

# Austin Genealogical Society

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## Using Maps for Genealogy Research

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Whenever you are conducting genealogy research you should always have a map of the geographic area in front of you - preferably a map for the same research time period. The type of map you use will be determined by the information you hope to find. However, to truly extract everything you can from maps for genealogy purposes you need to expand your definition of maps. Maps can be pictures, drawings, images or layouts. They give us a visual/physical depiction of the layout of geographic places, buildings, structures or physical systems. The magic of maps is they allow us to go back in time visually, so for genealogy purposes they are indispensable.

### **Types of Maps (Commonly thought of maps)**

- Atlas - street/road
- Business – rail road, fire insurance, etc.
- Cadastral – land ownership
- Climate – indicates temperature and rainfall
- Economic/Resources – farm crops, forest vegetation, minerals, etc.
- Military – battle locations, military equipment, etc.
- Physical – natural features: rivers, mountains, etc.
- Political – state, county, city, ward, etc.
- Thematic – they can cover any theme: voters, demographics, schools, etc.
- Topography - elevations

### **Types of Maps (Uncommonly thought of maps)**

- Pictorial drawings of towns or villages – churches, businesses, streets, piers, etc.
- Layouts of physical structures or within structures - buildings, ships, parks and statuary, cemeteries, etc.
- Drawings of physical systems – canal routes, railroads, plumbing or electrical systems, etc.
- Military plans within battles – names of companies, troop positions, troop movements and routes, etc.
- Modern county tax assessment maps – drawings of land plots, current land owner names, etc.
- Commercial Shipping navigation routes

### **Genealogy Purposes for Using Maps, Drawings and Layouts**

- Verify physical geographic locations
- Determining appropriate county for land research
- Finding and verifying land plates and locations

- Calculating proximity/milage from one known family location to another
- Determining names of neighbors and other local family members
- Locating schools, religious institutions, workplaces and cemeteries for additional family documentation
- Determining locations of family migration routes
- Determining ease and timing of possible travel
- Differentiating people with the same names by township, county, wards, etc.
- Determining and proving family relationships
- Enhancing family history and stories with visual images

## Google Earth

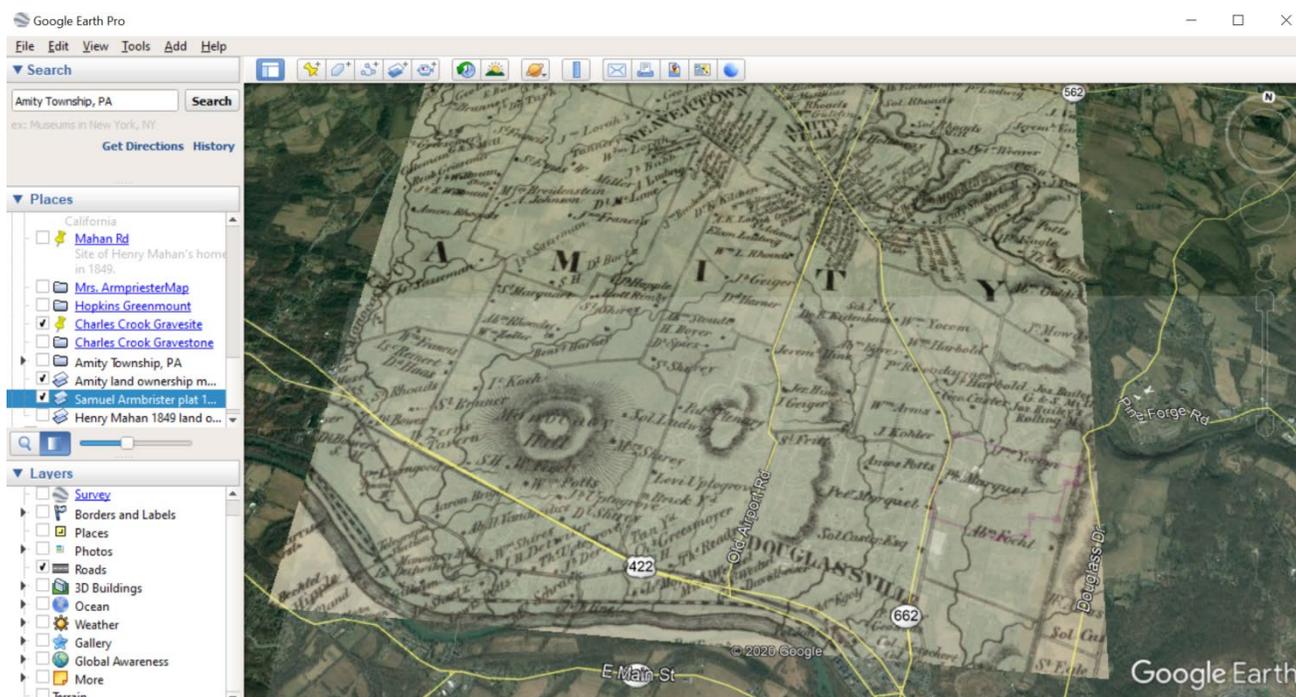


Figure 1: Overlay of a historic map of Amity Township, Berks Co., PA, over an aerial image on Google Earth. Historic map sourced from the Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3823bm.gla00029/?sp=21>

- **Google Earth:**
  - **Download Google Earth to your computer for free:** <https://www.google.com/earth/>
  - **Search function:** Search for specific places, sites, structures, features, roads, etc.
  - **Overlay historic maps or images:** Use the “Add” menu and click “Overlay Image” or click the “Add Overlay Image” icon in the toolbar. Google Earth accepts the following files: BMP, DDS, GIF, JPG, PGM, PNG, PPM, TGA, TIFF. Alternatively, KLM files are used to overlay a DeedMapper plat map.
  - **Create a placemark and add a photo** to a specific location. Click on the “Placemark” icon or “Placemark” under the “Add” menu. Then, click on “Add local image” to add a photo to the placemark.

- Create videos, visual stories, or tours of your research to share and collaborate with people.
- **Google Earth Outreach/ Learn:** This is a good place to learn the many functions and tools available on Google Earth: <https://www.google.com/earth/outreach/learn/>
- **Google Earth Users Guide:** <http://earth.google.com/intl/ar/userguide/v4/index.htm>
- **Google Earth and National Geospatial program training videos:** <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/national-geospatial-program/training>

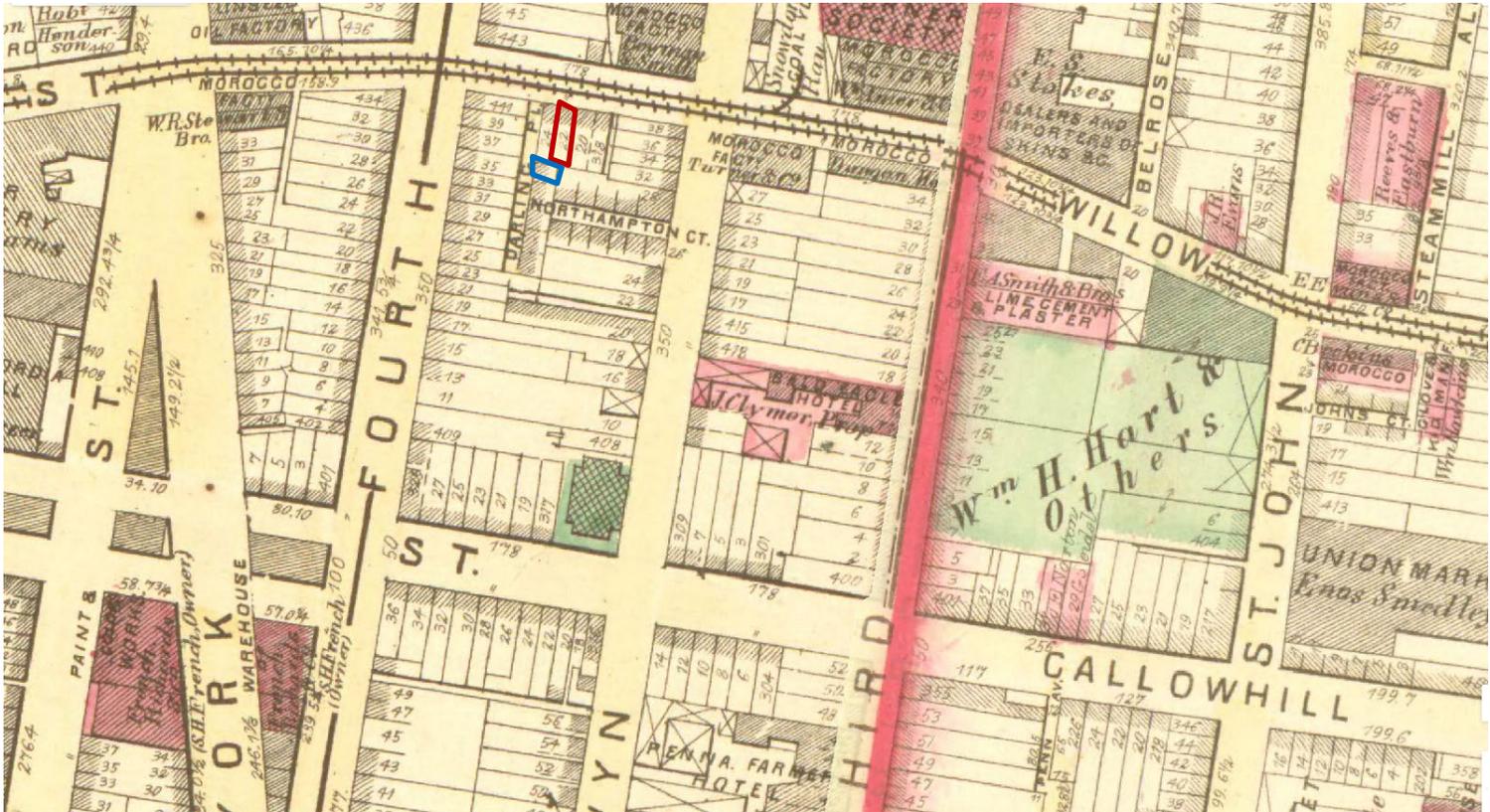
## Where to Find Maps

- Ancestor Tracks: <http://ancestratracks.com/>
- David Rumsey Map Collection: [http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/view/search?q=united%20states&sort=Pub\\_Date,Pub\\_List\\_No,Series\\_No](http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/view/search?q=united%20states&sort=Pub_Date,Pub_List_No,Series_No)
- Historic Map Works: <http://www.historicmapworks.com/> (\$)
- Historic Maps of Pennsylvania: <http://www.mapsofpa.com/home.htm>
- Images of Early Maps on the Web (free): <http://www.maphistory.info/imageus.html>
- Library of Congress – American Memory: <http://www.loc.gov/collection/american-revolutionary-war-maps/about-this-collection/>
- Library of Congress – Geography and Map Division: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/>
- Library of Congress – Digital Map Collection: <https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections/>
- MapGeeks: <https://mapgeeks.org/>
- Map Junction.com (Boston): <https://mapjunction.com/>
- National Archives – Maps of Interest to Genealogists: <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/maps>
- Norman B. Leventhal Map Center: <http://maps.bpl.org/>
- State and County Maps of Texas – Map Geeks: <https://mapgeeks.org/texas/>
- University of Texas – Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united\\_states.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united_states.html)
- United States Geological Survey - Using Maps in Genealogy: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/70039224/report.pdf>
- USGS Historical Map Collection: <https://nationalmap.gov/historical/>
- USGS Topographic Map Explorer: <http://historicalmaps.arcgis.com/usgs/>

## Using Maps to Verify and Confirm Information and Identity

- Joseph Feldman/Fielding’s father, **Morris Feldman**, was possibly listed as **Moses Feltmann** at the rear of **322 Willow Street**, Occupation **Shirtmaker** in the **1894 Philadelphia City Directory**. (Information for the 1894 Directory would have been collected in the late summer and fall of 1893.)
- On December 19, 1893, a Joseph Fielding reported on a National Guard Enlistment Paper that he lived at #4 Darling Ave. Philadelphia, and his occupation was a **soap maker**.
- Is the Joseph Fielding in the National Guard in 1893 the same Joseph Feldman/Fielding that is the son of Morris Feldman?

- It doesn't appear so when you just look at the addresses. However, when you plot the addresses on a map it confirms their identities as father and son.
- Indicates the street address 322 Willow Street.   Indicates the street address at #4 Darling Place.
- Since there is only one Darling Road/Street/Avenue in all of Philadelphia, the **rear of 322 Willow Street** is the same house as **#4 Darling Avenue**.



1875 Philadelphia Atlas, G. M. Hopkins, PhilaGeoHistory.org (Accessed 27 May 2022)

### Helpful Internet Sites and Articles:

- FamilySearch.” United States Maps.” *FamilySearch Wiki*: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_Maps](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Maps)
- Geonames - This website allows you to look up old names of places/buildings/Churches and helps you to find their modern-day location. Geonames: <https://www.geonames.org/>
- Historical U. S. Counties: <https://www.randymajors.org/maps>
- Infoplease: <https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/north-america/united-states>
- itouchmap.com – This site allows you to find the longitude and latitude of a specific address or map location. Itouchmap: <https://itouchmap.com/?r=latlong>
- McConnell’s historical maps of the United States: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2009581130/>
- Newberry Atlas of Historical County Boundaries: <https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/>

- Transportation History Resources: <https://railsandtrails.com/default.htm>

Here is the Link to great map of Texas it includes townships on the map and it was created in 1880 – from the MapGeeks website: County and Township map of Texas – Map Geeks:  
[https://mapgeeks.org/texas/#Mitchells\\_1880\\_State\\_County\\_and\\_Township\\_Map\\_of\\_Texas\\_also\\_Showing\\_portions\\_of\\_the\\_adjoining\\_states\\_and\\_territories\\_with\\_Plan\\_of\\_Galveston\\_and\\_vicinity](https://mapgeeks.org/texas/#Mitchells_1880_State_County_and_Township_Map_of_Texas_also_Showing_portions_of_the_adjoining_states_and_territories_with_Plan_of_Galveston_and_vicinity)

**Now go have a Genealogy Adventure!**