



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A New Description of Carolina

Stock#: 78977
Map Maker: Speed
Date: 1676
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 20 x 14.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

John Speed's *A New Description of Carolina*, engraved by Francis Lamb for the 1676 posthumous edition of Speed's *A Prospect . . . of the World*, stands as an important early map of the Carolinas, reflecting both the political ambitions of the era and the geographical myths introduced by explorer John Lederer. Based on the famous Lords Proprietors' Map of Carolina, this map embodies the complex interplay of exploration, colonization, and cartographical representation in the late 17th century.

The map's origin lies in Charles II's audacious grant to eight of his supporters, the Lords Proprietors, of all lands between Virginia and Florida, ignoring existing territorial claims. This political backdrop set the stage for the creation of this influential map. A young German explorer, John Lederer ventured across the Blue Ridge Mountains and introduced various geographical myths, including an erroneous description of Piedmont, North Carolina, a massive interior lake, and an arid region named the Arenosa Desert. These myths, perpetuated by Speed's map, survived in the cartographical record for nearly a century.

The map's depiction and design, drawn directly from John Ogilby's c.1673 map, include significant variations and details. Among these are the correct marking of Charles Town on the south bank of the Ashley River, a noteworthy early representation of Charleston before its relocation in 1680. The omission of the inset map of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and other minor differences highlight the evolving understanding of the region. The map's engraving by Francis Lamb, coupled with the panels of text on the reverse derived from Ogilby's *America*, provides a multifaceted view of the region, enriched by an account of Lederer's travels.

In its historical context, *A New Description of Carolina* serves as both a document of territorial ambition



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and a reflection of the ever-evolving quest for geographical knowledge. The integration of political maneuvering, exploration, and cartographical innovation makes this map an essential piece of the 17th-century British colonial endeavor. Through its depiction of the Carolinas and the accompanying myths, it provides a glimpse into a time when the boundaries of the known world were in flux, shaped by the aspirations and imaginations of explorers and rulers alike.

Detailed Condition:

Minor tear, repaired at top center.