



Remaining Meeting for 2025

Sunday, 7 December 2025

How to Find Any Shtetl on Topographic Maps

(This meeting will be Zoom only. Pre-registration is required.)

It is possible to find even the smallest shtetl on highly detailed and downloadable topographic maps. Our speaker will give step-by-step directions on how to do so for Eastern Europe, Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Featured Speaker: Andrew Kapochunas, expert on historic maps

The Step-by-Step Process:

1. Try to narrow your search geography (*Shtetl names aren't necessarily unique*)
2. Log in or create one at www.JewishGen.org;
 - a. Search the JewishGen **Communities Database**
 - i. If you don't get a match using the default Search Method: "Phonetically Like," cast an increasingly wider net at the Search Method-dropdown to get more possibilities
3. Once you get a possible match, make note of all the name variations -- including the contemporary name -- you'll be searching for on a topographical map
4. Go to Google maps to search on the contemporary name, and then look for nearby larger towns, to narrow the search on an antique topo map
5. Go to www.LithuanianMaps.com to access topographic maps from 1808 – 1945
6. Of the 7 pages of types of topographic maps, start with **TopoMapsGerAus1876-1945**
7. Look at the "Key" map vs. the Google map you made to see if there are topo maps covering the area where your shtetl might be. If you find a likely topo map, refer to the name variations you got from the Communities Database while scrolling the topo map up and down, and side to side, looking for your shtetl
 - a. If you can't find your shtetl, try one of the other types of topo maps on the other pages
 - b. Or, your shtetl might be in an area not covered by LithuanianMaps.Com (*Covered: Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad Oblast, Western Belarus, Eastern Poland, Northwest Ukraine*)
 - c. A wider area: east, west and south, is covered by another site: www.mapywig.org
 - i. Click on the **British flag** to get the English table of contents
 - ii. Click on the hotlink **WIG maps 1:100 000**
 - iii. Click on the **Index sheet** hotlink
 - iv. Click on the **Skorowidze (Indexes) icon** to get to the index map: a grid of available maps superimposed on a contemporary map
 - v. Remembering your Google map, click on likely topo maps, and use your name variations list to find your shtetl
8. Other sources of East European topo maps: www.easteurotopo.org <http://igrek.amzp.pl/index.php>
9. Topo maps of Germany: <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/search/collection/GermanyMaps>
10. Topo maps of Ireland and Scotland: <https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch-ireland/>

Questions? Comments? Need help? Your experiences?

Email me at kapochunas@gmail.com

I've been Secretary of the New York Map Society: www.NewYorkMapSociety.org for 11 years. I've been helping people find their ancestral shtetls and villages on maps for decades at no charge, because I love maps, and because, as a retiree for the past 15 years, it gives me great satisfaction.