Mapping Ancestors on the Move

Melanie McComb, Senior Genealogist

June 14, 2024

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

American Ancestors
by New England Historic Genealogical Society

1

Meet today's presenter

Melanie McComb

Senior Genealogist

2

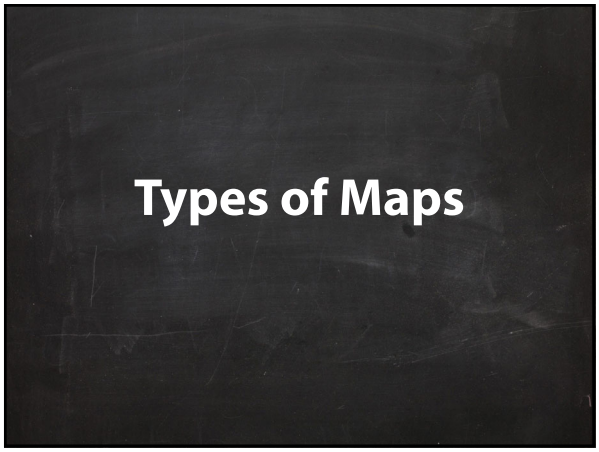
3

©New England Historic Genealogical Society, AmericanAncestors.org; produced by The Brue Family Learning Center

Why use maps in genealogy?

- Piece together your family puzzle
  - Visualize the land on which they lived
  - Provide context for their surroundings
  - Follow family groups through the years
  - Travel and migration routes
  - Use maps to present information
- Think broadly: shift your focus away from an individual to a ***place*** to break down brick walls and provide context

4



5

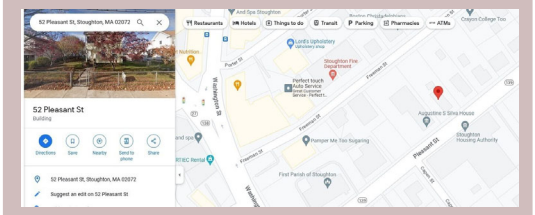
Types of maps

- Different types of maps may be available depending on whether your research subject is urban or rural, and the time period
- Cadastral maps (land/property ownership)
- Topographical maps (geographic features)
- Insurance (Sanborn)/real estate maps
- Ward and enumeration district maps
- Land surveys or plat maps
- Road maps
- Consider the *purpose* of the map – why was it created, who created it?

6

©New England Historic Genealogical Society, AmericanAncestors.org; produced by The Brue Family Learning Center

Google Maps – Stoughton, Massachusetts



7

2011 Photo – Stoughton, Massachusetts

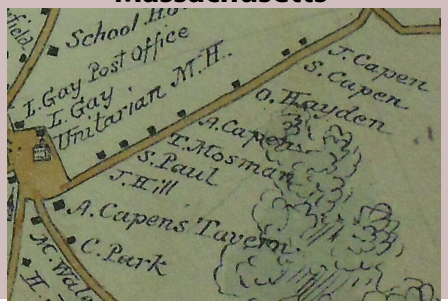
8

1879 Aerial Map – Stoughton, Massachusetts

9

©New England Historic Genealogical Society, AmericanAncestors.org; produced by The Brue Family Learning Center

1831 Map – Stoughton, Massachusetts



10

Cadastral Maps

- Otherwise known as land ownership maps or plat maps
- Shows the amount of land and owner's name
- Maps are used for taxation purposes, land ownership claims, mortgage planning, urban planning, and more

11

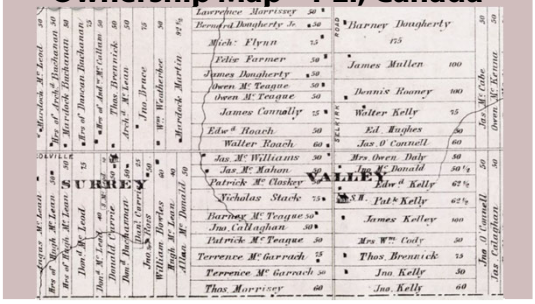
12

PLAN OF LOTS FIFTY SEVEN & FIFTY EIGHT

www.islandimagined.ca

13

Close-up of a Cadastral/Land Ownership Map – PEI, Canada



14

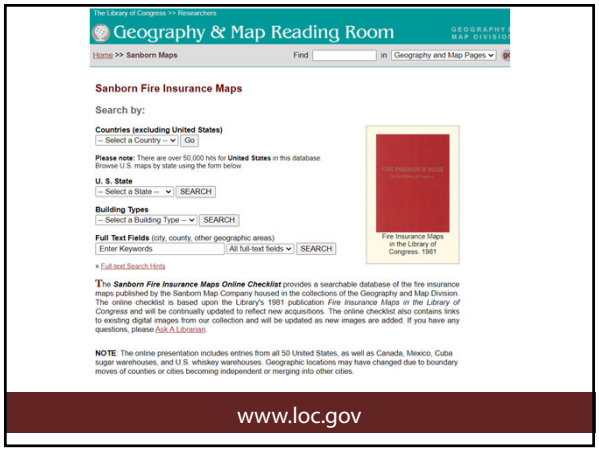
Topographical Map – Williamsport, Pennsylvania

15

Fire Insurance Maps

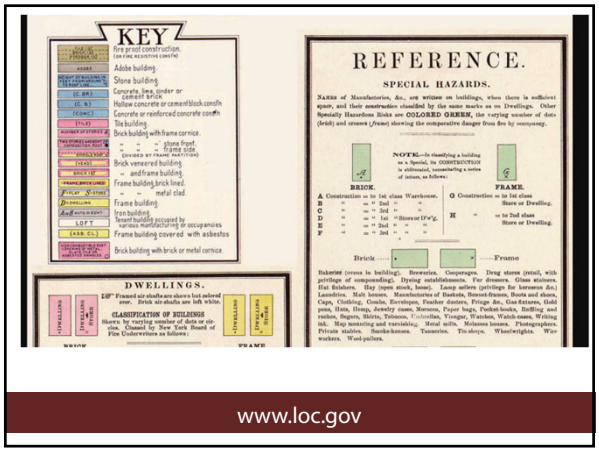
- Originated in London, England towards the end of the eighteen century
- Used by insurance companies to assess potential risk of a building based on several factors:
  - Building Material
  - Proximity to other buildings
  - Proximity to gas lines

16



www.loc.gov

17



www.loc.gov

18

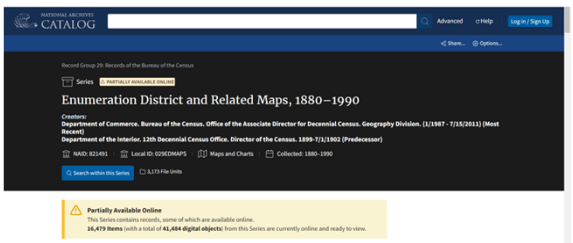
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map – Jeffersonville, Indiana

19

Enumeration District Maps

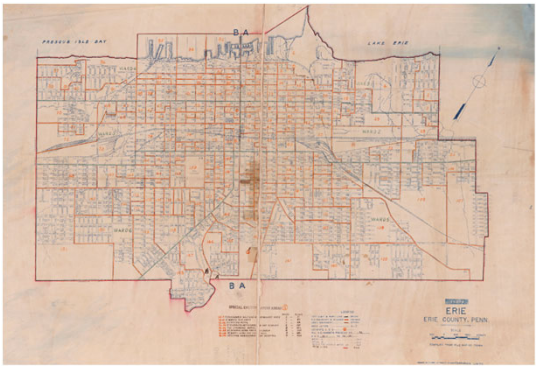
- An enumeration district was an area that a census taker could cover in two weeks in cities and four weeks in rural areas.
- The U.S Census Bureau started using enumeration districts in 1880.
- The maps illustrate the district's boundaries
- They provide a visual representation on how enumerators travelled from house to house.
- They include landmarks like schools, churches, parks, etc.

