



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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La Jolla, CA 92037

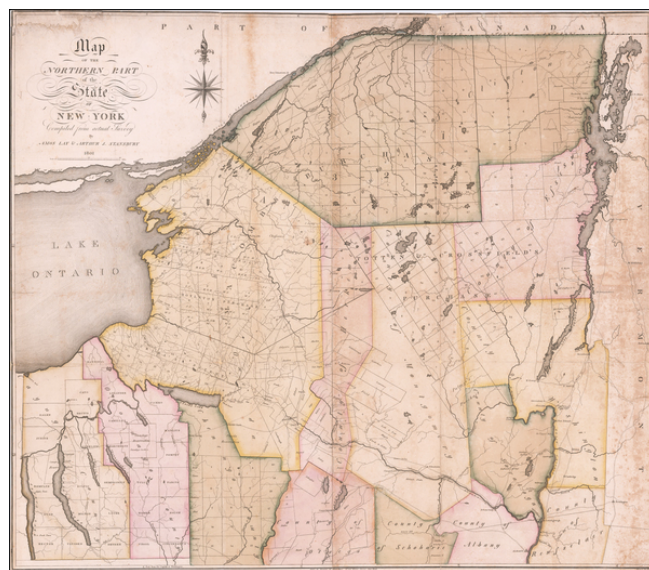
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## Map of the Northern Part of the State of New York Compiled from actual Survey By Amos Lay & Arthur J. Stansbury 1801.

**Stock#:** 60442  
**Map Maker:** Lay / Stansbury  
**Date:** 1801  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 29 x 25 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *Amos Lay's First Map -- The First American Map of Northern New York*

Rare separately published map of New York by Amos Lay and Arthur Stansbury, drawn by A. J. Stansbury, engraved by Roberts and Sold by Brown & Stansbury, No. 114 Water Street, New York.

This is the first state of Amos Lay's map of New York, unquestionably the best general map of the region at the time of its publication. The map covers the true Northern Part of York, including the eastern part of Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River to Cornwall and St. Regis and all of Lake Champlain, and extending south to Albany, Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake.

The map is filled with information on land surveys and development, wagon roads and trails, Military tracts, towns and villages, and early Grants and Purchases. Some of the details shown include:

- Scriba's Patent
- Boylston Purchase
- Macomb's Purchase
- Black R. Tract
- Totten & Crossfield's Purchase
- Palmer's Purchase



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- Oriskany Patent
- Royal Grant
- Jersey Field
- Oneida Reservation
- Indian Reservation on the St. Lawrence south of St. Regis.

The map focuses on land divisions, but it also shows county boundaries, and includes detailed coverage of roads and hydrography. It would seem that the first edition of the map was intended as a tool for land speculators, at a time when land speculation in this region was running rampant.

In his on-line essay on early maps of New York, David Allen notes:

*Turning to more ambitious large-scale maps, we can begin with the remarkable series of maps of New York State produced between 1801 and 1826 by Amos Lay (1765 -1851). Lay was apparently born in Connecticut and spent some time in Vermont, but for most of his life he lived and worked in Albany and New York City.*

*Lay started his career as a surveyor and land agent. In 1796, he placed advertisements in several Vermont and New Hampshire newspapers as an agent for sale of land in Lower Canada (now Ontario). A few years later, he was involved in surveying land along the St. Lawrence River in Franklin and St. Lawrence counties. In 1821 he wrote that he "had been employed for upwards of twenty-six years in exploring and surveying various parts of the United States, Upper and Lower Canada, and also in compiling and publishing maps,..."*

*Lay's first cartographic work appeared in 1801, when he co-authored a map of northern New York. A note on the map describes it as "compiled from the latest survey by A. Lay; and drawn by Arthur J. Stansbury." Lay's exact role in the production of this map is unclear. Judging from a description of the map published by his collaborator, Lay did a limited amount of surveying, and relied primarily on compiling information from other surveys.*

*Drawn at a scale of slightly more than seven miles to an inch, this map covers New York north of the Mohawk and Oswego Rivers. The details on this map are rather sparse and uneven. It shows fairly detailed hydrography for most areas, and major towns, but no topography. Its most notable feature is its delineation of the boundaries of recent land grants and purchases. Oddly, it is oriented toward magnetic north "as it was in 1760."*



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*At this point, Amos Lay almost disappeared from view for ten years. He seems to have made his living as a surveyor and land agent, and very likely engaged in some land speculation, which was a common pastime for people with his background.*

Over time, Amos Lay would re-issue the map in 1812, doubling the size of the map to the west and extending it an additional 50 miles to the south, such that the 1812 map covers roughly an area roughly 3 times larger than the 1801. Cartographically, the Lay also dramatically updates and changes the map, such that the 1801 and 1812 map bear very little similarity, other than the title cartouche.

In 1817, Lay would again considerably expand his map. In describing the third edition of the map, David Rumsey notes:

*In 1817 Lay extended the State map south to include New York City. This map extends only to the Pennsylvania border. Lay's 1801 map covers only the most northern parts of the state. For some reason, his 3 editions of the state map expand coverage from north to south ending with complete coverage in the 3rd edition.*

*Phillips states that this map was engraved by Samuel Maverick in Newark, New Jersey, although nothing on our copy indicates this.*

*[The map] shows the Proposed Canal from Rome to the west, and shows Indian Reservations in yellow. Much information on land surveys and development, Military tracts, and evolving towns.*

The second state of the map was referenced in a letter by Theodorus Bailey to Thomas Jefferson on July 21, 1812, writing to Jefferson:

*Mr Amos Lay of this State, has compiled a Map of the northern and western parts of our State, lying north of the northern line of Pennsylvania, and embracing the whole of our western and northern frontier, and the adjacent country on the Canada side—which is in like manner laid down from actual survey, and possesses an equal Claim to accuracy as the former—this work is in the hands of the engraver, and will probably be compleated in a few weeks—With your permission, I will do myself the pleasure to transmit you a copy, as soon as the same shall be*



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*completed.*

The first state of Lay's map pre-dates Simeon De Witt's map of 1802.

**Rarity**

The first edition of Amos Lay's map is extremely rare on the market. The legendary Americana Collector Thomas Streeter's sale did not include a copy of the map. We note only 1 example at auction in the past 40 years and one example in a dealer catalog (Philadelphia Print Shop, 1988 -- This would appear to be the same example of the map, based upon the condition description).

OCLC locates 2 copies of the map (New York State Library and University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (ex American Geographical Society copy)). We note also a copy in

**Detailed Condition:**

2 sheets, joined. Removed from original linen and professionally backed with rice paper, with narrow margins, original color, as issued. A few small areas of missing paper at folds Torn at top left corner, with an old repair.