



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A Map of the United States of N. America

Stock#: 60509
Map Maker: Schopf
Date: 1788
Place: Erlangen
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 7 x 5.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Thomas Jefferson's Proposed States in the Old Northwest.

Rare early map of the United States, illustrating the states proposed by Thomas Jefferson for the Northwest Territory lands.

Following the American Revolution one of history's great land rushes began, as settlers poured over the mountains into Kentucky and the "Old Northwest," the vast triangle of land between the Great Lakes and the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

The Continental Congress sought to impose order on the process through diplomacy with the native tribes and legislation regulating the governance of the territory north and west of the Ohio River. The first such was the Land Ordinance of 1784, which among other things dictated the future division of the region into ten states and specified their boundaries. Jefferson, who helped write the Ordinance, proposed ten names, most now lost to history: Illinoia, Michigania, Saratoga, Washington, Chersonesus, Sylvania, Assenisipia, Metropotamia, Polypotamia, and Pelisipia.) Only the first two names endured, of course, though not in the locations they were originally assigned.

The plan to create new states in the region was documented on just a few maps, including William McMurray's United States (1784) and John Fitch's Map of the North West Parts of the United States of America (1785). However the only map to both locate the borders of the proto-states and assign to them Jefferson's proposed names was A Map of the United States of America, first engraved by Henry Pursell and published in Bailey's Pocket Almanac for 1785. Offered here is a German edition, which appeared in



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Johann Schopf's 1788 Reise durch einige der mittlern und südlichen vereinigten nordamerikanischen Staaten.

The map differs substantially from both the Buell and McMurray maps, and its geographical prototype is uncertain. For the most part it reflects the national boundaries established by the Treaty of Paris, though it generously interprets the terms by extending the Mississippi and Lake of the Woods far to the northwest and the famous "height of land" north of Maine almost to the St. Lawrence. One clear deviation from the Treaty is to the south, where East and West Florida appear to be shown as belonging to the United States, though in reality they had been assigned to Spain.

The map presumes the cessions by New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Virginia of their claims north and west of the Ohio-though in fact these were not accomplished until well after Pursell's map first appeared in late 1784. By contrast North and South Carolina as well as Georgia are shown extending to the Mississippi. One other interesting feature is a note near the headwaters of the Missouri River, optimistically identifying the "Head of the Oregon which runs W. to the Pacific Ocean."

The visual appeal of the map is enhanced by an ornamental cartouche bearing the Great Seal of the United States. The Seal was enshrined in law in June 1782, and Pursell's first edition was likely its earliest appearances in print and its earliest use on a map.

Description From Boston Rare Maps.

Detailed Condition: