



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(The Flying Machine View) The Empire City, Birdseye view of New-York and Environs.

Stock#: 96929
Map Maker: Bachmann
Date: 1855
Place: New York
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 33.75 x 23.25 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The Second Example Traced.

Bachmann's Exceptionally Rare 1855 "Flying Machine" View of New York.

The Empire City, Birdseye View of New York and Environs, published by John Bachmann in 1855, captures a transformative period in New York's history, portraying an expansive, dense cityscape punctuated by the whimsical depiction of a flying machine above Manhattan. This extremely rare view reflects the city's aspirational modernity and burgeoning urban development, encapsulating a pivotal moment where architectural ambition began to shape the iconic skyline of New York.

The mid-19th century marked an era of rapid urbanization and architectural innovation in New York City. Amidst the industrial boom and increased immigration, the city's boundaries pushed outward, and its skyline reached upward, embodying an emergent, distinctly American form of modernity. This lithograph, a product of A. Weingärtner's lithography studio and Bachmann's artistic finesse, elegantly mirrors this historical juncture. From the southern tip of the Battery, Manhattan extends into a horizon where the city's geographic complexity and social divisions are subtly obscured, yielding to an image of unity and architectural coherence.

Bachmann's depiction is as much a topographical record as it is an artistic interpretation. The island of Manhattan, viewed from the Battery, unravels a dynamic urban landscape where iconic institutions, such as the Merchant's Exchange and City Hall, command attention amidst a sea of architectural unity. The lithograph reveals a city in transition; where Broadway, teeming with horse-drawn carts, omnibuses, and a bustling populace, embodies the lively, chaotic, yet harmonious energy of a city defining its identity.



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In this rendering, the flying machine, perhaps an artistic foresight of technological advancement, underscores the era's untethered aspiration and innovation. This Da Vincian flying machine, a marvel adorned with paddle wheels, elaborate walls, and wires, elegantly glides above two flocks of birds and the streets below.

In the visual narrative of *The Empire City*, historical and speculative elements converge, rendering a detailed, if not fantastical, panorama of 1855 New York. The city's physical expanse and architectural diversity are presented with a distinct visual language that transcends mere cartographic accuracy. Through Bachmann's skilled representation, viewers are invited to a reimagined landscape where the city's architectural and social fabric intertwine, offering a glimpse into a New York caught between the tangible strides of urban development and the intangible aspirations of a metropolis on the cusp of transformation into the Empire City.

Rarity

Extremely rare. No examples in OCLC.

This view is rare enough that Reps (Views & Viewmakers 2675) lists the only location as "Unknown. See Old Print Shop Portfolio, VII, pp. 156-157, No. 7." Reps scoured institutional collections while researching the census for his book and almost never listed a location as "unknown".

The only example we can trace online is at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Edward W. C. Arnold Collection of New York Prints, Maps and Pictures, Bequest of Edward W. C. Arnold, 1954. This is the same example cited by Stokes in *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*, volume III, page 894, item 57: "Shows a flying machine. Owner: Edward W.C. Arnold."

Detailed Condition:

Tinted lithograph finished with hand-color, on wove paper.