20



catalog.archives.gov

21



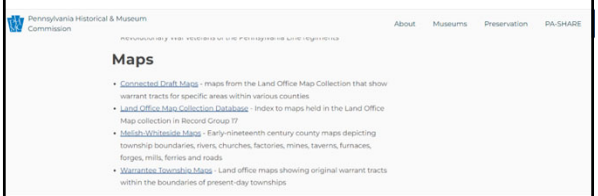
1950 U.S. Census Enumeration Map, Erie County, Pennsylvania

22

Warrantee Township Maps

- Show original land purchases from proprietors of a colony or commonwealth
- Show the following information:
  - Name of warrantee
  - Name of patentee
  - Number of acres
  - Name of tract
  - Dates of warrant, survey, and patent
  - Survey and patent #'s

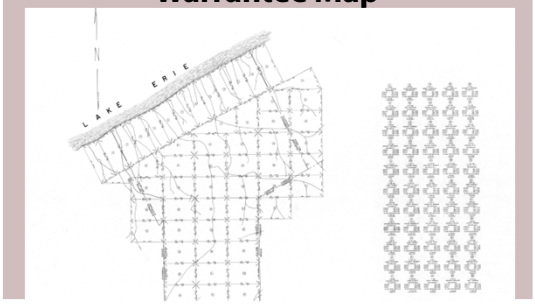
23



https://www.phmc.pa.gov

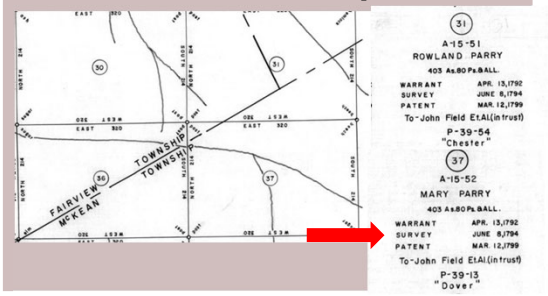
24

Fairview, Erie County, Pennsylvania Warrantee Map



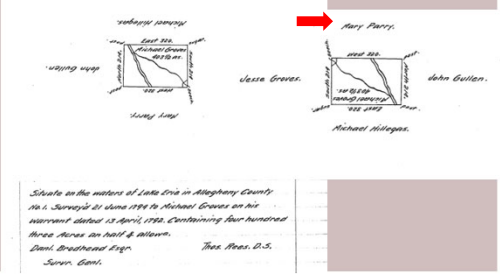
25

Fairview, Erie County, Pennsylvania Warrantee Map



26

Survey of Land on Waters of Lake Erie – Mary Parry



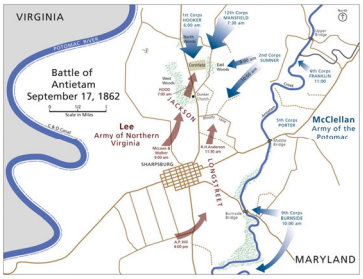
27

Military Maps

- Helpful to understand battles that your ancestors fought in and follow a regiment
- Some maps show property owners

28

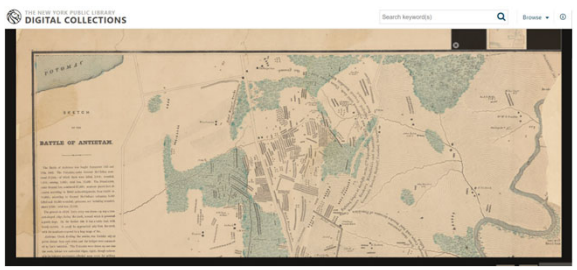
Battle of Antietam (Civil War) Map



nps.gov

29

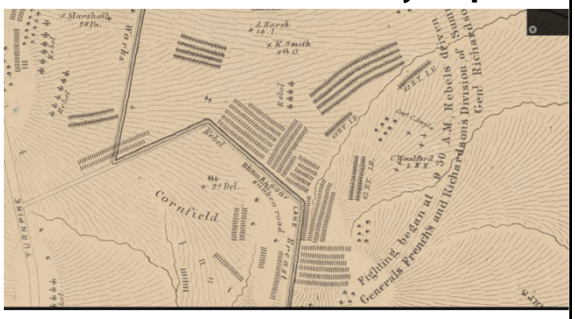
Battle of Antietam Cemetery Map



digitalcollections.nypl.org

30

Battle of Antietam Cemetery Map



digitalcollections.nypl.org

31

Mapping a Migration Route: Case Study (Elias Leonard)

32

Steps

1. Summarize What You Know
2. Create a Research Plan
3. Research
4. Create a Timeline
5. Create a Map

33

Step 1: Summarize What You Know

- Elias Leonard
  - b. circa 1758
  - m. Mary Ervin on 18 Feb. 1779 in New Jersey
  - Settled in Springfield, Burlington, New Jersey (1810 and 1830 U.S. Census)
  - Was on the 1835 pension roll, living in Burlington, New Jersey (age 77 years old)
    - Served in the Pennsylvania Militia

34

Step 2: Create a Research Plan

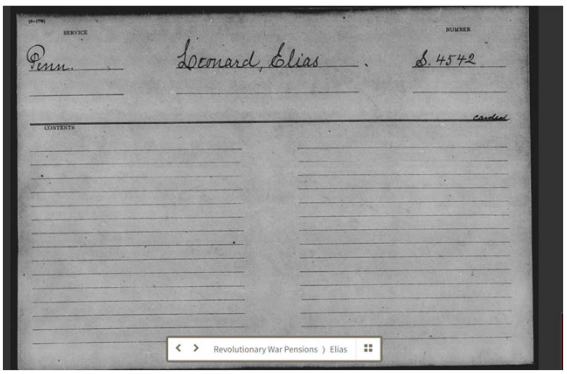
- Objective: Create a migration map for Elias Leonard, who married Mary Arvin in New Jersey.
- Strategy:
  - Search Fold3 for a pension file for Elias Leonard for the Revolutionary War that may include an affidavit from Elias detailing his movements before and after the war.
  - Search for any relevant land deeds and create a map of his migration

35

Step 3: Research

- Search for a pension file for Elias Leonard
- Pension file S.4542 was found on Fold3.com under Revolutionary War Pensions.

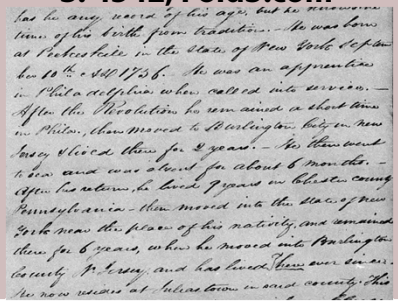
36



Fold3.com

37

Affidavit of Elias Leonard, Pension S. 4542, Fold3.com



38

Transcription of Affidavit of Elias Leonard, 6 Nov. 1831

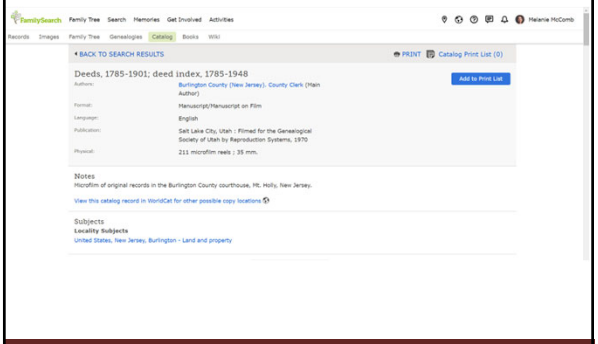
- "He was born in Peekskill in the State of New York September 10th AD 1756. He was an apprentice in Philadelphia when called into service. After the Revolution he remained a short time in Phila., then moved to Burlington City in New Jersey & lived there for 2 years. He then went to sea and was absent for about 6 months. After his return, he lived 9 years in Chester County Pennsylvania – then moved into the State of New York near the place of his nativity, and remained there for 6 years, when he moved into Burlington County New Jersey, and has lived there since. He now resides in Juliustown in said county."

39

Step 3: Research Cont'd

- Search for land deeds/mortgages and land grants that your ancestor had
  - Many are kept at the county level
  - Connecticut, Vermont, and Rhode Island – town level

40

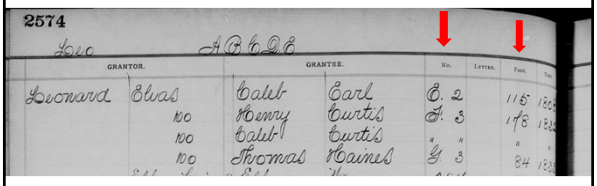


familysearch.org

41

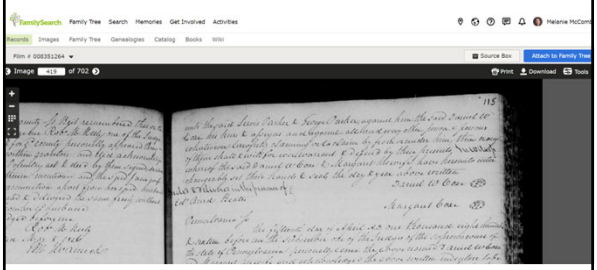
familysearch.org

42



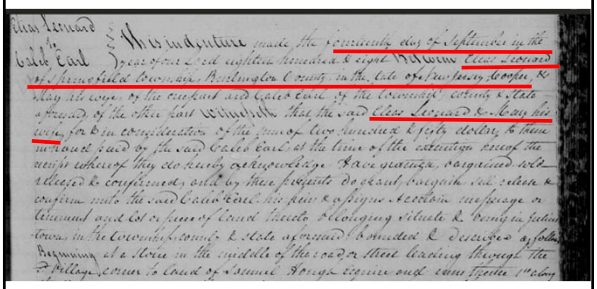
familysearch.org

43



familysearch.org

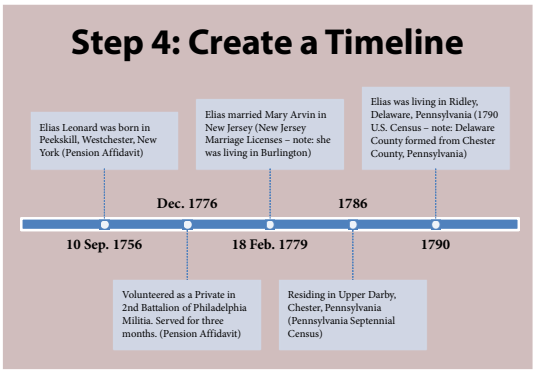
44



Elias Leonard Deed to Caleb Earl, 14 Sep. 1808, Burlington, New Jersey, FamilySearch

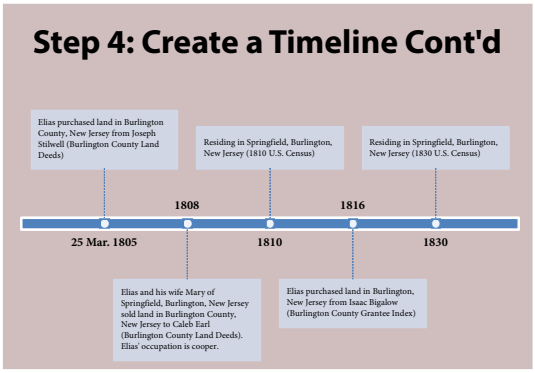
45

Step 4: Create a Timeline



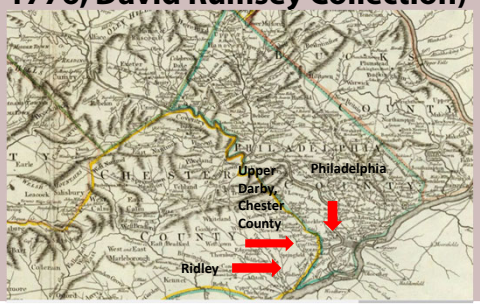
46

Step 4: Create a Timeline Cont'd

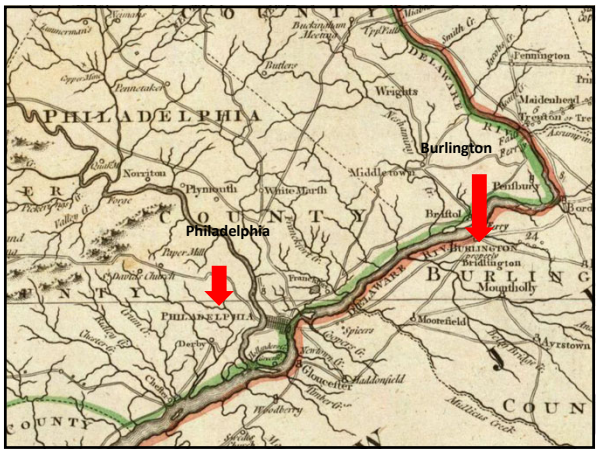


47

Create a Map (Historical Atlas, 1776, David Rumsey Collection)



48



49

Creating a Map

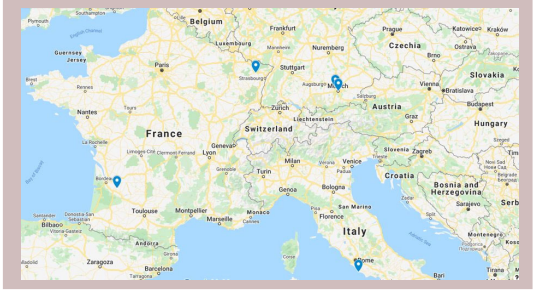
50

Create your own maps

- On the computer or by hand
  - Google Maps
  - Google Earth
  - ArcGIS
  - StoryMaps
  - DeedMapper
  - Print-outs of (blank) maps

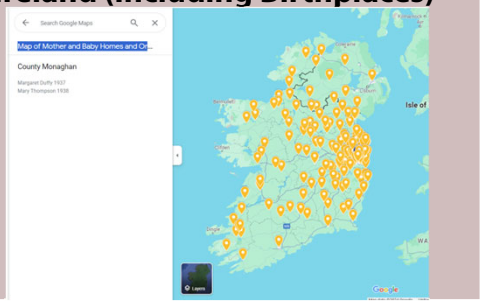
51

Google Maps



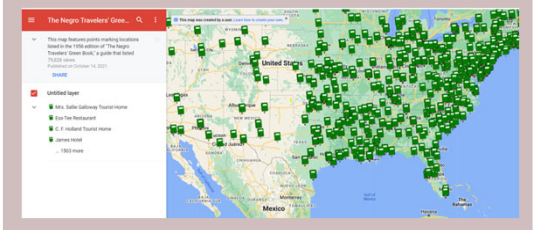
52

Map of Mother and Baby Homes in Ireland (Including Birthplaces)



