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Amerique Septentrionale dressee sur les Relations plus modernes des Voyageurs et Navigateurs ou se remarquent Les Etats Unis . . . Pubilee en 1750 et Corrigee en 1783

Stock#: 57299
Map Maker: de Vaugondy

Date: 1786 circa
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 19.5 x 25 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

North America Soon After American Independence

Scarce, late state of De Vaugondy's map of North America, published in Paris.

First issued in the 1750s, this state has been updated to include the newly formed United States—one of its early appearances on a map.

At the same time, it includes a variety of lingering chimeric features in the American West that mark it as both an emerging and a fantastical view of the continent at a moment of change.

The map shows the sprawling landmass from Baffin Bay to north South America. It includes the Caribbean and large stretches of the Atlantic, as well as a substantial swath of the Pacific.

There are a few areas with curious outlines which stand out to the modern eye. These include a sharpened Florida and the angular California which expands to the west. An inset covers the northwest corner, leaving the western interior up for debate.

The inset shows the northwestern-most part of the map, emphasizing the narrow strait separating Asia and North America. This geography is very different than that shown on other contemporary maps and on more modern maps. The west coast juts far westward, filled in with lands called Quivira and Anian.

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Quivira refers to the Seven Cities of Gold sought by the Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1541. In 1539, Coronado wandered over what today is Arizona and New Mexico, eventually heading to what is now Kansas to find the supposedly rich city of Quivira. Although he never found the cities or the gold, the name stuck on maps of southwest North America, wandering from east to west. Here it is used to describe the entire southwest.

Anian often referred to a strait between the continents, but also was sometimes used to denote a territory. The term *Anian* itself comes from Marco Polo's thirteenth-century accounts of his travels. Polo used the term to refer to the Gulf of Tonkin, but cartographers thought it could refer to this supposed strait between Asia and North America. The Strait of Anian, so named, first appeared in a 1562 map by Giacomo Gastaldi, and was later adopted by Bolognini Zaltieri and Gerard Mercator. Here, it covers a large area of the West and a strait with that name is rather shown as an entry to the interior.

Just south of this different Strait of Anian is *Fousang des Chinois*. This note stems from the work of French Orientalist Le Guignes, who hypothesized that the Chinese arrived in the New World over a millennium before the Europeans, most famously in his 1761 work, *Recherches sur les Navigations des Chinois du Cote de l'Amerique, et sur quelques Peuples situés a l'extremite orientale de l"asie.* Le Guignes was named a fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1752 and his work was well known across Enlightenment Europe, as evidenced here.

The curious Strait of Anian included here connects to a series of lakes that lead, in a complicated way, to Hudson's Bay—a Northwest Passage! These lakes are based on the controversial letters of Admiral de la Fonte, who, along with Martin de Aguilar and Juan de Fuca, had a large influence on the geography of this area (see below).

What is today Alaska is shown here in only the roughest outline. It is based in large part on the two voyages of Vitus Behring, which were Russia's first attempt to know and colonize these lands. The translation of these voyages to paper resulted in a couple of odd features, such as *Stachtan Nitada ou Grande Terre* (see below).

Martin Aguilar, Juan de la Fuca, and Admiral de la Fonte

The Pacific Northwest shown here is defined by the voyages of three men, Martin Aguilar, Juan de la Fuca, and Admiral De Fonte, all of which were to prove dubious. The former navigator was a Spanish captain who sailed with Sebastian Vizcaino on a reconnaissance expedition up the California coast in 1602-3. Aguilar, commanding the Tres Reyes, was blown off course, to the north. When the seas calmed, Aguilar reported that he had found the mouth of a large river. Eighteenth-century geographers conjectured that is

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might lead to an inland sea or great river, which is does here.

Another entrance that leads to a large river is labeled as relating to Juan de la Fuca. Juan de la Fuca is the Castilianized name of Greek navigator Ioánnis Fokás (Phokás). Little archival evidence survives of Fuca's career, but a chance meeting with an English financier, Michael Lok, in Venice in 1596 gave birth to rumors of Fuca's voyages in the Pacific. Fuca reported that he had been sent north from New Spain twice in 1592 in search of the Strait of Anian. The Spanish Crown failed to reward Fuca's discovery of an opening in the coast at roughly 47° N latitude and Fuca left the Spanish service embittered. His story lived on in Lok's letters and eventually was published in Samuel Purchas' travel collection of 1625. In 1787, just after this map was likely published, the present-day Juan de Fuca Strait was named by the wife of naval explorer Charles William Barkley, making permanent a label that had previously just been hopeful conjecture.

Even farther north, there is a *Lac de Fonte* connected to a series of lakes. Admiral de Fonte supposedly sailed to the area in the mid-seventeenth century. The first mention of Fonte appears in two letters published in London in 1708 in two issues of The Monthly Miscellany or Memoirs for the Curious. The Fonte letters had been reprinted by Arthur Dobbs in his 1744 *An Account of the Countries adjoining Hudson's Bay* and were mentioned in other travel accounts.

The letters recounted that Fonte had found an inlet near 53°N which led to a series of lakes. While sailing northeast, Fonte eventually met with a Boston merchant ship, commanded by a Captain Shapley. One of Fonte's captains, separated from the Admiral, reported he had found no strait between the Pacific and the Davis Straits, yet had reached 79°N, helped by local indigenous peoples. This story, with its suggestion of water passages connecting the Pacific Northwest with the east, inspired hope in some and doubt in others in the mid-eighteenth century. A few, like Irish mapmaker John Green, thought the entire story a farce. Many, including Joseph-Nicolas De L'Isle and Philippe Buache, thought the information conformed neatly to other recent discoveries and included Fonte on their maps.

The Russian discoveries in the Pacific Northwest and the odd case of Stitchan Nitada

The farthest northwest coast was "*découvertes par Beering et Tchirikow en 1741.*" Two expeditions led by Vitus Behring (1728-30, 1733-43) explored Kamchatka and what is now Alaska, charting the strait between them. Captain Alexsei Chirikov (Tchirikow) was his second-in-command on the second voyage. The first maps of the discoveries appeared in France in the early 1750s, followed by a German map by Gerhard Müller, a member of the second Kamchatka Expedition, first published in 1754 and distributed more widely in a 1758 edition. These maps, though they differed in many respects, show the strait between the continents and the westward thrust of the Alaskan mainland/archipelago, as does this map.

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In the 1760s, Russian fur traders discovered more and more of the Aleutian Islands, some of which are shown here. In 1764, another Second Kamchatka Expedition veteran, Lieutenant Ivan Synd, led a new voyage to the Bering Sea. He was in search of the Northwest Passage, but also hoped to clarify to what extent western Alaska was a peninsula or an archipelago. He produced several maps, all but one of which have been lost. The map that does survive shows a series of islands nearly touching Kamchatka, not a peninsula.

As a result of Synd's findings, a modified 1773 Russian edition of Müller's chart converts Müller's large peninsula to a string of islands. In the same year Jacob von Stählin, secretary to the Russian Academy of Sciences, created his own map based on Synd's discoveries entitled, "A Map of the New Northern Archipelago discover'd by the Russians." This toponym seems to have been included for the first time by Stählin. It is supposedly a place Synd landed. The book excited members of the Royal Society of London, who ensured that the German language publication was translated into English by the end of 1774.

However, Stachtan Nitada's precise location and importance remained unclear to explorers, none more so than James Cook. Cook carried the English translation of Stählin's map with him on this third voyage, which was focused on finding the Northwest Passage. What interested Cook was the strait between Stachtan Nitada and the nearest island to the west. It seemed to Cook and others planning his third voyage that this could be an entrance to a Northwest Passage.

When Cook arrived in search of the islands and passage in 1778, he found no such place. As J.C. Beaglehole, Cook's twentieth-century editor, explains:

> …no one could be too hard on Stählin. He had thrown the name Alaska on to an arbitrary island in the north; the other name Stachtan Nitada was unknown to either Russian or Aleut…As a cartographer he was naïve, even infantile; and he was unwise enough to speak slightingly of seamen. (*Journals of Captain Cook*, cxxxvii-cxxxviii)

Cook himself had choice words about Stählin and Stachtan Nitada. In his journal of October 1778, he wrote:

> Stachtan Nitada as it is calld in the Modern maps, is a name quite unknown to these people, Indians as well as Russians, but both know it by the name of America. (251)

Of Stählin's map, Cook wrote later in October 1778:

> If Mr Stehlin was not greatly imposed upon what could induce him to publish so erroneous a Map? in

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> which many of these islands are jumbled in in [sic] regular confusion, without the least regard to truth and yet he is pleased to call it a very accurate little Map? A Map that the most illiterate Seafaring men would have been ashamed to put his name to. (456)

Interestingly, this map adopts the new United States, which were only officially recognized with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, but it does not integrate Cook's revised view of Alaska from his third voyage, the account of which was published in 1784. It is therefore a strange conglomeration of cartographic ideas.

Detailed Condition: