



The Legend

Number 41
Winter 2009



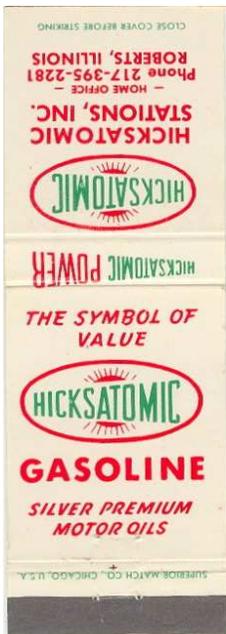
HICKSATOMIC, The maps and company
by Walt Wimer (RMCA #7)

In 1931, C. W. Hicks of Roberts, Illinois founded the Hicks Oil Company, which would later market HICKSATOMIC gasoline at service stations in northern and central Illinois. Founded with just that single service station in Roberts, which was Texaco branded at the time, Hicks Oil would become one of the leading private brand independent “discount” gasoline chains in a very competitive state. The 1950s through the mid-1970s were the “Glory Days” of the independent private brand marketers. Many of them, like Hicks, were founded in the 1930s and even a few, such as Spur Distributing, could trace their roots back to the late 1920s. But two things happened in the marketplace that today few of these companies and brands still exist. The biggest blow to this type of operation was the so-called “Energy Crisis” of the 1970s. A “private brand” company is one that has no manufacturing. Thus, in the gasoline business, a Private Brander bought his gasoline from various refiners, including some of the largest major oil companies. During the 1970s shortages, often Private Branders were unable to get product and if they could, it was at a higher price than they could sell it for at retail. The other problem was the C-store growth

that forced out most conventional full service gas stations and the independent “gas only” stations.

Hicks Oil grew from that single station in Roberts at the junction of U. S. 54 and Illinois route 115 in the middle of farmland, to 17 stations by 1941. Roberts had a population of around 500 and many of the company’s early stations were in such towns in rural Illinois. Over half of those sites were no longer around by the 1950s, probably having failed to survive the war years, or maybe switching to other brands if they were not company owned. However, seven of the pre-war sites were still pumping Hicks products in the early 1950s including those at Roberts, Chatsworth, East Peoria, Fairbury, Morton, Pekin and Watseka. It was some time after the war that the company elected to rebrand their stations to “HICKSTOMIC”. This was a time in our country’s history that the “Atomic” name was used in many marketing ventures as meaning a product with “power.” It

Continued on Page 4



SAVE HICKSATOMIC STAMPS

For money spent at our stations you will receive 1¢ stamps. Save these stamps in the folder and when the folder is filled return it to us with the seal unbroken. WE MUST CHECK the seal in your presence. You will have an opportunity to save from \$1.25 to \$10.00 by selling others about our plans and the many services you receive at HICKSATOMIC STATIONS. Please tell one person for each dollar you receive.

We reserve the right to protest this book.

HICKSATOMIC STATIONS LOCATED AT

Aurora, Illinois — Broadway & North
Aurora, Illinois — Main & Clark
Bloomington, Illinois — 201 South Main St.
Bloomington, Illinois — U.S. 150 at Jct. 66
Canton, Illinois — 30 South First Ave.
Canton, Illinois — 509 South Fifth Ave.
Chatsworth, Illinois — Route 24
Decatur, Illinois — Rt. 49 South
East Peoria, Illinois — 501 South Franklin
Edwardsville, Illinois — Schwarz and Buchanan
Fairbury, Illinois — Route 21, East edge of Town
Joliet, Illinois — 1744 Core St.
Kankakee, Illinois — Route 49 South
Morton, Illinois — Route 47
Morton, Illinois — Route 103 and 121
Pekin, Illinois — Capital & Margaret
Peoria, Illinois — 241 South Jefferson Ave.
Roberts, Illinois — Routes 54 & 115
Waukegan, Illinois — Routes 24 & 1

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HICKSATOMIC PLANTS ARE LOCATED AT

Bloomington, Ill.	Monticello, Ill.	Woodstock, Ill.
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Decatur, Ill.	Plantfield, Ill.	Knox, Ind.
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Road Map Collectors Association

ROAD MAP COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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TO JOIN RMCA send your name, address, phone, e-mail address and a short description of your road map collecting interest to: RMCA, PO Box 158, Channelview, TX 77530-0158.

