



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

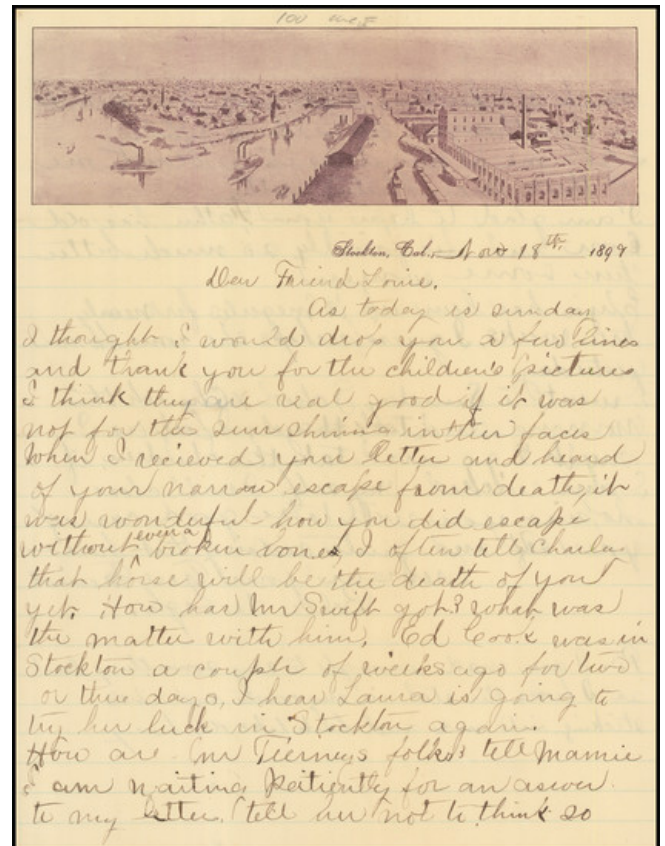
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**(California Pictorial Lettersheet) [Manuscript letter on Lettersheet with Bird's-eye view  
of Stockton, California]**

**Stock#:** 97542  
**Map Maker:** De Legh  
**Date:** 1899  
**Place:** Stockton, California  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 8.5 x 11 inches  
**Price:** \$ 495.00



**Description:**

***Stockton Pictorial Lettersheet***

***"I broke the steel in my corsets and it is sticking into me and hurts like old harey."***

An unusual and rare 19th-century California lettersheet illustrated with a bird's eye view of Stockton. The illustration of Stockton is printed in halftone, which is rare for pictorial lettersheets of this time, which had been commonly printed by lithography. The view seems to be based on a sketch, perhaps originally from a photograph. Stockton is shown as a bustling city of smokestacks, with steamboats in San Joaquin River.

The letter, written by a woman named Belle de Legh, is not without interest. She writes to a friend named Louie, mentioning the recipient's horse, new dresses, as well as "Mamie" and "Old Coon." Other names mentioned: Ed Cook and Mr. Tierney.



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Some 22 years later Mrs. Belle de Legh advertised her 1070-acre Stockton stock and hog ranch for sale, including 250 acres planted with alfalfa - see Feb 25, 1922 issue of *Pacific Rural Press*.

Text of the letter:

*Dear Friend Louie:*

*As today is Sunday, I thought I would drop you a few lines and thank you for the children's pictures I think they are real good if it was not for the sun shining in their faces when I recieved [sic] your letter and heard of your narrow escape from death, it was wonderful how you did escape without even a broken bone. I often tell Charlie that horse will be the death of you yet. How has Mr. Swift yet? What was the matter with him. Ed Cook was in Stockton a couple of weeks ago for two or three days. I heard Laura is going to try her luck in Stockton again. How are Mr. Tierney's folks? Tell Mamie I am waiting patiently for an answer to my letter (tell her not to think so much of Sheridan, and give her friends a few thoughts once in a while. I got me a new dress it's a beaut, one of these nice blister cloth. I am glad to hear your Father has old Coon and his family so much better [t? some women. Eliza has been up to [Megerles?] for nearly three weeks. I guess perhaps she came home yesterday. I went to Sunday School & Church this morning and took Hazel, I feel as I ought to go and take the children, if I am wicked myself. I will close hoping you will take good care of yourself and quit riding that horse. I remain your true friend, Belle de Legh.*

*P.S. I am mad enough to say something bad as I broke the steel in my corsets and it is sticking into me and hurts like old harey.*

California pictorial lettersheets were first issued during the Gold Rush. They proved a popular means for gold seekers to share images of California with folks back home. The present 1899 letter, being a somewhat latter-day example of the genre, is unusual for the printing technology used: the halftone process, which was a fairly recently invented (ca. 1881) pioneering method of reproducing photographic views.

**Rarity**

We can not trace any other examples of this Stockton lettersheet either online or on RBH. No examples described in OCLC.



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**Detailed Condition:**

Lettersheet, with view of Stockton, printed in halftone, at top of first page. Letterpress place and date line "Stockton, Cal., \_\_\_189\_\_" directly below image, completed in manuscript: "Nov. 18th, 1899" Old folds. Condition is excellent.