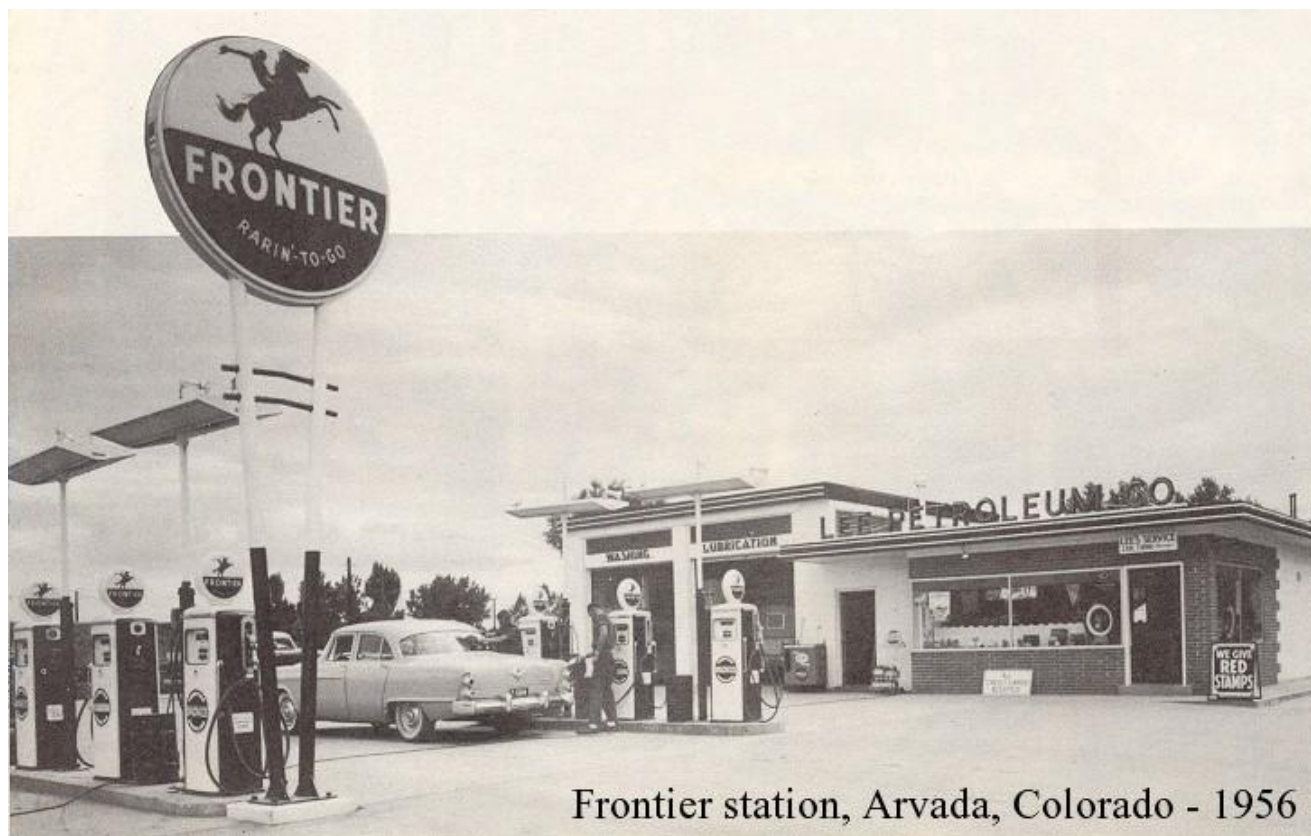


FRONTIER, Company History and Maps – Part 1

by Walt Wimer (RMCA #7)

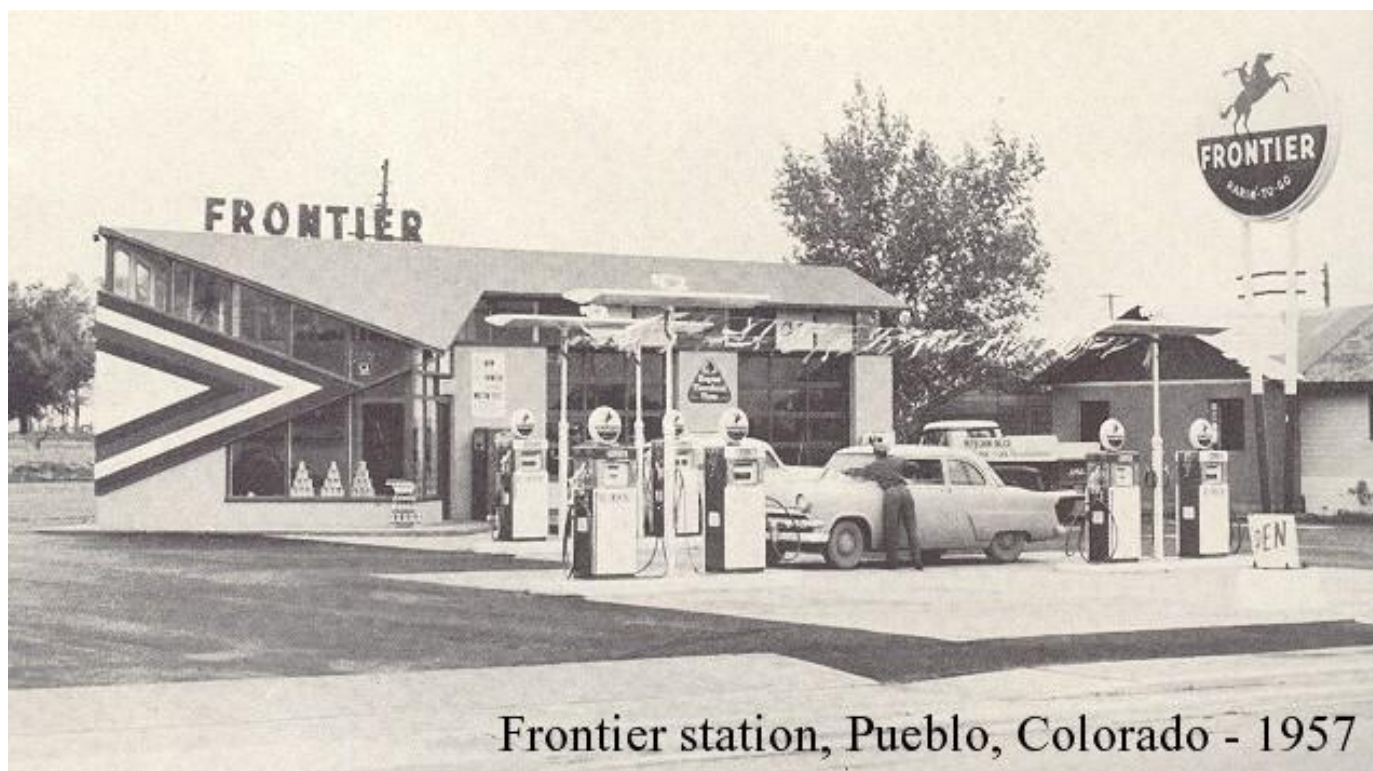


In the gas & oil-collecting hobby certain brands become quite popular with collectors. Size does not matter here as some smaller brands can be just as popular for collectors as giants such as Texaco, Shell and Mobilgas with its “Flying Red Horse”. Collectors in general, but especially those into pump globes, oil cans and signs, have a special liking for any brand that shows a person, animal or some type of object in their logo. Such is the case with the Rocky Mountain area FRONTIER brand, and its cowboy on horseback logo. The Frontier Refining Company was founded sometime in the mid-1930s, but the exact date appears to be lost in history. By 1940, just as World War II was breaking out, the company became publicly traded as growth had been steady since its founding.



Frontier station, Arvada, Colorado - 1956

The war probably slowed down the company's growth, but by 1955 the small fully integrated oil company was marketing in parts of 11 states and had 161 company owned or leased gas stations. By 1959 this would increase to 209 company-controlled outlets and around 550 total when dealer and jobber sites were added. The company's refinery was located in Cheyenne, Wyoming, but the headquarters had moved to Denver by that time. They had oil leases and well drilling in eight states along with pipelines and terminals. While their marketing covered parts of 11 Rocky Mountain and Plains states, their primary markets were the states of Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska.



