

## CONFRONTING THE TOURIST MAP: DIVERGENT PURPOSES AND DISPARATE USERS

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**ABSTRACT.** Tourist mapping provides the cartographer with both serious challenges and exciting opportunities. There is, as is the case with any map, an opportunity to develop a distinct subtext component. This component cannot be implemented using a simple set of design procedures. It can be approached in a rudimentary way with the application of perceptual- and cognitive-based design elements, but the creation of an appropriate subtext is most likely achieved only by considering the total design of the map. Given the wide range of goals and the variety of tasks performed by tourist maps, an efficient subtext will be accomplished only by using a holistic approach to design. This situation is examined using examples from different tourist environments.

Tourist mapping is probably the most complex area in which to work with the concepts and processes of cartography. Any specific tourist situation involves, ultimately, more than a single graphic display and, in the network of displays dramatizing a particular tourist site or situation, there are a plethora of issues to be accommodated. For each map there are **text** issues as well as **subtext** and **context** considerations. There has been considerable discussion of the relationships between text and context in cartography. Subtext, however, as it is employed in literature, theater, political rhetoric, and many other areas, appears to have been overlooked in cartographic design.

The first application of subtext in cartography is probably the pseudoconic projection of Claudius Ptolemy (150). Ptolemy's *Geography* in its many fifteenth century (and later) editions employed two projections: a simple conic, and a pseudoconic. Both worked effectively ... but the curved parallels and curved meridians of the pseudoconic suggest the sphericity of the earth.

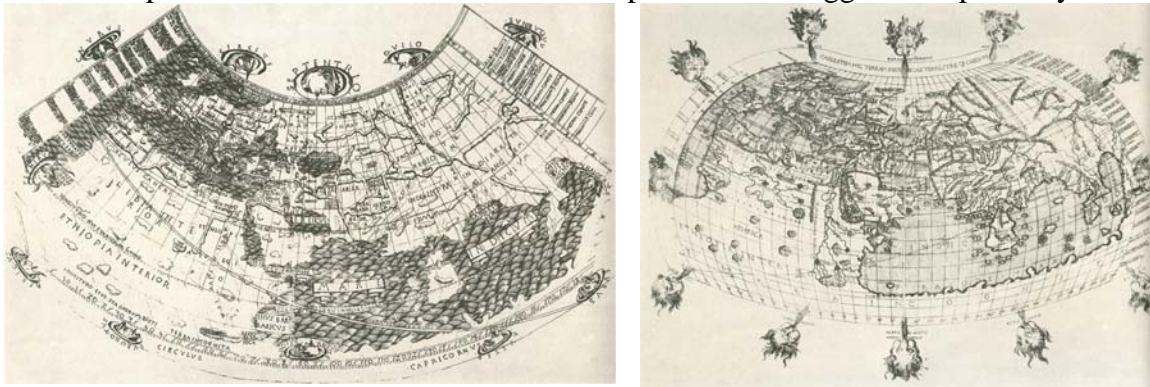


Fig 1. Ptolemy maps, Bologna (1477) and

Rome (1482)

Consider two maps, one from Amtrak, the other illustrating the location of National Heritage Areas in the United States. While the Amtrak message suggests potentially enjoyable possibilities traveling throughout the United States by railroad, the simple graphic of the NHAs carries a subtextual message in its use of color, and the message is not entirely clear!

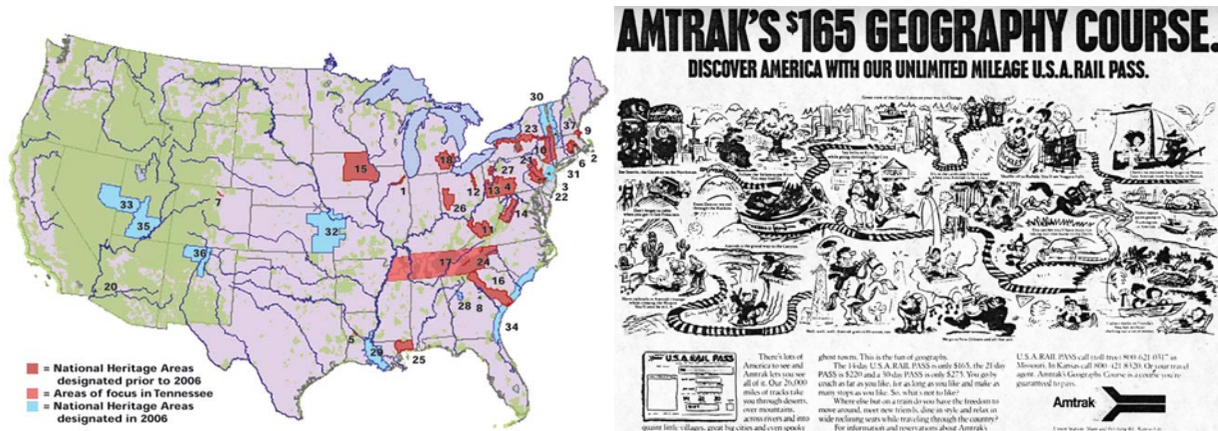


Fig. 2. The green areas are National Forests, not generally associated with Heritage Areas. The "cartoon" style used on the Amtrak map is commonly employed for recreational tourism.

Subtext involves, in cartography as well as in other visual arts, the employment of design structures and motifs that provide an implicit statement, something beyond the explicit content of the map, beyond the content that is organized to convey the principal message, the focal consideration of the map. For tourist maps, ignoring their operational utility, there are the associations among the map user, the map, and the environment. For the user there is both the background, the personal knowledge of the environment, and the level of map use ability, as well as the ability to employ the map appropriately during the tourism experience. For the map, and for the environment that it represents, there is "reliability" ... do the map and the environment confront the user with a "united front." The tourist-map task may be carried out appropriately, even though the subtextual content of the map might be a confounding factor, rather than a complementary one. Subtext has been employed, maybe unwittingly, but it has not been formally practiced in map design.

For tourist maps, it is possible to work with Clawson's five-stages of recreation: anticipation and planning, travel-to, on-site activities, travel-from, and recollection. Here the environmental tasks of navigation and data management can be dealt with discretely. The direct environmental experience can be handled in concert with direct and indirect vicarious support ... map use ... and the tourism experience occurs in a finite way.

Compare two maps, created for similar purposes: visiting wineries in different parts of the United States. The New England map is single-color in a tabloid format on newsprint quality paper. Missouri uses a multi-color map on glossy paper folded into a typical tourist brochure. Both maps are accompanied by descriptions of the wineries and directions for locating them. Other wine maps (and brochures) provide similar information, the elaborateness of the product in each case ranging from "poor" to "outstanding."

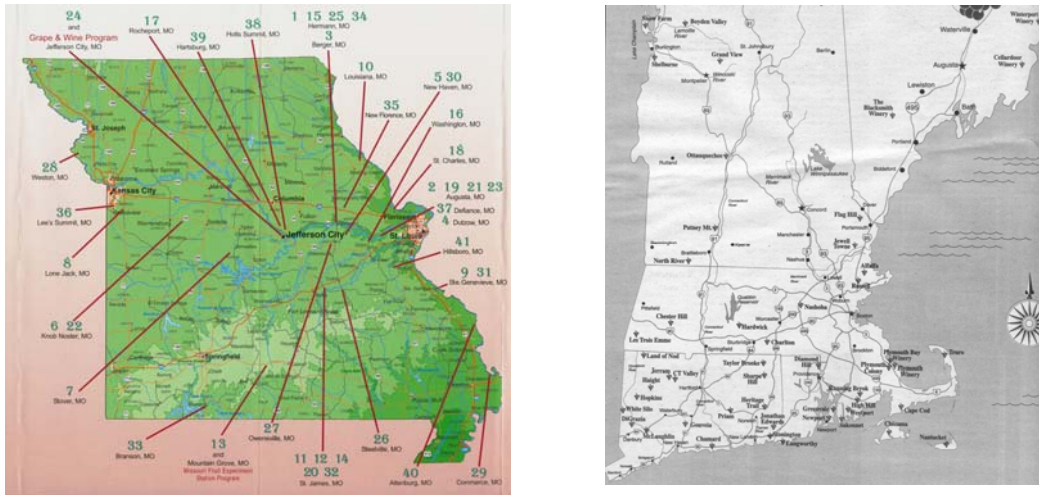


Fig. 3. Missouri and New England winery location maps

While the wine maps locate many sites for the potential tourist, other brochures (and advertisements) for different types of tourist sites bring different anticipation and planning issues. The information provided for a single site (e. g., Disneyland or Downtown San Antonio) will provide the potential tourist with a different planning problem than that involved in planning visits to several Civil War battle sites or nature preserves.

When one deals with maps for traveling to a tourist site, there are often maps (and verbal directions) that are context-free ... maps that provide a lot of available choices. The complexity of the map use situation will depend on the distance to be traveled and on map scale ... more than one map could be involved. The possibilities are more elaborate than one expects.



Fig 4. The single-route (AAA) Trip-Tik, verbal directions, and a verbal-graphic combination

Onsite activities maps vary widely. For wineries, there are few examples ... the location of the tasting room is generally well marked! Historical sites, like Old Sturbridge Village, and sites with hiking trails require detailed information. Some sites have programmed tours, but others provide an unstructured tour map.



Fig 5. Old Sturbridge Village provides an unstructured site map. The "site map" for the Coastal Wine Trail (leading to six wineries in Rhode Island and Massachusetts) is accompanied by a set of inter-winery verbal navigation directions. The Freedom Trail in Boston is sequentially organized.

The route home will probably be different that traveled to the tourist site. Thus, there is the possibility for a more flexible return trip plan.

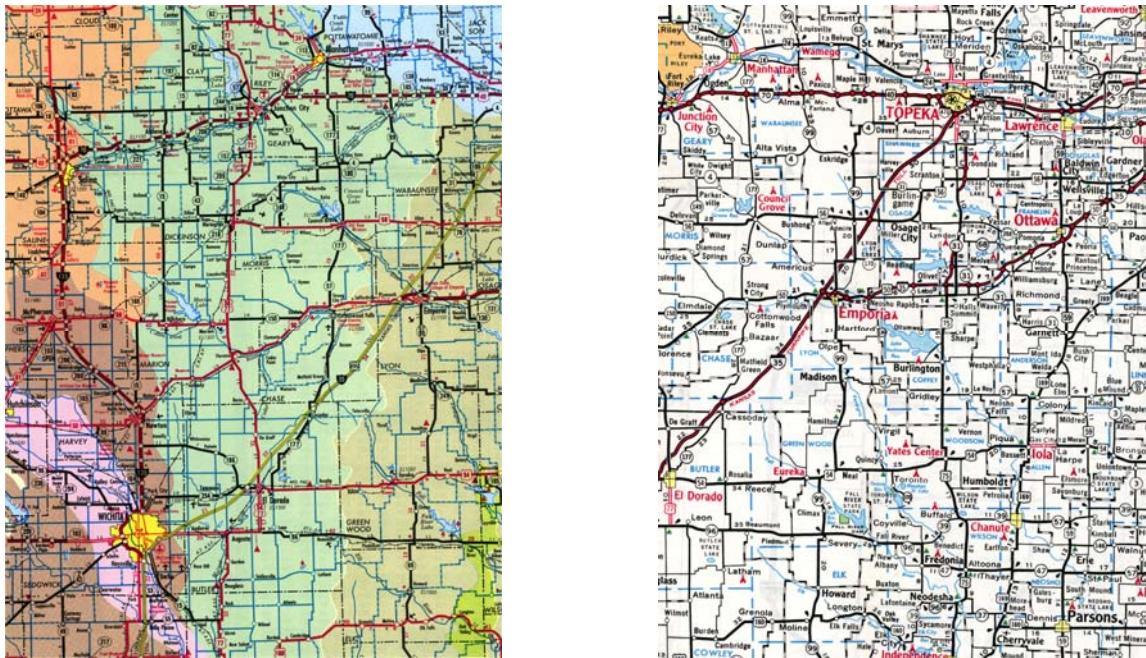


Fig 6. Two approaches to the highways in Kansas: the state highway map (with physiographic regions) and an example of the conventional highway map (American Automobile Association)

Recollection can be based on, or prompted by, a map acquired at the tourist site ... or by some trinket purchased at the gift shop that will prompt a mental map. Probably the most important “product” is the mental (cognitive) map that has been developed.

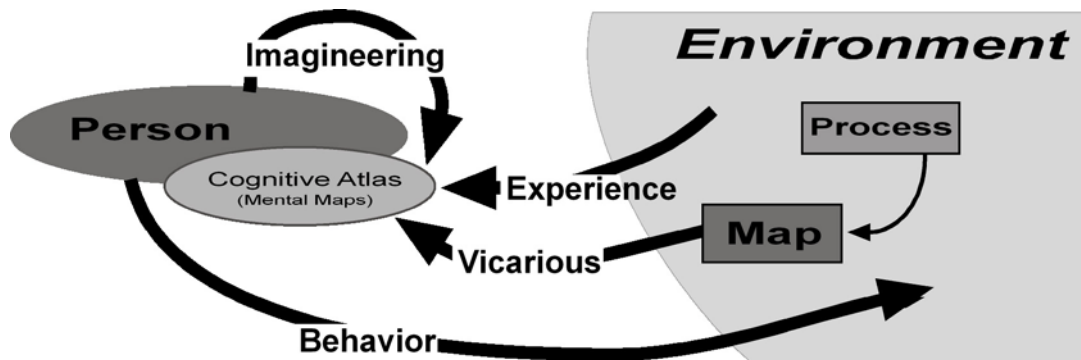


Fig 7. A model of the person-environment system, showing how direct environmental experience and the varieties of vicarious experiences (involving maps, photographs, verbal and even numerical information) contribute to the person's cognitive atlas.

All of the issues discussed thus far are generally straightforward, but things are often not that simple. More common, and more complex in terms of cartographic concepts and processes, are historical tourism situations where the development of the environment, the evolution of land uses (particularly in urban environments), has annihilated the original conditions of the landscape and considerable expertise and imagination are required to understand the landscape that existed decades or centuries ago. The examples here are many and they involve sites where temporal and spatial changes have produced a visible landscape entirely foreign to the original situation. ... the contemporary environment is almost impossible to relate to the reality that once existed. The challenges to the mental map of even the most astute tourist and his or her expectations are often too great to be met.



Fig. 8. Quantrill's Raid, 21 August 1863, in one of the many drawings displaying the event. The photograph, taken two years later, shows the same location, the downtown of the community of Lawrence, Kansas, having been rebuilt and extended.

For the cartographer, creation of maps for any tourist situation is a challenge. Some maps need to be carefully organized to deal with the navigation activities required to bring the tourist to the site. Too often these are forgotten, and the resulting locational and navigation maps fail to meet even the most basic requirements. The maps that manage the environment involved vary enormously in style and quality ... the map for Disneyland is at one end of the spectrum, far contextually and graphically from that of a Civil War battlefield. It is a question of how much of the inventory can be displayed. How should the map handle the content and the context of the tourist site? Are the conventional paper map and the guidebook still satisfactory ... or is the situation one that requires an interactive digital display?

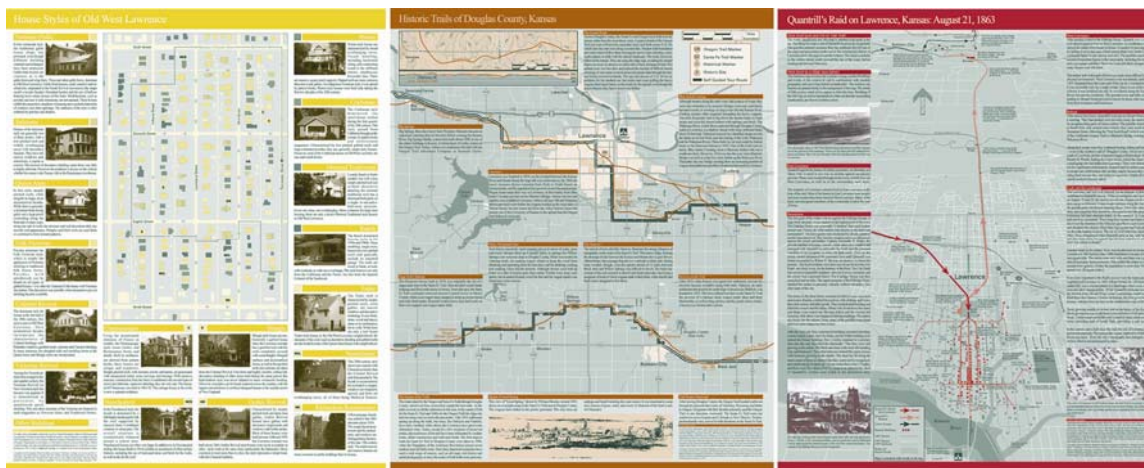


Fig. 9. Three tourist brochures created for visitors to Lawrence, Kansas. These are the detailed interpretive displays: Left, Old West Lawrence, a historical district with over one hundred nineteenth century homes. Center, the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails in Douglas County, Kansas. Right, Quantrill's 1863 Raid on Lawrence.

These, and other issues, confront the creators of the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, an addition to the growing collection of sites being organized across the United States. While other Heritage Areas often are located in and based on activities where remnants of the environment remain (e. g., manufacturing activities and transportation links), Freedom's Frontier lacks features and activities where elements in the present environment provide explanation. For example, military confrontations were few and small in scope, trails are now covered with fields of corn and beans, the grassy prairies are now laced with tree lines.

For the cartographer, the potential task is exciting: how can one create a series of maps for isolated sites, each contributing some component, some story, to the variegated culture that emerged on the settlement frontier of the United States beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. How can the complex text be organized in concert with a subtext that will unify a theme that covers more activities that had no direct impact on the visible landscape. Even more significant is the manner in which this can be done for tourists of all ages, of many interests, and with distinctly different map use abilities.

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