



# Cartophilia: Maps and the Search for Identity in the French-German Borderland

*Catherine Tatiana Dunlop*



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The period between the French Revolution and World War II was a time of tremendous growth in both mapmaking and map reading throughout Europe. There is no better place to witness this rise of popular cartography than in Alsace-Lorraine, a disputed borderland that the French and Germans both claimed as their national territory. Desired for its prime geographical position and abundant natural resources, Alsace-Lorraine endured devastating wars from 1870 to 1945 that altered its borders four times, transforming its physical landscape and the political allegiances of its citizens. For the border population whose lives were turned upside down by the French-German conflict, maps became essential tools for finding a new sense of place and a new sense of identity in their changing national and regional communities.

Turning to a previously undiscovered archive of popular maps, *Cartophilia* reveals Alsace-Lorraine's lively world of citizen mapmakers that included linguists, ethnographers, schoolteachers, hikers, and priests. Together, this fresh group of mapmakers invented new genres of maps that framed French and German territory in original ways through experimental surveying techniques, orientations, scales, colors, and iconography. In focusing on the power of "bottom-up" maps to transform modern European identities, *Cartophilia* argues that the history of cartography must expand beyond the study of elite maps and shift its emphasis to the democratization of cartography in the modern world.



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