



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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Carte Particuliere de Isthmus ou Darien qui Comprend le Golfe de Panama &c. Cartagena, et les Isles aux Environs

Stock#: 37449
Map Maker: Mortier
Date: 1700 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 34 x 24.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Finely executed map of a portion of Central America, extending from the east coast of Nicaragua and Costa Rica in the northwest to Cartagena and Santa Martha in modern Columbia in the east, and centered on the Isthmus of Darien and Gulf of Panama.

Among the more interesting features on the map is New Edinburgh, a reference to the Darien Scheme, an unsuccessful attempt by the Kingdom of Scotland to establish a trading colony in the late 1690s.

At the end of the 17th Century, the Scottish crown perceived a need to expand its trading reach. Incapable of protecting itself from the effects of English competition, Scotland's once thriving industries such as shipbuilding were in deep decline. Goods which were in demand had to be bought from England for sterling, the Navigation Acts further increased economic dependence on England by limiting Scots' shipping, and the navy was tiny.

In response, a number of remedies were enacted by the Parliament of Scotland. In 1695 the Bank of Scotland was established; the Act for the Settling of Schools established a parish-based system of public education throughout Scotland and the Company of Scotland was chartered with capital to be raised by public subscription to trade with "Africa and the Indies". The Company of Scotland attempted to raise subscriptions in Amsterdam, Hamburg and London for the scheme, but was blocked by England. This left no source of finance but Scotland itself. The Company of Scotland for Trading to Africa raised £400,000 sterling in a few weeks, with investments from every level of society, totalling about a fifth of the wealth of Scotland.



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Scottish-born trader and financier William Paterson had long been promoting a plan for a colony on the Isthmus of Panama to be used as a gateway between the Atlantic and Pacific. Paterson was instrumental in getting the company off the ground in London. He had failed to interest several European countries in his project but in the aftermath of the English reaction to the company he was able to get a respectful hearing for his ideas. The Scots' original aim of emulating the East India Company by breaking into the lucrative trading areas of the Indies and Africa was forgotten and the highly ambitious Darien scheme was adopted by the company. Paterson fell from grace when a subordinate embezzled from the Company. The company took back Paterson's stock and expelled him from the Court of Directors; he was to have little real influence on events after this point.

There were a large number of former officers and soldiers who joined the Darien project eagerly as they had little hope of any other employment. The first expedition of five ships set sail from the east coast port of Leith to avoid observation by English warships in July 1698, with around 1200 people on board. The journey round Scotland while kept below deck was so traumatic that some colonists thought it comparable to the worst parts of the whole Darien experience. After calling at Madeira and the West Indies, the fleet made landfall off the coast of Darien on November 2, 1698. The settlers christened their new home "Caledonia".

With Drummond in charge, they cut a ditch through the neck of land that divided one side of the harbour in Caledonia Bay from the ocean, and constructed Fort St Andrew, equipped with 50 cannon, on the peninsula behind the canal. The fort did not have a source of fresh water. On a mountain, at the opposite side of the harbour, they built a watchhouse. Close to the fort, they began to erect the huts of the main settlement, New Edinburgh, and to clear land for growing yams and maize. Letters sent home by the expedition created the misleading impression that everything was going according to plan. This seems to have been by agreement as certain optimistic phrases kept recurring, but it meant the Scottish public would be completely unprepared for the coming disaster.

Agriculture proved difficult and the local Indian tribes, although hostile to Spain, were unwilling to buy the combs and other trinkets offered by the colonists. Most serious was the almost total failure to sell any goods to the few passing traders that put into the bay. With the onset of summer the following year the stifling atmosphere, along with other causes, led to a large number of deaths in the colony. Although local Indians brought gifts of fruit and plantains, these were appropriated by the leaders and sailors who largely remained on board ship. The only luck the settlers had was in giant turtle hunting, but fewer and fewer men were fit enough for such strenuous work. The situation was exacerbated by the lack of food mainly due to a high rate of spoilage caused by improper stowing. At the same time King William had instructed the Dutch and English colonies in America not to supply the Scots' settlement so as not to incur the wrath



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of the Spanish Empire.

The only reward the council had to give was alcohol, and drunkenness became common, even though it sped the deaths of many men weakened by dysentery, fever and the rotting, worm-infested food. After eight months the colony was abandoned in July 1699, apart from six men who were too weak to move. Deaths continued on the ships, and those who managed to survive the journey and return home found themselves regarded as a disgrace to their country and even disowned by their families.

Only 300 of the 1200 settlers survived and only one ship managed to return to Scotland. A desperate ship from the colony that called at the Jamaican city of Port Royal was refused assistance on the orders of the English government, which feared antagonizing the Spanish.

Word of the first expedition did not reach Scotland in time to prevent a second voyage of more than 1,000 people. The second expedition arrived on November 30, 1699 and found two sloops there; one with Thomas Drummond from the original expedition. Some men were sent ashore to rebuild huts, which caused others to complain that they had come to join a settlement, not build one. Morale was low and little progress was made. Drummond insisted that there could be no discussion, and that the fort must be rebuilt as the Spanish attack would surely come soon.

Drummond clashed with the merchant James Byres who maintained that the Counsellors of the first expedition had now lost that status, and consequently had Drummond arrested. Initially bellicose, Byres began to send away all those he suspected of being offensively minded - or of being allegiant to Drummond.

The colonists sank into apathy until the arrival of Alexander Campbell of Fonab, sent by the company to organize a defense. He provided the resolute leadership which had been lacking and took the initiative from the Spanish by driving them from their stockade at Toubacanti in January, 1700. However, Fonab was wounded in this daring frontal attack and became incapacitated with a fever. The Spanish force, which was also suffering serious losses from fever, closed in on Fort St Andrew and besieged it for a month. The Spanish commander called for the Scots to surrender and avoid a final assault, warning that if they did not no quarter would be given.

After negotiations the Scots were allowed to leave with their guns, and the colony was abandoned for the last time. Only a handful of those from the second expedition returned to Scotland. Of the total 2500 settlers that set off, just a few hundred survived.



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Detailed Condition:

Old Color.