



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

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New Voyages to North-America. Containing an Account of the Several Nations of that vast Continent; their Customs, Commerce, and Way of Navigation upon the Lakes and Rivers... A Geographical Description of Canada, and a Natural History of the Country... To Which is Added, a Dictionary of the Algonkine Language, Which is Generally Spoken in North-America. Illustrated with Twenty Three Mapps and Cutts...

Stock#: 96062
Map Maker: Lahontan
Date: 1703
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 4.75 x 7.75 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Important Early Account of Lake Region With Maps and Plates

Imaginary Western Voyage and Cartography

With Folding Map of Fictitious "Long River"

First English edition of Lahontan's account of travels in the interior of North America. Originally issued in French, this English edition appeared in the same year as the first French edition. The present English edition is notable for the four maps engraved by H. Moll, as well as a suite of plates and three other maps. The second folding map in Vol. 1 was purportedly based on a map "drawn upon stag skins" supplied by Lahontan's so-called Gnacsitare informants. Its entirely false geography incorporated an imaginary western river, which according to Wheat was avidly copied by European cartographers, "some even attempting to show the big salty lake further to the west."

Lahontan's narrative, of considerable value when confined to his actual sojournings in the Lake region, was unfortunately disfigured by his inserting an account of a pretended trip west of the Mississippi, about as convincing as the legends of the sea-serpent - Howes.

The idea that a long river leading west all the way to the Pacific had been the stuff of legend for years. As Greenly points out, since Lahontan could not locate such a river, he simply decided to invent one.



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The work of La Hontan has not received the amount of credit to which it is really entitled, although written by a man of more than ordinary learning and intelligence... The Voyages are almost wholly devoted to a description of the manners, customs, domestic habits, and method of warfare of the Indians of Canada. All of the nineteen plates are illustrative of the same characteristics of the savages - Field.

In the preface, Lahontan declares how the present London edition's maps are an improvement over the earlier version with maps engraved in the Hague:

I have likewise corrected almost all the Cuts of the Holland Impression, for the Dutch gravers had murder'd 'em, by not understanding their Explications, which were all in French. They have grav'd Women for Men and men for women; naked persons for those that are cloath'd, and è Contra. As for the maps, the Reader will find 'em very exact...

The four maps are:

- Untitled map of the Great Lakes region.
- *A General Map of New France Com. call'd Canada*
- *A Map Drawn Upon Stag-skins by ye Gnacsitaires... [with, on same sheet:] A Map of Ye Long River*
 - *"A representation of a Tahuglauk dwelling house and giant canoe here appear outside and above the map, rather than being crowded into it as on the edition printed at the Hague" - Wheat.*
- Lake of Hurons

While a rare few examples of this English Lahontan include a frontispiece in vol. 2, most do not have such a plate. As Howes points out, the title page in volume 1 specifically calls for only 23 "Mapps and Cutts," and it stands to reason that the vol. 2 frontispiece, which would bring the total number of plates and maps to 24, was added later to only some copies of the book.

Rarity

Nice sets of the first edition of Lahontan with all of the maps are scarce in the market.



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Detailed Condition:

Octavo. Antique-style full paneled speckled calf, black morocco spine labels, raised bands. Without frontispiece in vol. 2, which was not issued on all copies (all 23 maps and plates called for on title page of vol. 1 are present). Two volumes. [24], 280 pages [like all known examples, vol. 1 ends with seemingly incomplete index, with superfluous catch-word "The" at foot of page]; [2], 302, [2, ad], [13] pages plus total of 4 maps (3 folding) and 19 plates. Very occasional light foxing. Overall an attractive, very clean set, with the maps and plates clean.