TIPS FOR A STRESS-FREE RESEARCH T

JULY / AUGUST 2004, VOL. 22
$4.95 U.S. $5.95 C.

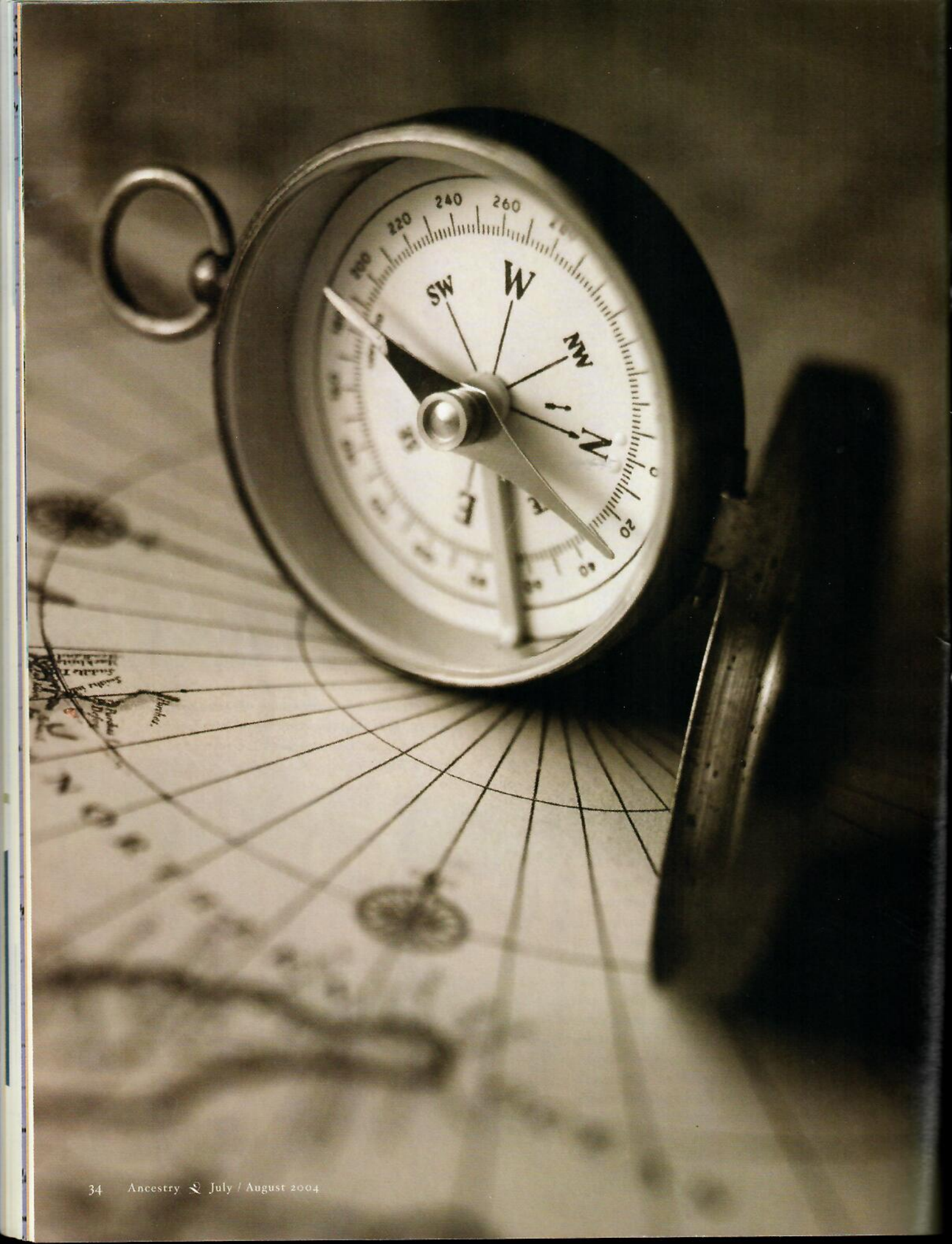
Ancestry

FAMILY TREE Arts & Crafts

Maps to Ancestral Treasures

Customize Your Computer

07
0 74470 94354 9


240
260
220
SW
W
NW
N
20

HISTORIC MAPS

The World at Your Fingertips

BY MICHAEL L. STRAUSS, AG

For centuries, maps have been the preferred choice of travelers the world over. They not only serve as reliable guides to desired destinations, they also assist the user in getting his or her bearings straight.

But beyond direction and bearing, maps enrich the genealogist's journey through the roadways and byways of personal history. From fire insurance maps that provide minute detail of our ancestors' homes, to election maps that detail boundaries of registered voters in large cities, you're sure to find a research path you've not yet considered.

1862 county atlas of Lancaster, County, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of F.W. Beers Publishing.

MAP SCALE

Scale shows how many units on the ground are represented by one unit on the map. The scale with which we may be most familiar is called a graphic scale—a bar on which equivalent distances are marked off. A large-scale property survey might have a bar two inches long, with "0" at one end, "100 feet" in the middle, and "200 feet" at the end. Usually the scale is stated beneath the bar or graphic scale: "One inch equals one hundred feet." The same scale may also be expressed by the fraction 1/1200, or by the ratio 1:1200. Each means that one unit of length on the map—inch, centimeter, or foot—represents 1,200 of those same units on the ground. One inch on the survey or map equals 1,200 inches on the ground, which in turn equals 100 feet, as described by the text under the bar.

Large-scale maps are those with the largest fractional scale (a thousandth of anything is larger than a millionth of it). They show the largest amount of detail, but of only a small area. Typical examples are the USGS quadrangle maps (both the older ones at 1:62,500 and the more recent ones at 1:24,000, or 1 inch to 2,000 feet), city and suburban street maps, and private property surveys.

Medium-scale maps are those with scales between 1:75,000 (a little over a mile to the inch) and 1:600,000 (just under ten miles to the inch). Typical examples are highway maps of the smaller states and many nineteenth-century county maps and atlases. Where development was sparse, they may be all that's available and will provide the needed degree of detail.

Small-scale maps show a smaller amount of detail but cover large areas and allow us to orient ourselves and identify the locations where we will seek out larger-scale maps that provide more detail. Typical examples are world atlas maps and highway maps covering the larger states.

The newer and larger-scale 1:24,000 USGS topographic maps give an excellent representation of an area as it is or was within the last generation, but we shouldn't neglect the older ones at the 1:62,500 scale. Many of them were made at the turn of the century; they may show the churches and rural schools our ancestors attended or the houses in which they grew up.

—by Donn Devine, CG℠, CGI℠

County Atlases

Production of county atlases began in the late eighteenth century and became increasingly popular by the mid-nineteenth century. Thousands of county atlases have been produced over the years for many areas of the United States. Most have been published and are readily available for researchers and historians to utilize.

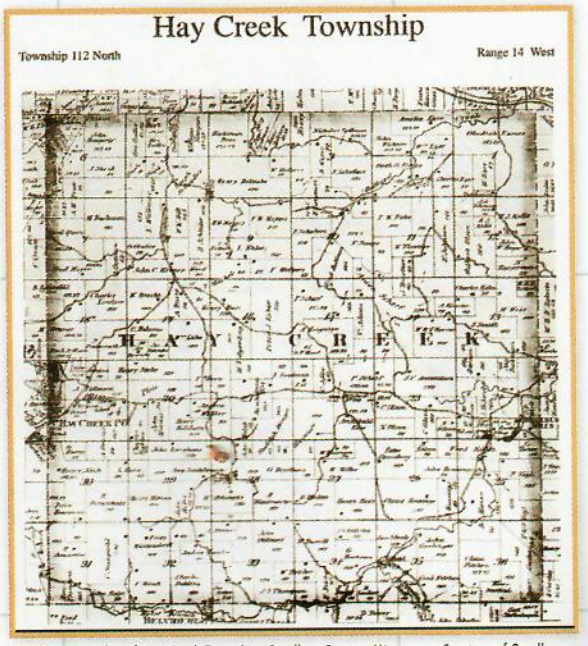
These county atlases often list the landowners by name with their location pictured on the map. Some atlases give information pertaining to the occupations of the property owners; still others list the number of acres of land for each property.