The early 1960s were a busy time for Frontier. Right around late 1959 to early 1960 they took over the Western States Refining Company of Salt Lake City, which had two small refineries and marketing in a number of Rocky Mountain states. Western States marketed under the BEELINE brand, with their stations further west than Frontier's primary market area. After the merger, Western States became Beeline Refining division of Frontier and the two brands were flown at some 700 gas stations by 1962. As early as the mid-1950s Frontier had interests in Florida, obtaining several properties on which they had hoped to build a refinery in the Sunshine State. Planning to build a refinery there, Frontier got involved with marketing in Florida by buying 29 gas stations from Union Petroleum of Florida headquartered in Miami. That operation was merged in to Florida Southern Oil Company, and at one point Frontier motor oils were sold at Union stations in Florida. But the refinery was never built as there were problems with securing import licenses from the government and objections from local residents near the planned Jacksonville refinery site. What

happened to the Union chain of stations is unknown, but they likely disappeared during the 1970s when we had the so-called “Energy Crisis”. Also around 1962 the company bought 11 New Mexico stations from Corypenn Oil Company of Tucumcari, NM. Corypenn, a discounter with a chain of stations across New Mexico and Arizona, had at least 20 stations and it is not known if the sale to Frontier was the end of the company and their station chain.

After over three decades of growth, things came to an end for the Frontier Refining Company in 1968 when they were taken over by another growing western independent, Husky Oil Co. of Cody Wyoming. The new company, with over 1,600 gas stations in the U.S. and Canada, would operate under three brands for a while, but by 1970 the Frontier and Beeline brands had been phased out in favor of Husky. The Frontier cowboy had ridden off into the sunset....at least for a while!!

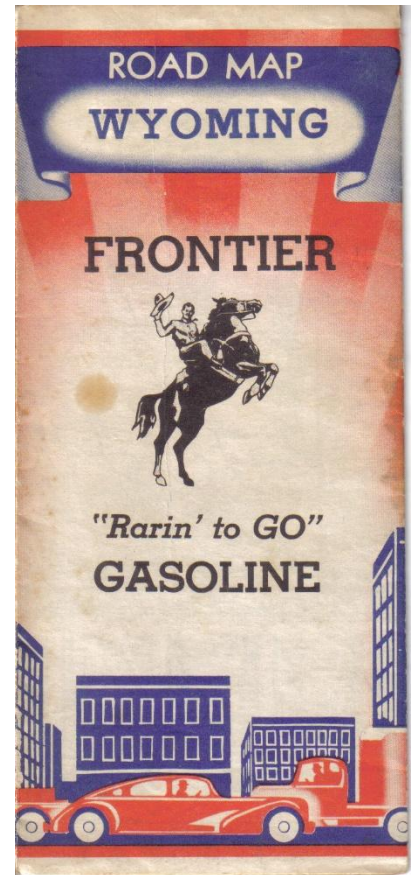
Husky Oil Company was an American company with roots in Western Oil & Fuel out of Minneapolis. Like Frontier, they had grown quite a bit after taking over the H. Earl Clack Company out of Montana in 1954. The takeover of the Clack company, which marketed under the “HI-POWER” brand, greatly increased the Husky marketing area well up into the Pacific northwest. Over the years they had also built up an extensive Canadian operation based in Calgary, Alberta. But then Husky dropped a bombshell around 1983 when they elected to pull out of the U. S. and become a strictly Canadian company when it came to refining and marketing. Their marketing and refineries in the U.S. were sold off and the Husky dog went the way of the Frontier cowboy on American highways.

By 1986 the Cheyenne, Wyoming refinery had been sold off and was operating under the RMT Properties name. The name later changed to Frontier Oil Co., and there might have been another ownership change along the way, but in 1991 the refinery was bought by Wainoco Oil Corporation based in Houston. Wainoco was primarily an oil producer, but now they were into refining and in a limited way, into branded marketing as the Frontier brand had been brought back to the Colorado-Wyoming area at least by 1990. In 1998 Wainoco changed their name to Frontier Oil Corporation with a subsidiary company, Frontier Refining & Marketing, to handle that end of the business. Not long afterwards, Frontier bought a nearly 100,000 b/d refinery in El Dorado, Kansas in 1999 that had once belonged to Skelly and later Texaco. Although Frontier branded gas stations have been back on the Rocky Mountain scene for nearly two decades now, Frontier no longer has a branded marketing program according to the company website. Frontier stations are known to have existed as late as 2007, but if you are lucky enough to run into one, it would just be a local dealer still using the signage and probably buying his gasoline from Frontier.

FRONTIER MAPS

What is believed to have been the very first Frontier map was issued in 1941. This was a generic Mid-West Co. map done in pink & blue shades. Actually, this was right after Gousha had taken over Mid-West and features a Mid-West state map, but with a Gousha U.S. map on the reverse side complete with Gousha "O" date code. The tri-fold map features a large Frontier logo with the horseback cowboy and the words "Rarin' to Go" Gasoline. There is additional advertising on the other two panels. This map is quite scarce and the hardest Frontier map to find. It is also the only "generic map" cover ever used by Frontier and is the only one ever done by either Mid-West or Gousha. To the best I can determine the map was only issued in 1941 with Frontier maps discontinued during the war years.

After World War II Rand McNally took over as Frontier's map maker and would produce all other known Frontier maps. A new



1941 front cover

issue came out in 1945

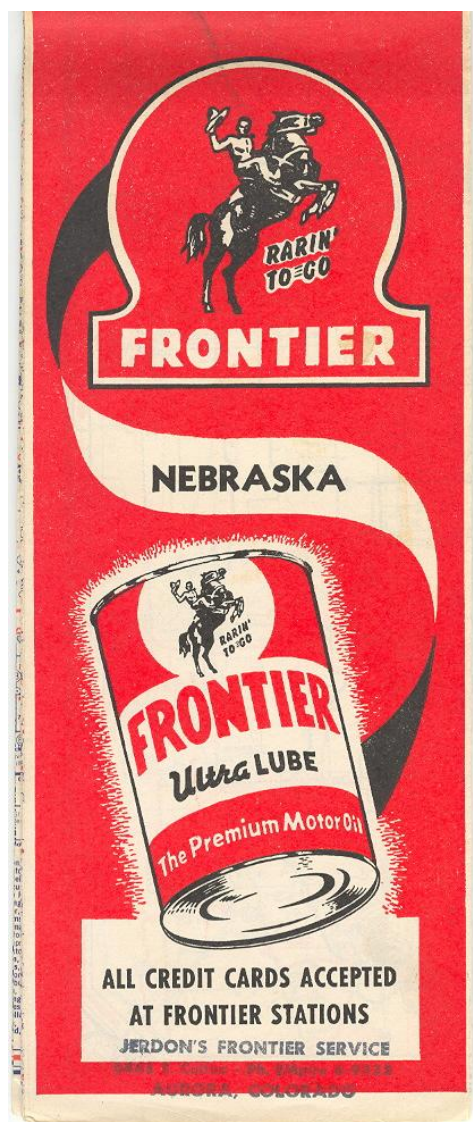
right after the war. Also a tri-fold map, this one had the outline of a cowboy on horseback in red at the top with the words "Frontier Rarin' to Go Road Map" and at the bottom a large "double circle" Frontier logo. The two other panels are done in red with advertising including three oil cans much sought after by can collectors. Of note, the location of the company is listed as Cheyenne, Wyoming as the headquarters had not yet been moved down the road to Denver. This design had a six-year run through 1950.



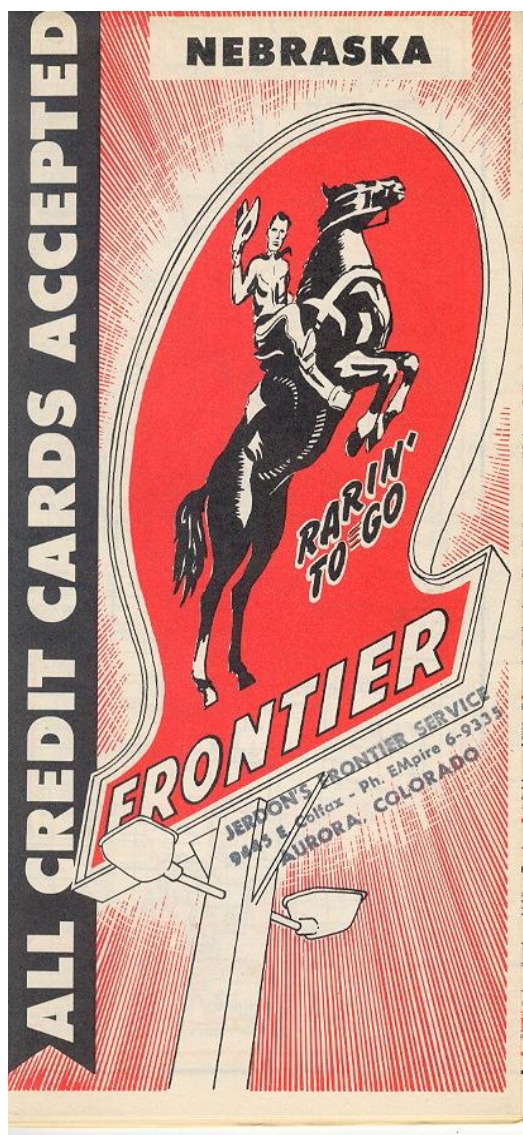
1950 front cover and side panel

In 1951 Frontier issued a red cover "tall" map that measured 9-3/4" rather than the standard 9".

The reason for the size is unknown, but over a half-dozen western companies used this form from shortly after the war into at least 1953. On the cover is another nice Frontier oil can under the then new “keyhole” logo, while on the back cover they plug “90 octane Frontier Ethyl Gasoline” with a large 90 at the top. The tall type maps were only issued for two years, being replaced with a standard size format in 1953 complete with a new cover. This cover featured a large keyhole logo sign on the cover and a giant oil can on the back. Notable is that both of these early ‘50s map designs advertised “All Credit Cards Accepted” a practice that was quite wide spread with the smaller refiners in the Midwest and Rocky Mountains from the mid-‘50s into the early ‘70s.



1952 front cover



1955 front cover

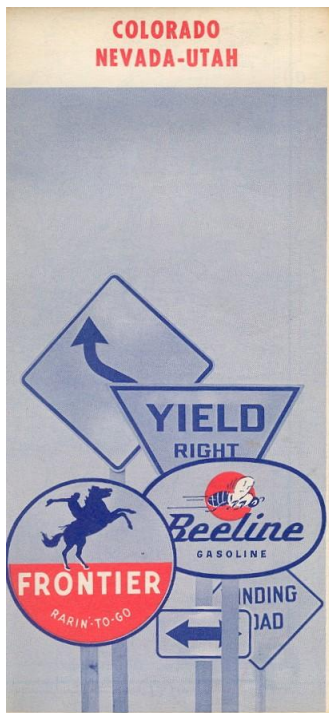
1956 was a big year for Frontier marketing. Early in the year they introduced a new very modern service station design for all their new stations. And about the same time they completely redid their logo to the red & white circle, which is still in use today some 53 years later. With a new logo, there had to be new maps!!! The new design, which would run through 1961, was probably the nicest of all Frontier maps. Actually, it appears that this new map design was first issued in mid to late 1955, although most of these maps are from 1956 on. The new logo station ID sign is very prominent on the cover in the foreground of a highway leading off in the distance to snow covered peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Not only did this map have a nice cover, but also the inside was custom made by Rand McNally for Frontier rather than the standard stock Rand McNally designs used in all other Frontier maps. Inside, the maps featured red borders, a number of Frontier logos and the Frontier name in the legend. The maps usually featured a state map on one side and a map of "Frontierland" on the reverse, which covered most of the company's marketing area.



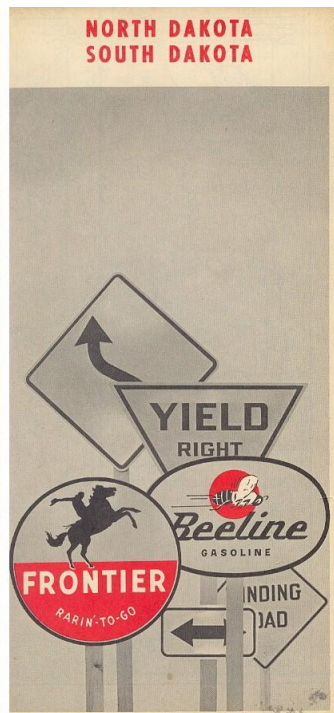
1955-60 front cover

1961 front cover

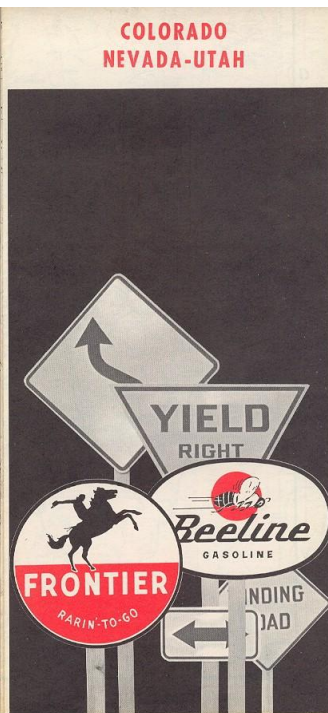
Although this design would last six plus years, there are a number of minor differences for the collector who is interested in such. On all of these maps there is a billboard along the highway beneath the large Frontier sign. The original version features a girl in a convertible and advertises Frontier "Platinum", which was their Ethyl premium grade of gasoline. However, the girl and convertible was replaced in 1961 with a cartoon cowboy and the slogan "Fastest Gas in the West". This change appears only on the 1961 maps. Then there are back cover changes of note. The 1955-58 versions have a station attendant at the top of the back cover with the slogan "Stop at the sign of the Rarin' Horse." On the 1959 version the attendant gets replaced by a cowboy and the "Fastest Gas in the West" slogan. Then in 1961 the rather lifelike drawing of a cowboy is replaced by the cartoon version like on the billboard. There are also a number of wording changes through the series, but space does not allow me to go into that. Also, I might mention that the former Western States refinery locations of North Salt Lake, Utah and Farmington, New Mexico are listed on the 1961 map.



1962



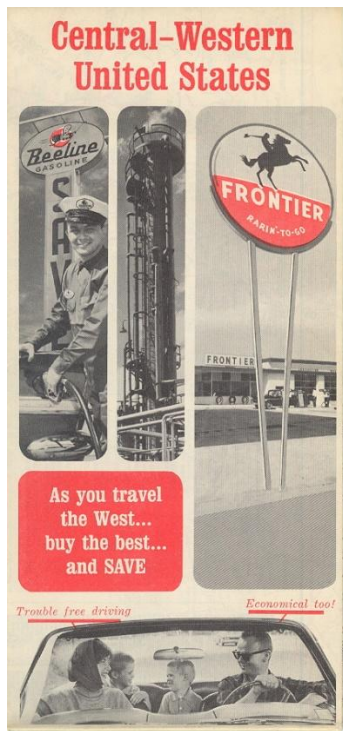
1962



1963-64

In 1962 Frontier made a cover change showing a number of highway road signs along with the Frontier and Beeline logos on signpoles. This 1962 map had a rather dull gray background with none of the signs really showing up well. Frontier must have realized their 1962 maps weren't too appealing as when the 1963 version came out the background was changed to black and all the signs stood out much better.

The same black cover was continued in 1964. However, there are a couple of 1962 issues known with a light blue cover background. Could this have been a "mid-year correction"? There are a few minor wording changes on these maps, but the really only noticeable change is that the 1962 shows two credit cards for the Frontier and Beeline brands, but by 1964 the two brands had been combined into one single card.



1965-67 front cover

The next change appears to have begun before 1964 was over, but mostly used for three years 1965-67, and is the last map to bear the Frontier Refining Company name. This cover features a Frontier station, an attendant pumping gas under a big Beeline sign, part of a refinery and at the bottom a family of four in a convertible. The back covers are much like the 1962-64 series with the exception of an ad block for “CA7” with “7 built-in cash savers.”

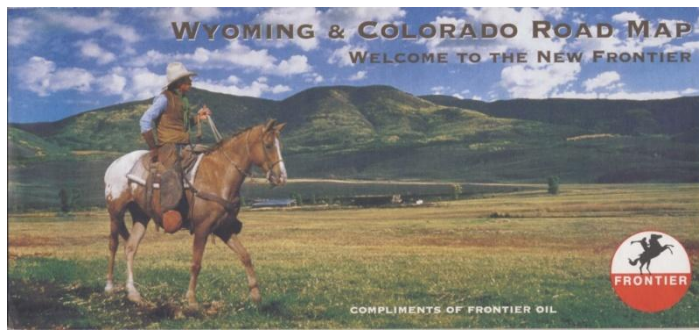
1968 would see what was to be the last Frontier map for over 30 years. This one was issued by Husky Oil Co. and featured all three logos on the back cover. The front of the colorful cover shows full color photos of Frontier and Beeline stations at the bottom and at top a fancy red, white and blue banner advertising Frontier as the “official gasoline” of the

Bonneville Nationals drag races in Utah. Of note is the fact that 1956 Frontier maps read “over 500 stations” while the 1968 map plugs “over 1,600 stations in the U.S and Canada.” Of course that was for three brands!!

While the 1968 issue would be the last Frontier map for over 30 years, the 1968 and 1969 Husky maps showed the Frontier and Beeline logos on the back cover, with the 1969 map showing a combined three brand credit card and a combined three brand Bonneville Nationals logo. By 1970 the Frontier and Beeline stations were history and the brands were no longer shown on Husky maps. It appears that Frontier issued maps for all the Rocky Mountain and Plains states they marketed in, although many issues combine two or three states. Denver maps are also known, but are not very common.



1968 front cover

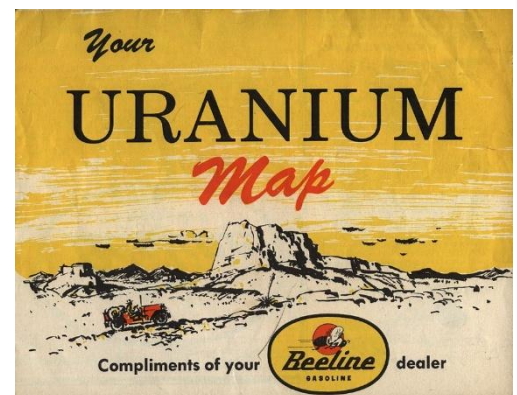


2000 front cover

But wait!!! There was still one more Frontier map to come. Thirty two years later another Frontier map was published in 2000!!! Published, but as far as I can determine, never released and given to the public at Frontier stations of the “new” Frontier Oil Company. As far as I have been able to learn, a small number of these maps were printed up by Rand McNally as sort of a

“test” run. But apparently the company thought better of giving out road maps at their limited amount of gas stations and this beautiful cover map never went into production. These maps are of Wyoming and Colorado and feature a full color photo of a cowboy on horseback on the range with mountains in the background. The photo runs the full length of the map when looked at sideways. Lucky for us, a bundle of these maps fell into the hands of a collector and some of them are now in the collections of RMCA members. How many of these maps were printed?? I have no idea, but the collector who lucked into that bundle of 25 or less, tells me he has never seen any but the ones that came from that bundle. Could be the 2000 map, which never hit the map racks in gas stations, is scarcer than the original 1941 Frontier map??

As we bring this article to a close, I might make mention of three other maps that aren’t “Frontier” but are related. Prior to the takeover of Western States Refining by Frontier Refining Co. there never were any “regular” maps issued for the Beeline brand. However, Western States did issue an undated “uranium mine” map back in the 1950s, probably to give to tourists. These are quite scarce. Equally as scarce is a 1962 Union map of Florida issued by Florida Southern Oil Co, Miami, Florida when owned by Frontier. The map is mostly light blue with an outline map of Florida in orange below a big Union logo, which was a blue USA outline map with Union in orange. As far as I know the maps were only issued in 1962 and only for Florida. However, I have been unable to find another collector who has one to check such. I probably would not have one either except for living in Florida at the time and passing Union stations often.



1950s Beeline Uranium Map



1962 Union (Florida Southern Oil Co.)

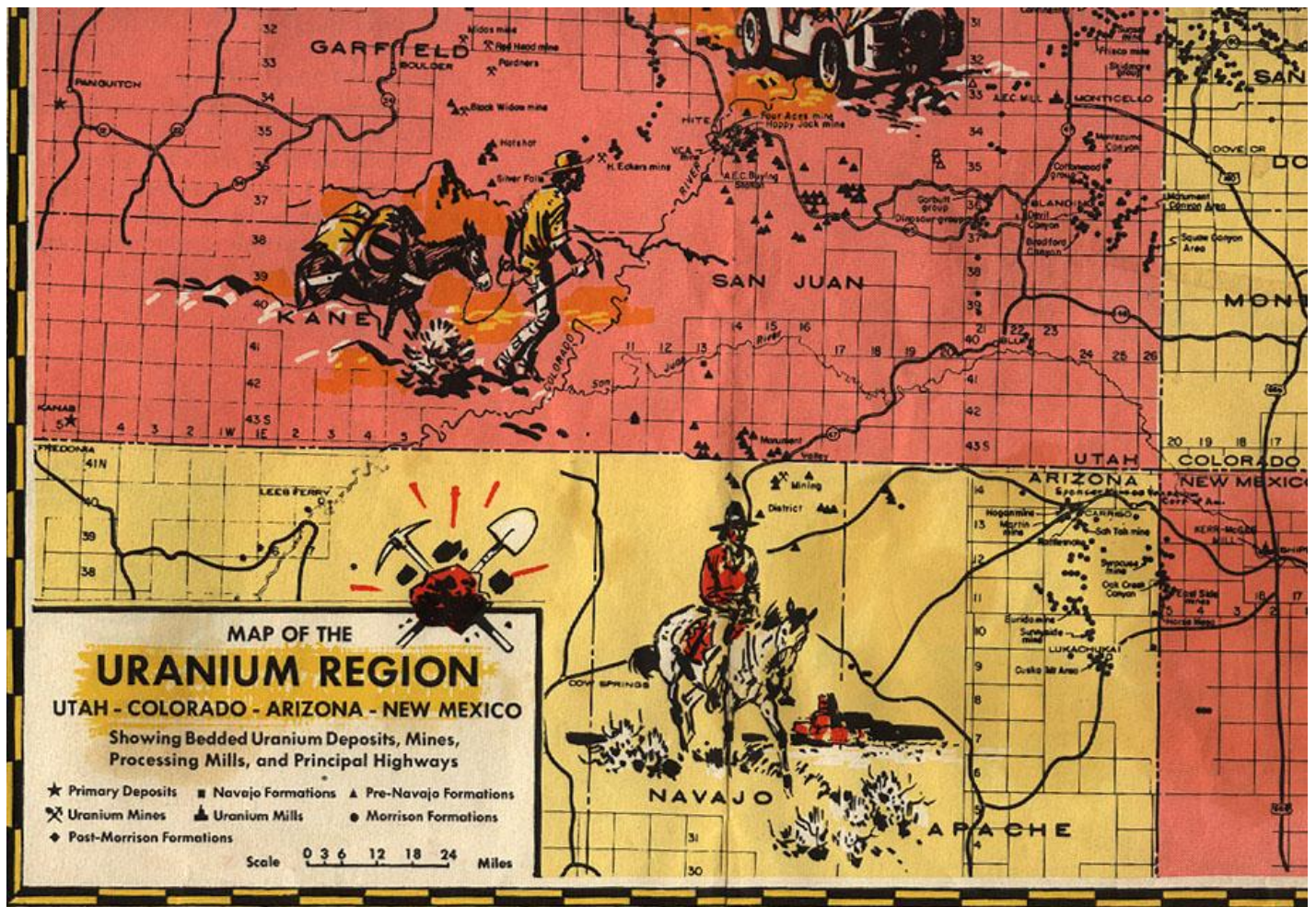


1950s Corypenn

The final map of note is a cartoon type map put out by Corypenn Oil Co. of New Mexico in the 1950s. This undated map is of very limited cartography, showing only the major highways in New Mexico and Arizona. In 1962 Frontier bought 11 of Corypenn's 20+ stations and that may have been the end of that brand. RMCA member, and former Legend editor, Dave Leach just did a profile of this map in the Feb. 2009 issue of Check the Oil magazine. While not as scarce as the Beeline uranium map or the Union of Florida, I would still rate this one as "scarce." I might also mention that there is no known connection

with the New York based Frontier Oil and Refining Corp. That company had a refinery in Buffalo with gas stations throughout western New York. They sold out to Ashland Oil and Refining in 1950 with the stations rebranded to Ashland about 10 years later. The New York Frontier also had maps, generally much scarcer than those of the Rocky Mountain brand.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the Frontier brand is quite popular with all kinds of gas & oil collectors. Pump globes, oil cans and signs are all much sought after by such collectors, mainly due to the famed cowboy on horseback logo. Ditto for anything with the Beeline brand and its bumble bee logo, available, but much harder to find than Frontier. In closing I want to thank fellow RMCA members Jim Wakefield, Mark Greaves, Nathan Lippe, Richard Horwitz, Judy Aulik and Gary Spaid for all their help in dating the years of each cover issue and letting me know of anything I may have missed. Also, the company's annual reports from 1955-1959 have been a big help in this article.



Interior detail from 1950s Beeline Uranium