



THE LIVES OF CARTOGRAPHERS



Completed By: _____



www.usm.maine.edu/maps

Directions

1. Read the fictional journal entries of each cartographer. Compare what you learn with the Maps, Atlases, and Cartographer Profiles provided separately.
2. Determine which cartographer wrote each journal entry and fill in the box above the fictional journals with the cartographer's name, date of birth, date of death, and country of origin.
3. Complete the booklet by pasting the provided copy of each cartographer's map in the box under their journal entries. (The first cartographer will not have a map).
4. Make sure to fill out the reflection questions for each cartographer.



Introduction

Most people have heard of Christopher Columbus, John Cabot, Magellen, Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain, and John Smith, but few know the stories of the mapmakers who never left Europe: the Hondius and Blaeu families whose maps marked the pinnacle of the Golden Age of Cartography, the mapmakers caught up in the Reformation such as Gerardus Mercator and Olaus Magnus, or the English and French mapmakers who led the campaign for mathematically correct maps free of unscientific mythology.

The Influences

Most of the maps that we have from Europe during the Middle Ages are based on the writings of early Catholic scholars. For instance, the Venerable Bede wrote that the three sons of Noah, characters in the Bible, settled the three continents of the world: Europe, Asia, and Africa. Thus, many medieval maps include “Sem” next to Asia, “Japhet” next to Europe, and “Cam” next to Africa.

Maps changed greatly after Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453. Ancient Greek and Roman manuscripts were smuggled to Rome for safekeeping. Europeans had not seen some of these books for many centuries, and they were amazed at how much information was contained in the Greco-Roman manuscripts. Perhaps the most important classical (Greco-Roman) writer in regards to maps was especially popular during the 1400 and 1500s. While we have no way of knowing if he ever made maps, he wrote a book describing how to map the earth mathematically using latitude and longitude.



Name: CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY

Born: 90

Country of Origin: EGYPT

Died: 168

120 – about age 30:

It is strange to think that I am of three different nations. My family is Greek, yet we are Roman citizens. Still, I’ve never been to Greece or Italy in my life. I’ve spent my full 30 years in Egypt, and if I had to choose, Egypt is my true home. I feel so fortunate to be able to live in Alexandria. After all, there is no library in the world equal to ours, and nothing sounds worse to me than living away from the light of knowledge.

165 – about age 75:

I once had the opportunity to travel to Greece. My friends urged me to stay in Alexandria where it was safe, and I listened. Sometimes I wonder what I could have seen. I am an old man now, though, and I’ve learned that regrets do not accomplish anything. My life has been what it has been, and I believe that I’ve enjoyed it as much as anyone has a right to. I’ve spent much of my life inside the walls of the Alexandria library, where I’ve had the privilege of reading the words of men who lived long ago. I’ve made it a priority to write my own words as well. Perhaps hundreds of years in the future, men will read my words and wonder at the past.

