



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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A Chorographical Map of the Northern Department of North-America, Drawn from the Latest and most accurate Observations . . .

Stock#: 56739
Map Maker: Romans / Mortier, Covens & Zoon
Date: 1778 (1780)
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 24.5 x 21 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Revolutionary-era map of northern New England, celebrating the State of Vermont just after its declaration of independence "from the Claws of Harpy Land Jobbers"

A cartographic rarity of the highest importance, Bernard Romans' *Chorographical Map* is the first great map with Vermont as its focus. It is the first map to use the term "State of Vermont" and was created in part to support the positions of Vermont and New Hampshire in their long-running territorial dispute with New York (and the Harpy Land Jobbers referenced in the note below Lake Champlain).

The map was first published in New Haven in 1778. Offered here is the equally rare Covens & Mortier edition of 1780.

Oriented with east at the top of the map, the coverage includes all of the "State of Vermont" (the first time this name appears on a printed map), along with the western portions of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, eastern New York including part of Lake Ontario, a corner of Pennsylvania, and the upper St. Lawrence and part of Quebec.

Major lakes, rivers, and streams are shown, as is a minimal amount of topographical information. The boundaries of dozens of townships in New York, New Hampshire and Vermont, as well as hundreds of land grants in the Lake Champlain, Hudson and Mohawk valleys dominate the map.



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Romans' sources for the map are not entirely clear, though various elements bring to mind Jefferys' *The Provinces of New York and New Jersey, with part of Pensilvania*; Jefferys' *Map of the Most Inhabited Part of New England*, and Sauthier's *Chorographical Map of the Province of New-York*. An advertisement soliciting subscriptions for the map indicates that it was a composite from published and archival sources:

"The whole is taken from real surveys, performed by the Publisher himself, communicated by his friends, or collected from the Secretary's office in New-York; and in every part where those fail, the work is founded on the best maps, corrected by the publisher, from observations and remarks, made during his frequent travels in every part of America." (Boston Gazette, and Country Journal, November 17, 1777, reprinted in Phillips, Notes on the Life and Work of Bernard Romans, pp. 89-90)

Context of the Map

This remarkable map is an intensely political document, originating in the long-running controversy between New Hampshire and New York over sovereignty in the region lying between the Champlain Valley and Connecticut River. Despite New York's strong legal claim to the region, between 1749 and 1764 New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth (1696-1770) granted at least 135 townships in the disputed region, many of which were directly or indirectly acquired by the Allen brothers of Connecticut.

In 1764, the British Crown finally ruled that the region belonged to New York, thereby invalidating the Wentworth grants. New York's legal victory counted for little, however, in the face of resistance by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys. Prevented by New York from joining the thirteen newly-united states, in 1777 Vermont declared independence and endured as a republic until joining the Union in 1791.

Born in the Netherlands, mapmaker Bernard Romans came to America in the 1760s, where he held a series of important surveying positions in the southern Colonies and Florida. He joined the cause of rebellion early on, and in May 1775 accompanied Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen on their expedition to Lake Champlain, which resulted in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. Having no prior connection to Vermont, Romans may have assimilated the outlook of Allen and the Green Mountain Boys, for in 1777 he arranged for the publication in New Haven of *A Chorographical Map of the Northern Department of North America*, the first map to present Vermont as an independent state. In addition to serving as a graphic declaration of Vermont's independence from New York, the map is filled with invective directed at the New York interests.

Of particular interest, given the map's rhetorical intent, are the land grants along the eastern shore of



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Lake Champlain and indicated by dotted lines and/or marked with a "Y." These are explained by a long note which incidentally serves as evidence of Romans' irascible style:

"The Townships or Grants East of Lake CHAMPLAIN are laid down as granted by the State of NEW-HAMPSHIRE, Except those that are marked Y. Which were granted by the State of NEW-YORK on unlo rated [sic, read "unlocated"] Ground. where they do not interfere with the Hampshire Grants: the Spurious New-York grants. that interfere with the older ones are marked with dotted Lines, and as they are mostly granted to Officers in the Regular army except a few wich have the names of Wallis, Kemp, and some such other favourites of these Princes of land Jobbers, [New York Governors] [Henry] Moore, John Murray, Earl of] Dunmore, [Cadwallader] Colden, and [William] Tryon, Stamped on them, it was not thought worth while to note them: Especially as the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont now hold them by the triple title of honest purchase of Industry in Settling; and now lately that of Conquest."

