



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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**Novus Orbis Sive America Meridionalis et Septentrionalis . . . (California as an Island--
Rare Probst edition)**

Stock#: 39647
Map Maker: Seutter / Probst
Date: 1784
Place: Augsburg
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 23 x 19.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Striking, Richly Engraved Map of the Americas—One of the Last to Feature California as an Island

Fine, detailed map of the Americas, with California as an island and two richly illustrated cartouches. This is one of the last maps to be printed with an insular California.

Based on an earlier map (ca. 1730) by Matthaus Seutter, this map depicts the Americas and parts of France, Spain, Portugal, and western Africa at its eastern border. In North America, California is depicted as an island, with the supposed Strait of Anian (*Fretum Anian*) separating it from the fabled *Terra Esonis* to the north, whose coastline stretches westward from North America. To the east of California, the Anian River, depicted in place of the Columbia River, hints at the longed-for existence of a Northwest Passage, together with the Strait of Anian. To the north of this river is the *Pays de Moozemleck*, another conjectural element also seen in maps of America by Seutter's contemporary, Johann Baptist Homann.

In contrast to the many place names, indigenous group names, and topographical features present in the rest of the map, the vast interior of northwestern North America is left empty, its northern and western borders undefined. Farther to the east, the Mississippi River is placed considerably west of its actual course, and the Great Lakes are oddly shaped, with large bays strangely added to the west coasts of Lakes Superior and Michigan.



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In South America, which is given a wider shape than in reality, the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan (1519-22) is highlighted with *Terra Magellanica*. The island of Tierra del Fuego, at the tip of the continent, is also given the name *Magellanicae*. An abbreviated dotted line in the Pacific Ocean stretching to the northwest off the southern tip of *Terra Magellanica* traces part of Magellan's voyage.

Other dotted lines originating in this area trace parts of other important explorers' voyages. These include the 1615-1617 voyage of navigators Jacob Le Maire and Willem Corneliszoon Schouten to discover a new route to the Moluccas, an important center of the spice trade, and the exploration of the western coast of the Americas by Sir Francis Drake, part of Drake's 1577-1580 circumnavigation of the world.

Off the coast of Peru, a line represents Alvaro de Mendaña de Neira and Hernán Gallego's 1567-69 voyage resulting in their discovery of the Solomon Islands, depicted too far to the east in the present map. Another dotted line coming off the Peruvian coast traces Mendaña's next voyage (1595-97), with Pedro Fernandes de Queirós as pilot. This voyage aimed to colonize the previously-discovered Solomon Islands; however, the Solomons could not be re-located and Mendaña died of fever during the voyage.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the present map is its two large, finely engraved cartouches. The cartouche in the upper left has text describing European exploration of America by Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci and the conversion of indigenous peoples to Christianity. Above this text, the Virgin Mary sits on a pedestal holding a large cross, a chalice, and open book. To her left, European men converse at a dining table. To her right, indigenous people in loincloths and feathered headdresses kneel before an altar laid with a crucifix, chalice, and urn.

The cartouche in the lower left depicts an indigenous person hanging a tapestry with the map's title on a rocky outcropping, over which exotic birds perch and fly. Indigenous people are seen fishing, cutting sugar cane, farming, and paying tribute to a chief. The richly illustrated scenes in these cartouches complement the detailed geographical content and reveal the European visual imaginary of America.

The present map first appeared in Seutter's *Atlas Novus sive Tabulae Geographicae*, first published in Augsburg in 1720. It is similar to earlier maps by Johann Baptist Homann and Adam Friedrich Zürner. This late example, from more than two decades after Seutter's death, was published by Johann Michael Probst, the grandson of Seutter's former employer Jeremias Wolff.

In 1762, Probst purchased many Seutter maps and copperplates for his own publishing house. His involvement in the publication of the map in its present state is indicated by a note in the lower right corner. Another note below this also references Seutter's honorary title as imperial geographer and the privilege he received for publishing maps in parts of southern Germany.



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Detailed Condition: