



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## A New Map of the English Empire in the Ocean of America or West Indies (Jamaica, Port Royal, Bermuda, Barbados, Bridgetown, Tobago, Antigua, St. Christophers, and Generall Chart of the West Indies)

**Stock#:** 52967  
**Map Maker:** Senex  
**Date:** 1721  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 23.5 x 20 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

### *Fine Map Showing British Empire in the Caribbean by Early-Eighteenth Century England's Most Prominent Mapmaker*

Nice example of Senex's revised map of the British holdings in the Caribbean in the early-eighteenth century. The map is actually a series of insets showing islands and major ports. Senex compiled the map to show the lucrative, yet volatile region that was so important to British overseas expansion.

The bottom half of the document is taken up with the largest Caribbean British holding, Jamaica, which is accompanied by an inset of Port Royal. The top half shows, from left to right: Barbados and its capital, Bridgetown, Bermuda, Tobago, the Caribbean region, St. Christopher's (St. Kitts), and Antego (Antigua). With the exception of Bermuda, the insets are placed in rectangles with straight lines. Bermuda is separated by a more decorative scrollwork design.

### British holdings in the Caribbean

Barbados was one of the most lucrative of English holdings in the West Indies, even though it is only 21 miles long and 14 miles wide. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive on the island, and Pedro a Campos named the island Los Barbados, the bearded ones, after the island's fig trees, which had a bearded appearance. The first English ship arrived in 1625 and two years later Sir William Courten



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established a proprietary colony. At first, labor was provided by indentured servants but by the 1640s African slave labor largely replaced white servants. The island's economy was focused on sugar and in the mid-seventeenth century Barbados, the eastern most Caribbean island, was the major producer of sugar. By the 1720s, when this map was made, they had been eclipsed by the Leeward Islands and Jamaica.

The capital, Bridgetown-also known as the Town of St. Michael-was built near the site of an indigenous bridge. The settlement was founded in 1628. The city became a center of island life, but it was also vulnerable. For example, as it was built on a swamp, it proved an unhealthy place; 20,000 people died of cholera in 1654. The city burned in 1659, was hit by a hurricane in 1667, and burned again in 1668.

Bermuda was used as a watering station for the Spanish and Portuguese, but they did not settle the island because legends arose about strange sounds and spirits; they most likely originated from hearing bird calls and the squeals of wild hogs. The English came in 1609 when Sir George Somers shipwrecked on the dangerous reefs surrounding the island. All on board survived, including John Rolfe, who would go to marry Pocahontas. The stranded English established a settlement which was included under the charter of the Virginia Company. In 1612, more settlers arrived and started St. George, in the northeast, the first capital and the longest inhabited English town in the Americas. Their main industry was the export of salt and shipbuilding.

Tobago was sighted by Columbus and was initially a Dutch holding, but the Spanish killed the settlers in 1637. Further attempts at colonization by Courland in 1637, 1639, and 1642, and by England in 1649, 1642, and 1647 failed. Settlement picked up again in the 1650s, when the Dutch, Courish, and French shared the island. In the later seventeenth century, control of the island passed between the Dutch, French, and English; it ultimately changed hands 33 times, the most in regional history. It was permanently ceded to the British only in 1814 and when this map was published it was being fought over by the English and the French.

St. Christopher's, better known as St. Kitts, is one of the Leeward Islands. Columbus claimed the island for Spain in 1493 and the French established a colony in 1538. The English came in 1623 and they partitioned the island with the French. Spain seized the island in 1629, but the English recovered their holdings in 1630. In the eighteenth century, the British and French continued to fight over the island until Britain permanently secured it in 1783.

Antego, or Antigua, was named by Columbus in 1492 and settled by the English in 1632. It became a profitable sugar-producing plantation colony and was strategically placed, thus it was known as the



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"Gateway to the Caribbean."

The largest of the islands, Jamaica, was colonized by the Spanish in 1509, who controlled the island until 1655. In that year, the English, including Sir William Penn, invaded and managed to wrest the island from Spanish control. They continued to import slaves, as the Spanish had, and developed a thriving sugar colony. When this map was published it was the premier Caribbean holding for the British.

The map of Jamaica has its own title and is dedicated to Sir Thomas Grey, second Earl of Stamford (ca. 1654-1720). Grey was a prominent politician who had resisted the Restoration Monarchy. After the Glorious Revolution in 1688, he served as a Privy Councilor to William III. The reason that Senex dedicated a map of Jamaica to Stamford is that Stamford served as the President of the Board of Trade from 1699 to 1702 and again from 1707 to 1711. The Board oversaw overseas and colonial trade, particularly the sugar trade carried out in the Caribbean.

John Senex (1678-1740) was one of the foremost mapmakers in England in the early eighteenth century. He was also a surveyor, globemaker, and geographer. As a young man, he was apprenticed to Robert Clavell, a bookseller. He worked with several mapmakers over the course of his career, including Jeremiah Seller and Charles Price. In 1728, Senex was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society, a rarity for mapmakers. The Fellowship reflects his career-long association as engraver to the Society and publisher of maps by Edmund Halley, among other luminaries. He is best known for his *English Atlas* (1714), which remained in print until the 1760s. After his death in 1740 his widow, Mary, carried on the business until 1755. Thereafter, his stock was acquired by William Herbert and Robert Sayer (maps) and James Ferguson (globes).

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Restoration to lower corners, with reinstatement of neatline. Repaired tear above Port Royall harbor, extending to Jamaica.