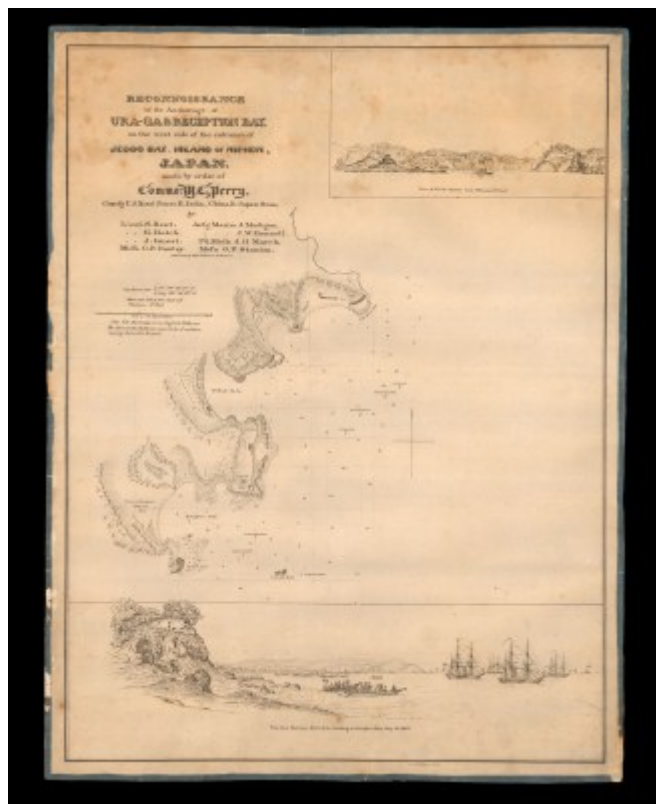




Surveyor's fair copy manuscript chart with two inset views, pen and black ink on paper, laid down on linen, edged in blue silk, pencilled annotations and gridlines for copying, inscribed on verso "Chart of Ura-Ga Bay of Jeddo 1853" and "Mississippi" in blue and brown ink respectively, some edge abrasion, title and top inset slightly foxed.

USS MISSISSIPPI'S COPY OF THE FIRST CHART OF THE FIRST AMERICAN DELEGATION TO END JAPAN'S ISOLATIONISM

Reconnaissance of the Anchorage of Ura-Ga & Reception Bay, on the west side of the entrance of Jeddo Bay [Edo, Tokyo], Island of Nippon, Japan.

Author

BALCH, G.; J.W. BENNETT; S. BENT, J. GUEST; C.F. HAWLEY; J. MADIGAN; J.H. MARCH; O.F. STANDON, for PERRY, Commo[dore] M[atthew] C[albraith]

Publication date

Sep. 5 1853.

Publisher

Publication place

[USS Mississippi],

Physical description

Surveyor's fair copy manuscript chart with two inset views, pen and black ink on paper, laid down on linen, edged in blue silk, pencilled annotations and gridlines for copying, inscribed on verso "Chart of Ura-Ga Bay of Jeddo 1853" and "Mississippi" in blue and brown ink respectively, some edge abrasion, title and top inset slightly foxed.

Dimensions

650 by 495mm. (25.5 by 19.5 inches).

Notes

Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794-1858) was commissioned by the US Navy to force Japan to open its ports to American trade. The whaling industry had started to drive ships into the North Pacific, and the rumour of Japan's bountiful coal supply marked Japan as an alluring target. However, foreign presence had been tightly controlled by the Shogunate since the mid-seventeenth century.

Confident with the gun-boat diplomacy of an emergent American Empire, Perry anchored a fleet of four ships in Jeddo [Edo, or Tokyo] Bay. The present chart is the result of Perry's order for his lieutenants and midshipmen to survey the area, in preparation for his demanded opening of Japanese ports.

Stretching from Cape Kama Saki to Morrison Bluff on the Miura Peninsula. Military fortifications are indicated with black dashes, with vegetation and topography shown in simple relief. A depth sounding has been added in pencil to 'Reception Bay', an eyebrow-raising naming for waters forbidden to foreigners.

In addition to this maritime survey of Tokyo Bay, the artist onboard, William Heine, has contributed two prospective views of Uraga Harbour and "Morrison Bluff on the Landing in reception Bay, July 14th 1853". The templated terrain of the coastline is depicted in the former; the latter juxtaposes the American tall ships with the simple fishing boats of the surprised local inhabitants, overseen by a fortress carved into a cliff face.

We can find only one example in the U.S. National Archives, differing from ours by the delicate inscription "Traced by H. Patterson Sep 5 1853" below the lower neatline. Whilst William Heine was the official artist under Perry's command, assistant draughtsman Hamilton Patterson has traced his master's chart so precisely that even Heine's signature is copied in the bottom left of each inset image.

Such a faithful rendering of the original chart suggests that each was prepared to be a ship's copy - one for USS Mississippi, the other for USS Suquehanna. With the contemporary annotation "Mississippi" on the verso of our example, it is tempting to conclude that the other chart held institutionally was indeed destined for Perry's second paddle frigate, the Susquehanna.

If so, the present example would have been used as the first copy to guide the USS Mississippi into 'Reception Bay', now known as Tokyo Bay. It was here that Perry presented a threatening letter from President Fillmore to the two magistrates of Uraga, ultimately leading to the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854. This pivotal negotiation marked the end of Japan's isolation period.

It is fitting that the first American burial on Japanese soil was for a Marine belonging to the USS Mississippi. He had passed away days before the official signing of the Treaty. A conference was held in Yokohama on March 9th 1854 to discuss the suitable internment of the body. Perry's private journal describes how "the corpse was taken on shore in the usual manner and placed in a grave near to a Japanese temple with all religious ceremony, conformably to the forms of the Episcopal church" (Pinaeu).

Bibliography

PINEAU (Roger), editor: The Japan Expedition 1852-1854 - The personal Journal of Commodore Matthew C. Perry. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968, pp165-166.

Provenance

Price: £75000

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