



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

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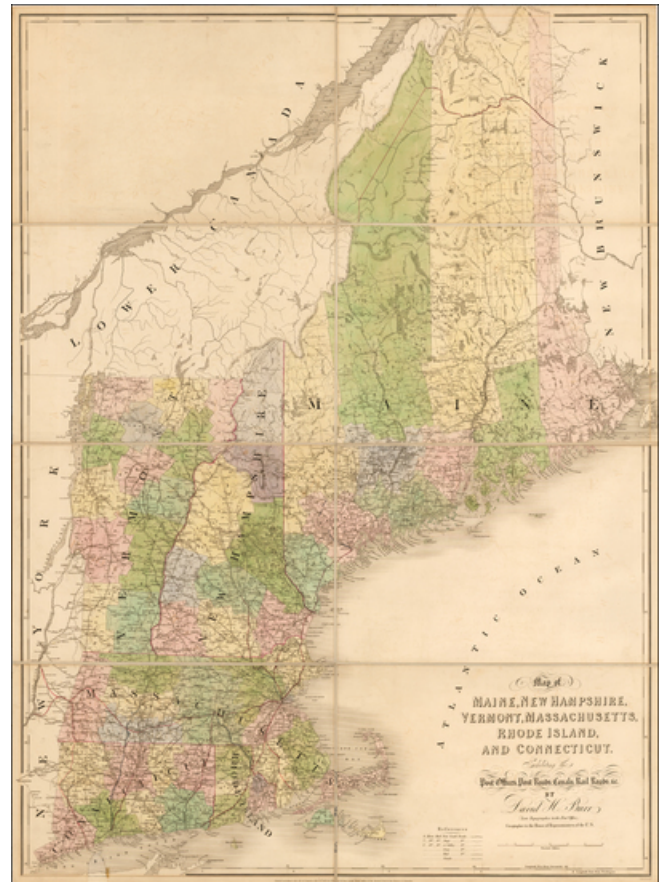
(858) 551-8500
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Map of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Exhibiting the Post Offices, Post Roads, Canals, Rail Roads &c by David H. Burr (Late Topographer to the Post Office.) Geographer to the House of Representatives of the U.S.

Stock#: 44795
Map Maker: Burr

Date: 1839
Place: New York
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 50 x 36.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Postal Map of New England

Nice example of David Burr's rare postal map of New England, the first postal map to focus on the New England region.

David Burr's single greatest accomplishment was *The Postal Atlas*. A now legendary rarity, the maps in Burr's atlas meticulously recorded the post offices and postal routes throughout the United States.

David Burr is one of the most famous, yet ironically little understood mapmakers of the first part of



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the 19th Century. His two most famous works, the *Postal Atlas of the United States* (1839) and *Atlas of the State of New York* (first published in 1829) are among the most important cartographic works of their respective genres, yet relatively little is known about Burr.

David H. Burr originally worked under Simeon DeWitt, New York State's Surveyor General at the beginning of the 19th century. Burr had a brief career as a lawyer and an aide-de-camp for New York Governor De Witt Clinton, before being appointed to his first position in charge of a team surveying a portion of the state for a proposed road in 1825. He then succeeded in getting approval from the state legislature to compile an atlas that included maps of each county as well as a separate map of the entire state. The maps were dated 1829, but not actually published until early 1830. Burr's atlas has the distinction of being the second atlas published in the 19th century of one of the individual states in the U.S., preceded only by Mill's *Atlas of South Carolina* (1825).

In the 1830s, Burr produced an important early map of Texas and was in the process of publishing his *New Universal Atlas* in the late 1830s, when he was apparently offered work as a mapmaker for the United States House of Representatives. He produced several maps for the House, before beginning work for the Post Office on a series of maps which would become his most important work.

Work on the postal maps was completed by the end of 1839, at which time Burr contracted with John Arrowsmith in London to print the maps. During this time period, he fell out of favor with the prevailing powers in the House of Representatives, and by 1841 his position with the government had been terminated. In this same time period, he petitioned the US Government for a tariff exemption on the import of his *Postal Atlas* and separate maps, which he apparently wished to distribute privately. The tariff exemption was turned down, leaving Burr with a \$10,800 unpaid printing bill and financially bankrupt.

Of equal interest, Burr's title of Topographer of the United States Post Office and Geographer to the House of Representatives, may in fact have been self-appointed titles. In the House of Representatives committee proceedings which resulted in his censure and termination, Burr was classified as a clerk and his superiors were derided for having allowed temporary clerical positions to have grown far beyond their intended scope, perhaps because of the political weight carried by Burr's older brother, who seems to have initially recruited Burr into government service.

During his time with the Post Office, Burr produced his *Postal Atlas of the United States*. This "atlas" is



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one of the great rarities of American 19th century cartography, with complete sets being virtually unobtainable for modern collectors. John Arrowsmith engraved the plates in London, an unusual collaboration at this late a date between an American cartographer and a London engraver.

Burr also served as surveyor to the states of Florida and Louisiana, then returned to Washington and became geographer to the U.S. Senate. In the 1850s, President Franklin Pierce named him the surveyor general of Utah Territory, where as the top ranking federal official in the territory, he was "heavily involved with the legal and jurisdictional disputes between Mormon leaders and the U.S. government" (Ristow).

Detailed Condition:

Minor area of restoration at bottom left, just affecting the S in Long Island.