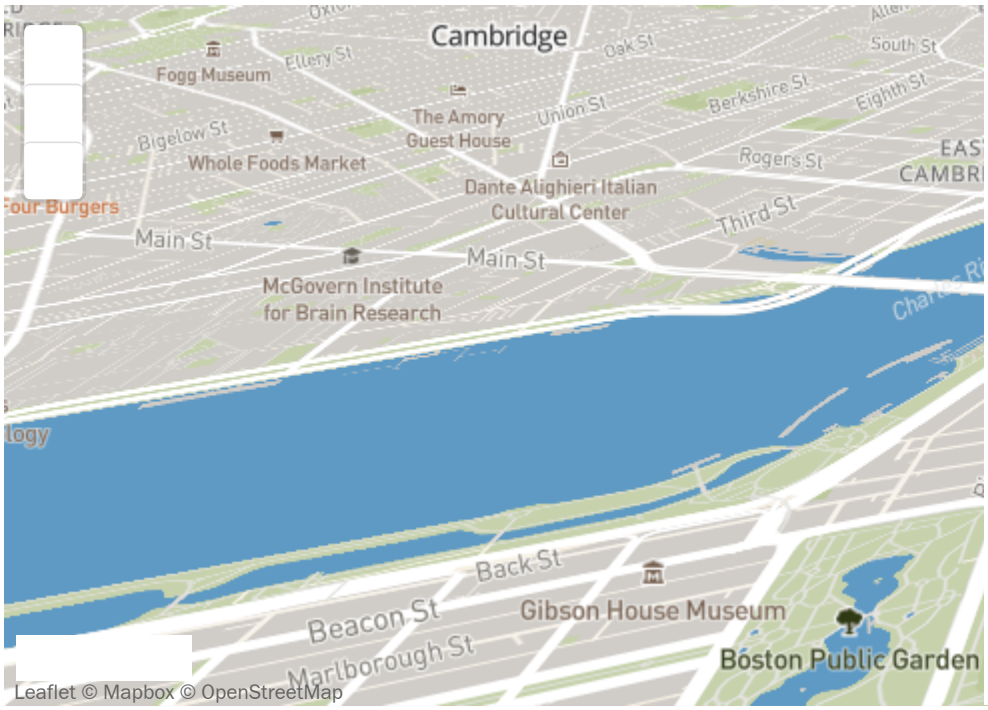

Boston

Now & Then

Use the slider below to reveal the Boston area in 1893. The historical topographic mapping collection lets users explore how physical and cultural features change over time. The maps are particularly useful to scientists, historians, genealogists and others researching a specific geographic area. A series of maps of the same area published over a period of time can show how an area looked before development and provide a detailed view of changes over time.

Accessing USGS Topographic Maps Has Never Been Easier

TopoView highlights one of the USGS's most important and useful products, the **topographic map**. In 1879, the USGS began to map the Nation's topography. This mapping was done at different levels of detail, to support various land use and other purposes. As the years passed, the USGS produced new map versions of each area. TopoView shows the many and varied topographic maps of each of these areas through history. This can be particularly useful for historical purposes, such as finding the names of natural and cultural features that have changed over time.

This interface was created by the **National Geologic Map Database project** (NGMDB), in support of topographic mapping program managed by the **National Geospatial Program** (NGP). Geologic mapping and topographic mapping at the USGS have a long tradition together (see **1888 report**). The NGMDB project is proud to assist the NGP in bringing these maps to the Web.

Packed With New Features And Downloadable File Formats

View and Download maps now

Learn more about the **NGMDB** project

Want to see more? Check out our **video demo**

The maps shown through topoView are from the USGS's **US Topo series** and earlier **Historical Topographic Map Collection** (HTMC). The term "US Topo" refers specifically to quadrangle topographic maps published in 2009 and later. These maps are modeled on the familiar 7.5-minute quadrangle maps of the period 1947-1992, but are mass-produced from national GIS databases on a repeating cycle. US Topo maps repackage geographic information system (GIS) data in traditional map form. This benefits non-specialist map users, as well as applications that need traditional maps.

See our **FAQ's** section for answers

The goal of the HTMC, which started in 2011, is to provide a digital repository of USGS 1:250,000 scale and larger (more detailed) maps printed between 1884 (the inception of the topographic mapping program), and 2006. Currently, there are more than 178,000 maps in the HTMC and the collection continues to grow. NGP is accurately cataloging and creating metadata to accompany high-resolution, georeferenced digital files of each of these printed maps.

At present, both the US Topo series and HTMC maps are offered as GeoPDFs through **The National Map** and the **USGS Store**. However, additional formats are now offered for evaluation and use through **topoView**. These include:

GeoTIFF – The GeoTIFF files are a compressed, 300 dpi TIFF image format, with embedded georeferencing information so that the map can be used directly in a Geographic Information System (GIS). The GeoTIFFs are generated at true scale, allowing users to plot the map at the intended map scale in cases where a hard copy is needed.

JPEG – The high-resolution JPEGs, or 'Browse JPEG' format are useful for getting a quick view of the map in order to find place names or simply explore the map area without the need for downloading a large file.

KMZ – The KMZ format is a compressed form of the KML format which is used for displaying the maps in Google Earth.

Metadata – GeoTIFF downloads for both HTMC and US Topo maps come bundled with an XML metadata file. To view the metadata file, simply open it in a text editor, web browser, or application that supports XML. An inventory of topographic maps for the HTMC and US Topo collections is refreshed nightly and can be used to keep private collections of map files current, write download scripts, and for other kinds of advanced data management. **Download an inventory of USGS HTMC and US Topo map products (CSV format)**.

Send Us Your Feedback

We're pleased to offer these formats to you, and invite you to explore the collection of USGS topographic maps. Help us make topoView more useful by sending us **comments and suggestions** on the site's usability and the addition of new downloadable formats.

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