



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(Menagerie & Circus) Van Amburgh & Co's Great Golden Menagerie. Henry Barnum... Manager.

Stock#: 91489
Map Maker: Van Amburgh & Co.
Date: 1871
Place: Jefferson, Missouri (?)
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 4.5 x 21.5 inches
Price: \$ 950.00



Description:

Van Amburgh & Co's Great Golden Menagerie, managed by Henry Barnum, proclaimed as the largest exhibition in the known world, was an iconic traveling menagerie that toured America in the 19th century. This promotional material, dating from September 6th, 1871, illustrates the grandeur and diversity of the exhibition, boasting a collection of rare and wonderful animals, and positioning itself as a significant institution for the study of natural history, all unaccompanied by objectionable circus performances.



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In an era marked by curiosity and exploration, the menagerie culture was flourishing in the United States. The *Van Amburgh & Co's Great Golden Menagerie* set itself apart as a "Congress of Animated Nature," emphasizing its educational and scientific value. Its commitment to showcasing "The Great Creator's Handiwork" resonated with the public's interest in understanding the natural world, and its significant investment of nearly half a million dollars demonstrated the scale and ambition of the endeavor.

The advertisement's description paints a vivid picture of the menagerie's offerings, with claims of a living lion loose in the street unchained, and mentions of obtaining specimens from all known countries, reflecting a sense of adventure and wonder. The pricing structure and special rate for children hint at the broad appeal of the show, seeking to attract audiences of all ages.

Accompanied by an original printed pictorial envelope, including the names of the manager, assistant, and agent, and embellished with wood-engraved illustrations of animals, some performing tricks, this promotional material is a fascinating artifact of 19th-century entertainment and education. It not only offers a glimpse into the way nature and exotic creatures were presented to the public but also reflects broader cultural trends of spectacle, exploration, and scientific inquiry.

Van Amburgh & Co's Great Golden Menagerie stands as a testament to the complex interplay of entertainment, education, and commercial enterprise in the 19th century. Its unique blend of spectacle and education, grand claims, and vibrant imagery provides valuable insights into the public's fascination with the natural world and the ways in which that fascination was commodified and presented through popular culture.

Detailed Condition:

Broadside is linen-backed. Original printed pictorial envelope.