Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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A New and Correct Chart of the North Part of America from New Found Land to Hudson's Bay. Sold By W. & I. Mount & T. Page on Tower Hill London.

Stock#: 38544
Map Maker: Mount & Page

Date: 1751 circa
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 22 x 17.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

A fine Mount & Page edition of John Thornton's important sea chart of Hudson's Bay and Eastern Canada.

This fascinating sea chart embraces all of eastern Canada, from the southern part of Baffin Island down to include the Canadian Maritimes, although it is focused on Hudson Bay and the massive Quebec-Labrador Peninsula. It is from the 1751 edition of Mount & Page's *English Pilot Fourth Book*, the era's most popular British sea atlas relating to North America and the West Indies and is printed from the same (but altered plate) as John Thronton's original edtion of 1699.

One will immediately notice that while the depiction of the Hudson Bay and Straits, Labrador and Newfoundland, is quite accurate for the time, the southern areas take on a nebulous form. This is simply because, until the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) the river and Gulf of St. Lawrence was French territory, forbidden to British mariners and thus was of little interest to London chart makers.

Most notably, the chart is an important map relating to the early history of Canada and the activities of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay (better known as the Hudson's Bay Company, or simply the HBC), in particular. It accurately defines the core territories of the HBC, an institution that played a dominant role in the history of Canada for 200 years.

The map features an excellent rendering of Hudson and James Bays and while far from scientific, the outlines of these vast seas is impressively accurate. The chart features many place names that were at the

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heart of the HBC's operations. These include the region of 'New South Wales', 'P. Nelson' (Port Nelson, named by the explorer Thomas Button in 1612), 'York Factory' (founded 1684), 'Moose River' (Moose River, home to Moose Factory, founded 1673) and 'Ruperts R.' (home to Rupert's Fort, founded 1668). A curious feature of the map is the 'Frenchmens River' which is erroneously shown to connect James Bay with the St. Lawrence River.

The map is based on the cartography of John Thornton (1641-1708), who, along with John Seller, was the most important figure in English cartography during its ascendency in the latter 17th Century. Thornton first learned to draft manuscript charts as an apprentice to John Burston and soon became a leading member of the 'Thames School' of maritime chartmakers. The Thames School was noted for incorporating the latest overseas discoveries by London mariners into beautifully drafted manuscript charts but their influence was limited as they initially published very little of their work.

By the 1660s, Thornton set out to change this, and in cooperation with John Seller and William Fisher, began to publish charts and atlases. However, Thornton proved to be the only Thames School alumnus who could make a financial success of publishing. His stock rose rapidly in rarified London circles and he was appointed to be the Official Cartographer to the English East India Company (EIC) and cartographer in ordinary, to the Hudson's Bay Company. He also had a privileged relationship with the Lords of Trade, the official body which oversaw England's colonies in North America and the West Indies, which yielded access to important manuscripts.

Thornton issued several groundbreaking maps of North America in the 1670s and early 1680s and published *The English Pilot, Fourth Book* (1689), the first English sea atlas dedicated to the Americas. This was followed by The *English Pilot, Third Book* (1703), the first English sea atlas of African and Asian navigation. Thornton's charts, with their progressive sources and elegant signature style, are today prized as amongst the most important maps of their era.

Following Thornton's death in 1708, his son, Samuel, continued the business until his passing in 1715. Following that, the business and the Thornton plates were bought by the Thornton's rivals, William Mount & Thomas Page, who issued their own editions of the *English Pilot Fourth Book*, starting in 1716. The volume proved to be exceedingly popular, as the Mount & Page firm (later changed to Mount & Davidson) issued editions regularly until 1794.

Thornton first printed chart of Hudson's Bay, entitled *A Chart of ye North part of America, For Hudson Bay Commonly called North West Passage*, appeared in the 1689 first edition of the *English Pilot, Fourth Book*, being reduced from his separately-issued map of the same title, first printed in 1677.

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Thornton included the present chart in his 1699 ediiton of the *English Pilot, Fourth Book*. With its improved delineation of the shores of Hudson and James Bay, it was intended to replace the former chart in ongiong editions of the English Pilot. The present example appears in the 1751 Mount & Page edition of the atlas and is identical to the first edition, save for the appearence of Mount & Page's imprint in the place of Thorton's.

The Hudson's Bay Company was founded as the world's most ambitious fur-trading venture in 1670, following the successful mission of Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers and Captain Zachariah Gillam. At first, the governors of the HBC were hesitant to disseminate the geographic intelligence of the Hudson's Bay region that their agents had newly acquired, fearing that it might encourage potential competitors. However, they eventually decided that printing accurate maps as devices to entice new investors outweighed these concerns and Thornton was authorized to include the latest discoveries on his printed maps.

This allowed Thornton to move far beyond the established mapping of Hudson's Bay done by Henry Hudson (1610-11), Sir Thomas Button (1612-3) and Thomas James (1630-1). Thornton's late-breaking sources, all of which were used to prepare the present chart, included the geographic intelligence provided by the scouting mission of Groseilliers and Gillam, of 1668-9, along the eastern shore of James Bay (around the mouth of the Rupert River) and the west coast of Hudson's Bay (around the mouth of the Nelson River). This was followed by further information collected by Groseilliers and Pierre-Esprit Radisson in 1670-1.

Most notably, Thornton had access to the carefully guarded manuscript maps done under the direction of Charles Bayly, the first overseas governor of the HBC, Radisson and the adventurer Thomas Gort, in 1671-2. These maps covered all of the shores of James Bay and most of Hudson's Bay and were based on careful, yet unscientific, reconnaissance. While Bayly was known to be a unpredictable religious fanatic, who was allegedly sent to Hudson's Bay by King Charles II in order to 'be rid of him', he proved to be a very intrepid explorer.

The present chart is a key map for any collection of cartography relating to eastern Canada, arctic exploration and the Hudson's Bay Company.

Detailed Condition:
Some restoration along centerfold.