



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

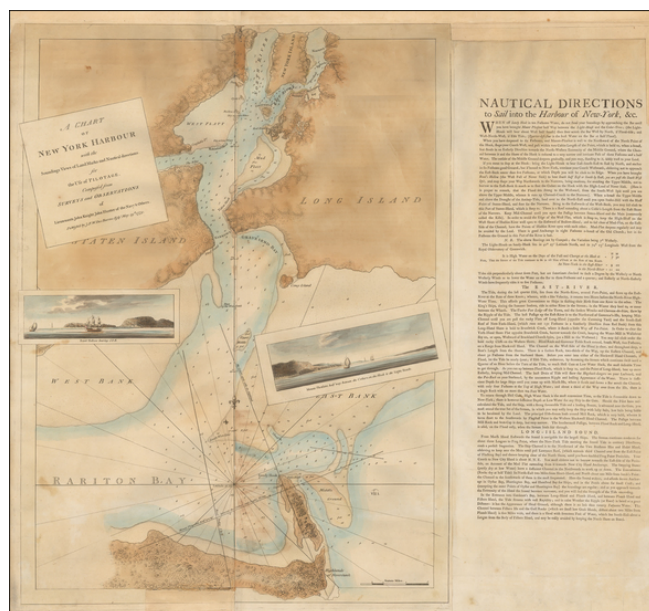
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**A Chart of New York Harbour with the Soundings Views of Land Marks and Nautical  
directions for the Use of Pilotage. Composed from Surveys and Observations of  
Lieutenants Johyn Knight, John Huntar of the Navy & Others . . . 1779 (with Sailing  
Directions Sheet!)**

**Stock#:** 51318  
**Map Maker:** Des Barres  
  
**Date:** 1779  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 35 x 31 inches  
  
**Price:** \$ 6,400.00



**Description:**

***Des Barres's Map of New York Harbor. The Definitive Revolutionary War Era Chart of the Harbor.***

Highly important Revolutionary War Era chart of New York Harbor, published in the most important collection of nautical charts of the age: Des Barres's *Atlantic Neptune*. This example is differentiated by its presentation with the accompanying letterpress sailing directions, a very interesting and highly unusual inclusion for a separate Des Barres chart.

The map covers Manhattan Island approximately up to modern-day 42nd Street. It shows Hunters Point in Queens, Williamsburg down to Coney Island in Brooklyn, part of New Jersey bordering the harbor, part of Staten Island, and the Sandy Hook area of New Jersey. This was a very active theater in the American Revolution, starting in 1776, with the British landing and capture of the city.

Two attractive landscape coastal profiles are presented on the map, the leftmost shows Bond Hollow bearing South by East; the one of the right shows "Mount Pleasant half way between the Cedars on the Hook & the Light House."



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The nautical directions are titled "Nautical Directions to Sail into the Harbour of New-York &c." It includes sections on navigating into the harbor, navigating the East River, and navigating Long-Island Sound.

The National Maritime Museum at Greenwich has four variants of the present chart ( [see all four here](#) ). The present map matches the earliest of their examples without the additional contouring and shading on the land.

#### **Des Barres**

Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres (1721-1824) was born in Switzerland where his Huguenot ancestors had fled following the repeal of the Edict of Nantes. He studied under the great mathematician, Daniel Bernoulli, at the University of Basel, before immigrating to Britain where he trained at the Royal Military College, Woolwich. Upon the outbreak of hostilities with France in 1756, he joined the British Royal American Regiment as a military engineer. He came to the attention of General James Wolfe, who appointed him to join his personal detail. During this period he also worked with the legendary future explorer, James Cook, on a monumental chart of the St. Lawrence River.

#### **Atlantic Neptune**

Upon the conclusion of the Seven Years War, Britain's empire in North America was greatly expanded, and this required the creation of a master atlas featuring new and accurate sea charts for use by the Royal Navy. Des Barres was enlisted to survey the coastlines of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. With these extremely accurate surveys in hand, Des Barres returned to London in 1774, where the Royal Navy charged him with the Herculean task of producing the atlas. He was gradually forwarded the manuscripts of numerous advanced surveys conducted by British cartographers in the American Colonies, Jamaica, and Cuba, conducted in the 1760s.

The result of Des Barres's travels along the Atlantic seaboard was The Atlantic Neptune, which became the most celebrated sea atlas of its era, containing the first systematic survey of the east coast of North America. Des Barres's synergy of great empirical accuracy with the peerless artistic virtue of his aquatint views, created a work that "has been described as the most splendid collection of charts, plates and views ever published" (National Maritime Museum Catalogue).

The Neptune eventually consisted of four volumes. Des Barres's dedication to the project was incredibly



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strong. He continually updated and added new charts and views to various editions (often at his own expense) until 1784, producing over 250 charts in all. These charts were immensely detailed and featured both hydrographical and topographical information. In many cases, Des Barre's charts remained the most authoritative maps of the regions covered for several decades.

The atlas is of the utmost rarity; the last example sold at auction made \$779,000 in 2009.

#### **Des Barres After the Atlantic Neptune**

After the Revolution, United Empire Loyalists were resettled throughout Canada. As part of this process, a new colony was created by separating Cape Breton from Nova Scotia. Des Barres served as lieutenant governor of Cape Breton Island from 1784 to 1787. He later served as governor of Prince Edward Island from 1804-1812.

He lived an exceptionally long life, even by today's standards, finally dying at 102-years-old. Des Barres's funeral was held at St. George's Round Church in 1824. He was buried beside his wife Martha in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Des Barres was survived by his mistress Mary Cannon and their four children.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Old color. Engraved chart joined with letterpress sailing directions. Repairs and margin extensions have been made with pieces from other original Des Barres charts. A piece from another chart has been used to close a loss approximately covering modern-day Jersey City (see image). A rectangular piece of paper below Sandy Hook in New Jersey has been replaced with a margin from another chart. A margin from another chart has also been added above the sailing directions.