

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY: HELPFUL EASTERN EUROPE RESEARCH TOOLS

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Introduction

The accompanying presentation will demonstrate how knowledge of the geography and history of the region can help researchers tracing their roots in Eastern Europe. Maps and newspapers are helpful tools.

History and geography research resources

Historical maps. The historical map example below portrays Europe in 1815.



Map source: C. Colbeck, The Public Schools Historical Atlas (Longmans Green & Co., 1905), retrieved from maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/europe1815_1905.jpg.

Political maps. The following sample is a political map of Hungary.

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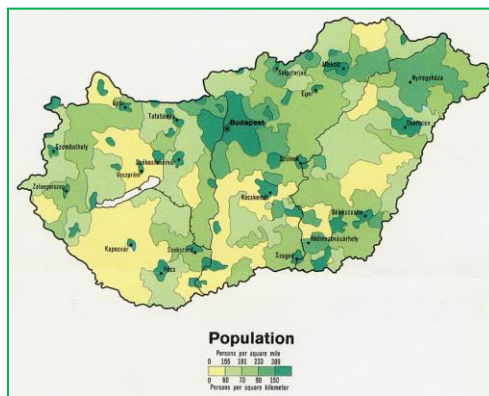
Map source: Political map of Hungary (1994), retrieved from maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/Europe/hungary.jpg

Topographic maps. The below example is a shaded relief map of Eastern Europe:



Map source: Eastern Europe shaded relief map, retrieved from maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/Europe/eeurope_rel84.jpg

Thematic maps. The example of a thematic map below represents the population density of Hungary.



Map source: Hungary population map (1973), retrieved from maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/Europe/hungary_pop_1973.jpg.

Cadastral maps. The following example is an 1852 cadastral map of Nowotaniec (then located in the Austrian Empire; today located in southeast Poland).



Map source: Cadastral map of Nowotaniec (1852), retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nowotaniec#/media/File:Nowotaniec_-_mapa_katastralna_\(1852\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nowotaniec#/media/File:Nowotaniec_-_mapa_katastralna_(1852).jpg)

Rail transport maps. The following 1898 map example shows railways in Austria-Hungary.



Map source: Railway map of Austria-Hungary (1898), retrieved from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rail_transport_in_Hungary#/media/File:Osterreich-Ungarn_1898.jpg.

Historical maps, atlases, and gazetteers. Online resources include:

- <https://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/LocTown.asp> (JewishGen Gazetteer)
- <https://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp> (JewishGen Communities Database)
- <https://maps.geshergalicia.org> (The Geshet Galicia Map Room)
- <https://www.litvakSIG.org/research/map> (LitvakSIG Shtetl Map & List)
- <https://feefhs.org/map/library> (Foundation for East European Family History Studies Map Library)
- www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/tgn/ (Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names Online)
- www.davidrumsey.com (The David Rumsey Map Collection)
- www.kartenmeister.com (Kartenmeister)

Historical newspapers. Online resources include:

- <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (Library of Congress Chronicling America)
- <https://news.google.com/newspapers> (Google Newspapers)
- <https://www.ancestry.com/search/categories/histnews/> (Ancestry.com Historical Newspapers Collection)
- www.theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html (The Ancestor Hunt)
- <https://www.newspapers.com> (Newspapers.com)
- www.elephind.com (Elephind.com)
- www.cyndislist.com/newspapers (Cyndi's List)

The example below reports the Russian advance into Bulgaria in 1877 in the *New York Herald* (Friday, 29 June 1877 edition).



Source: *The New York Herald*. (New York [N.Y.], 29 June 1877. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1877-06-29/ed-1/seq-3/>>

“Brick walls” in Eastern European research

Brick walls are common in genealogical research, especially when researching Eastern European ancestry. It can be difficult to establish the connections between generations due to missing records. It is also easy to become lost or end up looking in the wrong place, as borders and names changed in the area. The accompanying program will present examples of brick wall situations where knowledge of history and geography helped resolve research challenges.

Note: The URLs listed above are current and verified as of 25 January 2022. The URL links are provided for informational purposes only and no warranties are made as to the accuracy or content of any external site or subsequent link.

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