

# 18th Century Material Culture: Spectacles & Visual Aids





The Correction of Vision  
During the Era of  
The American Revolution:

Documenting Authentic Eyewear  
& Visual Aides of the 18th Century  
Through Extant Artifacts  
and Contemporary Artwork

---

---

# *Collector's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*

A showcase of more than 2,300 artifacts made, worn, and used by those who fought in the War for Independence.

---

---

George C. Neumann and Frank J. Kravic



In 1976, The Material Culture Resource Center was introduced to the Arms, Accoutrements and Personal Belongings of the Common Soldier who served during the American War for Independence through George C. Neuman's and Frank J. Kravic's "Collector's Encyclopedia of the American Revolution". This epic work continues to be one of the most important texts ever to be written on the subject.

In this wonderful work, numerous designs of spectacles said to be available during the era of the American Revolution are illustrated. Many historic re-enactors have relied upon these designs when documenting eyewear for their impressions.

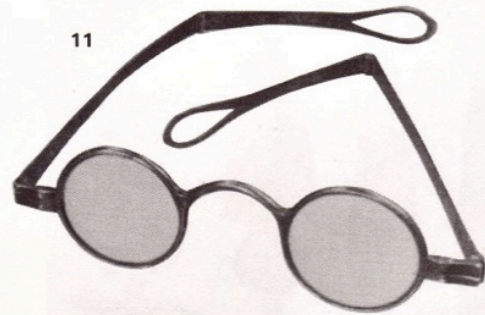
*“Standing on the Shoulders of Giants”*

# COLLECTOR'S ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

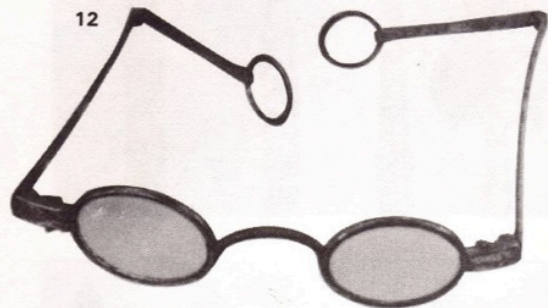


A showcase of 18th century artifacts from the War for Independence

By George C. Neumann and Frank J. Kravic



11



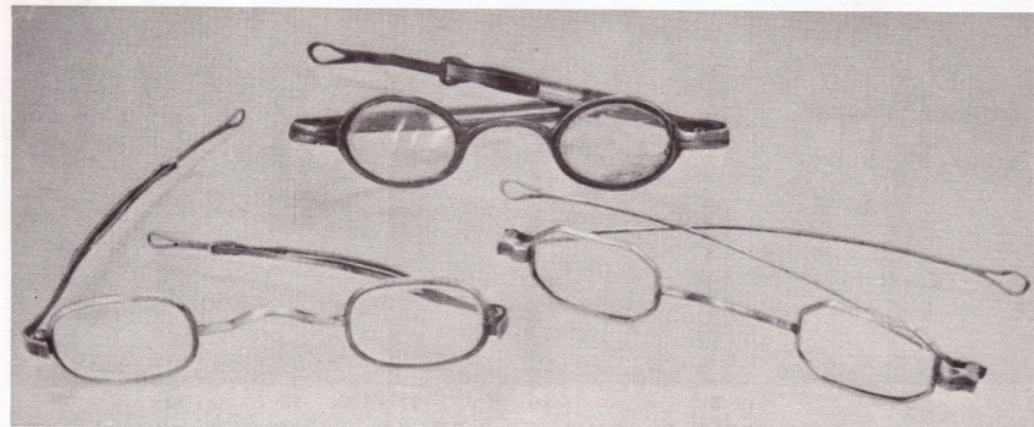
12



13



15



14

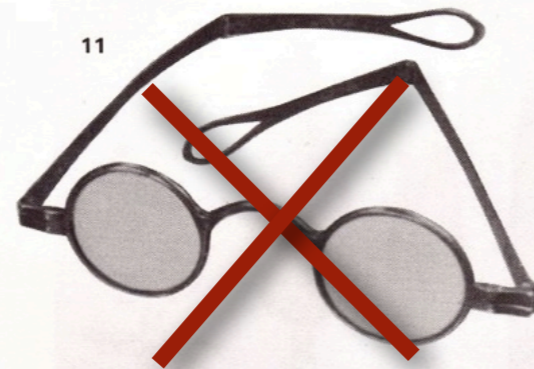
(8) A hinged steel spectacles case marked "1761." (9) Two-part leather holder, c. 1750–1770. (10) A long (6") hinged tinned case, c. 1770–1840. (11–13) Iron and silver frames having oval or round lenses with hinged temple bars (to better fit the head contour and reduce size); c. 1750–1780. (14) Later patterns using narrower oval or near rectangular lenses plus fixed or telescoping side bars (i.e. easier to fit); the frames are of iron, brass, or silver-coated brass; circa 1770–1850.

Sources: 15—*Brigade of the American Revolution*; remainder—George C. Neumann.

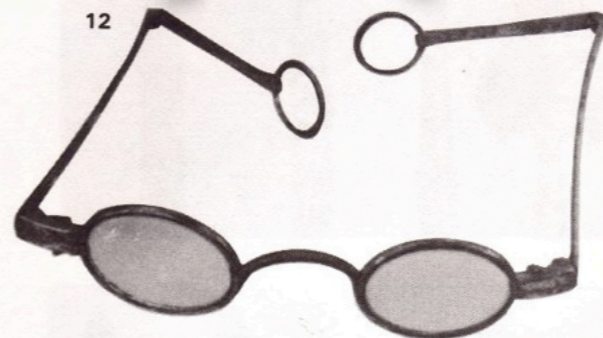
Despite the significance of "Collector's Encyclopedia", 30 years of additional research since the work first went into print reveals that most of the spectacles depicted are incorrectly dated.

With the examination of period artwork and extant artifacts with provenance, we will attempt to authenticate which spectacle designs were actually in use prior to and during the American struggle for Independence.

Round Lenses  
Hinged Side Bars with Teardrop Ends



11



12

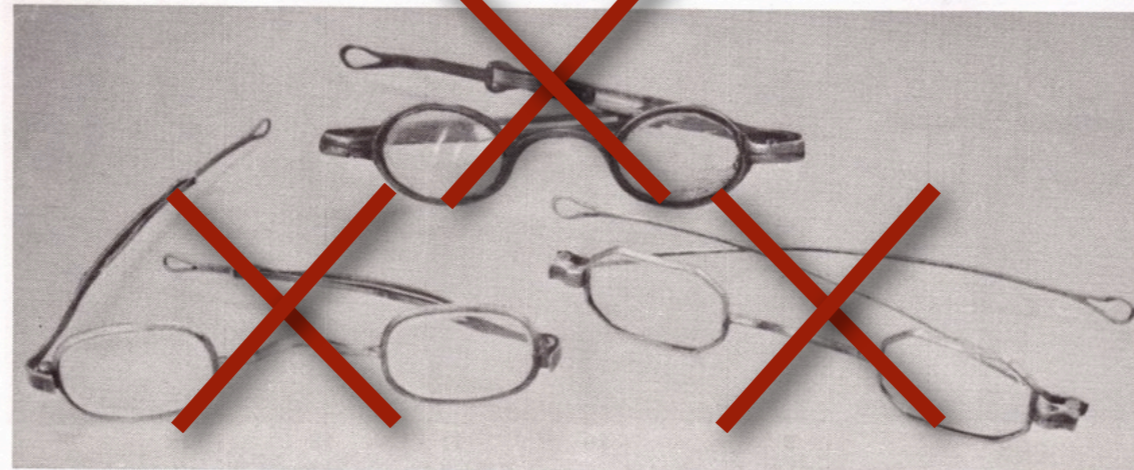


13

Round Lenses  
Turnpin Side Bars with Paddle Ends

Round Lenses  
Sliding Side Bars with Teardrop Ends

Oval Lenses  
Sliding Side Bars with Teardrop Ends



14



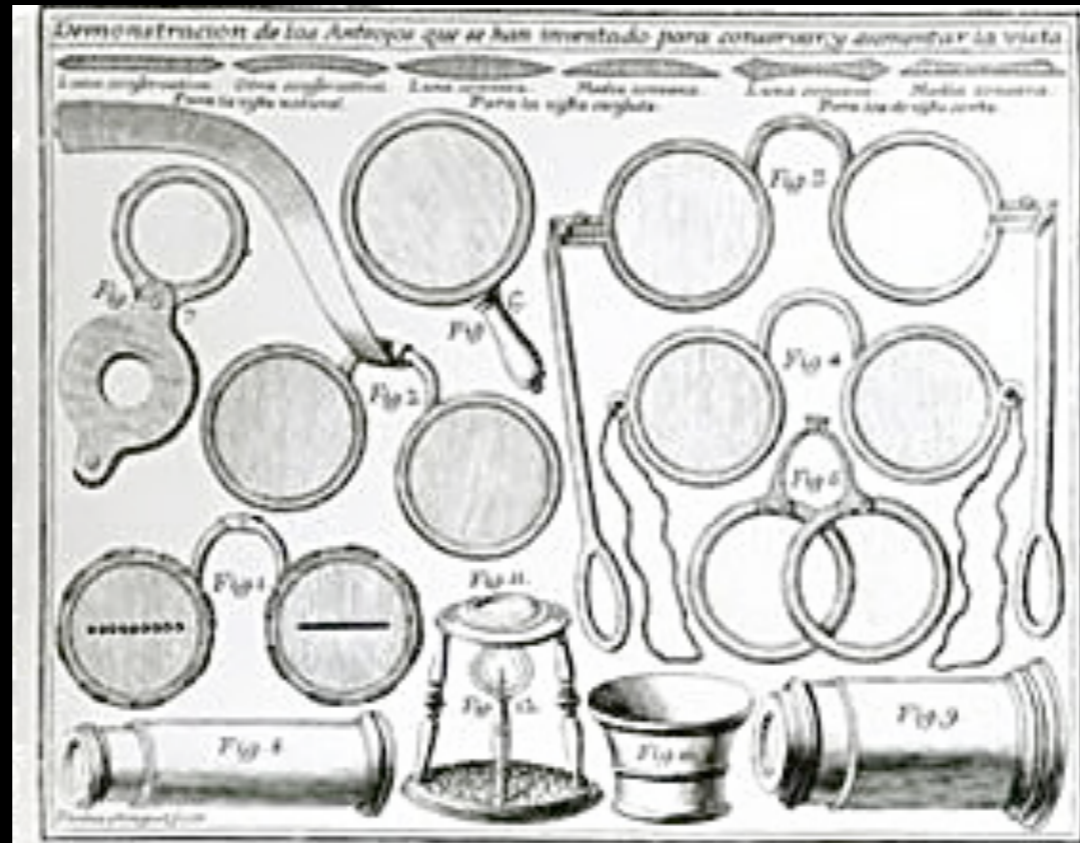
15

(8) A hinged steel spectacles case marked "1761." (9) Two-part leather holder, c. 1750-1770. (10) A long (6") hinged tinned case, c. 1770-1840. (11-13) Iron and silver frames having oval or round lenses with hinged temple bars (to better fit the head contour and reduce size); c. 1750-1780. (14) Later patterns using narrower oval or near rectangular lenses plus fixed or telescoping side bars (i.e. easier to fit); the frames are of iron, brass, or silver-coated brass; circa 1770-1850.

Sources: 15—Brigade of the American Revolution; remainder—George C. Neumann.

Crossed Out Spectacle = Designs Dating to AFTER 1783

# Appropriate Spectacle Designs based on DOCUMENTATION



## EXPLICACION DEL USO DE LOS ANTOJOS PARA TODO GENERO DE PERSONAS: POR PABLO MINGUET.

**C**ONCORDIA Lector, sé que de la ignorancia en que me hallo por ahora respecto al uso de los Antojos, te habré de dar una breve noticia, para que sepas lo que convenga a tu estado, y a tu salud.

Los Antojos se dividen en tres generos: los que se usan para la vista natural, los que se usan para la vista miopía, y los que se usan para la vista hipermetropía.

Los que se usan para la vista natural, son los que se usan para conservar la vista, y para acompañarla, cuando se trabaja mucho, o cuando se está mucho tiempo leyendo, o cuando se está mucho tiempo escribiendo.

Los que se usan para la vista miopía, son los que se usan para corregir el defecto de la vista, y para que se pueda ver con claridad.

Los que se usan para la vista hipermetropía, son los que se usan para corregir el defecto de la vista, y para que se pueda ver con claridad.

El uso de los Antojos es muy sencillo, y se puede aprender a usarlos en muy poco tiempo.

Para usarlos, se deben poner sobre los ojos, y se deben mantener en su lugar, hasta que se haya acostumbrado a ellos.

Si se quiere saber más acerca del uso de los Antojos, se puede consultar a un médico, o a un óptico.

Pablo Minguet Broadside (Madrid, Spain)  
Spanischer Druck Aus Dem Jahre 1763

# Magnifiers & Looking Glasses



Reading Glass of Horn  
c. 1750  
(Private Collection)



Pre - 1751 Magnification Glass Marked:  
AYNS TH  
No. 4  
ROSO MAN STREET  
CLERKENWELL



Magnification Reading Glass

c. 1750

(Private Collection)



Nuremberg Magnification Reading Glasses

c. 1750

(Massachusetts Historical Society)



Magnification Lens with Cardboard Paste Case

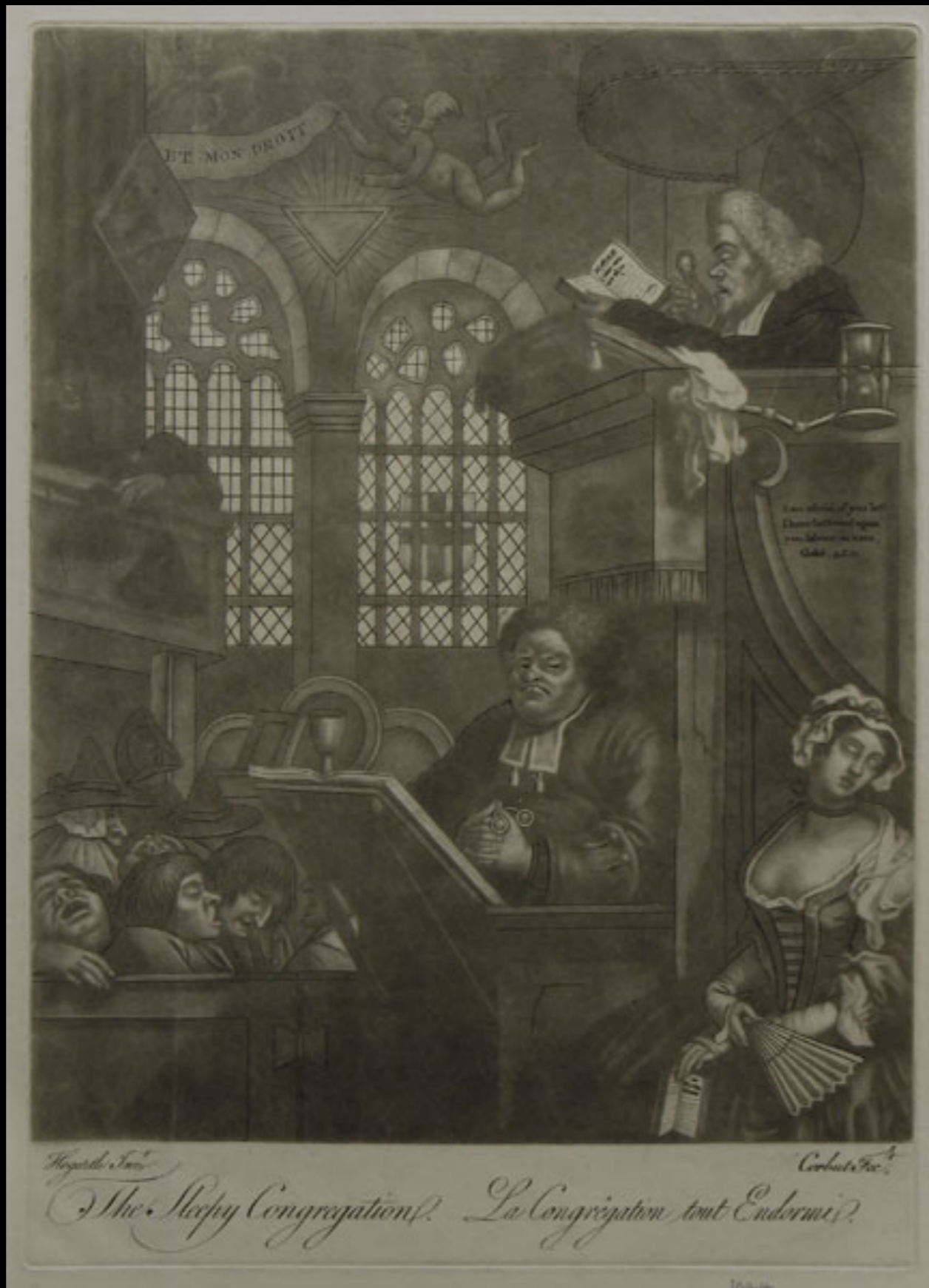
c. 1750



English Magnifying Glass  
by Henry Haynes c. 1771 - 1772  
(Colonial Williamsburg)



Two Male Figures  
by Lt. Gabriel Bay 1774  
(National Maritime Museum)



The Sleepy Congregation  
by Richard Purcell after William Hogarth c. 1750  
(The British Museum)



*The Sleepy Congregation? La Congrégation tout Endormie?*

The Sleepy Congregation  
by Richard Purcell after William Hogarth c. 1750  
(The British Museum)



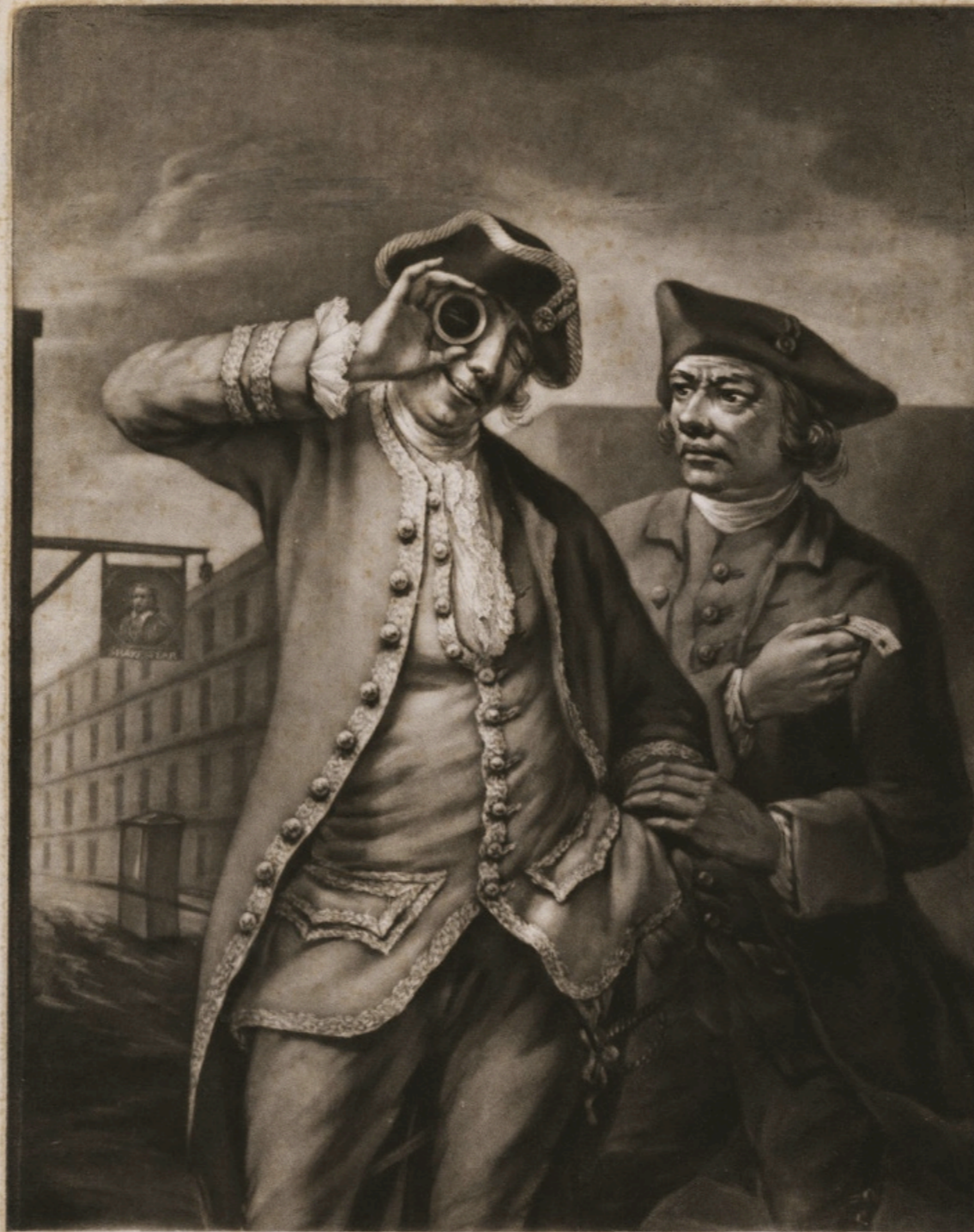
Folding Horn Magnifier  
c. 1750



German Horn "Scissor" Glasses  
4th Quarter 18th Century  
(Deutsches Museum, Munich)



The Writ  
by William Hogarth  
(Darlington Borough Art Collection)



*Dixon ad vivum delineavit et fecit*

**Sir FOPLING ARRESTED.** Drawn from a late real Scene.

*Sir Fopling Stutter through his Glafs, & Yet still the Coxcomb lacks the Wit,  
Inspects the Ladies as they pass. - & To guard against the Bailiffs Writ.*

Published according to Act in 1769, by JOHN BOWLES, at N<sup>o</sup> 33 in Cornhill, LONDON.

*Charles Fleetwood, sculpsit. J. Bowles fecit.*

“Sir Fopling arrested, Drawn from a late real Scene”  
by John Dixon 1769  
(Fitzwilliam Museum)



*Charles Johnson, painted by George Kneller*

“Sir Fopling arrested, Drawn from a late real Scene”

by John Dixon 1769  
(Fitzwilliam Museum)



“Sir Fopling Flutter through his Glass  
Inspects the Ladies as they pass-

Yet still the Coxcomb lacks the Wit  
To guard against the Bailiffs Writ.”

*Charles Johnson, engraved by J. Smith for J. Dodsley.*

“Sir Fopling arrested, Drawn from a late real Scene”

by John Dixon 1769  
(Fitzwilliam Museum)

Nose, “Pince Nez”,  
or “Nurnberg” Spectacles  
c. 1600 - 1800



Leather Wrapped Horn Nose Spectacles in a Carved Wooden Case  
Mid 17th Century  
(Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, Massachusetts)



Leather Wrapped Horn Nose Spectacles in a Carved Wooden Case  
Mid 17th Century  
(Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, Massachusetts)



Nose Spectacles of Horn with Wood Case  
c. 1650  
(Private Collection)



Leather Wrapped Spectacles Worn by Esek (Essex) Hopkins  
c. 1770  
(Rhode Island Historical Society)

Large numbers of Flattened Wire Nose Spectacles were made in and around the towns of Nurnberg & Furth during the 17th and 18th Centuries.

These inexpensive eyeglasses were exported all over the world.



*“Nurnberg” Style Spectacles of Wire  
Owned by Scottish Jacobite General, Lord George Murray, First Duke of Atholl (1694 - 1760)  
Participant in the 1715 Uprising  
c. 1740*

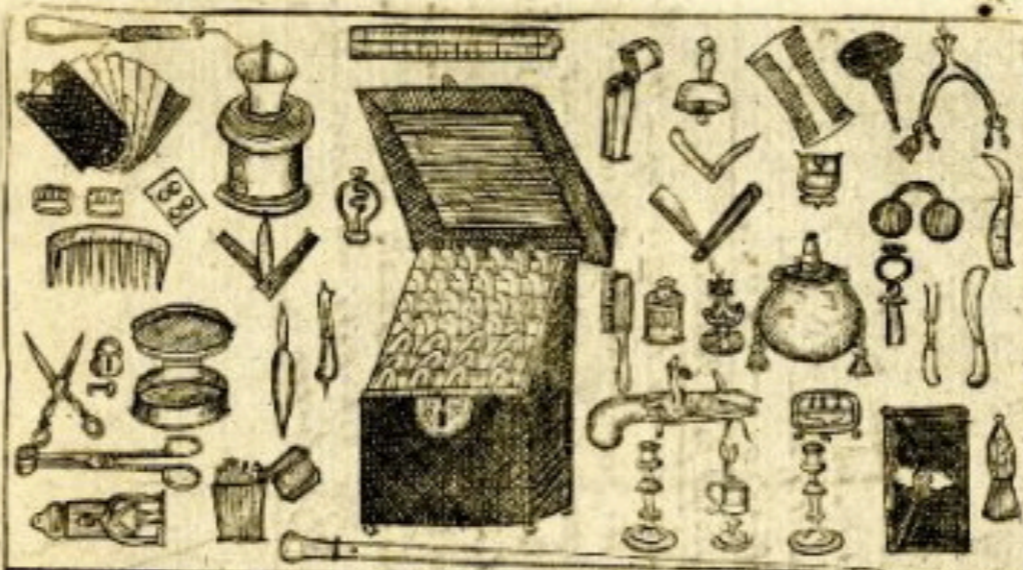




Wire Spectacles & Leather Case marked Schwartz Wohlfafft In Furth  
Dated 1749



Wire Spectacles & Leather Case marked Schwartz Wohfhafft In Furth  
Dated 1749



John Brailsford  
 CUTLER in y<sup>e</sup> Broad part of St<sup>e</sup> =  
 Martins Court LEICESTER FIELDS maketh &  
 Selleth all Sorts of the Best LONDON Work  
 Knives Forks Razors Scissors Penknives fleams  
 Gardeners & Painters Knives Fine Steel & Met-  
 tle Buckets Cork Screws Spurs Snuffers Tobacco  
 & Snuff Boxes Powder Horns Dogs Collers & Pad-  
 locks Ivory Box & horn Combs Ivory Pocket-  
 Books & Brushes Canes Rules Pencils Curl-  
 ling Tongs Ink Stands &c. with all sorts of  
 Birmingham & Sheffield Ware & Filteth up  
 Silver China & Aggett. Hasls w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> best Steel  
 Blades at Reasonable Rates. Canes Mounted

Advertisement for John Brailsford, Cutler

c.1750

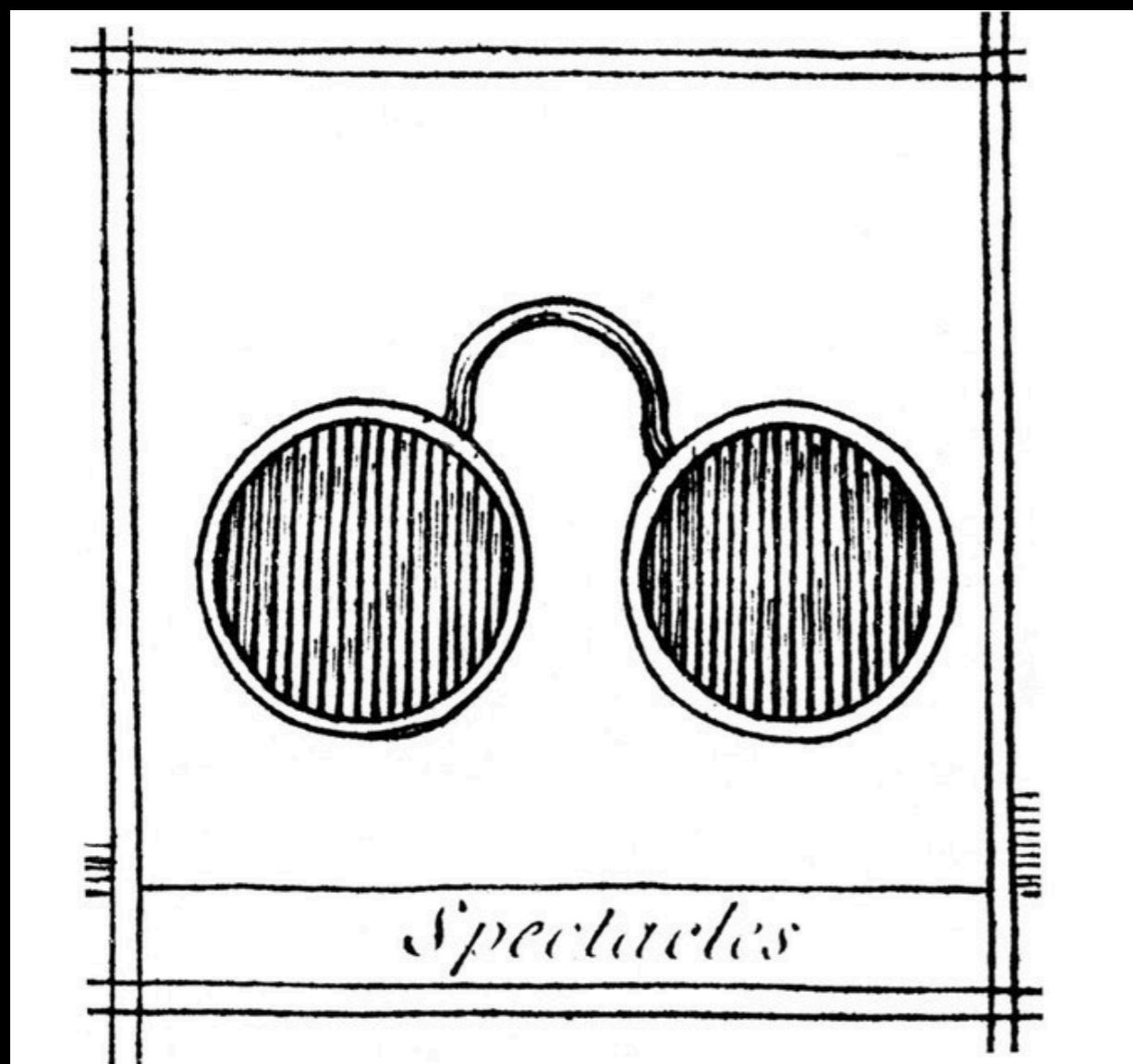


A Pedlar Selling Spectacles Outside A Cottage in the Netherlands  
by Jan Steen c. 1650 - 1653  
(The National Gallery)



“Fine Ground Spectacles for all Sights”

c. 1740



Bowles & Carver Woodcut Illustration of Nose Spectacles & a Spectacle Seller  
18th Century

*Marie Anne Viet & Tho: Mitchell Jeweller at y<sup>e</sup> Sign of y<sup>e</sup> Dial  
 in Kings Arms, on Cornhill near y<sup>e</sup> Royal Exchange Lane L. 1742*

*Make and Sell - All sorts of Curiouses in Gold Silver Mother of Pearl Tortoise  
 Shell Agat Amber Ivory, &c. as Snuff Boxes, Sweeter Cases, Equipages, after the  
 Newest Fashion, Knives, Cases of Knives, Forks & Spoons, Gold & Silver Chains,  
 Strings for Watches, Seals, Pendants, Rings, Necklaces, Boxes, Travelling & other  
 Cases, Cases of Maps, Spurs, Fine Swords, Fine Combs, Fans, Spectacles, Fine  
 Flowers, and all sorts of Cutlers Wares, The best Snuff & Hungary Water  
 All manner of fine Dutch Toys at Reasonable Rates, &  
 Monnoye for Plate or Jewels.*

*Marie Anne Viet & Tho: Mitchell, Jouailliers, à l'enseigne des Armes du Roy et du  
 Lion, proche la Banque Royale dans Cornhill à Londres, font tous d'habiles toute sorte de Curieuses  
 d'Or, d'Argent et de Fer, de Perle, de Coquille, de Tortue, d'Alabastr, d'ambre, de Verre, &c. Comme  
 Tabatières, Étoiles à Cure-dents & Garnitures, Ciseaux à la nouvelle Mode, &c. Étoiles  
 à Contreux, fourchettes, & Cuilliers, des Chaînes d'Or & d'Argent, Cordons pour les  
 Montres, Bagues, Pendans, Bagues, Colliers, Boucles, Étoiles pour les Voyageurs  
 & autres, Canes, Peignes, Espérens, fourchettes, Noeux pour les Espérens, Peignes,  
 Éventails, Lunettes de belles, Montres, & toutes sortes d'ouvrages d'Or, d'Argent,  
 de bon, fabrié en Poudre, Eau de la Reine d'Angleterre, toute sorte de Quin-  
 quallerie d'Allemagne, le tout à un juste Prix.  
 Monnoye pour les Vaisselles d'argent ou Joyaux.*

Advertisement for Marie Anne Viet and Thomas Mitchel, Goldsmiths  
 Near Royal Exchange Lane c.1750

Nose Spectacles were also fabricated in London, England. These were made with Flexible Bridges of Steel or Silver and Lenses Framed in Metal, Horn or Tortoiseshell.

Some of these spectacles incorporated a hinge within the Nose Bridge which allowed them to be folded for storage.



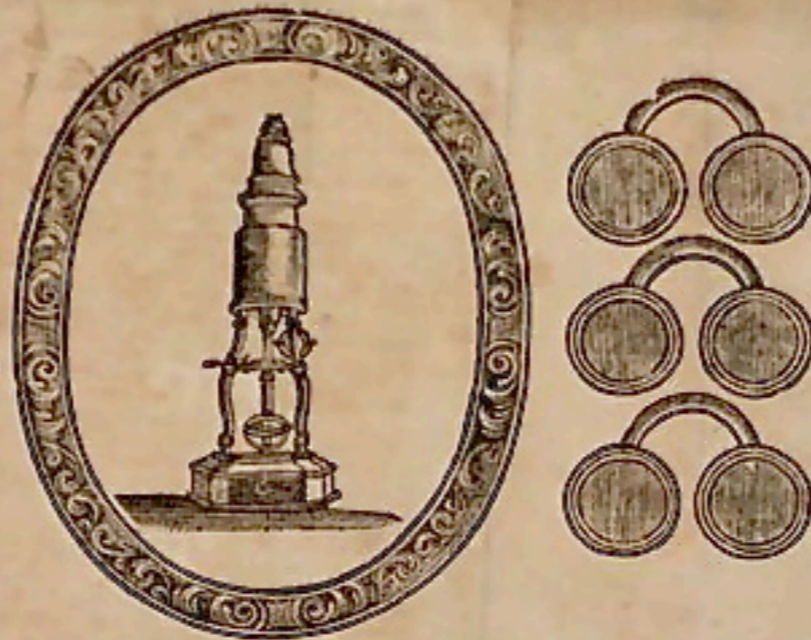
Trade Card of Soderberg, Optician & Musical Instrument Maker c. 1750  
(The British Museum)



18th Century Silver and Tortoise Shell Nose Spectacles  
17th Century Inlaid Shell Case  
(Victoria and Albert Museum)



Silver and Tortoise Shell Nose Spectacles  
Shagreen Case  
c. 1775 - 1790  
(Christie's Auction House)



**J O H N C U F F,**  
**Optician, Spectacle, and Microscope Maker,**

At the Sign of the REFLECTING MICROSCOPE and SPECTACLES,  
 against *Serjeant's-Inn* Gate in *Fleet-street*,

**M**AKES and Sells all Sorts of the most curious Optical Instruments, such as SPECTACLES and READING GLASSES, ground on Brass Tools in the Method approved by the Royal Society, of *Brazil* Pebbles, Rock Chrystal, or the finest Flint Glais, and set either in Silver, Mother of Pearl, Tortoise-shell, &c, in the most convenient Manner for Use.

REFRACTING TELESCOPES, proper for celestial or terrestrial Observations, either by Land or Sea; and also REFLECTING TELESCOPES, as invented by *Sir Isaac Newton* and *Mr Gregory*.

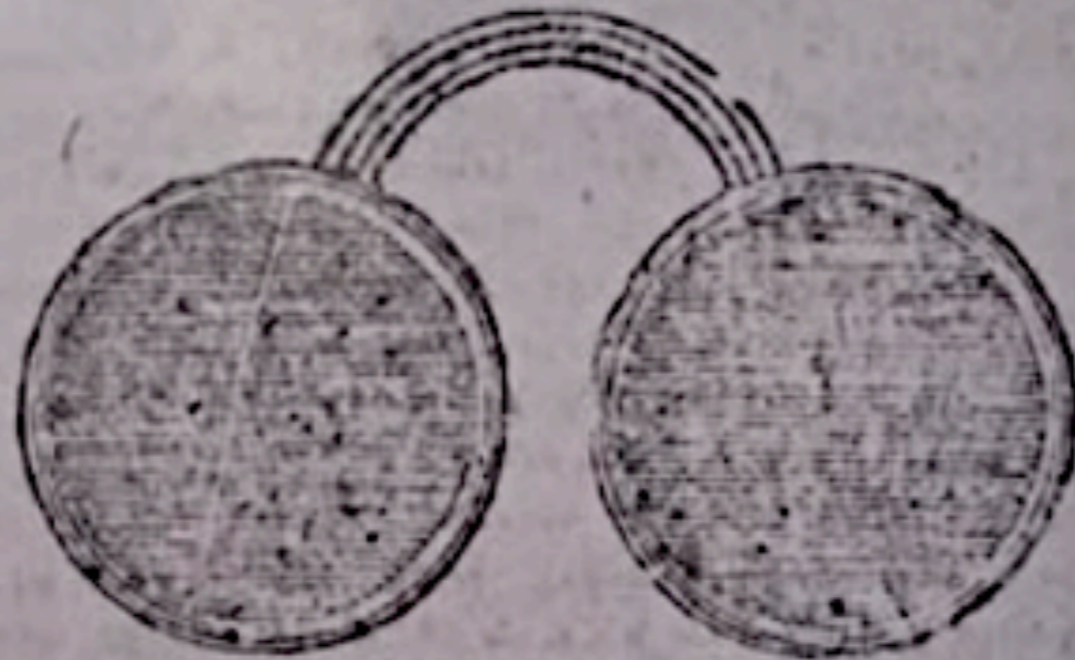
MICROSCOPES of several Kinds, both Single and Double, (either for the Study or the Pocket) particularly a new-constructed DOUBLE MICROSCOPE, invented by the said *John Cuff*, to remedy the Inconveniencies complained of in all the former Sorts; the SOLAR MICROSCOPE, as improv'd by him with a most convenient and manageable Apparatus for viewing Objects, and a Contrivance for drawing the Pictures of them with great Ease and Exactness, even by those that have never drawn before; the AQUATIC MICROSCOPE, invented also by him for the Examination of Water Animals; the OPAKE MICROSCOPE, which by a Light reflected upon Objects that have no Transparency, renders them distinctly visible; *Culpepper's* MICROSCOPE, *Wilson's* Pocket MICROSCOPE, &c.

The CAMERA OBSCURA for exhibiting Prospects in their natural Proportions and Colours, together with the Motions of living Subjects; MAGIC LANTHORNS; Convex and Concave SPECULUMS OF LOOKING GLASSES, MULTIPLYING GLASSES, BAROMETERS, THERMOMETERS, OPERA GLASSES, SPECTACLES of true *Venetian* Green Glais, SPEAKING TRUMPETS, several Mathematical Instruments, and many other Curiosities, are sold by the said Operator at reasonable Prices, either Wholesale or Retail.

John Cuff (1731 - 1770), Optician, Spectacle, and Microscope Maker Broadside  
 Fleet Street, London c. 1750  
 (Bodleian Library, University of Oxford)



Folding Nose Spectacles of Wire  
18th Century



Just imported in the Ship *Myrtilla*, Captain Bolitho, from London, and to be sold by

**HANNAH BREINTNALL,**

At the Sign of the Spectacles, in Second-street, near Black-Horse Alley,

**A** Great Variety of the finest Chrystal Spectacles, set in Temple, Steel, Leather or other Frames. Likewise true Venetian green Spectacles, for weak or watery Eyes, of various Sorts. Also Concave Spectacles, for short sighted Persons; Magnifying and Reading Glasses; and an Assortment of large and small Spy-glasses and Bone Microscopes, with magnifying and multiplying Glass, &c. &c. Pocket Compasses, of different Sizes, &c.      || 20 s. Thetf.

---



Nose Spectacles Case of Horn

c. 1720 - 1740

(Private Collection)

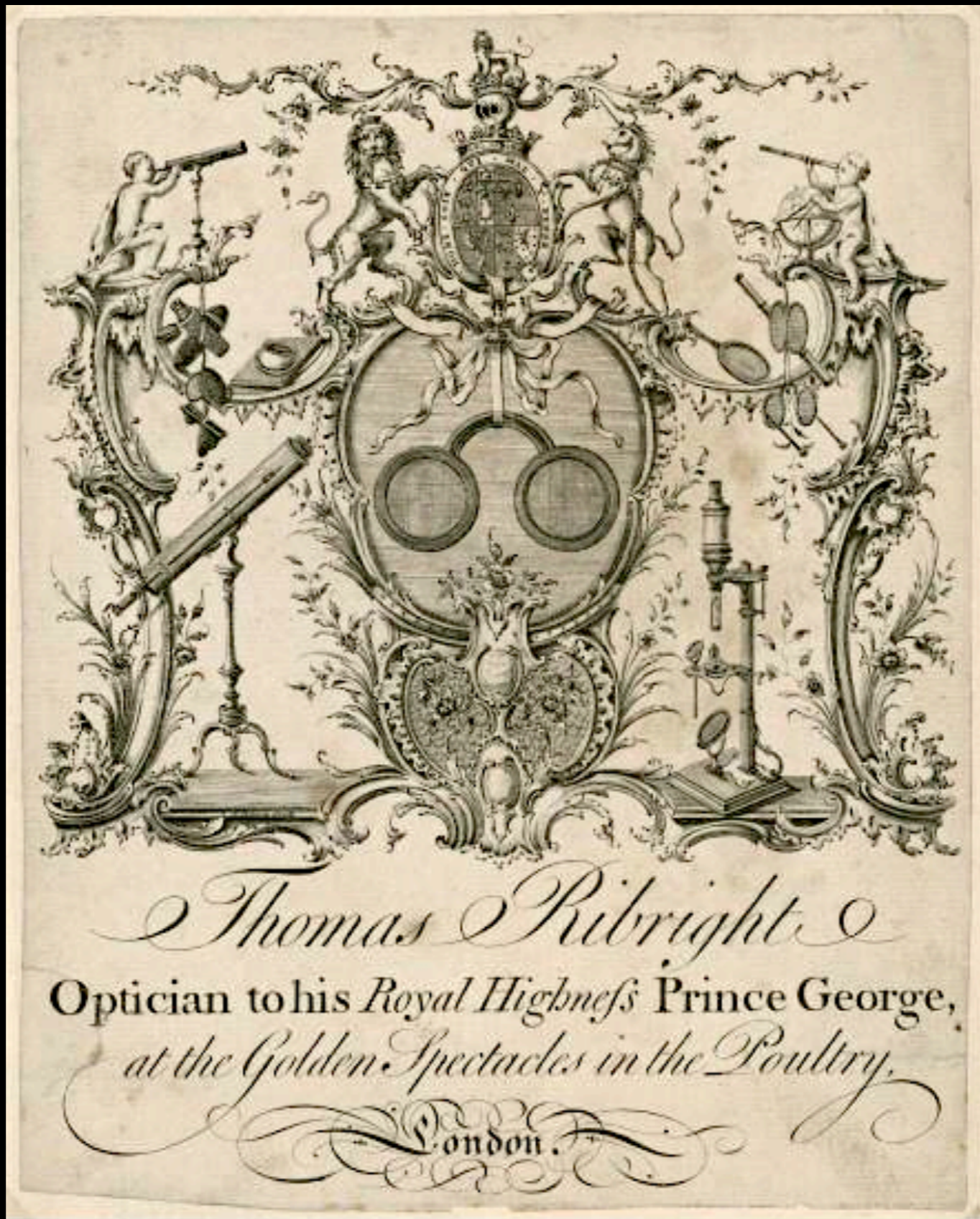
1746



1759



Nose Spectacles Cases of Wood



Trade Card for Thomas Ribright - Optician to his Royal Highness Prince George

c. 1753 - 1772

(Wellcome Library)



