



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

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### Virginia City, N. T.

**Stock#:** 25740  
**Map Maker:** Brown & Co.  
**Date:** 1864  
**Place:** Virginia City, N.T.  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 41 x 30 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



#### Description:

Fine example of Grafton Tyler Brown's rare birds-eye view of Virginia City, Nevada Territory, published by C. C. Kuchel in San Francisco, offered here in a variant edition that was apparently unknown to Reps.

G.T. Brown's view of the Virginia City is one of the most sought after of all western birds-eye views. Published 3 years after Nevada became a territory and in the same year as Nevada obtained its statehood, the view depicts one of the most famous mining boom towns in the history of the American West. The view is G.T. Brown's second large format view of Virginia City, published 3 years after his smaller view of 1861, which is taken from a very different vantage point. There are two editions of this 1864 view, a view depicting 9 mills (complete with smokestacks) around the central town view, and the present edition, which includes smaller views of 15 buildings across the top and 18 buildings below the central town view, including the Newspaper Office where a young Mark Twain would have been working in 1864.

As stated by John Reps in *Views and Viewmakers of Urban America*. . . , p. 166 (1984):

*Brown's second rendering of Virginia City is one of the most fascinating American city views. . . Brown surrounded his principal view of Nevada's most important silver mining town with thirty vivid vignettes showing details of various business structures. Perhaps the most interesting depicts the office of the Territorial Enterprise as it looked when the young Samuel Clemens [Mark Twain] first worked there as a cub reporter.*

*. . . In addition to his training as an artist . . . [Brown] made a living in Nevada, which he described in an advertisement for the Virginia City Mercantile Guide and Directory in 1864: "Traveling Artist in Nevada Territory, views of mills, mines, business houses, residences etc. drawn in the finest style."*



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The following is excerpted from a catalog entry prepared by Holabird-Kagan Americana, which offered the "smokestack" edition of the view in a sale in November 2009 (cleaned and restored copy, which sold for \$18,212):

*The central view in the middle of the lithograph is clearly looking roughly westward across the canyon at Virginia City and Mt. Davidson sketched from a point that may have later become the sight of the C&C shaft, which everyone today knows from the photo on the dust jacket cover of Stan Paher's Nevada Ghost Towns. The rock outcrop in front is a testament to this angle of view.*

*The central portion of town is marked by the large number of brick buildings and hundreds of wood dwellings scattered about the hillside. Gone are the two arrastras of the 1861 version, replaced by the many miner's shacks and houses, as well as the many mills on the outside of town. At the right are several significant things. A series of wagons, probably ore wagons, can be seen coming and going up and down the Six Mile Canyon road to the various mills located in that canyon, or down to the mills on the Carson River. At the foot of the canyon in the view is probably the Ogden Mill, one of the first mills purchased by Ralston and the Bank of California men in a successful attempt to control milling of Comstock ores. Toward the head of Six Mile Canyon road are two large churches. Along the central part of town are visible at least ten different hoist houses corresponding with each of these on the major mine properties. At a spot slightly below central town is a large dump, the largest shown, which is the Gould & Curry Mine, then at its peak of production. The dump has long since been removed and was processed for the low grade gold and silver ore that it contained. At the right of this dump are the dumps of the Ophir and Mexican mines, about the spot where the park and family center are located today.*

While the central view is unchanged in the two editions, it appears with some certainty that the present example (the 33 building view) pre-dates the smokestack edition. The two most notable differences are that the 33 building edition is slightly wider. Most notably, on the left side, several of the buildings which are partially cutoff in the smokestack edition are shown in their entirety on the 33 building view edition. The second notable difference is that the image in the 33 building view edition includes clouds and significantly more detail in the peripheral mountains, suggesting an earlier use of the plate. We found no evidence to suggest that the smokestack edition was printed before the 33 building edition. It would also seem that the 33 building view is the rarer of the 2 editions. We are aware of at least 4 examples of the smokestack edition, whereas we have not located another example of the 33 building edition and this edition is not listed in Reps.

