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Using Maps in Genealogical Research
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Introduction

Utilizing maps should be an integral part of one's genealogical research. Even if the exact name of your ancestral village remains unknown, exploration of the geo-political history of the region can become an exhilarating basis of study.

In my own research, map exploration was divided into two categories. The initial investigation required knowledge of the exact map coordinates of my ancestral villages, which mandated careful research in gazetteers and atlases, consultation with the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington, D.C, and localization of the towns on both ancient and modern maps.

The second category of map research utilized computer assisted search techniques. Internet access has opened many windows of opportunity through which one may explore an ever-changing and wide variety of available global databases. New resources are becoming available through the use of Internet search engines. Map libraries also contain information and links to other genealogically important information including historical articles, timelines, road maps, satellite imaging, and photographic images of towns. Previously, access to such data was unavailable. There has been an explosion of relevant new resources for the genealogist.

Discovering Map Coordinates

Basic to all genealogical research is the identification of one's ancestral towns. Geographically, towns are identified by latitude and longitude. Latitude is measured by degrees of arc from the zero reference point north or south of the equator. Longitude is measured by degrees of arc from the zero reference point east or west of Greenwich, England. Map coordinates are written in degrees, and the subdivisions of degrees in minutes and seconds of arc.

Gazetteers and Atlases

Gazetteers and atlases are very useful in discovering the location of towns. In addition to the map coordinates, one may find important political and historical facts, regional ethnic and religious demographics, climatic information, discussion of the local geography, the location of bordering towns and rivers, and population statistics. Gazetteers may indicate the nearest towns for church and provincial records.

Best Guide to Jewish Communities in Central and Eastern Europe

A particularly outstanding publication, which has the best compilation of town locations of the Jewish communities in Europe, is: Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack: "Where Once We Walked, A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust." Avotaynu, Inc, Bergenfield, New Jersey. Revised Edition, 2002. [JGS 943 E 5mj 2002].

This gazetteer has unique information of special interest in locating towns that had Jewish communities. Included in this gazetteer are:
1. Town names and country.
2. Town map coordinates.
3. List of the nearest major city with the distance and direction from that city.
4. Transliterations of 23,500 town names including Yiddish (17,500 towns), Russian, Polish, Lithuania, and others, based upon the name changes, which occurred after past wars or annexations by regional political powers.

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5. Alternative town names, Yiddish names, and synonyms, by which the towns were known.
6. Town names by phonetic sounds.
7. Town names listed by the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex System.
8. Population statistics.
9. Select bibliography of useful atlas and gazetteer resources.

Historical Atlases

Historical Atlases are included in the list of resources as special publications, which contain chronologically sequential maps that span past centuries and millennia. Such books can be an invaluable source of information regarding the history of the changing political borders of countries, and maps showing the effects on border changes caused by wars and pogroms. Several of my favorite historical atlases are listed in this handout.

Cadastral Maps:

The word, cadastral, is taken from the root word, Cadastre, which is an official register of the quantity, value, and ownership of real estate used in apportioning taxes. Cadastral: showing or recording property boundaries, subdivision lines, buildings, and related details. A. Merriam-Webster, "Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Merriam-Webster, Inc., Publishers, Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A., 1988.

U.S. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

U.S. Library of Congress offers free map research assistance through their Geography and Map Division, Washington D.C. 20540-4761 - Telephone: (202) 707-6277 or (202) 707-8555. In the letter requesting assistance from the library, one must include the town name and country, if known, and the map coordinates. A research coordinator will be assigned to search for the requested maps and send photocopies of them to you free of charge. The library maintains a huge worldwide inventory of both ancient and modern maps. Special maps and oversized maps (i.e. one meter size) can be obtained at a nominal charge. Be as specific as possible in your request. You may ask for photocopies of the following types of maps (I recommend that you request all of these):
1. The oldest maps available in their collection
2. A modern map of the same town and region
3. A town map
4. A regional map
5. A national map
6. A town-plan map, which will show the streets and major venues

Local and Regional Libraries

Public and private libraries, as well as university libraries may have excellent map research services. Investigate these resources. Consider contacting similar facilities in the foreign countries of your ancestral towns as you explore your family history.

Internet resources

Access to relevant global databases and other resources is now possible through the use of computers that have Internet connections. This requires understanding how to use Internet search engines to explore lists of websites that may contain information that is relevant to your research. Some of these websites are listed in this handout. Several databases can be accessed, which utilize foreign language key foreign words including Cyrillic and Hebrew alphabet characters, are also listed. When available, utilize the "translation to English" links. Learn some useful foreign language vocabulary and have available the Cyrillic, Hebrew, and Yiddish alphabets to use in typing into the search windows the necessary word for your particular research. Please note that the words for "map" may be "karte" (Austrian, German), "mapy" (Polish), or "harta" (Romanian), etc.

