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New Jersey entworfen von D.F. Sotzmann . . . 1797

Stock#: 60564
Map Maker: Sotzmann

Date: 1797
Place: Hamburg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 18.5 x 25 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

The Finest 18th Century Map of the State of New Jersey, compiled by two German geographers who never visited America.

This remarkable map depicts New Jersey in its entirety as well as border areas of New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The topographic detail is fairly strong for a map of this scale, with much attention given the Mountains in the northwest. The mapmakers use standardized line forms to differentiate state boundaries, county lines, township boundaries, and major roads.

Counties are picked out in outline and wash color. Though the predominant language on the map is German, the legends are bilingual and the prime meridian set at Washington, D.C., suggesting that it was intended for both German and American audiences.



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Ebeling, Sotzmann and the Erdbeschreibung

This map was intended for a planned atlas to accompany Christoph Daniel Ebeling's *Erdbeschreibung und Geschichte von Amerika*, a magisterial study of the geography and history of the new United States. Ebeling (1741-1817) was a Hamburg academic with a general interest in free states, which interest lead him to a decades-long fascination with America and ultimately to conceive the *Erdbeschreibung* project. To this end, he carried on a voluminous correspondence with leading Americans, who supplied him among other things with the most up-to-date American maps available. His map library eventually made its way back to America, where it was purchased by a Boston collector and eventually became the nucleus of the Harvard Map Collection.

To produce the maps Ebeling commissioned Daniel Friedrich Sotzmann (1754-1840), Geographer of the Berlin Academy. Ristow, summarizing the assessment of scholar Wolfgang Scharfe, describes Sotzmann as one "of the most distinguished cartographers in the German-speaking countries in the early years of the nineteenth century" (p. 177). The atlas was to contain 18 plates, including 16 of the individual states. Unfortunately, neither the narrative nor the atlas were fully realized, perhaps because of Ebeling's advancing years and (in his view) a lack of sufficiently accurate source material, particularly for the southern states and the newly-admitted states west of the Appalachians. In all, seven volumes of the *Erdbeschreibung* were issued between 1793 and 1816, while ten maps were completed: [I?] Vermont (though numbered XVI), 1796; II. New Hampshire, 1796; III. Massachusetts, undated; IV. Maine, 1798; V. Rhode Island, 1797; VI. Connecticut, 1796; VII. New York, 1799; VIII. New Jersey, 1797; IX. Pennsylvania, 1797; X. Maryland and Delaware, 1797. (According to William Coolidge Lane, in *Letters of Christoph Daniel Ebeling...*: "Apparently Virginia was never engraved. Later letters show that Ebeling found difficulty in getting the material.") With the odd exceptions of the New Jersey and Rhode Island maps, all of these maps are now scarce, while some (such as Maryland) are extremely rare, and few institutions possess full sets.

Brown and Ristow differ considerably on Ebeling and Sotzmann's respective roles in compiling the state maps, with Brown arguing for Ebeling as the prime mover and Ristow favoring Sotzmann. Whatever their relative contributions, they developed the state maps by sifting, compiling and reconciling the source maps in Ebeling's collection with a highly critical eye. The result is a set of maps that, while in some sense derivative of American sources, were for a time—and in some cases a long time—the best available of their kind.

Detailed Condition: