

Notes on American Bookbindings

A NEW YORK BINDING TICKETED BY W. M'QUEEN

In his quest for signed New York bindings late in his collecting career, Michael Papantonio acquired two bindings signed by the unmistakably Scottish name of W. M'Queen. A two-volume copy of James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Spy*, 3d ed. (New York, 1822) was signed with a tiny ticket pasted inside the front cover. A much larger quarto family Bible, more elaborately bound, was stamped in blind at the foot of its spine with the name M'Queen, Binder, N.Y., a later style of signature. Both books are now in the Papantonio collection at the American Antiquarian Society.¹

The 1822 copy of the third edition of Cooper's novel is unique in that it bears the name of its owner, Jane Livingston, on both of its volumes, evidence that it was commissioned either by her or for her. It is worn with the passage of time and probably from the hands of many readers.

Nothing is known of M'Queen at this time but his name, which appeared in New York city directories as William M'Queen, with locations at 'rear, 58 Williams Street' in 1818 and 1819, and at 56 Cedar in 1820 and 1822. Further information in an advertisement by M'Queen on page 12 of Longworth's *Directory* declared to readers that he 'Binds books in every variety of style, both plain and Elegant in the *Modern European style*.'²

¹ Marcus A. McCorison, 'Early American Bookbindings From the Collection of Michael Papantonio,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 93 (1983): 496, 498.

² George L. McKay, comp. *A Register of Artists, Engravers, Booksellers, Bookbinders, Printers Publishers in New York City, 1633-1820*, New York, 1942.

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