



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

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**To His Excellency Sr. Henry Moore Bart. Captain General and Governour in Chief in & over the Province of New York & the Territories depending thereon . . . This Plan of the City of New York, Is most Humbly Inscribed by His Excellency's Most Obedient Servant.
Bernd. Ratzen . . .**

Stock#: 47771
Map Maker: Ratzer

Date: 1769 circa
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 34.5 x 23 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

First State of the "Ratzen Plan," " one of the most important colonial maps of New York City."

Rare first state of one of the most important eighteenth-century maps of New York City. Prepared by Bernard Ratzer a decade prior to the start of the American Revolution, the map is by far the most accurate published survey of New York City at this critical time in its history.

This plan is normally referred to as the "Ratzen Plan," as a result of the engraver's error misspelling Ratzer's name in the title cartouche. According to Deak, the plan

details a portion of the city extending from the Battery to a point south of today's Grand Street, including the road to Greenwich (along the Hudson), Broadway, and the Bowery Lane (the high road to Boston). Across the river, a small part of Long Island is depicted, with the important Brookland Ferry clearly indicated. Thirty-one numbered references to the major landmarks are given below the dedicatory cartouche. These include Fort George, various churches, religious meetinghouses, the Exchange, and marketplaces. The nineteenth reference is to "The College" (i.e., King's College), today's Columbia University, originally located on spacious grounds overlooking the Hudson, south of Murray Street.

The map is based on the surveys of the British engineer, Bernard Ratzer, undertaken at the direction of Sir Henry Moore. Drawn in 1767, the survey was authorized in response to the Stamp Act Riots of 1765,



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motivated by British fears that the city might soon become a battleground. Needing a more detailed accounting of its layout, the British authorities commissioned Ratzer to survey and construct a map of the city.

Engraved and published by Thomas Kitchin, one of London's leading engravers and map publishers, this rare first state was probably intended for the British Administration and not intended for general circulation. Cohen & Taliaferro note:

The manuscript was completed in 1767, and very few examples of this first state were printed in 1769. It lacks a publisher's imprint and date, and was probably prepared primarily for circulation within the British Administration. This must account for its great rarity. Nevertheless, it was advertised for public sale in the New York Gazette, 21 August, 1769.

A second state, with the imprint of Thomas Jefferys and William Faden added below the lower left neat line was issued in 1776.

The plan shows the topography and existing streets, avenues, estates, farmlands, wharfs, and forts. A small portion of Brooklyn, here entitled "Part of Long or Nassau Island" is shown with the important Brookland Ferry indicated.

The topography and renderings of estates and farmlands make it clear what a small town New York was before the Revolution. The key beneath the title identifies 31 important sites. The landmarks and property lines are reported with such accuracy that the map is sometimes used to settle title disputes to this day.

In 1770, Ratzer issued a second map of New York City and environs, covering a significantly larger area. This larger map is typically called the "Ratzer map." Cohen & Augustyn state that these two maps are perhaps the finest for an American city produced in the eighteenth century. The "geographical precision combined with highly artistic engraving was unsurpassed in the urban cartography of its day."

Bernard Ratzer was a British cartographer, best known for his 18th-century maps of early New York City. Ratzer was a British Army officer who spent his time in America working as a surveyor and draftsman. He was, in particular, assigned to survey America's eastern coastline during the French and Indian War and later into the early stages of the American Revolution. He worked alongside his more well-known contemporaries Claude J. Sauthier, Samuel Holland and Thomas Jefferys.



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Detailed Condition:

Two repaired tears, extending into the image below the title cartouche at the left and between the R and the I in "River" at the right side, expertly repaired on verso.