



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

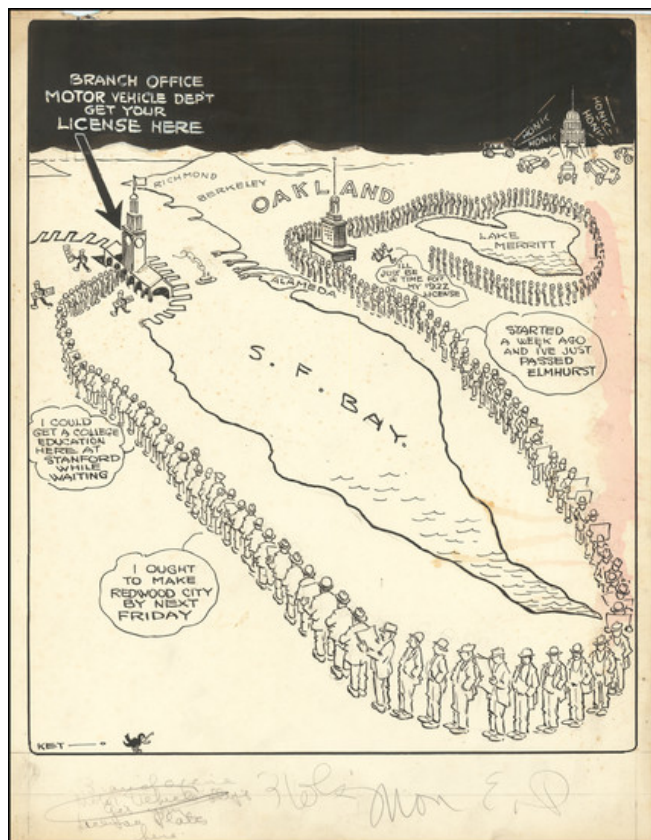
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[Long Lines at the DMV]

Stock#: 68563
Map Maker: Kettlewell
Date: 1921
Place: Oakland
Color: Uncolored
Condition: Good
Size:
Price: SOLD



Description:

Original Pen and Ink Cartoons on Artist's Board

This is a great vintage cartoon lambasting the California Department of Motor Vehicles for its long lines, evidently an issue in 1921 as it is nearly a century later. This is an early career work by the famed early 20th-century Californian cartoonist Frank Kettlewell and signed with his signature "Ket," showing a small quacking bird.

The map humorously depicts San Francisco and the Bay Area, showing a DMV line stretching southwards around the bay, wrapping around to Oakland and encircling Lake Merritt. At various points in the queue, quips about how long people have been in line are made. In the far east of the map, evidently indicating Sacramento, cars honk at the capitol building, voicing their displeasure.

Few records indicate how widespread this issue was, or how widespread discontentment with the DMV



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was. The official history of the DMV offers some clues. As of 1920, license plates were issued yearly, meaning that all drivers had to get a new metal license once a year. Evidently, the branch offices were not equipped to face such steep demand, and lines may have become excessive. Annual license plates in California would continue until 1942 when metal shortages forced the DMV to issue only small stickers indicating that the car was registered. Whether or not the problem was fixed after 1921 remains unknown.

Given the reputation upheld by the DMV today, this cartoon speaks clearly to the modern observer.

Detailed Condition:

Manuscript notations from creator or editor in pencil along bottom. Staining to right of image. Minor loss to top margin.