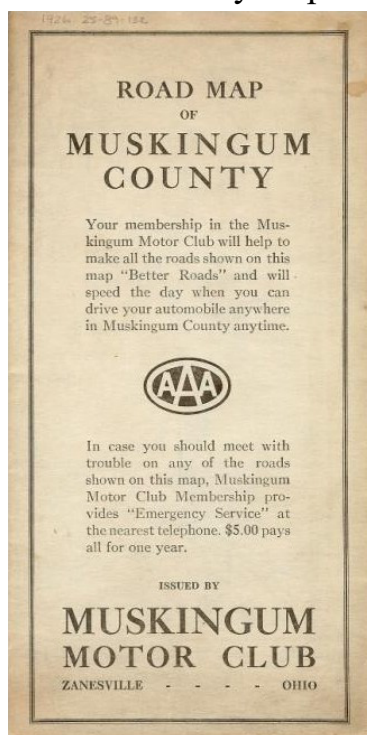
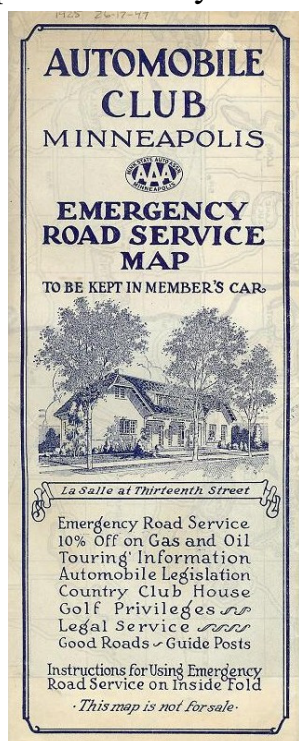


Local Auto Club Maps from the 1920s

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.

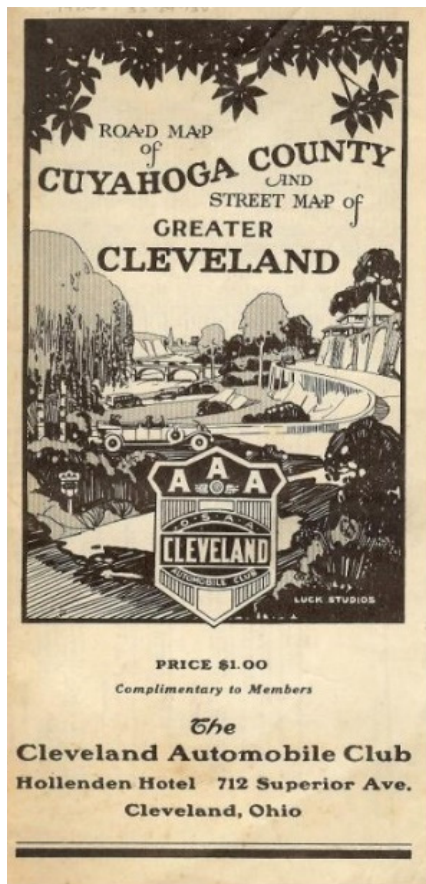
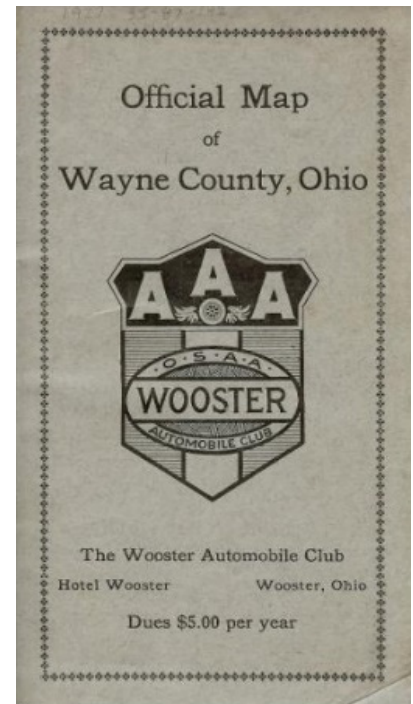
One of my favorite local maps was issued by the Automobile Club of Minneapolis in 1925. It is well de-signed and has a nice cover drawing of the house that served as the Club's headquarters. Once unfolded, it displays the major roads of greater Minneapolis and St. Paul. The Hudson Comp-any produced the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

