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FOUR RARE LITHOGRAPHED MAPS DEPICTING THE OPERATIONS OF THE BRITISH ARMY ON THE RIVER SUTLEJ DURING THE FIRST ANGLO-SIKH WAR OF 1845-46

[1] Plan of the Battle of Sobraon fought on the 10th Feby 1846 by the British Army under the personal command of Genl. Sir Hugh Gough, Bt., GCB, Comr. in Chief, with the Sikh Forces entrenched on the Sutledge; [2] Plan of the entrenched position of the Sikh Forces near Sobraon on the Sutledge, carried in the battle of the 10th Feby 1846 by the British Army under the personal command of Genl. Sir Hugh Gough, Bt., GCB, Comr. in Chief: [3] A Sketch Map of the Scene of Operations of the British Army on the Sutlej under the personal command of General Sir H. Gough, Bt., GCB, Commander-in-Chief against the Sikh Forces in 1845 and 1846; [4] Index to Sketch of Actions on the Sutluj under Command of Gen. Sir H. Gough, Bt., GCB, Comr. in Chief, 1845-46.

Author

BAKER, Captain [William Erskine]; Lieutenant [Richard] STRACHEY; Lieutenant HODGSON; Brigadier Edward SMITH; Lieutenant Colonel W[illiam] GARDEN

Publication date

1846 and 1847

Publisher

Government Lithographic Press,

Publication place

Calcutta,

Physical description

Four lithograph maps [1] lithograph with partial hand-colour, with remnants of old folds and old tape marks, skilfully repaired; [2] lithograph map, some loss to upper right corner and lower section, affecting image, skilfully repaired, tears to old folds skilfully repaired; [3] lithograph map, fine original hand-colour, loss to upper left margin skilfully repaired in facsimile; [4] lithograph key sheet for map 3, fine original hand colour, small loss to upper left corner skilfully repaired.

Dimensions

[1] 470 by 590 (18.5 by 23.25 inches); [2] 510 by 690mm (20 by 27.25 inches); [3] 520 by 675mm (20.5 by 26.5 inches); [4] 500 by 660mm (19.5 by 26 inches).

Notes

Four extremely rare maps depicting the operations of the British Army on the River Sutlej during the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46, and especially concentrating on the decisive battle of Sobraon. Not only do the maps represent detailed depictions of the actions along the River Sutlej, they are also examples of some of the earliest lithographic printing on the Indian subcontinent.

The collection consists of two maps focusing on the battle of Sobraon; a single sheet (sheet IX of 11) of a large map showing the progress of the First Anglo-Sikh War, together with the key sheet to the multi-sheet work.

List of Maps

1. BAKER, Captain [William Erskine]; Lieutenant [Richard] STRACHEY; Lieutenant HODGSON

Plan of the Battle of Sobraon fought on the 10th Feby 1846 by the British Army under the personal command of Genl. Sir Hugh Gough, Bt., GCB, Comr. in Chief, with the Sikh Forces entrenched on the Sutledge.

Calcutta, Printed at the Gov[ernmen]t Lith[ographi]c Press, March 1846.

Key to positions and events below title.

Scale: 4 inches to 1 statute mile.

2. SMITH, Brigadier Edward

Plan of the entrenched position of the Sikh Forces near Sobraon on the Sutledge, carried in the battle of the 10th Feby 1846 by the British Army under the personal command of Genl. Sir Hugh Gough, Bt., GCB, Comr. in Chief.

[Calcutta, Government Lithographic Press, c1846].

Key to positions and batteries, lithographed inscription by Edward Smith,

Brigadier, Chief Engineer, Army of the Sutledge

Scale: 1 ft to 1 statute mile.

3. GARDEN, Lieutenant Colonel W[illiam]

[Sheet 9] IX. A Sketch Map of the Scene of Operations of the British Army on the Sutlej under the personal command of General Sir H. Gough, Bt., GCB, Commander-in-Chief against the Sikh Forces

in 1845 and 1846, compiled by Lt. Col. W. Garden, CB, Quarter Master General of the Army. [Calcutta], Government Lithographic Press, 1847.

The ninth sheet of 11, intended to show the whole of the campaign along the River Sutlej. Key upper right listing events from 15th December 1845, to the surrender on 9th March 1846.

Scale: 1 inch to 1 statute mile.

4. GARDEN, Lieutenant Colonel William

Index to Sketch of Actions on the Sutluj under Command of Gen. Sir H. Gough, Bt., GCB, Comr. in Chief, 1845-46.

