# ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

# BULLETIN

# ASSOCIATION DES CARTOTHÈQUES ET ARCHIVES CARTOGRAPHIQUES DU CANADA



**NUMBER 175 / WINTER 2025** 

# NUMERO 175 / HIVER 2025

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**Cover image:** A collage of maps depicting themes of American relations. Thanks to Rhys Stevens and Larry Laliberté for map inspiration.

Cornell University - PJ Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography:

A Map of the United States May Look Like This After the Annexation of Canada. (1888) <u>https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343357</u>

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#### ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

#### **BULLETIN**

#### Place Name Change and GIS: A Review of Recent Literature

**Feature Article** 

#### Author: Karen Jensen Head, Cataloguing and Collection Maintenance, Concordia University

Keywords: toponymy, geographical names, digital humanities, GIS

#### Abstract

This article reviews some of the recent literature on how GIS relates to toponymy in general and, more specifically, to changing place names. It reviews articles on Indigenous names and commemorative place names while considering some of the main reasons place names are revised, such as linguistic and political change in a region. It reviews articles describing settler names in North America and considers questions of gender equity in place names.

#### Introduction

How are Geographic Information Systems being used in the field of toponymy? The field has benefitted from GIS, enabling a variety of studies, such as how microtoponyms relate to

landscape in Switzerland using semantics, location and topography<sup>1</sup> or the study of exaggerated tsunami-originated place names in the Sanriku Coast area of Japan.<sup>2</sup> This article reviews some of the recent literature on how GIS relates to toponymy in general and, more specifically, to changing place names.

Jago (2021) looked at changing place names in an article entitled ""Renaming Places: How Canada is Reexamining the Map"."<sup>3</sup> He began by discussing efforts to rename 'Toronto's Dundas Street and concluded that British Columbia, as a name commemorating Christopher Columbus, should be changed. In Canada, changing offensive names has been an ongoing effort. While it is perhaps easier now for equity-seeking groups to effect change, place names have always been in a state of flux for various reasons.

Historical GIS (HGIS) can be used to display, store, and analyze data of past geographies and track changes in time. HGIS is often seen as part of the digital humanities. Maluly, Gil, and Grava (2023) point out that HGIS must have the historical-geographical foundation to be understood as a discipline, writing that if the digital humanities (DHs) are an umbrella, then "HGIS must be both the rain and the umbrella. To locate itself in the DHs, but also to provoke them, operationalized by the 'geographical gaze."<sup>4</sup>

Fuchs published papers in 2015 based on a case study of German place names in the American Midwest due to settlement patterns during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He used the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), which includes former and alternative names and spellings. He combined toponymic findings with contemporary ancestry data to confirm distributions and concentrations of German influence and highlight local discrepancies. He wrote that "An important development that has fundamentally reshaped cartography in the past three decades are Geographic Information Systems ... GIS can help identifying inconsistencies,

<sup>1</sup> Julia Villette and Ross S. Purves, "From Microtoponyms to Landscape Using Semantics, Location. and Topography: The Case of Wald, Holz, Riet, and Moos in St. Gallen, Switzerland," The Professional Geographer 72, 109-20. no. 1 (2020): https://doi:10.1080/00330124.2019.1653772

<sup>2</sup> Yuzuru Isoda, Akio Muranaka, Go Tanibata, Kazumasa Hanaoka, Junzo Ohmura, and Akihiro Tsukamoto, "Strengths of Exaggerated Tsunami-Originated Placenames: Disaster Subculture in Sanriku Coast, Japan," *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information* 8, no. 10 (2019): 429. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi8100429

<sup>3</sup> Robert Jago, "Renaming Places: How Canada is Reexamining the Map," *Canadian Geographic*, July 22, 2021. <u>https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/renaming-places-how-canada-is-reexamining-the-map/</u>

<sup>4</sup> Vinicius Maluly, Tiago Gil, and Massimiliano Grava, "Do Historical GIS and Digital Humanities Walk Hand in Hand?" *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 58, no. 2 (2023): 59-63. <u>https://doi.org/10.3138/cart-2023-0005</u>

marginalized phenomena, and alternative perspectives."<sup>5</sup> He found that GIS software and tools allow for the storing and processing of a variety of toponymic and associated information to support spatio-statistical analyses and visualizations of distributions and patterns.

The author's earlier paper in 2015 noted that 45 percent of Germanic naming in the Midwest is due to names based on persons, and 38.7 percent is due to names based on places, generally describing the possessive character of Germanic naming in the Midwest.<sup>6</sup> The high percentage of current names (85.7 percent) indicates a general permanence of the Germanic legacy. He concluded that by using GIS, "The identified types and clusters directly inform interpretative and critical analyses of the kind that have recently spurred a renewed interest in place-name research."

#### 1. Indigenous names

Historically, there have been problems with how settlers used Indigenous words in names. Beck described the situation in Canada, stating that the use of Indigenous names fosters a climate in which reconciliation or a form of restitution can be made on the part of settler states.<sup>7</sup> Renaming efforts have also been made in North American stratigraphic nomenclature, where names are based on toponyms. MacNaughton, Dafoe, and Haggart (2022) proposed guidance on revising existing formal stratigraphic names to allow for the fact that some toponyms on which stratigraphic names are based may be culturally offensive or otherwise inappropriate.<sup>8</sup> The authors noted the historic suppression of Indigenous languages, including names for geographic features.

