



2 volumes, 8vo (200 by 130mm). iii-xx, 453, [1]; v-xx, 574pp. 5 engraved folding maps, contemporary tree calf, expertly rebaked to style, at spine gilt divided into six compartments, red morocco lettering pieces.

FIRST EDITION OF AN IMPORTANT HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE FIRST BOOK TO RECEIVE COPYRIGHT IN THE UNITED STATES

The History of the Revolution of South Carolina, from a British Province to an Independent State.

Author

RAMSAY, David

Publication date

1785

Publisher

Isaac Collins,

Publication place

Trenton,

Physical description

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Dimensions

Notes

Although Ramsay applied for copyright to this work in 1785 (and his *History of the American Revolution* in 1789), it was not granted until 1790. Nevertheless, the two hold the joint distinction of being the first books to receive copyright in America.

Ramsay, born in Pennsylvania and educated at Princeton, settled as a physician in Charleston. He served in the Continental Congress and as a military surgeon during the war, and was later President of the South Carolina Senate. His history is an accurate portrayal of the events in the southern theatre. Responding to a portion of the printing sheets of this work sent to him by Ramsay, Thomas Jefferson wrote to the author on 31 August 1785: "I am much pleased to see that a commencement of those special histories of the late revolution which must be written first before a good general one can be expected. I shall be more pleased to see the remaining parts as well executed as this which sets the example" (Jefferson to Ramsay, 31 August 1785).

The maps, among the earliest American cartographic depictions, include: *A Sketch of Charleston Harbour*; *Plan of the Siege of Charleston*; *A Sketch of the Situations & Stations of the British Vessels, under the command of Sir Peter Parker on the attack upon Fort Moultrie*; *Plan of the Siege of Savannah*; *Plan of the Investment of York[town] & Gloucester*.

Beyond its value as a cartographically-illustrated work of history, it has been argued by Lester Cohen and others that the few 18th-century American histories of the Revolution, most notably those authored by Ramsay, were part of a larger nation-building movement. Thus, this history of the revolution in the southern theatre is distinctly American: in its writing, illustrations, printing, binding and socio-political impact upon the young Republic's cultural identity.

Bibliography

Evans 19211; Felcone 223; Howes R36; Sabin 67690; Streeter 2:1135

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 15202