



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Carte des Voyages du Cape. Carver, dans la partie interieure de L'Amerique Septentrionale, en 1766, et 1767.

Stock#: 41300dm
Map Maker: Carver
Date: 1784
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 10.5 x 13.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of Jonathan Carver's map of the Upper Midwest, one of the most important maps depicting an exploration of the Upper Mississippi River and environs on a printed map.

The map depicts the region from Lake Michigan to the Lake of the Woods, and extending as far south as the confluence of the Mississippi River with the Wisconsin River near Prairie du Chien.

The map provides a remarkably detailed and heavily annotated description of the region, being one of the first maps to treat the Upper Midwest (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Western Michigan and northern Iowa) in significant detail. Of note, it is the first map to show an overland attempt to locate the supposed Northwest Passage by an American Colonist.

Jonathan Carver (1710 - 1780) was a colonial Massachusetts explorer and writer. He was born in Weymouth, Massachusetts, and then moved with his family to Canterbury, Connecticut. He later married Abigail Robbins and became a shoemaker.

In 1755, Carver joined the Massachusetts colonial militia at the start of the French and Indian War. In 1757, Carver, a friend of Robert Rogers, enlisted with Burke's Rangers. Burke's Rangers would in 1758 become a part of Rogers' Rangers. During the war he studied surveying and mapping techniques. He was successful in the military and eventually became captain of a Massachusetts regiment in 1761. Two years later he quit the army with a determination to explore the new territories acquired by the British as a result of the war.



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Initially Carver was unable to find a sponsor for his proposed explorations but in 1766, Robert Rogers contracted Carver to lead an expedition to find a western water route to the Pacific Ocean, the Northwest Passage. There was a great incentive to discover this route.

Carver left Fort Michilimackinac in the spring of 1766. Taking large fur-trading canoes, he traveled the well-utilized trade routes of the French. His route took him along the northern coast of Lake Michigan, cut across to the modern Door County peninsula in Wisconsin, and proceeded along the western edge of the bay until reaching the modern Green Bay, Wisconsin.

There was a small Metis settlement at the foot of Green Bay, as well as a French monastery nearby in De Pere, Wisconsin. Carver resupplied here and then continued. He traveled up the Fox River to the Winnebago Indian village at the north end of Lake Winnebago at the site of the present city of Neenah, Wisconsin. Continuing up the Fox River he eventually arrived at the "Grand Portage" a well used portage between the Fox River and the Wisconsin River. This was a major fur trade location because from the Portage, furs could proceed from the Great Lakes to the Wisconsin River, hence to the Mississippi and New Orleans.

Carver crossed to the Wisconsin River and then traveled down the Mississippi emerging at the great trade encampment at Prairie du Chien. Rather than turn south towards New Orleans, his expedition turned north into what is now Minnesota. By the late summer he had reached the Saint Anthony Falls at what is now Minneapolis. He spent some time with the tribe near the falls but turned south, down the Mississippi to find a more suitable place to spend the winter.

Carver wintered in a tribal village in what is now eastern Iowa. The next spring he encountered James Tute and James Stanley Goddard, who had been sent to accompany Carver on his journey. They continued exploring and mapping up the Mississippi River through what is now Minnesota, and Wisconsin. They then headed for Grand Portage on Lake Superior, hoping that Rogers had sent supplies there for them. However, instead of supplies they found a letter from him chiding them for having spent as much money as they already had and warning them to be more thrifty in the future. Unable to proceed, they headed back to Fort Michilimackinac, arriving there on August 29, 1767.

He found that his sponsor, Royal Governor Robert Rogers, was under suspicion of plotting treason against England. On December 6, 1767, Rogers was arrested, charged with treason, placed in irons and put in solitary confinement. While he spent a miserable winter in an unheated guardhouse, Carver probably spent time preparing his journal of the expedition for publication. In the spring of 1768, the first ship of the season took Carver and Rogers both to Detroit. Carver travelled in the relative comfort of a passenger cabin, while Rogers was forced to sit out the journey seated upon the ballast rocks in the hold of the ship.



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Rogers was taken to Montreal to be court-martialed, and although he was found not guilty of the charges against him, he was not returned to his position as Royal Governor. Carver submitted a list of expenses to his superiors, but payment was denied on the grounds that Rogers had not had sufficient authority to order such an expedition.

Carver believed that he had been legitimately hired by the Crown to map and explore the newly acquired territory. He believed that he had possibly identified a Northwest Passage. He had spent two years working and now had little to show for it but maps and log books. No one seemed interested. In 1769, Carver left for England to petition the government for his promised payment and for a reward for identifying a potential Northwest Passage.

He left his wife Abigail in the colonies and never saw her again. He spent the remainder of his life petitioning the British government for his payments. He did in fact ultimately get two separate grants from the crown, although not the great reward for identifying a Northwest Passage.

In the 20th century, the reliability of Carver's narrative has been debated by scholars; examination of Carver's manuscript journal establishes that it differs in important respects from the published version. More recent research points to the conclusion that while Carver actually made the tour he describes, he suppressed the fact that he performed it as a hired agent of Royal Governor Major Robert Rogers, rather than on his own responsibility.

After Carver's death, Dr. John Coakley Lettsom purchased the copyrights to the book and had published a third edition. Lettsom claimed he had in his possession a deed, signed by two chiefs of the Sioux, giving Carver title to about 10,000 square miles in what is now Wisconsin and Minnesota. The deed could not be located after the death of Carver's London widow.

In 1804, a group of descendants of Carver petitioned the U.S. Congress for ownership rights to a large tract of land in Wisconsin and Minnesota, claiming that the deed supposedly dated at the "Great Cave, May the 1st, 1767" entitled Carver and his family to over 10,000 square miles of land. Specifically they identified; "the whole of a certain tract or territory of land, bounded as follows, viz.: from the Falls of St. Anthony, running on the east bank of the Mississippi, nearly southeast, as far as Lake Pepin, where the Chippewa joins the Mississippi, and from thence eastward, five days travel, accounting twenty English miles per day, and from thence again to the Falls of St. Anthony, on a direct straight line." This triangular tract in northwestern Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota would have been bounded by lines running from modern Minneapolis southeast to Pepin, then due east to near Stevens Point, and from there northwest roughly through Eau Claire to Minneapolis.



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Congress investigated their claim and ultimately concluded that English law at the time prohibited any land grants to individuals. They also concluded that Carver himself never made any mention of such a grant in his book or afterwards, and finally that no Indians in the region had any knowledge of such a transaction having been made by their grandparents' generation; in 1817, Sioux elders in St. Paul had even told Carver's heirs that no chiefs with the names on the deed had ever existed. Congress concluded, on Jan. 29, 1823, not to permit Carver's heirs the rights to this land in Wisconsin. Land speculators and con-men nevertheless continued to promote the sale of portions of "Carver's Grant" for another half century.

Detailed Condition: