



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A Map of the Middle British Colonies In North America First Published By Mr. Lewis Evans of Philadelphia in 1755; and since corrected and improved . . . By T. Pownall . . . March 25th 1776

Stock#: 29965sk
Map Maker: Evans / Pownall
Date: 1755 (1776)
Place: London
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 32 x 19.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A nice example of the enlarged edition of Lewis Evans' seminal map of the Middle British Colonies, updated, corrected and extended by Governor Thomas Pownall in 1776

Along with Mitchell's map issued in the same year, Lewis Evans' A General Map of the Middle British Colonies, in America . . . of 1755 is considered the most important American map of the 18th Century. Both maps were intended to spur western expansion into the Trans-Allegheny, Ohio Valley and regions westward and in response to French Encroachments. Evans map became the standard for nearly 50 years, being re-issued in this and a number of pirated editions by Jefferys, Sayer Kitchen, Bowles and others.

Engraved by James Turner in Philadelphia, Evans' map is a milestone both for its political significance and extension of cartographic knowledge in the region. Unlike the pirated editions, Pownall's map is issued from the original Evans plate, with and addition of New England and a group of tables, naming townships in the Colonies. It bears Evans' Tribute of Gratitude... in the upper left corner. Pownall had been a great supporter of Evans and pledged the proceeds from the map to Evans' daughter.

Lewis Evans (1700-1756) was originally commissioned by the Pennsylvania legislature to secretly compile a map of the British Colonies. Evans has previousl produced several other credible maps and had travelled with and examined a number of the great Indian traders of the day, helping him to compile a map of incomparable detaile for the period. Unfortunately, Evans map was overshadowed by his outspoken political opinions, which quickly alienated his peers both because of his willingness to cede certain regions north of the St. Lawrence to the French and because of his contentious relationship with Governor Morris of Pennsylvania, which ultimately led to Evans being imprisoned for libel, where he died in 1756.



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Despite his ignominious demise, Evans' fervor for British control of the Trans-Alleghany West and the Ohio Valley comes through clearly in his writings. In his "Analysis" which accompanied his original map, Evans' states:

The Map, that these Sheets accompany, and that they are intended to explain and supply, is presented to the Public, when a longer Time was indeed necessary to have given it the Degree of Correctness that was intended it. But the present Conjunction of Affairs in America, and the generous Assistance of the Assembly of Pensilvania, have brought it to Light, when the Public will, it is hoped, receive Advantage from it, that will render an Apology for its premature Publication needless; and think it worthy the Encouragement of a Body who devote the Public Money to the Public Service.

As noted by Henry Stevens in his Essay on Evans' map:

The " present conjuncture of affairs " no doubt refers to the rapidly increasing encroachments of France on the back settlements, to which Evans draws particular attention in his " Analysis." He especially points out the great advantages to the English Colonies of the Country on the Ohio and the Lakes, and urges the necessity for more general knowledge of the nature and position of those remote parts and of the various ways by which they may be reached, in order that the French may more easily be dispossessed. He then proceeds to explain the scope and details of his map and particularly he points out the nature and sources of his information, and quotes his authorities for each part of the country when describing it.

One has only to read Evans' " Analysis " to readily realize the extreme difficulty of making a map of this vast country on a small scale of about thirty six miles to the inch on anything like correct lines. It is evident that he drew the map with the most conscientious desire for accuracy, and the " Analysis " reveals the extraordinary amount of information he had collected for the purpose. In his concluding remarks Evans makes some curious and slighting allusions to the ambitions of Massachusetts towards Independency, most interesting and prophetic in the light of subsequent events. But the main object of his book seems to have been to direct particular attention to the advantages of a colony on the Ohio and the retrieving of the country encroached on by the French. Some copies of the map were probably issued in advance of the publication of the " Analysis " for the map is stated, in the imprint, to have been published on June 23, 1755, whereas the Preface to the " Analysis" is dated August 9. . . .

The map evidently excited considerable attention in the Colonies, and, according to what Governor Pownall says in 1776, 2 it was for a long time generally accepted as the standard authority for settling boundaries, purchases, etc., on account of the extreme care and accuracy with which it had been



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prepared. . . . As a further testimony to the accuracy of Evans' work may be quoted Captain Thomas Hutchins, who, in the Preface to his Topographical Description of Virginia, published in 1778, says,

It is fit also, that I should take notice, that in the account which I have given of several of the branches of the Ohio, and Alleghany rivers, I have adopted the words of the late ingenious Mr. Lewis Evans, as I found he had properly described them in the Analysis to his Map of the Middle Colonies.

Evans map was pirated by a number of British mapmakers, beginning with Thomas Kitchin in 1756. Referencing the 1758 Kitchin edition in his 1776 Topographical Description . . . , Pownall notes " this Plagiarism was falsely sold as Evans's map improved; by which that very laborious and ingenious but poor man was deprived of he Benefit of his Work." Subsequent editions were published illegally by Jefferys (1758), Carrington Bowles (1771), Sayer & Bennett (1775 and after) and Laurie & Whittle (1793 and after).

In 1776, Governor Thomas Pownall, a long time supporter of Evans, issued what would appear to be the only authorized later edition of the Evans map. As noted by Henry Stevens:

As to the map, Pownall appears to have been in possession of the original Evans plate engraved by Jas. Turner in Philadelphia, and he uses it as the basis of his improved map. . .

The old engraver's imprint, " Engraved by Ja s Turner in Philadelphia", still remains to the left of the cartouche. Not much alteration is to be observed in the Western parts, save that an alternative course of the River Ohio, according to Gist and Gordon, is laid down in dotted lines. But the whole of the map east of the longitude of Philadelphia is greatly changed, and is filled in with new details. The old right-hand border, which in the original Evans plate was placed at about 4 degrees east of Philadelphia, is cut off, and the map is now extended eastward to about 9 degrees. The new portion of 5 degrees appears to be engraved on a separate plate, and, after separate printing, the impressions from each plate are neatly pasted together to form one map. In the ocean and in various other blank spaces are Lists of the Counties and Townships of the various Colonies, numbered to correspond with numbered references in the body of the map.

Regarding his changes to the map, Pownall states in his Topographical Description:

The Western Division of this present map was composed and published at the Commencement of the late War in America. It was found by the Officers and Servants of the Crown to have that Degree of Precision,



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that it was used by them both in England and in America, and served every practical Purpose during the War. Those who have served and traveled in America, have had few Occasions of correcting it; on the contrary, its Exactness as far as a general Map means to go, as far as a Map on this small Scale could go, has generally been confirmed by Experience on the Spot. In any Transactions since the War, where local Precision has been necessary, this Map has been referred to, not simply in private but public Transactions, such as the great Indian Purchase and Cession. The Boundaries by which the Propositions for the Purchase of Lands on the Ohio were made to the Boards of Trade and Treasury, were marked and settled on this Map. When the Servants of the Crown proposed in the House of Commons the Clause for the Limits of the Government of Quebec; and when the Line of those Limits was there opposed, both Sides, with this Map in their Hands, argued from it."

Detailed Condition:

Very wide margins. Backed on the verso with Japan paper, with some minor fold splits.