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Peaks of the Sierra, Blanca, from near Fort Massachusetts

Stock#: 19828
Map Maker: U.S. Pacific RR Survey
Date: 1855
Place: Washington
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 9 x 7 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fort Massachusetts was officially established on June 22, 1852. Built on the west bank of Ute (Utah) Creek, its primary function was to protect travelers and settlers in the San Luis Valley (then part of the New Mexico Territory) from Indian attack. In 1853, the explorer John W. Gunnison and his party stopped at Fort Massachusetts, as did an expedition to California under the command of Lt. E.F. Beale. Gwinn Harris Heap, who was with the Beale group, described the fort as "a well-built stockade of pine logs, ten feet in height, and enclosing very comfortable quarters for one hundred and fifty men."

Following the Christmas massacre at Fort Pueblo in 1854, troops assembled at Fort Massachusetts for a campaign against the Indians who were responsible. After six months, the Mohuache Utes and their allies, the Jicarilla Apaches, were decisively beaten, and they ceded their lands in the San Luis Valley. Within a few years after its establishment, it became apparent that the poorly chosen swampy location was unsuitable for the fort's operations. In 1858, the fort was abandoned in favor of Fort Garland, six miles to the south.

Detailed Condition: