



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

**Map of Washington City District of Columbia Seat of the Federal Government.
Respectfully dedicated to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United
States of North America. Surveyed and published by A. Boschke C.E. 1857**

Stock#: 46291
Map Maker: Boschke

Date: 1857
Place: Washington
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 58 x 56.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Albert Boschke's Supressed Wall Map of Washington City, District of Columbia.

One of the most important maps of the Washington, D.C., prior to the Civil War and by far the largest and most detailed map published in the first 7 decades after the first creation of the city, on paper, by Pierre L'Enfant in 1791.

The map is surrounded by eighteen vignette illustrations of important buildings and landmarks including the National Observatory, U.S. Treasury, White House, Capitol and a portrait of George Washington.

Albert Boschke was a German (or Polish) born civil engineer who worked for U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in Washington, DC. Credit to him began to appear on official charts in the early to mid-1850's.

On his own, he conceived the idea of making a highly accurate map of Washington, D.C. and a separate map of the District of Columbia, with the hope of selling it to the Government, as well as privately. At his own expense, he organized and employed a group of surveyors to do the fieldwork. This project eventually



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

**Map of Washington City District of Columbia Seat of the Federal Government.
Respectfully dedicated to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United
States of North America. Surveyed and published by A. Boschke C.E. 1857**

cost him his job at the Coast Survey.

After 5 years, the project yielded two maps, this large four sheet map of Washington City, first published in 1857, and a 4-sheet map of the whole District of Columbia in 1861.

Boschke's map is amazingly detailed. Drawn on a scale of 500 feet to one inch, it was by far the most accurate map of Washington, D.C. produced to that date. It documented the location of all buildings, both private & public that had been built in the city. Each structure was drawn from actual tape-line measurements that had been made in the field. The roads were measured by two parties, one with transit and chain, the other with a level.

The end result was a map of the Nation's Capital that was by far the most accurate of the area produced.

The Seizure of Boschke's Maps

Shortly after the publication of Boschke's two maps, as the Civil War was breaking out, the United States Government, realizing the size and importance of the maps and fearing their use by the Confederate States, "seized the map and plates" (Baker). This was done because the Union did not have good maps of the region and, so that the maps would not be obtained and used by Confederate forces.

Baker notes:

At the outbreak of the war the United States had no topographic map of the District, the only topographic map existing being the manuscript produced by Boschke. He sold his interest in it to Messrs. Blagden. Sweeney and McClelland. Mr. McClelland is an engraver, now seventy four years old, living in Le Droit Park. He engraved the Boschke map, which was executed on two plates. With his partners, he agreed to sell the manuscript and plates to the Government for \$20,000. Secretary of War Stanton, not apparently understanding the labor and expense of a topographic map, thought that \$500 was a large sum. There was, therefore, a disagreement as to price. After some negotiations, Mr. McClelland and his partners offered all the material, copper-plates and manuscript, to the Government for \$4,000, on condition that the plates, with the copyright, should be returned to them at the close of the war. This offer also was refused. There then appeared at Mr. McClelland's house in Le Droit Park a lieutenant, with a squad of soldiers and an order from the Secretary of War to seize all the material relating to this map. Mr. McClelland accordingly loaded all the material into his own wagon and, escorted by a file of soldiers on either side, drove to the War Department and left the material. While the war



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

**Map of Washington City District of Columbia Seat of the Federal Government.
Respectfully dedicated to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United
States of North America. Surveyed and published by A. Boschke C.E. 1857**

was still in progress, after further conference, Secretary Stanton agreed to refer the question of payment for this property to the Committee on War Claims. That committee recommended a payment of \$8,500, and the owners, regarding this amount in cash as worth more than future uncertainties, decided to accept it. Thus all the material became Government property at a cost of \$8,500, and the plates, two in number, are now in possession of the War Department.

Many years later, living in California and in need of money, Boschke asked Congress to pay \$25,000 for his property. Although Congress granted his petition, the money did not appear. Boschke sued the government but to no avail.

The legacy of Boschke's map and seizure has rendered the maps very scarce on the market. Until 2 examples came to light in 2015 and 2016, there had not been any recorded examples of the map at auction or in dealer catalogs going back more than 40 years.

OCLC locates examples in the Library of Congress, Boston Public Library and University of Chicago. There may also be an example at the District of Columbia Public Library.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected and laid on linen, recently refreshed. Edges in green silk, in the style of the period.