

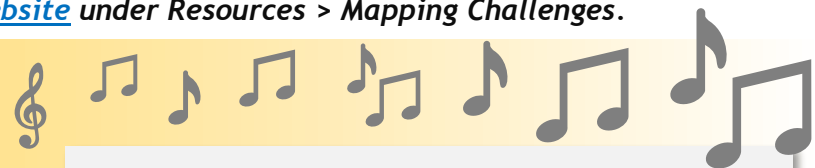


Mapping Challenges Updates

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	LENGTH (DAYS)	# OF UNIQUE POINTS	# OF VOLUNTEERS
Fire Stations	TN	4/1/21 - present	(See our original post from 4/1/21 for tips and tricks on this challenge)		
City / Town Halls	KY / TN	4/1/21 - 4/29/21	28	309	7
City / Town Halls	KS / OK	3/18/21 – 4/1/21	14	102	6
(March 2021 Newsletter)					
Fire Stations	AR	2/11/21 – 3/25/21	42	1,156	21
City / Town Halls	NC	2/11/21 – 3/18/21	35	478	10
Schools	CA / NV	2/18/21 – 3/18/21	28	2,117	13
Fire Stations	CA / NV / AZ	1/28/21 – 2/18/21	21	706	14

All challenge updates are listed on our [website](#) under Resources > Mapping Challenges.

Ready for some country music and horse races? Now that we're done dabbling at the beach, mapping challenges have followed the yellow brick road through Kansas and Oklahoma to the green, rolling hills of Kentucky and Tennessee. The table above shows challenges completed since our last newsletter was released along with new challenges launched.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 [Mapping Challenges Updates](#)
- 2 [Misspellings in Road Signs: What to Do](#)
- 4 [Neat Find: Post Office on an Interstate](#)
- 5 [3000 Historical Cemeteries in Rhode Island. Really???](#)
- 7 [Geography-Inspired Volunteer Art](#)
- 8 [Recognition Shout-Out: TucsonKen](#)
- 8 [Overview of the National Structures Dataset](#)
- 9 [TNMCorps Team Corner: Structures Team](#)
- 10 [Recognition](#)



Misspellings in Road Signs: What to Do

Typos and misspellings are an everyday occurrence. If I had a penny for each time I typed a word too fast and went back to correct its spelling, it'd be like winning the lottery! (Thank goodness the days of the typewriter have passed, and we now have spellcheck...)



Occasionally typos slip through the review process and into final products. In formal writing, a common practice for authors using a direct quote with an error in it is to carry the error over along with the “[sic]” notation to clarify that the error was in the quoted source and not the transcription.

But typos aren't just a problem for journalists or writers. Even though our primary focus is geography, TNMCorps encounters typos and misspellings on a regular basis. We've encountered them in road signage, on commercial mapping services, in street numbers, even on historic topos.

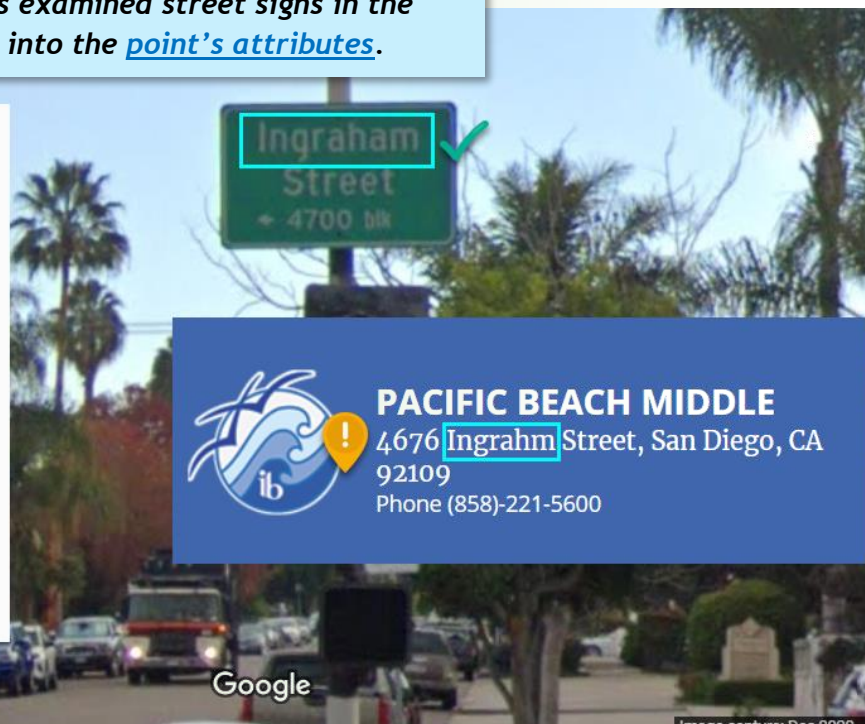
So, what should you do if you encounter a misspelling in your research? We tell our volunteers to make sure a point's name and address match its authoritative source, so does that mean you should carry the misspelling over into the point's attributes, too? Not necessarily. It would look pretty odd to see a map with an occasional “[sic]” in its street and/or point labels, don't you think?

