



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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**Accurata delineatio celeberrimae Regionis Ludoviciana vel Gallice Louisiane ol.  
Canadae et Floridae Adpellatione in Septemtrionali America Descriptae quae Hodie  
Nomine Fluminis Mississippi vel St. Louis . . .**

**Stock#:** 91037  
**Map Maker:** Seutter  
**Date:** 1734  
**Place:** Augsburg  
**Color:** Hand Colored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 22.5 x 19.5 inches  
**Price:** \$ 2,800.00



**Description:**

***Seutter Edition of Nicolas De Fer's Landmark 1718 Mississippi Bubble Map***

A finely colored example of Seutter's so-called Mississippi Bubble map, depicting the short-lived French financial-colonial scheme masterminded by Scottish financier John Law.

The map shows a detailed treatment of much of North America focusing on the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. A large inset of the Gulf Coast shows many forts and American Indian villages. The map is a single sheet map of the inhabited parts of North America, based upon Nicholas De Fer's landmark 4-sheet map published in 1718, one of the rarest and most important printed maps of the period. De Fer's map provided a synthesis of the French discoveries on North America at the moment in time when Scottish Financier John Law was the celebrated savior of the French economy, through an investment scheme in French Louisiana, which would come to be known as the Mississippi Bubble (1718-1720).

At the top left of the map is large scale map of the Mississippi Delta and Mobile Bay, based upon the 1699 voyage of Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville. The inset also appears on De Fer's 4 sheet map and Guillaume De L'Isle's 1718 *carte de la Louisiane*. D'Iberville explored the mouth of the Mississippi and its many tributaries, including the Red River in Arkansas.



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Heidenreich and Dahl surmised that that De Fer's map was originally issued to promoted the recently established Compagnie Francoise Occident and reinforce French opinion in the 1713 boundary settlement. The Compagnie Francoise Occident, under John Law's leadership was initially successful in promoting investment and French emigration to America. However, the financing side of the company, conceived by John Law to help finance the debt left by by Louis XIV, led to a wild burst of speculation and ultimate collapse. This episode is often referred to as the Mississippi Bubble.

De Fer's map was of great contemporary importance. Among its most important features, it is the first printed map to depict Francoise Le Maire's manuscript copies of the best available Spanish manuscript charts, including the Enriquez Barroto - Bisente manuscript charts of the Gulf Coast (the large inset at the top of the map), which significantly improved the cartographic details of of the Gulf Coast and its principal Bays. Henry Popple would later utilize De Fer's map to delineate Spanish settlements on the Rio Grande and territory west of the Mississippi Valley. De Fer's Great Lakes model was utilized well into the 18th Century, most notably serving as the model for the first edition of John Mitchell's monumental map of North America. Perhaps of greatest historical significance, it was undoubtedly a very useful selling tool for John Law, helping him raise significant sums of money for his venture, which would later end with a massive commercial failure known as the Mississippi Bubble.

The map is drawn from the work of the most important French explorers and missionaries in America in the late 17th and early 18th Centuries, including Hennepin, de La Salle, Tonti, Justel, des Hayes, and Jolliet. Perhaps most notable is the contributions of Francois le Maire, a Jesuit Missionary in Louisiana, whose job from 1706 to 1720 included the review and transcription of explorers' journals, accounts (and maps), which were recorded in his memoirs and then transmitted back to France. Many of these reports and maps were obtained from Spanish sources. One noteworthy example of the Spanish source maps utilized by Le Maire is a manuscript chart illustrated by Jackson in *Flags Along The Coast* (opposite page 59) and attributed to "a [Spanish] pilot named Soupar (or Soupart)." As noted by Jackson (p. 60):

*Francois Le Maire arrived in [Louisiana] in 1706 and devoted himself to a study of its geography. Le Maire collected the accounts of various explorers, analyzed the data, and then forwarded them to France in the form of memoirs and maps. Le Maire's work enabled De L'Isle to produce one of the most influential maps of North America ever made, his 1718 Carte de la Louisiane et du cours du Missisipi.*

The large inset at the top of the map is an almost exact copy of the Soupar / Le Maire chart (Carte de la



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Cote de La Louisiane depuis la Cote-de Ouest de la Floride iusqu'a l'Ouest de la Riviere du Missisipy par moy Sovpar 1716), with two notable exceptions, the shape of Pensacola Bay and the shape of the "Baye de Ste. Rose," to the east. For these two features, The map more closely resembles a manuscript map by Valentin Devin, entitled Carte de la cote de la Louisiane, depuis l'Embouchure de Mississipi . . . , which states that it was prepared based upon the observations of M. de Serigny in 1719 and 1720.

The map includes an elaborate cartouche, which depicts an allegorical, satirical scene of the infamous Mississippi Bubble investment scheme with a female personification of the Mississippi River pouring jewels and riches forth, while she is perched precariously upon a bubble. Cherubs above the cartouche are issuing stock for the company, and another group is blowing bubbles in the foreground surrounded by piles of worthless stocks. In the background, desperate investors climb a small tree and fling themselves out of it, and in the foreground more disconsolate investors wail and bemoan their fates as one tries to impale himself on his sword. Above them, a cherub upends an empty money-bag.

#### **The Mississippi Bubble Scheme**

The Mississippi Bubble centered around John Law's Mississippi Company, a French trading company. The Mississippi Bubble occurred from August 1719 to May 1720, growing out of France's terrible economic situation in the early 18th century. When Louis XIV died in 1715, the French Treasury was a disaster, with the price of metal coins fluctuating wildly. The French regent turned to a Scotsman, John Law, for assistance. Law was a gambler who had exiled himself to France in order to avoid a duel. He suggested that the Banque Royale take deposits and issue bank-notes that would be payable in the value of the currency when the notes were issued. His ideas helped France make the transition from metal-based currency to paper currency, which resulted in a brief period of financial stability.

In August 1717, Law formed the *Companie des Indes* (commonly called the Mississippi Company), which received a monopoly on trading rights with the French colonies in the Americas (the Louisiana territory). By August 1719, Law had created a scheme that would let the Mississippi Company take on the entire French national debt. Portions of the debt would be exchanged for shares in the company. Law promised a 120 percent profit for shareholders. Not surprisingly, 300,000 would-be shareholders vied for the 50,000 shares that were being offered. As demand for the shares soared, the French government, which was effectively controlled by Law, continued to print paper banknotes, which caused inflation to skyrocket.

The bubble burst in May 1720 when a run on the Banque Royale forced the government to admit that the amount of metal-based currency in France was not equal to half the amount of paper currency that was



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circulating. The government issued an order that would gradually depreciate Mississippi Company shares, so that by the end of the year they would be valued at half of their nominal worth. That order was reversed a week later due to extreme public outcry, but the Banque Royale closed. It reopened in June, and the bank runs continued. By November 1720, the Mississippi Company shares were worthless and Law was forced to flee the country.

**Detailed Condition:**

Repaired tear in left margin, just entering printed image.