



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

**Carte Generale de la Floride et du Delta du Mississippi, presentant le trace du Canal projete de l'Ocean Atlantique ou Golfe du Mexique a travers l'Isthme des Florides, ainsi que l'ensemble des ameliorations projetees ou en cours d'execution ont ete recommandees . . .**

**Stock#:** 55119  
**Map Maker:** Poussin  
**Date:** 1834  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 18 x 25.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

***An Early Examination of the Prospects of a Canal Across Florida, Prepared In France By One of the Original U.S. Surveyors***

Rare early map of Florida and the Gulf Coast, extending to beyond the mouth of the Mississippi, published in Paris by Guillaume (William) Tell Poussin, a French engineer who had been one of the primary officials responsible for the survey of the prospects of the Canal undertaken between 1826 and 1831.

The present map is Poussin's adaptation (in French) of the W.H. Swith map of Florida, entitled *Map of the Territory of Florida, from its Northern Boundary to Lat: 27°30' N. Connected with the Delta of the Mississippi*, published in 1829: <https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/archivedetail/30407> . Poussin was one of the members of the Board of Internal Improvements who signed off on the bottom of the original W.H. Swith map.

The idea of a Canal across Florida was first proposed by Philip II of Spain in 1567. It was repeatedly considered over the years but found to be economically unviable. The present map was prepared in connection with the consideration of the canal between 1824 and 1831 by the United States Congress.

The map provides a meticulous treatment of the topographical features in Florida, including rivers, bays and other features, along with Indian Boundaries, the Seminole Agency and early Indian villages and



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paths. Similar details are shown throughout.

Includes inset maps of St. Augustine and the entrances to the St. Mary and St. John rivers.

The map appeared in the *Travaux d'ameliorations interieures projetes ou executes par le Gouvernement General des Etats-Unis d'Amerique, de 1824 a 1831; par Guillaume-Tell Poussin*. Poussin's work was a general synthesis of scientific projects in the United States, including the Florida Canal project, undertaken after he returned from America in 1832.

### **The Florida Canal Project**

The Florida Canal project, covering a distance of about two hundred and fifteen miles from Fernandina to Saint Georges Sound, has been discussed since before the American Revolution. The project was proposed initially in 1763, when the British took over Florida, and again in 1821, when the United States retook possession. Exploratory missions were conducted by the British who also believed that the waterway existed.

American proposals, beginning with Jefferson's administration, favored construction of a canal. Jefferson was concerned with Florida's proximity to Cuba and Cuban influence on navigation in the Gulf of Mexico. A canal across Florida would destroy Cuba's power over trade around the tip of the peninsula. Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, was interested in waterway development, as was George Washington earlier.

In 1830 the *Southern Review* reported: "Mr. Gallatin suggested the inquiry into the feasibility of uniting the St. Mary's and the Mississippi, and on the temporary occupation of Florida, by the American troops, in 1818, Mr. Calhoun, the Secretary of War, seized the occasion of directing some partial examinations near the head waters of the St. Mary's and the Suwannee, with the view to inland communication between the Atlantic and the Gulf."

It was not until 1824 that the project was seriously studied in earnest. On December 24, 1824, the Florida Legislature approved a proposal to seek assistance from Congress to pursue the idea. Richard Keith Call, Florida territorial delegate to Congress, submitted a plan to cut a water across Florida to the House Committee on Roads and Canals in February 1825. After the formation of a 3 man committee, the state submitted a formal proposal in December 1825.



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In January 1826, Congress appropriated \$20,000 for a canal survey. General Simon Bernard, who previously served as Napoleon's chief Engineer, to oversee the survey. The survey examined 2 routes, one from the St. Johns River to Vassasousa Bay and the other from the St. Mary's River to the Appalachiola River. Major Paul H. Perrault joined General Bernard in conducting the surveys. The report concluded that a ship canal was not possible, but that a six foot deep steamship canal was possible. The report final report was submitted by to the President John Quincy Adams, was signed by General Bernard and Captain William Tell Poussin and included a general map of the area and several possible canal routes.

Congress appropriated an additional \$10,400 to complete the canal survey under the direction of Major Poussin. Poussin remained in charge until the Summer of 1831, when he returned to France. The final survey was submitted without a cost estimate and thereafter, the project was abandoned, until it was next considered in 1852.

**Rarity**

The map is very rare on the market. This is the first example we have ever seen and we can find no examples of the book appearing on the market with the map in a dealer catalog or auction record.

**Detailed Condition:**