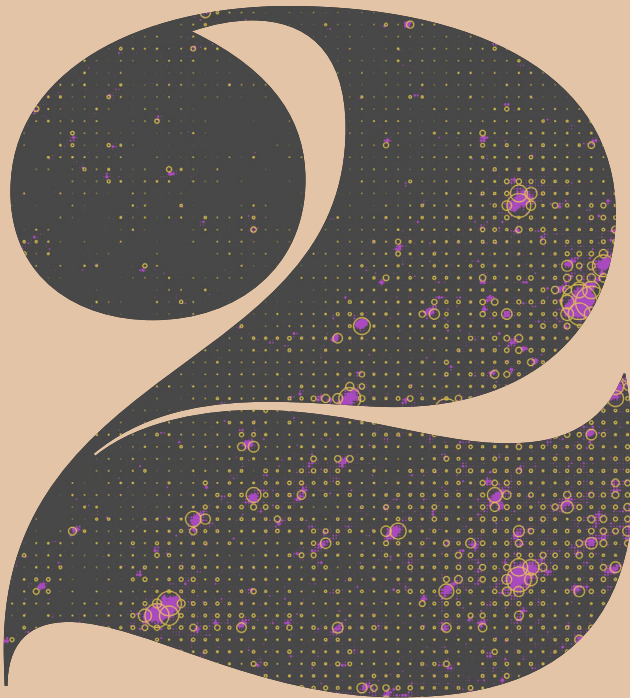




Norman B. Leventhal
Map & Education Center
at the Boston Public Library



ANNUAL REPORT





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To the members of our community:

I recently stumbled upon an article in the *Boston Globe* describing “cartomania in Boston.” The headline pointed out that “ancient maps” are “treasured by Bostonians,” and referred to this public obsession with geography as “a growing fad.” A fad? It turns out the article in question was published in 1896—just one year after the Central Library opened its new building in Copley Square.

Luckily, in the 126 years that have gone by since then, Bostonians have continued to treasure their maps, both ancient ones as well as those of more recent vintage. We can feel the energy of that “cartomania” every day here at the Leventhal Map & Education Center. Since the summer of 2022, we’ve opened two new exhibitions, hosted dozens of public programs, and reached thousands of students and members of the public. Nearly half of our current staff has come on board in just the past year.

Most importantly, we’ve committed ourselves not only to caring for the objects in our collection and making them accessible to all, but also to exploring the broader themes of geography that weave centuries of history into a single tapestry that leads right up to the present and future. Studying the intertwined stories of people and places is what we do at the Leventhal Center—and, the truth is, we’re one of the few institutions in the country that’s dedicated to these kinds of topics. Every day, we work to make maps and geography essential pieces of a local and global conversation about how the spaces around us shape how we live.

We couldn’t do this without your support. I hope you’ll see in this annual review not only a reflection of our work—but also a reflection of yours.



Garrett Dash Nelson
President and Head Curator



Charles Cooney
Chair, Board of Directors

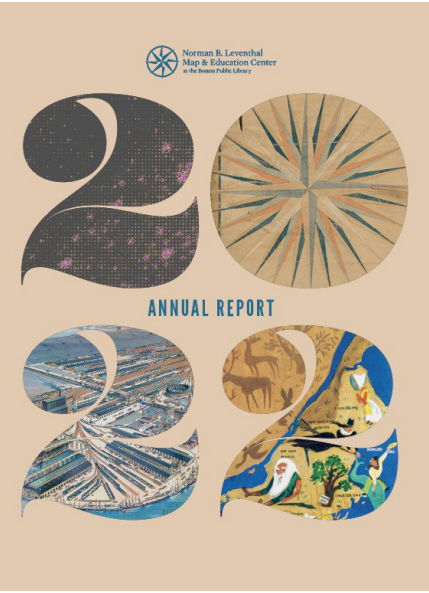
Dear friends:

This year, I have had the privilege to step into the role of Chair of the Board of the Leventhal Map and Education Center, following the strong leadership of Alan Leventhal, who was appointed as the US Ambassador to Denmark, and I am delighted to welcome you to this Annual Report with reflections on the past year. Our accomplishments lay the foundation for our future aspirations to foster understanding of people, places, and history.

With new and vibrant leadership and staffing in the Center, we have moved from pandemic closure to an exciting new normal, with exhibitions that bring to life how changes in territory, climate, and environment impact our lives. Our exhibitions spread outward, with curriculum development to help bring maps into K-12 classrooms, and collaborations that strengthen our community both locally and broadly. Our presence within the Boston Public Library provides an opportunity to build strong relationships and productive partnerships within Boston, and we are very excited by the reopening of Special Collections in a new space that provides expanded access to the historical tressures held by the BPL. Through our continuing commitment to building a digital platform, we are greatly expanding access to the maps in our collections, and, more importantly, bringing geographic topics alive for audiences ranging from the casual reader to the classroom teacher and academic researcher.

We are here to support your needs and interests and greatly appreciate your support of the Center and its activities. We invite you to visit us in person at the Central Library or online, and follow the new activities and initiatives that are happening almost every week. I look forward to working with all the members of our extended community as we continue to develop and grow the Center’s strengths and resources.

ABOUT THE COVER



The maps on the cover provide a window into our work in the past year. The upper left is an original map made by our team for the *More or Less in Common* exhibition which plots global carbon emissions against population, highlighting the disparities in the causes and consequence of climate change. At top right, you’ll find an ornate compass rose from a massive 1795 manuscript map depicting the newly independent town of Boston. At bottom left, we see Boston from a perspective that’s unfamiliar to modern viewers—both for its position and its subject—a view which shows the Seaport’s history as a multimodal hub for commerce and industry. Finally, the 1946 pictorial map shown on the bottom right is one of a number of pictorial maps that were added to our Digital Collections in the last year.

- 1. *A shared problem, an unequal burden*, Leventhal Map & Education Center (2022)
- 2. *To the select-men of the town of Boston [...]*, Osgood Carleton (1795)
- 3. *View of Boston freight terminals, the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad*, Geo. H. Walker & Co. (1903)
- 4. *America, its folklore*, William Gropper (1946)



EXHIBITIONS & COLLECTIONS

It was a busy year, as our team opened two in-person exhibitions at the Central Library, added 79 new items to collection, and began making archival collections more accessible to the public.

In March, we said goodbye to *Bending Lines: Maps and Data from Distortion to Deception*. Just over 16,000 visitors saw the exhibition in person and the digital exhibition saw nearly 70,000 visits between May 2020 and March 2022.

Two weeks later, our team opened *More or Less in Common: Environment and Justice in the Human Landscape*. To date, more than 30,000 visitors have spent time in the exhibition gallery—many of whom have commented on the exhibition’s eye-opening approach to the topic of environmental justice.

Reviews from both professional commentators and casual visitors alike have praised the exhibition’s connections between local and global issues of environmental inequality, as seen through maps that illustrate both social issues and changes to the historic landscape of Boston. We’ve kept the gallery full of special events, too, with tours ranging from community groups to government policymakers, and continued to strengthen partnerships with allied institutions like the the Olmsted 200 network and the Boston Green Ribbon Commission.



“More or Less in Common: Environment and Justice in the Human Landscape is a visual argument, wading into some of today’s most contentious issues of power, money, and race... the maps tell the story of industrial development’s burdens and benefits — and the unequal distribution of each.”

Renée Loth, Boston Globe



This page
Views from *More or Less in Common* on display in our public gallery at the Central Library in Copley Square



Left
The 1795 Osgood Carleton map of the Town of Boston shows the streets, public spaces, and wharves of Boston in the late eighteenth century. To explore the map online, use the QR code below:



New Acquisitions

Dozens of new materials came into our collections this year, with creation dates ranging from 1669 to 2022. Notably, we completed the acquisition of one of the most significant items in the LMEC collections: an incredible large-format manuscript map of Boston executed in 1795 by Osgood Carleton, gifted to us by the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association. This map, which had been presumed lost, was the first detailed map of the city created for the town government of newly-independent Boston. Measuring nearly seven feet by eight feet, the map required special handling and storage, and creating the digital copy posed an exciting challenge for the BPL’s imaging lab.

Building On Archival Collections

With the help of the Boston Public Library’s Archives team, our staff has begun working to make our archival series more useful to both academic researchers and the public. Finding aids have been completed for just over half of the collections, including the two most recently acquired.

The Applied Geographics, Inc. Records and David J. Weaver Collection provide insight into the history of computer cartography and help narrate the changes—both human and technical—in cartography design, process, and philosophy from the 1970s through 2012. These collections encompass hundreds of cartographic objects including maps, data creation tools, software manuals, and more.



K-12 EDUCATION

Our work during the 2021–2022 school year built upon lessons learned from teaching remotely. Meanwhile, we returned to in-person teaching at BPL and on-site in classrooms around Boston.

Returning to In-Person Teaching

Our direct service teaching remained mostly virtual in Fall 2021, but became almost entirely in-person during Spring 2022. During the 2021-22 school year, LMEC educators worked with over 2,000 students and teachers, with multi-week classes at several schools. At English High School in Jamaica Plain, students took part in “Map Mondays”. Each week, students completed a deep analysis of either one or two maps that connected to the questions and topics they were covering, from Native removal to Reconstruction and beyond. Our partner teachers noted that students became increasingly skilled and comfortable analyzing maps and were able to return to the close-looking protocol we created without referring to the questions directly.



- New opportunities for youth engagement around GIS and work as teen curators, and
- Developing more specific civics connections within our programs and materials for educators.

Professional Development

This summer we welcomed eight Carolyn A. Lynch teacher fellows in-person to the Center after two years of virtually working with teacher fellows. The new cohort pursued work across a variety of content and topic areas, with all using maps and data to help students explore Boston history and social justice issues. Additionally, through our “Small Bites” online professional development series, educators from across the country have learned how to teach with our Maptivist lessons including our Visualizing Boston and redlining lessons as well as how to help students find reliable map resources when conducting online research.



Our education work has been focused on three central facets for longer-term work in K-12 schools:

- Creating more opportunities for our current and past teacher fellows and partner schools to share curriculum and come together as a community,

Teen Curators

We were awarded a Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Regional Grant, which will help support our 2023 exhibition, *Building Blocks: Boston Stories from Urban Atlases*. The grant funds the work of teen curators, whose original research will be featured in the upcoming exhibition, in addition to K-12 resources and programming. This summer we worked with two Boston Public Schools students, Maleeha Wasim and Nadia Madaoui (as well as working with Anh Do in Summer 2021). Students worked with the LMEC team to research a location that had significance to them using Atlascope and other primary sources.



New Teaching Materials

We’re also creating easy-to-use teaching materials and professional development activities that help teachers integrate maps and mapping into their curriculum. Some of our new teaching materials include:

- **Same Data, Different Stories**, which uses two maps showing differing interpretations of WiFi hotspots and Internet subscription rates in Boston to how the choices made by mapmakers can create very different interpretations of data.
- **Mapping Our Boston** features different ways we map our city, from a blank paper map of Boston to Google tools that create map layers that can be visualized in a variety of different ways.

LMEC also launched a six-week online class called *Empowering Maptivists: Using Maps and Data to Examine Social Issues in the Humanities Classroom* through the National Humanities Center. This course will run multiple times per year and is available to any educator around the world.

“I am thinking about utilizing maps to help students develop a sense of locality and history. Boston is so historically rich and maps help students connect to that history more tangibly. I am thinking about maps as ‘sources’ for students to think critically: whose story is being told? Whose is excluded?”

“Now that I’ve had this experience, I’ll think about being more intentional when we talk about maps in class. When looking at maps before, I would mainly focus on the data that maps told us. Now, I’d engage students in a discussion using your protocols about the map before looking at the data to open a conversation about what the map tells us beyond the key.”

Quotes from 2022 Teacher Fellows

Left
Students use map reproductions to explore census data and how it represents the neighborhoods of Boston

Right
The 2022 Carolyn A. Lynch teacher fellows pose with the LMEC K-12 Education team at the Central Library

Opposite, top
LMEC staff listens to presentations from 2022 Teen Curators about their original research using Atlascope

Opposite, bottom
Director of K-12 Education Michelle LeBlanc leads a guided tour of maps at the Boston Harbor Hotel for former Lynch teacher fellows





PUBLIC PROGRAMS & RESEARCH

In the last year, we’ve experimented with events and programming that engage with the topics of our exhibitions and worked to support public research and digital research tools for the public.

Connecting Collections Through Events

We’ve been working to create a variety of public programs and events that can extend our work beyond the gallery and the classroom. In 2022, we hosted or partnered on 21 in-person and virtual public events, lectures, or presentations totalling just over 1,600 attendees.

"I learned so much at this event. Absolutely one of the most educational talks I've been to. I extend a huge thank you to the presenters and organizers! I thought it was crucial information presented in an accessible manner."

Quote from "Continued Conversations: Indigenous Land Rights" attendee

Below (from left to right)

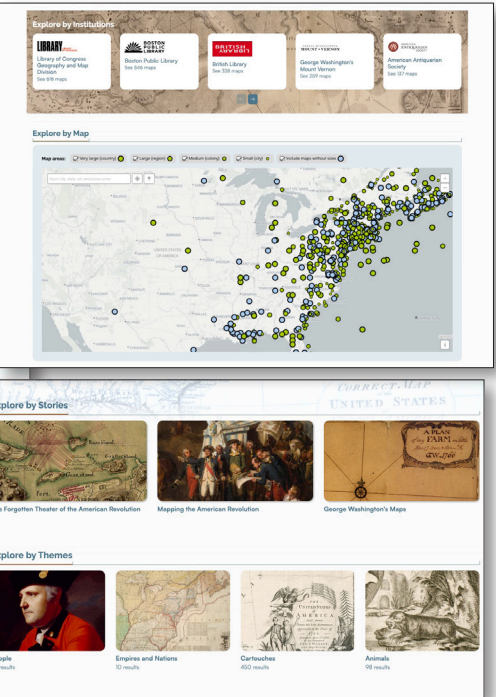
- 1. Continued Conversations: Indigenous Land Rights
- 2. Public Research Fellow Madeline Webster on a panel with Byron Rushing and Yawu Miller about Roxbury's boundaries
- 3. Transportation Trivia
- 4. Map & Media Literacy Workshop
- 5. Get to Know Your Data
- 7. University exhibition tour

the land trust movement in Roxbury, Indigenous land rights, and industrial pollution in the Mystic River.

Beyond those series, we hosted workshops with BPL Public Service staff on media literacy and genealogy research. We began a series we’re calling “Get to Know Your Data,” where we interview creators of geographic datasets and talk about how they can be used for public research. We even had an Atlascope-themed trivia series during the summer. The final trivia night of the summer was standing-room only at the Newsfeed Café in the Central Library.

Supporting Public Scholarship

Madeline Webster, 2021-22 Public Research Fellow, worked within our collections and exhibition to show how adaptive reuse is a form of historic preservation. Her work investigated how Black Bostonians converted upper Roxbury’s Victorian-era single-family houses into postwar multi-family homes, and how this additional income from rent allowed owner-occupants to build equity and maintain their houses despite exclusion from traditional funding sources.



Left Screenshots from the prototype of American Revolutionary Geographies Online (ARGO) portal show how the new portal will allow users to explore thousands of Revolutionary-era maps and learn more about the historical geography of this formative period

Making Revolutionary Maps Accessible

Alongside the team at the Washington Library at Mount Vernon, we’ve made great strides on our cooperative American Revolutionary Geographies Online (ARGO) project. This digital portal will collate digitized maps of North America made between 1750 and 1800 from over a dozen peer institutions into a single user-friendly web interface. In addition to providing users from many backgrounds with easy, intuitive access to beautiful high-resolution images, ARGO will also give people the tools they need to learn and understand historical context through interpretive essays, curated collections, classroom materials, and more. As a platform for scholarship, education, and exploration, the goal of ARGO is to make the rich visual legacy of our Revolutionary past accessible to the public as never before.

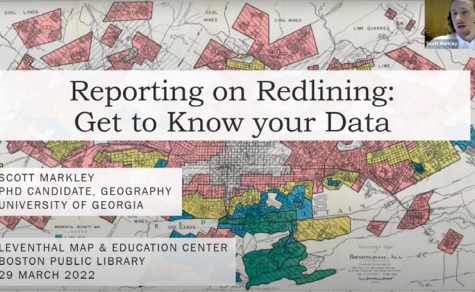
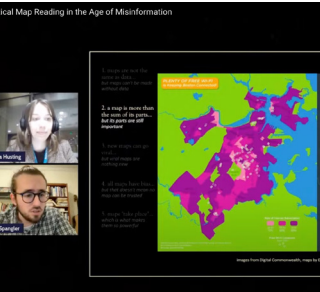
Investing in Open Source Infrastructure

Georeferencing—or associating pixels in a historic map image with modern geographic coordinates—is the foundation of many geography and digital humanities projects. In fact, it’s this process that transforms images of urban atlases into map layers into Atlascope. Historically, georeferencing has required special software and technical expertise, making it somewhat inaccessible to students and the public.

We’ve begun work with independent web developer Bert Spaan to build out an open-source, browser-based georeferencing tool. This tool, called Allmaps, will allow users to georeference any maps in our Digital Collections, as well as hundreds of thousands of maps from other online map collections.



21
1600+
Public events, lectures, or presentations
Attendees, in person and virtually





SUPPORTERS

We're 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, along with our other major funders, for their support.



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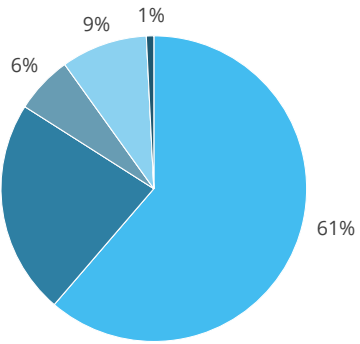
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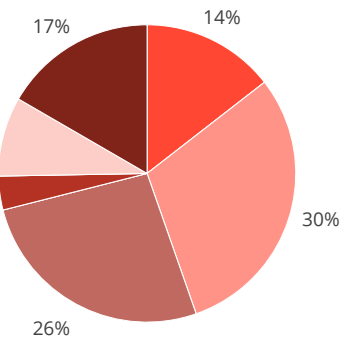
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Revenues \$2,120,880

Grants & Contributions	\$1,300,027
Endowment Income	\$481,841
Acquisition Support, BPL	\$128,992
Donated Services	\$193,463
Program Revenues/Other	\$16,557



Expenses \$1,460,978

Collections	\$211,694
Education & Outreach	\$440,618
Administrative	\$385,590
Advancement	\$53,731
Acquisitions	\$126,145
Exhibitions	\$243,200

FY 2022 Financial Report

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022





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

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BUILDING BLOCKS



BOSTON STORIES FROM URBAN ATLASES



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our next exhibition, *Building Blocks:
Boston Stories from Urban Atlases*,
opens to the public on
January 13, 2023.

In the period spanning the Civil War to the Second World War, Boston's urban fabric experienced profound changes. *Building Blocks* travels to different areas of metropolitan Boston from the 1870s to the 1930s for an episodic view of history, illuminating the many stories that are preserved in the atlases. Beyond the stories narrated in this exhibition, the rich details of the atlases help modern viewers imagine what one's own story in a rapidly developing city might have looked like during a moment steeped in change.