

Google Earth and the Newberry Historic Atlas of Historical County Boundaries

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Why is Google Earth Such a Good Product for Genealogists? Use it to:

- Find exactly where your ancestor (and FAN Club) lived and see roads, streams, and topography
- find historical boundaries if you use it with the *Newberry Atlas*
- add a placemark or pin and notes regarding ancestral records at that place and other details
- correlate with published county histories and 19-century maps
- overlay historical maps
- use the walking man to actually see what it (and the surrounds) look like
- sort out different names for same or nearby location
- send your work to someone else by email, or send it to yourself if you are visiting an area and want to access your map details
- determine how far apart things are

Getting Started:

1. Download and Install Google Earth or Google Earth Pro from

<https://support.google.com/earth/answer/21955?hl=en> (free)

- You may have to sign in with your Google account (email and password). You don't need a gmail account, but you do need to set up a Google account if you haven't already done that
- Be sure all to save the app to all your devices so you have your data wherever you go

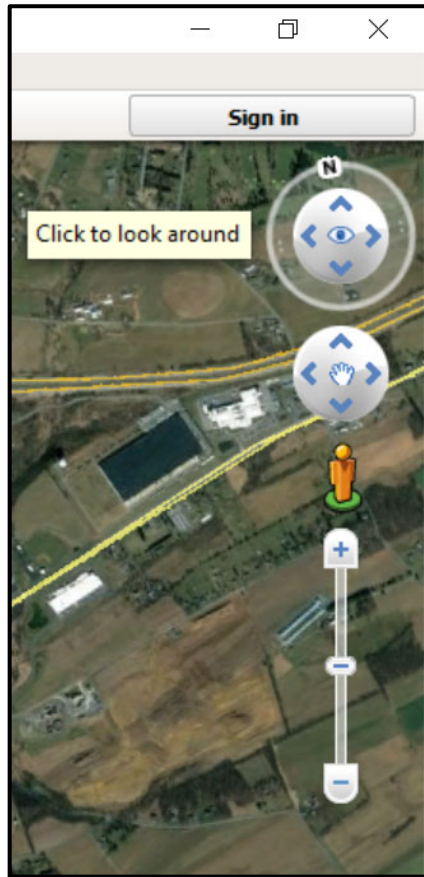
2. Open Google Earth (you may have to sign in)

- Google Earth has an official YouTube channel with videos at <https://www.youtube.com/googleearth>.
- While some of the screenshots on the following site are slightly out of date, the excellent explanation is still valuable and may fill in information not included in this handout:
http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/google_earth/UserGuide.html; also see Google's own support site at <https://support.google.com/earth/?hl=en#topic=4363013>)

How to Navigate the Maps (far right, top of screen):

- ❖ On the far right of your screen, there are some functions that may be hidden. To see them, hover over right side of screen or turn them on permanently under "View" > "Show Navigation" > "Always"
- ❖ To see scale of map, go to "View" drop-down menu and toggle "Scale Legend"
- ❖ To see latitude/longitude, "View" > "Status Bar"

- ❖ To tilt so you can view hills and mountains”
 - For Mac: press Shift and scroll forward or backward
 - For PC, press Shift + Left-click



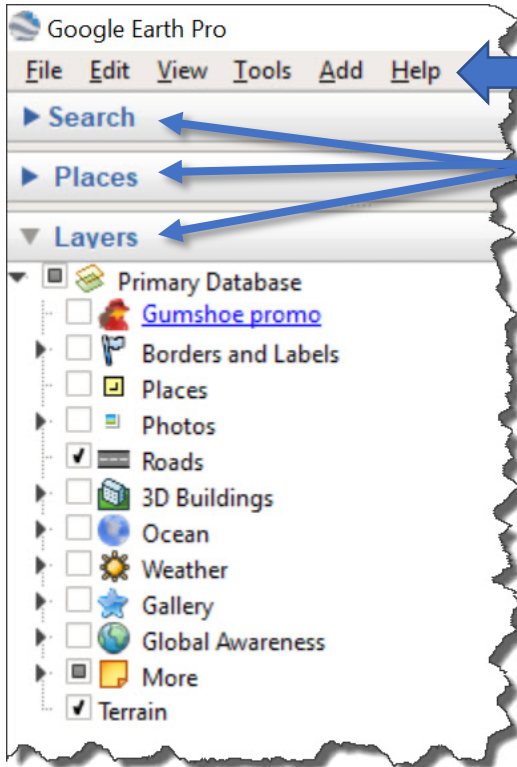
Rotation button: Drag to rotate the view or click on N to set it to top of view; click on an arrow to look in that direction

