



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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The American Pilot Containing the Navigation of the Sea Coast of North America, from the Straights of Belle-Isle to Cayenne. Including the Island and Banks of Newfoundland, the West-India Islands, and all islands on the coast.

Stock#: 94111
Map Maker: Norman

Date: 1794
Place: Boston
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 18 x 22 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

The renowned 1794 version of John and William Norman's esteemed American Pilot featuring foundational maps of Nantucket by Pinkham and the Carolinas by Dunbibin. This atlas is among the earliest to be published in the United States, and it is only the third complete copy to be available for purchase since the Streeter auction in the mid-1960s.

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, reliable charts of local waters were scarce. Navigators primarily used outdated or expensive British publications like *The English Pilot*, *The Fourth Book*, *The Atlantic Neptune*, and *North American Pilot*. Bartholomew Burges of Boston took the initiative to fill this gap by preparing a sea atlas, which was published in 1790 by Matthew Clark as *A Complete Set of Charts of the Coast of America*.

However, Clark's work did not achieve lasting commercial success and is now extremely rare. Additionally, competition emerged when John Norman, Clark's engraver, printer, and primary retailer, announced in the *Boston Gazette* on January 1, 1790, that he was engraving new charts of the entire American coast on a large scale. This must have infuriated Clark, but Norman was actually pursuing a long-held ambition.

In 1785, Norman had proposed to the Massachusetts legislature to print a "Correct Set of Compleat Maps" depicting the coast from Newfoundland's Banks to the Gulf of Mexico. These maps were meant to align with the recent surveys conducted by the British Government, such as those by J.F.W. Des Barres, Samuel Holland, and others published in the *Atlantic Neptune*. Norman's proposal claimed that these drafts would be published on different scales to enhance their usefulness and provide printed directions and



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observations for mariners. This would enable safer navigation along the extensive sea coast. (Bosse, p. 24, citing "Petition of John Norman, John Coles, Hector McNeil, and Benjamin Gould," House Unenacted Petition no. 1836, 7 November 1785 (Boston, Massachusetts Archives)).

The American Pilot

The American Pilot proved a great success. Norman's status as an established engraver, printer, publisher, and retailer with strong connections to Osgood Carleton and other members of Boston's scientific community likely had an even more significant impact. Following the first edition, he reissued the work in 1792 and 1794, after which his son William published further editions in 1794, 1795, 1798, 1801, and 1803. After William's early death in 1807, John resumed control and released editions in 1810 and 1812 before selling the work to Andrew Allen, who published a final edition in 1816. Despite the lengthy publication history, the *Pilot* is one of the rarest early American atlases: as of July 2019, fewer than 20 complete copies of all editions are known.

The 1794 edition of the *Pilot*, featuring the William Norman imprint, is offered here. The preliminaries include a title, five pages of sailing directions, and an eye-catching broadside on the front paste-down advertising atlases and maps for sale at Norman's shop at 75 Newbury Street. The eleven charts provide coverage, at varying scales and with interruptions, from Surinam on the northern coast of South America to the waters surrounding Newfoundland. Notably, the charts of Nantucket by Pinkham and the Carolina coast by Dunbabin are included, as well as the extensive and intricate Chart From New York to Timber Island including Nantucket Shoals, which covers New York and southern New England, present here in its most comprehensive form on seven sheets. Additionally, the four-sheet *Chart of the Bay of Chesapeak Including Delaware Bay* makes its first appearance in this edition. This chart closely resembles one featured in *The Atlantic Neptune*, with the interesting additions of Washington, DC, and "President Washingtons," referring to his Mount Vernon plantation.

Charts

The full list of charts is as follows:

1. *A Chart of Nantucket Shoals. Surveyed by Capt. Paul Pinkham.* Double page. Wheat & Brun 210, 1st state of 3.
2. *[Untitled chart of Surinam River area.]* Single page. Wheat & Brun 707, 1st state, later states have three sheets.
3. *A New General Chart of the West Indies...* Four sheets, folding. Wheat & Brun 688, 2nd state of 2.



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4. *A Chart of South Carolina and Georgia*. Single page. Wheat & Brun 600, 1st state of 3.)
5. *Chart of the Coast of America from Cape Hateras to Cape Roman from the Actual Surveys of D^r. Dunbabin Esqr.* Double page. Wheat & Brun 580, 3rd state of 5?
6. *A New and Accurate Chart of the Bay of Chesapeak Including Delaware Bay...* Four sheets, folding. Wheat & Brun 310, 1st state of 2.
7. *Chart From New York to Timber Island including Nantucket Shoals...* Seven sheets, folding. Wheat & Brun 157, state 2.
8. *[Untitled chart of Maine coast from Wood Island to Good Harbour.]* Double page. Wheat & Brun 166, 1st state of 2.
9. *[Untitled chart of the Bay of Fundy.]* Single page. Wheat & Brun 98, 1st state of 2.
10. *[Untitled chart of Gulf of St. Lawrence and Strait of Belle Isle.]* Single page. Wheat & Brun 99, 1st state of 2.
11. *Charts of the Banks of Newfoundland*. Wheat & Brun 106, 3rd state of 3.

Rarity

There are 20 known copies of the atlas in institutional collections, of which at least 4 are incomplete; additionally, 3 copies are in private hands, including the example presented here. Two other incomplete copies were sold at auction in 2008 and 2009, and it is believed that these copies were disassembled and the charts sold separately.

1791: 13 charts. Harvard, Huntington Library (the latter lacking Pinkham's *Chart of Nantucket Shoals*)

1792: 11 charts. Library of Congress, Clements Library (latter lacking one map but with another not called for in Phillips)

1794 (John Norman): 11 charts. Boston Public Library (i.e., Leventhal Map Center), John Carter Brown Library, Library of Congress. Another sold at James Julia on Feb. 1, 2008 for \$408,250 and now in the collection of William Berkley.

1794 (William Norman): 11 charts. Beinecke Library, plus the present copy.

1795: A worn, disbound and incomplete copy sold at Bloomsbury Auctions on Nov. 19, 2009. Current location not known, though likely broken up and the charts sold individually.

1798: 11 charts. Boston Public Library (i.e., Leventhal Map Center, containing 7 disbound charts), Library of Congress, Peabody Essex Museum (10 charts only). Another, formerly the Streeter copy, in a private New England collection.

1801: 12 charts. John Carter Brown, Phillips (MA) Academy.



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1803: 11 charts. Allegheny College, American Antiquarian Society, Clements Library, Library of Congress, Peabody Essex Museum. Another, with just 7 charts, sold at James Julia in August 2008 for \$97,750 and was subsequently broken up.

1810: 11 charts. Sold to the trade at Swann Galleries on Dec. 5, 2017 for \$68,750. This was subsequently restored, offered on the antiquarian market for \$180,000, and apparently sold sometime in 2019.

1812: 10 charts. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

1816: 11 charts. Boston Public Library (i.e., Leventhal Map Center).

Detailed Condition:

Folio. Expertly rebound to style in half calf over boards. Broadside on front paste-down, engraved title page, 5 pages of sailing directions, and 11 engraved charts, of which 7 printed on multiple sheets and folding.