



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Bird's eye view of Phoenix, Maricopa Co., Arizona.

Stock#: 64323jc
Map Maker: Schmidt Label & Litho. Co. & Dyer
Date: 1885
Place: Phoenix, Arizona
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 32 x 21.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Greatest Arizona Map or View Ever Published and One of the Great Western Bird's Eyes of All Time.

Separately-issued chromolithograph view of Phoenix, Arizona Territory, printed by Schmidt Label & Co. in 1885. The view was "sketched by C.J. Dyer, Phoenix, A.T.", Dyer also holds the 1885 copyright, as noted in the lower-left corner.

The bird's eye shows Phoenix only four years after it had been incorporated, and it still a small town. An essay on the city in the lower right corner of the view notes "The town is rapidly growing and its charming situation will yet make it the leading city in Arizona. Population about 3,500." Even that figure might have been an exaggeration; modern estimates put the 1890 population at only 3,000.

This is the earliest printed map or view of Phoenix that we have found.

Though copyright-dated 1885, the view was probably available in 1884, as it is mentioned in the May 28, 1884 issue of *The Weekly Arizona Miner*: "The plaza at present in beautiful robe of green presents even a more beautiful appearance than the artist, C.J. Dyer, endowed it with in his recent excellent birds-eye view of the city."

The view is superbly composed and chromolithographed, it is much more impressive than other bird's eye views published for similarly-sized towns at the time. In *Views and Viewmakers of Urban America* (pages 172-173), Reps has effusive praise for Dyer's *Phoenix*:

Two extremely rare, attractive, and brilliantly printed city views were drawn by this artist in 1885.



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His Phoenix, Arizona, lithograph (Color Plate 12) identifies the printer as the Schmidt Label & Litho Company of San Francisco, and almost certainly the second view, an undated view of Prescott, then still the capital of Arizona Territory, was printed by the same firm.

The composition of the Phoenix print is both unusual and effective. The principal view of the entire city is surrounded by an oval border of trimmed saplings. Dyer also used this as the rectangular outer border, to create four circular vignettes, and to divide one of the corners -- all of which contain additional vignettes -- into three compartments. A legend at the bottom left balances a description of Phoenix on the other side of the title, which appears against a background of desert and agricultural vegetation.

Perhaps W. Byrnes who put Dyer's drawing on stone contributed to this design. Even if he did not, he deserves to be recognized for creating a multi-stone colored lithograph of glowing quality whose hot tones convey the intensity of the Arizona sunshine.

Rarity

Reps locates examples at the Library of Congress Prints and Maps Divisions (it's possible this is actually only one bird's eye view). No other genuine examples are located through OCLC searches.

Appendix: Vignettes and Legend

The sheet sports insets showing:

- The Office of the Daily Phoenix Herald.
- J.Y.T. Smith's Flour Mill
- Res[idence] of F.M. Fowler
- Falls of Arizona Canal.
- Head of the Arizona Canal
- Irvine's Block
- Res[idence] of H.H. McNeil
- Gregory House
- Public School House
- County Court House
- Vidal & Pickering Billiard Hall & Phoenix Hotel

The legend at the lower-left numbers 29 points of interest:



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1. County Court House.
2. Baptist Church.
3. Washington St. Methodist Church.
4. Public School House.
5. Centre St. Methodist Church.
6. Salt River Valley Canal.
7. Residence of J.T. Simms.
8. Gazette Printing Office.
9. Kales & Lewis' Bank.
10. Valley Bank.
11. Herald Printing Office.
12. J.Y.T. Smith's Flour Mill.
13. Public Plaza.
14. Irvine Building.
15. Phoenix Swimming Baths.
16. Phoenix Hotel, Chas. Salari, Prop.
17. Gregory House & Lumber Yard.
18. Hotel Lemon.
19. Catholic Church.
20. Dutch Ditch.
21. Maricopa Canal.
22. Grand Canal.
23. Arizona Canal.
24. Residence of H.H. McNeil.
25. Residence of M.W. Kales.
26. Property of E.B. Kirkland.
27. Lount Bros.' Ice Factory.
28. P. Minor's Lumber Yard.
29. H.W. Ryder's Lumber Yard.

Detailed Condition:

Additional title in manuscript in lower margin: "PHOENIX IN 1885". A few expertly mended minor cracks.
Backed with archival tissue.