



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A Map of the Military lands and 20 Townships in the Western part of the State of New York

Stock#: 53764
Map Maker: Anonymous / De Witt
Date: 1789 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 12.5 x 11.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

First State of the First Map of the Military Lands in Western New York with Extensive Manuscript Annotations

The virtually unknown first state of this rare map of the New York Military Tract, the first such map of the Military Tract, established during the Revolution to provide compensation to the state's veterans of the Revolutionary War.

The map is made all the more historically significant for the annotations location the system of roads shown throughout the map, without question one of the most extensive mappings of the roads (or more likely trails) through the region to that date.

The present map is the virtually unknown first state of the map, which can be distinguished from the second state as follows:

- Wm. S. Smith lands, north of the Chenango River, are subdivided in 5 sections in state 2, but no subdivision in the first state of the map.



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- The Occelict (Otselic) River appears for the first time on state 2 of the map.
- Fall Creek at the south end of Cayuga Lake appears for the first time on state 2 of the map.
- Unnamed River (Salmon Creek) on east side of Cayuga Lake appears for the first time on state 2.
- A second road above Dryden extend to Cayuga Lake appears for the first time on state 2.
- South of Otsego, there is a small branch added to the south of the river coming off the Susquehanna in state 2 of the map.
- Butternut Creek is shown feeding into the Unadilla River on state 2.
- An unnamed River branck off the Chenango River is shown in Township 14.

The present example is also of note for the extensive manuscript additions to the map. In Fayette Township, Benjamin Hovey's property and Mersereau Mill are named, the two earliest settlements in Chenango County.

The map also shows an extensive road system fanning out from the Owego Settlement, in all directions, with a circle showing a town near the modern day Chenango Forks and another circle on Cayuta Creek, which would seem to be the location of John Shepard's lands.

John Shepard was one of the more prominent early white settlers, buying 1,000 acres, including all of what would become Waverly, and building a mill on the banks of Cayuta Creek in 1796. The settlement would soon become known as Milltown. Originally Milltown was believed to be located in Pennsylvania until it was resurveyed and it was found to be mistakenly 1/4 of a mile north of the border, which moved the settlement into New York State.

Further west, the location of Elmira is shown with an unnamed circle. The New York legislature established the Township of Chemung, now Chemung County, in 1788. The settlement of Newtown was soon established at the intersection of Newtown Creek and the Chemung River. In 1792, the settlement at Newtown joined with the Wisnerburg and DeWittsburg settlements to form the village of Newtown. In 1808, the village officially changed its name to the Town of Elmira, at a town meeting held at Teal's Tavern.

Indian Reservations

The map is also almost certainly the earliest map to locate and name the Oneida, Onondaga and Cayuga reservations, which are here delineated for the first time on this map. The Oneida Reservation was first granted in 1784, but significantly modified and reached its final shape under the Treaty of Fort Schulyler in 1789, reserving 300,000 acres to the Oneida people. The Treaty of Albany similarly granted to the Onondaga and Cayuga the lands which would finally be confirmed to them by the US Government in 1794.



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Ithaca, New York

At the bottom of Cayuga Lake, a square appears, along with 3 triangles. These reflect the earliest settlements in the area of Ithaca, New York. In 1788 eleven men from Kingston, New York came to the area with two Delaware people (Lenape) guides, to explore what they considered wilderness. The following year Jacob Yapple, Isaac Dumond, and Peter Hinepaw returned with their families and constructed log cabins. That same year, Abraham Bloodgood of Albany obtained a patent from the state for 1400 acres, which included all of the present downtown west of Tioga Street.

Overview of the Military Tract

The Military Tract, also called the New Military Tract, consisted of roughly two million acres in what is now known as the Finger Lakes Region, set aside to compensate New York's Revolutionary War veterans. To encourage enlistment Congress had guaranteed each soldier at least 100 acres at the end of the war (officers received much more), but by 1781 New York had achieved only about half of its quota of enlistees. That year the state legislature authorized an additional 500 acres per soldier, using land from 25 Military Tract townships to be established in the central part of the state, in what is now known as the Finger Lakes region.

The townships were to comprise 100 lots of 600 acres each, with each given names from classical antiquity and associated writers such as Dryden, Milton and Virgil. Three more townships were later added to accommodate additional claims at the end of the war, Junius in 1791, Galen in 1792 and Sterling in 1795. The Tract covered the present counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga and Seneca and parts of Oswego, Tompkins, Schuyler and Wayne. Most of the original classical township names are still in use, but the original townships do not correspond exactly with the boundaries of any modern towns, each of which covers only a fraction of the territory.

Mapping The Military Tract

The area was first mapped in detail in 1789 by teams headed by Moses DeWitt and Abraham Hardenbergh under the supervision of state Surveyor General Simeon DeWitt. It is almost certain that this printed map was derived from these surveys, the only detailed ones which had been performed to date. This accounts for the attribution of the map to Simeon DeWitt.

Wheat & Brun describe the map as follows:

Shown here are the primary land purchases and grants, as well as the several counties,



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townships, and settlements as the existed at this date. Only the larger streams are indicated and many not by name. The Oswego is noted as the Onondago River and among the townships are the following: Hanibal, Vergil, and Cincinnatus.

They date the map to 1795, but we disagree. This map identifies 25 townships in the Military Tract and omits the 26th and 27th, Junius and Galen, which were added in 1791 and 1792 respectively. Junius was formed on January 29, 1791, providing an approximate terminus ante quem for the engraving of the map.

The only other contemporary printed map of this region is the 1st sheet of DeWitt's State Map of New-York (Wheat & Brun #357). That map covers a somewhat larger area, extending well to the east to encompass other lands not in the Military Tract. It is also executed at a larger scale and depicts the area's watercourses in much greater detail than on our map. It shows both Junius and Galen but not Sterling, suggesting that it was published some time from late 1792 to 1794.

Rarity

The *Map of the Military Lands and 20 Townships* . . . is extraordinarily rare. Below is a summary of the other 3 (or 4) known examples

Wheat & Brun locates only a single copy, in the New York Historical Society (state not identified).

The archives of the Holland Land Company (SUNY Fredonia) includes an example of State 1 of the map. In 2016, we sold a copy of State 2 of the map to Yale.

We note also note a copy of the map in a 1908 Anderson auction (Catalog 687, Item 84). It is possible that the Anderson auction copy is one of the above examples.

OCLC 32240561 lists four copies. However 3 are identified as photocopies (Clements Library, NY Public Library, and Library of Congress), and we have determined that the Library of Congress photocopy is taken from our map, gifted to the Library in 1993. Cornell's on-line catalog indicates that its impression is very fragile, and thus may be an original.

Detailed Condition: