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Map of Alaska and Northwest Territories Published By Lowman & Hanford Stationary and Printing Company Seattle Washington 1897 (Unrecorded early map -- possibly the earliest to show the discovery of Gold in Alaska)

Stock#: 34288
Map Maker: Lowman & Hanford Stationary
& Printing Company
Date: 1897
Place: Seattle
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 33 x 22 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Unrecorded separately issued map of Alaska and British Columbia, showing the route to Gold Regions of Alaska, which is quite possibly the first map to illustrate the route to the newly discovered Gold Regions in Alaska.

Lowman & Hanford of Seattle produced several of the earliest maps illustrating the routes to the Gold Regions. What makes this map of particular note is that it appears to pre-date all of the other maps and may be both unrecorded and Lowman & Hanford's first map. For example, this map appears to pre-date the use of the name "Klondike" to describe the region (although the Klondike River is named), unlike other early Lowman & Hanford maps showing the same region. See, for example, the map held by the University of Alaska at Fairbanks: vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cdmg11/id/11944/rec/1. In subsequent months, the firm would issue 2 other maps showing the routes to the Gold Regions, as well as "*Wallace's map of the Klondike and Indian River gold fields*".

The map shows several routes to Alaska and locations of gold fields in red, but only a single route from Skagway via Ft. Selkirk to the Gold Fields, referencing also the "Supposed Dalton Trail." By contrast, the later edition referenced above shows a very different course for the Dalton Trail and shows Lake Dasar-Dee-Ash much further south than this map. The present map also does not show the Gold Fields on the Copper River (and includes significantly less cartographic detail in this region). The Copper River Gold Fields are shown on the later Lowman & Hanford map.

While it is impossible to state with certainty, it is quite possible that this is the earliest printed map to promote the discovery of Gold in Alaska. We note that there are apparently two variant editions of the



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later Lowman *Map of Alaska Northwest Territories and British Columbia showing all the Recent Gold Discoveries*, with the University of Oregon holding a copy that includes a note that it is corrected to November 1, 1897, suggesting that there were two editions of the map. As such, it is probable that this unrecorded earlier map of the routes to the Gold Region would have been published at least several months earlier. The present map also lacks text, suggesting it was very much rushed to market.

Only 1 example of the later Lowman *Map of Alaska Northwest Territories and British Columbia showing all the Recent Gold Discoveries*, has appeared on the market in the past 50 years (Streeter, #3574), purchased from Midland Rare Book Company in 1946. No copy of the Wallace map or this map has appeared on the market.

We were unable to locate any other examples of this map in any bibliographic sources.

In August 1896, three people led by Keish (Skookum Jim Mason), a member of the Tagish First Nations, headed north, down the Yukon River from the Carcross area, looking for his sister Kate and her husband George Carmack. The party included Skookum Jim, his cousin, known as Dawson Charlie (or sometimes Tagish Charlie), and his nephew Patsy Henderson. After meeting up with George and Kate, who were fishing for salmon at the mouth of the Klondike River, they ran into Nova Scotian Robert Henderson who had been mining gold on the Indian River, just south of the big dike. Henderson told George Carmack about where he was mining and that he did not want any "Siwashes" (meaning Indians) near him.

August 16, 1896, the Skookum party discovered rich placer gold deposits in Bonanza (Rabbit) Creek, Yukon. The news spread to other mining camps in the Yukon River valley. Gold was first discovered in Rabbit Creek, which was later named Bonanza Creek. The Bonanza, Eldorado, and Hunker Creeks were rapidly staked by miners who had been previously working creeks and sandbars on the Fortymile and Stewart Rivers.

News reached the United States in July 1897, at the height of a significant series of financial recessions and bank failures in the 1890s. The first prospectors arrived in San Francisco, California on July 15 and in Seattle, Washington on July 17, setting off the Klondike stampede. In 1898, the population in the Klondike may have reached 40,000, which threatened to cause a famine.

The boom brought many interesting people, including William Howard Taft (Camp Skagway #1), who went on to become a U.S. President; Frederick Russell Burnham, the celebrated American scout who arrived from Africa only to be called back to take part in the Second Boer War; and W. W. White, author and explorer.



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Most prospectors landed at the Alaskan towns of Skagway and Dyea, both located at the head of the Lynn Canal. From these towns they traveled the Chilkoot Trail and crossed the Chilkoot Pass, or they hiked up to the White Pass and then to Lake Lindeman or Bennett Lake, the headwaters of the Yukon River. Here, the prospectors built rafts and boats that would take them the final 500-plus miles (800-plus km) down the Yukon to Dawson City, near the gold fields.

The miners had to carry a year's supply of goods over the passes to be allowed to enter Canada. At the top of the passes, the miner's met Canada's North West Mounted Police at a post that enforced the provisions regulation, as well as customs and duties. It was put in place to avert shortages like those that had occurred in the previous two winters in Dawson City, and also to restrict the entry of guns, particularly handguns, into British territory. Another reason was to keep out of Canadian territory the criminal element which had established itself in Skagway and the other Yukon Ports (then still claimed as British territory), as well as the fears by British and Canadian authorities about a possible armed takeover of the goldfields as an American territory.

Once the bulk of the prospectors arrived at Dawson City, most of the major mining claims of the region were already established. However, any major potential unrest with the idle population was averted with the firm authority of the NWMP under the command of Sam Steele.

Detailed Condition:

Pocket map in stiff green cloth boards with gilt title. A bit of discoloration and damage along one fold, else very nice condition.