



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A Map of the Located Districts in the Province of Upper Canada, Describing all the New Settlements, Townships, &c. with the adjacent Frontiers, Compiled and Corrected, From the latest Surveys in the Surveyor General's Office By William Chewitt, Senrio Surveyor & Draughtsman . . . April 5th, 1825.

Stock#: 58344
Map Maker: Chewitt

Date: 1825
Place: London
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size:

Price: SOLD



Description:

Very rare - the first accurate general map of what is now Southern Ontario

Important early large-format map of Upper Canada, created from the surveys of William Chewitt.

The map provides a finely detailed treatment of what is now Southern Ontario, focusing on the inhabited part of the province, located to the south of the 46th-parallel, as well as parts of Lower Canada and parts of Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Vermont, as well as Lakes Erie, Huron and Ontario.

William Chewitt & the Early Mapping of Upper Canada

The principal author of the map was William Chewett (1753-1849). William was certainly the most consequential surveyor and mapmaker in the early history of Upper Canada, although he never received the recognition that his work deserved. Born in London, England, he arrived in Quebec in 1771, and soon found work as both a military and civilian surveyor in the employ of the British colonial regime. Following the American Revolution, he benefitted greatly from the training he received from Samuel Holland, the Surveyor General of British North America, one of the 18th Century's most important cartographers, who had at one time given surveying lessons to the future explorer James Cook.

In 1792, Chewett moved to the newly-formed Province of Upper Canada (Ontario), where he worked as



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surveyor for Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, under the direction of David William Smyth, laying out new towns and cadastral lots for incoming Loyalist settlers. While Chewitt was a highly competent and hard-working professional whose work was invariably of a high caliber, he appears to have been an inept political operator. He was repeatedly unable to navigate the power structure of Upper Canada, which was controlled by a Tory oligarchy popularly known as the "Family Compact". While perennially the most qualified candidate, and frequently serving as the acting surveyor general of the province, he was repeatedly passed over for the top job. A frustrated Chewitt expressed early on that political leaders' promises to procure preferment "ended in a mouthful of moonshine" (DCB). Nevertheless, he was, more than any other individual responsible for shaping the accurate geographic conception of what is now southern Ontario.

In the late 1790s, many of Chewitt's cadastral and regional surveys of Upper Canada were used by William David Smyth, the province's surveyor general, to produce *A Map of the Province of Upper Canada, describing all the new settlements, townships &c.* (London: William Faden, 1800). While not explicitly given any credit for the map, James Chewitt was likely its principal author. This map was used as the 'blueprint' for settlement in the province and was the base map on which the cartography of Upper Canada was predicated for the next generation. This so-called "Smyth Series" ran into 13 editions and had the longest publishing history of any map of what is now Ontario.

During this early period, settlement in Upper Canada only hugged the main waterways along the American border, including the shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the Detroit, Niagara, St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers. The contemporary mapping of this strip of civilization was impressive, based on triangulated surveys, done to advanced scientific standards. Critically, however, the maps had a glaring flaw. The areas beyond the settled zone, such as the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Nipissing were very poorly mapped, and much of the hinterland was left as a complete void. This created a rather jarring visual juxtaposition to the highly developed aspects of the map, lending the overall appearance of an unfinished composition.

On the eve of the War of 1812 (1812-5), William Chewitt prepared an updated version of the Smyth map, which bore his own name as the author, published as *A Map of the Located Districts in the Province of Upper Canada* (London: William Faden, 1813). The first edition of the map shows all the counties west of Lake St. Clair, locating Sandwich and Amherstburg; also York, Queenston, Forts Chippewan and Erie. Buffalo is called New Amsterdam

The map became the standard map of the region, with several updated editions. In 1825, Chewitt issued a



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final and significantly updated edition of the map.

William Chewitt's map was the first in a series of important maps in the region, which would ultimately result in his son James Chewitt's seminal wall map of the same region, first issued in 1825.

Rarity

All editions of the map are rare on the market. We note 2 examples of the 1813 map at auction in the past 25 years and none in dealer catalogs. The last appearance of the 1825 edition was at Sothebys in 1988 and before that in a Francis Edwards catalog in 1967.

Detailed Condition:

Minor offsetting and soiling. Several minor fold splits, repaired on verso.