If you encounter a misspelling or typo during your research, please correct the error when transferring information from an [authoritative source](#) to a point. Below, we've highlighted a few examples and the correct way to update the corresponding point. The intent of these examples is not to point out flaws or to embarrass anyone, but rather to provide guidance on how to correct the mistake.

Examples

[Pacific Beach Middle School](#) in San Diego, CA has a misspelling in the street name on the school's website. To correct this, volunteers examined street signs in the vicinity and incorporated the correct spelling into the [point's attributes](#).

Name	Pacific Beach Middle School
GNIS ID	
Address 1	4676 Ingraham Street ✓
Address 2	
City	San Diego



PACIFIC BEACH MIDDLE
4676 **Ingrahm** Street, San Diego, CA
92109
Phone (858)-221-5600

Google

Image capture: Dec 2020

Continued on [next page](#)

Misspellings in Road Signs: What to Do (Continued)

[Pasco County Fire Rescue Station 29](#) has some figures transposed in the street number on its website. Volunteers determined this by examining roadside signage for the station which also shows the street number. Volunteers transcribed the correct street number when updating [this point](#).

Station 29

Pasco County Fire Rescue Station 29 proudly serves the Zephyrhills community of Pasco County.

Station 29 is located at 6709 Dairy Rd, Zephyrhills, FL 33542



Name

GNIS ID

Address 1

Address 2

City

Typo

[Campbell Cemetery](#) has a misspelling in its roadside signage which volunteers changed to the correct spelling according to [Merriam Webster](#).



Name

GNIS ID

Address 1



Neat Find: Post Office on an Interstate

One neat thing about volunteering for TNMCorps is that you get to take virtual tours of different communities throughout the country. When doing so, it's only a matter of time before you come across what we like to call a "neat find", or something out of the ordinary.



This month's neat find is a post office with an address placing it on the interstate. When you think of addresses, you probably don't normally associate them with a location on an interstate. That's what threw us for a loop when the [Valmy Post Office](#) (zip-code 89438) surfaced. As we were reviewing this point, we did a double-take to make sure we were seeing things correctly because [USPS.com](#) lists an exit number off an interstate as a street address! We even copied and pasted the address into a desktop application where we could change the font to make sure we weren't mistaking the capital letter "I" for a lower-case "l", the number "1" or a special character known as a vertical pipe ("|"). But sure enough, this post office is situated in the middle of the desert off I-80 in Nevada.

[Google Maps](#)



[Waymarking](#)



VALMY — Post Office™

1 | 80 W EXIT 216
VALMY, NV 89438-9800

Street Parking Available

**For facility accessibility, please call
the Post Office.**

We've featured various other "neat finds" over the years, some of which were submitted by volunteers. Be sure to check them out here:

- [The Longest Place Name in the U.S.](#) (March 2018)
- [Rare Find: 4 High Schools in One](#) (March 2019)
- [Neat Find: Zero for a Street Number](#) (May 2019)
- ["Lots" of Zeros](#) (July 2019)
- [detour's Fun Find](#) (January 2021)

If you've encountered a "neat find" that you'd like to share with us, [send us a message](#) and we'll put it in our next newsletter!

3000 Cemeteries in Rhode Island. Really???

by cgibson

You may have read in a past newsletter that there are [two TNMCorps volunteers](#) who have teamed up to get Rhode Island's historical cemeteries on the National Map. And wow, is teamwork definitely needed, because there are about 3000 historical cemeteries crammed into the tiny state of Rhode Island! In fact, Rhode Island has a 6 to 10- times higher density of cemeteries than any other nearby state. Not only are there a mind-boggling number of cemeteries, but many of them are small family plots with only a few burials, and they are scattered all over the landscape: tucked into backyards, on the lawns of office parks, preserved on [highway median strips](#), or hiding in the woods miles from modern roads. Most are not recorded on historic topographic maps or on The National Map, which means that each cemetery has to be verified by combining a careful study of aerial imagery, a review of information in [Rhode Island's Historic Cemetery Commission Database](#), and boots-on-the-ground field checking. How is it possible that miniature Rhode Island has so many cemeteries, and why are they scattered all over the place?



The [Hunt Family Lot Cemetery](#) is located in a median on Route 1 (Post Road) in North Kingstown, Rhode Island.

First, it's important to emphasize that we're talking about historic cemeteries created by European settlers in this article, not about Native Americans burial places. The Native Americans who lived in New England for thousands of years before European colonization had their own cultural and spiritual practices associated with death and burial. Contemporary Native Americans often prefer that the burial places of their ancestors remain private, so we're focusing on European-American cemeteries here.

So, what's going on in Rhode Island, and why is verifying all those cemeteries such a challenge? In order to understand the pattern of European-American cemeteries in Rhode Island, and why it's so different from the rest of New England, we have to reach back about 400 years, and take a quick detour into some early history regarding the early colonization of the northeast US.

Close your eyes and picture New England. Even for folks who don't live here or have never visited, the picture that probably projects itself onto the back of your eyelids is a bucolic scene consisting of a white church facing a small green square of land, with historic houses clustered next to the church and around the edges of the green, creating a little village. Look closer and you'll often see an old cemetery in this area as well. Right? Exactly. But not in Rhode Island.

Continued on [next page](#)

3000 Cemeteries in Rhode Island. Really??? (Continued)

Your image of colonial New England is just right if you're thinking about states like Massachusetts or Vermont. That's because the earliest European settlements in those areas were often established by Puritans, who began colonizing much of what is now New England in the early 17th century in order to escape persecution in Europe, and to establish a society based completely on their religious beliefs. The Puritans were a pretty disciplined bunch, and when they founded new towns, they tended to lay them out in the same pattern over and over. The church was considered the most important building, so it was located in the center of town, with other public buildings, residences and a cemetery all clustered around a communal "town green." Even though most old New England towns have expanded well past their original borders today, this layout still forms the historic center of many towns, and it is this pattern that creates the iconic image of New England that most people think about.

However, things look quite different in Rhode Island. Even though Rhode Island is a New England state, it was not colonized by Puritans. In fact, Rhode Island was the place where European settlers went if they got kicked out of Puritan towns in other parts of New England, usually because they behaved in some way that was considered unacceptable to Puritan leaders. As a result, Rhode Island was the first colony to establish the separation of church and state. So, most Rhode Island towns did not develop around a centralized church and "town green" like they did in other parts of New England, and therefore did not have centralized cemeteries. (The exceptions are towns that are now in Rhode Island but were originally part of Massachusetts, and large urbanized port towns like Newport.) Instead, most people of European origin were buried in small plots on private family land. Over time, the land changed ownership, agriculture was abandoned, fields were reforested, and family cemeteries became overgrown and forgotten. Now, all of these small cemeteries are scattered throughout the landscape, acting as silent reminders of Rhode Island's early colonial history. It wasn't until about 1850 that centralized cemeteries started to become common in Rhode Island.

The [Chestnut Hill Cemetery](#) located in Exeter, Rhode Island, contains the grave of Tuberculosis victim and suspected vampire, [Mercy Lena Brown](#).



Find A Grave



Leaflet | Powered by Esri | ESRI Imagery

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3000 Cemeteries in Rhode Island. Really??? (Continued)

All of us who are volunteering with The National Map Corps are editing history. Whether you're focusing on verifying one type of structure or are concentrating on all the structures in a particular geographic area, each structure that we verify is located in a particular place for a reason. So, the next time you're sitting at your computer editing, and are puzzling about why on earth a particular structure is located *there*, you are coming face to face with cultural beliefs and priorities that make up the history of the US. And you're getting inside the heads of people that lived long ago. Cool, huh?

Team Rhode Island Historic Cemeteries Mapping Squad update:

RISailor has completed a review of all of the historic cemeteries in the [Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries](#) online database (yes, about 3000 cemeteries), and has added all of the cemeteries that can be verified with aerial photography and Google Street View™ walks to the TNMCorps editor. A list of cemeteries that can't be verified with aerial imagery was sent along to *cgibson* for possible field checking. *RISailor* is helping *cgibson* review this list to determine which cemeteries can be field-checked, and which are inaccessible. He's also starting to work on Massachusetts historical cemeteries, including reviewing cemeteries added to the TNMCorps editor by fellow editor *AnnG*, *cgibson's* sister, who is also hard at work on those pesky cemeteries in Massachusetts!

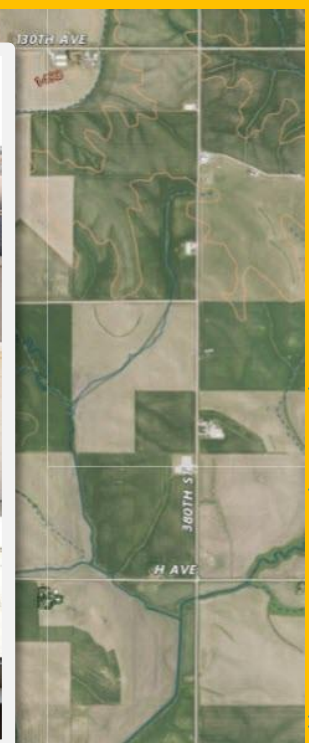
cgibson has field-checked approximately 100 historical cemeteries from the list provided by *RISailor*. She has been able to verify many of these "missing" cemeteries and add them to the TNMCorps editor. Cemeteries that aren't visible in aerial imagery, and can't be located in the field, are not being added to the TNMCorps editor for now, until we can figure out a reliable way to verify them.

[Wire Fox Terrier Stella](#) continues to practice her [fuzzy four-legged historical cemetery sniffing skills](#), and is a veteran of multiple cemetery verification trips.

Geography-Inspired Volunteer Art

Volunteer Snowleopardess makes stained glass art inspired by the places and images they've encountered while editing data for TNMCorps. Their latest piece showcases a patchwork of geometry representative of farmland seen in aerial imagery: "I got this stained-glass idea while mapping states that have farm fields in squares and rectangles."

Check out their [New Orleans-inspired piece](#) in our [September 2019 newsletter](#)!



Recognition Shout-Out: TucsonKen

Check out the bio below to learn more about our newest [Theodolite Assemblage](#) member, TucsonKen!

“I am a retired Civil Engineer that started my career walking trails in the Chamberlain Wilderness in Idaho and marking trail locations with a red marker on aerial photos for updating the Forest Service maps in the late 1960's. Today's technology is quite an improvement! I find it a challenge to find features, especially small family cemeteries. Two or three different sources might say one is there, but just try and find it in the trees!”

*TucsonKen's been busy and has since moved into the [Family of Floating Photogrammetrists](#). Thanks for helping out The National Map Corps, TucsonKen!



Overview of the National Structures Dataset

Ever wonder what happens after you click save on a point? Edits that volunteers submit via the TNMCorps web editor become part of the [National Structures Dataset](#) (NSD). The NSD is a vector-based (point) dataset that is part of [The National Map](#) and is displayed on [US Topo maps](#). Features in the NSD consist of man-made structures such as schools, fire stations, police stations, etc. See the [USGS Structures Feature Report](#) for a comprehensive overview of these features.

When a user makes an edit using the [TNMCorps web editor](#) and clicks save, the point goes through a series of automatic filters. These filters are what trigger the [dialog messages](#) notifying you of special characters, conflicting features nearby, etc. If a point is saved and it passes all the automatic filters, it's automatically synced with the NSD.

But what happens when a point triggers a filter? Are those also synced with the NSD as-is? Not quite. When a point triggers an automatic filter, it enters a holding pattern called the “review queue.” Everyone involved with TNMCorps occasionally pitches in and helps review and approve these points. That's why you'll often see a point that's been edited turn from green or blue to yellow.

We also have a very dedicated and talented set of staff who help us review these points on a regular basis. In addition to TNMCorps edits, they process data from other Federal, State, and local partners into the NSD. We wanted to use this month's [Team Corner](#) to introduce you to these staff members.



TNMCorps Team Corner: Structures Team

Eric

My name is Eric Jaramillo, I started with the National Mapping Division in December of 1986 as a stay in school student. After I graduated in 1987 from CCD, I was hired full time thru a handicap program. I worked on a lot of different projects included scribing, lettering, and editing 24k, 50k, 63k and 100k scale maps. Conducted materials assessment evaluation and inventories for entry into the Maps Separated Tracking System, PG2 stereo compilation of 24k maps, and processed and revised 24k and 63k DLGs and DRGs to produce a graphic product and digital data. I used a variety of state-of-the-art image processing and geographic information system (GIS) hardware and software to ingest both classified and unclassified data and I was a Auxiliary Security Officer for the SAF. I used LT 2000 formerly (LTPlus, LT4X), the software produces 10-meter horizontal resolution DEMs in our contour unit. I did QA/QC for contract DOQQS and created DOQQS. For 5 years I was part of the Lidar team that checked and processed Lidar data. Now I work in the Structures unit as well as an advanced editor for The National Map Corp. My hobbies include weightlifting, fly fishing, concerts, theatre, gardening having fun with family and our new granddaughter Elena Rose, classic trucks and finding that new coffee shop. I plan to retire in 2023.

Hello fellow mappers! My name is Katy Bradford and I'm excited to be a part of the newly merged TNMCorps/Structures team. I have been with USGS as a Cartographer for over 4 years. I support the TNMCorps team by performing QC/QAs of volunteer efforts and processing and reviewing structure data from NPS, USFS and BLM. When not at work I enjoy mountain biking, cross country skiing, and hiking with my Blue Heeler.

Katy

Have a story or photo you'd like to share?

We want them! This could be anything from a photo of you verifying a structure or an interesting story that you discovered while editing.

Photos, graphics, and stories may be used in future news releases and social media posts. All materials submitted become part of the “[public domain](#),” and can be used by USGS in the future unless otherwise specified.

Please email them to nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov



New Recognition Category Members



Squadron of Biplane Spectators (6000-6999)

- ktomansager



Ring of Reconnaissance Rocketeers (5000-5999)

- JoanMCameron



Family of Floating Photogrammetrists (3000-3999)

- TucsonKen



Flock of Winged Witnesses (4000-4999)



Theodolite Assemblage (2000-2999)

- TucsonKen



Alidade Alliance (1000-1999)



Stadia Board Society (500-999)

- jonny-cox
- GloballyMike



Circle of the Surveyor's Compass (200-499)

- HBR
- GloballyMike
- LeslieDriskill
- skirunplay



Pedometer Posse (100-199)

- LuisLujano2021
- GloballyMike



Society of the Steel Tape (50-99)

- GloballyMike
- Frenchmapper
- LuisLujano2021
- Marcusaholt
- Suki
- madelinehrtn



Order of the Surveyor's Chain (25-49)

- GloballyMike
- WillZabin
- redleg_64
- Marcusaholt
- Rigby305
- LuisLujano2021
- Frenchmapper
- ellisrae
- tcollins4
- Trumparmy02
- Contour810

CONTACT US AT: nationalmapcorps@usgs.gov for suggestions, questions, additions to the next newsletter, or if you would like to be removed from the email list.

