

Guide to "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" print by J.G. Charlton of 1810 engraving by William Blake C0421

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circa 1900s



Title Statement

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Subtitle: "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" print by J.G. Charlton of 1810 engraving by William Blake

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0421

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/695

Unit Date

circa 1900s

Language

English .

Abstract

Printed reproduction of "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" by J.G. Charlton of 1810 engraving by William Blake.

source

Morowitz, Harold J.

Creator

Charlton, J.G. (John G. Charlton)

Extent

0.1 Linear Feet 1 print

Physical Location

Map Case 16.2

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Public Domain. There are no known restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Harold Morowitz in 2015.

Processing Information

Processing and finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner from January-February 2024.

Preferred Citation

"Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" print by J.G. Charlton of 1810 engraving by William Blake, C0421, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries

Biographical and Historical Information

Written by Geoffrey Chaucer in Middle English between 1387-1400, The Canterbury Tales is a collection of stories set within a frame narrative centered around a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury, Kent. Chaucer establishes the identities of these 30 pilgrims in "The General Prologue" where they gather at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, across the Thames from London, and agree to engage in a storytelling contest to pass the time during their journey to Canterbury. The use of pilgrims, who by design come together from a variety of backgrounds and social standings, as the storytellers allows for the inclusion of a wide variety of story genres. Chaucer's full plan for the book remains incomplete, with both some pilgrims' stories and the return journey missing from the existing version.

William Blake was an English engraver, artist, and poet, perhaps best known for his collections "Songs of Innocence" (1789) and "Songs of Experience" (1794). Born in London on November 28, 1757, as a child Blake wanted to be an artist, so his father enrolled him in Henry Pars' Drawing School where he studied from 1767-1772. Following his studies, Blake was taken on as an apprentice by engraver James Basire (1730-1802) with whom he studied and lived for seven years, from 1772-1779, before beginning work as an independent engraver. Among his best known and most critically acclaimed engravings are his large-scale design of Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Pilgrims" in 1810, his 22 folio designs for the Book of Job in 1826, and his 7 large unfinished plates for Dante (1826-1827). Blake passed away on August 12, 1827 and is buried in London's Bunhill Fields, a burial ground for "Nonconformists."

John Charlton, known professionally at J.G. Charlton, was a photographer and publisher based in Canterbury, England from circa 1893 through the 1920s, likely serving for some time as the official photographer of Canterbury Cathedral. Charlton initially took over the shop of fellow photographer John Bateman at 54 St. George's Street, before moving to 14 Mercery Lane circa the early 1900s. Charlton's studio specialized in portrait photography, reproduction prints of popular engravings of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales by both William Blake and Thomas Stothard, and a variety of other Canterbury-based souvenirs.

Scope and Content

Printed, possible colotype, reproduction of "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" by J.G. Charlton of 1810 engraving by William Blake. On the back of the print is a stamp attributing printing to "J.G. Charlton, Cathedral Studios, 14 Mercery Lane, Canterbury".

The print depicts Geoffrey Chaucer, seen on the far left riding a dark horse, and the pilgrims as they depart the Tabard Inn in Southwark on their way to Canterbury. The names of the pilgrims are identified directly below the image and read, from left to right, as follows: "Reeve. Chaucer. Clerk of Oxenford. Cook. Miller. Wife of Bath. Merchant. Parson. Man of Law. Plowman. Physician. Franklin. 2 Citizens. Shipman. The Host. Sompnoir. Manciple. Pardoner. Monk. Friar. A Citizen. Lady Abbess. Nun. 3 Priests. Squires. Yeoman. Knight. Squire."

Keywords

Engraving

Reproductions

Art

Chaucer, Geoffrey, -1400. Canterbury tales

Photographic prints

Morowitz, Harold J.

Blake, William, 1757-1827

Chaucer, Geoffrey, -1400.

Bibliography

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"J G Charlton, John Charlton, Canterbury." 2016. Historic Canterbury. 2016. <http://www.machadoink.com/J%20G%20Charlton.htm>.

"The Canterbury Tales | Summary, Characters, & Facts." 2023. Britannica. November 6, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Canterbury-Tales>.

Arrangement

This is a single item collection.