



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

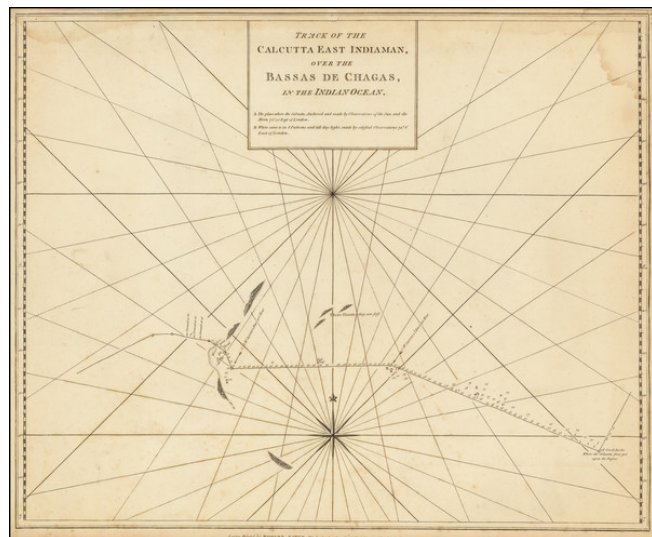
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[Diego Garcia / Chagos Archipelago] Track of the Calcutta East Indiaman, over the Bassas de Chagas, in the Indian Ocean

Stock#: 66729
Map Maker: Sayer
Date: 1780 circa
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 21.5 x 17.5 inches
Price: \$375.00



Description:

Rare separately published sea chart of the Chagos Archipelago, published in London by Sayer.

Chagos Archipelago

Portuguese explorers were the first Europeans to discover the archipelago. Portuguese navigator Pedro de Mascarenhas (1470 - 23 June 1555) is credited with having discovered the islands during his voyage of 1512-13, but the first maps to show the region date to 1532.

The Portuguese named the area Bassas de Chagas, but the islands were never made part of the Portuguese Empire. The earliest and most interesting description of the Chagos, before coconut trees grew widely on the islands, was written by Manoel Rangel, a castaway from the Portuguese ship *Conceição* which ran aground on the Peros Banhos reefs in 1556.

The French were the first to lay a claim on the Chagos after they settled Réunion Island (in 1665) and Isle de France (now Mauritius, in 1715). The French began issuing permits for companies to establish coconut oil plantations on the Chagos in the 1770s. On April 27, 1786 the Chagos Islands and Diego Garcia were claimed for Great Britain, but not formally ceded to Britain until after Napoleon's defeat, in 1814.

Diego Garcia and the rest of the Chagos islands were uninhabited until the late 18th century. In 1778, the French Governor of Mauritius granted Monsieur Dupuit de la Faye the island of Diego Garcia, and



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evidence exists of temporary French visits to collect coconuts and fish. Several Frenchmen living in "a dozen huts" abandoned Diego Garcia when the British East India Company attempted to establish a settlement there in April 1786.

The supplies of the 275 settlers were overwhelmed by 250 survivors of the wreck of the British East Indian Ship Atlas in May, and the colony failed in October. Following the departure of the British, the French colony of Mauritius began marooning lepers on Diego Garcia, and in 1793, the French established a coconut plantation using slave labor, which also exported cordage made from coconut fiber, and sea cucumbers, known as a delicacy in the Orient.

Commander Robert Moresby made the first scientific survey of the Chagos on behalf of the British Admiralty in 1838.

Detailed Condition:

Minor soiling.