



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Topographische Charte von der Kolonie Surinam . . .

Stock#: 34530hs
Map Maker: Gericke
Date: 1775
Place: Berlin
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 21 x 14.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine early map of Suriname, the authoritative plan illustrating Dutch commercial interests at the height of sugar production in the colony.

The present map is based on Alexandre de Lavaux's 1737 plan, which was commissioned by the Society of Suriname, the private concern that governed the colony during the eighteenth-century. The map is a detailed cadastral plan showing all of the enumerated estates that lined the banks of the Suriname and Courantyne rivers. The map provides a striking visual juxtaposition between the lines of estates (civilization) versus the wild, jungle-clad hinterland. Maroon towns, occupied by escaped slaves, can be seen throughout the interior. During the eighteenth-century Suriname, then referred to as Dutch Guiana was one of the most productive agrarian economies in the world, with sugar production reaching its height around the time that the present map was made. The colony was also a major producer of coffee, cotton and hardwood timber. The major Dutch town of Paramaribo (the colonial capital) and the fortified town of New Amsterdam are detailed by the confluence of the two great rivers, not far from where they meet the Atlantic.

The region was originally settled in 1650 by English settlers from Barbados. However, in 1667, during the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the colony was seized after a brief skirmish by the Dutch navy. Following the Treaty of Breda later that year, the Dutch gained official possession of the colony, in exchange for granting New Amsterdam (New York) to the English. By today's standards, given the prominence of New York versus Suriname, this would seem like a ludicrous exchange. However, it must be remembered that at the time the revenues from the sugar industry in Suriname dramatically exceeded any of the financial benefits that could have been gained from New York.



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In 1683, the colony was entrusted to the Society of Suriname, a private company jointly held by the Dutch West India Company, the City of Amsterdam and the Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family. While nominally a Dutch concern, the colony attracted plantation investors from across Europe, thus the present German plan, printed in Berlin, would have been of great interest to many key stakeholders. The Society was disbanded for political reasons in 1795, whereupon Dutch Guiana became a crown colony. The Lavaux map sequence remained the authoritative cartographic representation of the colony until well into the nineteenth-century.

Detailed Condition: