



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
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(858) 551-8500  
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## 1st sheet of De Witt's State Map of New-York (with contemporary manuscript annotations)

**Stock#:** 43777  
**Map Maker:** De Witt  
**Date:** 1793 circa  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 20 x 22.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### ***Annotated Example of Simeon De Witt's Map of the New Military Tract: The First Detailed and Authoritative Map of Central New York.***

Simeon De Witt's map of the New Military Tract is of great historical importance for the State of New York. Titled *1st Sheet of De Witt's State-map of New York*, the map covers central New York from slightly east of Little Falls on the Mohawk River to the west side of Seneca Lake, and from the Pennsylvania line to Lake Ontario.

De Witt's map is largely based on the manuscript maps created from the original surveys of the New Military Tract in 1789, prepared under De Witt's supervision. However, the map includes a significantly larger area. While it was intended primarily as a property map, De Witt's *1st Sheet* incorporates hydrography, towns, and Indian reservations. As indicated by the contemporary manuscript annotations on this example of the map, the map would have been used both by De Witt in his work as surveyor general and to anyone buying or selling property in central New York.

The title reflects De Witt's plan to use this map as the first part of his long planned large format wall map of New York, which was not published until 1802 (discussed below). The township divisions shown on this map would become the source map for the next several decades and were widely copied on other maps published in the final years of the eighteenth century.



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This "1st Sheets" provides the only contemporary printed record of the information then being compiled by De Witt, which was being synthesized into manuscript maps which were largely completed in 1792. As noted by David Allen:

*The extensive mapping of the New Military Tract in central New York, which was done under the supervision of Simeon De Witt, is shown on De Witt's published maps . . . However, additional light on the history and geography of this area can be obtained from the manuscript maps that preceded the printed versions. A spectacular example is A Map of the Military Lands by De Witt's assistant, Abraham Hardenbergh, which was probably drawn in 1792. This pen-and-ink map is drawn on a very large scale (two miles to an inch), and includes a minute depiction of the hydrography in the townships and ranges of the military tract. It appears to be a kind of "master map," which may have provided the basis for the smaller-scale maps that were published later. **De Witt himself drew A Map of the Military Tract and Lands Adjacent, (ca. 1792), which is an early draft of a map later published as the "1st sheet" of his map of the State of New York.** These drafts were produced over a period of two or three years, and show significant differences in detail.*

David Allen further notes the importance of *De Witt's 1st Sheet* in the preparation of the Ebeling-Sotzmann map of New York . Ebeling specifically noted his use of the map in correspondence with Noah Webster on October 4, 1796, and Allen observes that *De Witt's 1st Sheet* served as the primary regional source for Ebeling Sotzmann.

The lack of a consensus on the dating of this map is quite interesting. The Boston Public Library notes a date of 1792. The Antiquarian Society of America and New York Public Library put the date at 1793, with other sources suggesting a date as late as 1794. We have utilized David Allen's dating of 1793.

The present state is State 2, with the Town of Middletown and the river system in the "230,400 acres ceded to Massachusetts" at the bottom center added. Wheat & Brun record 1 example of State 1 (Library of Congress) and 2 examples of State 2 (Harvard Library, acquired prior to 1831 and Clements Library). Our research also shows examples held by American Antiquarian Society, Cornell University and New York Historical Society.

#### Manuscript Annotations

The map includes two different types of manuscript annotations, the depiction of two early roads not present on the printed map and reference to early purchasers of land.



