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Partie Meridionale De La Riviere De Missisipi, et ses Environs dan L'Amerique Septentrionale . . . 1718

Stock#: 55846
Map Maker: de Fer
Date: 1718
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 25 x 18 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

De Fer's Landmark Map of the Mississippi River Valley and the French Regions in interior of North America.

Fine example of De Fer's rare map of the southern part of the French regions in North America, prepared by De Fer for the French Company of the West (John Law & the Mississippi Bubble), one of the most important maps of the region and one of the earliest maps to incorporate the reports of Jesuit missionaries and explorers active in the early 18th Century.

De Fer's map is perhaps the most important and influential regional map of the period, providing significantly updated cartographic information in a number of regions. The map is the first printed map to provide the updated treatment of the Mississippi River, which was later made famous by De L'Isle in his *Carte de la Louisiane et du cours du Missisipi*. . . De Fer's map pre-dates De L'Isle's map, making it the first to include the updated information along the Gulf Coast transmitted to France by Francoise Le Maire and the first to incorporate the revised and improved mapping of the region to the west of the Great Lakes derived from French missionary sources.

While its cartographic details rival the contemporary maps of Guillaume De L'Isle for primacy, De Fer's map was almost certainly the more commercially influential work at the time it was published, having been commissioned by John Law's Compagnie d'Occident (Company of the West), to provide a graphic depiction of the vast and rich commercial potential of French Louisiana, for which commercial rights had just been ceded to Law's Company of the West.



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De Fer first began work on his map in 1715, when he issued his La Riviere de Missisipi, et ses Environs, dans l'Amerique Septentrionale ..., based upon a 1701 manuscript map by Guillaume De L'Isle.

<http://rla.unc.edu/Mapfiles/misc/Fer%201715.BRA.Elkhadem.jpg>. The 1715 map is essentially the proof state for the lower half of the 2-sheet map, lacking the internal embellishments intended to demonstrate the wealth of the region.

With the founding of John Law's Company of the West and Law's being granted by the King of France the rights to commercial control of Louisiana in August 1717, Law commenced an advertising and promotional campaign to attract investors for his new company. A visual tool was undoubtedly needed to help potential investors understand the scope and commercial potential of France's holdings in Louisiana. To fill the need, De Fer was commissioned to create such a map.

While the 1715 map had been quite plain in its depiction of the southern regions, the 1718 edition is expanded to include the Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes, and lavishly embellished with vignettes highlighting the rich hunting grounds, fur trade and ample watercourses which could be found in the region, undoubtedly to persuade potential investors of the commercial potential of the region and Law's enterprise.

Utilizing the most recent information transmitted back to France by Jesuit Missionary Francoise Le Maire and others, De Fer updated his 1715 map and added a second sheet to the north, bearing the title "Le Cours du Missisipi, ou de St. Louis Fameuse Riviere de l'Amerique Septentrionale. . . " { { inventory_detail_link('42285') } } Later, De Fer added two additional half sheets to the east, completing a 4 sheet wall map which depicted the rest of the Colonies. De Fer's map was immediately copied by Gerard Van Keulen in 4 sheets and was also reproduced in single sheet versions by Chatelain and Ottens.

De Fer's map was of great contemporary importance. Henry Popple would later utilize De Fer's map to delineate Spanish settlements on the Rio Grande and territory west of the Mississippi Valley. De Fer's Great Lakes model was utilized well into the 18th Century, most notably serving as the model for the first edition of John Mitchell's monumental map of North America. Perhaps of greatest historical significance, it was undoubtedly a very useful selling tool for John Law, helping him raise significant sums of money for his venture, which would later end with a massive commercial failure known as the Mississippi Bubble.

The map provides credits to some of the most important French explorers and missionaries in America in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries, whose work is incorporated in the map, including Hennepin, de La Salle, Tonti, Justel, des Hayes, and Jolliet. Perhaps most notable is the contributions of Francois le Maire, a Jesuit Missionary in Louisiana, whose job from 1706 to 1720 included the review and transcription of explorers' journals, accounts (and maps), which were recorded in his memoirs and then transmitted back



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to France. Many of these reports and maps were obtained from Spanish sources.

Examples of the 2-sheet and 4-sheet version of De Fer's map are extremely rare on the market. This *Partie Meridionale* appears a bit more often, but is still relatively scarce.

Detailed Condition:

Few expertly repaired fold splits.