# Mapping Geospatial Data: Google My Maps

Developed by Colleen Nugent for
AFAM 2296 Early African American Literature
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*NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks*

*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# **Workshop Agenda**

- Learn about Google My Maps as a mode of conveying data and content
- Discuss best practices and questions to consider before creating your map in Google My Maps
- Explore sample Google My Maps
- Outline steps for using Google My Maps
- Start building!

Slides, handouts, and data available at

**https://bit.ly/diti-fall2020-aljoe**

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# **Workshop Objectives**

- Articulate particular choices you will make when using a map to convey information
- Follow a step-by-step guide for creating, saving, and publishing maps using Google My Maps
- Upload data into Google My Maps, including location information, images, and text
- Navigate Google's map markers and location-finding system

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# What are different uses for maps?

- Maps are powerful tools for conveying geospatial information
- Well made maps can quickly and easily give **content** and **context,** but poorly made maps can be misleading
- How do you use maps in your everyday life?
  - How does a subway map compare to a Google map?
  - What are these maps doing? How do they shape your expectations and experiences?

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# Example Projects Using Google My Maps

- [“US National Parks”](#): uses a mix of textual, image, and geo-location data to provide content and context about US National Parks

- [“Freedom Trail Boston”](#): uses a mix of lines, geo-spatial points, texts, and images to map the route of the Freedom Trail in Boston

- [“Davis Square Somerville”](#): maps the businesses of Davis Square, using different icons to demonstrate various types of businesses

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# Activity: Explore Boston's Black Heritage Trail

Explore this sample map of [Boston's Black Heritage Trail.](#) This map makes use of several Google My Maps features, including color coding, styling of icons and basemap, layers, points, lines, and polygons.

We will learn how to add these features to our own maps, including:

- Add and style points, lines, and polygons
- Add images, descriptions, and links
- Utilize layers and basemaps

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# Analysis of Examples

- Look through the examples, particularly the map of the Black Heritage Trail, and think about how they use geospatial layouts to present information.
- Make some notes about how you interacted with these maps.
- Can these techniques be applied to your own project?
- What worked best? What didn't work for you? What do you want to try on your own?

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# Create a map with Google My Maps

- Go to https://www.google.com/mymaps
- Sign in through Google
- Click "Create a New Map"

  **+ CREATE A NEW MAP**
- Once you have

  created your map, it will be there

  for you to work on
- Name your project and give it a description
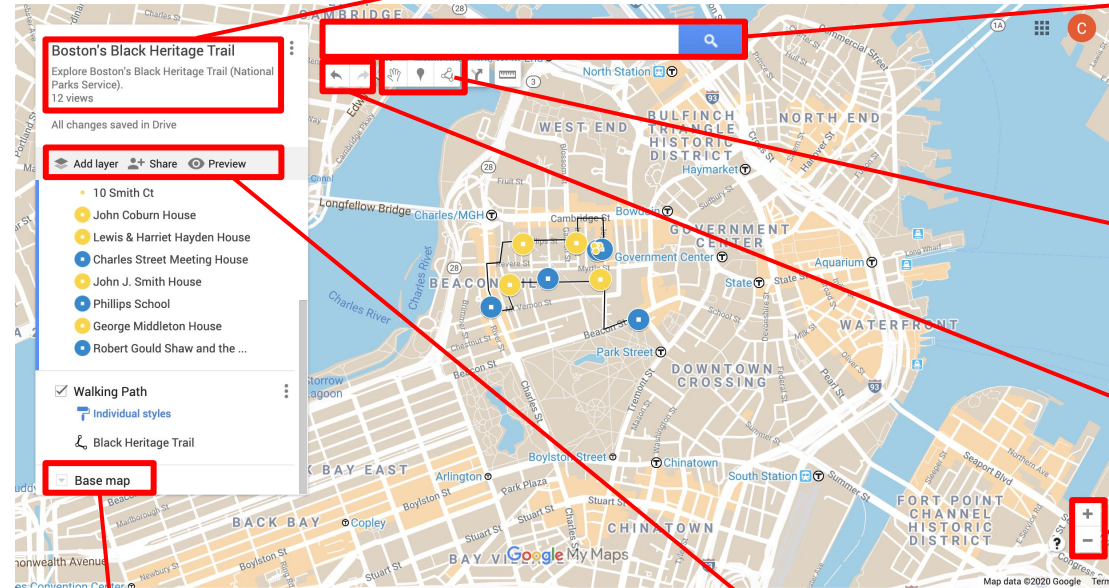
*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# Your Google My Maps



Map title and map description

Search for locations using their addresses

Add and move points, lines, and polygons

Undo and redo

Zoom in and out

Change basemap

Add new layers and preview the finished product

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# Selecting Your Basemap

To change your basemap, go to the bottom of the left-hand column and click "Base Map." Google provides you with a variety of options to choose from.

Basemaps can help:

- Situate the map a particular context
- Make certain content easier or more difficult to read

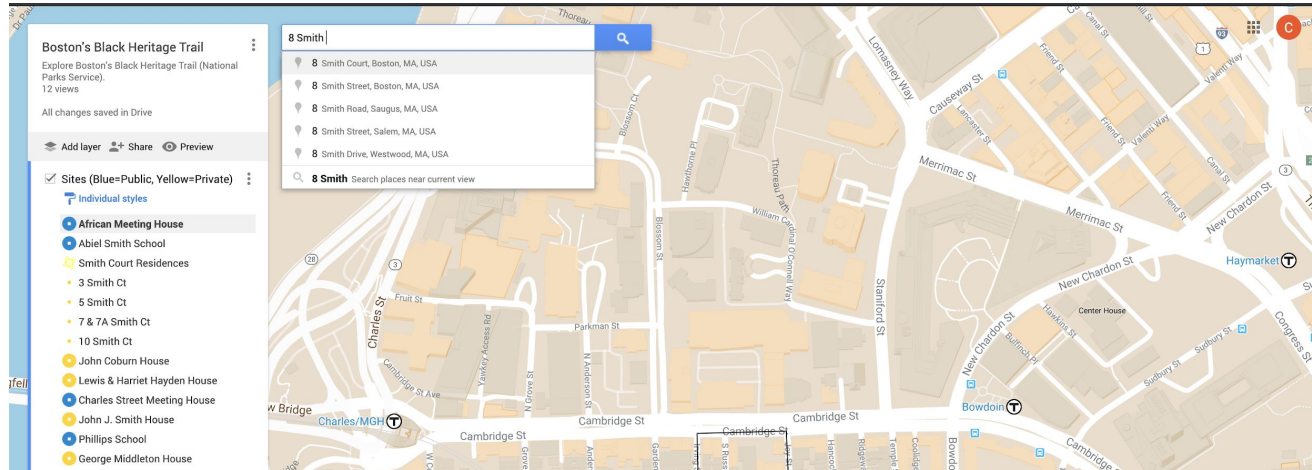What other impacts and implications can you think of?

# Map Markers

Map markers are the different points on your map. You can place markers using coordinates or addresses, or add them manually.

Each marker can contain:

- Name and description
- Street address
- Latitude/longitude geospatial coordinates
- Customizable icon and color
- Media: images, videos, and links

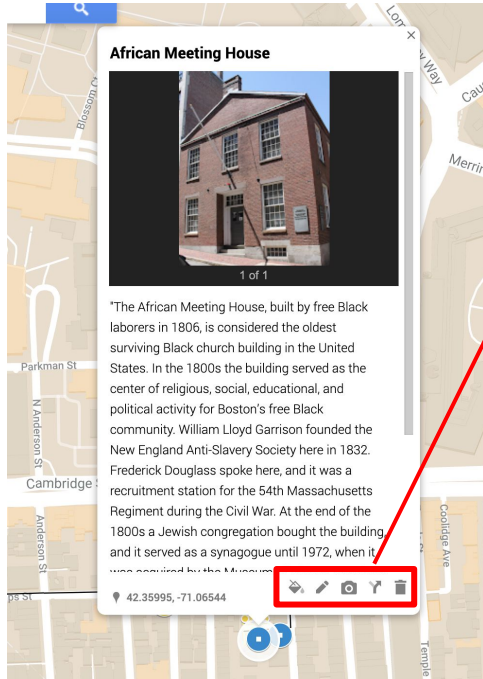*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# Add A Location



Search for the location you want and select "Add to Map."

Google My Maps does not always recognize place names; you might need to look up the address or location instead

If you cannot find the address for a location, you can select the marker icon and click on the spot where you wish to add the marker

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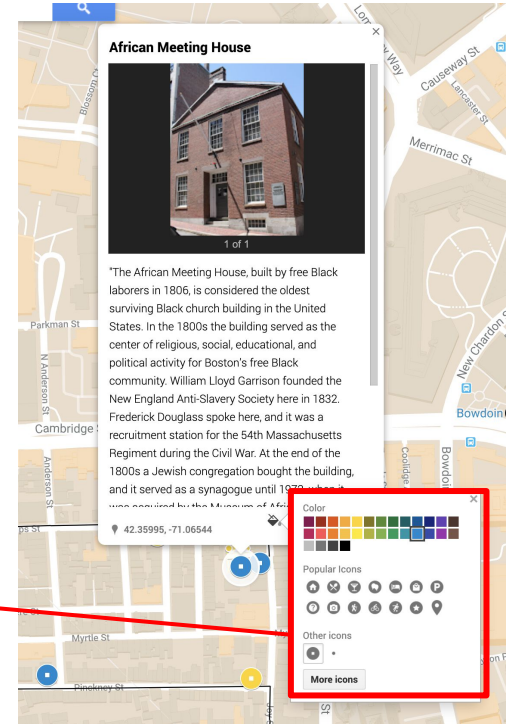*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# Add More Data to Markers



Tools, left to right: Style, Edit title and description, Add images/video, Delete marker line or polygon

For all markers, you can add a title, description, images, videos, links, and customizable color.

You can change the color and icon of the marker.

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# Lines and Polygons

Google My Maps can also add lines and polygons to your map.
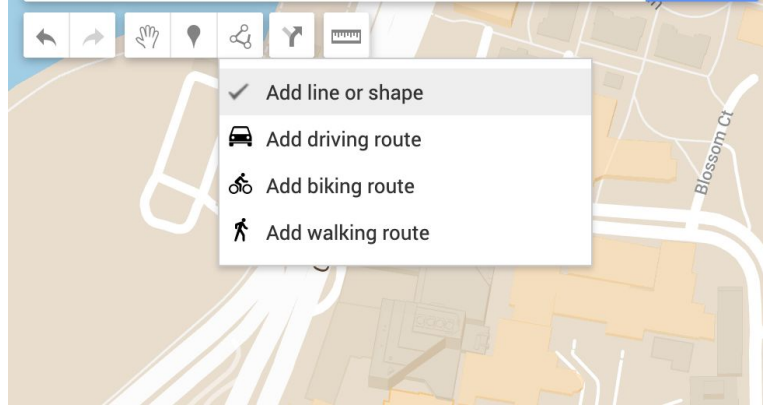
Lines can demonstrate, for example:

- Routes
- Directions
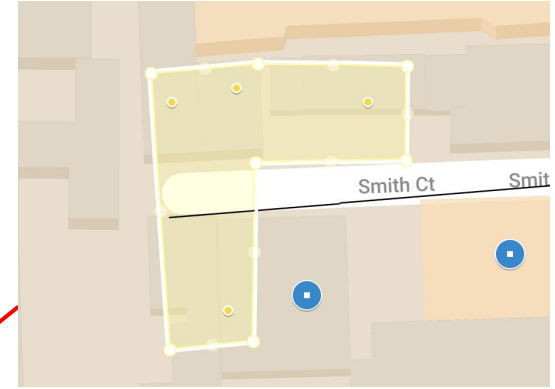
Polygons can demonstrate, for example:

- Towns
- Neighborhoods

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# Add Lines and Polygons



Click "Add line or shape"



For polygons, click where you want to start drawing, click each corner or bend of the line, and click back on the first point to finish the shape
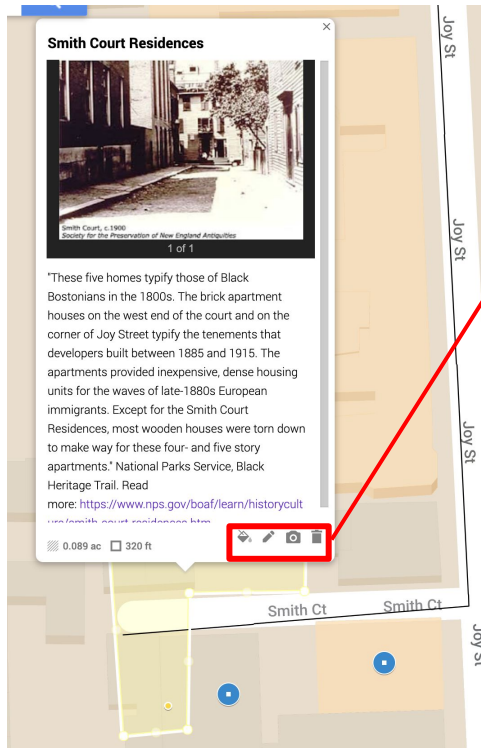
For lines, click where you want to start drawing and then click each corner or bend of the line; double click when you are done with the line

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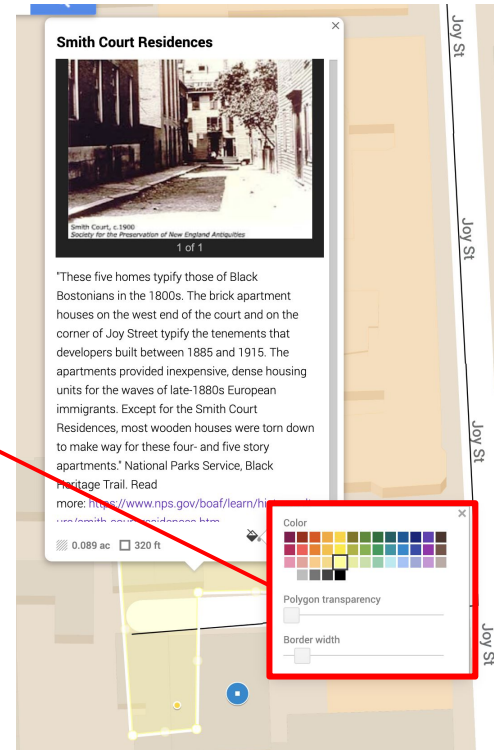*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# Add More Data to Lines and Polygons

Tools, left to right: Style, Edit title and description, Add images/video, Delete line or polygon

For lines and polygons the color, transparency, and width can be customized.

For all lines and polygons, you can add a title, description, images, videos, and links.

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# Layers

Layers allow you to sort/filter your geospatial information into different groups. All of your markers, lines, and polygons will be placed into an "Untitled Layer," so always make sure to title the layer even if you will only have one.

- Individual layers can be turned on and off.
- Layers can be exported individually as KML (a markup language for expressing geographic annotation) to view in Google Earth
- To add a new layer, click "Add Layer"
- Title the layer
- Add markers, lines, or polygons!

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# Discussion

- How do you think differently about these locations when they are in a Google My Maps format?
- What was difficult or easy about this platform?
- What was interesting about seeing your data presented in a Google My Maps format? Are you able to identify any patterns or new ways of thinking about your data?

*Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!*

# Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact us at: nulab.info@gmail.com

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Schedule an appointment with us! **https://calendly.com/diti-nu**

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