

18th Century Material Culture

Handkerchiefs, Neckerchiefs, & Fichus



“Neck Cloths”, “Handkerchiefs”, “Kerchiefs” & “Neckerchiefs”

According to the research of Ruth Hodges, an analysis of Boston Newspapers printed between 1764 and 1774 reveals that the most common term representing neck coverings for both men and woman during this period was “Handkerchief” (1845 hits). “Neck Cloth” also appears in these papers, but to a lesser degree (93 hits). The terms “Kerchief” and “Neckerchief” do not appear in any accounts, despite the fact that Samuel Johnson’s 1768 Dictionary defines the following:

HANDKERCHIEF, n.s. A piece of silk or linen used to wipe the face, or cover the neck.

KERCHIEF, n.s. A head dress of a woman; any loose cloth used in dress.

NECKCLOTH, n.s. That which men wear on their necks.

NECKERCHIEF, n.s. A gorget; handkerchief for a woman’s neck.

Whether the exclusion of the term “Neckerchief” from the New England dialogue is purely a regional phenomenon will only be determined through further study. The 18th Century Material Culture Resource Center greatly appreciates Ruth Hodges and Paul Dickfoss for their input on period neck coverings.

Plain

Neck Cloths, Handkerchiefs,
Kerchiefs & Neckerchiefs



Detail: Black (Likely Silk) Neck Cloth Tied in a Bow & Worn Over the Shirt Collar
Unknown Huntsman by William Hoare of Bath c. 1770s
(Private Collection)



Detail: Black Neck Cloth (or Stock) worn Under the Shirt Collar
Peter Legh (1723-1794) by Edward Penny c. 1750
(Grosvenor Museum)



Neck Cloth Tied in a Bow
"Twenty Thousand I've got.... How Lucky's my Lot" by Carington Bowles 1781
(RareOldPrints.com))



Detail: White Neck Cloth
"The English Coachman" by Carington Bowles 1769
(The British Museum)



Detail: White Neck Cloth worn Over the Shirt Collar and Tucked Into the Waistcoat
George Morland by Henry Robert Morland c. 1779
(Yale Center for British Art)



English Linen Handkerchief of Queen Charlotte, Consort of King George III
Late 18th - Early 19th Century
(Kent State University Museum)

Yarn Dyed
Neck Cloths, Handkerchiefs,
Kerchiefs & Neckerchiefs



Detail: Alternating Thin & Thick Dark Striped Tan Neck Cloth
From "Watson and the Shark" by John Singleton Copley 1778
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Plain Weave Linen Handkerchief Bordered with Four Pink Stripes
18th - Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American White Cotton Handkerchief Bordered with 6 Corded White Stripes
c. 1790 - Early 19th Century
(Colonial Williamsburg)



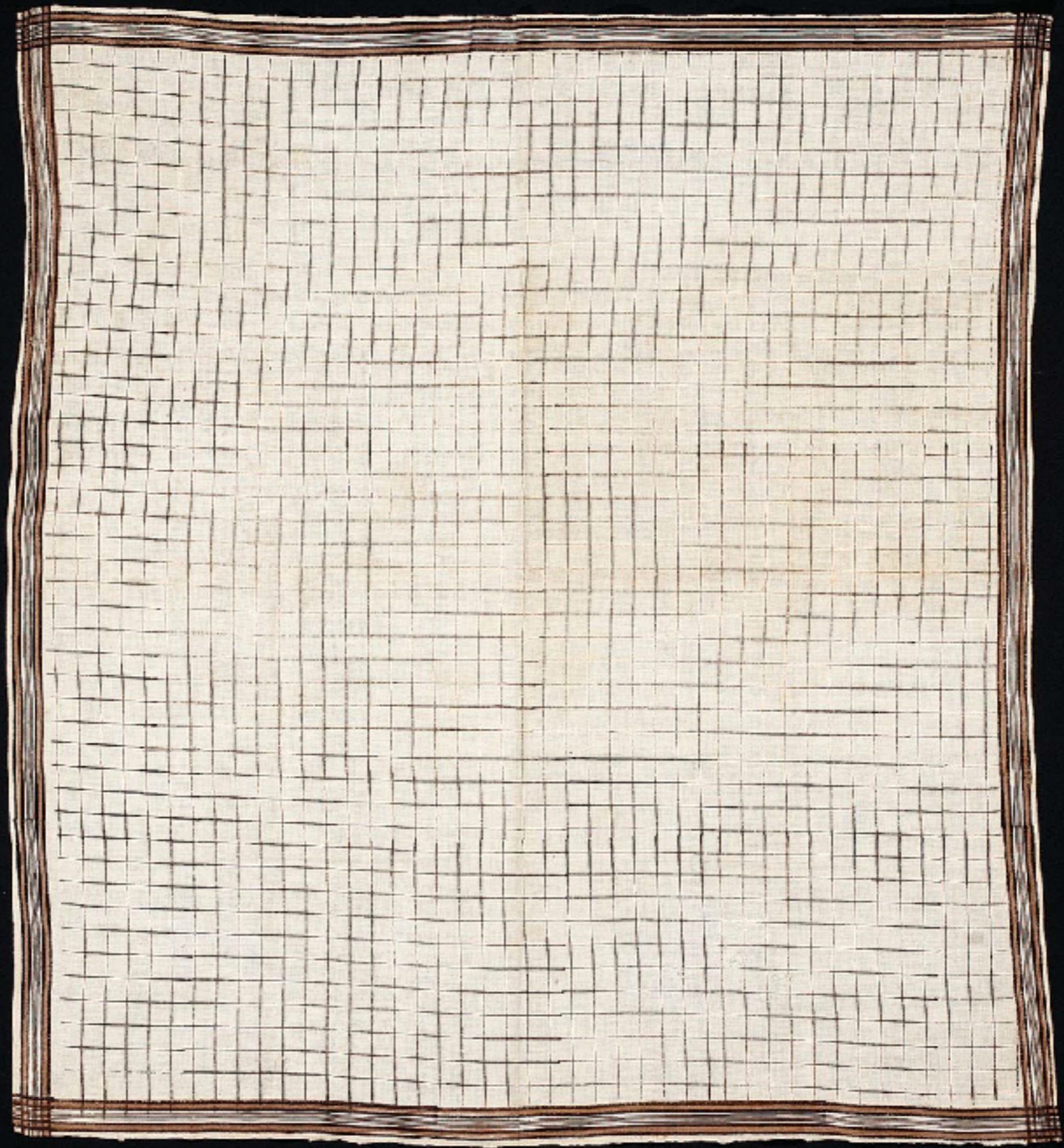
Detail: White Line Check on a Maroon or Brown Neck Cloth
From "Watson and the Shark" by John Singleton Copley 1778
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Checked Linen Neck Cloth

c. 1750

(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American Block Printed Cotton Handkerchief Worn by a Member of the Robbins Family of Lexington, Massachusetts
Made in Massachusetts - Late 18th to Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Neck Cloth of Checked Linen Embroidered "E M"
c. 1780 - 1820
(Colonial Williamsburg)



American Linen Handkerchief
18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Wool Handkerchief
Late 18th to Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



American Wool Handkerchief
Late 18th to Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Printed Spotted & “Birdseye”
Neck Cloths, Handkerchiefs,
Kerchiefs & Neckerchiefs



Printed Red Neck Cloth with White Dots & Striped Border
18th Century
(Cowper & Newton Museum, OLNEY)



Printed Red Neck Cloth with White Dots & Border
18th Century
(Cowper & Newton Museum, OLNEY)



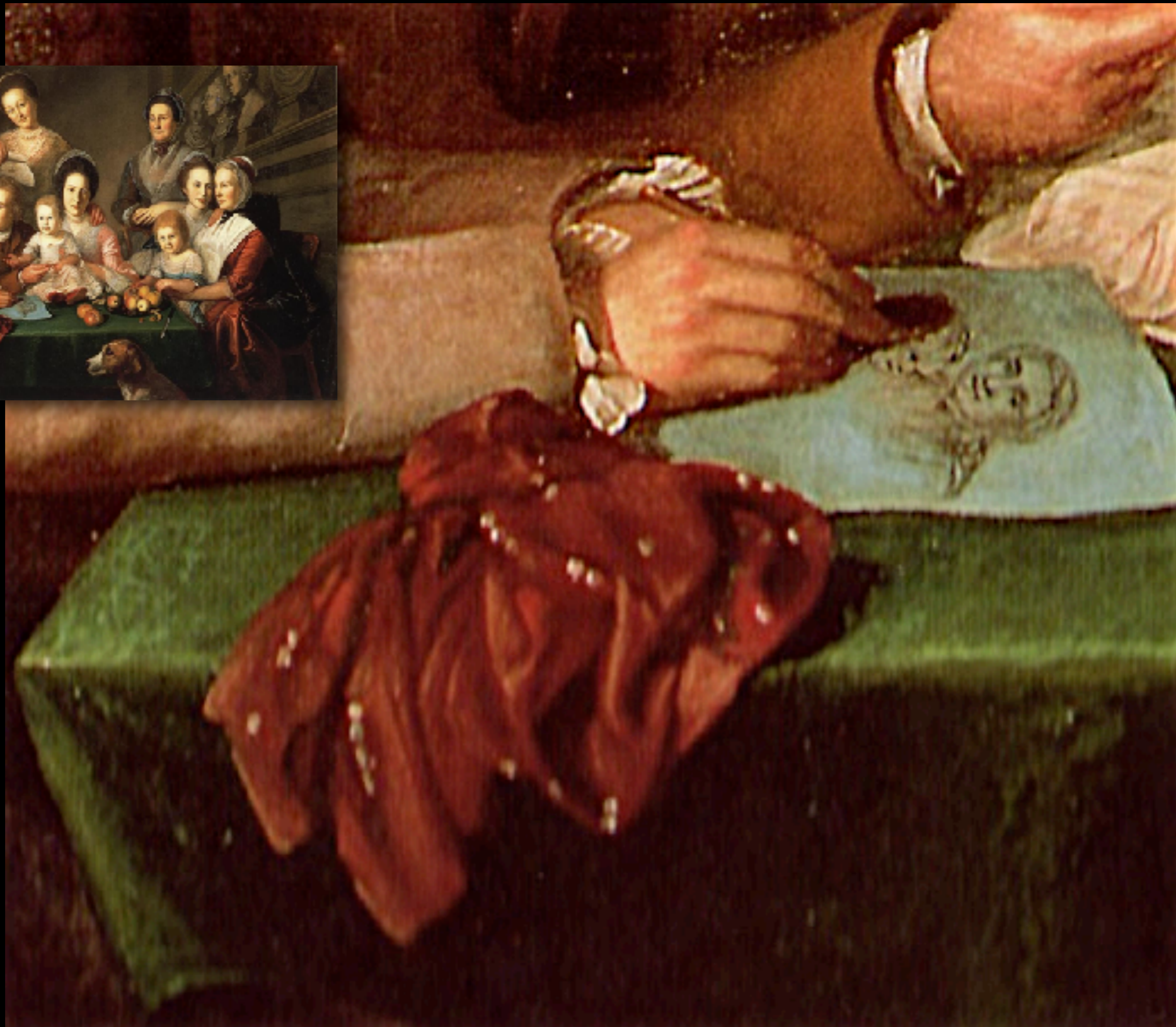
“The Elopement”
by John Collett
(National Maritime Museum)



“Sticker-Up of Bills...”
by Lt. Gabriel Bay - 1774
(National Maritime Museum)



Detail: Spotted Blue & Plain Red Neck Cloths
“BACHELOR’S FARE, or BREAD and CHEESE with KISSES”
Printed by Carington Bowles 1777
(The British Museum)



Detail: Red Neck Cloth with Resist or Tie-Dyed "Bandannoe" Diamonds
"Watson and the Shark" by John Singleton Copley 1778
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Detail: Spotted Red Neck Cloth
“An ENGLISH SLOOP engaging a DUTCH MAN of WAR”
by Carington Bowles 1781
(The British Museum)



The SAILOR'S PRESENT, or, The JEALOUS CLOWN.
From the Original, *Written by John Collier, on the first performance of Carington Bowles.*
Printed and sold by Carington Bowles, at the Sign of the Anchor, in the Strand, London.

Detail: Spotted Brown & Red Neck Cloths
"The SAILOR'S PRESENT, or, The JEALOUS CLOWN"
Printed by Carington Bowles 1778
(The British Museum)



Detail: Plain and Spotted Neck Cloths
"The SAILOR riding to PORTSMOUTH"
Published by Carington Bowles after Robert Dighton 1782
(The British Museum)



The Market Girl
by Henry Walton c. 1776 - 1777
(Yale Center for British Art)



“A City Shower”
by Edward Penny 1764
(The Museum of London)



“MY WIFE AND YOUR WIFE”
 by Carington Bowles 1779
 (The British Museum)



Detail: Spotted Neck Cloth Tucked into a Jacket (Note the Striped Shirt)
“A STUDENT of the STABLE”
by John Raphael Smith after Benjamin van der Gucht 1783
(The British Museum)



“YOUTH AND AGE”

From: “A Collection of Drolleries” 1770 - 1797 c. 1785
(Lewis Walpole Library)



“SLIGHT of HAND by a MONKEY... or the LADY'S HEAD UNLOADED”
by Carington Bowles 1776
(Lewis Walpole Library)

“Tie” or “Bandannoe” Resist Dyeing

From: A Woodrunner’s Diary (<http://woodsrunnersdiary.blogspot.com>):

“Bandhani (there are several similar spellings) means to tie or dye tie. Bandhani is in fact an ancient form of tie dyeing where spots of material are bound or wound with thread then dyed to produce a series of white spots in a variety of designs. This art form was widely used in the east, but in the late 17th century and early 18th century, Bandhani was exported to the New World in the form of large handkerchiefs. From the name Bandhani, came the name Bandana or Bandanna or Bandannoe.”



Cloth Bound and Ready for Dyeing



Detail: Red Neck Cloth with Resist or Tie-Dyed "Bandannoe" Diamonds
"Watson and the Shark" by John Singleton Copley 1778
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



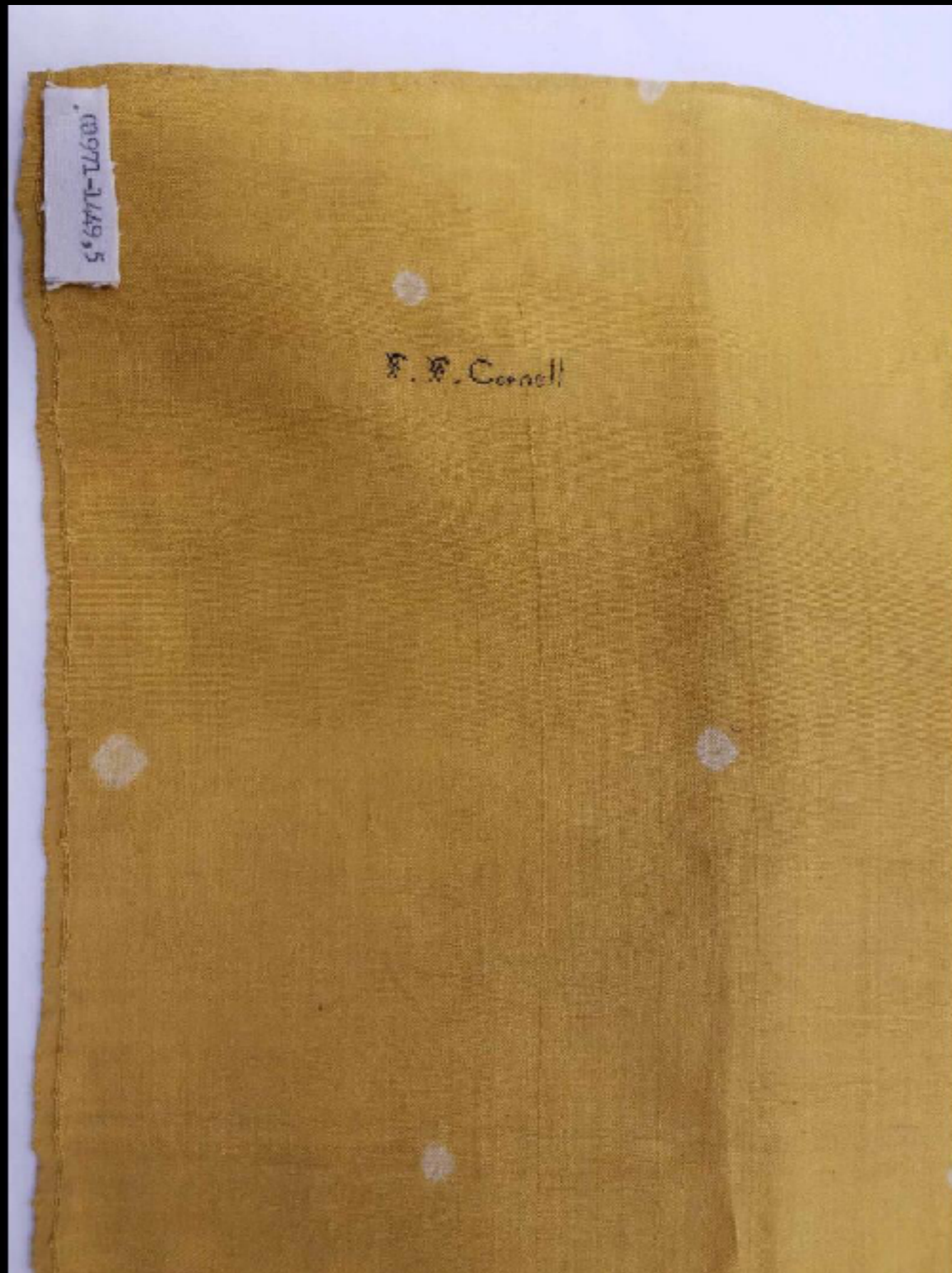
Indian Export Birdseye Resist Dyed Handkerchief
18th or Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Possibly English Export Birdseye Resist Dyed Handkerchief Worn in America
Descended in the Family of Jane Sloan, Who Married John Eatton LeConte, sr. in 1776 c. 1750 - 1820
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