The businesses named across the top are the (1) Tahoe House -- Mrs. L.A. Fair -- Est 1865, T. Steudeman & Co., Boots, Shoes, Hats, Dale & Co Music, Stationary, Toys, S. Roesner & Co. Fancy & Staple Dry Goods; (2) and (3) Masonic Block (2 buildings -- Gage & Eastman); (4) W.H. Burrall's Pioneer Bookstore; (5) Philippon & Mansfeld Cigars, Tobacco Cutlery &c.; (6) Orrick Johnson & Co. Washoe Livery & Sale



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Stable; (7) Assay Office of Leopold Kuh Metallurgical Chemist; (8) St. Paul's Church; (9) Delta - McCluskey & Malone; (10) Young America Engine Co, No 2; (11) Sargent, Valentine & Co. Paints, Oil & Gas; (12) Carlahpel Cigars, Tobacco & Stationary and A. Hirschman, Dealer in Watches, Diamonds & Jewelry; (13) Burnham & Hall, Oil Cloths & Paper Hangings; (14) Assay Office -- E. Ruhling & Co. Bankers & Assayers; (15) M. Goldman & Co. Furniture & Carpet Warerooms.

The businesses named across the bottom are (1) C. Walker, Watches & Jewelry; (2) Theall & Co. Assayers - Paxton & Thornburgh Banker -- Bernhard Franz, Books, Stationary and Music Circulating Library; (3) Louis Feusier & Co. and Gillig, Mott & Co. Importers; (4) Residence of N.W. Winton; (5) Residence of F.B. Smith; (6) Country Clerk's Office (A.H. Ungar); (7) S. Haas & Co. Clothing & Furnishing Goods; (8) Esberg & Fried, Cigar & Tobacco Warehouse; (9) Howell Black, & Bro, Evening Bulletin; (10) McLaughlin & Root Hardware, Stoves & Tin Ware, Arnold & Blauvelt Bankers and Rice & Livermore, Druggist; (11) J. Barnert & Co. San Francisco Clothing Store; (12) Residence of D.E. McCarthy; (13) Residence of R.C. Chappell; (14) H.S. Beck & Co. Hardware; (15) Wood & Wilson; (16) A. Benham & Bro. Virginia Livery and Exchange Stable; (17) Residence of L.W. Ferris; (18) "Territorial Enterprise" Goodman & McCarthy Publishers, Kennedy & Mallon Groceries, Wines & Liquors and Langton's Pioneer Express.

While Reps states that G.T. Brown's views were printed in color by Britton & Rey, we have only encountered matching colored examples of the 1861 and 1864 smokestack view in the Honeyman Collection, which we suspect were colored by hand after the original printing. This is consistent with the catalog entries for the two maps, so we suspect that the Reps entry is in error. Reps also erred in identifying 30 vignettes around the 1864 view (which is confirmed by his omission of this edition in the bibliographic section of *Views and Viewmakers...*). In fact, there are 30 vignettes around the 1861 view, although none appear to be duplicates of the vignettes in the 1864 view, as vignettes in the 1861 view tend to be much smaller buildings. A link to the Honeyman copy of the 1861 view can be found [here](#).

The 1864 "smokestack" view includes vignettes of the following mills: Ophir, Woodworth, Gould & Curry, Potosi, Bullion, Mexican, Chollar, and Savage. A link to the Honeyman copy of the 1861 view can be found [here](#).

Virginia City was first created in 1859, at the outset of the Comstock Silver Strike. At its peak, Virginia City had over 30,000 residents, including Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), who would have been one of the town's residents at the time this view drawn by G.T. Brown.

Grafton Tyler Brown is perhaps the first and unquestionably the most famous African American artist and lithographer to depict California and the Pacific Coast. Brown was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, February 22, 1841. Before he was 20, Brown moved to San Francisco and learned the art of lithography from C. C. Kuchel. In 1861 and again in 1864, Brown created the two earliest bird's eye views of Virginia



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**Virginia City, N. T.**

City. At the age of 26, he established his own firm, G.T. Brown & Co.

Brown produced skillfully illustrated bank notes, labels, and maps, and stock certificates for Wells Fargo, Levi Strauss and Co., and several mining companies. His significant lithographic production, *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County* (1878), featured 72 views of the county's communities and ranches. Brown traveled throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, and British Columbia (where he settled in 1882), producing maps and illustrations, including many landscape paintings.

In 1893, Brown secured employment as a draftsman at the St. Paul, Minnesota office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Sometime during his St. Paul years he married Elberta Brown. Brown's work with the Corps of Engineers ended in December 1897, after which he worked in the civil engineering department of the city of St. Paul until 1910. He died on March 3, 1918, in Nicollet County, Minnesota, bringing to a close a rich and varied career as an artist and illustrator of the American West.

**Detailed Condition:**

Very faint foxing.