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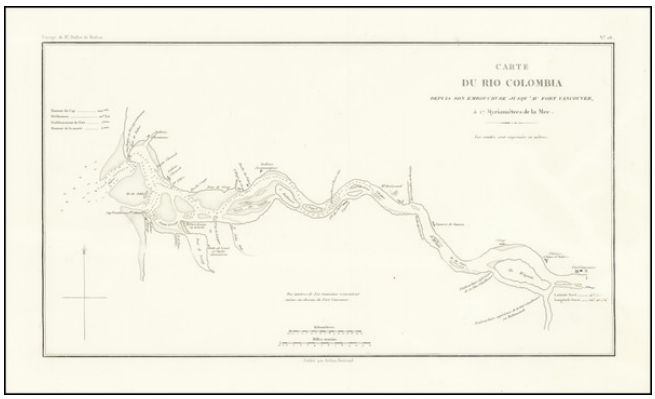
Carte Du Rio Colombia Depuis Son Embouchure Jusqu'au Fort Vancouver



Stock#: 71755
Map Maker: Duflot De Mofras

Date: 1844
Place: Paris
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 16 x 9 inches

Price: SOLD

Description:

Striking, Early Map of the Columbia River by the French Spy, Duflot de Mofras

Fine example of Duflot de Mofras' map of the Lower Columbia River, from Fort Vancouver to the Pacific Ocean— a seminal map for regional collectors.

A detailed look at the mouth of the Columbia River, from the infamous Columbia Bar to Fort Vancouver. This is the earliest printed map to show this section of the river in such detail.

From the travel account of the spy Duflot de Mofras, the map includes a number of early settlements, forts, Indian villages and lodges, and other points of interest like Fort Vancouver and Fort George (Astoria). Tributaries veer off to the north and south, with the largest shown here the "*Oullamet ou Multnomah,*" today's Willamette River.

The map includes locations where the local Native Americans would smoke salmon, an important foodstuff and cultural symbol for these peoples. Several tribes are identified, including the Clatsop and the "*Chenamus*" (likely the Chinook).

Several place names reference Gray. This is Robert Gray, the first white man to pass the Bar and spend time in the river. Sailing out of Boston, in 1792 he named the waterway after his ship, the *Colombia Rediviva*. This "*Village de Gray*" may represent the Indian Village with whom Gray traded during his second exploration of the river.

Another point of interest is the "*Hutte oú Lewis et Clarke hivernèrent*" (the hut where Lewis and Clark wintered in 1805) on the east side of Youngs Bay. The unnamed river emptying into the southeast end of Youngs Bay should be identified as Youngs River, but it is not. What de Mofras identified as "*R. de Young*"

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is actually the Lewis and Clark River and it should be on the west bank of this river that Fort Clatsop, Lewis and Clark's name for their encampment, was located. Thus, Duflot de Mofras located the "*hutte*" of Lewis and Clark several miles from its actual site.

Duflot de Mofras drew upon the 1837 Arrowsmith map of the British Dominions of North America for much of his information in the region and this map is no exception. He also gathered information while on a visit to Fort Vancouver, where he met Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition (U.S. Ex. Ex.).

The map appeared as part of the atlas volume of de Mofras' *Exploration Du territoire de l'Orégon, des Californies et de la mer Vermeille* (1844).

Early European and American interaction with the mouth of the Columbia River

The earliest mention of a river at roughly the latitude of the Columbia originates with the Spanish. Martin Aguilar was a Spanish captain who sailed with Sebastian Vizcaino on a reconnaissance expedition up the California coast in 1602-3. Aguilar, commanding the *Tres Reyes,* was blown off course, to the north. When the seas calmed, Aguilar reported that he had found the mouth of a large river. Later geographers conjectured that the river was the entrance to a River or Sea of the West.

