



Amplissimae Regionis Mississippi seu Provinciae Ludovicianae A R.D. Ludovico  
Hennepin Francisc Miss In America Septentrionali Anno 1687 . . .

**Cartographer:** Johann Baptiste Homann

**Date:** 1720

**Size:** 19 x 22 inches

Striking full color example of Homann's map of the course of the Mississippi River, based upon the reports of Hennepin, who explored the upper Mississippi and Great Lakes regions as a Jesuit Missionary in the late 1600s. The map follows the work of De L'Isle in his seminal map covering the same region. The Mississippi is oddly mis-projected, with the Ohio and several other rivers splitting to the east and tracking near a vignette showing Indians hunting long-horn buffalo. The western rivers, including the Missouri, are equally inaccurate. The map shows a number of explorers' routes throughout the southwest and Louisiana and annotations regarding various regions. Many Indian Tribes and early forts named. Florida is an archipelago. Nice detail in Texas.

The title cartouche (upper left) shows Father Hennepin with allegorical figures related to the exploration of the New World and below them a famous view of Niagara Falls. The colored vignette (lower right) presents a very early representation of an American bison flanked by Indians. Latin and French text.

German cartographer Homann's "Louisiana Province" is one of the most attractive early maps of the American interior—as well as being politically provocative. It represents essentially the eastern half of the United States, but focuses on the enormous region called "La Louisiane," the ownership of which had been a political hot button between Spain and France throughout the 1700s.

Homann's model for his map was Delisle's important *Carte de la Louisiane et du Cours du Mississipi* of 1718. Delisle's labeling of the territory west of the Appalachians as *La Louisiane* assumed a French proprietorship that provoked angry protests from the Spanish and British governments. Homann repeated the label on the present map, thus perpetuating a cartographic war in which the mapmakers of each country issued publications showing their preferences toward political claims.

Homann departs from the Delisle model, however, in his delineation of the Spanish territory of Florida, which he shows as occupying primarily the Southeast. (A variant issue of the map indicates a much more extensive northern boundary, i.e., reaching as far north as the Appalachians.) Further details include a very early form of the word *Texas*, seen in the legend reading *Mission de las Teyas, etablie en 1716* near present-day San Antonio. Routes of early explorers are shown and dated; the New Mexico pueblos are named as far north as Taos, as are the locations of Indian tribes and of many early settlements.

Homann dedicated the map to the French priest Louis Hennepin, who explored the Great Lakes regions and claimed to have reached the mouth of the Mississippi River. The dedication is actually a reinforcement of French proprietorship of the Louisiana region. Hennepin also claimed to have made the first drawing of Niagara Falls, an accomplishment recognized on the map by the inclusion of a much-copied view of the falls pictured below the title cartouche featuring Hennepin.

Homann's ornamental flourishes are, in fact, the hallmark of his style, and his maps are particularly notable for their well-engraved thematic cartouches. The depiction of New World symbols on this map is especially engaging, as for example in the fascinating representation of an American buffalo flanked by male and female Indians with a pelican in the foreground. This is a wonderfully detailed map, especially fine for the Mississippi Basin and the Great Lakes region. An outstanding and dramatic example that represents 18<sup>th</sup> century mapping of the area before the great explosion of knowledge in the later period of colonization.





Carte de la Louisiane et du cours du Mississippi

This map of “la Louisiane” was published by French geographer Guillaume de l’Isle. It is the first detailed map of the Gulf Coast region and the Mississippi River, as well as the first printed map to show Texas (identified as *Mission de los Teijas etablie en 1716*). The map is also the first to identify New Orleans, founded in 1718 (see the inset detail of the mouth of the St. Louis River). De l’Isle obtained most data from French explorers and fur-traders traveling through North America.

A close examination of the map reveals the land routes of early explorers in North America. Each route is mapped out and identified with the explorer’s name and year of travel. The map represents the travels of Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto in Florida and the southeast in 1539–1542, Alonso de Leon in 1689, and French Canadian explorer Saint Denis in 1713 and 1716, among others. De l’Isle accurately identified the location of many Native American tribes, marked by a small hut symbol and a name.

De l’Isle’s map provoked outrage among the English for extending French claim over British-controlled areas and reducing the size of the English coastal colonies. He further angered the British by stating on the map that Carolina was named after French King Charles IX, instead of after Charles I, King of England, and by identifying Charles Town (Charleston) as “nommé par les Francois,” although Charleston was actually named after Charles II of England. In recognition of his work in promoting France’s commercial interests, Louis XV named De l’Isle “Premier geographic du Roi.” Despite the availability of new information, the *Carte de la Louisiane* greatly influenced later maps of North America as noted above.



### NOVISSIMA TABULA REGIONIS LUDOVICIANÆ

*Gallice Dictæ La Louisiane iam olim quidem sub Canadæ et Florida; nomine in America Septentrionali notæ nunc vero sub auspiciis Sereniss: Ducis Aurelianensis maxime inclarescentis Colonise Gallicæ, delineata ex recentissimis itinerariis et commentariis Gallicis a Guil: Insulano Geographo et Socio Regiæ Scientiarum Academia- et recognita a Chr: Weigelio Nor.*

**Size:** 12 x 16 inches

**Location:** In Johann David Kohler's "Bequemer schulund reisen-atlas aller zu erlernung deralten, weittlern undneuen Geographie." Nurnberg, C. Weigeln, 1734 [?]. Library of Congress.

The date of the map is fixed as after 1717 by the legend at *Natchitoches* on the Red River, *etablissem Francois fait en 1717 par M. de Bienville*. It does not chronicle the founding of New Orleans, which took place in 1718. The copy of the map in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island, locates "Orleans" in its proper place.

Guillaume Insulanus (Guillaume Delisle), 1675-1726, the leading geographer and mapmaker of his day, was geographer to Louis XIV, King of France. He published a number of beautiful atlases, and has the credit of being, if not the first, at least one of the first, to accept the then new view that California was a peninsula.

The map displayed above derives its importance from its delineation of the French claims concerning the boundary between their possessions in the valley of the Mississippi and the Spanish possessions in Mexico, at the time when the struggle between France and Spain over this question was at its height.



Although of French origin, the map traces the basis of the Spanish claim, namely the expedition of De Soto, 1539-42, as this is now usually accepted, through Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. The scene of the crossing of the Mississippi is placed thirty or forty miles below the present city of Memphis, Tennessee. After De Soto's death, which took place near the junction of the Red River and the Mississippi, his successor, Moscoso, led the party westward in an endeavor to find the Gulf of Mexico in that direction; but failing, he returned, and descended the Mississippi to the Gulf.

The basis of the French claim was laid by La Salle 145 years or thereabouts later, when he brought an over-seas expedition to Texas.

By mistake, perhaps due to faulty maps, the single surviving ship of this expedition missed the mouth of the Mississippi and made land on the coast of Texas, at the mouth of *Rio de San Marco ou Colorado*, at the point marked *Fort Francois Etablissem't de M. de la Salle Jan 1685*. The bay in question, *Baye S. Louis ou S. Bernard*, is the present Matagorda Bay. A second and more healthful spot was soon chosen on the present Garcitas River, near the head of Lavaca Bay. This vessel itself was lost in searching for the Mississippi; and illness and scarcity of food forced the leader to leave a few men at the fort, which had been erected, and set out for the Illinois for assistance. He was murdered on the way by one of his own men, somewhat north of the first location, at a point marked *Icy fut tue Mr. de la Salle en 1687*. After the leader's death, his brother, John Cavelier, led the survivors over the route indicated on the map to the mouth of the Arkansas, and thence northward on the Mississippi to New France. This route in Texas is marked, *Route de M. Cavelier en 1687*.

In 1689 a Spanish force from Mexico carried off all the surviving Frenchmen that could be found, nine in number; and in 1698 they themselves founded Pensacola farther to the east, near Mobile Bay.

It was a see-saw game between rival colonial powers that now set in, Spain and France ceaselessly maneuvering, each endeavoring to establish itself and to oust the other, and each seeking the support of the natives of the country.

France took the next step. In 1699 Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, "fighting trader, hero of the fur raids on Hudson Bay, and the most dashing military figure in New France," founded *Bilocci* on Mobile Bay, a settlement that was shifted a number of times to different spots on the bay; and on the same bay *Fort Louis* was founded. In 1712 the King of France made the Crozat grant of a commercial monopoly in the interior of America, to last for fifteen years, covering all the country south of the Illinois and between the English on the east and the Spaniards on the west. To further the new commercial policy and to build up trade with the Spaniards in Mexico, Saint Denis made French explorations from 1713 to 1716, through Texas as far as the *Rio del Norte* [Rio Grande], along routes indicated on the map; and Bienville founded the French settlement at Natchitoches on the *R. Rouge* [Red River] in 1717. The French city of "Orleans" (New Orleans) was founded in 1718, but this is not on this version of the map.

The Spaniards established six missions, from 1716-17, very close to the French at Natchitoches, and west of the latter settlement was *Mission de los Teijas etablie en 1716*. This inscription is one of the first occurrences of the word *Texas* on any map.

Of boundary treaties to decide the rival claims of the two countries in the region there were none, so that in the southwest, as in the northeast, the French map-maker stretched the claims of his country to the limit. A few attempts were made to mark the line between the French and the Spaniards down to 1763, a few leaden plates were sunk

along the Sabine River to mark the line; but nothing was accomplished.

Delisle's map is one of the first to show the French claims to the Rio Grande as the boundary line between Louisiana and Mexico; and following suit were other French maps of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But in 1762 le S. Robert de Vaugondy constructed a map of *Amerique Septentrionale*, in which he recedes from the usual French position and concedes the claim of Spain by placing the boundary on the Sabine River. But it was in this same year of 1762 that France gave up to Spain the French claim west of the Mississippi. France no longer had reason to make the old claim in that direction. In the same year, 1762, D. Thomas Lopez published a map in Spain, in which this leading Spanish map-maker follows the French claim and makes Louisiana extend to the Rio Grande. But why not? Was not Louisiana then a Spanish colony?

John R. Ficklen expresses the view that there is nothing conclusive in the testimony of the maps on the subject of the Louisiana boundary. "It would seem," he says, "that as to number and trustworthiness, they are about equally divided." Indeed, in the absence of an official demarcation line, the map-maker's only guide was his own opinion or national prejudice. There are a number of maps that place the line midway between the Rio Grande and the Sabine. Ficklen's article is accompanied by a reproduction of two of Vaugondy's maps, but these two are not so satisfactory as the one here cited, in the New York Public Library. He does not reproduce the Lopez map.

The Spanish advance up the *Rio del Norte* into *Nova Mexico* is indicated by the *Via regia ex Mexico in Novam Mexico*, and by various settlements, *S. Phelipe d'Albuquerque* [ondee en 1705, *Sa. Fe*, *Villa nueva de S. Maria de Grado* [ondee en 1705, *Pueblo de Pecuries* fonde depuis peu, and by *los Taos*.

The chain of forts by which France at this early period sought to protect her claims against her opponents, the Spaniards and the English, already appears at a few points, *Catarocoui* at the outlet of *Lacus Ontario* into the St. Lawrence, *F. Denonville* on the site of the later Fort Niagara at the outlet of the Niagara River, *le Detroit* between Lakes Huron and Erie, *Ancien Fort* at the mouth of the Ohio, *Fort ou Ecors Prudhomme* near Memphis on the Mississippi, *Rosalie* below Natchez, *Vieu Fort* near the mouth of the Mississippi, and *Vieu F. de Bilocci*, *Fort Louis* and *Vieu Fort* on or near Mobile Bay.

There is an Indian settlement at *Chicagou* on the southwestern shores of Lake Michigan, and the *Chicagou R* empties into the *Riviere Illinois*.

A striking characteristic of the map is the marvelously correct delineation of the Mississippi River, which differs little from that of the maps of the present day. The French travelers and surveyors had traversed the whole of the course of the river from the Gulf of Mexico to within two degrees beyond the Falls of St. Anthony, and had set down its devious course, the location of its tributaries, the high banks in the north, the low flat banks in the south, and the many shoals. Of the important tributaries on the east, only one, the *Ouisconsin* [Wisconsin] leading to the *Riv. aux Renards* [the Fox], on the Great Lakes, the most important traveled route in early colonial times from the waters of the Mississippi to those of the St. Lawrence, seems to be well done; the *Illinois* [Illinois] and *Ouabache* [the Wabash, that is, the Ohio] are not so well done. The last two river routes between Canada and Louisiana were little frequented in early times.

It has been claimed that this is the first map to represent the two tributaries of the Ohio, the Cumberland and the Tennessee. The names of these two rivers were applied later.

On the west, the Missouri and its leading tributaries, the *Aiaouez* [Big Sioux] and the modern Dakota on the east, and the *Ossages* [Osage], *Grand Riviere des Cansez*



[Kansas] and the *Panis* [Platte] rivers on the west, are also well done. The waters of the Missouri had apparently been traversed as far as the modern Big Cheyenne, marked on the map by the inscription *Franci ultra ft. Missouri longius non processerunt*. In the continuation of this river farther to the west the author probably mistakes the Big Cheyenne for the Missouri. The *Akansas* [Arkansas] and the *Rouge* [Red] beyond Natchitoches are poorly done and probably had been little explored. The mapping of the *Rio del Norte* [Rio Grande] and of the rivers in Texas and Florida, copied from Spanish sources, is inferior to that of the French in the interior of the continent.

The rivers of the Atlantic Coast, in Florida copied from Le Moyne, are also poorly done; but the Great Lakes, with Lake Champlain in correct position, are much improved, and are probably the best representation of these up to this time. The small lakes of western New York are singularly well done, and could have been thus drawn only after careful survey. The portages leading from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi south from Lake Champlain, and south and west from Lakes Erie and Michigan, call attention to the various interior routes of the French in these parts.

The Appalachian Mountains, the Ozarks, and the Rocky Mountains are correctly located. Nor do the mineral resources of the land elude the French, as is shown by the map's various references to the salt houses and salines on the Mississippi, for example to those near St. Louis, to copper mines at various points, to the lead mines east and west of the Mississippi in the present states of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and to the "metas" of iron in the Ozarks of Missouri. Meadows, or prairies, are noted on the banks of the Missouri, as well as a hunting ground of one hundred and eighty leagues in extent south of the Ohio, where the Illinois Indians hunted cows (buffaloes).

Few early maps so clearly represent the location of the Indian tribes. Some, especially in Texas, are represented as *errantes* [wandering], and along the coast in Texas are *Indi errantes et Antropophagi* [wandering and cannibal tribes].

Under Virginia, on the sea coast, is the legend: *Icy fut defeat et fait prisonier Abatschakin Roi de ces contreese* [Here Abatschakin, King of these regions, was defeated and made prisoner], and, under Carolina, *ita nominata in honorem R. Caroli IX a Francis qui eam detexerunt et possederunt usque ad ann. 1660* [So named by the French in honor of King Charles IX, who discovered and held it till 1660].

On No. 238 of the Kohl Collection of Maps, in the Library of Congress, J. G. Kohl inscribes a note in which he says that this map of Delisle's "is the mother and main source of all the later maps of the Mississippi and the whole west of the United States."



Detail of the Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois and Ohio Rivers showing the routes of various explorers like De Soto, Route de M. Cavelier and La Salle





*Detail of Virginia and Carolina*

#### References:

Cumming, W.P., *The Southeast in Early Maps*, p. 213

Fite, E. and Freeman, A., *A Book of Old Maps Delineating American History*, pp. 176-179, #46.

Goss, *Mapping of North America*, map 49 49;

McCorkle 720.1; Sellers & Van Ee 102; Day 401; Lowery 475; Wheat 144.