Special Map Collections

Military Maps of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: "Militär Landescufnahme und Spezialkarte der Österreiche-Ungarichen Monarchie," published by Österreich Militärgeographisches Institut, 1:75,000 scale, includes Austria, Hungary, and regions of Czechoslavia, Northern Italy (South Tyrol), Poland, Romania (Bukowina), Western Ukraine, and Yugoslavia. 1778-1929.

> These military maps are available at:
> a. LDS Family History Center, West Los Angeles, 10741 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025: Microfilm, #1045395. CD ROM Index and Microfilm Index available.
> b. LDS Family History Center: Microfiche, Poland – Fiche Maps and Index files # 6000198-6000247.
> c. UCLA, Graduate Research Library
> d. U. S. Library of Congress, Geography & Map Division, Washington, D.C.
> e. New York Central Public Library.
> f. Internet map search engines

LDS Family History Center:

A collection of large-sized, detailed, and original Russian, and Central and Eastern European maps is stored in the Map/Gazetteer room at the West LA FHC. Many of these maps of the collection were donated several years ago by Randy Daitch. He is a JGSLA member and the Daitch individual named in the Daitch-Mokotoff soundex classification system. FHC map-drawer contents include:
1. Central Europe (943) and Poland (943.8)
2. Czechoslovakia (943.7)
3. Eastern Europe (947.5)
4. Luxemburg (949.35)
5. Greece (949.5)
6. Yugoslavia (949.7)
7. Iran (955)
8. Middle East (956)
9. Israel and Holy Land (956.9)

UCLA Graduate Research Library (Telephone (310) 825-3135). Contains a huge collection of ancient and modern maps, town plans, topographical maps, microfische and microfilm records, and other special collections. Included are:
a. CIA Maps
b. Army Special Service Series Maps

Atlases and Gazetteers:

"Atlas Historyczny Polski." Panstwowe Przedjiebiostrvo Wydawnictw Kartograficznych, Warsawa. PGS 943.8 E7ab.

Barnavi, Eli: "A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People," Schocken Books, New York, 1992.

Euro-Travel Atlases, 1:300,000: American Map Corporation (Langenscheidt Publishing Group, Ravenstein Publisher, Germany), Maspeth, New York. Available: Africa, Austria, Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Belgium/Netherlands, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Russia, and Turkey.

Gilbert, Martin, "Atlas of Jewish Civilization, 4000 Years of Jewish History." Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, 1990. JGS 911 G374i.

Gilbert, Martin: "Atlas of Jewish History." Dorset Press, U.S.A., 3rd Edition. JGS 911g374. 1984.

Gilbert, Martin: "Atlas of Russian History from 800 B.C. to the Present Day." Oxford University Press, New York, 1993. PGS 947 E7g 1993

Gilbert, Martin: "The Illustrated Atlas of Jewish Civilization, 4,000 Year of Jewish History," Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1990.

Gilbert, Martin: "The Jews of Russia: their History in Maps." Hippocrene Books, Inc. New York, 1987.

Hupchic, Dennis P. and Cox, Harold E.: "A Concise Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe," St. Martins Press, New York, 1996 [947H 3hd]

Lenius, Brian J.: "Genealogical Gazetteer of Galicia." PGS 943.8 E5L.

Mokotoff, Gary and Sallyann Amdur Sack: "Where Once We Walked, A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust." Avotaynu, Inc. Bergenfield, New Jersey. Revised Edition, 2002. JGS 943 E 5mj 2002.

Pogonowski, Iwo Ciprian: "Poland A Historical Atlas," Hippocrene Books, Inc. New York, 1987. [PGS 943.8 E7p.]

"Polska, Atlas Drogowy," 1:200,000. Geo Center, Warszawa, 1998.
PGS 943.8 E7ad

"The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World," Columbia University Press, New York, 4th Ed 1962. PGS 910.3 C723g 1966.

National Archives and Records Administration – NARA II

1. German Flown Aerial Reconnaissance Maps (of the German Air Force flown in World War II), 1940-1944, US Captured Photography.
   a. NARA II – National Archives and Records Administration at College Park (Archives II), Cartographic and Architectural Research Branch (NWDNC), Third Floor.
   b. Address: Third Floor, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740
   c. Tel: (301) 713-7040
   d. E-mail: carto@nara.gov
2. Captured Still Photography, German Reconnaissance films:
   a. National Archives in College Park
   b. Address: National Archives and Records Administration at College Park (Archives II), Special Media Archives Services Division (NWCS), Still Picture Reference Team, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, CA 20740-6001
   c. Tel: (301) 837-3530
   d. Fill out the form: "contact us at"nara.gov
   e. You must provide the town and country names

Websites:

Direct links to the Library of Congress:
  http://www.loc.gov

  Geography & Map Division: www.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml.panhome.html

