



# ENGLAND MAPS & GAZETTEERS

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No research project is complete without information regarding the place where an ancestor lived. Maps and gazetteers supply that needed information, whether by providing background information about a known place, or detailed information about other places that will help you decide the right place in which your ancestor lived. Each place is associated with one or more jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions lead us to records we can use to find ancestors.

## WHAT IS A JURISDICTION?

Throughout the last four centuries, wherever people lived, civil, religious, and other leaders exercised authority over them. A jurisdiction is the power, right, or **authority** to legislate, interpret, and apply civil and religious laws or social habits and traditions. A jurisdiction typically has physical boundaries showing the area of an organization's authority. Jurisdictions may have several levels. Large jurisdictions (such as churches or governments) may be divided into smaller ones. Records are often created by the leadership of a jurisdiction regarding its people. It is those records that entice genealogists and family historians to learn about and use jurisdictional information.

Finding records to search for information about an ancestor is critical. To be successful, you must know:

- Which records will provide what specific information
- Which authority created those records
- Where the records are kept

The jurisdictions that created meaningful records in England are:

- Parish – There were two kinds of parish, civil (government) and ecclesiastical (church) Ecclesiastical parishes defined the churches and church records are found by ecclesiastical parish. Civil parishes are more important in cities and began about 1832 There are few genealogically significant records, if any, created by civil parishes.
- County – 40 counties in England
- Civil Registration District – Divisions created for the reporting of births, marriages and deaths for an area, beginning 1 July 1837
- Probate Court – The body charged with the settling of a deceased person's estate.
- Diocese - A large division of the Church of England presided over by a bishop. The courts associated with the diocese are Episcopal, Commissary, Bishop's, Consistory and Exchequer courts. A grouping of designated rural deaneries overseen by a bishop.
- Rural Deanery – Geographical areas consisting of many parishes, administered by a dean, who reported to a bishop.

- Hundred – An ancient jurisdiction which area consisted of the amount of land required to sustain 100 families or 100 fighting men.
- Poor Law Union - Jurisdiction charged with the responsibility of administering to and collecting taxes for the relief of the poor, beginning in 1834. These unions often used the same boundaries as civil registration districts.
- Province - The area of jurisdiction of an archbishop. There are two provinces in England, Canterbury and York. The Archbishop of Canterbury holds primary jurisdiction for England.

### Tips for recording jurisdictions

- When recording the name of a place on family group records or pedigree charts, begin at the smallest level and go to the largest.
  - Parish, County, Country
    - East Dereham, Norfolk, England
  - If you know the hamlet or village, you can add it before the parish.
- In large towns or cities a parish name is defined by the name of the town or city, followed by the name of the saint to which the church is dedicated:
  - Norwich St Peter Parmentergate, Norfolk, England

## WHAT IS A GAZETTEER?

A gazetteer is a dictionary of place names. It is arranged alphabetically by place. A gazetteer often relates historical and later information about that place. It might include:

- Description of town, village, civil parish, hamlet, city, county, sub-district, or name of registration district
- Identify important jurisdictions, i.e. which registration district a parish or place is in.
- Geographical features
  - Rivers, mountains, forests, springs, etc.
- Canals, railways, docks, ports, prisons, workhouses, market towns, post offices, major manufacturing works, major occupations and/or trades, schools and colleges, hospitals, family estates
- Religious denominations: parish church and names of each chapel of ease within its boundary, Nonconformist chapels
- Population

### Important Gazetteers for England

Wilson, John M. *The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales*. 6 vols. Edinburgh: A. Fullerton, 1870. (FHL book 942 E5i; films 897325–7; fiche 6020308–36). Gives civil registration district and probate court. See [www.visionofbritain.org.uk/expertsearch](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/expertsearch)

Lewis, Samuel. *Topographical Dictionary of England*. 4 vols. London: S. Lewis, 1831. (FHL book 942 E5l 1831; films 413519–22; fiche 6340019–34). See [www.british-history.ac.uk/search](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/search)

Smith, Frank. *A Genealogical Gazetteer of England*. Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1968. (FHL book 942 E5g). Gives probate court.