The Library of Congress houses one of the largest collections of county atlases in the United States. You can access information on these records at <www.loc.gov>. Simply search the library catalog by name of county and state (under the keyword search).

In addition, searching at state archives, genealogical and historical societies, and public libraries can lead to additional copies of atlases for research purposes.

Panoramic Maps

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, panoramic maps were a popular cartographic form in the United States. These maps—also known as bird's eye views and aero views—were hand-drawn representations of cities and towns. They were typically not drawn to scale, but they show streets, individual businesses and homes, and terrain features. Panoramic maps embody accurate representations

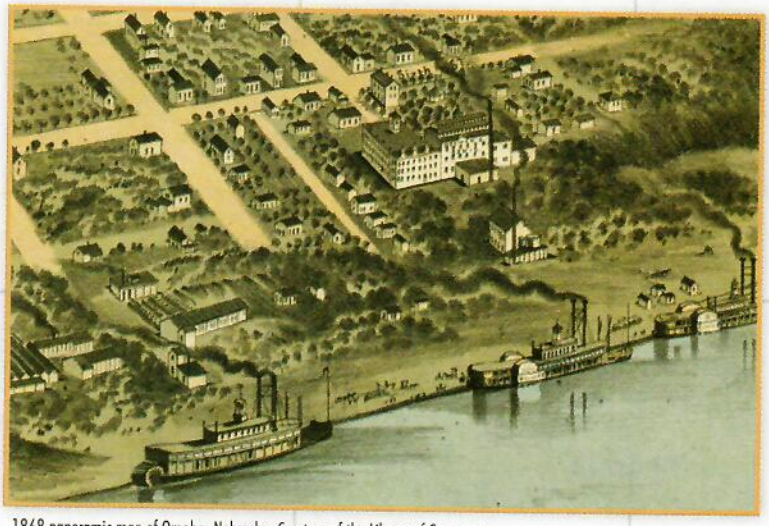


1877 county atlas of Hay Creek Township, Goodhue County, Minnesota. Courtesy of Goodhue County Historical Society.

of many communities from around the United States that might otherwise remain untapped or undiscovered.

These maps show not only views of cities and towns, they sometimes indicate areas of future development. An 1890 map of Childress, Texas, is a good example. The map portrays an industrial town; many people and horses fill the streets as thick clouds of black smoke bellow from the smoke stack of some industrial center of the town. At the time the map was created, though, the town was still under development.

Panoramic maps are readily available to researchers. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., has a collection that can be accessed onsite or online at <www.loc.gov>. Select M under Index A–Z and scroll to Maps. Then click on panoramic maps.



1868 panoramic map of Omaha, Nebraska. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Sanborn Maps

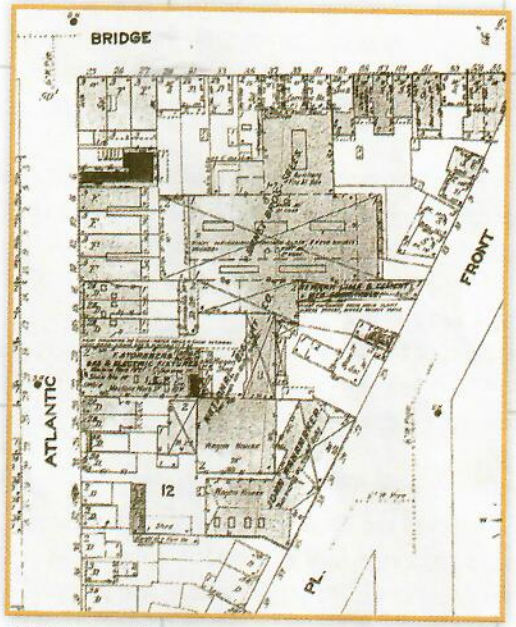
The maps created by the Sanborn Map Company date from as early as 1867 and consist of a series of large-scale maps representing commercial, industrial, and residential areas of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. They were created to help insurance companies determine risk factors and establish premiums for any given property.

There are more than 12,000 communities represented in this vast collection of some 660,000 maps. Both small and large communities are included.

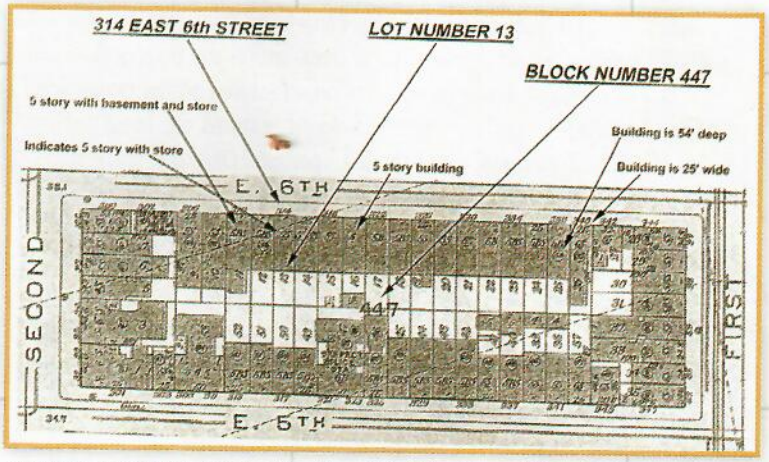
The Sanborn maps cover a broad period dating from 1867 to 1961, although most date after 1876. Occasionally, maps for most of the larger metropolitan areas of the United States were updated. It is not unusual to find numerous editions for some cities.

These maps are full of useful information for genealogists. Researchers can tell where their ancestors' properties were located within a given community. Sanborn maps do not name property owners except in some cases where the names of businesses are used on the maps, but any researcher equipped with a good city directory (especially a reverse city directory) will be able to learn property owner names.

Sanborn maps provide information such as the height of buildings and the number of stories; whether the structure had a basement; even the locations of doors, windows, and elevators in buildings. In addition, researchers can discover



1892 Sanborn map of Newark, New Jersey. Courtesy of the New Jersey State Archives.



Sanborn map of New York City, New York, with breakdown of abbreviations. Courtesy of Municipal Archives, New York City.

MAP SYMBOLS

Each series of maps has its own set of symbols that are shown either in the margin, on a separate accompanying sheet, or on a page at the beginning of an atlas. Many symbols are international in use or vary only slightly from map to map.

Landform symbols, often shown in brown, take several forms. On older maps, short shading lines running up and down the slope (called "hachures") show hills and mountains; the closer together the lines, the steeper the slope. Modern large-scale topographic maps use contour lines that run around a hill in such a way that the line is always at the same height above sea level. If we traced a contour line on an actual hill and walked along it, one foot might be lower than the other, but we would neither climb or descend as we followed it. Where contour lines are close together, the slope is steep; along a cliff side they run together. The further apart they are, the more level the land. Usually every fifth line is marked somewhere along its length with a number, showing its height in feet or meters (the marginal information will tell which) above sea level.

Water features, often shown in blue, show everything from oceans, rivers, and canals to intermittent streams that run only after a rainstorm. Wells and springs may also be marked. The extent to which these features are shown depends on how important water is to life in the area, or to its economy and transportation.

Vegetation may be shown in green, but symbols vary considerably. Solid or shaded green often represents natural woodlands or grasslands, while small green circles in orderly rows generally represent orchards or tree farms.

Cultural features, shown in black on multicolor maps and usually making up most of the detail, include structures such as schools and businesses, highways, railroads, electrical transmission lines, prisons, tank farms, industrial plants, power stations, and dams.

Often, buildings are indicated by an add-on symbol—a small flagpole and pennant for schools, or a cross, a star of David, or a crescent for churches, synagogues, and mosques. Cemeteries are identified by the letters "CEM" or, on older maps, by a cross within the boundary lines. Towers and high chimneys, being prominent features on the landscape, are usually shown, and the most prominent features are identified by name, to the extent the scale of the map permits. On small-scale maps, only cities and towns may be named, while large-scale maps will identify prominent roads, public buildings, and other major structures.

Finally, on some maps, both large- and small-scale, red is often used to indicate principal roadways. On large-scale maps, the red will appear between the black edges of the roadway. On small-scale highway maps, red may be used to indicate classifications of roads, such as high-speed, high-capacity highways and rural byways.

—by Donn Devine, CG℠, CGI℠

street and property lengths and widths as well as the building's use. Sanborn maps may also reveal how the business was powered or heated, and what sort of fuel was used.

This map collection is readily available for easy access. The Geography and Map Reading Room of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., contains a Sanborn collection that is nearly complete. Most state colleges and universities have the Sanborn maps available for their own states. Additionally, researchers can find the Sanborn collection in state libraries, historical and genealogical societies, and sometimes even at local libraries.

To order individual maps directly from the Sanborn Map Company (now owned by Environmental Data Resources, Inc.), visit the company's website at <www.edrnet.com>.

Road Docket Maps

Another great source of genealogy information can be found in road docket books and their associated maps, which are located in many county courthouses throughout the United States.

Years ago, when properties were surveyed and additional roads were needed to lead from one public road to another, it was necessary to petition the court to have a new survey performed on each road being considered. Enterprising businessmen and residents petitioned the court to survey the entire length of the proposed road. The documents attached to the petition included a rough drawing of the area in question.

Included on these maps were the names of the landowners along the entire route of the proposed public road. Also listed were businesses located along the project's path. Mills, taverns, and other structures were generally listed at either end of the proposed road as well.

Most of these maps date from the mid- to late-eighteenth century and are a great source for genealogical information. The best way to locate such records is to inquire at your local county courthouse in the county clerk's office or at your local state archive or historical society. Also, the Family History Library has microfilmed many of the road docket books and maps. You'll need to conduct your search first by county and explore what's available from there.

Election Maps

Also of genealogical interest are the maps used in records of elections. Because cities like New York, Boston, and Philadelphia were so large, it became necessary to draw maps listing the voting boundaries as well as the names of registered voters. The maps created are a relatively untapped resource that are often ideal in determining the whereabouts of people in large cities that have proved especially difficult to find.

Beginning in 1884, registered voters in New York City were listed in the supplemental record by street address and broken down into election and assembly districts. The corresponding maps show the boundaries of the districts by borough, making it relatively easy to find family members in election records.

When you find an ancestor's name in a supplemental record, contact the Bureau of Elections for the correct borough and request the voter's application details. The election maps for New York City are located in the public library in Manhattan. For other large cities, consult the local library.

World War I Draft Registration Maps

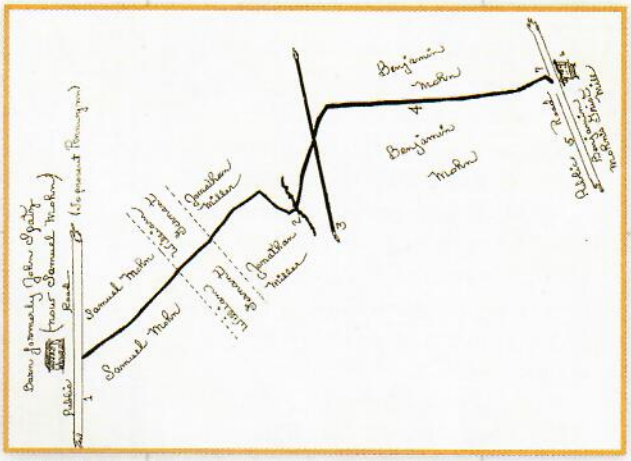
In 1917 and 1918, when it appeared likely that the United States would soon enter World War I, approximately 24 million men born between 1873 and 1900 completed draft registration cards. This civilian registration is often confused with induction into the military; however, only a small percentage of these men were actually called up for military service.

