



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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**A New Map of Part of North America From the Latitude of 40 to 68 Degrees, Including the late discoveries made on Board the Bomb Ketch in 1742, And the Western Rivers & Lakes falling into Nelson River in Hudson's Bay as described by Joseph La France a Canadese Indian who Travaled thro those Countries and Lakes for 3 Years from 1739 to 1742**

**Stock#:** 68744  
**Map Maker:** La France  
**Date:** 1744  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 19 x 13 inches  
**Price:** \$ 8,500.00



**Description:**

Important early map illustrating the controversy over the Northwest Passage.

The map was part of the great Dobbs-Middleton debate concerning British exploration in search of a northwest passage. The present map extends from the Great Lakes, Upper Plains and Cape Blanco in California to the Arctic Circle, emphasizing Hudson's Bay and Strait and the prospects for discovery of a Northwest Passage at the northwestern part of Hudson's Bay, including "Cape Dobbs", Lovegrove's Opening and Water Strait.

The map depicts a severely truncated western "unknown coast" connecting to Hudson's Bay at "Rankin' Inlet" with another possible connection at "Lovegrove's Opening". An elaborate river system connects Hudson's Bay with the Lake of Woods, with a short portage shown to Lahontan's famous "Long River". Finally the open-ended "Lake Tahuglauk" lies west of a mountain range in a region named "Part of California".

The map was commissioned by Arthur Dobbs, who disputed the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly and its failed expeditions in search of a passage to the Pacific. Dobbs was opposed to the trade monopoly held by the Hudson's Bay Company, and was convinced that a northwest passage lay in the western parts of Hudson's Bay. His public allegations that Middleton acted in the interests of the HBC by not exploring



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those regions for a potential northwest passage led to the investigation of the HBC by a British Parliamentary committee in 1749.

Dobbs tried to have the HBC monopoly revoked by arguing that HBC had violated its charter which said they had an "obligation to search for the Northwest Passage." To build support, Dobbs prepared this map to accompany his 1744 book, *An account of the countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, in the north-west part of America*, which was a collection of stories about trade and exploration in Hudson Bay, along with his criticisms of the HBC. Two years earlier, he had met Joseph La France, a Métis coureur de bois, who had traveled and lived in the area. La France told Dobbs about the geography of the land and the nature of the trade between Indigenous communities and York Factory, the main Hudson's Bay trading post. Dobbs used the fact that the HBC were not spread out across Rupert's Land to argue they were limiting development around the Bay. As such, trade should be open to all so the land could be utilized fully.

Dobbs map was compiled from information supposedly gathered by La France, based upon information supposed gathered during his travels in the region between 1739 and 1742. Dobb's map reflects his limited cartographic knowledge and obsession with the Northwest Passage. By the 1740s, few Europeans had sailed from California to British Columbia. Because North America's western half was still largely speculation and conjecture, Dobbs map manager to completely eliminate the existence of a good portion of Canada, along with the areas that would become Alaska, Washington, and Oregon.

Rankin's Inlet and Wager Strait are drawn to suggest they are a passage to the Pacific. The New Discover'd Sea on top of Quebec is another example of Dobb's speculation. The passages leading to Hudson's Bay are completely distorted. The top of Labrador does have Ungava's Bay, which may have been the New Discover'd Sea's inspiration, but it is in the wrong place.

In 1745, Dobbs convinced the British House of Commons to create a reward of 20,000 pounds for the discovery of a Northwest Passage and then got a group of investors to back an expedition for a share in the reward. Two ships set off in 1746. Things were fine until winter hit. By the spring many men were sick and fighting began to hamper the mission. When they returned in 1747, they revealed Wager Strait was actually a bay and Rankin's Inlet led to nowhere. Dobbs and others tried to argue that perhaps Repulse Bay (top of the map) was the answer, but the British House of Commons now held the opinion that there was no Northwest Passage. Dobbs gave up and set his sights on America after becoming a wealthy landowner in North Carolina in 1745. He later became the governor of the colony.



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**Rarity**

The separate map is rare on the market. We note only 1 appearance in a dealer catalog in the past 30 years and 3 appearance at auction.

**Detailed Condition:**

Loss in upper right corner, expertly reinstated, with some facsimile image along the border, but not impacting any landmass.