

LOCALITY ANALYSIS FOR CUBA

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Locality analysis plays an essential part in determining the objectives for family history research. It should be done as soon as a specific new place of origin or residence is identified, and, of course, must be completed before step two of the records analysis can be completed.

Locality Analysis involves two processes. The first is to locate the exact place or places from which one's ancestors came and determine the various jurisdictions to which that place belonged. (This is, in effect, an answer to one of the initial questions asked in the People Analysis: Where did the ancestor live?) The second goal of Locality Analysis is to learn as much about that particular place as one can. This includes not only the physical location and the geographical features of the place, but, to better understand the life of the ancestor, also requires a knowledge of its history and physical appearance.

Modern Atlases and Maps

Atlas de Cuba. La Habana : Instituto Cubano de Geodesia y Cartografia, 1978. (G 1605 .I5 1978) (FHL film 1162487 item 2)

Nuevo atlas nacional de Cuba. La Habana : Instituto de Geografia de la Academia de Ciencias de Cuba, 1989. (BYU Maps G 1605 .N83x 1989)

Gazetteers

Gazetteer of Cuba, Vol I & II. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: Defense Mapping Agency, 1991. (F 1754 .G39 1991)

Locality guide for Cuba. compiled by Mayra F. Sánchez-Johnson. Salt Lake City : Cuban Genealogical Society, 1992. (FHL)

Historical Atlases, Maps and Materials

Atlas of ports, cities, and localities of the island of Cuba. Washington, D.C. : Norris Peters Co., 1898. (BYU G 1605 .U5 1898)

Atlas geográfico de España, islas adyacentes y posesiones españolas de ultramar. Madrid : Gaspar y Roig, 1864. (FHL film 0897114 item 1)

Ecclesiastical Directories

Apuntes para la historia eclesiastica de Cuba by Juan Martin Leisaca. Habana: Talleres

Tipograficas de Carana, 1938. (U. of Florida 282.72 L532)

Encyclopedias

La Enciclopedia de Cuba, por Vicente Báez, ed. Madrid : Playor, S.A., Santa Polonia, 1973.

These are examples available from six major categories of books that can be valuable in completing a locality analysis for this country.

1. Atlases and Maps. Individual atlases that exist for most Hispanic countries can help locate ancestral towns and establish the proximity of ancestral towns to other towns found during the research. Typical of these is one for Mexico, Nuevo Atlas Porrua de la Republica Mexicana (Editorial Porrua: Mexico, D.F., 1980), available in many local libraries. This small volume contains maps of each state, historical maps, and a general country-wide index, as well as various geographical entity lists. Maps in these should be in a scale of at least 1:250,000.

Another useful geographical tool for the Latin American genealogist will be the Index to the Map of Hispanic America, published by the American Geographical Society. (Washington: 1945). As this is an index to a collection of maps, scale 1:1,000,000, it will generally only be found in a large public or university library. It covers all Latin American countries in good detail.

Also of value for locating especially small hamlets and for recreating geographical details of local life are the United States Army Map Service Select Series and Topographical Maps produced for all of these countries. Any place, no matter how small, will appear on these detailed maps (scale 1:50,000). Unfortunately, these maps have no direct index, and locating places can only be accomplished by using latitude and longitude references in the gazetteers such as those published by the U.S. Office of Geography. (See the following section on gazetteers).

Maps and atlases are being digitalized for computer storage at an incredible rate. As that process continues these will become increasingly available on CDROM and on the Internet and World Wide Web. Currently, for example, the University of Texas at Austin Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection has placed many atlases and maps from the CIA on the Computer Internet. Check with the library for the current address and the countries available.

2. Gazetteers. Gazetteers are long lists of place names with a minimal amount of information to identify and locate each particular place. Since many of these gazetteers list geographical subdivisions smaller than the parish or municipality, and other features such as rivers and mountains, they can be of great help when the particular place to be located does not appear in the atlases or geographical dictionaries available to the researcher. Many countries also publish postal guides and political divisions guides.

Gazetteers, such as the United States Board on Geographical Names Gazetteer, prepared by the Office of Geography of the Department of the Interior, are frequently more readily

obtained in the United States than local geographical dictionaries and detailed atlases of Hispanic countries. The Hispanic countries covered by the U.S. Board on Geographical Names series and their numbers in that series are:

Argentina, 103	Honduras, 27
Bolivia, 4	Mexico, 15
Brazil, 71	Nicaragua, 10
Chile, 6	Panama, 110
Costa Rica, 7	Paraguay, 35
Cuba, 30	Puerto Rico, 38
Dominican Republic, 33	Spain and Andorra, 51
Ecuador, 36	Spanish Sahara, 108
El Salvador, 26	Uruguay, 21
Guatemala	Venezuela, 56

For a number of Hispanic countries there are updated versions of these gazeteers published by the Defense Mapping Agency (DMA). These are included under each country in the last section of this chapter. These gazeteers have now been placed by the DMA (in collaboration with the U.S. Board of Geographic Names on the computer Internet under the title GEONet Names Server.

3. Geographical dictionaries. These vary in size, from one and two volume dictionaries to large series containing sixteen to twenty volumes. In the United States, those covering Hispanic countries are generally found in the Family History Library Catalog or in large public or university libraries which have map collections. Nearly every country has at least one such dictionary, although these can vary dramatically in the amount of detail they contain. Some of the large countries such as Mexico even have state or regional geographic dictionaries. Whether national or regional these are most helpful in locating a particular town, and usually provide a written description of the town, or other geographical unit. These descriptions, as well as individual place name entries, can be used to identify the larger geographical unit (where records would usually be found) to which a smaller unit, whose name is the only one the family remembers, belongs. Figure 7- , a page from Volume I of the Diccionario geografico de Guatemala, illustrates this principle, showing the caserios of Guatemala. These dictionaries also often provide information in developing the history of the ancestral locality as a background to the family history.

4. Ecclesiastical guides and directories. Many Catholic dioceses, publish directories listing the various parishes, seminaries, and convents which make up the diocese. These directories always include the names of local parishes and the priests who serve there. They also may contain maps and other aids, and interesting and pertinent information about local history, including even local jurisdictional changes. Many of these are available through the LDS Family History Centers and in libraries having the CIDOC Collection of Latin American Church documents on microfilm. For at least four countries, Spain, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Argentina, such guides exist which also indicate at least the beginning date for parish registers in nearly every parish in the country.

5. Historical Atlases, Maps and Materials. In the chart in the last section of this chapter a special category has been created for geographic reference tools that were printed before 1900 but are still widely available or were written to deal with geography during an historical period, most often the colonial period. The use and format of these materials parallels that of their contemporary counterparts described in other sections above.

6. Local histories. As the name implies, these are histories that deal entirely with a particular town or region, found both as books and as articles in periodicals. Scholarly historical journals such as The Americas and Hispanic American Historical Review are particularly valuable. These do not help in locating exact places, but can be extremely valuable in helping to understand the history of that locality, and especially to trace its jurisdictional changes.