In contrast to Canadian historical naming practices, Mamontova and Filippova (2024) discussed the situation of the Evenki people, one of 43 communities in Russia officially recognized as Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East. The authors critically examined the evolution of Evenki toponyms on official topographic maps over the past century. They contributed

<sup>5</sup> Stephan Fuchs, "Toponymic GIS — Role and Potential of Place Names in the Context of Geographic Information Systems and GIS," *KN - Journal of Cartography and Geographic Information* 65, no. 6 (2015): 330-37. <u>https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03545470</u>

<sup>6</sup> Stephan Fuchs, "An Integrated Approach to Germanic Place Names in the American Midwest," *The Professional Geographer* 67, no. 3 (2015): 330-41. <u>https://doi.org/10.1080/00330124.2014.968834</u>

<sup>7</sup> Lauren Beck, *Canada's Place Names and How to Change Them* (Montreal: Concordia University Press, 2022), 119.

<sup>8</sup> Robert B. MacNaughton, Lynn T. Dafoe, and James W. Haggart, "North American Commission on Stratigraphic Nomenclature Note 72 - Application for Revisions to the North American Stratigraphic Code to Address Culturally Offensive or Inappropriate Unit Names and to Encourage the Use of Indigenous Place Names," *Stratigraphy* 19, no. 3 (2022): 187-200. <u>https://doi.org/10.29041/strat.19.3.03</u>

to the discussion of critical toponomy by exploring a distinctive Soviet experience, its "decolonial" phase during the 1920s. Although the Soviet government issued guidelines to geodesists on how to document Indigenous toponyms in 1939, emphasizing the importance of first-hand field data and the accurate documentation of Indigenous pronunciation, most field specialists were not trained linguists: "This may possibly explain the presence of official hydronyms in Siberia such as the Gorbiachin River (from Evenki *gerbi achin*, 'no name') or the Echev-Sara River (from Evenki *echev sare*, 'I don't know')."<sup>9</sup> The authors also wrote that "the problem of implementing accurate toponymic policies becomes even more intricate when confronted with multilingual settings like the Republic of Sakha, with six Indigenous languages, including the state language of Sakha, each holding a distinct place-naming tradition."

An earlier research article by Mamontova and Klyachko (2022) described the development of a flexible tool to represent Indigenous place names as dynamic and to enable Indigenous communities to share their knowledge using an open-ended community-based platform.<sup>10</sup> They found that at least 30 percent of the more than a thousand Siberian place names that Glafira Vasilevich recorded in the field from the 1920s to the 1960s while working closely with the Evenki changed over time. The authors challenged the idea of static landscapes and the conventional view of Indigenous place names as stable, conservative, and even ancient.

#### 2. Commemorative place names

Commemorative place names are a special class of toponyms, often studied at the populated place (city, town, village) or street level. David (2011) found that commemorative names display specific and distinctive features due to their dependence on political regimes and ideologies.<sup>11</sup> Commemorative naming was originally developed from a possessive motive. Yet, possession is sometimes only expressed symbolically, and the names are often based on non-personal phenomena, such as events and important dates or other places. This motivation is pervasive in the urbanonymy of Central and Eastern Europe, typical of twentieth-century toponymy, and mainly associated with non-democratic regimes. As an example, the Polish industrial city Katowice was renamed Stalinogrod a few days after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. "This change was followed by a further act of naming: all the boys born on the same day the city was renamed were

<sup>10</sup> Nadezhda Mamontova and Elena Klyachko, "'Process Toponymy': A GIS-Based Community-Engaged Approach to Indigenous Dynamic Place Naming Systems and Vernacular Cartography," *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 57, no. 3 (2022): 213-25. <u>https://doi.org/10.3138/cart-2022-0010</u>

<sup>11</sup> Jaroslav David, "Commemorative Place Names — Their Specificity and Problems," *Names* 59, no. 4 (2011): 214-28. <u>https://doi.org/10.1179/002777311X13082331190074</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Nadezhda Mamontova and Viktoriya Filippova, "Soviet and Russian Regimes of Spatial Inscription: A Critical Analysis of Indigenous versus Official Place Names on Maps in Siberia, 1920s-2000s," *Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization* 59, no. 1 (2024): 1-16. <u>https://doi.org/10.3138/cart-2023-0015</u>

given a third name, Józef, … in order to commemorate this 'great and sad day.'" The name Katowice was reinstated only three years later with Khrushchev's criticism of the Stalinist era. In his article, David mentioned the goal of creating a landscape "wiped clean of all traces of previous ethnic groups." He also emphasized that an important feature of commemorative names is their instability. The process of naming is less about distinguishing one place from another and more about asserting control. The author noted that during the twentieth century, Czech city centres were repeatedly inundated with commemorative names, but that three typical names dating back to the Middle Ages have survived to the present day: *Úzká* ("Narrow Street"), *Přícná* ("Cross Street"), and *Krátká* ("Short Street"). These names accurately describe the respective streets and show that they are not sufficiently impressive to be given commemorative names.

Buchstaller et al. (2024) showed that the most vivid turnover in the commemorative landscape can be found at the cusp of changes in state ideology when one political regime gives way to another. They believe that most critical toponymy research is historically and geographically narrow. Their research covered new ground by exploring street name changes over a century characterized by consecutive waves of political transformation in Leipzig (East Germany) and Poznań (Poland). They found that "post-colonial and post-communist struggles over public naming, in particular, show the vigor with which such narrative enactment of the city-text is linked to changes in nationhood, identity formation, and (counter)memorialization."<sup>12</sup> The Nazi period in Leipzig was the one when ideological renaming was at its most intense, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Ideological and non-ideological street renamings in Leipzig and Poznań, 1916-2018. Reproduced from Buchstaller, Fabiszak, Alvanides, Brzezińska, and Dobkiewicz, "Commemorative City-Texts," 299, fig. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Isabelle Buchstaller, Małgorzata Fabiszak, Seraphim Alvanides, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, and Patryk Dobkiewicz, "Commemorative City-Texts: Spatio-Temporal Patterns in Street Names in Leipzig, East Germany and Poznań, Poland," *Language in Society* 53, no. 2 (2024): 291-320. <u>https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404523000040</u>

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As for Poznań, there is the added dimension of successive shifts in the official language of administration. For example, the <u>Nibelungenlied</u> was commemorated in Leipzig during the Weimar Republic (1919-1932), resulting in streets named after the heroes of this Middle High German poem. The Nazi regime (1933/39-1944) continued this naming theme and carried it over to occupied Poznań. These streets were not renamed in Leipzig, as they commemorated apolitical fictitious figures, but retaining such street names (Brunhildweg, Kreimhildstrasse) in Poznań after the fall of the Nazi Reich was untenable. A map showing street name changes in Poznań over time is reproduced in Figure 2. The longitudinal perspective of this study emphasized that "peaks of change are followed by periods of relatively little re(naming) activity as the revolutionary zeal for erasing old and instigating new heroes, symbols, and values wanes over time."

