

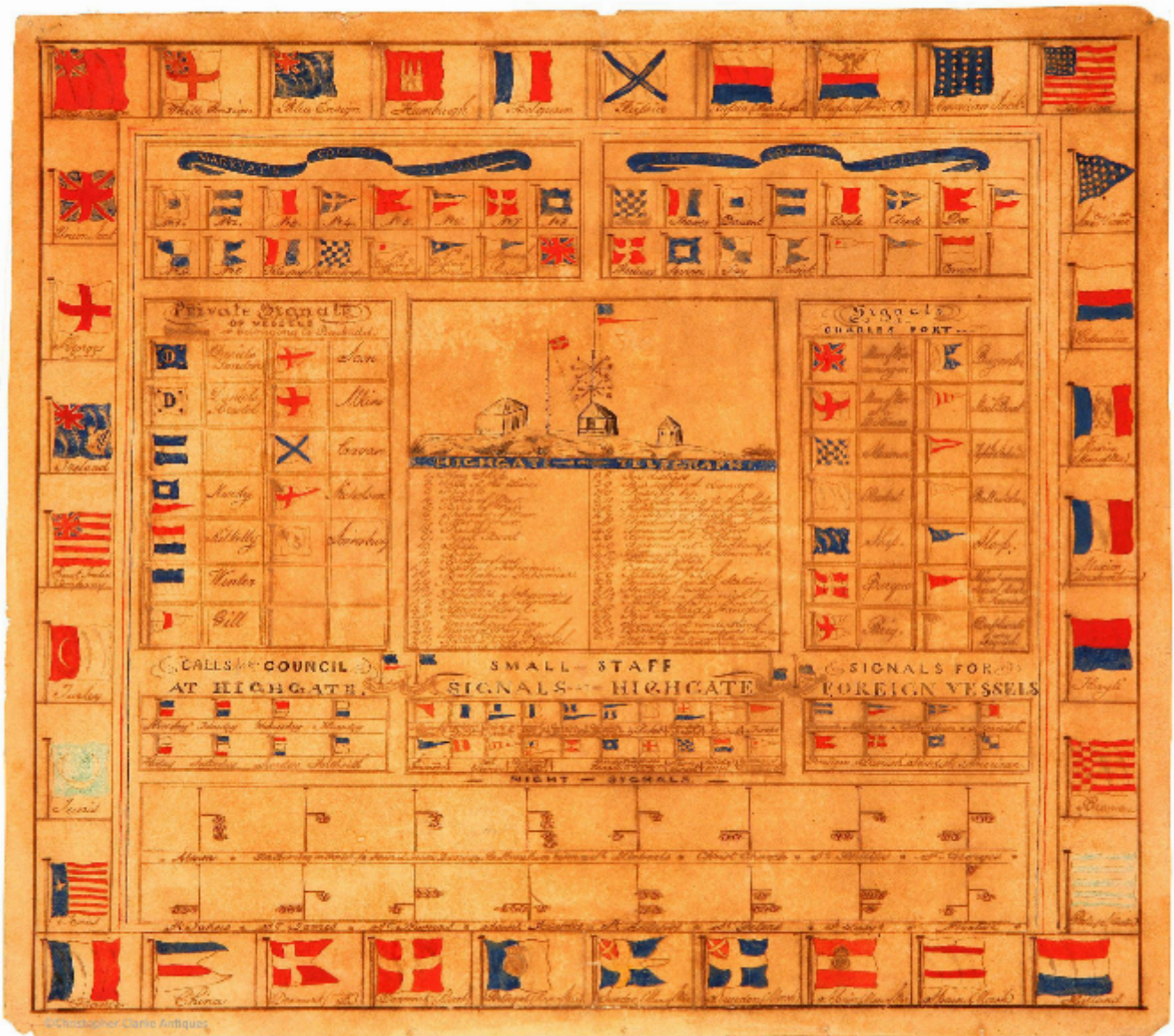


Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture
& Travel Items

Barbados Signals

Sold



REF: 7320

Height: 29 cm (11.4")

Width: 32 cm (12.6")

Description

This pair of hand drawn signal sheets refer to the Highgate Telegraph and Charles Fort in Barbados.

The smaller of the two sheets, entitled 'Signals at Charles Fort' gives the flags used to indicate the type of ship spotted at sea. These range from a 'Man of War at a Distance' to a 'Steamer in Sight'. The larger sheet contains far more information surrounding the central sketch of Highgate Telegraph. It has a border of national flags which were presumably those most frequently seen. These range from Central and South American flags such as Mexico, Hayti and Chile to the American Jack, European and British flags. Included within these are both merchant and naval flags. Other interesting flags illustrated in this border are for The East India Company, China and Texas. The interior of the sheet is divided up into different sections and give Marryat's Code of Signals, Private Signals of Vessels Docking (?) or belonging to Barbados, R.M.S Packet Company Signals (listing the ships), Signals at Charles Fort (in repetition of the smaller sheet), Calls for the Council at Highgate (with the days of the week and forthwith) and Small Staff Signals at Highgate. Added to these the sheet also gives the Night Signals (made by combinations of lanterns) for the eleven parishes of Barbados as well as for Alarm, etc. Not only do these signals give a fascinating insight into the traffic of both trade and military ships around Barbados but they also help to date the sheets fairly accurately.

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company was formed in 1841 with the mail contract for the West Indies. A number of their listed ships, such as the Thames, Clyde, Dee and Severn, were launched in 1841. However, their ship The Derwent, whose signal is shown, wasn't launched until 1850. The Texan flag is also an indicator of date as it enjoyed such a brief period of use. Texas gained their independence in 1839 but joined the Union in 1845. The flag was probably still used for a few years after this date by some but it is rare to find it on period artwork because of its short time span of use. The six signal stations built by the British in 1818 in Barbados were vital in conveying information across the island, whether it be about merchant or enemy ships approaching, fire in the cane fields, slave rebellions or to call for the Council to meet. Highgate was one of the most important stations as it was close to Bridgtown and covered most of the sea view to the south of the island. Fort Charles was the largest fort to guard the south and west coasts. The draughtsman responsible for these two sheets took a lot of care and effort in their production. He used watercolour, ink and gold paint on card. They were important documents when used and still are today. Circa 1850.

Fort Charles H 9 W 12 inches

Highgate Telegraph H 11 1/4 W 12 3/8 inches