



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

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**To The President, The Senators and Representatives of the United States, This Map of
The United States of America Is most Respectfully Dedicated by Shelton & Kensett.
1816.**

Stock#: 44420
Map Maker: Kensett & Shelton
Date: 1816
Place: Cheshire, CT
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 53.5 x 47 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Best Large Format Map of the United States of Its Generation

Finely preserved of first edition of Shelton & Kensett's rare map of the United States.

Issued in the same year as the first edition of John Melish's map of the United States, Shelton & Kensett's map is of tremendous import, presented on perhaps the largest scale of any map of the United States yet published in America.

Shelton & Kensett's map of the United States, with its spectacular cartouche engraved by Amos Doolittle, is among the rarest and most sought after maps of the United States published in the early part of the 19th Century. Rumsey states: "This highly detailed and accurate map must be one of the best of its period." In fact, it is the finest and most detailed map of United States east of the Mississippi River published to date.

To create the map, Shelton & Kensett used Aaron Arrowsmith's landmark *Map of the United States* as their base map, through the version published by P. F. Tardieu in Paris, 1812 (a note below the title states that the view of Niagara Falls is "engraved from Tardieu's map published in Paris"). However, a comparison of Shelton and Kensett's 1816 map to the various states of the Arrowsmith, Tardieu, and the



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1812 state of Abraham Bradley's postal map, clearly shows that the Bradley map was also utilized for additional information. While it is clear that Shelton and Kensett incorporated information derived from Arrowsmith, Tardieu and Bradley, the Shelton & Kensett map is an important milestone, significantly updated to include the new developments during this period of intense activity.

The map's large size (significantly larger, for example, than John Melish's map of the same year and on a scale which was approximately 4.5 times larger--1:838,000 for the Shelton & Kensett, versus 1:3,900,000 for the Melish), allows for many of the states, including Kentucky and Tennessee, and those in the Old Northwest, to appear on the same or a larger scale than that on the individual maps of these states that had previously appeared in atlases and books. In addition, a general map such as this allows for a comparative study of the entire "Back Country" on one format, at the same point in time. Without question, this map includes the finest and most detailed portrait of the United States between the Blue Ridge and the Mississippi River from this crucial period in history.

The excellence of the sources for Shelton & Kensett's western information can be traced in one instance, in their depiction of Illinois and Indiana. While the sources are not identified on the *Map of the United States*, the sources are noted on Shelton & Kensett's separately-issued map of the southern part of these regions published in the following year (1817). The information is essentially identical on both maps, and is stated to be based on surveys communicated by Christopher Harrison, Lt. Governor of Indiana, and by General Mansfield.

Cartographically, this map is far superior to the Arrowsmith, Tardieu and Bradley maps. In the west it incorporates both of Pike's maps of the Upper Mississippi and the western tributaries of the Mississippi and the Missouri. East of the Mississippi, it uses much from the Bradley "Postal" map of the United States of 1804-1812, including public survey lines, county formations, township boundaries, roads, etc. There are two very interesting inset maps and a commentary on ancient fortifications found along the Ohio River.

Of particular interest are the large insets at upper left, which include the earliest printed depiction of General Parson's plan of the Ancient Works at Marietta.

1.) A Plan and Description of an Ancient Work found in Illinois, by Enos Cutler Deputy Surveyor.

2.) A Plan of the Ancient Works at Marietta taken by the Hon Gen Parsons and communicated to the Rev. Doctor Stiles Presiding President of Yale College.



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Dating from between 100 BC and 500 AD, the "Ancient Works" at Marietta rank as one of the most important Native American sites in North America. They were investigated in 1786 by Capt. Jonathan Heart. He drew the first plan of the site which was published in the Columbia Magazine in May 1789 (reproduced in Thomas Smith, *The Mapping of Ohio*, plate 11). Between 1788 and 1796 the Ohio Company made provisions for the mounds to be surveyed and protected and gave them their present Latin names. The first result of this project was Major General Samuel Holden Parsons plan that was made between May 1788 (the date of his arrival in Marietta), and November 1789 (when he died). Parsons was one of the Directors of the Ohio Company. His plan was communicated to Ezra Stiles, the President of Yale University, who later gave it to Shelton and Kensett, who worked with Amos Doolittle and were leading printers of New Haven. Parsons plan is superior to Heart's, and as far as is known, only appeared in print on Shelton and Kensett's map. A manuscript plan of the "Ancient Works" signed by Winthrop Sargent, dated 1787, is presently in the hands of a Parisian dealer.

Issued in the same year as John Melish's land mark coast to coast *Map of the United States with the Contiguous British & Spanish Possessions*," Shelton & Kensett's map is also of great merit, treating the region covered in significantly larger scale and therefore often greater detail than Melish's map. There is only one state recorded, although Harry Newman of the Old Print Shop reports having seen fragments of an example that suggest that an 1817 edition was issued, showing Alabama Territory.

The firm of Shelton & Kensett was founded circa 1812 in Cheshire, Connecticut. They issued a number of maps and prints, many of which are quite scarce. Thomas Kensett (1786-1829) was born in England and emigrated to America. He was in New Haven in 1806. Amos Doolittle (1754-1832) was born in Cheshire, Conn. He was trained as a jeweler and silversmith. As an engraver, he was self-taught. He produced a number of engravings by himself, with his son and with the firm of Shelton & Kensett.

A well preserved example of this great American rarity.

Detailed Condition:

Old color. Dissected and laid on linen, recently renewed. Some minor loss at top left and right corner. Color retouched.