

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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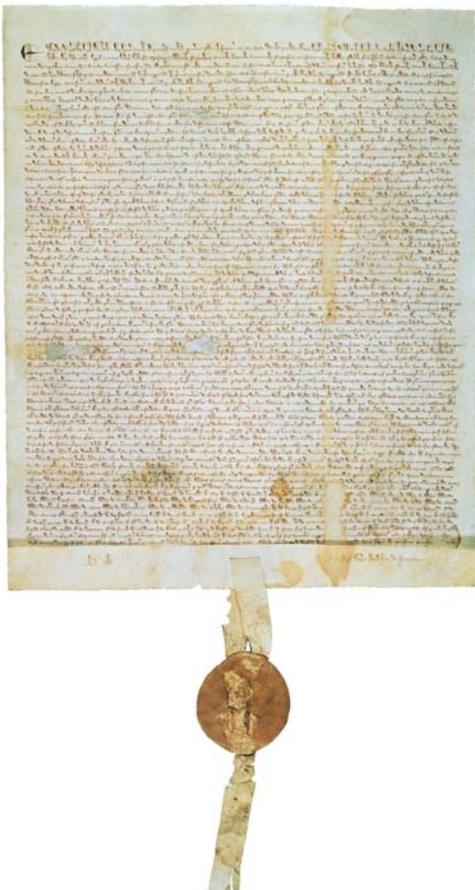
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# THE MAGNA CARTA

## TO BE SOLD BY SOTHEBY'S IN DECEMBER 2007

*THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENT  
EVER OFFERED AT AUCTION*



New York, NY, September 25, 2007 – During the week of December 10, 2007, Sotheby's in New York will present for sale **The Magna Carta**, the royal document revered as the birth certificate of freedom. This iconic manuscript, dated 1297, is the original charter that enshrined the rights of man into English law, and inspired the passion for liberty that flowered in America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues around the world today. It is the most famous single document in existence. Issued by King Edward I, and sealed by the king, this astonishing survivor is one of fewer than twenty examples of the *Magna Carta*, and the only one ever likely to be sold. This medieval vellum manuscript is well-known to millions, having been on view with the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution of the United States at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. since arriving in America over 22 years ago. This is one of only two copies of the *Magna Carta* outside of England (the other belonging to the people of Australia). The document is estimated to sell for \$20/30 million with the proceeds benefiting the charitable activities of The Perot Foundation.

A media preview of the *The Magna Carta* will be held today, Tuesday, September 25, 2007 from 10 am to noon at Sotheby's in New York (details on page 2).

David Redden, Vice Chairman of Sotheby's, said, "The *Magna Carta* is the first rung on the ladder to freedom, followed by the great American charters of freedom - the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Bill of Rights* and *The Gettysburg Address*. This document symbolizes mankind's eternal quest for freedom; it is a talisman of liberty."

*...here is a law which is above the King and which even he must not break. This reaffirmation of a supreme law and its expression in a general charter is the great work of Magna Carta; and this alone justifies the respect in which men have held it.*

--Winston Churchill, 1956

The *Magna Carta*, which is Latin for "Great Charter", was initially issued in 1215 but not finally confirmed as English law until 1297, the year this *Magna Carta* was issued. Originally written because of disagreements between King John and the English barons about the rights of the King, the charter required the king to renounce certain rights, respect specified legal procedures and accept that his will could be bound by the law. The fundamental right enshrined in the *Magna Carta* is that no man is above the law. More specific, and enduring, rights stated by the *Magna Carta* include the right against unlawful imprisonment, the right to a speedy trial and the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers.

*No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned...but by lawful judgment of his Peers, or by the Law of the Land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny or defer to any man either Justice or Right."*

The spirit of the *Magna Carta* reached far beyond England, however. The seeds of the American Revolution were sewn in the *Magna Carta*. Colonists from Boston to Charlestown demanded the same rights as British citizens resident in Great Britain, and when these rights were denied, the principles of the *Magna Carta* were cited in justification of the American rebellion by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and scores of other patriots. When the founding fathers searched for a precedent for asserting their rightful liberties from King George III and the English Parliament, they found it in the *Magna Carta*. The *Magna Carta* made it clear that no man, not even the king, is above the law and in 1779 John Adams evoked that sentiment when he called for: "A government of laws, and not of men."

With each king that succeeded King John, the *Magna Carta* was ratified and reissued. The present *Magna Carta*, issued by Edward I in 1297, is the original charter confirming and ratifying the 1225 issue of the *Magna Carta*, and was intended for the shire of Buckingham. The present *Magna Carta* was documented in the possession of the Brudenell family of Deene Park, Northamptonshire since the late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is not known how the document came into the possession of the Brudenell family, but it is likely through one of two family members who were distinguished lawyers. The manuscript was purchased by the Perot Foundation directly from the Brudenell family in 1984 and immediately placed on exhibition in the rotunda of the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Together with a 1297 *Magna Carta* in the National Library of Australia, this is the only *Magna Carta* outside England.

**MEDIA PREVIEW -- TUESDAY, SEPTMEBER 25, 2007, 10 AM TO NOON**

- **Date/Time: Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to noon**
- **Location: Sotheby's, 1334 York Avenue (@72<sup>nd</sup> Street)**
- **RSVP: Sotheby's Press Office, 212 606 7176**

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