“Move” button: Move your point of view by clicking or holding an arrow (or between arrows)

Street View: Drag the man to a location to switch to street view

Zoom slider: Drag the slider up or down (or click the + or -) to zoom in or out

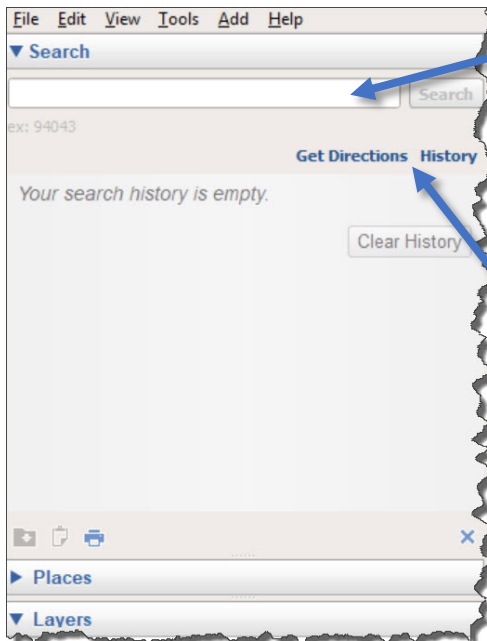
Tool Bar and Side Screen (far left, top of screen):



The menu bar contains six drop-down menus under the headings (File, Edit, View, Tools, Add, and Help)

Three panes (Search, Places, and Layers) have tiny arrows (▶) that can be toggled so that you can select what features you want to see on the map

Search Panel:



Search for Places: search for specific and general locations and then zoom or “fly” to the location by double-clicking on it. You can search by:

- ❖ Addresses
- ❖ Zip code search
- ❖ Longitude/Latitude search
- ❖ General terms like “cemetery” and town name

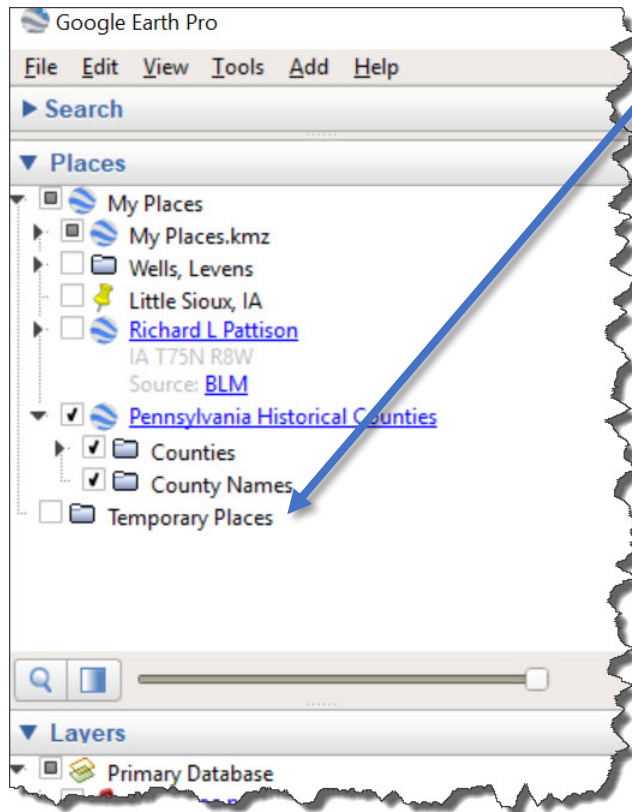
Get Directions

History

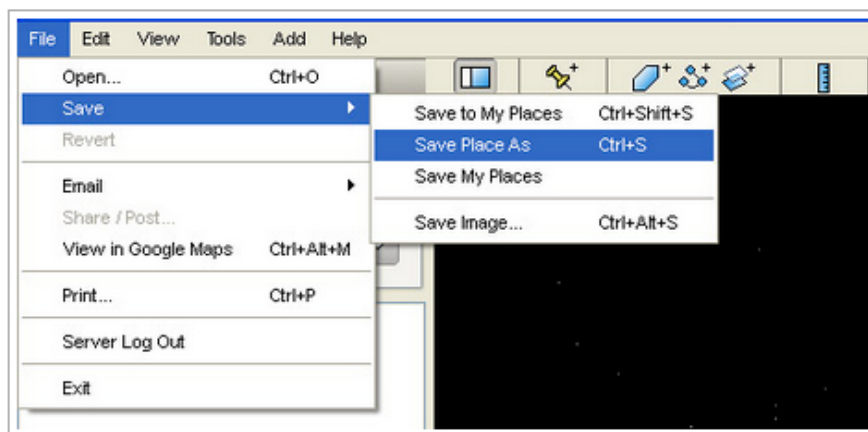
- ❖ To see previous search results, click “History” (Double-click any link for places you want to revisit and Google Earth will zoom to that location)
- ❖ To delete previous searches, click “History” then “Clear History”

Saving Your Work

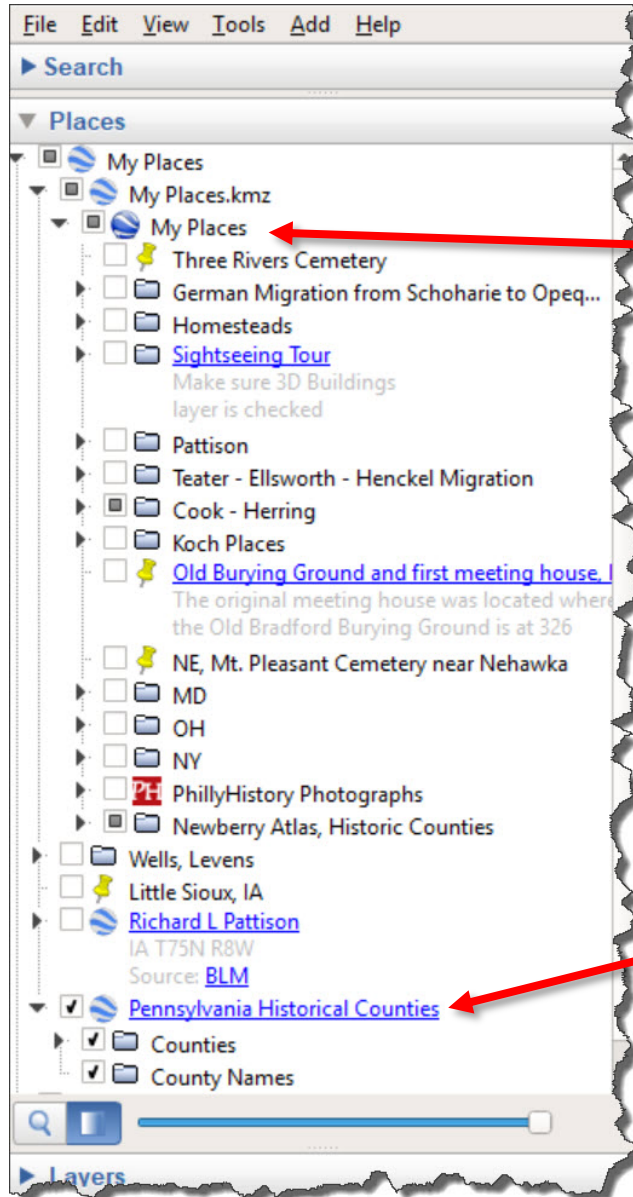
- ❖ By default, Google Earth puts places you find or create into a “Temporary Places” folder.” You can drag locations from the temp folder into Google Earth’s “My Places” folder above, and you can save the “My Places” file to your computer (we suggest you create a folder such as “Newberry Atlas” on your computer in which to save these files)



BE CAREFUL! Anything left under “Temporary Places” will disappear when you leave Google Earth so use “Save”