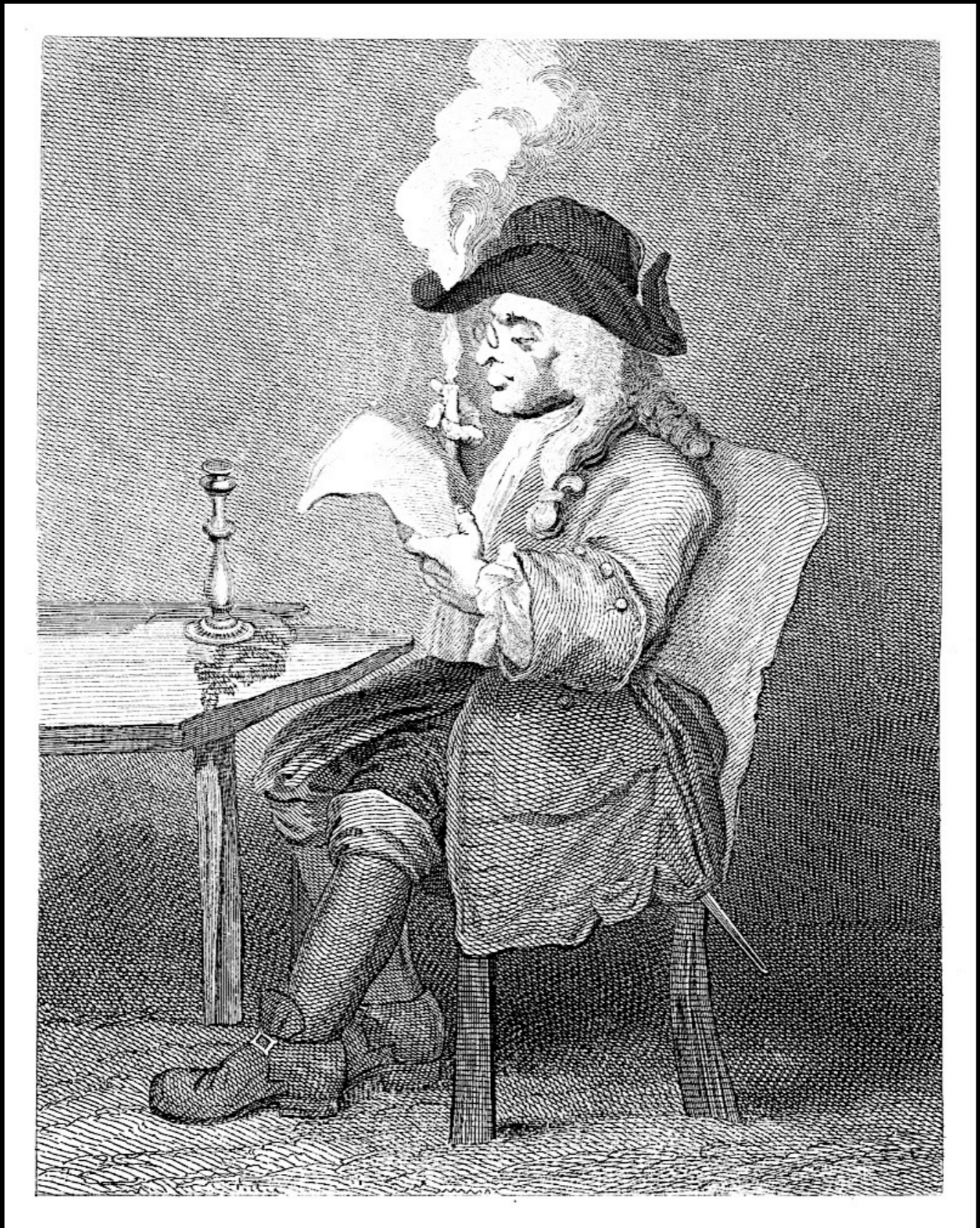
A Choice Collection of Books  
 being the Library of the late  
 famous Nicholas II. Doctor, are  
 to be put to Sale this 23<sup>rd</sup> day, and  
 to continue until all be Sold,  
 at 11 o'clock in the  
 Morning, at the Sign of a Bell  
 near the Cathedral, where  
 he had at most of the eminent  
 Book-sellers in the four Quarters  
 of - London, Books, which  
 may be seen before or at the  
 hour of Sale.

Come Sirs, and view this famous Library,  
 'Tis pity Learning should discourag'd be:  
 'Tis Books (that as, if they were but well Sold)  
 I maintain'd are worth their weight in Gold

THE  
 COMPLEAT  
 AUCTIONER

Then bid apace, and break me out of hand:  
 Ne'er cry you don't the Subject understand:  
 For thus I'll say - howe'er the Case may hit,  
 Whoever buys of me, - I teach em Wit.

“The Compleat Auctioneer”  
 Featuring Nose Spectacles



William Hogarth "The Politician"  
c. 1740, Etched by Sherwin & Published in 1775



Jean Simeon Chardin (1699 - 1779)  
Self Portrait 1771  
(The Louvre)



"A Celebrated Connoisseur"

c. 1772

(The British Museum)



*A Celebrated Connoisseur.*

“A Celebrated Connoisseur”  
c. 1772  
(The British Museum)



Brass Folding Nose Spectacles Cases  
1759 & 1779



Published as the Act directs June 1773

The Money lender  
probably meant for  
slaves

The young lord  
borrowing

The Human Passions - The Money Lender  
by Timothy Bobbin 1773  
(Lewis Walpole Library)



A Father and His Foppish Son  
1781



A Father and His Foppish Son  
1781



Nose Spectacles of Wire with Wood Case owned by Dr. Hans Klöti, Swedish Immigrant to South Carolina  
1784



Ziet hier de Ontwapening der Keeren  
Wie Lou niet voor haar Vryheid Weeren  
Een Schop voor 't Gat op de Neus een Brill  
De Stal myt Kees en houd je Stil

5167  
24

NeH1790sf-1 20

Nose Spectacles Worn by a Military Fox

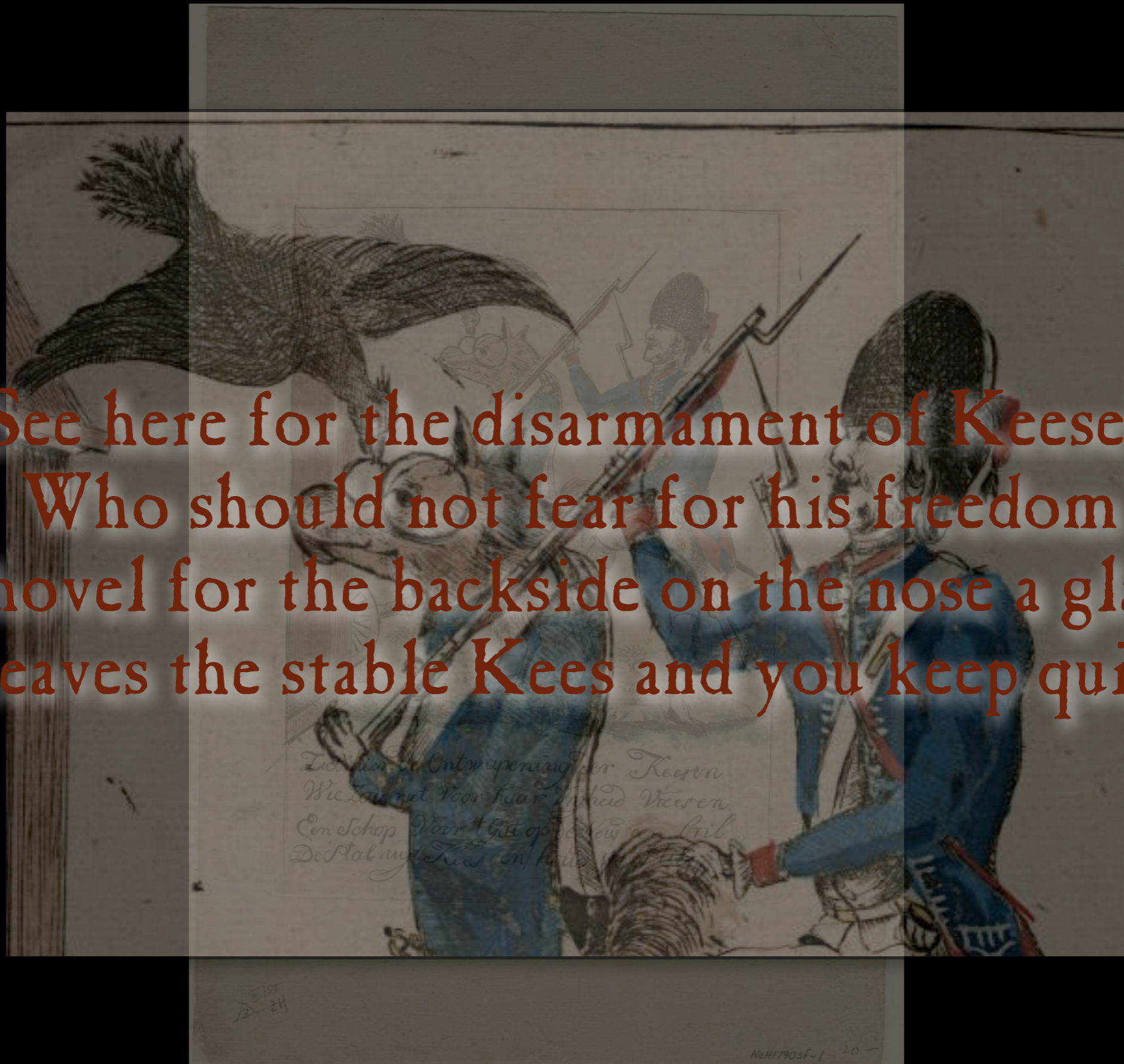


1857  
H2  
24

NeH1790sf-1 20 -

Nose Spectacles Worn by a Military Fox

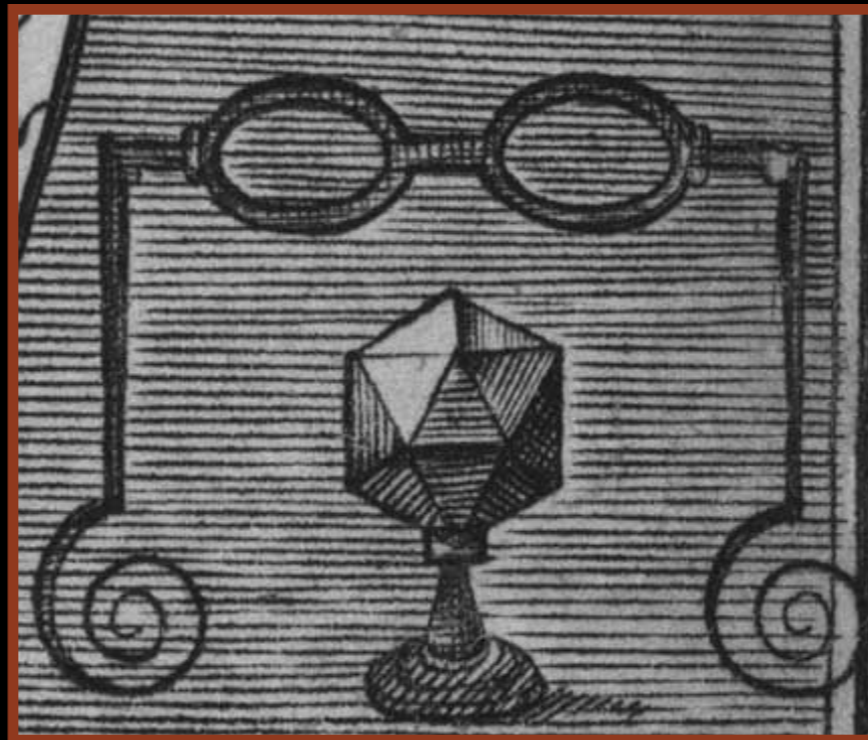
See here for the disarmament of Keesen  
Who should not fear for his freedom  
A shovel for the backside on the nose a glasses  
Leaves the stable Kees and you keep quiet

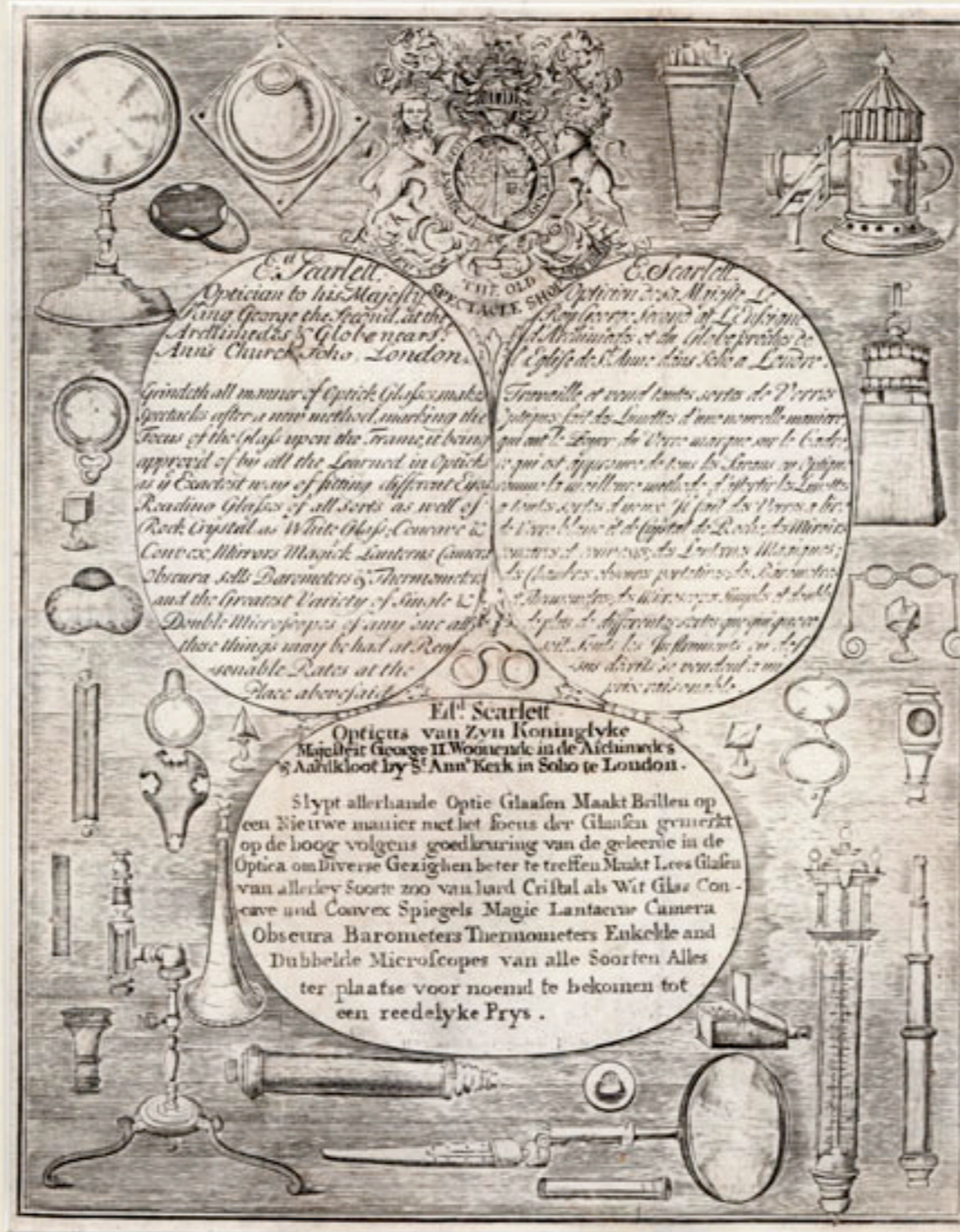


*De Ontwapening der Keesen  
Wie zou niet voor haar Vrijheid Vrezen  
Een Schop Voor 't Gesicht op de Neus en 'n Brill  
De Stal met Kees en Keesen*

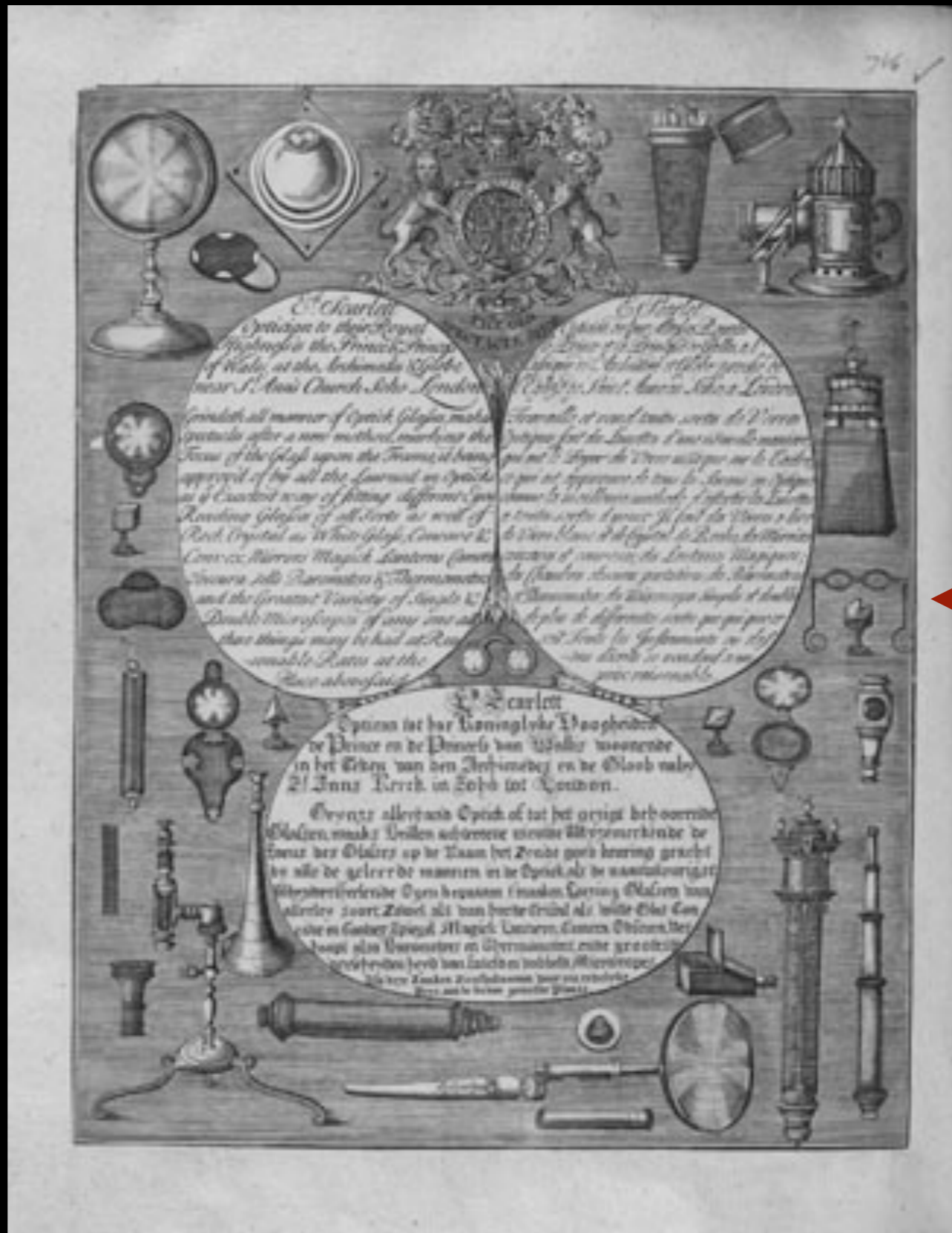
Nose Spectacles Worn by a Military Fox

1714 - 1727  
London Optician  
Edward Scarlett Advertises  
The First Side Arm Spectacles





Edward Scarlett Trade Card  
 c. 1714 - 1727  
 (British Optical Association)



Edward Scarlett Trade Card

c. 1714 - 1727

(Bodleian University)



Detail - Edward Scarlett Trade Card  
"THE OLD SPECTACLE SHOP"

c. 1714 - 1727  
(Bodleian University)



Edward Scarlett Pattern Side Bar Spectacles  
The Oldest Known Pair of Spectacles with Side Bars  
Round Lenses  
c. 1730  
(British Optical Museum)



Edward Scarlett Pattern Side Bar Spectacles  
Round Lenses  
Later 18th Century Shagreen Case  
(Private Collection)



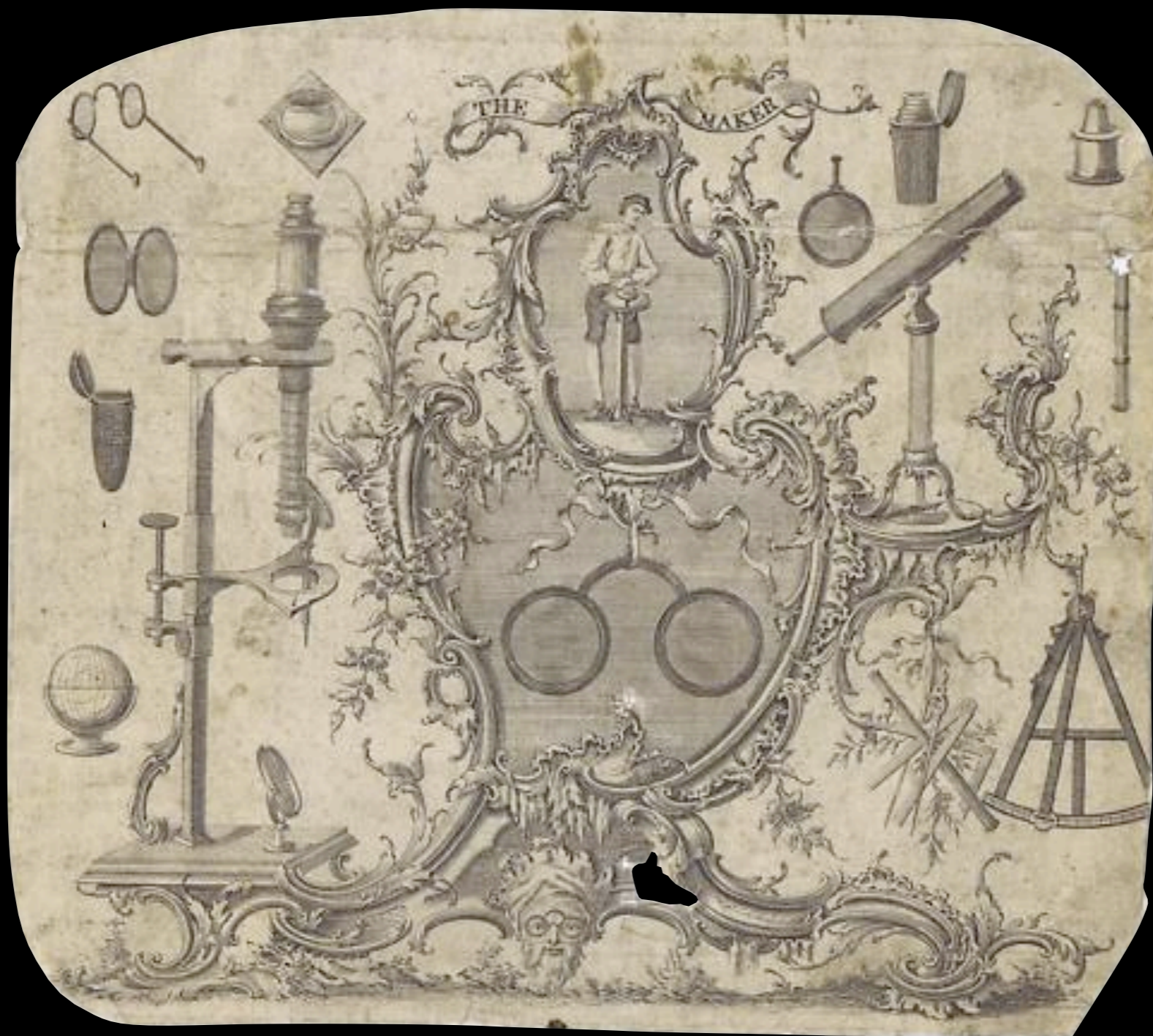
Edward Scarlett Pattern Side Bar Spectacles  
Round Lenses  
Sitting on a 1769 Journal  
(Private Collection)



Trade Card for Henry Patten of London

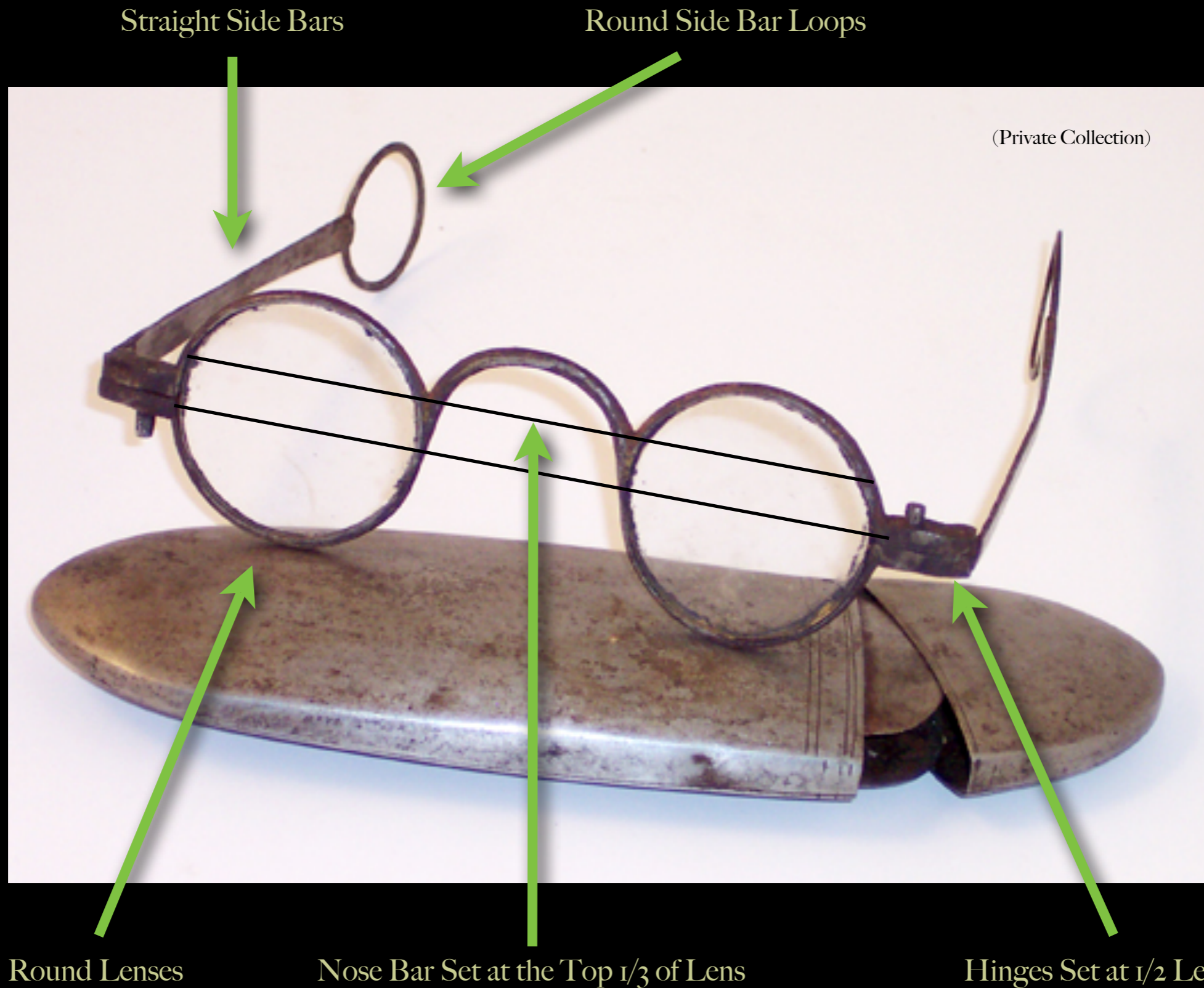
c.1750

(Victoria & Albert Museum)



English Optician or Instrument Maker's Trade Card  
c. 1750 - 1760

# Characteristics of Straight Side Bar Spectacles (1752 - 1783)



[THE OLDEST SHOP.]

SAMUEL JOHNSON,  
OPTICIAN,

(Successor to the late Mr. MANN)

At the Sign of Sir ISAAC NEWTON and Two Pair of Golden Spectacles,  
near the West End of St. Paul's, LONDON;



MAKES and SELLS, Wholesale and Retail, the finest Crystal Spectacles, ground upon Brass Tools (approved by the ROYAL SOCIETY and the greatest Mathematicians) set in Gold, Silver, Tortoise-shell, Horn, & other, and all Manner of Ways that are most convenient and beautiful. Also curious Reading Glasses of Rock Crystal, or the whitest Flint, contrived to turn into Cases of various Kinds, to be carried in the Pocket without Trouble or Damage. Likewise Spectacles of Brazil-Pebble, or Green and Blue Glass.

He makes Concaves for Myops or Short-sighted Persons, which are so nicely adapted to every Degree of Short-sightedness, and by so regular a Method, that Persons, after being once fitted, may at all Times be furnished with them (though at ever so great a Distance) as exact as if present.

REFLECTING TELESCOPES on the Principles of Sir ISAAC NEWTON, and Mr. GREGORY, made with the greatest Accuracy, and the Apparatus finished and adapted in so compleat a Manner, as renders the Use of them pleasant and easy. Also MICROSCOPES double and single (with all the modern Improvements) which magnify to so great a Degree, that the Circulation of the Blood in Animals, the Animalcula in Fluids, and the Fanna of vegetables, with many other Phenomena, otherwise imperceptible, are clearly discover'd.

— Particularly an Improvement of the Apparatus of the Solar Microscope, which renders it much easier for Use, and less liable to Disorder, than any yet extant.

PRISMS for demonstrating the surprizing Theory of Light and Colours; Camera Obscura's for delineating Views in Perspective; Optical Machines for viewing Perspective Pictures; Convex and Concave Speculums of all Sizes; Magick Lanthorns, Opera Glasses, Multiplying and Magnifying Glasses, Barometers and Thermometers; with many other Curiosities not here mentioned.

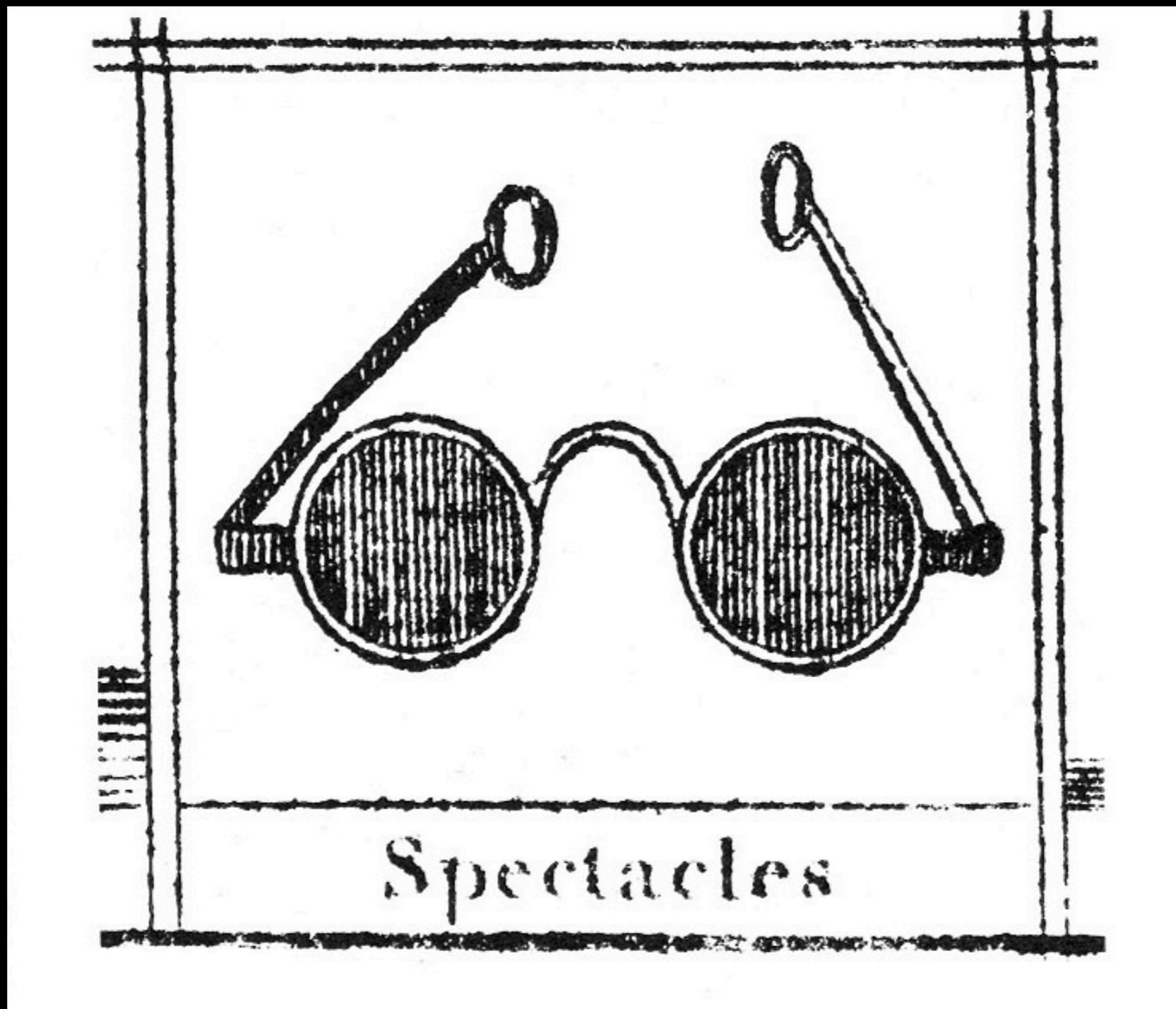
REFRACTING TELESCOPES IMPROVED,

By a Method founded on the justest Principles and Rules of Opticks, are allowed by the best Judges in Theory (who have made the Comparison) to be equal in all Respects to those of the celebrated PIERO PATRONE at Milan; by which Improvement, those of two, three, and four Feet, have by Experience been found to be much more useful at Sea, than any have hitherto been, and are made by the abovesaid SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Trade Card of Samuel Johnson, London Optician  
18th Century  
(Science Museum of London)



Steel Spectacles with Steel Case  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Exaggerated Round Loops,  
c. 1750 - 1760



Bowles & Carver Woodcut of Spectacles with Straight Side Bars and Round Loops  
Mid 18th Century

Bob-Cherry.



*Sold at the Print Shop in May's Buildings, Covent Garden, Where is Sold compleat Sets.*

"Bob - Cherry"

Sold at the Print Shop in May's Buildings, Covent Garden 1746

(Lewis Walpole Library)

Bob-Cherry.

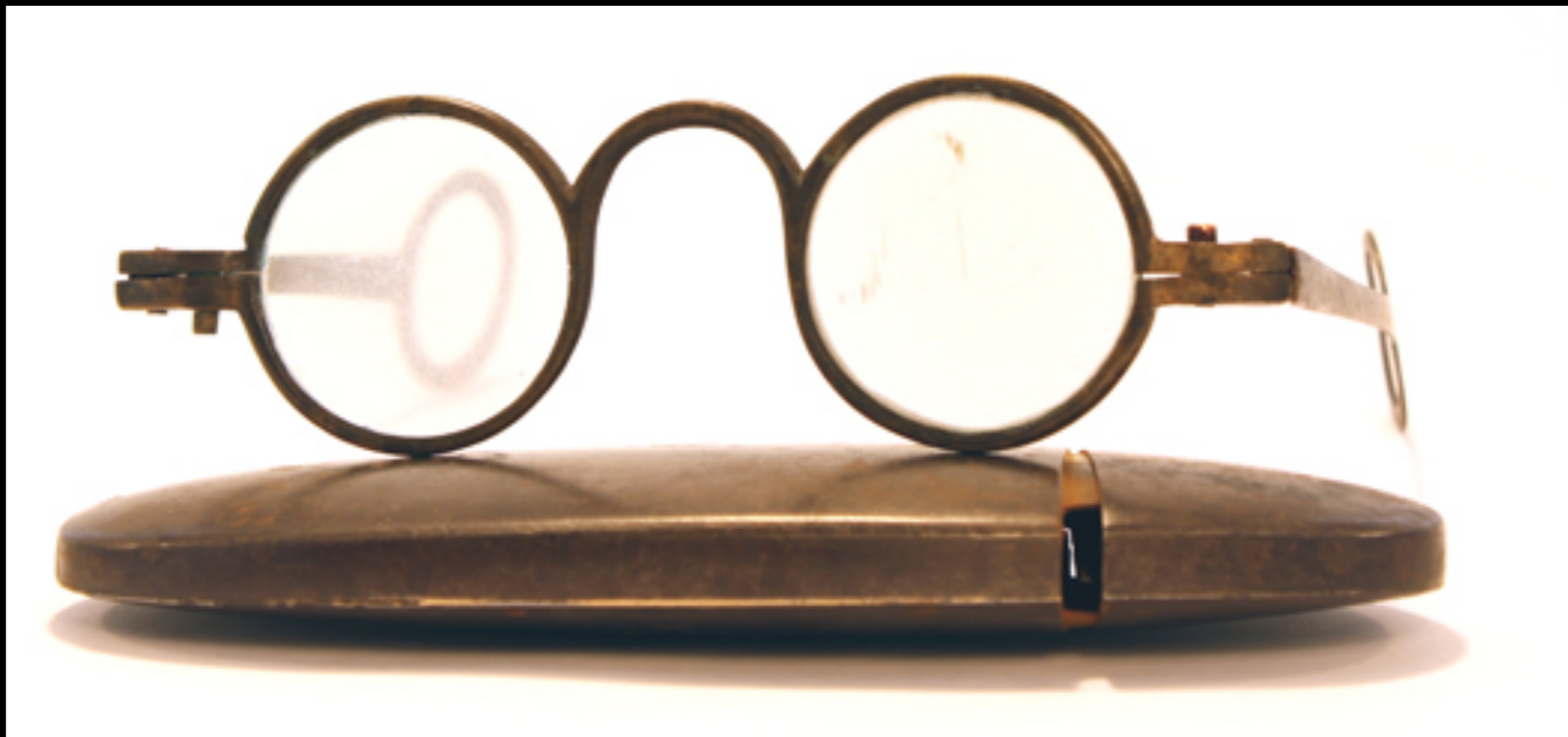


*Sold at the Print Shop in May's Buildings, Covent Garden, Where is Sold Compleat Sets.*

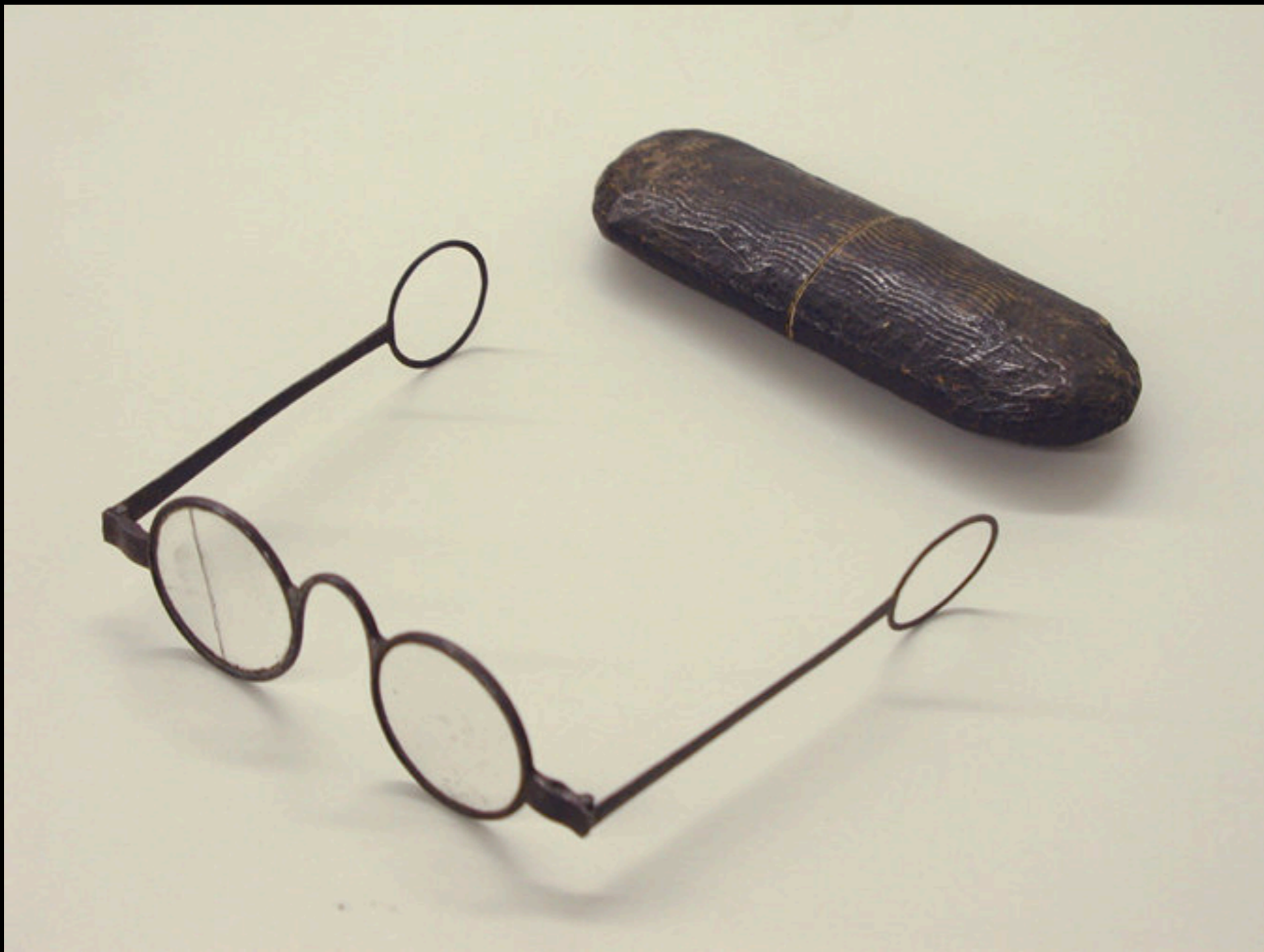
“Bob - Cherry”

Sold at the Print Shop in May's Buildings, Covent Garden 1746

(Lewis Walpole Library)



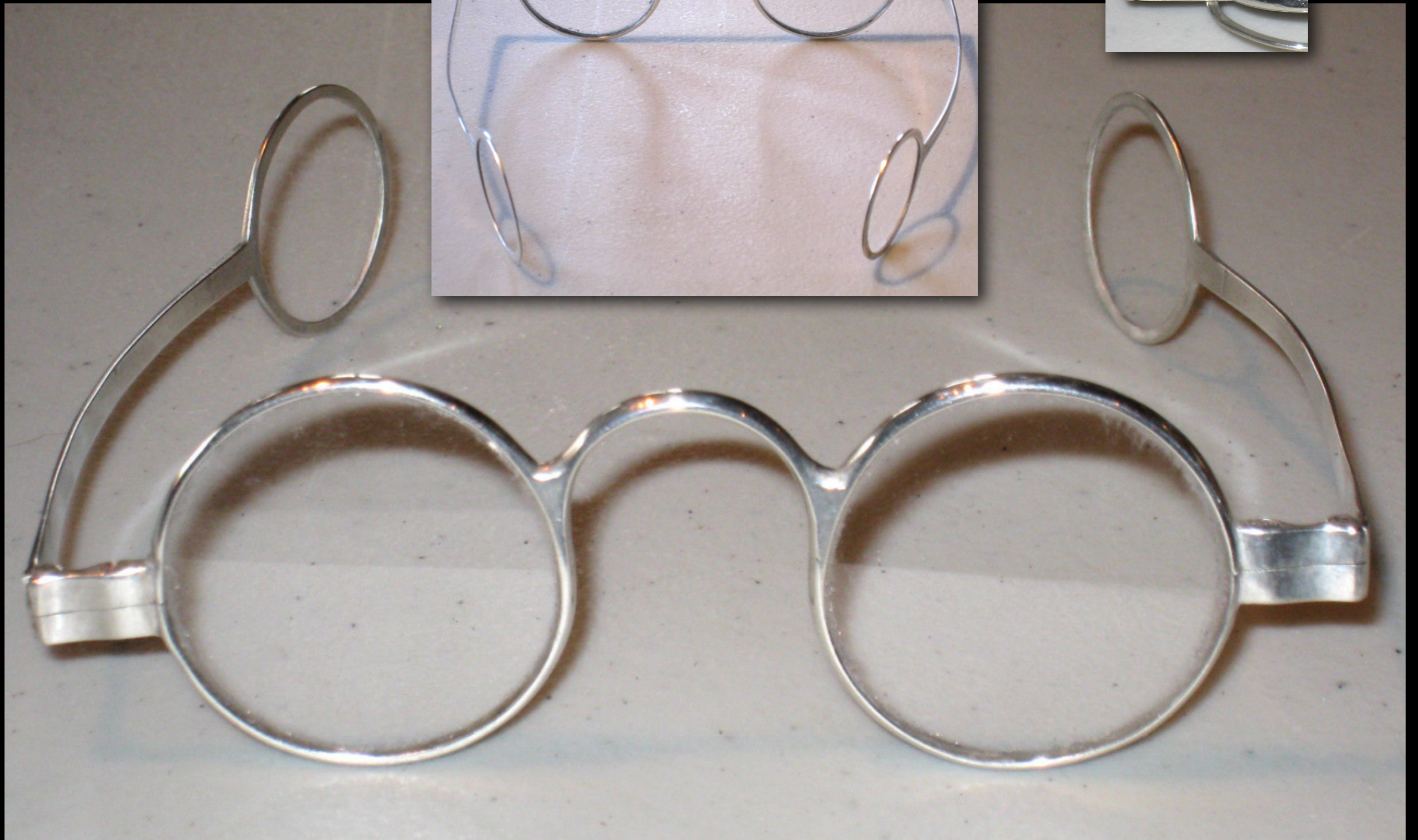
Steel Spectacles with Steel Case  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1750 - 1760



Steel Spectacles with Pasteboard Case  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1750 - 1760



Steel Spectacles with Leather Case  
Round Lenses in Green Glass, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1750 - 1760



Silver Spectacles  
c. 1750 - 1780  
(Gary Gregory Collection)



Steel Spectacles with Dated Leather Case  
Round Lenses in Green Glass, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
1774  
(Aagenendt Collection)

All Side Bar Spectacles Depicted  
in Artwork from 1750 - 1783 have:

Round Lenses

Straight or Hinged Side Bars

Round Side Bar Loops

Nose Bars in the Top  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Lens



Jean Simeon Chardin (1699 - 1779)  
Self Portrait 1775  
(The Louvre)



"The CONGRESS or The NECESSARY POLITICIANS"  
by Anonymous 1775  
(The British Museum)



Isaac Brodeau, Silversmith or Coffee House Keeper in Oxford  
by George Roth 1768  
Exhibited in London by the Society of Artists as William Roth, 1768  
(Christie's Auction House)



Ed. North.