Dues are \$15, Canada \$16, other countries \$20. Dues may also be paid via PayPal from the RMCA website at

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

[F]or me, twenty-five square-inches of pixels cannot ever deliver the same sense of location as can fifteen-hundred square-inches of paper road-map – a document capable of suggesting a traveler's place in a greater landscape embracing heart and soul. - William Least Heat-Moon, Roads to Quoz: an American Mosey (2008)

The quotation above captures the romance of collecting road maps far better than I can. An earlier passage in Roads to Quoz refers to Route 40 preservationist Frank Brusca's childhood map collection, proudly discarded by his mother and culminating in a mad dash to a curbside.

Often the objects of our collective heart are discarded at worst, and our hobby misunderstood at best. The heartbeat of our group is strongest at our annual Expo. For 2009 we have made the Expo a more practical destination for our members by placing it during the weekend of the Peotone gas bash, a.k.a. the Chicagoland Petroleum and Advertising Show. October 23 and 24, 2008, are our dates, with Saturday's location the Jean Shepherd Center in Hammond, Indiana once again. This year we hope to have events scheduled on both Friday and Saturday nights, so that you

can roll out of bed on Sunday morning and make the short drive to Peotone, should you desire.

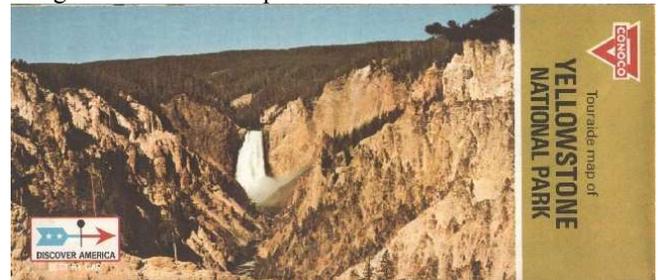
Because of a management change, we don't have a price quote from our usual hotel, and are uncertain if it will remain part of the Amerihost chain. We will make the rest of the information available once we are informed.

Judy Aulik, RMCA #273

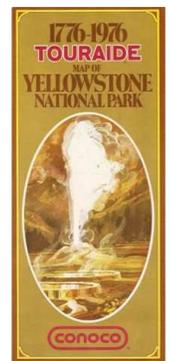
EDITOR'S NOTES

My article on Conoco Yellowstone road maps in the last issue prompted numerous replies. I had asked about other issues from this series, as well as any other oil company national park maps besides these and one Conoco did for Hot Springs National Park. A couple of people responded mentioning non-U.S. maps, such as several that Caltex did for parks in Africa. Sinclair's 1956 U.S. Map "featuring National Parks and Monuments" and various city and regional maps which included nearby parks were also brought up, but in the spirit of the original article, I will restrict this update to maps specifically devoted to one national park in North America – although the subject of other oil company national park maps from around the world would make for a very interesting article, if someone would care to write that!

I have not received confirmation on any other parks aside from the two mentioned (other than a few rather boring Texaco "sheet maps" with multiple parks on them), but did receive a number of additions to the Conoco Yellowstone collection. As suspected, several additional years were confirmed, two of which have substantially different cover designs. The 1970 map features the familiar Yellowstone



Falls photograph, but with an unusual horizontal orientation. This map also has a rather humorous message on the back, a "Notice to Bears" warning them not to accept "ersatz foodstuffs" from humans. The other new cover design is on the 1976 map, which features a drawing of a geyser. In addition, a 1999 map was reported, with the same cover as 1995 and Gousha cartography, but attributed to Rand McNally, which had taken over Gousha in 1996. – Mark Greaves, #39



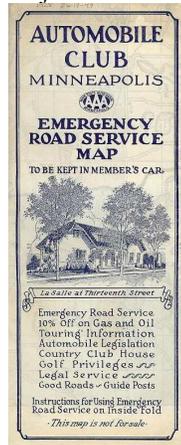
Road Map Collectors Association

Local Auto Club Maps from the 1920s

by Tom Rice (RMCA #720)

In the early years of the 20th century motorists in cities and counties all across the country formed independent local automobile clubs. By the 1920s most of these clubs had affiliated with the American Automobile Association (AAA) and they depended on the AAA for a variety of services and travel materials, including state and regional road maps. These maps served local club members well when they traveled far from home, but they seldom gave the detail that members wanted for the roads close to home. This led many clubs to issue their own local maps of cities and counties. Because these maps were locally produced and often used local cartographers, each map was unique. In this article I feature a few of these maps from the 1920s.

One of my favorite local maps was issued by the Automobile Club of Minneapolis in 1925. It is well designed and has a nice cover drawing of the house that served as the Club's headquarters. Once unfolded, it displays the major roads of greater Minneapolis and St. Paul. The

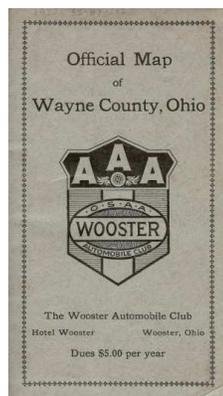


Hudson Company produced the map and the cartographer was C. L. Hall. A map of Muskingum County in Ohio, issued by the Muskingum Motor Club in 1926, has the plain text-only cover style that was common for early maps from



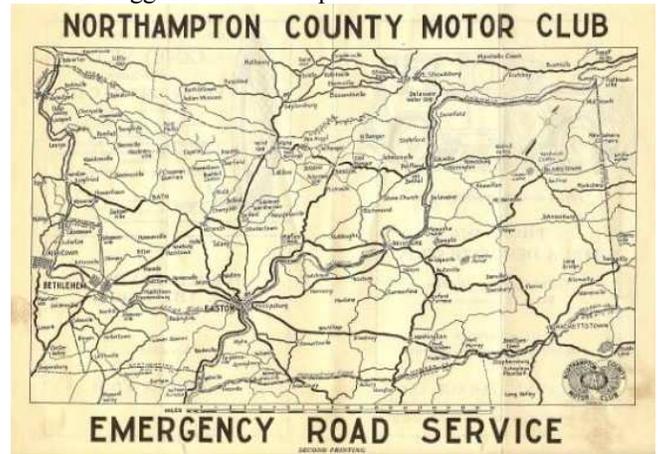
local and state automobile clubs. The handsome map inside was produced by the Forman-Bassett Company, a Cleveland-based cartographer that produced maps of various Ohio cities and counties from 1905 to 1930. Several panels of the backside feature advertising for businesses in the county. Presumably, the Club sold the advertising to help pay for the map.

The Wooster Automobile Club of Ohio produced a foldout map of Wayne County in 1927 that was glued inside a hard stock cover. No cartographer is listed, but the map was probably produced by the county government because it includes township boundaries and the location of the rural schools.

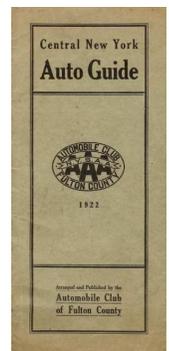


The 1927 map of Cuyahoga County issued by the Cleveland Automobile Club has a very attractive landscape on the cover, complete with automobiles and rolling hills. One side has a map of Cuyahoga County produced by the Cleveland club and the other side has a street map of Cleveland produced by the Forman-Bassett Company.

A single sheet of paper folded in the middle contains the map of greater Easton, Pennsylvania that was issued by the Northampton Motor Club. There is no date on the map, but the advertising on the back suggests that it was produced in the 1920s.



The spartan Easton map is in sharp contrast to the 30-page guide to Fulton County, New York, produced by the Fulton County Automobile Club in 1922. This booklet is filled with all types of advertising and information about the county, including a directory of businesses and detailed descriptions of the many points of interest in the county. There is also a modest two-page map of Fulton County and several surrounding counties.



These are just a few of the local automobile club maps in my collection, but they give a flavor for the wide variety of interesting maps issued by these clubs in the 1920s. I am attracted to these maps in part because they represent the hard work of ordinary citizens who voluntarily came together in the early days of the automobile to help make motoring more enjoyable in their communities. I am always interested in adding automobile club maps of any type to my collection (especially maps from local clubs!), so please contact me if you have some available - (pinehavenbeach@hotmail.com).

