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DROP BY THE AIRPORT TO FLY BACK IN TIME

New San Francisco Airport Exhibition Features Highlights From Private Map Collection, Providing a Unique Look at the Evolution of America

SAN FRANCISCO – June 26, 2003 – The San Francisco International Airport (SFO) is a starting point for many travelers, and now explorers have the chance to gain a new perspective of the country without ever leaving the ground.

Mapping America, a new exhibition at SFO, provides a unique look at America's evolution through a selection of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth -century maps that are part of the private collection of David Rumsey (www.davidrumsey.org).

Among the treasures to be seen in the exhibition is a first edition map showing Lewis and Clark's early expedition across the western portion of North America along with a rare, eight by eight foot wall map by Henry Popple dating back to 1733 and once owned by King George II. Regarded as the most accurate map of its day, this large-scale and highly detailed record of the settling of early America was used as late as 1893 as evidence in settling various land disputes.

"You can read historical maps like old photographs. They can make the study of history a visual discovery and journey," Rumsey says. "When you pore over old maps up close, you see amazing things that no longer exist in the landscape or, better yet, a landscape shown on the map that never existed."

Rumsey says he can't image a better place to exhibit his private map collection than the airport, the only accredited museum in an airport in the country. The installation includes 74 maps, atlases, guidebooks and charts from his private collection, which numbers more than 150,000 pieces.

At the San Francisco International Airport, the public has an opportunity to interface with the collection in a unique way through the use of multimedia monitors, which display digital images from the collection. For example, a



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digital elevation model of Yosemite Valley uses modern three-dimensional GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software to provide viewers a bird's eye view of this California landmark.

“What’s interesting for me is this is a chance for the public to see the real stuff,” says Rumsey, who invites continued public exploration of his map collection online at the award-winning David Rumsey Historical Map Collection web site: www.davidrumsey.org.

Rumsey began scanning the cartographic material from his collection more than a decade ago to provide greater access to the materials and a new way of looking at the collection. Presenting individual maps in a digital format literally breaks the boundaries of an atlas's bookbinding. Using Luna Imaging's Insight® software, viewers can search for maps in the online collection, such as the large-scale Poppel map, and zoom in on details that may otherwise be difficult to see with the naked eye.

The Mapping America exhibition is on view through January 15, 2004 and is open 24 hours a day, free of charge. It is located pre-security in Gallery D-5 Central South Connector, located between Terminals 1 and 2 near the Delta and American Airline gates. For a map locating the exhibit space see www.sfoarts.org/maps/index.html

About SFO

The San Francisco Airport Museums, www.sfoarts.org, program was established by the Airport Commission in 1980 for the purposes of humanizing the Airport environment, providing visibility for the unique cultural life of San Francisco, and providing educational services for the traveling public. Today, the San Francisco Airport Museums features approximately 20 galleries throughout the Airport terminals.

About David Rumsey

Through his company, Cartography Associates, David Rumsey www.davidrumsey.org promotes the distribution of digital facsimiles in both print and electronic media. Specializing in both primary source documents and cutting-edge technology, Rumsey is committed to developing tools that integrate cataloging with visual images on the Internet. Rumsey's vision is to offer users the best of both worlds: the powerful searching, access, and user functionality made possible by technology, combined with the visual beauty, technical mastery and intellectual richness of original source materials.