Benke. Mott Windsor Jeffrey Dunstan.

Sam. Hoar.

C. J. Fox.

THE DISCOVERY.

Rowlandson

“THE DISCOVERY”  
by Rowlandson 1784  
(The British Museum)



Ed. North.

Benk. Math. Windsor Jeffrey Dunstan.

Sam. Hoar.

C. J. Foy.

THE DISCOVERY.

Rowlandson

“THE DISCOVERY”  
by Rowlandson 1784  
(The British Museum)

1752

James Ayscough Invents  
The First  
Hinged Side Bar Spectacles

# Characteristics of Hinged Side Bar Spectacles (1752 - 1783)

Round Side Bar Loops

Hinged Side Bars

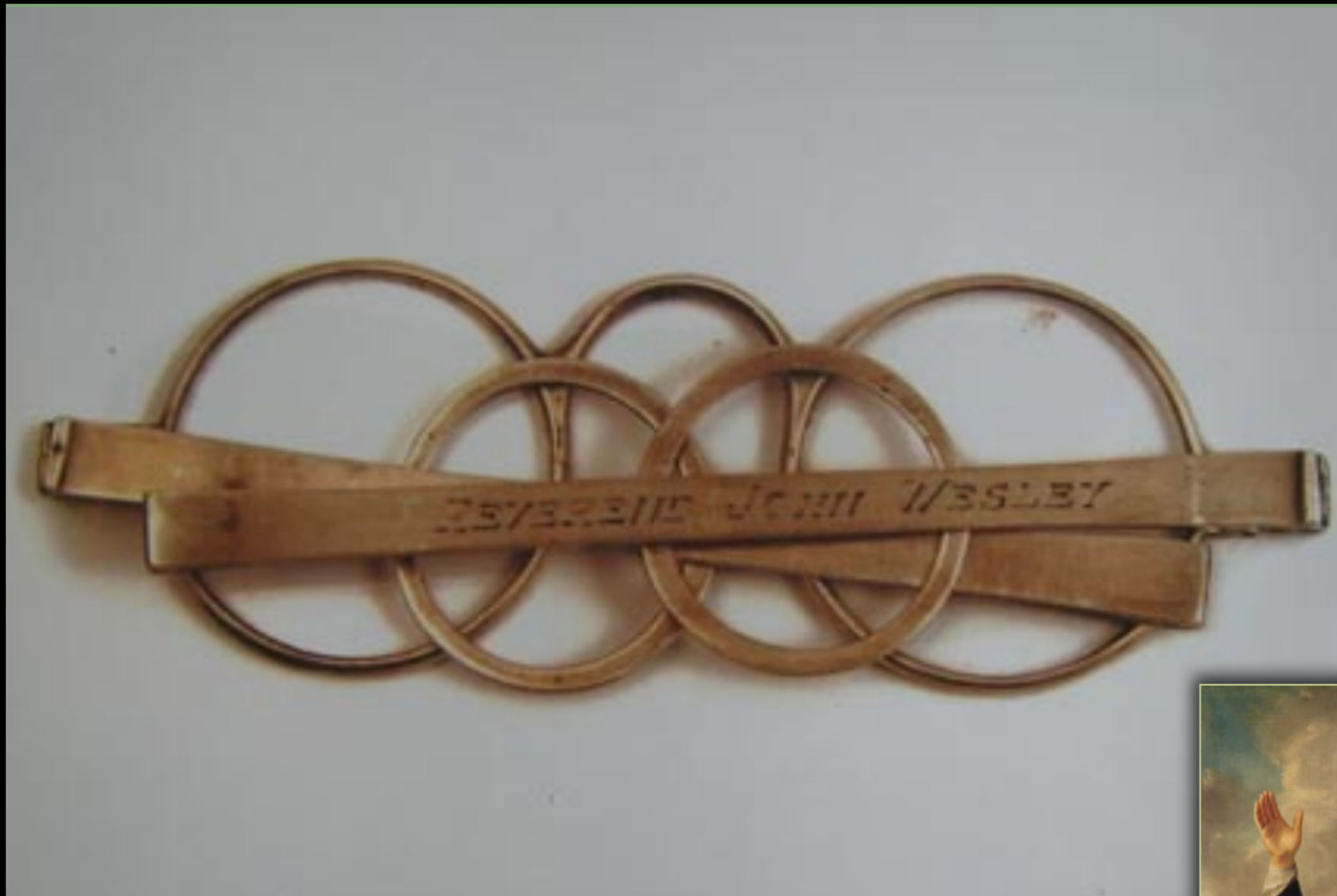
(Colonial Williamsburg Collection)



Hinges Set at  $\frac{1}{2}$  Lens Diameter

Nose Bar Set at the Top  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Lens

Round Lenses



Silver Spectacles Engraved "REVEREND JOHN WESLEY"  
Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1755





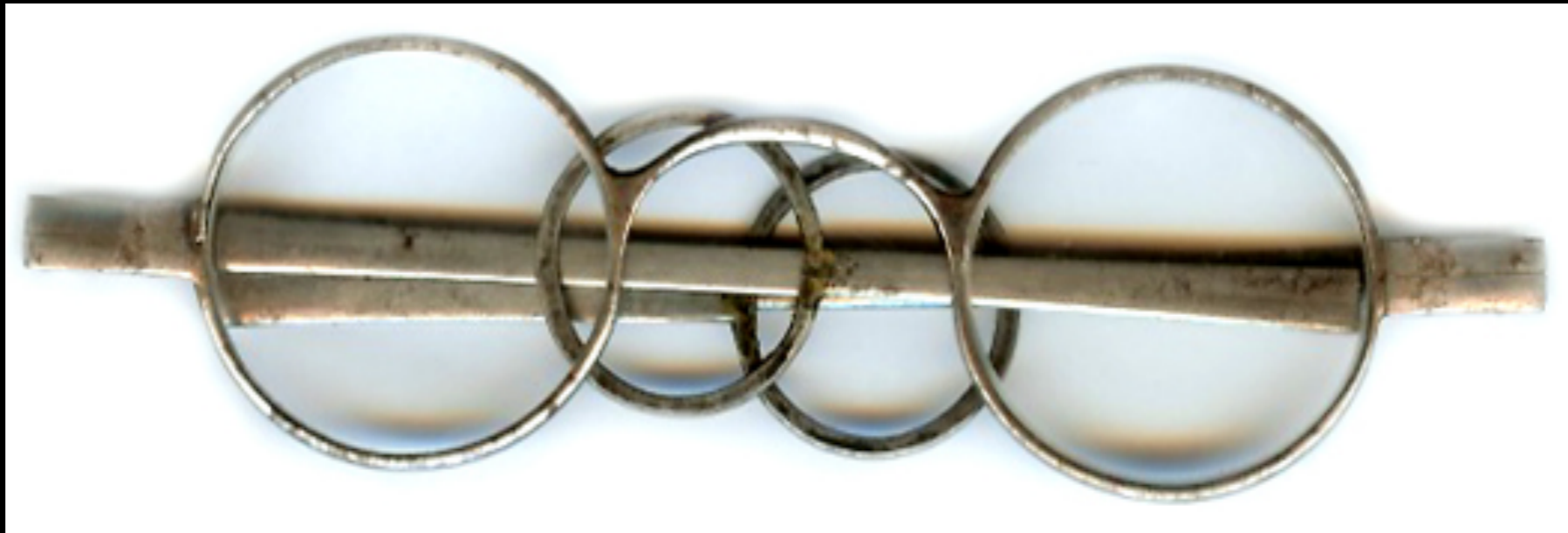
Tortoise Shell Case with Engraved Silver Inlay

Silver Spectacles Engraved "REVEREND JOHN WESLEY"  
Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1755





Steel Spectacles with Steel Case  
Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars (Bent to Contour) with Round Loops  
c. 1750 - 1760



Two Pairs of Steel Spectacles  
Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1750 - 1760

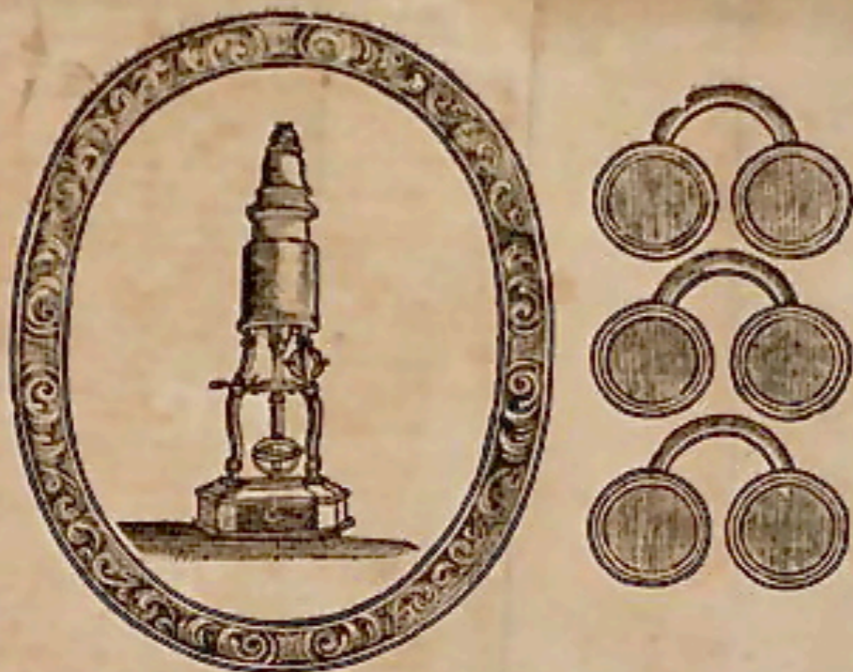


John Cuff, London Optician, and His Assistant  
by Johann Zoffany 1772  
(The British Museum)

Steel Spectacles  
Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops



John Cuff, London Optician, and His Assistant  
by Johann Zoffany 1772  
(The British Museum)



**J O H N C U F F,**  
**Optician, Spectacle, and Microscope Maker,**

At the Sign of the REFLECTING MICROSCOPE and SPECTACLES,  
 against Serjeant's-Inn Gate in Fleet-street,

**M**AKES and Sells all Sorts of the most curious Optical Instruments, such as SPECTACLES and READING GLASSES, ground on Brass Tools in the Method approved by the Royal Society, of Brazil Pebbles, Rock Chryslal, or the finest Flint Glais, and set either in Silver, Mother of Pearl, Tortoise-shell, &c. in the most convenient Manner for Use.

REFRACTING TELESCOPE, proper for celestial or terrestrial Observations, either by Land or Sea; and also REFLECTING TELESCOPES, as invented by Sir Isaac Newton and Mr Gregory.

MICROSCOPES of several Kinds, both Single and Double, (either for the Study or the Pocket) particularly a new-constructed DOUBLE MICROSCOPE, invented by the said John Cuff, to remedy the Inconveniencies complained of in all the former Sorts; the SOLAR MICROSCOPE, as improv'd by him with a most convenient and manageable Apparatus for viewing Objects, and a Contrivance for drawing the Pictures of them with great Ease and Exactness, even by those that have never drawn before; the AQUATIC MICROSCOPE, invented also by him for the Examination of Water Animals; the OPAKE MICROSCOPE, which by a Light reflected upon Objects that have no Transparency, renders them distinctly visible; CULTEPPER'S MICROSCOPE, WILSON'S Pocket Microscope, &c.

The CAMERA OBSCURA for exhibiting Prospects in their natural Proportions and Colours, together with the Motions of living Subjects: MAGIC LANTHORNS; Convex and Concave SPECULUMS OF LOOKING GLASSES, MULTIPLYING GLASSES, BAROMETERS, THERMOMETERS, OPERA GLASSES, SPECTACLES of true Venetian Green Glass, SPEAKING TRUMPETS, several Mathematical Instruments, and many other Curiosities, are sold by the said Operator at reasonable Prices, either Wholesale or Retail.

**MICROSCOPES**

Made and Sold by

**J O H N C U F F,** Optician,

Opposite to

Serjeants-Inn, Fleet Street, London.

**A DESCRIPTION of the MICROSCOPE,**  
 commonly called, the Reflecting Microscope:

(Objects, that are transparent, being illuminated by Reflection from a Convex Mirror, which turns round in a semicircle, for the Convenience of being moved to a proper Angle.)



THIS MICROSCOPE hath a Back Foot or Trunk at the Bottom, with a Drawer in it which holds the Object Glasses, and the other Apparatus belonging to this Microscope.

Upon this Trunk are fix'd five Pillars, by which the Microscope is supported. There are five distinct Magnifiers (or Object Glasses) mark'd upon the Cells 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The first is the greatest Magnifier, and its chief Use is, to discover the minutest and most transparent Objects.

All the Cells slide on to the lower End of the Microscope, and may be exactly adjust'd to their focal Distance, by the sliding Tube, which is mark'd with Figures answering those on the Cells, and may be moved, higher or lower, till it is exactly fitted to the Eye.

All Objects are to be plac'd in the Centre of the round Brass Plate when view'd. The round Object Plate hath in it Dull of Metals; Dross of a Man's Wing; Dull of a Sun Flower; Eye of a Fly; Scales of a Fish; a Leaf.

The two little Concave Glasses therein are to receive a Drop of Liquid on, in order to discover the Animalcula, which Animals are most remarkably numerous in Stagnant Water, or in Water wherein Pepper, Hay, Grass, or any other Herb hath been sometime steep'd.

The little black and white Plates are to lay upon Objects on, and are to be adjust'd by the Plano Convex Glass, which will send a Spot of Light upon the Object, either from the Sun, a clear Sky-light, or a Candle; and it may be moved higher or lower, and also horizontally, according to the Situation of the Light received.

The Cell which hath a Convex and Plano Glass in it, is to confine living Objects in, during the Observation.

The three little Glasses, viz. one a Plano Glass, and the other two Concaves, are in the same Purpose, the more readily to confine any small Object which happens in the Way.

The black Ivory Case, fits on the Shank underneath the Brass Plate, and is to be used there chiefly when the first and second Magnifiers are employ'd; for Experience will show, these Objects appear more distinct by cutting off some Part of the oblique Rays, reflected from the Concave Mirror.

The Brass Fish-pan is to lay a Fish on to see the Circulation of the Blood in the Tail. In order thereto, bind the Fish down, with its Tail over the oblong Hole at the smallest End of the Fish-pan, which falls into the Brass Plate in the same Manner as the round Object-plate doth, is that long Hole, with a Spring underneath to keep them steady. Choose either a Gulper, Scud, &c. whose Tail is most transparent.

The Glass Tubes are intended to put a Frog in, to observe the Circulation, which can, without killing, or in the least tormenting it, be seen only in the Web of its Foot, between the Toes, the which must be expanded by the upper Side of the Tube, and Care taken that no other Part of the Frog hinder the Light from coming to it. Apply the Tube with the Frog in it underneath the round Plate, where there are two Springs, and a Cavity made in the Shank to hold it.

The little Pair of Plates, with a Pin at one End, is either to hold an Object between them, or to hold any thing upon; and the Spring-steel in the Middle is to fit into the round Hole at the Edge of the Convex Mirror of the Brass Plate.

The little Bush is to clean the Glasses, and the Tallow in the Ivory Box; and the small Rings of Wax, are to supply what may be lost, or to change the Objects at Pleasure.

All the same Things are made in the greatest Perfection, all other Sorts of Microscopes, Telescopes, the other Reflecting or Refracting, all various Spectacles made of Brass Tubes, with all other Optical Glasses, at reasonable Prices.

Trade Cards of John Cuff, London Optician  
 18th Century  
 (Science Museum of London)



The Jugg N<sup>o</sup> III. — Chancery — opposite New Church — London  
**JACK, have down — With a Grog Blossom Fever.**

“JACK, have down - With a Grog Blossom Fever.”  
 c. 1770s  
 (The British Museum)

Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops Spectacles



“JACK, have down - With a Grog Blossom Fever.”

c. 1770s

(The British Museum)



*R. Dighton delin.*

*How Merrily we live  
That Soldiers Be,*

### CATCH SINGERS.

*Round the World  
Thus we Sing with merry Glee.*

*London, Printed for R. Sayer & J. Bennett, N<sup>o</sup>. 63 Fleet Street, and J. Smith, N<sup>o</sup>. 35 Chancery Lane, as the Act directs 15<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1780.*

“CATCH SINGERS”  
by Sayer & Bennett 1780  
(The British Museum)

Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops Spectacles



“CATCH SINGERS”  
by Sayer & Bennett 1780  
(The British Museum)



A VISIT TO CAMP or the ROGUES MARCH,

*T. Lamb Esq. Mayor of Rye drummed out of Coxheath Camp, by the 6. Regt. of Foot, 1781. Oct. 2.*

A VISIT TO CAMP or the ROGUES MARCH  
T. Lamb Esq. Mayor of Rye drummed out of Coxheath Camp by the 6th Regt of Foot 1781  
(The British Museum)

Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops Spectacles



A VISIT TO CAMP or the ROGUES MARCH  
T. Lamb Esq. Mayor of Rye drummed out of Coxheath Camp by the 6th Regt of Foot 1781  
(The British Museum)



Remnants of Round Lens, Straight Bar Spectacles Buried with the Indian Chief Cunne Shote (Cumnacatogue) or Standing Turkey  
Portrait by Francis Parsons c. 1762  
(Spectacles - Frank H. McClung Museum - University of Tennessee)

The Independent Chronicle, March 6, 1777(?):

“DESERTED from my Company, in Col. Marshall’s Regiment, the following Persons, viz. John M’Daniel, 5 Feet 5 Inches high, aged 37, light Complexion, grey Eyes; had on a blue Surtout. John Brown, aged 38, 5 Feet 4 Inches high, light Complexion, had on a light coloured Surtout, **has fore Eyes**. Thomas Simmins, aged 30, 5 Feet 5 Inches high, light Complexion, belonging to Groton. John Atkinson, aged 28, 5 Feet 5 Inches high. John Durce, Daniel Elliott, Durfy Springers and Frankling Tennent, of Bedford. BENJ. WALLCUTT, Captain.”



“High Life Below Stairs” by John Collet  
London, 1763  
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



343

A MASTER PARSON with a GOOD LIVING .

London: Printed for & Sold by CARINGTON BOWLES, N<sup>o</sup> 69 in S<sup>t</sup> Pauls Church Yard.

Published as the Act directs, 2 June 1782.

“A MASTER PARSON with a GOOD LIVING”  
by Carington Bowles 1782  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

Round Lenses, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops Spectacles



“A MASTER PARSON with a GOOD LIVING”  
by Carington Bowles 1782  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

# Benjamin Martin Spectacles

Benjamin Martin

(1704 - 1782)

London Instrument Maker

who designed

“Visual Glasses” in 1756

In the design of his Spectacles, One third of the lens was filled with “Horn of the Ox” where the “Lens tilted inwards so that the axes of the eye converged on the object of regard.”

This reduced damage to the eyes caused by excessive light.



Instrument Maker & Optician Benjamin Martin  
(1704 - 1782)



Benjamin Martin Horn and Steel Spectacles with Steel Case  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1756+



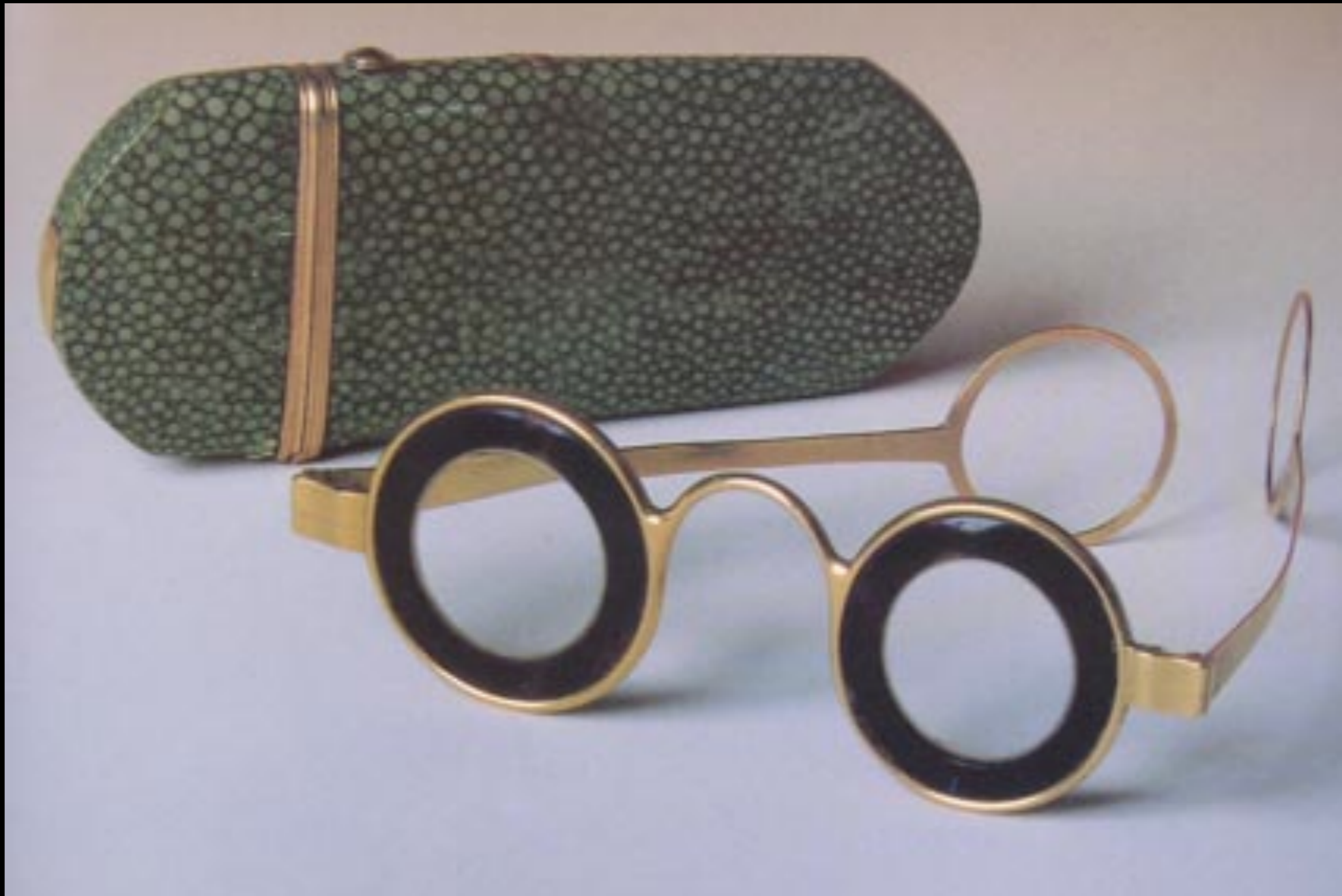
Maker's Mark  
London Optician Benjamin Martin Spectacles  
c. 1756 +



Admiral Peter Rainier  
by John Singleton Copley  
(Museum of Fine Arts)



Steel and Horn Benjamin Martin Spectacles with Steel Case  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
c. 1756 +



Gold Plated Spectacles of King Louis XV of France with Shagreen Case  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops

c. 1770  
(Musée de la Lunette)



“Nurnberg” Style Silver & Horn Spectacles with Benjamin Martin Lenses  
c. 1775 - 1785



Steel and Horn Benjamin Martin Spectacles  
Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
2nd to 3rd Quarter 18th Century  
(Christie's Auction House)

Benjamin Franklin  
&  
Bifocal Spectacles

**JUST IMPORTED,**  
 And to be **SOLD** by *B. Franklin*, for Ready  
 Money only; the lowest Price being marked in each  
 Book.

<p><i>Allan's Synopsis of Physick</i>, 2 vols. 8vo.</p> <p><i>Arbuthnot on Aliments.</i></p> <p><i>Atalantis</i>, 4 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Arabian Nights</i>, 6 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Bacon's Essays.</i></p> <p><i>Beveridge's Thoughts.</i></p> <p><i>Bailey's Dictionary.</i></p> <p><i>Bradley on Gardening.</i></p> <p><i>Bladen's Caesar.</i></p> <p><i>Clark on the Attributes.</i></p> <p>-----'s Sermons, 10 Vols. 8vo.</p> <p><i>Characteristicks</i>, 3 Vols. 8vo.</p> <p><i>Crusoe's Life</i>, 2 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Cronal's Elop.</i></p> <p><i>Congreve's Works</i>, 3 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Collection of Novels</i>, 6 Vols.</p> <p><i>Drollincourt on Death.</i></p> <p><i>Dryden's Flegil</i>, 3 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p>----- Fables.</p> <p><i>Gravefande's Elements</i>, 2 Vols. 8vo.</p> <p><i>Gay's Fables.</i></p> <p><i>Human Prudence.</i></p> <p><i>Hive</i>, 4 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Lack of Human Understanding.</i></p> <p><i>Landlord's Law.</i></p> <p><i>Ladies Library</i>, 3 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Milton's Paradise lost.</i></p> <p><i>Nelson's Justice</i>, 2 Vols. 8vo.</p> <p><i>Ovid's Epistles.</i></p> <p><i>Ottway's Plays.</i></p> <p><i>Pittcairn's Works.</i></p> <p><i>Pembroke's Arcadia.</i></p> <p><i>Pope's Homer</i>, 11 Vols. 12mo.</p>	<p><i>Prior's Poems</i>, 2 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Rousse's Lucan</i>, 2 Vols. 12mo.</p> <p><i>Sancho's Epistles.</i></p> <p><i>Seneca's Morals.</i></p> <p><i>Quincy's Sanctorius.</i></p> <p>----- Lexicon.</p> <p>----- Dispensatory.</p> <p><i>Solden's Table-talk.</i></p> <p><i>Tale of a Tub.</i></p> <p><i>Wood's Institutes of the Laws of England</i></p> <p>----- Civil Law.</p> <p><i>Wingate's Arithmetick.</i></p> <p><i>Family Instructor.</i></p> <p><i>Clark's Introduction.</i></p> <p>----- Corderius.</p> <p><i>Watts's Psalms.</i></p> <p>----- Lyric Poems.</p> <p><i>Bailey's Exercises.</i></p> <p><i>Euclid's Elements.</i></p> <p><i>Ovid's Tristia.</i></p> <p><i>Accidences.</i></p> <p><i>Polite Philosopher.</i></p> <p><i>Columbarium.</i></p> <p><i>Duck's Poems.</i></p> <p><i>Every Man his own Lawyer.</i></p> <p><i>Beiler's German Grammar.</i></p> <p><i>History of England.</i></p> <p><i>Ward's Young Math. Guide.</i></p> <p><i>Kelly's Navigation.</i></p> <p><i>Cole's Latin Dictionary.</i></p> <p><i>Racley's Apology.</i></p> <p><i>Valerianum.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">With many other Sorts too tedious to mention.</p>
---	--

Where also may be had,  
**BIBLES**, Testaments, Psalters, Old and New-Eng-  
 land Primers, gilt Paper, mourning Paper, Sealing-  
 Wax, Wafers, Dutch Quills, Ivory-leav'd Memorand-  
 um Books, Folding Sticks, Paunce, Letter Cases, Pocket  
 Books of several Sizes, Ink-Powder, Spectacles of several  
 Sorts, Blanks of all Sorts; with most Sorts of Stationary  
 Ware.

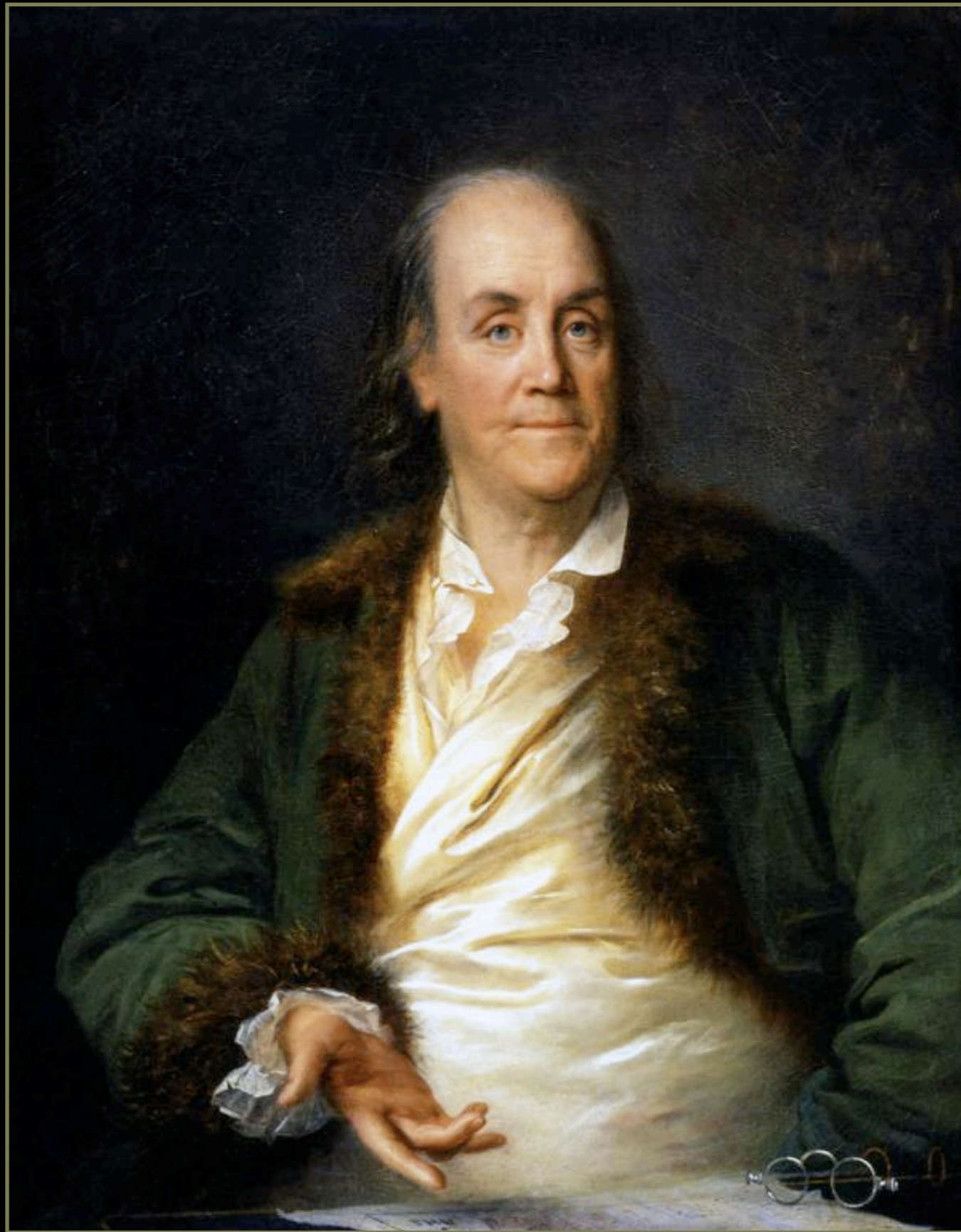
Benjamin Franklin Advertisement - Pennsylvania Gazette 1738  
 "Just Imported and to be Sold" / "Spectacles of Several Sorts"  
 (Library Company of Philadelphia)



Benjamin Franklin  
by Charles Wilson Peale after David Martin 1767  
(American Philosophical Society)



Benjamin Franklin by Charles Phillippe Amedee Vanloo  
c. 1777 - 1785  
(American Philosophical Society)

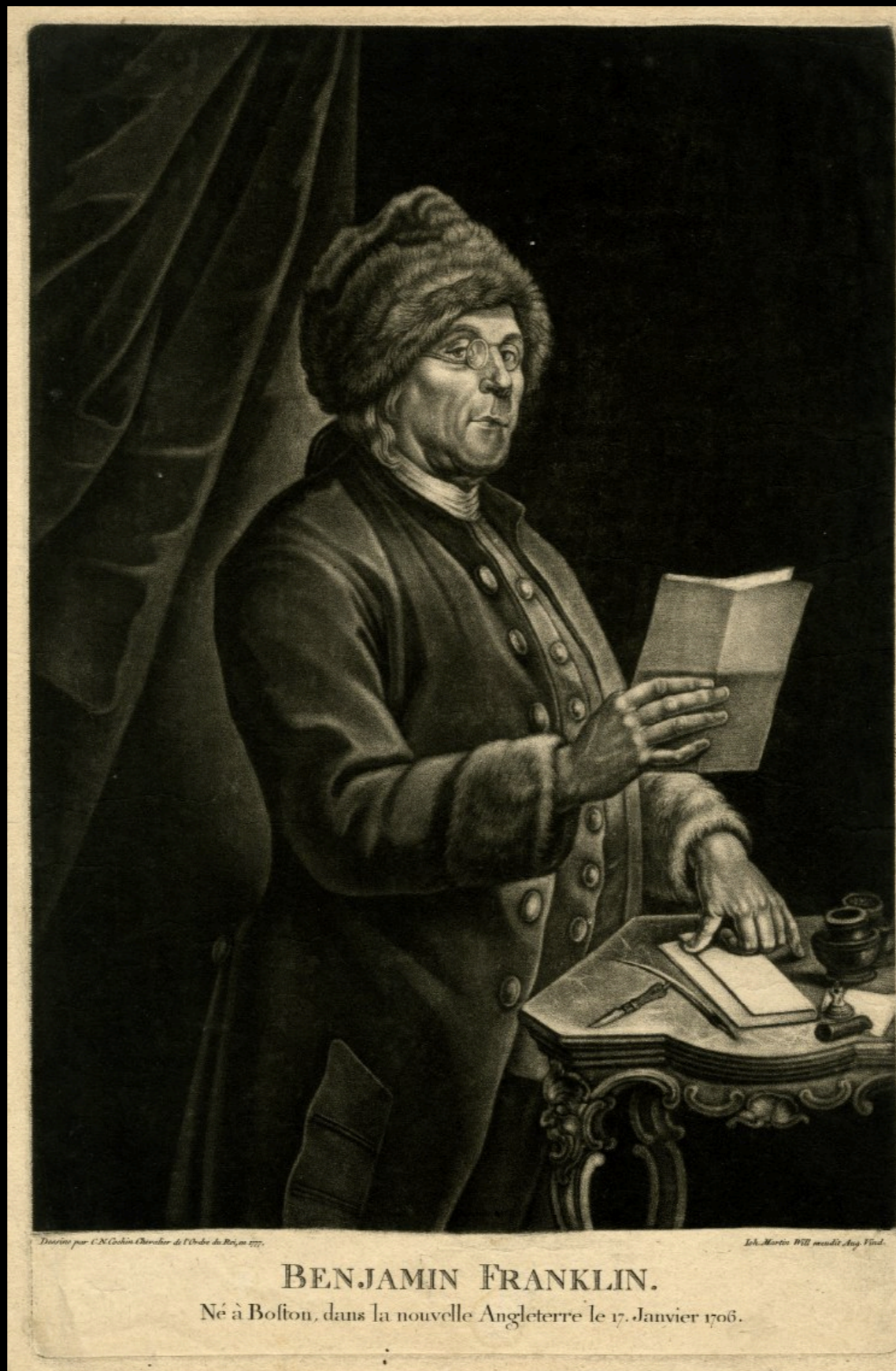


Benjamin Franklin  
by Anne Rosalie Bocquet Filleul 1778 or 1779  
(Philadelphia Museum of Art)

Round Lenses, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops  
Exaggerated Nose Bar



Benjamin Franklin  
by Anne Rosalie Bocquet Filleul 1778 or 1779  
(Philadelphia Museum of Art)



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Né à Boston, dans la nouvelle Angleterre le 17. Janvier 1706.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
by Johann Martin Will after Charles Nicolas Cochin c. 1777  
(The British Museum)

Benjamin Franklin is Traditionally Credited with the Invention of the Bifocal Lens. Although the exact date of their introduction is uncertain, they were made by Franklin's optician, Samuel Pierce, who stated that people were wearing them in 1775. It is possible that they may have been made ten years earlier.

H. Sykes, an English Optician living in Paris, wrote to Benjamin Franklin regarding the delay in making the United States Ambassador a pair of Bifocal Spectacles in 1779.



*An Indian Squaw King Kumpun-pia  
 Which makes her lustful passions rise  
 But while he do the friendly Jobb  
 She gives her Kamil into his Fob  
 And thence conveyance are told  
 His Watch whye cannot see of Gods*

*When Danger is threaten tis mere Nonsense  
 To talk of such a thing as Conscience  
 To Arms to Arms with one Accord  
 The Sword of Quakers and the Lord  
 Till Bumpers then of Rum or Arrack  
 We'll drink Success to the new Barrack*

*'Fight Dog' fight, bear, you've all my Friends  
 By you I shall attain my Ends  
 For I can never be content  
 Till I have got the Government  
 But if from this Attempt I fall  
 Then let the Devil take you all.*

"The March of the Paxton Men"  
 1764  
 (Library Company of Philadelphia)



An Indian Squaw  
 Which makes her  
 But while he doth a friendly Job  
 She drives her Kamil into his Fob  
 And thence conveyance are told  
 His Watch whye Causa ere of Gods

To Arms to Arms with one Accord  
 The Sword of Quakers and the Lord  
 Till Bumpers then of Rum or Arrack  
 We'll drink Success to the new Barrack

For I can never be content  
 Till I have got the Government  
 But if from this Attempt I fall  
 Then let the Devil take you all.

all my Friends  
 Ends

"The March of the Paxton Men"  
 1764  
 (Library Company of Philadelphia)

Reading, is not the best for greater Distances. I therefore  
 had formerly two Pair of Spectacles, which I adjust myself  
 as in travelling sometimes read and often wanted to regard the  
 Prospects. Finding this Change troublesome and not always suf-  
 ficiently ready, I had the Glasses cut, and half of each lens  
 separated in the same Circle, thus



By this means, as I wear my Spectacles constantly, I have only to  
 raise my Eyes up or down as I want to see distinctly for or near, the  
 proper Glasses being always ready. This I find more particularly  
 convenient when in France, the Glasses that serve me best  
 at Table to see what I eat, not being the best to see the Faces of those on the  
 other Side of the Table who speak to me, and when one's Ears are not  
 well accustomed to the Sounds of a Language, a Sight of the Features  
 in the Features of him that speaks helps to explain, so that I can  
 understand French better by the help of my Spectacles. —

My intended Translator of your Piece, the only one I  
 know who understands the Subject as well as the two Languages,  
 which a Translator ought to do or he cannot make a good Trans-  
 lation, is at present occupied in an Affair that prevents his undertaking  
 it, but that will soon be over. — I thank you for the Notice, I  
 should be glad to have another of the printed Pamphlet.

We shall always be ready to take your Children, if you  
 send them to us. I only wonder, that since London draws  
 and transports such Numbers of your Country People, that your  
 King should not want and willingly receive the Children you  
 dispose of. That Circumstance, together with the great  
 sum as then, to serve for a time as Language, or for life as  
 in consideration of small Wages, seems to me a Proof that you  
 is over-peopled. — And yet it is afraid of Immigration!

