Mapping the Oxford Knights

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This work is to be done using Google Fusion Tables. An online tool produced by Google. Step one is to Create a Fusion Table [https://support.google.com/fusiontables/answer/2571232], and upload the dataset file you just downloaded.

Mapping the Data

Next, we want to tell the tool which columns include the data we want to geo-encode. It's automatically guessed some it thinks look like place names and highlighted them yellow. We could geo-code those, but we're interested in the 'Place of Origin' column, which includes the most comprehensive information.

Geocoding takes time, so we want to reduce the amount of work that the program does so we get to our map sooner. To do this, set all columns with yellow in them to 'text' by clicking on the column header and then 'Change'. Change to text. This means the tool will ignore these columns for geo-encoding purposes.

We do, however, want the 'Place of Origin' column to be set to 'Location'.

Then click on 'File' -> 'Geocode'. This will take a few minutes. It will take WAY longer if you don't do the step above.

You should see a map with lots of points on it, showing where these knights came from originally. If you don't see the map, try clicking on the tab that says 'Map of Origin'.

Fixing the Obvious Error

Your map might have an entry in Vancouver for someone named Richard Breame. If so, you'll note by clicking on that entry that it's misinterpreted 'Surrey' for a town on Canada's west coast by the same name. That's not right, because our data refers to people who died long before that town was founded. So we want to change it.

Go back to the data "Rows 1" tab.

To find him we need to filter the records by something unique about Richard Breame. His name should make it easy enough. You can either sort the 'Surname' column 'Sort A to Z' by clicking on the column header. Or you can add a filter and isolate only people named 'Breame'. Let's do that so that you know how to do it.

Click on the 'Filter' button and select 'Surname'. Now you can either type in his name or scroll through the options. Type it in and click 'Find'. That should bring you to the right entry.

The problem is that 'Surrey' is ambiguous. We need to specify that we mean the Surrey in England. We can do this by editing the 'Place of Origin' column entry. Click on the cell in the table that you want to change. The whole row should go yellow. Then click on the 'Edit' button, which looks like a pencil. This should pop up an edit row window. In 'Place of Origin' change what's there to 'Surrey, England' and then click on the little 'Geocode' link. It will try to put this near Guildford, which is in Surrey – close enough because we don't have any finer-grained detail about where this person comes from. You can click 'Done' and then 'Save'. Your entry should now be correct. If you go back to the 'Map of Origin' tab, your entry on the Canadian west coast should be gone.

There's another obviously wrong entry in the Congo in Africa. If you can figure out where that is supposed to be, you can change it (I couldn't figure out where Wenge was!).

Making a 'Heatmap'

Back to the map, the way it's formatted at the moment doesn't tell us a lot about the distribution of these people because so many of the dots overlap one another. We can see where these people are clustered if we use a 'heat map' instead.

Click on the Heatmap tab (or click on the 'Map of Origin' tab at the top and click 'Change Map', if you can't see that option). You can increase the radius and opacity of the heat map, which should make it clear where these people are clustered.

What's interesting about this map from a historical perspective?

Filtering by Year

On the 'Map of Origin' tab, click on 'Filter' and select 'Matriculation Year' – which is the year the person started university. Filter from 1000 to 1600 and click 'Find'. The map should update.

Does it look noticeably different?

Filter again, this time from 1600-1714. What changes?

Remove the first filter. Filter this time by 'College'. Select 'Brasenose College' and make a note of what you find.

Now remove 'Brasenose College' and select 'Christ Church College'. How is it different?

Again, this time select ‘Exeter College’.

All three colleges have roughly the same number of graduates. How is the spatial distribution of them different? What does this tell us about Oxford Colleges? Did you know that before? Could you tell from looking at the original records?