



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

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La Jolla, CA 92037

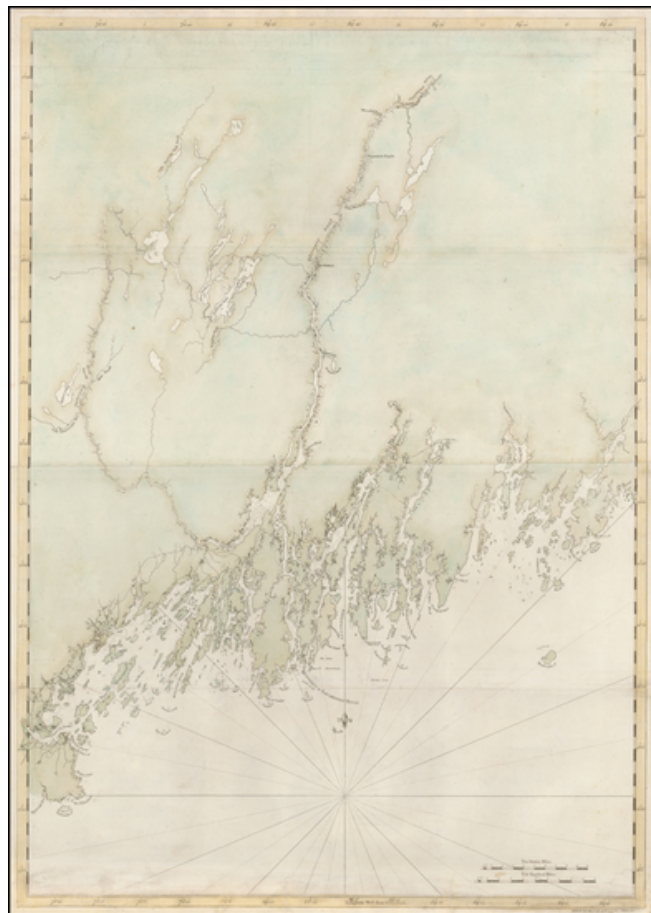
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**[Portland & Cape Elizabeth to Moskito Island -- Centered on Kennebec River]**

**Stock#:** 50079  
**Map Maker:** Des Barres  
**Date:** 1776  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 41 x 29 inches  
**Price:** \$ 3,400.00



**Description:**

***Des Barres Revolutionary War Era Sea Chart of the Southern Maine Coastline***

Fine example of Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres detailed charting of the Maine coastline in the area around the Kennebec River, from his *Atlantic Neptune*.

The map extends from Cape Elizabeth, Portland and Plymouth Harbor in the south to Moskito Island and St. George, just south of Thomaston, Maine.

Unlike most of Des Barres charts, this map also extends far into the interior along the Kennebec River, reaching north to the Fort Halifax area on the Sebasticock River. Fort Western is also shown, as are the lakes and ponds to the west, south of Norridgewock, and the course of the Androscoggin River and its



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tributaries and neighboring lakes and ponds.

The detail of the islands, rivers, and other details in the region is quite extraordinary, with even the location of buildings and roads noted along the coastline. The chart is without question the most detailed charting of the region ever undertaken and would remain so until well into the 19th Century.

The chart was compiled under the direction of Samuel Holland and J. F. W. Des Barres, as part of the first systematic attempt by any European power to make an extensive survey of areas overseas at a large scale.

Benedict Arnold took the Kennebec River to the Battle of Quebec in 1775. He stopped in Fort Western and Fort Halifax along the way. Fort Western is now the oldest extant wooden fort in America.

This state precedes the addition of the engraved page number "\*\*\*6" in the upper left-hand corner, which was added in Henry Stevens 103D in the National Maritime Museum's Des Barres collection.

### Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres and the Atlantic Neptune

Joseph Frederick Wallet Des Barres was born in Switzerland, where his Huguenot ancestors had fled following the repeal of the Edict of Nantes. He studied under the great mathematician Daniel Bernoulli at the University of Basel, before immigrating to Britain where he trained at the Royal Military College, Woolwich. Upon the outbreak of hostilities with France in 1756, he joined the British Royal American Regiment as a military engineer. He came to the attention of General James Wolfe, who appointed him to join his personal detail. During this period he also worked with the legendary future explorer James Cook on a monumental chart of the St. Lawrence River.

Upon the conclusion of the Seven Years War, Britain's empire in North America was greatly expanded, and this required the creation of a master atlas featuring new and accurate sea charts for use by the Royal Navy. Des Barres was enlisted to survey the coastlines of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. With these extremely accurate surveys in hand, Des Barres returned to London in 1774, where the Royal Navy charged him with the Herculean task of producing the atlas. He was gradually forwarded the manuscripts of numerous advanced surveys conducted by British cartographers in the American Colonies, Jamaica and Cuba, of which the present map is based on the work of Samuel Holland, conducted in the 1760s. The result was *The Atlantic Neptune*, which became the most celebrated sea atlas of its era, containing the first systematic survey of the east coast of North America. Des Barres's synergy of great empirical accuracy with the peerless artistic virtue of his aquatint views, created a work that "has been described as the most splendid collection of charts, plates and views ever published" (*National Maritime Museum Catalogue*).



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*The Neptune* eventually consisted of four volumes and Des Barres's dedication to the project was so strong that often, at his own expense, he continually updated and added new charts and views to various editions up until 1784, producing over 250 charts and views, many appearing in several variations. All of these charts were immensely detailed, featuring both hydrographical and topographical information, such that in many cases they remained the most authoritative maps of the regions covered for several decades. Following the completion of *The Neptune*, Des Barres returned to Canada, where he remained for forty years, becoming a senior political figure and a wealthy land owner, living to the advanced age of 103.

**Detailed Condition:**

Minor fold splits, expertly reinforced on verso.