



Amos Doolittle: Engraver of the New Republic

Donald C. O'brien

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As a copperplate engraver, Amos Doolittle (1754-1832) played an important role during the American colonies' war for independence and the early years of the new nation. He completed his apprenticeship in New Haven, Connecticut, around 1770 and continued to work actively in that city for over sixty years. His first known attempts are the views of the battles of Lexington and Concord--four plates that he engraved, printed and published in 1775. Even today, Doolittle's first attempt, although crude in workmanship, continues to be often reproduced. Doolittle did general engraving and printing throughout his career. Maps for atlases and illustrations for books became his specialty, but he also engraved maps and broadsides that were published separately. Scholars have identified more than 600 Doolittle engravings, both signed and unsigned. During the course of his career, one of Doolittle's major accounts was with Philadelphia publisher Mathew Carey (1760-1839). This book contains excerpts from correspondence between the two, never published before, which reveal much about business practices of the time. This book was written to complement similar works on Doolittle's contemporaries, including Paul Revere. There are chapters on various types of his work, including his tune-books, maps, illustrations, bank notes and more. The book also includes two useful appendices, cataloguing books containing his engravings and references to him and his work. Co-published with the American Historical Print Collectors Society, Amos Doolittle is a valuable contribution to the study of American engravings.

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