Doing History with Online Mapping Tools: An Introduction

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/joanne_riley/11/
Doing History with Online Mapping Tools

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“Let us look at the map, for maps, like faces, are the signature of history.”

Quote: Will Durant
1776 Map of Boston: Library of Congress
FamilySearch Research Wiki

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Roxbury, Massachusetts

This is a historical and genealogical guide to the town and city of Roxbury. You will find help with town histories, vital records, city directories, cemetery records and cemeteries, churches, deeds (i.e. land records), town and city records, newspapers, maps, and libraries. There is a detailed guide for the town and city of Boston that annexed Roxbury.

Roxbury (1630–1668)
Roxbury was a town in Norfolk County before it was annexed to Boston in Suffolk County. This guide discusses the records created by this town and includes references to material of present-day Roxbury (the neighborhood of Boston) as well. Be careful of the time period you are researching here as the records you need may be in one of two counties or one of two towns.

Brief History
Roxbury was one of several towns settled by the passengers from the Winthrop Fleet in 1630. The settlement grew when the famed Rev. John Eliot (called "the Apostle to the Indians") arrived in 1632 with a group of his followers called "Maezing Christians." It is under Eliot that the church is established (with residents attending Dorchester's church before his arrival). Some settlers moved
Types of Maps

- Birds-eye
- Aerial Photography
- Topographical Maps
- Real estate Maps
- City Atlases
- Fire Insurance Maps

- Learning Historical Research – superb site!
  - http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/maps.htm
Reality Check

- **Scale** - relationship (or ratio) between distance on a map and the corresponding distance on the ground.

- **Orientation** - relationship between the directions on the map and the corresponding compass directions in reality.

- **Legend** – an explanatory list of symbols on a map or chart
Legend: Sanborn Map: 1867 Boston
Extra help from good old Google

• Geo-coded maps allow for calculating
  ○ Directions
    ▪ Walking directions informative for historical conjecture
  ○ Distances
    ▪ “Atlantic” to Milton? Indian Orchard to “Jenksville”?

• Street views
  ○ including far-flung places
  ○ “Walk” the roads of unfamiliar locations

TIP: be sure you’re exploring the right place! Check out archaic or duplicate names at TGN, USGS, FS Wiki or MA Archives list
Went down to the Orchard again with Sylvia. We got out and strolled around near the river at Jenksville.
Ludlow, MA to Indian Orchard
Google Street View – “walk” down the street!
An oft-told family story:

• “Your great-grandfather emigrated to Middletown, CT from Melilli, Sicily. His compatriots built an exact replica of their hometown church in Middletown.”

• Through Google Street View:
Basilica San Sebastiano, Melilli Sicily
St. Sebastian Church, Middletown CT
Map Collections

- Leventhal Map Collection, Boston Public Library
- Library of Congress American Memory Map Collections
- Historic Map Works
- David Rumsey Historical Map Collection

- Portal: Old Maps Online — links to all of the above and more
Historic MapWorks

Search 1,662,956 Historical Maps & Images

People are searching for... syosset woodbury marblehead ohio columbus ohio los angeles marion marion ohio wentzville mo maine montgomery co ohio indiana syosset 1906 united kingdom michigan

54% of our collection can currently be viewed in Historic Earth™

The rest of the collection can be accessed through Browse and Search.
Friday 7

Pleasant, manner. Came home from store before 5 and took Clara and her company Miss Haskell to Mt. Aka for William to ride around "Cheetah Hill Reservoir". In the evening.
Index Map
From the atlas Brookline 1874 published by G. M. Hopkins in 1874
Brookline Atlas, 1874 published by G. M. Hopkins in 1874: Zenas Brett property
Plate 003: From the Atlas Boston 1912, G. W. Bromley & Co. in 1912
Best of Both Worlds

- What would we need to combine features of a Beers map a Bromley map a Sanborn map a street map and a satellite image?
  - Match up and align the images
  - Resize as necessary
  - Identify common features
  - Create a magic see-through layer

  - I.e. skew, enlarge, geo-reference, create transparent layers
USGS Historical Topographic Map Explorer

1. Go to the location you want to explore, then Click on a place to see its historical maps.
Go to the location you want to explore, then **Click** on a place to see its historical maps.

Search: Enfield (historical), Massad
Go to the location you want to explore, then **Click** on a place to see its historical maps.

**Slide** transparency on map to compare, or drag/drop to reorder maps.

- **Belchertown**
  - 1890
  - download map

- **Ware**
  - 1906
  - download map
Go to the location you want to explore, then click on a place to see its historical maps.

3 Slide transparency on map to compare, or drag/drop to re-order maps.

Belchertown
1890
download map

Ware
1908
download map

Historical Map Scales
- 250,000
- 125,000
- 62,500
- 24,000
- 12,000
David Rumsey Collection

- Complex site!
- Many, many options!
- Best paths are:
  - Luna Viewer
  - Geo-Referencer
John McNally and family lived on “Pine Island” in Boston City in 1870s and 1880s

- No Boston “Pine Island” in TGN or USGS
- 1880 Boston Directory – street definitions:
  - “Pine Island” - from Roxbury Point
  - “Roxbury Point” - from Swett
  - “Swett” - Northampton to Roxbury Point
- 1905: Glimpses of Early Roxbury say:
  - Magazine Street, leading from Dudley Street near St. Patrick's Church, was laid out in 1662, and was called Powder House Lane because it led to the powder magazine. This magazine was owned by the State, and was on Pine Island, now a part of the mainland.
- 1912: A Record of the Streets, Alleys, Places, Etc. in the City of Boston
  - “Swett Street (now Southampton)”
Swett, Magazine, Roxbury Point...
A plan of Boston in New England with its environs, including Milton, Dorchester, Roxbury, Brooklin, Cambridge, Medford, Charlestown, parts of Malden and Chelsea with the military works constructed in those places in the years 1775 and 1776.