  Panoramic/Perspective Artistic Maps:
  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html

Railroad Maps (1828-1900):
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/rrhtml/rrhome.html

Jewish Genealogy Society Shtetl Seeker website:
http://www.jewishgen.org/ShtetlSeeker/loctown.htm

Google Search Engine:
1. http://www.google.com/maps
2. Enter desired map address, city, state and zip code
3. Select U.S. town and state for search for the desired map
4. Select the "map" link for the road map
   a. Select the desired map resolution by clicking the zoom out (-) or zoom in (+) button
   b. Click "View Printer Page" This will provide a larger image file for downloading and printing.
   c. Click "E-mail Page" to send the image to yourself or a relative.
   d. Select the "Find" tool and click "Save As" to download image to your computer.

International Map Search Engines:
1. Google Earth free download:
   http://earth.google.com/
2. Google Maps World Gazetteer:
   http://earth.google.com/
3. Mapquest:
   http:// www.mapquest.com/www.
4. University of Texas, Perry Casteneda Library:
   http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map_sites/cities_sites.html
5. FEEFHS Map Room (Federation of Eastern European Family History Society):
   http://feefhs.org/maps/indexmap.html
6. Global Gazetteer: Worldwide Directory of Cities
   Use link button at far right bottom of webpage http://www.calle.com/world/
7. Maps of Hungarian Cities:
   http://lazarus.elte.hu/gb/maps.htm
8. Ukrainian Map Server (Inter-active):
   http://www.infoukes.com/ua-maps/
9. Ravenstein Publishers, "Atlas of Maps of the German Empire"
   Searchable and downloadable maps:
   http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein/mapdl.html
10. U.S. Cadastral Maps:
   http://www.earthmaps.com/maps.htm

11. National Geo-physical Map Service:
   http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/topo/globe.html
12. Terraserver U.S.A.
   http://terraserver-usa.com/Place.aspx
13. Historical Town Atlas of Austria:
   http://www.magwien.gv.at/english/historictowns/a_eng.htm
14. On-line Maps to Everywhere:
   (Excellent resource. Access requires password). http://www.multimap.com
15. Exploring World Maps:
   http://www.lbl.gov/web/Web-Exploration.html
16. Czech Map 1862
   http://www.cgu.cz/aps/DVD_hm_demo/pgs_eng/mapy_id_60983.html

17. Geologic Maps of Europe:

http://www.cgu.cz/aps/DVD_hm_demo/pgs_eng/home.html
18. Eastern European Map Grids:
  http://www.genealogyunlimited.com/me200.html
19. Interactive Military Map of Austrian Monarchy – 1910:
  http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm

Foreign Language Map Search Engines:
  I.   Map search using foreign vocabulary "Key-Words":
  II.   Click the "TRANSLATE THIS PAGE" link:
      i.   Dutch:
          1. Landkaart
          2. Kaart
      ii. French:
          1. Carte Francais
      iii. German:
          1. Karte Interaktiv
          2. Stadtplan (town plan)
      iv. Hungarian:
          1. Terkep
      v.   Italian:
          1. Carta Geograficia
      vi. Poland:
          1. Mapy Polska
          2. City Plan - Plany Miast

      vii. Romanian:
          1. Harta Romanie
      viii. Spanish:
          1. Cartografia/Callejero
  III. Special Foreign Language Search Engines (examples):
      A. Maps of Poland [Mapy Polska]:
          1. http://www.globpol.com/polska/travel_mapy.htm
          2. http://www.pilot.pl/map_list.php3
             [Site has alphabetical town list/Plany Miast]
          3. http://www.castlesofpoland.com/prusy/mapy.htm [Site has photos and texts about the Castles of Poland, Maps, Choice of texts in English, German, or Polish]
          4. http://homepage.interaccess.com/~netpol/POLISH/historia/mapy.html [Atlas maps of Polish history from 11th century]
          5. http://www.citinet.net/ak/PolandHistory.html [Polish History in English in 24 chapters]
          6. http://www.pilot.pl/ [Home page/ excellent map search engine]
      B. Maps of Romania:
          1. http://www.hartionline.ro/ro/ro.html [Website home page]
          2. http://www.hartionline.ro/ro/harta/strazi.html [Harta Romaniei/Romanian Maps, cities are listed alphabetically. Clickable and outstanding resource]
      C. Hungarian Maps:
          1. http://lazarus.elte.hu/gb/maps.htm
          2. http://lazarus.elte.hu/gb/maps/movaros.htm [Cities of Hungary]
          3. http://www.fsz.bme.hu/hungary/budapest/cgi-bin/search [Clickable detailed map of Budapest/every street and venue is shown]
      D. Russian Search Engine: Global Maps for purchase:
          http://www.omnimap.com/catalog/russia/index.htm