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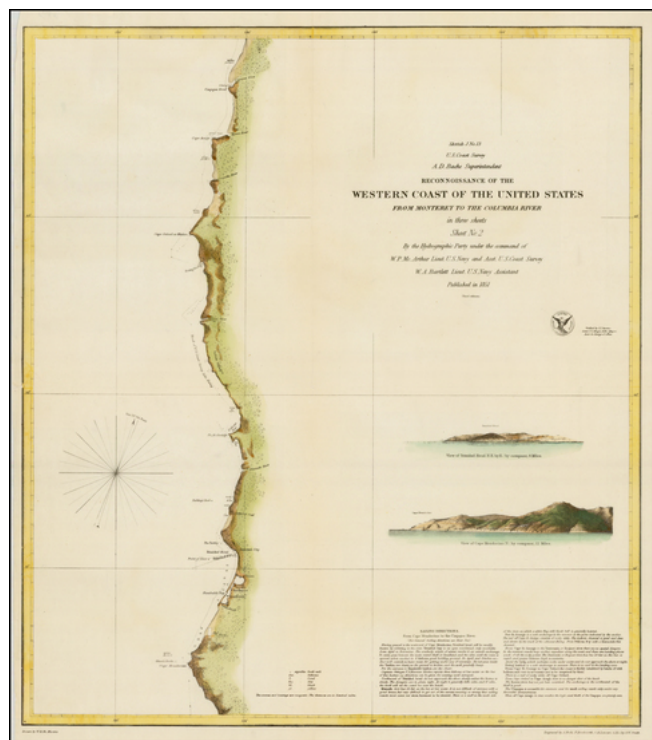
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[Umpquah River to Cape Mendocino] Reconnaissance of the Western Coast of the United States From Monterey To The Columbia River in three sheets. Sheet No. 2.

Stock#: 42732
Map Maker: United States Coast Survey
Date: 1851
Place: Washington
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19 x 17 inches
Price: \$175.00



Description:

US Coast Survey Chart Exploring Oregon and Northern California

Fine chart showing the United States western coastline from the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon to Monterey, California. First published by the US Coast Survey in 1850, it details the coasts of Oregon and Northern California at a time when the region was just beginning to be recorded in detail by Americans.

The chart includes coastal cities, as well as nautical information like soundings in fathoms. Two columns of sailing instructions are in the bottom right corner, with the title above. The chart includes very few land features, but some were necessary to show, as positions on the water could only be determined in reference to fixed points on land. Other features, like rivers and cities, can also be used as references. Here the main land references are Trinidad Head and Cape Mendocino. They are shown as profile illustrations between the title and the sailing directions.

Indigenous presence is evident on the Coast Survey's chart, which reads "Indian Villages" along the coast



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just south of Rogues' River. The chart mentions Indian populations again in its sailing instructions: "From Cape St. George to Cape Oxford, the coast is thickly inhabited by bands of wild Indians, and care is necessary to not be surprised by them."

Other important landmarks featured in this chart include Humboldt City and Humboldt Harbor, named for Alexander von Humboldt, one of the most famous European explorers and naturalists of the nineteenth century. These landmarks were named after due to his legacy of exploration and discovery. Humboldt City no longer exists—it was deserted in 1851 shortly after the creation of this chart.

The chart similarly features Union Town, a former mining town that is no longer in existence. Just north of Union Town is Trinidad City, the oldest town on Northern California's coast, which served as a valuable port for nearby mines. It was founded in 1850 but, like many towns in this region, declined in population by the close of the decade as the supply of gold dwindled. These towns can be used as markers for the abrupt rise and fall of the gold mining industry in California, and for the way it served as a hopeful prospect for new wealth in the minds of many Americans.

The Expedition of McArthur and Bartlett

The chart includes a ship's track, that of the US Coast Survey schooner *Ewing*. Lieutenants William P. McArthur and Washington A. Bartlett set off in the *Ewing* on April 3, 1850 to explore the coast north of San Francisco. Their goal was to survey the coast for future development sites, potential locations for lighthouses, and accurate hydrographical information.

Much of the documentation of this voyage came from McArthur's letters to Captain Williams. In one letter, he wrote, "We have completed a very correct outline of the coast, its headlands, Bays, Rivers and indentations from San Francisco to this place, as well as carrying on our soundings as we go, and the results are such as to please me very much" (McArthur 1915, 255). He also spoke for the precision of their work, "The limits of error may be estimated at one mile in longitude and an ½ mile in latitude. This I consider quite a triumph" (McArthur 1915, 258).

While the expedition, overall, was successful, it was not without casualties. Lieutenants Richard Bache and Robert L. Browning both drowned off the northwest coast of California on March 27, 1850 making surveying. Lieutenant Bache was the younger brother of Superintendent of the US Coast Survey Alexander Dallas Bache, whose name is mentioned in the title block.

Another topic heavily mentioned in McArthur's letters were the crew members' claims to the new land. Fitting with many colonial histories, McArthur and his mariners were quick to lay decisive claim to land



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that was already inhabited by indigenous peoples.

After the voyage through the Northwest, W.P. McArthur continued exploring. But when he set off for Panama on December 23, 1850, he contracted dysentery and perished. His death was a great loss to the Coast Survey; Professor Bache notes, "His reconnaissance of the western coast, from Monterey to Columbia river, and his preliminary survey there, were made in spite of desertion, and even mutiny...He has not lived in vain. His name will ever be bright in the annals of our Survey" (McArthur 1915, 261).

Nineteenth Century America: Westward Expansion

With the nineteenth century came booming populations in the eastern United States—cities became increasingly crowded and unsanitary. As explorers like Lewis and Clark forged westward at the beginning of the century, the West became the idyllic setting for a supposedly better and more bountiful life.

With the recent discovery of gold in California and the alluringly lush forests of the Pacific Northwest, Americans began making the journey to the new frontier. The population of the Pacific States (Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada) increased from just 100,000 to more than 400,000 in the 1850s alone, as Americans aspired to strike it rich hunting for gold and fertile soil. As settlements grew in the Western states, it became clear that this region needed better maps and charts for navigation.

It is important to note that although few Europeans had settled in the area by the mid-nineteenth century, the region was heavily populated by indigenous peoples. Nineteenth-century Americans' perception of the West as a pristine and relatively untouched wilderness conflicted with the presence of indigenous populations and their enduring use of the land.

Those interested in American History, westward expansion of the United States, coastal navigation and nautical charts, the US Coast Survey, and the Pacific Northwest would find this chart intriguing.

Detailed Condition: