

Language Mapping with Google Earth: Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi Communities

March 16, 2006

Bill Jancewicz
SIL International

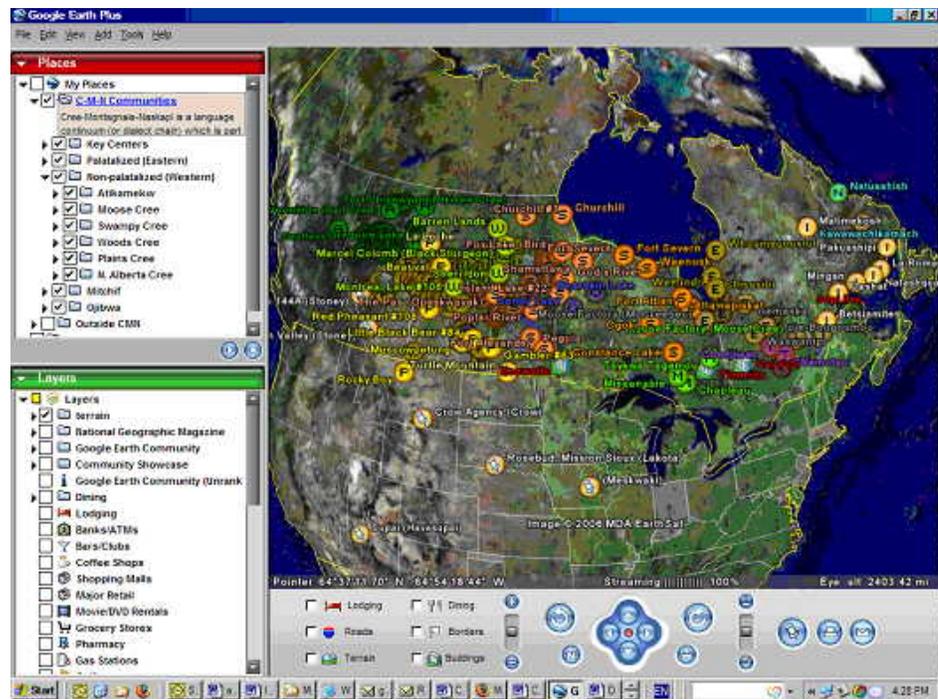
INTRODUCTION

Because of the ability to create custom overlays to the geographic features in Google Earth, this mapping program can be used as a language and dialect mapping tool. In a language survey pilot project with SIL International, a downloadable mapping overlay was produced in conjunction with a Toolbox database of current survey research that provides location and language information for the communities of the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi language continuum.

Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi is a language continuum (or dialect chain) which is part of a classification of Algonquian languages (after Ives Goddard 1978). Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi has been classified further into Naskapi, Montagnais, East Cree, Atikamekw, Moose Cree, Swampy Cree, Woods Cree and Plains Cree. Classification of Northern Alberta Cree as separate from Plains Cree is pending depending on survey results.

Google Earth combines satellite imagery, maps and the power of Google

Search to put the world's geographic information at your fingertips. Using Google Earth it is possible to view the locations of the language communities and observe the groupings and patterns of the observed dialects.



INSTALLATION

The free version of the Google Earth program (along with information about system and connection requirements) can be found here:

<http://earth.google.com/>

Before using the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi overlay, it is first necessary to download and install Google Earth on your computer.

For assistance in using the Google Earth Program, please read the information linked to the website above.

OPENING THE PLACEMARKS

From within the Google Earth program, click on HELP, and choose “Google Earth Community”.

Alternatively, from a regular web browser, you can just select the following address and click “Go”.

<http://bbs.keyhole.com/>

Now you are at the Google Earth Community website.

BELOW the line that says “**Google Earth Community**”, find where it says:

“My Home - Entrance - Main Index - Search - Active Topics”

and click on the word “Search”.

This opens a search dialog page, and on the right side there’s a box for “Keyword Search Terms”.

Type: “Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi” in the box, and click “Submit” (at the bottom of the page).

The page containing my posting of the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi communities map overlay will open.

Click on the word “Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi”, and the posting (with the download link) will open.

Or just click this link to jump there:

<http://bbs.keyhole.com/ubb/showthreaded.php/Cat/0/Number/313709/page/0>

IF you have Google Earth installed, and then you click the icon “Open This Placemark”, then the Google Earth Program will come to the front, and a map of Canada with all the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi communities will be shown.

NAVIGATING THE PLACEMARKS

You can use your mouse controls (or the buttons at the bottom of the view) to zoom in on any community shown. Or better, follow this procedure:

In the “Places” pane on the left of the view, at the bottom, click on the small triangle just to the left of “C-M-N Communities”, to expand that folder.

Under C-M-N Communities, there will be other folders as follows: *Key Centers*, *Palatalized (Eastern)*, *Non-palatalized (Western)*, etc. Under these folders there will be other folders, “Atikamekw”, “Woods Cree”, “N. Alberta Cree”, etc. You click on the small triangle on the left of the folder to expand that folder.

In the navigation bar under the viewing window, it is recommended to turn on “Roads”, “Terrain”, “Borders” and “Buildings”, to show those features.

Now for the fun. Double-Click the *folder icon* itself, and the map will zoom in for a view of all the communities contained in that folder.

Double-Click on a *community name* in the “Places” list, and it will zoom right in on that community.

A single click on the *underlined community name* link in the “Places” list will give you a balloon with the statistics for that community. A double-click takes you there.

Click the “check mark” next to a folder or place-name, to turn OFF those place marks on the map. This way, if you want, you can just turn ON “Plains Cree” while turning OFF all the others, for example. Clicking in the check-box again will turn the place-marks “ON” again.

Click on the small triangle next to a folder to “collapse” the list under the folder (so you can see the other folders).

To zoom back out, double click on the *top folder* “C-M-N Communities”.

When you are done viewing and you close Google Earth, a dialog will say: “You have unsaved items in your ‘Temporary Places’ folder. Would you like to save them in your ‘My Places’ folder?”... This is so that you can view these placemarks during future sessions of Google Earth without having to download the placemark again from “Google Earth Community”. Click “Yes” so that you would will have this folder of “C-M-N Communities” saved on your computer for next time.

Of course, like the balloon linked to the C-M-N Communities placemark says, you should “...*share with the author any suggestions you may have for updates or corrections...*” I am counting on people like you to set me straight if I need to make any corrections to the information provided in this placemark. Updates to the placemarks will be posted periodically as revisions are made.

You can suggest changes just by sending me an e-mail with your corrections and suggestions, or by clicking on the “Reply” link at my post in Google Earth Community (you will need to register yourself with Google Earth Community to reply on the website):

<http://bbs.keyhole.com/ubb/showthreaded.php/Cat/0/Number/313709/page/0>

Other cool things to do:

When you click on a placename in Google Earth, besides the statistics like population and language, you also get “Directions to here, from here”. So you click the “*to here*” link, and then open another placemark and click “*from here*”, and Google Earth will give you the directions, distance and driving time between the placemarks.

It works with almost ALL the placemarks in the posting, except (1) when there are no roads to that location and (2) when the placemark selected is too far from the nearest road. In the latter case, you can still get directions by clicking on the nearest road, and adding a temporary placemark (menu: Add-Placemark, OK) and then choosing “directions from this/to this”.

As already noted, Google Earth and the C-M-N Communities map posting are both freely downloadable off the Internet.

Cite SIL International and the author if any references are made to Language Mapping with Google Earth, this placemark, or information in this article.

REFERENCES

Goddard, Ives. 1978. Eastern Algonquian Languages. *Handbook of North American Indians* ed. by William C. Sturtevant, v 15: pp 17-77.

MacKenzie, Marguerite. 1980. *Towards a Dialectology of Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi*. Doctoral Thesis. Toronto: University of Toronto.