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(Native Americans) Magic Pile Erected by the Assiniboin Indians. Zauber Maal bei den Assiniboin Indianern. Monument Magique des Indiens Assiniboins.

Stock#: 77702
Map Maker: Bodmer
Date: 1839 circa [but circa 1922]
Place: London (Leipzig?)
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 12 x 9 inches
Price: \$ 295.00



Description:

Buffalo Hunt Monument on the Plains after Karl Bodmer

A wonderfully evocative hand-colored engraving after Karl Bodmer, originally issued as Vignette 15 in the atlas to Prince Maximilian of Wied's famous travel account of the Western Plains, *Travels in the Interior of North America* (1839-43).

Maximilian's monumental account first appeared in German (1839-41), followed by a French translation in 1840-43 and an English edition in 1843. A Paris-issued pictorial atlas contained eighty-one aquatint plates (48 "imperial" folios and 33 smaller "vignette" plates often called quarto in size), engraved and etched on metal plates, after paintings by Karl Bodmer, and which accompanied all three editions. The plates are outstanding authentic depictions of the western plains and Native Americans by a highly skilled European artist. Bodmer avoided romanticizing his subjects, and attempted to record the people and places he encountered as true to life as possible.

This landscape print has the three captions and imprint statements in German, French, and English; a reference to Bodmer can be seen in the inscription in the lower left "Dessiné d'après nat. par Ch. Bodmer", and the date "May 1st, 1839" is present.

The following passage, from the English translation of Maximilian's narrative, describes the subject of the present rather mysterious image:



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The neighborhood around Fort Union is ... a wide, extended prairie, intersected in a northerly direction by a chain of rather high, round, clay-plate and sandstone hills. We observed on the highest points, and at certain intervals of this mountain chain, singular stone markers, set up by the Assiniboins, and consisting of blocks of granite, or other large stones, on the top of which is placed a buffalo skull. The purpose of these, we were told, is to attract the herds of buffalo, and thereby ensure a successful hunt.

According to Howes, the vignette plates in the original issue of the pictorial atlas did not have the special blindstamp with Bodmer's name which is requisite on first issues of the larger folio plates. The atlas was reprinted in 1844 by the London engraver Edward Lumley. There was also a later 1922 Leipzig edition with the plates restruck on India paper and mounted on thicker sheets. The present print appears to be one of the reissues.

Detailed Condition:

Hand-colored engraved print. Plate impression approximately 12 1/2 by 9 1/2 inches, on sheet measuring 16 by 12 inches. Some minor negligible surface abrasions to the sheet under the image in the vicinity of the captions (image not affected). Otherwise, clean and very good. Vivid hand coloring, heightened with gum arabic.