most significant discoveries in the manuscript field in recent years, represents a quintessential example of the President's eloquent and forceful writing style and refers to one of the themes that was closest to his heart and paramount during his presidency: the freedom of religion. In phrases that strikingly parallel some he used in his 1777 Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia, Jefferson powerfully affirms the key principle of the separation of church and state and emphatically asserts the restricted role of the government. In a somewhat similar letter, written six months later, the President coined the legendary metaphor 'the wall of separation' that in his opinion should exist between Church and State.*

*The letter was unearthed by a volunteer of the Historic Elk Landing Foundation early last year when she was sifting through some old papers in Hollingsworth House, a historic residence being restored by the Foundation. An unmarked envelope contained a letter from the Delaware Baptist Association congratulating Thomas Jefferson on his inauguration as a President. With it was Jefferson's eloquent reply. Both letters are being offered for sale now by the Historic Elk Landing Foundation and the proceeds of the sale will be used to support the ongoing restoration of Hollingsworth House and its grounds.*

*Three centuries earlier, quite different matters were occupying the mind of Juan Ponce de León (1474–1521). Ponce de León had come to the New World with the second expedition led by Columbus in 1493. He had later been appointed Governor and Captain-General of the island of San Juan Bautista (later Puerto Rico). In the belief that there might be more islands to be discovered to the north, Ponce de León sent a special emissary back to Spain to solicit royal approval and support for his new expedition. A recently discovered letter written by him in 1511 (estimate: \$300,000–500,000) inquires in guarded terms about the emissary and his mission. Not long afterwards Ponce de León was granted permission and on March 3, 1513, the epic voyage was launched. A month later, on April 3, Ponce de León set foot on what appeared to be a very large island – in reality he had become the first Spaniard to set foot on North American soil. The newly discovered land he named Florida. The new letter is one of the earliest letters ever sent from the New World and is the only Ponce de León letter ever offered at auction and the only one in private hands.*

*The sale will also include a selection of 300 antique atlases and related items from the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation. Among the highlights in this group is the rare Spanish edition of Willem and Johannes Blaeu's large Atlas, entitled *Atlas Mayor sino Cosmographia Blavania, En La Qual Exactamente se Describe la Tierra, el Mar, y el Cielo* (estimate: \$80,000–120,000), consisting of 10 volumes with 544 engraved maps that are all colored in a contemporary hand. No name has more resonance in cartography than Gerard Mercator and the sale offers *Atlas or A Geographicke description of the Regions, Countries and Kingdomes of the World, through Europe, Asia, Africa and America ...* (estimate: \$20,000–30,000). This atlas comprises two volumes with 195 engraved maps and was created by Mercator in collaboration with Jodocus Hondius and Joannes Janssonius. It includes the Hondius-Jansson world map. Further to these two highlights, works of many major cartographers will be offered as well as numerous American atlases.*

*Auction: Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts Including Americana June 17*

*Viewing: Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Center*

*June 12 - 16*

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*Images available on request*

*Visit Christie's Web site at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)*

*More information about Christie's sale of Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts can be found on [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com). All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com) provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.*