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The Strait of Magalhaens commonly called Magellan Surveyed by His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle By Captain Philip King R.N. F.R.S. &c. and Captain Fitz Roy R.N. 1826-30, 1832-34.

Stock#: 50058
Map Maker: British Admiralty
Date: 1834 circa
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 36.5 x 24 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Scientific Mapping of the Straits of Magellan -- Charles Darwin's First Overseas Voyage of Discovery

Extremely rare example of one of the most historically important sea charts of the 19th Century, being the official chart showing the first detailed and scientific survey of the Strait of Magellan, undertaken in two separate expeditions by Captain Philip Parker King and Captain Robert FitzRoy between 1826 and 1834. An important artifact of 'Darwiniana', the chart is also the only original cartographic record of what was Charles Darwin's first overseas voyage.

The chart records the first and the most important efforts to scientifically map the Straits of Magellan, during which survey (on the first voyage), the Beagle Channel was discovered by Captain Robert FitzRoy.

Of further note, the present edition is dated May 1st, 1832, despite the fact that it shows the results of 2 expeditions, the latter of which ended in 1834. As discussed below, this may be an unrecorded precursor to the 1837 edition.

The First Surveying Voyage to Tierra del Fuego

Finding a safe passage around the southern tip of South America was one of the great imperatives of global shipping. Rounding Cape Horn itself was always fearsome, and while the Strait of Magellan held out the promise of a more sheltered route, its labyrinthine passages were not sufficiently understood. While the Strait itself had been surveyed in a cursory fashion by Captain James Cook, a far more exacting



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survey, employing the latest equipment was in order.

In 1826, the Royal Navy dispatched the *HMS Adventure* and its smaller companion, the *HMS Beagle*, to survey the coasts of southern Patagonia, and the Strait of Magellan in particular. The *Beagle* was commanded initially by Captain Pringle Stokes, while the overall command of the voyage fell under Captain Phillip Parker King, aboard the *Adventure*. The relatively nimble *Beagle* was charged with the far more treacherous aspects of the survey, essentially circumnavigating Tierra del Fuego. Highly advanced trigonometric surveys of the shorelines were conducted with theodolites, while copious soundings of the seafloor were taken, and navigational hazards noted. During this survey the Beagle Channel, the interoceanic passage which ran between Tierra del Fuego and Navarino Island, was discovered.

The voyage was not without mishap, however, as Captain Stokes committed suicide, only to be replaced by the energetic Lieutenant Robert FitzRoy. While only 23 years old, he proved to be a highly competent surveyor and leader. Towards the end of the voyage, a group of native Fuegians stole one of the *Beagle*'s tenders. In response, FitzRoy took some Fuegians hostage, and while the situation was eventually diffused, it made for an unusually melodramatic surveying expedition.

Upon the *Beagle* and *Adventure*'s return to England a chart was apparently published depicting the survey's findings. However, the only record we can find of the chart is in *The Nautical Magazine*, June 1832 (London, Fischer & Son, Jackson), where the following note appears at page 203, describing important charts published in 1832:

***The Strait Of Magalhaens, commonly called Magellan. Surveyed in His Majesty's
Ships Adventure and Beagle. By Captain Phillip Parker King, R.N. F.R. S. 1826-1830.
Price 6s. Size, Double Elephant. Admiralty.***

This is the first chart published of the South American coast, surveyed by Captain King. It contains the whole navigation of this extraordinary, and, we may add, dangerous Strait. Hitherto no chart has appeared, on which a ship could depend, nor a set of directions to consult; and thus have the dangers of this Strait remained as formidable as they were to the first navigators. Numerous channels and inlets have been discovered by Captain King, that are now distinctly defined, among which are the Otway and Skyring waters, places abounding in seals and sea elephants. To vessels employed in hunting these animals, the present chart will be most valuable, as well as the directions by which it is accompanied, and geographers will at length obtain a correct delineation of the southern parts of the South American continent, as well as the heights of the principal mountains. The southern limits of this chart extend to Lat. 55° 9' S.



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The Second Surveying Voyage to Tierra del Fuego, including Charles Darwin

While the Admiralty was highly impressed with the surveys thus far, the project was far from complete. At FitzRoy's behest, the *Beagle* was dramatically retrofitted and kitted out with the most advanced scientific and navigational equipment. It also occurred to FitzRoy that while he and his men performed hydrographic surveys, someone should conduct a scientific appraisal of the land itself. Through an unlikely chain of inquiries they selected Charles Darwin, a brilliant but obscure amateur naturalist, who was otherwise on track to becoming a rural clergyman.

The second surveying voyage of the *Beagle* departed England in December 1831. Over a two-year period FitzRoy and his crew painstakingly completed their surveying mandate, while Darwin combed the barren landscape "geologizing". Prefiguring the ingenious insights that would later make him famous, Darwin made highly important observations with respect to the geology, biology and anthropology of this mysterious land and its inhabitants. Once the surveying mandate was complete, the *Beagle* headed across the vast expanse of the Pacific, giving Darwin his first exposure to the unique flora and fauna of New Zealand and Australia. The expedition returned to England in October 1836.

The present map is nothing short of a masterpiece of scientific surveying, and one of the most technically impressive mapping achievements of the first half of the nineteenth-century. While the present chart is an extreme rarity, its influence was profound, as it became the basis for all subsequent charts of what was one of the world's most important shipping lanes.

Darwin published his intellectually brilliant and highly entertaining account of the voyage as his 'Journal & Remarks', the third volume of FitzRoy & Darwin's *Narrative of the surveying voyages of his Majesty's ships Adventure and Beagles between the years 1826 and 1836* (1839), which was subsequently popularized as the *Voyage of the Beagle*. His account became a best seller, and established his celebrity as a naturalist.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) was history's greatest and most celebrated naturalist. He is most famous for his work *On the Origins of Species* (1859), in which he articulated the theory of evolution. While this revolutionary concept was highly controversial at the time, it has since acquired definitive scientific authority. While his participation on the Second Tierra del Fuego expedition of the *Beagle* set him on a course to fame, he developed his groundbreaking theories while studying the exotic wildlife on the Galapagos Islands. His engaging style of prose and his extraordinary subject matter was instrumental in popularizing the genre of scientific writing for a broader audience.



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Robert FitzRoy (1805-1865) was a navigator, meteorologist and Colonial Governor of New Zealand. He began his command of the *Beagle* in 1828, at the commencement of its surveying work in Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and the Straits of Magellan. The first survey concluded in 1830, with a second survey commenced in December 1831 and completed in 1836. The voyage's interest was increased by the presence of Charles Darwin as naturalist, with whom FitzRoy collaborated in the *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of HM Ships Adventure and Beagle*, FitzRoy being responsible for the first two volumes and Darwin for the third. In 1837, FitzRoy was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for his achievements.

Philip Parker King (1791-1856) was a noted early explorer of the Coasts of Australia and Patagonia. Between 1817 and 1822, King surveyed parts of the Australian coast not already examined by Matthew Flinders. In this work, he was at various times joined by John Septimus Roe and John Oxley. In his next major assignment, he was given command of the survey vessel *HMS Adventure*, and in company with *HMS Beagle*, spent five years surveying the complex coasts around the Strait of Magellan. The result was presented at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in 1831, which brought King great acclaim for his accomplishments in the scientific effort to chart the Strait.

Rarity--The Early Editions of The Chart

As noted above, an 1832 edition of this chart, pre-dating the discoveries made in 1832-1834, was advertised for sale in June 1832. An 1837 edition of the chart, heavily updated from the 1832 edition, was published in the early months of 1837. However, this chart, which is dated May 2nd 1832, would seem to be an unrecorded intermediate state of the map, coming after the return of the second voyage in 1834, but before the 1837 edition: `{{ inventory_detail_link('34568') }}`

The most obvious difference between this chart and the later 1837 chart is the addition on the 1837 chart of several lines of text to the bottom of the title, which is not present on this May 2nd 1832 imprint.

The chart is exceptionally rare. No copies have been offered in reported auctions or dealer catalogs in more than 30 years, with the exception of the example noted above, which we offered for sale in 2015.

OCLC locates an 1865 edition of the chart and a reduced size copy of the chart which was bound into volume 1 of Robert FitzRoy and Charles Darwin's *Narrative of the surveying voyages of his Majesty's ships Adventure and Beagles between the years 1826 and 1836, Describing Their Examination of the Southern Shores of South America and the Beagle's Circumnavigation of the Globe*, published in London in 1839. *Mapoteca Columbiana* also notes an edition which it dates 1832 (1840?).



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Detailed Condition:

Some soiling, primarily in the margins. Margins reinforced and slightly extended. A few minor marginal tears.