Barry Lawrence Ruderman
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Chinatown San Francisco

Stock#: 63643rc
Map Maker: Chun

Date: 1939
Place: San Francisco
Color: Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 21.5 x 16.5 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

A Chinatown Rarity

Fine example of Ethel Chun's rare pictorial map of Chinatown, published in San Francisco in 1939, drawn by well known Hawaiian-Chinese Artist Ethel Chun.

Published for the California Chinese Pioneer Historical Society, the map provides a fine out of scale caricature of Chinatown, oriented with west at the top, with a smaller inset of greater San Francisco at the bottom left. On the verso, there is an excellent short history of Chinatown from the Gold Rush onwards, along with a list of 33 "interesting spots in Chinatown" is given, along with a self mailing label to turn the map into a souvenir.

The only example of the map we could locate is the example illustrated by Hornsby in *Picturing America*. As noted on the GeoGarage blog:

> *This map by artist Ethel Chun uses a traditional Chinese color scheme to try and explain the chaos of Chinatown to the average American tourist.*

Ethel Chun

Ethel Chun is perhaps best known as the inventor, with her brother Ellery, of the "Aloha Shirt" in the mid-1930s. As noted in *Hawaiian Shirts--The History, Heritage and Lore ...*

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Chinatown San Francisco

In 1931, . . . Ellery Chun returned to Hawaii after attending school in Connecticut . . . to work for his father's dry goods store in Honolulu. Chun soon took over the business, renamed the store King-Smith Clothiers . . . He enlisted the help of his sister, Ethel Chun Lum, and began making bright print short sleeve shirts made out of the leftover material from Japanese Kimonos. Chun registered the trade name "Aloha" in 1936 and a print ad in the Honolulu Advertiser Newspaper was where he first coined the phrase "Aloha shirt". . .

* * *

. . . The shirts were purchased by local residents, beach boys, surfers and island visitors. Tourists to the islands fell fast for the fad of the brightly colored shirts donned by young islanders. Chun began sponsoring a local radio talent show from the Moana Surfrider Hotel, giving even more acceleration to the popularity of the Hawaiian Aloha shirt. His sister, Ethel, began creating bright tropical fabric patterns that defined Hawaiian designs vs. Asian styles establishing the modern Hawaiian shirt for men.

* * *

Post World War II the shirt's colorful, exotic prints were in even higher demand from tourists who traveled by cruise ship to the islands to the tropical destinations they'd seen on Hollywood screens. By this time, the Hawaiian Aloha shirt had found fame worn by Elvis Presley, John Wayne, Frank Sinatra, and several presidents including Harry S. Truman. The shirts graced movie screens including "From Here to Eternity" and secured a place in history as a Hollywood fashion trend. In 1960, one of the largest garment manufacturers in Hawaii, Kamehameha Garment Company, shipped 35 tons of Aloha shirts to mainland United States.

Rarity

The map is very rare on the market.

OCLC locates a single example at UC Berkley.

Detailed Condition: