The purpose of this section is to illustrate the changing appearance and aesthetics of printed maps over their five-hundred-year history. The maps were selected to provide a visual demonstration of how printing techniques, cartographic content, artistic designs, and color styles changed over time. No claim to completeness can be made—it would take far more room than we have here to fully illustrate the rich diversity of mapmaking. The maps were assembled in a diachronic sequence that illustrates the salient points of the visual evolution of printed maps.

The same forces that moved the art world in Renaissance Europe influenced the art of mapmaking. While art evolved from one movement to the next, mapmakers echoed the same aesthetics. At its artistic high, mapmakers filled their work with fine miniatures portraying life and customs in distant lands and allegories representing military prowess or peace and prosperity. As cartographers embraced the ideals of the Enlightenment they moved away from traditional decorative elements and developed a more functional style. Even while most maps maintained that utilitarian style in the 19th and 20th centuries, one can still detect the influences of the major art movements in many maps.

This section is not intended to chronicle the mapping of any specific region; others have already done that well. Instead they were assembled to illustrate different regions, mapmakers, and styles and purposely organized by date rather than geographic region. The date used in the description is when the map was drawn or first published. Most old maps were published more than once and some have incredibly long and complex publishing histories that span decades and were issued by a succession of publishers. When a map pictured is a later state the publication or circa date is noted in the caption. Additional illustrations of miniature versions, derivatives or different states are included for some entries.

Many map books emphasize rare cartographic milestones at the expense of the vast variety of highly collectible and available maps that fall into the “near map” category. That emphasis on “trophy maps” implicitly demeans many superb maps and tacitly suggests that they are less worthy of being collected. The aim here is to present a more egalitarian view of the wide world of map collecting.

Beginners are often intrigued when they realize they can actually afford a map that was printed at the same time Columbus was discovering America and Leonardo da Vinci was painting the Mona Lisa. At the other end of the spectrum are maps that are not even technically “antique” (over 100 years old), but nevertheless represent an important, interesting era and are sufficiently removed from 21st-century style and technology to be collectible.

The descriptions included here are intended to pull together the information presented in the previous chapters. In addition to providing information on the mapmaker and printing process, they explore each map’s purpose and put it in historical or cultural context. However, they are not intended to be a definitive analysis of the maps. Whenever possible the captions contain a reference indicating where you can find a detailed discussion of the map. These references, such as Burden (NA) 64, refer to the book (in this case Philip Burden’s The Mapping of North America) and the map number or page number. All the reference books used for this purpose are listed in Appendix A.

Join us, now, in this illustrated, guided tour through five centuries of mapmaking history. Savor the visual flavors and how they changed over time.
Libri Chronicarum, popularly known as the Nuremberg Chronicle, is one of the most magnificent 15th-century books. It contained two maps, a profusion of illustrations depicting principal cities, and other woodcuts illustrating the history of the world.

The map of the world is one of the great intellectual constructs linking the medieval world with that of the Age of Discovery. It is drawn on a Ptolemaic projection and enclosed in a wide border containing twelve windheads. There is no scale, latitude, or longitude. The map is centered on Jerusalem and is presented by the three sons of Noah, Japhet, Shem, and Ham, Christian icons that represent the post-diluvian state of the world. It shows the world known to Europeans just prior to Columbus’s voyage to the New World and Dao’s rounding of the Cape of Good Hope.

The panel of outlandish creatures arrayed vertically along the border and on the verso, illustrates the medieval concept of the inhabitants of the unknown parts of the world. These were drawn from classical texts, as well as early traveler’s tales. The letterpress above the map is sometimes identified as the title: in Latin, Secunda etas mundi, and in German Das ander alter der Werlt.

The stitch holes have been professionally repaired on the map illustrated here. The later color was done in the correct style for the period.

The other map included in the Nuremberg Chronicle is the first modern printed map of Europe. In contrast to Schedel’s world map, which portrays a purely Ptolemaic view, this map features the Scandinavian region first shown in the 1482 edition of Ptolemy. The map depicts Central and Northern Europe with Constantinopel (sic) in the far lower right and Ireland (Iberia) in the far upper left. Hieronymus Münter designed the map based, in part, on Germanus’s map of the northern regions and Nicolaus Cusanus’s manuscript map of Central Europe, circa 1460.

The later color was done in the correct style for the period.
Giacomo Gastaldi was one of the 16th century’s great mapmakers. His edition of La Geographia di Claudio Ptolemeo broke definitively with the Ptolemaic tradition. His maps clearly deviated from the classical pattern and may be considered an intellectual watershed in cartography. The atlas is considered to be the first to focus on the New World, as it contained a series of separate maps of various parts of the Americas based on current information. Many firsts can be claimed for this atlas. It is the first 16th century atlas to use the copperplate technique, the first atlas in the Italian language, and the first small-scale (pocket) atlas.

Gastaldi’s South America is the first printed map focused on the continent that can be collected. While appearing simple, it contains considerable information from early explorations. Many places are named along the coastlines, except in present-day Chile, which had yet to be explored by Europeans. Inca cities are shown in Peru. The Amazon River (Rio Maragagon) is incorrectly shown with its source in the south. The graceful and restrained style of Gastaldi marks a transition from the earlier, elemental woodcut maps. Typical of many Italian maps of the period is a wide border containing latitudes and longitudes, graphically engraved oceans, and the title in the top margin. Plates for Gastaldi’s atlas were not uniformly inked, so there is wide variation in the impressions even though there was only one edition.
Abraham Ortelius, a native of Antwerp, developed the first uniformly sized, systematic collection of maps bound into what would become known as an atlas. His Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (Theater of the World), first published in 1570, became an instant success and appeared in numerous editions until 1612. Ortelius conclusively broke away from the Ptolemaic influence by assembling maps from a diverse group of modern cartographers throughout Europe.

The maps were elegantly engraved in a strikingly different style than those of the Italian engravers. The Theatrum set the standard for future atlas production and was the most expensive book of its time.

The map illustrated at right is the first (of three) world maps that were included in Ortelius’s famous atlas. It is a simplified reduction of Mercator’s influential wall map of 1569 presented on an oval projection.

From surviving correspondence, it is known that Mercator encouraged Ortelius and provided him with information, particularly with coordinates of places in the Americas. The map shows North America as much too wide and South America with a bulging southwestern coastline. At the poles, a prominent Northwest Passage snakes its way along the southern coastlines of the four islands that make up the Arctic regions, and a huge Terra Australis Nondum Cognita (southern lands not yet known) makes up the imaginary southern continent. Frans Hogenberg engraved the map in a new, robust Mannerist style. The map is placed on a cloud background with the title in a strapwork banner at top that is balanced with a quotation from Cicero at bottom. This plate was used for the first sixteen editions of the Theatrum. A crack developed in the lower left corner between 1570 and 1579. This example, in original color, shows evidence of that crack with the repair that appeared in 1575. Ortelius’s map was copied widely, and many of its derivatives, both folio and smaller sizes, are less expensive.

Several miniature versions of the Theatrum, commonly known as the Epitome, were issued between 1577 and 1724. Miniature atlases proved to be very popular as the wealthy merchant class expanded throughout society. Philip Galle engraved the maps in the first versions of the Epitome. There were many editions in different languages, including a number of plagiarized Italian versions published in Brescia and Venice by Pietro Marchetti. Maps from these atlases are charming and are reasonably priced compared to the folio-size versions. Both examples illustrated here show the updated shape of South America that first appeared in 1587. They were both colored recently.
I t is widely considered that the
mapping of the heavens achieved its
pinnacle with the work of Andreas
Cellarius. His charts cover the Ptol-
emaic, Copernican, and Tychonic systems,
as well as numerous other cosmographical
plates and star maps. The charts of the solar
system are paradigms of lucidity. They de-
pict various models of celestial and plane-
tary motion with exquisite clarity, yet retain
extraordinary visual impact. Engravings of
the celestial constellations, with splendid
allegorical figures and Baroque ornamenta-
tion, are particularly magnificent.

Cellarius’s Harmonia Macrocosmica seu
Atlas Univerale et Novus . . . was published
by Johannes Jansson in 1660, 1661, and
1666 as a cosmographical supplement to his
Atlas Novus. Jansson’s heirs reissued it circa
1680. Early editions were colored by some of the
most talented illuminators in Amsterdam.
The colors were layered with gum arabic
and sometimes highlighted in gold leaf. The
original plates were sold in 1694 to Valk and
Schenk, who reprinted the plates in
1708. The price can vary greatly depending
on edition and quality of coloring. While
the constellation plates are in high demand
(and priced accordingly), the theoretical
diagrams are more affordable.

These popular plates have been repro-
duced countless times and are a particularly
attractive subject for the Italian photolithog-
raphers. Most of these reproductions are
easily identifiable by printing method, size,
and paper type.

The charts from Valk and Schenk’s edition bear their imprint (upper right
cartouche) and are colored in the style popular in the 18th century: sparingly
applied panel pigments with the major embellishments left uncolored. This
unnatural chart presents the constellations with Christian symbols instead
of the traditional figures from Greek mythology. It is based on the work of the
early 17th-century astronomer, Julius Schiller.
In the mid-18th century, the idea of a great inland sea in present-day Canada was entwined with the ongoing search for the elusive Northwest Passage. The French and English needed to find that passage in order to compete with the Spanish for the lucrative Asian trade. Both nations sent several exploring expeditions and, after discounting the Arctic route, began to concentrate on a navigable river and lake system through the North American continent. The Sea of the West was spawned from a combination of legends, missionary reports, and questionable tales such as those of Admiral de Fonte, Baron Lahontan and Moncahit-Apé. The sea appeared on a number of maps, particularly those of the French from about 1750 to 1790.

Jean Janvier’s map breathes life into the hopes and desires of explorers searching for a passage to the Pacific. It presents probably the largest expression of the Sea of the West along with the apocryphal passage of Admiral de Fonte, and a potential River of the West connecting Lake Superior with the sea. The map appeared in Jean Lattre’s Atlas Moderne ou Collection de Cartes sur Toutes les Parties du Globe Terrestre.

Lewis Evans’s map of the Middle British Colonies (1755) is one of the landmarks of American cartography. It was issued to encourage immigration into the Trans-Allegheny region and Ohio River Valley to counter French encroachments on what were called the "back settlements" on the western frontier. Evans’s map contributed enormously to the cartographic knowledge of the Ohio Valley and was filled with information and notations concerning the hunting grounds and ranges of the Indians. Due to the extreme care and accuracy with which it had been prepared, it was subsequently used as the standard authority for settling boundary disputes.

Evans’s map was also one of the most copied maps of the colonies in the latter part of the century. A series of unauthorized versions were made by a number of respected English mapmakers including Thomas Jefferys, Thomas Kitchin, Robert Sayer, Carington Bowles, and others. The only authorized reissue of Evans’s map was Thomas Pownall’s edition in 1776. Shown here is the third issue (first state) of Carrington Bowles’s pirated version. It was published by Bowles with his imprint below the cartouche - Printed for Carington Bowles at No. 69 St. Pauls Church Yard, London, Publish’d Jan:y 1, 1771. The original Evans’s version is very rare and fetched a six-figure price the last time it appeared on the market. The pirated versions offer collectors an opportunity to own a truly important piece of American history at a much more affordable price.
1845

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

This German map is a reduced version of Arrowsmith’s important map of theRepublic of Texas (1841) showing the extent of Texas’s claims to the region of the upper Rio Grande, including Santa Fe, Taos, and well into present-day Colorado. The detailed map shows many trails, rivers, towns, and forts. Thirty land districts are outlined and named in a table, and the northern panhandle is divided into twelve sections, with the erroneous notation (copied from Arrowsmith) that the land was well wooded and watered. The map was issued in Karl Sohr’s Hand-Atlas at a time of rising German interest in Texas spurring an influx of German immigration. A small inset depicts Galveston, the port where the majority of immigrants entered Texas.

John Arrowsmith’s map was one of the earliest maps to contain information from the General Land Office of Texas with the delineation of pioneer county development and land grants. It was filled with notations describing the country as valuable and rich, which were evidently designed to promote immigration. The map illustrated is the third state.

Maps depicting the Republic of Texas are among the most popular of old maps, with prices that reflect their desirability. The Arrowsmith map is both cartographically important and is printed in the English language, so it is pricey. The German derivative is an affordable alternative for interested collectors.

1848

A GREAT ADVANCE IN THEMATIC MAPS

Among the many important cartographic contributions attributed to Alexander von Humboldt is his influence on the development of thematic cartography. He pioneered comparative climatology mapping, improved geological mapping, and was the driving force behind the great Physical Atlas by Heinrich Berghaus and its English version, The Physical Atlas by Alexander K. Johnston. Berghaus’s atlas was a monumental achievement, but the maps employed inconsistent formats and techniques. It was Johnston’s Physical Atlas that brought together the diverse information in a unified manner, thus producing the first comprehensive thematic atlas.

This is a superb example of thematic mapping, with various colors and diagrams used to illustrate the distribution of plants throughout the world. The chart at top provides a graphic display of the type of indigenous vegetation in the major mountain regions of the world. At bottom is a map of the world with the distribution of plants depicted through the use of color.

The map was printed by the newly developed chromolithographic process, which made a huge impact on cartography in general and specifically the vivid portrayal of data on thematic maps.

Picture postcards first appeared in the 1870s, quickly gained popularity, and soon became a staple of tourism. It was not long before maps were among the illustrations on souvenir cards. Linen postcards, as they were called, were not printed on linen, but on card stock with a high rag content that was embossed with a pattern that resembled linen. This process, termed “C.T. Art-Colortone,” was developed by Curt Teich & Co. to produce a brighter image with new faster-drying inks. The process was used between 1931 and 1959. The cards illustrated here are linen postcards. Produced during the period considered the Golden Age of ocean liners, these cards features the Panama Canal, a premier destination for early cruise ships. Postcard maps are commonly found at postcard and ephemera fairs. The variety is staggering and they are inexpensive.

Advances in technology and increasingly inexpensive color printing brought pictorial cartography into the advertising realm. The genre was tailor-made for transportation companies such as Greyhound Bus Lines, which produced many colorful, fun maps in the 1930s and 1940s. The bus routes are delineated in bold lines with interconnecting routes in dotted lines. Delightful pictographs highlight attractions throughout the country accompanied by humorous text such as, “thar’s room in Texas for all of Yurrup and half of Africa, yes suh.” Race cars zoom past Indianapolis; a camel complains, “I can’t walk another mile” in the tobacco farms of North Carolina; oil gushers dot Texas and Oklahoma; a man counts his wives in Utah; and a wife bids her husband, “So long old dear! I’ll be using you!” in Nevada.

A good-natured map of the United States setting forth the services of The Greyhound Lines, anonymous, San Francisco, circa 1937, multiple color processes, 19.5 x 29.3 inches (49.5 x 74.4 cm). Courtesy of Old World Auctions.