



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(Captain Smith's Mythical Sea) L'Amerique

Stock#: 91130
Map Maker: Jansson
Date: 1710
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 8 x 6 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

One of the Only Readily Obtainable Maps to Show the Mythical "Lacus Salsus Apalatcius." [The Myth that Led to the Founding of New York City.](#)

Detailed map of America, which appeared in Jansson's *Atlas Minor*, showing a number of important early myths, including an elongated St. Lawrence River, a land bridge between North America and Asia, Lake Prime in Guiana, and others.

Perhaps the most interesting feature shown on the map is the body of water shown west of "Rassawick" in Appalachia. Denoted by striations showing a lake, the sea is connected to the coast via two rivers, one connecting to the Atlantic near present-day New York, and one flowing out to sea in Virginia. This very uncommon representation is of immense importance to the founding of New York City and the Dutch colony of the New Netherlands, as discussed by our collaborator [Geography Geek](#) on Youtube.

One of the other interesting myths on the map is the massive land bridge running from North America to Asia with only two small breaks. This configuration was derived from the globe of Plancius and Van Den Keere of 1614, which was also engraved by Abraham Goos, engraver of the present map (employed by the Hondius firm). The curious coastline may be in response to the reported discoveries of Juan de Fuca along the NW Coast of America. This map is noteworthy as the first depiction of this elongated coastline on a printed map.

The Lacus Salsus Apalatcius and the Search for the Northwest Passage



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The keen observer of North America will notice a serpentine St. Lawrence River that reaches all the way to present-day Colorado (near the Seven Cities of Gold). However, this is not the only interesting artifact on the map referring to a northwest passage. Where the "R. Grande" flows westwards, one can find striations indicating an inland sea in present-day Appalachia. This is perhaps one of the most important, and under-displayed cartographic myths of North America.

In mid-1608, Smith was just about to undertake his comprehensive survey of Virginia and was hot on the trail of rumors of a great lake, which local Indians told him lay not far inland. Smith had not seen the lake himself but felt confident enough in his triangulation of the Indian reports that he could relay his findings to others in Europe. The fact that there was a large inland lake somewhere in North America was tantalizing because, according to the theories of the day, such a large body of water would probably have offshoot rivers that exited to the Pacific Ocean in the west.

Smith wrote to Hudson, an English explorer involved in the search for a Northwest Passage, at about this time to tell him of the lake's existence and the possibility that it might connect. If Hudson looked for the Northwest Passage near Smith, it would benefit Smith's nascent Virginia by sending more trade in that direction. Hudson made a manuscript map that showed where he thought the sea might be, which was obtained by Dutch cartographers, and this is how it ended up on the present printed map.

Hudson then made his way towards North America in 1609 after a difficult search for a northeast passage. For an unknown reason, he decided to take the northern of the two rivers that connected to the sea, and he found a "North River" at about the correct latitude for this second passage. He found a nice harbor with a large island, which he explored extensively, and then sailed up the river for several days until realizing that the river did not swing due-west as indicated by Smith. He returned to Amsterdam defeated, but the "North River" would be renamed in his honor as the Hudson. The Dutch then returned to the region to found the colony of "New Amsterdam" on the island Hudson discovered, which was later renamed "New York."

While some myths persisted for years on maps, the myth of the great inland North American seaway in present-day Appalachia rapidly faded from the maps shortly after it was put on, partly because of Hudson's failed expedition. The [Hondius globes](#) are some of the only other objects on which we have seen this myth, which is so critical to the history of New York City and surroundings.

Lake Parime and El Dorado

Lake Parime is a fictional lake located in the Amazon rainforest of northern Brazil that started to appear on maps in the late sixteenth century, although it was not disproved until the nineteenth century. The myth was primarily due to Raleigh's El Dorado Expedition, which was his first voyage to Guiana in which



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he went up to four hundred miles inland into the continent. During this expedition, Rayleigh was supposedly told of the lake from indigenous and Spanish sources and informed that the gold of the local peoples initially came from there.

While Rayleigh never found the supposed lake, in 1596, one year after his initial expedition, he sent Lawrence Kemys to Guyana to search for the lake. Kemys again gathered more information, but was unable to find the lake. However, the myth of Lake Pareme, and its "city of gold," continue to live on.

It has been more recently been conjectured that the explorers misunderstood reports of the flooded shores of the Orinoco River. During these flood months, gold from the high plateaus would have washed up on the banks of the river, providing an explanation for the myth.

States of The Map

There are two states of the map.

- 1628: Title of map is *Americae Descriptio*, scallop like cartouche. Signature A Goos Sculpsit in lower right corner.
- 1710: Title changed to *L'Amerique*. Cartouche is rectangular. Goos signature replaced with a scale of miles.

Rarity

The 1710 state is quite rare on the market.

Detailed Condition: