Connecting Places in World Historical Gazetteer

Karl Grossner, PhD

World History Center, University of Pittsburgh, US
The **World Historical Gazetteer** platform

- supports the aggregation, linking, and publication of historical place data contributed by researchers studying the past from many disciplinary perspectives
World Historical Gazetteer
linking knowledge about the past via place

Explore open access, historical place data
Upload and extend your data with geometry and identifiers from Wikidata and Getty TGN
Contribute your uploaded data to WHG by linking it to other places in our index
Teach with WHG-focused lesson plans
Create and share your custom collection of places and datasets published in WHG
Integrate WHG data using our application programming interface

Featured Datasets and Collections

Dutch Global History
The ‘Dutch Global History’ collection will offer users a central point of entry for all Dutch historical place names and other place names related to Dutch history — in the broadest geographical sense. As the collection grows, it will also function as a public resource for the wide range of projects on Dutch history that carry spatial components. The collection is being compiled on an ongoing basis by the KNAW Humanities Cluster from new and existing datasets created by a variety of different institutions, projects, and individual researchers.

D-PLACE
D-PLACE (the Database of Places, Language, Culture, and Environment) contains cultural, linguistic, environmental and geographic information for over 1400 human 'societies'. A 'society' in D-PLACE represents a group of people in a particular localit...

HGBox de las Indias
Historical geography for the Bourbon Spanish America through time (1701-1808), comprising settlements (lugares) and their temporally scoped position within the administrative territorial structure (territories) of that period and region.

https://whgazetteer.org
Outline

• Define some terms
• WHG data
• Users and use cases
  • Research
  • Teaching
• Contribution workflow
• Features:
  • Search, Browse, API
  • Dataset Collections, e.g. Dutch Global History
  • Place Collections
• Future plans
Definitions
What is a gazetteer?

• A \(\text{catalogue/register/list/index/thesaurus}\) of place information
  
  • Web navigation systems, e.g. Google Maps
  • The back of a print road atlas
  • Encyclopedic: Chinese local gazetteers; Wikipedia place pages
  • GeoNames, Getty TGN, Nominatim, etc.

• There is enormous variety in both the kinds of places represented, and the information held for each entry

• WHG is using the Linked Open Data framework to publish (mostly historical) gazetteer datasets, to link individual attestations of closely matched places from multiple sources, and to provide record-level access to the resulting data
A Distinctive combination

- global geographic coverage
- structured, granular temporal information
- attestations of place references by researchers
- Linked Data publishing platform for datasets without web presence
- multiple attestations for a place are linked, effectively linking projects and disciplines
- faceted record-level search across datasets
- machine access via APIs

KNAW HuC, Amsterdam   13 Sep 2022
What is a place?

• “...a meeting up of histories” – Doreen Massey
• NOT simply a location, but a setting for activity
• “Experienced space” -- @kgeographer
What is a WHG place attestation record?

Linked Places format conceptual model
WHG Data
WHG Data

we are **agnostic** as to contributors’ own research data formats!!

researchers create data, *some* of it for places, ...

...in numerous, varied formats
WHG Data

an uploaded dataset, reconciled and made public

**Dataset Summary**

**Title**: Atlas of Mutual Heritage

**ID / label**: 819 / amh_20210622

**Description**: The Atlas of Mutual Heritage is a growing database containing information about, and images of, the charter areas of the V.O.C. (Dutch East India Company) and W.I.C. (Dutch West India Company).

**# Records**: 1322

**Timespan**: earliest: 1417, latest: 1945

**Last modified**: 17 Aug 2022

**Webpage**: https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/

**WHG Permalink**: http://whgazetteer.org/datasets/819

**Creator(s)**: Nationaal Archief (Dutch National Archives), Rijksdienst het Cultureel Erfgoed (Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency), Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Dutch National Library).

**Citation**: Nationaal Archief (Dutch National Archives), Rijksdienst het Cultureel Erfgoed (Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency), Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Dutch National Library). Atlas of Mutual Heritage. (Data file, last modified 17 Aug 2022). Retrieved from http://whgazetteer.org/datasets/819, 12 Sep 2022

- Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

  You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the CC-BY-4.0 license [1], and indicate if changes were made.

**Downloads**

- Linked Places format 📄
  - LP-TSV 📄
a “place portal” page showing four linked attestations for Amsterdam in the WHG union index
linking knowledge about the past via place identifiers
WHG Data

- ~1.9 million places, ~5 million name variants
- 18 public datasets; 1/3 from KNAW
- dozens in queue, from every continent

### Public Datasets

- HGIS de las Indias lugares (13258)
- HGIS de las Indias territorios (892)
- African Ports, 1887 (305)
- D–PLACE Societies (1428)
- Pleiades (partial) (20365)

### Atlas of Mutual Heritage (1322)
- KIT gazetteer Surinam (2146)
- KIT gazetteer Dutch Antilles (1227)
- Curaçao Administrative Areas (29)
- Utrecht Chronicle of the Teutonic Order (181)
- Curaçao Administrative Areas (29)

### In queue (partial)

- Atlases
  - Getty TGN (partial) (1804270)
  - GeoNames Cities (926)
  - Ecoregions (TNC) (814)
  - Watersheds (226)
  - Mountain Ranges (217)
  - Lakes (WRI) (1491)
  - Global Rivers (982)

- Established
  - EuRatlas Cities (3584)
  - An Historical Atlas of Central Asia (759)
  - List of Russian towns, late 14c (282)
  - Indigenous Place Names of the Yukon (100)
  - Geographic Names of Antarctica (63)

- Other libraries
  - al–Thurayya (11c Islam) (2241)
  - Ukrainian settlements, 17c (3007)
  - Rivers of Crimea (74)
  - Populated places of Crimea, 1450–1800 (94)
  - Provinces of Crimea, 1450–1800 (6)
  - Districts of Crimea, 1450–1800 (43)

- Poland
  - Settlements of the 16c (23771)
  - Poland provinces in the 16c (23)
  - Poland districts in the 16c (105)

- Greek
  - French Sci. Mission Greek Settlements (3888)
  - KIMA Gazetteer (27239)
  - CAMPOP Places (4065)
  - Seshat polities (64)
Dataset Collection presentation page(s)

**Title**: Dutch Global History

**Description**: The ‘Dutch Global History’ collection will offer users a central point of entry for all Dutch historical place names and other place names related to Dutch history — in the broadest geographical sense.

**Keywords**: Netherlands, West Indies, East Indies

**Datasets (6)**

1. **Title**: KIT gazetteer Surinam (829)
   **Description**: Gazetteer developed by the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute) in the Netherlands, in order to allow users to produce geographical queries on the KITs Dutch Colonial Maps.
   **Temporal coverage**: 1993 / 2011
   **Created**: 03 Aug 2021
   **Number of records**: 2146

2. **Title**: KIT gazetteer Dutch Antilles (827)
   **Description**: Gazetteer developed by the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute) in the Netherlands, in order to allow users to produce geographical queries on the KITs Dutch Colonial Maps.
   **Temporal coverage**: 1993 / 2011
   **Created**: 01 Aug 2021
   **Number of records**: 1227

3. **Title**: Atlas of Mutual Heritage (819)
   **Description**: The Atlas of Mutual Heritage is a growing database containing information about, and images of, the charter areas of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) and WIC (Dutch West India Company).
   **Temporal coverage**: 1417 / 1945
   **Created**: 22 Jun 2021
   **Number of records**: 1322
Why a World Historical Gazetteer?

Use cases, audiences, contributors
Use cases for research and teaching

• Research
  • Publish place data products of research as Linked Data
  • Georeference place references in source materials, for mapping, analysis
  • Augment place data with missing geometries & authority identifiers
  • Link individual place records & entire datasets with those of other projects
  • Use resulting datasets & Dataset Collections for georeferencing during annotation of source materials

• Teaching
  • Graduate level: building historical gazetteers
  • Secondary level: discovering connections between places and publishing them in Place Collections
Contribution workflow
• Export a place data file from existing research data, in Linked Places format
• Upload into private WHG workspace
• Submit reconciliation task against the WHG index of 3.5m Wikidata place records
• Review resulting prospective matches
• Upon completing metadata, WHG staff flags dataset as public
• Accession to the WHG “union index,” linking your individual place records with those from other projects where applicable; those with no matches are new “seed” records in the index
• Export a place data file from existing research data, in Linked Places format
• Upload into private WHG workspace
• Submit reconciliation task against the WHG index of 3.5m Wikidata place records
• Review resulting prospective matches
• Upon completing metadata, WHG staff flags dataset as public
• Accession to the WHG “union index,” linking your individual place records with those from other projects where applicable; those with no matches are new “seed” records in the index
• Export a place data file from existing research data, in Linked Places format

• Upload into private WHG workspace

• Submit reconciliation task against the WHG index of 3.5m Wikidata place records

• Review resulting prospective matches

• Upon completing metadata, WHG staff flags dataset as public

• Accession to the WHG “union index,” linking your individual place records with those from other projects where applicable; those with no matches are new “seed” records in the index
• Export a place data file from existing research data, in Linked Places format
• Upload into private WHG workspace
• Submit reconciliation task against the WHG index of 3.5m Wikidata place records
  • Review resulting prospective matches
• Upon completing metadata, WHG staff flags dataset as public
• Accession to the WHG “union index,” linking your individual place records with those from other projects where applicable; those with no matches are new “seed” records in the index
• Export a place data file from existing research data, in Linked Places format
• Upload into private WHG workspace
• Submit reconciliation task against the WHG index of 3.5m Wikidata place records
• Review resulting prospective matches
• Upon completing metadata, WHG staff flags dataset as public
• Accession to the WHG “union index,” linking your individual place records with those from other projects where applicable; those with no matches are new “seed” records in the index
• Export a place data file from existing research data.
• Upload into private WHG workspace.
• Submit reconciliation task against the WHG index of 3.5m Wikidata place records.
• Review resulting prospective matches.
• Upon completing metadata, WHG staff flags dataset as public.

• Accession to the WHG “union index,” linking your individual place records with those from other projects where applicable; those with no matches are new “seed” records in the index.
Accessioning: incoming record on the left will join the four indexed records listed in a “cluster” on the right
Features: Search, Browse, API, Teaching
WHG database and index support search, browse, teaching, and API features.
Faceted search with pre- and post-filtering
These datasets flagged as public in WHG include a growing set of historical contributions, as well as several in a non-historical "core." They can be browsed on their linked pages, explored in context of the entire repository on the Search page, and accessed programmatically with our Index and Database APIs.

All such public data are made available under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License, requirements of which appear alongside download links on all Dataset and Collection pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>title</th>
<th>rows</th>
<th>description</th>
<th>modified</th>
<th>contributor</th>
<th>type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Ports, 1887</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>305 settlements and ports on the West African coast</td>
<td>2022-08-31</td>
<td>whgadmin</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Historical Atlas of Central Asia</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>This dataset comprises 759 place records, digitized in 2018 from 15 of the 48 maps in this scholarly atlas. The maps' extensive sources, detailed in the Preface and Notes, include &quot;...all reliable gen...more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlas of Mutual Heritage</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>The Atlas of Mutual Heritage is a growing database containing information about, and images of, the charter areas of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) and WIC (Dutch West India Company).</td>
<td>2022-09-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curaçao Historical Administrative Areas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Spatiotemporal GIS layer of administrative areas (quarters; divisions; districts; urban neighbourhoods) in the island of Curaçao under Dutch, post-WIC control (1792-1954).</td>
<td>2022-07-06</td>
<td>rjstapel</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euratlas Cities</td>
<td>3584</td>
<td>3584 cities with temporally scoped names from the Euratlas Periodic Historical Atlas and Gazetteer. Polities will be added as a separate dataset.</td>
<td>2022-09-07</td>
<td>whgadmin</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Names of Antarctica</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>A sample of geographic names in Antarctica in Gazetteer of the Antarctica, a cooperative project of the the Geological Survey (U.S.), National Mapping Division; National Science Foundation (U.S.).</td>
<td>2022-04-22</td>
<td>al5512</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Browsing public datasets with download feature.

**Dataset Summary**
- **Title**: Atlas of Mutual Heritage
- **ID / label**: B19 / amh.20210622
- **Description**: The Atlas of Mutual Heritage is a growing database containing information about, and images of, the charter areas of the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) and WIC (Dutch West India Company).
- **# Records**: 1322
- **Timespan**: earliest: 1417; latest: 1945
- **Last modified**: 17 Aug 2022
- **Webpage**: https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/
- **WHG Permalink**: http://whgazetteer.org/datasets/B19

**Creator(s)**
- National Archief (Dutch National Archives), Rijksdienst het Cultureel Erfgoed (Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency), Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Dutch National Library)

**Citation**

**Downloads**
- Linked Places format
- LP-TSV

You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the COCDB BY-4.0 license and indicate if changes were made.
Features: Dataset Collections
Dutch Global History
Title: Abigaelslust
Variants: Abigaelslust; Abigaelslust; Abigaelslust;
Types: EST
Links: no links established yet
When: earliest: 1993; latest: 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pid</th>
<th>ccodes</th>
<th>geom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>668666</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6674492</td>
<td>amh_837p</td>
<td>Abuga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66866687</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Acaribo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6674493</td>
<td>amh_313p</td>
<td>Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6674494</td>
<td>amh_809p</td>
<td>Achchuveli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dataset: KIT gazetteer Surinam
KIT gazetteer Dutch Antilles
Atlas of Mutual Heritage
Curacao Historical Administrative Areas
Utrecht Chronicle of the Teutonic Order
Birth places of ordained priests in Utrecht (1505-1518)
Data uploaded as Linked Places format (LPF) are available only in that format. Data uploaded as LP-TSV (delimited text files or spreadsheets) can be downloaded as either LPF or LP-TSV.

**IMPORTANT LICENSING INFORMATION:** Data made public in WHG by its creators are available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License. They can be freely shared, re-used, and adapted, but "you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made." Please see CC-BY-4.0 details, and WHG policy. Citations are provided below. By clicking download on this form, you are agreeing to those terms.

### Datasets (5693 total rows)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Rows</th>
<th>Formats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIT gazetteer Surinam</td>
<td>2146</td>
<td>LPF, LP-TSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIT gazetteer Dutch Antilles</td>
<td>1227</td>
<td>LPF, LP-TSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlas of Mutual Heritage</td>
<td>1322</td>
<td>LPF, LP-TSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curaçao Historical Administrative Areas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>LPF, LP-TSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utrecht Chronicle of the Teutonic Order</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>LPF, LP-TSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth places of ordained priests in Utrecht (1505-1518)</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>LPF, LP-TSV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### File Formats

- **Linked Places format (LPF)** is JSON-based, valid GeoJSON and valid JSON-LD (rdf) with temporal extensions.
- **LP-TSV downloads** are tab-separated text files.
Features: Place Collections

A Place Collection is a set of place records found in publicly accessible datasets within WHG. Place records can be added to a collection individually, in groups, or from entire datasets. Each record in the collection can optionally be annotated with relevant start and end dates, a relation keyword, and notes—all serving to explain the place’s membership in the collection. The collection record itself can include an abstract, keywords, an image, an accompanying essay in PDF format, and up to three links to relevant web resources. Its data can be downloaded for further use.
Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavus Vassa, was born in the Kingdom of Benin, enslaved as a child, and spent his adult life as a sailor, writer, and abolitionist. His autobiography, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, published in 1789, is an important source for understanding enslaved and free lives in the eighteenth century.

Keywords: slavery, Atlantic world

Essay: [The Life of Olaudah Equiano](#)

Created: 29 Jun 2022

Links: The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African (a website); Equiano’s World (a website);
**Title:** The World of Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa), 1745-1797

**Description:**
Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavus Vassa, was born in the Kingdom of Benin, enslaved as a child, and spent his adult life as a sailor, writer.

**Collection keywords:** slavery, Atlantic world

**Annotation keywords:** waypoint, residence

**Image:** [50/questioning900b0730744cf3a.. (change)]

**File:** [50/The_Life_of_Olaudah_Equiano.pdf (change)]

**Links:**
- The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African
- Equiano’s World

**Public:** ✓

**Datasets**

- Jamaica [pid: 85271]
- Livorno [IT] [pid: 8369417]
- London [GB] [pid: 86350]
- Madeira [PT] [pid: 5050966]
- Mediterranean Sea [pid: 86884]
- Montserrat [pid: 87188]
- Mosquito Coast [pid: 87216]
- New York [US] [pid: 4926662]
- New York [US] [pid: 87550]
- Nice [FR] [pid: 87579]
- Norwich [GB] [pid: 87722]

**Places (57)**

**Annotations**

**Title:** Livorno

**Variants:** Liburna, Liburno;

**Relation:** Waypoint

**Start/End:** 1768 / 1768

**Notes:** Livorno was one of Equiano’s ports of call while working for John Jolly on the Delaware.
Future plans

• Plan for sustainability: international consortium? subscription?
• More data
• Make contributing easier
• More Dataset Collections (“focus domains”)
  • e.g. Historical Gazetteer of Ukraine; Portuguese Global History; Historical
    Middle East; Ottoman Empire; Central Eurasia; Latin America; Atlantic
• More and better integrations with external apps
  • e.g. Recogito; NodeGoat; AllMaps; Machines Reading Maps
• Enhance Place Collection capabilities, for teaching and ??
• Region Collections
Thank you!
Questions or comments?

https://whgazetteer.org

karl@kgeographer.org
@kgeographer