Indian Export Birdseye Resist Dyed Handkerchief
c. 1750 - 1820
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



Indian Export Birdseye Resist Dyed Handkerchief
c. 1750 - 1820
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



Indian Export Birdseye Resist Dyed Handkerchief
c. 1750 - 1820
(National Trust, Snowhill Collection)



Sample of Resist Dyed Birdseye Cloth made in Manchester, England, as a Simulation of Imported Indian Goods

c. 1750

(Musées des Arts Dséoratifs)

Pictured in "Textiles in America" by Florence Montgomery



Sample of Resist Dyed Birdseye Cloth made in Manchester, England, as a Simulation of Imported Indian Goods

c. 1750

(Musées des Arts Dséoratifs)

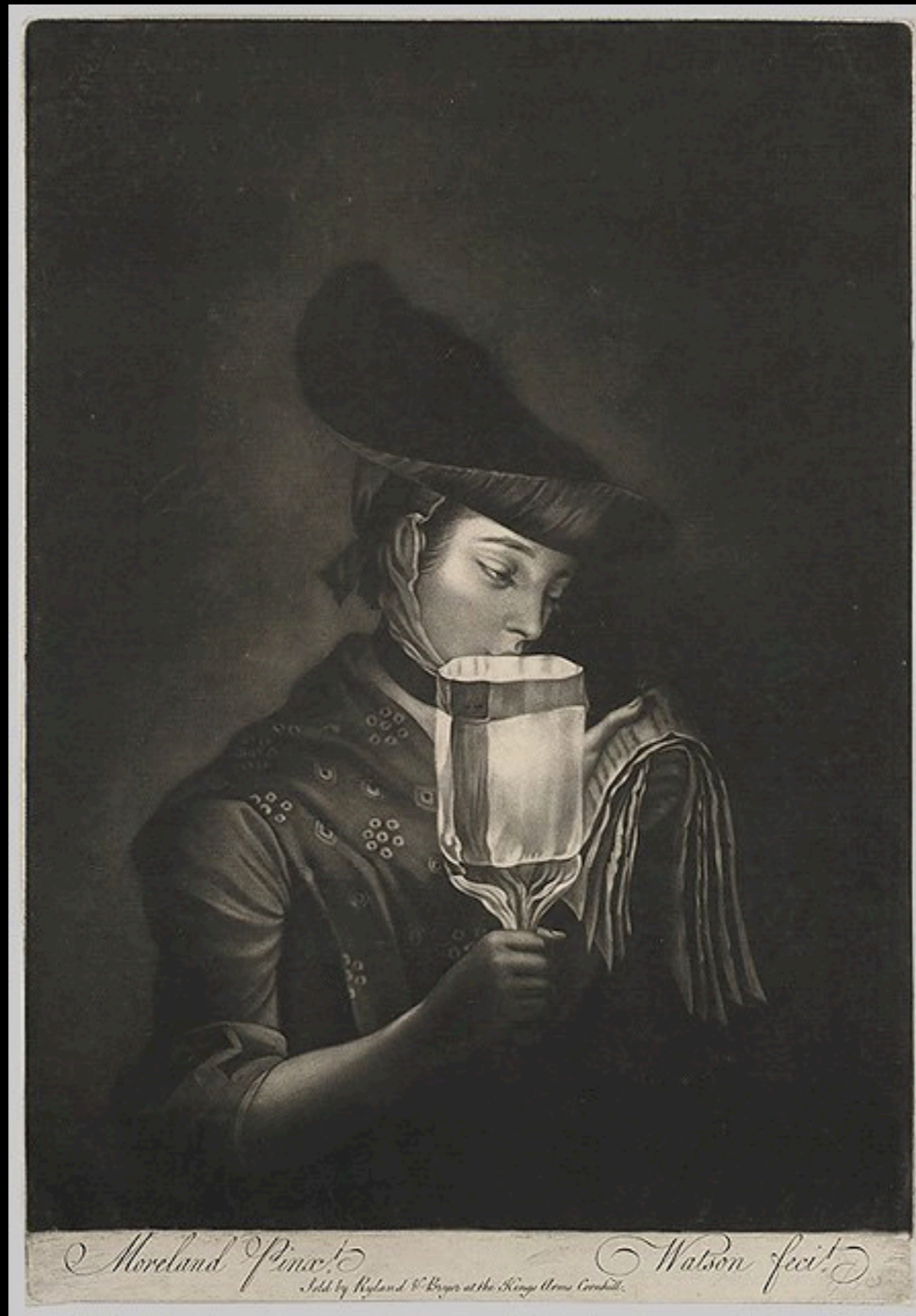
Pictured in "Textiles in America" by Florence Montgomery



The Ballad Singer
by Henry Robert Morland 1764
(Yale Center for British Art)



Detail: Resist or Tie-Dyed "Bandannoe" Brown Neck Handkerchief
"The Ballad Singer" by Henry Robert Morland 1764
(Yale Center for British Art)



“Moreland Pinact. Watson fecit!”
by Hyland & Boyer at the Kings Arms, Cornhill c. 1769



Detail: Resist or Tie-Dyed "Bandannoe" Red Handkerchief
William, Sixth Baron Craven by Francis Cotes 1768
(Worcester Art Museum)



Detail: "The Letter Woman"
by Philip Dawe after Henry Morland, Published by C. Bowles, London 1769
(Christie's Auction House)



Detail: White and Striped Neck Cloths & Resist Dyed Handkerchief
"The MODERN BEAU in DISTRESS"
(Yale Center for British Art)



The Stanley Children of New Bern, North Carolina
by Charles Wilson Peale 1782
(Tryon Palace)



The Stanley Children of New Bern, North Carolina
by Charles Wilson Peale 1782
(Tryon Palace)



Portrait of a Woman and Boy
by English School (Possibly by John Hoppner) c. 4th Quarter 18th Century
(Grogan & Co. Auctioneers)



Detail: Brown Handkerchief with Resist or Tie-Dyed "Bandannoe" Diamonds
Timothy Matlack by Charles Wilson Peale c. 1790
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Printed
Neck Cloths, Handkerchiefs,
Kerchiefs & Neckerchiefs



“The Young Sportsman”
by Robert Pine c. 1766

(Art Gallery of New South Wales - Detail Courtesy Neal Hurst & Angela Trowbridge Burnley)



Detail: Printed Neck Cloth Tucked into the Waistcoat
Andrew Wilkinson by Andrew Wilkinson 1755
(National Portrait Gallery)



Indian Export Handkerchief
18th Century
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Indian Export Printed Cotton Handkerchief from the Coromandel Coast

c. 1710 - 1720

(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Indian Export Printed Cotton Handkerchief from Pulcat on the Comandel Coast
18th Century
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Neck Cloth or Handkerchief
18th Century
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Turkish Silk Embroidered Bohça Made for Export
Early 18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



English Copper Plate Printed Silk Handkerchief
"AN ACCOUNT OF 5 MOST GLORIOUS VICTORIES" of the British Forces c. 1707
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



English Plate Printed Silk Handkerchief Commemorating the Battle of Blenheim in 1704
c. 1705
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



English Plate Printed Silk Handkerchief Commemorating Doctor Sacheverell

1710

(Victoria & Albert Museum)



English Copper Plate Printed Silk Handkerchief Commemorating the Treaty of Utrecht

c. 1713

(Victoria & Albert Museum)



English Copper Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief

“PRESENT TASTE OF THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY EXHIBITED IN THE GRAND MASQUERADE BALL IN 1771”
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



English Plate Printed Handkerchief, "The Right Hon.ble John Wilkes, Esq.r"
Printed Linen 1775
(The British Museum)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief Depicting General George Washington

c. 1776 - 1777

(New York Historical Society)



English Plate Printed Quilted Handkerchief Depicting General George Washington

c. 1776 - 1777
(Winterthur)



English Plate Printed Quilted Handkerchief Depicting General George Washington

c. 1776 - 1777
(Winterthur)



English Plate Printed Quilted Handkerchief Depicting General George Washington

c. 1776 - 1777
(Winterthur)



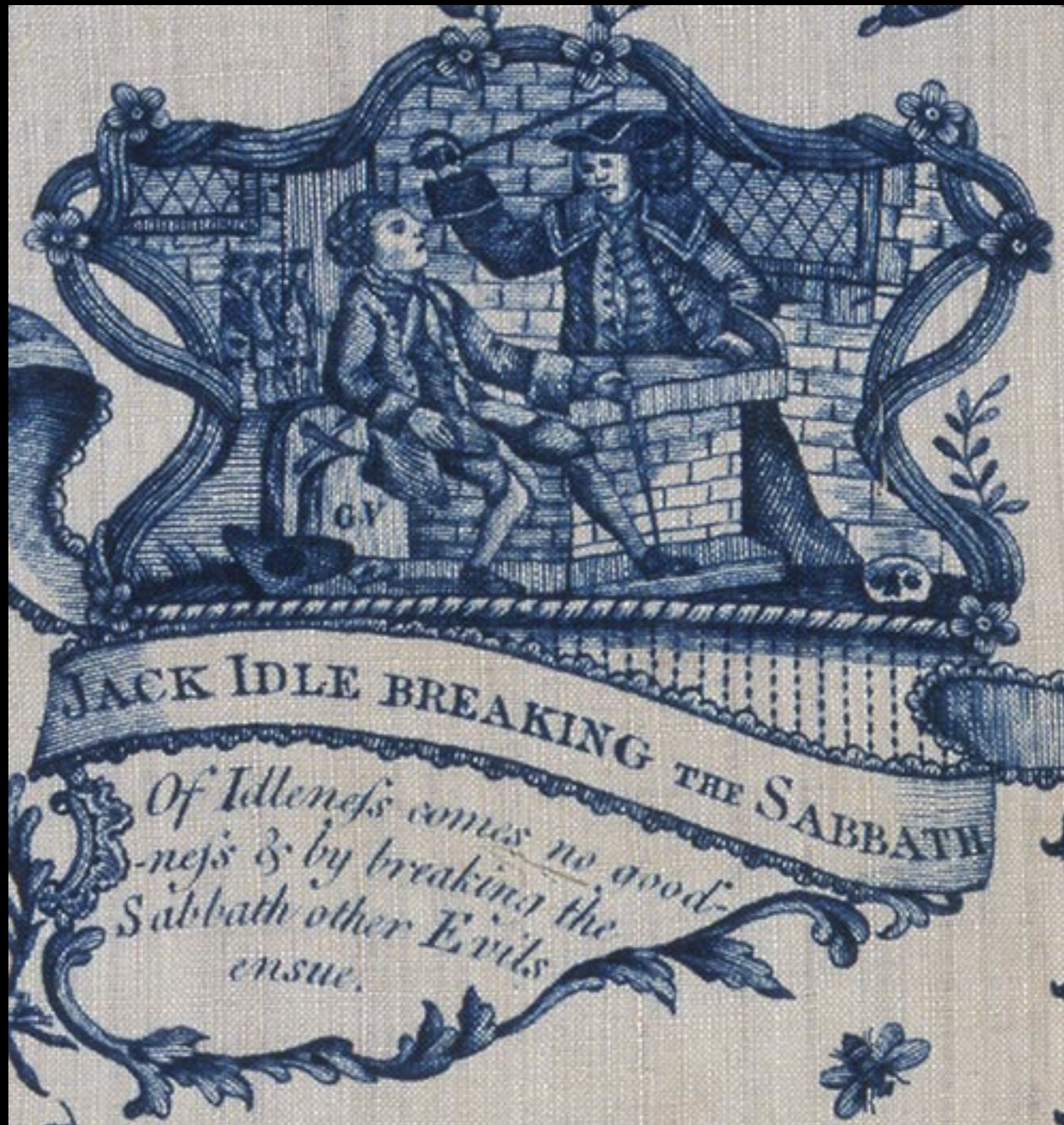
English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775

(Colonial Williamsburg)



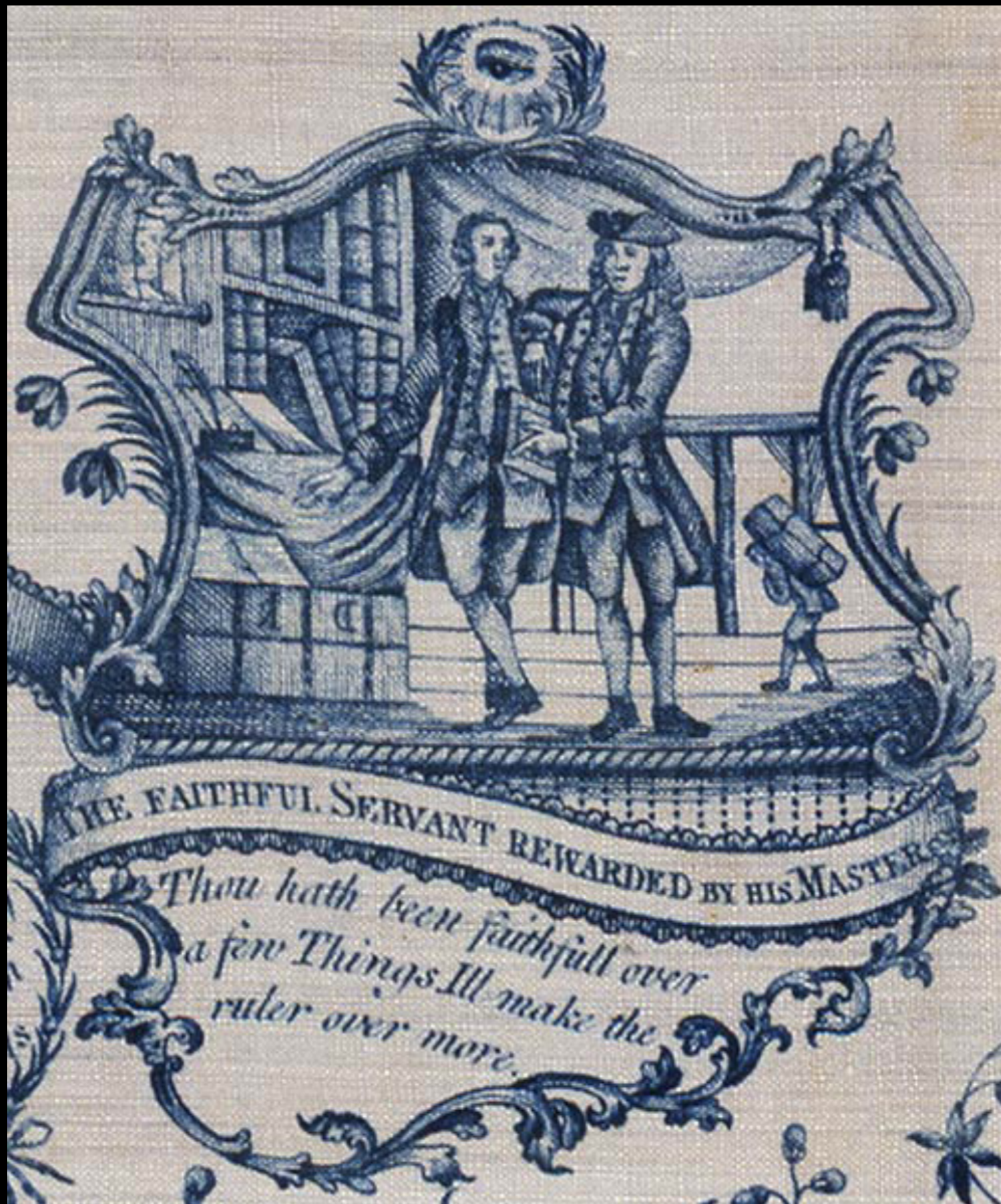
English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775

(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775

(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775

(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief of "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS"

c. 1775
(Colonial Williamsburg)



English Copper Plate Printed Handkerchief Depicting the Cab Rates in Hackney, London
18th Century
(Christies)



English Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief Commemorating the Signing of the Magna Carta
by C. Warren c. 1785
(Victoria & Albert)



American Block Printed Cotton Handkerchief Worn by a Member of the Robbins Family of Lexington, Massachusetts
Made in Massachusetts - Late 18th to Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



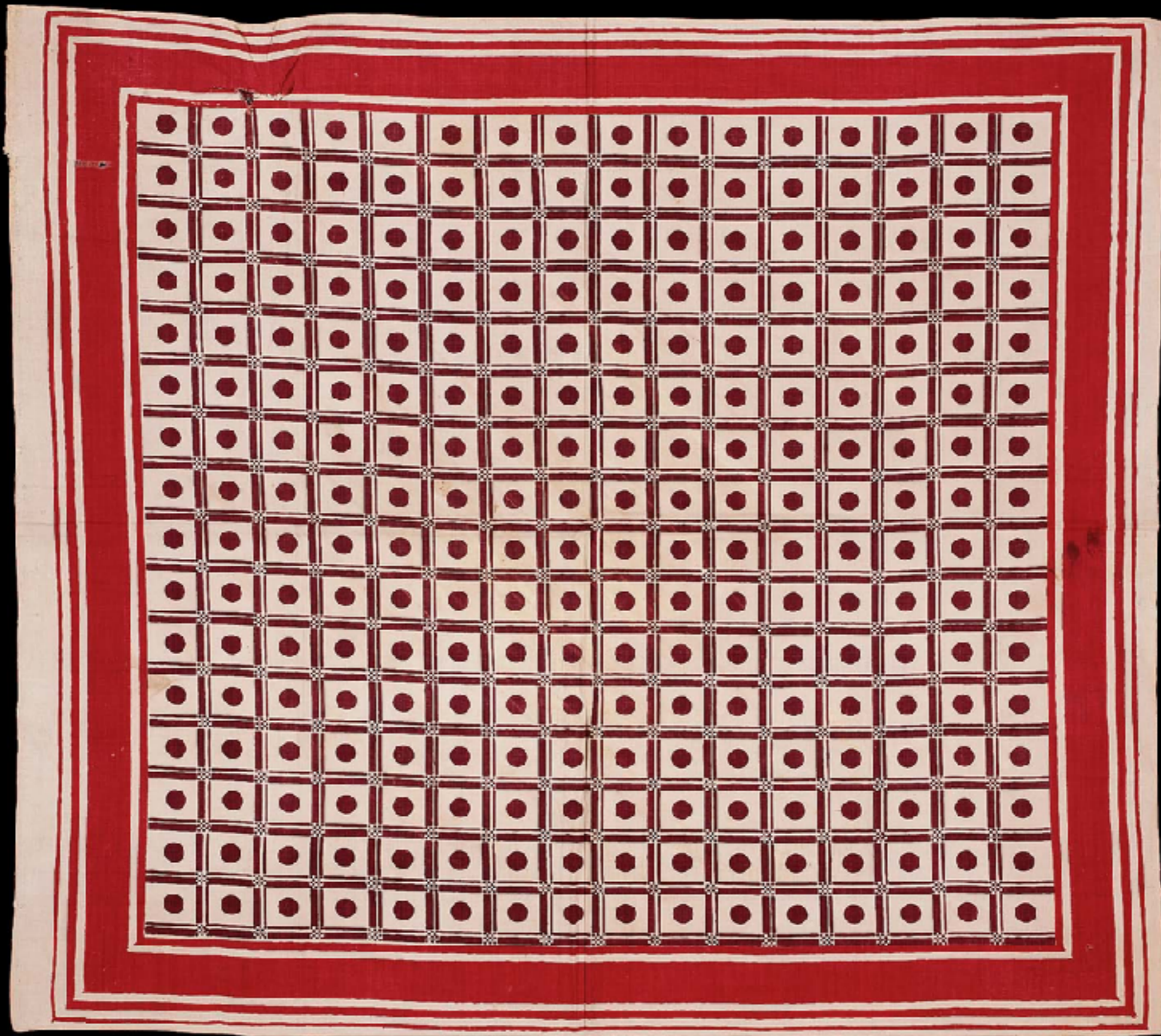
Alsace, France, Block Printed Cotton Handerkerchief
by Mulhouse c. 1783
(Victoria & Albert)



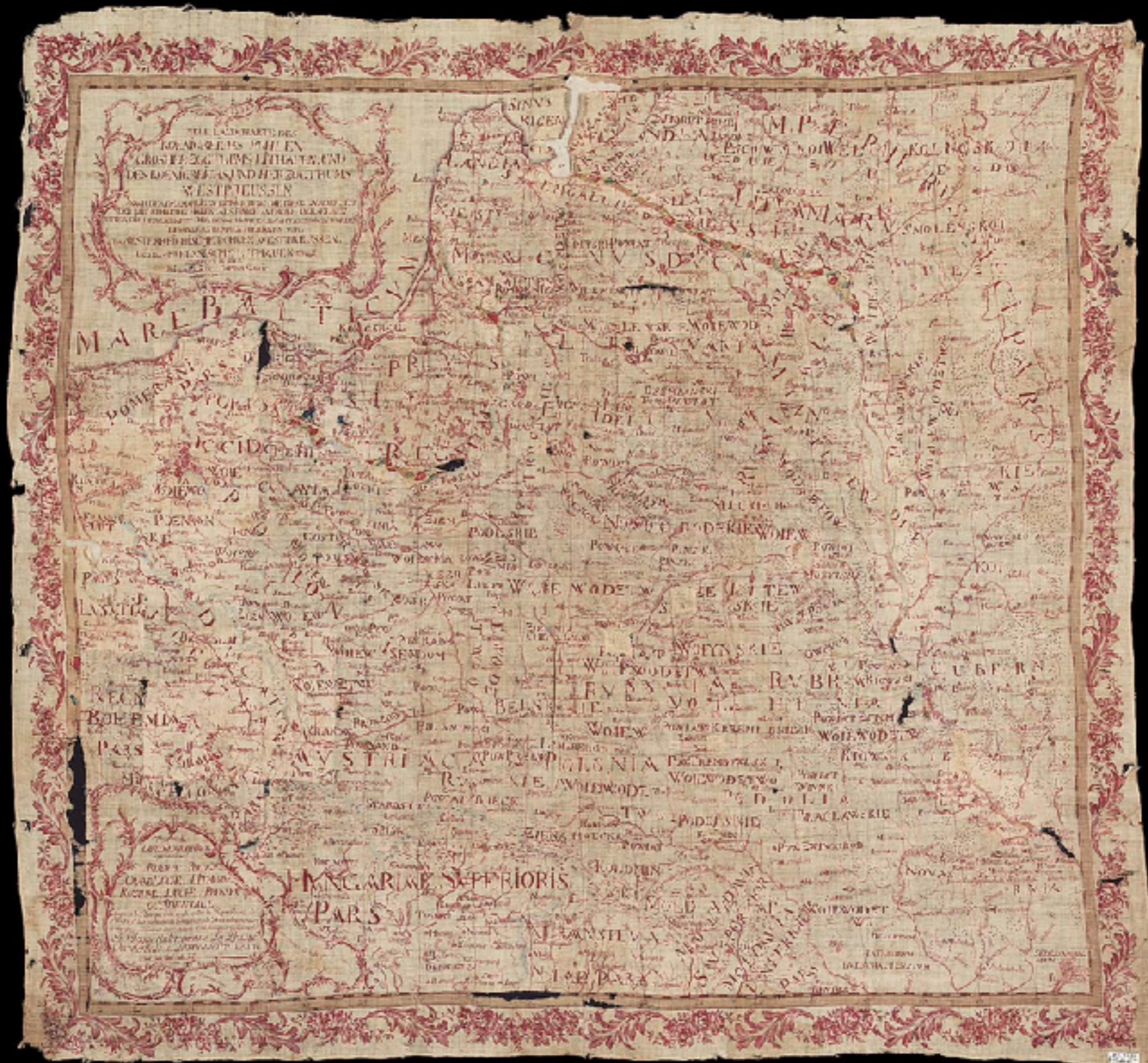
Printed Silk Samples from the Pattern Book "Fancy Vestings and Handkerchief Goods" by Maze & Steer
Spitalfields, London, England, 1786-91
(Victoria & Albert)



French Block Printed Cotton Neck Cloth or Handkerchief
c. 1780 - 1799
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



French Block Printed Cotton Neck Cloth or Handkerchief
Late 18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



German Copper Plate Printed Cotton Handkerchief from Frideau- Map of Poland, Lithuania & East Prussia

1775

(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



French Cotton Neckerchief
c. 1785
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Cotton Likely Printed in Alsace
c. 1785 - 1820
(Museon Arlaten)



French Wool Muslin Neckerchief (Likely Import of the Levant)
c. 1785
(Museon Arlaten)



French Wool Muslin Neckchief (Likely Import of the Levant)
c. 1785
(Museon Arlaten)



French Wool Muslin Neckchief (Likely Import of the Levant)
c. 1785
(Museon Arlaten)

Lace

Kerchiefs / Fichus

The Fichu

“Fichu, part of a woman’s underclothing. It is a square or rectangular piece of muslin, or of another white or coloured cloth, or even silk, which is folded in two at the angles and covers the neck. The point of the fichu falls in the middle of the back and covers the shoulders; the extremities are crossed in front and cover the chest; but with white skin, curves, firm flesh and a bosom, even the most innocent peasant woman knows how to let just enough show by arranging the folds of her fichu.”

The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert





Indian Export Cotton Muslin Handkerchief
1738
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Indian Export Cotton Muslin Handkerchief
1738
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



French White Embroidered White Silk Gauze Kerchief
18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



European Embroidered Silk Kerchief
18th Century
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



American Fine Cotton Kerchief
c. 1760
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American Fine Cotton Kerchief
c. 1760
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American Fine Cotton Handkerchief
Late 18th to Early 19th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Linen Whitework Kerchief
18th Century
(Meg Andrews)



Linen Whitework Kerchief
18th Century
(Meg Andrews)



Linen Whitework Kerchief
18th Century
(Meg Andrews)



American or French Fine Linen with Cotton Embroidery Handkerchief
18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



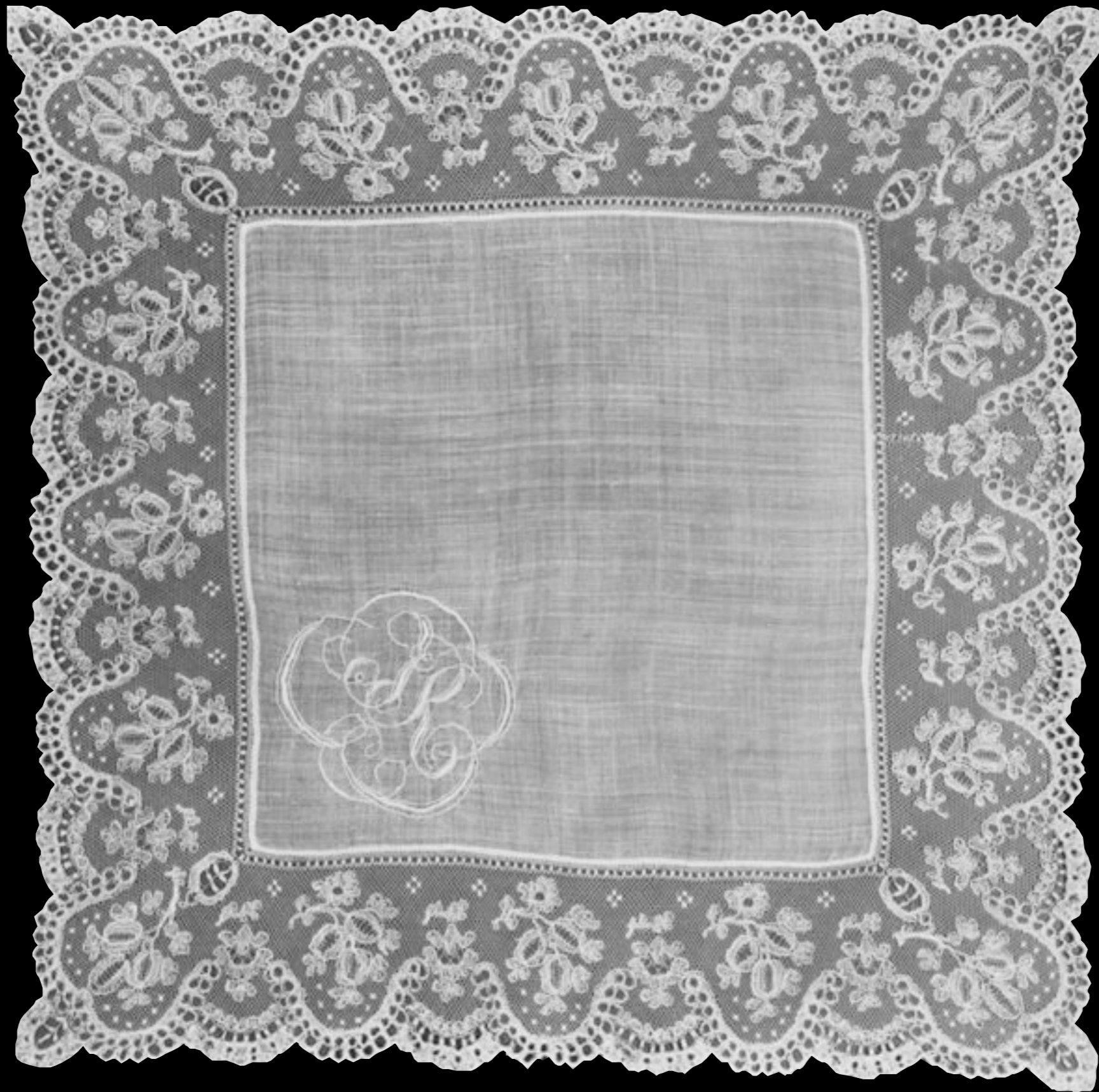
European Fine Cotton Handkerchief
18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



European Fine Cotton Handkerchief
18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



European Fine Cotton Handkerchief
18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



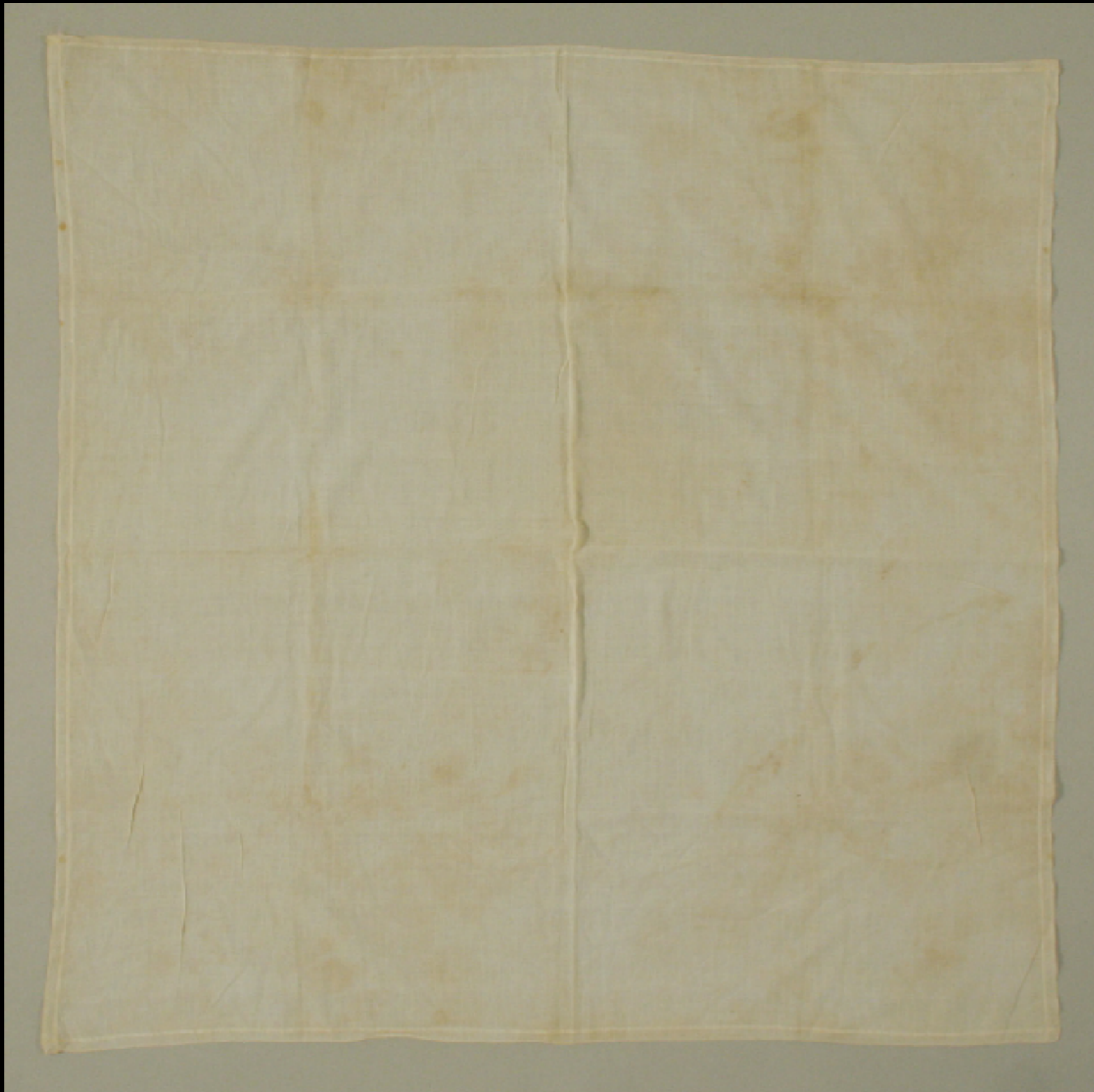
Bobbin Lace Cravat or Handkerchief Made in Denmark
18th Century
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



French Fine Linen Kerchief
c. 4th Quarter 18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



English Cotton Kerchief
c. 1775 - 1790
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American Cotton Kerchief
c. 1775 - 1790
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)

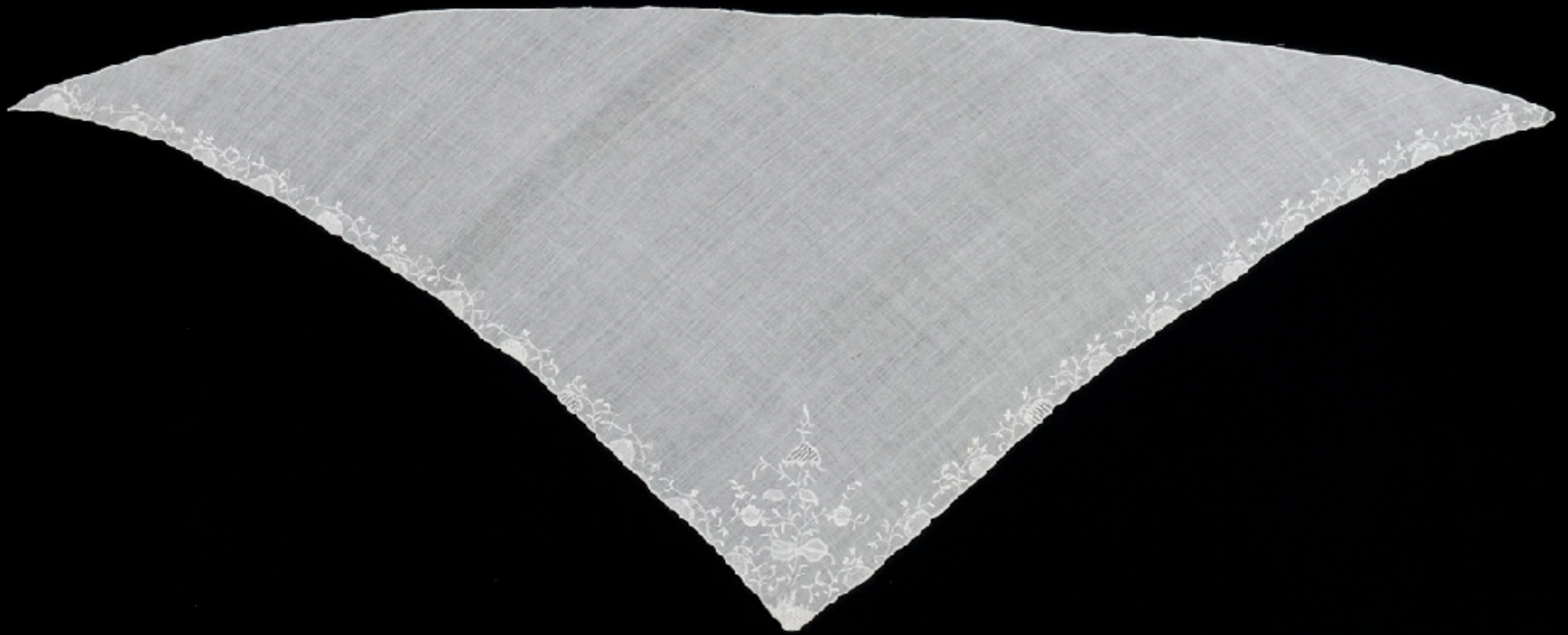


French Muslin Cotton Neckerchief
c. 1775 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Muslin Cotton Neckerchief
c. 1775 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)

Triangular Fichus



European Fine Cotton & Linen Fichu
c. 1750 - 1800
(Winterthur)



European Fine Cotton & Linen Fichu
c. 1750 - 1800
(Winterthur)



American or European Fine Cotton Fichu
c. "1700 - 1945"
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American Fine Cotton Fichu
c. "1700 - 1942"
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American Fine Cotton Fichu
c. "1700 - 1942"
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American or European Fine Cotton Fichu
18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Austrian Linen Fichu with White Work
c. 1740 - 1780
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



English White Cotton Fichu Embroidered with Linen

c. 1740 - 1770

(Manchester Art Gallery)



English Cotton Fichu with White Work

c. 1750

(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



English Cotton Fichu with White Work

c. 1750 - 1775

(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



English Cotton Fichu with White Work & Open Work
c. 1770
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Belgian Linen Bobbin Lace Kerchief or Fichu
c. 1730 - 1750
(Victoria & Albert)



American Linen Fichu
c. 1775 - 1790
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American (?) Cotton Fichu with Whitework Embroidery
c. 1775 - 1790
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



American (?) Cotton Fichu with Whitework Embroidery
c. 1775 - 1790
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



English or European Silk Embroidered Cotton Fichu
c. 1780 - 1795
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



French Cotton Fichu
c. 1785
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



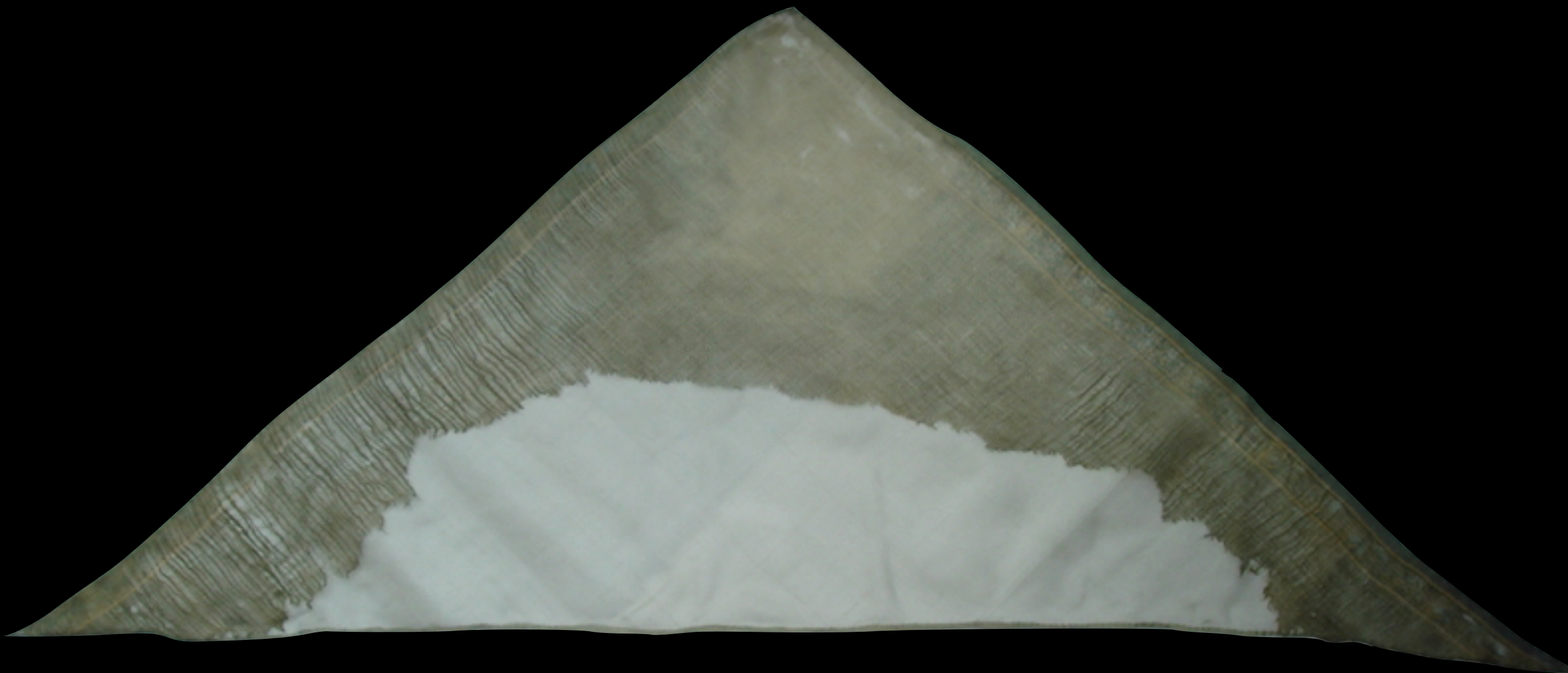
American Cotton Fichu
18th Century
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



