



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Le Canada ou Nouvelle France &c. Ce qui set les plus advance vers le Septentrion est tier de dives Relations des Anglois, Danois &c. . . . 1656

Stock#: 95764
Map Maker: Sanson
Date: 1656
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 21.5 x 16 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Map to Name Lake Erie—A Landmark Map for the Cartography of the Great Lakes and Canada

Fine example of Sanson's seminal map of Canada and the Great Lakes, one of the most important maps of North America from the period of French exploration in the Americas. The map integrally shaped the cartography of the region for the next century, and was the first to label Lake Erie by that name.

The map depicts Labrador and the territories of New France, including Canada and the Great Lakes, in addition to the colonies of Virginia and Florida. It shows a detailed depiction of the entire drainage basin of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The map is bordered by a neatline identifying latitude and longitude, and the title cartouche is embroidered with wreaths that contain roses in the center.

Sanson created this map as an improvement upon a previous map of North America from 1650, titled "*Amerique Septentrionale*." While Sanson made few changes to his depiction of the northern waters, he employed greater detail in his depiction of Hudson Bay. Additionally, Sanson improved his delineation of the eastern coast in the new map. He introduced Long Island and corrected his depictions of New Amsterdam and the Delaware River. "Mont Real," or Montreal, and Quebec are also clearly identified in the map.

Sanson's map was the first to use the name Lake Erie for a Great Lake. While Europeans began mapping the Great Lakes region in the sixteenth century, early maps were largely based upon the accounts of



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Native Americans and used a variety of toponyms. Working on behalf of the French crown, Samuel de Champlain participated in the first great mapping effort of the Great Lakes in the early seventeenth century, gathering local accounts and drafting maps.

By 1643, Jean Boisseau, a contemporary of Sanson as well as an engraver and cartographer, denoted one of the Great Lakes as *Derie*. Here, Sanson identifies it as *L.Erie, ou du Cha*. The latter part of the toponym refers to what Sanson supposedly thought of as the “panther-like qualities” of the local Native American population (Burden). Sanson’s map remained predominant for the century after its publication, although his delineation of Lake Erie was superseded in 1703 with the publication of Guillaume de L’Isle’s *Carte du Canada*.

The map is significant as well because of its reflection of the contemporary French perception of territorial boundaries. New Netherlands is divided between *Nouveau Pays Bas* and *N.Hollande* and extends to Cape Cod in the east. While the map outlines the borders of Virginia, it does not include a depiction of Virginia’s settlements. This omission could reflect French colonial competition with Britain in North America. The French still claimed the territory south of Virginia, despite the lack of French presence in the area for the past century. Indeed, although the English possessed less land in North America than the French, the English boasted a much larger population. French colonists numbered only about 3,000 people, while English colonists numbered nearly 50,000 people.

French Colonial Expansion in the New World

New France refers to the territories of North America that France colonized between 1534 and 1763. After Jacques Cartier made France’s first land claim in North America in 1534, the company of New France was created in 1627, nearly three decades before the creation of Sanson’s map. French presence in North America continued until the mid-eighteenth century when, after the French and Indian War (Seven Year’s War), France ceded Canada and the territory east of the Mississippi River to England. The territory west of the Mississippi went to Spain according to the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

Early explorers such as Champlain, La Salle and Louis Jolliet expanded French territory beyond the lower St. Lawrence River to include the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley. Champlain was also an integral figure in the founding of the headquarters for French Canada, which is now Quebec City. While early explorers such as Champlain often created maps of the territories that they had seen first-hand, Sanson functioned as a compiler who relied upon the sketches made by explorers of newly discovered territories as he created or edited his maps.

Samuel de Champlain



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The maps produced by Samuel de Champlain (c. 1567-1635) provided the foundation for Sanson's 1656 map. Champlain's cartography marked the first accurate, detailed mappings of the Atlantic coast north of Cape Cod and the St. Lawrence River Valley. Champlain also provided a cursory mapping of the eastern Great Lakes, and he was the first to create maps that combined the results of English Arctic exploration with French explorations to the south. Champlain's most significant work was *Les Voyages du sieur de Champlain*, published in 1613, which contained sixteen large-scale maps of the places he had visited. Additionally, Champlain continually revised his map of the St. Lawrence River Valley, originally published in 1612, until 1632.

Champlain's cartographic activity resulted from demands by Henri VI in the late sixteenth century that the *coureurs de bois* operating in New France create a new settlement. Previous settlement in the region had been stifled by the extreme cold weather, fear of attack by Native Americans, and the belief that the area could not efficiently generate revenue. Thus, throughout his time in New France, Champlain acted not primarily as a cartographer but rather as an explorer in charge of resource evaluation and an administrator responsible for overseeing the fur trade and governance in New France.

Jesuit Exploration of New France and the Great Lakes

After Champlain's death, Jesuits conducted the most significant exploration in New France. Their activity had been encouraged by Champlain, who was a strong Catholic and sanctioned missionary activity in Native American communities. As they moved westward, Jesuits published their findings in annual accounts between 1632 and 1680 upon which Sanson heavily relied as he created his own maps. In fact, Sanson's earlier map from 1650, in addition to this map from 1656, were the first printed maps based upon the Jesuit exploration of the Great Lakes.

The outbreak of the Beaver Wars in 1648 with the Iroquois Confederacy temporarily hindered the activities of the Jesuits. During the war, the Iroquois moved through Huron territory, destroying villages and killing many Jesuits. After peace was reached in 1653, Jesuits and *coureurs de bois* who were in search of furs continued traveling west, thereby gaining the information upon which Sanson relied. After the 1660s, the mapping of the Great Lakes area accelerated as Jesuits were able to move farther west into the areas around Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. This increased activity was due not only to recent French military victories over local Native Americans but also to new policies promoting exploration by the French crown.

Publication and the Continuing Influence of Sanson's Map

The map was separately issued from 1656 to 1658 as Sanson completed his atlas, *Cartes générales de*



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toutes les parties du monde. It was engraved by Jean Somer, one of the main engravers with whom Sanson worked. Then, it became an integral component of the *Cartes générales*, which was published in many editions. However, the map remained unaltered throughout. The final edition of the atlas was published in 1676, although it remained in use even after this date.

As a map whose influence integrally shaped the cartography of Canada and the Great Lakes for over a century, this map would be a fine addition to any collection of maps related to colonial North America or French Canada. Sanson's map remains a testament to the extent of French exploration in North America and the scope of French colonial ambition in the New World.

Detailed Condition: