Googling Gertrude - Using Google Earth in Genealogy

© by Gale L. French

Google Earth is a 360 degree three dimensional way to view your ancestor's world! In this presentation, you will learn how to show findings of your research – from photographs to locations of homesteads. Google Earth has the power to geographically document the story of your ancestors. All this is tied together by creating a "tour" of the elements you've created to show family & friends.

I. Google Earth is Ideal for Genealogists

Features & Benefits:

- It's FREE!
- 3 Dimensional
- Add your own Photos
- Tours - Gives you a visual look at your ancestor's lives

II. Getting Started with Google Earth

How to Download the free Google Earth Software:

[DOWNLOAD]

1. Go to https://www.google.com/earth/desktop/ Click the blue   button.
2. Read the Terms of Service
3. If you agree to them, click the Agree and Download button
4. Follow the installation guide
5. When complete click the "Run Google Earth" button

III. How to Work with the Places Panel

How to Save a Location in the Places Panel:

1. Click the Placemark pushpin icon in the toolbar at the top of the screen
2. In the pop up window, type a name for the Placemark
3. Click OK to close the pop up window
4. The Placemark appears in the Places panel on the left.
5. The box for the Placemark will be checked. Click it to uncheck the box and the location will be removed from the map. The box operates as a toggle switch for that location.

How To Organize the Places Panel:

1. Click on My Places to select it
2. Right click on My Places and select ADD ➜ FOLDER
3. A New Folder window will pop up where you can name your folder and enter a detailed description of its contents. (You may want to have a folder for each surname)
4. Click OK
5. Scroll down the Places panel and you will see your new folder under My Places
6. Drag and drop placed marks into the new folder as desired
7. Select *File* ➜ *Save Place As* from the menu
8. Name the place and save it to the desired location on your hard drive

lV.   Exploring Your Ancestors Lives with Map Overlays

- **Scan you own map**

- **Save a map from the internet (beware of copyright issues!)**

- Rumsey Historic Maps - http://www.davidrumsey.com/
  How to Add a Rumsey Historic Map to Your Google Earth Map:
  1. Go to the Layers panel
  2. Under "Gallery" select "Rumsey Historic Maps"
  3. Rumsey icons will appear on the Google Earth map if historic maps are available in the area you are looking at
  4. Click the Rumsey icon on the map to open the dialogue box
  5. Click the map thumbnail in the pop up box to add the map to Google Earth
  6. The historic map will appear in the Places panel and can be moved to any folder you wish.

- **Land Patents**
  - Do a Land Patent Search at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Web Site: http://www.glorecords.blm.gov
  - Locate Homesteads on Google Earth by entering the Bureau of Land Management's Land Patent Legal Description into the Earthpoint website's "Convert Township and Range" Tool at http://earthpoint.us/TownshipsSearchByDescription.aspx
  - Save the plotted Land Patent location in the Places Panel.

V.   Family History Tour: Select a Story to Tell
Start small. Tell a single story, not an entire family story.   Each story (or chapter) can be saved as a separate KMZ file and be viewed individually. Simply activate or deactivate them in the Places panel.

VI.   The Starting Place: Creating a Tour Folder in My Places
Create a folder for your family history tour in the Places panel before beginning to build the tour. This will allow you to save items into the folder as you go, keeping you organized.

VII.   X Marks the Spot: Adding Placemarks to Your Map
The Placemark is the main tool you will use to mark the events that occurred in the lives of your ancestors. Customize the icons to represent the event you are documenting.   Here are just a few ideas for items to mark on your map:

- Birthplace
- Residences / Land Holdings
- Places of business

- Place of Marriage
- Departure and Arrival Ports
- Place of Death

If you have a Placemark already on your Google Earth map and you would like to edit it, simply

right-click on the Placemark (either on the map or in the Places panel, and select PROPERTIES which will open the Placemark dialogue window. Now you can edit. When you are done, click OK to close the Placemark.

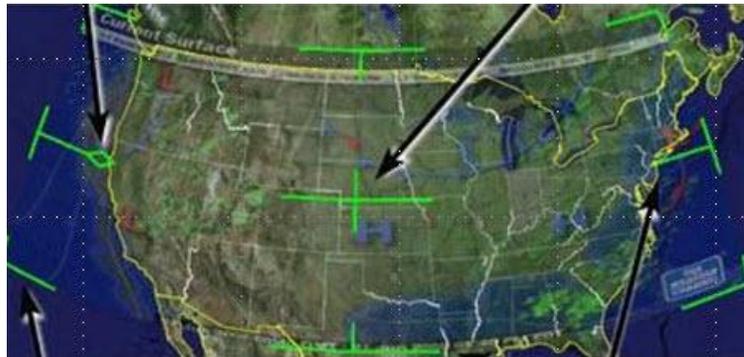**VIII.   Adding Photos, Documents and Other Digitized Images**
Any item that can be scanned and saved to your computer as an image file can be added to your tour with a Placemark (button found in Toolbar at the top of the screen) including but not limited to:
- Family Photos
- Census Records
- Old Postcards
- Vital Record Certificates

How to Add an Image or Website Link to a Placemark:
1. Host the digital image online
2. Zoom to the desired location in Google Earth
3. Click the Placemark button in the toolbar at the top of the screen
4. Name the Placemark
5. Add a description if desired
6. Click the ADD IMAGE button (or for a website click ADD LINK)
7. Copy and paste the image URL address into the field and click OK
8. Click OK to close the box.

Image Overlay

IX.   Recording Your Tour
The Record a Tour feature in Google Earth is a button in the toolbar that looks like a camcorder. You will have the option to record with or without voice. If you wish to narrate your tour (which I highly recommend) consider writing your script ahead of time so that you will know exactly where you want to go and your presentation will be smooth and easy to follow. Make sure that your Placemarks appear in the Places panel in the order you want to tell the story. To move a Placemark simply click on it and drag and drop it in to the correct order.

To begin, click the Record a Tour button in the Toolbar. A small recording tool will appear at the bottom of the screen. Click the Red button to record a **silent** tour, and click the microphone button to record a tour **with narration**. (You will need a computer microphone or headset)

Click the first Placemark in the Places panel to show that location and begin speaking. You can use street view if you wish to show it up close. Then click the next item in the Places panel and describe and continue to tell the story.

When you are done recording click the red or microphone button again to stop. The recording will automatically begin to playback. Click the SAVE button on the small recording bar to save the recording. A dialogue box will appear. Name the recording and provide a description, then click OK. The recording will appear in the Places panel. Drag and drop the file into the folder of your choice. I recommend dragging and dropping it so that it is the first item in the folder & easy to find.

X. Saving Your Family History Tour Map

Whether you want to save one item or a folder full of Placemarks, the process for saving is the same. Google Earth files are saved in the KMZ file format and are readable by Google Earth.

How to Save A KMZ File:
1. Go to the My Places panel
2. Right click on the Tour folder or Placemark and select "Save Place As"
3. In the pop up window name the file, and save it. (Leave the file type as KMZ)
4. Click OK

Now the file is ready to use or attach to an email to share with others.

References
1. Google Earth **-** http://earth.google.com
   https://www.google.com/earth/desktop/   **Download**
2. Google Earth Help - http://support.google.com/earth/?hl=en
3. Lisa Cooke's "*Genealogy Gems*" website **-** http://lisalouisecooke.com
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=49GR4kkDKbU
   1:38:00🕐
4. The Library of Congress American Memory Project Website (Great resource for public domain historic images) - http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html
5. Photobucket (free hosting of digital images) - www.photobucket.com
6. YouTube - www.youtube.com
7. The Internet Archive (Moving Images Tab) - www.archive.org/details/movies
8. NYC Images http://nycma.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet
9. Tips: https://mashable.com/2013/06/20/google-earth-tips/#h13c_cyMg8qt
   https://www.inverse.com/article/30603-new-google-earth-tips-and-tricks

Bibliography

- Cooke, Lisa L., *The Genealogist's Google Toolbox*, 1st ed. Genealogy Gems Publishing Company, 2011.
- Cooke, Lisa L., *Google Earth for Genealogy DVD Series*, Volumes I & II, 1st ed. Genealogy Gems Publishing Company, 2011
- Michelson, Dale, *Google Earth 2017: Learning the Essentials,* Google Books, 2017
   e-Book **$3.** $\underline{^{03}}$