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HICKSATOMIC – from page 1

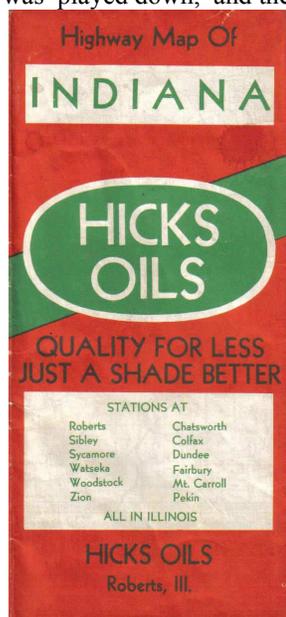
is with the HICKSATOMIC name that the company is most remembered by gas & oil collectors.

C. W. Hicks was quite a businessman. He had a lot more going for him than just a chain of discount gasoline stations. He had his hand in several car dealerships, a large farm of some 460 acres with grain and dairy products, a grain elevator, a couple of restaurants at his gas stations and most important, a successful propane gas service that served eastern Illinois and western Indiana, which he started in 1940. By the mid-60s that business had grown to 34 plants and in the long run, outlasted his gas station operation. The Hicks family also owns a lubrication business headquartered in Du Quoin, Illinois and the Hicks name continues to be very well known in central and northern Illinois.

As for gas stations, the Hicks and Hicksatomic stations were mostly in Illinois. There was a station in Burlington, Wisconsin back in the early 1940s, but it was gone from the chain a decade later. In the late 1960s they operated sites at Rensselaer and North Judson, Indiana. But otherwise their stations were all in Illinois. In the beginning most of the stations were in small rural towns, but as time went on the company expanded to larger population areas such as Aurora, Bloomington, Decatur and Peoria. In the 1950s they even had a couple of sites in the Chicago area including one on busy Archer Avenue and a station in Skokie. It is interesting to note that the small town marketing strategy used by the Hicks Company is pretty much followed by the very successful Casey's General Store chain out of Iowa today. In the mid-70s the gas station chain began to wind down some and the company began to put more emphasis on their HICKS GAS propane operation. After around three decades, the Hicksatomic name was played down, and the big oval signs replaced with smaller ones that just read "Hicks Gas for Less". Some of the last stations were sold off to Trimble Oil Co., a Standard/Amoco distributor and rebranded to the major brand. The last remaining gasoline station was in Bloomington. It was closed in the late 1990s, but the site remained with the propane business.

MAPS

The first Hicks Oil maps date to the late 1930s. The oldest issue we know of is from 1939, although maps might have been issued before that



1939 front cover

date. Those early Hicks maps were from the Mid-West Map Co., just before H. M. Gousha bought that company. The 1941 issue has a state map showing the Mid-West name, but a half-page United States map with the Gousha name. When compared to most maps from small independent companies, these early versions of Hicks maps are outstanding. The maps are tri-fold, with one of the three covers showing a full-length photo of a Hicks Oil tank truck of late '30s vintage. Inside the 1941 issue there is a full quarter page photo of Hicks Café on U.S. Route 24 at Watseka, Illinois, which was located adjacent to one of their early stations. Another major difference between the 1939 and 1941 issues is the station location list on the front cover. The 1939 issue lists stations in only 12 towns. By 1941, the list has grown to 17 and while the 1939 map listed only the towns, the 1941 map shows highway locations such as Illinois 48 & 115 in Roberts and U.S. 24 in Watseka (Illinois 48 was later changed to U.S. 54).



1941 front cover and side panel

As most every collector knows, oil company road maps slowed to just a trickle during the war years, with just a couple of major oil companies issuing maps during the 1943-44 period. Things picked back up by 1945-46. However, in working on this article for *The Legend* I have been unable to come up with any later 1940s maps from Hicks, even with contacting several club members who have extensive collections. It is quite possible that the company did not issue maps again until the early 1950s. Also, there is one other possibility. One club member has a Rand McNally generic map dated 1941 that shows only a "Hicks Oils" rubber stamp at the bottom. This is the same Rand McNally "generic", or "stock" design that was used for the first

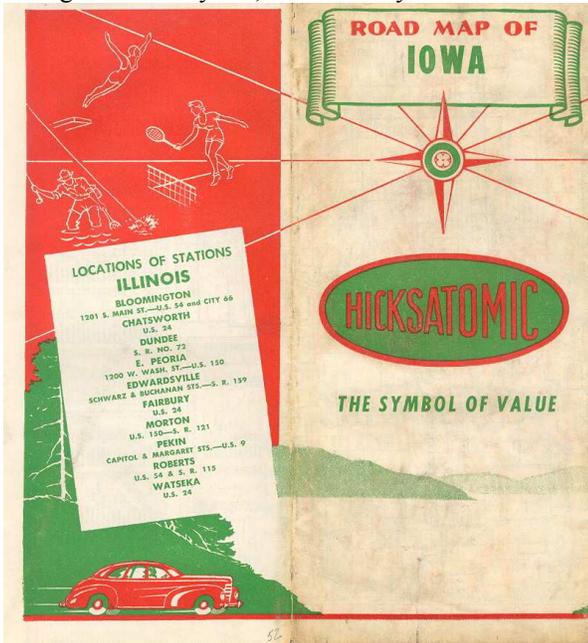
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“Hicksatomic” map in the early ‘50s. That design is the one I call the “compass” design, with a four point compass star at the top and a very undetailed lake with mountains scene at the bottom. On these maps Rand McNally would place the company’s logo or advertising in the blank area between compass and lake area and also in plain white boxes on the back & inside panels of the tri-fold maps. It could be that the only Hicks maps of the later half of the 1940s were like this 1941 issue. I would estimate that over the years more than 75% of the small independent oil companies used such “generic” cover maps from Rand McNally or Gousha. Hicks Oil used at least four different such covers from the 1940s into the ‘70s.



1941 generic cover

Hicks Oil began using the Hicksatomic brand name in the 1940s after the war, but it is rather hard to pin down an exact date. The first years of Hicksatomic maps featured a green oval logo with red lettering. To the best I can determine, that logo did not actually appear on station signage. The oldest map of this design I have been able to come up with is 1952, although it could have been issued earlier. On the back cover of the tri-fold map is a station location list, which was common to all Hicks and Hicksatomic maps. Of note is that the listing on the 1952 map fell to 10 from the 17 of the 1941 map. It could have been that some of the smaller stations did not make it through the war years, or that they were dealer stations



1952 front cover and side panel

rather than company owned and operated, which were not listed on the maps after the war.

In 1953 Rand McNally changed their maps from the tri-fold design to what has become known in the hobby as the accordion style. Now there were only front and back covers for oil companies to place their advertising. At the time Rand McNally dumped the “compass” design and several other stock designs they had used through the 1940s and early 1950s. Hicks, like all the other small companies, made a change in their map cover design that year. Hicks chose a map cover with a Far Western mountain bluff and peak with a lake in the foreground. The only wording on the covers of the 1952 maps was “The Symbol of Value” located below the oval logo. But in 1953 they added quite a bit of wording that would stay constant through their maps of the 1970s. “The Symbol of Value” was moved above the logo and below it “Gasoline plus Silver Premium Motor Oils”. Then below the mountain scene it reads “Will Give You the Utmost in Motoring Economy “Quality For Less”.



1953 front cover



1954 front cover

The cover for the 1953 issue appears to have been only used for that one year, as the 1954 issue is completely different. For reasons unknown, Hicks went to a different Rand McNally generic cover that year. This one is another Rand McNally design that saw considerable use in the ‘50s and ‘60s. It shows a country road through rolling hills with a 1950s car along with a church and couple of houses in the background. This cover was printed in a number of different colors, but for the Hicksatomic maps it was in green and red, the company’s long time colors.

The 1954 design was again short lived, as the company made another change in 1955. This time a change that would remain through their remaining map history in the

Continued on page 8

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Early Road Maps of Hawaii

by Stan DeOrsey (RMCA #76)

Hawaii became a state in 1959 and published its first official state highway map in 1963. Prior to this there were a few oil companies which did business in Hawaii and distributed road maps, for example Chevron, Texaco, Union, and a few others. But these oil company maps only go back to the 1950s. Surely there were roads in Hawaii many years earlier; there must have been maps, maybe official maps?

While the preferred originator of official maps is the state highway department, often the state tourist department issued the official state highway map. In Hawaii during its early territorial days, actually beginning in 1903, four organizations banded together to form a joint tourist agency and they issued maps, official or at least semiofficial.

