



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

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(858) 551-8500  
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## Americans of Negro Lineage

**Stock#:** 65926  
**Map Maker:** Jefferson  
**Date:** 1946  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 37.5 x 28 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

Rare pictorial map illustrating important people and places in African American culture in the United States and Canada, drawn by African American artist Louise E. Jefferson for the National Council of Churches.

This map celebrates the considerable achievements of black Americans in all walks of life: writers, artists, scientists, educators, entertainers, athletes and the men and women who worked the land and built the country from the ground up. Even Jackie Robinson is mentioned as a member of the Montreal Royals minor league team, just one year away from breaking the color barrier in major league baseball. As noted in Laura Bilss's, *How 20th-Century Women Put the 'Art' in Cartography*, ( March 25, 2016):

*It is a remarkable map, especially considering its time. Black American scientists, scholars, inventors, writers, musicians, artists, steel workers, farmers, actors, and athletes are drawn in careful, vivid detail and located in their respective geographies, their achievements and contributions called out in snippets of text. Some of the figures are identified on the map, but many others aren't—a powerful way of putting the unnamed black workers who literally built America on the same plane as the Harriet Tubmans and Louis T. Wrights of the world. Tyner notes that Jefferson's figures "are less cartoonish and certainly less stereotypical" than the way some other pictorial mapmakers (and other producers of popular culture) were representing people of color at the time.*

The following Biography is excerpted from the Tulane University website:



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*Jefferson was born in Washington, D.C. in 1908 . . . the only child of Louise and Paul Jefferson. Her father was a calligrapher for the United States Treasury, and her mother made a living playing piano and singing aboard cruise ships on the Potomac River. . .*

*Louise began her training at Hunter College in New York City where she studied fine art, and then on to Columbia University where she studied graphic arts. During her time in New York City, Jefferson became involved with the Harlem Artist's Guild, and is credited as a founding member. She was an active member of the artistic community during the Harlem Renaissance, and she became close friends with poet Langston Hughes, and shared an apartment with Pauli Murray, who would become an influential activist, lawyer, and priest.*

*At the start of her career, Jefferson designed posters for the YWCA in New York City, until she was discovered by the Friendship Press, the publishing branch for the National Council of Churches. By 1942, Jefferson was the Artistic Director for the Friendship Press and she had control of every aspect of the Press's book productions. While working for Friendship Press, Jefferson also accepted freelance work from publishing companies Doubleday, Macmillan, and Viking, and also from the University presses of Columbia, Oxford, Rutgers, and Syracuse. Jefferson would retire from the Friendship press in 1960, but she remained busy designing book jackets and maps for publishing companies and Universities.*

*Once retired, Jefferson set her sights on the most ambitious project of her life. Over the course of several years, Jefferson made five trips to Africa to do research for what would become her book, *The Decorative Arts of Africa*. She travelled the continent extensively, visiting Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Jefferson used her photographs and drawings from her adventures to create *The Decorative Arts of Africa*, which was published in 1973. Containing over 300 illustrations, Louise describes her book "as a visual sampling of what the spirit and tempo of the African artist's role has been in the past and what it continues to be today."*

*In her later years, Jefferson settled down in the picturesque town of Litchfield Connecticut, where she maintained an art studio and could always be found with her beloved camera, ready to capture a photo at a moment's notice. She spent the last few years of her life tending to her garden, entertaining friends, and taking snapshots around Litchfield. Louise Jefferson passed away in 2002 at the age of 93.*

The Louise Jefferson papers are held by the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

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**Americans of Negro Lineage**

**Rarity**

The map is very rare. This is the first example we have ever seen on the market.

**Detailed Condition:**