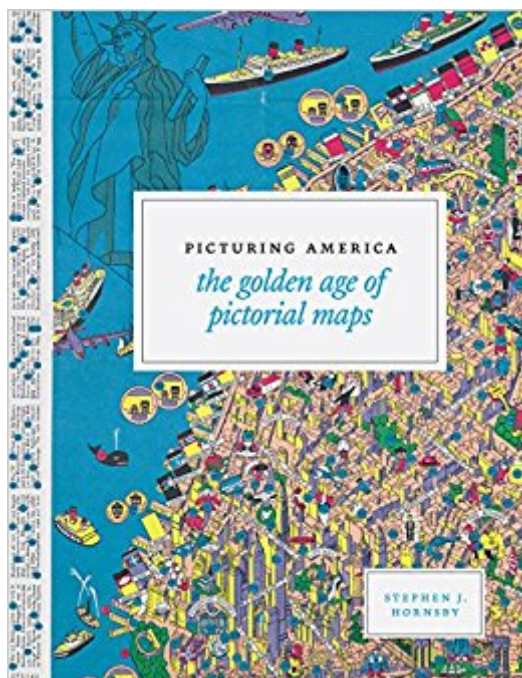


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# Picturing America: The Golden Age Of Pictorial Maps



## Synopsis

Instructive, amusing, colorful—pictorial maps have been used and admired since the first medieval cartographer put pen to paper depicting mountains and trees across countries, people and objects around margins, and sea monsters in oceans. More recent generations of pictorial map artists have continued that traditional mixture of whimsy and fact, combining cartographic elements with text and images and featuring bold and arresting designs, bright and cheerful colors, and lively detail. In the United States, the art form flourished from the 1920s through the 1970s, when thousands of innovative maps were mass-produced for use as advertisements and decorative objects—the golden age of American pictorial maps. *Picturing America* is the first book to showcase this vivid and popular genre of maps. Geographer Stephen J. Hornsby gathers together 158 delightful pictorial jewels, most drawn from the extensive collections of the Library of Congress. In his informative introduction, Hornsby outlines the development of the cartographic form, identifies several representative artists, describes the process of creating a pictorial map, and considers the significance of the form in the history of Western cartography. Organized into six thematic sections, *Picturing America* covers a vast swath of the pictorial map tradition during its golden age, ranging from “Maps to Amuse” to “Maps for War.” Hornsby has unearthed the most fascinating and visually striking maps the United States has to offer: Disney cartoon maps, college campus maps, kooky state tourism ads, World War II promotional posters, and many more. This remarkable, charming volume’s glorious full-color pictorial maps will be irresistible to any map lover or armchair traveler.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press (March 23, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 022638604X

ISBN-13: 978-0226386041

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 1.1 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #138,103 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 in *Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Cartography* #52 in *Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Design History & Criticism* #185 in *Books > Engineering & Transportation >*

## Customer Reviews

"Hornsby's *Picturing America* is a beautifully illustrated new book that documents the 'golden age' of pictorial maps, from the 1920s to the 1970s. It includes the playful (distorted views of the country from the perspective of New Yorkers, Texans and Californians); the obscure (a map of volunteer fire departments in Philadelphia, circa 1792, commissioned and drawn in 1938); and more of the obscure (a map of Michigan bakeries)." (New York Times)"An underappreciated form of American visual art: the pictorial map. They're maps designed to draw you in and as often as not try to sell you something, whether it's a tropical vacation, a brand of bourbon, or a version of the American dream. [*Picturing America*] highlights an occasionally twisted, often amusing, always colorful tradition of hand-drawn cartography." (National Geographic)"Delightful, weird, informative....*Picturing America* collects rare images from the short-lived golden age of pictorial mapping." (Mental Floss)"Although [pictorial maps] were hugely prominent in American culture of the time, their importance has been largely overlooked. However, a new book, *Picturing America* by geographer Hornsby, examines how these illustrated maps once captured the image of America." (CNN Style)"From the 1920s through the 1970s, map designers continued the tradition of mixing whimsy and fact, creating thousands of maps for use as advertisements and decorative objects. For the first time, those works of art have been bound together in a charming volume perfect for armchair travelers." (Fathom)"Designed to educate, amuse, or advertise, pictorial maps were a clever and colorful component of print culture in the mid-20th century, often overlooked in studies of cartography. *Picturing America* celebrates these vibrant maps, tracing their development and proliferation from the 1920s to the 1970s." (Sierra Sun Times)

Stephen J. Hornsby is director of the Canadian-American Center and professor of geography and Canadian studies at the University of Maine. He is author and coeditor of several books, including the prize-winning *Historical Atlas of Maine*.

This is a gorgeous, valuable, and readable book that serves both as a well-annotated and explained reference work, but also as an entertaining general interest book. However, there is unfortunately one major, frustrating, and very disappointing flaw: the detail of nearly half the maps reproduced in this volume is so poor that it can scarcely be seen with the naked eye; a magnifying glass is

needed. As the pages of this work have overly wide top, bottom, and side margins, there's simply no excuse for not having enlarged the maps so that their detail might be savored. It's astounding that this defect wasn't noted and corrected prior to printing.

A excellent and much-needed resource for those collecting or selling in this increasingly popular genre. High quality illustrations. He missed a couple of 2nd tier artists, but that is a small complaint given all those he noted and the numerous illustrations he chose to include.

Truly magnificent in every way, this book will be the definitive work on the subject until the planet melts. I am dismayed by the comments about the size of the maps since this is not an atlas but a deeply researched examination of the significance of this delightful form of cartography. Many of these beauties are wall maps and to reproduce them at 1:1 would require megabooks about 5 feet tall which would make bringing them home from the bookstore difficult. In the real world this study of the creme de la creme of the genre is a meticulously chosen selection arrived at after obvious exhaustive study. Also Hornsby gives us the signposts of who and why and where these things can be seen close up (i.e. Rumsey or the Library of Congress) but to see them categorized and organized under themes is amazing. As books on the history of mapping and the reproduction of maps in same this one is at the top of the cartographic mountain.

Great text - but maps are too small for a map book. Would have been better to have used the entire whitespace on the pages and/or have magnified sections.

Have to agree with A. Lueder's review, the reproductions are woefully small. A book of this nature should have also had some foldout pages as well. But I will give the book five stars because it is absolutely gorgeous. Well-written, and despite the undersized reproductions, still a joy to peruse. Kudos to the author!

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