

The First-Landowners Map Project and Upcoming Research Tools from HistoryGeo.com

by Greg Boyd
Email: gboyd@arphax.com

*Dallas Genealogical Society, J. Erik Jonsson Central Library,
Dallas, Texas, October 6, 2018*

Why early landowner maps? How are they used by genealogists?

Landowner maps help you fill in the blanks. They often provide people and locations not found in censuses or that came and went in-between census years. They show relationships---for most of our country's history, people found their spouses among neighbor-families who lived within a couple of miles. Finding surname combinations next to one another, in different locations, often helps explain migrations which help you know which courthouses to check (including courthouses in between spots on the migration trail).

This Research Method is known as finding a FAN club: Friends, Associates, & Neighbors

Leading genealogist Elizabeth Shown Mills perfected this method years ago. You can read more at:

- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Elizabeth_Shown_Mills, and
- <https://www.evidenceexplained.com/content/quicklesson-11-identity-problems-fan-principle>

With our First Landowners Project, some of your FAN club is already on display

We've mapped 12.5 million people in 30 states, all of whom were original landowners. The shaded states below show you where we've focused our work so far. These are the "Public land states" plus the state of Texas.



What Else Can I Use the First Landowners Viewer for?

- County-boundary history
- City/Town Locator
- Cemetery Locator
- Markers for general migration info or on known specific locations

What About the Antique Maps Project? What Does that Offer?

Landowner maps from various time periods from a range of locations, many not included in the First Landowner's Project. Examples: 1870 Plymouth Mass. Landowners, Cherokee Allotments, and thousands of others. This has its own map viewer, separate from the First Landowners's Viewer. Check out its own video available on the homepage.

Great Training Aids Available at HistoryGeo.com

We have lots of training videos available at HistoryGeo.com.

Click the **Support** link, then > [Map Viewer Helps](#). It will take you to a page where you'll find . . .

1. [First Landowners Videos](#): How to Navigate, Print, Search, Browse, and Get Details, etc., plus a link to the 38-minute video on YouTube: "Map Viewer Essentials"
2. A [Cheat Sheet](#) that points out all the tools on the First Landowners Map Viewer
3. [Antique Maps Video](#): a 37-minute YouTube video

Other Projects Coming Soon to HistoryGeo.com

The Place-Finder + Topos Tool

(scheduled for release in early 2019)

The Geographic Names Information Service (GNIS) is our federal government's attempt to standardize place-names. Every creek, river-bend, township, town, hill-top, valley, cemetery, or any other geographic feature that has a name attached to it should be in the GNIS database.

Why Care?

Do you realize how many of these geographic features are named after people? If the number is not in the millions it has got to be in the 10s or 100s of thousands. If you have deep U.S. roots, odds are good one of your frontier families has a valley or creek or some geographic feature named after it. If not, odds are good that a deed or a tax record or a diary will mention your family being near such-and-such creek or branch or fork, and your task then becomes learning: where the heck is that?

Specific Features

Here are just a few of the many features found in the Place-Finder tool:

- Find nationwide instances of a place-name, then drill down by state, by county (QUICKLY).
- Find topo maps instantly, no matter what area you are viewing within the continental U.S.
(our topo library will continue to grow to include historical versions as they become available)
- Make markers that keep specific spots on record for your later retrieval.
- Save an entire Map with the layers you choose to display (multiple counties and/or topos). Used in concert with your Markers, this is a powerful organization tool that will help you keep track of the areas you need to continuously research.

Finally, the Place-Finder will integrate with the upcoming **Metes and Bounds** mapper.

The Metes & Bounds Mapper

(scheduled for late-2019 release)

So, what about the part of the nation that we've NOT been mapped? Well, first, there is no central repository of grant records for the colonial states (they are in individual states). And while many of these records have been digitized, very few have been abstracted in a way that lends themselves to a wide-scale mapping effort.

What is HistoryGeo going to do about it?

First, we are going to utilize the thousands of early landowner records that have been scanned by individual states, and make available a tool that allows anyone to map the underlying parcels in these records

So, once a record has been obtained (we can direct you to thousands of them), 3 steps are undertaken:

1. Describe It: this step involves creating a structured abstract---entering basic information about the grant record: where the record originated, where the land is located (now and in the past), who the parties were, when it was transferred, etc. We are creating templates to make this step as simple as possible.

2. Draw It: this is the geometry work. We have tools to help draw, automatically, the “legal description” in the document, with the goal being to end up with a closed polygon (of any shape or size).

3. Place It: once drawn, we need to figure out WHERE does this parcel go? Is it adjacent to already drawn parcels? Is it on a particular river or stream? Is it at the base of a mountain? In this step, our Place-Finder will help us locate these geographic features and ultimately to place this parcel.

The Cemetery Mapping System

(release date not set)

This is more than just a project. This is a complete system designed to help you, a cemetery association, or a genealogical or historical society, learn how to cheaply and expertly, map every grave in a cemetery. And then put your work on display for public viewing.

Using low-cost drone photography and sophisticated, yet highly affordable technologies, we can now map a cemetery in a way most people do not think possible. As time allows in this program, we'll share how we've already mapped 9 cemeteries using the technique described. You'll hear much more about this system in the near future.

One Other Project in Early Development: the World History Project

Interested in a Personal Subscription to HistoryGeo.com?

Anyone who chooses a 12 month subscription in the next week, can email us that you attended this event and we'll give you an additional 3 months for FREE. Please email us just before or after creating your HistoryGeo.com subscription at info@historygeo.com.

Questions?

Email: info@historygeo.com

Phone: 405-366-6181

www.historygeo.com