



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Magelland Strait from the First Narrows to Sandy Point By Captain R.C. Mayne, R.N. C.B. . . . H.M.S. Nassau 1867-8. Additions by H.M.S. Sylvia 1883-4

Stock#: 65406
Map Maker: British Admiralty
Date: 1884 (1891)
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 39 x 32 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare separately published sea chart illustrating a portion of Magellan's Strait.

The map covers the northeastern entrance to the the Strait.

The Third Surveying Voyage to the Straits of Magellan, by Captain Mayne, 1866-9

A generation after King and FitzRoy's surveys, the Admiralty decided that it required more detailed bathymetric soundings in the eastern part of the Straits and further exploration of the fjords on the western side of the passage. In 1866, they selected the Captain Richard Charles Mayne to lead the endeavor. Mayne was uniquely qualified, having previously surveyed the heavily indented and mountainous coastlines of British Columbia, an area that bore geographic similarity to the southern reaches of Patagonia.

Upon hearing of the Mayne's assignment, Charles Darwin requested that the Admiralty instruct Mayne to collect fossil bones of extinct species that were known to be found along the shorelines of Tierra de Fuego. While Darwin himself had collected fossils on these shores decades previously, since then Admiral Sir Bartholomew Sullivan had discovered bones that were far more significant specimens, and belonged to a more ancient era than Darwin's finds. Mayne showed great enthusiasm for this aspect of his mandate, and one of Darwin's protégés, Robert Oliver Cunningham, was assigned to join the mission.



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From 1866 to 1869, Mayne's crew, aboard the HMS Nassau, exactly charted the waters of the Straits of Magellan. The present 1871 chart of the straits, in comparison to its 1837 predecessor, features far more copious soundings in the critical eastern passage of the strait, as well as more refined shoreline conventions throughout the waters. An inscription, which appears in the upper left center of the chart, notes that Mayne also conducted new and important surveys of the Smyth Channel area, near where the straits enter the Pacific.

Mayne's mission was considered a great all-around success. Upon his return to London, he produced this chart that would become the definitive map of the Straits for the coming decades. Consequentially, the bones and fossils collected by Cunningham and Mayne were instrumental in refining Darwin's theories on evolution. These specimens are now preserved at the Museum of Natural History in London.

Robert Charles Mayne (1835-1892) was one of the most important British hydrographers working in the Pacific in the mid-19th century. He came from a family of distinguished jurists and law-enforcement officers, and his father was the first commissioner of the London's Metropolitan Police. He joined the Royal Navy at a young age and received advanced training in hydrographic surveying. From 1856-60, Mayne conducted the first systematic coastal survey of Vancouver Island and parts of British Columbia's mainland. His charts were widely admired and his book, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (1862), is considered a classic source on the early history of the colony. In 1862, Mayne was promoted to command the *HMS Eclipse*, which participated in the native wars in New Zealand. Severely wounded in battle, he was sent back to England to recuperate. Upon his recovery, in 1866, he was selected by the Admiralty to lead a high-profile mission to map and explore the natural history of the Straits of Magellan region, resulting in the present chart. Mayne was eventually promoted to Admiral, and towards the end of his life, served as an MP for the Welsh constituency of Pembroke.

Rarity

The present chart is very rare, we are not aware of another example of this edition appearing on the market during the last 25 years, and WorldCat does not cite this edition.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected and laid on linen, with original covers.