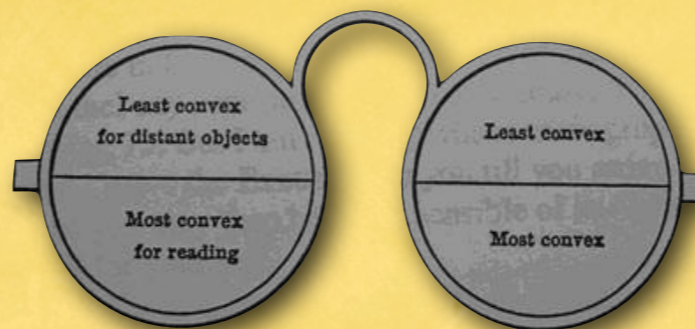
Adieu, my dear Friend, and believe me ever,  
 Yours every affectionately

B. Franklin

1785 Letter of Benjamin Franklin to His Friend, George Whatley  
 Describing the Design of His Bifocal Lenses  
 (Library of Congress)

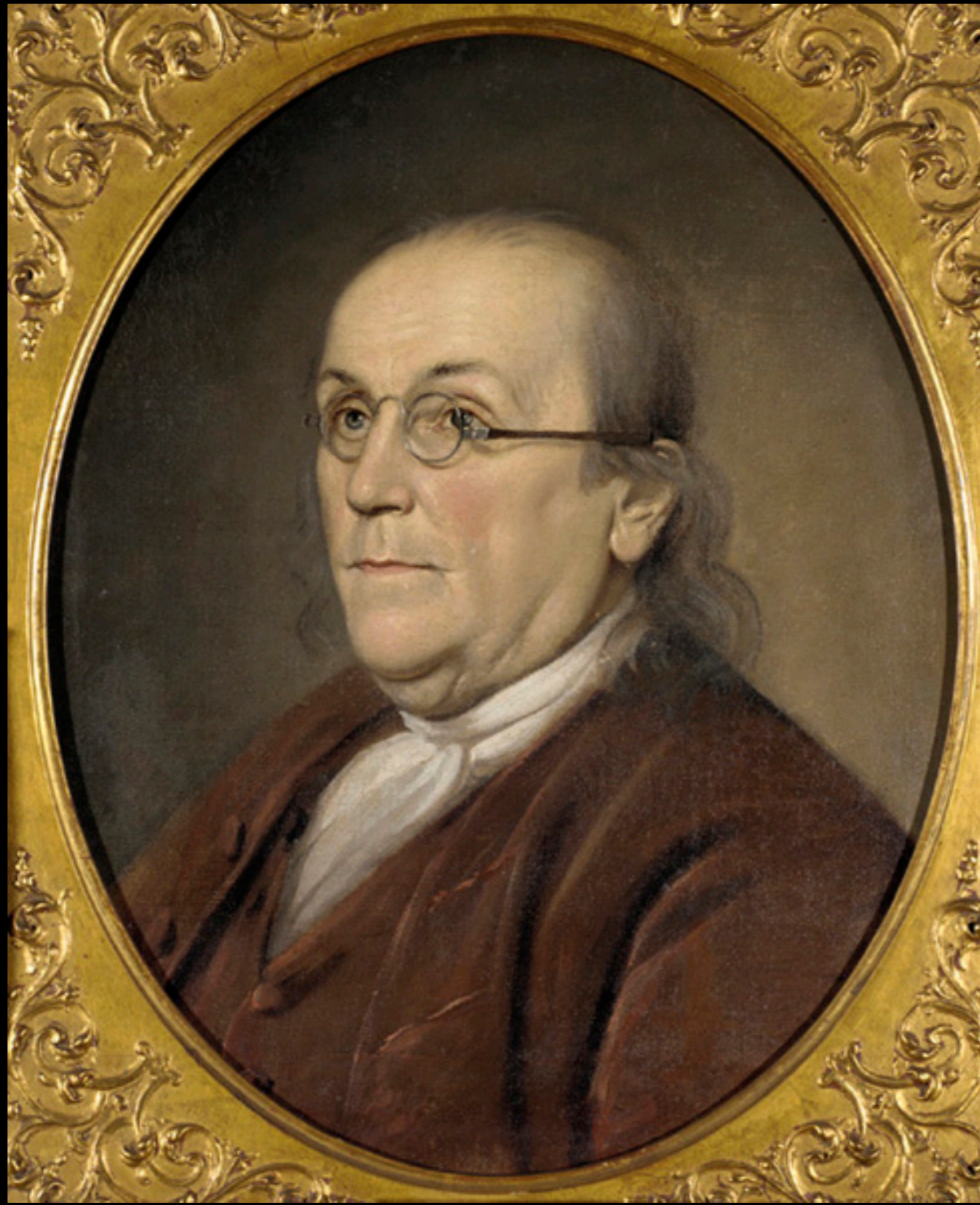
*Reading, is not the best for greater Distances. I therefore  
had formerly two Pair of Spectacles, which I shifted every Day*

“By M. Dollond’s saying that MY double spectacles can only serve particular eyes, I doubt he has not been rightly informed of their construction. I imagine it will be found pretty generally true, that the same convexity of glass, through which a man sees clearly at distance proper for reading, is not the best for greater distances. I therefore had formerly two pairs of spectacles, which I shifted occasionally, as in traveling I sometimes read, and often wanted to regards the prospects. Finding the change troublesome, and not always sufficiently ready, I had the glasses cut and half of each kind associated in the same circle, thus



By this means, as I wear my spectacles constantly, I have only to move my eyes up or down, as I want to see distinctly far or near, the proper glass being always ready. This I find more particularly convenient since my being in France, the glasses that serve me best at table to see what I eat, not being the best to see the faces of those on the other side of the table who speak to me; and when one’s ears are not well accustomed to the sounds of a language, a sight of the movements in the features of him that speaks helps to explain, so that I understand French better by the help of my spectacles...”

*Benjamin Franklin*



Benjamin Franklin  
by Charles Wilson Peale 1785  
(Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts)



Benjamin Franklin  
by Charles Wilson Peale 1785  
(Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts)



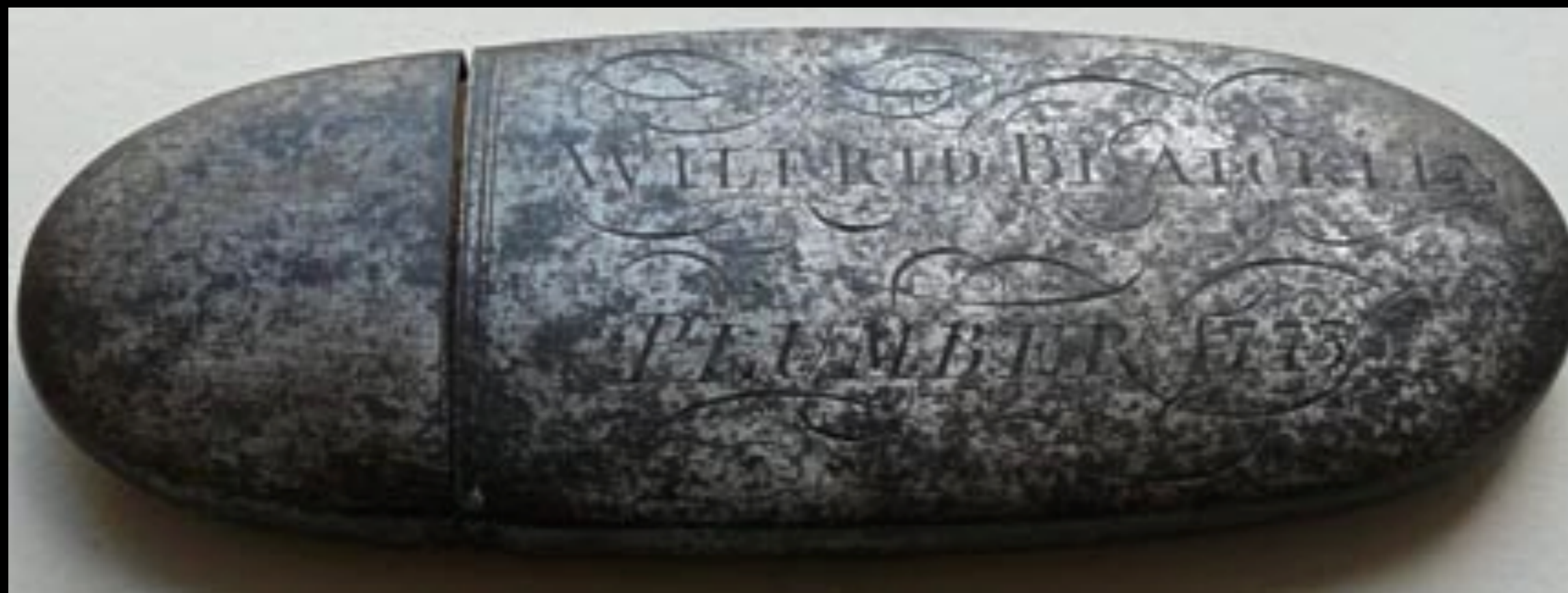
Benjamin Franklin by Charles Wilson Peale  
1789 After the 1785 Portrait (Due to Franklin's Illness)  
(Atwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

# Horn Spectacles



Horn Spectacles  
c. 1750 - 1800  
(Private Collection)

# Spectacle Cases



Dated Steel Spectacle Case

1773



Dated Steel Spectacle Case  
James Perry Hooper 1772



Paper Case  
18th Century



1749 Shagreen



Dated Spectacle Cases

Spectacles  
Worn or Introduced  
After 1783

After the Conclusion of the American War for Independence in 1783, numerous Spectacle designs began to emerge. While it is nearly impossible to definitively “pinpoint” exact dates, the use of Teardrop Side Bar Ends, Oval Lenses, or Turnpin Side Bars prior to 1783 cannot fully be documented.



## *An Exception to the Rule?*

*These Spectacles bear all the Characteristics of a Mid 18th Century frame*

*Steel Spectacles  
Rectangular Lenses & Straight Side Bars with Round Loops,  
c. 1750 - 1760 (?)*

The Continued Use of Nose Bar Spectacles



Veritas Ino.

THE END OF THE SCRUTINY or the DEVIL turn'd FISHERMAN.

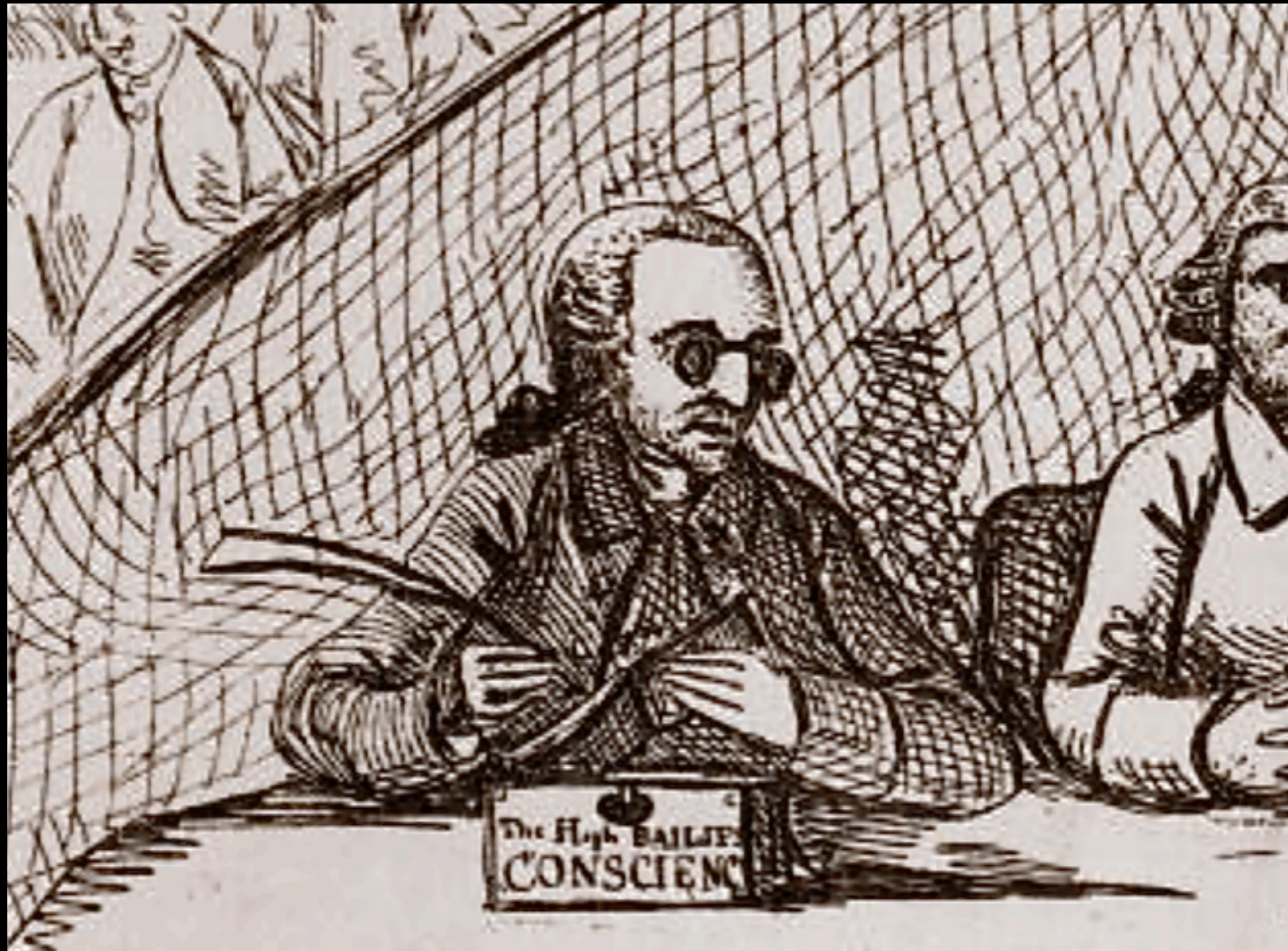
Dolor Sculp.

Pub'd by W. Humphrey 227 Strand.

May 1784

“THE END OF THE SCRUTINY or the DEVIL turn'd FISHERMAN”  
Pubd. by W. Humphrey 227 Strand c. 1784  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

The Continued Use of Nose Bar Spectacles



“THE END OF THE SCRUTINY or the DEVIL turn'd FISHERMAN”  
Pubd. by W. Humphry 227 Strand c. 1784  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

The Continued Use of Nose Bar Spectacles



“GOOD MORNING TO YOUR NIGHTCAP”

by Henry Kingsbury 1786

(Lewis Walpole Library)

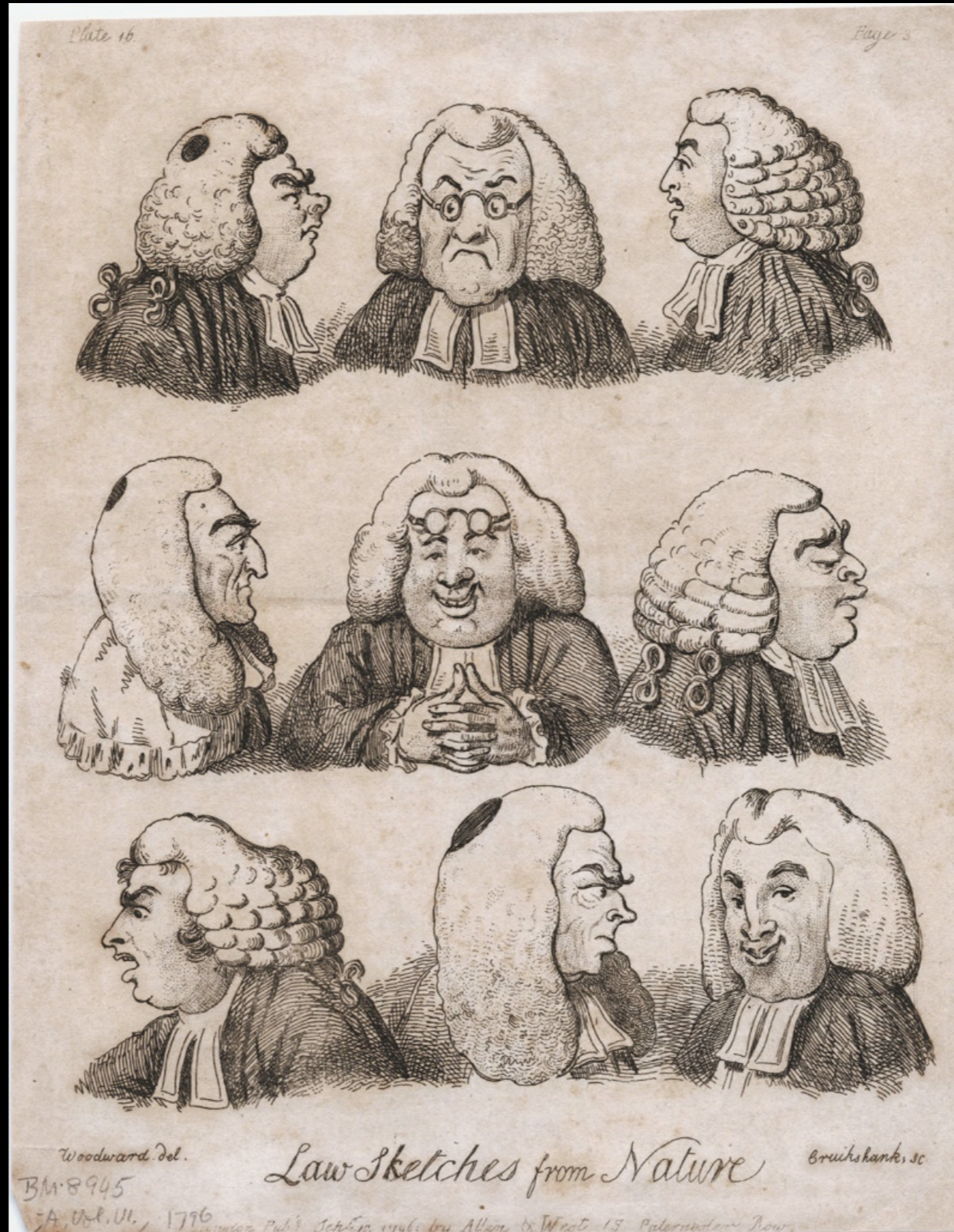
The Continued Use of Nose Bar Spectacles



A Tailor Wearing Nose Spectacles

1792

The Continued Use of Round Lens Spectacles



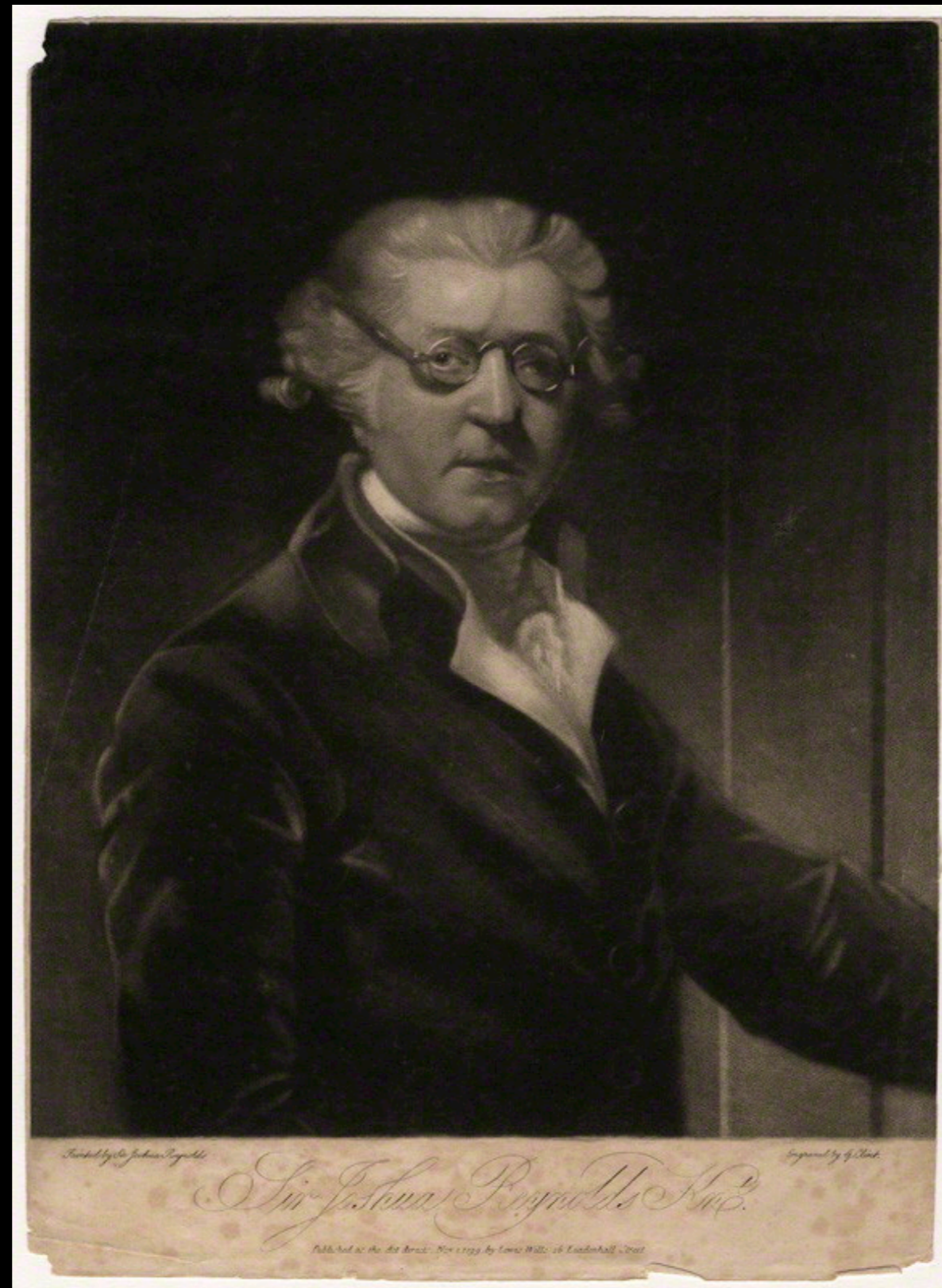
“Law Sketches from Nature”  
by Isaac Cruikshank (1756? - 1811?) 1796  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

The Continued Use of Round Lens Spectacles



Sir Joshua Reynolds wearing Round Spectacles with Hinged Side Bars  
Self Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds c. 1788

## The Continued Use of Round Lens Spectacles



Sir Joshua Reynolds wearing Round Spectacles with Hinged Temple Bars  
by George Clint, published by Lewis Wells after Sir Joshua Reynolds 1799  
(National Portrait Gallery)

The Continued Use of Round Lens Spectacles



“500 L a Year will do, for Me and for You”  
Printed for and Sold by Bowles & Carver c. 1796  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

## The Continued Use of Round Lens Spectacles



The Continued Use of Round Lens Spectacles



Francisco De Goya  
Self Portrait with Spectacles c. 1797 - 1800  
(Musée Goya, Castres)

Round Lens Straight Paddle End Side Bar Spectacles



James Wilson Wearing Round Lens, Straight Side Bar Paddle Ended (No Loop) Spectacles  
by John Pierre Henri Elouis c. 1792  
(Smithsonian Institute)

## The TEARDROP Loop

Based on extant artifacts and contemporary art work, the Teardrop Loop found at the end of a Spectacle Side Bar appears to make its introduction in the 1780s. Currently, there is no hard evidence that this style of loop was in use prior to that time.



