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Carta esférica que comprehende las costas del Seno Mexicano construida de orden del Rey en el Depósito Hidrográfico de Marina: Por disposición del Exmo. Señor Don Juan de Lángara, Secretario de Estado y del Despacho Universal de ella. Año de 1799.

Stock#: 41973
Map Maker: Direccion Hidrografica de Madrid
Date: 1799
Place: Madrid
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 37 x 24 inches
Price: \$ 12,500.00



Description:

Large-Scale Spanish Chart of the Gulf of Mexico—The First to Show Galveston Bay

The foundational Spanish sea chart of the Gulf Coast, Florida, Texas, etc. – one of the six most important maps of Texas, according to Streeter.

This is the first large-scale printed chart of the Texas coast based upon actual soundings and explorations. The chart is based primarily on the landmark survey of the coast commissioned by Bernardo de Gálvez and conducted by José de Evia. The most significant milestone of the survey was the discovery and naming of Galveston Bay in 1785. This is the first time it appeared on a printed chart. *Baie de Calvesion* (Galveston) is shown on the present chart exactly as laid down in the manuscript charts from Evia's survey. This is also the first map to name Matagorda Bay.

The coastline configuration of this chart established the prototype for the mapping of Texas and the U.S. Gulf Coast which dominated printed maps for the next two decades.

The chart remained one of the most significant charts of the region for several decades. Both Humboldt and Arrowsmith copied the information from this chart for their important maps.

The chart is framed tightly on the Gulf of Mexico. The Yucatan Peninsula is prominent, as is Florida. The western two thirds of Cuba is also included, as are portions of the Bahamas. The coastline is extremely detailed, with the exception of a small part of the northwestern peninsular coast of Florida.



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New Orleans is tucked into swamp land, with the winding Mississippi passing through. The Mexican coast is studded with mountains visible from the water. In northern Florida, a note specifies the Rio Santa Maria, which separates the United States and Spanish territory. Another note off the Yucatan explains that the continent can be found directly via that latitude, according to information from the frigate *Mercedes* in 1798.

The waters are surrounded with information vital to navigation. Coordinate measurements are indicated with symbols that denote them as taken on land, on land astronomically, or via water. The fourth category is longitude taken with a marine watch, or chronometer. These readings are accompanied by soundings and abbreviations that indicate the quality of the bottom: sand, white, fine, thick, black, and dull; gravel, shells, mud, slime, stone, grass, and green.

The seal of the *Depósito Hidrográfico* is at bottom left with the price of 18 reales just below. The map was engraved by Felipe Bauza and Fernando Selma, whose imprints appear below the neatline at bottom right and left.

The Evia Survey

This chart was made under the supervision of Señor Don Juan de Langara, a prominent naval officer. The son of an admiral, he entered the Spanish Navy in 1750 at the age of fourteen. He turned to surveying and exploratory missions from 1766-1771, with three voyages to the Philippines and the seas around China. On his 1771-3 voyage, he, along with José de Mazarredo used the lunar distance method for the first time aboard a Spanish ship. These voyages solidified his reputation as a skilled pilot and surveyor. After decades as a naval minister and distinguished commander, in 1796 he was named Secretary of State for the Navy and a Counsellor of State. A year later, he was appointed Inspector-General for the Navy. He retired in 1799.

Langara was serving in his first stint as a naval minister when this survey was undertaken. In 1777, Lieutenant John Osborn, with John Payne, companions of Admiralty Surveyor George Gauld, surveyed along the Texas coast just west of Galveston Bay. This alarmed Louisiana Governor Bernardo de Gálvez Galiardoqui, who sent a ship to intercept Gauld.

Late in 1777, Gálvez sent Luis Antonio Andry to chart the Louisiana and Texas coasts. However, at Matagorda Bay, Karankawas boarded the ship, killed its crew, and burned all of its charts (and the ship).

After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the Spanish no longer had to worry about the British on the Gulf Coast.



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Gálvez redoubled his efforts, sending José Antonio de Evia to survey as much of the region as possible. He covered the Florida Keys to Tampico from 1783 to 1786. These surveys resulted in this chart, among others.

States of the chart

The present example is Streeter 1029A, the first state. The map was later revised in November 1803 (Streeter 1029A) and 1805 (Streeter 1029B). A variant edition also exists with revised pricing below the *Depósito* stamp in the lower left corner (Streeter 1029C).

A Spanish hydrographical atlas with sixteen maps of the coast of the Americas (including the present map), sold at the Frank Streeter sale at Christie's in April 2007 for \$120,000. According to American Book Prices Current, no copy of the atlas had appeared at auction for thirty years prior to the Frank Streeter sale and only one example of this chart in the first state has appeared on the market.

Detailed Condition: