



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

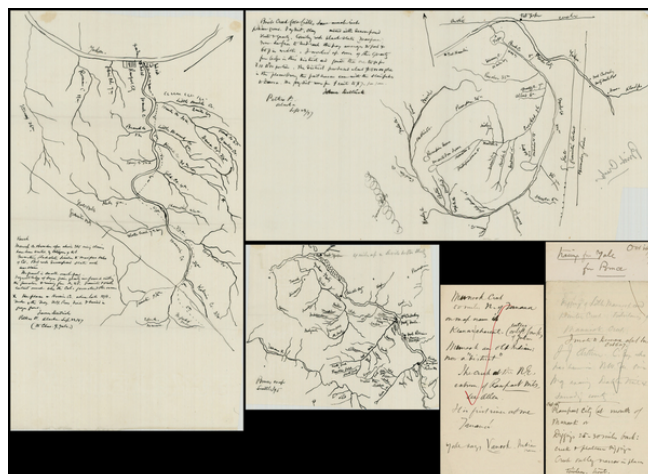
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[3 Manuscript Maps of the Yukon Gold Mining Regions w/Notes]

Stock#: 24751
Map Maker: Deitrick
Date: 1897
Place: Petkas Point, Alaska
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG
Size: Various
Price: SOLD



Description:

Interesting early group of manuscript maps, depicting regions along a northern stretch of the Yukon River during the early part of the Klondike Gold Rush, attributed by the owner to George Davidson, but perhaps more likely by James Deitrick an American businessman and mining speculator.

The maps would seem to collectively reflect a set of skilled freehand drawings or tracings covering the major gold strikes along the Yukon River between 1895 and 1896, including the Manook Creek, Birch Creek and Klondike Strikes. Given the dating on the maps (September 1897), it would seem that the maker of the maps probably spent at least the spring and summer of 1897 in the region. As word of the Klondike Strike did not reach the outside world until July 1897, it would seem logical that the maps were likely drawn from observations made by someone who had been in the region in 1896 and 1897, rather than a more recent arrival.

The group of maps and 2 accompanying manuscript notes were contained in an envelope marked "Tracings For Yale . . .", which we believe to be Charles G. Yale. Several of the maps are signed "James Deitrick," most likely referring to the American Businessman James Deitrick whose papers are held by Stanford University. When we acquired the collection, the seller believed that the work was attributable to George Davidson, the noted geologist and collaborator with Charles G. Yale. George Davidson had been active surveying the region in the 1860s. However, it seems unlikely that Davidson, who would have been in his early 70s at the time these maps and notes were produced, could have been in the field at that time. Davidson did produce a number of Yukon and Klondike related materials between 1897 and 1898, so he may have been an intermediate recipient or final owner of the manuscript maps. It is also possible that the Davidson referenced by the prior owner was J.M. Davidson, who was working for the US Geological



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Survey in the region during this approximate time and produced a remarkable map of the lower Yukon River in 1900, however this is speculation.

The maps reflect a skilled freehand survey of the major gold districts along the Yukon during the 1896-1898 period, including an early report on the Klondike region (in Canada) and the American rivers feeding into the Yukon, in the area of Rampart City and to the southwest, as the Yukon dips south and heads toward Canada. The maps seem to have been prepared for Charles G. Yale, a leading Mineralogist of the time. Yale published a paper entitled *The Yukon Mining Region* on March 10, 1898, which appeared in the *Min Ind & Rev*, which was described by *The Engineering Index, Volume 3* (1896-1900) as describing "the conditions at present existing, the high price of living and transportation, the severity of the climate, and the expectations." The manuscript notes which accompany the maps would seem to reflect this exact type of information.

The first map depicts a section of the Yukon River centered on Rampart City, Alaska and the neighboring Indian Village, along with the tributary creeks to the south, including Manook (Miwook) Creek, Dawson Creek, Little Miller Creek, Branch Creek, Spring Creek, etc. The manuscript annotations indicate 365 mining claims in the region, with observations concerning the mineral deposits, gravel, quartz, slate and geological formations, etc. The report is signed "James Deitrick Petkas Pt. Alaska September 23 / 97 (to Chas G. Yale)." Petkas Point, the former name of Pitkas Point, is located near the junction of the Yukon and Andreafsky Rivers, 5 miles northwest of St. Mary's on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, about 100 miles from the Yukon's terminus in the Pacific Ocean. Named for the Russian half-breed Peter Pitka, who in 1895 found gold on Birch Creek, Petkas Point was a village of about 65 people at the time. The village was first reported by the US Geological Survey in 1898, meaning that this map pre-dates the official location of the village by the USGS.

The second map depicts a section of the Yukon River from Fort Hamlin (later Fort Hills) to Fort Yukon and Circle City in the north, extending down the Yukon River to Fort Cudahy (later Fort Constantine) and the Forty Mile region, including Dawson and Klondyke. The annotations for this map focus on the Birch Creek Gold fields and their composition and geology. The annotation also discusses the effects and economics of the gold rush on the region. The dateline is Petkas Point, September 1897 and is also signed James Deitrick.

The third map depicts the region south of Fort Yukon at Birch Creek and Circle City and extending south to Fort Reliance, Dawson, "Clondyke," etc. with emphasis on the tributary creeks and rivers to the south of the Yukon River, again with distances noted. The Tanana River appears at the lower left corner of the map. One of the annotations appears to provide a date of September '95.

