

Pincushion with engraved map printed on silk, hand-coloured, text to verso.

PINCUSHION MAP OF AMERICA

North America.

Author
[?DARTON, William Junior]

Publication date
c1820].

Publisher

Publication place
[?London,

Physical description
Pincushion with engraved map printed on silk, hand-coloured, text to verso.

Dimensions
(diameter) 55mm.

Notes
Unrecorded pincushion map of America.

The issuing of pincushions as educational toys for children began in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1744, The London publisher John Newbery advertised, ‘A little pretty pocket-book’ the first book published specifically for children, and as the title states: “intended for the instruction and amusement of little Master Tommy, and pretty Miss Polly: with two letters from Jack the giant-killer,

as also a ball and pincushion, the use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good boy, and Polly a good girl". The work was priced 6d. The addition of a pincushion or a ball, depending on your gender, would set the buyer back an extra 2d.

The burgeoning market for children's books and educational games grew strongly throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, with publishers such as Darton, Spilsbury, and Wallis producing a series of game and jigsaw, many of which had a map as their base. The earliest example of a pincushion map, according to Geoffery King, was produced by Robert Miller a London publisher working at 24 Old Fish Street, from around 1810 to 1819 when he was declared bankrupt; his stock would later be acquired by William Darton Junior. The pincushion bears a map of England and Wales on one side and on the other a map of Ireland. Miller did advertise pincushions for sale in his, 'A Catalogue of books & fancy articles' circa 1819, however, they do not bear maps, but instead portraits of notable figures of the day.

The current pincushion is slightly larger than Miller's example, bears no imprint, and has descriptive text to the verso:

"North America is about 4,500 miles long and the breadth from the promontory Alaska to the extreme point of Labrador is about 4,600 miles. It is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean; on the west by the Pacific Ocean; on the south it is said to extend to the vicinity of Panama, while the northern limits have not been exactly ascertained it is supposed to contain about 20,000,000 Inhabitants"

Although the work can be dated to around the early nineteenth century – with the United States named, and Mexico shown pre Texas independence – there a enough stylistic differences from Miller's map to suggest he was not the publisher. It is possible, that with the acquisition of Miller's stock by William Darton, that the later began to publish his own pincushion maps, however, with out further evidence this can only be speculation.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 15320

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