

**Unfortunately Boundaries Can and Do Change:** *Finding the original boundary can be a challenge (reads better at*

<http://www.kuzmich4.com/Facebook/Unfortunately%20boundaries%20Can%20and%20Do%20Change.pdf>

Boundaries in the US and internationally can be a factor that we may find challenging. Becoming familiar with locations and their geography changes which can help you vital records where your ancestors lived and where they moved to, or from. First, it is important to figure out the general history of the geographic area. Here's a good starting place at <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesa2.html> with technology, these resources can be found as many sections of the USA covered with tips and suggested resources. **Using Maps for Research:** From [FamilySearch](#): "Maps are also helpful in locating places, parishes, geographical features, transportation routes, and proximity to other towns. Historical maps are especially useful for understanding boundary changes. Maps are published either individually or as an atlas (a bound collection of maps). Maps may also be included in gazetteers, guidebooks, local histories, historical geographies, encyclopedias, and history texts." To learn about helpful strategies for using maps in research, see [Goal A3](#) at <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesa2.html#b> in the United States page.



There are different types of maps as presented at <https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Maps>.

- 4.1 Atlases
- 4.2 Census maps
- 4.3 Chamber of Commerce maps
- 4.4 City and town maps
- 4.5 County, parish, or province maps
- 4.6 Fire insurance maps (Sanborn maps)
- 4.7 Land ownership (cadastral) maps and plat books
- 4.8 Military maps
- 4.9 Railroad maps
- 4.10 Topographic or geologic maps

## Closing Comments

James Tanner did an in-depth three-part series of articles on how to deal with boundary changes.

- **Part One:** <https://genealogysstar.blogspot.com/2020/04/how-to-analyze-genealogical-sources.html>
- **Part Two:** [https://genealogysstar.blogspot.com/2020/04/how-to-analyze-genealogical-sources\\_17.html](https://genealogysstar.blogspot.com/2020/04/how-to-analyze-genealogical-sources_17.html)
- **Part Three:** [How to Analyze Genealogical Sources: Part Three – The Family ...](https://www.thefhguide.com/blog/how-to-analyze-genealogical-sources-part-three/) at <https://www.thefhguide.com/blog/how-to-analyze-genealogical-sources-part-three/>

## Closing Comments

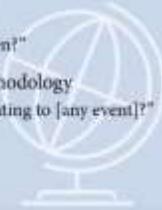
Understanding where your ancestor is living at a given time can be a loaded question--and to answer it completely, you need to know the broader Geo-political and historical context. And as records are most often arranged my place, the "where" becomes especially important for family historians. The video cited below by genealogist Haley Borstel demonstrates how to research boundary changes and understand jurisdictional levels using maps, primary and secondary sources and other records.

This video of 1:10 hour is a definitive resource on this topic at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijiXhBkFLN0> that clearly outlines the presentation in the images cited below.



### Location-based genealogy questions

- Questions about family origins
  - "Where did we come from?"
  - "Where did [any event] happen?"
- Questions about research/methodology
  - "Where can I find records relating to [any event]?"



### Locations and research methodology

- Your research question will inevitably involve a particular place
  - Use places to refine research questions (why did this happen here? what can we learn about X by focusing in on this location?)
  - Place provides context for understanding your research subject (how did the place of residence effect what that person did, how they lived?)
- You will need to locate sources from that place
  - Search by subject: place

### Place-Name Categories

- Your ancestor might never have moved off the same piece of land, but because jurisdictions or place-names have been changed, it *looks* like your ancestor moved
- Outside the U.S., there are similar levels of administration
  - Germany: *Stadt* (city), *Kreis* (county), *Land* (state)
  - Ireland: townland, civil parish, county

### Who keeps track of what?

Administrative Division	Records
Town/Municipality	Vital, tax, cemetery
County	Vital, land, court, probate
State	Vital, state-land grants
Federal	Post-1906 citizenship, federal land sales, military and military cemetery

### Terms

- Parent [town/county] – town from which another town is created
- Daughter [town/county] – town that is created from another town
- Annex (v.) – land from one municipality becomes part of another
- Extinct – town/county no longer exists as a legal entity
- Incorporated town vs. unincorporated community/CDP

### Why do names change?

- Any level of name might change, from street name to country
- In general, at any level of administration...
  - Boundaries are redrawn or a new community is incorporated/disincorporated
  - Population outgrows the original name
  - Standardization
  - Memorialization of a person or event
  - To avoid confusion
  - Wars/political regimes

### How does a name change effect my research?

- Knowing whether or not there was movement helps us determine where to find records and determine migrations
  - Did my ancestor move, or were boundaries redrawn?

