

# Postal History from the Archives of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

## PREFACE

This catalogue comprises address leaves and envelopes (covers) to be sold for the benefit of the collections of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Founded in 1824 in Philadelphia, the Society is one of the oldest historical societies in the United States and holds many national treasures. The Society's building, listed on the City of Philadelphia's Register of Historical Places, houses some 600,000 printed items and over 19 million manuscript and graphic items. The Society is one of the largest family history libraries in the nation, has preeminent printed collections on Pennsylvania and regional history, and offers superb manuscript collections renowned for their strength in 17th, 18th, and 19th century history. The Society's website is [www.hsp.org](http://www.hsp.org)

None of the covers in this offering has written content; therefore, they were deemed to be of no use to researchers. Their value to collectors of postal history will be used to enhance the Society's collections.

For collectors, this sale is an unprecedented event. The sheer number of significant 17th and 18th century covers in this offering is staggering (there are hundreds of covers dated prior to 1789). Large voids in the collecting field have been filled; for example, there are important covers from the French and Indian War, and three covers related to the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. Many new listings will be required in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, including Annapolis and Marlboro, Maryland, postmarks dating from 1735 (25 years earlier than previously recorded) and a Falmouth-New York Packet cover from December 1755, close to the inauguration date of this important Colonial packet service. Collectors of Pennsylvania covers will now have an opportunity to own covers addressed to William Penn in 1684 and Phineas Pemberton in 1683. If one has desired to own free franks of our Founding Fathers, here is an opportunity to choose from 32 George Washington and 18 Thomas Jefferson franks, as well as the franks of Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, John Adams and others.

Because of the nature of this material and the conditions in which it was stored and made available to the public, we wish to draw prospective bidders' attention to the following:

- **Dates:** Many of the covers have receipt docketing in the Quaker-date style (for example, October 24 as "10th mon: 24th"). Some of the covers dated in the first quarter prior to 1752 bear the year of the preceding year (for example, "Feb. 15th 1739" is probably 1740). We have made every effort to be accurate in quoting manuscript docketing and assigning covers to the correct year, but no lot may be returned because of an error in dating or transcription.
- **Rates:** Postage rates during the Colonial period involved complex calculations based on distance, the number of sheets, and currency conversions. We have made a special effort in this catalogue to describe the markings and interpret the rates, but no lot may be returned because of an error on our part or another differing interpretation.
- **Cropped Images:** Many address leaves have been kept unfolded. Most of the images of open address leaves in this sale catalogue have been digitally cropped to show the significant portion of the entire sheet. No item may be returned because of a fault lying outside the area pictured in the catalogue, such as a tear around the seal (although significant faults are described in the descriptive text).
- **Repairs:** Some of the early Colonial-period address leaves in the Society's archives were repaired. In some cases, a tissue-like paper was used to reinforce folds, and, in a few cases, there is discoloration. We recommend consulting with a paper restorer to have such repairs reversed, which we believe can be done very effectively.
- **Condition:** We have made every effort to describe faults and repairs which affect markings or the appearance of the address panel. However, the condition of 17th and 18th century covers is never expected to be pristine. Covers dated prior to 1800 should be expected to have toning, faults or minor repairs, and may not be returned because every detail of condition was not described.

The estimates in this sale catalogue are conservative. In many cases, we have had to assign value to something which has never been offered in the market, such as the 1684 cover to William Penn or flag-of-truce covers from the Revolutionary War. We urge everyone who wishes to bid to take full advantage of the live auction and Live Internet Bidding, and to consider bidding well above our estimate range for the truly rare or unique items.

—SCOTT R. TREPPEL