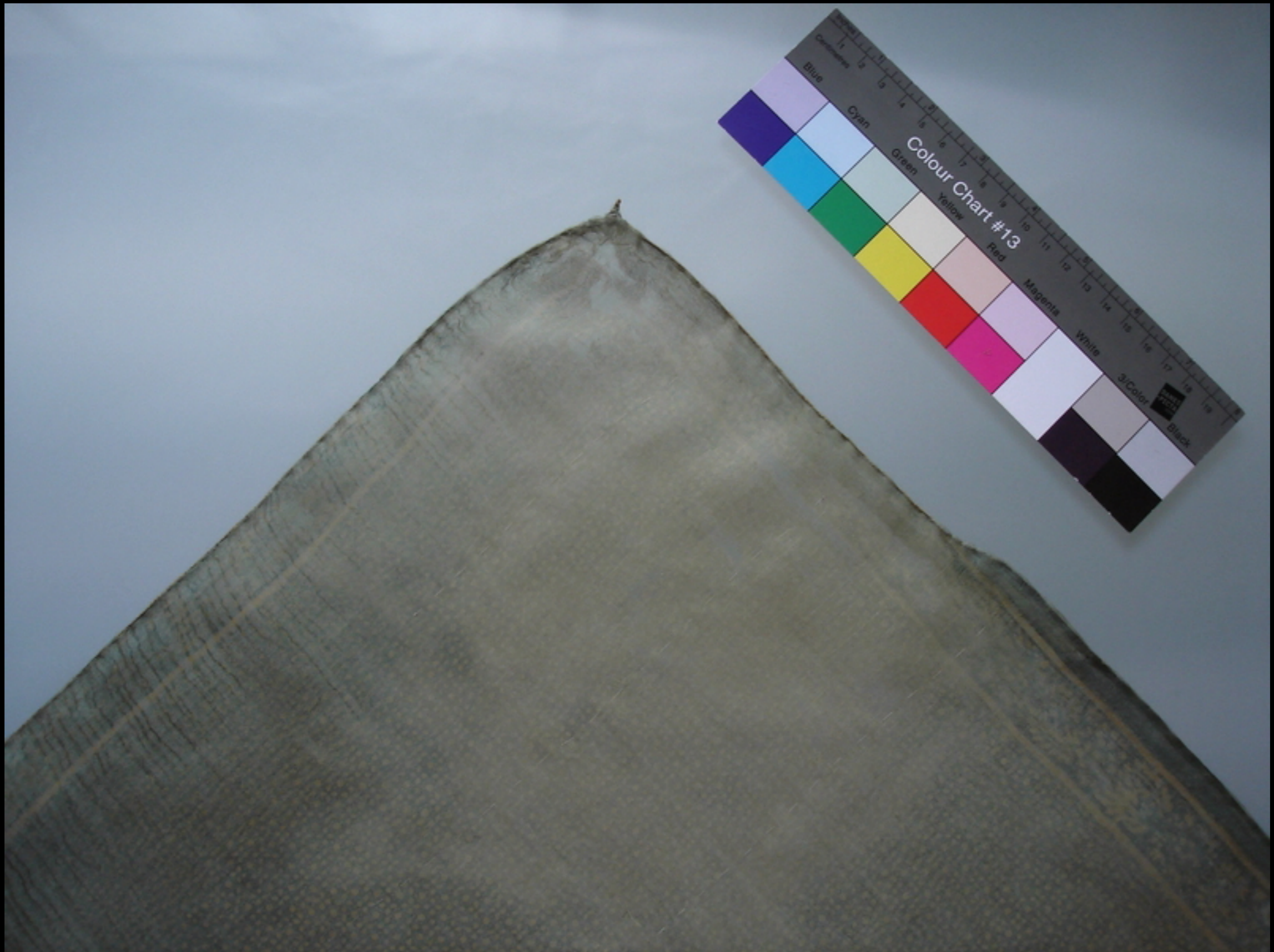
French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton Likely Made in Marseilles
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Cotton Likely Made in Marseilles
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Cotton Likely Made in Marseilles
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Cotton Likely Made in India
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton or Indian Cotton Printed Provincially
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton or Indian Cotton Printed Provincially
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton
c. 1751 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton
c. 1776 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton
c. 1780 - 1790
(Museon Arlaten)



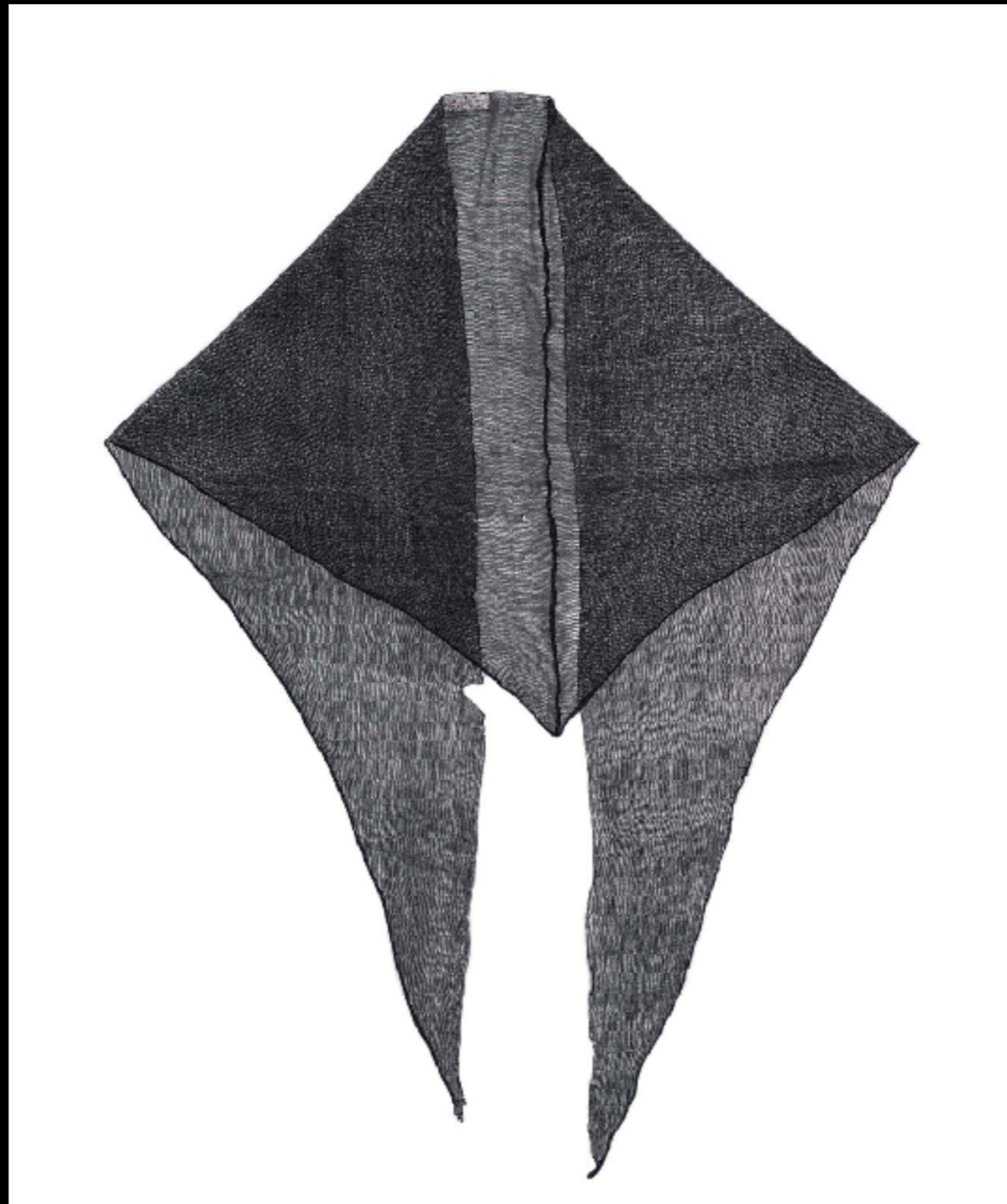
French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton
c. 1780 - 1790
(Museon Arlaten)



French Fichu or Mouchoir de Tête of Printed Indian Cotton
c. 1775 - 1800
(Museon Arlaten)



White Mull with Polychrome & Gilt Embroidery Fichu
c. 1780s
(Augusta Auctions)



English Woman's Mourning Fichu of Black Silk from Nottingham
Worn in Roxbury Massachusetts by Elizabeth Hyslop Sumner, Wife of Massachusetts Governor Increase Sumner Late 18th Century
(Victoria & Albert)



Indian Export Silk Fichu
18th Century
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



French Silk Fichu Brocaded with Flowers

c. 1750 - 1770
(Museon Arlaten)



Turkish Silk Fichu with Gilt Metal Embroidery
18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Dutch Silk Embroidered Fichu
c. 1750 - 1800
(Los Angeles County Museum of Art)



French Cotton Muslin Fichu with Tambour Embroidery & Metallic Yarns
18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



European Double Silk Fichu Embroidered with Gold Metallic Thread, Polychrome, and Silk
18th Century
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Acknowledgements

The 18th CMCRC acknowledges our friend, Angela Trowbridge Burnley, for her excellent research and leads on 18th Century Neckerchiefs. Having examined and studied many period artifacts, she offers exceptional reproductions of handkerchiefs for the use of the living historian, all of which can be found at her website: www.burnleyandtrowbridge.com



Acknowledgements

Without the help of our friends who generously support us with their research and materials, none of these slideshows would be possible. We would like to personally thank and recognize Angela Trowbridge Burnley, Sharon Burnston, Paul Dickfoss, William Hettinger III, Neal Hurst, Ruth Hodges, Adam Hodges-LeClaire, James Mullins, Ward Oles, & Steve Rayner for their contributions to this edition.

Acknowledgements

The material contained within these slideshows is presented for educational purposes only. The 18th Century Material Culture Resource Center does not personally own any of the items depicted herein and is indebted to the countless museums, libraries, and private collectors who willingly share their collections with the public through the internet. Every attempt has been made to credit these organizations and individuals for their contributions as best as possible.

If there is a question you have regarding a particular item featured within a presentation, please contact the 18th Century Material Culture Resource Center and we will try to answer your inquiry as best as possible. If for any reason you feel there is any item that should not be presented here, or if there is an error in any listing, or if you know the source for any item whose credit is unknown, please inform us and we will make sure your concern is addressed as soon as possible.

Thank you!

- The 18th Century Material Culture Resource Center