



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

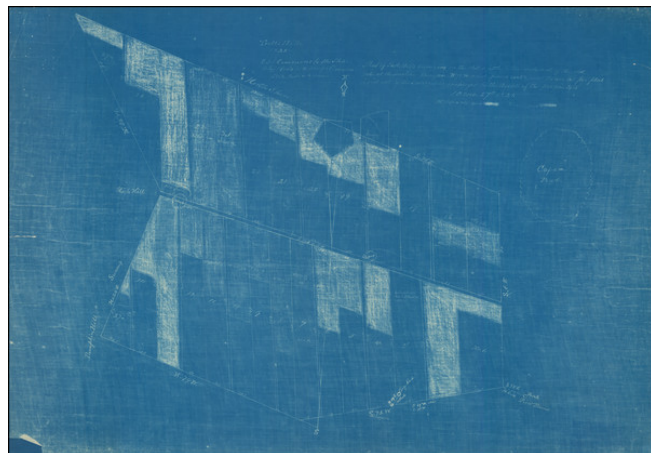
(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Trotts Hills, 1821. 636 Commons to the Share [blueprint]

Stock#: 94484
Map Maker: Coffin

Date: 1821 (but early 20th Century)
Place: Nantucket
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 23 x 17.5 inches (including text)

Price: \$ 375.00



Description:

Early blueprint of Henry Coffin's mapping of Trott Hills, laid out in 1821.

As a means of dividing up some of Nantucket's jointly owned lands, in 1821, several areas were designated as dividend lands, intended to be distributed among the proprietors. Among these areas were Trotts Hills, Head of Plains, Smooth Hummocks, and others. This term "dividend lands" suggests that these areas were probably considered as a form of profit or return from the collective property owned by the proprietors.

The establishment of English settlement on Nantucket in the mid-17th century followed a model similar to many New England colonies, initiated by a group of share-holding investors forming a closed corporation. Unique to Nantucket, however, was the persistence of this proprietorship as a distinct, parallel governing entity, operating independently alongside the Town Meeting well beyond its initial temporary intention.

The origins of this proprietorship trace back to a group commonly referred to as the "Proprietors," distinct from Ralph Waldo Emerson's reference to the island's Wampanoags as "ancient proprietors." The English settlement's foundational group comprised ten men: Tristram Coffin Sr., Peter Coffin, Thomas Macy, Richard Swain, John Swain, Thomas Barnard, Christopher Hussey, Stephen Greenleaf, William Pile, and Thomas Mayhew of Martha's Vineyard. These individuals were the initial investors and were later joined by partners who became full shareholders, establishing an egalitarian base for the venture. These partners included Tristram Coffin Jr., James Coffin, John Smith, Robert Pike, Thomas Look, Robert Barnard, Edward Starbuck, Thomas Coleman, John Bishop, and Thomas Mayhew Jr., whose descendants would carry on the legacy of the Proprietors.

The "first purchasers" secured the rights to Nantucket from potential claimants—Sir Fernando Gorges, the



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Earl of Stirling, and Thomas Mayhew Sr.—the latter retaining a portion of interest for himself. The initial acquisition not only involved financial transactions but also agreements with the local Wampanoag groups. The Proprietors compensated the Wampanoags for portions of the land and obtained grazing rights across the island, laying the groundwork for the English settlement and governance that would follow.

This complex arrangement of purchase, partnership, and governance set the stage for Nantucket's development, distinguishing its proprietorship model from other colonial enterprises. The enduring structure of this body, beyond its original scope, highlights a unique facet of Nantucket's historical and governance landscape.

Detailed Condition: