



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

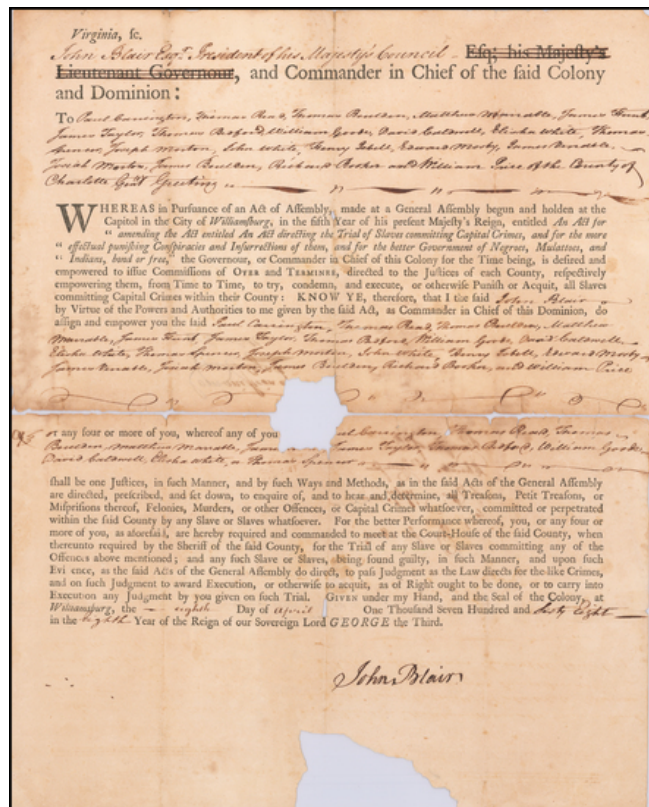
7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
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## [Virginia / Slavery / Signed by Acting Governor John Blair] ... Act directing the Trial of Slaves committing Capital Crimes, and for the more effectual punishing Conspiracies and Insurrections of them . . .

**Stock#:** 59948  
**Map Maker:** Blair  
**Date:** 1768  
**Place:** Williamsburg  
**Color:** Pen & Ink  
**Condition:** Fair  
**Size:** 12 x 15 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

### Amending An Act For The Trial of Slaves Committing Capital Crimes . . . Conspiracies and Insurrections

A directive signed by John Blair (then Acting Governor of Virginia), as President of His Majesty's Council and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, in pursuance of:

*An Act . . . amending the . . . Act directing the Trial of Slaves committing Capital Crimes, and  
for the more "effectual punishing of Conspiracies and Insurrections of them, and for the better  
Government of Negroes, Mulattoes, and "Indians bond or free" . . .*



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The Act empowered the names person to "try, condemn, and execute, or otherwise Punish or Acquit, all Slaves committing Capital Crimes within their County . . . " and to ". . . equire of, and to hear and determine, all Treasons, Petit Treasons, or Misprisions thereof, Felonies, Murders, or other Offences, or Capital Crimes whatsoever, committed or perpetrated . . . by any Slave or Slaves . . . .

A directive to Paul Carrington, Thomas Read, Thomas Bouldin, Matthew Manable, James Hun??, James Taylor, Thomas Bidford, William Goode, David Caldwell, Elisha White, Thomas Spencer, Joseph Morton, John White, Henry Isbell, Edward Mosby, James Venable, Josiah Morton, James Bouldin, Richard Booker and William Price of the County of Charlotte General Greeting.

#### **John Blair**

John Blair (1687 - 1771) was an American merchant and politician, a member of the House of Burgesses representing Jamestown and Williamsburg and four-time acting governor of the colony of Virginia. He was the nephew of James Blair, the founder of the College of William and Mary, and father of John Blair, Jr., a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Blair was born in Scotland around 1687. He immigrated as a child with his family to Virginia in the 1690s. John Blair graduated from the College of William and Mary around 1707.

Blair's public career may have begun in 1715, when he or a cousin with the same name was appointed keeper of the Royal Storehouse in Williamsburg. Blair took the oaths of office as a justice of the peace for York County on August 17, 1724 (serving until he was sworn in as a member of the Virginia Governor's Council in 1745) and in 1727 as a James River upper district naval officer (serving until he became deputy Auditor General of Virginia on August 15, 1728). He served as deputy Auditor General until his death in 1771, while simultaneously holding various other positions.

Blair was elected to the House of Burgesses from Jamestown from 1734 to 1736, succeeding his father. Subsequently, he was then elected to represent Williamsburg from 1736 to 1740, where he dealt with issues of the defense of colonists from attacks by Indians. From April 22, 1741 to October 15, 1741, he served as clerk of the Governor's Council. He is likely the John Blair who was Williamsburg's mayor in 1751.

Having inherited approximately £10,000 from his uncle James, Governor William Gooch now considered Blair qualified for a seat on the Virginia Governor's Council and recommended to the King in February 1745 that he be appointed to fill a vacant seat. However, the king had already named Blair to fill a



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different vacancy on November 15, 1744. He was seated on August 6, 1745. He became the council's senior member or president in 1757 and served four times as Virginia's acting governor. The first was after the departure of Robert Dinwiddie, from January 12, 1758 to June 5, 1758, when Francis Fauquier arrived. The second time was in September and October 1761 when Fauquier was consulting with General Jeffery Amherst in New York. In 1763, Blair was acting governor when Fauquier was in the Province of Georgia in September to December. The final time was after Fauquier's death on March 4, 1768 until the arrival of his replacement, Norborne Berkeley on October 26, 1768.

Although appointed for life, he resigned on October 15, 1770 after the death of governor Berkeley. In poor health himself, he did not want to serve as acting governor again for the fifth time.[1] He died the following year.

AS Deputy Auditor General of Virginia for 43 years, he was responsible for certifying the accuracy of official government revenue accounts, including quitrents and taxes on exported tobacco, then a major component of Virginia's agricultural production. Blair successfully improved procedures and records to prevent the evasion of paying quitrents. However, in his final years the efficacy of the office was poor, probably due to his failing health and the death of his assistant. Blair's son became the next deputy auditor general.

During his first term as acting governor in 1758, he addressed the General Assembly on March 31 requesting that Virginia raise an additional regiment for offensive operations in the Ohio Valley against the New France forces in the French and Indian War, which was approved. Also approved was the issuance of £32,000 of treasury notes to fund defenses of the colony.

In 1768, Fauquier had intended to call the Assembly into session. After Fauquier died, Blair, again acting Governor, followed through with a session that closed in April at which time he sent to the King and Parliament the assembly's challenges, led by speaker Peyton Randolph of Parliament's right to tax the colonies. The response was the speedy appointment of Berkeley as new governor with instructions to quash such protests of the crown's authority over the colonies. Blair also urged Virginia's clergy to raise money to aid the victims of a fire in Old Montreal (then under British rule) that destroyed the Congregation Notre-Dame convent and 88 houses.

Until his death in 1733, Blair's father, Archibald, was the largest shareholder of Dr. Blair's Store, a mercantile house. Blair was the store's manager. Blair was also a partner with John Blair Jr. (the son of a cousin) in another store from 1740 to 1759. Blair owned one the largest taverns in the colony, the Raleigh



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Tavern, named after Sir Walter Raleigh and the Chowning Tavern, renting them to tavern keepers. He owned Chowning from 1726 to around 1738, and sold Raleigh in 1742. In 1745, he was a partner with 16 others in a 1,000-acre land grant on the Potomac and Youghiogheny rivers.

**Detailed Condition:**

Stained, with evidence of old folds and a large hole, with loss at bottom not affecting text.