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[Belize - Mapping Mahogany and Other Resources] A Map of A Part of Yucatan or of that Part of the Eastern Shore within the Bay of Honduras Allotted to Great Britain for the Cutting of Logwood, in consequence of the Convention Signed with Spain on the 14th July 1786. By a Bay-Man . . . 1787 [with Additional Text Panel]

Stock#: 60976
Map Maker: Faden
Date: 1787
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 37 x 20.5 inches (including text)
Price: SOLD



Description:

First Modern Map of Northern Belize, with Text from the Logwood Treaties between Britain and Spain

Rare, separately published 1787 logwood map of Honduras and modern-day Belize printed by William Faden, Geographer to the King. This is the first accurate map of what is now northern Belize.

This map shows the extent of British land in the southern Yucatan Peninsula immediately after the 1786 Convention with Spain. This convention decided how land would be divided among imperial powers for the purpose of cutting logwood, a valuable resource for creating dyes and textiles. The treaty required British evacuation of the Mosquito Shore in exchange for expanded territories in the Yucatan Peninsula. The map also notes the areas rich in Mahogany.

This map includes what is approximately the northern half of modern Belize (from Dangriga northwards), which had become the focus of British interest, particularly after the 1786 Treaty. While not based upon a scientific survey, the map provides good detail for this previously unmapped region, including the British settlements concentrated on the New River, in the north, which has several named properties.

In the upper right corner there is an inset map showing the Mosquito Shore, along with a stylistic compass rose. There is another, simpler compass rose on the left side. The map also includes two graphic scale bars and a list of references providing greater detail for map features.

Above is a legend decoding the map's colors. The red boundaries signify the limits for cutting logwood



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according to the 1783 Treaty between Britain and Spain. The yellow signifies Britain's new grants of land after the Convention of 1786, also between Britain and Spain. Lastly, the orange represents British settlements prior to the most recent treaty.

The left side of the map includes an additional text panel. It contains lengthy excerpts from these two Anglo-Spanish treaties. The 1783 "Definitive Treaty of Peace," included in the Treaty of Versailles, concluded the American Revolutionary War. Below that is an excerpt from the 1786 Convention, which details further stipulations of land use in the region.

Mapping Belize: A Search for Natural Resources

Faden's map marks the Logwood Treaty of 1786 between Britain and Spain, in which Spain transferred control of the region to Britain. In doing so, Faden also created the first map of modern northern Belize. The information in the map is credited to a "Bay-Man," which refers to an Englishman working at cutting logwood near the Bay of Honduras. While the mapmaker's identity is unknown, it was most likely a colonist with official responsibilities for land management.

The central map illustrates the areas with logwood and mahogany stands, along with notes about their quality. It includes comments such as "this part is mostly cut out except some logwood," "most part of this land is pine ridge or cutting grass savannas or swampy," and "the English were settled and cut wood 120 miles above this" on various points of the map to aid cutters and traders. In this sense, the work is a highly detailed and useful natural resource map made by a country who had just increased their official influence in the region.

British and Spanish Logwood Diplomacy in Central America

The "Mosquito Shore," located along the eastern coast of Central America and shown here in the inset, had been visited by European sailors since the early sixteenth century. Englishmen began to frequent what is now Belize on the Bay of Honduras in the mid-seventeenth century, cutting logwood to export to Europe to use as prized dyes in the textile industry. During this period of initial settlement, Spanish forces would occasionally invade, causing the English to hide until they could return to the area.

After the Seven Years War, the Spanish asserted a claim to the Mosquito Shore, arguing that it belonged to the Spanish Empire. The 1783 Treaty of Versailles required British evacuation of the "Spanish Continent," referring to Central and South America, except for Belize, which, as displayed on this map,



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was already dominated by British loggers.

Though the Spanish attempted to seize control of the shore, the British had a strong trading partnership with the local Miskito people that the Spanish were unable to replicate. The new circumstances that accompanied the treaty did not satisfy the British, who increased military activity near the Black River Settlement along the Mosquito Coast. Spanish military forces near this settlement also increased in turn. Because conflict remained high, the two nations decided to renegotiate the terms of settlement in the region.

The 1786 Convention that this map details resulted in British evacuation of the Mosquito Shore, in exchange for an expanded territory on the Yucatan Peninsula for use by British loggers. Many of the British settlers left the Mosquito Shore for Belize and other British territories. The areas of mahogany and other hardwoods newly available to the British are delineated on this map. Faden's map would become the authoritative map defining the parameters of the new colony and the extraction of resources.

Rarity

The map is extremely rare. We note only two other examples on the market in the past twenty years.

Faden's map holds a unique position as one of the first detailed European representations of this region. It tells a fascinating narrative of conflict and rivalry for new resources. Those interested in Central American history, Belize and Caribbean maps, the Mosquito Shore, and British-Spanish relations would find this rare example compelling.

Detailed Condition: