

18th Century Material Culture Bags, Sacks, & Wallets



Bags

Osnaburg Bags

Court Records of Augusta County, Virginia 1755

Augusta County Virginia, 1755.

"August, 1764 (B).

Cresap vs. Walker. - Debtor Dr. Thomas Walker: 1755 -

[Extracts.]

March 17, To 54 ells of oznabrigs for bags; paid for making 20 bags, 10/; thread, 1/6."

March 28, paid Daniel Lynn for carriage of 12 casks of flour; paid Daniel Lynn for carriage of 33 pounds of wheat; to 21 yards of oznabrigs for bags; paid for making six bags, 3/. thread, 6d..."

Chalkley, Lyman; "Chronicles of the Scotch-irish Settlement in Virginia. Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745 - 1800." Three Volumes. Volume I. Commonwealth Printing Company, Rosslyn, Virginia. 1912. At Google Books.

Osnaburg Bags

From this Account, we can determine the Dimensions of the Bags. As “Oznabrigs” cloth typically came 26 or 28 inches wide:

"To 54 ells of oznabrigs for bags; paid for making 20 bags"

54 ells at 45 inches per ell = 67.5 yards, divided by 20 bags = 3.375 yards per bag. The cut material was 26 or 28 inches wide by 121.5 inches long.

"to 21 yards of oznabrigs for bags; paid for making six bags"

21 yards divided by 6 = 3.5 yards per bag. The cut material was 26 or 28 inches wide by 126 inches long. The length is the total length allowed for the bag; to make a bag it would need to be folded in half. The commodities mentioned are wheat and flour. Horses and water transport are mentioned.

Two batches of bags were made, one is 25 or 27 inches wide allowing one-half inch for the side seams, deducting one inch from the length for seams at the ends, for a length of 60.25 inches, and for the other batch of bags, 25 or 27 inches wide allowing one-half inch for the side seams, deducting one inch from the length for seams at the ends, for a length of 62.5 inches.

Therefore, the bags are a bit over five feet long. Due to the narrowness of some of the sacking materials, bags may often have been narrower than our modern perception.



Detail: John Beale Bordley of Philadelphia
by Charles Wilson Peale c 1770
(National Gallery of Art)



Printed for & Sold by CARINGTON BOWLES,

A HOLIDAY DIVERSION.

at N^o 69 in St Pauls Church Yard, LONDON.

“A HOLIDAY DIVERSION”
by Carington Bowles 1782
(Lewis Walpole Library)



"A HOLIDAY DIVERSION"
by Carington Bowles 1782
(Lewis Walpole Library)



Le Citoyen de la Roche ne pouvant plus de son âge se faire servir par ses domestiques, a été obligé de se faire servir par ses enfants. C'est ce qui a été représenté dans cette gravure. On voit le Citoyen de la Roche, qui a été obligé de se faire servir par ses enfants, être porté en l'air par ses enfants. On voit aussi le Citoyen de la Roche, qui a été obligé de se faire servir par ses enfants, être porté en l'air par ses enfants. On voit aussi le Citoyen de la Roche, qui a été obligé de se faire servir par ses enfants, être porté en l'air par ses enfants.

“GRANDE EXEMPLE DE L'AMITIE FILIALE”

1783

(The British Museum)



“GRANDE EXEMPLE DE L'AMITIE FILIALE”

1783

(The British Museum)



GUY VAUX.

Printed by W. Humphry N° 29, 7 Strand

"GUY VAUX."
by W. Humphry 1782
(Lewis Walpole Library)



Printed April 16, 1783, by W. Humphrey N° 207 Strand.

THE COLE-HEAVERS.

*Two virtuous Elves,
Taking care of themselves.*

“THE COLE-HEAVERS.”
by James Gillray 1783
(Lewis Walpole Library)



“Paille d'avoine, paille d'avoine drawn by Saml. Egerton Leigh, Esqr.”
by J. Humphrey - James Gillray 1786
(Lewis Walpole Library)

Flour & Oat Bags

The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet 1759 - 1760

George Stevenson to Colonel Henry Bouquet

“York, 21st May 1759...

As the quantity of Oats is uncertain (because I expect more yet) the Number of bags wanted here is also uncertain, Six hundred Bushels will require 100 bags our common bags hold 4 Bushels each, & are generally made out of 3 1/4 yds. Baging, & when made up are about 4 feet 10 inches in Length; I think the bags intended ought not to exceed 5 Feet in Length when made up, which will require 3 1/2 yards for a Bag but care must be taken that the Top Sail Duck or Sail Cloth be 2 feet wide or such Breadth as that 3 1/2 yards in length, when made into a Bag, will contain the quantity of Six Bushels.”

Flour & Oat Bags

The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet 1759 - 1760

Edward Shippen to Colonel Henry Bouquet

'Lancaster, 24th May 1759...

Bags are making of Ozenbrigs & Ticklenburgs & other Stuff & best I can find, tho these sorts are scarce.'"

Flour & Oat Bags

**The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet
1759 - 1760**

Edward Shippen to Colonel Henry Bouquet

'Lancaster 30th May 1759...

I approve much of ye Dimensions of ye bags & (crossed out) which are to be made large enough to hold 7 Bushels, & tho' Mr Simons said they would be too big Yet I have advised him to obey Orders. I did not think of this when I was making those for the present Emergency, but if I had made them So large, they might have bursted in carrying as I was obliged to make them of Ozenbrigs or any sort of weak Stuff as I could pick up on a Sudden."

Salt Bags

The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet 1759 - 1760

Major James Livingston to Colonel Henry Bouquet

“Fort Cumberland January 9th 1760...

This Day Capt Moore Seets[sic] off with his Brigade of the Kings Pack Horses Consisting of Forty Horses, & Carrys As near as Can be Conjecherd 6,000lb. of Grahams Salt Cumputed to 100 Bushells at Sixty Pounds p Bushell. By Computation the Quantity of the first Brigade Carried was 27 1/4 Bushells[.] Total of Salt Carried forward is 127 1/4 Bushells[.] Remaining in Store Forty four Baggs Suppos'd to Contain four Bushells in Each Bagg Makeing in the Whole 176 Bushells[.]”

Salt Bags

The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet 1759 - 1760

Colonel Henry Bouquet Correspondance

"Six hundred Bushels will require 100 bags our common bags hold 4 Bushels each, & are generally made out of 3 1/4 yds. Baging, & when made up are about 4 feet 10 inches in Length; I think the bags intended ought not to exceed 5 Feet in Length when made up, which will require 3 1/2 yards for a Bag but care must be taken that the Top Sail Duck or Sail Cloth be 2 feet wide or such Breadth as that 3 1/2 yards in length, when made into a Bag, will contain the quantity of Six Bushels."

Extant Bags

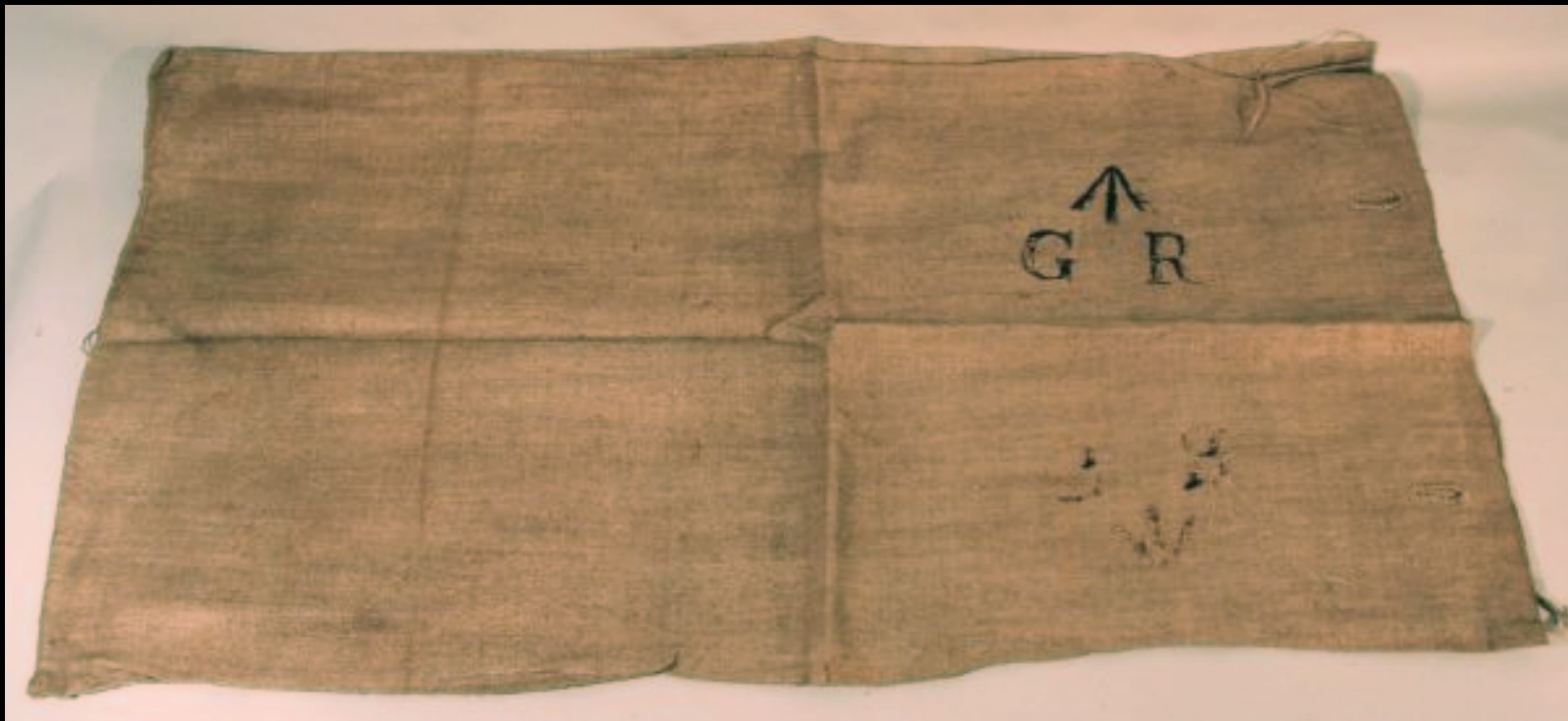


British Coarse Linen Bags used aboard a British Ship of War

33 1/2" H x 17" W

Captured by Captain Thomas Thompson of the Continental Navy, Commander of the Raleigh of Portsmouth, New Hampshire

(Royka's Auction House)



British Coarse Linen Bags used aboard a British Ship of War

33 1/2" H x 17" W

Captured by Captain Thomas Thompson of the Continental Navy, Commander of the Raleigh of Portsmouth, New Hampshire
(Royka's Auction House)



British Coarse Linen Bags used aboard a British Ship of War

33 1/2" H x 17" W

Captured by Captain Thomas Thompson of the Continental Navy, Commander of the Raleigh of Portsmouth, New Hampshire
(Royka's Auction House)



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G

R









These George Rey bags
were taken from a captured
British ship by Thomas
Thompson — Portsmouth
N. H. about 1777 or '78

Linen Bags Marked with GR and the British Broad Arrow

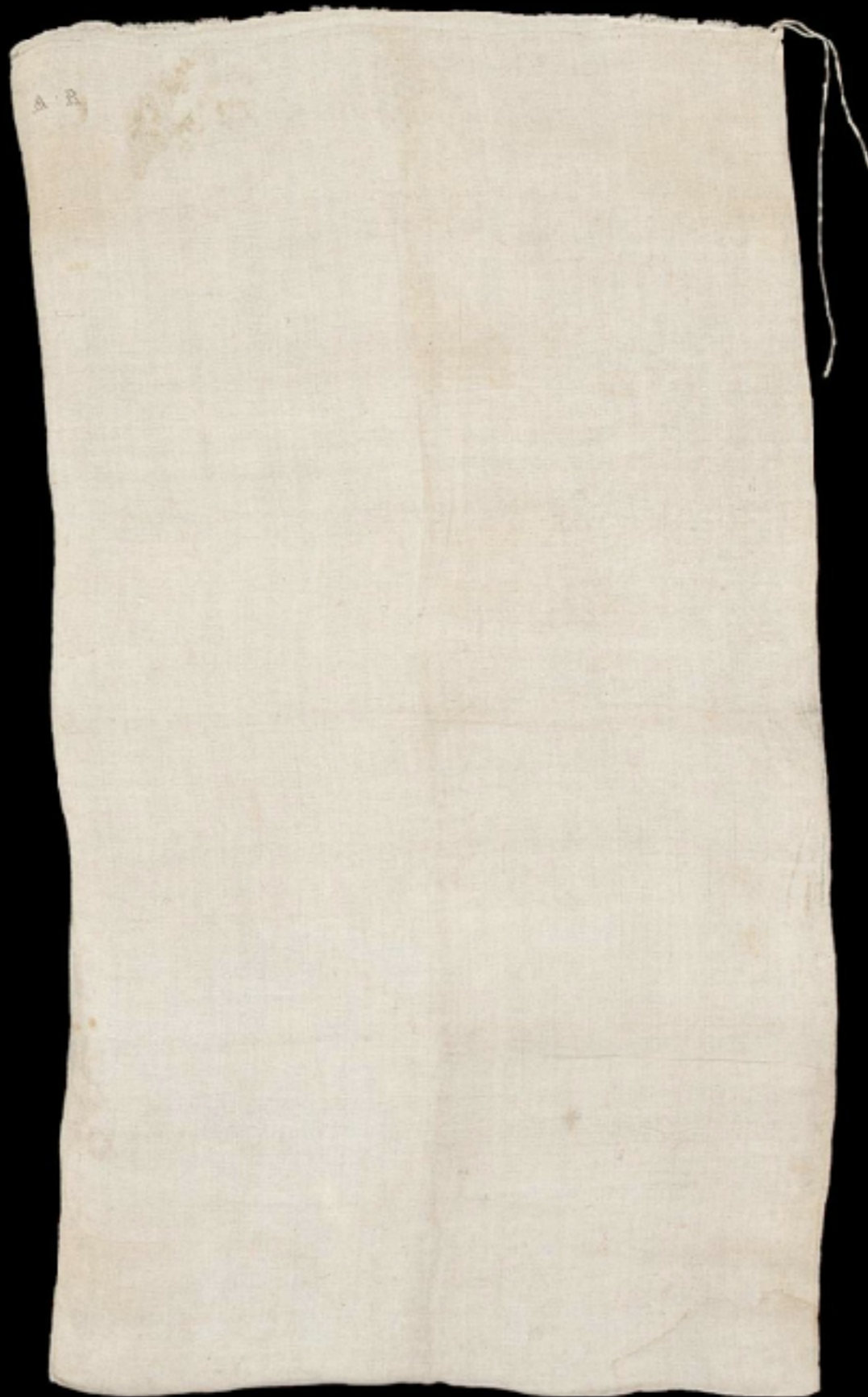
33 1/2" H x 17" W

Captured by Captain Thomas Thompson

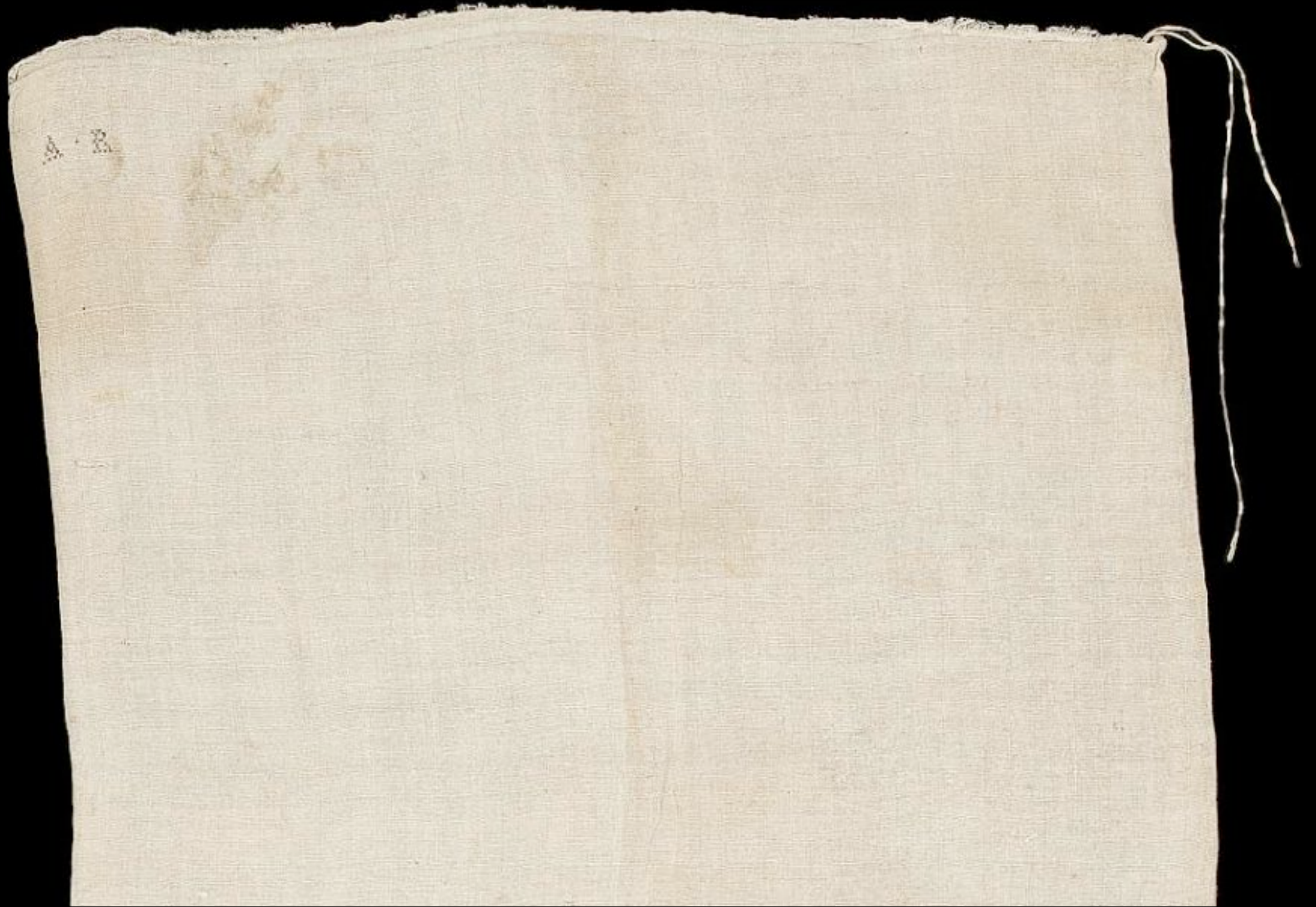
Commander of the Raleigh of Portsmouth, New Hampshire

(Later captured by the British)

(Royka's Auction House)

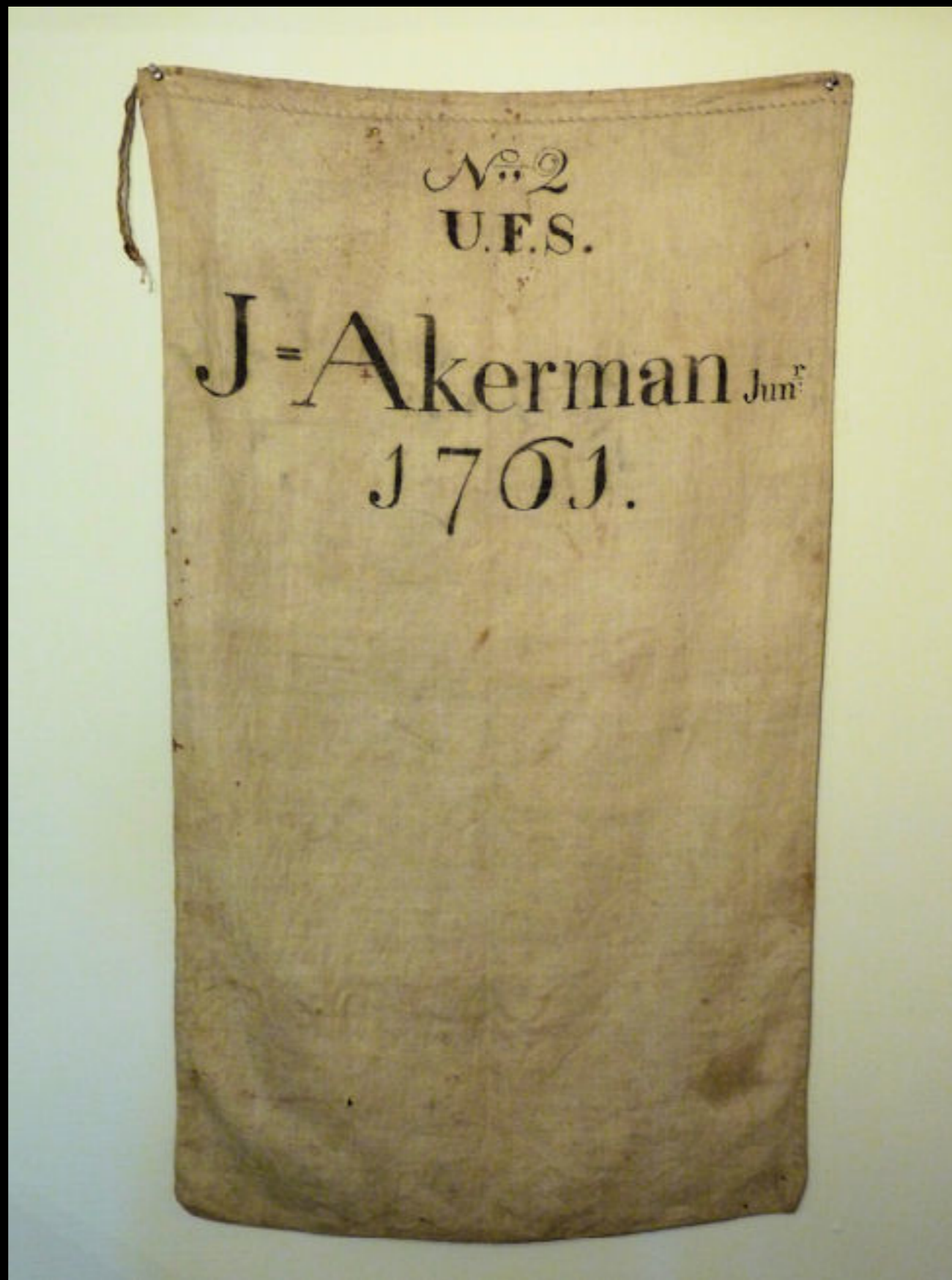


Linen Drawstring Bag with Cross Stitch Embroidered "AR"
127 x 71 cm c. 18th - Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Linen Drawstring Bag with Cross Stitch Embroidered "AR"
127 x 71 cm c. 18th - Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Fire Bags



Linen Fire Bag (26" x 44 1/2")
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 1761
(Skinner Auction House)

N^o. 2

U.F.S.

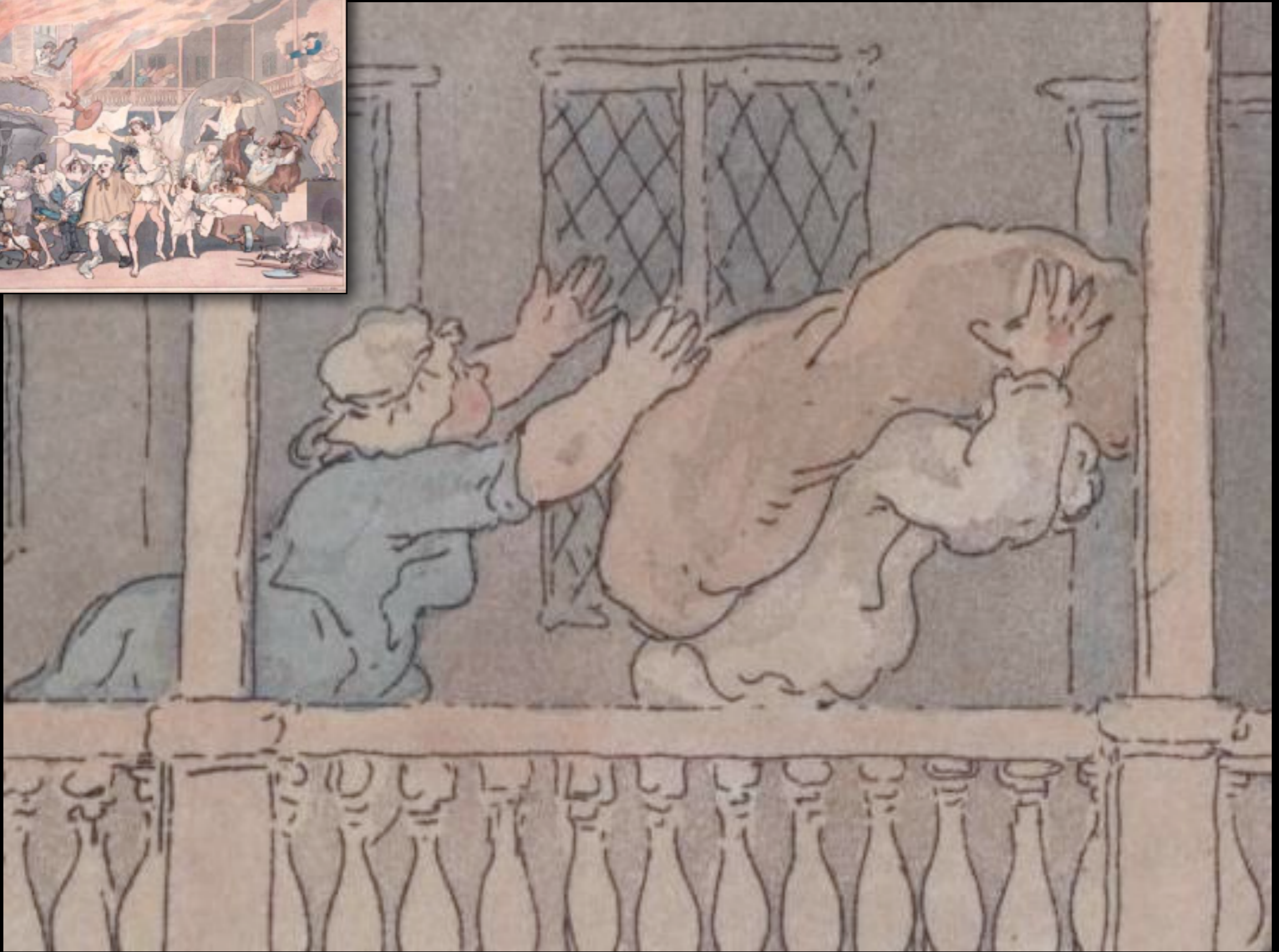
J = Akerman Jun^r

1761.

Linen Fire Bag (26" x 44 1/2")
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 1761
(Skinner Auction House)



Linen Fire Bag (26" x 44 1/2")
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 1761
(Skinner Auction House)



Detail - Peregrine Rescuing Emila from the Inn Fire
by Thomas Rowlandson c. 1786

Wallets



T H R E E P O U N D S Reward.

RUN away from the subscriber, living in Shrewsbury, in the county of Monmouth, New-Jersey, a NEGROE man, named TITUS, but may probably change his name; he is about 21 years of age, not very black, near 6 feet high; had on a grey homespun coat, brown breeches, blue and white stockings, and took with him a wallet, drawn up at one end with a string, in which was a quantity of clothes. Whoever takes up said Negroe, and secures him in any goal, or brings him to me, shall be entitled to the above reward of *Three Pounds* proc. and all reasonable charges, paid by

Nov. 8, 1775.

§

J O H N C O R L I S.



*Faults still they find with that, or this,
And something always is amiss: —* | *As if Government were intended...
For nothing else but to be mended... —*

— Published according to Act of Parliament.
From One Selling, with the Study of a Station of Learning the Right and Wrong of it, March 10th 1729

“The itinerant handy craftsman, or, Caleb turn'd tinker”
Hubert François Gravelot c. 1740
(Yale University)



"The Itinerant Handy Craftsman, or, Caleb turn'd Tinker"
Hubert François Gravelot c. 1740
(Yale University)



London Cries: A Man with a Bundle, Old Clothes
Paul Sandby c. 1759
(Yale Center for British Art)



Detail of a Wallet - "L'homme à la Besace"
by Françoise Duparc c. 1760
(Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille)



Cries of Dublin: Woman Carrying Clothing in a Large Wallet
by Douglas Hamilton c. 1760s
(British Museum)



"Old Cloaths to Sell"
by Hugh Douglas Hamilton 1760
(Private Collection)



“An Engagement in Billingsgate Channel, between the Terrible and the Tiger, two First Rates”
by Carington Bowles 1781
(The British Museum)



“An Engagement in Billingsgate Channel, between the Terrible and the Tiger, two First Rates”
by Carington Bowles 1781
(The British Museum)

Work Bags



Linen & Cotton Twill Work Bag Initialed "M F"
1683
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Wool Embroidered Linen & Cotton Work Bag
1702
(Victoria & Albert)



English Crewell Embroidered Linen & Cotton Work Bag

1710

(Kerry Taylor Auctions)



Drawstring Bag
(Connecticut Historical Society)

Acknowledgements

The 18th Century Material Culture Resource Center extends its sincere appreciation to Steve Rayner for sharing his research on cloth bags. Steve has been a tremendous asset to the success of these slideshows.

Acknowledgements

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