



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Santa Barbara, Cal. from the "foot hills" Looking South. Islands 60 miles in the distance.

Stock#: 73104
Map Maker: Mote
Date: 1877 circa
Place: Richmond, Indiana
Color: (See Description)
Condition: VG+
Size: 24 x 14.25 inches (sight)
Price: \$ 24,500.00



Description:

Fine original oil painting of Santa Barbara, California, in the mid-1870s, by noted midwestern artist Marcus Mote.

Mote's painting shows Santa Barbara from the east, with Santa Cruz Island in the distance and bucolic hilly meadows and scattered trees in the foreground.

The artist, Marcus Mote is notable and well respected, but best known for portraits and paintings on religious themes. The present painting, as noted in his inscription on the back of the canvas, is "From a sketch by Sue Spence in Winter of 1876-7." Sue Spence was one of Mote's early students, and a famously volatile one, based upon Mote's biography. After leaving Mote's studio in the 1860s, she set up her own studio in Paxton, Illinois, where she remained for several years. Later, she traveled to California. The July 1, 1875 *St. Helena Star* notes Spence "a fine and artistic painter," visited her brother H. Spence.

The inscription on the verso shows that it was a gift to "Danl S. Anthony from M[arcus] M[ote] in Richmond, Indiana." Daniel S. Anthony was an early settler in Richmond, who first opened a mill in the town in 1818.

The painting is accompanied by a photocopy or carbon of a letter from Joseph A. Baird, Jr., to Mrs. Elizabeth Hay Bechtel of Santa Barbara, California, dated February 5, 1972, stating that when Baird was recently in New York:

one of the major dealers in American paintings... showed me a painting of Santa Barbara. It is



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utterly charming, and in my opinion a real period document. As you well know, the number of historic paintings of Santa Barbara is small indeed. The artist is Indiana born [actually Ohio] and resident...; just what exact connection he had with Sue Spence, who sketched the original scene, is not yet clear. Seen in 'reality', the painting has great quality; and Mote, the artist, is certainly an above average later Victorian painter....

There is also a receipt for the painting from Maxwell Galleries of San Francisco, dated August 25, 1979, for sale of the painting to M.P. McKenna of Conway New Hampshire, and two copies of an appraisal by Maxwell Galleries for the painting, dated August 30, 1979, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Thompson of Santa Barbara, California. The Thompsons were evidently the final most recent owners, as the painting was consigned by the family to Pacific Book Auctions for sale in April, 2021.

Rarity

19th-century bird's-eye view oil paintings of California cities are generally very rare. This is the only such 19th-century painting of Santa Barbara that we have encountered in 30 years in business in California.

Detailed Condition:

Oil on canvas, on original wooden stretchers. A few small spots retouched in the sky. Gilt carved wood frame (30.75" x 21.25").