Innovations with Sanborn Maps
Welcome!

Please introduce yourself in the chat. Tell us
• Your name
• Where you are from
• What you teach
Overview:

1. What are Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps?
2. What innovative tools exist for searching this collection?
3. How can these tools be utilized in the classroom?
What do you wonder about this map?

Record your observations in the chat.
Where are the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps?

- Geography & Map Division at the LOC
- Largest and most comprehensive cartographic collection in the world
  - 5.2 million maps
- 700,000 large-scale Sanborn fire insurance maps
What are the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps?

- Series of building level maps
- Dating from 1867*-present (only those that are non-copyright restricted available online)
- Depict 12,000 cities and towns in the US, Canada, and Mexico
Reading Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

KEY

- Fireproof construction (or fire resistive construction)
- Adobe building
- Stone building
- Concrete, lime, cinder or cement brick
- Hollow concrete or cement block construction
- Concrete or reinforced concrete construction
- Tile building
- Brick building with frame cornice
  - """" stone front
  - """" frame side (divided by frame partition)
- Brick veneered building
  - """" and frame building
- Frame building, brick lined
  - """" metal clad
- Frame building
- Iron building
- Tenant building occupied by various manufacturing or occupancies
- Frame building covered with asbestos
- Brick building with brick or metal cornice

Additional symbols and abbreviations:
- (C.BR)
- (C.B)
- (CONC)
- (TILE)
- (NUMBERS)
- (2STORIES)
- (COMPOSITION ROOF)
- (SHINGLED)
- (F=FLAT S=STORE)
- (D=DWELLING)
- (A=Auto H=Shop)
- (LOFT)
- (ASB.CL.)
- (NON-COMBUSTIBLE ROOF COVERING OF METAL, SLATE TILE OR ASBESTOS SHINGLES)
About this Collection

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps Online Checklist provides a searchable database of the fire insurance maps published by the Sanborn Map Company housed in the collections of the Geography and Map Division. The online checklist is based upon the Library's 1981 publication Fire Insurance Maps in the Library of Congress and will be continually updated to reflect new acquisitions.

The Sanborn maps are arranged by state, then city and release date. The online checklist also contains links to existing digital images from our collection and will be updated as new images are added. If you have any questions, comments, or are interested in obtaining reproductions from the collection, please Ask A Librarian.

Sanborn Keys & Colors

Fire insurance maps are distinctive because of the sophisticated set of symbols that allows complex information to be conveyed clearly. In working with insurance maps, it is important to remember that they were made for a very specific use, and that although they are now valuable for a variety of purposes, the insurance industry dictated the selection of information to be mapped and the way that information was portrayed. Knowledge of the keys and colors is essential to proper interpretation of the information found in fire insurance maps.

Color

- **TILE**
  - Brick building with frame cornice.
  - Brick building with brick or metal cornice.
  - Frame building, brick and frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Brick building, brick lined.
  - Brick building, brick framed.
  - Brick building, brick and frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Brick building, frame building, brick lined.

