



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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A general Map of the Middle British Colonies, in America; Viz Virginia, Måriland, Dèlaware, Pensilvania, New-Jersey, New-York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island...

Stock#: 57320mp2
Map Maker: Evans
Date: 1755
Place: Philadelphia
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 25.5 x 19 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

"One of the most important maps published in America before Independence." - Schwartz and Ehrenberg

Lewis Evans' *A General Map of the Middle British Colonies*, along with the maps of Henry Popple (1733) and John Mitchell (1755), is considered the most important and influential American map of the 18th century. Printed by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia in 1755, the Evans map is the only of the three to have been published in America by an American. Both Evans' and Mitchell's maps were intended to spur western expansion into the Trans-Allegheny, Ohio Valley, and regions westward, and in response to French encroachments.

The present map is an example of the first state in old hand-color with single-family provenance dating to at least 1909.

Evans' map provided the best early depiction of the Ohio Country while documenting competing British, French, and Native American claims in a region destined to be the flashpoint of the French and Indian War. In this regard, it is of particular note for treating the Iroquois Confederacy as a geopolitical power in its own right, with its own internal political structure, territory (here known as "Aquanishuonigy") and diplomatic interests.

To borrow from the *Pennsylvania Gazette* proposal for the map, published on July 17th, 1755:



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THIS Map includes the country between Rhode-Island on the east side, and the falls of Ohio on the west; and from Lake St. Pierre, in St. Lawrence river, on the north, to the line divided Carolina and Virginia on the south: And is printed on one sheet of imperial paper, 30 inches broad, and 22 inches high, and is engraved in a manner perfectly neat and correct.

The map is also the first regional map of Colonies widely utilized for land speculation in the American frontier. Published at a time when British Colonial western expansion was still limited by the claims of the French, Evans' map provided the best available information concerning the lands at the Western limits of the British Colonies that were available to investors and speculators.

One of the Evans map's great contributions was its original depictions of the natural resources of the interior. In particular, it is the earliest mapping of petroleum and coal resources in this country. It is the first document to mention oil at the birthplace of the oil industry, western Pennsylvania.

Contemporary Use of the Evans

Because of its immediate and widespread importance within the Colonies, the Evans map became an essential tool for the Founding Fathers. Beginning prior to the French & Indian War and continuing well after the American Revolution, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and all of the Founding Fathers regularly circulated and referenced Evans' map as a primary tool for visualizing the nation and the American frontier.

George Washington's papers show that he thought highly of the map and used it repeatedly in official business. An inventory of his library shortly after his death corroborates this, as a copy of the map is recorded there.

In 1756, Washington wrote to John Robinson regarding the boundaries of the English settlements:

And, now, Sir, one thing to add, which requires the Assembly's attention; and that is—what vale, or upon what part of our Frontiers these Forts are to be built? For, I am to tell you, that the Great Ridge, or north mountain, so called in Evans's map, to which I refer; is now become our exterior Bounds: there not being one Inhabitant beyond that, on all the potomack waters; except a few families on the South Branch, and at Joseph Edwards's, on Cacapehon (which I have already mentioned) guarded by a Party of ours. So that it requires some consideration to determine whether we are to build near this, to protect the present Inhabitants; or on the South Branch, or Pattersons Creek: in hopes of drawing back those who have forsaken their dwellings. -- George Washington to John Robinson, 24 April 1756



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Also in that year, after the Braddock Expedition, Washington told Adam Stephen that Evans' map was the only useful one available for the interior:

You desire to have a map sent you of the lakes, &c. I have none but Evans's, which you have also... --
George Washington to Adam Stephen, 5 April 1756

After achieving victory in the Revolutionary War, Washington wrote to Benjamin Harrison on 10 October 1784, remarking of Evans' map and *Analysis* "(considering the early period at which they were given to the public) are done with amazing exactness".

Benjamin Franklin, the publisher of the Evans map, naturally wrote about it many times. A letter from Franklin to Richard Jackson in 1754 mentions the forthcoming map:

We have a new Map going forward in Pensilvania, of the Western Country, or back Parts of our Province, and Virginia, and the Ohio and Lakes, &c. by Lewis Evans, who is for that purpose furnished with all the Materials our Country affords, and the Assembly have to encourage him given £50 towards the Expençe. When that is done, Dr. Mitchel's Map may perhaps be something improv'd from it; and I suppose it will be publish'd before Spring. If the Dr's Map should afterwards be printed, I make no doubt but great Numbers would sell in America. -- Benjamin Franklin to Richard Jackson, 12 December 1754

Ten years later Franklin wrote to his son, William, saying that he was still circulating the map and making annotations on it in his own hand:

I left with him one of Evans's maps of the middle colonies, in the small-scale part of which I had marked with a wash of red ink the whole country included in your boundaries. -- Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin, [27 September 1766]

The Streeter Sale included a copy of the map inscribed by Evans to Peter Collinson "To Mr. Peter Collinson from his most humble Serv'. Lewis Evans."

In August 1776, just after the Declaration of Independence, John Adams wrote a letter to his wife, Abigail, in which he stressed the importance of cartography and discussed the plans of the new Board of War to form a map collection and hang maps of America, including the Evans, in the War Office:

Geography is a Branch of Knowledge, not only very usefull, but absolutely necessary, to every Person of public Character whether in civil or military Life. Nay it is equally necessary for



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Merchants.

America is our Country, and therefore a minute Knowledge of its Geography, is most important to Us and our Children.

The Board of War are making a Collection of all the Maps of America, and of every Part of it, which are extant, to be hung up in the War Office. As soon as the Collection is compleated, I will send you a List of it. In the mean Time take an Account of a few already collected and framed and hung up in the Room [...]

A General Map of the Middle British Colonies, in America, [...] By Lewis Evans 1755. Dedicated to T. Pownal Esqr. whom Evans calls the best Judge of it in America. -- John Adam to Abigail Adams, 13 August 1776

Thomas Hutchins, the future Geographer of the United States, frequently consulted Evans' map. As noted by Klinefelter (p.49):

Among those who made practical, on-the-spot use of the map were Captain Thomas Hutchins, military engineer and future geographer to the United States government, and General George Washington. The former had frequent occasion to consult Evans's pro duction for the western country when he accompanied the expedition of Colonel Henry Bouquet into Ohio in 1763, and the reconnaissance party led by Captain Harry Gordon from Pittsburgh to New Orleans in 1766; and in all probability he had further occasion to refer to it when he served as a commissioner for Pennsylvania to determine the western boundary of that state with Virginia in 1783-1784.

The latter came to realize while on a trip into the western country in 1784 that in certain details, of which he had cause to take particular notice, Evans's map was "done with amazing exac ness." Thus wrote the victorious leader of the revolutionary armies, who, nearly thirty years before, in the dark days following Braddock's defeat, had replied to a request for a map "of the lakes, &c.," in these words: "I have none but Evans's, which you have also."

The map was also used by General Edward Braddock during the French and Indian War.

Evans' Cartographic Sources



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Pritchard and Taliaferro describe Evans as "the best geographer working in the English colonies in the mid-eighteenth century. A dedicated scientist, he exchanged scholarly information with Peter Collinson, Benjamin Franklin, colonial administrator Thomas Pownall, New York mathematician and mapmaker Cadwallader Colden, and others." (*Degrees of Latitude*, p. 172)

Evans' map was published with his *Analysis of a General Map of the Middle British Colonies*, an essay describing the map's sources and explaining its geopolitical significance. This essay is of great importance when understanding the lengths to which Evans went in compiling the most accurate and up-to-date information in his map.

Evans' great map of 1755 follows from a more restricted map, his [*Map of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, And the Three Delaware Counties*](#) (Philadelphia, 1749), which included the cartographic results of his 1743 expedition, in addition to those of John Bartram and Indian agent Conrad Weiser. In 1755, he considerably expanded the depth and breadth of his mapping.

In the Ohio Country, Evans' acknowledgments of sources shed little light on what maps were actually consulted. Based on what is shown in this part of his map, he obviously had access to new, important physical, cultural, and environmental information, including the locations of forts, Indian villages, and trading posts. In one case he acknowledges the assistance of "a very intelligent Indian called The Eagle, who had a good Notion of Distances, Bearings and delineating". Evans also acknowledges the assistance of three traders and a land speculator who gave him information on the Ohio River watershed.

It is worth noting the relationship between Evans' map and the so-called *Trader's Map*, a circa 1753 manuscript map in the Library of Congress, which is attributed to John Pattin, or Patten. In that map, the outline of the Ohio River is similar to Evans', as is the general layout of the rest of the region. Howard N. Eavenson notes that "Paper having the same watermarks as those found in the *Trader's Map* was used for the Evans maps of 1749 and 1755..."

Interestingly, in Ohio, Evans did not make use of George Washington's *Map of the Western parts of the Colony of Virginia, as far as the Mississipi*, which was published for the 1754 London edition of his *Journal*.

In the east, Evans' map is an impressive work of compilation, relying on numerous printed maps and original surveys. Generally, the map follows his 1743 *Map of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and the Three Delaware Counties*, but extends and improves upon that map.

In Connecticut and Rhode Island, Evans follows William Douglass' 1753 *Plan of the British Dominions of New England*. For Connecticut specifically, he used a general map of the colony that was provided by



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Reverend Thomas Clap, the President of Yale College. Evans also had access to surveys by James Helme, Nathanael Kellogg, and William Chandler. A survey of the Connecticut River was sent to Evans by Thomas Pownall, the Governor of New York.

In New York, Evans included information from maps provided by Governor Pownall.

In Virginia, Evans relied heavily on Fry and Jefferson's newly-published map. A note in Virginia reads:

For a particular Map of VIRGINIA the Reader is referred to that by Fry and Jefferson, published by Mr. Jefferys near Charing-Cross LONDON, in 1751.

In his text to accompany his update of the Evans map, Thomas Pownall says:

The greatest part of Virginia is composted with the Assistance of Messieurs Fry and Jeffersons Map of it, and as this had the Assistance of actual Surveys of the Division Line with Carolina, and of the Rivers Rapahannock and Potomocak from their Entrances to their heads, joined to the Experience of two skillful Persons, it would have been Affectation to have ommitted the Advantage of it. (See, Henry Taliaferro, "Fry and Jefferson Revisited", Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts.)

Evans examined the Fry and Jefferson map with a critical eye, and noticing one major discrepancy he modified his map accordingly. This change is concisely described by Klinefelter (page 43):

Although the work was composed by two highly capable mathematicians, he found it subject to correction in one particular, as mentioned above, for upon comparing it with the return of the survey which Benjamin Eastburn and the Pennsylvania commissioners made of the running of the Temporary Line in 1739, he discovered that its authors had mistaken the longitude of the great bend of Potomac by some ten or twelve miles. His detection of this discrepancy necessitated certain departures from their mapping of the country thereabouts. And of course he could not accept their assignment of the Pennsylvania lands then being claimed by the Ohio Company to the sovereignty of Virginia.

In Maryland, Evans used the Fry and Jefferson and Walter Hoxton's 1735 *Mapp of the Bay of Chesepeak*. Later, Evans would admit that Maryland was the worst mapped of all the settled areas.

In Pennsylvania, Klinefelter notes:

A dotted line he inserted from the vicinity of Shamokin to Lake Erie and lettered, "Purchased in



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1754," marked the northern limits of the land purchase concluded with the Iroquois in that year. The position of these limits was determined from a map he had furnished to the Pennsylvania commissioners and Conrad Weiser, who either by intent or from error adduced it as evidence that the Waters of Juniata, which were all intended to be included within this Purchase, did, some of them, run a good Way to the Northward of the Mouth of Kayarondinagh [Penn's Creek, and therefore Weiser and the Indians] agreed upon this Course, as what would clear all the Waters of Juniata, and give the Proprietaries a good Extent on the River Ohio.

Fortunately, Evans could do much better by the more westerly parts of the province. His plotting of the Allegheny River and its affluents represented a remarkable advance over the treatment he gave them in the Brevis Delineatio. He had "several valuable Notes" from Indian trader William West about the Forks and some of the parts thereabouts, and he obtained much of the information from which he mapped the regions above the Forks from John Davison, an Indian trader who had served Washington as guide and interpreter when he went to Fort le Boeuf in 1753-1754. That part of Allegheny River from Conewango Creek to its source he laid down entirely by guess, for he had "no other Information of it, but that it heads with the Cayuga Branch of Susquehanna.

For a more detailed treatment of these and other subjects, see Walter Klinefelter, "Lewis Evans and His Maps", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*.

