



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Amerique Septentrionale divisee en Ses Principales parties . . . 169 [California as an Island]

Stock#: 91231
Map Maker: Jaillot
Date: 1690 circa
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 25.25 x 18 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A Map of Myths Legends and Cartographic Curiosities

Fine dark impression of Jaillot's striking large format map of North America, based upon Sanson's landmark map of 1656.

Jaillot's map of North America is packed full of many of the great myths and cartographic errors of the 16th-18th Centuries, some of which would not be fully resolved until the middle of the 19th Century. The map depicts North America from the Arctic Circle in the north to the Gulf of Mexico in the south, and from the eastern Atlantic coast to the Pacific Ocean. California is shown as an island (see essay below). The northwestern coast of North America is not well-defined, with a large blank area extending from present-day Alaska down to the area which likely corresponds with the Straits of Juan de Fuca. This is because at the time, Europeans had not yet fully explored the western coast of North America, and so the details of the coastline were largely unknown. The narrow strait between the Island of California and "Terre de Ieso" is shown.

The Great Lakes are depicted on the map, but their western borders are undefined. This is because the western boundaries of the Great Lakes were not well known at the time. The first modern maps to define the western shores of the Great Lakes were issued by Nolin and Coronelli at about the same time as the publication of this map. The maps also include an ill-defined depiction of the Mississippi River (called the Chucagua), which would be corrected following the explorations of Marquette and Jolliet into the region, but would not begin to appear on most maps until after 1700.



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One interesting feature of the map is the depiction of the Rio Grande River, which flows into the Gulf of California. This is not accurate, as the Rio Grande actually flows into the Gulf of Mexico. However, this error was a common misconception among European cartographers at the time. There is a massive lake in Florida called Apalache, a mis-mapping of Lake George stemming from the work of De Bry and Le Moyne.

In the Arctic regions, an area at the south end of Button's Bay remains open, suggesting the existence of the still undiscovered northwest passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans.

Details are densely included in Mexico and Central America, as well as the East Coast of North America. Beyond the Appalachian Mountains and outside Nueva España, however, there is much blank space and conjecture. For example, *Quivira* appears in what is now Texas. This is a reference to the Seven Cities of Gold sought by the Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1541. In 1539, Coronado wandered over what today is Arizona and New Mexico, eventually heading to what is now Kansas to find the supposedly rich city of Quivira. Although he never found the cities or the gold, the name stuck on maps of southwest North America, wandering from east to west.

Detailed Condition: