



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(Caribbean Atlas) A New Atlas of the British West Indies, with a Whole Sheet General Map of the West India Islands, and a Whole Sheet Map of the Island of Hispaniola, or St. Domingo.

Stock#: 84330

Map Maker: Humphreys

Date: 1806

Place: Philadelphia

Color: Uncolored

Condition: VG

Size: 25.5 x 15.75 inches

Price: \$ 6,500.00



Description:

The Earliest Printed American Atlas of the Caribbean. A Scarce and Important Work on the West Indies.

Atlas volume serving to accompany Bryan Edwards's *History of the West Indies*, issued in Philadelphia in 1806. This collection of eleven maps represents the most up-to-date mapping of the Caribbean at the time, being taken from all the best sources of the time. Particularly interesting is the general map of the West Indies, which includes an early depiction of the Gulf Stream.

The *Atlas* provides a fascinating and immensely well-researched look at the 19th-century Caribbean. These maps tell their own story of the British possessions in the area, providing remarkably detailed maps that were the standard of Caribbean cartography.

The first map, *A New Map of the West Indies*, is of particular interest for its treatment of the Gulf Stream. Here labeled "The Florida Stream," it can be traced from the Honduran coastline up around Cuba and along the Floridian coastline. The naming of "The Florida Stream" instead of the Gulf Stream is of note. While some earlier maps of the Gulf Stream were printed in the US showing the whole Atlantic, this is one of the earliest to focus on the important phenomenon at such a detailed scale. The map includes some minor inland detail in Central America, including the Darien Country, which is unusual to see treated to such an extent on a primarily maritime map.

This general chart is supplemented by extremely detailed maps of the British-held islands as well as the non-British-held Santo Domingo. Showing Santo Domingo in this primarily British-themed atlas likely



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reflects the recent Anglo interest in the island following the Haitian Revolution. British troops had tried, unsuccessfully, to intervene in the 1790s, conducting what was the largest British expedition mounted to date. However, this was unsuccessful, and the British eventually withdrew.

The *Atlas* that these maps served to accompany was considered a masterpiece and the definitive work on the Caribbean. The book described the economies of the islands, their history and governance, and it shone a light on the slave trade, disparaging the treatment of slaves and describing the inhumane conditions they suffered.

This *Atlas* is from the fourth edition of Edwards's text, being the first printed in Philadelphia. This edition is the first to add the atlas volume as volume five, accompanying four volumes of text, following the London editions of 1793, 1801, and 1807. The work was reissued one further time, in 1818 in London, with the last edition including five text volumes and updated maps. The 1806 Philadelphia edition can be recognized by its circular cartouche in the general map of the West Indies and the signatures of the engravers Seymour and Tanner on the first two folding maps.

Contents

1. *A New Map of the West Indies.* (Folding).
2. *Jamaica Divided into Counties & Parishes.* (Folding).
3. *Barbadoes.*
4. *Barbadoes.* (Repeated, erroneously).
5. *St. Vincent.*
6. *Grenada.*
7. *Map of the Island of Dominica for the History of the West Indies, by Bryan Edwards Esqr.*
8. *Island of St. Christophers.*
9. *Island of Antigua.*
10. *Virgin Islands.*
11. *Island of Tobago.*
12. *St. Domingo.* (Folding).

Detailed Condition:

Folio. Modern quarter calf over original paper boards, with pastedown title reading "ATLAS | TO | EDWARDS' HISTORY | OF THE | WEST INDIES | VOL. 5." Marietta Library ex-libris on front pastedown, manuscript pencil on front page. Complete set of 11 engraved maps (three of which folding), with the



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Barbados map appearing in duplicate. Apparently lacking two initial leaves of text (Title and Contents).