



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

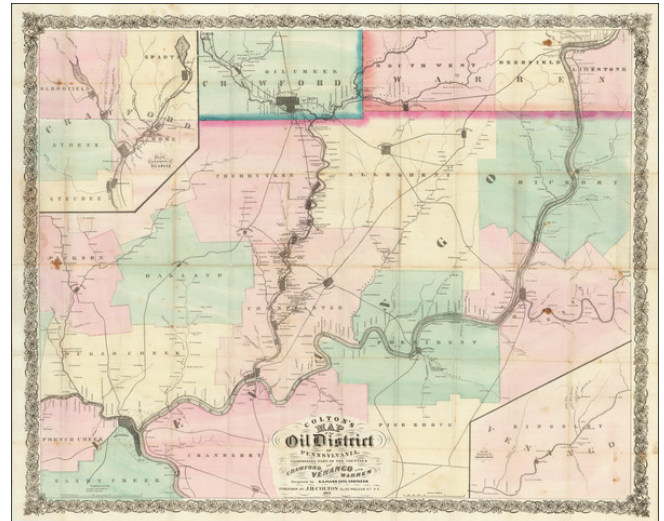
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

(Early Oil Drilling) Colton's Map of the Oil District of Pennsylvania Comprising Part of the Counties of Crawford, Venango and Warren

Stock#: 97376
Map Maker: Colton
Date: 1865
Place: New York
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 37 x 31 inches
Price: \$ 3,500.00



Description:

One of the Earliest Oil Maps, by the Leading American Cartographic Firm.

Fantastic map of the cradle of modern industrial civilization: the oil-producing regions of western Pennsylvania.

Of the three maps recorded by Streeter that explored the Pennsylvania oil industry in 1865, this one is considered the best general overview. Consistent with Colton's reputation as the flagship American mapmaking publisher, the map is fantastically detailed. It was surveyed by the local civil engineer H. S. Plumb, of whom we know little about save that he was active in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania in the late 1850s and early 1860s.

The map traces the locations of oil wells, refineries, landowners, and effectively anything else that would have been useful to an early investor or wildcatter. The main image extends from Titusville in the north to Franklin in the south, while insets show the Oil Creek and Tionesta Creek areas. Counties, towns, roads, and more are all shown, and the map is an unusually detailed regional look for Colton, who usually focused on either larger regions or individual cities for his maps.

Rumsey notes that there are, in fact, two states of the map, unrecorded by Streeter (who had the second state). The [first state](#) records substantially less development throughout, speaking to the incredibly fast-pace of growth, building, and drilling in the region. The most easily recognizable difference between the



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first and second states is the addition of two scale bars (including one in the esoteric unit of "roods.")

The earliest maps of the oil-producing regions of Pennsylvania come from 1864, although (perhaps with the exception of Lloyd's map) these were significantly more rudimentary than those of 1865. The other two Pennsylvanian oil maps recorded by Streeter for this year are the Hunt map and the Townsend and Dale map. Colton also produced a map of West Virginian oil-producing regions that same year.

The Early Pennsylvania Oil Industry: 1860-1865

The development of the oil industry in Pennsylvania can be traced back to the mid-19th century, marking a pivotal moment in both American industrial history and global energy production. The birth of the modern petroleum industry was at Titusville (in Crawford County, at the northwestern corner of the map), where Edwin L. Drake successfully drilled the first commercial oil well in 1859. Prior to this, oil had been collected through rudimentary methods like "seep mining," where oil seeping to the surface was simply gathered. Drake's innovation was to use a steam engine to drill a well, reaching a depth of 69.5 feet to strike oil.

The success at Titusville led to an oil boom in Pennsylvania, particularly in the regions surrounding the initial discovery. Oil Creek Valley (upriver of Titusville) became a bustling area, attracting entrepreneurs, speculators, and laborers in search of fortune. Towns like Oil City and Petroleum Center (south of Titusville) sprang up almost overnight, complete with infrastructure like pipelines and refineries. The development was so rapid that by 1861, Pennsylvania was producing millions of barrels of oil, effectively monopolizing the young industry. This period also saw the emergence of influential companies, such as the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company and Seneca Oil, which played crucial roles in shaping the industry's future.

By 1864, the state was producing an estimated 3.7 million barrels of crude oil, a staggering amount considering the industry was in its infancy. This production was largely concentrated in the Oil Creek Valley (shown in the inset), where refineries and drilling operations had become increasingly sophisticated. The year 1865 saw the introduction of "torpedoing," a technique involving the detonation of nitroglycerin in wells to increase oil flow, further boosting production rates. This innovation was first successfully demonstrated by Colonel Edward A. L. Roberts in Titusville, revolutionizing extraction methods and setting a precedent for future drilling technologies.

The industry also began to attract significant investment and regulatory attention during these years. The Pennsylvania legislature passed the Oil Creek Railroad Bill in 1864, facilitating the transportation of oil and contributing to the infrastructure that would sustain the industry for decades to come. Financial



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markets started to recognize the value of oil, leading to the establishment of the Petroleum Exchange in Oil City in 1865, one of the first commodity exchanges of its kind.

Rarity

This is the only copy of the map that we trace as coming up at auction over the past decade, per RBH. In 2007, a copy of the map sold at Christie's for an astonishing \$8,125.

Detailed Condition:

Original hand color. Backed on thin tissue and bound into original cloth covers. Covers stamped with gilt with publisher's advertisement on front pastedown. Fold toning and minor soiling. Spine replaced.