

# CARTE DU COMITE FRANCE-AMERIQUE

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(Lecture delivered by Ingénieur Hydrographe en Chef PELISSIER (France) before the IVth International Hydrographic Conference, 19th April, 1937).

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M. PÉLISSIER, Ingénieur Hydrographe en Chef (France) explained in a few words the object of this chart (which was shown to the Delegates) and the different French voyages of discovery which it represented.

The "France-America Committee" desired to offer to President Roosevelt and the larger Universities of the United States a chart representing the principal itineraries of the French Explorers in North America from the XVI to XVIII centuries, to be presented in May 1935 on the occasion of the maiden voyage of the S.S. *Normandie* to the United States. This chart was intended to give expression to the idea developed by Mr John FINLEY, President of New York University in his book entitled "The French in the heart of America".

The French Hydrographic Service charged with the production of this document first prepared a chart of "double elephant" size (75 by 105 cm;) utilizing as a basis the *Carte Générale. Bathymetrique des Océans*, of the Prince of Monaco, having a scale of 1/10,000,000 at the Equator. After some research which seemed rather long in view of the limited time available, the itineraries were plotted as accurately as possible and in as much detail as the scale of the chart and the data collated permitted. At the same time, at the suggestion of M. de la RONCIÈRE, *Conservateur de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, the chart in preparation was ornamented with several scenes relating to the explorations represented on the chart.

The itineraries plotted correspond to 25 groups of explorations lying between those of Giovanni VERAZZANO, Florentine captain, charged by Francis I in 1524 with the exploration of the coasts of the New World and that of LAPEROUSE, who, in the course of his celebrated and unfortunate voyage of circumnavigation, from July to September 1786, followed the west coast of America from Mount Saint Elias and the Port of the French (Lituya Bay), the scene of the frightful disaster of the Expedition, to Monterey.

Time does not permit an enumeration of all these voyages. We shall confine ourselves to a few of the principal ones;— Jacques CARTIER from 1534 to 1542 discovered and explored the St Lawrence as far as Stadacone; Samuel CHAMPLAIN, the founder of Quebec, reached the fresh waters of Lake Huron in 1615, Père MARQUETTE explored the Mississippi as far as the confluence of the Arkansas, CAVELIER de la SALLE descended the Great Waters (Mississippi) to the Gulf of Mexico and was killed by his companions when he attempted to retrace his steps by going up the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico. LE MOYNE D'IBERVILLE and his brother LE MOYNE DE BIENVILLE explored Hudson Bay and Louisiana; Pierre GAU-

THIER DE VARENNES, Sieur de la VERENDRYE (1) his son and their companions pushed inland as far as the Rocky Mountains in 1743 extending the zone of French Exploration 1000 kilometres further to the westward than any previously explored.

A plate was made (coasts, rivers, lakes) and lettering was prepared by heliogravure on zinc from a specially prepared tracing. A second plate, obtained by the same process contained the scenes which had been selected for representation. A third zinc plate obtained with the aid of a "simili" tracing represented by suitable tints the three zones of European influence in 1763 as well as the region remaining unexplored at that time. The chart was printed in three colours: grey, bistre and buff, as described above.

In order to make the track of the itineraries stand out more distinctly it was necessary to use a number of colours. Eleven colours were chosen, which were used at the same time for the colouring of the drawings. But only a few charts were required by the France-America Committee. Taking into consideration a supplementary distribution, the total did not exceed 25 copies. Under these conditions the onerous preparation of eleven different colour plates for the colouring of the itineraries and drawings appeared to be impracticable. The basic charts having been printed in three colours and in sufficient number, the colouring of the itineraries and the drawings was done by hand. This work took some time as may readily be appreciated by an examination of the charts mounted on the board, and as these charts were not requested of the Hydrographic Service before 25 February and had to be ready by May 18th at the latest, you may well imagine the worry it caused the Chief of the Section for *Hydrographie Générale* during those eleven weeks which elapsed while the work was in progress.

As soon as the France-America Committee was in possession of one copy of the chart, they had it reproduced in colours to a scale half as large. This reproduction was distributed more widely than that of the "double elephant" size.

Thereupon the Committee requested the Ministry of Marine for delivery of 100 and then 200 more copies of this large chart. As it was not possible to colour all these by hand it was decided to print in 14 colours (2) after having prepared the eleven supplementary zincs necessary. These plates were also to serve for the coloured drawings at the same time. Those of you who are acquainted with the processes of multiple superposed printing from numerous plates can form some idea of the difficulties arising from the fact that the drawings were on separate plates from those of the itineraries tied up with the outline chart plate. We did not wish to be obliged to make more runs than were necessary for the colouring of the itineraries. However, at that moment it would have been better had we abandoned the

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(1) This great explorer was the object of a singular misfortune. None of his names is mentioned in either the Biography of Michaud, or the Larousse of the XIXth or XXth century — nor in the *Grande Encyclopédie*.

(2) Whence 15 runs through the press, since the gold tint required two runs.

idea of having the grey and the bistre respectively for the outline and for the tints and employed for this purpose a common plate even though that would have necessitated remaking the zinc plate to be used for the tints. I should add that that preparation of a zinc plate which in one impression would give the four zones (outline and three washes) which would have been necessary did not appear to be recommended. The printing in four different tints with the aid of four different plates would have permitted a better joining up of the tints selected and would not have been onerous.

The copy which was shown to the Delegates in the Library was one of those which had been printed in 14 colours. There was displayed in the Committee Room of the International Hydrographic Bureau one of the copies which was coloured by hand like those delivered to the Franco-American Committee.

