Aesthetic Design

As the project progressed we were able to improve upon the overall look and feel of the maps. Designing a continuous series of maps has inherent difficulties. Design decisions made on one map may not be applicable to another; especially with the diversity of terrain the AT traverses in Maine. The northern terminus of the AT at Kathadin (5267 feet) drops to 600 feet within ten miles. No other map in this series illustrates that much vertical rise. Some traverse low wetlands, while others follow ridgelines. We wanted a consistency across the series, but wrestled with the design along the way. Creating an effective and pleasing look and feel of the colorized terrain model and contour lines involved much trial and error. Overall we believe we created a highly effective series of maps beneficial to the hiker, first and foremost, but also helpful to anyone interested in visualizing the AT corridor in Maine. The relief models are subtle; yet represent the undulations of the landscape, with contour lines for added reference. The AT is the most dominant piece of information, followed by the designated lean-tos and campsites. A hiker plans his or her day by the distance and topography between campsites. It was this mindset that governed our design decisions. As I worked on the map, I found myself vicariously hiking the trail; often resting as I came to specific attributes like a lean-to. The design should be equally effective for studying the maps around a kitchen table or huddling along the trail in a stiff wind and rain, perhaps aided by a flashlight. This is the mark of a truly effective design, one that bridges the artistic vision with pure utilitarian use; a map equally at home framed on the wall or crumpled up in the back pocket of an exhausted hiker.

Postscript: The 2005 ACSM/CaGIS 32nd Annual Map Design Competition recognized this series of maps with an Honorable Mention in the Recreational Map category.

See http://www.acsm.net/cagis/04mapwinners.html

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cartographic collections

Illinois Historical Aerial Photography Digital Archive Keeps Growing

By Arlyn Booth, Map Coordinator and Tom Huber, Map Librarian
The Illinois State Library Map Department

The Illinois Historical Aerial Photography Digital Archive, representing the earliest Illinois statewide aerial photography acquired during 1938-1941 (Figure 1), has grown with the addition of twenty more counties. Forty-five counties comprising a total of 15,921 aerial photographs are now accessible through the Illinois Geospatial Data Clearinghouse located at http://www.isgs.uiuc.edu/nsdihome/webdocs/il-hap/. (Figure 2)

The aerial photographs for the latest 20 counties added to the web site, most of which are situated adjacent to the Illinois River, were funded by an Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant to the Illinois State Library (ISL) and the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS). The ArcIMS interactive map service web pages (Figyre 3) have been significantly updated with new layers aiding search strategy, including the USGS 7.5-minute topographic map index, USGS Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) files, and the 1998-2001 USGS Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quadrangle (DOQQ) imagery. Record-level metadata is available
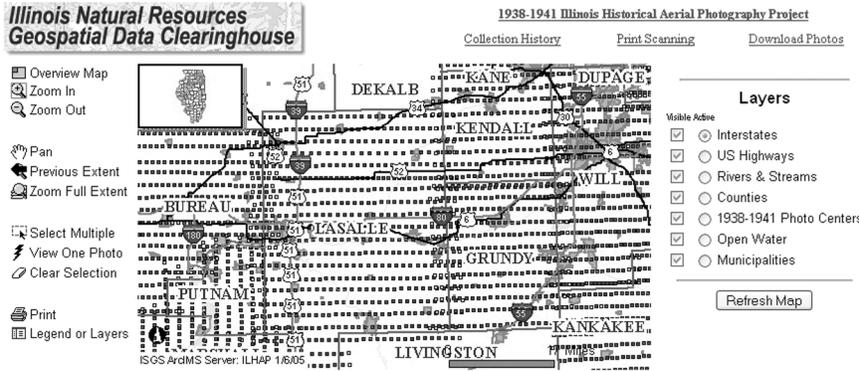

Figure 1. A July 27, 1939 LaSalle County photo.

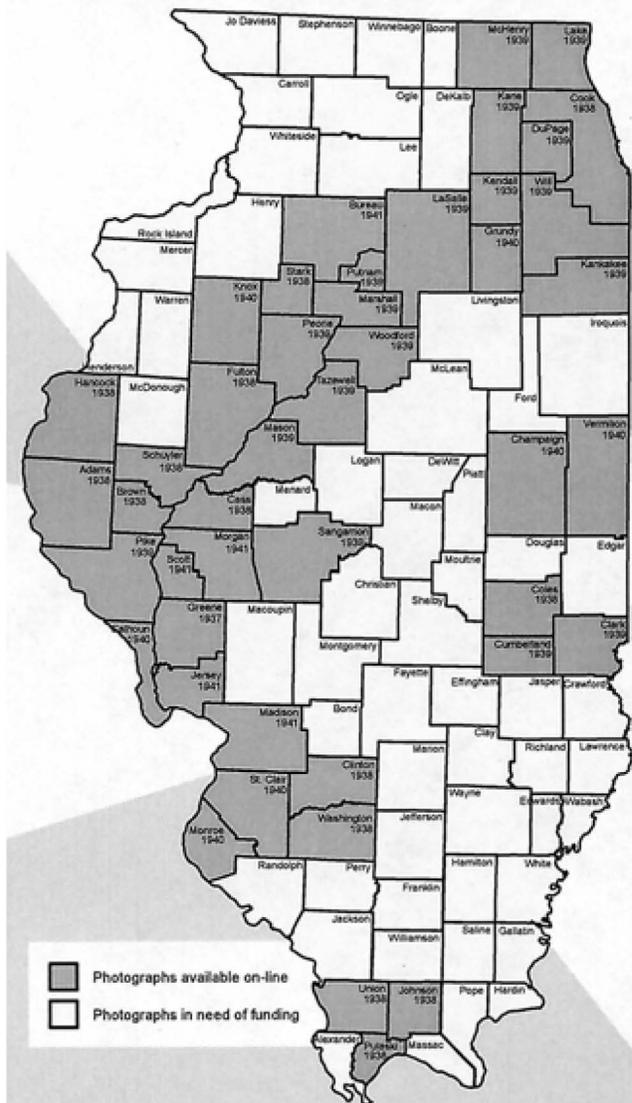*Figure 3. The ArcIMS interactive map.*

Figure 2. The 45 counties now on the Internet.

for each aerial photograph. Access and search of the aerial photography is also provided via text-based web pages for each of the 45 counties.

Scantech Imaging of Champaign, Illinois scanned the 7 x 9 and 9 x 9 inch paper prints, acquired from various aerial photography collections around the state, at 750 dpi in an 8-bit grayscale range, using a Crosfield 646IE drum scanning system. The county indexes were scanned on a large-format document scanner and have been georeferenced to serve as the basis for accessing and searching the digital archive. The individual aerial photographs have not been georeferenced in order that they may serve as digital surrogates of the original prints, and so that stereoscopic viewing capability is maintained. All of the aerial photographs and county indexes are available for free download on the website. The aerial photographs are compressed into MrSID-formatted images, with an ExpressView Browser plug-in available on the web site for download. The original uncompressed TIFF images will be available on CD-ROM from ISL in the future.

ISL and ISGS hope to attract funding to eventually scan the oldest aerial photography for the remaining 57 Illinois counties. The goal is to preserve the oldest statewide aerial photographs first, since their original negatives no longer exist and little or no preservation methods are in place for the existing photographic paper print collections. When the 1938-1941 aerial photographs for Illinois are preserved, it is hoped that efforts can then turn to making later flights accessible via the Internet.

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