Reflection Questions

What about this cartographer’s **life** stands out most to you? _____

What about this cartographer’s **map** stands out most to you? _____



Name: ISIDORE OF SEVILLE

Born: 556

Country of Origin: SPAIN

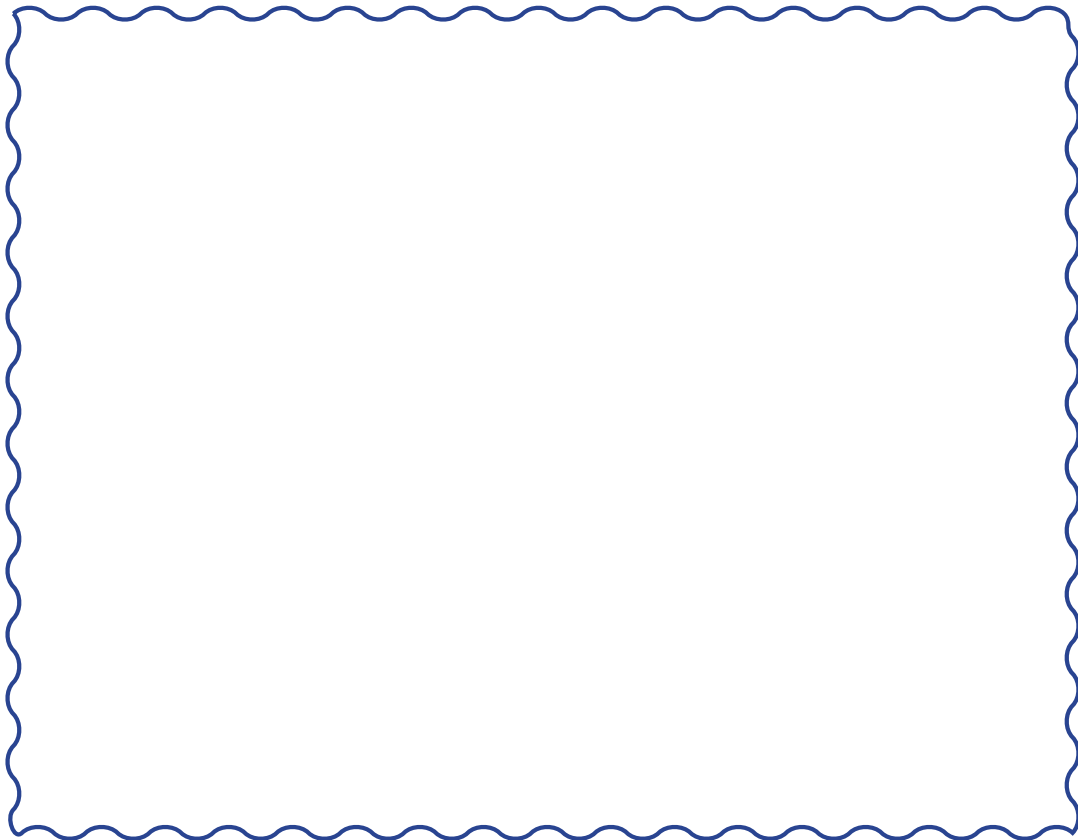
Died: 636

580 – about age 20:

Sometimes I feel trapped. It was always expected that I would take vows for the Church, but I have to wonder what would have happened had I not followed in the path set for me. I tried to explain this to my brother once, but he only grew indignant. He has always wanted to be a part of the authority of the Church, and does not understand why anyone would feel otherwise. Still, I am happy with my lot in life. It is a comfortable one. And I have the opportunity to read and learn, where most men do not. Someday I hope I can write my own book, explaining everything I've learned from my studies. But I am only twenty—I have much more learning to do first.

630 – about age 70:

I have been archbishop of Seville for 30 years now. I am glad that I did not do anything foolish when I was a young man. I would not trade my experiences for any of the adventures I used to dream of. I have had enough adventure in my readings. My encyclopedia has been received with great success, and is being copied by 12 monks. It contains everything I've learned in my 70 years on earth.



Reflection Questions

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The Printing Press

Cartography changed drastically when Johannes Gutenberg invented his printing press. Before the invention of the Gutenberg's press, the only way to have multiple copies of a document was to painstakingly copy them by hand, making them rare and expensive. With the printing press, however, one could produce thousands of copies of a page or map in a short period of time.

Within a few decades, printing presses were in use throughout Europe. During the Middle Ages, books and maps had been too expensive for anyone but the very wealthy to purchase, but by the 1500s, many Europeans would be able to afford a book or map, albeit a relatively cheap one.

Most of these maps would be printed in the Netherlands, who, due to their fight against the Spanish, developed a strong economy in the late 1500s. This, in turn, led to the country becoming the center of map publication. A few prominent Dutch families produced grand, hand-colored atlases, causing many to consider the late 1500s and early 1600s the "Golden Age of Cartography."

The Reformation and Renaissance Mapmakers

During the Renaissance, which literally means "rebirth," culture was revitalized with new interest in the Classical arts and scholarship. New cartographic development was one outcome of the Renaissance. Another outcome was the Reformation. As religious groups broke away from the Catholic church, there was new reason to make maps. The Reformation was received with incredibly violent backlash. Regions began to produce maps, in part to help them defend their borders. For instance, when the Pope declared that any Catholic would be justified in killing the protestant Queen Elizabeth of England, she responded by commissioning a survey and map of England's coasts. From the resulting maps, England created a network of alarm beacons.



Name: OLAUS MAGNUS

Born: 1490

Country of Origin: SWEDEN

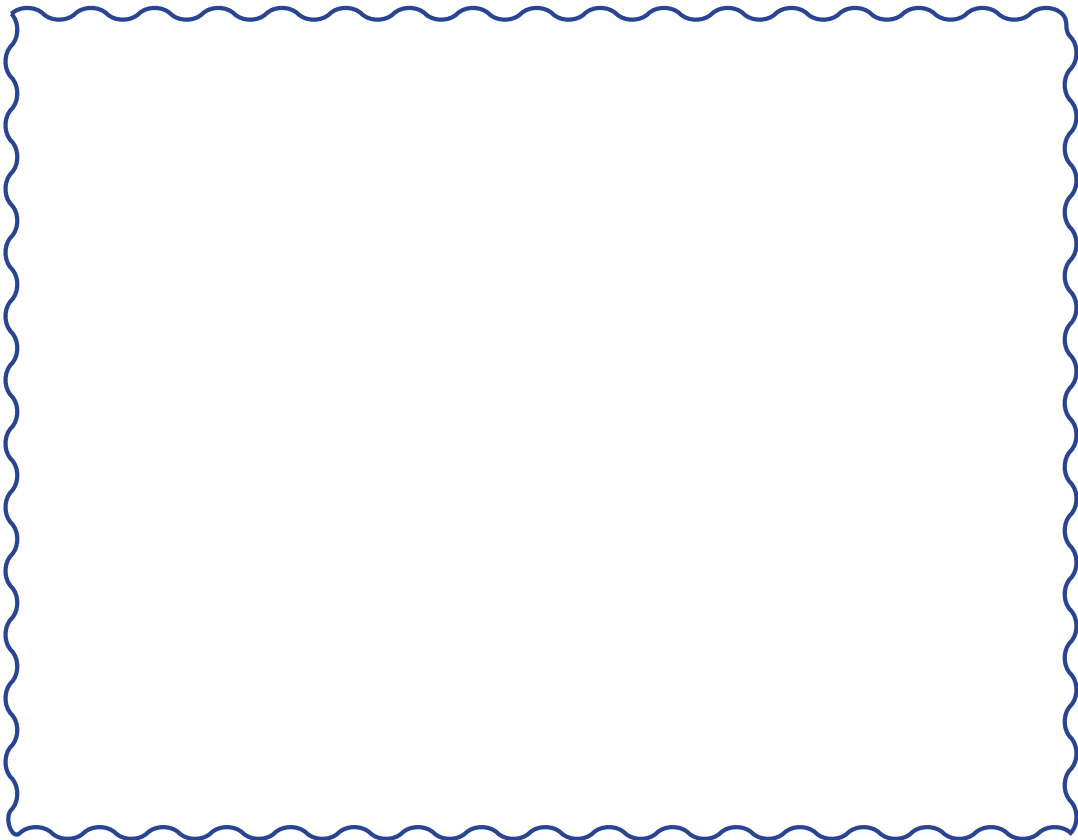
Died: 1558

1510 – age 20:

Bjorn repeated a disturbing rumor today. He had the nerve to wonder aloud if Sweden could ever fall to the blasphemy of Martin Luther, which has ravaged the souls of many further south. I told him to hold his tongue and that it was verging on heresy to doubt the power of the true church in Sweden. But if I were to be truly honest, I am more fearful of what he said than angry. If the heresy did take root here, everything my family has worked for would be undone. My brother and I may even have to flee because of his high position in the church.

1537 – age 47:

The unthinkable has happened. I am now living in Rome, far from my home country. Far from even the region of Scandinavia. Thankfully, I've been used to travel throughout my life, so it is not such a shock to me as it is to my brother. He is now an Archbishop in only name, and does not like the climate of this place. I miss my home as well, but I will not let it discourage me. I have decided to write a history of the Scandinavian people. Few people know anything about my home, but perhaps I can change that.



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Name: SEBASTIAN MUNSTER

Born: 1488

Country of Origin: GERMANY

Died: 1552

1528 – age 40:

I wonder how many men have made the worst mistake of their lives at 18. Perhaps more than just me. I feel so trapped now. I harbor no ill feelings towards my Franciscan brothers, but I am forced to live in Heidelberg, far from my friends in Basel. Worst of all, far from my lovely Anna, who has been alone since Adam's death over a year ago. I cannot even have her move to me, since I am not allowed to marry as a monk. I can only pray that my elders will see the wisdom of releasing me from my vows.

1550 – age 62:

I have come a long way in the past 20 years. I am far from being a Franciscan monk—in fact, I was named an “enemy of the Roman Church” almost 15 years ago! As long as Basel remains in the control of Protestants, however, I don't have to worry about being arrested. Right now I am more worried about how I am going to afford Aretia's dowry. Anna is insistent that our daughter being well provided for in her new life, but I am concerned that Anna and I will have to live in a tree after the wedding. But as much as I complain about Aretia's dowry, I have much bigger concerns on my mind. I've heard rumors of the Black Death further south of here. While I've avoided mentioning it to Anna, I cannot help but feel a sense of foreboding. Perhaps I am just getting old.



