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A Map Of The Most Inhabited Part Of New England Containing The Provinces Of Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire. With the Colonies of Conecticut and Rhode Island . . . 1755

Stock#: 37681ops
Map Maker: Jefferys / Mead
Date: 1755 (1768)
Place: London
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 41 x 40 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Nice old color example of the rare first state of the second edition of Bradock Mead's remarkable large format map of New England & Long Island, the most important general map of the region issued during the French & Indian War.

Bradock Mead's map of New England is generally considered the single most important and influential map of New England published during the British Colonial period. First issued in 1755, the map provided the largest-scale and most detailed and accurate portrait of the region to date. Its importance was such that it was revised and reissued well into the 1790s, and over this period it served as a primary source for leading European and American mapmakers. While the editions of the map dated 1774 and after appear on the market with some frequency, the examples which pre-date 1774 are quite rare on the market, having only been issued separately or added to composite atlases.

Offered here is an example of the first state of the second edition of the map, which was significantly revised in the 1760s, featuring a complete re-engraving of much of northern New England and New York and addition of the inset map of Boston. These changes are so extensive that the map, viewed in its proper



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context, needs to be viewed for historical purposes as a new map, first issued before the American Revolution. The changes included major improvements to the natural geography of the region (changes to the New Hampshire Lakes Region are particularly striking) , the introduction of settlements in central and northern New Hampshire, and the division of Vermont into dozens of "Wentworth Grant" towns.

The map depicts New England to 44°30' North as well as Long Island and the Hudson River Valley. Township, county and provincial boundaries are shown, as are roads, forts, and meetinghouses. Rivers and streams are depicted with relative care, while the many mountain ranges are indicated haphazardly with archaic "molehill" symbols.

The contrast between southern and northern New England is striking: Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts east of the Connecticut River are entirely laid out in a grid of counties and townships; whereas much of New Hampshire and almost all of Vermont are denominated "Wildernes [sic] lands of the crown not yet appropriated." Further, the geography of the north country is but poorly understood, as evidenced by the sketchy detail and distended outlines of New Hampshire's Lakes Region. Present-day Vermont is shown under the aegis of New Hampshire, though the ambiguity of its status at the time is indicated by the absence of a border with New York.

Adding to the informational value and decorative appeal of the map are an early chart of Boston Harbor at bottom center, an inset plan of Fort Frederik [sic] at upper left, and a decorative cartouche portraying an idealized version of the Pilgrims' landing at Plymouth.

A table of notes at the right lists Mead's sources for the map, and in so doing makes clear how much care and effort went into its compilation. Mentioned among others are surveys of Connecticut by Gardner and Kellock (1737, no longer extant); of New Hampshire by Hazen and Mitchell (various dates); of the Maine coast executed at the order of Governor Shirley (1754); and of Lake Champlain by unspecified French surveyors.

Oddly, the primary source for the map is not cited: William Douglass' *Plan of the British dominions of New England in North America* (ca. 1753). Based as it was on original surveys, Douglass' depiction of New England's physical and political geography represented a massive advance over anything then available. In particular, the large scale enabled him to show for the first time the rapidly evolving network of surveyed township, county and provincial boundaries across the region.

That said, Mead and Jefferys' map is in many ways a substantial improvement on the Douglass. To begin



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with, it covers much more territory than the prototype-most significantly, lands north of roughly 44° latitude, including Lake Champlain and the Maine coast east of Casco Bay. Further, Mead and Jefferys apparently had the benefit of several surveys not available to Douglass, for they added some new place names (such as "Pentusok," now Pittsfield, Mass.), introduced county boundaries, linked Cape Ann to the mainland, and gave a more accurate depiction of the so-called "Lakes Region" in New Hampshire. Thomas Jefferys was the preeminent English publisher of maps related to the American colonies in the middle of the 18th century. Braddock Mead (aka John Green) was a troubled but brilliant mapmaker who produced some of Jefferys' finest maps. Cummings describes their collaboration in *British Maps of Colonial America*:

[Thomas Jefferys] was the leading British chart and mapmaker of his day, and his work contributed toward making London the 'universal centre of cartographic progress.' An engraver as well as a publisher, he turned out an impressive number of maps and charts.... With William Faden, his successor, he produced the most considerable body of North American maps published commercially in the century.

The genius behind Jefferys in his shop was a brilliant man who at this time went by the alias of John Green.... Green had a number of marked characteristics as a cartographer. One was his ability to collect, to analyze the value of, and to use a wide variety of sources; these he acknowledged scrupulously on the maps he designed.... Another outstanding characteristic was his intelligent compilation and careful evaluation of reports on latitudes and longitudes used in the construction of his maps... (p. 45)

For an interesting account of Mead's scandalous life, see Cummings, pp. 45-47.

Detailed Condition:

Four sheets, joined as two sheets.