Source: Library of Congress Maps Collection
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>CITY/TOWN</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>155 Washington Street</td>
<td>Brookline</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>86 Merrimac St</td>
<td>Newburyport</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Charles Street</td>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Dau Catherine's birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>16 High Street</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Patk, baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>19 Union St</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2 children born there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>125 Division St</td>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>268 Havre St</td>
<td>East Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>son Wm baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>36 Middle St</td>
<td>So. Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>248 East Ninth St</td>
<td>So. Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Dir - baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>71 Emerson St</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Birth record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>104 H Street</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>908 E. Broadway</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>78 Bower St</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>36 Northfield St</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>709 E. Broadway</td>
<td>So. Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Bus Dir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>737 East Broadway</td>
<td>So. Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>12 Mitchell Street</td>
<td>So. Boston</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Paste your location data below to map it:

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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(click to copy/paste, or drop your file here)

(Don't forget to include some header columns - You can also try our Spreadsheet Template, or hit "Map Now" and try it out with our example data.)

Validate & Set Options or Map Now

Done: 5 columns, 17 rows - scroll down to Validate & Set Options

Validate & Set Options

We have made our best guess at your data, but check below that everything is ok.

Basic options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location / Address</td>
<td>STREET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City / County</td>
<td>CITY/TOWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State / Province / Postcode</td>
<td>STATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip / Postcode / Country</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group by / Thematic Value</td>
<td>Single Color</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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## Validate & Set Options

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**Basic options**

- **Region**: United States
- **Location / Address**: STREET
- **City / County**: CITY/TOWN
- **State / Province / Postcode**: STATE
- **Zip / Postcode / Country**: none
- **Group By / Thematic Value**: Single Color

**Marker box preview**

155 Washington Street
Brookline, MA
YEAR: 1870
Validate & Set Options
We have made our best guess at your data, but check below that everything is ok.

Basic options
- Region: United States
- Location / Address: STREET
- City / County: CITY/TOWN
- State / Province / Postcode: STATE
- Zip / Postcode / Country: none
- Group By / Thematic Value: CITY/TOWN

Marker box preview
- 1870
- 55 Washington Street
- Brookline, MA

Advanced options
- Title: YEAR
- Marker Description: NOTES
- Country Field: 
- URL: Use Google Maps
- Image URL: 
- E-mail: 
- Latitude: none
- Longitude: none

Marker colors
- Color: Group name
  - Red: Brookline
  - Blue: Newburyport
  - Green: Lynn
  - Yellow: Salem
  - Purple: So. Boston

Marker shape
- Circle
- Square
- Triangle

Map style
- [Map styles]

Make Map
Geocoded 10 records.

See your map below. If you find any markers out of place - just drag and drop them to the correct location.

Save & Continue
Geocoded 10 records.

See your map below. If you find any markers out of place - just drag and drop them to the correct location.
Doing History with Online Mapping Tools: Links and Resources

1. **Family History Research Wiki (FamilySearch.org)**: search by city, town, county, region, country for detailed rundown of resources including maps, associated names, border changes and area history. Also provides specific and important tips about how to use listed resources.  
   familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/

2. **Introduction to Map Scales**: excellent explanation of scales, map projections, grid systems, degrees, minutes, quadrangles…  
   geology.isu.edu/geostac/Field_Exercise/topomaps/map_scale.htm

3. **Archaic Community, District, Neighborhood Section and Village, Names in Massachusetts**  
   www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cisuno/unoidx.htm

4. **Thesaurus of Geographic Names (TGN)**: 2 million placenames including historic and alternate names  
   www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/tgn/

5. **USGS Nameserver** – can be slow – give it a few minutes! You can download full database if you like.  
   geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/index.html

6. **Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps**  
   introduction, descriptions, notes on symbols, keys, colors  
   www.loc.gov/collection/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection/

7. **Real Estate Atlases of Massachusetts** at the Massachusetts State Library: free! PDF files may be downloaded, but can be hard to navigate.  

   ngmdb.usgs.gov/maps/TopoView/

9. **Interactive topographical maps from USGS**: excellent interface, searching, filtering by date, transparent overlays.  
   historicalmaps.arcgis.com/usgs/index.html

10. **BatchGeo**: Custom location mapping – paste spreadsheet data and create map pins and popup information boxes  
    batchgeo.com/

11. **Map Collections Online:**  
    1. **Historic Map Works** – HistoricMapWorks.com  
    2. **David Rumsey Historical Map Collection** – DavidRumsey.com  
    3. **Leventhal Map Collection, Boston Public Library** - - maps.bpl.org/view_collection  
    4. **Library of Congress American Memory Map Collections** - memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/  
    5. **Old Maps Online** – searchable portal with links to most of the above and more.  
        http://www.oldmapsonline.org/
Ancestral Atlas is a family history web map that everyone can share. It shows family history events added by users. Take a look and if you want to add your own family history information, simply register for free.

With Ancestral Atlas you can:
- Attach your own family history to the map on the location where the event took place, and share it with everyone else, or keep it private.
- Find out who else has family events in the same area by browsing the map and collaborate with them in a secure environment.
- Build your own "Ancestral Atlas" and visualize your family history.

Browsing the map is simple, just click on the map pins to find out about the events located there. Refine your search by date, name and event type.

If you want to start adding your data to the map simply register for free (no credit cards details required).

For more help and tips, please use the "HELP & FAQ" menu button on the top menu bar.

We're continually improving the site, so if you have any comments, we would be more than happy to hear from you.