

# Looking for an Old Aerial Photograph



San Francisco, California, May 5, 1906—Library of Congress

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 satellite images are commonplace.

The rate of acquiring aerial photographs and satellite images has increased rapidly in recent years. Views of the Earth obtained from aircraft or satellites 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.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) maintains the Earth Science Information Centers (ESIC's) to sell aerial photographs, remotely sensed images from satellites, a wide array of digital geographic and cartographic data, as well as the Bureau's well-known maps. Declassified photographs from early spy satellites were recently added to the



Plattsburgh, New York, 1940—U.S. Geological Survey, aerial mapping photograph

ESIC offerings of historical images. Using the Aerial Photography Summary Record System database, ESIC researchers can help customers find imagery in the collections of other Federal agencies and, in some cases, those of private companies that specialize in esoteric products.



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

## U.S. Geological Survey

At the EROS Data Center, near Sioux Falls, S. Dak., the USGS maintains the National Land Remote Sensing Data Archive, including, beside 49 million satellite images, some 8 million aerial photographs of the United States. Some of them date to the

1940's. More recent products are standardized under the National Aerial Photography Program in which the entire country has been photographed every five to seven years since 1980.

Products can be researched and ordered by contacting:

USGS EROS Data Center  
Customer services  
Sioux Falls, SD 57198

Phone: 605-594-6151  
E-mail: [custserv@usgs.gov](mailto:custserv@usgs.gov)

## National Archives and Records Administration

Most aerial mapping photographs of the United States taken for Federal agencies before 1941 have been assembled at the Cartographic and Architectural Branch (CAB) of the National Archives. These photographs date from the mid-1930's and cover approximately 80 percent of the land area of the conterminous 48 United States. The CAB also maintains a collection of American military photographs of the United States from the 1940's-1960's and some German military photographs of Eastern Europe and Russia flown during World War II.

The Still Picture Branch (SPB) of the National Archives has a large collection of photographs taken from the air. These date from the early 20th century to the present. Both the CAB and the SPB maintain search rooms where visitors can search the files for the photographs they want. For mail inquiries, be specific in describing area locations and time eras. Also, include your name, address, and daytime telephone number in each inquiry. The National Archives office will return a research report and a price list for prints. The SPB will also send electrostatic copies of appropriate photographs.

For information from the CAB and the SPB, contact:

National Archives and Records Administration  
Cartographic and Architectural Branch (NNSC)  
8601 Adelphi Rd.  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
301-837-3200

## Library of Congress

The Library of Congress maintains a large collection of historical photographs, some



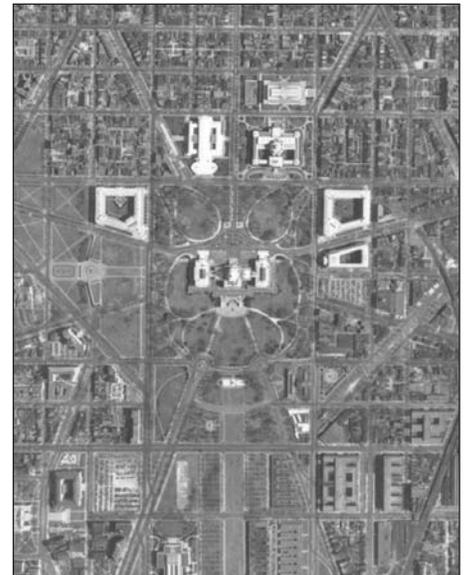
Lower Manhattan, New York, 1930's—National Archives, Still Picture Branch



Madison, Wisconsin, 1908—Library of Congress

of which are aerial photographs dating from 1900 to the 1940's. A few aerial photographs 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, D.C., are welcome to examine their research files. For more information contact:

Library of Congress  
Prints and Photographs Division  
James Madison Memorial Building  
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20540-4840  
202-707-6394



Washington, D.C., 1949—U.S. Geological Survey, aerial mapping photograph

## Information

For information on these and other USGS products and services, call 1-888-ASK-USGS, or visit the general interest publications Web site on mapping, geography, and related topics at [erg.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/pubslists/](http://erg.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/pubslists/).

For additional information, visit the [ask.usgs.gov](http://ask.usgs.gov) Web site or the USGS home page at [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov).