

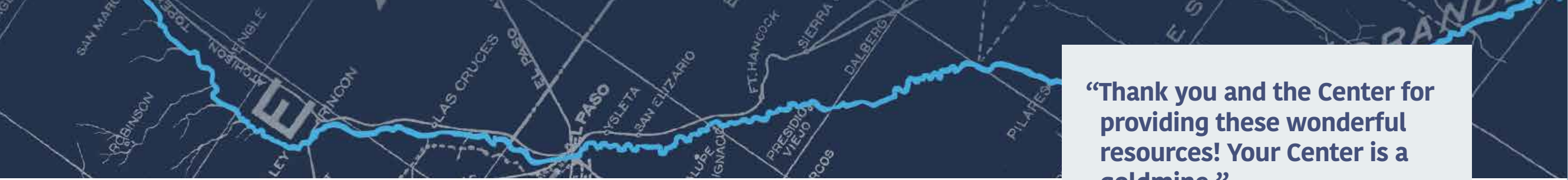


Annual Report

July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020



Norman B. Leventhal
Map & Education Center
at the Boston Public Library



“Thank you and the Center for providing these wonderful resources! Your Center is a goldmine.”

Map & Education Center Patron



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As of June 30, 2020

Dear Friends,

As I retire from the chairmanship of the Map & Education Center, I leave with a sense of great pride how the organization has progressed this past year.

In June, the Center approved a new Strategic Road Map, the culmination of an eight-month-long visioning process guided by Michael Norkus of Alliance Consulting Group. It emphasizes using geographic thinking to advance a more just and equitable society through:

- Deepening our work with teachers
- Accelerating digital engagement
- Extending our work with the local community
- Broadening our national presence
- Inspiring public engagement and donor involvement

These precepts, together with the new mission and values statements you see on the opposite page, have already helped guide the organization in this challenging year. The pandemic shut our physical doors but our work continued; indeed “accelerating digital engagement” turned out to have been prescient. The tragic killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others were stark reminders of the persistence of racism in our country, and we reaffirmed our commitment to work to advance a more just and equitable society.

It is clear to me, as I hope it is to you, that the Map & Education Center has matured into a dynamic, high-achieving institution that never lost sight of Norman Leventhal’s founding insight that maps are powerful tools for learning. With confidence and pride, I pass the torch to our next Chair and my good friend, Alan Leventhal, and look forward to watching the Map and Education Center continue to evolve under his leadership.



Thank you,

Robert M. Melzer
Chair, Board of Directors
Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center

A Divided Year

The fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 is a story divided into Before and After. Before the pandemic hit in March, and before we were reminded of the acute urgency of taking anti-racism action; that part of the year seems so long ago. And now we are in the After, which while originally a response to these crises, has now become the new normal.

In November 2019, we opened Part Two of *America Transformed: Mapping the 19th Century*. An important goal even then was to encourage visitors to question the complicated legacy of westward expansion, especially its impact on indigenous peoples. Our education programs around these themes and our Empowering Maptivists program challenged students with questions of place and identity, and brought professional development opportunities focused on teaching social justice to teachers.

After the onset of Covid-19 and the physical closure of the gallery, the staff quickly adapted to working remotely. As I hope you will read in this report, we pivoted our exhibitions, public-facing events, and educational work to impactful virtual formats.

Putting the precepts (recounted in Bob Melzer’s letter on opposite page) into action, we are orienting our projects towards less-represented local communities, developing new ways to increase diverse representation in our collections, activities, and organization; and weaving social justice and anti-racism themes into curricular materials and courses.

I want to sincerely thank our incredible staff for coming together as a team, undauntedly facing multiple new challenges, and moving the institution ahead in creative new ways. We are also deeply grateful for our enduring partnership with the Boston Public Library and its ongoing major support. As we go forward together with you, stronger than ever, I eagerly anticipate the achievements the coming year will bring.



Yours,

Connie C. Chin
President
Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center

OUR MISSION

The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library shall inspire curiosity and learning, and foster geographic perspectives on the relationships between people and places, through free and accessible collections and resources, critical interpretation and research, and K-12 and public education.

OUR VALUES

- Commit to integrity, excellence, respect in all our relationships, and professional library ethics*
- Listen to and include community voices, especially those who have been less represented
- Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in our organization and our work with others
- Work to advance a more just and equitable society
- Keep our spaces and community services open, welcoming, and “free to all”

*American Library Association Code of Ethics; Association of College and Research Libraries Code of Ethics for Special Collections Librarians

Adopted June 17, 2020

Cover Image: Frederick W. Rose, Serio-comic War Map for the Year 1877 (1877). Exhibited in *Bending Lines: Maps and Data from Distortion to Deception*.



“A fascinating exhibition...you will never read a map the same way again!”

Jared Bowen,
WGBH “Morning Edition”



“I am just watching the live conversation... and can’t wipe the smile off my face... I think you are doing a wonderful job!”

Immanuel Barshi

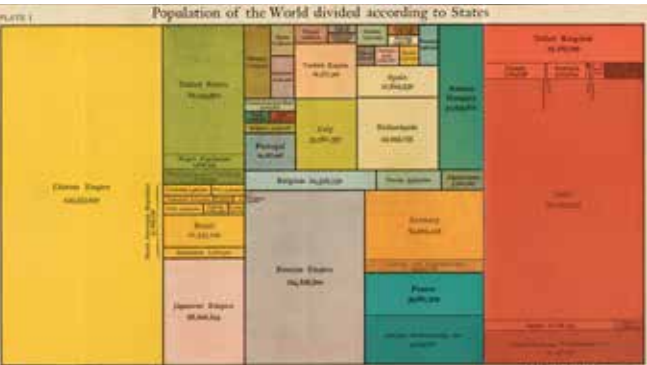
DIGITAL EXHIBITION

Viewers of maps often consider cartographic resources as trustworthy, factual documents. But can maps be used to obscure the truth, rather than clarify it?

Our exhibition, *Bending Lines: Maps & Data From Distortion to Deception*, asks just that by examining the many ways that maps and visual data have been used to manipulate what we believe to be true. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic this spring and the closure of the Boston Public Library, the exhibition was our first designed specifically for a digital experience, and launched online in May 2020.

Curated by Garrett Dash Nelson, the exhibition features a variety of objects, including historical persuasive maps, election ephemera, wartime propaganda, modern data visualizations, digital interactives, and original commissioned maps by cartographers, designers, and artists. One highlight is an 1862 “flow map” by the influential French engineer Charles Minard, pictured above right. It shows how Minard, an innovator of information design, distorted some features in order to make other parts of the map’s message clearer.

The exhibition also features an education section designed specifically for teachers and students, featuring maps and lesson plans. By the end of September, nearly 90,000 people had visited the digital exhibition.



Bottom left: Lionel Curtis, *Population of the World divided according to the States* (Macmillan and Co., 1917)



Bottom right: F. E. Manning, *Target Berlin* (United States Army Air Forces Publications Division, 1943)

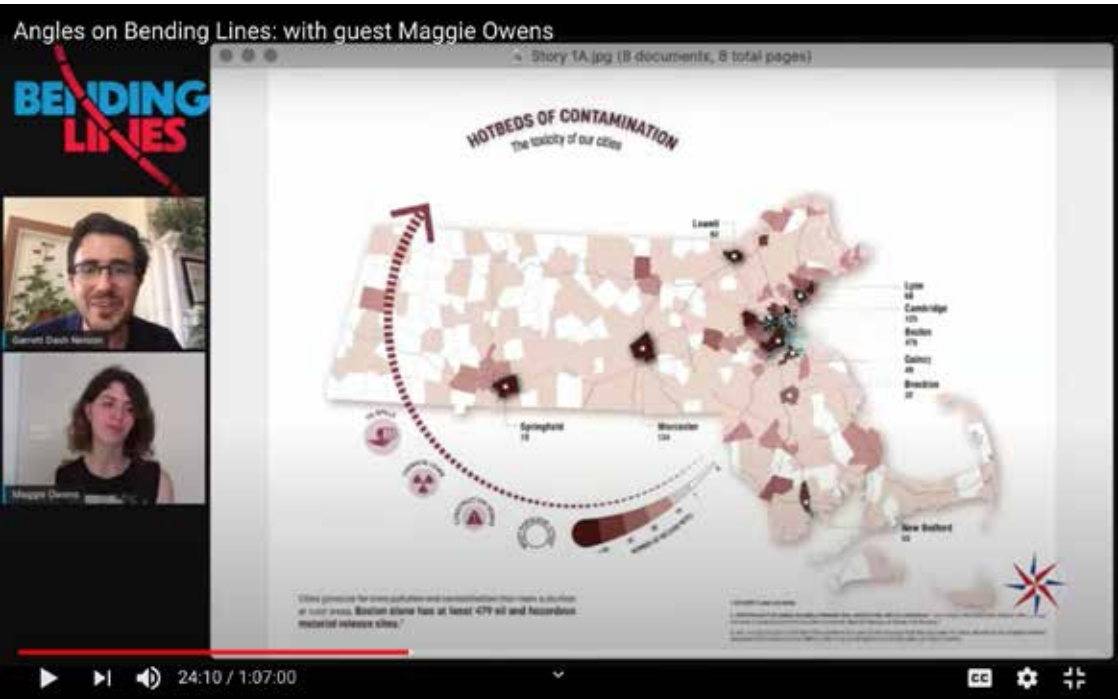
Top Right: Charles Joseph Minard, *Carte figurative et approximative des quantités de coton en laine importées en Europe en 1858 et en 1861* (Lith. Gratia, 1862)

