

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Special Collections Committee

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

DRAFT MINUTES

A meeting of the Trustees Special Collections Committee (“Committee”) was held on December 15, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Present at the meeting were: Committee Chair, Ben Bradlee Jr, Vice Chair K. Matthew Dames, along with Committee members: Jabari Asim, Juan Enriquez, David Leonard, and Alan Leventhal. Absent members: Grace Fey, Jeff Hawkins, and Elizabeth Johnson.

Also present were: Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board, Priscilla H. Douglas, Board Chair, along with BPL staff and members of the public.

Committee Chair Ben Bradlee Jr welcomed all to the first meeting of the newly formed Special Collections committee. He called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. and began by reading the Trustees reaffirmation statement. A roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. All in attendance were reminded that the meeting was being recorded and to sign up for public comment before the sign up period closed.

Mr. Bradlee introduced the new Committee members that included: Ben Bradlee Jr, K. Matthew Dames who would serve as Vice Chair, Jabari Asim, Joe Berman, Juan Enriquez, Grace Fey, Jeff Hawkins, Alan Leventhal, David Leonard, and returning member Elizabeth Johnson. Each member gave a brief background and expressed various ways each of them hoped to make the collections at the BPL more visible and accessible to the public. Additionally, they hoped to focus on engagement with the collections via exhibitions, partnerships, or collaborative initiatives; similar to those already established with the Associates and the Leventhal Map & Education Center (“LMEC”).

Laura Imscher announced that she was resigning from her position of Chief of Collections to move to Connecticut. She assured them that she was leaving the department in great hands with the collections team in place. Ms. Imscher gave a brief update on the Rare Books renovation with more details to come in the spring.

Mr. Bradlee thanked Ms. Imscher for her tenure at the BPL and wished her well in her future endeavors. Mr. Leonard added his appreciation for Ms. Imscher for all of her contributions to the BPL noting the Special Collections were in a much better position because of her efforts.

Next, Ms. Beth Prindle, Head of Special Collections, noted some key hires to the Special Collections department. They selected a Public Services Librarian who will oversee the Special Collections reading room and will be starting in January. They were actively interviewing for two archivist positions, the conservation officer, and a research collections manager. They were looking forward to welcoming the new staff that would be hired in 2022.

Ms. Prindle announced a grant from an anonymous donation through the BPL Fund and the Associates to support the project of cleaning and adding descriptions to our founding research collections. This collection consists of hundreds of thousands of materials collected during the 19th and early 20th century. The grant would allow them to start work on a portion of this collections. An RFP was issued and they selected a candidate for the project manager to oversee it. They hope to have this manager meet with this committee in future meetings to discuss this multi-year project.

There was a newspaper grant through the National Digital Newspaper Program to digitize thousands of images from microfilm from our newspaper collection. This project was kicked off under the stewardship of our digital partners team.

Ms. Prindle also noted that the LMEC received a major grant in partnership with Mount Vernon. She noted that she would not reveal the details, but noted the LMEC team will be presenting to this committee in February to discuss the stewardship of their collection and their focus on access and programming.

Next, Ms. Prindle introduced the BPL Curator of Music, Jared Rex. Mr. Rex joined the BPL in 2020 during the pandemic. His position is funded through the Associates of the BPL. Ms. Prindle gave a brief background on his professional experience and invited him to speak to the Committee.

Mr. Rex stated that his goal was to orient the Committee on the history of the BPL's Music collections and to help them better understand the significance of some of the treasures held within it. He hoped to make the collections more accessible to the public, not only the citizens of Boston, but to scholars and musicians worldwide.

Mr. Rex reviewed the types of formats that are held in the music collections. Noting, to many people's surprise, the BPL has little recorded sound, but rather the majority of the collection were manuscript scores. These treasures included first and early edition published scores, rare editions containing annotations and sketches, monographs and journals, and performance ephemera.

He showed some examples of some notable artifacts held in BPL's digitized manuscript scores, such as: a score with handwritten notes from Mozart's *Fugue*, a first edition of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, John Dowland's early printed music *First Book of Songes* (from 1597) and a copyist's manuscript of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

The history of the collection began with the BPL founding with two major special collections, the Joseph Koudelka Collection (from 1858) and the Allen A. Brown Collection (from 1894). Public libraries at that time did not have the resources to collect music due to high costs and limited printing runs. It was not until 1837 that there was a focus on starting a music library. Members of the general public pushed for more accessibility to music. Music was being collected at the BPL before the opening of the first reading room in 1852.

The first collection of music acquired at the BPL was the Joseph Koudelka Collection, it consisted of approximately 500 volumes. The collection principally contains early influential writers of western classical writers (pre-1700). Some works are extremely rare and are one of few copies known to exist. Mr. Rex gave a background on how Mr. Koudelka developed his collection.

Some concert ephemera noted the BPL in the footnotes noting examples of the collaboration with many cultural institutions in the 1800s.

The Allen A. Brown collection receives the most reference inquiries from the BPL Music Collection. This foundational collection serves as an integral collection to America's music history and Boston's musical life. The collection grows to this day through the Brown Trust funds. The collection was given to the BPL upon the completion of the McKim Building in 1894. The initial donation was comprised of 6,990 volumes of predominantly western art music but now totals 40,000 volumes. This collection was what put the BPL on the map internationally as an institute that houses musical treasures.

The Brown Collection reflects diverse music and formats. Including operas, concert ephemera scrapbooks, and autograph musical scores and was continually being developed to reflect all music.

Mr. Rex ended his presentation by noting some other notable collections held in the Music Collections and

his commitment to ensuring accessibility to our treasured collections.

The Committee thanked Mr. Rex for his thorough presentation. They discussed the idea of potential exhibitions or collaborative partnerships. They discussed having some 20th century collections reflected to showcase modern genres of music to offer a diverse collection of all times.

Mr. Bradlee asked for new business. Mr. Leonard noted for the purpose of future agendas, he reminded the Committee members that the goal of the meetings this year were to orient the members on particular holdings within Special Collections.

Mr. Bradlee asked for public comment for which there was none. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board of Trustees

BPL Trustees Special Collections Committee (2022)

BPL Mission Statement: “The Boston Public Library provides educational and cultural enrichment, free to all, for the residents of Boston, Massachusetts and beyond, through its collections, services, programs, and spaces.”

DRAFT BPL Special Collections Committee Charter and Principles

The purpose of the BPL Trustees Special Collections Committee shall be:

To advocate for BPL’s special collections, their long-term care and for their centrality in the execution of the BPL’s overall mission.

To review and advise on all relevant policies that affect stewardship of and access to special collections.

To receive reports on and recommendations for issues affecting special collections and comment as appropriate.

To work to foster and enhance alignment between special collections, library services, and the needs of BPL’s communities of users.

To support and promote greater access to and engagement with special collections in alignment with the approved BPL strategy.

Provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees on special collections matters requiring full board approval.

To advise of potential new funding and/or partnership opportunities in support of special collections stewardship and outreach.

To support the development of a long-range strategic plan for the Special Collections Departments.

To advocate for and support capital project initiatives in service of the Special Collections.

As with all BPL Trustee Committees, appointments are made by the BPL Chair as is the selection of a chair and vice chair. The President of the Library will be a voting member of the committee. Additional staff roles will be appointed as non-voting ex-officio members.

Placing Maps and Geography in a Public Research Library

Presentation to BPL Trustees Special Collection Committee, 2022-02-02



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

@bplmaps

leventhalmap.org



History of the Center

- 2004 Original partnership
- 2007 Independent center
- 2011 Renovated space in McKim
- 2018 Name change
- 2019 New 10-year agreement

Staff & Structure

Garrett Dash Nelson

President & Head Curator

Emily Bowe

Assistant Director

Rachel Sharer

Development Coordinator

Education Department

Michelle LeBlanc

Director of Education

Lynn Brown

K-12 Education Manager

CIRCLE Department

Lauren Chen

Cataloging & Reference Librarian

Ian Spangler

Assistant Curator of Digital & Participatory Geography

Megan Nally

Public Engagement Coordinator

Gallery Attendants

Exhibition Designer

Research Fellows

Governance

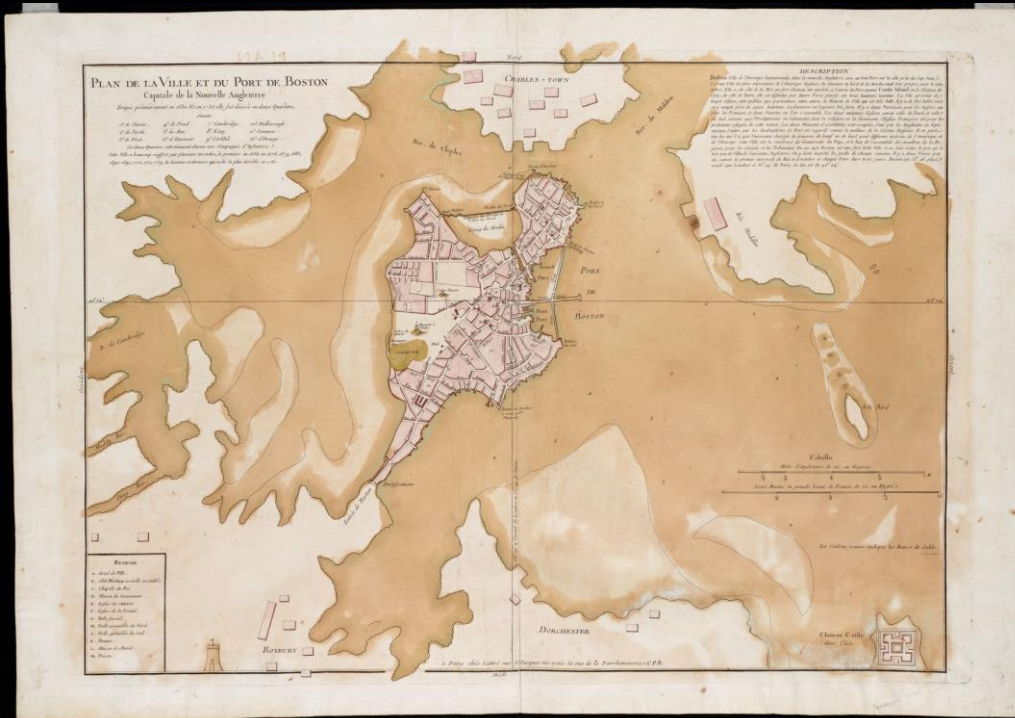
- Board of Directors
 - BPL President and Chair of BPL Trustees sit *ex officio*
- Board of Review
- Education Committee

Budget

- Mapping Boston Foundation Endowment
- LMEC-driven Fundraising
- BPL Contribution and join fundraising with BPL Fund
- Grants
- Earned Income
- Acquisitions Trust Funds

What is in the LMEC collections?

Mapping Boston Collection



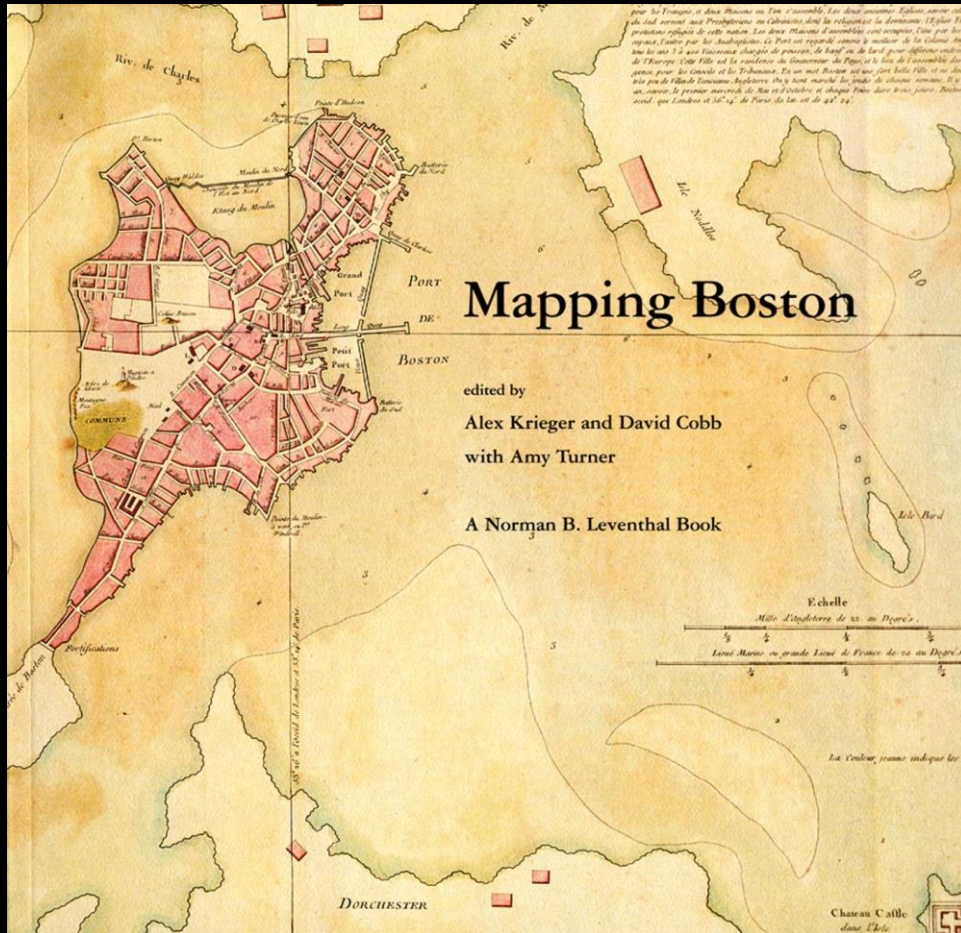
Lattré, *Plan de la ville et du port de Boston* (ca. 1764)



Chatelain, *Carte tres curieuse de la Mer du Sud* (1719)

What is in the LMEC collections?

Mapping Boston Collection



What is in the LMEC collections?

BPL Collections



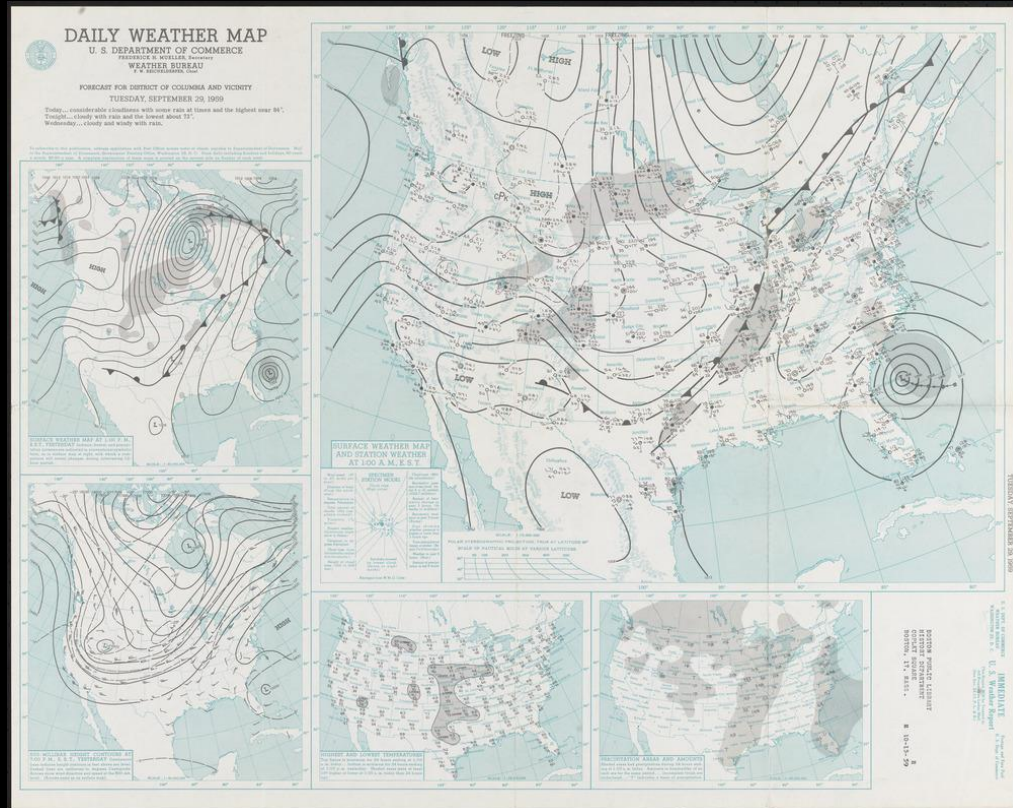
Bernardo, after Ptolemy, *[The World]* (1511)



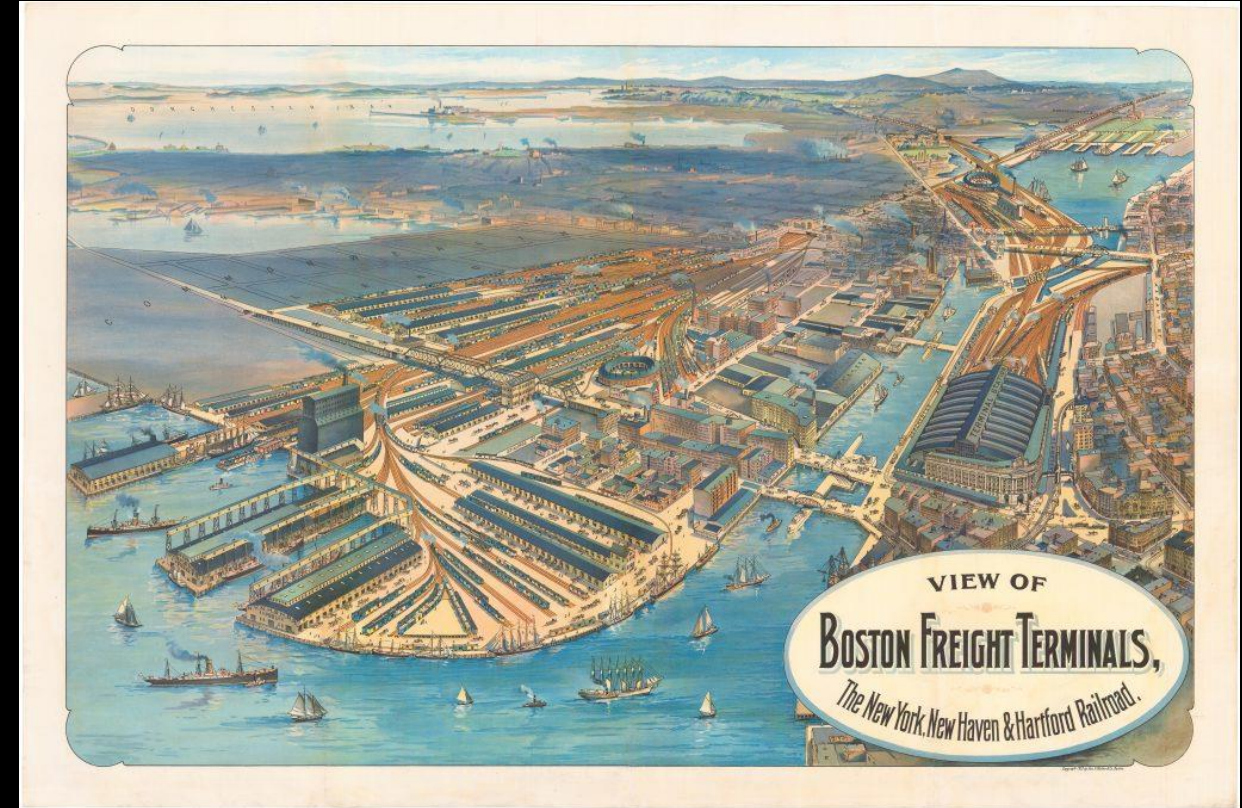
A. E. Downs, George H. Walker & Co., *Boston 1899* (ca. 1899)

What is in the LMEC collections?

BPL Collections



U.S. Department of Commerce, *Daily weather map: Tuesday, September 29, 1959*

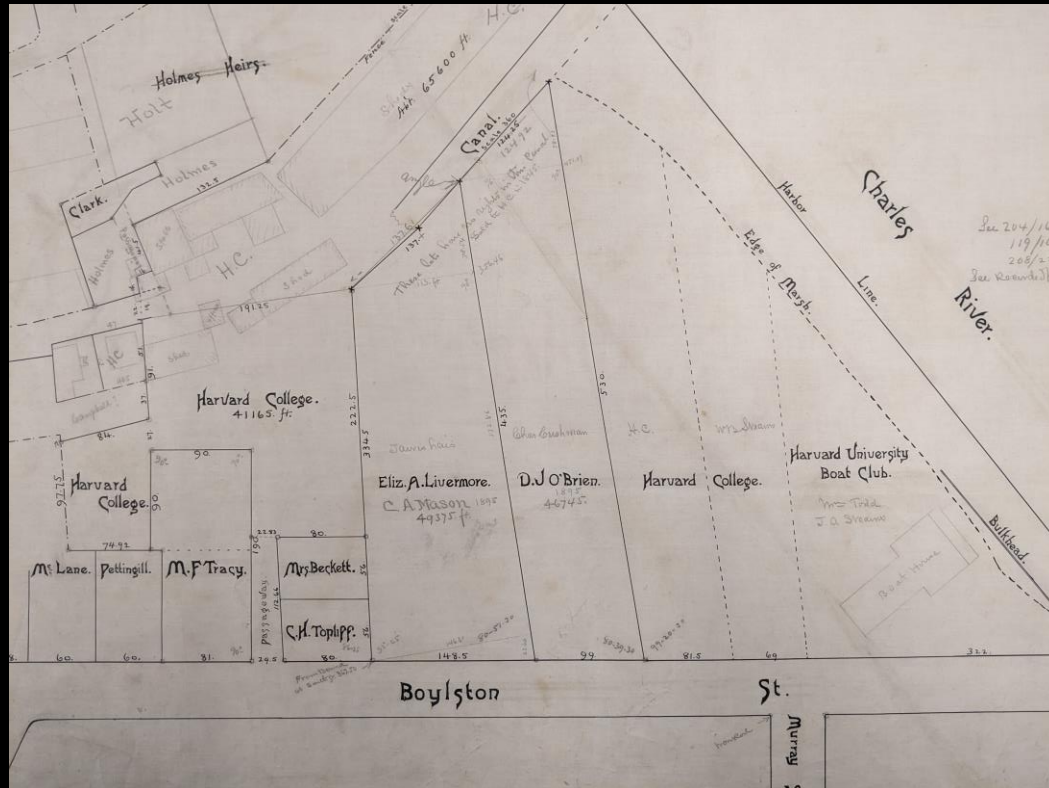


George H. Walker & Co., *View of Boston Freight Terminals (1903)*

What is in the LMEC collections?

BPL Collections

Archival Series



Digital Map Data

data.leventhalmap.org/#catalog/dkircu2ol

We're currently working on this portal. See something broken? Please let us know!

Data Portal Documentation + Guides Ask a Librarian Simple view

Go Back New Search

Historic Boston Shoreline

Dataset Identifier ark:/76611/dkircu2ol Published 2019

Standardized boundaries of historic shoreline; geography covers the City of Boston and parts of Cambridge, Somerville, Chelsea and Winthrop; time period covers 1630-present in a series of temporal snapshots

About this data

Dataset Overview

This dataset represents the extents of Boston's historic shoreline. It covers the City of Boston and includes some parts of Cambridge, Somerville, Chelsea and Winthrop. This data is structured as temporal snapshots capturing the shoreline extent at different years. The years included in the dataset are 1635, 1795, 1852, 1880, 1916, 1934, 1950, 1995 and the present day. Different versions of this data have existed in the past, digitally 'hand-drawn' by cartographers creating maps for print publications. The datasets used to create these maps until now haven't been archived in GIS-compatible formats. This LMEC-maintained dataset is a stable, standardized GIS boundary file of historic shoreline extents. The LMEC has standardized and preserved data submitted by cartographers working on the Atlas of Boston History book project.

Get this data

Boston Historic Shoreline Land Extent GeoJSON

Download to your computer

Preview on GeoJSON.io

Provider Leventhal Map & Education Center

How can I make a map from a GeoJSON file?

Boston Historic Shoreline Water Extent GeoJSON

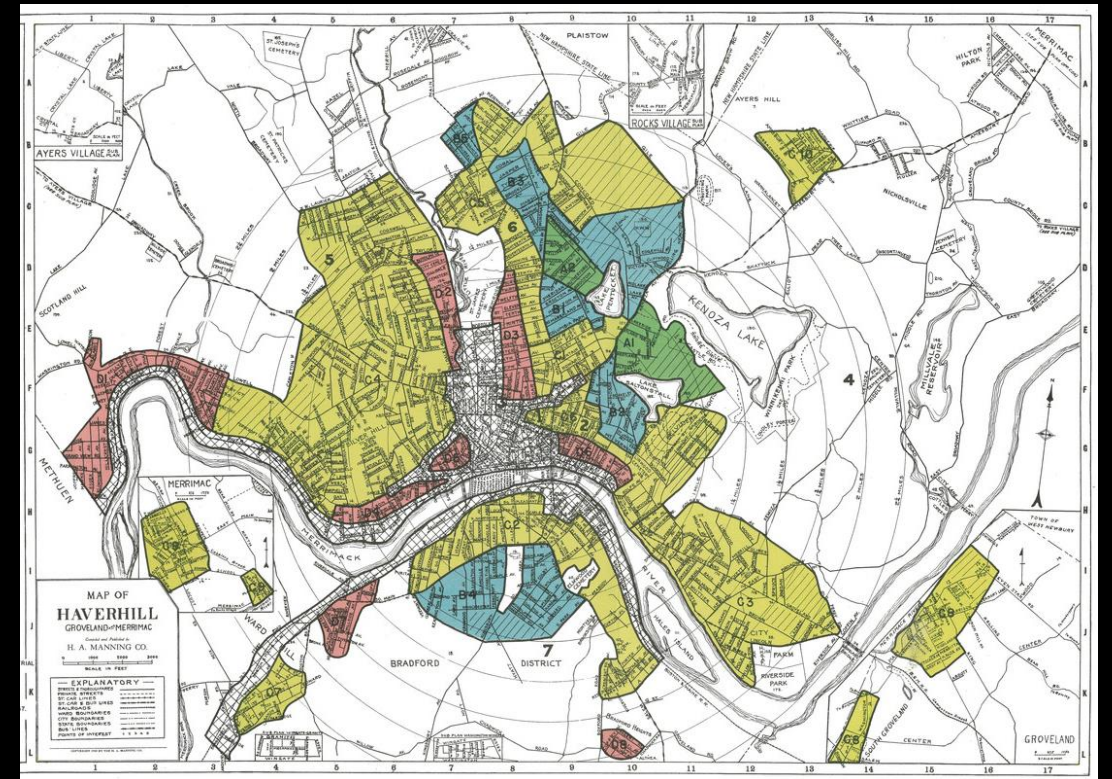
Download to your computer

What is in the LMEC collections?

Digital Partner Collections



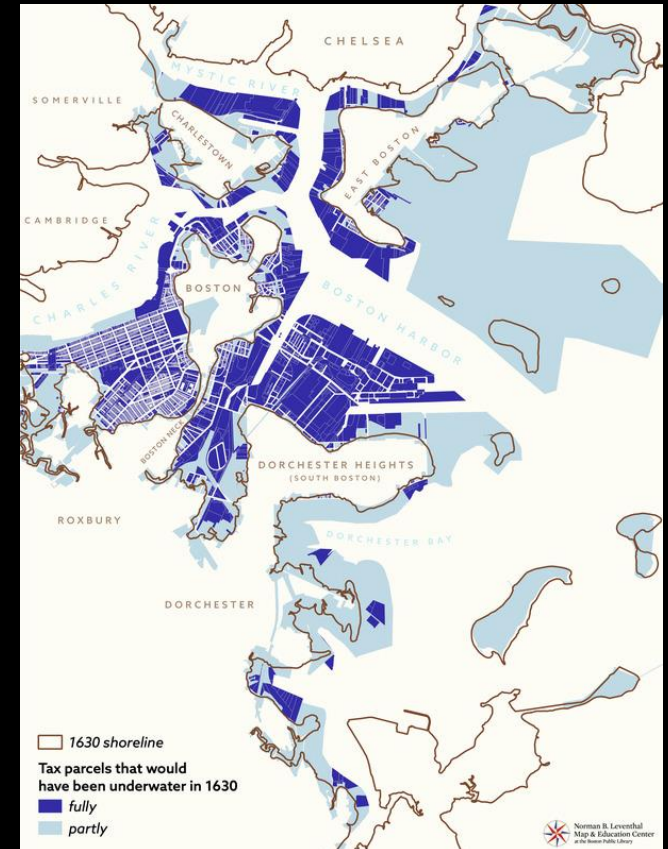
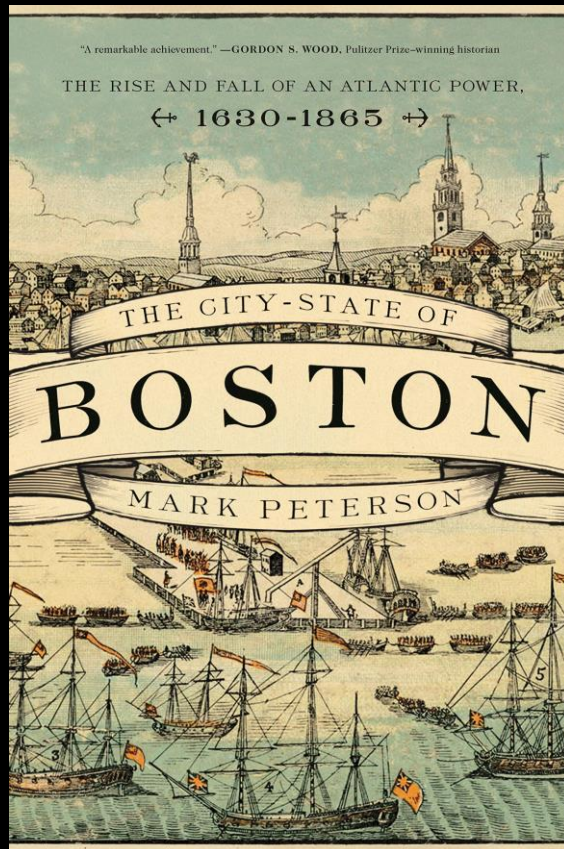
Cyprian Southack, *A draught of Boston Harbor* (1694).
British Library



Home Owners' Loan Corporation, *Residential security map of Haverhill, Mass.* (1937). National Archives/University of Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab

What can you do with a map collection?

Supporting original research and discovery



What can you do with a map collection?

Opening worlds for K-12 students and teachers



What Is A Map?

Grades 1-3

Students practice how to interpret maps by reading the stories being told by mapmakers. Students create a map of their own, receive a short interactive lesson about maps and mapping, and work in small groups to answer questions about some of the maps in our collection.

[Download lesson material](#)



World Maps Over Time

Grades 6-8

Students practice being critical map readers using a range of world maps, from the oldest in our collection to the present. After an interactive lesson on map projections, students work in small groups to analyze what mapmakers include on their maps and why.

[Download lesson material](#)



Native People and Settler Colonialism: A Story of Land and Maps

Grades 4-12

Students explore maps made by Indigenous People and Euro-Americans to interrogate differing conceptions of land and how maps can document and be used as tools of land dispossession, cultural genocide, and resistance. In Lesson One, students look closely at a 19th century map made by a Bájoxe (Ioway)

What can you do with a map collection?

Engaging the public through exhibitions and programs



logue background slides (page 1 of 4)

Monday, October 6

**Author talk with
Lizabeth Cohen**
(History, Harvard University)





**SAVING
AMERICA'S CITIES**
Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew
Urban America in the Suburban Age
LIZABETH COHEN

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

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

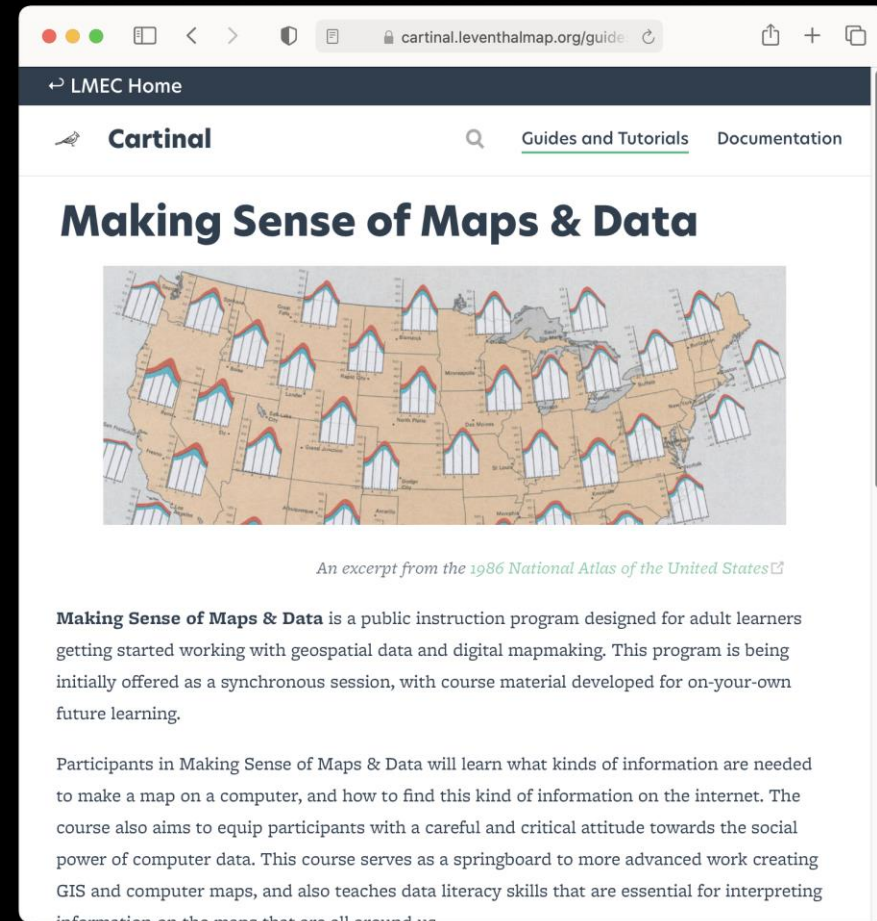
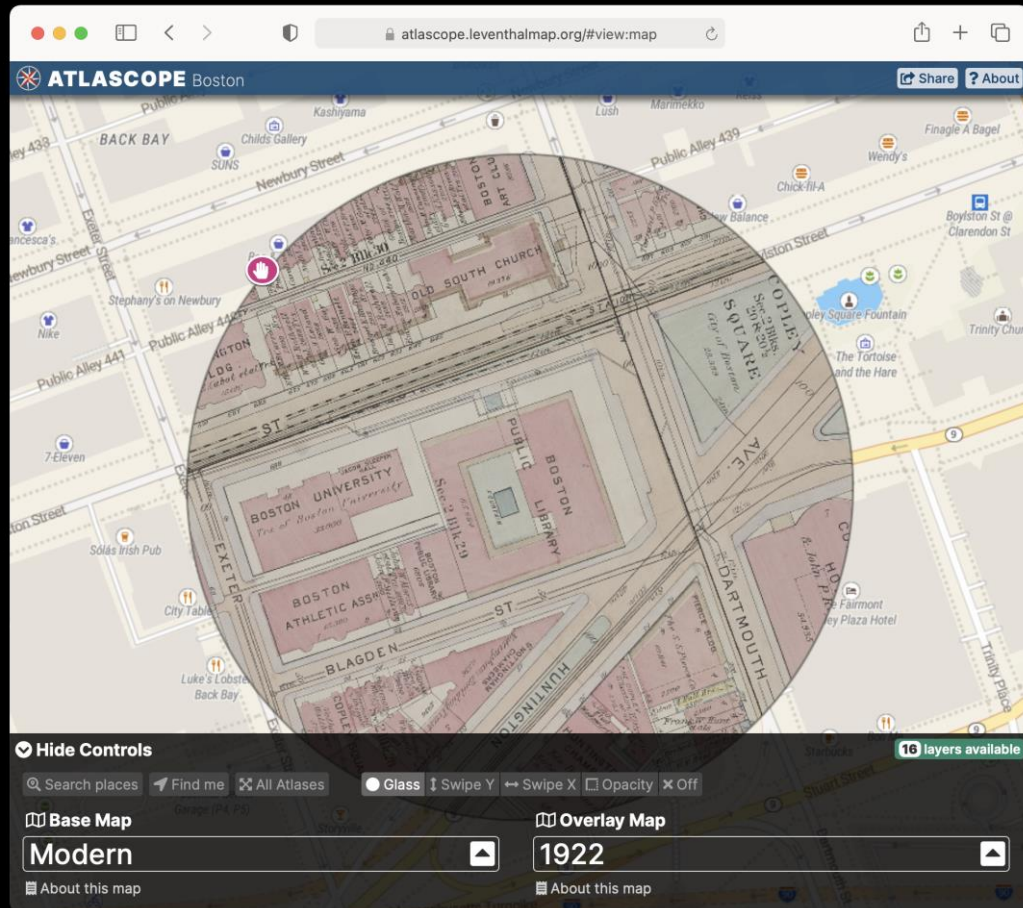
3:41 / 1:07:20

Garrett Dash ...

Author Lizabeth Cohen with *Saving America's Cities: Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America*

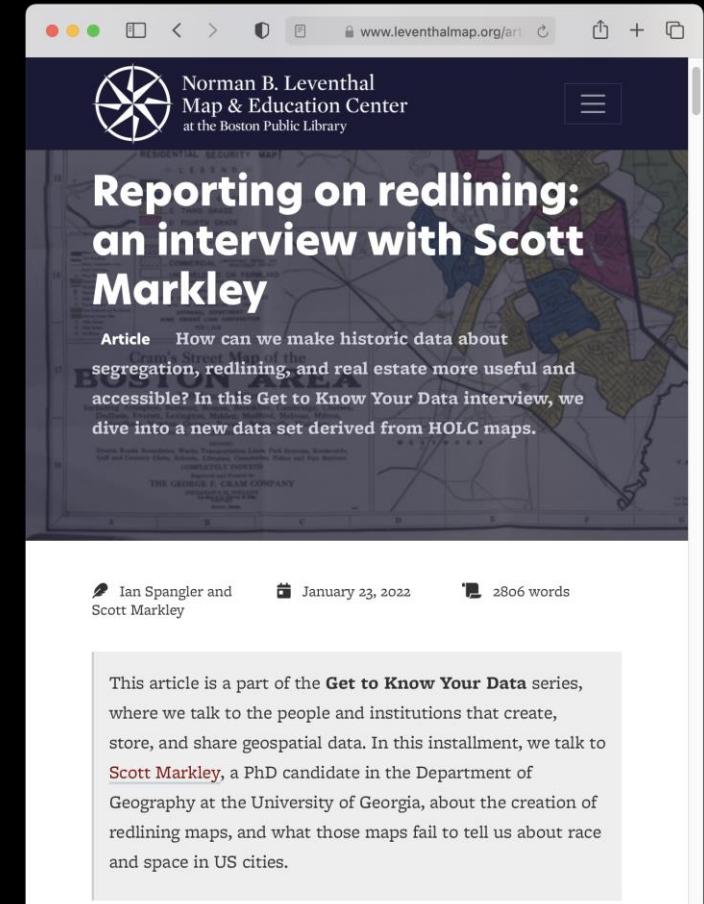
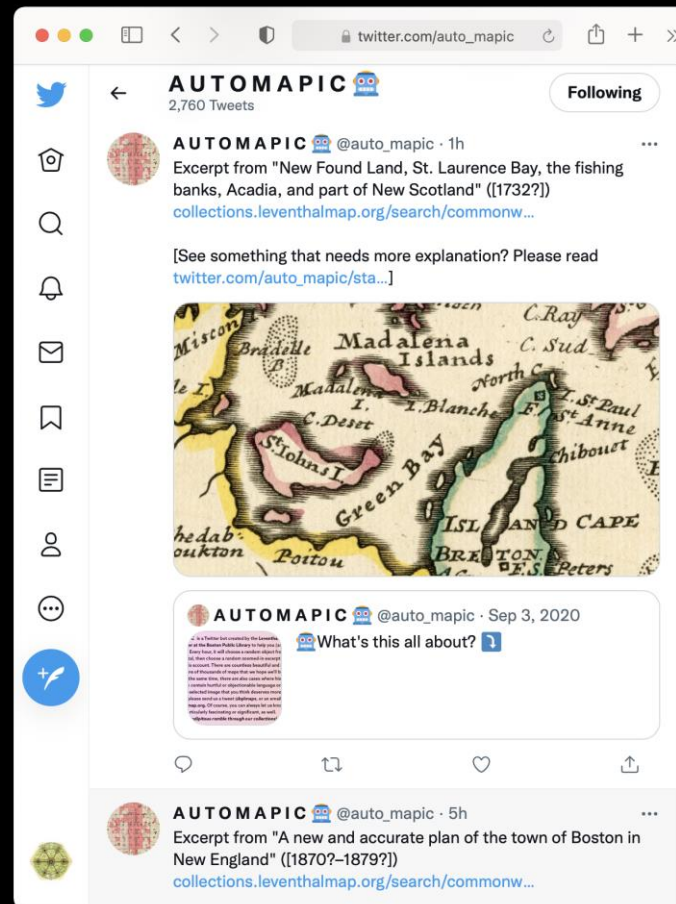
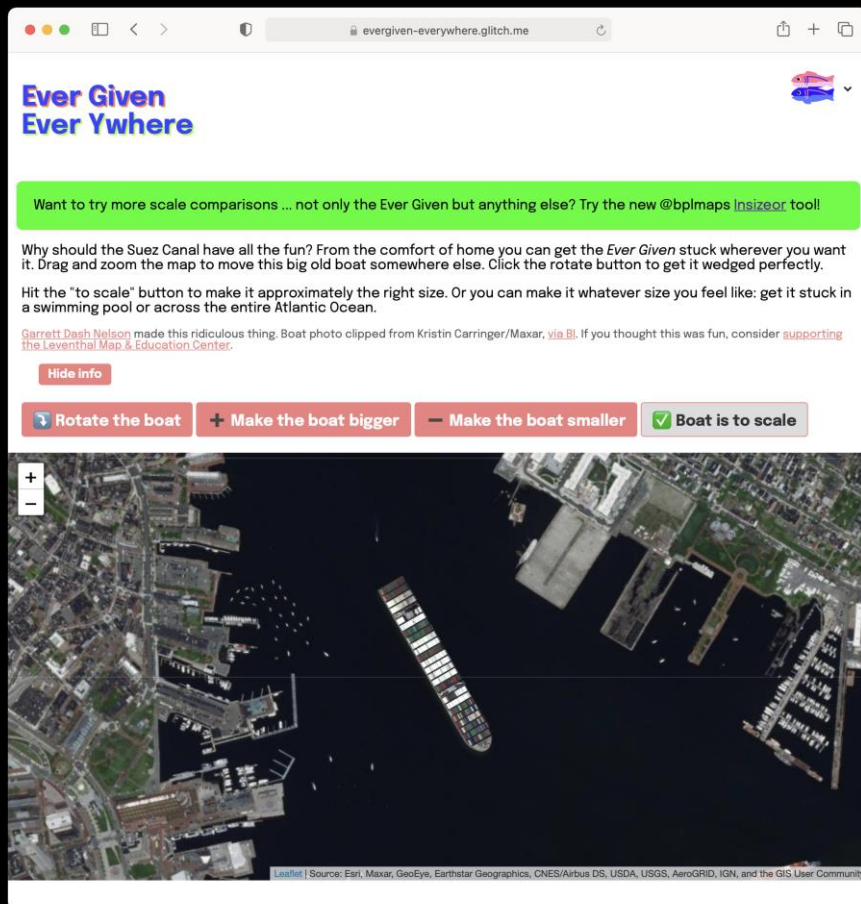
What can you do with a map collection?

Innovations and experiments with digital humanities



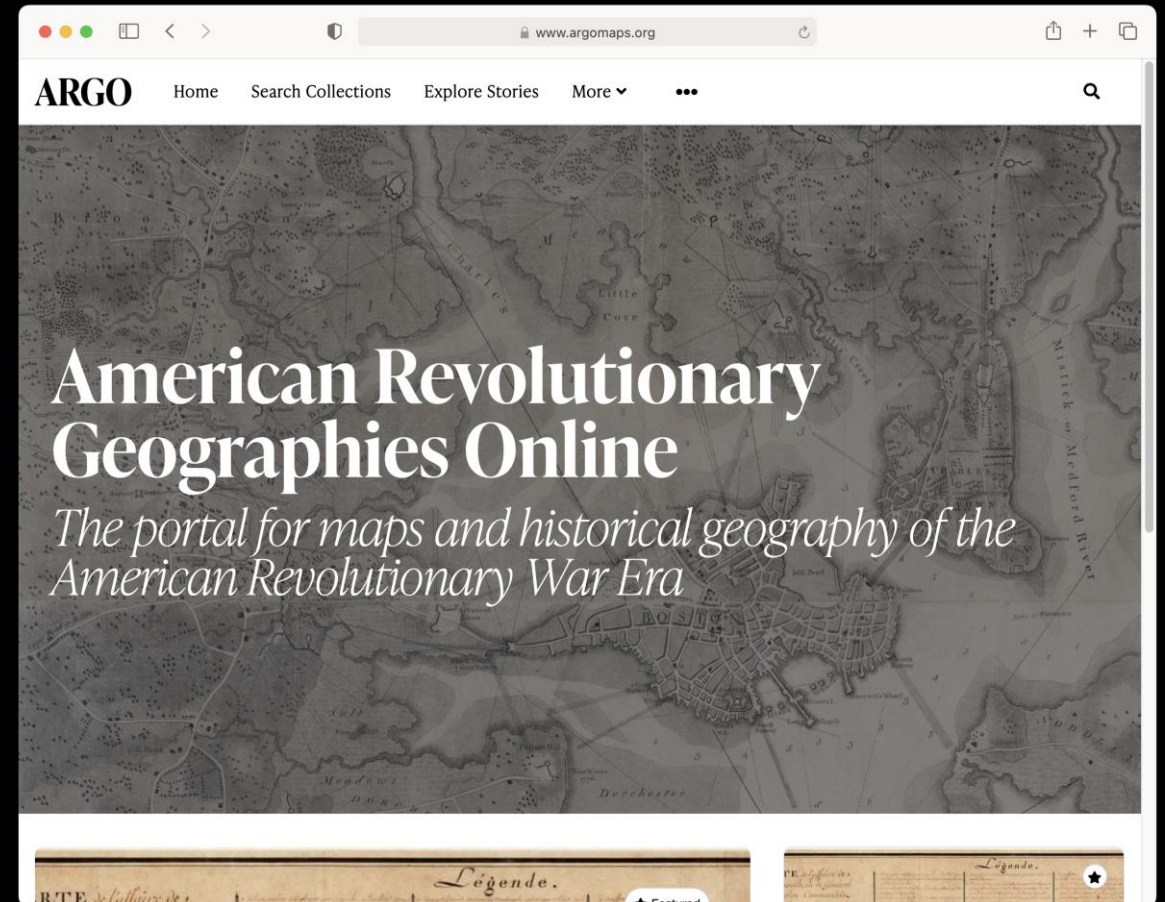
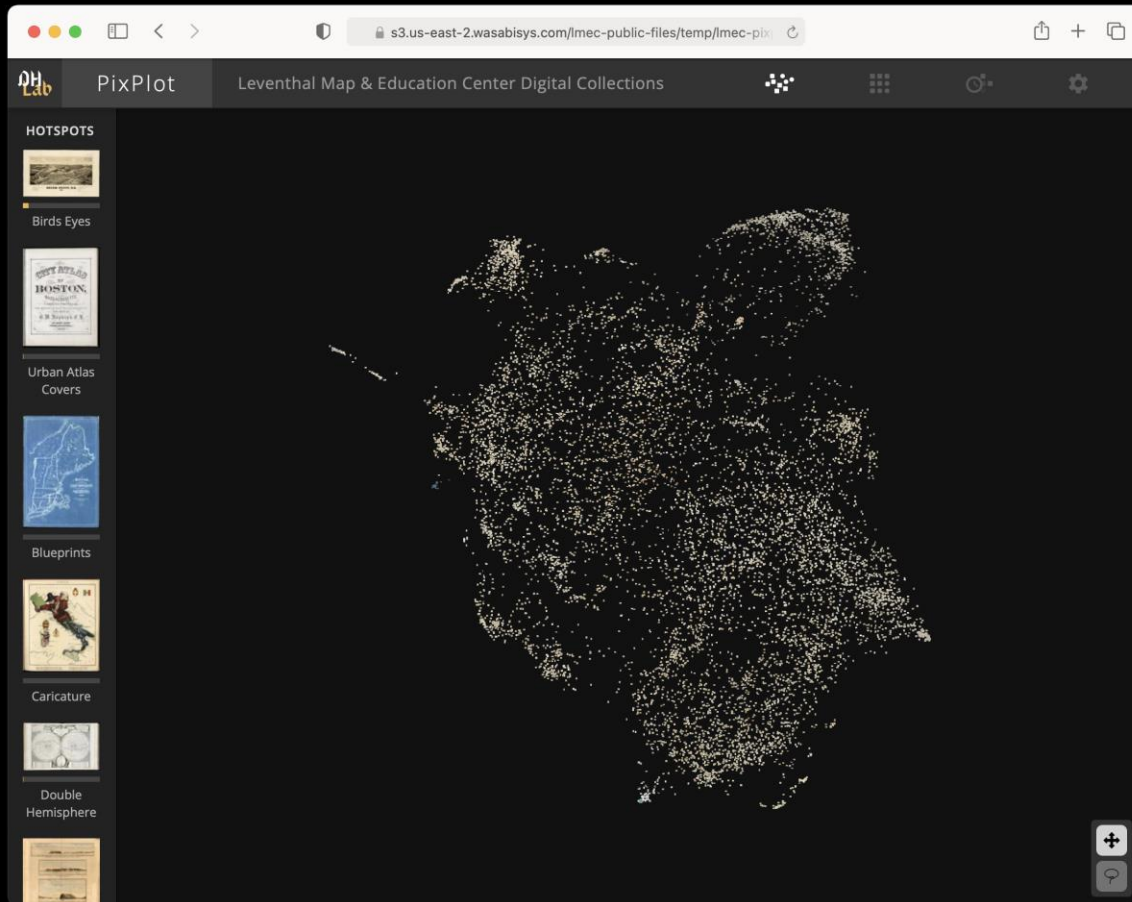
What can you do with a map collection?

Innovations and experiments with digital humanities



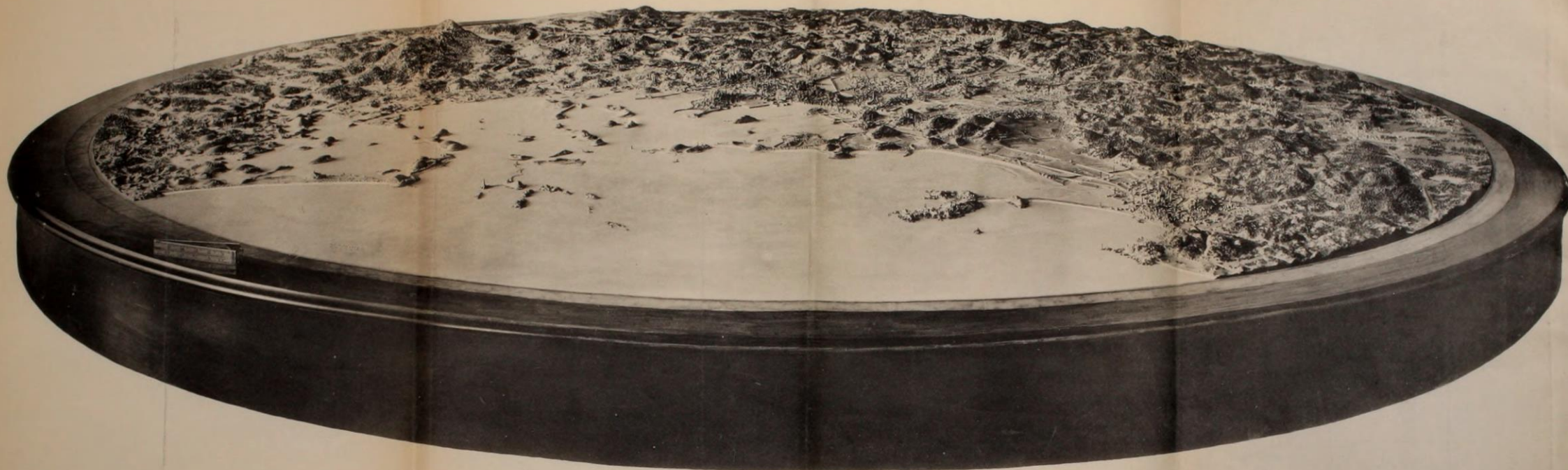
What can you do with a map collection?

Innovations and experiments with digital humanities



From “old maps” to “historical geography”

- “We use maps, geography, and history to understand the connection between places and people in Boston, New England, and beyond.”
- Example: NYPL Schomburg Center — not just a collection of Black Culture historical materials but a nexus of collections, research, programs, community engagements taking a broad interpretation of “research and education”
- Geography is crucial for understanding both historical and contemporary issues about social inclusion and exclusion, environmental change, politics, urban challenges, and much more
 - Upcoming March 18 exhibition opening: *More or Less in Common: Environment and Justice in the Human Landscape*



THE MODEL OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF BOSTON—Bird's-eye View from the East. [G. C. Curtis, Sc.]

It is advocated by several prominent educators that the model be permanently installed in some public building, such as the Boston Public Library, where it would form an interesting map for public instruction, especially for the schools, and a handy reference for all residents of Greater Boston.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Space needs for collections storage, teaching, staff
 - Engagement with the McKim master plan
- Excitement versus stability
 - Improving administrative procedures and closer integration with Special Collections on issues such as accessioning, preservation, research access, and more
- Rethinking exhibitions and teaching in a post-pandemic world
 - Strategic consideration of our “forced digital” period
- Reach versus focus
 - Identifying key activities with greatest impact for effort



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

leventhalmap.org

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF

THE CITY OF BOSTON

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM A. STODOLSKY AND ASSOCIATES, N.Y.