Several of the maps identify "James Deitrick" at the end of the annotations. We initially thought that this



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was a reference to a steamboat by the name of the *James Deitrick*, which was known to have been working the Yukon River during this time period, however, the records for the *James Deitrick* reflect that the ship was built at the Crescent Shipyard in New Jersey in 1898 and was later recorded to have been on the Yukon River in 1898, one year after the subject maps and annotations. However, we now believe that the James Deitrick referenced on the map was an American Businessman, born in 1864, who would go on to have significant business interests in Central America and China. Dietrick has been described as:

A speculator of the highest order, [who] sought to secure support for his activities in Nicaragua (circa 1903) where he had won a controversial stake to mining claims in the northern part of the country, including nearly the entire Mosquito Coast; in 1904, he added a gold mine to his enterprises.

The summary of Deitrick's papers at Stanford University refers to him as:

a capitalist, an engineer, location, construction and contractor of railways in America, China and Siberia.... [who was involved in] construction of railroads, development of mining and agricultural lands and resources, sale of farm equipment, and war material.

Dietrick would later become the President of the Central Railway and Navigation Company, United States and Nicaragua Company (a large mining concern), and Compania de la Luz-y-Los Angeles Mines between 1912 and 1915, and also worked as a consulting engineer on mining projects. The Stanford Papers cover the period from 1900 to 1918 and primarily 1914 to 1917.

The chonology of his life with his papers at Stanford suggest that he was a agent for the Brice Syndicate in 1894 and was in Mongolia from 1898 to 1904, but this information is almost certainly in error. According to a separate archive of Deitrick letters sold at Cowans in 2008, written by Deitrick to his future wife, singer Beatrix Sells, whom Deitrick married in 1903, shortly after her graduation from Mills College in Alameda, California in 1901, it would seem almost certain that Deitrick was at least a frequent visitor to California during this time period. The Cowan/Sells Archive included significant corresponsse from 1902 to 1904, during which time Deitrcck was active in Nicaragua.

In addition, the Congressional Record Serials of 1903-1904 (House Record 652) reflect a payment of \$1,632.32 to James Deitrick for payment of rent on a land office at Peavy, Alaska and for supplies furnished to R.C. Nichols for use of the land office and for freight and drayage paid on land office furniture and supplies from Saint Michael (a harbor near the Yukon River in Alaska) to Peavy, Alaska. After the discovery of gold in the Klondike region, mining enterprises in Alaska persuaded the US Government to create additional land districts in the region. On June 14, 1898, Alaska was divided into two land districts, the Sitka District, the Circle District. Later, by executive order of February 14, 1899, the Peavy District was carved out of northern portions of the Yukon and Circle districts, with the land office at Peavy; but



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this district was abolished by executive order of February 24, 1900. The Yukon and Circle Districts were discontinued in 1902.

Based upon the foregoing, it seems fairly certain that James Deitrick was pursuing business interests in Alaska during the Klondike Gold Rush in 1897 and 1898.

As early as 1849, gold was discovered in Alaska. In 1863, gold was discovered near Birch Creek, near present day Circle, Alaska. By the 1870s, prospectors were traveling the Yukon and its tributaries looking for gold. In 1886, a decade before the Klondike Gold Rush, gold was found on the South Fork of the Fortymile River. This led to the Fortymile Gold Rush and the establishment of the towns of Chicken, Jack Wade, Franklin and others. The discovery of gold on Birch Creek in 1892 led to the Circle Gold Rush. As a result, when gold was discovered on Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River near Dawson in the Yukon Territory in 1896, leading to the Klondike Gold Rush (1897-1898), the upper Yukon River area already had thousands of miners and prospectors.

The reference to Pitkas Point is of interest. A former prospector, Jack McQuesten, was working as a trader for the Alaska Commercial Company in 1895. He grubstaked Peter Pavlov, better known as Pitka, and his brother-in-law, Serge Cherosky. They found gold in the gravel of Birch Creek. Almost overnight, Fortymile became a ghost town as prospectors rushed to Birch Creek. The town of Circle City was founded by the prospectors and camp followers. That winter 700 persons lived there. It is possible that the stopover in Pitkas Point was intended to allow the map maker to obtain information directly from Peter Pitka.

The next year, 1896, Tagish Charlie, Skookum Jim, and George Carmack made their strike which opened the Klondike. In the spring, the three headed for the Tron-duick River, now called the Klondike River, in Canada. There, Bob Henderson, a Canadian prospector, had reportedly taken more than \$700 in gold from a tributary. The discovery of gold on Bonanza Creek by the three men on August 17, 1896, brought Alaska and western Canada to the world's attention. When Joe Ladue, a trader along the Yukon River, learned of the strike he rafted supplies to where the Yukon and Klondike rivers meet. He staked a townsite named Dawson, in honor of George Dawson, head of the Canadian Geological and Natural History Survey. The names Dawson and Klondike (and Klondike) appear on these maps, reflecting a very early appearance of both names.

Word reached San Francisco and Seattle in the summer of 1897 of the gold strike on the Klondike River. The great gold rush of 1898 began. Ships raced up the Inside Passage carrying stampedees, horses, and mining equipment. Many Americans were among the thousands of fortune-hunters heading north. Some took the lengthy all-water route, traveling by ocean steamer to St. Michael on Alaska's western coast, then on riverboats up the Yukon River to the gold fields. The journey was possible only during the brief summer months when the waters were free of ice.



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Detailed Condition:

The maps are on tracing paper. The notes are on the back of scraps cut from a promotional broadside.