



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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### **L'Amerique Meridionale et Septentrionale Dressee sure les Nouv.les Decov.tes et derniers Relations des meilleurs Navigateurs . . . 1760 (Shows the Sea of the West)**

**Stock#:** 74009  
**Map Maker:** Desnos / Danet  
**Date:** 1760  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 27.5 x 18.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



#### **Description:**

#### ***The Americas with the Sea of the West and the Latest Russian Discoveries***

Striking example of the 1760 edition of Guillaume Danet's decorative map of America. It features the conjectural Sea of the West, and a large inset shows the Russian discoveries and various theories for an inland Northwest Passage.

Published by Louis Charles Desnos in Paris, the map provides a detailed historical overview of the exploration of America, beginning with Columbus, in a block of text in the lower left. The text also references the explorations of Amerigo Vespucci, Pedro Cabral, Thomas Auber, Ponce de Leon, Hernán Cortez, Ferdinand Magellan, John Sebastian Cabot, Juan Verazzano, Jacques Cartier, Francisco Pizzaro, Olivier de Noort, Willem Schouten, Jacques Le Maire, Father Marquette, Father Joliet, and De La Salle.

The portraits of these explorers run along the upper and lower borders of the decorative frame of the map. They are augmented with medallions holding the coat of arms of various provinces and colonies across the two continents. At left and right are pictorial representations of constellations.

A fine, large cartouche fills the upper left corner. Two angels guard the French coat of arms, while below Hermes, the herald, and a Native American sit surrounded by bales of goods and a telescope (Hermes), and an alligator and a bow and arrows (Native American).

Geographically, the primary feature of interest on the map is the massive *Mer de L'Ouest* (Sea of the West), which dominates the northwest part of America. The sea includes a wide open and optimistic



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watercourse from the Sea of the West to Hudson's Bay, labeled "*Communication presumée*" (presumed connection).

The sea is fed by inlets discovered, supposedly, by Martin de Aguilar and Juan de Fuca. 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, including De L'Isle and Bauche, conjectured that the river was the entrance to the Sea of the West, as it is positioned on this map.

There is another entrance to the sea, this one labeled as the discovery of Juan de la Fuca. The authors are referring to Juan de la Fuca, 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. On many eighteenth-century maps, including this one, Fuca's Strait is linked with a River or Sea of the West. In 1787, 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.

On the banks of the Sea of the West is Quivira, which 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.

In the lower right is an inset showing the Pacific Northwest, including Alaska, as derived from the work of Joseph Nicolas De L'Isle. In a [series of maps from the early 1750s](#), De L'Isle and Philippe Buache hypothesized as to the extent and source of a Sea of the West; this work is an important source bank for this map.

Joseph Nicholas De L'Isle spent much of his career in Russia, where he helped to found the Russian Academy of Sciences. While there, he had access to the latest findings of Russian explorers and was at the center of Russia's geographic establishment; for example, he helped produce the first Russian atlas, the *Atlas Russicus*, with Ivan Kyrilov. He returned to Paris in 1747 with a large map collection, an event



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that drew some criticism from Russian academicians who thought he absconded with delicate materials.

The map identifies Russian discoveries from the previous several decades. Two expeditions led by Vitus Bering (1728-30, 1733-43) explored Kamchatka and what is now Alaska, charting the strait between them. De L'Isle interviewed Bering and used his charts from the voyages.

The map also includes the track of "*Mrs Thiricou et de l'Isle de la Croyere*" in June and July of 1741. De L'Isle's half-brother, Louis De L'Isle de la Croyere, sailed with Captain Alexsei Chirikov (Tchirikov) to discover the fictional De Gama's Land, or Companies Land. Joseph Nicholas was convinced that the island existed and provided his half-brother with maps to support the hypothesis. de la Croyere perished on the voyage, but his brother received his papers and published his findings on the map.

A major feature of the inset are the lakes and passages towards the east, including *L. de Fonte*. 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. Delisle's copy of the letters came from Lord Forbes, British ambassador to Russia, as he explained in a memoir, *Nouvelles Cartes des Decouvertes de l'Amiral de Fonte* (Paris, 1753). He also read of them in Henry Ellis' account of the 1746-7 expedition to Wager Inlet.

The letters recounted that Fonte had found an inlet near 53°N which led to a series of lakes. While sailing north east, 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 De L'Isle, Buache, Danet, and Desnos, thought the information conformed neatly to other recent discoveries and included Fonte on their map.

The map was first issued by Danet in 1731 and then later revised by Desnos, at which time he significantly reworked the cartographic details. This early Desnos edition of the map is quite rare, with only one example of a 1766 edition noted in AMPR between 1983 and 2011 (Librairie Le Bail-Weissert: 2003, Item 370 -- \$5,700 USD) and a 1768 edition offered by Richard Arkway in 1990 (Catalogue XXXVI--\$2,000).

The 1760 is the earliest of the Desnos editions, with the Sea of the West inset, that we have seen.



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**Detailed Condition:**

Original outline hand-color. Minor spotting and soiling, but overall a very nice example.