



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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[Yosemite Valley]

Stock#: 23617
Map Maker: Prang
Date: 1868
Place: Boston
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 26 x 15.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Scarce Louis Prang chromolithograph of Yosemite Valley, based upon an original water color painting by Thomas Hill.

Hill's painting of Yosemite Valley was his first truly large scale work and widely considered to be his first major painting. The original painting sold in Boston in the 1860s for \$5,000, the equivalent of nearly \$1,000,000 in today's prices. As noted by Hans Huth in *The Story of an Idea* (1948): "Because one of Hill's Yosemite paintings on exhibition in Boston in 1868 had been acclaimed as the best representation of the great natural wonder of California, it was chromo-lithographed by Louis Prang in Boston and became widely known all over the country."

Thomas Hill (1829-1908) was born in Birmingham, England and moved with his family to Taunton, Massachusetts in 1844. He studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts under the tutelage of Peter F. Rothermel. Hill painted in Massachusetts throughout the 1850s, often in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, with a group of artists that included Asher B. Durand, George Inness, Benjamin Champney, Albert Bierstadt, Virgil Williams and his brother Edward Hill.

In 1861, Hill moved with his wife and children to California for health reasons. After settling in San Francisco, Hill advertised himself as a portrait painter. In 1862, Hill made his first trip to Yosemite, accompanied by the artists William Keith and Virgil Williams. In 1866, Hill exhibited his Yosemite scenes at the National Academy, and later that year, traveled to Paris where he was a pupil of Paul Meyerheim and exhibited at the Universal Expo.

After returning to the United States, Hill stayed in Boston from 1868 to 1870, then returned to San Francisco in 1871. Hill reached his peak in California during the 1870s, beginning with his first grandiose painting, *The Yosemite Valley*, which was published as a chromolithograph by Prang. With Frederic



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Whymper, Hill was a founding member of the San Francisco Art Association, and in 1873 he became a member of the Bohemian Club, a men's organization dedicated to cultural enhancement.

Hill built a studio in Yosemite in 1883, which would become his main residence for the rest of his life (his wife maintained the family home in Oakland). During the winter months, Hill resided in San Francisco, where he maintained a studio in the Flood Building. When Virgil Williams died in 1886, Hill became interim director of the School of Design until a new director could be found.

During the 1870s and 1880s, Hill's work was in demand and brought very high prices. Like Bierstadt, his panoramic landscapes were considered old-fashioned and for half a century or more his work was in eclipse. Today his work has regained its proper stature and he is considered one of the most important American artists of the 19th Century. His work can currently be viewed in the collections of the de Young museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Oakland Museum and the White House.

Detailed Condition:

Hinged loosely on original card stock, with part of the original Louis Prang label still affixed to the back of the card stock mount