



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

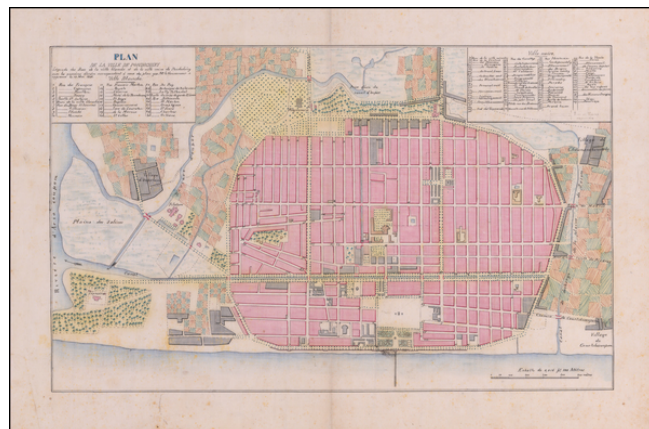
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[Puducherry-- Hand Drawn Map] Plan de la Ville de Pondichery. Legende des Rues de la ville blanche et de la ville noire de Pondichery avec les numeros d'ordre correspondant a ceux du plan que Mr. le Gouvernor a approuve le Mai 1856

Stock#: 58607
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1856
Place: Pudicherry ?
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 20 x 12.5 inches
Price: \$ 2,700.00



Description:

"Black Town" and "White Town": Geographical Segregation in French-Colonial India

Fine hand-drawn plan of Puducherry, "Corresponding to the Plan approved by the Governor May 13, 1856."

The map is meticulously drawn, illustrating the streets, canals, rivers, open spaces and other details within Puducherry in the middle of the nineteenth century, along with the neighboring villages of Oupalom, Courtchicoupom, and Chounamboucala.

At the lower center, a pier extends into the ocean; it runs through an elegant garden into the center of town. The *Magnanerie* is also shown (silkworm farm), as is the *Filature* at the lower right (the place where silk thread is created). Also featured is the *Leproserie* (Leper home).

Black Town and White Town

The map illustrates the two towns within Puducherry, the *Ville Blanche* and the *Ville Noire* (White Town and Black Town). The French laid out the town in a classic grid pattern, which became White Town. Over the canal, or Drain, the Tamil quarter, Black Town, grew up in its own organic way, although the plan shows it as quite ordered as well. It also had a great number of fine mansions built by wealthy traders.

The map includes separate keys for both parts of town. It locates 66 points of interest in Ville Noire and 30 points of interest in Ville Blanche. The map is west-oriented, with the Bay of Bengal at the bottom and the



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Canal running from left to right. White Town is situated near the water, the most privileged space, while Black Town is set back from the sea.

The plan invites more investigation into the urban geography of the town, which makes this a useful teaching document. For example, there were far fewer white people living in the town than local Indian peoples; the Ville Noir was more densely populated than the Ville Blanche. Also, within the Black Town were more divisions by caste and religion; there was a Hindu Quarter, a Muslim Quarter, and a Christian Quarter. Those of mixed-race tended to live near the canal.

The spatial divisions shown of the plan reflect the institutionalized division of the populations at the time it was drawn. It was made during the Second French Empire when the previous, more lenient, policy of assimilation of locals was abandoned in favor of more segregationist tactics. With the law of March 15, 1849, the French abandoned the concept of universal voting rights for its settlements in India. This attitude prevailed until the French Third Republic came to power in 1870.

Puducherry

The French East India Company first established Puducherry as a factory or trading center on February 4, 1673, when Bellanger de la Espinary, a French officer, took up residence in the Danish Lodge, which was then a tiny fishing village. In 1674 François Martin, the first Governor, began transforming the town into a major port town and, in time, it became the premier French settlement in India.

The development of the town and its port made it an object of interest to many European overseas empires. The Dutch captured Puducherry in 1693 but returned it to France by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1699. In the eighteenth century, the French expanded their holdings on the Indian coastline, acquiring Mahe in the 1720s, Yanam in 1731, and Karaikal in 1738. During the Anglo-French wars (1742-1763), Puducherry changed hands frequently. On January 16, 1761, the British captured Puducherry from the French and destroyed much of it. The rubble and land was returned to France in the Treaty of Paris (1763).

The British took control of the area again in 1793 at the Siege of Pondicherry during the Wars of the French Revolution. They again returned the port and town to France in 1814. When the British gained control of the whole of India in the late 1850s, they allowed the French to retain their settlements in the country.

Pondicherry, Mahe, Yanam, Karaikal, and Chandernagar remained a part of French India until 1954. The



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French influence on the town is still visible today, as are the divisions into Ville Blanche and Ville Noir shown on this plan. It is a illuminating document that highlights the prejudices of colonialism. It also invites further study as to the interaction of colonial segregation and the caste system, and the place of mixed-race peoples in this seemingly black and white geography.

Detailed Condition:

Pen and ink with wash color on drafting linen.