Bernard Romans (ca. 1720-1784)

Bernard Romans was born in Delft, Netherlands about 1720. He learned mapmaking and surveying in England, before moving to the North American Colonies in 1757. He worked as a surveyor in Georgia, where he would rise to become Deputy Surveyor General in 1766, before moving on to Florida, where in 1773 he was appointed Deputy Surveyor General for the Southern District under William Gerard de Brahm, though the two men soon came to hate one another. In 1775 he published his A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida, one of the most important Colonial works on Florida, and also produced the monumental map Maps of East and West Florida.

Romans was in Boston when war broke out in 1775, keeping tabs on Paul Revere as the latter engraved his maps of Florida. Romans enlisted in the American cause, was appointed a Captain and served with Benedict Arnold and Nathaniel Greene in their attacks on Fort George and Fort Ticonderoga. He then went on to oversee construction of fortifications at Constitution Island on the Hudson River across from West Point, then in April 1776 took command of a Pennsylvania company on service in Canada.

Controversy followed him everywhere, however: Romans feuded with the commissioners overseeing the Constitution Island works, which were ultimately deemed insufficient for proper defense of the Hudson; and in Spring 1776 he faced court-martialed for the licentious behavior of the troops under his command in Canada, though he was soon acquitted. There is then a nearly two-year gap in our knowledge of his activities, but in July 1778 he resigned his military commission and moved to Wethersfield, Connecticut. There he married one Elizabeth Whiting in January 1779.

From early 1779 until his death, Romans' last years are "shrouded in uncertainty." In early 1778, he



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published volume 1 of his *Annals of the Troubles in the Netherlands* in Hartford, Connecticut. His book *A Compleat Pilot for the Gulf Passage*, written with De Brahm, was published in London in 1779. The two dominant narratives have him being captured by the British and imprisoned for several years, either in Montego Bay, Jamaica or in England itself. Both accounts have him dying at sea on his return to America in 1784, possibly murdered for his money.

Despite wartime conditions, Romans produced a striking number of important cartographic publications during the Revolution. During the 1775-76 siege of Boston he published *An Exact View of the Late Battle of Charlestown* and a map of the area around Boston, entitled *The Seat of Civil War In America*, which he dedicated to John Hancock. Later he published three maps in New Haven, including *Connecticut and parts adjacent* (1777), the *Chorographical Map of the Northern Department of North America* (1778) as well as *A Chorographical Map of the Country Round Philadelphia* (1778). All of these publications are today extraordinarily rare.

The three 1777-78 maps were reissued in 1780 by Covens & Mortier in Amsterdam, the circumstances of which are a topic itself worthy of investigation. Unfortunately the secondary literature we have inspected is quite silent on the matter. Two facts are worth keeping in mind, however: Romans' Dutch roots, and the sheer unlikelihood that Covens & Mortier would on their own have gained access to the New Haven editions of his maps. The most plausible explanation is that, always short of funds, finding sales of the maps slow in wartime America, and hoping to generate some revenue from his efforts, Romans took advantage of existing relationships in his country of origin to arrange for their publication there.

Much background on Romans can be found in Phillips, *Notes on the Life and Work of Bernard Romans* (reissued in Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2017).

Rarity

Both editions of the map are extremely rare: Between them, Cobb, McCorkle, Wheat & Brun and OCLC locate only four examples of the New Haven edition (British Museum—i.e. British Library, Huntington Library, John Carter Brown[4], and Trinity College) and four examples of the Amsterdam edition offered here (Clements Library, Harvard, Library of Congress and Vermont Historical).

We find record of only two other examples appearing on the market over the past 30 years, including one currently on the market with Boston Rare Maps in outline color.

Detailed Condition:



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