



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

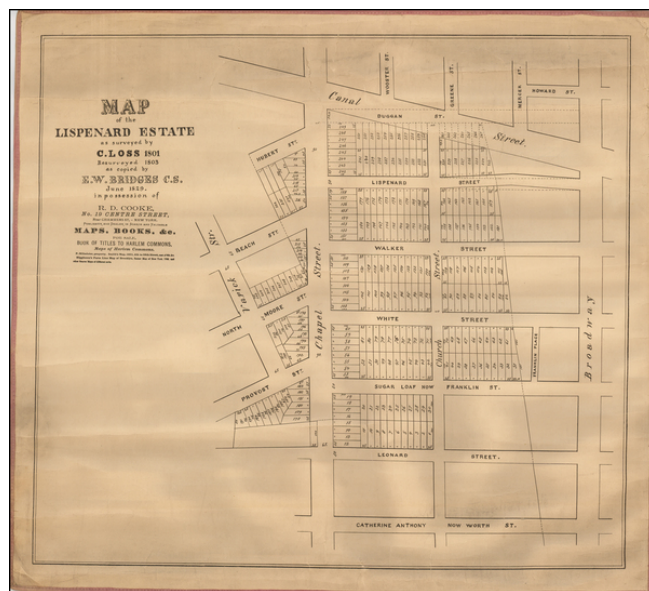
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[Soho-Tribeca, Manhattan] Map of the Lispenard Estate as surveyed by C. Loss 1801 Resurveyed 1803 as copied by E. W. Bridges C. S. June 1829.

Stock#: 49885
Map Maker: Cooke
Date: 1829 (1890 ca)
Place: New York
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21.5 x 19 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Detailed neighborhood-level separately issued map of part of Soho-Tribeca, in lower Manhattan.

This is a photolithographed map based on early-19th-century surveys of the area by Charles Loss. It was sold by one of Manhattan's most important antiquarian 19th-century map sellers, Richard Cooke. On this map, Cooke lists his wares for sale:

. . . Smith's Map, 1831, 4th to 28th street, east of 6th Av. Higginson's Farm Line Map of Brooklyn, Ratzer Map of New York, 1766, and other Scarce Maps of different sorts.

It shows the area roughly bounded by Worth Street, Broadway, Canal Street, and Varick Street.

The Lispenard Estate was one of the old farms that dotted Manhattan Island before it was divided and sold off at the end of the 18th century.

Richard D. Cooke

Richard D. "R. D." Cooke (1829-1912), was a rare map and book dealer based in lower Manhattan working at the end of the 19th century. He was himself trained as a surveyor. Cooke was employed by John Bute Holmes in 1850s, as a surveyor, and they seemed to have shared the same love of old maps of New York



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City. Indeed Holmes's maps and Cooke's maps are remarkably similar, although Cooke's postdate Holmes's by a few decades. {{ creator_browse_link('4724','See+our+John+Bute+Holmes+maps+here.') }}

In 1885, Cooke purchased the map collection of Joseph Bridges, who had, in the first half of the 19th century, served as New York City Surveyor. According to contemporary accounts, after Bridges's death, his collection had languished in a cellar, unattended to by his heirs, until Cooke acquired it. He then produced a limited number of copies of some of the better maps from the collection. An 1899 account in the *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* tells the fascinating story of Cooke's acquisition of the Bridges collection:

It is learned that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment will be asked next week to make an appropriation of \$30,000 with which to purchase for the Register's Office the Bridges collection of maps and surveys. The request is to be made in the form of a petition, signed by real estate lawyers, and will be the second petition on the subject presented to the city authorities, the first having been submitted many years ago, shortly after the collection came into the possession of its present owner. The collection consists of over 5,000 maps, surveys and field books, and contains a very great number of surveys that are not on file in the Register's Office or in other city departments, and of which no duplicates exist, although copies of many of them were originally deposited in various city departments. The comprehensiveness of the collection may be inferred from the fact that the "Descriptive Index of the Maps on Record in the Office of the Register of the City and County of New York," published by Adolf Dengler in 1875, comprises less than 1,500 titles.

