

Last JFK holiday card fetches 11G

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A Christmas card signed by John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy just days before the President was assassinated in 1963 sold for \$11,000 at an auction last night.

The simple card, bearing the official White House seal, is believed to be the last one signed by the couple before JFK was killed in Dallas.

It was snapped up by an anonymous buyer who telephoned a bid into the auction,

held at the St. Moritz Hotel by R.M. Smythe & Co. last night.

Earlier, collector George Sullivan gasped when he saw the two signatures on the card, which was never sent. "It's the idea that it was meant for Christmas 1963; that's what gives it value," Sullivan said. "For them, that was the Christmas that never was."

Unfolded and never addressed, the card was one of several dozen personal Christmas cards that the Kennedys intended to send out that year.

Just 30 of the cards bear the signatures of the First Couple.

On the front is a photograph of a Christmas creche that was set up in the East Room of the White House. Inside is the simple message, "With our wishes for a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Beneath the message are the two names: JFK's scrawled, barely legible John Hancock and Jackie's ladylike, precise signature.

A Secret Service agent saw the President signing the

card, said Sal Alberti of R.M. Smythe & Co. The agent said the card was signed about a week before the Kennedys traveled to Dallas.

"It's a dramatic piece because it was signed but never sent," said Bruce Gimelson, an antiques dealer from Garrison, N.Y. "That's the drama of it."

The auctioneers do not know how the card came into private hands. They purchased it from a private collector based in Texas.

Along with the card, rare items from JFK's funeral were also sold last night, fetching \$1,000 from another anonymous buyer.

Included in that lot was an original Mass card from the funeral, along with three photographs of JFK that were to appear on the card.

There was also a menu card for a state dinner scheduled for Nov. 25, 1963, the evening of the funeral. The dinner, to honor visiting West German leaders, was canceled.

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