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Carte d'Amerique Divisee en ses Principaux Pays Dressee sur les Memoires les Plus Recents, et sur Differents Voyages et Assujettie aux Observations Astronomiques . . . 1787

Stock#: 74865
Map Maker: Clouet
Date: 1787
Place: Paris
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: Good
Size: 48 x 37 inches
Price: \$ 11,000.00



Description:

Stunning French Wall Map of the Americas Showing the Sea of the West

Striking, large wall map of North and South America, published in Paris by Jean Baptiste Louis Clouet.

Wall maps with embellished borders were popular in the seventeenth century, when the consumption of maps and their use as decorations in homes and offices came into style in Western Europe. By the time this map was made in 1787, such decorative wall maps were only rarely produced, making this a novel cartographic item of particular note.

The geographic content of the map is largely based upon the work of Joseph Nicolas De L'Isle and Philippe Buache, important French cartographers of the mid-eighteenth century who popularized the Sea of the West, which is included here.

South America is dominated by the two riverine networks of the Amazon and of Rio de la Plata. To the south are the Malouines, or Malvinas, which a note explains are called the Falklands by the English. Tierra del Fuego is shown as one island, with a volcano at its center.

North America is full of the names of Indian tribes, rivers, and mountains. To the north, the large Sea of the West gives way to a series of lakes in the east and then to Hudson's Bay. The western inland sea has two outlets, one named for Juan de Fuca (misdated by a century to 1692) and the other for Martin Aguilar.



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An inset in the top right corner shows the far northwest of North America. The note below explains that the configuration was derived from Russian discoveries and from an Admiral de Fonte. The Russians explored the North Pacific and what is now Alaska on the two expeditions led by Vitus Bering in 1725-30, 1733-43. The date of 1731 listed here is therefore curious.

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. Joseph-Nicholas 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 in Hudson's Bay.

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, and Clouet, thought the information conformed neatly to other recent discoveries and included Fonte on their maps.

In the Pacific are several islands and the tracks of explorers. One of these tracks belongs to the first voyage of James Cook, which rounded Cape Horn. Another is labelled as belonging to Louis-Antoine de Bougainville. From 1766-9, Bougainville completed the first French circumnavigation; his was also the second European ship to visit Tahiti, in 1768. However, this map gives credit for the first encounter with Tahiti to Bougainville, although it was well established that Samuel Wallis had visited a few months prior to Bougainville.

The meridian line passes through the Isle de Fer, also known as El Hierro (iron) or Ferro. The island is the westernmost of the Canary Islands and was a much-used meridian outside of Britain. Also marked is the Demarcation Line that separated the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, as decreed by Pope Alexander VI in 1493. This was followed by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which moved the line farther west.

In the lower corners are two elaborate cartouches. In the left is a French title cartouche which has a



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European woman holding a cross and an Amerindian man climbing vegetation. To the right, robed individuals (who appear European but are likely meant to be Indigenous American) flank a second title cartouche, this one in Spanish.

Surrounding the map are twenty vignettes. These offer a pictorial history of the New World. It starts with the so-called discovery of America by Europeans, in the top left corner, and continues clockwise to the La Salle expedition at the end of the seventeenth century. Along the left side are imagery and overviews of the leadership of the Incas and Aztecs. Each picture has an explanation in both French and Spanish.

Detailed Condition:

Restored and laid on linen. Some small area of soiling, loss and abrasions. Expertly restored.