## WHAT IS A MAP?

Maps can help you find where your ancestors lived and give you a visual representation of that place. There are many types of maps. Each can help you in a different way. Use historical maps to place a family in the past. They will give a snapshot of a place at a specific time in the past. Modern maps give you a view of how things in a place look today.

Other types of maps that could be used to provide information and background for research include:

- Country
- County boundaries
- Parish boundaries
- Civil Registration Districts
- Diocesan boundaries
- Enclosure
- Tithe
- Estate
- Ordnance Survey
- Hundred boundaries
- Town plans
- Topographical
- Road
- Migration patterns
- Cemetery plot maps
- Regional
- Drainage
- Occupational
- Military campaigns
- Transportation: canals, rivers, railways
- Communications
- Marine: ports, shipping lanes
- Settlement plans
- Economic growth and development
- Effects of plagues
- Industrial
- Specialty
- National Farm Survey
- Valuation Office
- Natural resources: coal, forests, minerals

Maps are published separately or in bound collections, called atlases. You may find maps in gazetteers, guidebooks, local histories, directories, or history texts. An example of an atlas for England that shows parish boundaries (1831), as well as giving lists of parishes within each county and other information about finding records is:

Humphery-Smith, Cecil R. *The Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore & Co., 2003 (FHL book 942 E7pa 2003.)

An excellent web site that combines an interactive map with gazetteer information is found at <http://maps.familysearch.org>. This map will give you parishes, registration districts, probate court and many other jurisdictions, as well as an Ordnance Survey map as a base.

Maps are a necessary resource when doing family history and genealogy. They provide context to place the family and find records. William Foot once described three types of maps needed for family history.

1. "Maps to show where a place-name connected with a family history is situated.

2. "Maps to increase substantially knowledge of places, buildings, and events connected with an individual's life.
3. "Maps that can directly advance genealogical knowledge by fulfilling function, but also serving as graphic indexes to additional recorded information."

William Foot. *Maps for Family History*. PRO Readers' Guide No. 9. London: PRO Publications. 1994

## HOW DO I FIND A MAP?

Maps can be found in a variety of places. Archives and libraries hold many different kinds of maps, usually in paper format. Also, most universities and colleges build outstanding map collections in their campus library.

Maps can also be found online by using a search engine. When searching online, use the search term "Historic Maps," rather than just "Maps." You will be able to filter out the multitude of modern maps available.

## WEBSITES FOR ENGLAND MAPS

The following sites give lists of or allows you to view maps for England:

- **FamilySearch.org/catalog** - [https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/England\\_Maps](https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/England_Maps)
- Search by especially parish or town or city, or by county and/or the country level.
- **England Jurisdictions, 1851** – <http://maps.familysearch.org> . A powerful interactive, mapping system, that consolidates data from many finding aids into a single searchable tool.
- **A Vision of Britain Through Time** - [www.avisionofbritain.org.uk](http://www.avisionofbritain.org.uk). Free maps & gazetteers
- **Ancestral Atlas** - [www.ancestralatlas.com](http://www.ancestralatlas.com) . Upload a GEDCOM to map your ancestors. (\$)
- **Old-Maps** – [www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk) . Allows a view of selected areas of maps.
- **Antique Maps** – [www.antiquemaps.com](http://www.antiquemaps.com) Useful for searching for hamlet/village.
- **Wikipedia** – Maps UK: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_maps\\_of\\_the\\_UK\\_and\\_Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_maps_of_the_UK_and_Ireland) .
- **Ordnance Survey Maps of Britain** - [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) . Government maps for different time periods that show topographical information, as well as transportation routes, churches, commercial places and much more.
- **Genuki** - [www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk) . Use this site to identify and link to maps for many different jurisdictions, including county, district, city and more.
- **Genmaps - uki** - <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~genmaps/index.html>. Allows you to search for maps in England, Wales, Scotland by county. This list is growing and has a large variety of maps.
- **GB Names Public Profiler** - <http://qbnames.publicprofiler.org/>. Easily find a surname's distribution throughout 1881 England with this free online mapping service.