Reflection Questions

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Name: GEMMA FRISIUS

Born: 1508

Country of Origin: BELGIUM

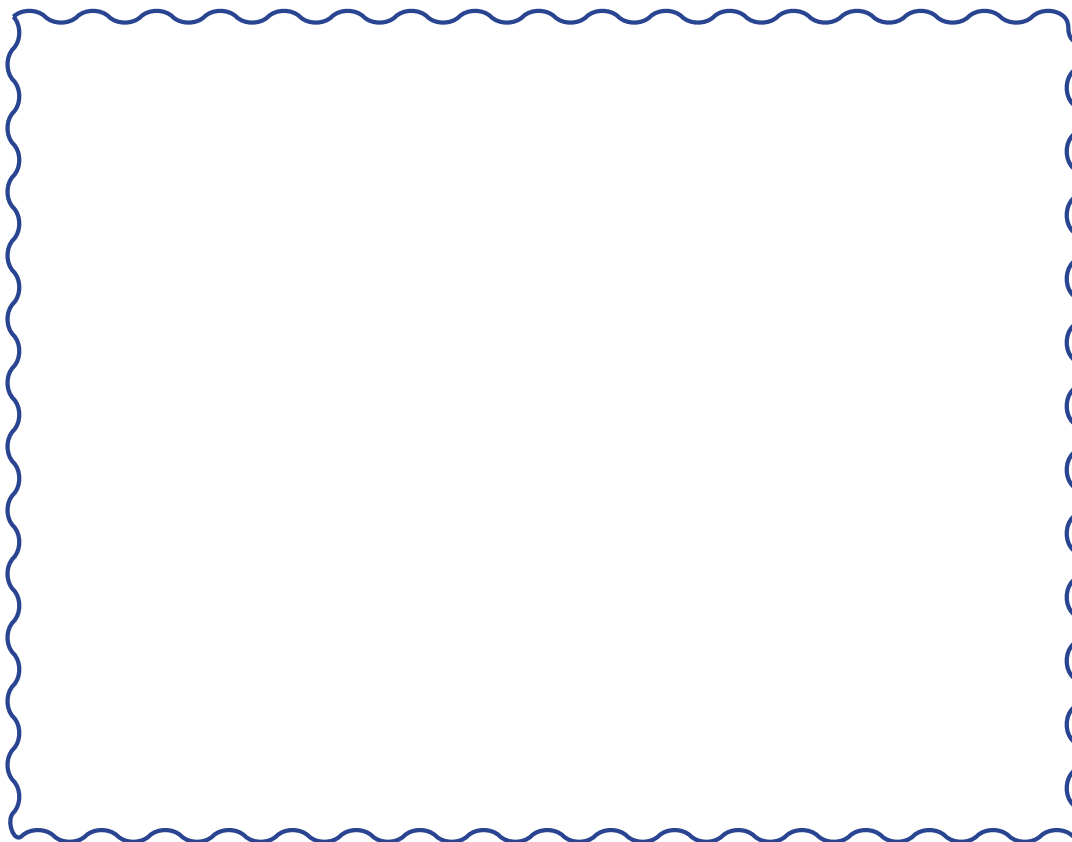
Died: 1555

1525 – age 17:

My cloak has a hole the size of an apple. I won't miss this poverty when I go to Lily College. Thankfully they have seen my abilities and granted me a poor student's seat there! I will miss my stepmother, however. Since my father died when I was young, she is the only family I have. She cared for me when I couldn't walk until the age of 6, and provided for me ever since. I know she is so pleased that I am going to university, however. I'm glad to make her proud.

1548 – age 40:

I have loved my position here at the University at Louvain. Even during the difficult times, like the siege of 1542. My students have become good friends to me and some have even become my colleagues. Gerardus Mercator comes to mind. He has had a difficult journey in some ways, having been imprisoned for heresy several years ago, but it seems he is doing well these days. He and Barbara have six children now, and his sons seem to enjoy mapmaking like their father. My own son, Cornelius, also shares my interests. He hopes to be a professor at Louvain University like me someday.



Reflection Questions

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Name: GERARDUS MERCATOR

Born: 1512

Country of Origin: FLANDERS/ HOLLAND

Died: 1594

1533 – age 21:

I am very optimistic these days. When I was young, I thought I would have to be a travelling shoemaker like my parents, but now that I'm training with the famous Gemma Frisius, I have a world of opportunities open to me. Hopefully Barbara Schelleken's father can recognize that. I've decided that I want to marry her more than anyone, even though her dowry might not be as large as Ursula's.

1593 – age 81:

My sons accuse me of being an old man. They are right of course, but what else am I going to be at the age of 81? They do not understand the importance of being careful in our maps. Even though decades have passed since my imprisonment, I do not forget that the politics of religion can be our worst enemy. Perhaps they are right to believe that we are safe from retaliation, but I still want the maps in our *Atlas* to carefully avoid saying anything controversial. I may be old, but my sons still have a lot to lose.



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Name: ABRAHAM ORTELIUS

Born: 1527

Country of Origin: HOLLAND

Died: 1598

1545 – age 18:

I have made a large amount of money as a colorist in this past year. As my reputation grows, I hope I'll be able to save even more money. I love to color maps, and my sister and I have often dreamed of opening our own shop someday. Perhaps map-dealing would be a good investment.

1595 – age 68:

It is hard to believe that *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* has sold almost 2000 copies already! It has been more successful than I ever dared to dream. My only regret is that my good friend Gerardus Mercator will never see my latest edition. He has always supported and inspired me in my mapmaking, and his death last year is still keenly felt.



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Name: JODOCUS HONDIUS

Born: 1563

Country of Origin: FLANDERS/ HOLLAND

Died: 1612

1593 – Age 30

I am eager to return to the Low Countries for the first time in almost a decade. As a Calvinist, I fled to England rather than submit to Catholicism when Spanish forces conquered my hometown of Ghent in September of 1584.

Only 21 at the time, it was difficult to be hopeful on the journey to London, but the Lord used my exile for good.

I was able to study under two excellent cartographers, Richard Hakluyt and Edward Wright, and am now prepared to go into business as a map seller when I finally arrive in Amsterdam.

1612 – Age 49

Life has been good to Coletta and me in Amsterdam. Our children are healthy and dutiful, and our map-making business has prospered ever since I purchased Gerard Mercator's map plates in 1595. Our daughter, Elisabeth, is soon to marry a promising young man by the name of Jan Jansson. Though he is still young, only 24, his connections among publishers will provide security for them. I feel great peace of mind knowing that if anything happens to me, Elisabeth will be cared for and Coletta will be able to run the business with the help of our teenage sons—Henricus is especially diligent in helping out in the shop, even though he

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Name: HENRICUS HONDIUS

Born: 1597

Country of Origin: HOLLAND

Died: 1651

1613 – age 16:

I feel like I haven't sat down in weeks. Ever since father died, we have been working hard to keep the business running. Jodocus and Mother finally forced me to take a day off, which is how I am able to take a few minutes to write.

1630 – age 33:

Jan has convinced me. I will re-enter the mapmaking business, which makes him and Elizabeth extremely happy. He has had great success in the book publishing business, but has grown very interested in maps ever since marrying my sister. I only regret having sold our engraved plates to Willem Blaeu last year. At the time, however, I couldn't imagine continuing to make maps without Jodocus by my side. My brother died much too young.



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Name: JAN JANSSON

Born: 1588

Country of Origin: HOLLAND

Died: 1664

1611 – age 23:

I like Amsterdam. I wasn't sure at first, but there is a great opportunity for book publishers here. And I can't wait to marry Elizabeth Hondius next year! I have enjoyed getting to know her family. Jodocus II and Henricus are still very young, but are incredibly funny together. Last week they made a simple engraving of Coletta—I suppose I should call her Mrs. Hondius—dressed in Jodocus the Elder's business clothes. While everyone had to admit that she could probably run the shop just as well as Jodocus, the old man was not amused. He was upset that he had to remelt the expensive copper plate.

1630 – age 42:

I've finally done it! Henricus has agreed to reopen the mapmaking business with me. Elizabeth was not sure that he would be willing to make maps without Jodocus, but she is relieved to be wrong. Henricus has great skill, and it would be a shame to waste it.



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Name: WILLEM BLAEU

Born: 1571

Country of Origin: HOLLAND

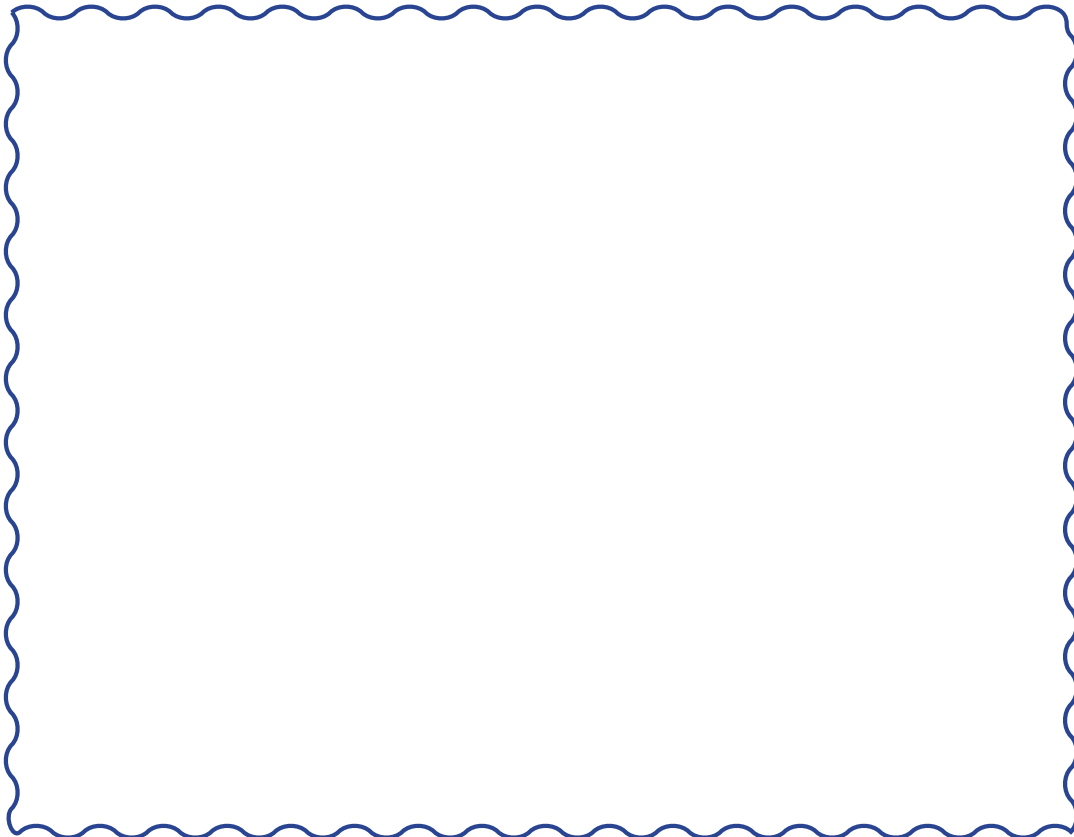
Died: 1638

1601 – age 30:

I can't believe I am thirty years old this year! Time has gone by so fast. I never dreamed that I would be able to be a globe-maker in Amsterdam. If my father had his way, I would have become a herring packer like him. Maertgen often remarks that she is glad that I smell like a globe-maker and not a herring packer. We really have my old teacher, Tycho Brahe, to thank. Without his support, it would have been difficult for me to gain the skills and reputation needed to support myself the way I wanted to.

