



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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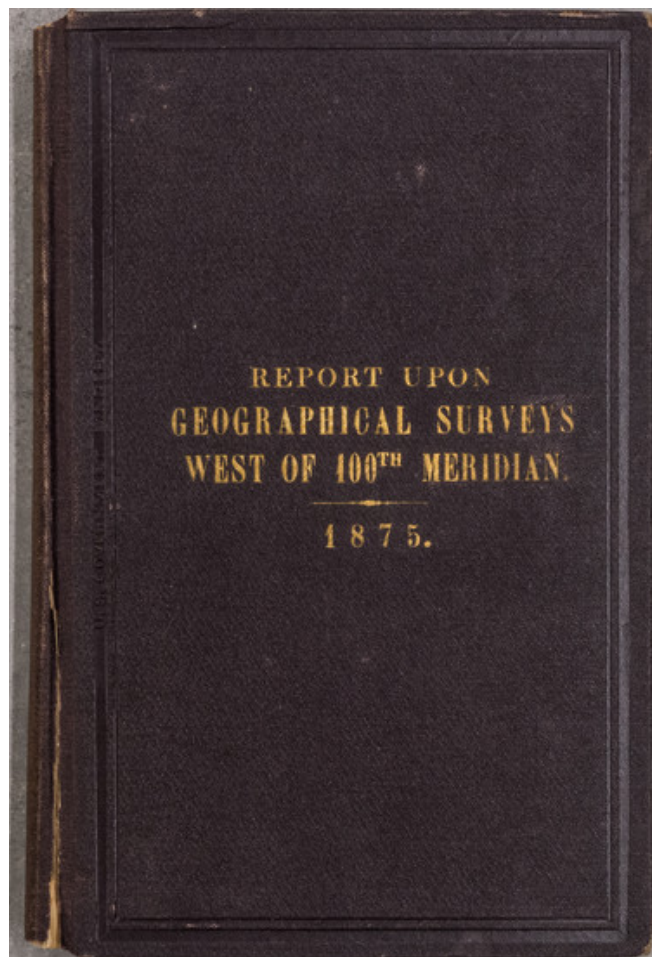
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**[Run of 6 Volumes] Report Upon Geographical Surveys West of the 100th Meridian**

**Stock#:** 74064  
**Map Maker:** Wheeler  
**Date:** 1875  
**Place:** Washington D. C.  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 6 x 9 inches  
**Price:** \$ 8,500.00



**Description:**

***The Wheeler Surveys***

Collection of six important annual reports documenting the progress of the Wheeler Survey from 1875 to 1880. This fascinating series of reports contains 18 folding maps, numerous plates, and detailed text regarding the exploration of the West.

One of the four great surveys of the American West (in addition to the King, Hayden, and Powell Surveys), the Wheeler Survey ran from 1869-1879 with primary goals that included: creating a better geographical map of the west; determining the geological, botanical, and zoological points of interest in the west; and mapping possible routes for roads and railroads.



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## **[Run of 6 Volumes] Report Upon Geographical Surveys West of the 100th Meridian**

These reports were published as appendices to the *Annual Report to the Army Chief of Engineers*.

### **George Wheeler and The Geographical Surveys West of the 100th Meridian**

George Montague Wheeler was placed in charge of mapping the western United States for the US Army Corps of Engineers at the age of 26. With a team comprising several dozen army officers and civilian scientists, he would embark on his first early expeditions in 1869 and 1871. Public support for the surveys would blossom following the publication of William Bell and Timothy O'Sullivan's photographs of the west, and Congress would formally appropriate funds for mapping the territories west of the 100th meridian in 1872.

The US Army Chief of Engineers, Andrew Humphreys, had initially conceived of a survey that not only focused on geographical mapping but also understanding the economic resources and scientific interest of the western American possessions. He described the purpose of the surveys as:

*[to] obtain correct topographical knowledge of . . . everything relating to the physical features of the country, the numbers, habits, and dispositions of the Indians who may live in this section, the selection of such sites as may be used for future military operation or occupation, and the facilities offered for making rail or common roads . . . the mineral resources that may be discovered . . . the influence of climate, the geological formations, character and kinds of vegetation, its probable value for agricultural and grazing purposes, relative proportions of woodland, water, and other qualities which affect its value. . .*

Such an extensive survey of such an expansive area would take a long time to complete, but Wheeler progressed quickly. By 1879, large portions of Utah, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico, along with parts of California, would be mapped. In that year, however, Congress would decide that having four overlapping surveys of the west, both military and civilian, was inefficient. The surveys would then be agglomerated into the newly formed USGS, although Wheeler would publish several later reports based on previously collected data.

### **Rarity**

Collections of these reports are rare on the market and present an uncommon opportunity for American West collectors.

### **Contents**

### **Maps**



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A description of some of the more interesting maps included in the report are detailed below.

*Progress Maps*

Each volume contains a progress map, showing the developments of the survey up to the publication of these reports, allowing the readers of the report to see the year-on-year development of the survey. Overlain on these maps, in red, are the routes taken by previous military expeditions dating to the early 19th century as well as important trade routes.

*Outline map of Parts of Southern California*

The 1876 report contains a detailed map of southern California based on the survey's progress during the past summer. Focus is primarily placed on the drainage basins of the area, with approximate drainage areas marked.

*The Diversion of the Colorado River*

This 1876 volume also includes an interesting map of the Colorado River which was conducted by a division of the survey charged with assessing the possibility for diverting the river. Incredibly detailed topography is shown from their outward route from Los Angeles over Cajon Pass to trace the Colorado River from Las Vegas southwards, as well as for their return route from Ehrenburg to San Diego. The report details several portions along the river in which flow could be diverted in order to irrigate the surrounding area.

*Profile of the Continental Divide*

The 1877 volume contains a fascinating profile of the Continental Divide in New Mexico and Colorado. Numerous peaks on the Divide are labeled, as well as developed and possible passes.

*Passage Par Terre a la Californie*

The 1878 volume contains an interesting reproduction of the 1705 Kino map of California that shows Baja California, northwestern Mexico, and the lower portions of the Colorado and Blue Rivers. The text contains a fascinating and developed description of the California as an island myth, as clearly laid out as in any modern text on cartographic history.

*Sketch of El Paso, Texas, and Vicinity; Showing Position of Astronomical Monument of 1878 near Ft. Bliss*

The 1879 volume contains one of the earliest obtainable plans of El Paso. The map shows the greater El

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Paso area, with an inset showing the downtown layout and the position of an observatory in which the survey conducted various studies.

*Outline Map of the Washoe District, Nev. Showing Comstock Lode Etc.*

The 1879 volume also contains a detailed map showing different claims and mines which developed the Comstock Lode, as well as the location of the Sutro Tunnel.

**Volumes**

Volume I

Appendix LL to the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1875*. iv, ii, 196. Complete with 2 folding maps and 9 additional plates.

Volume II

Appendix JJ to the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1876*. vi, 355. Complete with 8 folding maps and 2 additional plates.

Volume III

Appendix NN to the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1877*. iv, 1210-1334, V. Complete with 2 folding maps.

Volume IV

Appendix NN to the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1878*. x, 234. Complete with 2 folding maps and 5 additional plates.

Volume V

Appendix OO to the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1879*. vi, 340. Complete with 5 folding maps and 1 additional plate.

Volume VI

Appendix PP to the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1880*. v, 40. Complete with 1 folding map.



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**Detailed Condition:**

6 volumes. Octavo. Contemporary cloth binding by the US Government Bindery. Volume I in full original cloth, while Volumes II-VI have original print-text covers. Volumes I and IV show minor splitting at hinges. Bookplates "With the Compliments of George M. Wheeler, Liet. of Engineers, U. S. Army" in Volumes I and VI. One map separate from binding but present.