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**A MAP OF THE United States. Exhibiting Post Roads & Distances BY Abraham Bradley Jun. The first Sheet Comprehending the Nine Northern States, with parts of Virginia and the Territories North of Ohio.. . .**

**Stock#:** 82772  
**Map Maker:** Bradley  
  
**Date:** 1796  
**Place:** Philadelphia  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 35.5 x 31 inches  
  
**Price:** Reference



**Description:**

Fine example of Abraham Bradley's postal map of the United States, one of the most important maps early maps of the United States and a landmark in the both the history of cartography and American Postal history.

The present example of the map is the first edition, third state of the map (the second complete state) and the earliest known example of the map in private hands (per Caldwell & Buehler).

First issued in 1796 (northeast sheet only), Bradley's postal map is among the most important maps in American history. Bradley's map is one of only 4 large format maps of the United States to have been published in America prior to 1800, two of which (maps by Abel Buell and John Norman) are unlikely to ever again appear on the market. The map provides an exceptionally detailed look at the post offices and postal routes of America, as they existed at the end of the 18th Century, locating every post office then in operation. The map also includes the first printing of the first American postal delivery time and route schedule (which may have also been issued separately, although there are no known separately printed examples which have survived).

In 1796, Bradley published his first *Map of the United States, Exhibiting the Post-Roads, the Situations,*



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*Connections, and Distances of the Post-Offices.* At that time, less than 15 years after the end of the War of Independence, most citizens of the fledgling United States still had no real conception of the magnitude of their young nation. Bradley's postal map, with its schedule chart, was a perfect combination of Bradley's skills and obsession for precision scheduling. This unique U.S. map was on public display in almost every large post office in the country and provided citizens with an impressive visual depiction of the scope of the United States at a time when the search for a national culture and national identity was at its height, after the final and official separation from Great Britain. The inclusion of stagecoach schedules promoted, encouraged and broadened popular notions of the concept of time beyond seasonal and religious practices.

For many colonial residents, the Bradley's map was the iconic symbol of a unified United States. Citizens began to consider (and later demand adherence to) weekly and daily notations of time, as measured by the institution of regularly-scheduled mail service.

A fascinating historical footnote for Bradley's map was its use by Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, future King of France (1830-1848), during his travels in America. Louis Philippe spent more than three years in American exile, from 1796 to 1800. At the beginning of his exile in 1796, he and his two brothers visited an aging George Washington at Mount Vernon, where they revealed their desire to explore the mysterious interior of America. Washington presented them with a copy of Bradley's map and outlined a route for the brothers in red. The map became a favorite keepsake for Louis Philippe, who years later, as King of France, would proudly produce the map for visitors and share the story of how Washington had redlined the map in his own hand for a young Louis Philippe and his brothers.

The present map is the third state of the 1796 edition, preceded, only by the offering of the northeastern sheet (state 1) and the first complete state (state 2). Caldwell & Buehler offer a date of 1797 for the map, based upon the inclusion of post offices which were not opened until 1797. The map bears the name (E. Williams) and 1797 date on the verso, which were likely written on the original linen by the first owner of the map at the time of its acquisition.

18th Century editions of the map (of which there were 4) are of the utmost rarity. The last auction record for an 18th Century edition of the map was in 1976. The Caldwell & Buehler articles notes only one known example of the first edition, first state (Library of Congress) and 4 complete examples of the first edition, second state (American Geographical Society, American Philosophical Society, Library of Congress and New York Public Library).



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The present example is the earliest known example of the map in private hands and one of only 8 known examples of the first edition, third state (Boston Public Library, British Library, Library of Congress, Massachusetts Historical Society, New York Public Library, Osher Map Library, and University of Michigan. The first edition, fourth state (published in 1800), is known in 6 examples, including the only other known privately held example of the first edition of the map.

An enlarged second edition was published in 1804 (4 known states) and a third edition in 1825 (1 known state).

**Detailed Condition:**