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**A Map of New Spain from 16°. to 38°. North Latitude reduced from the Large Map  
drawn from astronomical observations at Mexico in the year 1804**

**Stock#:** 31647  
**Map Maker:** Humboldt  
**Date:** 1810  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 16.5 x 11.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

Nice example of the English edition of Alexander von Humboldt's monumental map of New Spain.

Humboldt's map of New Spain is the first modern geographical treatment of the region, which includes all of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and parts of Wyoming, Kansas, Utah and California. The map is based upon information compiled by Humboldt while in Mexico at the end of the eighteenth century, much of which appears for the first time on a printed map. It has been called "a magnificent cartographic achievement . . ." for its advancement of the mapping of the California, the Rocky Mountains, Texas and the West.

Humboldt's map of Mexico and the American Southwest is a landmark map of the region, being the most



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important and detailed mapping of the upper parts of New Spain and for its introduction of hachuring as a topographical style for depicting topography. Thomas Streeter described the map as one of the six most important maps in the history of Texas. The map is also one of the most important maps in the cartographic history of California, the Rocky Mountains and the Southwestern US. The mythical second Salt Lake in Utah appears, as does do annotations concerning the courses and sources. This map appeared in Humboldt's *Atlas Géographique et Physique du Royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne* . . . to accompany the first German and first French editions of Humboldt's *Essai Politique sur le Royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne*... Howes referred to the map as being of "superlative California importance."

At the end of his grand tour of Latin America, Humboldt travelled to Mexico in 1803, where he resided until 1804 in Mexico City as a guest of the Spanish Crown. His reputation as one of the greatest scientists and explorers of his generation gained him license from the Spanish Viceroy of Mexico to access the rarely seen explorer's accounts and earlier mappings available in the Mexico City archives. With this indigenous information and information gleaned from American and European sources, Humboldt compiled this landmark mapping of the American southwest - the most sophisticated and advanced treatment of the region yet seen.

Among the significant advancements apparent on this map are Humboldt's connection of Fiedler and Mackenzie's "Stoney Mountains", today the Rocky Mountains, with the Cordilleras of Mexico. Humboldt also correctly mapped the course of the Rio Gila as it passes north and west of "Tubscon" (Tuscon). To the east of the Rocky Mountains, a burst of remarkable insight enables Humboldt to correctly unite the Nepeste and Arkansas Rivers.

One of the fascinating anomalies in the map is Humboldt's connection of the Great Plains with "Cibola", one of the seven legendary cities of gold, but in actuality a former Hopi settlement in modern day New Mexico. Humboldt was a great fan in indigenous cartographic knowledge, which he incorporates here with regard to the Aztec migration "myth" of Lake Teguayo - which he associates with Lake Timpanagos or Great Salt Lake.

Humboldt draws on a number of sources including the Meria-Escalante expedition (west of the Rocky Mountains), accounts of the voyages of the ships *Sutil*, and *Mexicana* (Pacific Coast), the memoir of M. Espinosa (Pacific Coast), the Lafond map (Louisiana), and the Arrowsmith map (United States). Humboldt's extraordinary cartographic work would remain the authorities document on this region until advanced by the expeditions of Fremont, himself an acknowledged Humboldtian, in the late 1840s.

For his efforts Humboldt was awarded with honorary Mexican citizenship. Following his time in Mexico City, Humboldt sailed into Philadelphia in May 1804, where he befriended Jefferson, Madison, Peale, and



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other important Americans. Believing in the free and open exchange of scientific data, Humboldt freely shared manuscript copies of his mappings of the American southwest, so much so that he he later became embroiled in controversy with Zebulon Pike, whom Humboldt accused of copying his material, and with Aaron Arrowsmith, who liberally borrowed from this map.

**Detailed Condition:**

Minor foxing