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ACSC

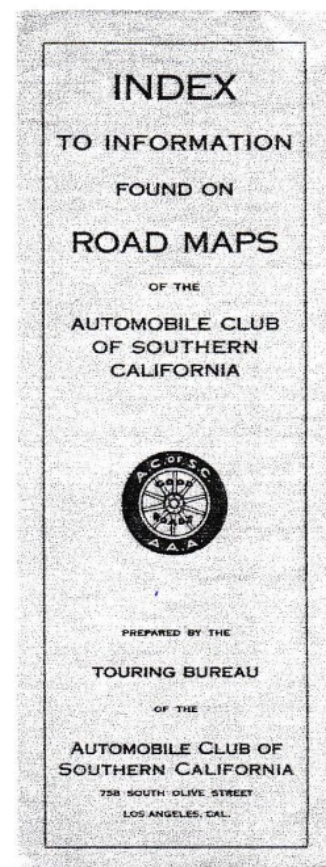
100 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE TRAVELER

By Brian Hatcher

Edited by Curtis Carroll and Stan DeOrsey

It was on December 13, 1900 when ten automobile enthusiasts gathered in Los Angeles to form the Automobile Club of Southern California (ACSC), mainly to seek out new places to travel and enjoy their cars. At that time, "The City of the Angels" had a population of around 100,000 and a total of 231 miles of paved roads and about the same amount of graded dirt streets. Outside the city limits it was an entirely different terrain extremely hostile to their vehicles. The roads were unmarked and their condition could be deeply rutted, muddy, sandy, rocky and everything in between. In many instances, these trails petered out into open country without any facilities to aid a stranded motorist and his broken-down vehicle. It wasn't until six years later that the ACSC offered a travel service to its members and began marking roads with directional signs to lead the way.

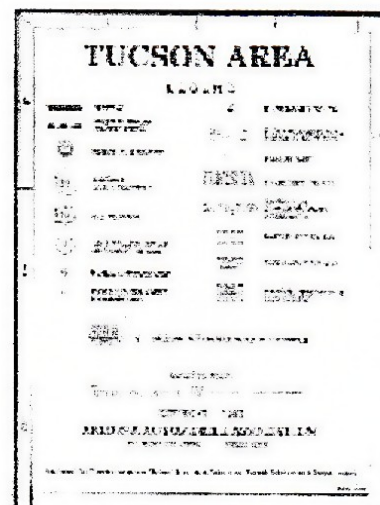
According to a history of the ACSC published in 2000, the first touring guide books were issued in 1909 and the first road maps offered to the general public in 1911. The ACSC started out



as part of the nationwide AAA federation but severed ties with them in 1915. This enabled the ACSC to sell their maps directly to other clubs, an important and unforeseen revenue source. They became in effect a competitor to the AAA and it was after this date they made tremendous efforts to greatly improve their cartographic quality. The ACSC and the AAA worked out their differences in 1950s and the ACSC was brought back under the AAA umbrella.

Shortly before the Second World War, the ACSC had worked with the U.S. military to provide up-to-date road maps of Southern and parts of Northern California. It was during this time that they decided to mask their date codes for security purposes. At first, the masking was quite easy and simple to read like the California State map copyrighted 426 or June 1942. As time progressed their masking system became a bit more complicated much like the California map 15454 or April 1954. What the 15 stood for I am not quite certain but other methods were used usually starting with a "1" and the date in reverse. It was not until 1966 that these dates were reinstated to their correct form.

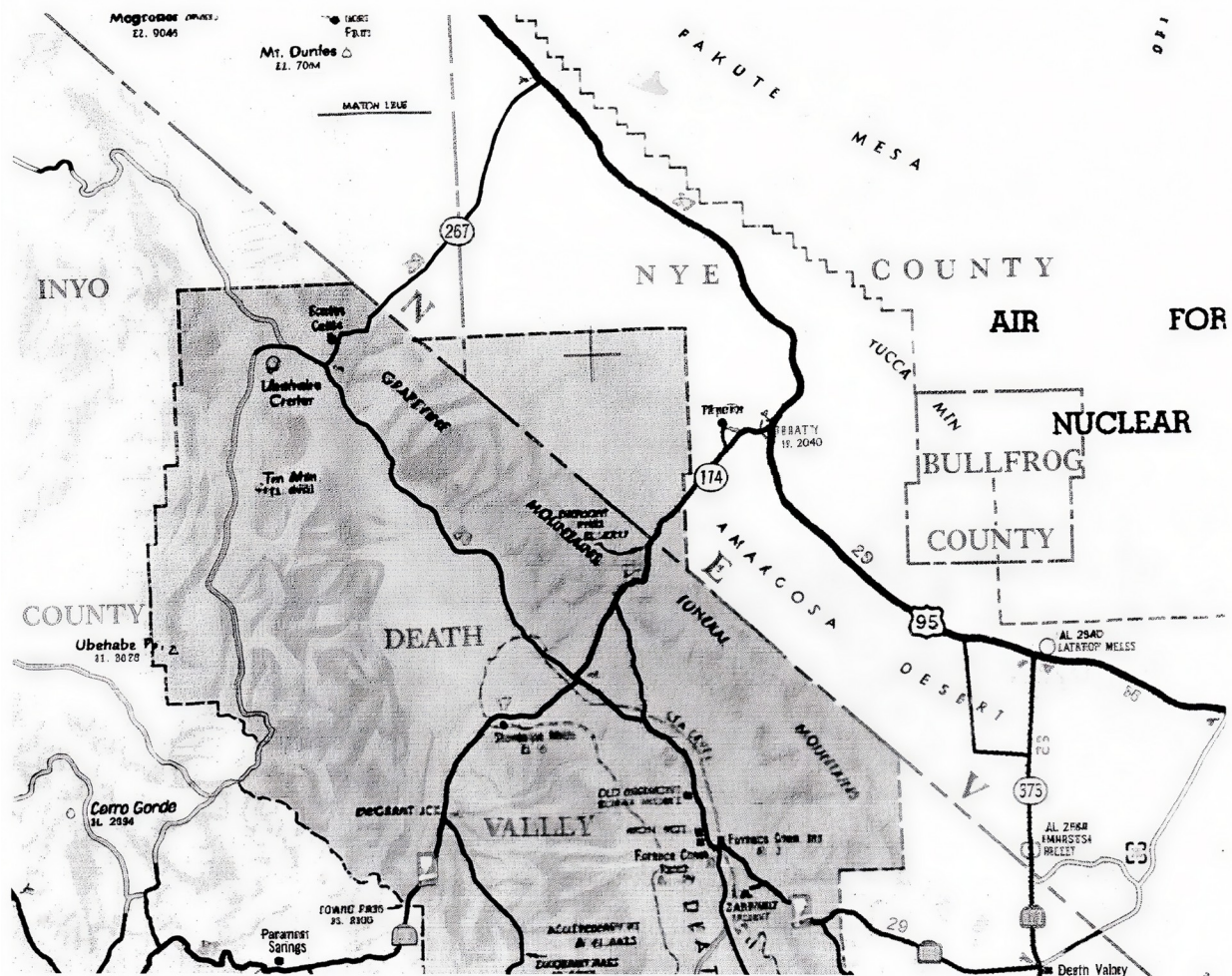
Unlike most auto clubs who cataloged their maps alphabetically, the ACSC issued their maps chronologically. At first, they issued their maps with simple map numbers that were changed every time a map was redrawn. When they started to combine their maps with insets and continuations, they found that it was becoming too difficult to index their inventory. Because of this, a catalog number on the cover was added in 1966 with 4 numerals at first and a fifth one added in 1971. Maps were then numbered in order by state, county, region and city. Now, not only could the ACSC record their maps, but they could also



keep track of their other inventory such as tour books and other paraphernalia within this same system. Despite this change, the ACSC still continued their old map numbering system until January of last year.

Soon after the Second World War, the California State Automobile Association (CSAA) filed a lawsuit against the ACSC citing territorial infringement. The ACSC was soon forced to stop producing maps north of Tulare County with only a few exceptions". It was not until recent years, however, that the ACSC was allowed to again publish maps inside Northern California after they formed a partnership with the CSAA.

Today the ACSC is planning to broaden their sphere of influence by incorporating into Texas and other western states. A sad turn of events was when their much popular county maps came to an end when they were discontinued in 2003 in replaced with much larger regional sheets. Despite this setback, newer maps have been recently published, such as Santa Catalina Island, Sequoia National Park, North and South Winery Guides, Golfing (Southern California), and Mountains and Deserts of L.A. County.



Although this January 1988 California map is not rare, it is one of the few maps to show Nevada's unpopulated Bullfrog County

Auto Club of Southern California—Maps and Guides RMCA Legend #34

Images contributed by Curtis Carroll, Dave Cole, Brian Hatcher and Dave Leach



1925 and 1926 Strip Maps

1935 Route Book

1915 Mission Tour

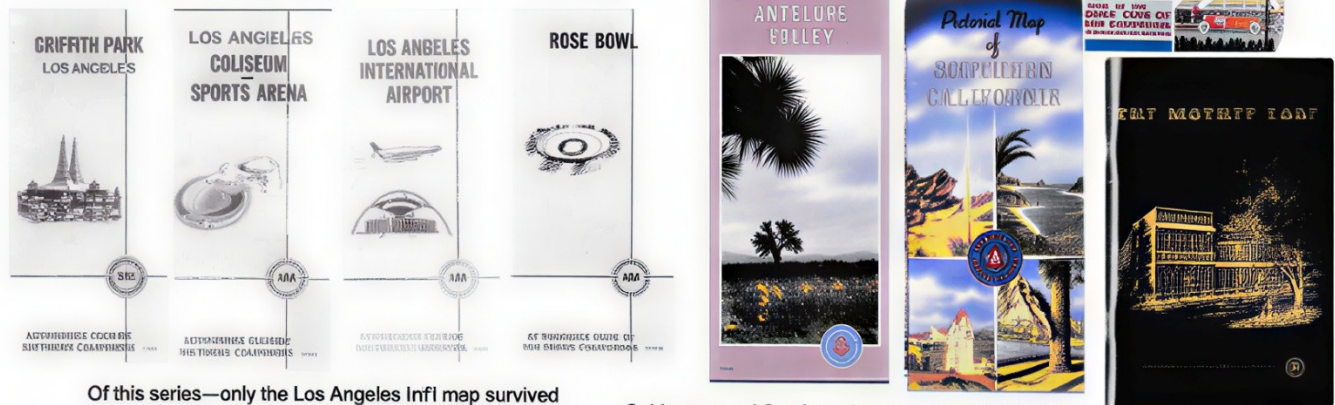
1927 Pacific Highway

1930's Map



Two Specialty Maps from the '30's

City maps



Of this series—only the Los Angeles Intl map survived

Guide map and Southern California Regional maps



Recent guide books from Northern and Southern California

