

# **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 a wide variety of available global databases. New resources are becoming available through the use of Internet search engines. Map libraries also contain information or 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 town for church and provincial records.

### **Best Guide to Jewish Communities in Central and Eastern Europe**

A particularly outstanding publication that 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, and others, based upon name changes after past wars or annexations by regional political powers.
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 special publications, which contain chronologically sequential maps that span past centuries and millennia. Such books can be an invaluable resource of information regarding the history of the changing political borders of countries. Several 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, Geography and Map Division, Washington D.C. 20540-4761 - Telephone: (202) 707-6277 or (202) 707-8555. Offers free map research assistance. 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, 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 that use foreign language key words 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 your research.

### **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, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, and Northern Italy. 1778-1929.

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.

### **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. Much of the collection was 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 Przedjebiostrvo Wydawnictw Kartograficznych, Warszawa. 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., 3<sup>rd</sup> 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, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed 1962. PGS 910.3 C723g 1966.

## **National Archives and Records Administration – NARA II**

1. German Flown Aerial Reconnaissance Maps, 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](mailto: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. Provide: Names of shtetl (town) with the country name

## Websites:

Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov>

Geography & Map Division:

[www.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml.panhome.html](http://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>
2. Enter desired map address, city, and zip code number
3. Select “Mapquest” search for the desired address
4. Select “Street Map” link to 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.

Stephen Morse One-Step (Maps):

1. Home Page: <http://www.stevemorse.org>
2. Map Page: <http://www.stevemorse.org/jcal/map.html>
3. Global Gazetteer: Stephen Morse Worldwide Directory of Cities  
<http://www.calle.com/world/>
4. Aerial Maps [Best access is through Steve Morse website/map link. Link for commercial sales only. Not able to download directly.]:  
<http://imageatlas.globexplorer.com/ImageAtlas/image.do>

University of Texas-Perry Castañeda Library, Map Collection:

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map\\_sites/cities\\_sites.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map_sites/cities_sites.html)

Eastern European Maps of 19<sup>th</sup> Century:

[http://www.feefhs.org/newest\\_maps.html](http://www.feefhs.org/newest_maps.html)

Maps of Hungarian Cities: <http://lazarus.elte.hu/gb/maps.htm>

Ukrainian Map Server (Inter-active)

URL: <http://www.infoukes.com/ua-maps/>

Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest, Hungary – Cadastral Maps):

<http://lazarus.elte.hu/gb/gbindex.html>

Infomine.maps, UC Riverside –Scholarly Internet Research Sources:

<http://infomine.ucr.edu/>

University of California at Berkeley - Special Interactive Cadastral Maps of Ukraine, (Cyrillic alphabet):

1. UCB Earthsciences hyperlink – UCB Library Home page:  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/>
2. Digital Interactive Maps (Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, North America, Pacific Region, and South America):  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/topo.html>
3. Digital Interactive Topographical Maps Sets in Section/subsections - Ukraine - 1942:  
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/x-ussr/ukraine.html>
4. Brody, Ukraine (Example):  
<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/EART/x-ussr/100k/M-35-063.jpg>

Ravenstein Publishers, “Atlas of Maps of the German Empire”

Searchable and downloadable maps:

<http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein/mapdl.html>

Cadastral Map Site/Links: <http://www.earthmaps.com/maps.htm>

“GLOBAL DATA” – Global Land Onekm Base Elevation Project:

<http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/seg/topo/globe.shtml>

Satellite Maps direct access: <http://www.Globexplorer.com>

Terraserver, Download by City – anywhere in the world:

<http://terraserver-usa.com/Place.aspx>

Historical Town Atlas of Austria:

[http://www.magwien.gv.at/english/historictowns/a\\_eng.htm](http://www.magwien.gv.at/english/historictowns/a_eng.htm)

Austria Town Map Web Service (purchase fees):

[http://www.magwien.gv.at/english/historictowns/en\\_leit.htm](http://www.magwien.gv.at/english/historictowns/en_leit.htm)

On-line Maps to Everywhere: (Excellent resource. Access requires password). <http://www.multimap.com>

On-line Clickable Map Search Engine: Global references; Interactive Map references; Geodata Information Services; and Weather Maps and Imagery. Includes several hundred links. This is a remarkable cyber resource, which includes everything from oceanic mapping to images from Mars and Venus. [http://www.cgrer.uiowa.edu/servers/servers\\_references.html](http://www.cgrer.uiowa.edu/servers/servers_references.html)

University of California at Davis:

1. Clickable search engine:  
<http://ice.ucdavis.edu/echo/geography.html#maps>
2. <http://www.lbl.gov/WWW-Info/Maps.html> [Maps of the World Wide Web]

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 Geografica
  - 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](http://www.globpol.com/polska/travel_mapy.htm)

2. [http://www.pilot.pl/map\\_list.php3](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 11<sup>th</sup> 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>