Round Lens Hinged Temple Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



Unidentified Sitter

Published in London by H. Humphrey, No. 51 New Bond Street 1783  
(Lewis Walpole Library)



Teardrop Loop Double Hinged Steel Temple Bar Spectacles with Leather Case  
Dated 1787



Brass Round Lens Hinged Temple Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops  
c. 1790 - 1800  
(Private Collection)

Round Lens Hinged Temple Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



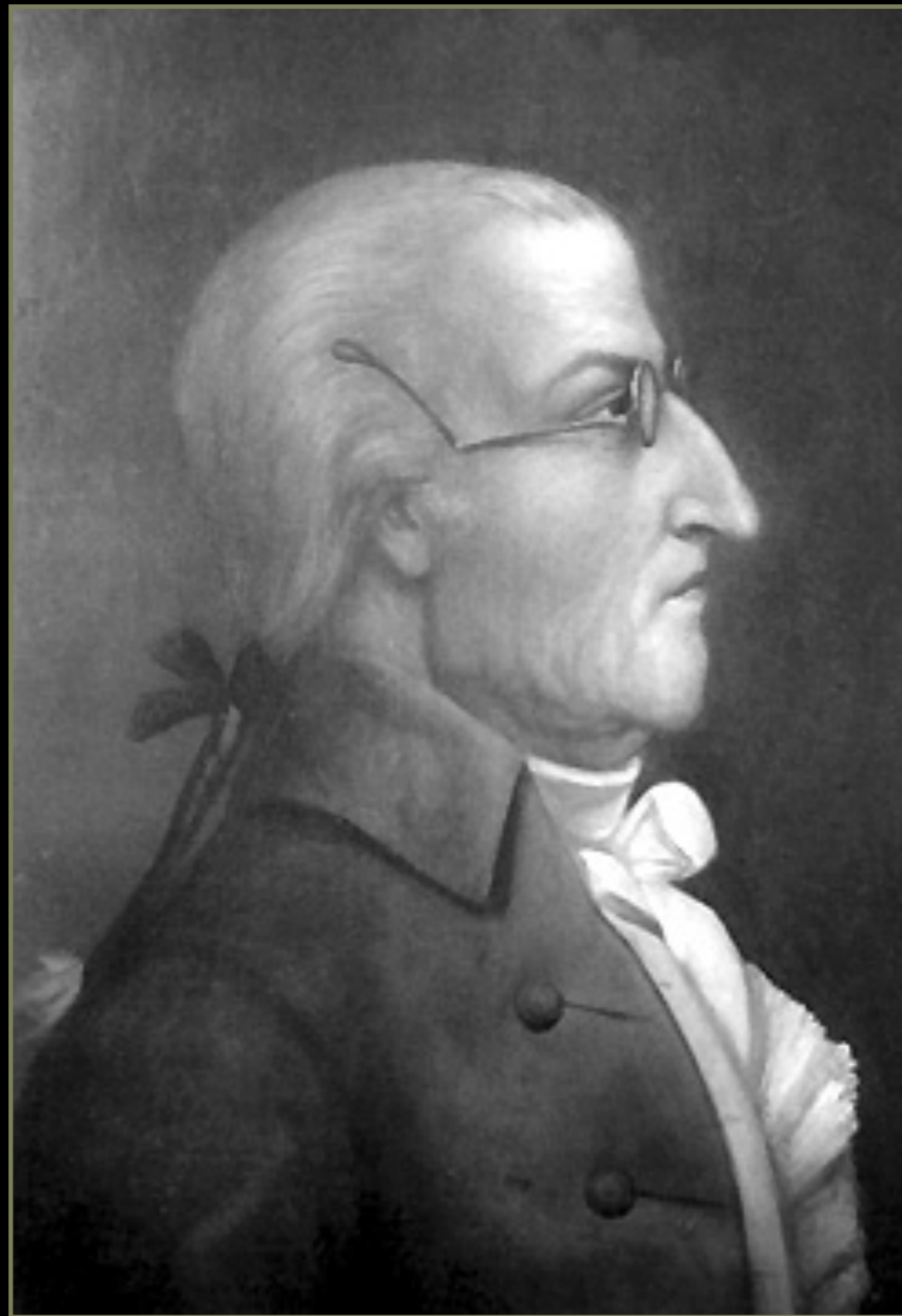
Martha Saunders (Mrs Nicholas Salisbury)  
by Christian Gullager (American artist, 1759-1826) 1789  
(Worcester Art Society - Private Collection Loan)

Round Lens Hinged Temple Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



Old Man Holding a Candlestick  
by H. Humphrey, London, 15 Feb. 1783 by H. Humphrey  
(Lewis Walpole Library)

Round Lens Hinged Temple Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



Benjamin Chew, Philadelphia Lawyer, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court  
Homestead at Cliveden, Germantown, where H.M. 40th Regiment of Foot held the American Advance

Round Lens Hinged Temple Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



Hallmarked Sterling Spectacles  
Signed By John Parrock, Birmingham - 1808  
(Private Collection)

Round Lens Hinged Side Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



Steel Small Round Lens, Wide Nose Bridge, Hinged Side Bars with Teardrop Loops  
c. 1800  
(Museum of Science and Technology, Manchester UK)

But Whose Head  
Could  
These Have Fit ???

Round Lens Hinged Side Bar Spectacles with Teardrop Loops



Steel Small Round Lens, Wide Nose Bridge, Hinged Side Bars with Teardrop Loops  
c. 1800  
(Museum of Science and Technology, Manchester UK)

## The OVAL Lens

Based on extant artifacts and contemporary art work, the Oval Lens appears to make its introduction sometime in the “Late” 1780s. To date, there is no hard evidence to confirm that this style of lens was in use prior to that time.



Oval Lens, Straight Side Bar with Round Loop Steel Spectacles  
Dated “Late 1780s)  
([Medicalantiques.com](http://Medicalantiques.com))

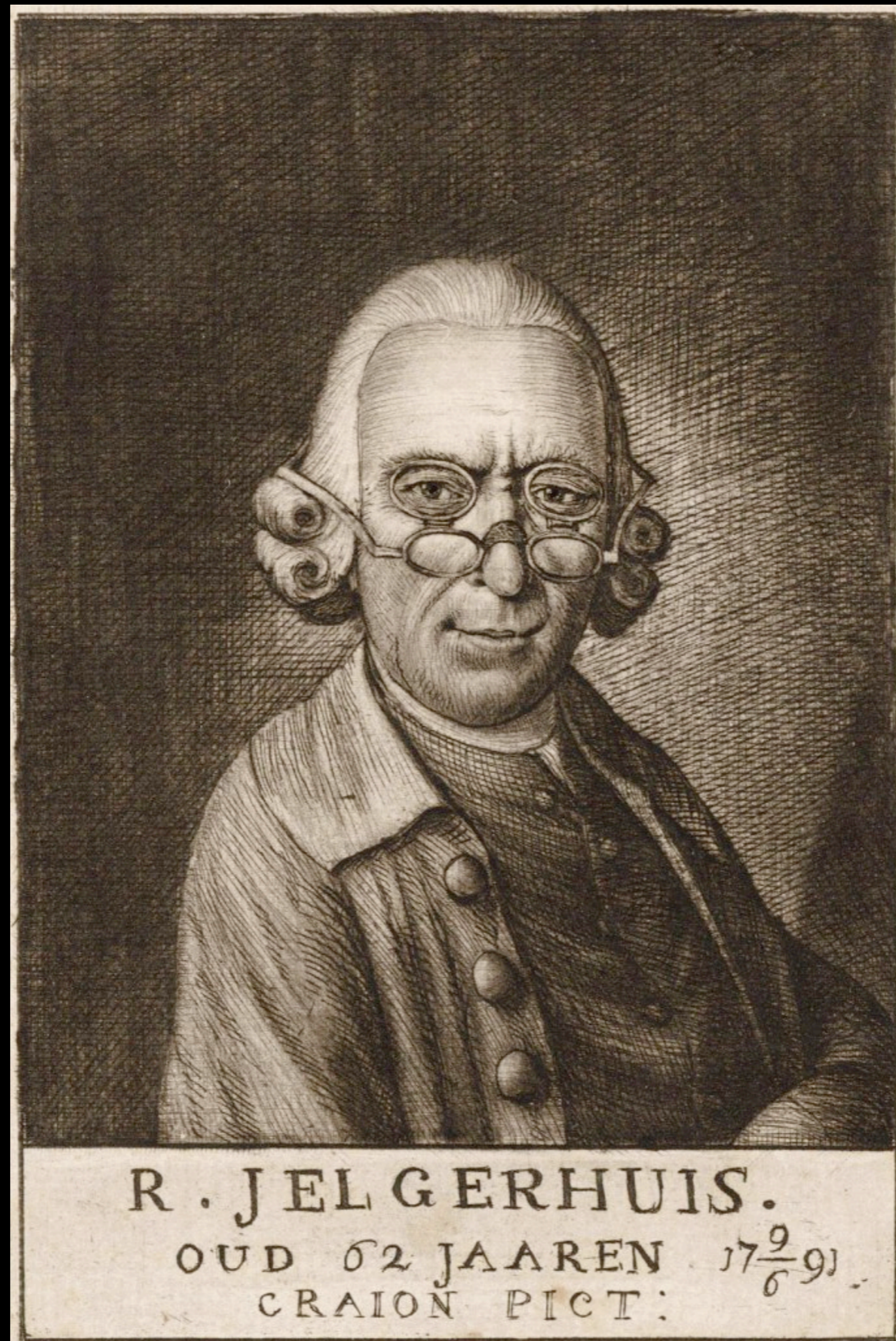
Oval Lens Hinged Side Bar Spectacles



Oval Lens, Hinged Side Bars with Round Loops Steel Spectacles Worn by the Honorable Israel Putnam  
Painting c. 1775, Spectacles dated "Late 1780s"  
(Painting :Ann S.K. Brown Collection, Brown University, Spectacles: New York Historical Society)



Oval Lens, Straight Side Bars with Round Loops Steel Spectacles  
“Late” 18th Century  
(Spectacle Wear-house)



Self Portrait  
by Rienk Jelgerhuis 1791  
(Beeldbank. Amsterdam)

# Horn & Tortoise Shell Spectacles 1784 - 1800



Martha Washington's Tortoise Shell Spectacles  
c. 1790 - 1800  
(Mount Vernon)

# The 19th Century

Introduction of the:  
Octagonal Lens  
Sliding Side Bar  
Turnpin Side Bar  
Bent Nose Bar

Round Lens Spectacles still worn into the 19th Century



Mrs. Boulton by George Engleheart  
c. 1812  
(Victoria & Albert Museum)

## Round Lens Spectacles



Self Portrait - "Entrance to the Jardin Turc"  
by Louis-Léopold Boilly c. 1812  
(The Getty Center, Los Angeles)

Round Lens, Turn Pin Side Bar Spectacles



Round Lens, Turn Pin Side Bar, Silver Spectacles  
by Robert Brettell Bate (Master 1828 - 1829) c. 1820  
(British Optical Association Museum)

Round Lens, Turn Pin Side Bar Spectacles



Round Lens, Turn Pin Side Bars, Steel Spectacles owned by Paul Revere towards the End of His Life  
Not Made by Revere who Made 3 Silver Pairs 1765 - 1788

c. 1815

(Paul Revere Memorial Association)

Oval Lens Bent Nose Bar Hinged Side Bar Spectacles



Rubens Peale  
by Rambrandt Peale 1801  
(National Gallery of Art)

Oval Lens Bent Nose Bar Hinged Side Bar Spectacles



Rubens Peale  
by Rambrandt Peale 1801  
(National Gallery of Art)

Oval Lens Bent Nose Bar Hinged Side Bar Spectacles



Charles Wilson Peale  
Self Portrait 1804  
(Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts)

The Sliding Temple Bar  
is Introduced...

The Early 19th Century

Oval Lens. Bent Nose Bar. Sliding Side Bar. Spectacles



Rubens Peale  
by Rembrandt Peale 1807  
(National Portrait Gallery)

Oval Lens. Sliding Side Bar. Spectacles



Washington Architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe  
by Rembrandt Peale c. 1815  
(National Portrait Gallery)



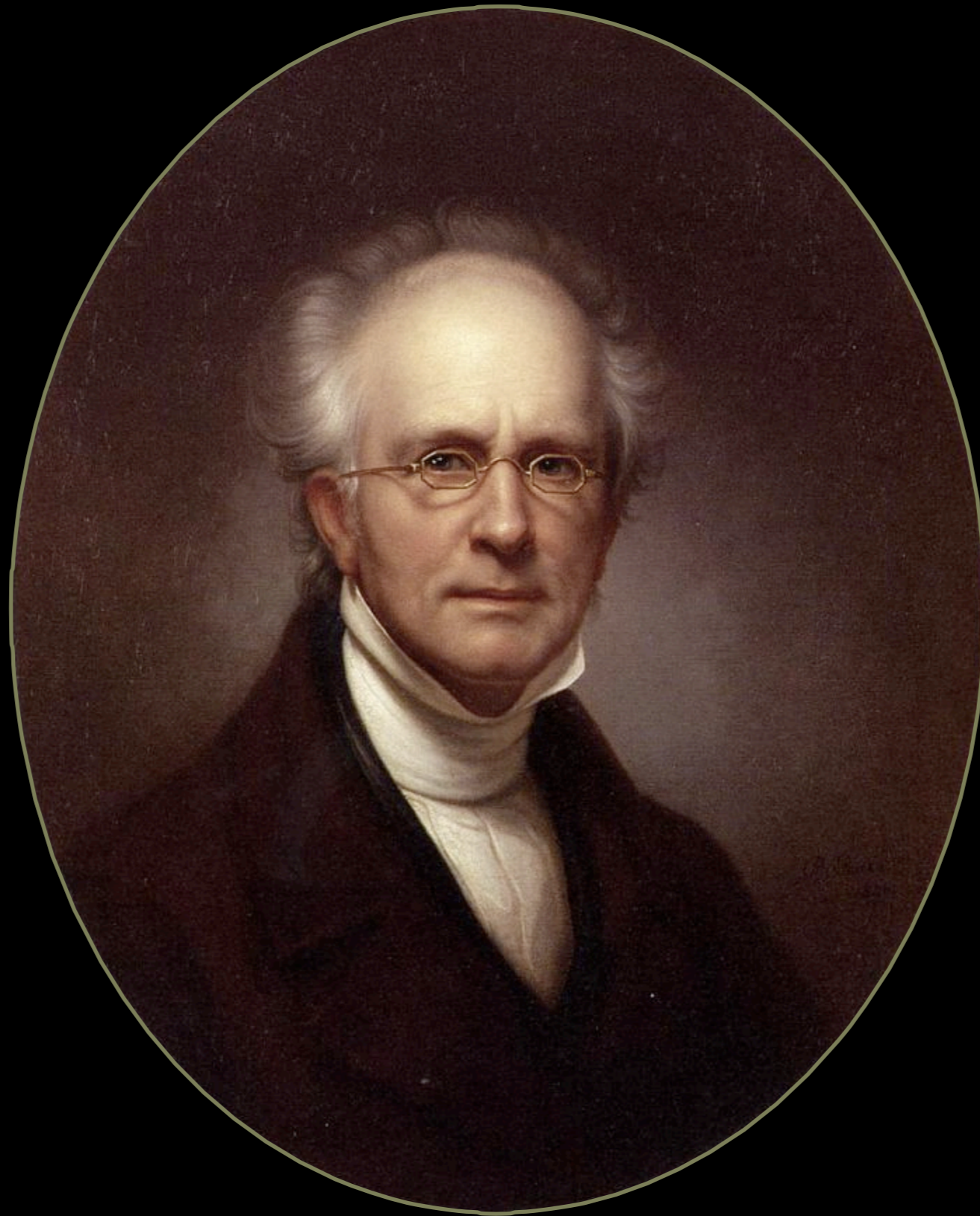
Round Lens Sliding Side Bar Silver Spectacles  
Signed By Eli Corrie - 1811

Oval Lens. Sliding Side Bar. Spectacles



Rembrandt Peale  
Self Portrait 1828  
(Detroit Institute of Arts)

Octagonal Lens, Bent Nose Bar, Sliding Side Bar, Spectacles



Rembrandt Peale  
Self Portrait 1846  
(The Athenaeum)

Octagonal Lens, Bent Nose Bar, Sliding Side Bar, Spectacles

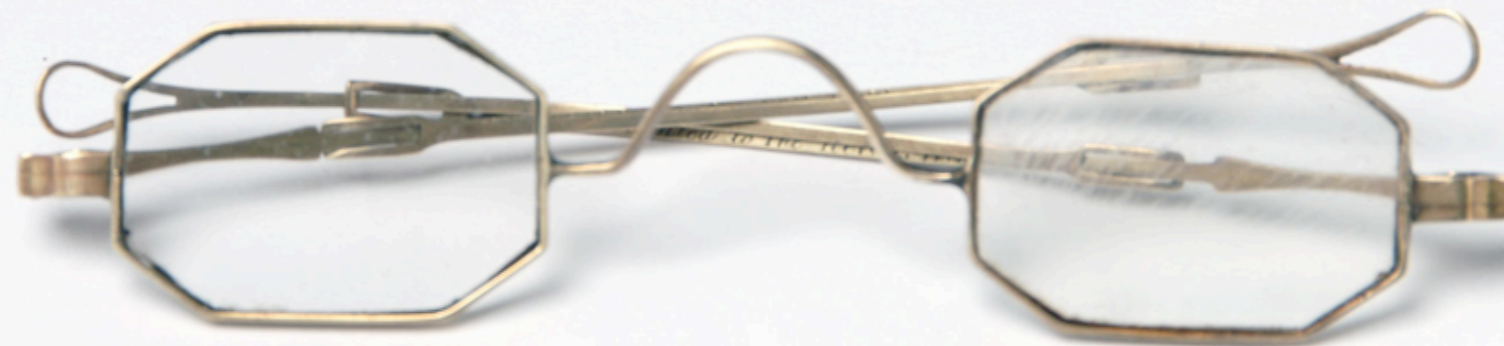


Rembrandt Peale  
Self Portrait 1846  
(The Athenaeum)

Octagonal Lens, Bent Nose Bar, Sliding Side Bar, Spectacles



MUSEUM *of the*  
HISTORY *of*  
SCIENCE



Octagonal Lens Bent Nose Bar Spectacles with Sliding Temple Bars  
"Presented to The Revd. T. Hindley, / by his Children, Decr. 1st 1868"  
Early to Mid 19th Century  
(Museum of History and Science)

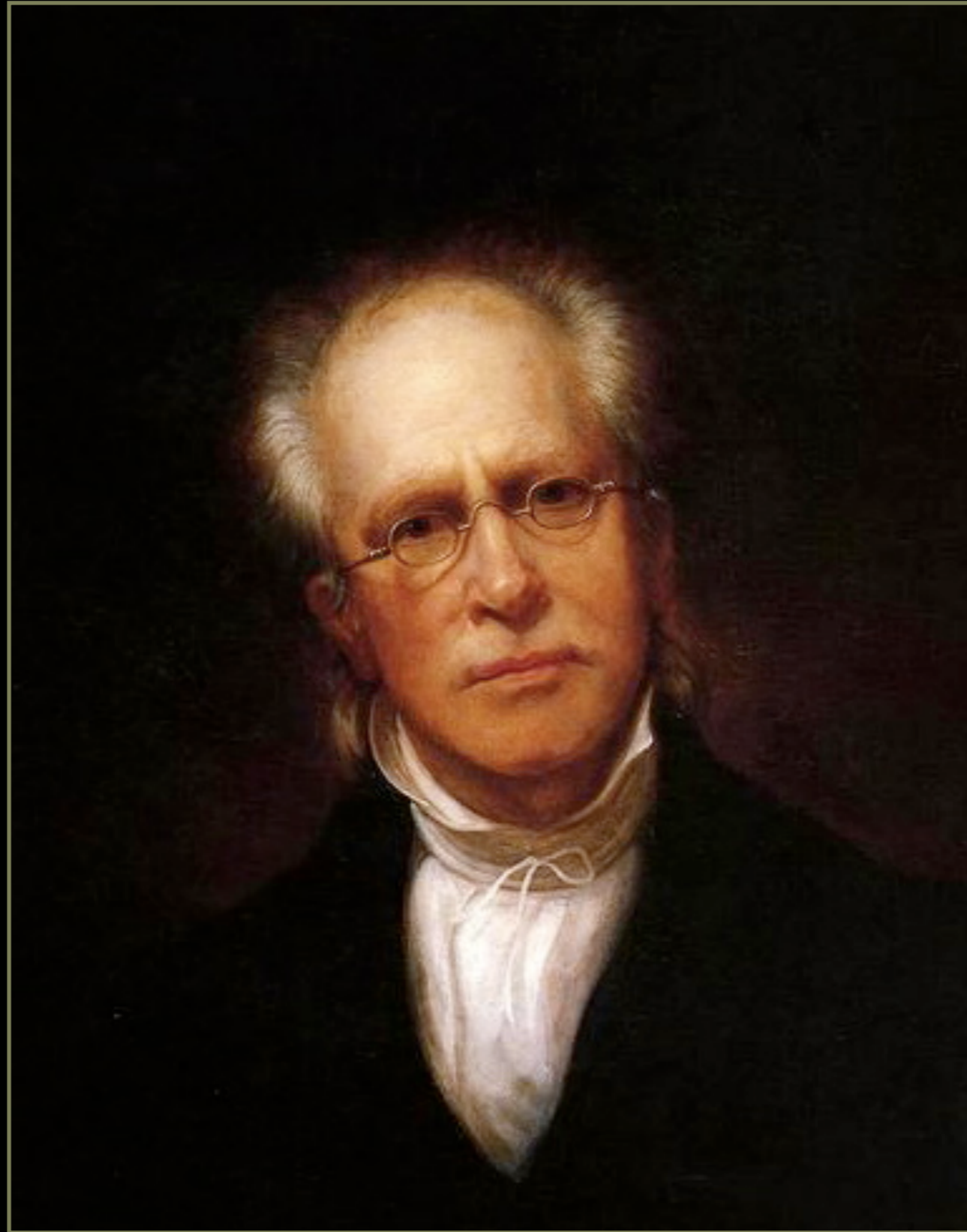


Rounded Rectangular Lens, Bent Nose Bar, Sliding Side Bar Silver Spectacles with Teardrop Loops

c. 1825

(Private Collection)

Oval Lens, Bent Nose Bar, Sliding Side Bar, Spectacles



Rembrandt Peale  
Self Portrait 1856  
(Amherst: Mead Art Museum)

# Conclusions

If Spectacles are to be worn for a 1752 - 1783 Living History impression, it is appropriate to wear:

1. Contact Lenses (Best Choice)
2. Nose Bar Spectacles
3. Round Lens Spectacles with either Straight or Hinged Side Bars and Round Loops

It is the opinion of the Material Culture Resource Center that no current reproduction “18th Century” frame remains perfectly true compared to the construction of original frames. Close comparison between available reproductions and the original artifacts shown in this presentation will clarify this observation for the reader.



Original Frames worn for Exacting Authenticity  
(Best option would be contact lenses but if these cannot be worn, this is the Best alternative option)



**THANK YOU**  
**We'll be Watching You!**

# 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