



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

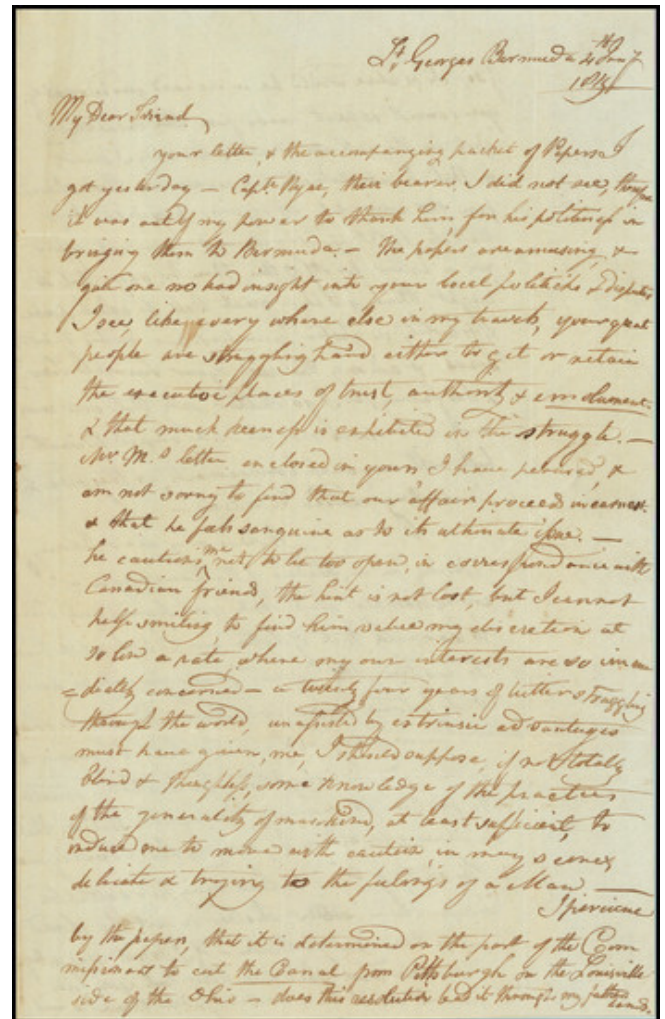
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**(Bermuda - Early 19th-Century) [Autograph letter, signed, from Thomas Connolly, to
Edward Evans of Philadelphia]**

Stock#: 96545
Map Maker: Connolly
Date: 1819
Place: St. Georges, Bermuda
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG+
Size: 8 x 12.5 inches
Price: \$ 950.00



Description:

Early 19th-Century Transatlantic Ties from Bermuda, 1819.

Written from St. Georges, Bermuda, this manuscript letter dated 4 January 1819 offers a fascinating glimpse of specific American transatlantic ties with Bermuda. The letter, from Thomas Connolly, to his friend Edward Evans, a noted plasterer in Philadelphia, sheds light on the political landscape, matters of land and infrastructure, and some deeply personal reflections on family ties and societal expectations. Connolly's reference to "local politicks and disputes" and his observations on power



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struggles for "executive places of trust, authority and emolument" dovetail with the broader political tensions of the time.

Edward Evans, the recipient of the letter, was a Philadelphia plasterer who did a ceiling medallion in Independence Hall, among other important commissions in prominent homes and buildings in the city. In 1813 and 1814, Evans styled himself a plasterer and a measurer of plasterer's work, with a shop located on the corner of 9th and Maple. In later directories, Evans is described as a specialist in "ornamental stucco work." The letter makes mention of Johnny, who was almost certainly Evans's son J.W.C. Evans, a future physician and amateur archaeologist.

Canal from Pittsburgh "on the Louisville side of the Ohio River"

Most notable is Connolly's mention of the proposed canal project from Pittsburgh. This might be a reference to the Louisville and Portland Canal, a 2-mile canal which bypassed the Falls of the Ohio River to Louisville. The Falls of the Ohio were the only natural obstruction to riverine traffic from Pittsburgh, the source of the Ohio. The mention of this planned canal, particularly its potential passage through familial land, sheds light on how such infrastructure improvements affected people in the region, particularly landowners.

Beyond the sharing of political and economic news, the letter is imbued with an emotional exchange appropriate to a close friendship. Connolly's concern for the education of Evans's son Johnny reflects the social milieu of the two correspondents, who clearly placed great value on education and its potential to uplift family prestige. Connolly's musings on the choice between medicine and law for Johnny, the professions seen as pillars of respectability, are evocative of the societal expectations of the day. Intertwined with these reflections on future prospects is a palpable yearning for family and a hope for reunification. The letter concludes with a poignant sentiment, one of hope for future reunions and a world where dispersed families might once again find a common home.

Connolly's letter stands as a valuable primary source, granting modern readers a window into the complexities of relationships, ambitions, and societal aspirations of the early 19th century, a period of profound transformation in America.

The text of the letter here follows:

My Dear Friend,

Your letter, & the accompanying packet of Papers I got yesterday - Capt'n. Ryan their bearer, I did



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not see, therefore, it was out of my power to thank him for his politeness in bringing them to Bermuda. The papers are amusing, & give one no bad insight into your local politicks and disputes. I see, live every where else in my travels, your great people are struggling hard either to get or retain the executive places of trust, authority and emolument and that much keenness is exhibited in the struggle.

Mr. M's letter enclosed in yours, I have perused, & am not sorry to find that our affair proceeds in earnest & that he feels sanguine as to its ultimate issue. He cautions me not to be too open, in correspondence with Canadian friends, the hint is not lost, but I cannot help smiling to find him value my discretion at so low a rate where my own interests are so immediately concerned -- in twenty four years of bitter struggling through the world, unassisted by entrinsic advantages must have given me, I should suppose, if not totally blind & thoughtless, some knowledge of the practices of the generality of mankind, at least sufficient, to induce me to move with caution, in [many scenes?], delicate & trying to the feelings of a Man.

I perceived by the papers, that it is determined on the part of the Commissioners to cut the Canal from Pittsburgh on the Louisville side of the Ohio -- does this resolution lead it through my father's lands if so, its value would be increased considerably. You cannot expect news from this insulated spot in the Atlantic Ocean; the only I know, is, that its inhabitants are recovering their spirits from the universal depression occasioned by the late fatal epidemick - & I cannot afford you a better proof of this, then to say, that to night there is to be a great Ball, to which scene of frivolity & glitter, numbers are invited of both sexes, & among the rest, your humble Servt. & his family - I go thither, only that our inmates not deem me a dull stupid Misanthropist but with me, such amusements, as they are termed have long ceased to intice.

How is my dear Johnny coming on in his studies of the languages -- I am extremely glad that you have put him to learning that of Latin -- I look upon him to restore the dignity of our family in America & if fortunes prove propitious the funds shall not be wanting with me to assist in giving him a liberal & enlightened education -- suitable to fit him to move in the highest station that a Man can attain to among his Countryman. The study of Physic or Law may hereafter be indispensable -- whether or not he should pursue them as a profession -- if I do not misjudge Medicine would suit him best, but you his parent must be a better judge than I can pretend to be as to the actual predilections of his mind.

Give my best to Sister, & say how much my heart bleeds to be separated from her society, but as inexorable fate has made it irreversible for a time -- she must not think of me, as of one cast off from



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*his relations forever -- happier times may yet arise -- and the scattered members of the family have
some permanent abode & reputations in the World.*

*I have nothing to add further but to wish you a happy new year; and [?] the blessing of the Almighty
parent of all good may continue to you and yours.*

Adieu Dear Friend, Yours unalterably

Thos. Connolly

Detailed Condition:

Folded folio sheet. [3] of manuscript text. Old fold marks. Address page with circular New York postal stamp in red ink dated Jan. 29. With another stamp also in red ink: "SHIP." Remnants of wax seal. Clean and very good.