The four founding organizations were:

- Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu (Oahu island)
- Hilo Board of Trade (Hawaii island)
- Maui Chamber of Commerce (Maui island)
- Kauai Chamber of Commerce (Kauai island)

Evolution of Hawaii tourist agencies:

- Hawaii Promotion Committee 1903-1919
- Hawaii Tourist Bureau 1919-1943
- Hawaii Travel Bureau 1943-1945
- Hawaii Visitors Bureau 1945-1996
- Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau 1996-date

A 1917 map by the Hawaii Publicity Commission has also been seen. It is not clear if this is a misprinted name or another organization.

Hawaii comprises eight main islands. The following are the islands, area in square miles, and 1920 population.

Hawaii	4038	64,895
Maui	729	36,080
Oahu	608	123,496
Kauai	553	29,247
Molokai	261	1,784
Lanai	140	185
Niihau	73	191
Kahoolawe	45	3

One can clearly see that the first four islands dominate in terms of both physical size and 1920 population, which explains why only four islands were included in the early tourist organization. Lanai, Niihau, and Kahoolawe are each privately owned, Kahoolawe by the US Government. While Molokai was owned by many individuals and companies, the low population initially voided the need to be included in tourist promotions.

The Hawaii Promotion Committee published five maps: one each of the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Oahu, and Kauai plus a separate map of the city of Honolulu, far and away the largest city. It is not clear when these maps were first issued but maps are known from 1911. It seems that each map was not published every year but all were issued many times. The designs from the beginning to the early 1930s were of a road map of the entire island with one or no insets, plus lists of hotels, attractions, and transportation services. Drafting was provided by local people, and different for each island. For Oahu in the 1920s, the Honolulu Automobile Club is credited. Usually the same map was used for a number of years but the drafting changed over time.

By 1929 Honolulu was included on the Oahu map but in the 1930s two maps were again issued. Also by the mid-1930s maps were printed in two colors with a cover of less text. About 1937 a map of Molokai appeared. Then the war hit, quite literally in Hawaii's case. Tourist Bureau maps ceased to be issued until the early 1950s, certainly by 1952, perhaps earlier. By now the maps were more like travel brochures with photos, but free oil company maps were also readily available of the entire territory.

As can be seen, it was "normal" to publish maps of an individual island rather than the entire territory, which is mostly water plus islands without public access.

George Armitage was secretary of the Hawaii Tourist Bureau from 1920. With Tourist Bureau maps not available he decided to publish his own Honolulu map for use by military personal and others who were now stationed or passing through Oahu. His maps of Honolulu and Oahu (one map, with one inset of all the islands) are found in a variety of editions and printings starting in 1942 and continuing into at least the 1970s. Most editions are printed on a bewildering variety of pastel colored paper. Apparently he printed a few each time paper supplies became available during the war. They exist attributed to George Armitage, Lousie and George T. Armitage, Hawaiian Service, and Island Map Service.

One other person who took advantage of the war was Edwin H. Bryan, Jr. He had written articles for the *Honolulu Advertiser* newspaper about tiny Pacific islands or atolls. These island overviews were collected in the book *American Polynesia* published in 1941 and expanded in 1942 under the title *American Polynesia and the Hawaiian Chain*. Each of the northwest chain of islands, part of Hawaii, are included along with small maps. A very fascinating book of these seldom mapped areas.

