

J. H. COLTON'S TERRITORIES OF NEW MEXICO AND UTAH

by Wesley A. Brown

A few relatively common antique maps are so appealing that despite their prevalence they are widely sought by map collectors. Consider, for example, the first map of the Western Hemisphere, *Novis Orbis* by Sebastian Munster, first printed in 1540. Philip Burden lists 46 different versions of that map in his book *The Mapping of North America*. Another map, widely existent and actively purchased, is the *Territories of New Mexico and Utah* by J. H. Colton. This map is the subject of this brief paper. In this discussion, a *state* is an alteration of the printed image where new (or different) information is contained or the decorative aspects of the map are changed. Changes in coloring do not constitute a new state.

The map's importance is indicated by its use as the color frontispiece for volume 4 of his Carl Wheat's monumental *Mapping the Transmississippi West*. The genuine attractiveness of the map and the large number that were printed guarantees it as a staple in the map trade. There is yet another reason for its appeal. The production of the map from 1855 to 1863 covers a remarkable period during which the enormous land area of the two territories was carved up, to produce Nevada, Colorado and Arizona in addition to New Mexico and Utah. In those eight years, successive printings of this map show significant changes, whereas most maps of the eastern states barely changed. This dramatic sequence makes the various states of the map of New Mexico and Utah popular with many map collectors. I hope that a brief outline of the different states of the map identified to date will increase enjoyment of the map and will aid collectors and dealers in describing them.

Before I list the states of the map, a general history of it may be useful. Although American mapmaker Joseph Hutchins Colton had produced maps since 1833, he did not produce his first atlas until 1855. This ambitious project was aided by sons George Woolworth and Charles B., who took over the business a decade later. The atlas first appeared as a two-volume work, *Atlas of the World*, in 1855 and 1856; the map is contained in the first volume. The map was prepared to illustrate the two new territories of New Mexico and Utah created in 1854 out of much of the vast new western land that had recently been acquired from Mexico. In 1856, the map appeared in Colton's one-volume *Atlas of America*, which, in fact, was the first volume of the earlier *Atlas of the World* with a changed title page and without descriptive text pages. Colton's single-volume *General Atlas*, which also contained the map, first appeared in 1857. Beginning in 1859, Johnson & Browning also published Colton's *General Atlas*. Because the map appeared in so many different atlases, its cumulative volume is very high.

Although Colton's *General Atlas* continued to be published through 1888, the map was not produced after 1863. Each state of the map is designated as sheet No. 51, except State 4 (designated No. 53) and State 12 (designated No. 67). New editions of the atlas did not appear every year, but the great transitions occurring in this southwestern region of the country caused this sheet to be updated virtually every 4 years and occasionally even more than once a year. Because large numbers of a new sheet would be produced at one time, the same version of the map might have been included in editions of the atlas for two successive years.

State 2 of the map was also published separately as a pocket map, in covers, with the date 1855 in the title block, but

with no plate number.

The topography of the territories is very clearly illustrated and the map also shows the general findings of John Charles Fremont in the 1840s, supplemented by Stansbury in 1850, and greatly enhanced by the Pacific Rail Road surveys of 1853 to 1855. Fremont's routes are outlined with particular interest.

Walter Ristow reports that there are no plate marks on the maps, and he comments that the maps were "probably engraved first and then transferred to lithographic stones or zinc plates for reproduction."³ Much of the maps' charm arises from the strong red color applied by hand to indicate the boundaries of the enormous territories, and the softer full-color wash in broad horizontal strokes to denote the huge counties of the fledgling territories. Most of the maps are surrounded by a decorative strap-work border. The lack of a center fold adds to the maps' attraction.

The maps are 11 inches by 14 inches from the neatlines, and the decorative border and wide margins make most sheets about 15 by 18 inches. All of the states listed in the table above are approximately the same size except State 4, which is smaller because it does not have the decorative border. All the states, except States 7 and 9, have the same small text above the bottom neatline: "Entered according to Act of Congress in the Year 1855 by J. H. Colton & Co. in the clerk's office of the district court of the United States for the Southern District of New York." No other dates are noted on any states of the map. The above table is intended to help identify the various states of the map. Although there may be several changes on each state, for simplicity, I have noted only one or a few identifying changes.

