



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

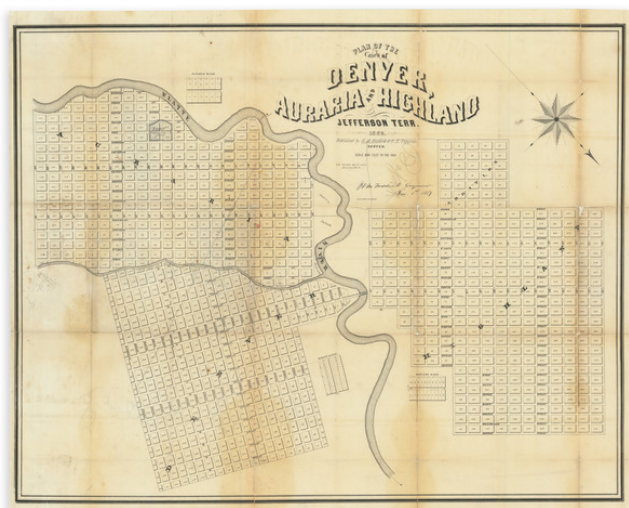
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(First Map of Denver) Plan of the Cities of Denver, Auraria, and Highland. Jefferson Terr.

Stock#: 93668
Map Maker: Fosdick & Tappan
Date: 1859
Place: Boston
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 27.5 x 21.75 inches
Price: \$ 65,000.00



Description:

"This is the First Map of Denver." - Everett D. Graff --

Heralded by Graff as the first map of Denver, the 1859 "Plan of the Cities of Denver, Auraria and Highland," by H.M. Fosdick and L.N. Tappan, stands as a seminal piece in the cartographic history of that city and the Pikes Peak Gold Rush.

The map was the brainchild of civil engineer Henry Fosdick, who leveraged his own surveying in its design. Despite its minimalist detailing—numbered blocks, street names, and bridge locations—it earned the recognition of being the official federal government map of the area encompassed by the original congressional grant. The map's creation followed the establishment of the Denver City Town Company by William H. Larimer, Jr., who named the town Denver in a bid to court favor with James W. Denver, the former Kansas Territory governor. The map showcases the distinct grid layouts of Denver, Auraria, and Highlands, each within their unique geographical contexts, encapsulating a historical moment when Denver and Auraria were rival towns before their eventual merger in April 1860.

Manuscript Annotations

The present example is embellished with scattered pencil notations that provide insights into the changing landscape and socio-economic dynamics of the cities. They mark changes in land ownership, detail the outlines of city blocks, and highlight individual structures. Of particular interest is a set of four blocks



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shaded and labeled "Camp Weld," a significant military encampment of the period, and red pencil marks on a specific lot. South of Cherry Creek in Auraria, further annotations outline lots, buildings, and partial subdivisions of city blocks, painting a dynamic picture of the developing urban environment.

Among the annotations on the map is at the top right, placed over the printed signature of Henry Fosdick, is a large square, with the name "Bassett." This is a reference to the lands of Captain Peleg Tripp Bassett, T., a Director of the Denver City Town Company and its Recorder in autumn of 1858. On April 16, 1859, Captain Bassett was shot and mortally wounded by J.W. Scudder, treasurer of Auraria Town Company. Scudder would later be acquitted of the murder, as it was determined to be an act of self defense.

Colorado Gold Rush

The map was created during the peak of the Colorado Gold Rush (often called the Pikes Peak Gold Rush), a period of rapid population growth and fervent land speculation. The discovery of gold in 1858 attracted a flood of prospectors and settlers to the area, leading to the rapid development of settlements like Denver, Auraria, and Highland. As such, this map not only charts the early urban planning of these burgeoning cities but also encapsulates the frenzied economic and social changes of the era. It captures the essence of a boomtown atmosphere, where ownership of lots could change rapidly and new buildings sprung up seemingly overnight.

Camp Weld

On the present map, Camp Weld is noted in pencil manuscript in an early hand. Camp Weld was strategically established on a thirty-acre tract of land situated to the east of the Platte River and north of Denver's 8th Avenue Bridge. This military outpost, commissioned in 1861 by Colorado's Territorial Governor Gilpin, was a defensive initiative to safeguard the Colorado Territory from potential Southern assaults during the American Civil War. Nestled just beyond the confines of U.S. Marshal Hunt's homestead, Camp Weld served as a vital hub for the organization and rigorous training of Union troops, fortifying them for the defense of the Union cause.

Rarity

As documented in the Graff Catalog (1386), the map eluded researchers for most of the last half of the 19th century, finally being rediscovered in the vaults of the Denver Land Office in 1897.

Today the map remains extremely rare. It last appeared for sale in the Jay T. Snider Collection of Historical Americana Sale, Christie's New York, 21 June 2005, where it made \$31,200. Before that, RBH



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records only a 1980 Howell catalog entry for \$1,650.

OCLC's records are somewhat difficult to trace but it seems that there are examples at Denver Public Library, Yale University, and the Rosenstock Map Collection at the Autry Museum. We are aware of at least one example in a private collection in Colorado.

Conclusion

As the first map of Denver, it stands as one of the holy grails of Colorado map collecting. The map remains a fascinating testament to Denver's early history, offering valuable insights into the region's urban and social development.

Detailed Condition:

12mo, original green cloth pocket folder (showing wear and buckling), gilt title on upper cover. In custom clamshell case. Map with some toning and wear at intersecting folds. Early pencil annotations.