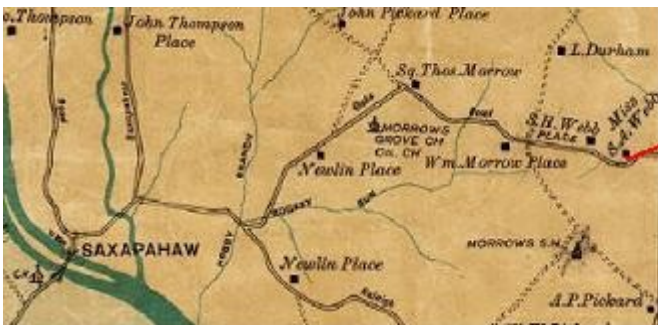


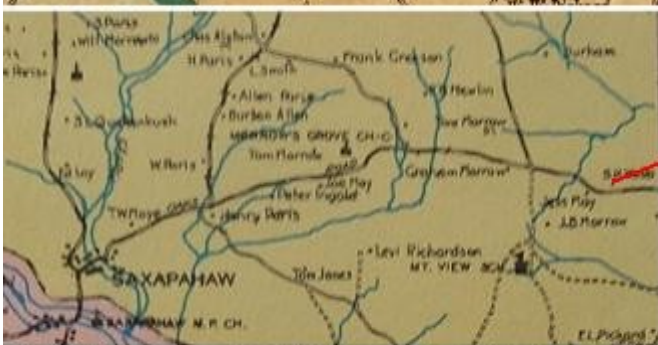
NC Maps: X does mark the spot! Tony Stevenson

I'm sure you've heard the stories – a wealthy colonial landowner in the area, an original church or school site now relocated, your opportunity for the next big score. But where, *exactly*? Oh somewhere in this general 150 acres! Looks like it's back to the schoolyard to pick through woodchips for zincolns. If only someone had drawn a treasure map...

But they did! Of course, there's no X marks the spot, and it wasn't intended to help you find their long lost coins. But historic maps can be an enormous help in researching your newest old coin or relic hotspot. And here in North Carolina, we're particularly blessed with some excellent map resources. Ever want to find the long-lost Battle of Clapps Mill (and the cannon rumored to be buried there)? Several probable locations for Clapp's mill can be found on maps in the collections I'm about to present. You may recall that the pirate treasure aboard the sunken Whydah was recovered in large part thanks to a marking on a 1717 map found in a university library. More likely for us, these maps can be used to find unsearched school, church, or home sites that no one else remembers existed there... until now. If you haven't seen them before, here's the rundown on some of the top places to find historic maps of our area.



**William Luther Spoon
circa 1893**
Miss S. A. Webb



**Spoon, Lewis,
and Camp
1928**
S. H. Webb



**Google Earth
2008**
Victory Calls Stables

North Carolina Maps Project

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/ncmaps/>

The North Carolina Maps Project is a joint venture between the North Carolina Collection, the State Archives, and the Outer Banks History Center to digitize their map collections in a high-quality searchable database. Over three thousand maps are available spanning 500 years of the state's history. The maps are provided with a zoom function showing a great level of detail. Many mark locations of historic homes, businesses, schools, churches, and more.

What you shouldn't miss:

- The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. With holdings from the 1880's and digitized through 1922, the Sanborn maps show homes and businesses in urban areas with a striking amount of detail. Sanborn created maps for more than 150 cities and towns throughout North Carolina.
<http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/ncmaps/sanborn.html>
- William Luther Spoon Map of Alamance County. Spoon was considered one of the more accurate cartographers of his time, and the level of detail and accuracy in this 1893 map of Alamance clearly demonstrates why. Marked on the map are home sites (most with names), schools, churches, roads, cartways, mills, crossing, and more. The wealth of information in this map alone (and it's accuracy in portraying locations) is truly remarkable. As an example, I've located my farm on this map shown above.
http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/ncmaps&CISOPTR=259&CISOBX=1&REC=10
- Rural delivery routes, Alamance County. Drafted between 1910 and 1915, this map shows postal routes, post boxes, roads, houses, schools, stores, railroads, and churches.
http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/ncmaps&CISOPTR=1732&CISOBX=1&REC=19
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The North Carolina Collection at UNC

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/>

While the digitized collection is highly convenient, visiting the North Carolina Collection at UNC's Wilson Library in person can also be helpful. For example, the Sanborn fire insurance maps are only digitized until 1922, but more recent maps in the collection are on file at the University. Use the school's online library catalog to locate what you want before you visit. I've found the staff at the NCC to be incredibly helpful and knowledgeable, so they're also a great resource for your historical questions.

What you shouldn't miss:

- Map of Alamance prepared by Spoon, Lewis & Camp. Not digitized because the copyright is still owned, this 1928 map of the county is (like Spoon's 1893 version) highly detailed. I find this map particularly useful in conjunction with the 1893 map, as the earlier map shows older structures while this more recent version is more accurate in terms of modern road locations. Photocopying of this map is not permitted, so bring a digital camera with you to record your places of interest. As an example, I've located my farm on this map shown

above, and compared the location with the earlier 1893 map and satellite imagery.

<http://webcat.lib.unc.edu/search~S1/?>

search-

type=a&searcharg=spoon+lewis+and+camp&searchscope=1&SORT=D&extended=0&SUBMIT=Search&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=spoon+lewis+camp

US Library of Congress Online Maps Collection:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/>

The Library of Congress is working to digitize its copyright-free historic map collection, which is presented online in a very detailed searchable database. I'm only just beginning to get to know this database, but I'm sure it will be of great use to many of the area relic hunters. Divided into sections such as "cities and towns" or "military battles" (and searchable throughout any or all categories), this collection is quite promising for new hunting leads. And since it's digital, you don't even have to change out of your pj's! Like the NC Maps Project, these maps also provide zoom functionality to see all the details.

In Summary

The best chance we have at finding a piece of history is to start by learning the history of what we're trying to find. Accomplish that, and you've already succeeded (whether you strike gold or not). To learn the history of the locations around you, try pulling out a map. I hope I've shown that historic map resources can be an excellent tool for locating new potential sites, and shown you a few of the abundant places to find relevant maps quickly and easily. So happy hunting, and remember that X may, in fact, mark the spot!