In large cities, it was essential to have maps produced that indicated the boundaries of the individual draft boards. Sometimes these maps and corresponding written boundary lines were recorded in the local newspapers. The maps were an important part of organizing the boundaries of larger cities. For instance, there were more than 200 boards for New York City alone.

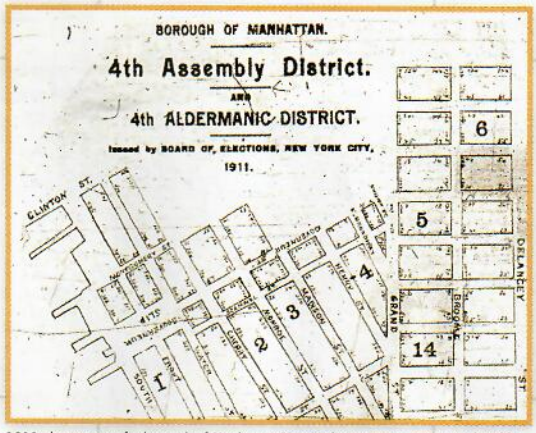
The maps are available at the Family History Library on microfiche and represent most of the larger major cities in the United States such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. Ancestry.com has made many of the actual registration cards available online, but for researchers looking up numerous names in one area, these maps are a great asset. The maps will assist researchers in finding their ancestors and possibly other siblings who were eligible for the draft. Each map is organized into board numbers, so with the use of a good city directory researchers can find each person they are looking for by first using the maps to determine the proper draft board, and then viewing the actual registration card online.

Putting It All Together

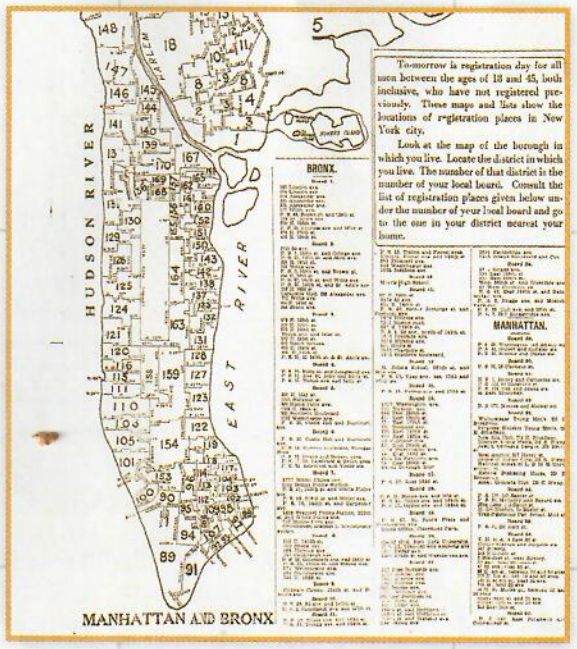
To demonstrate the value and merit of these map resources, consider the following example. Ephraim G. Werner (1852–1922), was born in Cumru Township in Berks County, Pennsylvania, and remained in Berks County throughout his life.



1856 road docket map for Cumru Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania.



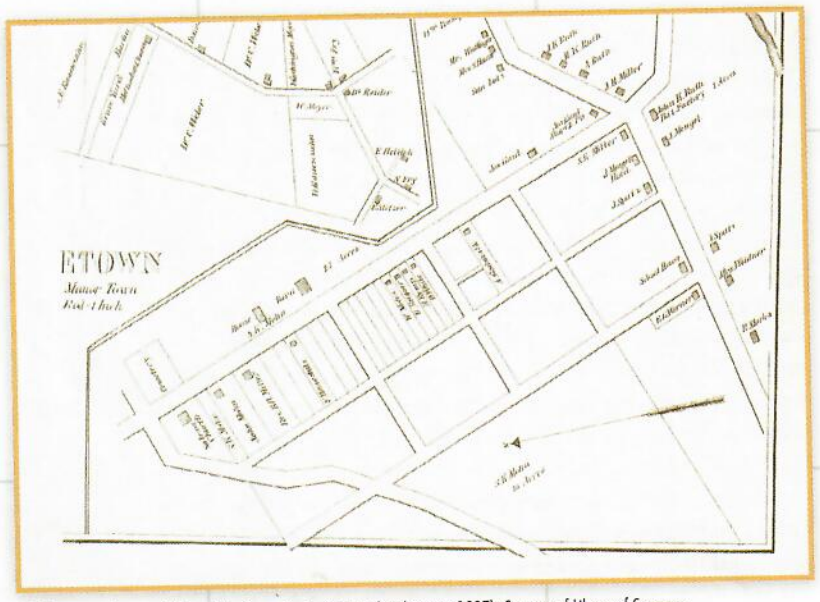
1911 election map for borough of Manhattan/New York City. Courtesy New York Public Library, New York City.



World War I draft registration map of Borough of Manhattan, printed in the *New York World,* 11 September 1917. Courtesy National Archives – Northeast Region.

Years of research into Ephraim's business enterprises yielded several maps that contain valuable information about him. Ephraim was a successful businessman operating a general store from 1875 to 1880 in Mohnsville, Pennsylvania. Later, his business grew to include other lines of commercial activities. By the turn of the twentieth century, Ephraim had a profitable business making and selling wooden boxes.

The 1898 panoramic map of Mohnsville, Pennsylvania, illustrates how much his business had grown. In 1907 the citizens of Mohnsville petitioned the county courts to change the name of their small community to Mohnton.



1898 panoramic map of Mohnsville, Pennsylvania (renamed Mohnton in 1907). Courtesy of Library of Congress.

ADDITIONAL MAP RESOURCES

Ancestry.com
www.ancestry.com/search/rectype/reference/maps
Ancestry offers hundreds of viewable and printable maps that depict areas all over the world. Particular attention is given to state and county maps for each state in the United States. Other specialties include migration, British Isles, religious, urban, and military maps. These maps are free to use with or without a paid subscription to Ancestry.com. Maps are easy to access in the Ancestry Map Center—you can scan drop-down menus that are organized by category.

David Rumsey Historical Map Collection
www.davidrumsey.com
This collection, which contains over 10,000 historical maps from all over the world, focuses on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century maps of North and South America. Users can view and print the maps, zoom in on specific features, and buy high-quality copies. You can even view maps from different eras at the same time, which will help you see how an area changed over a certain timeframe.

eBay
www.ebay.com
This online auction hub offers maps of Germany, Disneyland, and everything in between. In addition to maps, eBay is home to numerous other genealogy collectibles such as town histories, antique postcards, and photographs. A quick search for "gazetteer" listed 121 items, including a 1931 Atlas and Gazetteer for $8 and a 1797 American Naval Gazetteer for $362. Go to eBay and perform a search for your ancestor's surname or hometown—you never know what kinds of treasures eBay will have to offer.

Gold Bug
www.goldbug.com
Gold Bug offers software, CD-ROMs, and printed maps. AniMap Plus v.2.5 shows county boundary changes for the continental United States, beginning in colonial times. This software includes over two thousand maps, and its information covers all years, not just census years. Numerous historical map collections are available on CD-ROM, including European, North American, and railroad maps. Interested customers can also purchase printed maps of North America, the United Kingdom, railroads, Europe, and areas involved in the U.S. Civil War.

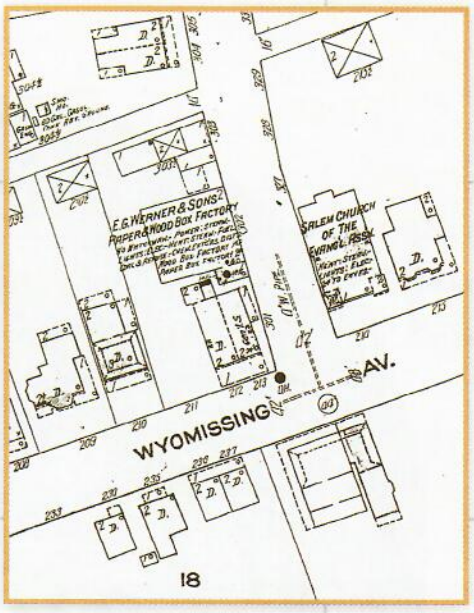
Jonathan Sheppard Books
www.johathansheppardbooks.com
Jonathan Sheppard Books publishes and sells reprints of historical maps. Most maps are from Europe and North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are also a few from Australia and New Zealand. In addition to buying reprints of these maps, customers can also purchase original antique maps. The company's website contains a complete listing of available maps.

With this approval in hand, the small village of Mohnton continued to prosper.

By the early part of the twentieth century, Ephraim Werner was still employed in his chosen line of work. The 1912 Sanborn map depicts his business. By 1920 Ephraim had sold his property and moved his business to Reading, Pennsylvania, where he remained until his death in 1922.

Whether you are trying to solve research problems or are simply gathering information to provide interesting and unknown details about your ancestors, a variety of map resources will prove to be a challenging addition to your family history.

Michael L. Strauss, AG, a professional genealogist and lecturer, is accredited for the Eastern States Region. He works as a research associate at the George Tyler Moore Center for Civil War Studies at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.



1912 Sanborn map shows business of Ephriam G. Werner in Mohnton, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Library of Congress, Geography and Map Reading Room
www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap
This division of the Library of Congress is the world's largest collection of maps, containing more than 4.8 million maps. The collection includes a 1482 edition of Ptolemy's Geography. Family historians will be drawn to the United States state and county maps from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Online Map Collection is searchable by keyword, location, subject, and other categories. If you would like a copy of one of the maps you find in this collection, you can order a reproduction online.

Map History / History of Cartography
www.maphistory.info/webimages.html
This website is an index to historical map websites. The index is arranged by collection size, theme, and geographic location. Additionally, the site contains a search engine so you can find categories that don't easily fit into a particular area of the index. Unlike many other map sites, this index contains map links for every continent. There is also an explanation that can help you navigate the site, view images, cite your sources, and so on.

Map Societies
http://web.ulib.csuohio.edu/SpecColl/maps/MapSoc/index.html
The above website contains a directory of contact information for map societies around the world. Such societies encourage map enthusiasts to get together and promote the study, collection, and preservation of maps. Even if you aren't interested in joining, you may still want to check out map society websites, because they frequently contain viewable maps that can assist in your research.

National Geographic
www.nationalgeographic.com/maps
This searchable Maps and Geography website includes free and fee services. You can print detailed black-and-white maps of each country of the world. The MapMachine Online Atlas links to maps that you can view, zoom in on, and even order copies of. You can select various check boxes to show or hide streets, railroads, places, and political boundaries. This site lists mostly current maps, rather than historical ones. However, one notable exception is a CD-ROM that contains all the maps *National Geographic* published from 1889 to 1999.

Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection
www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map_collection_guide.html
The online Perry Castañeda collection contains over 5,000 map images. If you are lucky enough to live near Austin, Texas, you can visit this library and see all 250,000 maps available there. Though a substantial portion of the online collection consists of Texas maps, you will find that other areas of the U.S. and the world are also well represented. In addition to browsing numerous images on this website, you will also find links to other map websites.