- **RUBBER**
  - Rubber building.
  - Rubber building with frame cornice.
  - Rubber building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **WOOD**
  - Wood building.
  - Wood building with frame cornice.
  - Wood building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STEEL**
  - Steel building.
  - Steel building with frame cornice.
  - Steel building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE**
  - Concrete building.
  - Concrete building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STONE**
  - Stone building.
  - Stone building with frame cornice.
  - Stone building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **OTHER**
  - Other building.
  - Other building with frame cornice.
  - Other building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **FRAME**
  - Frame building.
  - Frame building with frame cornice.
  - Frame building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **BRICK**
  - Brick building.
  - Brick building with frame cornice.
  - Brick building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **METAL**
  - Metal building.
  - Metal building with frame cornice.
  - Metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **PLASTIC**
  - Plastic building.
  - Plastic building with frame cornice.
  - Plastic building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **GLASS**
  - Glass building.
  - Glass building with frame cornice.
  - Glass building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **LEATHER**
  - Leather building.
  - Leather building with frame cornice.
  - Leather building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **FIBER**
  - Fiber building.
  - Fiber building with frame cornice.
  - Fiber building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CORK**
  - Cork building.
  - Cork building with frame cornice.
  - Cork building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **COCOA**
  - Cocoa building.
  - Cocoa building with frame cornice.
  - Cocoa building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **HIDE**
  - Hide building.
  - Hide building with frame cornice.
  - Hide building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **SILK**
  - Silk building.
  - Silk building with frame cornice.
  - Silk building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **HEAVY**
  - Heavy building.
  - Heavy building with frame cornice.
  - Heavy building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **LIGHT**
  - Light building.
  - Light building with frame cornice.
  - Light building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STONE & BRICK**
  - Stone & brick building.
  - Stone & brick building with frame cornice.
  - Stone & brick building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STONE & GLASS**
  - Stone & glass building.
  - Stone & glass building with frame cornice.
  - Stone & glass building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **GLASS & METAL**
  - Glass & metal building.
  - Glass & metal building with frame cornice.
  - Glass & metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **METAL & STEEL**
  - Metal & steel building.
  - Metal & steel building with frame cornice.
  - Metal & steel building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STEEL & CONCRETE**
  - Steel & concrete building.
  - Steel & concrete building with frame cornice.
  - Steel & concrete building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & BRICK**
  - Concrete & brick building.
  - Concrete & brick building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & brick building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & STONE**
  - Concrete & stone building.
  - Concrete & stone building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & stone building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STONE & METAL**
  - Stone & metal building.
  - Stone & metal building with frame cornice.
  - Stone & metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & STEEL**
  - Concrete & steel building.
  - Concrete & steel building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & steel building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **STONE & GLASS & METAL**
  - Stone & glass & metal building.
  - Stone & glass & metal building with frame cornice.
  - Stone & glass & metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & WOOD**
  - Concrete & wood building.
  - Concrete & wood building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & wood building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & GLASS**
  - Concrete & glass building.
  - Concrete & glass building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & glass building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & STEEL & METAL**
  - Concrete & steel & metal building.
  - Concrete & steel & metal building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & steel & metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & JUTE**
  - Concrete & jute building.
  - Concrete & jute building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & jute building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & SEWING**
  - Concrete & sewing building.
  - Concrete & sewing building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & sewing building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & PAPERS**
  - Concrete & papers building.
  - Concrete & papers building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & papers building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & GLASS & WOOD**
  - Concrete & glass & wood building.
  - Concrete & glass & wood building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & glass & wood building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & GLASS & STEEL**
  - Concrete & glass & steel building.
  - Concrete & glass & steel building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & glass & steel building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & GLASS & METAL**
  - Concrete & glass & metal building.
  - Concrete & glass & metal building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & glass & metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.

- **CONCRETE & GLASS & STEEL & METAL**
  - Concrete & glass & steel & metal building.
  - Concrete & glass & steel & metal building with frame cornice.
  - Concrete & glass & steel & metal building, frame building, frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick lined.
  - Frame building, brick framed.
Reading Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
Reading Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

The image on the right shows a key for interpreting Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Here are the key points:

- **Fire proof construction** or Fire resistive construction:
  - Adobe building
  - Stone building
  - Concrete, lime, cinder or cement brick
  - Hollow concrete or cement block construction
  - Concrete or reinforced concrete construction
  - Tile building
  - Brick building with frame cornice
  - Frame building with brick or metal cornice

- Height of building in feet from ground to roof line:
  - (C. BR)
  - (C. B.)
  - (CONC)
  - (TILE)

- Number of stories:
  - 2 stories and 8 feet or more composition roof
  - Single roof
  - (VEND)
  - Brick 1st
  - Frame, brick lined
  - Frame, brick or metal clad
  - Frame building
  - Iron building
  - Tenant building occupied by various manufacturing or occupancies
  - Frame building covered with asbestos

This key helps in understanding the construction details and building types depicted on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.
Innovative ways to explore historic collections

- **LC Labs** (labs.loc.gov)
  - Innovators in Residence
  - Digital Scholarship

Priorities:
- Reduce barriers to innovation
- Explore emerging approaches
- Gather wide ranging expertise
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Map Navigator

USA

Number of Sanborn Maps from the State

0  1-500  501-1000  1001-1500  1501-2000  >2000
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Map Navigator

USA > New Jersey

Number of Sanborn Maps from the County

0 1-50 51-100 100-150 >150

Randomly Selected Newspaper Image
Newspaper: Bridgeton pioneer
Publication location: Bridgeton, New Jersey
Date: December 06, 1900
Selected from New Jersey

Sanborn Maps from Counties in New Jersey
Atlantic County  Monmouth County  Warren County
How was the Sanborn Maps Navigator Made?

LibraryOfCongress / sanborn-navigator

- master 1 branch 0 tags

librlaurie Shows LC github repo at the bottom of the page

- jupyter_checkpoints wrote guide on how to update site 3 years ago
- data moved independent cities fix into the correct spot, added com... 3 years ago
- README.md added link to updating on README 3 years ago
- about-style.css wrote up about page and added styling 3 years ago
- about.html Change link to code to LC link 3 years ago
- global-style.css back button functions, did some more styling 3 years ago
- home-style.css back button functions, did some more styling 3 years ago
- how-to-update.ipynb wrote guide on how to update site 3 years ago
- index.html Shows LC github repo at the bottom of the page 3 years ago
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Atlas Volume Finder

This map provides a comprehensive set of links for Sanborn Volume Finders created for select US cities by the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress. Volume Finders help users pinpoint which Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas Volume(s) provide coverage for specific geographic areas of interest. To access online Volume Finders, simply click the bright pink pin to access a direct link. City Finders currently in development are symbolized with light pink pins.

For more information about accessing Sanborn maps that are not available online, please contact the Geography & Map Division.

Created by Julie Stoner and Meagan Snow, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress

Download Map Data: CSV File
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Atlas Volume Finder
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Atlas Volume Finder

Sanborn Volume Finder: Washington, DC

Sanborn Maps, 1903-1916
For the area you selected, maps are available in Volume 2 from 1904.
This resource is available online here

Zoom to

3 of 6
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Atlas Volume Finder
Innovative Search Tools: Sanborn Atlas Volume Finder
Summary of Innovative Tools:

- **Sanborn Map Navigator**
  - Organizes the digital collections by location and year
  - Links the Sanborn Maps to Chronicling America

- **Sanborn Atlas Volume Finder**
  - Search collection by address
  - Includes both digitized and non-digitized maps
Brainstorm:

• What innovative questions can the map(s) prompt?

• How might you support student interactions with the maps?
Innovative questions teachers have considered with their students:

• How have things developed over time?
• What is valued?
• Who is counted?
• What environmental concerns exist? Who is most affected?
• Has the population increased or decreased? How do you know?
• Has the shoreline changed?
• How can the layout of a town/city help explain a historical event?
• What are the pros and cons of the city/town design?
Innovative questions students have asked:

• How were these maps made?
• Why did insurance companies need this information?
• Why are certain areas labeled by nationality?
• How did the Sanborn Company pick the areas to map?
• Do we still have ____ today?
• Is it safe for factories to be converted into dwellings?
• How have certain bodies of water appeared or disappeared?
Questions?
How was the Sanborn Maps Navigator Made?

LibraryOfCongress / sanborn-navigator

- master 
- 1 branch
- 0 tags

librlaurie Shows LC github repo at the bottom of the page

- ipynb_checkpoints: wrote guide on how to update site
- data: moved independent cities fix into the correct spot, added com...
- README.md: added link to updating on README
- about-style.css: wrote up about page and added styling
- about.html: Change link to code to LC link
- global-style.css: back button functions, did some more styling
- home-style.css: back button functions, did some more styling
- how-to-update.ipynb: wrote guide on how to update site
- index.html: Shows LC github repo at the bottom of the page

53a8cbe on Sep 24, 2020
160 commits

@TeachingLC
How was the Sanborn Maps Navigator Made?

Analyzing and visualizing cartographic metadata from loc.gov

Table of Contents

- This notebook
- 1. Required Prep: Install and import all of the Python modules we’ll need
- 2. Query for list of records
- 3. Harvest the metadata
- 4. Basic metadata analysis
- 5. Metadata charts
- 6. Metadata maps and Wikidata

More Resources

Other Jupyter notebooks and examples from the Library of Congress can be found at LC for Robots.

This notebook

This notebook is part two of a series of Jupyter notebooks exploring how to computationally access, retrieve, and analyze cartographic collections on loc.gov.
Walk the streets of any U.S. city today, and you might come across historic markers or masonry etchings indicating what the buildings used to be. It is always fascinating to learn what our neighborhoods, cities, and towns used to be—factories turned residences, street names changed, the places and spaces our predecessors lived, ate, and worked? The Sanborn Maps Navigator, a new tool created by a Library of Congress Junior Fellow Selena Qian, allows you to travel to familiar and far-off neighborhoods to explore the past.