



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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(California Lithograph) At the Play. Respectfully Inscribed to the Wealth, Enterprise & Beauty of California by Their Faithful Friend

Stock#: 84403
Map Maker: Britton & Rey / Gariboldi / Marriott
Date: 1879 July
Place: San Francisco
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 35.5 x 24 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

California's Elite in 1879. Rare Lithograph by Britton & Rey after Photographs by Bradley & Rulofson.

This impressive composite lithograph view consists of portraits of three hundred prominent San Franciscans, mostly successful businessmen and politicians and their wives. Based upon photographic originals by Bradley & Rulofson, the lithograph shows San Francisco's elite seated in a grand theater from the perspective of the stage. The detailed features of the many well-dressed audience members are wonderfully rendered for all to see. While most in the audience are men, there are several women present, including Jessie Benton Fremont. There is also a boy, the young Leland Stanford, Jr., for whom Stanford University would later be named after his untimely death in 1884 at the age of 15.

Signed on stone by G. G. Gariboldi as "decor." This must have been the same G. G. Gariboldi who created the ornamental artwork in Stanford's Nob Hill mansion. G. G. Gariboldi is identified as one of the audience members in the lithograph. This is the only lithograph listed by Harry T. Peters' *California on Stone* as having anything to do with Gariboldi, and it seems the latter's primary business in California was decorating mansions, and perhaps hobnobbing with the nobs.

Dedicated by Frederick Marriott (Marriott & Son), editor and proprietor of *the San Francisco News Letter*.

Caption in lower left: Lith. Britton & Rey, S. F. Bradley & Rulofson, Photo.

Britton & Rey were the most prominent of the pioneering San Francisco lithographic firms; they produced



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excellent maps, lettersheets and numerous lithograph showpieces such as the present view. Bradley and Rulofson, who were responsible for the portrait photographs that served as the models for the present lithograph, are described by Peter Palmquist as engaging in "an aggressive and innovative style of doing business... In the fall of 1871, Bradley and Rulofson won all of the first premiums for portrait photographs at the Eighth Exhibition of the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute."

Among the worthies in the theater: Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Bancroft, F. A. Bee (Chinese Consul), Mayor A. J. Bryant, Samuel Brannan, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Crocker, Chas. and M. H. de Young (proprietors of *the San Francisco Chronicle*), Mrs. Jessie Benton Fremont, Arpad Harazthy ("wine grower"), Mrs. Mark Hopkins, Senator John P. Jones, Gov. William Irwin, Gen. W. S. Rosecrans, J. C. Flood ("Bonanza King" who made a fortune from the Comstock Lode), Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford and Leland Stanford, Jr., and dozens of other capitalists, politicians, stockbrokers, bankers, merchants, clergymen, and the like.

The Norris Catalogue adds a humorous note about this distinguished group:

It is curious to note that less than a dozen of the gentlemen are clean-shaven and of the many ladies present only three carry fans.

Accompanied with a photocopy (negative photostat) of the printed key which identifies the people shown in the lithograph: *Key Block of the Prominent San Franciscans "At the Play."*

Rarity

The last copy recorded at auction was sold in 1948 at the Norris sale. WorldCat locates only three copies (U.C. Berkeley, Lawrence Lab, and the Institute of Government Studies). We can also find examples at the Huntington Library and

A finely produced lithograph by California's premier 19th-century lithographic establishment; and a wonderful example of what might be styled proto social media.

Detailed Condition:

Color tinted lithograph. Linen-backed. Vertical crease down the middle. Numerous tears to left and right margins, sometimes affecting printed areas, the worst affecting the lower right quadrant and right-hand edge area in general. Paper losses to lower right corner, with loss of one word in caption: "Entered according to Act of Congress in the Office of the Libraria[n] [Washington], D.C. July 1879." Also losses to the printed logo of the San Francisco News Letter in lower margin and to the chest area of one James R.



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Keene, capitalist. Withal quite good.