

Looking for an Old Aerial Photograph

Santa Cruz, Calif., 1906—Library of Congress



U.S. Department of the Interior
Geological Survey
National Cartographic
Information Center (NCIC)



San Francisco, Calif., May 5, 1906—Library of Congress

Historical Photographs

Attempts to photograph the surface of the Earth date from the 1800's, when photographers attached cameras to balloons, kites, and even pigeons. Today, aerial photographs and even satellite images are commonplace.

The rate of acquisition of aerial photographs and satellite images has been increasing rapidly in recent years. Views of the Earth obtained from the aircraft or from space vehicles have become valuable tools to government resource planners and managers, land-use experts, environmentalists, engineers, scientists, and a wide variety of other users.

Many people want historical aerial photographs for business or personal reasons. They may want to locate the boundaries of an old farm or a piece of family property. Or they may want a photograph as a record of changes in their neighborhood, or as a gift.



Plattsburgh, N.Y., 1940—U.S. Geological Survey, aerial mapping photograph

The U.S. Geological Survey has established the National Cartographic Information Center (NCIC) to help customers find maps, aerial photographs, satellite images, and other cartographic products. NCIC offers direct access to most of the Nation's domestic aerial photographs (including some historical material) and satellite images available to the public. Important other sources also exist and NCIC will assist you in contacting them when appropriate. These sources include Federal agencies and some private firms that retain the originals of photographs or that produce highly specialized products.

NCIC works in conjunction with the Earth Resources Observation Systems (EROS) Data Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Both NCIC and the EROS Data Center research requests for information about photos and take orders for aerial and space photographs and space images.

National Archives

Most aerial mapping photographs of the United States taken for Federal agencies before 1941 have been assembled at the Center for Cartographic and Architectural Archives at the National Archives. These photos date from the mid-1930's and cover approximately 80 percent of the land area of the conterminous 48 States. The Center also maintains collections of American military photographs over the U.S. from the 1940's through 1960's and some recently acquired German military photographs of Eastern Europe and Russia flown during World War II.

The Still Picture Branch of the National Archives has a large collection of photographs taken from the air. These date from the early 20th century to present day. Both the Center for Cartographic and Architectural Archives and the Still Picture Branch maintain Search Rooms in Washington, D.C., where visitors can search the files for the photograph they want. Mail inquiries are accepted but should be very

specific in describing area locations and time eras. Be sure your name, address, and telephone number are included in each inquiry. The Archives will search the files and return a research report and a price list for prints. The Still Picture Branch will also send electrostatic copies of appropriate photos. The address for both offices is:

National Archives
8th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20408
Telephone: 202/523-3006

Library of Congress

In addition to the National Archives, the Library of Congress maintains a large collection of historical photographs, some of which are aerial pictures dating from 1900 to the 1940's. A few aerial photos of the Connecticut countryside and Paris, France taken from aerial balloons in the 1880's are also available as is a series of panoramic views of U.S. cities taken between 1906-1908. The Library cannot

perform searches for mail inquiries, but visitors to Washington are welcome to examine their research files. The Library of Congress address is:

Library of Congress
10 First Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20540
Telephone: 202/287-5000

U.S. Geological Survey

A variety of aerial and space photographic products can be ordered through NCIC and the EROS Data Center including aerial mapping photographs taken since the 1940's, and current Landsat satellite images; black-and-white, color, and color-infrared photographs; and Apollo, Gemini, and Skylab manned spacecraft photographs. For further information, please contact the nearest NCIC office or the EROS Data Center. Information on photograph and image costs will be sent to you in response to your inquiry.



Lower Manhattan, 1930's—National Archives, Still Picture Branch



Jefferson County, Colo., 1937—National Archives, Center for Cartographic and Architectural Archives, aerial mapping photograph



Madison, Wis., 1908—Library of Congress

EROS Data Center

U.S. Geological Survey
EROS Data Center
User Services Section
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57198
Telephone: 605/594-6151

NCIC Headquarters

National Cartographic Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey
507 National Center
Reston, Virginia 22092
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NCIC Offices

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Telephone: 703/860-6336

Mid-Century Mapping Center—NCIC

U.S. Geological Survey
1400 Independence Road
Rolla, Missouri 65401
Telephone: 314/341-0851

National Cartographic Information Center

U.S. Geological Survey
National Space Technology Laboratories
NSTL Station, Mississippi 39529
Telephone: 601/688-3544

Rocky Mountain Mapping Center—NCIC

U.S. Geological Survey
Box 25046, Stop 504 Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225
Telephone: 303/234-2326

Western Mapping Center—NCIC

U.S. Geological Survey
345 Middlefield Road
Menlo Park, California 94025
Telephone: 415/323-8111, ext. 2427