1635 – age 64:

I've been appointed hydrographer of the Dutch East India Company! Receiving word of the appointment made me remember my first atlas, so Maertgen and I pulled out an old copy of The Light of Navigation. While I was very happy with it when it was published over 25 years ago, it is nothing compared to our new atlases. Ever since we bought Mercator's map plates from Henricus Hondius 6 years ago, our atlases have become even better. We include our own original engravings as well, of course. Joan is especially skilled at mapmaking. Out of our seven children, I would say he is perhaps the most diligent.



Reflection Questions

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Name: JOAN BLAEU

Born: 1596

Country of Origin: HOLLAND

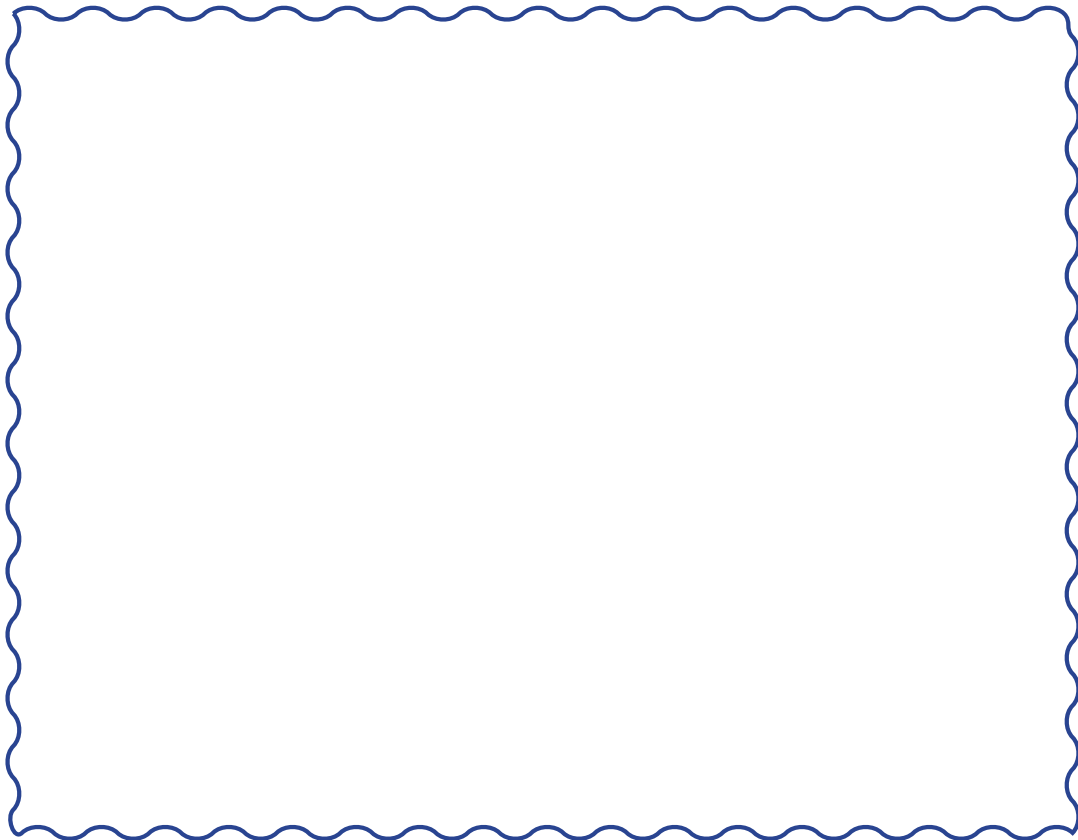
Died: 1673

1641 – age 45:

Geertruid is annoyed again. I've been so busy in the shop that she hasn't seen nearly enough of me. What can I do, though? I've got to provide for her and our six children, and since Cornelius died three years ago, I've had to take over a lot of the responsibility for the business. After all, she wants to have as big a house as Elizabeth Jansson next door. And with Henricus Hondius and Jan Jansson's success in the map business, I have to work even harder to compete.

1672 – age 76:

The Blaeu mapmaking business is over. Geertruid is sympathetic, but I can't help but suspect that she's glad the warehouse fire destroyed nearly all of our equipment. She's been after me for years to slow down. I'm far too old to rebuild the business, and I don't believe any of our sons are interested in inheriting it anyway. Still, we've had great success over the years. I finally produced an atlas larger than Jan Jansson's—eleven volumes!



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Bonus

For the most part, the major mapmakers of the “Golden Age of Cartography” all knew each other. Using the information found on the Cartographer Profiles and in the fictional journal entries, complete the chart below.

GEMMA FRISIUS taught GERARDUS MERCATOR, who was good friends with ABRAHAM ORTELIUS. GERARDUS MERCATOR also sold his engraving plates to JODOCUS HONDIUS, who left them to his son, HENRICUS HONDIUS, who then sold them to WILLEM BLAEU. When _____ died, the plates went to *his* son JOAN BLAEU, ~~who made maps with his brother-in-law,~~ _____.

The Enlightenment Mapmakers

With the arrival of the Enlightenment, people turned to reason and science to address questions and issues, rather than to the Catholic church. People also began to feel that humans should be free to live and believe as they wished. The centers of enlightenment, largely France, and to a lesser extent, England, also became the centers of mapmaking.



