

Maps at the Filson Historical Society | Updated 22 April 2022

I. Handy Reference Maps

These maps (primarily of Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky) are some of the most frequently used in the library collection. *These maps are available in the Filson's reading room.*

- 1784 – Filson, John. *This map of Kentucke*. . . Shows the early stations near Louisville.
- 1858 – Bergmann, G.T. *Map of Jefferson County, Kentucky*. . . Shows major property owners.
- 1879 – Beers & Lanagan. *Atlas of Jefferson & Oldham Counties, Kentucky*. Shows major property owners by districts. Digitized by the Oldham County Historical Society:
<https://oldhamkyhistory.com/research/1879-atlas/>
- 1884 – Atlas of the city of Louisville, Ky, and environs. Detailed map of Louisville showing property owners and buildings.
- 1913 – Louisville Title Co.'s New Map of Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky. This a Louisville Title Co. Map showing property owners.
- Census maps (Louisville) – These show the city wards or enumeration districts for some of the census years.

II. Guides to Maps

Consult the following bibliographies to identify relevant maps.

Jillson, Willard Rouse. [A checklist of early maps of Kentucky \(1673-1825\)](#). (Frankfort: Roberts Print Co., 1949). Descriptions of maps: 1) Showing the area of Kentucky (1673-1785) and 2) Showing the area of Kentucky specifically (1782-1825). Descriptions only; scale and publication information included. (Filson call no.: **Pamphlet 016.912769 J61**)

[Index of Kentucky & Virginia Maps, 1562 to 1900](#). (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1976). Descriptions of maps arranged by the year they were published, from 1562 to 1899. (Filson call no.: **912.769 S187**)

[The Ohio River Atlas: a collection of the best-known maps of the Ohio River from 1713 to 1954](#). (Cincinnati, OH: Picture Marine Pub. Co., 1954). A catalogue of maps of the Ohio River and surrounding regions dating from the **1700s only**, as well as one map from 1954. Maps have been reproduced in this publication. (Filson call no.: **Pamphlet 917.7 O37**)

III. Finding Print Maps using the Filson's Library Catalog

Maps and atlases in the Filson library collection are described in our online catalog (<http://filson.ipac.dynixasp.com/>). The following instructions will help you locate relevant maps.

Browse by location. The most precise way to search for maps in the Filson library collection is by using a “subject browse” search. On the Basic Search screen, select “subject browse” from the dropdown. Enter a place name in the search bar, e.g., “Louisville Ky” or “Spencer County Ky.” On the results list, look for the location, followed by the term “atlases” or “maps.” (Hint: you may need to click “Next 10 Library subjects” in the bottom right corner of the screen.) Click on the subject headings to see the list of titles.

Maps at the Filson Historical Society | Updated 22 April 2022

Browse by item type. An alternative way to search is to browse by item type. On the Basic Search screen, select “subject browse” from the dropdown. Enter either “maps” or “atlases” as a search term. Click through the results list to find maps or atlases for relevant locations.

Maps showing land ownership. Researchers often find maps which show land ownership helpful in their research. The Filson library has tried to take this into account when cataloging maps and other documents. On the Basic Search screen, select “subject browse” from the dropdown and enter “real property” in the search bar. Click through the results list to find locations of interest. (For Louisville property maps, see the “Go-To Maps” section of this document as several maps listed contain details on property ownership.)

IV. Online Sources

Library of Congress American Memory: Map Collections. Browse the Geographic location index or use the keyword search with terms such as ‘Kentucky’ or ‘Ohio River.’ Many Kentucky counties are represented. The site also has a collection of maps from the American Revolution and the Civil War.

<https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections/>

Kentucky Counties interactive map. An interactive map that shows the divisions of Kentucky’s counties from its formation in 1776 to 1939. Newberry Library:

<https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/pages/Kentucky.html>

David Rumsey Map Collection. An online historical map collection focused on rare 18th and 19th century cartographic materials from North and South America. Images are available for download. Registration is required to download high resolution images. <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>

V. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Maps created by the Sanborn Company to assess fire insurance liability in urbanized areas of the United States. Sanborn maps show details (number of stories, construction material, windows, etc.) of all structures within city limits. The use of a Louisville city directory in combination with a Louisville Sanborn map from the same time can be a helpful research combination.

The Library of Congress has created a list of all Kentucky city maps published by the Sanborn company: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/sanborn/states.php?stateID=19> (*This is primarily a list of maps; most are not available digitally through the LoC site.) The Filson library has microfilm copies for Kentucky cities as well as some paper copies (Louisville). Some Sanborn maps for Kentucky cities can be viewed online through the Louisville Free Public Library; see a guide on this created by Steve Wiser:

<https://filsonhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/Sanborn-Maps-How-to-Use-on-LFPL-website-2021-update.pdf>