



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

**(Manuscript Map Illustrating The Discovery of the Sources of the Upper Nile River,
Lake Victoria, Lake Albert, Lake Tanganyika and Zambezi River)**

Stock#: 53479
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1866 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG
Size: 50 x 29.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Discovering the Sources of the Nile River-Manuscript Map of the Nile Expeditions of the Mid-Nineteenth Centuries

Large English manuscript map extending from the Upper Nile to the mouth of the Zambezi River. The map depicts the great lakes of eastern Africa and marks the tracks of the British explorers who went in search



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of the greatest geographical mystery of their time: the source and flow of the Nile River.

The map makes a meticulous study of the sources of the White Nile River, along with details of Lake Albert, Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Nyasa (Malawi), and the Shire and Zambezi Rivers. At least two hands have written in notations across the map, marking this as a working document—an attempt to understand the exciting new information coming back with the explorers. Specifically, the compilers seem fascinated by the question of which lakes were the main source of the Nile, as the various elevation notes in Lake Albert show. It is a work in progress, as the unfinished outline and huge size of Lake Albert further indicate.

The European search for the source of the Nile: Mountains of the Moon and the Nile Duel

The tracks included on the map reflect the enthusiasm for geography that was common in Victorian Society. The author(s) have included the tracks of several expeditions, although only two are labeled. The tracks also help with dating the map, as the Samuel Baker expedition of 1872-3 is not included, dating the map to ca. 1866, after news of Baker's 1863-4 expedition had reached Europe.

Europeans had been interested in the source of the Nile since ancient times. Ptolemy, in his second century *Geographia*, postulates that the source lies near the Mountains of the Moon, where water flows into two large lakes at the same latitude. This theory came from Diogenes, who supposedly saw the mountains ca. 110 CE. Mapmakers continued to copy Ptolemy's design well into the nineteenth century, although some earlier mapmakers like Guillaume Delisle were suspicious of their veracity.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the source of the Nile had become a geographic obsession. Europeans knew the source of the Blue Nile was Lake Tana in Ethiopia. However, the source of the White Nile was unknown and thought to stem from a large body of water—called various names like the Sea of Ujiji or Lake Ukerewe. In 1856, the celebrated Captain Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890), already well known for sneaking into Mecca dressed as a merchant, was asked by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) of London to seek out the source. He was accompanied by Captain John Hanning Speke (1827-1864), a fellow army officer on leave from service in India.

Speke and Burton had been on a previous exploratory expedition to east Africa in 1854-5. The men did not get along, to put it mildly, and, to add injury to insult, the expedition ended in an attack by local warriors who wounded Burton and captured and severely wounded Speke. Despite their differences, Speke joined Burton again on the second expedition.

Although the author(s) has chosen to include only one dashed line that looks like one expedition under



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Speke, the "Speke's Track" on the manuscript map combines two expeditions. As shown, Speke and Burton moved west from Zanzibar Island in 1857 with the help of porters and local guides such as Sidi Mubarak Bombay. Spurred by stories from Arab traders of a large lake to the north, Speke wanted to travel in that direction. Burton, however, wanted to continue west. They eventually arrived at Lake Tanganyika; by this time the expedition was in dire straits. Burton was lame and had terrible tongue ulcers. Speke was practically blind and deaf-a beetle had entered his ear and was boring into his head.

Speke recovered from this gruesome circumstance quickly, but Burton remained ill. Taking advantage of his absence, Speke led a small group of men to the north. This is marked on the map with the eastern-most of the branches leaving from Kaze (Kazeh). They eventually reached the southern shore of a vast lake which Speke named for the Queen, Victoria. Speke was convinced he had found the source of the Nile and, returning to London before Burton, he told the RGS so. Burton, unsurprisingly, disagreed and thought Lake Tanganyika, the lake he had been part of discovering, was the true source.

The RGS was intrigued by Speke's report and sent him, along with Captain James Augustus Grant, another army officer, to verify his claim. As before, they left from Zanzibar and journeyed to Kaze, as it is written on the map, before turning north. Despite delays caused by a quarrel between their translators, they made their way inland. With permission from a local ruler, Mutesa, King of Buganda, they made their way to what they named Ripon Falls, the point where the White Nile rises from Lake Victoria.

Speke returned to London triumphant and started a speaking tour. He also published an account of his expedition in 1863. However, the book was badly edited, making some doubt his conclusions, and Burton continued to disparage Speke's findings. The two explorers were scheduled to debate the true source-Victoria or Tanganyika-at a session of the 34th annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, hosted by the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution. The occasion was replete with geographic luminaries including Speke, Burton, David Livingstone, and Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, then president of the RGS.

While the "Nile Duel" was scheduled for the 16th of September, 1864, the day before Speke and Burton were supposed to sit together and listen to the first portion of the panel, an update on exploration in Jordan, Iran, Central Asia, and China. As Speke listened, he grew visibly agitated and eventually left the hall. The next day, the assembled awaited Speke, including Burton. After roughly 25 minutes, organizers came in with tragic news. Speke had gone out shooting the previous day after he had stormed out of the hall. There had been an accident and he was fatally injured. After so many near death experiences in Africa, the Nile Duel ended near Bath with no conclusion.

The curious life of Samuel Baker



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The other track mentioned on the manuscript map belongs to Baker, a reference to Samuel White Baker (1821-1893). Baker, a civil engineer, moved with his young family to Mauritius in 1843. Later, they uprooted to Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, where he started a settlement and eventually published a memoir of his time there. His first wife, Henrietta, died of typhoid in 1855. Three of his children had also died by then and he left his other four daughters in the care of a sister.

After journeys in the Ottoman Empire, Romania, and the Balkans, Baker found himself in a slave market in Bulgaria with the Maharaja Duleep Singh, his good friend. There, Baker was attracted to a white slave woman, Florenz Barbara Maria, who was sold to the Ottoman Pasha of Vidin. Baker ran away with Florenz, whom he later married. She would become his travel companion and accompanied him to Africa in 1861.

Like Burton and Speke, Baker was in search of the source of the Nile. In fact, his goal was to meet up with Speke and Grant as they made their way around Lake Victoria. He left Khartoum in December 1862 and rendezvoused with Speke and Grant at Gondokoro, as marked on the map. Speke and Grant were on their way up the river after the discovery of Ripon Falls. Baker, fearful he would discover nothing in his own right, instead followed the other explorers' tip of a lake to the west. Baker ventured in that direction and found Albert Nyanza, as the manuscript map records. He further added to knowledge of the Nile by proving that Lake Albert was a partial source of the Nile. He and Florence were also the first Europeans to see and name Murchison Falls, also marked here.

The two returned to Europe in October 1865, where Baker was the toast of the RGS and the Paris Geographical Society. He was knighted, although Queen Victoria refused to meet Florence because she had slept with her husband before they were married. Although never as famous as Burton or Speke, Baker was well known at the time, in part because of his successful books about the Nile published in 1866 and 1867.

The continuing debate, Dr. Livingstone, and Henry Morton Stanley

Whereas the possible sources of the Nile had been identified, the precise flow of the river, and the proportion of that flow that came from each lake was still a matter for debate. Burton, still wedded to his discovery of Lake Tanganyika, thought that that lake was responsible for at least some of the flow via a connection to Albert Nyanza. Speke had died before he could convince his audience that Lake Victoria was the main source, especially as he had failed to chart the river north from Ripon Falls. Baker, unsurprisingly, thought his Albert Nyanza an important, if only partial, source. As the southern shores of both Lake Victoria and Albert Nyanza remained uncharted, the question remained open.

This question is represented on the map with the several different elevations listed on Albert Nyanza,



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some crossed out. At least initially, the author listed Albert Nyanza as low as Lake Tanganyika, at 1800 feet. Later, the lake was elevated to 2800 feet. Others thought Lake Tanganyika could flow into Lake Albert, which called into question Speke's elevation reading of 1800 and supported Burton's claims. It is clear the compiler was following the Nile story and wanted to compare sources so as to decide for themselves.

The RGS also wanted the matter decided. In 1865, they planned an expedition headed by Britain's most famous explorer, Dr. David Livingstone (1813-1873), to settle the question once and for all. Starting in 1866, Livingstone traversed overland between Lake Nyasa, to the south, and Lake Tanganyika, to the north. However, he lost touch with Europe and was presumed dead, although the information he had sent made some at the RGS certain that Lake Tanganyika flowed into Albert Nyanza. After being located by Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904)-"Dr. Livingstone, I presume"-in 1871, Livingstone continued to search for a Nile source to the south of Lakes Tanganyika and Victoria, to no avail. He died south of Lake Bangweolo in 1873.

Stanley set out across Africa, from Zanzibar to Boma, on foot in 1874. En route, he mapped both Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. He circumnavigated Lake Victoria, proving its one outlet to be via Ripon Falls. Speke was correct. At Lake Tanganyika, he showed that the Rusizi River flowed into, not out of, the lake, proving Burton wrong. Finally, he followed the Lualaba River to its joining with the Nile, disproving Livingstone's southern source theory. Lake Victoria, via Lake Albert, was the source of the White Nile.

Final Observations on Our Manuscript Map

While the map is unsigned, the scale of the map, details (elevations, etc.), and the multiple hands which appear to have been involved in constructing the map strongly suggest that it was created shortly after the dates of the expeditions depicted and before Baker and Stanley set out again in the 1870s. Perhaps it was the work of a fellow explorer, or an armchair traveler, a contemporary of Baker, Burton, and Speke. The inclusion of Speke's name, and not Burton's, may also indicate a partiality for one of the explorers over the other, as Speke's feud with Burton was front page news. Whoever the author, their map is a testament to the central place of geography in general, and the Nile River in particular, in Western society in the mid-nineteenth century.

Detailed Condition:

Backed with paper and then laid on linen. Repaired tears, as illustrated, but in all quite solid and cohesive.