Name: JOHN OGILBY

Born: 1600

Country of Origin: ENGLAND

Died: 1676

1642 – age 42:

Once again, my career is destroyed. When I broke my leg while performing for the king, my years as a dancer were over. It was with great relief that I accepted the position offered to me by Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. I've enjoyed teaching dance to his children over the past several years. His role in last year's Irish Rebellion, however, has earned him an execution. Now I must retreat to London. There is nothing for me in Dublin any longer. Perhaps I will enter the book publishing business when I'm back in England, since I always did love the classics.

1666 – age 66:

For the third time, everything I've worked for has been taken from me. Like many other businessmen, my book publishing business was carried away by the Great London fire. As always, my wife, Christian, is there to encourage me. I've decided that I will offer my services to map the burned part of London. Who knows? Maybe it will lead into a fourth career for me.

Reflection Questions

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Name: GUILLAUME DELISLE

Born: 1675

Country of Origin: FRANCE

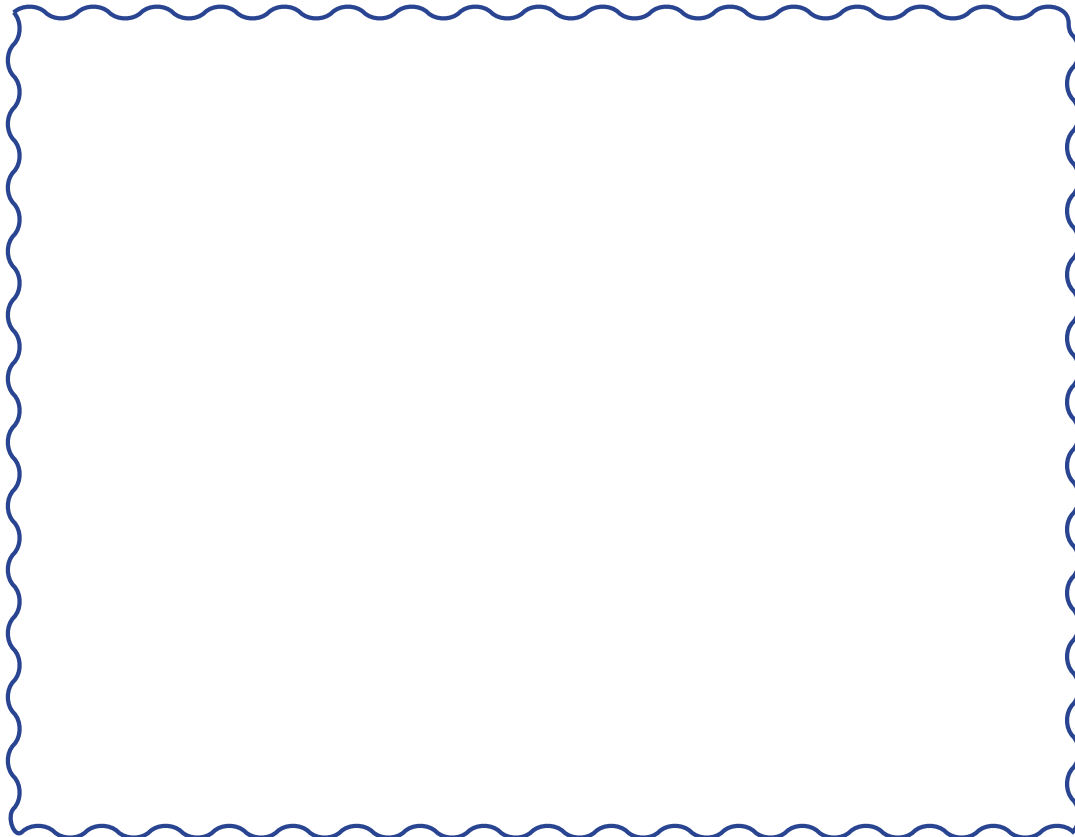
Died: 1724

1690 – age 15:

I am always competing with my brothers for my father's approval. Or at least that's how it feels. That's why I was so excited yesterday when he saw a map I'd drawn, and was very impressed. It was hard not to gloat to my brothers. We all want to be cartographers like our father.

1705 – age 30:

Sure enough, all three of us sons have become cartographers. My brothers are much more adventurous than I, but even though I'll probably never see Russia, I believe I can make very accurate maps by simply relying on scientific observations rather than myths.



