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Historical Topographic Maps - Preserving the Past

By [National Geospatial Program](#)

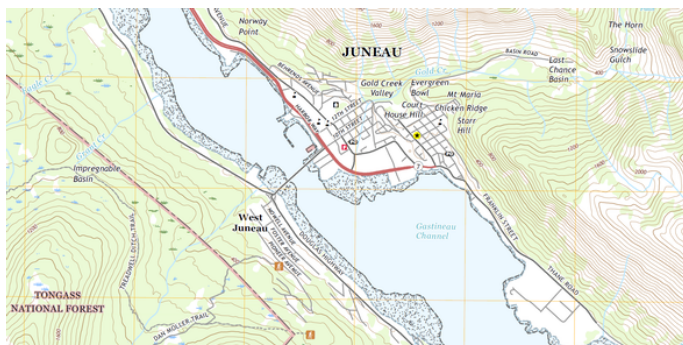
The Historical Topographic Map Collection contains USGS topographic maps published from 1884 to 2006

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The goal of The National Map's Historical Topographic Map Collection (HTMC) is to provide a digital repository of USGS 1:250,000 scale and larger maps printed between 1884 and 2006.

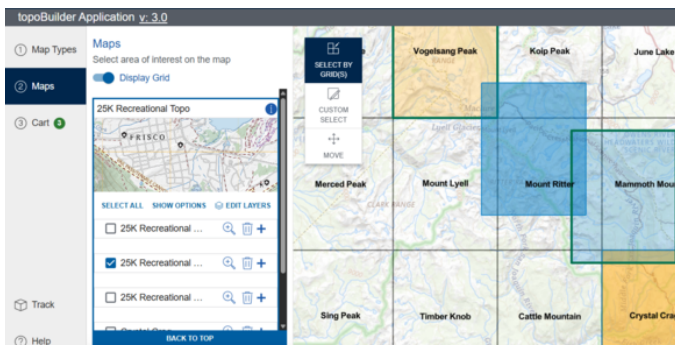
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Current US Topos and historical topographic maps are available as digital files or printed to order.

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Build a USGS topographic map with choice of format, area of interest, scale, and National Map content.

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Legacy U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Maps

The Historical Topographic Map Collection, or HTMC, provides a comprehensive digital repository of all scales and all editions of [U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#) printed topographic maps that is easily discovered, browsed, and downloaded by the public at no cost.

In 2011, the USGS [National Geospatial Program](#) began publishing scans of 1:250,000-scale and larger topographic maps printed between 1884, the inception of the topographic mapping program, and 2006, when the final maps created using traditional cartographic methods and lithographic printing processes were published. Many of these maps are no longer available for distribution in print.

Today, the HTMC contains over 185,000 high-resolution, georeferenced digital files, with accompanying metadata, representing these legacy maps.

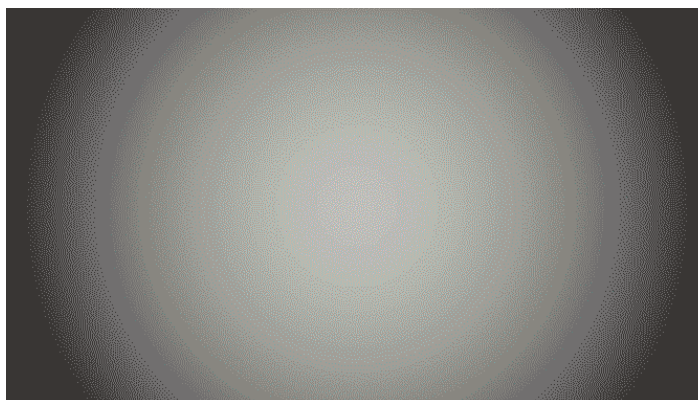
Accessing the HTMC

- [The National Map Downloader](#) is the primary portal for finding and downloading maps and other data products of the USGS National Geospatial Program.
- The [topoView application](#) provides a visual overview of the HTMC and serves maps in additional formats.
- The [USGS Store website](#) offers map downloads and sells prints of map files, including USGS maps and publications that are not included in either the [US Topo](#) series or HTMC.

A Glimpse into the Past

Although the historical maps may not show the current landscape, they are often useful to scientists, historians, environmentalists, genealogists, and many others as a snapshot of the nation's physical and cultural features at a particular time. A series of maps of the same area may show how it looked as early as the 1880s and provide a detailed view of changes in that area over time.

As the USGS continues the production of the current generation of topographic maps ([US Topo](#)), the topographic map remains an indispensable tool for government, science, industry, land management planning, and recreation.



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Change over time in the Reston, Virginia area on USGS topographic maps dating from the 1950s to the 1990s.

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JUNE 29, 2017

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The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Geospatial Program is scanning published USGS 1:250,000-scale and larger topographic maps printed between 1884, the inception of the topographic mapping program, and 2006. The goal of this project, which began publishing the historical scanned maps in 2011, is to provide a digital repository of USGS topographic maps, available to the public at...

Authors: Kristin A. Fishburn, Gregory J. Allord

By: [National Geospatial Program](#)

JUNE 23, 2017

[Scanning and georeferencing historical USGS quadrangles](#)

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Geospatial Program is scanning published USGS 1:250,000-scale and larger topographic maps printed between 1884, the inception of the topographic mapping program, and 2006. The goal of this project, which began publishing the Historical Topographic Map Collection in 2011, is to provide access to a digital repository of USGS topographic maps that...

Authors: Kristin A. Fishburn, Larry R. Davis, Gregory J. Allord

By: [National Geospatial Program](#)

DECEMBER 2, 2014

[Specification for the U.S. Geological Survey Historical Topographic Map Collection](#)

This document provides the detailed requirements for producing, archiving, and disseminating a comprehensive digital collection of topographic maps for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Historical Topographic Map Collection (HTMC). The HTMC is a digital archive of about 190,000 printed topographic maps published by the USGS from the inception of the topographic mapping program in 1884...

Authors: Gregory J. Allord, Jennifer L. Walter, Kristin A. Fishburn, Gale A. Shea

By: [Core Science Systems Mission Area](#), [National Geospatial Program](#), [National Geospatial Technical Operations Center](#), [NGP Standards and Specifications](#)

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JANUARY 1, 2014

Standard for the U.S. Geological Survey Historical Topographic Map Collection

This document defines the digital map product of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Historical Topographic Map Collection (HTMC). The HTMC is a digital archive of about 190,000 printed topographic quadrangle maps published by the USGS from the inception of the topographic mapping program in 1884 until the last paper topographic map using lithographic printing technology was published in...

Authors: Gregory J. Allord, Kristin A. Fishburn, Jennifer L. Walter

By: [Core Science Systems Mission Area](#), [National Geospatial Program](#), [National Geospatial Technical Operations Center](#), [NGP Standards and Specifications](#)

JULY 1, 2001

Finding Your Way with Map and Compass

A topographic map tells you where things are and how to get to them, whether you're hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, or just interested in the world around you. These maps describe the shape of the land. They define and locate natural and manmade features like woodlands, waterways, important buildings, and bridges. They show the distance between any two places, and they also show the...

Authors: Water Resources Division U.S. Geological Survey

Contacts

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Email: tnm_help@usgs.gov

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