In 1775, as part of a series of Spanish voyages which sought to shore up Spanish claims to the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, Bruno de Heceta commanded an expedition in the *Santiago*, in company with the *Sonora* and the *San Carlos*. The other two vessels continued north, but Heceta was forced to return to San Blas, Mexico due to illness among his crew. On his return trip south, Heceta noted the mouth of the Colombia River. It appears on Spanish maps as the *Entrada de Ezeta*.

While the Spanish had glimpsed the entrance to the river, they had never tried to navigate it. They also were not the only ships sailing in the north-eastern Pacific waters. Since the third voyage of James Cook (1776-1780), American and European commercial vessels had begun to ply the area's seas in search of sea otter, beaver, and other animal pelts.

One of these traders was Robert Gray, who also became the first American to circumnavigate the world (1787-90). In command of the *Columbia Rediviva*, Robert Gray made it over the Bar on May 11, 1792. Later that year, Gray shared his charts with George Vancouver, who was then on a Pacific voyage of exploration and diplomacy for the British. Vancouver sent his companion ship, the *Chatham*, to confirm Gray's find in October 1792.

Once over the Bar, *Chatham's* commander, Lt. William Broughton, found that he was not alone. Anchored

just past the Bar, in a bay, was Captain James Baker of the *Jenny*, a Bristol, UK-based ship also trading for furs along the coast. Broughton named the bay for Baker. Commercial vessels continued to visit the over the next decade, trading with local peoples for furs.

After an arduous overland journey, Americans Meriweather Lewis and William Clark arrived via the Snake River and the upper Columbia in November 1805. For shelter over the winter, they built Fort Clatsop near what is today Astoria, Oregon. The Corps of Discovery had a terrible winter, beset by fleas and constantly damp. However, they had made it overland to the Pacific Ocean.

In their wake came more fur traders, this time land-based, rather than maritime. The leader for Oregon-based business was John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, founded in 1810. The Company established Fort Astoria in 1811. The fort was then sold to the North West Company, a British-Canadian rival, who changed the name of the settlement to Fort George.

In 1821, the North West Company was forcibly merged with yet another rival, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), by the British government. This merger resulted in a major reorganization and created the Columbia Department of the HBC to cover the Pacific Northwest. The regional headquarters were at Fort George (Fort Astoria), which was moved in 1825 to recently-finished Fort Vancouver farther up the Columbia. In the 1840s, the fort remained the HBC's administrative headquarters and its primary depot in the region. Fort George remained a minor depot.

The travels of Eugene Duflot de Mofras in the American West

In 1839, Eugene Duflot de Mofras (1810-1884), was assigned to the French embassy in Mexico City and instructed to visit the northwestern provinces of Mexico, report on potential commerce, observe US, British, and Russian interests, and determine the feasibility of French trading posts in the region. In effect, he was acting as a spy, undertaking reconnaissance of the West and assessing the relative strengths and interests of the United States, Britain, Mexico, and Russia.

De Mofras visited Jalisco, Colima, Sinaloa, and Sonora in 1840, then sailed from Mazatlán to Monterey. He met with commandant Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo in Sonoma, continued to Fort Ross, and returned to Monterey in July. He then sailed up the Sacramento River with A.G. Rotchev, Governor of the Russian colony and manager of Fort Ross, to New Helvetia, where he met with John Sutter, with whom Rotchev was negotiating for the sale of the Russian fort.

He later visited San Jose, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco, before traveling to Fort Vancouver. On this trip, de Mofras met and talked with Charles Wilkes, the commander of the United States Exploring Expedition. He returned to San Francisco with HBC Director Sir George Simpson, factor John McLoughlin, and US

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agent Horatio Hale. On January 3, 1842, de Mofras sailed via Santa Bárbara to San Diego, before returning to Mexico.

Duflot de Mofras provided important information on the economic life, geopolitics, and geography of the American West. He gave excellent descriptions of the Russian posts at Fort Ross and Bodega just prior to their sale and of California in general prior to the Gold Rush. He specifically noted Sutter's willingness to serve France, and reported on the reputed plot of Isaac Graham to overthrow the Mexican government in California.

Detailed Condition:
Several repaired tears, expertly repaired on verso.