

Introduction

Strange lands, wild creatures, and the promise of adventure have beguiled map lovers for many centuries. Maps are spectacular pictorial evidence of the exploration and curiosity of artists, navigators, explorers, and pirates throughout history.

Most of us consider maps to be pretty serious and truthful business, more science than art. In school when the teacher pulled out a map, we believed the information on it was pure history and fact. The truth is, many historical maps are fiction posing as fact, and our artful rather than scientific. Map makers wanted to tell stories of adventure and discovery, and those stories were just as stories are meant to be: often tall tales that hardly resemble the absolute truth. Sometimes they made mistakes on Maps by accident other times the maps they made were purposefully false: they wanted to lead the competition in the opposite direction, or convince someone of something for selfish gain.

Those of us who want to be called map makers come from a long line of people who were inventive, creative, skill – liars, thieves, and pirates. Even now, they leave us to interpret stories filled with wonder and beauty. They left us the tradition of making our own stories by way of maps. Making maps is a joy, both because Maps are beautiful to look at and because they lead us through our histories and dreams in a way that no other art form really can.



Map Basics

Welcome to the world of handcrafted maps! In this brochure you will learn about the tools of the trade based on age old tradition combined with new methods.

Historical map makers did more than record land and sea. They use Maps to fool, educate, steer, advertise, remember, romanticize, influence, and warn. To add great appeal to their maps, they added elaborate cartouches, neatlines, legends, and flora and fauna. Maps are often exquisite to look at because of these visual elements.

To learn more, visit www.loc.gov/maps



Map Basics

Orient Yourself

The orientation of a map is the direction the map points compared to the Compass or reality. This gives you the relative location of the map to area and helps you locate where you are.

It is now common for a map to be oriented to the north, but it was not always that way. Before "magnetic north" was discovered, maps were oriented in nearly every direction. Religious maps were oriented toward the east, where Paradise was believed to be where the sun rose. Chinese maps were oriented towards the south because this is where the sun reaches its highest point in the sky during the summer solstice. This ancient cosmological view is what translates to feng shui in modern times. Polar maps are necessarily oriented toward the center of the map with all cardinal directions equidistant from the pole.

In other words, the orientation is up to the maker of the map, and the tradition is to map one S. at the top or center of the map.

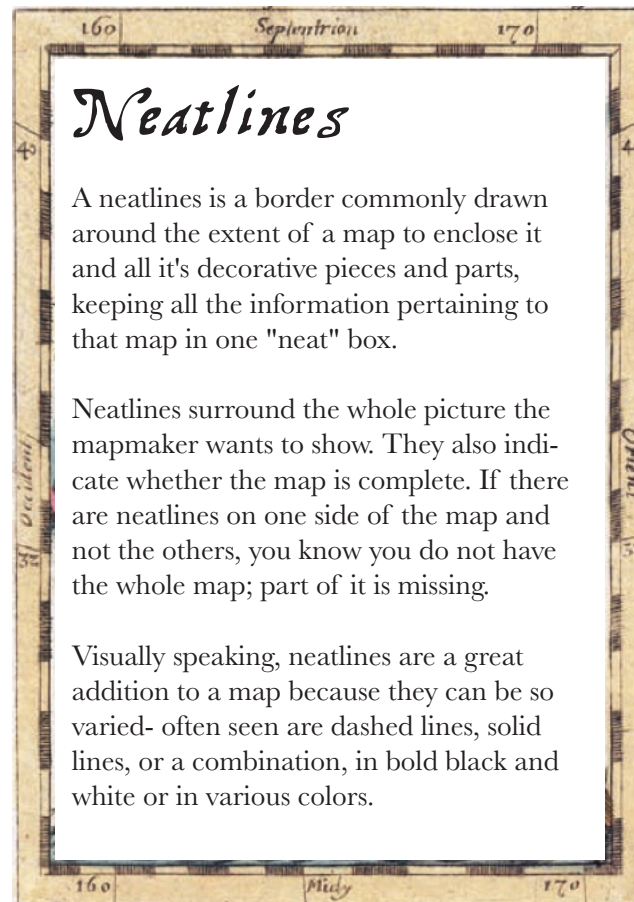
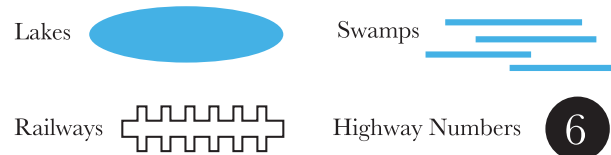


Compass Rose

The compass rose is both beautiful and functional, indicating the four cardinal directions: North, south, east, and west, and sometimes there intermediaries. It is based on the degrees of a circle. The compass rose is a sensual to a map holder to orient the land on the map. Original roses on maps were called wind roses, and they indicated the 32 directions of the prevailing winds. When magnetic north was discovered, the rose became a compass rose and began to consistently point to the north on maps.

Legends

Map legends are also known as keys and contains symbols used to depict items on the map. These can include landforms, human made objects like buildings, or resources like minerals. A legend explains the pictorial language of the map, known as its symbology. Icons can be representational or symbolic. Legends can be contained within a cartouche or placed anywhere on the map.



Neatlines

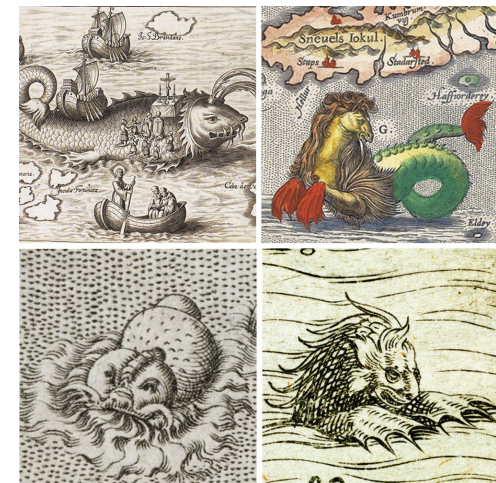
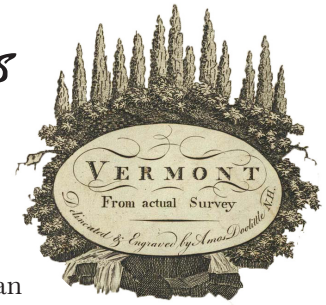
A neatlines is a border commonly drawn around the extent of a map to enclose it and all its decorative pieces and parts, keeping all the information pertaining to that map in one "neat" box.

Neatlines surround the whole picture the mapmaker wants to show. They also indicate whether the map is complete. If there are neatlines on one side of the map and not the others, you know you do not have the whole map; part of it is missing.

Visually speaking, neatlines are a great addition to a map because they can be so varied- often seen are dashed lines, solid lines, or a combination, in bold black and white or in various colors.

Cartouches

Cartouches are decorative elements that frame map of titles and other information about the map. They can add an artistic narrative to the Maps they describe. Cartouches have been around for many centuries, but they became popular in the beginning of the 16th century. Cartouches can be made using many techniques including drawings, rubberstamping, stenciling, and decorative tape.



Sea Monsters

Sea monsters appeared on Maps for hundreds of years, and not even experts know exactly why. were those sailors so sea-weary they imagined whales to have beards or manatees to appear as glamorous mermaids? What ever the reason, fantastical sea creatures appeared in huge numbers on Maps from the 10th through the 17th centuries. They come winged, fanged, flipped, snakelike, and humanoid. They can resemble snakes, dogs, cats, clerics, devils, women, and horses.