



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500  
blr@raremaps.com

## [Touring Map of California]

**Stock#:** 76578  
**Map Maker:** Automobile Blue Book  
Publishing Co.  
**Date:** 1917  
**Place:** San Francisco  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 14 x 25.75 inches  
**Price:** \$ 375.00



### Description:

Rare separately published automobile touring map, published by the Automobile Blue Book Publishing Co. in 1917, issued compliments of the Northern California Hotel Association.

Fascinating auto touring map, illustrating the nascency of this genre of mapping.

One of the mysteries of the map is its four color coding system for roads. While blue is clearly the color of



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the "major" roads, there is no clear delineation of the significance of the roads marked in black, white and yellow. We surmise that the black roads are likely minor paved roads and white roads are unpaved, but the yellow remains a mystery and may have something to do with their being in Northern California and being more scenic in nature and/or described by an accompanying guide book.

The map identifies several dozen hotels which were part of the Hotel Association which sponsored the map.

The inset map of Yosemite, showing the locations of the Desmond Park Service Company is quite remarkable, it being difficult to imagine that there were once seven automobile service stations in Yosemite National Park.

Includes a number of photographic views of major northern California tourist attractions, centered on Yosemite Valley and Lake Tahoe.

An unusual and rare early auto touring map.

### **Automobile Blue Book Publishing Company**

The following is excerpted from John T. Bauer's *The Official Automobile Blue Book, 1901-1929: Precursor to the American Road Map*

*Navigating by automobile at the dawn of the twentieth century was difficult because maps appropriate for this new mode of transportation were scarce. An early solution to this problem was the route guide. Listing turn-by-turn directions between various cities, route guides helped early motorists navigate a network of unmarked, local roads. [Bauer's essay] focuses exclusively on the Official Automobile Blue Book, the earliest and most popular of the route guides. It contends that the Blue Book series was a precursor to the American road map because the volumes served two important functions of road maps and did so before road mapping matured into a full-fledged cartographic business. The Blue Book commercialized automobile touring and provided directional information. . .*

*This problem of navigation, or finding one's way, by automobile during the early years of the last century prompted entrepreneurial automobilists to create route guides. These guides helped early automobile tourists navigate through unfamiliar territory by collecting localized directional information and presenting it in a form usable to outsiders. Automobile clubs, highway associations, and other related organizations published or sponsored route guides*



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*during these years, which competed with one another in the marketplace. The Automobile Green Book, official guide book of the Automobile Legal Association of Massachusetts, King's Official Route Guide, published by Sidney J. King of Chicago, Illinois, the Interstate Automobile Tourists' Guide, published by F. S. Blanchard and Company of Worcester, Massachusetts, and the Official Automobile Blue Book, published by the Automobile Blue Book Publishing Company (ABBPC) of New York, are just four examples of guides that were commonly available between 1900 and 1930.*

*. . . the Official Automobile Blue Book [was] the earliest and most popular of the route guides. . . the Blue Book series, and in general all route guides, were a precursor to the American road map . . . . Although the Blue Book methods of recording and transmitting this information were different than road maps that came later, they were uniquely suited for navigating the primitive network of local roads that existed prior to the 1920s.*

*The Official Automobile Blue Book was founded by Charles Howard Gillette, a prominent businessman from Hartford, Connecticut. . . . Before starting the Blue Book in 1901, he founded Columbia Lubricants Company, suppliers of oil and grease for automobiles. He was also a cofounder of the Automobile Club of Hartford, Secretary of the American Automobile Association (AAA), and an occasional official starter for the Vanderbilt Cup automobile races (Hart 1919). Gillette's 1901 Automobile Blue Book covered the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore metropolitan areas. Its stated purpose was to promote touring by establishing routes that connected automobile "supply stations."*

\* \* \*

*Little has been written about how the routes in the Blue Books were first traced. Evidence indicates, however, that both professional and amateur "pathfinders" did this work. These early automobilists took upon themselves the task of field-compiling routes while traveling local, unmarked roads. The first pathfinders were actually bicyclists with the League of American Wheelmen (Mason 1957). After growing enthusiasm for the automobile replaced the bicycle craze of the 1880s and 1890s, the task of pathfinding fell to members of local automobile clubs and highway associations. The compiler's forward to a 1907 Blue Book acknowledges "the friendly cooperation received from the American Automobile Association, its affiliated and other clubs, and from tourists who have placed notes of their own trips" (Class Journal Co. 1907, xxxv). . .*

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*In addition to relying on amateur pathfinders from automobile clubs, by 1907 the Blue Book publishers were employing their own professional pathfinders and outfitting them with official Blue Book cars. . . [In 1907], the entire fleet consisted of three cars that year but expanded as the series grew to include the entire country. In 1924, the western United States required a fleet of five pathfinding cars.*

\* \* \*

*When first introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Official Automobile Blue Book was marketed toward wealthy automobile owners seeking a leisurely touring trip filled with scenery and adventure. Only wealthy Americans at that time, after all, could afford the high expenses of purchasing and operating an automobile. However, after Ford Motor Company introduced the Model T in 1908, the cost of purchasing and operating an auto declined dramatically, thus bringing this new form of transportation, and its associated pastime of touring, to the middle class.*

**Detailed Condition:**

Several dampstains.