



**Norman B. Leventhal
Map Center**
at the Boston Public Library

PRESS RELEASE

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Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center Announces New Map Curator
Garrett Dash Nelson, PhD, to join team

Boston, MA - The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library is proud to announce and welcome Garrett Dash Nelson, PhD, as the Curator of Maps & Director of Geographic Scholarship.

Nelson is primarily a historical geographer whose research unpacks the history of placemaking and planning in New England, with a focus on the role of maps in the creation of civic knowledge. He is also a cartographer and programmer with an extensive portfolio of projects that draws from fields like urban studies, historic preservation, and landscape architecture. He holds a BA from Harvard College, an MA from the University of Nottingham with his thesis on Frederick Law Olmsted in England, a PhD in Geography from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and he was most recently a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows and Department of Geography at Dartmouth College. In addition to being an active member of the Critical GIS and Geohumanities research communities, Nelson has contributed to the *Boston Globe* Ideas section, *CityLab*, *Places Journal*, and *Zócalo Public Square*. His most recent book project is titled *The Limits of Here: Contested Geographies of Community, Polity, and Place*, and examines a series of New England-based case studies.

“After a thorough six-month international search, we could not be more thrilled that Garrett is joining us to become part of the Boston curatorial community,” said Connie Chin, President and CEO of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library. “His background and expertise is a tremendous asset to our mission of inspiring curiosity and learning among people of all ages by using cartographic materials to illuminate history, geography, world cultures, science, and contemporary issues. His intellectual leadership is grounded in interdisciplinary thinking and a true passion for the stories maps tell.”

“I strongly believe that maps are one of the most powerful communicative languages for creating a shared discourse about the history and future of places,” said Nelson. “The Boston Public Library in general and the Leventhal Center in particular have long been one of my most cherished academic homes-away-from-home. I see the role of a new Curator at the Leventhal Center as building on the impressive existing strengths of the organization and expanding its role in the broad Boston-based community of people and institutions with an interest in geography, maps, and urban and regional studies.”

In this role, Nelson will be responsible for directing the research and curating of map exhibitions as well as acquisition, preservation and access for the Map & Education Center’s physical and digital collections. Nelson will also direct all research and scholarship activities, and work in tandem with the Director of Education to create curriculum-related programs for K-12 schoolchildren and teachers, and opportunities for a diverse public community to be inspired to learn about and learn through maps.

The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library is open to the public Monday through Thursday from 10am-7pm; Friday and Saturday from 10am-5pm; and Sunday from 1pm-5pm.

About the NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP & EDUCATION CENTER AT THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center is ranked among the top map centers in the United States for the size of its collection, the significance of its historic (pre-1900) material, its advanced digitization program, and its exceptional exhibitions and educational programs.

The Center’s mission is to use its extensive map collections to inspire curiosity and learning among people of all ages, illuminating history, geography, world cultures, science, and contemporary issues. The Center offers a robust selection of K-12 education programs for students of all levels, develops and disseminates lesson plans, and trains teachers to use maps effectively and creatively in the classroom. Public programming includes changing exhibitions, lectures, workshops, classes, and family programs. An extensive website offers free access to more than 10,000 high resolution digitized maps of historical significance, virtual exhibitions, geo-referencing capabilities, and a Tools for Teachers section with map sets and classroom activities.

The Center was established by philanthropist Norman Leventhal as a public-private partnership with the Boston Public Library and was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2007. The Center stewards the Boston Public Library’s permanent collection of 200,000 maps and 5,000 atlases and a select group of rare maps collected by Mr. Leventhal. The collection, the second

largest in the country located in a public library, is freely available for academic and public research. To learn more, visit leventhalmap.org

About BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boston Public Library provides educational, cultural and civic enrichment, free to all, for the residents of Boston, Massachusetts and beyond, through its collections, services, programs, and spaces. Established in 1848, the Boston Public Library is a pioneer of public library service in America. It was the first large free municipal library in the United States, the first public library to lend books, the first to have a branch library, and the first to have a children's room. As a City of Boston historic cultural institution, Boston Public Library today features a Central Library, twenty-five branches, a map center, business library, archival center; extensive special collections of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, and prints; and rich digital content and online services. The award-winning renovation of the Central Library in Copley Square, completed in 2016, together with new, renovated and historic branches, provide a transformed library system for the next generation of users. Boston Public Library enriches lives, hosting thousands of free educational programs and exhibitions, and providing free library services online and in-person to millions of people each year.

To learn more, visit bpl.org

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