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GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERY OF 1857 BASEBALL DOCUMENTS COULD REWRITE HISTORY OF THE GAME'S INVENTION

*Revelations of 'Laws of Base Ball' documents could push price
over \$1 million next month at auction. Bidding begins April 6th*

Laguna Niguel, Calif. (March 17, 2016) – In Cooperstown, New York, the National Baseball Hall of Fame displays a plaque dedicated to Alexander Joy Cartwright Jr. that dubs him the “Father of Modern Base Ball.” Further text cast on the regal monument credits Cartwright as having “set bases 90 feet apart” and “established 9 innings as game and 9 players as team.” However, through the research efforts of SCP Auctions and renowned baseball historian John Thorn, new discoveries of the 160-year-old documents titled “Laws of Base Ball” have confirmed that the invention of baseball’s most foundational rules have been wrongly credited.

SCP Auctions has identified the author of the groundbreaking 1857 “Laws of Base Ball” documents as Daniel Lucius “Doc” Adams, who was then serving as President of the New York Knickerbockers Base Ball Club, the baseball club founded by Cartwright in 1845. Adams drafted the manuscript – which goes up for auction on April 6th at www.scpauctions.com – for presentation at the historic Base Ball Convention of 1857 in New York City. The significant gathering of 14 New York area clubs was initiated by a desire to codify “Rules for Match Games of Base Ball.” Adams’ “Laws of Base Ball” were the focal point of the convention and among dozens of newly proposed rules and guidelines established for the first time:

- the base paths at 90 feet;
- the number of men to a side at nine;
- the duration of the game at nine innings, rather than first club to score 21 runs;
- a specified pitcher’s distance; and
- constraints on betting and “revolving” (the practice by which a man could play for another club whenever he liked).

“When Doc Adams set to work in late 1856, none of these aspects of the game were settled,” said Thorn. “This was some seven years after Cartwright had left New York for Hawaii, never to return. For his role in making baseball the success it is, Doc Adams may now be counted as first among the Founding Fathers of Baseball.”

The documents first surfaced in 1999 in a general (non-sports) manuscript auction. Presented with no known authorship and a minimal catalog description, they were purchased sight-unseen by a Texas

bidder for \$12,650. For the past 17 years, the documents were kept in a desk drawer and paid little attention to until the buyer recently enlisted SCP Auctions to fully research their origin.

“When we started to peel back the layers of information held within these documents – and their origin and purpose was revealed – we were overwhelmed by the gravity of their historical significance,” said Dan Imler, vice president of SCP Auctions. The firm now believes their value could exceed \$1,000,000 in the company’s 2016 Spring Premier online auction next month.

“No earlier baseball manuscript of this significance has ever come onto the open market,” said Thorn. “In 1857, baseball made its great leap forward, and these are the documents that reveal what it was like to be present at the creation.”

The sports world has known few transcendent foundational documents that have surfaced in original form for public offering. Among them are Naismith’s 1891 Original Rules of Basketball (sold for \$4.3 million) and The 1859 Original Rules of Soccer (sold for \$1.4 million).

“It’s difficult to put a value on an object of such singular importance but we feel it is worthy of a substantial seven-figure price,” said Imler. “We have previously sold a 1920 New York Yankees jersey worn by Babe Ruth for \$4.4 million dollars, but if not for this document we may have never known Babe Ruth.”

Bidding is open to registered bidders only at www.scpauctions.com beginning on Wed., April 6, and closing on Sat., April 23. For more information on how to participate and take part in the bidding, please call 949-831-3700 or visit www.scpauctions.com.

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