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Boston its Environs and Harbour, with the Rebels Works Raised Against that Town in 1775, from the Observations of Lieut Page of His Majesty's Corps of Engineers, and from the Plans of Capt. Montresor.

Stock#: 84961mb
Map Maker: Faden
Date: 1777 , October 1st
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 25 x 27.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Siege of Boston by the Leading, On-The-Ground, British Engineers.

Impressive and rare William Faden map of Revolutionary Boston, showing the defensive positions of the British-held city as it succumbed to the American siege. The map depicts the city as it stood in the last days of British rule, as exemplified by works shown that were built less than two weeks before the British evacuated the city. The map remains one of the best obtainable plans of the siege of Boston made from the British standpoint.

The map is particularly notable for its basis on the work of Lieutenant Thomas Page, wounded at Bunker Hill, and Captain John Montresor, chief engineer of British Forces in North America at the start of the War. These two individuals, who both served for extended periods in Boston, were some of the foremost British authorities on North American geography and would have had access to the most detailed military surveying. In addition, numerous unnamed engineers would also have contributed to the making of this map.

The map extends from the American fortifications in Cambridge and Roxbury Hill in the east of the map eastwards to the mouth of Boston Harbor. British positions at Charlestown, Boston, and the Boston Causeway are all indicated. As previously noted, Dorchester Hill shows "Work Begun," from the last days of the siege. The depictions of military positions, fortifications, redoubts, and defenses is remarkably and unmatched in their extensiveness. Physical and human geography are also very well represented.



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This map was published in 1777 by William Faden, as part of a collection of important battle plans for the North American theatre.

The Siege of Boston

Following the battles of the 19th of April, 1775, at Lexington and Concord, the British retreated into Boston. Immediately thereafter, a siege was laid by militiamen who set up camp at Charlestown, Cambridge, Brookline, and Roxbury and slowly, but surely, set up a ring of offensive positions that eventually encircled the town. After some early engagements, the siege settled into a stalemate following the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17th. The Americans lacked the confidence to attempt an amphibious assault on the city, and the British were too shocked by their losses at Bunker Hill to mount a proper counteroffensive.

During the winter of 1775 and 1776, the Americans were able to strengthen their positions using the artillery dragged overland from captured Fort Ticonderoga. At the start of March, relatively ineffective bombardments of Boston began. By March 5th, Washington decided to occupy Dorchester Heights, which the American troops did so overnight, with the construction of impressively rapid fortifications. The British position became untenable, and they decided to evacuate the city, which they would do on the 17th of March.

Involvement of Montresor and Page in the Map

As previously mentioned, Montresor and Page were some of the leading military engineers in the British North American Colonies. Both are known for their cartographic involvement in some of the most important Revolutionary-era maps of the American Colonies, including Montresor's [*Plan of the City of New-York*](#), the first large-scale view of New York city, and Page's [*English Pilot*](#).

The involvement of these two in the mapping of Boston combine to provide a degree of detail and sense of immediacy available on few other contemporary maps of Boston. However, the exact involvement of each in this mapping is difficult to discern. Montresor later said that "Page served Eleven days and was then wounded [at Bunker Hill] and return'd home and had ten shillings per diem settled for life" (*Journals*, p. 146), suggesting that Page would have had little to do with the making of this map, but Montresor was prone to overstating his own involvement affairs. During the French and Indian War, he had been caught trying to erase mapmaker Samuel Holland's imprint from a survey of Quebec.

Based on the relative timings of the two men in the city, it is likely that the majority of the base mapping of



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the vicinity of Boston came from Montresor or pre-siege surveyors. Following the American encampments, Page mapped the military fortifications of American and British troops. Then, during Page's invalidation back to England, it is possible that he brought the manuscript surveys to Faden to have them published.

Detailed Condition:

A very clean and attractive copy, printed on heavy 18th-century laid paper. Original hand-color in battery positions.