

John Bachmann (dates), *Bird's Eye View of Florida and Part of Georgia and Alabama*, (New York, 1861).

## Interesting History

Artistry and purpose are evident in John Bachmann's hand-drawn map. The map provides a stunning view of Florida at the very start of the Civil War. Unlike battle maps that covered a discrete area or particular battle, Bachmann's bird's eye view gives a sense of the actual landscape of the war throughout the state. A subtle pro-Union bias shows the progress and military relevance of the Union blockade.

Bachmann's three-color chromolithograph maps were produced to meet an increasing demand for easy-to-read pictorial Civil War maps. His maps helped both the military and civilians. Military leaders used the maps to gauge the location and distance of Florida's natural landmarks, towns, forts and roads.

For civilians often unaccustomed to reading maps, the strength and aggression of the Union army was clear.

## Interesting Art

John Bachmann describes the creation of his map as "drawn from nature." The bird's eye view perspective offers a three-dimensional look at geography – what a bird would see flying thousands of feet in the sky toward land. Bird's eye view maps were drawn by hand using detailed information about the place in question, and were shown at an angle, as if the bird were approaching town, not looking down on it.

When Bachmann drew his map, aerial photography did not exist – his chromolithograph is the precursor to photos taken in flight. The first aerial photographs were produced from tethered hot air balloons, followed by kites and rockets in the mid-1880s. Wilbur Wright was the first to take an aerial photo from an airplane in 1908.