



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Map of the City and County of New York. With The Adjacent Country . . . 1832.

**Stock#:** 30090  
**Map Maker:** Burr  
**Date:** 1832  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 50.5 x 20.5 inches



**Price:** SOLD

### Description:

Fine old color example of David Burr's large format map of New York City, published by Simeon De Witt, Surveyor General of the State of New York in 1832.

First issued in 1829, Burr's map is one of the most impressive commercial published maps of New York from the 1820s. The first edition of the map includes a key below the title, which was removed in the later editions. The map occasionally appears in wall map form, with advertising on an index below the map. The map also appeared in Burr's 1829 Atlas of the State of New York, the second printed American State Atlas.

The present example is the second state of the map. Rumsey's copy of the Atlas of the State of New York also included this second state.

The map covers all of Manhattan Island with Hudson River and New Jersey to the west. To the east is the East River, "Town of Brooklyn", "Town of Bushwick", and "Town of Newtown." The coast line of the Bronx is also shown but not named. It also covers Jersey City and Horsimus, and other communities in N.J. Ornamental cartouche. Includes "Remarks" on streets and distances.

The map seems to have appeared in editions of 1829, 1831, 1832, 1839 and 1841, the final 2 editions bearing the imprint of Stone & Clark, Ithica, New York.

David Burr is one of the most famous, yet ironically little understood mapmakers of the first part of the 19th Century. His two most famous works, the *Postal Atlas of the United States* (1839) and *Atlas of the State of New York* (first published in 1829) are among the most important cartographic works of their respective genres, yet relatively little is known about Burr.

David H. Burr originally worked under Simeon DeWitt, New York State's Surveyor General, at the beginning of the 19th century. Burr had a brief career as a lawyer and an aide-de-camp for New York



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Governor De Witt Clinton before being appointed to his first position in charge of a team surveying a portion of the state for a proposed road in 1825. He then succeeded in getting approval from the state legislature to compile an atlas that included maps of each county as well as a separate map of the entire state. These were dated 1829, but not actually published until early 1830. Burr's atlas has the distinction of being the second atlas published in the 19th century of one of the individual states in the U.S., preceded only by Mill's *Atlas of South Carolina* (1825).

In the 1830s, Burr produced an important early map of Texas and was in the process of publishing his *New Universal Atlas* in the late 1830s, when he was apparently offered work as a mapmaker for the United States House of Representatives. He produced several maps for the House, before beginning work for the Post Office on a series of maps which would become his most important work. Work on the postal maps was completed by the end of 1839, at which time Burr contracted with John Arrowsmith in London to print the maps. During this time period, he clearly fell out of favor with the prevailing powers in the House of Representatives, and by 1841 his position with the government had been terminated. In this same time period, he petitioned the US Government for a tariff exemption on the import of his *Postal Atlas* and separate maps, which he apparently wished to distribute privately. The tariff exemption was turned down, leaving Burr with a \$10,800 unpaid printing bill and financially bankrupt.

It was during this same time that Burr apparently produced the present map. While there is no record of its being made under the auspices of the United States government, the dating of the map (January 1842) and its size and detail, clearly suggest that it was compiled during the same time period and from the same information as the *Postal Atlas*. In fact, a close examination shows that many of the details on this map are identical too, and/or derived directly from the same source.

It is reasonable to surmise that the map was intended by Burr to be a successor to Abraham Bradley's general postal map of the United States, which was nearly 15 years out-dated by the time Burr began work on this postal maps. The general map which accompanied Burr's postal atlas is basically a key map, with no real postal or other detail, and clearly not incorporating the details of the rest of the maps in the postal atlas. Moreover, as noted at the time of Burr's tariff hearings, the Government had ordered very few separate copies of the general map of the US in the *Postal Atlas*. With only one remaining copy on hand at the time of the hearing, this provided additional circumstantial evidence that Burr intended a larger format general map of the US of similar detail to the general maps of the *Postal Atlas*.

Of equal interest, Burr's title of *Topographer of the United States Post Office and Geographer to the House of Representatives*, may in fact have been self-appointed titles. In the House of Representatives committee proceedings which resulted in his censure and termination, Burr was classified as a clerk and his superiors were derided for having allowed temporary clerical positions to have grown far beyond their intended scope, perhaps because of the political weight carried by Burr's older brother, who seems to



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have initially recruited Burr into government service.

During his time with the Post Office, Burr produced his *Postal Atlas of the United States*. This "atlas" is one of the great rarities of American 19th century cartography, with complete sets being virtually unobtainable for modern collectors. John Arrowsmith engraved the plates in London, an unusual collaboration at this late a date between an American cartographer and a London engraver.

Burr also served as surveyor to the states of Florida and Louisiana, then returned to Washington and became geographer to the U.S. Senate. In the 1850s, President Franklin Pierce named him the surveyor general of Utah Territory, where as the top ranking federal official in the territory, he was "heavily involved with the legal and jurisdictional disputes between Mormon leaders and the U.S. government" (Ristow).

**Detailed Condition:**

Original Color. Three folds, as issued. Minor repaired tear in lower right margin and minor fold splits, repaired on verso.