Context: The French and Indian War

Evans' map provides an overview of colonial America just before the formal outset of hostilities of the French and Indian War. The possibility of war had certainly been on Evans' mind when the map was conceived, as the frontier had not been without altercations before that point. The tenor of press about the map changes significantly from the summer of 1755 to the fall of that year. Initially the proposals for the map focus on its authoritativeness and excellent coverage. A few months later, it becomes clear that the map is highly sought after because of its relevance for the war. For instance, in the advertisement in the *New-York Mercury* (issue 169, page 3.) 1755 November 3rd:

Lately published, and to be sold by GARRAT NOEL, Bookseller, in Dock-street, Price 18 coppers, the present state of North-America. 1. The discoveries, rights, and possessions of Great-Britain. 2. The discoveries, rights and possessions of France. 3. The encroachments and depredations of the French upon his majesty's territories in North-America, in times when peace subsisted in europe [sic], between the two crowns.

The map was widely used during the War. Including by General Braddock, as mentioned earlier.



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In his *Analysis*, Evans anticipates the oncoming war and underlines the value of the Ohio Country:

we may reckon as great a Prize, as has ever yet been contended for, between two Nations; but if we further observe, that this is scarce a Quarter of the valuable Land, that is contained in one continued Extent, and the Influence that a State, vested with all the Wealth and Power that will naturally arise from the Culture of so great an Extent of good Land, in a happy Climate, it will make so great an Addition to that Nation which wins it, where there is no third State to hold the Balance of Power, that the Loser must inevitably sink under his Rival. It is not as two Nations at War, contending the one for the other's Habitations; where the Conquered, on Submission, would be admitted to partake of the Privileges of the Conquerors; but for a vast Country, exceeding in Extent and good Land all the European Dominions of Britain, France and Spain, almost destitute of Inhabitants, and will as fast as the Europeans settle become more so of its former Inhabitants.

States and Editions

First state (of two): prior to the insertion of "The Lakes Cataraqui" just north of "LAKE ONTARIO".

Provenance

- Jno. S. Dunning [two 19th-century ink signatures on 19th-century backing paper, which has been removed and preserved]
- G. S. Thompson [General Counsel for the Illinois Central Railroad Co., Milwaukee, WI] (See image of correspondence)
- The map was owned by an Upper Midwest family until we acquired it in 2018.

There is an intriguing possibility that the Dunning who signed the backing paper is related to James Dunning, a prominent western Pennsylvania Indian trader and guide, active in the middle of the 18th century. Dunning was just the kind of person who would have had a use for the Evans map, as one can see from George Thornton Flemming's write up in the *History of Pittsburg* (Pittsburg, 1922), page 176:

James Dunning, the name found variously spelled, often "Denning," on the Allegheny as early as 1734 and remaining in the region for twenty years until the French ascendancy in 1754. Dunning was robbed by Peter Chartier and the Shawanese on the Allegheny in April, 1745. Dunning was a guide for Forbes in 1758, and for Bouquet the same year.

It is well documented that Henry Bouquet was making use of Evans map in his expedition and John Forbes expedition was specifically intended to capture fort Duquesne and to survey and construct a road across



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Pennyslvania's southern Appalachian Plateau and into the Ohio Country, for which Evans map was unquestionably utilized. As such, it is hard to imagine that James Dunning would not have had access to and use for Evans map.

In the 1750s there was also a Robert Dunning living in West Pennsboro Township, a few miles beyond Le Tort's Spring, the site of the present city of Carlisle, hence another possible contemporary owner.

The map was purchased along with a 1909 letter between P. M. Barnard (Percy Mordaunt Barnard, a prominent late-19th and early-20th-century English bookseller and president of the ABA in 1928) and G.S. Thompson regarding the relative value of the 1755 and 1756 editions of the map. This suggests that either Thompson bought the present map from Barnard, or that Barnard was offering an example of the 1756 edition, and Thompson was considering purchasing that as well.

We extend our thanks to Ashley Baynton-Williams for his assistance in cataloging this map.

Detailed Condition:

Old color, retouched. Two areas of loss at intersecting folds (in the southwest corner of Lake Erie and just past the southeast corner of Lake Erie). Both areas expertly mended with some facsimile (0.3% of the image). Ample margins on all sides, with some discrete repairs in the far lower right and upper left corners. The map has not been backed, however, some old folds have been expertly archivally reinforced.