



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

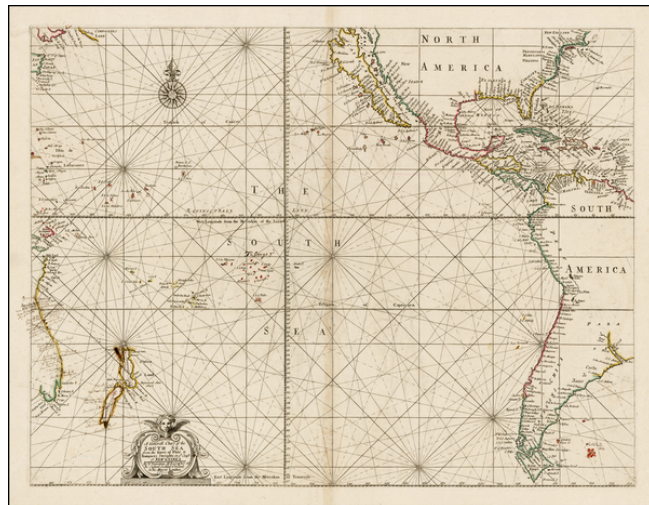
7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

## **A Generall Chart of the South Sea from the River of Plate to Dampiers Streights on ye Coast of New Guinea. By S. Thornton Hydrographer at the England Scotland & Ireland in the Minories London [with manuscript additions]**

**Stock#:** 33213gm  
**Map Maker:** Thornton  
**Date:** 1705 circa  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 22.5 x 17 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

An extraordinary example of Samuel Thornton's rare and highly Influential chart of the Pacific Ocean, featuring manuscript notations added immediately following the First Voyage of Captain James Cook.

This extremely rare and elegantly engraved work is one of only two sea charts of the Pacific Ocean published in Britain prior to 1740. While now extremely rare on the market, it was perhaps the most influential cartographic rendering of the South Seas in Britain during the majority of the eighteenth-century. The historical significance of this particular example is enhanced by the addition of contemporary manuscript notations revealing the discoveries of Captain James Cook's First Voyage (1768-71), although the annotator has mistakenly placed the manuscript coastal details of New Zealand on the wrong side of the printed coastline, creating a mirror image of the actual discoveries along the east coast of the islands.

The present chart is a scarce early state of John and Samuel Thornton's masterly *A Generall Chart of the South Sea*. Published around 1705, it evinces the most recent discoveries, although it betrays that much of the lands surrounding and within the world's largest ocean remained enigmatic. While the delineation of the shores of South and Central America is quite accurate, California is prominently shown to be an island. The Pacific is shown to be a vast, empty expanse, broken only by a handful of largely apocryphal islands.

On the opposite side of the Pacific, we gain a glimpse of Japan in the upper-left corner, and in the lower left there appear the intermittent outlines of the shores of Oceania as it was known at the dawn of the eighteenth-century. Conspicuous on the printed chart are the isolated partial outlines of the shores of



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Tasmania and New Zealand, as discovered by Abel Tasman in 1642-3. The engraving is silent with respect to the east coast of Australia, although it depicts the western coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria and the southeastern shores New Guinea, as explored by Willem Janz in 1606. Further north, it features a more recent discovery, that of "Dampier's Steights," the channel separating New Guinea from New Britain. This region was explored by the English pirate-intellectual William Dampier during his epic circumnavigation of 1689-91, after which his charts were first published in 1697.

The most fascinating and unique aspect of this example of the Thorntons' chart is the careful addition of manuscript annotations, clearly done in the mid-1770s in the immediate wake of Cook's First Voyage. They represent nothing short of an epistemological break from the very limited seventeenth-century conception of the Pacific towards the vast discoveries made during the Enlightenment era by Cook and others. Predicated on both the grounds of the style of the penmanship and nature of the content, the manuscript annotations were certainly added to the chart very shortly following the publication of the charts from Cook's First Voyage in 1773.

The eastern shore of Australia is carefully delineated in pen, as the procession of names of the newly discovered features line up along the coast, including "Port Jackson" and "Botany Bay". This precisely accords with the details engraved on Cook's series of charts of the coast of New South Wales. However, betraying the fact that this is all startling new intelligence, it is perhaps understandable that the author of the manuscript annotations mistakenly merges the eastern coast of Queensland with the western shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Derived from Cook's epic chart of New Zealand, the manuscript annotations delineate "Cook's Streights", running between the North and South Islands. Almost the entire expanse of the South Island is comprised by manuscript, while the North Island prominently features the Northland Peninsula, home to modern-day Auckland. Most of the place names given by Cook and annotated on the chart survive to this day.

Elsewhere mid-ocean are a series of islands added in manuscript, including "Is George 3d", referring to the name given Tahiti, upon its discovery by Lieutenant Samuel Wallis in 1767 during his circumnavigation aboard the *HMS Dolphin*, which provides perhaps the best evidence of the contemporary nature of the manuscript annotations. Further afield, in the South Atlantic, appear the "Falkland" Islands, which had been the focus of recent dispute between Spain and Britain that had nearly brought the two powers to war.

The present work was only the second chart of the Pacific Ocean published in Britain prior to 1740. John



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Thornton, who was latterly in partnership with his brother Samuel, became the preeminent sea chart maker in England. He was the official hydrographer to the East India Company and additionally was responsible for drafting some of the most important maps commissioned by the Hudson's Bay Company. He had a hand, along with John Seller, in producing *A Chart of the South Sea* (1675), which was the first English chart of the Pacific. Seller based his rendering on recent Dutch charts, notably the work of Abraham Goos.

The present chart is derived from Seller's work, save for some modest geographic advancements. Thornton subsequently bought-out Seller's plate stock, and employed it as the basis of his own great publications. These included the magnificent sea atlas, the *English Pilot*, notably its volumes on ' *West India Navigation*' (1689) and ' *Oriental Navigation*' (1703). John Thornton's enterprise was taken over by his brother upon his death in 1708.

The present example of *A Generall Chart of the South Sea* is an especially rare early edition, for it features the imprint of Samuel Thornton "Hydrographer at the England Scotland & Ireland in the Minories". The chart would usually have been separately issued, but was occasionally included in composite atlases. When Samuel Thornton died in 1715, his plates were purchased by the firm of Mount & Page, who subsequently produced states of the South Seas chart on which Thornton's imprint was erased from the cartouche.

The Thorntons' *Generall Chart of the South Sea* retained its influence for almost three generations, as the virtual absence of new discoveries prior to Cook's voyage ensured that it was not markedly superseded. The sharpness of the engraving and convenient folio size ensured its popularity, but its frequent use accounted for its low survival rate. The present example is from the celebrated collection of Glen McLaughlin, and is preserved in remarkably excellent condition. Moreover, the important manuscript notations from Cook's First Voyage ensure its place as a superlative example. All states of this chart are rare, and only a handful of examples of the present early issue are recorded in institutional collections, and we are not aware of any examples as having been offered on the market during the last decade.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Includes extensive manuscript additions in Australia and New Zealand