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Carte Du Canada Qui Comprend la Partie Septentrionale Des Etats Unis D'Amerique . . . 1783

Stock#: 76001
Map Maker: De L'Isle / Dezauche
Date: 1783 (1792 ca)
Place: Paris
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG
Size: 25.5 x 20 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Seminal Early Map of Canada & The Great Lakes -- One of The First Maps To Reference The Rocky Mountains

Nice example of this rare late state of Guillaume De L'Isle's map of Canada, the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest, one of the most important and influential maps of region published in the 18th Century.

The present example of the map has historically been described as the second Dezauche printing of De L'Isle's seminal map and the first state to name the United States and one of the earliest appearances of the name United States (Etats-Unis) on a printed map. It should be noted, however, that there are two different states of this 1783-Etats Unis map, with the second including the removal of the crown at the top of the cartouche and the royal fleur d'lis below it, as well as the removal of the words "du Roi" from the title, indicative of the modification of the copper plate by Dezauche following the French Revolution and most likely during the period of France's first First Republic (1792-1795), which had been inspired in part by the American Revolution. Curiously, the "avec privilege du Roy" note at the bottom of the cartouche is left unchanged.

De L'Isle's map is of seminal importance for a number of regions, including the Great Lakes and the Rocky Mountains. Kershaw states that the map is

One of the most outstanding maps of Canada of the 17th and early 18th Centuries . . . De L'Isle's careful research resulted in the first map of Canada to present the whole of the Great



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Lakes correctly. In addition, the position of the lakes relative to Hudson's Bay is also correct, and the Avalon Peninsula is shown much more realistically than on previous maps of Canada. Of considerable significance, the geography of the coastal regions of James and Hudson Bays, together with their major rivers systems, is presented by De L'Isle with a surprising degree of accuracy.

Of equal note, the map also includes one of the earliest references to the Rocky Mountains, the "Riviere Longue" and other features to the west based on the reports of Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan. Lahontan (1666-1715) served in the French military in Canada where he traveled extensively in the Wisconsin, Minnesota and the upper Mississippi Valley. His *Nouveaux voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (1703) was an immensely popular if somewhat fanciful account of his travels. While acknowledging the western terminus of his travels, Lahontan distilled Native American reports of a great river, flowing to high mountains, with a great body of salt water beyond the mountains. Lahontan's account of these reports convinced many of the world's greatest intellects of the existence of this mythical waterway, which resulted in his account being accepted and incorporated by most of the major mapmakers of the period.

Baron Lahontan

Lahontan joined the French Marine Corps and was sent to New France in 1683. He quickly learned the Indian languages and became adept in wilderness survival. He was sent to command Fort St. Joseph, near the present site of Port Huron, Michigan. He spent much of his time in America exploring the region. In 1688 he joined a party of Chippewa Indians in a raid on the Iroquois and later abandoned his fort and went to Michilimackinac. During the following winter he explored the upper Mississippi valley where he allegedly discovered the "Longue River". After several other adventures, including a successful attack on five English frigates in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, he eventually deserted the French military and returned to Europe.

Lahontan's report of his discovery of the "Longue River" (from the Mississippi to a great range of mountains in the west), along with a short pass through the mountains from which another river flowed (presumably) into the Pacific. He included accounts of Indian tribes who lived on islands in a great lake near the source of the river, and tales of crocodiles filling the waterways. He also used the book, in the form of a dialogue with an Indian named Adorio (The Rat), for a controversial attack on what were then the accepted doctrines of Christianity. While Lahontan's Longue River proved mythical, the reference to and depiction of the Rocky Mountains by De L'Isle is believed to be the first depiction on a printed map.

De L'Isle The Skeptic Looks At The Transmississippi West



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Although Delisle depicts the river and indicates the point at which the Baron de Lahontan's journey is supposed to have ended and the point his reports from Native American information began. De l'Isle himself is skeptical, stating: "...a moins que le dit Sr. de Lahontan n'ait invente tout ces choses ce quil est difficile de resoudre etant le seul qui a penetre dans cest vastes contrees" ("Unless the Seigneur de Lahontan has invented all of these things, which is difficult to resolve, he being the only one who has penetrated this vast land.") The map includes a note referring to a large body of salt water to the west-- "...sur la quelle ils navigant avec de grands bateaux"-a possible, early reference to the Great Salt Lake or a tantalizing hint of access to the Pacific.

De L'Isle studied at the French Maritime Ministry from 1700 to 1703, during which time he took extensive notes on the work of the Jesuit Missionaries, including Franquelin, Jolliet and others. Karpinski notes that the fruits of De L'Isle's substantial efforts are born out by the great improvements in the mapping of the 5 Great Lakes and other parts of the map. The information reported by Lahontan is in evidence in the Western part of the map and discussed in a lengthy annotation. Excellent detail on the sources of the Mississippi and the regions around the Hudson and the Great Lakes.

States of the Map as Published By Dezauche

- 1781: Date updated to 1781 and the words "Revue et augmentee par Dezauche" added.
- 1783: Date changed to 1783 and the title modified to "Carte Du Canada Qui Comprend la Partie Septentrionale Des Etats Unis D'Amerique . . . " (first reference to Etats-Unis in title)
- 1792 circa: the words "du Roi" removed from title and decorative features at top of cartouche modified to remove French royal imagery and crown.

Detailed Condition: