



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Carte Reduite Des Costes de la Louisiane et de la Floride Dressee au Depot des Cartes Plans et Journaux de la Marine . . . MDCCLXIV

**Stock#:** 64203  
**Map Maker:** Bellin  
**Date:** 1764  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 33 x 22 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *The Mythical Archipelago of Florida*

Spectacular and highly detailed sea chart of Florida, the Gulf Coast and the Mississippi Valley, published by Nicholas Bellin.

The map provides a remarkable look at Florida and French Louisiana at the close of the French & Indian War. Focusing on the hydrographical features of the region, a clear depiction of the river systems along the Gulf Coast is given, with a large inset of the mouth of the Mississippi River, created to aid French navigation, including inland navigation up the various rivers to named French forts and trading posts.

This is one of the best examples of Florida as an Archipelago. The region around the Mississippi Valley and Galveston Bay are also highly detailed for the period.

The map provides one of the most interesting large format depictions of Florida and the Gulf Coast at the conclusion of the French & Indian War. As noted in *Flags Along The Coast* (p.96) ,

*Bellin's representation of Florida is incomparably more bizarre than the Spanish (mis)understanding of the Everglades as an archipelago, first seen on their manuscript maps 70 years earlier. Once captains like Jean Beranger ceased to sail the Gulf Waters, taking with them talented mapmakers like Valentin Devlin, France's preeminence began to fade. Even though their maps were highly regarded until the late eighteenth century, French cartographers never captured the excitement of the early era . . .*



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### **Carte Reduite Des Costes de la Louisiane et de la Floride Dressee au Depost des Cartes Plans et Journaux de la Marine . . . MDCCLXIV**

Bellin's chart of the region was one of the most detailed and widely disbursed charts of the region during the time period immediately after the French & Indian War.

#### **The Florida Archipelago Myth**

Historians trace the mapping of Florida as an archipelago to Thomas Nairne's *Map of South Carolina Shewing the Settlements of the English, French, and Indian Nations from Charles Town to the River Missisipi*. Nairne was part of an effort started in the British Carolina Province in the early 1700s to raid Florida for slaves and generally wipe out the indigenous Indian population. As noted by Michelle Currie Navakas:

*Nairne, an Indian slave trader and the first Indian agent of South Carolina, based this map on his journey to Florida during 1702, when he and thirty-three Yamasee raided the interior and captured thirty-five Indians, whom they took to Charleston and sold as slaves.<sup>14</sup> Even though Nairne's raiding party went only as far south as the northern border of the Everglades, his time in Florida convinced him that the southern portion of it consisted of islands.*

*We know this not only because he produced a map of Florida as islands upon his return, but also because, in a document accompanying the map, he suggests that southern Florida is unstable, broken ground when he advises those seeking Indian captives that they can go only "as farr on the point of Florida as the firm land will permit."*

This configuration gained popularity, as illustrated by Guillaume de l'Isle's *Carte de la Louisiane et du Cours du Mississipi*. By 1764, Nicolas Bellin's *Carte Reduite Des Costes de la Louisiane et de la Floride* provided perhaps the single most dramatic illustration of the mythical group of islands at the south end of Florida.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Repaired tear at left center, extending above inset of the mouth of the Mississippi River.