



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

PRESS RELEASE

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Norman B. Leventhal Map Center Unveils Major Website Redesign

Invitation to interact with more than 8,000 maps, exhibitions and educational materials

Boston, MA – The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center’s redesigned website, complete with mobile-friendly digital collections and exhibitions, georeferencing capabilities, and interactive educational tools, was launched to the public. The new website has been in development for two years, and is the product of two major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Maps help us to visualize and understand the course of history in the context of geography, and the website’s added features were designed to enable users to explore this relationship. Georeferencing tools will allow users to overlay maps digitally in order to compare an older map to a modern one – to look at where a significant event took place and understand the setting as it was then, and how it is now. For example, a student could compare two maps of the city of Boston and see that cannons used by the colonists during the Revolutionary War were positioned in what is now known as Dorchester Heights. Additionally, collections may be searched using a digital map, to discover materials from a particular location. Once maps are georeferenced, they can be used in a variety of GIS tools.

The other primary features of the website include a series of more powerful interactive tools, designed to encourage users to engage with the Leventhal Map Center’s robust collections in a meaningful way. Users browsing the digital collections will be able to download high resolution images and to readily access expanded bibliographic information. They can take advantage of filtered search and browse facets to navigate through the Leventhal Map Center’s collections and partner images, as well as digital versions of exhibitions. The website houses the American Revolution Digital Collection, including images from nine partner institutions, offering unparalleled access to rare and significant maps. Maps from the British Library, the Library of Congress, and multiple other collections will all be readily accessible in one place.

“When it came time to talk about revamping the website, we were all in agreement that we wanted to create a place for people to more easily interact with the diverse array of maps in our collection,” said Connie Chin, President at the Leventhal Map Center. “We are excited to engage a wider audience through our digital strategies. We are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their support of this project”

The Leventhal Map Center places an emphasis on the vast array of educational uses for maps across age ranges, and the website will host a number of new tools for educators. Educators will be able to easily access and annotate maps for discussion, and even create their own map sets to correlate with class curriculum. The complete set of tools will be incorporated into the Map Center’s NEH-funded *Landmarks of American History* teacher workshop series, which will take place this summer.

“It is part of our mission to excite young people’s curiosity about their world through the use of maps as a teaching tool,” said Michelle LeBlanc, Director of Education and Public Programming at the Leventhal Map Center. “We view the website’s enhanced user experience to be the next evolution for having more maps available in classrooms across the country.”

Visit us online at collections.leventhalmap.org to explore the Map Center’s cartographic materials.

The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center is open to the public Monday-Thursday 10am-7pm; Friday-Saturday 10am-5 pm; and Sunday 1-5pm.

About the NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP CENTER

The Norman B. Leventhal Map 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, and its advanced digitization program. It is unique among the major collections because it also combines these features with exceptional educational and teacher training programs to advance geographic literacy among students in grades K-12 and enhance the teaching of subjects from history to mathematics to language arts. The collection is also the second largest in the country located in a public library, ensuring unlimited access to these invaluable resources for scholars, educators, and the general public. The Leventhal Map Center, incorporated in 2007 as a nonprofit organization, was established by philanthropist Norman Leventhal as a public-private partnership with the Boston Public Library. Its mission is to use 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 for the enjoyment and education of all through exhibitions, educational programs, and a website that includes thousands of digitized maps at leventhalmap.org. The map collection is global in scope, dating from the 15th century to the present, with particular strengths in maps and

atlases of Boston, Massachusetts, New England, the American Revolutionary War era, urban maps, and nautical charts. To learn more, visit leventhalmap.org .

About BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boston Public Library has a Central Library, twenty-four branches, map center, business library, and a website filled with digital content and services. Established in 1848, the Boston Public Library has pioneered 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. Each year, the Boston Public Library hosts thousands of programs and serves millions of people. All of its programs and exhibitions are free and open to the public. At the Boston Public Library, books are just the beginning. To learn more, visit bpl.org.

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