



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

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**The United States as viewed by California (Very Unofficial) Distorted and Drawn by  
Ernest Dudley Chase**

**Stock#:** 41799  
**Map Maker:** Chase  
**Date:** 1940  
**Place:** Winchester, MA  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 23 x 17 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

Fine example of Ernest Dudley Chase's whimsical map of California.

The map depicts California from the point of view of a "typical" Californian, with the Sun smiling on a disproportionately large California while the rest of the country is compressed into a spider's web beneath dark rain clouds.

The state is filled with lively illustrations showing agriculture, recreational opportunities and wildlife, and depict landmarks such as Spanish Colonial missions, the Rose Bowl, the Bakersfield oil wells and the state capital building. An airplane in the sky bearing the slogan "we'll soon be there!" approaches the state line along with a train, a bus and cars, while railroad cars carrying California produce head east.

Chase probably was inspired by Daniel K. Wallingford's popular maps A New Yorker's Idea of the United



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### **The United States as viewed by California (Very Unofficial) Distorted and Drawn by Ernest Dudley Chase**

States of America, and A Bostonian's Idea of the United States of America, both of which were first published around 1936 and redraw the U.S. with a similar comic premise. The Harvard University Map Collection owns a copy of this map.

Ernest Dudley Chase was one of the most prolific and renowned pictorial map artists of the 20th century, producing about 50 maps published from the 1930s to the 1960s. Chase's maps cover a wide assortment of locations and topics. The biographical pamphlet *A Meticulous Maker of Maps* describes Chase's "passion for perfection," executing the detailed pictures under a magnifying glass "dot by dot, with tiny pens."

Ernest Dudley Chase was born in Lowell, Massachusetts and began his career as a graphic artist. He established his own greeting card company, which he sold to Rust Craft Publishers in 1920. He authored *The Romance of Greeting Cards*, the first complete history of the medium, published in 1926, with a revised edition in 1956.

Chase began drawing maps at age 49, which he self-published from his home in Winchester, Massachusetts.

Chase donated many examples of his maps to the Harvard University Map Collection, Pusey Library, which featured them in the exhibition "The Pictorial Maps of Ernest Dudley Chase" from February to April 2003. According to the curators of the exhibit, Chase "designed pictorial maps ranging in scale from his own hometown to global themes of navigation, exploration, communication, and world peace. He could be alternately whimsical, didactic, and subtly allusive--often on the same map." In 2009, the State Library of Massachusetts presented the exhibition "Ernest Dudley Chase: A Worldview in Maps," showcasing his wide variety of works.

#### **Detailed Condition:**