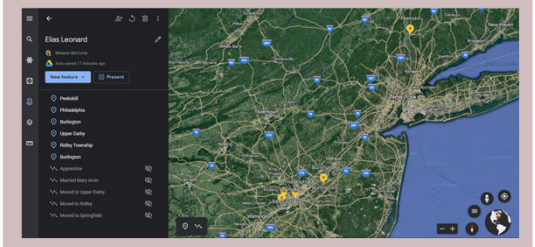
53

Negro Travelers' Green Book, 1956 from South Carolina Library



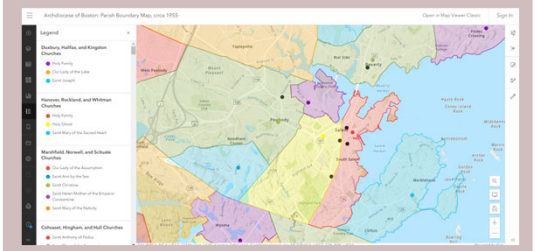
54

Google Earth



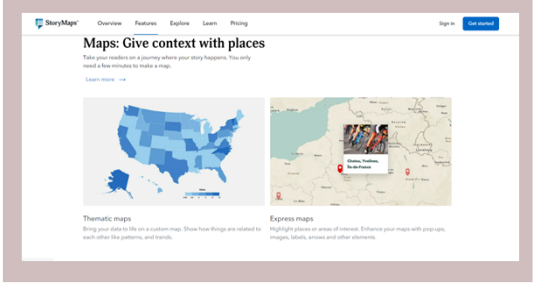
55

ArcGIS



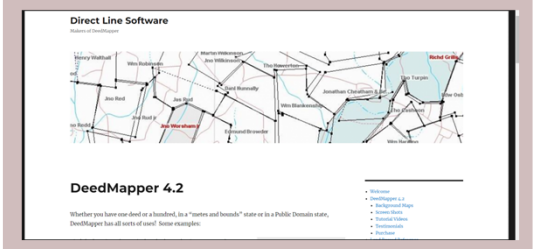
56

StoryMaps



57

DeedMapper



58

Printable Maps

59

Other Map Resources

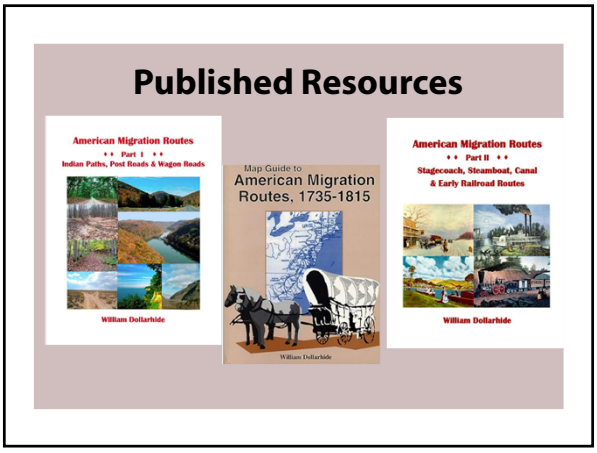
60

Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center
DIGITAL COLLECTIONS
Discover the digital collections of the Leventhal Map & Education Center and partners
Enter search terms...
Advanced Search
Menu
EVROPA.
CHALDEA.
ARABIA.
AFRICA.
Mare Balticum
Mare Caspium
Mare Rubrum
Mare Mediterraneum
Mare Nostrum
Mare Glaciale
Moreland
collections.leventhalmap.org

61

David Rumsey Map Collection
Cartographic Associates
THE COLLECTION
davidrumsey.com

62


Published Resources
American Migration Routes
Part I
Indian Paths, Post Roads & Wagon Roads
William Dollarhide
Map Guide to
American Migration Routes, 1735-1815
William Dollarhide
American Migration Routes
Part II
Stagecoach, Steamboat, Canal & Early Railroad Routes
William Dollarhide

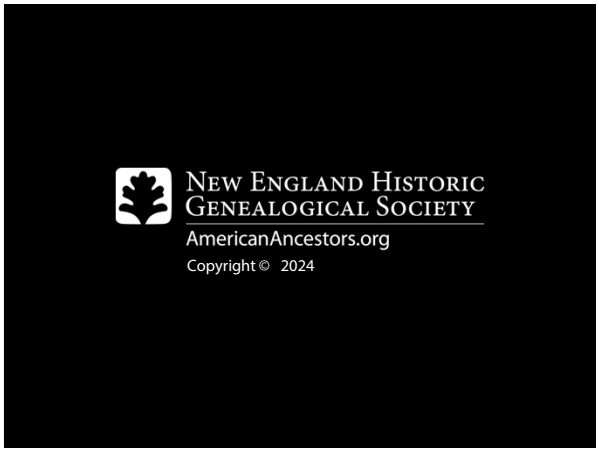
63

QUESTIONS?
Hire Research Services
research@nehgs.org
Chat with a Genealogist
AmericanAncestors.org/chat

64

THANK YOU!
AmericanAncestors.org

65


New England Historic Genealogical Society
AmericanAncestors.org
Copyright © 2024

66