



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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**Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Murfreesboro Tennessee Surveyed Jan 1863  
under the direction of Capt. N. Michler, Chief Topl. Engr., Army of the Cumberland, by  
Maj. J.E. Weyss, Capt. W. Starling, Capt. D. Thruston, Capt. J.W. Stinchcomb, Lieut. M.  
Allen, Lieut. Mackelfatrick, U.S. Vols.**

**Stock#:** 29316  
**Map Maker:** Weyss / Michler  
  
**Date:** 1863  
**Place:** Murfreesboro, TN  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 20.5 x 20.5 inches  
  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

Unique variant example of this rare battle plan of Murphreesboro, Tennessee, showing the progress of the battle in January 1863.

The map shows the current progress of the battle, with a color key at the bottom right identifying the location of various troop positions, which correspond to the positions shown on the map. Shows the line of battle of the United States forces, the line of battle of the Confederate forces, roads, distances, houses, names of residents, fields, and vegetation. Drainage is colored in blue and the "Nashville and Chattanooga R.R." is colored in red.

This example of the map varies significantly from the two copies in the collection of the Library of Congress. Most notably, the positions of the troops are different and neither of the Library of Congress copies include an explanatory key.

The following is excerpted from the Library of Congress on line exhibition of its collection of 210 field map



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prepared battle maps of the Civil War.

The Topographical Department of the Army of the Cumberland, under the direction of Col. William E. Merrill, was chiefly responsible for providing the maps for the Atlanta Campaign. Thomas B. Van Horne in his History of the Army of the Cumberland (1875) notes that "The army was so far from Washington that it had to have a complete map establishment of its own. Accordingly, the office of the chief topographical engineer contained a printing press, two lithographic presses, one photographic establishment, arrangements for map-mounting, and a full corps of draughtsmen and assistants."2

The lithographic presses were invaluable for quickly providing multiple copies of a map. However, the weight of the presses and stones made transporting them difficult, necessitating that they remain in a central depot near the front lines. As Van Horne points out, the topographic engineers in the field had available to them a mobile "facsimile [sic] photoprinting device invented by Captain Margedant, chief assistant. This consisted of a light box containing several india-rubber baths, fitting into one another, and the proper supply of chemicals. Printing was done by tracing the required map on thin paper and laying it over a sheet coated with nitrate of silver. The sun's rays passing through the tissue paper blackened the prepared paper except under the ink lines, thus making a white map on black ground. By this means copies from the drawing-paper map could be made as often as new information came in, and occasionally there would be several editions of a map during the same day. The process, however, was expensive, and did not permit the printing of a large number of copies; therefore these maps were only issued to the chief commanders." . . .

In preparation for the coming campaign, the Topographical Department began the compilation of an accurate campaign map of northern Georgia. The best available map was enlarged to the scale of an inch to the mile. According to Van Horne, this was then "elaborated by cross-questioning refugees, spies, prisoners, peddlers, and any and all persons familiar with the country in front of us. It was remarkable how vastly our maps were improved by this process. The best illustration of the value of this method is the fact that Snake Creek Gap, through which our whole army turned the strong positions at Dalton and Buzzard Roost Gap, was not to be found on any printed map that we could get, and the knowledge of the existence of this gap was of immense importance to us."

Two days before the Atlanta Campaign began, the Topographical Department was informed of the date of advance. As Van Horne notes, the single copy of the map of northern Georgia over which the



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Topographical Department had been laboring "was immediately cut up into sixteen sections and divided among the draughtsmen, who were ordered to work night and day until all the sections had been traced on thin paper in autographic ink. As soon as four adjacent sections were finished they were transferred to one large stone, and two hundred copies were printed. When all the map had thus been lithographed the map-mounters commenced their work. Being independent of sunlight the work was soon done--the map-mounting requiring the greatest time; but before the commanding generals left Chattanooga, each had received a bound copy of the map, and before we struck the enemy, every brigade, division, and corps commander in the three armies had a copy." Entitled "Map of Northern Georgia made under the direction of Capt. W. E. Merrill, Chief Topl. Engr.," the finished map measures 94 by 88 cm. It is lightly hand colored and indicates below the title and scale that it was "Lith. and printed at Topl. Engr. Office, Dept. Cumbd., Chattanooga, Tenn. May 2d, 1864." For ease of carrying in the field, the map was cut into 24 sections and mounted on cloth to fold to 16 by 23 cm. Pasted to the cloth mounting were cardboard covers to protect the map when folded (LC Civil War Maps no. S29-S30).

In addition to the standard edition of the campaign map lithographed on paper, it was also printed directly on muslin and issued in three parts. Van Horne points out that this was mainly for the convenience of the cavalry, "as such maps could be washed clean whenever soiled and could not be injured by hard service." Each section of the cloth map is entitled "Part of Northern Georgia" and was printed from one of the lithographic stones used for the standard campaign map. The superb work of the Topographic Department, Army of the Cumberland, led Van Horne to conclude "that the army that General Sherman led to Atlanta was the best supplied with maps of any that fought in the Civil War."<sup>8</sup>(LC Civil War Maps nos. 129.75, S22, and S31).

Preserved in the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, is a collection of 210 maps and three atlases belonging to Gen. William T. Sherman. This important cartographic collection, brought together from three separate acquisitions by the Library, includes both printed and manuscript maps, as well as contemporary photocopies. Many of the items were used by the general and his staff during the march on Atlanta in 1864. Represented are small-scale regional maps, maps indicating troop positions and fortifications, and reconnaissance maps. The latter were issued to topographical engineers on field assignment who were then required to plot new data and directed to return the reconnaissance maps to headquarters as soon as possible. Annotations were usually made in red to show additional roads, railroads, fortifications, and dwellings. One such reconnaissance map made as the army moved toward Atlanta is entitled "Part of De Kalb and Fulton County, Ga." (LC Civil War Maps no. S77). The base map was compiled and printed in Marietta, Georgia, on July 5, 1864, by the Topographical Engineer's Office,



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Department of the Cumberland. Instructions on the map direct topographical engineers "to return as soon as possible one copy of this land map with all the information they are able to obtain, to this office. Corps Engineers will cause a speedy compilation." The copy of the map in Sherman's possession has annotations apparently made by Lt. Harry C. Wharton, an engineer in the Army of the Cumberland.

The map is one of a group of maps presented to George Osterheld by his brother Henry Osterheld. Henry Osterheld was a Lieutenant, likely serving directly under Merrill at the time the map was compiled. The History of Westchester County, New York provides the following:

In 1864 . . . Mr. Osterheld was appointed to serve on General Rosecrans' staff as assistant inspector of railroad defenses in the Department of the Cumberland, Major James R. Willett being the chief inspector at that time. This department was then transferred to General Thomas' command, and Mr. Osterheld was sent to Nashville, Tennessee, as assistant chief inspector and took charge of the topographical engineers' department. ...

Subsequently he was transferred to the chief engineer's department, becoming assistant to the chief engineer, Major-General Z. B. Tower, head of the military division of the army of the Tennessee. He continued to serve in branch of the army until he was mustered out and honorably discharged in May, 1866.

OCLC locates examples in the Library of Congress (2 copies) and Cincinnati Historical Society.

**Detailed Condition:**

Some soiling and light staining, but overall very nice condition for a battlefield map