



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

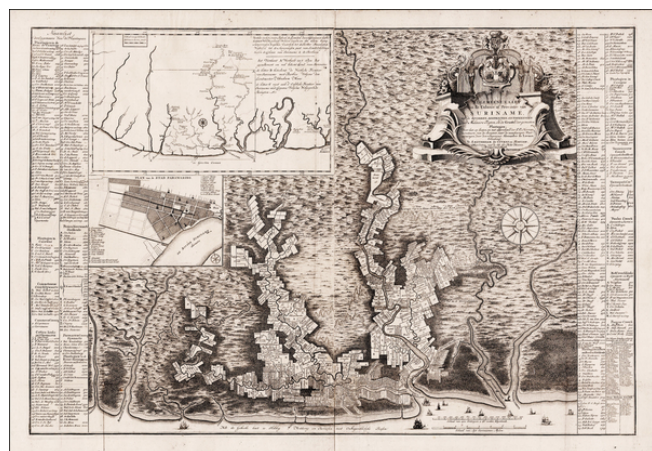
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Algemeene Kaart van de Colonie of Provintie van Suriname, met de Rivieren, Districten, Ontdekkingen door Militaire Togten, en de Groote der gemeeten Plantagien

Stock#: 46096mb
Map Maker: de Lavaux
Date: 1737 (1758)
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 23.5 x 35 inches
Price: \$4,500.00



Description:

Rare Edition of Alexander de Lavaux's Map of Surinam

An attractive and remarkably-informative map of the Dutch colony of Surinam, which in the 17th and 18th centuries was home to the earliest, largest and most significant Jewish population in the Americas.

After its 1667 capture from the English, Suriname became one of several valuable Dutch colonies on the northern coast of South America, along with Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice. From early on it was governed by the Society of Suriname, owned in equal shares by the city of Amsterdam, the Dutch West India Company (VOC) and the Van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family. Its plantation-based economy relied heavily on African slavery and produced sugar, cotton, indigo, and above all coffee, which was introduced around 1711 and by 1750 made up 50 percent of all exports. Suriname gained its independence only in 1975 and today is flanked to the east and west by French and British Guyana, respectively.

This large and striking map is oriented with north at the bottom and depicts the colony extending inland along the watershed of the Suriname River, with hundreds of plantations lining the shores. Flanking the map are long tables identifying several hundred planters and in many cases the size of their holdings. The one town of any significant size is the capital of Paramaribo near the opening of the Suriname into the Atlantic Ocean. The lack of information about the vast outlying region beyond the rivers and plantations is obscured by liberal use of archaic "molehills" to represent mountains and other symbols for swamps and woodlands.

An inset at upper left locates Suriname in relation to the neighboring Dutch colony of Berbice. This map is



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of particular interest for its references to the "maroons," groups of escaped slaves who rebelled against the Dutch administration. Along the Marawini River two "rebel slave villages" are shown, as well as a third rebel village that had been burned to the ground. Further west (i.e., to the right) mapmaker Alexander de Lavaux indicates a route he took in pursuit of the rebels, which led him deep into the interior between the Surinam and Saramacca Rivers. A second inset provides a street plan of Paramaribo, giving street names and identifying government buildings, churches, the hospital and other landmarks. The large cartouche at upper right bears the arms of the three partners in the Society of Surinam, surmounted by those of the States General of the Netherlands.

This map is of particular interest record of one of the most important early Jewish communities in the Americas. Jews of primarily Portuguese and Spanish descent arrived in Suriname in waves in the mid-17th century, attracted by the official tolerance of the English and then the Dutch authorities. One researcher has identified no fewer than 70 Jewish-owned plantations on the map, the vast majority along the Surinam River in the vicinity of the settlements at "Joodsch Dorp" and "de Joode Savaane." (Richard Gottheil, "Contributions to the History of the Jews in Surinam") The latter was first settled in 1635 and was the first permanent Jewish settlement in the Americas. The inset plan of Paramaribo shows a "Joode Bree Straat" and both the "Portuguese" (i.e., Sephardic) and "German" (Ashkenazi) Synagogues, known respectively as Zedek ve Shalom and Neveh Shalom.

The map is based on the work of Alexander de Lavaux, a Prussian engineer in the employ of the Society of Suriname since 1729. While there he put his varied skills to use, campaigning against the maroons and gathering information for his map. At the behest of the Society it was published by Hendrik de Leth, in or around 1737. The impression offered here is from a later edition (described by John Carter Brown Library as the "third"), printed from the same plates by Covens and Mortier around 1758. Some time between map's first publication and the Covens and Mortier edition offered here, very substantial changes and additions were made to the land ownership tables flanking the map. De Leth also issued a four-sheet edition of the map.

The present map is based on Alexandre de Lavaux's 1737 plan, which was commissioned by the Society of Suriname, the private concern that governed the colony during the eighteenth-century. The map is a detailed cadastral plan showing all of the enumerated estates that lined the banks of the Suriname and Courantyne rivers. The map provides a striking visual juxtaposition between the lines of estates (civilization) versus the wild, jungle-clad hinterland. Maroon towns, occupied by escaped slaves, can be seen throughout the interior. During the eighteenth-century Suriname, then referred to as Dutch Guiana was one of the most productive agrarian economies in the world, with sugar production reaching its height around the time that the present map was made. The colony was also a major producer of coffee, cotton



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and hardwood timber. The major Dutch town of Paramaribo (the colonial capital) and the fortified town of New Amsterdam are detailed by the confluence of the two great rivers, not far from where they meet the Atlantic.

The region was originally settled in 1650 by English settlers from Barbados. However, in 1667, during the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the colony was seized after a brief skirmish by the Dutch navy. Following the Treaty of Breda later that year, the Dutch gained official possession of the colony, in exchange for granting New Amsterdam (New York) to the English. By today's standards, given the prominence of New York versus Suriname, this would seem like a ludicrous exchange. However, it must be remembered that at the time the revenues from the sugar industry in Suriname dramatically exceeded any of the financial benefits that could have been gained from New York.

In 1683, the colony was entrusted to the Society of Suriname, a private company jointly held by the Dutch West India Company, the City of Amsterdam and the Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family. While nominally a Dutch concern, the colony attracted plantation investors from across Europe, thus the present German plan, printed in Berlin, would have been of great interest to many key stakeholders. The Society was disbanded for political reasons in 1795, whereupon Dutch Guiana became a crown colony. The Lavaux map sequence remained the authoritative cartographic representation of the colony until well into the nineteenth-century.

Detailed Condition: