



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Map of Massachusetts Proper Compiled from Actual Surveys made by Order of the General Court and under the inspection of Agents of their Appointment. By Osgood Carleton.

Stock#: 0092bm
Map Maker: Carleton

Date: 1801
Place: Boston
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 46 x 31 inches

Price: Not Available



Description:

A Massachusetts Landmark Map -- The First Map Official Map of the State of Massachusetts

Nice example of the first state of Osgood's Carleton's 1801 map of Massachusetts, the first officially sanctioned and sponsored map of the State.

Based largely on new surveys, Carleton's map depicts the surveyed boundaries of counties, the location of all towns then in existence, and the courses of roads and waterways and the locations of cultural and political landmarks such as academies, court houses, and meeting houses. The allegorical cartouche shows Anglo-American settlement and commerce merging with a scene of forest and crag, populated by a single native warrior.

After the Revolution the individual states needed to produce accurate and useful maps of their territories. One of the first state sponsored maps was prepared by the state of Massachusetts. The map was originally produced from information gathered in the mid-1790s by Osgood Carleton, a Boston surveyor and mapmaker, based upon a resolution for its production enacted by the General Court (legislature), in 1794. The project contemplated the production of the map through a compilation of local data. Each town was required to conduct a survey at its own cost and submit a town plan to the Secretary of State. Under state auspices, the surveys would then be compiled and where necessary, reconciled to produce maps of Massachusetts proper and the District of Maine. Enacting Carleton's proposal, a 1794 Resolve of the General Court stated:



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That the inhabitants of the several towns and districts in the Commonwealth... take or cause to be taken... accurate plans of their respective towns or districts, upon a scale of two hundred rods to an inch, and upon a survey hereafter actually to be made, or that has actually been made, within seven years next preceding this time.... [Resolves of the Massachusetts General Court, 1794, Chap. 101 (26 June, 1794)]

Further instructions made clear that this was not to be simply a geographical survey, but a summing up of the cultural and economic resources of the state.

And be it further Resolved, that on each of said plans... the situation of houses for public worship, Court-Houses... shall be inserted....

And it is further Resolved, That there be inserted... the breadth of rivers, the number and reputed magnitude of ponds, the falls of water, mountains, manufactories, mills, mines and minerals, and of what sort, iron-works and furnaces... (Ibid.)

By 1796 surveys had been received from most towns, many of which survive to this date in the Massachusetts State Archives. In 1797, Osgood Carleton and Boston printer-publisher-engraver John Norman, submitted a winning proposal to compile the data, produce engravings, and publish the result. In return for providing 400 copies of each to the State, they would receive a fourteen year copyright to the map.

Unfortunately, the project encountered numerous setbacks. Many towns were either tardy or noncompliant in submitting surveys, and those submitted were of widely varying quality. For example, Provincetown apparently submitted a "plan" consisting of nothing more than an outline of the town with no interior detail. Reflecting the quality of these surveys, a note on the first edition of the map (1798) states, "as the surveys of some towns were not so full as others, the Roads and Streams of those Towns have been unavoidably discontinued."

Another problem was the poor quality of the engraving. Norman clearly had trouble depicting the immense amount of information in a usable manner. As a result, the map is in some places so cluttered with information as to be almost unreadable. The General Court subsequently rejected Carleton and Norman's effort:

It is expected in the Mean time they correct all the Error in said maps, and take out the many accidental strokes in the Plate; and also that they make Margins of the Rivers, Ponds, and Sea



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*Coasts neater, and that the whole Plate be better Polished... (Boston Gazette, Aug. 20, 1798,
quoted in Ristow, American Maps and Mapmakers, p. 91.)*

400 copies of the rejected map had already been printed, however, so to recoup their costs Carleton and/or Norman attempted to sell it privately. This first edition of the map is now extremely scarce on the market.

For the second edition, Carleton terminated his partnership with Norman, and hired Joseph Callender and Samuel Hill to re-engrave the map on entirely new plates. This second edition was approved by the General Court and printed in 1801 in a run of 500 copies. Another run of 400 was issued in 1802, the only apparent change being the insertion of the "B. & J. Loring, 1802" imprint."

The Callender & Hill engraved second edition differs considerably from the John Norman engraved first edition, in ways that favor each map differently. Presumably to simplify the engraving and "clean up" the image, the second edition omits the ranges of mountains and hills shown on the first, as well as symbols indicating various types of industrial establishment. Conversely, the second edition includes new place names and landmarks, numerous changes to the details of roads and streams, and includes a more decorative cartouche.

Despite the problems encountered, Massachusetts repeated its overall approach in 1829, when the General Court again required towns to submit plans for compilation in an official state map. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the quality problems and consequent delays with the town plans recurred. This time around, however, much re-surveying was conducted at state expense, and a new map of the state was not published until 1844.

The present example is in remarkably good condition for an example which was joined and mounted over 200 years ago. Most surviving examples were dissected and laid on linen and even these dissected examples do not normally survive in such nice condition, as noted by examination of the on-line examples in the collection of David Rumsey, Massachusetts Historical Society, and Boston Public Library (Levanthal Collection).

Detailed Condition:

4 sheet map, laid on linen. The map is soiled and a bit fly speckled, with some dampstaining and a few



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minor tears, but still quite presentable.