



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Map Showing Blocks Included in British Columbia Southern Railway Land Grant and portion of Columbia and Kootenay Railway Land Grant British Columbia . . . 1907

Stock#: 36305
Map Maker: British Columbia Land
Department
Date: 1907
Place: Victoria
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 28 x 36 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A very rare map with great importance to the historical development of the Kootenay Region of British Columbia.

This map embraces the southeastern portion of British Columbia as far westward as Kootenay Lake, and charts the route of the British Columbia Southern Railway, which was responsible for opening the area to development and defending Canadian economic control of the region. All lakes, rivers and creeks are shown with exacting detail and the region is divided into numbered land districts, which in turn feature numerous numbered and labeled cadasters. Many of the properties lining the railway route were endowed to the B.C.S.R. Company as part of their charter. The demarcation and partial sale of some of these lands was the primary purpose of the map.



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In the late 1880s, while Canada's technical sovereignty over the territory above the 49th-parallel was no longer in question, the increasing presence of private American individuals and companies posed serious challenges to Canada's economic control of parts of its territory. For most of the late-19th century, southeastern British Columbia, divided longitudinally by several high mountain ranges remained quite isolated from the rest of Canada, and actually had better natural overland communications with the neighboring parts of Washington, Idaho and Montana.

In the late 1880s, Canada's only transcontinental railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.), ran far to the north, and it was clear that a new more southerly line needed to be constructed in order to open the area up to Canadian-controlled development. In 1888, the Crow's Nest and Kootenay Lake Railway Company was founded with this express purpose (and was renamed the B.C. Southern Railway Company in 1891).

The situation became more pressing when in 1890 when large quantities of silver were discovered in the Kootenay. American prospectors led the exploitation of the finds by sending Canadian silver ore to smelters in nearby U.S. territory. American activity in the region was further aided from 1893 by the completion of the transcontinental Great Northern Railway, which ran very close to the Canadian border.

Beginning in 1891, the B.C.S.R. crews labored diligently to build the track from Crow's Nest Pass (where the line entered the Rockies from the Prairies in Alberta) to its intended terminus at the bottom of Kootenay Lake. Progress was slow due to the extreme nature of the topography, but the route, as shown on the map, running through Cranbrook and Creston to the lake was completed in 1898. In 1901, the railway was leased to the C.P.R. and succeeded in bringing significant numbers of Canadian miners and settlers to the region, and was responsible for the development of the areas key towns.

The present map was made in 1907 by order of John Stoughton Dennis, the B.C. Land Commissioner, with the purpose of ascertaining the exact locations and limits of the various land private holdings in the region. Many of these land parcels were owned by the railway, granted to it by the crown as part of its charter agreement. During this time, the C.P.R. was engaged with constructing the Columbia and Kootenay Railway, so connecting the B.C.S.R. westwards to Nelson (and then onwards to Vancouver). To raise funds for this endeavor, the railway had agreed to sell some of its land parcels back the crown, thus necessitating this map.

The present map is the first edition, issued in 1907, and is extremely rare, as we are aware of only one institutional example (University of Calgary Library) and no other examples appearing at auction or in dealers' catalogs over the last 25 years. A second edition was issued in 1911, which is also known in only one institutional example (University of British Columbia Library).



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Detailed Condition:

Minor soiling.