



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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Plan de la Ville des Rades et des Environs du Port-Au-Prince Dans L'Isle Saint Domingue A.P.D.R. 1787

Stock#: 48984
Map Maker: Phelippeaux
Date: 1787
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 17.5 x 14 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Finely colored and highly important early town plan of Port-au-Prince, published on the eve of the Haitian Revolution and just fifteen years after Port-au-Prince replaced Cap-Français as the capital of the French colony of Saint-Domingue.

The map provides a remarkably detailed and scientifically accurate plan of Port-au-Prince, with topographical details, roads, buildings, fortifications and harbor-front features noted. Streets are named, as are several public squares. As indicated by the compass rose, the map is west-oriented, with north to the right.

Even more remarkable is the date of the map, made as it was just after the American Revolution and just before the French and Haitian Revolutions. Located in an area formerly frequented by buccaneers, in 1770 the French authorities founded Port-au-Prince to serve as the new capital of their most important colony. Saint-Domingue was France's wealthiest overseas holding, but that wealth was made off the labor and lives of African slaves working sugar and coffee plantations. On August 21, 1791, led by former slave Touissant L'Overture, the slaves rose up against their colonial masters. They had been inspired by the early days of the French Revolution and its "Declaration of the Rights of Man."

A complex revolution involving many stakeholders, the Haitian struggle would continue for over a decade. It outlasted the French Revolution, ending with the defeat of troops sent by Napoleon at the Battle of Vertieres on November 18, 1803. On January 1, 1804, Haiti became the first black republic in the world



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and the second independent country in the western hemisphere. Port-au-Prince remained the capital of this brave new country, although it had been burned during the war, as well as occupied by the British for a time in 1794.

René Phéliepeau was a French military engineer whose career followed the revolutions around the Atlantic. Trained as a surveyor, he was charged with surveying Saint-Domingue's major cities and towns in the 1780s, just before the outbreak of war. Prior to that assignment, he had served in Georgia during the American Revolution.

Phéliepeau collaborated with the engraver Nicolas Ponce, which is why several of his Saint-Domingue maps appear in *Recueil de vues des lieux principaux de la colonie française de Saint-Domingue*, engraved by Ponce and printed in Paris, 1791, which was intended to accompany *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue*, by Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, printed in two volumes, in Philadelphia, in 1797-1798. The Port-au-Prince map in the *Recueil* was dated 1785, while the John Carter Brown Library has an uncolored copy dated 1790. This is a particularly nice example of this scarce map, made especially desirable by the remarkable original color.

Detailed Condition: