



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

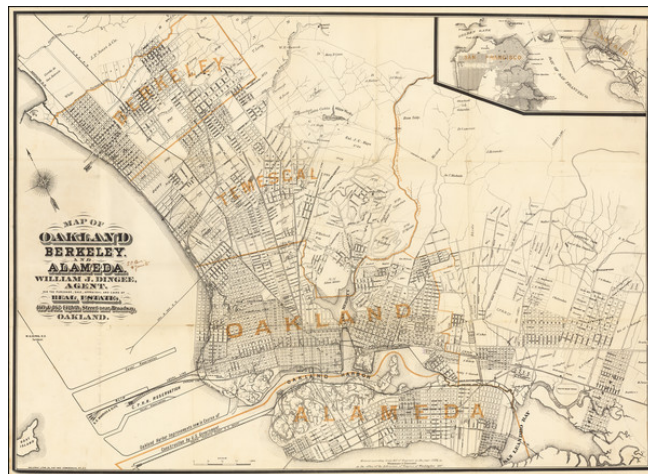
7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500  
blr@raremaps.com

### Map of Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda. William J. Dingee Agent . . . 1878

**Stock#:** 67149jc  
**Map Maker:** King  
**Date:** 1878  
**Place:** San Francisco  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 29 x 21 inches  
**Price:** \$ 3,400.00



#### Description:

#### ***Published Shortly After Incorporation of the Town of Berkeley -- Early Map Promoting William Jackson Dingee***

Antique map of Oakland, Berkeley and surrounding areas, published in the first year of the real estate career of William Jackson Dingee and shortly after the town of Berkeley was incorporated on April 1, 1878.

The map credits Malcolm G. King as surveyor. Published by Woodward & Taggart for William Dingee, who was just then launching his remarkable career in real estate, and lithographed in San Francisco by Galloway Lith.

UC Berkeley appears as an empty plot of land on Strawberry Creek labeled "State University", only 5 years after it was relocated to its present location. Plots of land built on reclaimed land are shown, with Oakland's Bay and Cedar Street overlaying water. Much of the bayfront, particularly in south Oakland and Alameda, remains marshland. Contemporary improvements to the harbor and bayfront are noted.

The Oakland Museum provides the following description:

*This is a particularly useful and valuable map in that it shows ownership of as yet undeveloped areas in Oakland, Piedmont, Berkeley, Emeryville, Alameda, and the Brooklyn Township. Real estate tracts are shown in detail and street names are given -- many of them original, prior to their assimilation into the Oakland system of street and avenue numbering.*



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*Landmarks and lines of transportation are also provided. An inset index map is also provided showing Oakland's relationship to the bay and San Francisco. Large place names and boundaries are printed in a medium ocher ink*

The present example would seem to be the first enlarged edition of the map, with an earlier edition having been issued by Woodward & Taggart in 1877, covering a smaller area having been Lithographed by famed African American lithographer G.T. Brown the prior year. <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt9g5028qh/?&query=oakland%201877>. It seems likely that is 1878 edition was published in the first year of Dingee's employment by Woodward & Taggart, with Dingee shortly thereafter replacing Woodward in the partnership.

An attractive map of the East Bay during a period of rapid expansion and modern development in the area.

#### William Jackson Dingee

William Jackson Dingee (July 22, 1854 - September 5, 1941) established the Oakland Water Company to supply his extensive real estate holdings in the hills above Oakland. His real estate and water dealings gained him significant wealth before his fortunes collapsed and he exiled himself to anonymity in Sacramento.

Dingee was born in Pennsylvania in 1854. He came to Oakland in 1877. William J. Dingee is first listed in the *City Directories* in 1877-78 as a "bookkeeper" with Olney and Company. He first appears in the Leimert Block in 1881-82 as a partner in the firm of Taggart and Dingee, "real estate and general auctioneers". Dingee had advertised in 1885 that having "long resided in Oakland" he could offer homes "at all prices, from neat little tasty cottages at \$1,500 to the more pretentious residences at \$3,000 to \$5,000, or the elegant mansion at \$10,000 and upwards."

His principal activity apparently having been land auctions. By 1887, he was successful enough to construct his lavish "Fernwood" mansion and estate, in the present Montclair area. The estate included a deer and game preserve.

Both Dingee and the Contra Costa Water Company continued to occupy their adjacent offices in the Leimert Block until the mid-1890's, when they became ruthless adversaries during the celebrated "Water War". The water war started when the water company turned down a service request by Dingee. He had wanted the water to develop some of his acreage in the Montclair - Piedmont area. Dingee responded by drilling tunnels into the hills on his estate above Shepherd Canyon to tap underground water sources. In order to pay for this costly venture, he extended his pipes beyond his Piedmont property and into the



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Oakland flatlands, forming in 1893 the Oakland Water Company. This placed him in direct competition with the Contra Costa Water Company.

The competition soon became fierce. Both companies hired experts to analyze each other's water and to declare it unfit for human consumption. Holes were bored into Contra Costa Water's marshland flumes, so that brackish water contaminated its supply for several days, and a City sewer was found hooked onto one of its mains, incidents which were blamed on the Oakland Water Company. Oakland Water claimed that someone was pumping millions of gallons of fresh water out of its Alvarado Wells into the bay. Dingee exclaimed, "The Contra Costa Water Company has hired newspapers to libel me...They have lied about the quality of our water...(and have) pumped lime into our lines...." He also accused Contra Costa Water of cutting and blowing up his mains. The war resulted in severe water shortages. It became impossible to get water into the upper floors of downtown buildings in the afternoon. Pitchers had to be used to carry water to the second floor of City Hall. Mayor Thomas urged that the two companies consolidate and he threatened to form a municipally-operated water company to take over their service, but Contra Costa initially refused to consider consolidation. Finally, in 1898, the City initiated formation of a municipal waterworks, which apparently induced the warring companies to merge under the name of the Contra Costa Water Company, but with Dingee in control.

By 1899, after Dingee had gained control of Contra Costa Water. At the end of the war, Dingee was a millionaire. After his Fernwood mansion was destroyed in an 1899 fire, he moved to 1882 Washington Street in San Francisco, his residence being known as the "diamond palace", and bought two mansions on New York's 5th Avenue which cost \$1 million each. He gained control of the slate roof industry, started cement plant projects in California, Pennsylvania and Washington and became a San Francisco park commissioner. When San Francisco's corrupt Mayor Eugene Schmitz got into legal trouble, Dingee put up a \$200,000 bond for him.

However, about 1908, Dingee's empire crashed and he lost virtually everything. He entered bankruptcy court in 1921 and died in obscurity in 1941.

#### **Rarity**

This first edition of the map is apparently unrecorded.

OCLC locates 2 examples of a map entitled Map of Oakland and Alameda, identifying Dingee as Agent for Woodward & Taggart, which is likely a later edition of the 1877 map referenced above.

We note no examples of this map or the related maps at auction or in dealer catalogues.



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**Map of Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda. William J. Dingee Agent . . . 1878**

The Rumsey Collection includes a later photolithographic edition of the map (5725) which he dates to 1884.

**Detailed Condition:**

Poor trimming on right-hand side.