



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

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**World Travel on United States Government Ships — To New York, South America & the Orient by United States Lines**

**Stock#:** 95363  
**Map Maker:** Anonymous  
**Date:** 1928 circa a  
**Place:** n.p.  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 18.75 x 28.5 inches  
**Price:** \$ 975.00



**Description:**

***A Shipping Line Launched With Captured WWI German Ocean Liners***

Rare promotional travel poster, advertising transit services of the United States Lines.

The map's title suggests that the poster was created during the period when the shipping line was still owned by the US Government, prior to its sale to PW Chapman Company in 1929.

The United States Lines, an iconic name in maritime history, began as a trade moniker for the United



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### World Travel on United States Government Ships — To New York, South America & the Orient by United States Lines

States Shipping Board's Emergency Fleet Corporation (EFC) formed during World War I. The corporation was initially established to operate the large German liners seized by the United States in 1917. These ex-German liners, such as *Leviathan* and *George Washington*, along with the USSB-built ships *President Roosevelt* and *President Harding*, served routes between New York and Europe. One of the founders of the United States Lines was Kermit Roosevelt, the son of US President Theodore Roosevelt.

Two of the initial three ships—*America* and *George Washington*—were German vessels seized during the Great War and kept as reparations, starting their journey under the banner of the United States Lines by running the New York-Bremen routes. The company gained fame in the 1920s through the heroic rescue missions led by Captain George Fried using their ships *President Roosevelt* and *America*.

By 1922, the line expanded its fleet with the acquisition of more ships that were renamed after U.S. Presidents, including the gargantuan *Leviathan*, formerly known as *Vaterland*. However, despite its expanding fleet and operations, the company accumulated significant debt throughout the 1920s. In a bid for financial stability, it was sold to the P.W. Chapman Company in 1929 and subsequently rebranded as the "United States Lines Inc." of Delaware. The stock market crash of that year compounded the company's financial woes, leading to the sale of the remaining ships to the "United States Lines Company" of Nevada. By the end of 1931, the United States Lines was absorbed by the Roosevelt International Mercantile Marine Company.

During the 1930s, the United States Lines welcomed its first custom-built ships, *Manhattan* and *Washington*, and later, a new *America* in 1940. Additionally, it proposed an innovative concept for a passenger liner that would also serve as a mail ship, capable of catapulting an aircraft to expedite trans-Atlantic mail delivery. However, the U.S. Congress refused to provide a guarantee on trans-Atlantic postal rates, so the project never materialized.

Throughout this decade, the United States Lines absorbed several divisions from its parent company, Roosevelt International Mercantile Marine, and other operations, including the American Line in 1932, the Baltimore Mail Line in 1937, and the American Merchant Line in 1938. This consolidation marked the evolution of the United States Lines as a dominant player in the maritime industry, navigating through tumultuous times while shaping the course of American maritime history.

#### **Rarity**

The poster is apparently very rare. We locate a single example at auction.



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**Detailed Condition:**

Linen-backed. Evidence of old folds and misfolds, and some old tears.