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**Patterson's Settlement:** The Treaty of Hartford (1786) settled the boundary dispute between New York and Massachusetts by transferring 203,400 acres of land to Massachusetts. In the upper section of the 203,400 acres of land ceded to Massachusetts, there appears the name Patterson. This is a reference to the lands acquired by General John Patterson. Patterson was part of the syndicate (the "Boston Purchase Company") which acquired the 203,400 acres from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in what was referred to as the Boston Purchase or Boston Ten Townships. As noted in Thomas Elgston's *The Life of John Patterson* . . . (p. 221):

*In the year 1790, General Paterson became one of the proprietors of the "Boston Purchase," which consisted of 230,400 acres in Broome and Tioga counties, New York. This property was west of the Chenango River and Owego Creek. It extended twenty miles north of the Susquehanna River. He therefore decided, in 1791, to remove from Lenox with his family to Broome County. . . The journey to Broome County was long and tedious and exceedingly difficult. It was made by passing through Catskill to Bainbridge on the Susquehanna River, where they took boats and descended the river to the present site of Binghamton, thence up the Chenango and Tionghinoga rivers, to the forks of the latter and the Otselic rivers, to Lisle, now known as Whitney's Point, in the township of Triangle, where they were the first, or among the first, settlers in the town. The place where he built his house was for a long time known as "Paterson's Settlement."*

**James Watson Tract:** At the bottom left, next to the lower part of Seneca Lake, between the Lake and the Preemption Line, the map notes the following names to the left of the lake:

- I. Lamb (John Lamb)
- I. Lawrence (Jonathan Lawrence)
- Greenleaf (James Greenleaf)
- F. Watkins (John Watkins)
- C. Livingston (Robert C. Livingston)

These lots were originally a single tract of land acquired by James Watson on August 4, 1791. These lands are sandwiched between Seneca Lake and the so called Preemption Line, which divides the Indian lands of western New York State, awarded to New York from those awarded to Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by the Treaty of Hartford of 1786. This tract of land is the subject of a map entitled

*Map of 29,914 acres of Land lying on the west side of Seneca Lake in the county of Onondaga. Surveyed for James Watson, pursuant to a resolve of the Commissioners of the Land Office. Dated August 23, 1791. Simeon De Witt, Surveyor-General.*



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**Manuscript Road / Patterson Settlement To Salt Springs:** Above the name Patterson (Whitney Point), a road depicted by a double dashed line extends more or less due north, to Salt Spring (Syracuse).

**Manuscript Road? / Owego (Tioga) to Corning ?:** From Owego (now Tioga), New York, on the Susquehanna River, a dotted line runs north, then west and ultimately south, ending in the southwestern portion of the Watkins & Flint's Purchase, apparently a precursor to the turnpikes which would connect Owego to the lands to the north and west of the Susquehanna River.

#### **New Military Tract**

The United States Congress had already guaranteed each soldier at least 100 acres at the end of the war (depending on rank), but by 1781, New York had enlisted only about half of the quota set by the U.S. Congress and needed a stronger incentive. The state legislature authorized an additional 500 acres per soldier, using land from 25 Military Tract Townships to be established in central New York State. Each of the townships was to comprise 100 lots of 600 acres. Three more such townships were later added to accommodate additional claims at the end of the war.

The 28 Townships were given classical Greek and Roman names, along with the names of English authors. The tract covered the present counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, and Seneca, and parts of Oswego, Tompkins, Schuyler and Wayne. The names themselves have been attributed to Robert Harpur, a clerk in the office of New York's Surveyor General, Simeon De Witt. Harpur apparently had an interest in classical literature.

The portion of the Military Tract north of Seneca Lake (i.e. townships of Galen and Junius), was divided by the New Preemption Line from land to its west assigned by the Treaty of Hartford of 1786 to Massachusetts. The tract immediately to the west became the Phelps and Gorham Purchase. The west limit of most of the tract was Seneca Lake.

Two Indian reservations were included in the Tract, for the Onondaga and Cayuga. All of the Cayuga and most of the Onondaga (including the City of Syracuse) were taken a few years later by New York State by treaties whose legality has been repeatedly challenged, since following the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1790, only the United States could conclude treaties with Indians.

The map is of the utmost rarity. We are not aware of another example on the market in the past 50 years.

#### **Detailed Condition:**



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Includes contemporary manuscript annotations. Repairs and some image loss along several folds, expertly reinstated.