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[Ilha da Santa Catarina to Bombinhas]

Stock#: 59598
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1750 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 11 x 15.5 inches
Price: \$ 2,800.00



Description:

Portuguese Manuscript Map of Santa Caterina Island in Brazil

Detailed Portuguese manuscript map of the island of Santa Caterina in southern Brazil.

This map dates to the mid-eighteenth century, when the island was being fortified as part of the continuing conflict between the Spanish and Portuguese empires over the status of the border between their colonial holdings in South America.

This map was drawn by an exacting and studious hand, as evidenced by the many corrections between a penciled outline and the inked outline placed over the pencil. Several corrections and rotations have been made, suggesting that it was a working document for a student or an officer. The map includes latitude and longitude bars to the left and bottom.



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The sketch shows the entire island of Santa Caterina, extending north nearly to Las Bombinhas. Hills have been added to suggest the undulating terrain. Numerous place names are included, such as Desterro, the main settlement on the island. Several towns are marked with a cross, suggesting important churches and religious sites.

The fortifications that dotted the channel between the island and the mainland are also included. These, including São José da Ponta Grossa (Fortaleza Ponta Grossa on this map), Santa Cruz Anhatomirim (Anhatomirin Fortaleza on this map), San Antonio (Fortaleza I. de Ratones on this map), and Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Barra do Sul (F. B. do Sul on this map), were built beginning in 1739. These forts, the watermark, and the handwriting suggest a date of creation of the mid-eighteenth century.

Ilha de Santa Catarina

The island came to prominence precisely during the period this map was drawn, but the Portuguese had already been on the island for three centuries by that time. Originally, the island was settled by Carijós Indians; archaeological evidence shows that they had been on the island 4,000 years ago.

The Portuguese arrived in roughly 1514 and called the island Ilha dos Patos. It was renamed in 1526 as Ilha de Santa Catarina. Originally, the main value of the island to the Portuguese was as a watering and supply station for ships en route to the Río de la Plata region to the south.

The first Portuguese settlement was officially founded in 1673, when a group of bandeirantes, or pioneers (literally, flag bearers), established an agricultural colony. Five years later, they had a chapel consecrated to Nossa Senhora do Desterro, the name of their small town. Desterro was designated a village by the Portuguese town in 1714, and a town in 1726.

From the early eighteenth century onward, the Ilha de Santa Catarina increased in strategic value. It was located midway between Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires; the former was a Portuguese holding, the latter Spanish, but both were large and important ports. In 1739, the island was named a capitania, an administrative unit within the Portuguese empire. Desterro was named as the capital and construction began on the imposing fortresses included on this map.

Also at mid-century, the population of the island boomed. 6,000 settlers arrived from the Azores and Madeira, kickstarting the agriculture, cotton, and linen industries. They also brought with them their customs and cuisine, both of which influenced the culture of the island immensely.

Just after this map was drawn, the fortifications were tested. As tensions mounted over control of what is today Uruguay, the Spanish launched a naval attack on Santa Catarina. The fleet landed in the north of the



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island, easily bypassing the forts and the Portuguese ships. The island was not in Spanish hands for long, however, as it was returned to the Portuguese in the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1777.

This map shows a strategically important island during the most formative years of its history. During the mid-eighteenth century, when the map was made, the island received its protective ring of forts. It also saw a significant boost in its population, a development formative of the island's economy and culture. This is a rare manuscript survival and would be an insightful addition to a collection of Brazilian maps.

Detailed Condition:

Pen & Ink. Watermark: Coat of arms with "LIBERTAS" in the bend on the escutcheon. "L G" below. Perhaps early 18th century.