ANGLES ON BENDING LINES

The exhibition launch featured *Angles on Bending Lines*, a series of four curator talks streamed live online. The series opened with an interview with Maggie Owens, from the City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department, who created a pair of maps in the exhibition’s “Same Data, Different Stories” section. Subsequent talks included Alasdair Rae discussing gerrymandering; Judith Tyner on her coining of the term “Persuasive Cartography;” and map collector PJ Mode, who lent to the show several objects from his persuasive maps collection. With the recordings available on both Facebook and YouTube, these broadcasts have drawn hundreds of viewers and dozens of comments and questions.



Bending Lines was made possible with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Annual Fund support from many individuals and institutions.



Curator Garrett Nelson talks with guest Maggie Owens about her data map showing toxic hazards in Massachusetts.



STUDENTS

In the third year of our Maptivists high school program, the Center worked closely in the classrooms with 50 seniors at the Margarita Muñiz Academy in Jamaica Plain on their research initiatives related to mapping climate change in Boston. In February, we hosted a Research Day at the Central Library for these students, giving them one-on-one access to a roster of community experts and professionals involved in climate initiatives. The experts met with small groups of students, helping to refine their research questions and suggesting resources.

“The students . . . came in with interesting, creative ideas and made connections between climate change and other topics they were passionate about. I was pleasantly surprised, and quite impressed...”

Research Day Community Participant

Students at our other school partners, including the Snowden and Burke High Schools, worked with maps showing social issues and the legacy of redlining in Boston as well as our new Atlascope tool.

We also taught a multitude of in-person classes to K-12 students all over the Greater Boston area, and hosted this year’s National Geographic Bee with the Lyndon School.

In March, the Map & Education Center quickly transitioned to offering remote learning with our partners at Boston Public Schools. Leventhal Center educators spoke with students over a series of Zoom calls to understand how to best teach GIS and data for an upcoming Boston Public School elective they will be teaching this winter. These Zoom conversations were a meaningful way to still connect with our students and garner feedback in our new remote world.

Top left: Students from the Lyndon School came to the Map Center after participating in the National Geographic Bee. Top right: Seniors from the Muñiz Academy work together in the Learning Center as part of a Research Day around climate mapping.

TEACHERS

In July 2019, our Carolyn A. Lynch Teacher Fellows were focused on helping educators develop ways to engage students in project-based learning connected to Boston neighborhoods and social justice issues, expanding on the work of our ongoing *Empowering Maptivists* teacher trainings.

Workshops for professional development for teachers were offered in the fall, focused on teaching the topic of America’s westward expansion, and the indigenous communities affected, using maps and primary sources. One teacher noted: “I will definitely be using the resources and knowledge gained to help me in my teaching of Westward Expansion...and to be sure we are telling a more complete story.”

In the spring, Educators Lynn Brown and Michelle LeBlanc also began to prepare educational materials related to *Bending Lines*, which are now featured in the educator’s section of the online exhibition.

With the challenging transition to remote learning in spring 2020, the Map & Education Center worked closely with teachers and colleagues to respond to their needs as teaching conditions changed, in an effort to best support our Boston Public School partners. We quickly created curricular resources specifically designed for online teaching, such as our education-focused video tour of



Bending Lines, and two online units for the BPS Social Studies department: *Boston’s Geography* and *The American Revolution and Mapping Indigenous Peoples and Westward Expansion*.

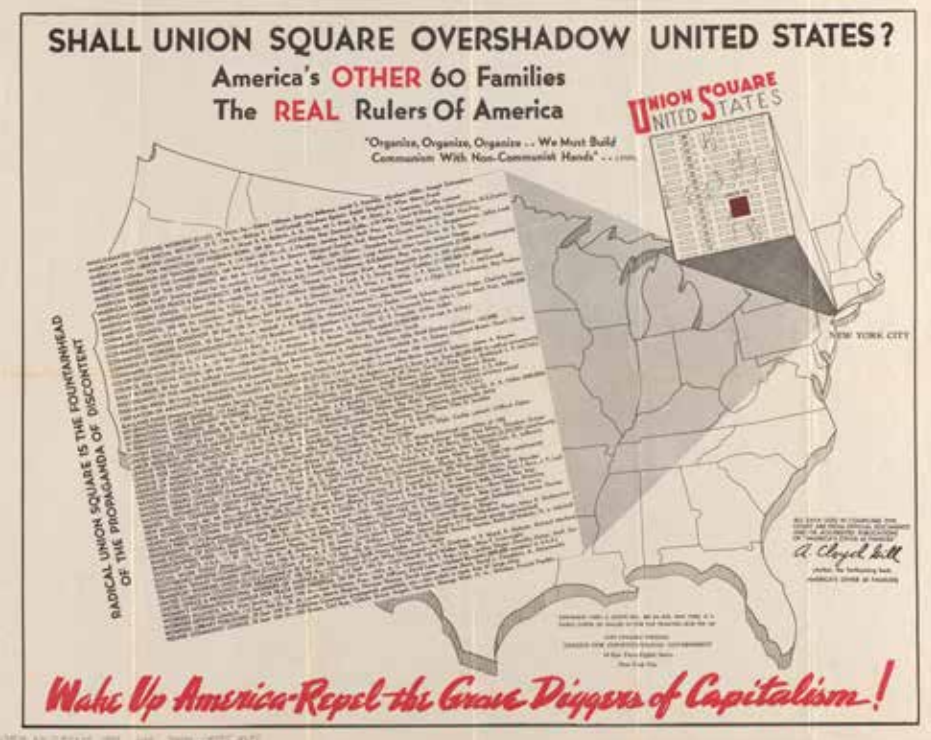
Top: Raúl the Third & Elaine Bay, Boston Kids Count (2020). Commissioned for and exhibited in *Bending Lines: Maps and Data from Distortion to Deception*. Bottom: Director of Education Michelle LeBlanc leads an education-focused video tour of the *Bending Lines* exhibition live on Youtube.

“Just wanted to say what a great job the Map Center has been doing in sending out resources for studying maps... I used the ‘Five Questions You Should Ask’ article with my students this past week...”

Middle School Teacher, June 2020



Our education initiatives are made possible with grants from Institute of Museum and Library Services, Mass Humanities, and Annual Fund support from many individuals and institutions.



ATLASCOPE

It can be fascinating to see at a small scale how neighborhoods evolve, from changes in building ownership to streams that have long since been buried by development projects. In 2020, the LMEC made this kind of information visually accessible with the launch of our web-based discovery tool Atlascope™.

The tool taps into fire insurance and real estate atlases of Boston and the inner suburbs, from the 1860s to 1930s, which are some of our most requested geographic resources. Cartographic & Geospatial Information Librarian Belle Lipton directed a multi-year project to digitize and geotransform 101 of these atlases, making them easily accessible online as web layers. \$154,062 grant dollars and 810 staff and intern hours later, you can now peer into Boston history and discover details of property ownership, genealogy, and community change.

Since the January launch, over 14,000 patrons have used Atlascope. We have been encouraging people to use it through fun trivia competitions and hyper-local community history nights co-hosted by the Boston Public Library's branches, as well as in K-12 education programs.

Our geospatial and digital tools aim to empower our patrons with data and information literacy, and help bring maps and data to life in a meaningful way.

“The coolest Boston maps you’ve ever seen! [Takes] the map collection to a whole new level.”

Boston Business Journal

Top: Intern Abby Duker (at front of room) and GIS Librarian Belle Lipton (in aisle) debut Atlascope at a Community History Night at the Charlestown branch of the Boston Public Library.

COLLECTIONS

Since joining the staff in June 2019, Curator of Maps and Director of Geographic Scholarship Garrett Dash Nelson has been adding to the collection, with new acquisitions focused on the twentieth century and material produced by members of underrepresented groups, in addition to continuing to augment existing strengths. Some notable new additions are:

- Items on display in Bending Lines:
 - Charles Minard’s flow map, *Carte figurative et approximative des quantités de coton en laine importées en Europe en 1858 et en 1861* (shown on page 5)
 - Several pairs of objects, such as an anti-communist map focused on Union Square and a socialist map of New York City (both shown above), which offer striking contrasts between competing messages
 - Politically-charged atlases from activist mapmakers, including the anti-imperialist Hungarian cartographer Alexander (Sándor) Radó and the radical American cartographer William Bunge
 - Exemplars of data design like Herber Bayer’s *World Geographic Atlas* and *William King’s Illustrated Portfolio of Our Country*
- An anonymous donor’s small collection of vernacular maps produced by schoolchildren and surveyors
- Atlases in world languages, such as the 1855 Nicolet *Atlas de Physique* in French and the 1908 *Coğrafya-yı umumî* in Ottoman Turkish, when that language was still written in Arabic orthography
- Objects that strengthen our Boston & New England Collection of Distinction, such as an 1880 bird’s-eye view of the White Mountains and an 1874 nautical chart with a Newburyport whaling captain’s inscriptions

Top left: Alexander Cloyd Gill, *Shall Union Square Overshadow the United States?* (1939) Top right: Walter Vrooman, *Map of New York City Showing Concrete Socialism in Red, and Private Enterprises in White, 1895* (Patriotic Literature Publishing Co., 1895)



Atlascope was made possible with grants from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), the Associates of the Boston Public Library, and Annual Fund support from many individuals and institutions.

Annual Fund Support

We are grateful to all those who have made our work possible this past year. We especially thank the Boston Public Library and Boston Public Library Fund for their major support.

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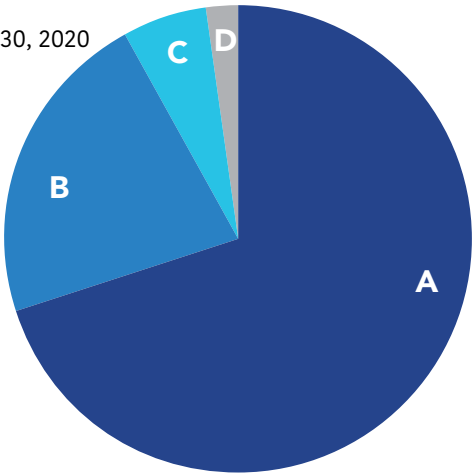
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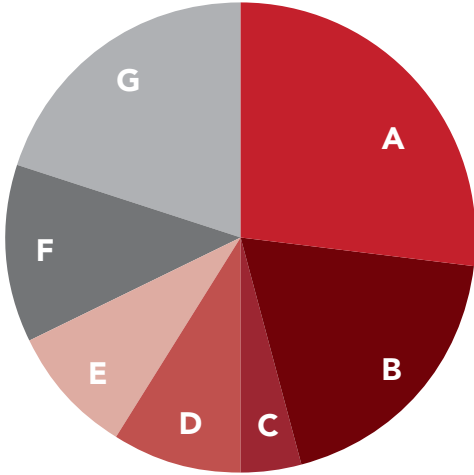
Fiscal Year 2020

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020



Revenues*
\$1,800,837

- A Grants and Contributions \$1,266,995
- B Endowment Income: \$407,418
- C Donated Services: \$105,557
- D Program Revenues/Other: \$20,867



Expenses
\$1,403,297

- A Education and Outreach: \$373,730
- B Exhibitions: \$270,545
- C Acquisitions: \$48,354
- D Collections: \$128,339
- E Website: \$136,153
- F Advancement: \$170,109
- G Administrative: \$276,067

*Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center exhibitions in the Boston Public Library and educational programs for Boston Public Schools are free of charge and do not generate earned income.

“I think the work the [Leventhal Map & Education Center] does is invaluable to the City of Boston.”
Grady Gillett





Norman B. Leventhal
Map & Education Center
at the Boston Public Library

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Image: Alasdair Rae, "The Shape of
American Democracy," (2018). Exhibited
in *Bending Lines: Maps and Data from
Distortion to Deception*.