Reflection Questions

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What about this cartographer's **map** stands out most to you? _____



Name: EMMANUEL BOWEN

Born: 1714

Country of Origin: BRITAIN

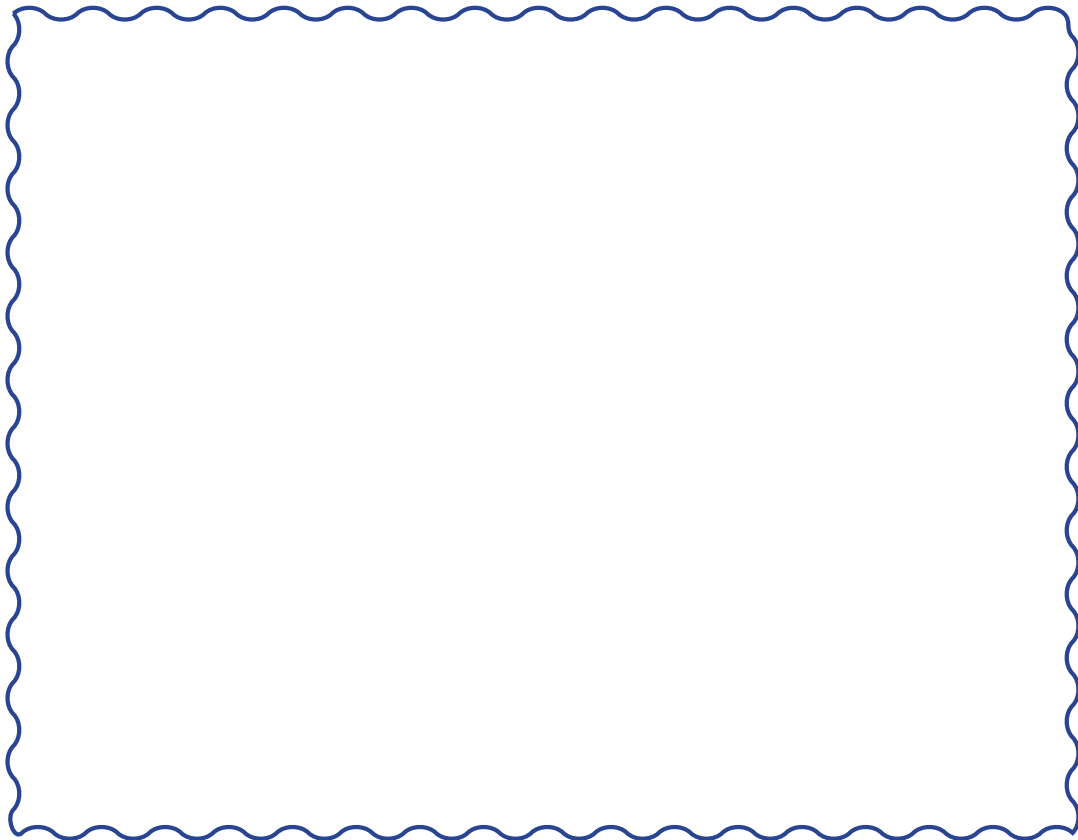
Died: 1767

1724 – age 10:

I was very sad yesterday. I read in the papers that Guillaume Delisle has died. He's always been one of my favorite mapmakers. His maps are so much more accurate than a lot of other maps, and he doesn't need to include a lot of pictures to make a beautiful map. That's the kind of cartographer I want to be when I grow up.

1767 – age 53:

My career as a cartographer has been very successful by some standards. After all, both the French and English monarchies have named me "Royal Engraver of Maps." Still, it turns out that I am a terrible businessman. Today, I am practically broke. My son, Thomas, wants to take over the cartography business. I hope he has a better business sense than I do!



Reflection Questions

What about this cartographer's **life** stands out most to you? _____

What about this cartographer's **map** stands out most to you? _____

Image Credits

Blaeu, Joan

Portrait: painting by J. Van Rossum,
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Map: Osher Collection; OS-1662-3

Blaeu, Willem

Portrait: engraving by Jeremias Falck,
commons.wikimedia.org

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1608-1

Bowen, Emmanuel

Portrait: original illustration by author,
compilation of 18th century portraits
**physical appearance is unknown*

Map: Smith Collection; SM-1748-6

Delisle, Guillaume

Portrait: engraving by Conrad Westermayr,
commons.wikimedia.org

Map: Smith Collection; SM-1745-6

Frisius, Gemma

Portrait: original illustration by author,
based on historic engraving of Frisius

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1584-2

Hondius, Henricus

Portrait: original illustration by author,
based on historic portrait of Hondius

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1633-7

Hondius, Jodocus

Portrait: detail from H. Hondius'
Nova Totius Terrarum, 1633

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1628-1

Isidore, Bishop of Seville

Portrait: original illustration by author,
based on statue by Jose Alcoverro at the
National Library of Spain

Map: Diagram by author,
based on Isidore's untitled T-O Map, 1472

Jansson, Jan

Portrait: original illustration by author,
based on historic engraving of Jansson

Map: Smith Collection; SM-1640-3

Magnus, Olaus

Portrait: woodcut from *Historia*

**physical appearance is unknown*

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1565-6

Mercator, Gerard

Portrait: detail from H. Hondius'
Nova Totius Terrarum, 1633

Map: Original map by author based on
world maps using Mercator projection

Munster, Sebastian

Portrait: woodcut from *Geographia*, 1545

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1555-1

Ogilby, John

Portrait: from 1660 edition of the *Iliad*
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Map: Osher Collection; OS-1675-4

Ortelius, Abraham

Portrait: frontispiece from

Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1595

Map: Osher Collection; OS-1570-3

Ptolemy, Claudius

Portrait: detail from H. Hondius'
Nova Totius Terrarum, 1633