What about road maps?

- For bicycles and the first cars - few roads and most were dusty or muddy ruts.
- There were no route numbers.
- "Maps" used photos and route descriptions.
- Named roads such as the Lincoln Highway or National Old Trail were used.
- Highways and maps used symbols.
- State route numbers started with WI in 1917.
- US routes weren't numbered until late 1926.
- Road maps became much easier to read, but the accordion fold wasn't the standard until 1953.
- Billions of maps have been given away.
- Digital maps and GPS have made getting directions easy but paper maps are better for general planning.

Why give away maps?

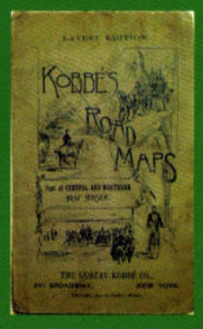
- OK, this one is obvious… to help travelers.
- To entice people to visit their country, state, city, or region.
- Businesses would often use maps for advertising - this could be on maps they distributed or on maps distributed by other entities.
- Oil companies used maps to promote travel - and to advertise their products, sometimes listing their gas station locations.

Who gave away road maps?

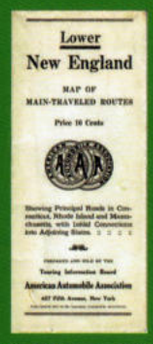
- The first route guides and maps were sold by various publishers.
- States highway departments began to distribute "official maps - and many continue to do so.
- Auto clubs distributed maps to their members.
- Some oil companies used early travel and automotive publications for advertising.
- Before there were route numbers, highway associations wanted people to travel on their specific highway.
- In 1914 Gulf Oil began issuing maps for all the states in their marketing area. Other oil companies followed with their own maps, with many offering free trip planning service.
- Merchants, banks, tire companies, chambers of commerce and tourist bureaus issued maps.
- Car rental companies had basic maps

When were maps issued?

- There have been maps of some sort as long as there have been trails and roads.
- Generally we are looking at maps from the Automobile Age, from the late 19th century through the present.
- The golden age of oil company issued maps was from the mid-1920's through the mid-1970's - though many were issued in earlier and later years



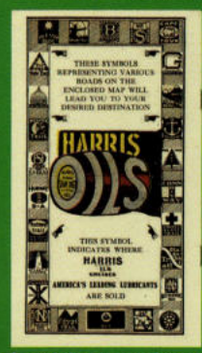
cycling map 1894



first AAA map 1911



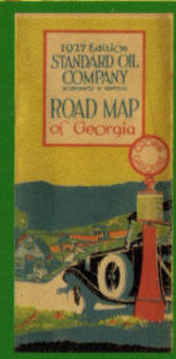
Gulf 1915 with car



20's with named routes



1927 Loreco gas



1927 nice graphics

GUIDE TO ROAD MAPS

About Road Maps

Collecting Them?

GUIDE TO ROAD MAPS

About Road Maps

Collecting Them?

Why on Earth would someone collect road maps?

- Preserve a slice of history and geography of that same Earth.
- Study road systems.
- Enjoy the variety of graphic arts used over time to attract attention.
- Enjoy petroliana (products and advertising relating primarily to gas stations and oil companies).
- Use maps to discover where gas stations were located - listed or shown on maps.
- Enjoy classic advertising styles.
- Old maps and old cars are totally related.
- Collect maps of your home region.
- Collect maps from your important years.

How to Date Road Maps?

It is important to know the date that a map was issued. Sometimes there was no copyright date. Luckily some map publishers put codes on their maps.

- Rand McNally began with A in 1919 thru Z in 1944, followed by the last number in the year of the base map date, so 5-42 would be 1945 and 1-50 would be 1951. Beginning with 1966 the last two digits of the year were used.
- H M Goushá began in 1927 with A thru Z in 1952, and AA in 1953 thru ZZ in 1978. After that it became more complicated…
- Much more information is on the RMCA website.

What kinds of maps do people collect?

Since so many maps have been issued, collectors often specialize. Here are some:

- Particular countries, regions, states, provinces, counties, and cities - folding maps and atlases.
- Gas station maps - all brands, several, or just one, then every map issued or one of each cover design. Gas stations on the map/listed.
- Official government issued maps such as state and provincial maps.
- Particular graphic style, Art Deco, maybe?
- Scenic covers either artwork or photographic.
- Special event or commemorative such as World Expos, Olympic games, historic events.
- Cruising guide maps.
- Themes, such as cars or animals, on the cover.
- Particular publisher (there were many).
- Particular highway, US 66, Lincoln Highway
- Recreational area maps.
- Toll road maps.

Where to find them?

- Flea markets and antique shops.
- Ebay, online vendors and auctions.
- Antique car shows.
- Estate sales and used book stores.
- Ask family members.
- Ads in petroliana, old car, and antique Magazines.
- Petroliana swap meets.
- RMCA ROAD MAP CONVENTIONS!



'29 station



fast cars



1932 Shell with woman driver



'53 official map



Rio '66



N Y World's Fair



1968 Olympics

GUIDE TO

ROAD MAPS

About Road Maps

Collecting Them?

RMCA

www.roadmaps.org
road map collectors association

We are a great resource for anyone interested in road maps, as a collector or researcher. Why not become a member, today?

- Website: Detailed information; dating maps; member directory; buy/sell/trade lists; master oil company and official map lists; past newsletters are available - and much more.
- Facebook group: A place to share your map stories and new finds.
- Email list: A great place for map information and getting to know other collectors.
- The Legend: RMCA's excellent newsletter.
- Tax deductible monetary and map donations are accepted.
- Annual convention.
- We host a permanent road map exhibit at America's Transportation Experience, (AACA Museum Inc.), 161 Museum Drive, in Hershey, Pennsylvania



Annual Road Map Convention

- Event with map sales/trading.
- Guest speaker, meeting and group dinner.
- May have panel discussions.
- Hotel with room-to-room trading & socializing
- One or two held annually at various locations.



RMCA MapCon sale/trading room scene