

Commemorative handkerchief, printed in brown on cloth.

NOT SOMETHING TO BE SNEEZED AT...

In Congress, July 4th. 1776. The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America.

Author
[WOODRUFF, William and John BINNS, after]

Publication date
c1821]

Publisher
The Anderston Printworks,

Publication place
[Glasgow,

Physical description
Commemorative handkerchief, printed in brown on cloth.

Dimensions
717 by 825mm (28.25 by 32.5 inches).

Notes
The American Eagle soars triumphant above portraits of George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, who support a chain of office linking the seals of the first thirteen United States of America. They surround the complete text of the Declaration of Independence, above signatures of all who signed.

At the bottom left a vignette of the Boston Tea Party appears: “The Patriotic Bostonians discharging the British Ships in Boston harbour”; bottom right “General Burgoyne’s Surrender to General Gates at Saratoga”.

Celebratory handkerchiefs commemorating the Declaration of Independence were printed by Richard and Colin Gillespie of Glasgow from the early 1820s. In 1821 the ‘New-York National Advocate’ announced:

“We have received (says a New-York paper) from Collin Gillespie, Esq. of Glasgow, formerly of this city, two Handkerchiefs, the finest specimens of printing on cambric ever produced. The design is a facsimile of Binns’ superb print of the declaration of Independence, and contains the signatures of the illustrious signers with great exactness. In one corner is a representation of the “patriotic Bostonians discharging the British ships in Boston harbor,” of their cargoes of tea; and in the other the surrender of Burgoyne to Gates at Saratoga. In a branch of laurel, on each side, is inscribed the name of Hamilton and Putnam, and the likenesses of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. The only deviation from the print, is the omission of the portrait of John Hancock”.

It is based on the popular prints of the Declaration of Independence by William Woodruff (February 1819), and John Binns (October 1819). In about June of 1816, John Binns advertised for subscriptions for a print of the Declaration of Independence with facsimile signatures. It was to be surrounded by images of John Hancock, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and with the seals of all thirteen states. But, before he could bring his design to fruition, his rival William Woodruff, copied his idea, and combined Binns’s signature design with one by George Murray, for whom he had previously worked, of the Arms of the United States and the 13 state seals, issuing his print eight months before Binns’s.

Brothers Richard (born 1772) and Colin (born 1774) Gillespie were sons of textile manufacturer, William Gillespie, of Anderston, just outside Glasgow. The younger brother emigrated to the United States in 1793 and soon became an American citizen, in 1798, founding a trading company, Collin Gillespie & Company. Richard remained in Scotland, and took overall control of the cotton spinning and textile printing factories in about 1808 or 1809. No doubt, he spotted the commercial potential of the Woodruff / Binns design, and sent it home to Scotland for manufacture.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 20331

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