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1914-1915 Panoramic Automobile Road Map and Tourist Guide Book Southern California

Stock#: 78625
Map Maker: Cundiff
Date: 1914
Place: Los Angeles
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 5 x 9 inches
Price: \$ 3,500.00



Description:

The Most Decorative Californian Road Atlas We Have Seen. An Uncommon and Truly Fabulous Piece.

Amazing Southern California traveler's guide including well over one hundred maps, the vast majority of which are delightful aerial views showing uncommon vistas of rural and urban areas. A revolutionary and unusual design for a road atlas, it hails from the earliest period of driving in California and provides an unparalleled look at what early motorists would have experienced. This map was issued by The Cadmus Press and illustrated by Willard Cundiff in Los Angeles.

The plates in the book are truly remarkable. They provide amazing views, as detailed as any other maps produced during the time and the work is unparalleled in the breadth of historical geographical information provided for the period. The maps of Los Angeles provide a great starting point, explicating the early history of the roads out of the city, but the book shines in its depictions of San Bernardino, the Imperial Valley, and the coastal ranges, areas which are seldom shown in this level of detail in maps. The depictions of the coastal areas of San Diego are also noteworthy. All the illustrated information is supplemented with detailed text describing the areas shown.

A particular leaflet included in the booklet describes the newest and some of the earliest road laws passed in Los Angeles in 1914. These include that drivers must drive on the right side of the road, that they must be within two feet of a curb when stopping, and that parking is not allowed in front of theaters. These laws paint a dire picture of what driving in the city must have looked like before the enactment of these laws.

All in all, this is a terrific piece of Californiana and a must for any serious collection of early twentieth-century California cartographic material.



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The Earliest Automobiles of California

The state of Californian roads in 1914 was a far cry from today. Driving had only just started to take off in the 1910s, which makes this remarkable guide rather early. The first recorded public instance of driving dates from 1897 following a trial show run from Los Angeles to San Bernardino. This led to widespread popularity, and by 1905, there were approximately 6500 registered motorized vehicles. Still, this tiny number represented only a sliver of the state's wealthiest members, and California still lagged behind its eastern counterparts in terms of car consumption.

Henry Ford's Model T hit the road in 1908, and the rapid growth in interest regarding motoring would start. The *California Highway Act of 1910* issued 18 million dollars in bonds which allowed for better highway construction and propelled the state's automobile industry and economy into the modern age. Better roads meant more motorists and allowed for the distances between points to be shortened, and allowed for California's diverse industries to be properly connected for the first time. This would lead to positive feedback where more motorists led to more infrastructure needed, a feedback loop that has continued for over one hundred years.

Willard Cundiff

Little is able to be traced about Willard Cundiff's personal life, but it is apparent that he made a number of important early southern California illustrations. He was born in Missouri in 1887, and the majority of works he produced in Los Angeles were in the first two decades of the twentieth century. He was an active cartoonist, producing a fantastic and rare book called "*A San Diego Cartoon Book*" that showed the famous residents of the city. For the *Panoramic Automobile Road Map*, he spent months travelling around southern California to understand the layout of the roads and the surrounding topography.

Detailed Condition:

Thin quarto. Publisher's light brown cloth with title printed on front board and embossed functioning compass. Some wear at edges and dislocation of hinges, professionally stabilized. [2]; viii; 288; [2]; folding map; complete. All maps in VG to VG+ condition, with a minor fold split on the appended folding map.