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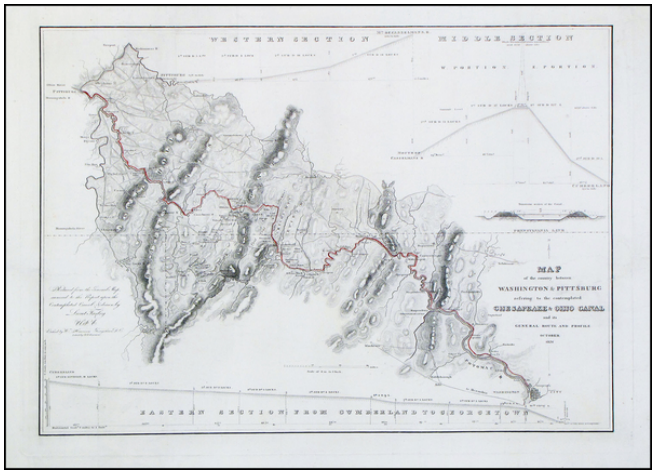
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Map of the Country between Washington & Pittsburg refering to the contemplated Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and its General Route and Profile. October 1826

Stock#: 23931
Map Maker: United States War Dept.

Date: 1826
Place: Georgetown, DC
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 25 x 17 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

Separately issued presentation copy of the map showing the route of the proposed Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, with inscription on verso from General Simon Bernard to Mrs. Eliza Custis.

After the Revolutionary War, George Washington was the chief advocate of using waterways to connect the Eastern Seaboard to the Great Lakes and Ohio River. Washington founded the Potowmack Company in 1785, in order to make navigability improvements to the Potomac River. The Patowmack Company built a number of skirting canals around the major falls including the Patowmack Canal in Virginia. When completed, it allowed boats and rafts to float downstream towards Georgetown. Going upstream was a bit harder. Slim boats could be slowly poled upriver. The completion of the Erie Canal worried southern traders that their business might be threatened by the Northern canal.

The earliest plans for a canal linking the Ohio and Chesapeake were drawn up as early as 1820. In 1824, the holdings of the Patowmack Company were ceded to the Chesapeake & Ohio Company. Benjamin Wright, who had served as Chief Engineer of the Erie Canal, was named Chief Engineer of this new effort, and construction began with a groundbreaking ceremony on July 4, 1828, presided over by President John Quincy Adams. The available land along the Potomac River from Point of Rocks to Harpers Ferry caused a legal battle between the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1828 . Following a Maryland state court battle involving Daniel Webster and Roger B. Taney, the companies later compromised to allow the sharing of the right of way.

The planned canal route to the Ohio River followed the North Branch Potomac River west from Cumberland to the Savage River. Via the Savage, the canal route crossed the Eastern Continental Divide

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at the gap between the Savage and Backbone Mountains near where present day O'Brien Road intersects Maryland Route 495, then via the valley of present day Deep Creek Lake, along the Youghiogheny River and ultimately to Pittsburg.

While the Canal's planning and backers were formidable, its completion was never achieved. Despite the grandiose intentions and backing of important southern interests (including Washington's heirs), the progress of the Canal lagged the construction of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. The last 180 miles of the Canal as never constructed and it quickly slipped into a secondary role in the transport of goods and was ultimately abandoned by the early 20th Century.

The provenance of this example of the map is of tremendous interest, bearing the inscription of General Bernard (one of the important early figures in the construction of the Canal), presenting the map to Eliza Parke Custis, the eldest granddaughter of George and Martha Washington and daughter of Martha Dandridge Custis and Colonel George Washington, whose correspondence with Lafayette resides in the Maryland HIstorical Society.

Baron Simon Bernard (1779 - 1839) was a French general of engineers. Bernard entered the French army in 1799. He rose rapidly, becoming a captain in 1800 and a major in 1809. After being involved in construction of the works to the Port of Antwerp, Bernard served (1809-1812) as aide-de-camp to Napoleon. Promoted to colonel in 1813, he was wounded in the retreat after the battle of Leipzig and distinguished himself the same year (1813) in the defense of Torgau against the allies.

After Napoleon's first abdication, Bernard rallied to the Bourbons and was promoted to general de brigade by Louis XVIII of France and made a knight of Saint Louis. After Napoléon's return from Elba, Bernard re-aligned with Napoleon and took part in the battle of Waterloo.

After Napoleon's second abdication, Bernard was banished from France and after refusing an offer for employment from Czar Alexander I of Russia, Bernard emigrated to the United States. Bernard was quicklymade a brigadier-general of engineers and was responsible for a number of extensive military works for the government, including the fortifications at Fort Monroe (Virginia), Fort Morgan (Alabama), and around New York. Bernard also did a large amount of the civil engineering connected with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Delaware Breakwater.

Bernard returned to France after the July Revolution of 1830 and he was made a lieutenant-général by Louis Philippe I of France. He was named to the general committee on fortifications and he draftied the plans to improve the fortifications of Paris. He was made a peer of France in 1834. He served twice as minister of war.

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Detailed Condition:
Minor tears repaired on verso, not affecting printed image. Includes inscription from General Bernard to Eliza Custis, which is now faint, but we have a photograph of the inscription and the catalog description which describes the provenance.