



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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A Topographical Chart of the Bay of Narragansett in the Province of New England with all the Isles contained therein, among which Rhode Island and Connonicut have been particularly Surveyed. Shewing the true position & bearings of the Banks, Shoals, Rocks &c. as likewise the Soundings: . . . By Charles Blaskowitz . . . 1777

Stock#: 60973mb
Map Maker: Faden
Date: 1777
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: Good
Size: 25 x 36.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Single Most Important Revolutionary War Chart of Narragansett Bay -- Used by Both the English and French Navy

Important Revolutionary War Plan of Narragansett Bay, prepared by Charles Blaskowitz, for the use of the British Navy during the American Revolution.

This fine plan, first published in 1777, is without question the most important eighteenth-century chart of



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Narraganset Bay. Nebenzahl notes that

"it is certain that the British, after occupying Newport at the end of 1776, used this map for their operations in this pivotal area. The detail shown is remarkable, including even the names of farmers on their land locations."

The French also quickly seized upon the map when they made Newport their primary base of naval operations after joining the American cause in 1778. By 1780, a French copy of the map had been published for use by the French Navy.

As the map's title suggests, it contains military information, indicating both British and American batteries and forts throughout the area. The map also shows the location of then Brown College in Providence and provides street plans of Newport, Providence, Bristol and other cities. The area's road system and extensive nautical information are also provided.

The map itself is unusual, in that it is a combination of a nautical chart and topographical map (and hence the title, "*A Topographical Chart...*"). The Bay is clearly shown with its many islands and intricate inlets, with numerous soundings which give accurate readings of the treacherous waters. On the shore, impressive detail is depicted, with individual farms named and elegant hachuring showing elevations. Eight batteries are shown via lettered references, with a key at the top right corner which details the numbers and types of canons. Along the right side of the map are the names of the principal land owners of the region, along with a brief description of the area. A large and well-designed dedication by Faden, to Lord Percy, appears just below.

Charles Blaskowitz arrived in America in the early 1760s, where he began surveying work in upstate New York and along the St. Lawrence River. In March 1764, he was commissioned as part of Samuel Holland's North American Survey team and would eventually become Holland's Deputy Surveyor by 1775. Blaskowitz's first assignment was to survey Aquidneck Island and Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, in order to determine whether Newport would be a suitable location for a naval base. Blaskowitz completed this survey in 1764 and later re-surveyed the region as part of Holland's larger surveys of the coast in 1774, for the Board on Trade and Plantations.

Blaskowitz's surveys would be used for two printed charts, by Des Barres and Faden, respectively. The



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Faden chart was a much more accomplished production, on a larger sheet and more elaborately engraved (and according to Pedley, costing two and a half times as much at the time of publication). The map was sold separately or within some copies of Faden's *North American Atlas*.

The colonies were already on the brink of Revolution and Newport was a hotbed of insurrection. In 1772, British naval ships laid siege to Narragansett Bay, in order to enforce customs duties on incoming vessels. After months of antagonizing the city's merchants, the much-hated British captain of the *HMS Gaspee*, was injured and the ship burned. Lt. Dudingston, the captain of *HMS Gaspee*, was treated by one of the attackers before he was taken off the ship. He was then delivered to a nearby physician for further treatment. Dudingston lived until 1817.

The region instantly became a point of great interest in Great Britain, with the King offering a reward for the capture of the insurrectionists. In May 1776, Rhode Island became the first Colony to declare its independence and the British would occupy Newport from November of 1776, until the end of August 1778.

Rarity

The chart is rare on the market. Rarebookhub notes only 1 example of the map in the past 30 years at auction (Sothebys, 1991). We note only 2 examples in dealer catalogs in the past 10 years.

Jointly owned with Boston Rare Maps.

Detailed Condition:

Tear in lower right corner, expertly repaired on verso. A portion of the margins is re-instated, with portions of the neatline in facsimile, primarily on the right side of the map.