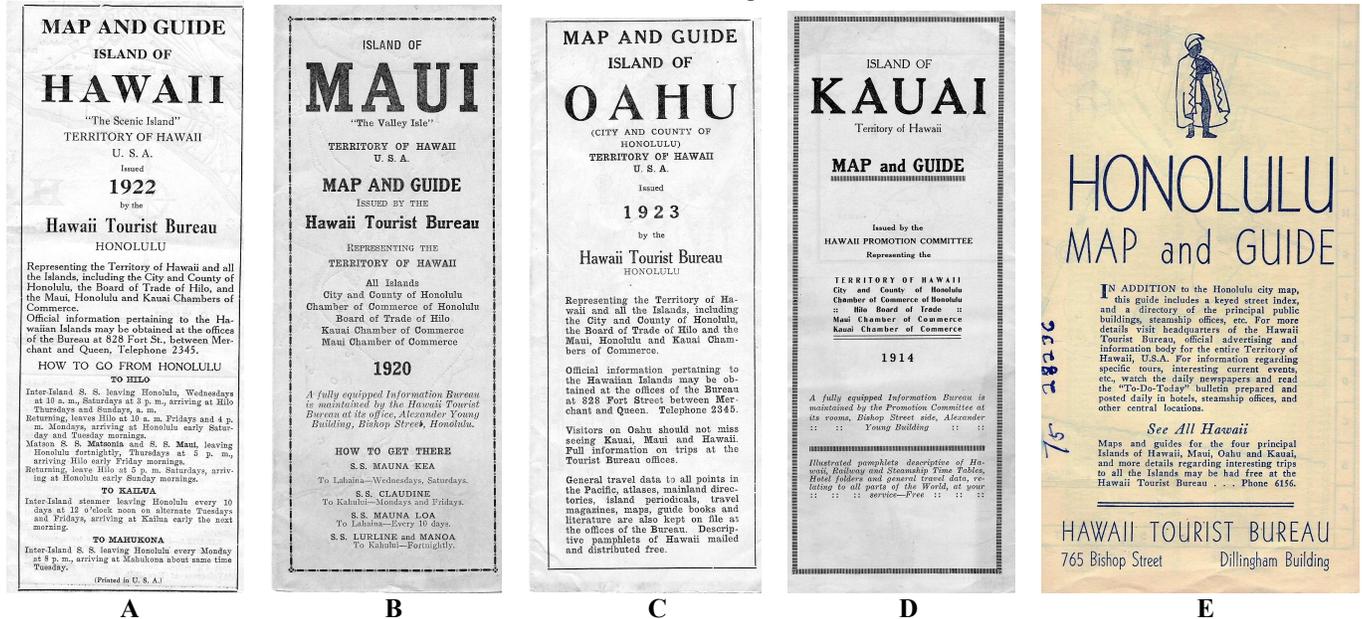
Byran also published a booklet of sectional maps of Honolulu in 1943. Expanded to include all of Oahu, it continued at least into the 1980s with frequent editions. Lastly, he published Captain Byran's Pacific War Atlas

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containing 75 maps with full index. It went through at least four editions (or printings?), but has little on Hawaii.

Of course there are other early maps, some by the USO, ones by Honolulu Transit (trolley and bus) as well as topographic map sheets. But few are really road maps.

For current maps, the set by James Bier must be mentioned. They are full color maps of each island with shaded topography. They have been issued in multiple editions starting in the mid-1970s. Titles include Moloka'i and Lana'i, Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i. He has also published similar maps of Western and American Samoa, plus Oceania.



A: Hawaii, 1922, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafting not credited, 1916.

B: Maui, 1920, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafted by Hugh Howell, 1915.

C: Oahu, 1923, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafted for Honolulu Automobile Club by U. Matsu, 1921.

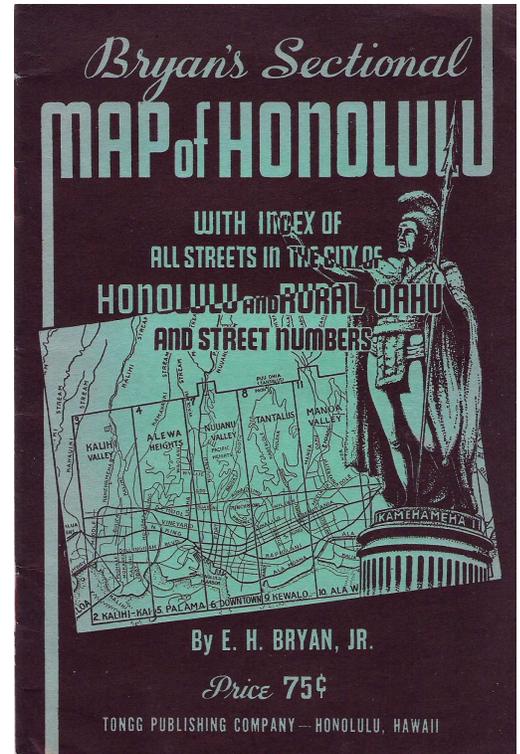
D: Kauai, 1914, for Hawaii Promotion Committee. Map drafted by H.E. Newton, 1908.

E: Honolulu, 1939, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafted by James B. Mann, 1939, "especially for the Hawaii Tourist Bureau."



Honolulu and Oahu, 9th printing, 1943, by George T. Armitage. Honolulu map drafted by James B. Mann, 1942, "especially for George T. Armitage." Identical to Hawaii Tourist Bureau map. Oahu and islands maps not credited.

Honolulu and Oahu, 3rd edition, 2nd printing, 1951, copyright 1948, by Hawaiian Service, Lousie and George T. Armitage. Very similar to 1943 map, only updated. Honolulu map by David A. Awana.



Bryan's Sectional Map of Honolulu, 1943 (first edition), by E.H. Bryan, Jr.

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HICKSATOMIC – from page 5

early '70s. This design has a wide color band in the bottom third of the map containing six cartoon outdoor recreation figures. Included are such enjoyments as golfing, hunting, skiing, archery and a lady in a bathing suit with a beach ball. The bar across the bottom, and a narrower one at the top are in dark green. This is also the first map that shows the famed Hicksatomic sunburst logo that is well known by gasoline and oil collectors of all types. This cover was in use from 1955 until the early '60s when a somewhat minor change was made. This cover also marks the first Hicksatomic map in my collection, a 1958 issue that I got at the Hicksatomic station on U.S. 24 in July of that year while driving across the state late at night. Fifty years later I still have it in "mint" condition. By 1958 there were 20 Hicksatomic stations listed on their maps. However, their map lists never did include dealer locations that handled the brand, except maybe early on. According to Shawn Coady of the company, their station count peaked in the mid-40s to the early 1970s before the energy crisis caused a downturn. The early '60s change I mentioned was the change from the dark green of the '50s to a much lighter, brighter green that would be used into the early 1970s. The latest issue I can find when checking with other collectors is 1972. That sounds about right. A good number of the major oil companies discontinued their map programs in the 1975-77 era. But the small independents had been hit hard by the so called "energy crisis" and likely gave up handing out free maps to customers a few years before that.



1955 - early '60s cover

early '60s - 1972 cover

Like the maps from all but the largest of the independent "Private Branders", maps from Hicks Oil are fairly scarce. The light green cover of the '60s, which was used some 10-12 years, is probably the most common. But even those don't show up at swap meets, antique shops or eBay all that

often!! The 1953 & 1954 designs were only used for one year each and by a chain that had under 20 company stations at that point. So they are quite scarce, as are the old pre-war issues prior to the Hicksatomic brand name. From what I learned in contact with other RMCA members, few gasoline map collections include more than 2-3 Hicks/Hicksatomic maps!! Hicksatomic maps were issued for at least nine states even though the company was more or less a single state marketer. Those known include Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Kentucky/Tennessee. There are also a Central States issue plus maps of Chicago and I would also suspect maps may have been issued for Ohio and other states. Also known is a SIGMA map issued in 1967 with "Hicksatomic Stations, Inc., Fairbury, IL" stamped at the bottom. Other SIGMA issues are likely. Along these lines the company also sold atlases at their stations from at least 1962 through 1980. These were in conjunction with Quaker State or just standard Rand McNally covers, both with "Hicksatomic Stations Inc." overprint at the bottom. For those into other gas/oil items, at least four different pump globes are known, none of them really common. Oil cans and signs are really scarce!! There are also a few paper items of the brand including matchcovers, stamp books and I have a full color post card of Canton, Illinois station #2 which was rebuilt in 1965 as the first Hicksatomic station to feature a canopy.



Post card showing Station #2, Canton, Illinois c.1970

In closing I would like to thank Shawn Coady, grandson of C. W. Hicks and one of the current owners of the company for all of the time and information he gave me. Also fellow RMCA members Gary Spade, Jim Wakefield, Judy Aulik, Richard Horwitz, Norm Fenske, Steve Sizemore, John McClure, Ian Byrne, Jim Heckenbaugh and Tom Sveum for filling me in on what Hicksatomic maps they have in their collections.

ROAD MAP EXPO COMING IN OCTOBER!

Please see "President's Views" on page 2 for details.