



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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Carte du Theatre de la Guerre actuel entre les Anglais et les Trieze Colonies Unies de l'Amerique Septentrionale dresse par J.B. Eliot Aide de Camp du General Washington ou se trouvent les Principaux Camps et les Epoques des Combats qui se sont donnees dans cette partie de l'Amerique 1781.

Stock#: 34512bb
Map Maker:

Date: 1781
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 27.5 x 21.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Map to Name The United States

Fine example of J. B. Eliot's map of the United States, the first state of which is generally regarded as the earliest map to include the title "United States" on a printed map, with additional annotations in a contemporary hand.

The present example is the second state of the map, with details of the battles fought during the American Revolution from the "Affaire de Bunker hill 17, Juin", 1775 to the "Camp du General Washington" in 1781, with a manuscript additions below it noting the "Surrender of L. Cornwallis 19 Cot. at York river."



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Eliot's map, which was drawn from American sources not previously utilized on any printed map, is generally regarded as the first printed map to bear the name of the United States ("Etats Unis"). The map translates from the French as "Map of the Actual Seat of War between the English and the Thirteen Colonies' of North America, as described by J.B. Eliot, an 'Engineer of the **United States** '." As noted by Ristow:

A highlight of 1778 was the French declaration of alliance with the Americans on May 4. This led immediately to French mapping of the American War of Independence, and that year "Carte de Theatre de la Guerre actuel entre les Anglais et les trieze Colonies Unies de l'Amerique Septentrionale" (Plate 122) by J.B. Eliot, an American Engineer, was published in Paris. It is the earliest known map to include the name "United States. . . ."

In an excellent essay on the map by Margaret Pritchard and Henry Taliaferro (*Degrees of Latitude*, Map 58), the importance of the map and Eliot, its mysterious maker are discussed at greater length.

The MAP of the theater of war between Great Britain and America by J.B. Eliot is important because of its title, les Trieze Colonies Unies de l'Amerique Septentrionale, may include the first reference on a map to the United States. The cartographer was identified as Ingenieurs des Etats Unis. On November 15, 1777, the Continental Congress selected "The United States of America," as the name of the thirteen colonies that formed a government under the Articles of Confederation. One month later, French authorities learned of the victory at Saratoga and decided to recognize American independence. By January 8, French foreign minister, Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, informed American envoys that France was ready to engage in an alliance. It is not surprising that the name United States was first mentioned on a map published in Paris in 1778.

Although the second state of the map referred to Eliot as an aide-de-campe to General Washington, no references to him have been located in the Washington papers. It is also curious that he did not indicate on the map the General's 1777 winter headquarters at Valley Forge, misspelled Walay Forge. What Eliot did illustrate were the lines of march taken by the British and American forces during the campaign in 1777, including Lieutenant Colonel Barry St. Ledger's unsuccessful diversionary expedition down the Mohawk Valley, Burgoyne's march from Crown Point to Albany, and Howe's campaign to take Philadelphia.



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As was usually the case, Eliot appears to have borrowed from several sources in compiling the geography. Some areas were designated by French place-names while others are predominantly English, specifically in the northwestern territories that the French knew best. It is clear they were aware of the latest intelligence relating to the Revolutionary War.

In the second state of the map, Eliot's title is changed from "Ingenieurs des Etats Unis " to "Aide de Camp du General Washington." While Ristow speculated that J.B. Eliot may have been a liaison between General Washington and France, there is no record of any military officer of this name serving in such capacity in the Department des Cartes et Plans in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France.

One of the most curious elements of the map is the spelling of the name "Walay Forge." George Washington first arrived at Valley Forge on December 19, 1777 and maintained it as his headquarters until June 19, 1778. On the First-State of the Eliot-Mondhare map, the name appears as "Walay Forge", with no further explanation. It is curious that any reference to this location would appear on the map at all, as it was generally not considered to be a place important enough to make it onto a small-scale map until it was made famous by the war. The misspelling suggests that the map was published relatively shortly after the news of the battle reached Paris, as the misspelling could not have lasted long.

The news of the location of Valley Forge (and indeed an appreciation of its importance) likely reached Paris in the late spring of 1778. Mondhare may well have added it to the plate in haste without fully understanding its significance. Curiously, it is placed on the wrong side of the Schuylkill River, an error corrected on this second state of the map.

It is curious that both the map also refers to Saratoga as "Saharatoga", a misspelling that also used on Brion de La Tour's map of the Theater of War and in the separate portraits of Gen. Horatio Gates published by Mondhare and Esnauts & Rapilly (both Paris, 1778). This error is repeated in the state of the map.

The present map also refers "Royal Block House," as "Royal Blanck [or Blane] House," a curious error for this important military feature on the shores of Lake Oneida, New York. A similar error appears on Brion De La Tour's map, which uses the name "Royal Black House" - clearly done by someone who has a limited understanding of English.

The present example of the map is the second state of the map, which includes a slightly revised title and



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significant additions, primarily in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, in the area around Valley Forge and Trenton.

Both states of the map are very rare. We can find no record of the second state of the map appearing on the market at auction or a dealer catalogue. The first state of the map last appeared at a Sotheby's London auction in 1998, where the map was described as one of only 6 known examples. AMPR notes no examples on the market in the past 30 years in dealer catalogs.

Detailed Condition:

Wide margins. Includes manuscript annotations in an English hand.