

Google My Maps: Visualizing Your Ancestors Lives

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What is Google My Maps?

Google My Maps is part of the free Google package, that allows you to create, manage and share maps with things you find important. This can be used for Genealogy related items such as cemeteries, migration patterns, repositories, as well as analysis of data to do a complete and exhaustive research on those pesky brick wall ancestors when we aren't sure if they are the right person.

My Maps can also be used to plan family vacations, or multiple person genealogy trips, by sharing the map with everyone going, it allows them to add all the things/places they want to try to visit. This way everyone can "see" what the trip will look like, and where everyone else wants to go.

Plan that dream Genealogy research trip, pinning all the places and events you want to see and do, to put more meat on the bones of your ancestors.

Why Google My Maps vs Google Earth Pro?

A quick synopsis of Google my maps is that it is easy to use, it's free, the data resides on the cloud, giving one access to the data, anywhere in the world, as long as there is a connection to the cloud. You can share it with anyone who has a google account. You can add photos and video to every pin on your map, on every layer, although there is a **limit of 10 layers per map**. This just means extra care must be taken when planning the layout of the maps you create.

Google Earth Pro, on the other hand, does have more bells and whistles, but with those bells and whistles comes a steeper learning curve, especially when you start to overlay older maps onto the current map. Google Earth Pro like My Maps is free however you must download the program onto your PC. Accessing Google Earth Pro will require you to be at your PC. It uses a lot of pc resources, (memory, ram, internet), so older PCs may have issues running the program.

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Accessing/Using Google My Maps

Accessing the app can be accomplished in 2 ways:

- My drive > New> select My Maps
- Google.com/mymaps

Once you access My Maps, you have a “blank” map to start building your personalized map. From here the next step is to type in an address, or a famous place, or building name, and add your pins. Once you have a few pins in place, you can move on to adding details to each pin, and naming your map and layers.



- Hand: moves map left, right, up and down
- Pin: adds a pin to the map, where ever you click
- Polygon: draws lines and shapes on a map
- Right Arrow: give directions to a pin
- Ruler: measures distance

CREATING LAYERS

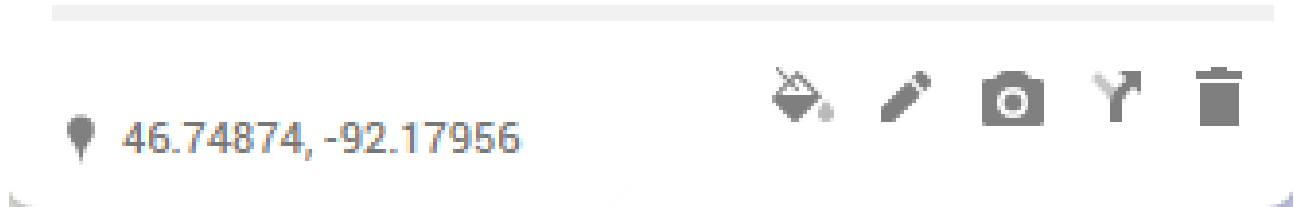
Creating layers on the map, help to group and organize the pins. Grouping pins are a personal preference, but some options would be to group by name, place, specific window of time or even documenting the life story of ONE ancestor.



- Add a layer: adds a new untitled layer to your map
- Share: allows you to share the map with others
- Preview: allows you to preview your map

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PIN DETAILS



- GPS Coordinates: tells where on the map a pin is located
- Paint Can: color code pins, add icons
- Pencil: write up a story about the location
- Camera: add photos and videos
- Directions: add directions to a pin
- Trash Can: deletes a pin **without warning**

Benefits to Genealogists

By using Google My Maps, you will have the ability to track and visualize your ancestors (migrations, burials, locales, life events, epidemics,) and group them in various different ways. It will help you plan and visualize, a dream genealogy research trip, one place study data, one name study data, see an ancestor's life and where there may be "holes" in their story or even break down a brick wall. With Google My Maps you can add and share those precious photos, and videos with family members across the globe. The best thing is there will be no more glazed over looks at family gatherings, when you start talking about genealogy, because now you can visually share with everyone the documents, photographs and the stories of your ancestors with your family. All you need is a smart TV, and access to your google account.

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Bibliography

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