Calcutta, Government Lithographic Press, November 1847.

The index sheet to accompany the previous map.

The Battle of Sobraon

The Battle of Sobraon was the decisive engagement of the First Anglo-Sikh War. On 11th December 1845 the Sikh army crossed the River Sutlej, beginning the first Anglo-Sikh war. On 18th December Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief in India, defeated the Sikhs at Mudki with the loss of several thousand men and seventeen guns. Then on 21st December there was another engagement at Ferozeshah, which ended with the Sikh forces withdrawing back across the Sutlej after losses on both sides. The British were victorious again at Aliwal in January 1846. There was a concentration of forces on both sides, which met at Sobraon, with the Sikhs forming an entrenched and fortified bridgehead on the British side of the river.

After initial inconclusive artillery exchanges, battle was joined, with heavy casualties. After some time the Sikhs were put under pressure in their centre, and most were unable to retreat to the Punjab side of the Sutlej across a pontoon bridge which had collapsed under the numbers of men crossing it, or through the power of the swollen river (according to some accounts, destroyed deliberately and too soon by Tej Singh to prevent the British using it in pursuit). Twenty thousand of the Sikhs were therefore trapped, though none surrendered. The British artillery continued to fire into the large numbers of men in the water. When firing ceased, Sikh casualties numbered between eight thousand and ten thousand men. The British had also captured sixty-seven guns.

As a result, the Sikh kingdom surrendered to the British and terms were agreed on 8th March 1846. A British Resident, Henry Lawrence, with ten thousand men, was established in Lahore.

Gough himself wrote, as quoted in a bulletin of 2nd March 1846 from the Bombay Government Gazette relating to the victory:

"The loss of the enemy has been immense: an estimate of it must be formed with a due allowance for the spirit of exaggeration which pervades all statements of Asiatics where their interest leads them to magnify numbers, but our own observation on the river banks and in the enemy's Camp, combined, with the reports brought to our intelligence department, to convince me that the Khalsa casualties were between 8 and 10,000 men killed and wounded in action and drowned in the passage of the river. Amongst the slain are Sirdars Sham Singh, Attareewalla, Genls. Goolab Singh Koopta, and Heera Singh Topee, Sirdar Kishen Singh, son of the late Jemadar Kooshall Singh, Genls. Mobaruck Ally and Illahee Buksh, and Shah Newaz Khan, son of Futteh-odd-Deen Khan of Kusoor. The body of Sham Singh was sought for in the captured camp by his followers: and respecting the gallantry with which he is reported to have devoted himself to death rather than accompany the Army in its flight, I forbade his people being molested in their search, which was finally successful."

Lithography in India

Lithographic printing developed in Calcutta under the British in two separate strands. James Nathaniel Rind (1793-1840), an assistant surgeon in the Bengal Medical Service, became a lithographer through a chance encounter with a school friend, Alexander Forrester, during a visit to

England. He acquired a thorough knowledge of lithography from Forrester and went back to Calcutta in August 1822 with a lithographic press and the accompanying material.

His proposal to establish an official press was presented to the East India Company in January 1823 and Rind became its superintendent, producing numerous maps as well as official forms, circulars, etc. Aside from his official work, Rind became a partner in the "Asiatic Lithographic Press", run by his former assistant George Wood, in 1825. A dispute over the propriety of this double role, especially as the two presses appeared to share premises and materials, led to the dismissal of a number of workmen, including Thomas Black, Rind's former assistant, and George Henry Stapleton. Although Rind successfully maintained that the advantage of these arrangements accrued mainly to the government and he was acquitted of any misconduct, he was required to sever his connection with the private company. The government soon became aware, having sacked all his assistants, that Rind was the only person qualified to run the press. His former colleagues, most notably Thomas Black would take the Asiatic Lithographic Press from strength to strength, with the firm dominating the Indian and Southeast Asian market for the next 30 years.

Rarity

Although the Government Lithographic Press was prolific in its output, due to India's climate very few extant examples survive. The four maps are no exception. We are unaware of any other examples appearing at auction since The War. The only institutional examples we could trace were the British Library, which contains examples of all four; and the University of Victoria, Canada which contains examples of 'A Sketch Map of the Scene of Operations of the British Army on the Sutlej', and the key sheet.

Bibliography

OCLC 557501145; 557501137; 556699680.

Provenance

Price: £30000

Inventory reference: 20719