



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Channel on the North Side of Vanua Levu from Muthuata Island to Ivaca Peak, Feejee Islands

**Stock#:** 92901  
**Map Maker:** Wilkes  
**Date:** 1849 circa  
**Place:** Washington, D.C.  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 23.75 x 15.5 inches  
**Price:** \$ 475.00



### Description:

#### *The Wilkes Expedition and the Charting of Vanua Levu's Northern Channel*

The Wilkes Expedition, officially known as the United States Exploring Expedition, was an ambitious American scientific and exploratory voyage led by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes from 1838 to 1842. With its diverse team of scientists, artists, and sailors, the expedition aimed to explore and survey the Pacific Ocean and surrounding lands, thereby asserting the young nation's interests in the Pacific region.

#### *Channel on the North Side of Vanua Levu: An Insight into Fijian Coastal Topography*

One of the charts produced during this expedition is the "Channel on the North Side of Vanua Levu from Muthuata Island to Ivaca Peak, Feejee Islands". This detailed coastal chart provides an unparalleled insight into the topography of the northern side of Fiji's second-largest island, Vanua Levu.

The neighboring islands of Anganga, Nalao, Vavea, Anutunga, Naumbutha, Vaungili, Nuvera, Vatou, and others punctuate the seascape around Vanua Levu. Each of these islands contributes uniquely to the maritime significance of the region, acting as navigational markers, providing potential anchorage spots, and creating a diversified marine ecosystem.

Crucially, the chart delineates the treacherous reefs and shallow waters surrounding Vanua Levu - vital information for any vessel navigating these waters. The reefs, acting as both a hazard and a protectorate for the islands, play an essential role in the region's ecology, supporting a diverse array of marine life.

The ship channel is meticulously detailed, with extensive soundings indicating the depth of the waters.



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### **Channel on the North Side of Vanua Levu from Muthuata Island to Ivaca Peak, Feejee Islands**

This would have been invaluable for the ships of the time, ensuring they navigated safely while approaching or skirting the island. The naming of several mountains, such as Ivaca Peak, adds another layer to the chart, offering navigational landmarks and providing a terrestrial perspective to the coastal view.

#### **The Wilkes Expedition's Encounter with Vanua Levu**

During his time in the Fijian waters, Wilkes and his crew charted numerous islands, channels, and coastal features. Their meticulous documentation of the region's geography was groundbreaking, offering Westerners a comprehensive view of an area previously shrouded in mystery and misinterpretation. Their encounters weren't always peaceful, though; the Fijian archipelago was known for its warrior culture, and on occasion, Wilkes' crew clashed with local inhabitants.

Despite these challenges, the Wilkes Expedition's time in the region was instrumental in broadening Western understanding of the Pacific and its many diverse islands, peoples, and ecosystems. The chart of the Channel on the North Side of Vanua Levu stands as a testament to the expedition's dedication to scientific rigor, exploration, and the advancement of maritime knowledge.

In conclusion, the Wilkes Expedition's endeavors around Vanua Levu and its resulting charts are emblematic of the 19th-century spirit of exploration and discovery. They capture a moment when the vast Pacific, with its myriad islands and cultures, was slowly being unveiled to the Western world.

#### **Detailed Condition:**