



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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### **A Map of the Province of Upper Canada and the Adjacent Territories in North America ... Shewing the Districts, Counties and Townships in which are situated the Lands purchased from the Crown by The Canada Company.**

**Stock#:** 37571  
**Map Maker:** Chewett & Ridout  
**Date:** 1826  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 72 x 40.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



#### **Description:**

***Very rare - the first accurate general map of what is now Southern Ontario, an exceptional 'presentation piece' in its custom original full morocco case.***

This finely-engraved large-format map of Upper Canada is one of the most historically important maps of the province. It is the first accurate general printed map to depict what is now Southern Ontario, based on scientific surveys. It embraces the inhabited part of the province, located to the south of the 46th-parallel, as well as parts of Lower Canada and the U.S. states of Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, as well as Lakes Erie, Huron and Ontario. The level of detail and the quality of the engraving and original hand-color is exceptionally fine.

The map was issued in London, in limited quantities, especially for the use of the Canada Company, then the most important land speculation syndicate in British North America. Cartographically, it far exceeded its predecessors in its accuracy and level of detail, and in these respects, it can be considered to be the first truly modern map of Southern Ontario. It therefore deserves to rank along side the other great jurisdictional maps of North America of the era, such as Simeon de Witt's *New York* (1804), James Madison's *Virginia* (1807) Eleazar Early & Daniel Sturges's *Georgia* (1818) and Stephen Austin's *Texas* (1830).

#### **James Chewett & the Early Mapping of Upper Canada**

The principal author of the map was William Chewett (1753-1849) and his son James G. Chewett. William was certainly the most consequential surveyor and mapmaker in the early history of Upper Canada, although he never received the recognition that his work deserved. Born in London, England, he arrived in



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Quebec in 1771, and soon found work as both a military and civilian surveyor in the employ of the British colonial regime. Following the American Revolution, he benefitted greatly from the training he received from Samuel Holland, the Surveyor General of British North America, one of the 18th Century's most important cartographers, who had at one time given surveying lessons to the future explorer James Cook.

In 1792, Chewett moved to the newly-formed Province of Upper Canada (Ontario), where he worked as surveyor for Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, under the direction of David William Smyth, laying out new towns and cadastral lots for incoming Loyalist settlers. While Chewett was a highly competent and hard-working professional whose work was invariably of a high caliber, he appears to have been an inept political operator. He was repeatedly unable to navigate the power structure of Upper Canada, which was controlled by a Tory oligarchy popularly known as the "Family Compact". While perennially the most qualified candidate, and frequently serving as the acting surveyor general of the province, he was repeatedly passed over for the top job. A frustrated Chewett expressed early on that political leaders' promises to procure preferment "ended in a mouthful of moonshine" (DCB). Nevertheless, he was, more than any other individual responsible for shaping the accurate geographic conception of what is now southern Ontario.

In the late 1790s, many of Chewett's cadastral and regional surveys of Upper Canada were used by William David Smyth, the province's surveyor general, to produce *A Map of the Province of Upper Canada, describing all the new settlements, townships &c.* (London: William Faden, 1800). While not explicitly given any credit for the map, James Chewett was likely its principal author. This map was used as the 'blueprint' for settlement in the province and was the base map on which the cartography of Upper Canada was predicated for the next generation. This so-called "Smyth Series" ran into 13 editions and had the longest publishing history of any map of what is now Ontario.

During this early period, settlement in Upper Canada only hugged the main waterways along the American border, including the shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the Detroit, Niagara, St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers. The contemporary mapping of this strip of civilization was impressive, based on triangulated surveys, done to advanced scientific standards. Critically, however, the maps had a glaring flaw. The areas beyond the settled zone, such as the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Nipissing were very poorly mapped, and much of the hinterland was left as a complete void. This created a rather jarring visual juxtaposition to the highly developed aspects of the map, lending the overall appearance of an unfinished composition.

On the eve of the War of 1812 (1812-5), William Chewett prepared an updated version of the Smyth map, which bore his own name as the author, published as *A Map of the Located Districts in the Province of*



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*Upper Canada* (London: William Faden, 1813). While this included the advances in settlement and road construction in the province, the areas north of the southern rim of settlement were still largely unmapped.

James Grant Chewett (1793-1862) followed several professions. Like his father, he was a surveyor, working in the surveyor-general's department for 30 years, and eventually becoming deputy surveyor-general on his father's retirement, and also a commander of the 3rd West York Militia. An architect, he designed the first Chewett building (completed by John Howard in 1835), Upper Canada College, which opened in 1829, and the 1832 parliament buildings. Over the years, he served as a director of the Bank of Upper Canada, president of the Bank of Toronto, and chairman of the Canada Permanent Building and Savings Society (later, the Canada Mortgage Corporation). He was also an incorporator of Toronto's first insurance company, British-America Fire and Life Assurance.

#### **The Next Generation of the Mapping of Upper Canada: The War of 1812 and the Canada Company**

The present map appeared at a critical time in the history of the province that would later become Ontario, following the War of 1812, and at the beginning of a period of explosive economic and population growth. The map was a critical primary document at the center of events, so giving rise to its historical importance.

The War of 1812 was a transformative event in the history of Upper Canada. Against the odds, the province's small defense forces of British regulars, citizen militia and their Native Canadian allies fended off repeated attacks by often much larger American armies. While the Upper Canadians' victory was a source of pride and lent a sense of social purpose to the colony (as well as securing Canada's future independence from the United States), the war had wrought extensive damage to farms, towns and property. Notably, the capital York (Toronto) had been sacked and burned in 1813. The British government technically assumed responsibility for compensating subjects for their war losses. However, as the provincial archives, including the records and maps of the Surveyor General's office, went up in flames during the burning of York, much of the information relevant to assessing compensation claims needed to be painstaking reacquired. Many cadastral surveys had to be redone, and visible damage to properties needed to be recorded. Chewett was given the primary responsibility for this important, yet thankless, endeavor.

During this time, another key factor was at play. Up to the War of 1812 a majority of Upper Canadians had



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been born in the United States. While many were United Empire Loyalists, political refugees whose allegiance to the British Crown was beyond reproach, many others, the so-called 'Late Loyalists', were suspected of moving to the province in search of cheap land, and not due to political conviction. During the war, the province's deeply conservative governing elite worried that the recent American immigrants would side with the American invaders. While events showed that these concerns were unfounded, and indeed almost all of the immigrants deeply resented the American invasion, the grandees in York still maintained their suspicions. They believed that henceforth efforts should be made to ensure that the majority of new settlers would come from Britain, and not the United States.

As time wore on, the cash-strapped Crown balked at paying the ever-rising war compensation claims, and so desired to find a new source of revenue for settling these obligations. Moreover, just as had happened in the neighboring American states, people realized that vast fortunes could be made in land speculation.

John Galt (1779-1839), a brilliant, charismatic, and some would say roguish Scottish novelist sensed an opportunity. In 1824, he proposed that a private land development company be formed to settle much of the hinterland of Southern Upper Canada. The company could buy large tracts of undeveloped land from the Crown, the proceeds of which could be used to settle the war compensation claims. In turn, the company could sell the land to migrants, in theory at great profit. Galt petitioned various political figures in London and York, and on July 27, 1825, the Canada Company was given a royal charter by Act of Parliament.

The Company agreed to purchase 400,000 acres of land from the Crown for a sum of 3 shillings, six pence an acre, plus some additional fees. The 'Canada Company Lands' consisted of much of the northern part of Southwestern Ontario, including much of the future counties of Lambton, Huron, Bruce, Wellington and Dufferin. Galt was made the secretary of the Company, and while he officially reported to its board of directors, he was, for all practical purposes, the Company's C.E.O., with complete control over the enterprise's operations.

While the Canada Company was technically a private venture the Crown's stake in the scheme ensured that official resources and manpower were drafted to support the venture. Moreover, various key members of the "Family Compact" were given a financial stake including politicians, business figures and leading Anglican clerics. James Chewett, William's son, was given the task of preparing a grand 'master map' of Southern Upper Canada that would give an accurate and up-to-date depiction of the province and the Canada Company Lands in particular. The completion of the map was seen as an urgent imperative, as many of the Company's investors had only a vague idea of the nature of the Company's territory. Chewett



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was thus under pressure from the grandees of the province to act fast. While much of the depiction of the province could be pieced together from Chewett's own recent surveys and those of others in the surveyor general's archives, a big problem was that the Canada Company Lands remained the most poorly mapped area of the region.

Fortunately, by coincidence, in the wake of the War of 1812, the British Navy had arranged for all of Canadian coastlines of the Great Lakes be surveyed to advanced scientific standards. While this process was still far from complete, from 1819 to 1824, Lieutenant Henry Bayfield had charted the shores of Lake Huron, from the mouth of the St. Clair River, all the way north and over to the mouth of Severn River in Georgian Bay. This precisely accorded to the shorelines of the Company's lands on Lake Huron. Chewett was able to acquire copies of Bayfield's manuscripts, and combined with accurate surveyed inland areas to the south, these hydrographic surveys allowed him to form an accurate delineation of the limits of the Company Lands.

By the end of 1825, Chewett rushed out an unfinished proof state of what would become the present map, which was printed in London. Notably, it did not yet include the critical information supplied by Bayfield's surveys and lacked the adornment of the Company's Coast of Arms (which were still in preparation), as well as numerous detail with respect to settlement and roads.

Given a few more months, Chewett was able to complete the manuscript for the present masterpiece, which became the basis for the first accurate general map of what would become Southern Ontario. As seen on the present marquis example, the depiction of the settled areas of the province is exceedingly precise and detailed, including the placement of towns, townships, counties, rivers, roads, with jurisdictions bodies of water outlined in fine original hand color. Many new towns and settlements have been added, including London, Middlesex County (which would officially be incorporated as a town in 1826) and the newly-settled areas in Simcoe County. The lands controlled by the Canada Company are labeled as "The Company Territory", and while for the most part are unsurveyed, the perimeters of the lands are well defined. Bayfield is specifically given credit for his contribution to the map, as an inscription located off of the shores of Lake Huron reads "This coast was surveyed by Lieut. Bayfield under the orders of the Lords of the Admiralty from 1819 to 1824". The elaborately engraved title is followed by a list of the Canada Company's principals, while its elegant arms adorn the space in the upper center. Importantly, the Company was also able to acquire lots within already established townships in other parts of the province. Those townships that include Company lots are marked on the map with an 'x'. Chewett is explicitly given credit for compiling the map, which is also attributed to Thomas Ridout (1754-1829), the Surveyor General of Upper Canada, who in actuality contributed comparatively little to its preparation.



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The present map remained the best map of the region, and the source map for many other cartographers, for many decades. It also served as the blueprint for the Canada Company's operations in the years to come. Winearls describes the map as:

*"Undoubtedly one of the most important maps to be published in the first half of the century -- because of its accuracy and for its impact on other map makers -- was the Canada Company map of 1825-6. The first state of 1825 was unfinished, probably because the company was delayed in receiving its charter, and the 1826 state, the finished map, adds information from the hydrographic charting of the Lake Huron coast by Henry Bayfield to produce the most accurate map of the province until the late 1850s" (Winearls, p. xxii).*

The years following the Company's establishment marked a period of explosive growth in Upper Canada, as the province's population grew from 165,000 in 1826 to 375,000 in 1846. The Company experienced considerable success in attracting settlers and developing its territories. New roads were quickly laid across the lands and new towns, such as Guelph (the Company's Headquarters) and Goderich were established (both in 1827).

However, the Canada Company quickly ran into financial and legal problems. This was, in good part, due to Galt's chaotic mismanagement and the web of corruption into which the venture became intertwined. Amazingly, Galt who had almost complete autonomy over the Company's day-to-day operations, did not even keep ledger books. Agreements were often made (and then rescinded) by means of oral conversations, and no proper records were kept. Company agents habitually embezzled funds and leading members of the "Family Compact" accepted bribes and other ill-gotten gains. Many of the regular prospective settlers and investors who had paid money to the Company were defrauded. Upper Canada's courts were inundated with lawsuits against the Company, and public outrage over the Company's behavior is thought to have been a contributing cause to Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837.

The situation was so serious that the Crown was not being paid its fees and quitrents. In 1829, the province's Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, ensured that Galt was dismissed, and had the Company placed under official audit. A more subdued culture was established, and while the Company continued to play a key role in the settlement of what would become Ontario, the vast riches imagined by the Company's founders remained elusive. The Company existed in various forms until it was folded in 1958.

The present map is one of the most important single maps in not only the history of Ontario, but of Canada generally. As the first accurate general map of Southern Upper Canada, it represents a vital primary



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artifact charting a critical period in the province's development.

The map is very rare and was evidently issued in very limited quantities. Such a large and well engraved map would have been quite expensive during its time and would have been issued expressly to be presented to major Company investors or purchased by affluent speculators. Many of the examples would have been used as wall maps and heavily marked up, so leading to a low survival rate for the map. We are aware of only two examples appearing at auction in the last half century: the Streeter copy selling in 1969 and another example selling at Sotheby's London in 1985.

The present example was clearly intended for a major stakeholder in the enterprise. It is an extraordinary example, in pristine (barely unfolded) condition, and housed in an original custom full morocco box, with the gilt arms of the Canada Company.

**Detailed Condition:**

Dissected and laid on 3 sheets of linen. Housed in a custom made slip case, richly embellished with gilt and bearing the coat of arms of the Canada Company.