



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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(California) Relacion historica de la vida y apostolicas tareas del venerable padre Fray Junipero Serra, y de las Misiones que fundo en la California Septentrional, y nuevos establecimientos de Monterey [with map:] Californias: Antigua y Nueva.

Stock#: 92572
Map Maker: Palóu
Date: 1787
Place: Mexico
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 6.25 x 8.5 inches
Price: \$ 14,500.00



Description:

Essential Foundational Work on Alta California

Beautiful Copy in Contemporary Vellum

With the Important Map

An immensely important book for the history of California - the first edition of Father Palóu's Life of Junípero Serra. Universally recognized as essential for any serious collection of California books. Henry Wagner called this book, "Perhaps the best known of all works relating to California." The book includes a fine engraved map of California as well as a full-length engraved portrait of Fr. Serra, evocative of his apostolic labors, and described by Robert Cowan as "a symbological portrait."

Miguel José Serra, born in 1713 in Petra, Mallorca, entered the Franciscan order at an early age, making his profession of faith on September 15, 1731, at which time he adopted the name Junípero. He devoted his life to missionary work, progressed through the Franciscan Order, eventually being charged with the task of creating a viable mission system in California. He arrived at San Diego in 1769, establishing a mission there - the first in Alta California - on July 16. Before his death in 1786 Serra founded a total of nine missions: San Diego, San Carlos, San Antonio, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Clara, and San Buenaventura. The book prints many of the letters from Serra to his friend Father Palóu. These letters are of great historical value for containing an account of the founding of the Franciscan missions, as well as details on the various Native American tribes, and a general description of the country.



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At the time California was populated by distinct groups of Indians, with no common culture, language or organization. To make matters worse, resources, both human and financial, were scarce, infrastructure almost non-existent, and lines of supply and communication long and very unreliable. Serra met the challenge through divine motivation, administrative ability, political savvy, and dogged determination. He was a man internally driven, who would lead others through superior skills, with unwavering encouragement, and by personal example. It is likely that, without Serra's forceful leadership, the California mission system would never have succeeded... Serra had an astounding influence on the early development of California. His mission system created a productive infrastructure, a common set of cultural values and beliefs, a common language, and a common form of government and laws - Dawson.

Issue points

The present example has the following sentence at the end of the title, before the imprint, as found in some copies: "A Expensas De Don Miguel Gonzalez Calderon Sindico De Dicho Apostolico Colegio," as opposed to "A expensas de Varios Bienhechores." Another point is the catchword at the end of the *Indice*: here present as "PRO-", while another issue has it as "CAR-" No priority has been attributed between the two versions. The map has its own issue point, described below.

The Map of California: Antigua y Nueva

The map, which presents both Alta and Baja California, was possibly printed before the book. It was engraved by Diego Froncoso in Mexico in 1787. There are two known states of the map: with and without the legend "Mar Pacifico." Most bibliographers consider the version showing the Pacific Ocean as blank to be the first state. The present example has the large engraved words present. The map shows Alta California as far north as San Francisco, as well as all of Baja California, and the Gulf of California. The Franciscan missions of Alta California are noted. The Colorado River and the Gila River are also shown.

Wagner believed the map was published before the book:

I have some reason to think that this map was published before the book and that the first edition was issued without the words "Mar Pacifico," as Mr. Robert E. Cowan has such a copy and only one other appears to be known.

Rarity



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Although there is a legend that a trunk full of pristine copies of this book was discovered over a century ago in a Querétaro monastery, it has been increasingly hard to find a complete and perfect copy of this esteemed California book, with the map and portrait plate intact. Wright Howes accorded the work a "c" rarity rating in the mid-20th century, suggesting a very rare work.

Detailed Condition:

Small quarto. Contemporary vellum. Raw hide leather ties intact. Inner front hinge starting to separate at gutter (upper 2 inches). Slight abrasion to front pastedown, suggesting removal of a private bookplate. Very minor old outline dampstain to fore-edge of back free endpaper, with similar to the map in right-hand blank margin. Overall a crisp near copy in original state. [28], 344 pages. Engraved portrait of Serra. Folding engraved map, measures: 14 x 10.5 inches. Complete.