



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## A Bird's Eye View of the Suez

**Stock#:** 74125  
**Map Maker:** Maclure & Macdonald  
Lithographers  
**Date:** 1882  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 26.7 x 10.25 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

Scarce lithographic view of the Suez Canal, published as a supplement for *The Graphic*.

As noted below, the view was likely prepared at a time when the British were actively engaged in acquiring a financial interest in the Suez Canal Company, occupying Egypt and suppressing the Urabi Revolt.

While the Canal had been completed in 1869, the first decade of operation was tumultuous. Work started on the shore of the future Port Said in April 1859. The excavation took 10 years. Some sources estimate that over 30,000 people were working on the canal at any given period, that more than 1.5 million people from various countries were employed, and that tens of thousands of laborers died, many of them from cholera and similar epidemics.

The canal opened under French control in November 1869. After the opening, the Suez Canal Company was in financial difficulties. The remaining works were completed only in 1871, and traffic was below expectations in the first two years. The canal had an immediate and dramatic effect on world trade. Combined with the American transcontinental railroad completed six months earlier, it allowed the world to be circled in record time.

The construction of the canal was one of the reasons for the Panic of 1873 in Great Britain, because goods from the Far East had, until then, been carried in sailing vessels around the Cape of Good Hope and stored in British warehouses. An inability to pay his bank debts led Said Pasha's successor, Isma'il Pasha, in 1875 to sell his 44% share in the canal for £4,000,000 (\$19.2 million), equivalent to £432 million to £456 million (\$540 million to \$570 million) in 2019, to the government of the United Kingdom. French shareholders still held the majority.



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Local unrest caused the British to invade in 1882 and take full control, although nominally Egypt remained part of the Ottoman Empire.

The Convention of Constantinople in 1888 declared the canal a neutral zone under the protection of the British, who had occupied Egypt and Sudan at the request of Khedive Tewfiq to suppress the Urabi Revolt against his rule. The revolt went on from 1879 to 1882.

**Detailed Condition:**