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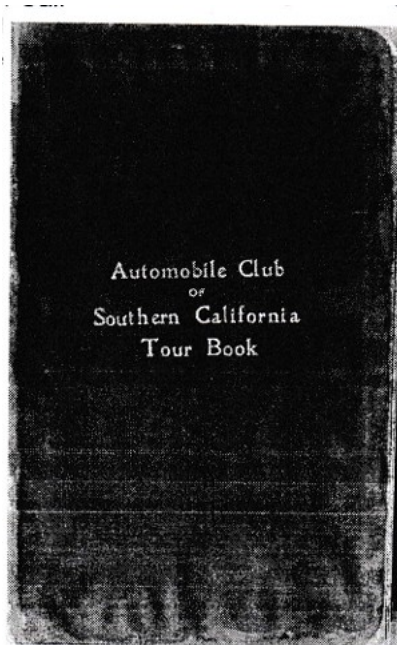
The First Two Tour Books of The Automobile Club of Southern California by Dave Cole #72

For over a century, the Automobile Club of Southern California has been the most prolific publisher of road maps and tour guides of any auto club in the entire country. As early as 1912, the club began publishing a series of long narrow strip maps, highly detailed although only black on white card stock. That soon included hundreds of routes, not only in Southern California, but all over the state, and within just a few years, all across the United States. There is something absurd about a strip map showing the route of the Lincoln Highway from Times Square in Manhattan, across the Hudson River and on to Newark and Rahway, New Jersey, with "copyrighted by the Automobile Club of Southern California" in the title block, but such a map exists (#640) and the series of such maps continued all the way to California. Other major transcontinental routes were mapped, too.

In the mid-'teens, the ACSC started publishing folding maps of each county in their territory, the southerly third of California, and state maps, too. In the late 1920's, the club began publishing books of strip maps covering major highways to Southern California, and some of these continued through the 1930's and '40's, with some of the most colorful artwork ever seen on auto club maps. If a collector had just One copy of every map, guide book, or special publication issued by ACSC over the last century, it would take an entire room to store it all, so vast has been their output. And it isn't hard to put together a

representative collection of ACSC maps either. Issued by the millions, they have been saved by the hundreds and, in California, they are not particularly rare except for the very earliest ones. Here, you can find upwards of a dozen ACSC road maps for every such map issued by the auto club in northern California, the California State Automobile Association, headquartered in San Francisco. But ACSC did not start with strip maps or folding maps, their first such publications were tour books, very ambitious projects for a club that had a hundred members when they embarked on the compilation of the first one.

ACSC's FIRST TOUR BOOK, 1909



The first tour book by ACSC was a long time in preparation. The May 25, 1907, issue of Pacific Motoring Magazine (now there's a rare publication!) carried a news item about the club's preparing a route book, but it was not published and bound until late in 1908, a year and a half later. But it was big, thick full of information, and very useful to auto tourists in California in 1909. It ran 384 numbered pages, plus some inserts stuck in that would bring the total close to 400, with pages 5" by 9* inches.

This was all bound in soft flexible black leather, with the title, AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TOUR BOOK, stamped in gold on the front cover. The back is plain black leather, there is no title on the spine, and certainly no artwork, alas, but it's a very classy-looking book regardless.

Strangely enough, it seems the book was published without a title page, and once this was discovered, an insert was printed and pasted in ahead of Page 1. Not all copies got this title Page addition, however.

Almost a hundred pages in the front of the book are taken up with material other than maps and route descriptions. The Auto Club is described, its distinctive road signs are all pictured and described, and the full text of both the Los Angeles City Traffic Ordinance and the State Automobile Law (essentially the Motor Vehicle Code of the time) is presented, interspersed with advertisements for automobiles, garages, supplies, hotels and other things of interest to motorists. There are indexes of cities covered, a list of garages, a description of El Camino Real, and two index maps of routes In the front of the book, also.

[illegible]

Obviously, these maps are rather crude and simple. They show only

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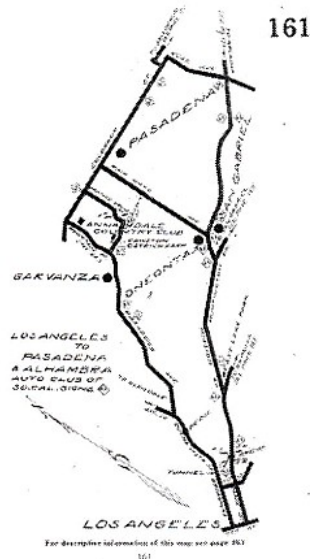
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Clarence B. Smith, of 1321 South Main Street in Los Angeles, apparently volunteered to report on the route from Los Olivos to Santa Maria, but his instructions do not match the mapped route. He says in a note, "This description is not according to map but is the best route". Charles B. Hopper, who was on the ACSC board of directors, drove his Marmon car to Santa Barbara and back, and described the routes on the club's maps in sharp detail. He even told about his trip: "We were on the road 8 hours and 22 minutes, but the actual running time was 5 hours and 55 minutes, averaging for the trip 17.8 miles per hour. On the trip, we passed 8 automobiles, 85 rigs (pulled by horses, he means)

4 streams, 8 bridges, and 10 railroad crossings. Used 13 112 gallons of gasoline." That tells you a lot about motoring in Southern California in 1908!

This first tour book covers routes from Los Angeles as far south as San Diego and Tia Juana (sic!) and as far east as San Bernardino, Redlands and Idyllwild. Heading north, it goes only as far as San Francisco, following both the coastal route and the inland road via Bakersfield and Fresno.

ACSC's SECOND TOUR BOOK, 1911

Two years after the first tour book was published by the Auto Club of Southern California there had

been enough changes in roads

that the book had become

obsolete, so a second edition

was announced in December,

1910, and readied for

distribution early in 1911. The

layout of this second edition is

very much like that of the first,

but the maps and route

descriptions had all been done

by a professional map maker,

George F. Beck, whose ad

appears on Page 295, as

pictured to the right. Note that Beck claims to have touring

information and maps of the entire west coast, but surviving examples

of any of it are exceedingly rare. It is known that Beck also did a tour

book for the California State Auto Association in 1912, but no copies of

it are known to survive. Beck apparently ran the Commercial Printing



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LOS BANOS TO GILROY.
(Via Pacheco Pass.)
56.2 Miles by Warner Auto Meter.

Leaving junction of main streets, Los Banos (0.0 m.), go South (0.5 m.), where Turn Right onto County Road. Follow same straight for ten miles, Turning Right (10.0 m.). Turn Left (11.4 m.) Following San Luis Ranch (12.0 m.) Grade over Pacheco Pass begins (12.2 m.). The road is mostly fair, with grades ranging from 4% to 12%. There are, however, numerous sharp turns and some rocky stretches, calling for cautious driving. Summit (22.2 m.). Passing Mountain House (22.7 m.). The descent is over somewhat sharper grades, with one bad 28% dip (23.9 m.). Bell Station (30.4 m.). Turn Right (30.6 m.). (Road straight ahead at this point leads to Hollister.) Passing through San Felipe (30.8 m.). (Turn Left here to Hollister.) Follow main (invaluable) road. Turn Left (44.4 m.). Turn Right at hicksmith's shop (47.4 m.). Cross Bridge (47.5 m.). Turn Left and Cross Bridge (48.0 m.). Railroad Crossing (48.7 m.). Turn Right onto Main Street (49.3 m.). Center of town, Gilroy (50.2 m.).

For map and descriptive matter, Gilroy to San Francisco, see Index Map on Page 11. This is the junction point of the Valley Tour with that from Los Angeles via the Coast Route.

GILROY TO LOS BANOS.
(Via Pacheco Pass.)
56.2 Miles by Warner Auto Meter.

Leaving center of town, Gilroy (0.0 m.), go South on Main Street to (0.4 m.), where Turn Left onto Old Gilroy Road. Cross Railroad main (0.5 m.). Cross Bridge (1.7 m.). Cross Ridge and Turn Right (2.3 m.). Turn Left at blacksmith shop (2.5 m.). Turn Right (2.8 m.). Continue on main traveled road crossing San Felipe (3.0 m.). (Turn Right at this point to Hollister.) Turn Left (3.6 m.). (Turn Right to Hollister.) From this point on, road winds up Pacheco Pass. Bell Station (10.6 m.). Shortly after leaving Bell Station, the Pacheco Grade begins. It ranges from 6% to 12%, with some stretches reaching beyond Mountain House and the foot of Grade is reached at (14.0 m.). Turn the San Luis Ranch House (18.0 m.). Turn Right (18.3 m.). (Road straight ahead at this point to Valley View, Newman, Santa Lavinia and Oakland.) Turn Left (20.0 m.). Follow straight road to (42.2 m.) where Turn Left to junction of main streets, Los Banos (50.2 m.).

For map of this tour see page 102.

Reliable Touring Information AND MAPS
Covering the principal Automobile Route of California, Oregon, Washington, Western Idaho and British Columbia.

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FROM
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As to be found in the four Tour Books covering the territory.

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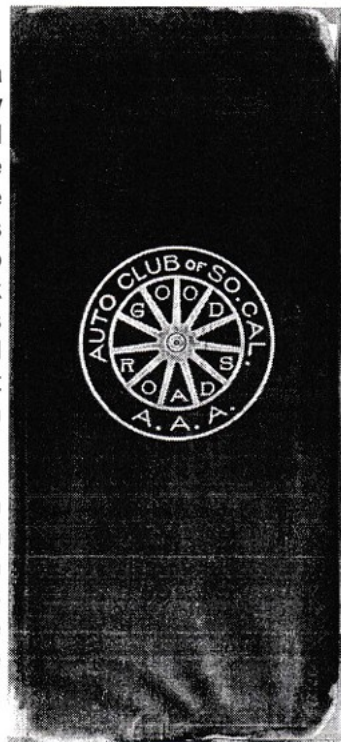
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House in Los Angeles, or at least its ad shows the same address as G. F. Beck's ad on page 295. The same printery did the first edition, too.

The 1911 tour book has a title page with a copyright date, and an introduction that describes it as the Second Edition, which confirms the

fact that the 1909 book is the first and only other previous edition. (But later ACSC history books confirm this, too.) Beck gave the 1911 book a new shape, long and narrow pages 4 1/2 inches wide and 10 1/2 inches tall. Although the routes covered are about the same as before, more ads push the inside page count to 489, with even the inside back cover numbered. Beck's maps are better detailed, but still show secondary routes just arrowed off from the main routes.

As before the book is bound in soft black leather, stamped in gold. the front cover is an early example of the ACSC wheel emblem but without the bell in the middle.



Around the "tire" is the name of the club, AUTO CLUB OF SO. CAL., the A.A.A. lettering denoting the club's being affiliated with the American Automobile Association (which it left in 1915 and did not rejoin until 1947!) while letters interspaced among the spokes of the wheel spell out GOOD ROADS. There is no title on the spine, there

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FRESNO TO LOS BANOS.

(Via Whites Bridge Road.)

60.2 Miles by Warner Auto Meter.

Leaving Fresno and "11" Streets (10 m.), go West on Fresno Street, passing under Railroad Bridge at (0.3 m.) and Turn Right onto "P" Street. Turn Left onto Amador Street (0.5 m.) Turn Right, then Left at (1.2 m.) onto Whites Bridge Avenue, the County Road. Cross Railroad bridge (2.5 m.) Railroad crossing (3.5 m.) Cross Railroad at Whites Bridge (22.1 m.) Cross Bridge over Kings River (30.1 m.) Turn Right at sign (31.5 m.) Mendota Station (32.1 m.) From here on past the Miller and Los Banos the road lies along the top of dunes. The country is of an alluvial-geologic formation. Avoid anything like wet spots on the road, as they are more than likely to conceal sink-holes, which would ruin a machine. KEEP OUT OF THE WATER WITHOUT PAIS. Down road at (42.1 m.) (Park to Right here amongst with Firebaugh and thence to Fresno via Modesto. The Firebaugh-Mendota road is often used when the Whites Bridge road is impassable, owing to floods during the wet season.) Turn Left at (44.5 m.) Cross Bridge (47.4 m.) Turn Left after crossing Canal at Miller and Los Banos (48.5 m.) following along Canal. Turn Right at sign (49.4 m.) Cross Railroad track (50.6 m.) Turn Left at Miller and Los Banos (51.5 m.) Turn Right (52.7 m.) and Turn Left (53.6 m.) Use Paine Sta. time on Left (53.6 m.) From this point follow Railroad tracks. Brite Station (55.3 m.) Take Left Fork at sign (55.7 m.) Cross Railroad center (58.3 m.) Turn Right at sign (59.1 m.) Los Banos (60.2 m.)

LOS BANOS TO FRESNO.

(Via Whites Bridge Road.)

60.2 Miles by Warner Auto Meter.

Leaving junction of mile dunes, Los Banos (0.0 m.), go South to (0.3 m.) and Turn Left onto County Road. Railroad Crossing (1.0 m.) The west two and a half miles to through the big Miller and Los Banos. Turn Right at sign (5.6 m.) Brite Station (5.8 m.) Des Palms Station (15.2 m.) Left Fork at Oil Plant (15.7 m.) Turn Right (16.5 m.) Turn Left at (16.4 m.) Turn Right at Ranch House (17.5 m.) Cross Railroad track (18.7 m.) Turn Left (19.5 m.) Fall low Canal at sign post (19.9 m.) Turn Right across Canal (16.8 m.) at Miller and Los Banos. Cross Bridge (21.9 m.) Turn Left (22.5 m.) Turn Right between turn telephone lines (21.5 m.) Right Fork (21.5 m.) (Left Fork here is used to Firebaugh, thence via Modesto to Fresno. Except to wet weather this road is not the best and should be taken only when Whites Bridge Road is under water.) From this point on the road is on top of the dunes. The soil is of an alluvial-geologic formation and care should be exercised to avoid anything like wet spots, where they are more than likely to conceal sink-holes which would ruin a machine. KEEP OUT OF THE WATER WITHOUT PAIS. Pooling towards Modesto (24.3 m.) Take Right Fork (25.2 m.) Turn Left at sign (25.1 m.) Bridge over Kings River (25.2 m.) Cross Railroad at Whites Bridge at (24.4 m.) Proceed here as keep main traveled road across dunes. Cross road (45.0 m.) (At this later road Turn Left to Modesto; Turn Right to Brite.) Cross Railroad at Brite Station (51.1 m.) Take Left (50.8 m.) Railroad Crossing (51.5 m.) Turn Right, then Left at sign (59.1 m.) onto Amador Street. Turn Right (59.5 m.) onto "P" Street. Turn Left onto Fresno River and follow main, passing under Railroad Bridge at (59.9 m.) Fresno and "11" Streets (59.6 m.)

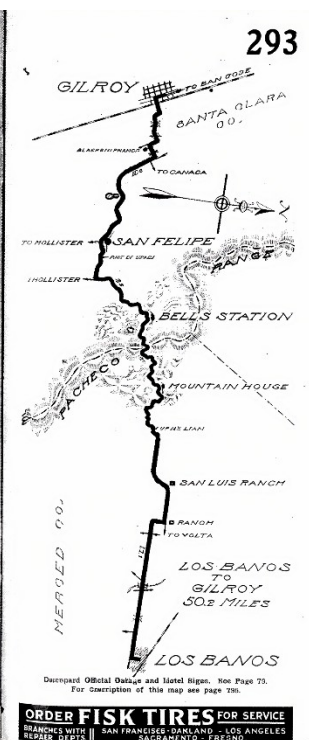
GARAGE:

Warner Auto Co. 1234 "11" Street.

For map of this tour see page 291.

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Departed Official Outline and list of signs. See Page 73.

For description of this map see page 291.

ORDER FISK TIRES FOR SERVICE
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are two ads on the back cover, one for Packard Motor Cars and the other for Chalmers Motor Cars.

By 1912, the directors of ACSC had decided that issuing a tour book every two years was no longer feasible. Too many changes in the roads were being made too frequently, and construction on the new state highway system in California was about to begin. Thus, the directors decided to have strip maps and folding maps made up and published instead of tour books, so these first two editions, of 1909 and 1911, are the only ones in the series. Both are exceedingly rare and highly desired by collectors, and thus prices of surviving examples are usually very high, although recently a well-known San Francisco dealer had a 1909 book listed at \$50, mainly because he did not know it was a first edition. A knowledgeable rare book dealer, T. Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles, offered a second edition of the ACSC Tour Book for \$350 in 1992, and no doubt they would ask even more if they had one today. Their example had been rebound, but those pictured with this article still have their original leather bindings, a bit ragged but still more or less intact.