



Double-page engraved map with hand colour.

## SPEED'S MAP OF ESSEX

**Essex,**

**Author**

SPEED, John

**Publication date**

[1676].

**Publisher**

And are to be solde by Tho: Bassett in Fleet Street, and Ric: Chiswell in St. Pauls Churchyard,

**Publication place**

[London],

**Physical description**

Double-page engraved map with hand colour.

**Dimensions**

395 by 515mm. (15.5 by 20.25 inches).

**Notes**

A map of Essex from the 1676 edition of the first large-scale atlas of the British Isles, Speed's 'Theatre'. In the bottom right-hand corner is an inset town-plan of Colchester, with points of interest

including 'S. Rumbals' and 'Cowe Stret' marked using an alphabetical key. Above this are portrait medallions of the Roman Emperor Constantine, his father Constantius, and his mother Helena. Helena is the patron saint of Colchester, reported by Geoffrey of Monmouth to be the daughter of its legendary founder, King Coel.

Accompanying text in English, 'Hundreds in Essex' and 'The Description of Essex' is printed on the verso.

John Speed (1552-1629) was the outstanding cartographer of his age. By trade a merchant tailor, but by proclivity a historian, it was the patronage of Sir Fulke Greville, poet and statesman, that allowed him to pursue this interest in earnest. His 'Theatre of Great Britain', from which the present work is drawn, was first published in 1611 or 1612 and is 'the earliest English attempt at atlas-production on a grand scale' (Skelton). Drawing heavily on the work of Saxton and Norden, little of Speed's cartography is original (he acknowledges, 'I have put my sickle into other mens corne'), instead it is his blend of cartography and history, incorporating town-plans, vignettes, and genealogy, that makes Speed an innovator.

This map is from the 1676 edition of the 'Theatre', published by Thomas Bassett and Richard Chiswell.

## **Bibliography**

Chubb, CIV; Shirley [Atlases], T.Spe-1j; Skelton, 92.

## **Provenance**

**Price:** £900

**Inventory reference:** 21983