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CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS RARE EARLY AMERICAN SILVER IN JANUARY

Early American Silver: 1670-1820
January 18, 2007

New York – Christie's is pleased to announce the January 18 sale of *Early American Silver*, offered in conjunction with the January Americana sales. As the first such dedicated sale to be staged at Christie's in nearly fifteen years, it presents collectors with one of the finest offerings of 18th century American silver to be seen on the market in recent times. Leading the sale are two extraordinary collections, silver from the First Church in Salem and a collection of silver from the Darling Foundation of New York State Early American Silversmiths.

"This January, we are privileged to offer an exceptionally large collection of 17th and 18th century American silver, one of the most comprehensive groupings seen on the market in many years" said Jeanne Sloane, Head of Silver for Christie's Americas. "With two important collections – each to benefit non-profit institutions - this sale offers great rarities for established collectors and also presents a scarce opportunity for new collectors to acquire classic examples of regional forms in Colonial silver."

The First Church in Salem was founded in 1692 and is the oldest continuing Protestant society in America. The silver, through its donors, represents virtually every aspect of early New England history, bringing to life the important theological, political, and intellectual movements of the Colonial and Federal Periods. Silver, equivalent to currency in the 17th and 18th centuries, was originally given to the Church in the spirit of financial support, and it is hoped that the sale of these bequests will help preserve this extraordinary and historical institution.

As in most collections of American church silver, the pieces from The First Church in Salem are secular objects, given by members of the Church for use during Communion and often bearing the inscription of the donor. These secular forms of silver – domestic cups, tankards, and mugs – represent the radical Puritan rejection of the trappings of the established Anglican religion. In fact, one of the Church's early ministers was the extremely liberal Roger

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Williams, who was banished from Massachusetts in 1635 due to his belief in the separation of Church and State.



Leading this collection is a magnificent Baroque silver tankard with the mark of John Coney, given to the Church by Elizabeth Clarke Cabott in 1784. This richly decorated tankard employs the full vocabulary of ornament found on Boston tankards in the baroque period (*illustrated left*, estimate: \$150,000–300,000). An interesting historical note is that Elizabeth Clarke Cabott's brother, Richard Clarke, was one of the consignees of the tea destroyed in Boston Harbor during the Boston Tea Party, the pivotal Revolutionary protest of 1773.

Many of the pieces in the sale are historically important in that they have direct ties to the infamous Salem Witch Trials of 1692. Of note is an extremely rare silver beaker by Jeremia Dummer (estimate: \$150,000–250,000), America's first native-born silversmith, donated by Francis Skerry, a prominent citizen who lived in the period leading up to the Trials and the landlord to John Godfrey, a Church member and accused witch. Also directly related to the Witch Trials is an important silver cup with the mark of John Coney (estimate: \$80,000–120,000) which was donated to the Church in 1720 by John Higginson, who had an important role in the Witch Trials as a magistrate and an examiner of jailed witches.

From the Darling Foundation of New York State Early American Silversmiths comes an extraordinary collection of 18th century silver from New York. Formed by Herbert F. Darling (1905–1968) of Buffalo, the Darling Foundation Collection has served as a New York State educational institution since 1958. Mr. Darling's interest in antique silver was sparked in 1945 with the purchase of a Georgian silver tea service, but he soon realized that there was "too much English around" and that collecting early American silver presented a more challenging and stimulating pursuit. With his focus set on New York State silver, Mr. Darling made his greatest contribution to the field of study with the publication of *New York State Silversmiths* in 1964, a publication that has remained the essential reference book on the subject and an indispensable guide to students and collectors of New York silver.

Leading the Darling Foundation's collection is The Douw Family Teapot, an important pear-shaped silver teapot with the mark of Tobias Stoutenburgh, circa 1730 (*illustrated right*, estimate: \$150,000–250,000). Rich with Dutch-style engraving, this is an exquisite example of early New York silver. Also from the Douw family is a silver cream jug also



with the mark of Tobias Stoutenburgh, circa 1730 (estimate: \$3,000–5,000).

Other highlights in the sale include a rare engraved punch bowl by Simeon Soumaine (estimate: \$40,000–60,000) and two rare pieces of American gold – a ring and a brooch – by Myer Myers, the celebrated Jewish Colonial silversmith of New York (estimate: \$8,000–12,000 and 4,000–6,000, respectively).

In conjunction with the *Early American Silver* sale, Christie's presents a lecture by Robert E. Trent, historian, museum consultant, and expert on Salem decorative arts, entitled "Harbor for all our Feelings: Salem in the Seventeenth Century and the American Historical Imagination." Mr. Trent advised on the historic interiors for the film *The Crucible*, which he will discuss during this lecture at Christie's Rockefeller Center galleries. *Please contact Christie's Silver Department at 212.636.2699 for more details.*

Auction:	<i>Early American Silver: 1670-1820</i>	January 18
Viewing:	Christie's Galleries at Rockefeller Plaza	January 13–17

About Christie's

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global sales in 2005 that totaled \$3.2 billion. It is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service, and international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers nearly 1,000 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewelry, photographs, collectibles, wine, cars and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai. In 2005 Christie's annual global sales increased 38% to \$3.2 billion, the highest total in company history and propelling the auction house into global market leadership.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

More information about Christie's sale of *Early American Silver* can be found on 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 provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.