

chicago manual of style historical geography citation

Mastering Chicago Manual of Style Historical Geography Citation: A Comprehensive Guide

chicago manual of style historical geography citation requires careful attention to detail, especially when dealing with the complexities of historical cartography, spatial data, and geographically-specific archival materials. This guide provides a thorough exploration of how to correctly cite historical geography sources according to the widely respected Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS). We will delve into the nuances of citing maps, atlases, spatial databases, and archival documents, ensuring academic rigor and clarity in your research. Understanding these citation practices is crucial for scholars, researchers, and students working within the fields of history, geography, urban studies, and related disciplines.

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Understanding the Core Principles of CMOS Citation for Historical Geography

The Chicago Manual of Style provides a robust framework for academic citation, and its principles extend effectively to the specialized domain of historical geography. The fundamental goal remains the same: to provide readers with sufficient information to locate and verify the sources you have consulted. For historical geography, this often involves elements beyond traditional text-based sources, including visual materials and datasets that represent spatial information at specific historical moments. Adhering to the author-date system or the notes-bibliography system, as dictated by your field or instructor, is the initial step.

Regardless of the system employed, consistency is paramount. When citing historical geography materials, you must consider the unique characteristics of each source type. This involves identifying essential bibliographic details that accurately describe the item. For maps, this might include the cartographer, publisher, date, scale, and projection. For digital data, it includes the data creator, dataset title, version, date of access, and the specific repository or URL. The objective is always to be as precise as possible, leaving no room for ambiguity about the source's origin and nature.

The Chicago Manual of Style Notes-Bibliography System for Historical Geography

The notes-bibliography system is frequently favored in history and the humanities, making it highly relevant for historical geography research. In this system, sources are cited first in numbered footnotes or endnotes, with a corresponding entry in a bibliography at the end of the work. For historical geography, a footnote might identify a specific map, detailing its creator, title, publication information, and the collection where it resides. The bibliography entry will then offer a more complete bibliographic description of the same source.

The structure of notes and bibliography entries will vary based on the specific format of the historical geography source. For example, a rare, independently published historical map will have a citation structure distinct from a map that appeared as an illustration within a book or a map found within a larger cartographic collection at an archive. Precision in noting the physical location or digital repository of the source is especially critical, as many historical geography materials are not widely available and may require a reader to visit specific institutions or access particular online archives.

The Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date System for Historical Geography

While less common in traditional historical geography scholarship, the author-date system can be employed, particularly in interdisciplinary contexts or for projects that lean heavily on quantitative spatial analysis. In this system, in-text citations refer to the author and date of publication, directing the reader to a reference list at the end of the work that contains full bibliographic details. For historical geography, this requires adapting the author-date format to accommodate non-traditional sources.

For example, a citation might look like (Smith 1910) for a published atlas. However, for a manuscript map found in an archive, the convention would need adaptation, perhaps referencing the archivist or the primary collection identifier along with a date proxy if a publication date is absent. The key is to establish a clear and consistent convention that allows readers to link the in-text citation to the full reference without confusion, even when dealing with historical, non-standardized materials.

Citing Historical Maps and Atlases

Maps are the cornerstone of historical geography, and their citation requires careful attention to detail. Whether you are referencing a single,

significant map or an entire atlas, the Chicago Manual of Style provides guidelines to ensure these visual documents are properly credited. The primary goal is to give your reader the best chance of locating the exact map you consulted, which often involves specifying its creator, title, publisher, date, and the scale and projection if they are significant to your argument.

When citing a standalone historical map, the information needed is akin to that for a book chapter or an independent publication. You'll want to identify the cartographer or surveying body, the title of the map (often italicized), the publisher, and the date of publication. Furthermore, details about the map's physical characteristics, such as its scale and projection, can be crucial for historical geographic analysis and should be included if readily available and relevant.

Citing Maps Found in Books or Journals

Often, historical maps appear not as standalone items but as illustrations or integral components within a book or scholarly article. In such cases, the citation needs to acknowledge both the map itself and the work in which it is found. Using the notes-bibliography system, a footnote would first describe the map (cartographer, title, date) and then indicate its location within the larger publication (e.g., "reproduced in," followed by the book or journal citation). The bibliography entry would then list the map as a component of the larger work.

For the author-date system, the in-text citation would refer to the author and publication date of the book or journal article. The reference list entry would then fully detail the map within the context of its containing publication. It's important to clearly distinguish between the map's original creation date and the publication date of the work that reproduces it.

Citing Historical Atlases

Historical atlases are compilations of maps, often covering a specific region or historical period. Citing an atlas requires identifying the editor or compiler, the atlas title (italicized), the publisher, and the date of publication. If you are referencing a specific map within the atlas, you will need to provide the map's title or description, the atlas title, page number, and the full atlas citation.

When using the notes-bibliography system, a note might reference "Map titled 'London in 1850,' in *The Historical Atlas of Victorian England*, ed. John Davies (London: Cartographia Press, 2005), 45." The bibliography entry would then be a complete citation for the atlas. For the author-date system, an in-text citation might be (Davies 2005, 45), with the reference list providing the full atlas details.

Citing Spatial Data and Digital Geographic Resources

The digital age has revolutionized historical geography, bringing with it a wealth of spatial data, geographic information systems (GIS) datasets, and digital maps. Citing these resources requires adapting traditional citation principles to the unique characteristics of digital information. CMOS provides guidance for citing electronic sources, which can be readily applied to digital geographic data.

Key elements for citing digital geographic resources include the creator of the data, the title of the dataset, its version number or release date, the name of the organization or repository where it is housed, and the date of access. If a persistent identifier, such as a DOI, is available, it should always be included to facilitate retrieval.

Citing GIS Datasets and Shapefiles

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) datasets, such as shapefiles or geodatabases, are fundamental tools in contemporary historical geography. When citing a GIS dataset, identify the data producer or copyright holder, the dataset name, the version or year, and the source or repository. For instance, a citation might include the name of the organization that compiled the data, the specific dataset title, and the URL or path to access it.

In the notes-bibliography system, a note could read: "Historical building footprints for New York City, circa 1900 (New York City Department of City Planning, 2018), accessed March 15, 2023, [URL]." The bibliography would present a more detailed entry. For author-date, an in-text citation could be (NYC DCP 2018), with the reference list providing the full details including access dates and URLs.

Citing Online Historical Maps and Geographic Databases

Numerous online platforms now offer access to digitized historical maps and extensive geographic databases. When citing these resources, treat them as online resources, but emphasize the geographic and historical specificity. This includes the title of the map or database, the name of the website or hosting institution, the publication date or last updated date, and the specific URL.

For example, a citation for an online historical map might include the title of the map, the creator of the digital version, the name of the website, and the date of access. Always strive to provide the most stable and direct link possible. If a DOI is available for a digital map or dataset, it is the

preferred citation element.

Citing Archival Materials for Historical Geography Research

Archival research forms the bedrock of much historical geography. This often involves consulting manuscript maps, cadastral surveys, property records, administrative documents, and personal papers that contain crucial spatial information. Citing archival materials demands a high degree of precision to enable readers to locate these often unique or rare documents.

The essential components of an archival citation include the name of the archive, the collection name and number, the specific folder or item number, and a description of the document. The date of the document itself is also critical. The Chicago Manual of Style offers specific guidelines for citing unpublished materials found in archives.

Citing Manuscript Maps and Plans

Manuscript maps, whether hand-drawn surveys, estate plans, or early topographical sketches, are invaluable for historical geography. When citing such a document, identify the creator if known (e.g., surveyor, landowner), the title or description of the map, the date of creation, and its location within the archive. This includes the name of the repository, the collection title and accession number, and the specific folder or box where the map is housed.

A note might read: "Survey map of the Manor of Ainsworth, 1788, John Smith Papers, Box 14, Folder 3, Bodleian Library, Oxford." The bibliography entry would then provide a more complete citation of the collection. For the author-date system, if the author is a known individual associated with the papers, it might be (Smith 1788), followed by the full reference in the list.

Citing Archival Documents with Geographic Content

Beyond maps, many archival documents contain essential geographic information. This can include land deeds, correspondence describing landscapes, boundary descriptions, or administrative records related to land use or settlement. The citation for these documents follows a similar pattern to manuscript maps, focusing on identifying the author (if an individual), the document type, its date, and its archival location.

For instance, citing a letter detailing land ownership might look like: "Letter from Eleanor Vance to her brother, July 20, 1910, Vance Family Papers, Series III, Correspondence, Box 7, Regional Historical Society

Archive." Precision in specifying the series, sub-series, and folder is crucial for archival research. These details ensure that a reader can precisely retrieve the document you consulted.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices in Historical Geography Citation

Citing historical geography sources presents unique challenges, and awareness of common pitfalls can significantly improve the accuracy and clarity of your work. One of the most frequent issues is inconsistency. Scholars may cite maps in one format and archival documents in another, leading to confusion. Adhering strictly to CMOS guidelines and maintaining a consistent approach across all source types is essential.

Another pitfall is insufficient detail. For historical geography, simply providing a title and author might not be enough if the specific edition or physical copy is important. Always ask yourself if a reader could reasonably locate the exact source you used based on your citation. This often means including scale, projection, repository names, collection numbers, and access dates.

Ensuring Clarity and Verifiability

The ultimate goal of any citation is verifiability. For historical geography, this means providing enough information so that another researcher can find the same map, dataset, or archival document. This often requires going beyond the basic elements and including details specific to the source's nature and location. For digital resources, broken links or outdated URLs are common problems; using persistent identifiers like DOIs is highly recommended.

When citing manuscript materials, ensure you have identified the correct archive and accession numbers. If you are unsure about any element of a citation, consult the archive's finding aids or contact the archivist directly. Their expertise is invaluable in ensuring accurate representation of their holdings.

Maintaining Consistency and Professionalism

The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes consistency above all else. Once you have established a citation style for a particular type of historical geography source (e.g., manuscript maps), apply it uniformly throughout your work. This applies to both footnotes/endnotes and the bibliography/reference list.

Developing a habit of meticulously recording citation information as you

encounter sources is a best practice. This can be done in a research journal, a digital citation manager, or simply a well-organized document. This proactive approach saves considerable time and reduces the likelihood of errors when it comes time to compile your bibliography or review your notes.

By following these detailed guidelines and paying close attention to the specific characteristics of historical geography sources, you can ensure that your citations are accurate, complete, and adhere to the rigorous standards of the Chicago Manual of Style. This not only lends credibility to your research but also aids future scholars in their own investigations into the spatial past.

FAQ

Q: What are the most important elements to include when citing a historical map according to the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: When citing a historical map, the most important elements include the cartographer or surveying body, the title of the map (*italicized*), the publisher, the date of publication, and the scale and projection if relevant. You must also specify the library, archive, or collection where the map is located, including accession numbers or call numbers.

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style handle citations for digital historical geographic data, such as GIS shapefiles?

A: For digital historical geographic data, the Chicago Manual of Style requires you to identify the creator or copyright holder, the dataset title, its version or release date, the repository or source from which it was obtained, and the date of access. If a DOI or persistent identifier is available, it should be included.

Q: What is the difference in citation style between a map found within a book versus a standalone historical map in Chicago style?

A: When a map is found within a book, your citation will first identify the map's details (creator, title, date) and then indicate its location within the larger publication (title of book, editor, publisher, year, page number). For a standalone map, the citation focuses solely on the map itself and its specific repository, without reference to a containing book.

Q: How should I cite an archival document that describes geographical features but is not a map itself?

A: For archival documents that describe geographical features, you should cite the author (if an individual), the document type (e.g., letter, deed, report), its date, and its precise location within the archive, including the archive name, collection name and number, and folder or box designation.

Q: What if the date of a historical map or document is uncertain? How do I handle this in a Chicago Manual of Style citation?

A: If the date is uncertain, the Chicago Manual of Style allows for approximations. You can use "ca." (circa) before a date (e.g., ca. 1750) or use question marks in parentheses (e.g., 1750?) if the date is entirely speculative. It's also good practice to note the basis for your dating if possible, perhaps in a footnote or parenthetical.

Q: Is it acceptable to use the author-date system for historical geography citations in Chicago style?

A: While the notes-bibliography system is more common for historical geography, the Chicago Manual of Style does support the author-date system. If you choose to use it, you must adapt the format to include the necessary details for historical geographic sources, such as cartographer, publication details, and repository information, and ensure it is applied consistently.

Q: How do I cite a historical atlas, and if I reference a specific map within it, how is that handled?

A: When citing a historical atlas, you cite the editor or compiler, the atlas title (italicized), the publisher, and the publication year. To cite a specific map within the atlas, you would typically provide the map's title or description, followed by the atlas citation and the page number where the map appears.

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