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1. Walter W. Ristow, *American Maps and Mapmakers* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1985), 324
2. Philip D. Burden, *The Mapping of North America* (Herts, England: Raleigh Publications, 1996), 16-17.
3. Carl I. Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West* (San Francisco: Institute of Historical Cartography, 1960)

STATES OF J. H. COLTON'S TERRITORIES OF NEW MEXICO AND UTAH

COLOR All states show the heavy red outlines for the territorial boundaries and have lighter wash colors for the counties. States 1 and 2 can also be found with light outline color for the counties and no wash color.

PLATE MARK Every state has plate mark "No. 51" in the bottom right corner except State 4 (No. 53) and State 12 (No. 67).

VERSO States 1, 2, and 3 are blank on the verso. States 4 through 11 have the descriptive text "The State of California." State 12 has text "The United States of Mexico – No.1."

State 1 has the following title block:

"Territories of NEW MEXICO AND UTAH" (This is the only State not to name a publisher in the title block.)

State 1 1855 At 31° west from Washington above the bottom neatline in solid dark capitals is "Mexico."
Examples have been found with light county outline color rather than wash color.

States 2, 3, 4, and 5 share the following title block:

"Territories of NEW MEXICO AND UTAH / Published by J. H. Colton & Co. No. 172 William SL New York"

State 2 1855-56 At 31° west from Washington above the bottom neatline in solid dark capitals is "Mexico." Examples have been found with light county outline color rather than wash color.

State 3 1856 At 31° west from Washington above the bottom neatline in double soft capitals is "CHIHUAHUA." (It remains this way for all subsequent states.)

State 4 1857-58 Same as State 3 except simple wide Fine border instead of decorative strap-work border. The plate number is 53.

State 5 1859 Same as State 3 except "ARIZONA" is introduced in faint block letters at about 33° north latitude. (It remains this way for all states through 9.)

State 6 has the following title block:

“Colton's Territories of NEW MEXICO and UTAH / Published by Johnson & Browning, 172 William St. New York.”

State 6 1859 Bright red horizontal line at 34° north as potential division between New Mexico and Arizona.

State 7 has the following title block:

“Colton's Territories of NEW MEXICO and UTAH / Published by J. H. COLTON, 172 William St. New York”

State 7 1859-60 Bright red horizontal fine at 33.5° north or 34° north as potential division between New Mexico and Arizona. Bright red vertical line at 114° west as potential boundary of Nevada and Utah. Very soft double capital "COLONA" has been inserted arcing through what will become eastern Colorado. No copyright date.

State 8 has the following title block:

“Colton's Territories of NEW MEXICO and UTAH / Published by Johnson & Browning, 172 William St. New York.”

State 8 1859-60 Dark printed dash-dot fine at 33.5° north below Socorro separating New Mexico from Arizona. Bold double capital "COLONA" has been inserted arcing through what will become eastern Colorado. Same new bright red lines as State 7.

State 9 has the following title block:

“Colton's Territories of NEW MEXICO and UTAH / Published by J.H. COLTON, 172 William St. New York”

State 9 1860 Same new bright red lines as State 7. Very soft double capital "COLONA" has been inserted arcing through what will become eastern Colorado. “Denver City” inserted on the South Platte. No copyright date.

States 10,11, and 12 sham the following title block:

“Colton's Territories of NEW MEXICO ARIZONA COLORADO NEVADA AND UTAH / Published by J. H. COLTON, 172 William St. New York.”

State 10 1861 -62 Bold arcing "COLORADO" placed in the new territory. Western part still has colored Utah counties. Bold arcing "NEVADA" placed in new territory. Colored counties of Utah still present.

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| State 11 | 1862 | Colorado and Nevada shown as separate territories with no counties. Strong red border color is over heavy dashed lines around Colorado and Nevada. |
| State 12 | 1863 | Arizona and New Mexico have close to modern boundaries. Colorado has 17 counties and Nevada has 10. Nevada's southern boundary is at 37° north. The plate number is 67. |

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