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First View of the Battle of Patapsco Neck Dedicated To Those Who Lost Their Friends In Defence of Their Country Sepr. 12 1814

Stock#: 55109mbml
Map Maker: Dulac
Date: 1814
Place: Baltimore
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 19.6 x 15.2 inches
Price: \$ 25,000.00



Description:

Previously Unrecorded First State of the Battle of North Point, Maryland -- A Contemporary American view of the Battle of North Point, which saved Baltimore from British invasion

A contemporary view, by an American participant, of the September 1814 Battle of North Point, at which Maryland militia bravely defended Baltimore against a large force of British regulars.

Background

The early land campaigns of the War of 1812 took place along the Canadian border, but in mid-1814, the British shifted their strategy and sent an expeditionary force under General Ross and Admiral Cochrane into the Chesapeake Bay. On August 24, 1814, the British captured and burned Washington, DC. A few days later Alexandria, Virginia, at the time an important American port city, surrendered almost without a fight. These defeats marked a low point in American military history.

From Alexandria, the British sailed further up Chesapeake Bay, and on the morning of September 12, 1814 had landed at North Point on the Patapsco Neck, several miles east of Baltimore. Marching toward the city they encountered a forward unit of the Third Brigade of the Maryland Militia, commanded by General John Stricker. In this initial battle, General Ross was mortally wounded by American sniper fire.

The British advanced until they ran into the main body of Maryland Militia at Bolden's Farm. After a



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pitched battle, the Maryland Militia withdrew, but not before inflicting nearly 300 British casualties. The British, now commanded by Colonel Arthur Brooke, paused overnight to regroup and tend to their wounded. This gave the Americans time to organize the main defenses around Baltimore. Following a failed British naval attack on Fort McHenry, the British forces withdrew to back to their ships and into Chesapeake Bay.

First View of the Battle of Patapsco Neck

The view depicts the main encounter, which took place at Bolden's Farm along the road to Baltimore. At the bottom of the view are the Maryland Militia in a line of trees on either side of the road to the city, facing oncoming British regiments assaulting their center. At the right, British riflemen rush into the trees, presumably to take up a flanking position from which to snipe at the Americans. At the left, a British regiment is shown attempting the flanking maneuver which ultimately forced the American retreat.

Unrecorded First State

All previously known examples of the view include a small vignette of General Ross's death at upper right, as well as several dead or wounded British soldiers lying on the battlefield. They also include an addition to the legend--"O GEN ROSS"— added at the lower left. These features are all absent from the present example.

The quality of the engraving indicates that these differences were introduced as revisions rather than burnished out and removed by the engraver. These differences are not noted in the bibliographies, suggesting that this is a previously unrecorded first or proof state.

Andrew Dulac

The print was probably based on a drawing by Corporal Andrew Dulac, a member of the Baltimore Jaegers whose unit met the first British assault at the small log house shown in flames at lower right. Dulac advertised his drawing in the Baltimore American on September 28, 1814, a mere two weeks after the battle.

"Battle of Patapsco Neck. ANDREW DULUC Has the honour of offering to his friends and the public in general, a subscription for an engraving, representing the first view of the engagement. The engraving will be 18 by 16 inches, to be seen at Mr. Phil'n Towson's tavern, North Gay street. The offerer has been favored by the help of Capt. Bouldon, part owner of the



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ground, and surveyor of the county.

"A. D. does not prize the talent of the artist, but rejoices at the idea of having seen fall in the battle one of the oppressors of our liberty.

"N. B. A few alterations will be made in the drawing which is now exhibited at Mr. Towson's."

It is impossible to say for certain, but the "small alterations" noted in the advertisement could well be the vignette of Ross's death and other additions noted above.

The print bears no engraver's credit, however McCauley cites an argument in *The Old Print Shop Portfolio* in favor of John Bower, engraver of the iconic View of the Bombardment of Fort McHenry . The grounds are the general similarity of the "primitive style" and the "identical" lettering of the capital letters in the title. I am not quite sold by the "primitive style" argument, but the title lettering does appear essentially identical.

Rarity

Only a handful of early strikes of this print are known: According to McCauley, impressions are held by the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Historical Society , Peale Museum (since absorbed by the Maryland Historical Society), and in the private collections of the Commercial Credit Company, Robert G. Merrick, and Baetjer and Howard Venable, all of Baltimore. Another is held by the Library of Congress .

The original copper plate survives at the Maryland Historical Society. Restrikes were made from it later in the 19th century, one of which was offered by this firm some years ago, printed on a much brighter, heavier sheet of wove paper.

Detailed Condition:

Engraving and etching on wove paper with "LEVERING & Co" watermark (prob. Gravell #659). Contemporary color. Lightly cleaned, color somewhat faded, couple of edge tears extending into image expertly mended and masked with pulp, large areas of chipping to edges reinstated but not affecting image.