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Chart of North Atlantic Ocean with Tracks of the Shipping to West Indies, North America, &c.

Stock#: 88731
Map Maker: Thomson
Date: 1815
Place: Edinburgh
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: Good
Size: 24.5 x 21 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Map of the North Atlantic, Featuring Lord Nelson Chasing the French Fleet to the Caribbean

Intriguing and aesthetically-pleasing, large-format map of the Atlantic, published by John Thomson in Edinburgh.

The map was drawn for inclusion in Thomson's influential *New General Atlas*, first published in 1817.

The map centers on the North Atlantic, a primary theater for commercial and naval traffic between the Americas, Africa, and Europe. It stretches from Hudson's Bay to Scandinavia, and from Iceland south to Brazil. The Caribbean is drawn with the large, and sometimes dangerous, banks around the Bahamas and south of Cuba shaded in. Similar banks are included off of New Foundland. The coastal detail is excellent and there are a few soundings in the Grand Banks.

At sea, there are many small islands, as well as obstructions that could pose a hazard to a ship. Many of these have explanatory notes. For example, a dotted circle off the coast of Sierra Leone, here written *Sierra Leon*, includes this text, "a Shoal even with the Water, and about 3 Leagues round seen by the Ships of the French East India Company."

Another of these Atlantic features is Brasil Rock, west of Ireland. Hy Brasil was a wandering island thought to appear from time to time to sailors through the mist. The myth dates back to the Medieval period. Its existence was uncertain, but still plausible enough to include here.



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This map includes trading routes from England to New Foundland and from England to and from the Caribbean. Two other tracks are also noted. One is the route of the American ship *Insurgent* to and from Spain. The USS *Insurgent* was a captured French ship that was then commissioned as part of the nascent US Navy. It cruised for prizes in European waters in the winter of 1799-1800, which is the voyage shown here. After the ships' return to Baltimore and then Hampton Roads, it was to sail to the West Indies to protect American shipping and harass enemies. However, after leaving in early August, the ship was never seen again. It was presumed lost in a September storm in the West Indies.

The final track is that of Lord Nelson pursuing the French in 1805. By that year, Horatio Nelson was not only an important naval commander, but also a national hero thanks to his victories at the Battle of the Nile and the Battle of Copenhagen, among other actions. After a year-and-a-half locked in by Nelson's blockade, in January 1805, the French Admiral Pierre-Charles Villeneuve managed to slip by the British at Toulon. Villeneuve was blown back to Toulon but escaped again in April, passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and set out for the Caribbean. Nelson chased the French all the way to the West Indies, as shown here.

However, he could not find them once he arrived. Villeneuve returned to Europe, even though he had been ordered not to by Napoleon. Nelson also returned, reaching Gibraltar in late July. After a stint in England, Nelson returned to his fleet to face the combined French and Spanish fleets off Cadiz in late September. He engaged the enemy at the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, winning a great victory for the British. He also received a mortal wound, dying below decks.

Detailed Condition:

Original hand-color. Significant dampstain, as illustrated. Cut to, or just inside, the platemark at the top and bottom.