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## BUSINESS SUNDAY

# MAPPING OUT BUSINESS

## Maine co. is like MapQuest on a time machine

By JAY FITZGERALD

What do you get when you mix Google Earth-like software with stacks of printed 18th, 19th and early 20th century maps?

You get Historic Map Works Inc.'s new online product that allows users to plug in current street addresses — and pull up all antique maps of the area in its database. You can then search the maps and identify what a particular property appeared like on charts decades or even hundreds of years ago.

Type in the rough address coordinates for Fenway Park

and — presto! One map comes up of a swampy Fenway area, another when there was just a street and nearby railroad line, and yet another from 1915, three years after Fenway Park was built, showing the map outlines of a young stadium surrounded by new streets — though not the yet-to-be-built Mass. Turnpike.

"Boston has the best (map) coverage" of any city in Historic Map Works' vast and growing database, said chief executive Charles Carpenter, who founded his Westbrook, Maine-based company three years ago.

Historic Map Works hopes to make money selling actual prints of antique maps, ranging from \$29.95 to \$59.95. But starting in January, it plans to launch a new subscriber model that would allow professional and amateur genealogy enthusiasts, as well as history buffs, to search the company's massive database of some 15,000 maps that Carpenter has quietly purchased in recent years. A free printed map will come with each one-year subscription.

Carpenter, 56, a trained scientist, successful health-care executive and a long-time collector of rare science

books, isn't shy about saying he and his partners ultimately envision selling the company to Google or some other digital-mapping company.

The idea for the company can be traced back to the early 1990s, when Carpenter stumbled upon an old map of his property outside Portland, Maine. The antique map listed the long-ago owner of Carpenter's 240-year-old home, William Moses.

"It was so cool, I bought the map and I framed it and hung it on my wall," said Carpenter.

Then five years ago, Carpenter was in a New Hampshire book store when he

stumbled upon an old county atlas, with so-called 'cadstral' maps that carefully listed names of streets and the names of individual property owners.

Such county atlases, Carpenter soon discovered, were once plentiful, popular and painstakingly put together, often with bright watercolor tints to make them more attractive to potential buyers.

"I thought to myself, 'Wow, there's a business here,'" recalled Carpenter, who since has spent about \$1 million of his own money buying county atlases and maps across the country, via direct sales or on-

line auctions. The maps are then scanned into computers and, with digital-mapping software, they're matched up with current addresses.

Carpenter and his partners, who have kicked in an additional \$500,000 to get the company up and running, are now proud owners of thousands of map images covering the Northeast and parts of the Midwest, California and other parts of the country.

Historic Map Works' technology is similar in concept to Google Earth's or MapQuest's address-search capabilities.

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For now, though, typing in a specific address at [www.historicmapworks.com](http://www.historicmapworks.com) will only bring up maps of a specific neighborhood, town, county or state. At the Web site, a user can manually zoom in to focus on a specific street or property.

If there are enough 'layers' (industry jargon for how many maps there are for an area and how far back they go), then one could conceivably trace, say, a piece of property when it was farmland and later a lone building and then later a dense neighborhood.

"It allows viewers to go back in time," said Carpenter, who has trademarked the phrase 'residential genealogy' to describe how his technology can help people find ancestors or previous residents of homes and neighborhoods.

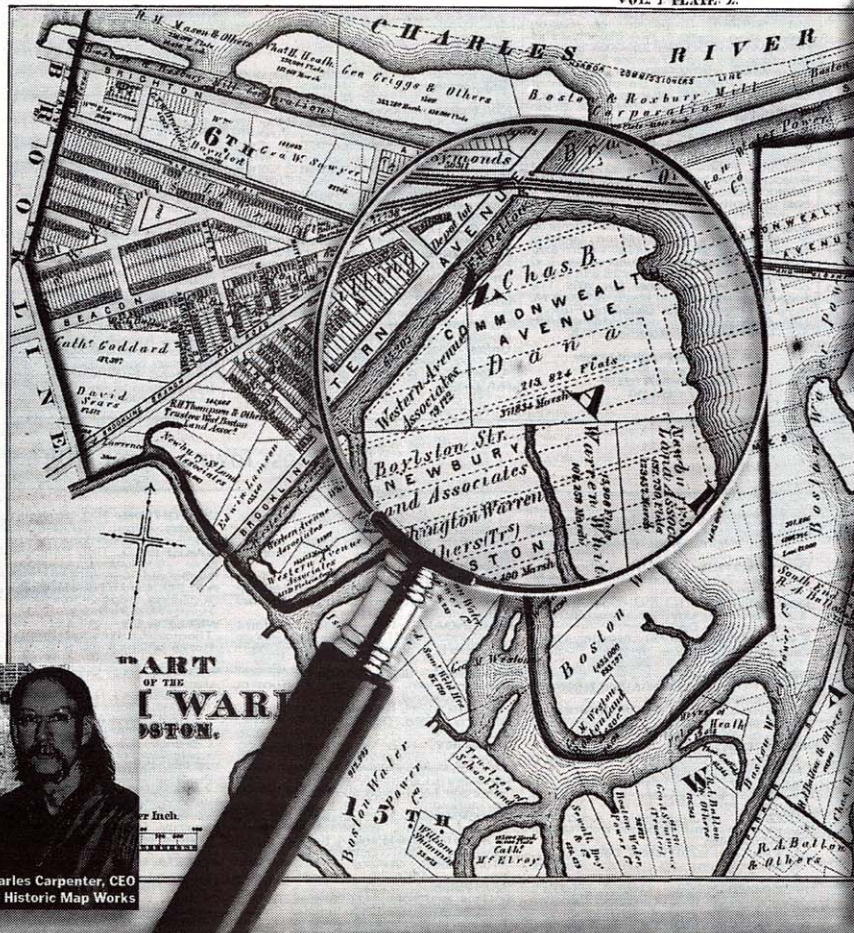
Historic Map Works' 14 employees are now developing software that eventually will allow users to instantly focus in on individual properties after entering an address-specific search, Carpenter said.

"The true value of this (company) is the huge database we're compiling," said Carpenter, noting that the genealogy and map businesses are quite lucrative.

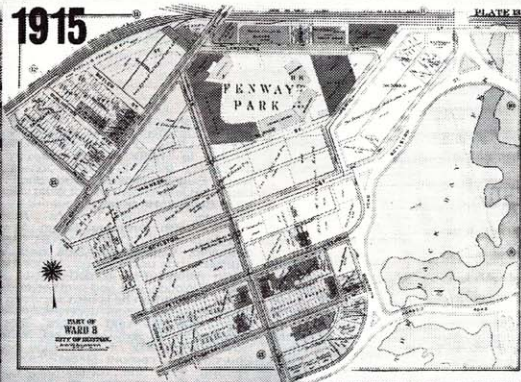
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1874

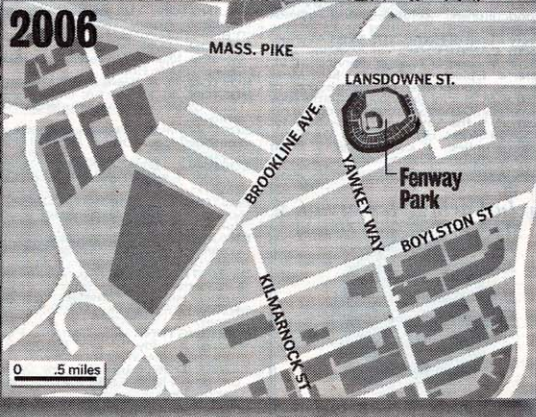
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Charles Carpenter, CEO of Historic Map Works

"ART OF THE WAR" BOSTON.

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FENWAY BY-WAYS: Typing the rough address around Fenway Park at Historic Map Works' new Web site provides a street-by-street history of how the area has developed.

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