



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A Large Mapp of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey & New York . .

Stock#: 28692
Map Maker: Thornton
Date: 1701 circa
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG-
Size: 23 x 19 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Scarce first edition of John Thornton's fine charting of the Chesapeake, Delaware Bay and contiguous regions.

As noted by Bill Wooldridge in his work *Mapping Virginia*, to be published in October 2012

Considerable uncertainty surrounds the date of Thornton's map. The second edition of the map carries Samuel Thornton's name. When John Thornton died in 1708, he left his son Samuel all his "Mapps, Charts, Copys, Books, Instruments, Copper graved Plates and all other things belonging to my calling." This map was probably struck from one of those "Copper graved plates," with Samuel's name substituted for John's, within a year or two of the son's succession to his father's business in 1708. The more difficult question concerns the date of the original engraving by John Thornton; On the Map, which uses it as the cover illustration, concludes that it first appeared between 1682 and 1685.

If this 1682-85 span were indeed correct, the map would have been the small-scale model for a large, showy four-sheet wall map of Virginia . . . that first appeared in about 1701. John Thornton dedicated the wall map to Micajah Perry, a merchant in the Virginia trade. This map, however, may not be that early. Henry Taliaferro has noted that it seems to use data from -- and in fact, to be almost a companion piece to -- a John Worlidge map of New Jersey, also published by Thornton, which can be dated to about 1699. This analysis implies that the original copperplate for Thornton's map is approximately contemporaneous with the appearance of the wall- map version in about 1701. The New York Public Library's online images for



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its exhibit "In thy map securely saile," which includes the Thornton wall map, notes that "Oddly, this [wall] map was never reduced to atlas format." Thornton's map is from an atlas and resolves the anomaly highlighted by the NYPL.

In short, Thornton's map appears to be an atlas-sized version of a Thornton four-sheet wall map that Coolie Verner called "indubitably the most important" Virginia map to appear since John Smith, "the most accurate and detailed of all the maps studied . . . between 1650 and 1750," surpassing the Herrman map in geographical utility and cartographical value.

Whatever its exact date, Thornton's map summarizes what was known of Virginia, and how Englishmen saw Virginia, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Augustine Herrman data have now been digested and modestly amplified. Virginia remains very much a coastal and riverine colony, with political subdivisions (counties) and a host of English place-names around the Bay and up and down the rivers, but the map shows almost nothing in the west. Seagoing vessels could not ascend the rivers above the rapids at present-day Washington, DC (Great Falls), Fredericksburg, Richmond and Petersburg. A line running through these points, the "Fall Line," marked the western limit of significant settlement. As its maps demonstrated, a century after Jamestown, the colony was still a seaboard enclave, facing across the Atlantic to England and the Old World.

Detailed Condition:

Trimmed into image at top. Minor damp staining.