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Map of Oregon, California, New Mexico, N.W. Texas & the proposed Territory of Nebraska. By Rufus B. Sage. 1846 (with book)

Stock#: 57585
Map Maker: Sage
Date: 1846
Place: New York
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 24 x 17.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A Landmark Map of the Transmississippi West

Nice example of Rufus Sage's important map of the American West and Texas, based upon his travels west of the Mississippi River between 1841 and 1843, with the original text of his *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains* . . .

Referred to by Wagner as "perhaps the rarest of Cartographical delineations of the Western Country," Rufus Sage's finely executed map is one of the earliest snapshots of the West following the resolution of the Northern border with Canada and on the eve of War with Mexico, including the first accurate depiction of the final boundary between Oregon Territory and British America (Canada). The map is also the earliest attempt to show the emigrant trails to the west and California, and one of the only printed maps to provide a detailed account of Jacob Snively's expedition on behalf of the Republic of Texas in 1843.

One of the most meritorious elements of the map is that Sage is careful not to include speculative information and for this the map has become among the most important maps prior to the Gold Rush. Early trade routes are depicted, as are early towns, a few roads in the west and the location of early settlements.

The map provides the most accurate delineation of the emigrant trails to California and Oregon to date. Sage's work is also noteworthy for the accuracy of his presentation of the major rivers between the Rocky



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Mountains and the Mississippi River, far surpassing the work of any contemporary traveler of the 1840s. The map also shows a number of the major forts in the west, including the trading forts operated by the fur traders (such as Ft. Laramie, Bent's Fort, Fort Pueblo and St. Vrain's Fort) and forts then operated by the US Government.

In Texas, the map identifies several battles and other notes along the Santa Fe Trail from Chihuahua, relating to Jacob Snively's Expedition on behalf of the Republic of Texas against Mexican Traders in the region, in retaliation for the mistreatment of Texans resulting from the Texan Santa Fe expedition, the Mier expedition, and General Woll's raid on San Antonio. These notes include the location of three battles fought against the Mexicans. The map also shows the location of the encounter between Snively and U.S. Dragoon Captain Philip St. George Cooke near the Arkansas River, where Snively's force was accused of violating the sovereignty of the United States and forced to disband (and later regroup under the command of Charles Warfield). Later, Cooke elected to simply escort a portion of the expedition to Independence, Missouri. A smaller group would continue the expedition for another month, disbanding at Fort Bird, Texas in July of 1843.

There is one other note relating to the Snively expedition, which notes "volunteers disbanded" just south of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River. This is where Rufus Sage initially joined the Snively expedition in February 1843, while Snively was still recruiting volunteers. Sage would serve as a scout on the expedition in New Mexico, including the battle near Mora, New Mexico, which is identified on the map in March 1843. Shortly after the battle, Sage and other mountain men recruited at Bent's Fort left the expedition and returned northward.

In Oregon Territory, an interesting set of regional names are used, including South Oregon, Western Division, Eastern Division, Middle Division, and Northern Division. These names appear in Philip Leget Edwards *Sketch of the Oregon Territory* . . . (1842). These divisions are also utilized in Sage's text, but do not seem to have gained currency thereafter.

In the area of present-day Nevada and Utah states, "This region has never been explored, and is supposed to be impassable on account of its immense plains of sand, alike destitute of vegetation and water." In California, Sutter's Nueva Helvetia is shown, as is the trail from California to Oregon. The Upper California missions are noted.

The full title of the book is:

Scenes in the Rocky Mountains. And in Oregon, California, New Mexico, Texas, and the Grand



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Prairies; or Notes by the Way, During an Excursion of Three Years, with a Description of the Countries Passed Through, Including their Geography, Geology, Resources, Present Condition, and the Different Nations Inhabiting Them. By a New Englander. Philadelphia: Carey & Hart , 1846.

Wheat notes:

Sage went to the Rocky Mountain country in 1841 primarily for his health. He worked for a fur company on the waters of the Platte and on White River, in present South Dakota, traveled as far as Taos, Fort Uintah and Fort Hall, saw much of the dying era of the fur trade, and engaged in one of the strangest filibustering escapades of the early West. In the summer of 1843 . . . a recruiting agent for the notorious Snively expedition from Texas against Santa Fe, one Captain Warfield, persuaded him and a few others to enlist. The gang (for that is precisely what it was, however it may have been titled) raided the town of Mora in New Mexico, only to be driven off, and Warfield and Snively finally threw in the towel when Captain Philip St. George Cooke, of the United States Army, captured and disarmed the Texas forces on the Arkansas.

Sage's map, is usually not found with the book. Wheat notes that it is "one of the earliest to depict the finally-determined Oregon boundary...one of the earliest attempts to show on a map the evermore-heavily traveled emigrant road to California." It adds interesting notes on the country and locations of fur trading establishments. Sage was certainly one of the most literate and acute observers of the west in the period immediately before the events of 1846.

An essential map for regional collectors.

Detailed Condition: