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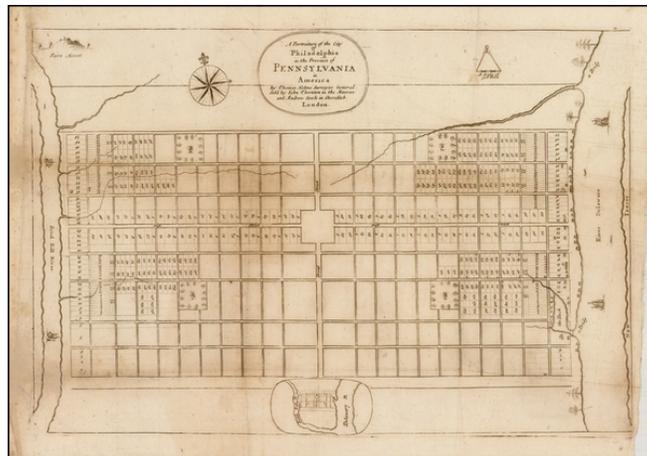
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La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

A Portraiture of the City of Philadelphia in the Province of Pennsylvania in America. [with] A Letter from William Penn Proprietary and Governour of Pennsylvania in America, To The Committee of the Free Society of Traders...

Stock#: 37576
Map Maker: Holme
Date: 1683
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size:
Price: SOLD



Description:

Extremely Rare - the first printed map of Philadelphia and a foundational document of Colonial America.

Thomas Holme's *A Portraiture of the City of Philadelphia...* (1683) is the first printed map of the city and the earliest design for a planned community in America. It is a critical primary document relating to the foundation of Pennsylvania, and one of the most important 17th Century imprints relating to America. The map is accompanied by the printed *Letter...* by William Penn, Pennsylvania's founder, explaining and promoting his new colony to prospective investors and settlers. It also includes the original *Advertisement...* by Thomas Holme, Penn's official surveyor, explaining his map of Philadelphia. The map is exceedingly rare, as no example had been offered at auction in over 30 years.

The present map is a detailed master plan for the future city of Philadelphia, the site of which was selected in 1682 as the capital of Pennsylvania. The design was conceived by Thomas Holme, the first Surveyor General of Pennsylvania, and a close confidant of William Penn. As shown on the map, the city was planned to be laid out on a 12,000 acre rectangular tract (approximately 1 mile wide and 2 miles long) bisecting a peninsula that lay between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. On these lands the new city was to be constructed along a rectangular grid of wide streets, featuring five large public squares.

While Holme's plan was made prior to the city's construction, the realized street plan of the city came to closely follow his design, which is still evident to this day. The main east-west artery was to be called High Street (today's Market Street) and the main north-south thoroughfare was to be named Broad Street.



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These two main arteries were to be 100 feet wide, while all other streets were to be 50 feet wide, generally much wider than the streets in comparable towns (such as New York, Boston and London). The five public squares were named Centre Square (later the site of City Hall), Northeast Square (today's Franklin Square), Northwest Square (Logan Square), Southwest Square (Rittenhouse Square), and Southeast Square (Washington Square). The map includes the outlines of the cadastral lots, identified by numbers, which had already been granted or sold to proprietors, including 149 lots fronting the Delaware River, 43 lots fronting the Schuylkill River and 192 street lots in the interior. The lot numbers correspond to a list of proprietors that originally accompanied the map. A small ovoid inset located in the bottom center of the map is inhabited by general perspective of the city's location on the peninsula between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. The rivers themselves are adorned with sailing ships and their banks feature stylized illustrations of flora, lending the composition a pleasant disposition.

Notably, Holme's map was engraved by John Thornton (1741-1708), one of the greatest English mapmakers of the era, being the official cartographer to the Hudson's Bay Company and the publisher of *The English Pilot, Fourth Book* (1689), the first sea atlas dedicated to England's American colonies.

William Penn, Thomas Holme and the Foundation of Philadelphia

The story of Holme's map and its role in the foundation of Philadelphia, the future first city of the American Colonies, is captivating. It begins with William Penn (1644-1718), a Quaker convert and the son of English Admiral Sir William Penn (1711-70). Much of Penn's early adulthood had been spent promoting Quakerism, a doctrinally strict but, in many ways, socially enlightened sect of Christianity. While estranged from his father and persecuted by royal authorities over his religious beliefs, Penn nevertheless inherited his father's estate and the large debt owed to Sir William by Charles II. In lieu of repaying the debt in cash, the king offered Penn the opportunity to create a proprietary colony in North America. The area that is now southeastern Pennsylvania had previously been settled by the Swedes and Dutch, but had been under English rule since 1665. In July 1681, Charles II formally granted Penn a charter entitling him to a large swath of territory running from the west bank of the Delaware River, through the interior of the continent (supposedly as far as the Pacific), roughly between 39°30' and 42° North.

Penn quickly dispatched three agents (called "Commissioners") to America to scout out his new colony, which he named Pennsylvania (meaning 'Penn's Woods'), and to locate a site for a capital city. The site chosen was an unsettled area of high ground between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, known to the local Lenape people as Coaquannock (meaning "pine grove"). The commissioners purchased the land from local Swedish settlers and made a report to Penn, who approved the location.



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Penn had grand and idealistic ambitions for the new colony, built around his Quaker values of hard work, pacifism, charity, and religious tolerance. He fittingly named the new capital Philadelphia (meaning "Brotherly Love" in Greek), after a city in Asia Minor mentioned in Revelation in the *New Testament*. Unlike other English American colonial towns which had developed organically, such as Boston, New York and Charleston, Penn's envisioned "greene country towne" was to be built according to a meticulous plan, following enlightened precepts. Before leaving England for Pennsylvania in April 1682, Penn appointed his friend, Thomas Holme, to create the plan for Philadelphia.

Thomas Holme (1624-95) was an experienced estate surveyor, having worked in both England and Ireland, and was a prominent member of Penn's Quaker circle. He was born in Lancashire and served in the Parliamentary Army during the English Civil War. He likely met Penn and converted to Quakerism while both lived in County Wexford, Ireland, in the 1660s. Appointed as the Surveyor General of Pennsylvania, Holme arrived in the province in August 1782 and served as one of Penn's key lieutenants for the rest of his days.

In consultation with Penn, Holme settled on a rectangular grid and square plan for Philadelphia. Such a geometric layout was by no means a novel concept. In fact, it had been favored by the Ancient Romans who built the majority of their towns on some form of this concept. While the geometric grid fell out of favor during the Medieval Era, the concept was revived by Renaissance planners. Indeed, by the 17th Century many important cities, notably Turin, Italy, were rebuilt on a grid plan.

The impetus for reviving the rectangular grid plan in England was the Great Fire of London of 1666. Pre-Fire London consisted of a Medieval warren of narrow streets. Not only did this convoluted and congested plan help spread the plague, but it ensured that the city went up like a tinderbox following a small fire in a bakery. While London was rebuilt on its ancient plan, the tragedy spurred many of London's leading minds, including John Evelyn, Robert Hooke and Christopher Wren (all acquaintances of Penn) to formally investigate new designs of urban planning. While the solution of a rectangular grid was not always followed, it was generally agreed that a city should feature wide streets in some form of regular pattern and that built-up areas should be interspersed with ample greenspace. Philosophically, the appreciation for a rational urban design prefigured the ethics of the Enlightenment period that was soon to follow. This was viewed to be beneficial for reasons of fire prevention, public health, transportation and ease of surveying.

Both Penn and Holme were greatly enamored with these concepts which employed "well-ordered spaces", as it accorded perfectly with their Quaker ideals of creating a disciplined, healthful, proscriband humane



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society. Holme developed the present map as a blueprint for Philadelphia's future development. As noted in Holme's Advertisement that accompanied the map, Holme believed that the natural location of Philadelphia was magnificent, as "such a situation is scarce to be paralleled."

In developing Philadelphia's five public squares, Holme explicitly mentions that he was inspired by Moorfields, a large public garden in northeast London, that had long brought much pleasure to the city's inhabitants. As conceived by Holme, even the proprietors on the smallest designated property lots in Philadelphia would have "about half an acre" of land which would be "room enough for a house, garden, and small orchard, to the great content and satisfaction of all here concerned", luxuries almost unimaginable in London.

The only major disagreement between Penn and Holme revolved around the naming of the streets (other than Broad and High Streets). Holme wanted to name the thoroughfares after prominent individuals, however, Penn thought that the memorialization of men was against the Quaker value of modesty. The proprietor's view prevailed, and many streets were named after trees, such as Chestnut, Locust, Mulberry and Walnut, names that continue to this day.

The founding Pennsylvania is generally considered to be one of the smoothest and most successful rollouts of a new colony in British history. Penn's marketing campaign was highly effective in attracting settlers to Pennsylvania. He also proved to be a good administrator, ensuring that the colony prospered in its early years. Impressively, the colony's population grew from 600 in 1683 to 11,400 in 1690. Thomas Holme's *A Mapp of Ye Improved Part of Pensilvania* (1687) charts the early success of the colony, as it shows how the province had developed in the greater region surrounding Philadelphia, employing a reduced version of the present map as an inset.

Holme's plan was, more or less, implemented and today downtown Philadelphia's street pattern closely follows that which is proposed on the present map. In fact, Philadelphia's city limits occupied the original boundaries as proscribed by Holme until 1854. However, while the orderly street grid and public squares were built as planned, the city's inhabitants did not fully cooperate with the Penn and Holme's concept of a spacious city. Almost immediately after taking possession of their properties, the owners of the prime lots along the Delaware River began to subdivide their lands and sell off small parcels to waiting buyers. This resulted in the creation a heavily congested corridor of settlement along the Delaware riverfront. While development eventually spread into the interior along Market Street, the notion that each household would preserve an "orchard" in their backyard was revealed to be somewhat fanciful. That being said, Philadelphia developed into the largest and most important city in Colonial America and served as the first



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capital of the United States during the War of Independence.

Holme's plan for the city was much admired and influenced the plans for new colonial cities, such as Kingston, Jamaica (1693), Savannah, Georgia (1733) and New York City's expansion beyond its old Dutch boundaries (1770s onwards). As the first model for a planned city in America, it is a milestone in the history of urban America.

The Rarity of Holme's Portraiture and William Penn's Letter

The present map appeared within a pamphlet, entitled *A letter from William Penn proprietary and governour of Pennsylvania in America, to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of that province, residing in London...* (London, 1683). The pamphlet was issued in the autumn of 1683 in three different editions, each "printed and sold by Andrew Sowle, at the Crooked-Billet in Holloway-Lane in Shoreditch, and at several stationers in London". The different editions can be distinguished by minor differences in pagination and typography, although the content of all three are the same. All of the editions consist of four parts after the title; 1) Penn's *Letter...*; 2) Holme's *Advertisement...* explaining the map; 3) Holme's map, the *Portraiture...*; and 4) an index to the property owners in Philadelphia, corresponding to numbers on the map.

William Penn's Letter to "the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of the Province" (meaning prospective investors and settlers in the Pennsylvania scheme), dated Philadelphia, August 3 1683, is both historically important and a fascinating read. It is nothing short of an ebullient and detailed disquisition extolling the innumerable virtues of Pennsylvania. While some liberties were clearly taken, including comparing Philadelphia's climate to that of the south of France, the arguments presented are well written, carefully ordered and, most of all, convincing. The Letter was a key part of Penn's successful marketing campaign to establish the colony.

The manuscript for Holme's map and the other contents of the pamphlet were drafted in Philadelphia in August 1683, and then hastily dispatched to London. The map and pamphlet were then quickly engraved (the map by John Thornton and the text by Andrew Soule), and distributed to Penn's investors and prospective settlers. It was not unusual for contemporary London printers, such as Soule, to issue multiple editions of the same pamphlet, as the copper plates wore down and needed to be altered. While perhaps as many as 300 examples of the pamphlet were originally issued, the work was sold without a binding (leaving it exposed to damage), would have been heavily used, and treated as ephemera, so accounting for its low survival rate.



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Importantly, while Holme's map is present and is complete in and of itself, the pamphlet to which it belongs is otherwise incomplete. <<<< INSERT CONDITION REPORT >>>>.

The map and pamphlet are exceedingly rare. The last example of the pamphlet, including the original map, being offered at auction appeared in 1981, and we are not aware of any examples appearing in dealer's catalogs during the last 25 years.

APPENDIX

This Appendix includes the original text of 3 of the non-cartographic sections of the pamphlet in which Thomas Holme's map appears (excluding the Index of property owners), including: A) The text of the Title Page; B) The Text of Willaim Penn's *Letter...* (abridged); C) Holme's *Advertisement...*, explaining his map.

A) Text of the Title Page:

A Letter from William Penn Proprietary Governor of Pennsylvania in America, to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders of that Province, residing in London.

Containing A General Description of the said Province, its Soil, Air, Water, Seasons, and Produce, both Natural and Artificial, and the good Increase thereof. Of the Natives or Aborigines, their Language, Customs and Manners, Diet, Houses or Wigwams, Liberality, Easy Way of Living, Physic, Burial, Religion, Sacrifices and Cantico, Festivals, Government, and their order in Council upon Treaties for Land, etc., their Justice upon Evildoers. Of the first Planters, the Dutch, etc., and the present Condition and Settlement of the said Providence, and Courts of Justice, etc.

To which is added, an Account of the City of Philadelphia Newly laid out. Its Situation between two Navigable Rivers, Delaware and Schuylkill with a Portraiture or Plat-form thereof, Wherein the Purchasers' Lots are distinguished by certain Numbers inserted directing to a Catalogue of the said Purchasers' Names And the Prosperous and Advantageous Settlements of the Society aforesaid within the said City and Country, etc.

Printed and Sold by Andrew Sowle, at the Crooked-Billet in Holloway-Lane in Shoreditch, and at Several Stationers in London, 1683.

B) The abridged text of A Letter from William Penn...:

A Letter from William Penn, Proprietary and Governor of Pennsylvania in America, & c. [to the



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Committee of the Free Society of Traders of that province, dated Philadelphia, 16 August 1683].

My Kind Friends;

*The kindness of yours by the ship Thomas and Anne, does much oblige me; for by it I perceive the interest you take in my health and reputation, and the prosperous beginnings of this province, which you are so kind as to think may much depend upon them. In return of which, I have sent you a long letter, and yet containing as brief an account of myself and the affairs of this province as I have been able to make.
[...]*

For the Province, the general Condition of it take as followeth.

I. The country itself in its soil, air, water, seasons, and produce, both natural and artificial, is not to be despised. The land contains divers sorts of earth, as sand, yellow and black, poor and rich; also gravel, both loamy and dusty; and in some places a fast fat earth, like to our best vales in England, especially by inland brooks and rivers. God in His wisdom having ordered it so, that the advantages of the country are divided, the back lands being generally three to one richer than those that lie by navigable waters. We have much of another soil, and that is a black hazel mold upon a stony or rocky bottom.

II. The air is sweet and clear, the heavens serene, like the south parts of France, rarely overcast; and as the woods come by numbers of people to be more cleared, that itself will refine.

III. The waters are generally good, for the rivers and brooks have mostly gravel and stony bottoms, and in number hardly credible. We have also mineral waters that operate in the same manner with Chipping Barnet and Northhaw, not two miles from Philadelphia.

IV. For the seasons of the year, having by God's goodness now lived over the coldest and hottest that the oldest liver in the province can remember, I can say something to an English understanding...

V. The natural produce of the country, of vegetables, is trees, fruits, plants, flowers. The trees of most note are the black walnut, cedar, cypress, chestnut, poplar, gumwood, hickory, sassafras, ash, beech; and oak of divers sorts, as red, white, and black, Spanish, chestnut, and swamp, the most durable of all; of all which there is plenty for the use of man.

The fruits that I find in the woods are the white and black mulberry, chestnut, walnut, plums, strawberries, cranberries, huckleberries, and grapes of divers sorts. The great red grape (now ripe) called



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by ignorance the fox grape (because of the relish it has with unskillful palates), is in itself an extraordinary grape, and by art doubtless may be cultivated to an excellent wine; if not so sweet, yet little inferior to the Frontignac, as it is not much unlike [it] in taste, ruddiness set aside, which in such things, as well as mankind, differs the case much. There is a white kind of muscatel, and a little black grape like the cluster grape of England, not yet so ripe as the other; but, they tell me, when ripe, sweeter, and that they only want skillful pignerons to make good use of them. I intend to venture on it with my Frenchman this season, who shows some knowledge in those things. Here are also peaches, and very good, and in great quantities, not an Indian plantation without them;....

VI. The artificial produce of the country is wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas, beans, squashes, pumpkins, watermelons, muskmelons, and all herbs and roots that our gardens in England usually bring forth. Note, that Edward Jones, son-in-law to Thomas Wynne, living on the Schuylkill, had with ordinary cultivation, for one grain of English barley, seventy stalks and ears of barley; and it is common in this country from one bushel sown, to reap forty, often fifty, and sometimes sixty. And three pecks of wheat sow an acre here.

VII. Of living creatures, fish, fowl, and the beasts of the woods, here are divers sorts, some for food and profit, and some for profit only. For food as well as profit, the elk, as big as a small ox, deer bigger than ours, beaver, raccoon, rabbits [and] squirrels, and some eat young bear, and commend it. Of fowl of the land, there is the turkey (forty and fifty pound weight), which is very great, pheasants, heath-birds, pigeons, and partridges in abundance. Of the water, the swan, goose, white and gray, brants, ducks, teal, also the snipe and curlew, and that in great numbers; but the duck and teal excel, nor so good have I ever eaten in other countries. Offish, there is the sturgeon, herring, rock, shad, catshead, sheepshead, eel, smelt, perch, roach; and in inland rivers, trout, some say salmon, above the Falls. Of shellfish, we have oysters, crabs, cockles, conches and mussels; some oysters six inches long, and one sort of cockles as big as the stewing oysters; they make a rich broth. The creatures for profit only by skin or fur, and that are natural to these parts, are the wildcat, panther, otter, wolf, fox, fisher, mink, muskrat; and of the water, the whale for oil, of which we have good store; and two companies of whalers, whose boats are built, will soon begin their work, which has the appearance of a considerable improvement; to say nothing of our reasonable hopes of good cod in the bay.

VIII. We have no want of horses, and some are very good and shapely enough....

X. The woods are adorned with lovely flowers, for color, greatness, figure, and variety. I have seen the gardens of London best stored with that sort of beauty, but think they may be improved by our woods....



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XI. The Natives I shall consider in their persons, language, manners, religion, and government, with my sense of their original. For their persons, they are generally tall, straight, well built, and of singular proportion; they tread strong and clever, and mostly walk with a lofty chin. Of complexion black, but by design, as the gypsies in England. They grease themselves with bear's fat clarified, and using no defense against sun or weather, their skins must needs be swarthy. Their eye is little and black, not unlike a straight-looking Jew....

XIII. Of their customs and manners there is much to be said. I will begin with children. So soon as they are born they wash them in water, and while very young, and in cold weather to choose, they plunge them in the rivers to harden and embolden them....

XVII. If a European comes to see them, or calls for lodging at their house or wigwam, they give him the best place and first cut. If they come to visit us, they salute us with an Itah, which is as much as to say "Good be to you," and set them down, which is mostly on the ground, close to their heels, their legs upright. [It] may be they speak not a word more, but observe all passages. If you give them anything to eat or drink, [that is] well, for they will not ask; and, be it little or much, if it be with kindness, they are well pleased, else they go away sullen, but say nothing....

XIX. But in liberality they excel; nothing is too good for their friend. Give them a fine gun, coat, or other thing, it may pass twenty hands before it sticks; light of heart, strong affections, but soon spent, the most merry creatures that live, [they] feast and dance perpetually; they never have much, nor want much. Wealth circulates like the blood, all parts partake; and though none shall want what another has, yet [they are] exact observers of property....

XXV. We have agreed that in all differences between us, six of each side shall end the matter. Don't abuse them, but let them have justice, and you win them. The worst is, that they are the worse for the Christians, who have propagated their vices and yielded them tradition for ill, and not for good things. But as low an ebb as they are at, and as glorious as their own condition looks, the Christians have not outlived their sight with all their pretensions to a higher manifestation. What good then might not a good people graft, where there is so distinct a knowledge left between good and evil? I beseech God to incline the hearts of all that come into these parts to outlive the knowledge of the natives, by a fixed obedience to their greater knowledge of the will of God. For it were miserable indeed for us to fall under the just censure of the poor Indian conscience, while we make profession of things so far transcending....

XXVII. The first planters in these parts were the Dutch, and soon after them the Swedes and Finns. The



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Dutch applied themselves to traffic, the Swedes and Finns to husbandry. There were some disputes between them [for] some years; the Dutch looking upon them as intruders upon their purchase and possession, which was finally ended in the surrender made by John Rising, the Swedes' governor, to Peter Stuyvesant, governor for the States of Holland, anno 1655....

XXXI.And for the well government of the said counties, courts of justice are established in every county, with proper officers, as justices, sheriffs, clerks, constables, etc.; which courts are held every two months. But, to prevent lawsuits, there are three peacemakers chosen by every county court, in the nature of common arbitrators, to hear and end differences betwixt man and man. And spring and fall there is an orphan's court in each county, to inspect and regulate the affairs of orphans and widows....

XXXIII.Your city lot is a whole street and one side of a street, from river to river, containing near one hundred acres, not easily valued; which is, besides your four hundred acres in the city liberties, part of your twenty thousand acres in the country....

Your kind cordial friend, William Penn

C) The text of Holmes's Advertisement...:

A Short Advertisement upon the Situation and Extent of the City Philadelphia and the Ensuing Plat-Form thereof, by the Surveyor-General.

The City of Philadelphia now extends in length, from river to river, two miles, and in breadth near a mile; and the governor, as a further manifestation of his kindness to the purchasers, has freely given them their respective lots in the city without any defalcation of any [of] their quantities of purchased lands. And as it is now placed and modeled between two navigable rivers upon a neck of land and that ships may ride in good anchorage in six or eight fathom water in both rivers, close to the city, and the land of the city level, dry, and wholesome: such a situation is scarce to be paralleled.

The city is so ordered now, by the governor's care and prudence, that it has a front to each river, one-half Delaware, the other at Schuylkill; and though all this cannot make way for small purchasers to be in the fronts, yet they are placed in the next streets, contiguous to each front, viz., all purchasers of one thousand acres and upwards have the fronts (and the High Street), and to every five thousand acres purchase in the front about an acre, and the smaller purchasers about half an acre in the backward streets; by which means the least has room enough for a house, garden, and small orchard, to the great content and satisfaction of all here concerned.



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The city (as the model shows) consists of a large Front Street to each river, and a High Street (near the middle) from front (or river) to front, of one hundred foot broad, and a Broad street in the middle of the city, from side to side, of the like breadth. In the center of the city is a square of ten acres; at each angle are to be houses for public affairs, as a meeting house, assembly or state house, market house, school house, and several other buildings of public concerns. There are also in each quarter of the city a square of eight acres, to be for the like uses, as the Moorfields in London; and eight streets (besides the High Street) that run from front to front, and twenty streets (besides the Broad Street) that run across the city, from side to side; all these streets are of fifty foot breadth.

In each number in the draft, in the fronts and High Street, are placed the purchasers of one thousand acres and upwards, to make up five thousand acres lot (both in the said fronts and High Street), and the numbers direct to each lot, and were in the city; so that thereby they may know where their concerns are therein.

The front lots begin at the south ends of the fronts, by the numbers, and so reach to the north ends, and end at Number 43.

The High Street lots begin towards the fronts, at Number 44, and so reach to the center.

The lesser purchasers begin at Number 1, in the Second Streets, and so proceed by the numbers, as in the draft; the biggest of them being first placed, nearest to the fronts.

The following is a link to the complete text of the letter: {{ inventory_enlarge_link('37576a') }}

Detailed Condition: