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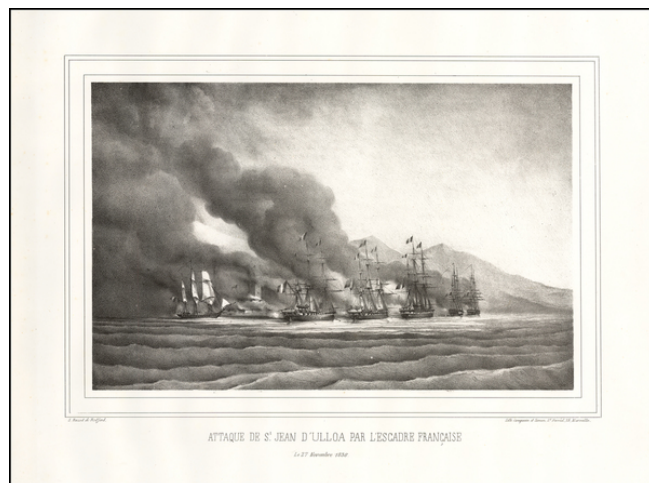
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(The Pastry War) Attaque de St. Jean D'Ulloa Par L'Escadre Francaise

Stock#: 55957
Map Maker: Russel de Bedford
Date: 1839 circa
Place: Marseille
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 14 x 10.5 inches
Price: \$345.00



Description:

The Decisive Battle of the Pastry War

Fine early lithographic view depicting the Battle of Veracruz.

Overview

During the early years of the new Mexican republic there was widespread civil disorder as factions competed for control of the country. The fighting often resulted in the destruction or looting of private property. Foreigners whose property was damaged or destroyed by rioters or bandits were usually also unable to obtain compensation from the Mexican government and they began to appeal to their own governments for help and compensation.

Commercial relationships between France and Mexico existed prior to France recognition of Mexico's independence in 1830, and after the establishment of diplomatic relationships France rapidly became Mexico's third largest trade partner. However, France had yet to secure trade agreements similar to those that the United States and Great Britain (then Mexico's two largest trade partners) had, and as a result of this French goods were subject to higher taxes.

The Pastry Chef

In complaint to King Louis-Philippe, a French pastry chef known only as Monsieur Remontel claimed that in 1832 Mexican officers looted his shop in Tacubaya (then a town on the outskirts of Mexico City). Remontel demanded 60,000 pesos as reparations for the damage. In view of Remontel's complaint and



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similar complaints from French nationals (among them the looting in 1828 of French shops at the Parian market and the execution in 1837 of a French citizen accused of piracy) in 1838 prime minister Louis-Mathieu Molé demanded from Mexico the payment of 600,000 pesos in damages.

When president Anastasio Bustamante made no payment, the King of France ordered a fleet under Rear Admiral Charles Baudin to declare and carry out a blockade of all Mexican ports on the Atlantic coast from Yucatán to the Rio Grande, to bombard the Mexican fortress of San Juan de Ulúa, and to seize the city of Veracruz, which was the most important port on the Gulf coast. French forces captured Veracruz by December 1838 and Mexico declared war on France.

With trade cut off, the Mexicans began smuggling imports via Corpus Christi, Republic of Texas and into Mexico. Fearing that France would blockade the Republic's ports as well, a battalion of Texan forces began patrolling Corpus Christi Bay to stop Mexican smugglers. One smuggling party abandoned their cargo of about a hundred barrels of flour on the beach at the mouth of the bay, thus giving Flour Bluff its name. The United States, ever watchful of its relations with Mexico, sent the schooner *Woodbury* to help the French in their blockade.

Meanwhile, acting without explicit government authority, Antonio López de Santa Anna, known for his military leadership, came out of retirement from his hacienda near Xalapa and surveyed the defenses of Veracruz. He offered his services to the government, which ordered him to fight the French by any means necessary. He led Mexican forces against the French. In a skirmish with the rear guard of the French, Santa Anna was wounded in the leg by French grapeshot. His leg was amputated and buried with full military honors. Exploiting his wounds with eloquent propaganda, Santa Anna catapulted back to power.

Battle of San Juan de Ulua

The Battle of Veracruz, or the Battle of San Juan de Ulúa, was a naval battle between a French frigate squadron under Rear Admiral Charles Baudin against the Mexican citadel of San Juan de Ulúa, which defended the city of Veracruz, from November 27 to December 5, 1838.

Having crossed the Atlantic to settle a dispute between France and Mexico, the squadron anchored off Veracruz and negotiated until all diplomatic means to resolve the dispute appeared exhausted. After announcing that hostilities would begin, Baudin had his squadron bombard the fort. French fire, particularly heavy mortars mounted on bomb vessels and Paixhans guns on frigates, silenced the citadel and forced it to surrender on November 28, 1839, a remarkable feat for the time. Mexican authorities, however, refused to cave in to French demands, forcing Baudin to mount a raid against the city itself on December 5, 1838. Despite its limited ground forces, the French squadron succeeded in capturing General Mariano Arista and in wounding General Antonio López de Santa Anna.



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The swift capture of the citadel by a small squadron of relatively light warships stunned military observers who had gathered to watch the scene, and marked the beginning of the era of shell artillery and the modernization of navies around the world. Politically, the attack undermined the Mexican regime while bolstering the prestige of Santa Anna, contributing to the political instability of Mexico. In France the battle attracted considerable public attention at the moment, but was later overshadowed by the much more considerable French intervention in Mexico in the 1860s.

Detailed Condition: