



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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(Texas - Mexican War) Campaña Contra Los Americanos del Norte. Primera Parte [all issued]. Relación histórica de los Cuarenta Días que mandó en jefe el ejército del Norte el E. Sr. general de division Don Mariano Arista, Escrita por un oficial de infantería

Stock#: 95742
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1846
Place: Mexico
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 6 x 9 inches
Price: \$ 9,500.00



Description:

Rare Early Eyewitness Account of Two Famous Texas Victories of the Mexican War

With Detailed Lithograph Battlefield Plans

The Streeter Copy - With His Pencil Notations

First edition of this important account, written in the aftermath of the two opening battles of the Mexican War, near Brownsville, Texas. The book includes an excellent first-hand account of the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de Guerrero (La Palma), covering the disastrous retreat to Linares by Division General Mariano Arista, who was called before a council of war to explain his actions.

This is one of the few 'eye-witness' accounts of these two famous Texas victories - Eberstadt

The two lithograph maps (by Cumplido) are detailed battlefield plans:

- *Croquis de la Batalla dada en Palo-Alto el 8 de mayo de 1846* (with printed color). Mexican lines marked in orange-red.



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- *Campamento de las Tropas Mexicanas en la Resaca de Guerrero el Dia 9 mayo de 1846.* With a key denoting positions of various cavalry and infantry troops.

Among the excuses given for the Mexican defeat at Palo Alto, is the deficiency of the Mexican artillery against the American army's innovative "flying" artillery:

English translation:

Our artillery on this flank was more of a hindrance than help, for its shot did not cover half the distance that separated us from the enemy, while theirs crossed our ranks, reached the park, which was 800 yards to the rear, and even the hospital, which was located in a small grove 1,500 yards to our left, where they took the right arm of a wounded man who was having his left one amputated.

Original Spanish:

Nuestra artillería de este flanco era un estorbo en lugar de auxilio, pues sus balas no recorrían la mitad del espacio que nos separaba del enemigo, cuando las de éste cruzando nuestras filas, alcanzaban al parquet, que estaba à 800 varas à retaguardia, y aun al hospital, que se hallaban en un bosquecillo à 1,500 varas de nuestra izquierda, y en donde le llevaron el brazo derecho à un herido à quien le estaban amputando el izquierdo - page 11.

Unbeknownst to Arista he had been facing the latest in American flying artillery. General Taylor put to use these innovative lighter guns, designed by Major Samuel Ringgold, which were mounted on carriages and pulled by specially trained crews and teams of horses. Such artillery proved to be the decisive in the battle. A recent history of the Mexican War by Peter Guardino highlights the importance of artillery technology in helping the Americans achieve these early victories:

Arista had chosen a location called Palo Alto for the battle. It was an open prairie broken up in spots by patches of woods and marsh... Taylor seems to have planned to clear the road with an infantry attack. However, first he halted his army out of range of the Mexican cannon and deployed his own artillery. Here, even at the beginning of the fighting, the American economic might that would win the war began to show. Although both the Mexican and the American cannon were muzzle-loading gunpowder weapons, the similarity ended there. The American guns were more powerful, and even their gunpowder was of a higher quality. Despite their larger size, they were more mobile, as the Americans had reequipped recently with more modern weapons with lighter carriages... Palo Alto has been a disappointment for the Mexicans, but Resaca de Palma was a disaster. There, 160 men were



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killed, compared to the roughly 100 killed at Palo Alto... - Guardino, The Dead March: a History of the Mexican-American War, pages 78-84.

Background

The Battle of Palo Alto, almost entirely an artillery duel, was the first battle of the Mexican War, fought on May 6, 1846. The build up to this war began a decade earlier, when Texas successfully fought and achieved independence in 1836. Mexico never recognized Texas independence or the Rio Grande River as a boundary. In 1845 the United States annexed Texas providing the opportunity for newly inaugurated President Polk, who ran on Manifest Destiny, to push his agenda in Texas. After failed attempts to purchase the land from Mexico, Polk sent General Zachary Taylor to move a force into the disputed territory at the Rio Grande River in an attempt to provoke Mexico into war. General Mariano Arista viewed this as a hostile invasion of Mexican territory and on April 25, 1846 took his soldiers across the river and attacked, giving Polk the pretext he needed to call for war. In the weeks between this skirmish and Congress' formal Declaration of War on May 13th, Zachary Taylor had already begun preparations for war. The first battle to take place was in the natural prairie of Palo Alto. Arista arrived first and stationed his troops to block the U.S. advance and when Taylor arrived the battle began. Taylor led his 2,000 soldiers to victory against greater Mexican forces, inflicting devastating casualties mostly owing to the much more effective U.S. artillery. This first battle of the Mexican-American War gave a psychological advantage to its ultimate winner, already foreshadowing the end of the war which came after the capture of Mexico City in 1847 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Provenance

Thomas W. Streeter, with his pencil notations.
His sale, lot 242, \$400.
Hubert Hudson, former Texas Senator 1957-1963.

Rarity

Very rare in the market. With only a single example recorded as sold in the last fifty years.

Detailed Condition:

Original printed wrappers. Woodblock soldier vignette on front and back wrapper. Lower one-inch margin of front wrapper torn away, no losses to printing. Minor light foxing to wrappers. Internally clean and



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fresh. A remarkable example in original state. Housed in a custom half green morocco and cloth slipcase, with chemise. Staining and silverfish damage to outer cloth sides of slipcase only. Thomas W. Streeter's copy, with his oval book label inside chemise, and pencil note on title page. 37 pages, verso blank; [3] pages, verso blank; [5] pages, verso blank. Plus two folding lithograph maps, one with printed color. This is Thomas W. Streeter's copy, with a brief pencil notation on the title page in his characteristic handwriting, referencing the plan of the Battle of Resaca de Guerrero.