The founder of the collection was William Bridges, city surveyor in New York, who died about 1812, leaving two sons, B. J. W. and Joseph F. to continue his business, as partners. Joseph F., who survived his brother, died in the seventies. William Bridges was one of the surveyors employed by the Commission of 1807 to lay out the City Plan, and is reputed to have been the author of the commission's report of 1811. In that year he published a book, now extremely rare, entitled "Map of the City of New York and Island of Manhattan, with Explanatory Remarks and References," on the title page of which he styles himself architect and city surveyor. His sons, in their day, had a very extensive practice, and, as the collection shows, were frequently employed by the city to make surveys for street openings and public improvements. The father and sons naturally retained copies of their public as well as private surveys, which, with their field books, extended over a period of about three-quarters of a century. To this original collection they added copies of important and scarce surveys made by



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others. As the collection exists to-day there is hardly an inch of ground south of 14th street which it does not cover, besides containing numerous surveys north of that line, including some in the Annexed District. When Joseph F. Bridges retired from active life, as he had no successor in business the collection was removed to his residence in Brooklyn, where he continued to give consultations. Before his death he disposed of part of the collection, which part appears to have consisted of Brooklyn maps, in payment of some claims. After his death several maps are known to have been surreptitiously sold by a degenerate son. On the foreclosure of a mortgage on the family home the collection was removed to a cellar, whence it was rescued when purchased in 1885 by R. D. Cooke, a dealer in scarce books and maps.

Mr. Cooke's first intention was to sell the maps singly, as opportunity afforded, and did sell half a dozen, one of which, a map of Broadway, between the Battery and Canal street, is now in the New York Historical Society Library. Later, at the instance of real estate lawyers who wished to see the collection acquired by the city, he determined to keep it together, and has since sold only tracings-Mr. Cooke was himself educated for the profession of a surveyor. About a dozen of the larger maps, mostly partition maps of old farms, have been published in limited editions, none of which sell for less than \$10 a copy. The value of the collection is recognized not only by title searchers but also by writers, and no historian of New York can afford to overlook it. It is referred to in the following acknowledgment by Thomas A. Janvier in his book "In Old New York:" "In determining the lines of old roads, and the boundaries of old estates, I have had the assistance of Mr. Richard D. Cooke, the highest authority in such matters in New York, and the use of his unique collection of maps." Instances are common of universities importing libraries of foreign scholars at a cost equaling the price demanded for the Bridges collection, although such libraries have a scientific value only. The Bridges collection is of the very first scientific value, for apart from books and manuscripts, it is the most important source [sic] in existence for the history of New York City during three-quarters of a century. Besides, it has an extremely practical bearing on practical interests, for should the information which it contains regarding old boundaries and surveys be lost a cloud would be thrown upon many titles to real estate, especially in the lower part of the city.

Cooke was eulogized in *The Publisher's Weekly*:

RICHARD D. COOKE, known to old New Yorkers for his famous bookshop near the place where the Criminal Courts Building now stands, died, on June 7, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. John H. Nimon, at 4 Hawthorne Avenue, Jersey City. Cooke's bookshop was a favorite browsing ground for historians, for these Mr. Cooke had at one time the most nearly complete



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set of maps of the old city and volume upon volume telling of the beginnings of Manhattan.

Thomas A. Janvier, in his introduction to his book, "Old New York," says: "I have had the assistance of Richard D. Cooke and his collection of old New York maps. He is the highest authority in such matters in New York."

The man who won such high praise came from Tipperary, Ireland, one of fourteen children. He was born there eighty-three years ago, and came to this country in 1851 to work for John Holmes, a New York surveyor. He did much of the work in laying out the Morris & Essex Railroad, and in Mr. Holmes' office he first got the idea of collecting the maps of the city.

In 1860 he started for himself and opened a bookstore in Liberty Street, later moving up to Centre Street. When the Criminal Courts Building was erected, Mr. Cooke retired and went to live with his daughter, who alone survives him.

Detailed Condition:

With original selvage and linen backing, as issued.