



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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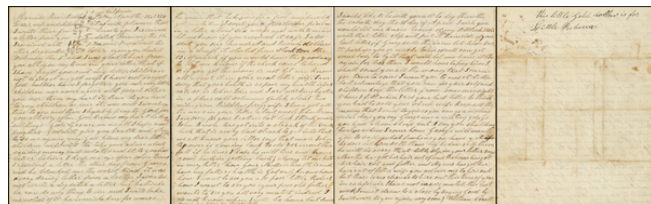
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(California Gold Rush Letter -- Ridley's Ferry, California, April 15, 1854)

Stock#: 28700
Map Maker: Coruth

Date: 1854
Place: Ridley's Ferry, CA
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG
Size: 10 x 8 inches (each sheet)

Price: SOLD



Description:

Fascinating 3 page Gold Rush letter, written by William Coruth from Ridley's Ferry on the Merced River, dated April 15, 1854.

William Coruth arrived in California via the Isthmus of Panama in 1851. A number of his letters have survived. Robert Joseph Chandler, author of *California: An Illustrated History* (2004) writes:

. . . Through the early 1850s, William Coruth wrote is wife and four children in Vermont from the southern mines. The rawness of life and crudeness of furnishings comes through. . .

. . . He and a brother built themselves a house "thirteen feet square inside," and he bragged on January 1855, "Our hus looks as neat as any parlor, tonight." . . . Ten years later, Coruth still faithfull wrote his wife from the land of gold.

The present letter offers interesting insight into how Coruth supported his family from California and life in the mining town:

I also sent you one hundred and twent dollars in a draft it started from Stockton the 13 of march if you would have the goodnes to let me know if the check come to hand or if you got the money ornot let me know all about it in your next letter . . . John and I are working together in a place call Solomans Gulch about two miles from Riddleys Ferry

Coruth had apparently been in the mining business prior to his arrival in California, having incorporated the Groton and Ryegate Mining Company in Vermont with a group of partners.



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A Coruth letter dated July 17, 1853 from Ridley's Ferry was auctioned at Early American Auctions in 2004.

Ridley's Ferry (across the Merced River from Bagby, in Mariposa County) was first named in about 1850. It was the major crossing point between north and south Mariposa County. It seems that the Mariposa Trail crosses going south at Ridley's as Lafayette Bunnell describes his view of El Capitan and Half Dome in Yosemite Valley from a point directly above Ridley's near the last site of the Pine Tree Mine. From the summer of 1850-1852, Thomas E. Ridley owned and operated a ferry along the Merced River just below the future site of Benton Mills. In about 1860, the area became known as Benton's Mill, named by Fremont after his father-in-law, United States Senator Thomas H. Benton, whom Fremont greatly admired.

Solomon's Gulch was located on the north side of the Merced River east of Bagby. This gulch was the scene of placer mining activity from 1849 through the early 1850s, and hard rock mining beginning in the 1870s. The mining district was known as the Cat Town Mining District. Gudde says that this was the first location of George Coulter's store, before Coulter moved to the future site of Coulterville.

Detailed Condition:

4 page letter on two letter sheets