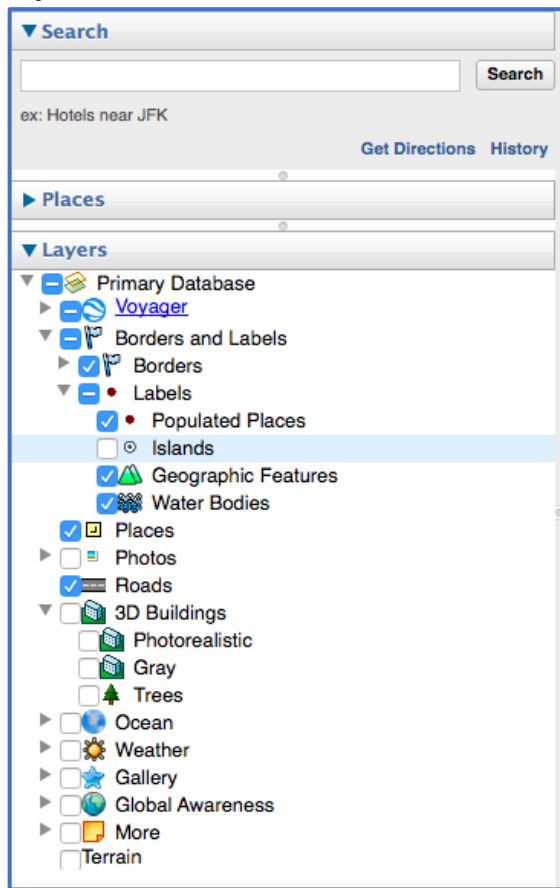
Places Panel:



Places are the places you have saved as Placemarks with push-pins, overlays, urls, photos, migration patterns, tours of important locations, etc. (see below)

- ❖ **“My Places”** is the default folder for locations you wish to save
- ❖ Create folders for surnames and locations in which you are searching and add features to each folder as you research
- ❖ You can expand any of the tiny arrows to reveal the contents of the folder
- ❖ Click on which folders or locations you want the map to display. **They will remain invisible unless selected**
- ❖ You can drag and drop the folders and individual locations to arrange them as you like
- ❖ Right-click and save often
- ❖ *If you download kmz files from Newberry Atlas, save them on your computer in a folder. When you open them, they will unzip and appear under “My Places”*

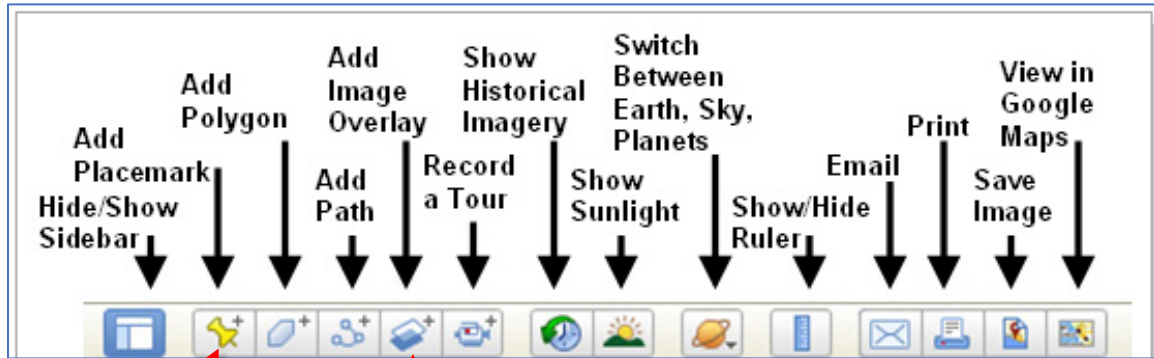
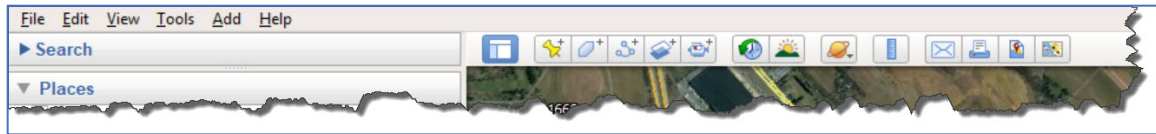
Layers Panel:



Layers

- ❖ Deselect most (or all) of these while you navigate, then select only the ones you need (perhaps “Roads” and “Borders and Labels”) when you’re close to your location or they will slow down your navigation
- ❖ You can add more layers from the Google Earth Gallery later if you want them

Google Earth Toolbar Icons (across top of screen)



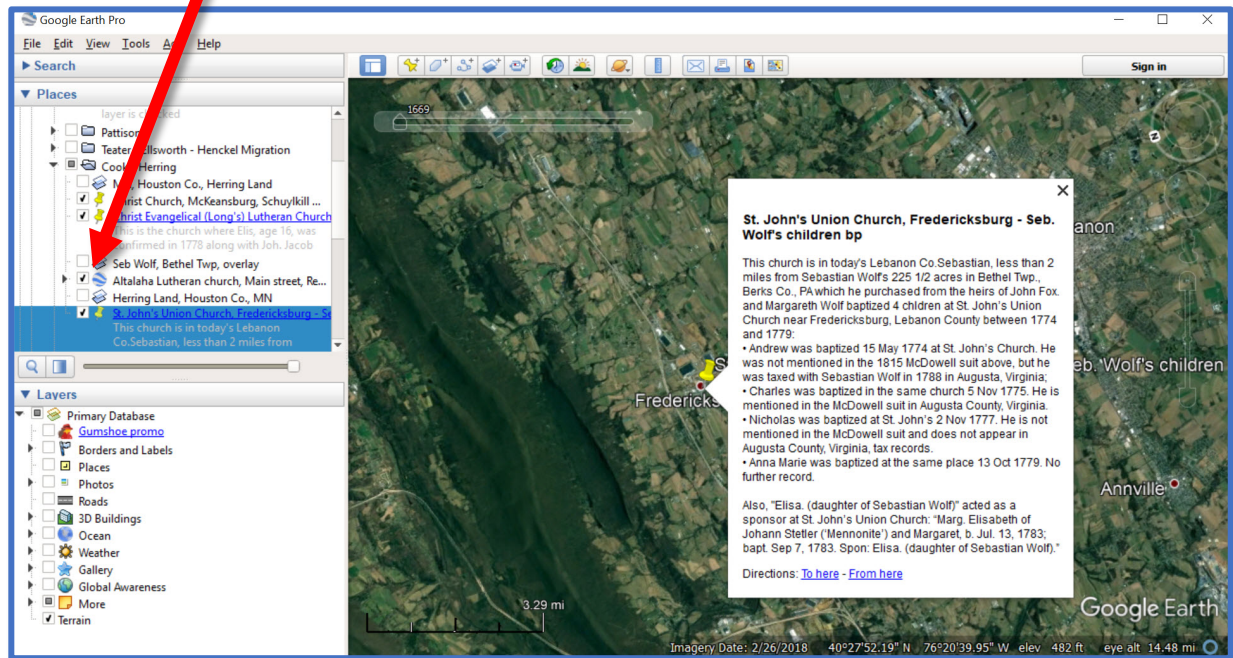
Tool Bar icon explanations (courtesy http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/google_earth/UserGuide.html)

You should explore all of the many features as you become familiar with Google Earth, but two capabilities are worth a thorough description: (1) Placemarks (pushpin icon) and (2) Image Overlay.

1. Adding Placemarks (pushpins): This is the ideal tool to use when you find that cemetery in which family members are buried, or when you want to know see exactly where their land was, or when you want to track their migration pattern.

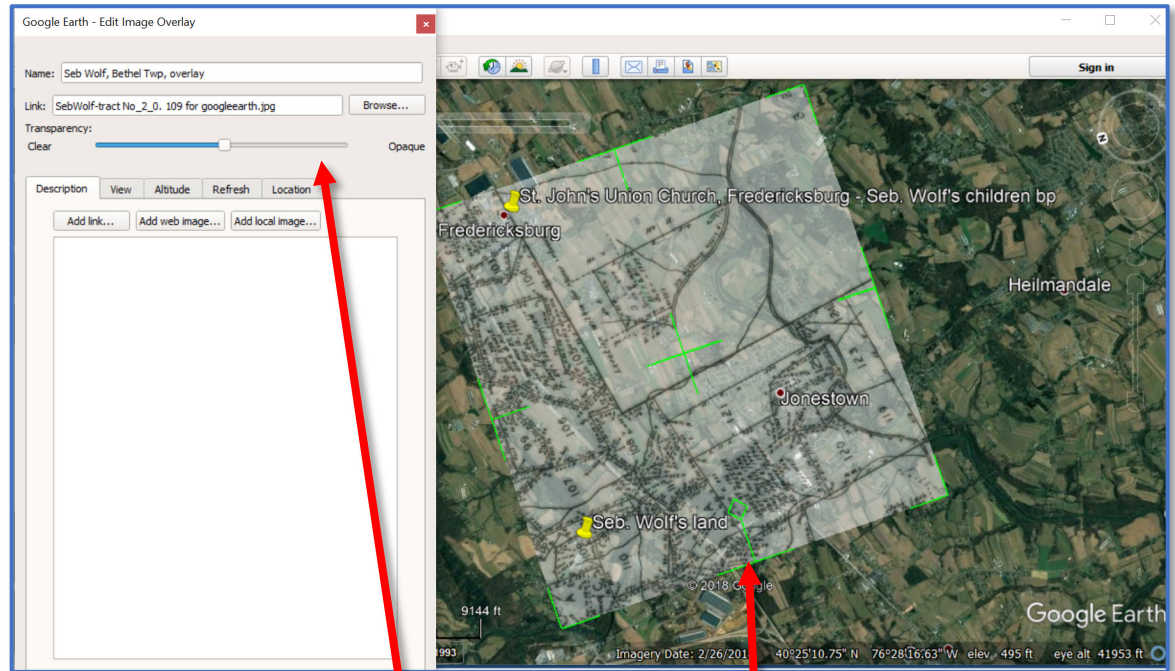
- ❖ Click on the pushpin icon and a dialog box will open. Add a short but meaningful title for the location (it will be displayed on Google Earth when you close the dialog box), a description, change the color of the pin and/or label; and choose to clamp the pin to the ground under "Altitude." Be sure to add what is significant about the place and the people who lived or are buried in the location, their records and citations, and notes you wish to follow up on. Two or three of the descriptive beginning words will be displayed on Google Earth.
- ❖ Before closing the dialog box, move the pushpin around on the map using your cursor until you are satisfied it is in the correct location (the latitude and longitude will change as you move the pushpin to the exact location).
- ❖ If a Placemark is in the wrong position, or if you find more family information or records, you can edit the pushpin as follows:
 - Right-click on the pin and open "Properties" from the drop-down choices to edit it. You can also choose to delete or rename it.
 - You can move the pin around, change the title, description, color of the label and pin icon, etc., then cancel or click OK.

- ❖ To view the description of a Placemark you have added to Google Earth, be sure to click on the box at the pushpin (it won't show up on the map otherwise)

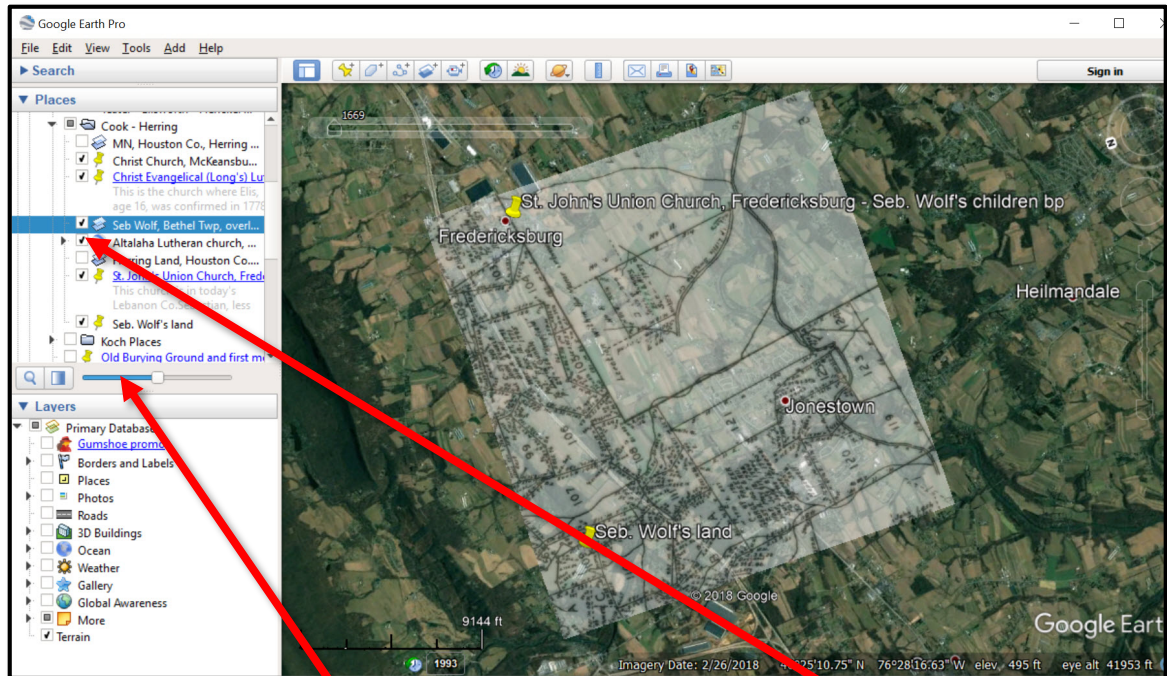


2. To Add an Image Overlay: You can add historic maps or photos as layers and toggle their transparency

- ❖ A couple of good videos are online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sjlbipyPmM>
- ❖ Click on the “Add Image Overlay” at the top of the Google Earth and a dialog box will open



- ❖ Insert a brief name for the image, then link to the images saved to your computer or to an online image in the “Link” box
- ❖ Resize and move the image around using the green hatch marks until you are satisfied
 - The center hatch mark moves the entire image; the side and corner hatch marks pull the image in those directions and rotates it
- ❖ Set the transparency slider to opaque, then adjust it to align it to underlying physical features
- ❖ Add as much description as you like under “Description” and set the “Altitude” to “Clamped to ground”
- ❖ Click “OK” or “Cancel”

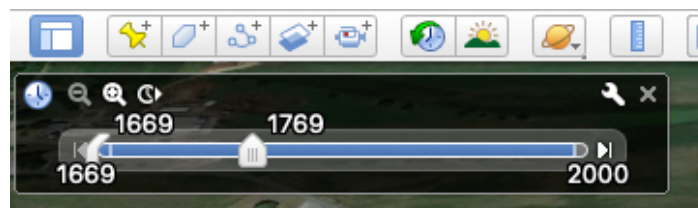


Viewing the Overlay:

- ❖ To change the transparency, be sure the overlay description is selected in “My Places”
- ❖ Adjust the transparency slider

Adding the Newberry Atlas to Google Earth

- ❖ Download the KML File for use with Google Earth: Open <https://publications.newberry.org/ahcb/downloads/states.html> and choose “KML Files” for the correct state. This will download a zipped folder of the atlas that will work with Google Earth if you have installed it on your computer.
- ❖ The reason you want the atlas added to Google Earth is that it will show you the county boundaries as they officially changed using a slider that you can adjust to a specific time period. The slider is visible at the top left of Google Earth’s screen—if it doesn’t appear, hover in that location to make it visible.



- Once you double-click or unzip the KML (Keyhole Markup Zipped) file it will turn into an unzipped KML (Keyhole Markup Language) file labeled “[State] Historical Counties.” Save it to your computer (I created a folder on my computer called “Newberry Atlas, Historic Counties” in which to store KML files for all the states in which I am researching). You can then open it from

your computer—and Google Earth will open with it. Alternately, you can open Google Maps or Google Earth first and then open the KML file.

Download State Files			
The data used in the Atlas project is readily available to download to be consulted, review to use this data, please consult our "Using the Atlas" page.			
State Name	GIS Files	KMZ Files	PDF Files
Alabama	8.2 MB	4.8 MB	35.1 MB
Alaska	42.9 MB	27.6 MB	16.8 MB
Arizona	2.2 MB	1.4 MB	3.2 MB
Arkansas	10.0 MB	6.1 MB	37.0 MB
California	10.4 MB	6.5 MB	17.9 MB
Colorado	9.4 MB	6.7 MB	27.5 MB
Connecticut	2.1 MB	1.3 MB	7.0 MB
Dakota Territory	10.0 MB	6.1 MB	22.4 MB
Delaware	0.8 MB	0.5 MB	2.1 MB
District of Columbia	0.1 MB	0.02 MB	0.2 MB
Florida	26.8 MB	16.6 MB	28.7 MB

- Google Earth will remind you when you close it that some items are in the temporary folder to give you a chance to save it. When you close Google Earth, go to File > Save > “Save Places As” or “Save My Places.”
- These KML files will automatically be stored in Google Earth in the “Temporary Places” folder. You can drag them into the “Places” pane so that it is saved and loads when you open Google Earth again.
- Use the down arrow pointing at “Counties.” Hover over the county of interest to find when it was created and what its parent county was—or choose a date in which the boundary changed. This is an image of Kentucky counties that existed in 1820 superimposed over Google Earth showing further information that Mason County changed its boundary in 1797 when Bracken Co. was formed.

