

Engraved plan, fine original outline hand-colour, a few marginal tears into image at left, skifully repaired, minor loss to fold intersections, trimmed to lower and left neatline, backed on japan paper.

RARE PLAN OF NEW ORLEANS

Norman’s Plan of New Orleans & Environs, 1845 By Henry Moellhausen Civil Engineer. B. M. Norman Publisher.

Author
MOELLHAUSEN, Henry; [Engraved by] SHIELDS & HAMMOND

Publication date
1845

Publisher
Entered according to Act of Congress, by B.M. Norman, in the Clerk’s Office of the District Court

Publication place
New Orleans,

Physical description
Engraved plan, fine original outline hand-colour, a few marginal tears into image at left, skifully repaired, minor loss to fold intersections, trimmed to lower and left neatline, backed on japan paper.

Dimensions
470 by 650mm (18.5 by 25.5 inches).

Notes
Rare and detailed plan of New Orleans, one of only a handful issued in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The plan shows New Orleans in considerable detail, with the demarcation of municipal boundaries, fire limits, the street plan and block numbers, canals, railways, public squares, cemeteries, and highlighting of key buildings. The key below the plan lists hotels, exchanges, banks, churches, public schools, theatres, hospitals, markets, public buildings, and cotton presses. The eleven cotton presses marked on the plan were among the largest buildings in New Orleans at the time and graphically demonstrate the great importance of the cotton export trade to New Orleans and much of the southern United States. Also of note is the division of New Orleans into three “municipalities”, which took place in 1836 in response to tension between the Anglo and French-Creole communities. Though the city had a single major, each municipality had its own council, police force, and right to raise taxes. In 1852 a new charter reunited the city, at the same time annexing the upriver City of Lafayette.

The plan was based upon surveys carried out by the architect, surveyor and civil engineer, Henry Moellhausen.

“The Prussian Henry Moellhausen worked in New Orleans from 1841-49 conducting surveys and producing architectural renderings. His topographical maps accompanied an 1840 report in which George Dunbar, engineer of the state of Louisiana recommended an underground drainage system for the New Orleans area. Two brick cottages in downtown Treme Faubourg and two brick stores in the St. Mary Faubourg are the only extant buildings that have been attributed to Moellhausen but his renderings show his remarkable skills as a draftsman. Yet he… did not make any distinctive contribution to the architectural development of New Orleans, though something of his influence lived on in students (Hilary S.Irvin, “The Impact of German Immigration on New Orleans Architecture”, Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, Vol. 27. No. 4, Autumn, 1986, pp. 375-406.)

The present plan’s old folds suggest that it started life as a folding or pocket map, either issued separately or more probably more likely issued with ‘Norman’s New Orleans and Evirons’ guidebook of 1845. The guide’s title page calls for a plan, but it was either issued separately or has been removed from many extant examples.

We were only able to trace two institutional examples of the 1845 edition, one in the Library of Congress and the other at Yale.

Bibliography
LC G4014.N5 1845.M6 TIL; Yale 795 N47 1845; Phillips p.496.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 1219

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