



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

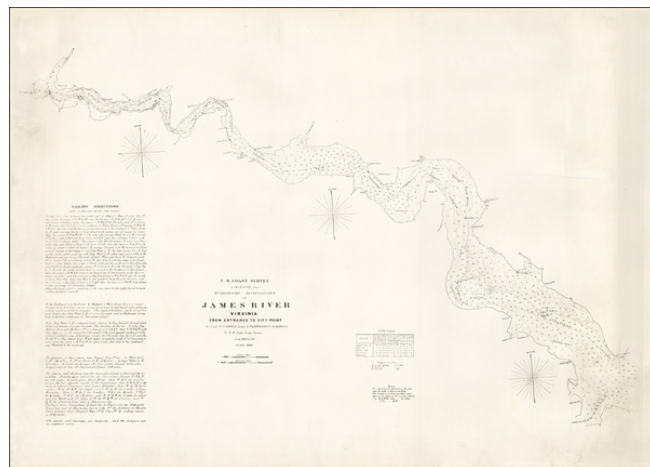
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Hydrographic Reconnaissance of James River Virginia From Entrance to City Point By Comr. W.T. Muse & Lieuts. R. Wainwright & J.N. Maffitt U.S. N. Assistants Coast Survey from 1854 to '59 . . .

Stock#: 36383mb
Map Maker: United States Coast Survey
Date: 1861 circa
Place: Washinton
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 43 x 29.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Proof or first state of this very rare Coast Survey chart of the lower James River probably hurried into print in preparation for McLellan's disastrous Peninsula Campaign of 1862.

This chart depicts James River from its mouth Hampton Roads and Newport News 71 miles upstream to City Point (now Hopewell). Detailed soundings are indicated throughout, as are some shoals and the all-important shipping channel, which in places becomes quite narrow. Towns, plantations, and other landmarks are identified along both shores, but there is little other terrestrial detail. A chart of sailing directions at lower right provides detailed instructions for navigating this channel. The chart is based on surveys conducted by U.S. Navy officers detailed to the Coast Survey during the 1850s when that agency had undertaken a massive effort to survey the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

It is noteworthy that the chart does not include a neat line and is on a larger sheet than the few surviving examples of the later state of the chart. The copy of the later state of the chart shown online in the Library of Congress collection is heavily annotated and colored, strongly suggesting that this chart was only published for military use and was never released commercially or in a government report.

Most charts issued by the Coast Survey were finely and precisely engraved, whereas this chart of the James River has a crude and unfinished appearance. As the US Coast Survey had become the mapmakers of choice for the Union Army, it is likely that the map was hurriedly compiled and printed in preparation for McLellan's Peninsula Campaign of 1862. The campaign began in March of 1862 with the amphibious landing of the Army of the Potomac at Fort Monroe and subsequent advance on the Confederate capital at



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Richmond. After initial success, the campaign stalled during the "Seven Days" battles of late June and July, due in no small part to McLellan's habitual timidity and paranoia. Richmond was not threatened again until late 1864.

This appears to be the earliest state of the chart and was, until recently, unrecorded. Stephenson #559.4 describes a later variant, with an added neatline and the imprint "Autographic transfer, July 1862." That variant is also listed in OCLC #52285714, which locates examples at the Connecticut State Library, Library of Congress, Penn State and University of Virginia only (with another example held by the University of Virginia.) Neither state is described in Phillips, Rumsey or Guthorn's United States Coastal Charts, and Antique Map Price Record lists no examples of either state offered for sale in the past 30 years.

OCLC 876369099 lists an impression of this state that we sold to Library of Virginia.

Detailed Condition:

Sea chart, rebaked with modern linen to support old tears and fold cracks, with areas of restoration, most notably at the lower left corner.