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Nashville, and the Camp of the 125th Regiment of Ills. Vols. Inst. At Edgefield Tennessee

Stock#: 55029ml
Map Maker: Santfleben
Date: 1863 circa
Place: St. Louis
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 25 x 19.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare Early View of Nashville

A highly important early depiction of Nashville, Tennessee and a remarkable image of camp life in the Civil War, lithographed by Theodore Schraeder of St. Louis.

The view depicts Nashville from the east bank of the Cumberland River, with the state capitol shown as the dominant structure of the city. In the river are two Union ironclads and two paddle-wheeled U. S. Mail steamers, one named the Humboldt; a swing bridge spans the river.

In the foreground is a marvelously detailed composite of the life of military camp in the Civil War. It is, however, as much a depiction of its social life as of its military functions. In the foreground a figure is receiving the dubious benefits of camp dentistry, while another nearby looks in a mirror while styling his hair. There is a grave digging detail at right; several soldiers exercise on makeshift equipment; a band practices and several groups palaver.

A notable detail is the few African-Americans scattered throughout the camp.

The artist of the view unknown. However, as reported in the description of the prior owner, a descendant of the purported artist has identified this as the work of Johannes Santfleben, a sergeant of the 16th Regiment of the Illinois Volunteers Infantry.



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This is the first of two known states of the view. Schrader issued this state, purported to depict the encampment of the 125th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers Infantry. He later re-issued the print purporting to depict the 16th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers. Other than their titles the two states differ in faces of the officers on horseback to left of center, which clearly have been considerably altered to reflect the two different regimental leaders.

It is notable that these officers' faces were engraved with greater individuality and refinement than are found on other figures in the views. The visage of the officer just to the left of the trellis in our view matches that of an image we found on line of the 125th's commanding officer (steely gaze and all), Colonel Oscar Fitzalan Harmon. We determine the state with the 125th Regiment to be the first because there is extra spacing in the title of the 16th Regiment state as well as indications of erasure in the title.

The 125th Regiment was mustered in Danville, Illinois for three years of service. It was encamped outside of Nashville from November 7, 1862 to June 30, 1863 and returned there once again for another month later that summer. It was a very active unit that fought numerous campaigns in Tennessee and Alabama and then with Sherman through Georgia and on to Richmond. In the course of its service, the Regiment lost over 200 men (out roughly 1000) including Harmon.

Rarity

Reps list only three other views of Nashville published before 1900; this one was not recorded by him.

We have found only three institutional examples of the print: Tennessee Library & Archives (2nd state--heavily damaged and stained), Huntington Library (2nd state); John Carter Brown Library (1st state). We are aware of only one other example having been on the market. An early publication of the Chicago Historical Society also references a copy of the second state, gifted by Dr. O.L. Schmidt, circa 1912.

Detailed Condition:

A bit of light foxing, light water staining bottom margin, few small marginal mends, near excellent overall with a strong impression.