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Croquis de la Ciudad de Zitacuaro de Yndependencia

Stock#: 49465ba
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1864
Place: Mexico
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG
Size: 16.5 x 11.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Town Plan of the Bustling City of Zitácuaro de Independencia

This enjoyable town plan shows Zitácuaro de Independencia in its formative growth period in the late nineteenth century. The author describes it as a *croquis*, or a rough sketch, but the effect is anything but rough. Rather, it shows a prosperous settlement in the state of Michoacán.

Zitácuaro is surrounded to the north, east, and southwest by hills, as shown on this northeast-oriented plan, including the *cerro* Guadalupe to the south. These are part of the *Sierra Madre Occidental*, and it is in the mountains to the north of Zitácuaro that the monarch butterfly winters.

The town's neat streets show the buildings that already exist, as well as newly laid-out blocks awaiting development. A key under the title shows how prominent the town was, for it is the seat of a prefecture and customs house (a). The city council (b) and the jail (c) are clustered with the prefecture around the central square, an opening in the dense city center. The parish church is one block over (d), while the hospital is just north of that (e). The old parish church is on the outskirts of the town, showing that the town was built up to the east and away from what might have been the original plaza. It is still the sight of the town's burial ground, the *camposanto* (f). Finally, a mill, or *molino*, is through the hills to the west, marked by a checkered box along a river.

Zitácuaro housed so many important regional buildings not only because it was geographically central, but because it was historically significant. Zitácuaro is in the eastern part of Michoacán, bordering the state of México. In the colonial era, Zitácuaro sat on a royal road, en route from Mexico City to Morelia and Valladolid.



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It is the Independence era that made Zitácuaro famous, however. After the *Grito de Dolores* in September 1810, Zitácuaro rose up. The area fell under the leadership of Benedicto López, a creole farmer. Under López, the rebels defeated a regiment sent to take the royal road in early 1811. Later that year, Ignacio López Rayón declared the *Suprema Junta Nacional Americana*, or the Supreme American National Council. This is widely considered to be the first attempt by the rebels to set up a replacement government to Spanish control.

The royalists of course resented the *Junta* and attacked the city with a vengeance. They sacked the city on January 12, 1812 and burned much of it to the ground. The city was burned again on April 1, 1855, when troops with allegiance to Santa Anna took revenge on the city which had declared for a rival general, Juan Álvarez. This map was made just nine years after this tragedy, so many of the building would have been new or repaired.

The city was burned a third time a decade later, in 1865, when French imperial troops retaliated against the Republican victory in the Battle of Tacámbaro. This troubled past marked Zitácuaro as a place of national resilience. In 1868, President Benito Juárez decreed that the city would now bear the name *Heroica Zitácuaro*, or Heroic Zitácuaro. The cerro labeled here as Guadalupe became known as *Cerrito de la Independencia*.

For a related sketch, see {{ inventory_detail_link('49551ba') }}

Transcription of key:

1. *Prefectura y Aduana*
2. *Ayuntamiento*
3. *cárcel pública*
4. *Iglesia parroquial*
5. *Hospital*
6. *Camposanto ó antigua parroquia*

Detailed Condition:

Tape repairs along the edges, as shown.