



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

(Calamity Jane - Wild West Shows) The Great Rocky Mountain Show

Stock#: 92575
Map Maker: Phelps & Plows
Date: 1884
Place: Chicago
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 26 x 19 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Show that Crystallized the Legend of Custer's Last Stand.

The Only Known Example of An Image from The Great Rocky Mountain Show.

Wild West shows, which began in the late 19th century, were central in forming the myths and legends of the American West. They featured rodeos, reenactments of historical events, and performances by Western characters. The first and most famous of these shows was Buffalo Bill's Wild West, which started in 1883, and their popularity grew rapidly and continued into the early 20th century.

One of Buffalo Bill's earliest competitors was the short-lived and infamous Great Rocky Mountain Show. This Show, notorious for the untamed nature of its cast, spawned the creation of various household names, including Calamity Jane, John "Liver Eating" Johnston, and Ashishishe (Curly) of the Crow Tribe. One of the show's specialties was putting on an outdoor re-enactment of Custer's Last Stand, which cemented the myth of that battle.

This handsome color lithographed poster advertisement displays one of the potential acts that the Show would feature, a re-enactment of a hold-up.

The present poster is the only remaining visual object produced by The Great Rocky Mountain Show, one of the earliest competitors with Buffalo Bill.

The Great Rocky Mountain Show

The Great Rocky Mountain Show, organized by Tom Hardwick and William Skiegle in 1884, featured



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

(Calamity Jane - Wild West Shows) The Great Rocky Mountain Show

prominent figures such as Ashishishe (also known as Curley) and numerous Crow tribe members. It was one of the earliest western shows to tour eastern cities and competed with the shows of Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, and Doc Carver. The show was notable for its first outdoor re-enactments of the Battle of Little Bighorn, contributing to the legend of Custer's Last Stand and the fame of Ashishishe for his involvement in the battle.

The show starred John "Liver Eating" Johnson, Marsha Jane Cannary (also known as Calamity Jane), and others. It likely started in Bismarck, Dakota Territory, and then traveled through Milwaukee and Janesville, Wisconsin. Despite attracting large crowds, the show faced financial difficulties. By the time it arrived in Chicago in late July, the show was in a dire financial situation and disbanded entirely in early August.

During the show's short duration, several cowboys were arrested for a shooting spree downtown, possibly with Cannary among them. The show's performers eventually had to sell their horses to raise funds for their return to Montana Territory. Despite its short-lived existence, the show played a significant role in the careers of those involved and contributed to the creation of the Custer myth, the legend of Ashishishe, and the history of Euro-American perceptions of American Indians.

Rarity

We find no other surviving ephemera from the show. This poster was probably produced for the show's final performances in Chicago, though it is also possible that it was used for earlier performances.

Detailed Condition:

Bright and attractive example with a few small closed tears at margins of no more than an inch, some repaired with archival tape, some residue at margin not affecting image. Overall, Very Good.