Changes in street names during 2nd Polish Republic (1919-1938)





Changes in street names during the Nazi era (1939-1944)

Changes in street names during Polish People's Republic (1945-1988)

Changes in street names in the Republic of Poland (1989-2018)



Figure 2: Spatiotemporal changes in Poznań. 1916-2018. Streets marked in green are translations from German to Polish or viceversa. Reproduced from Buchstaller. Fabiszak. Alvanides. Brzezińska, and Dobkiewicz, "Commemorative City-Texts," 307, fig. 5.

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#### 3. Linguistic change

An example from Western Europe indicates that border changes can result in renaming based more on linguistic lines than commemorative names. Jakobsen (2021) explored changing Danish place names over the country's history and how cartography has been used politically to implement linguistic changes in place names after shifts in the country's boundaries.<sup>13</sup> After the Middle Ages, the Danish-German borderland region of Schleswig-Holstein was governed by the same duke, and these two duchies were subject to the Danish king. However, the Danish king was also nominally subject to the German emperor for the southern duchy of Holstein. Due to territorial disputes, this part of Denmark was the first to have accurate and detailed mapping, with a vast number of place names added. The Schleswig duchy was a linguistically mixed borderland with place names originating from Danish, Low German, and Frisian. The administrative language of the duchy was predominantly German, so many Danish and Frisian place names had German parallel forms. Eighteenth-century Danish maps show a truly intertwined language mixture in many parts of the duchy. After Denmark won the First Schleswig War in 1851, cartographers were directed to consider local pronunciation and historical records before deciding which linguistic form to use. When Denmark lost the Second Schleswig War in 1864, both duchies were integrated into Germany, and all place names on new maps were consistently given in German. However, a referendum in Schleswig made it possible for the northern half of that duchy to be returned to Denmark in 1920. The Danish government then began a 're-Danification' project in the region. The author also describes the 1685 loss of most of the Danish province of Scania to Sweden. From 1658 to 1720, Scania was a colonial-like province of Sweden, led by a governor general, under whom a deliberate 'Swedification' policy was implemented to integrate Scanians into Sweden.

#### 4. Political change

Regime change is, of course, a worldwide and ongoing phenomenon. Ahmouda and Hochmair (2018) described using crowd-sourced spatial data or Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI) to measure name changes of artificial geographic features resulting from the 2011 Libyan revolution that was part of the Arab Spring revolutionary wave.<sup>14</sup> The 1969 coup that led to the Gadhafi regime resulted in new names associated with the coup, its date, its leaders, and ideals for places such as streets, schools, and plazas. Although most of the old names were associated with the Gadhafi regime, not all of them were changed to be associated with the 2011 revolution. For example, the University of Tripoli returned to its original name from its 1976 renaming as Al Fateh University. Their paper analyzed the usability of crowd-sourced information to identify name changes, comparing five crowd-sourced datasets (OpenStreetMap, Wikimapia, Google Map

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen, "Cartography in Danish Place-Name Studies," *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift - Norwegian Journal of Geography* 75, no. 1 (2021): 7-21. <u>https://doi:10.1080/00291951.2020.1851755</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ahmed Ahmouda and Hartwig H. Hochmair, "Using Volunteered Geographic Information to Measure Name Changes of Artificial Geographical Features as a Result of Political Changes: A Libya Case Study," *GeoJournal* 83 (2018): 237-55. <u>https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-016-9764-5</u>

Maker, Panoramio, and Flickr) as well as Facebook sites listing school directories. The local knowledge of residents in the analyzed areas was used as a reference dataset for comparison when available. Some information about name changes was reflected in data disseminated by the geospatial web community and proved particularly valuable in the absence of Libyan government websites or maps at the time.

#### 5. North America

As we saw in the work of Fuchs, toponyms in North America present a special case. Chloupek (2018) reviewed town and city toponyms in Nebraska, resulting from the era of town place-naming at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> He noted that a limited number of actors were responsible for place names in Nebraska, naming entities like the railroads, the United States Postal Service, and groups of settlers from the eastern United States or Europe. The use of repetitive and uninspired place names was well known and decried even when it occurred. Toponyms in most of the United States can not be studied in the same ways as they have been traditionally analyzed in places like Europe or Asia where searching for language or ethnicity-based etymologies can be fruitful. One of the categories of names in this study was "female," however, the author showed that selecting female toponyms for towns can be viewed in essentially the same way as the self-commemoration phenomenon: women commemorated were usually relatives of male founders who had already commemorated themselves in some other place name. The spatially dispersed pattern strongly suggests that naming towns after women was widespread across Nebraska from 1870 to 1889 in contrast to naming towns after places in eastern parts of the United States or after famous individuals of the day.

#### 6. Gender equity

The above sections touched on questions of gender equity and commemorative names for streets in Eastern and Central Europe. Gutiérrez-Mora and Oto-Peralías (2022) noted that the critical geographic literature attributes a strong symbolic power to urban toponyms. The authors researched urban gender bias through street names, developing a methodology to quantify gender bias in street names through computational tools of text analysis.<sup>16</sup> They constructed a geographically specific and time-variant indicator of the female share in street names that permits comparisons across cities and over time. Their case study of Spain showed that the Spanish street map is largely made up of commemorative names, approximately 54 percent. It is generally possible to identify the gender of streets commemorating persons because the names include both forename and surname. The primary dataset used was the Electoral Census Street Map issued by the Spanish Statistical Office. Data from 2001 to 2020 is included, permitting temporal

<sup>15</sup> Brett R. Chloupek, "A GIS Approach to Cultural and Historical Toponymic Research in Nebraska," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 35, no. 1 (2018): 23-43. <u>https://doi:10.1080/08873631.2017.1317182</u>

<sup>16</sup> Dolores Gutiérrez-Mora and Daniel Oto-Peralías, "Gendered Cities: Studying Urban Gender Bias through Street Names," *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* 49, no. 6 (2022): 1792-1809. <u>https://doi.org/10.1177/23998083211068844</u>

analysis of almost 15 million streets. The most challenging task was identifying whether a street had a male or female name. The classifier algorithm relies on a dictionary-based method. It is implemented as a rule-based system following five steps, one of which deals with streets bearing compound forenames formed by a male and female name, such as José María. Their results show that the female share in streets named after a person rose from 9.6 percent in 2001 to 12.1 percent in 2020. For new and renamed streets, the gender bias is lower at 18.4 percent. Using OpenStreetMap, they also uncovered a strong intra-urban pattern with the proportion of female streets increasing by more than half as one moves away from the city centre. Visualizations based on the classifier's output are valuable tools to show patterns and trends across the country, analyzing how naming patterns fit with sociocultural characteristics of cities.

Devine (2022) also looked at gender equity by studying female commemorative names in Antarctic and Arctic regions.<sup>17</sup> Uncovering Antarctic place names honouring women proved more difficult than studying Spanish street names because place names are usually based on one name, either a forename or a surname. Few women travelled to Antarctica during the early days of the continent's geographic feature naming, and as we saw in the case study of Nebraska, many female names in Antarctica were actually bestowed by males honouring their loved ones. Devine did however document some toponyms commemorating women explorers and scientists after 1947.

An Antarctic case illustrates the problem with naming geographic features after living persons. The Marchant Glacier commemorated geologist David Marchant of Boston University in 1994, recognizing his field work in Antarctica since 1985. Marchant was later found by the university to have sexually harassed at least one of his former graduate students. The original complaint by his graduate student at the time, Jane Willenbring, was lodged in late 2016. The glacier was renamed "Matataua" by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) and the Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names (ACAN) in September 2018 due to its proximity to Matataua Peak.<sup>18</sup>

The Canadian practice differs: "Since 1990 most of the provincial names boards and members of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) have been conservative in the use of commemorative personal names, insisting that persons be deceased for at least one year before their names are to be considered for features."<sup>19</sup> Fritz Müller's former student wrote that the glaciologist named Baby Glacier on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, after his first daughter,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Carol Devine, "Mapping Antarctic and Arctic Women: An Exploration of Polar Women's Experiences and Contributions through Place Names," *Polar Record* 58 (2022): e35. <u>https://doi.org/10.1017/S003224742100070X</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Jade Payne, "This Antarctic Glacier is Gone, But It's a Good Thing," GlacierHub, September 25, 2018, accessed January 5, 2025, <u>https://glacierhub.org/2018/09/25/this-antarctic-glacier-is-gone-but-its-a-good-thing/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Geographical Names Board of Canada, *Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming, 2011* (Ottawa: Natural Resources Canada, Geographical Names Board of Canada, 2012), 8.

although places in Canada cannot be named after living people.<sup>20</sup> The decision date for the name is recorded as 1961. The name is generic, perhaps meant only to celebrate birth. Baby Glacier has not proved to be distinctive with glaciers in Alaska, Montana, and Wyoming also bearing this name.

#### Conclusion

The use of GIS has revitalized the field of toponymy and made it easier to visualize changes over time and space, as well as incorporate other kinds of data. Longitudinal studies have revealed that name change fatigue gradually sets in after political change, and there is also much focus in the literature on street names. However, the financial cost to rename major thoroughfares in Canada — those most likely to have commemorative names — can be prohibitive due to the need to replace or repair Canadian city infrastructure now nearing the end of its life span. Perhaps it is worthwhile to prioritize squares, statues, and schools forming the city-text in continuing efforts to reflect new shared values. Those of us working in map libraries and archives can work towards documenting the history of place names as part of renaming efforts. Certainly, it's important to preserve maps bearing former names as we enter a new era of commemorative renaming.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Peter Adams, "Fritz Müller's Legacy on Axel Heiberg Island, Nunavut, Canada," *Annals of Glaciology* 31 (2000): 3. <u>https://doi.org/10.3189/172756400781819798</u>

<sup>21</sup> U.S. President. Executive Order. "Executive Order of January 20, 2025, Restoring Names that Honor American Greatness." <u>https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-names-that-honor-american-greatness/</u>

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#### MAPCART

**Feature Article** 

Authors: Saman Goudarzi and Bronwen Glover Illustrated by Kelly Penfold McMaster University

Keywords: Flat sheet maps, Map transportation, Map cart, Map truck, Preservation

#### Abstract

This manual addresses the challenges associated with the physical handling of flat sheet maps, advocating for the use of concave supports during their transportation. It provides an alternative to commercially procured map carts by offering step-by-step instructions and illustrations for constructing a map cart in-house.



by Saman Goudarzi and Bronwen Glover Illustrated by Kelly Penfold



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Andrew, Paige G. "A case for moving maps with care: A review of map trucks." *WAML Information Bulletin* 28, (1996): 15 23.

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Moving many maps: Stacking numerous flat sheet maps on top of each other is not recommended. Stacks like these are not stable, so there's an increased risk of the maps toppling over or slipping.



Instead, maps should be stacked on top of one another in a concave support. This way, their weight is still physically supported, and the risk of toppling is minimized.

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How to achieve this: Go buy one! There are a small number of vendors that will take commissions for such carts. This can be a good option if you're on a tight deadline and have the money to spend.



# 3

Alternatively, you can do what we did and build one. This can be a great option if you've got more time than money.



All you need is some unbleached and undyed fabric so you can make a hammock for your maps, and a cart with arms that you can attach your hammock to.

Unbleached, undyed cotton is ideal as it ensures nothing will affect your maps. You can purchase such fabric at most fabric stores. You can purchase a cart or truck from a hardware supplier. When selecting a cart, you should consider the following factors:



1. The cart's size:

- will it fit in your storage space?
- will it fit in your elevators?
- can it fit through doors?
- is it large enough to support your maps?

2. The cart's price

3. How easy is it to procure

We ended up buying an adjustable panel truck for \$800 CAD from Global Industrial.

We chose this cart as its arms are adjustable, allowing us to configure the cart based on our needs. Additionally, the wheels can also be switched out if needed.



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#### The data is falling!

**GIS Trends** 

Author: Martin Chandler, Cape Breton University

Keywords: Data, preservation, United States, politics

#### Review

At the risk of typecasting myself, this GIS Trends column offers another angle on data preservation (see my "<u>Here Today, Here Tomorrow</u>..." piece from the Summer 2024 issue, linked in the references section below). While last time we discussed the loss of research outputs and the data hosted therein with the retirement of Esri's "Classic Story Maps", today we discuss the loss of more "stable" data sources, namely government sources. As we've seen, even something as simple as the name of a place (see Treisman, 2025 on the Gulf of Mexico) can be changed, though even that can lead to a question of changed for who (see Thiessen, 2025 on Denali).

GIS work is conducted by collecting, overlaying, and the interaction between multiple sources of trustworthy and/or authoritative data. Much of this data is produced by governments as part of their work that plays out within the tension of power in society. Government manages the tools and information that allow freedoms within society, be that freedom of life, liberty, and security of person; freedom of learning about and engaging with the structures that maintain our way of life; or the freedom to reject or resist the imposition of ideals contrary to the freedoms to which we have a right. Within that broad and nebulous point of discussion, it is necessary that we can trust a government to act in good faith and provide the information needed to support our knowledge. Information restrictions, like our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, evince the tensions involved in this, and we accept the need for such restrictions while engaging with the question of where the

line of restriction ought to lie – a prime example being the Globe and Mail's Secret Canada reporting and database of Freedom of Information requests.

Recent geopolitical events have brought many changes, concerns, and problems to the fore in our ability to engage with governments, be they internal or international. Our colleagues in the United States, faced with conflicts between governing members and their bureaucracies, have engaged in various data preservation and rescue efforts, capturing data and housing it in institutions external to those now under threat – see the SDOH & Place Project {Healthy Regions & Policies (HeRoP) Lab. (n.d.B)}. Geospatial and other data under threat have been stored in various locations, including institutional repositories and server spaces. Access being maintained relied, and relies, on the ability to find, collect, and organize the information before it disappears (which implies some foreknowledge that something might disappear), as well as the courage to present information that people with agendas and money to influence those agendas desire to threaten. Ultimately, strength lies not in suppressing information but in making it available, even if it may create a problem for those making it so.

As noted, these issues are currently happening in the United States, but similar things can occur in Canada. With the spread of political tactics through groups such as the International Democracy Union – an ironic name indeed – and the movement toward more autocratic rule, the availability and preservation of data is no longer solely under the basic threat of destruction due to supersession or through standard rot of electronic ephemerality, but also through the concerted efforts to undermine the ability of the populace to learn about, and potentially challenge, the powers above. In short, we are losing power over data availability, and without concerted effort preservation is less and less of a guarantee.

So, where does this leave us? Well, now is a good time to review modes and methods of preserving data and to begin the process, not just relying on services such as the Internet Archive (under regular threat) but through other modes of preservation. And dispersing that preservation across multiple modes, as day by day there seems to be more of a threat not just to that being preserved, but to those who do the preserving. Perhaps that is hyperbole, and I am merely Chicken Little shouting about a falling sky; I'm sure our friend the fox will invite us to join them for a bit of reason.

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#### ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

#### BULLETIN

#### **Trading Card Project: Historical Hamilton Transit Cars**

Student Voices

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**Keywords:** Public transportation, Trains, Transit History, Hamilton, Industrialization, Instrumental Distribution

#### Abstract

Hamilton Street Railway, the city of Hamilton, Ontario's public transportation system, has a long history. The system was first run by horse-drawn cars, but was electrified in 1892 — around the same time that innovation surrounding electricity transmission came to Hamilton. It consisted of various routes around the city, including the "Belt Line," which connected the east and west ends of the city. The system, along with four interurban lines that went to Burlington, Beamsville, Dundas, and Brantford, were eventually purchased by the utility company, Dominion Power and Transmission. The street railway lasted until 1951, when it was no longer financially responsible to maintain. The author turned images of street cars that were used by Dominion Power and Transmission into trading cards that can be printed, cut out, shared, and traded, with the hope that they will spark excitement for public transportation! The cards can be used as a tool to learn about the history of public transportation in Hamilton, and invite investigation into its future.

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#### Background

In October of 2023, some old street railway tracks were paradoxically uncovered on Sherman Ave in Hamilton, Ontario while watermain construction in the area was underway. The relocation and upsizing of these watermains were being undertaken in preparation for the City of Hamilton's new and improved Light-Rail Transit project — a modem iteration of a street railway (VanDongen, 2023). These old tracks belong to the by-gone Sherman Ave portion of the "Belt Line1", an old Hamilton Street Railway route, which is denoted in red on the map below. The "Belt Line" and five other lines across the City with some variation over time (denoted in black) made up the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR). This forgotten rail network carried Hamiltonians across the City and even up the Escarpment between 1874 and 1951.



Out of all the HSR routes, the Belt Line was the last to go. It began on James St, turned right onto Barton Ave, and travelled south along Kenilworth Ave to Main St E, where it turned right again to make its journey westward across the City by connecting to King St E via Sherman Ave (Mills, 1971). When this service was discontinued in 1951, some felt as though it was a long time coming. Other cities across Canada were doing away with their Belt lines, and Hamilton's rickety street railway was not bringing in enough profit to justify the service (Upper Canadian Railway Society Newsletter, 1951). HSR had actually been on the fiscal decline ever since the electrification of its railway in 1892, when it transitioned from horse-drawn cars to electric-powered cars. Electric railways were not as profitable as horse-drawn cars, and the system was fighting to stay above water for many years before busses and trollies progressively replaced streetcar service.

A number of larger companies and a consortium of individuals with controlling shares of HSR attempted to keep the railway afloat, but the final owners before the City (the governing bodies of Canada Coach Lines) had no interest in maintaining the cash-draining railway operations of HSR, and in 1951, the last train (no. 529) ran on the Belt Line for the last time. HSR no. 529 was scrapped the following year, and what remained of the street rails that were not removed were buried under asphalt until their discovery in 2023, more than seventy years later (Mills, 1971).

The history of Hamilton's old street railway is not only indicative of the needs of what was, at the time, a booming population in an industry-forward city; it also points to the major technological innovation that was occurring in the region. The Cataract, an electricity company from Hamilton, Ontario, was the first in Canada to implement Nikola Tesla's alternating current electricity transmission system, allowing the company to transmit electricity from DeCew Falls in Thorold to Hamilton at twice the voltage of previous systems (Mills, 1971). It was greatly due to this 1898 innovation and the cheap electricity it provided that Hamilton earned its name as the "Electric City"! The electricity provided by the Cataract powered Hamilton's street railway system (HSR) and four interurban railway lines, stretching to the neighbouring municipalities of Burlington, Dundas, Brantford, and Beamsville.

The Cataract was integrated into a local utility company, Hamilton Electric Light & Power, under the new name, Dominion Power and Transmission (D. P. & T.). D. P. & T. successively purchased each interurban line, HSR, and the terminal station company. The terminal station was located on Catherine Street and served as storage for train cars and an office space. D. P. & T. eventually became a public transportation conglomerate in the Hamilton area (Mills, 1971).

This history and more is synopsized in John M. Mills' "Cataract Traction"— the second volume in a series published in 1971 by the Upper Canadian Railway Society and the Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association. Throughout the book, pictures of some of the train cars used on the street railway and the interurban lines are included. These pictures are sourced from private collections, HSR, the Dundas Historical Society, and Ontario Hydro. D. P. & T.'s fleet is also numbered and listed in the back of the book in the "Roster."

When looking through pictures of the train cars and reading their individual stories, it is clear that each car had its own identity. Some began and ended their lives employed in Hamilton, but others have more complex pasts, as they were purchased second-hand from major cities across the USA. These cars were modified and rebuilt according to needs, changing laws<sup>2</sup>, or, in a few unlucky cases, after a car barn fire in Beamsville in 1919. These events are only a small part of the rich history of public transportation in Hamilton and the train cars that carried Hamiltonians across the city. The author decided to create a set of trading cards to provide an interactive element to this history that emphasizes the individuality of each train car, like baseball cards do for their players.

#### The Trading Cards

The author used the historical images that appear in Cataract Traction to build a deck of trading cards that give specs and a short description of each car in the D. P. & T. roster. The cards list the car's manufacturer, the year it was built, its dimensions, and the type of controls, motor, and trucks it had. When the information was available, the author also added details on when and where the picture was taken and what year the car was scrapped. Some train cars had multiple

images, and therefore have multiple cards (eg. car no. 606). While the specs in these instances remain the same, the information about where and when the picture was taken differs, adding another layer of rarity to some cards.

All of the cars pictured belonged to D. P. & T. at some point. They are classified into car types (passenger, freight, plough, sweeper, combine, bonder, etc), although for some, the most prominent identifier was their destination. For example, some cars are called 'City' cars. These stayed within Hamilton. 'Interurban' cars travelled on the four interurban lines. The author used either the car type or its destination as the car's name on the cards, following whichever term Mills used in the roster of the cars provided at the back of the book. This name can be found to the right of the car's number on the card. Some other terms that appear are DT and ST- meaning Double Truck and Single Truck respectively. The term 'truck' refers to the structure that attaches the wheels to the car. This term and others used on the cards can be found in the glossary.

In addition to the 67 car cards, the deck also includes five images of the James and Wentworth Street incline railways (discontinued in 1941), and one special card featuring the historic Catherine Street Terminal Station. The reader might notice that the back of the cards also hold significance. An illustration of the City of Hamilton from 1876 can be found on the back of each sheet of cards, creating a puzzle that can be assembled when one has collected the right cards! Each set requires eighteen cards to finish the puzzle. The illustration depicts the city when HSR was still run by horse-drawn cars, which can be seen if you look closely. The original HSR car and horse barn, constructed in 1874, and the "new" station (1876) only a few blocks down can be seen on Stuart Street. What is interesting about this map is that it depicts the rails approaching. but not meeting, the 1876 station. This is because there is a hill on this street, and horses were not able to carry passengers all the way up (Luton, 2018). This illustration is a part of the Lloyd Reeds Map Collection's Digital Archive (Brosius, 1876). Maps such as these, meticulously preserved and digitized, can give readers an understanding of and appreciation for the geography of their City and how it has changed. Map collections, specifically those that carry historic maps, can provide patrons the opportunity to get to know their environment and the histories that surround them. The illustration provides an index to buildings, churches, businesses, hotels, schools, and more. It shows us what public transportation looked like when it was first starting out in Hamilton, and helps readers appreciate the changes it has gone through.

The author notes that there is some uncertainty about the history of these cars. Mills did an excellent job explaining multiple re-numbering schemes of the fleet, changes in the ownership of each line between various companies, changes in the names of the routes, corporate reorganization, abandoned projects, and more. Despite this, this history is still slightly confusing, especially when Mills' accounts contradict others', or when key information about a car is missing. There is also no unit for the weight of the cars. Because of this, the trading cards are not meant to be exactly historically accurate, nor are they meant to be a reference for any further work.

When searching for additional data outside of Cataract Traction, the author also used the TrainWeb forum, Hamilton Transit History (most of which consolidated the information already found in Cataract Traction). This web page is exclusively published and operated by Tom Luton, a local historian. It is thanks to the work of John M. Mills, Tom Luton, and many others that this project is possible and that the memory of this railway system can be retained — important especially now, as the City is moving into a new era of transportation with the Light-Rail Transit project. It is the author's hope that Hamiltonians will use these cards to learn about the history here and perhaps will prompt reflection on and investigation into the future of public transportation in our city.

#### How to Use the Trading Cards

These trading cards can be printed, cut out, shared, and compared. For best results, print doublesided. The author hopes that readers will use these cards to learn about trains and transit history in Hamilton, trade with their friends, and build the puzzles to reveal the completed illustration! These cards can be used to spark excitement about public transportation and its rich history, both in Hamilton and across Canada.

According to James Wertsch, instrumental distribution is one way that memory is conveyed across a group. This involves the work of tools (written records, archives, memorabilia, etc) to evoke memory from a group (Wertsch, 2002). One example of a tool of instrumental distribution is the City's 2024 HSR 150 exhibit at its Visitor Experience Centre. The exhibit shows information about HSR's past through images, props, and interactive elements— allowing visitors to learn about HSR's history in a way that invokes curiosity and appreciation for the system and the hard work that made it possible.

Through tools such as trading cards, monuments, and the City of Hamilton's HSR 150 exhibit, citizens can learn about what public transportation was, who it has been for, and how it has transformed to meet the needs of our population over time in order to understand why it is important to have a well funded and well planned public transportation system. Trading cards with historic train cars can show Hamiltonians that our transit system is evolving and growing, as are our transportation needs. To be able to see the bigger picture of our transit system, we need to look into the past to see where we have been. As we move into a new era of public transportation in Hamilton with the Metrolinx LRT, we have the unique opportunity to investigate our past to contextualize our future.

#### Glossary

#### Types of Cars\* (in order of appearance)

\*Some of the train cars can be classified by multiple terms. For example, we can assume that passenger trains were either open or closed, however, "closed" is listed as a type of car. I followed what the original roster from Cataract Traction named each car.

Rotary Plow	A rotary plow is a snow clearing device where the rotary engine drives a wheel attached to the front of the train car, blowing snow off of the tracks (Ingenium, 2015).
Sweeper	These were motors with a round brush at the front and back of the car that was rotated by the motor (Stahl, 2024).
Passenger	A train car which carries passengers (Wikipedia, 2024)
Line Car	"Line Car" is a colloquial term for a train car that can be used for freight by multiple companies.

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Open	Open train cars have no walls, and are boarded through the sides, where the conductor would walk along the edges to collect fares. Because of the risk of injury, they were outlawed in Ontario in 1915 (Luton, 2015).
Closed	Closed street cars have all walls and are only boarded through the door (Luton, 2015).
Combine	A combine is both a passenger and freight car (Wikipedia, 2024).
Bonder	Rail bonders are construction cars that are used to join sections of rail (Lionel, 2015)
Dump Motor	This is a type of car which can dump materials via an air valve (Trains, 2002).
Work Motor	This is a type of car that is designed to maintain and repair the tracks (CSX, 2024).
Interurban	These trains travelled between cities.
Suburban	These trains travelled within the city, meant to bring people from suburbs of Hamilton to the central city.
Freight	Freight cars carry goods from place to place.
City	City cars are named for their routes. Cars with the name "City" predominantly ran throughout Hamilton.
Plow	Much like a sweeper, a plow pushes snow off of the tracks.

#### Terms that appear on the cards

DT	Double Truck
ST	Single Truck
SE	Single Engine
DE	Double Engine
Built	This could be the company who constructed it or the city in which it was constructed, and the year it was built.
Truck	This is the structure on the bottom of a train car that attaches the axels to the car.

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	Control type	This refers to the type of system used to control the train car.			
	Motor	This refers to the type of motor that the train car had.			
Сотр	Companies and Other Acronyms				
	D.P. & T.	Dominion Power and Transmission Co.			
	H & D	Hamilton & Dundas			
	H. G. & B.	Hamilton, Grimsby & Beamsville			
	H. R. E. R.	Hamilton Radial Electric Railway			
	B. & H. E. R.	Brantford and Hamilton Electric Railway			
	HSR	Hamilton Street Railway			
	LRT	Light Rail Transit is a type of transportation system that runs on a separated lane on city roads, powered by light rail vehicles similar to street train cars (Metrolinx, 2022).			
	GRT	Grand Trunk Railway			
	CCL	Canadian Coach Lines			
	GTTA	Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, currently known as Metrolinx			
Other	terminology				
	Integrated	The process of one company acquiring another and merging their operations.			
	City	When capitalised, the City refers to the governing bodies of Hamilton, eg, City council and Mayor.			
	Province	When capitalised, the Province refers to the governing bodies of Ontario, eg. the Ministry of Transportation and the Premier			
	Ontario Hydro	The publicly owned electricity utility in the Province of Ontario. Previously named the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.			

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Terminal A terminal is the central location at which buses or other automobiles/trains may park and load. Currently, Hamilton's primary bus terminal is the Frank A. Cooke/ McNab Street Terminal Station.
Franchise A franchise is a corporate entity that distributes its symbology and trademark amongst private companies who pay a fee to belong to such an entity.

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Dime 55'5"x8'10.5"x12'11" 57500 kg 62 seats Control type K-35 crew. WH101B Motors Truck type Baldwin

Scrapped in 1933. Pictured here on King St. in Beamville on the last operating day, June 30, 1931 with local employees and



Baldwin

Truck type

### courtesy of O P Maw INTERURBAN

seldom

Jewett 1907 This car was 57'10"x9'1" photographed. Here it is sitting 73080 kg in the terminal yard in 1927. Scrapped 1932. 66 seats HL WH73E Peckham



the W.C. Reiley Collecti TERURBAN Burnt in 1919 in the Beamsville Built Preston 1913 55'5"x8'10.5"x12'11" Car Barn fire. Photographed Dimensions 57500 kg here at Lawrence Road. 62 seats Control type K-35 Motors WH101B Truck type Baldwin Interurban Built Jewett 1907 This car was previously 57'10"x9'1" employed by the city of Dimensions 73080 kg Columbus. Pictured here on the 66 seats old Canal Swing bridge HL sometime before 1921. Control type WH73E Motors Truck type Peckham





Truck type

#### PLOW Russell 1907 This car was purchased second hand in 1912. Here, it is pictured 49000 kg funtioning as a snow plow in 1920. Scrapped in 1932. A clip of this

K-35 train can be found on the National WH191B Film Board of Canada's website, Arch-Bar listed as Shot ID 27708.

Control type Motors Truck type

Built

Dimens







INCLINE



TTT



## CATHERINE STREET TERMINAL STATION

This terminal station was opened for railway use in 1907. It was four stories tall and had a theatre attached to it on the rear. This building charged each interurban line twenty five cents per car for use of the terminal. Buses began using the terminal in 1927, and after the railways were abandoned, this was its only use until 1955. The building was torn down in 1959.







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#### ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

#### **BULLETIN**

#### **Conference/ Conférence**

**ACMLA NEWS** 

CARTO 2025 At the Confluence À la confluence

At the Confluence: Maps and spatial technologies at the convergence of disciplines, methodologies, and practice

#### June 11-13 | Queen's University | Kingston, ON

The 58th annual conference of the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives in Kingston, Ontario from June 11-13, 2025. Pre-conference workshops will take place June 10.

The evolution of spatial technologies and digital cartography has revolutionized the way maps are created and used. Researchers across disciplines can find common ground in questions about the impact of space and place in environmental, cultural, economic and societal factors. The growing accessibility of GIS and digital cartography are catalysts for new and innovative use cases and user groups that are empowered to cross disciplinary boundaries and improve approaches to qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research.

Map librarians, archivists, and library specialists play a crucial role in this research by providing essential resources and expertise for spatial analysis, cartography, and visualization. Map libraries and archives house extensive collections of historical and contemporary maps, atlases, and geospatial data, serving as invaluable repositories for researchers across disciplines. As our user groups grow and diversify at this confluence of discipline and practice, how are we responding and adapting to meet their needs?

The Carto 2025 conference committee invites researchers, students, cartographers, librarians, library staff, archivists, specialists, and others to submit proposals for in-person presentations and lightning talks that explore this theme and related topics.

# À la confluence: Les cartes et les technologies spatiales à la convergence des disciplines, des méthodologies et des pratiques

#### 11-13 juin | Queen's University | Kingston, ON

L'Association des cartothèques et archives cartographiques du Canada (ACACC) vous souhaite la bienvenue au Carto 2025 de l'Université Queen's à Kingston pour sa 58e conférence annuelle! Cet événement se déroulera en personne avec des ateliers pré-conférence le 10 juin et la conférence du 11 au 13 juin.

L'èvolution des technologies spatiales et de la cartographie numérique a révolutionné la façon dont les cartes sont crées et utilisées. Les chercheurs de toutes les disciplines peuvent trouver des points communs dans les questions relatives à l'impact de l'espace et du lieu sur les facteurs environnementaux, culturels, économiques et sociétaux. L'accessibilité croissante des SIG et de la cartographie numérique est un catalyseur pour des cas d'utilisation innovants et des groups d'utilisateurs qui sont en mesure de dépasser les frontières disciplinaires et d'améliorer les approches de la recherge qualitative, quantitative et des méthodes mixtes.

Les cartothéacires, les archivistes et les spécialistes des bibliothèques jouent un rôle crucial dans cette recherhe en fournissant des ressources et des expertises essentielles pour l'analyse spatiale, la cartographie et la visualisation. Les cartothèques et les archives abritent de vastes collections de cartes historiques et contemporaines, d'atlas et de données géospatiales, qui constituent des dépôts indispensables pour les chercheurs de toutes les disciplines. Alors que nos groupes d'utilisateurs se développent et se diversifient à ce confluent de la discipline et de la pratique, comment répondons-nous et nous adaptons-nous pour répondre à leurs besoins?

Le comité de la conférence Carto 2025 invite les chercheurs, les étudiants, les cartographes, les bibliothécaires, le personnel des bibliothèques, les archivistes, les spécialistes et autres à soumettre des propositions pour des présentations en personne et des conférences éclair qui explorent ce thème et d'autres sujets connexes.