

Looking for an Old Aerial Photograph

Santa Cruz, Calif., 1906—Library of Congress



Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Earth Science
Information Center (ESIC)



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 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 Earth Science Information Centers (ESIC) to help customers find maps, aerial photographs, satellite images, and other cartographic products. ESIC offices offer 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 ESIC offices 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.

ESIC offices work in conjunction with the Earth Resources Observation Systems (EROS) Data Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The ESIC offices 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 Cartographic and Architectural Branch of 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. This office also maintains collections of American military photographs over the United States from the 1940's through 1960's and some 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 Cartographic and Architectural Branch and the Still Picture Branch maintain Search Rooms 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
Washington, D.C. 20408
(202) 523-3236 (SPB)
(703) 756-6700 (CAB)

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 will perform

a limited number of searches (less than 10) for a single mail inquiry, but visitors to Washington are welcome to examine their research files.

The Library of Congress address is:

Prints and Photographs Division
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540
(202) 707-6394

U.S. Geological Survey

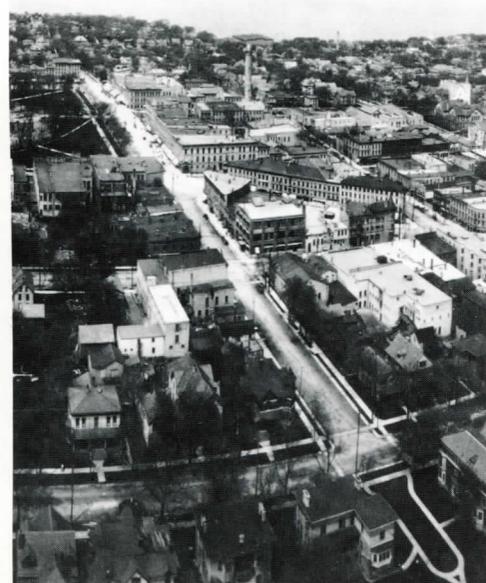
A variety of aerial mapping photographs taken since the 1940's can be ordered through ESIC offices and the EROS Data Center. For further information, please write or call ESIC or the EROS Data Center.



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



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



Madison, Wis., 1908—Library of Congress

EROS Data Center
Sioux Falls, SD 57198
(605) 594-6151

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507 National Center
Reston, VA 22092
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