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Map of Upper Canada. Shewing the Proposed Routes of Rail Roads, for the purpose of extending the Trade of the Province. Dedicated to His Excellency, Sir Francis Bond Head. K.C. H & G. and Prussian M.O.M. Lieut Governor of U.C. By his Humble devoted Servant, John Smyth. . . Toronto, 1837.

Stock#: 42441
Map Maker: Smyth / Currier
Date: 1837
Place: New York
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 36 x 28 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Wall Map of Canada, Proposing A Canadian-American Trans-Continental Railway in 1837!

Nice example of this rare and highly important map of Upper Canada and the Great Lakes, illustrating the author's proposal for the establishment of a Railroad from Canada to the Pacific Coast. This Toronto published map of the Great Lakes region, was prepared by John Smyth, one of the most colorful characters in Canadian Cartographic History.

Sir John, a title Smyth gave himself, was a major advocate of a railroad route extending from New York and Montreal to the Rocky Mountains and the Columbia River, as a means of increasing trade with China and India. His proposed route commenced in Toronto and continued westward below Lake Huron, crossing the St. Claire River and proceeding west to St. Josephs and Chicago.

The map was engraved for Currier by James Hamilton in New York, and includes a depiction of a steam engine with three cars. The map is without question one of the earliest general railroad advocacy maps and one of the earliest obtainable large format separately published maps of the Great Lakes region. Coming only 7 years after the commencement of operations of the earliest railroad in Britain and the United States, and less than 1 year after the completion of Canada's first real railroad, the Champlain and Saint Lawrence Railroad from La Prairie on the St Lawrence River to St Johns on the Richelieu River (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu), Smyth's map was extremely early and may have been influenced by the writings of Dr. Hartwell Carver, an American Doctor and Entrepreneur. Carver's push for a railroad to connect



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both coasts of the United States began in 1832 with a proposal that was dismissed by Congress. Over the next several years, Carver wrote a series of articles in the *New York Courier* and *Enquirer* about the subject. Carver advocated a line from Lake Michigan to Oregon.

By his own account, John Smyth was "born and bred up in this Province of Canada" and worked as a farmer until he was 23 years old. In about 1815, Smyth became a land agent in York. Smyth was a railway enthusiast, and in 1837 he published his *Map of Upper Canada, shewing the proposed routes of rail roads, for the purpose of extending the trade of the Province*. Copies of this map were sold by Toronto book-dealers Henry Rowsell, Robert Stanton, and James Lesslie. Eight years later Smyth published a short essay entitled "Railroad communication", in which he made one of the first public proposals calling for the construction of an all-Canadian railway route, saying that, in the event of war between Great Britain and the United States, a branch of the railway should be built "to run in the rear of Lake Huron, and also in the rear of Lake Superior, twenty miles in the interior of the county of the lake aforesaid; to unite with the Railroad from Lake Superior to Winnipeg at the north-west main trading post of the North West Company."

A fascinating map, combining early railroad history, trade with the West and China, one of the most interesting of all Canadian map makers. Printed on thin bluish paper, it is rare on the market, with the only recorded sale of the map at auction being the Streeter Copy (6:3856), which sold for \$130.00 in 1969 (previously acquired by Streeter by Thomas Thorp in 1937). We also offered an example of the map in 2005.

The description for the Streeter copy noted that the copy offered in 1969 was moderately foxed, with tears and wrinkling at the folds. Streeter 6:3856.

A seminal map for Transcontinental Railroad, Canadiana and Great Lakes Collectors.

Not in Phillips, Rumsey or Modelski.

Detailed Condition:

2-sheets joined. Several minor repairs within the image, most notably in the upper left corner.