

Notes on American Bookbindings

The following note, written by Willman Spawn, on a book-binding executed by American artisans is the first of a projected series that will appear regularly in the *Proceedings*. Hannah D. French also will contribute notes to the series, each installment of which will be illustrated. We expect that most examples will be drawn from the Society's collections.

We trust that this new 'feature' will prove to be of interest and instruction to bibliopegists as well as to bibliophiles.

M. A. McCorison

A NEW ATTRIBUTION FOR THE 'NEW YORK MIRROR' BINDING

The first American bookbinding acquired by the late Michael Papantonio, in 1949, was an extra gilt calf binding on volume 8 of the *New York Mirror* and *Ladies Literary Gazette* (New York, 1831). The copy had belonged to a contributor to the volume, Mrs. Emma C. Embury, whose name is stamped in gilt on the cover. As a result of this remarkable acquisition, Mike went on over the next thirty years to assemble a very distinguished collection of a thousand titles, all in American bindings, which he bequeathed to the American Antiquarian Society.

His first American binding was illustrated as No. 54 in *Early American Bookbindings from the Collection of Michael Papantonio* (New York, 1972), a catalogue of the sixty-two books exhibited at Cornell, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the University of Virginia, the American Antiquarian Society, and Princeton University during 1972 and 1973. At the time that Mike, Hannah D. French, and I prepared the copy for the catalogue, we attributed this binding to Wilson and Nichols of

New York City. We could associate one decorative roll found on the *New York Mirror* as also found on a variant copy of Cadwallader D. Colden's *Memoir* of the Erie Canal celebration (New York, 1825), presented to the Hon. John T. Irving, with 'Wilson & Nichols' stamped on the spine. The New York firm was responsible for the binding of many presentation copies of the Colden work, given to prominent New Yorkers and other notables of the time.

This attribution may be wrong. Today in the Papanonio collection, there are three ticketed bindings from the shop of Christian Brown (fl. 1802-34[?]) of New York City, all on books printed from 1817 to 1830. Among these three books nine different rolls appear, and six of these are identical to six of the ten rolls found on the sides and spine of the *New York Mirror*. This leads me to believe that we should now attribute the *Mirror* to Christian Brown and not to Wilson & Nichols.

The three ticketed Christian Brown bindings in the Papanonio collection at the Society are the following:

Watts, Isaac. *Psalms, Carefully Suited to the Christian Worship in the United States of America*. New York: John Tiebout & sons; J. Seymour, Printer, 1817.

H. T. Dering copy. Red roan, gilt and blind tooled.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Wept of Wisb-ton-Wish*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1829.

Calf, gold tooled spine and marbled paper sides.

Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. New York: Protestant Episcopal Press, 1830.

S. G. Clark copy. Green morocco, straight grained, gold tooled.

Willman Spawn

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