



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## **A Map of the Middle British Colonies In North America First Published By Mr. Lewis Evans of Philadelphia in 1755; and since corrected and improved . . . By T. Pownall . . . March 25th 1776**

**Stock#:** 78958  
**Map Maker:** Evans / Pownall  
**Date:** 1755 (1776)  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 32.5 x 19.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

#### ***Enlarged Edition of Lewis Evans' seminal Map of the Middle British Colonies, updated, corrected, and extended by Governor Thomas Pownall in 1776***

Pownall's 1776 state of Lewis Evans's 1755 *A Map of the Middle British Colonies*--the most important American map of the eighteenth century alongside Mitchell's *A Map of the British and French Dominions*, which was also first published in 1755.

Both maps were intended to spur western expansion into the Trans-Allegheny West, the Ohio River Valley, and other westward areas in response to supposed French encroachments. The Evans map became the standard for later cartography of the northwest and Appalachian areas for nearly fifty years. The map was re-issued in this and a number of pirated editions by Jefferys, Sayer, Kitchin, Bowles, and others.

Unlike the pirated editions, Pownall's map is issued from the original Evans plate, with the addition of New England and a group of tables which name townships in the Colonies. It retains Evans' dedication to Pownall. Pownall had been a great supporter of Evans and pledged the proceeds from this edition to Evans' daughter. The plate was engraved by James Turner in Philadelphia.

### **Lewis Evans and the making of the Evans map**

Before creating his famous map, Lewis Evans was commissioned by the Pennsylvania legislature to secretly compile a map of the British Colonies. Evans had also produced several other maps and had traveled with a number of the great Indian traders of the day. These experiences helped him to compile a work of incomparable detail for the period.



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Unfortunately, Evans's map was overshadowed by his outspoken political opinions, which quickly alienated his peers both because of his willingness to cede certain regions north of the St. Lawrence to the French and because of his contentious relationship with Governor Morris of Pennsylvania. The latter ultimately led to Evans being imprisoned for libel; he died in prison in 1756.

Despite his ignominious demise, Evans' fervor for British control of the Trans-Alleghany West and the Ohio River Valley comes through clearly in his writings. In his *Analysis*, which accompanied his original map, Evans states:

*The Map, that these Sheets accompany, and that they are intended to explain and supply, is presented to the Public, when a longer Time was indeed necessary to have given it the Degree of Correctness that was intended it. But the present Conjuncture of Affairs in America, and the generous Assistance of the Assembly of Pensilvania, have brought it to Light, when the Public will, it is hoped, receive Advantage from it, that will render an Apology for its premature Publication needless; and think it worthy the Encouragement of a Body who devote the Public Money to the Public Service.*

As noted by Henry Stevens:

*The " present conjuncture of affairs " no doubt refers to the rapidly increasing encroachments of France on the back settlements, to which Evans draws particular attention in his " Analysis." He especially points out the great advantages to the English Colonies of the Country on the Ohio and the Lakes, and urges the necessity for more general knowledge of the nature and position of those remote parts and of the various ways by which they may be reached, in order that the French may more easily be dispossessed. He then proceeds to explain the scope and details of his map and particularly he points out the nature and sources of his information, and quotes his authorities for each part of the country when describing it.*

One has only to read Evans's *Analysis* to readily realize the extreme difficulty of making a map of this vast country on a small scale of roughly thirty-six miles to the inch. It is evident that he drew the map with the most conscientious desire for accuracy, and the *Analysis* reveals the extraordinary amount of information he had collected for the purpose. In his concluding remarks, Evans makes some curious allusions to the ambitions of Massachusetts towards independence which are somewhat prophetic in light of subsequent events. However, the main object of his book seems to have been to direct particular attention to the advantages of a colony on the Ohio River and the retrieving of the country encroached



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upon by the French. Some copies of the map were probably issued in advance of the publication of the *Analysis* for the map is stated, in the imprint, to have been published on June 23, 1755, whereas the preface to the *Analysis* is dated August 9.

The map evidently garnered considerable attention in the Colonies and, according to Pownall in 1776, it had long been generally accepted as the standard authority for settling boundaries, purchases, etc. on account of the extreme care and accuracy with which it had been prepared. Further testimony to the accuracy of Evans' work comes from Captain Thomas Hutchins, who, in the preface to his *Topographical Description of Virginia*, published in 1778, says:

*It is fit also, that I should take notice, that in the account which I have given of several of the branches of the Ohio, and Alleghany rivers, I have adopted the words of the late ingenious Mr. Lewis Evans, as I found he had properly described them in the Analysis to his Map of the Middle Colonies.*

Evans's map was copied by a number of British mapmakers, beginning with Thomas Kitchin in 1756. Referencing the 1758 Kitchin edition in his 1776 *Topographical Description*, Pownall notes, "this Plagiarism was falsely sold as Evans's map improved; by which that very laborious and ingenious but poor man was deprived of the Benefit of his Work." Subsequent pirated editions were published by Jefferys (1758), Carrington Bowles (1771), Sayer & Bennett (1775 and after) and Laurie & Whittle (1793 and after).

**The Pownall State**

Thomas Pownall was a British politician best known for his service as the lieutenant-governor (1755) of New Jersey and the governor of Massachusetts (1757-1759) and later as an MP in the British House of Commons (1767-1780). He first met Lewis Evans on his tour of the principal cities of the Colonies when he first arrived in 1753-4. Pownall took a keen interest in Evans' geographic work and was the original dedicatee of the 1755 map.

Working with the printer John Almon, Pownall had this edition made from the original plate. The plate had been inherited by Evans' daughter, Amelia, and this new edition was to benefit her. Pownall oversaw the New England extension to the map and published it with a memoir explaining the updates.

Regarding the map, Pownall states:



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*The Western Division of this present map was composed and published at the Commencement of the late War in America. It was found by the Officers and Servants of the Crown to have that Degree of Precision, that it was used by them both in England and in America, and served every practical Purpose during the War. Those who have served and traveled in America, have had few Occasions of correcting it; on the contrary, its Exactness as far as a general Map means to go, as far as a Map on this small Scale could go, has generally been confirmed by Experience on the Spot. In any Transactions since the War, where local Precision has been necessary, this Map has been referred to, not simply in private but public Transactions, such as the great Indian Purchase and Cession. The Boundaries by which the Propositions for the Purchase of Lands on the Ohio were made to the Boards of Trade and Treasury, were marked and settled on this Map. When the Servants of the Crown proposed in the House of Commons the Clause for the Limits of the Government of Quebec; and when the Line of those Limits was there opposed, both Sides, with this Map in their Hands, argued from it.*

On the present map, the old engraver's imprint, "Engraved by Ja s Turner in Philadelphia", still remains to the left of the cartouche. Not much alteration is to be observed in the western parts, save that an alternative course of the Ohio River, according to Gist and Gordon, is laid down in dotted lines.

By contrast, the whole of the map east of Philadelphia is greatly changed and is filled with new details. The old right-hand border, which in the original Evans plate was placed at ca. 4 degrees E of Philadelphia, is cut off, and the map now extends eastward to ca. 9 degrees E. This was added using what appears to be a separate plate, and, after printing, the impressions from each plate were neatly joined to form one map. In the ocean and in various other blank spaces are lists of the counties and townships of the Colonies, numbered to correspond with references in the body of the map.

Evans' map is a milestone both for its political significance and its erudite coverage of cartographic knowledge of the region. This is an essential map for regional Americana collectors, those interested in the Seven Years' War, and in the American Revolution.

**Detailed Condition:**

Original hand-color in outline. Two sheets joined. Fold split in left and minor tear in image expertly repaired.