

NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP AND EDUCATION CENTER

# Visualizing Change: Stories of Community Activism in Digital Commonwealth Collections

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### Who we are

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



The Leventhal Map and Education Center is a nonprofit education and research center housed in the Boston Public Library

Focus on creative educational use of maps in center and digitally

250,000 maps, historical atlases, digital geospatial data, globes and other primary source materials, 10,000 of which have been digitized

### Maptivists Initiative

How can maps and digital mapping be used to help students envision their city and propose change?



### Visualizing Change and Activism in Boston

How can maps help us see change?

What has stayed the same over time? What has changed?

How did this change happen? What is the role of activism in this change?

### Case Studies

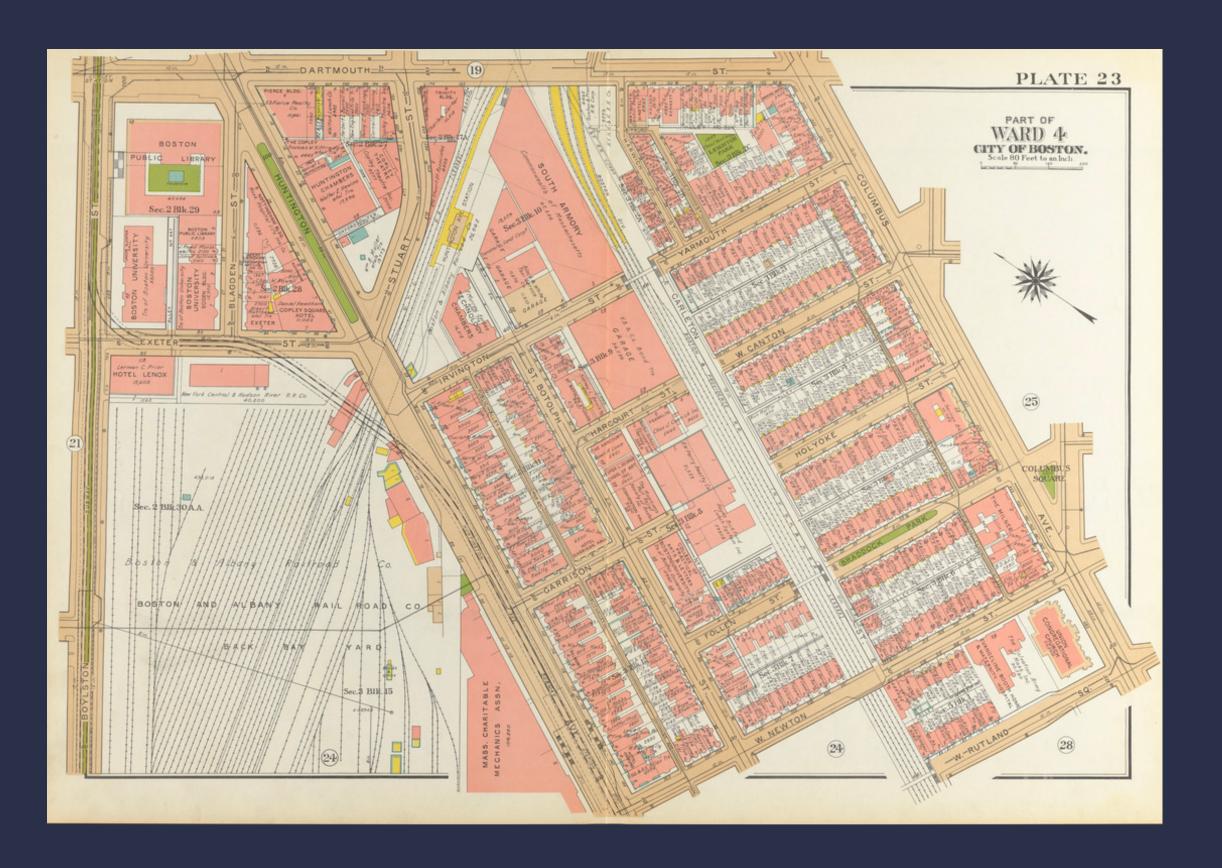
- TENT CITY

- DUDLEY TRIANGLE

- SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR

- PARCEL C

### Tent City

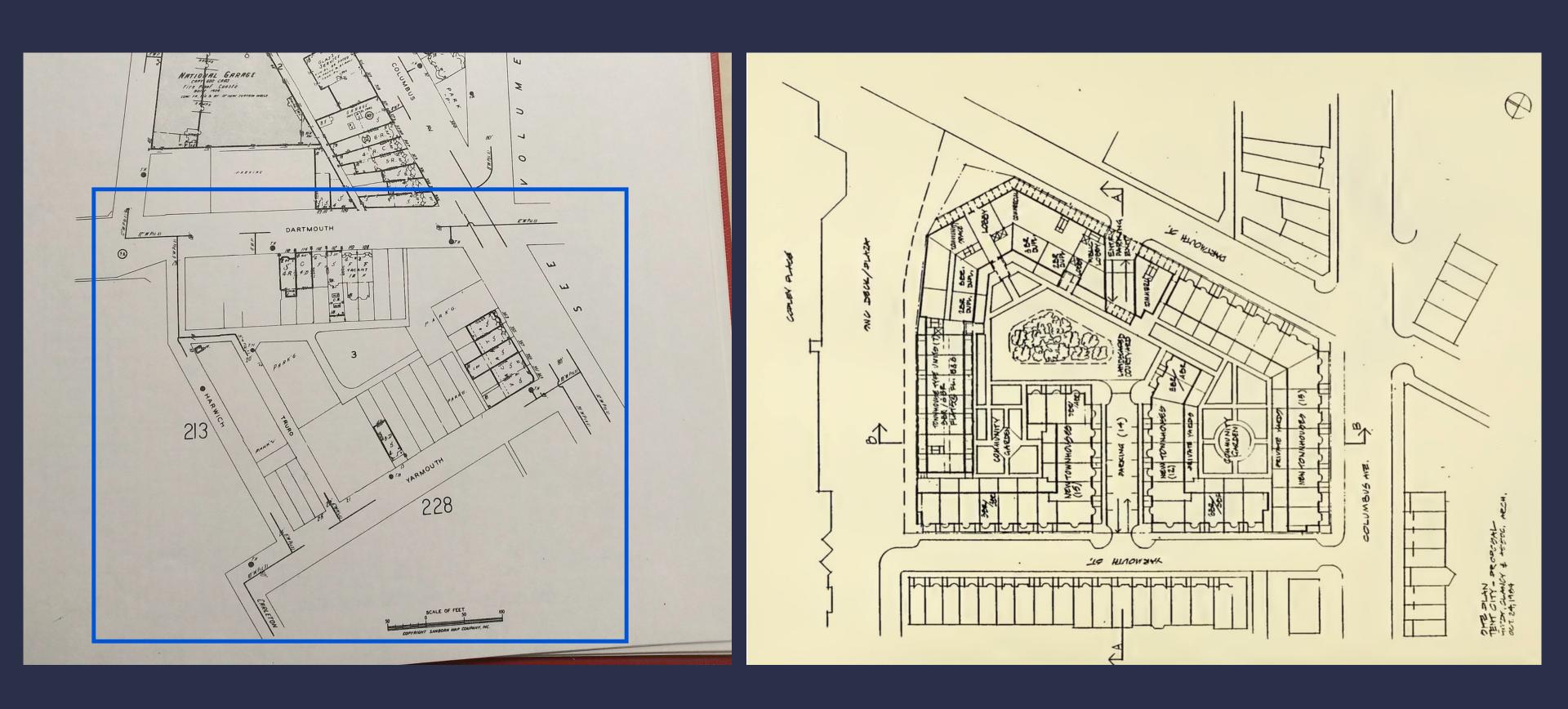


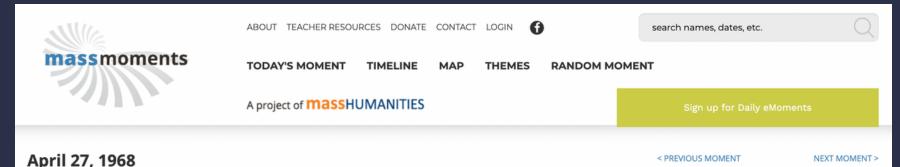
## Evidence of Change

Looking and thinking about these two maps side by side, what kinds of changes do you see? What do you see that has stayed the same?

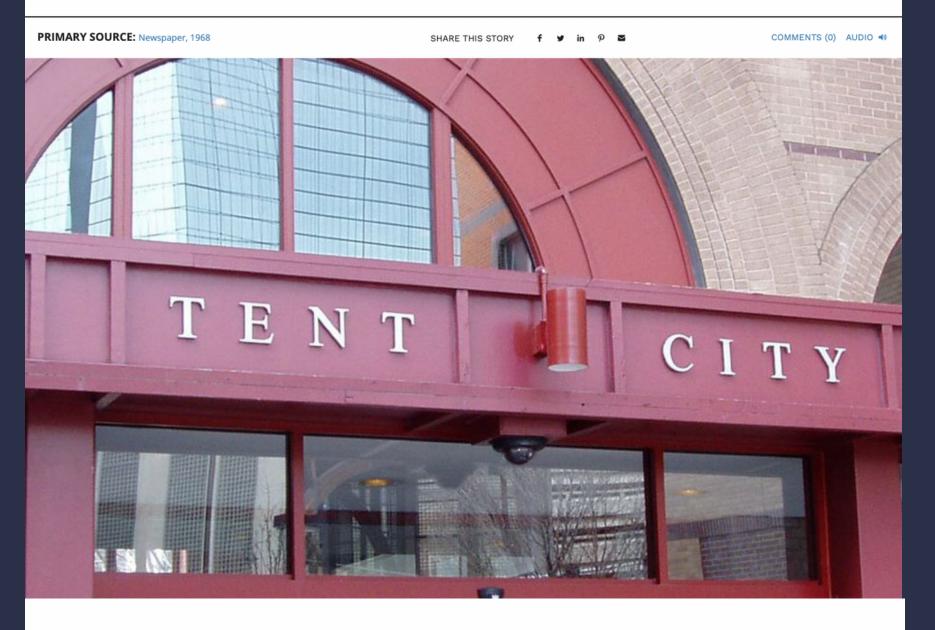
What do these maps tell you about the neighborhood or city?

What don't they tell you about the neighborhood or city that would help you understand it better?





**Activists Erect Tent City in Boston** 



On this day in 1968, hundreds of demonstrators occupied a parking lot in Boston's South End. Houses on the site had recently been demolished, and their occupants displaced. To protest this kind of "urban renewal," neighborhood activists created a temporary "tent city." Along with thousands of supporters, they spent a long weekend at what one reporter called "an impromptu urban fair." Thanks to an attentive media, they won public sympathy for their cause. After four days, the protesters left the site. They did not, however, give up the fight for affordable housing in Boston. It took 20 years, but their persistence paid off. The parking lot was eventually transformed into the Tent City development that is now home to several hundred mixed-income families.

### Changemakers

What did you learn that helped you make sense of either of the maps, or both of them?

Who were the people that created the change in the location on your maps, and why did they feel the change was important?

What is a question you have about this place after learning some things about it?

### Documenting the Role of Activism through Digital Collections



Search

Explore

For Educators

Primary Source Sets > Activism in Boston Over Time

### **Activism in Boston Over Time**

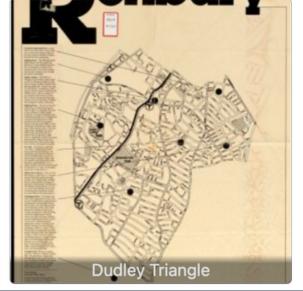
This collection was assembled by the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center as part of their Maptivists initiative with Boston Public Schools. Each set represents a location-based case study and includes a variety of maps, images and other primary sources that reveal change over time in different Boston neighborhoods and the role of activism in creating that change.

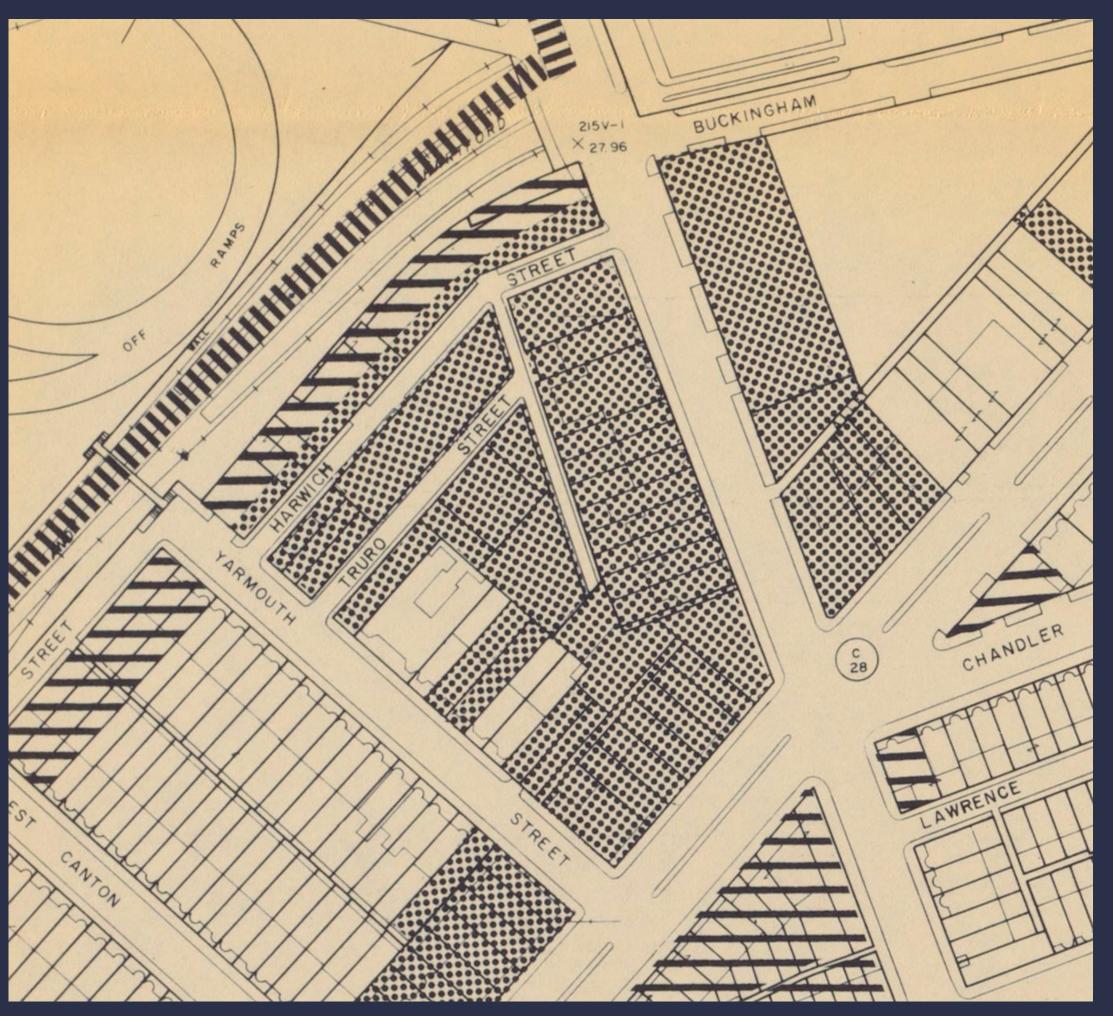
Linked here is a lesson that incorporates many of these sources as well as others that can be used with students in grades 8-12. Students compare two maps to uncover how the location changed and then investigate additional resources to learn about the individuals and organizations that came together to fight highway building, create affordable housing, etc. Massachusetts students are required to complete a civics action project by the time they graduate. These historical examples speak to different locations in Boston that students might pass by or live near.

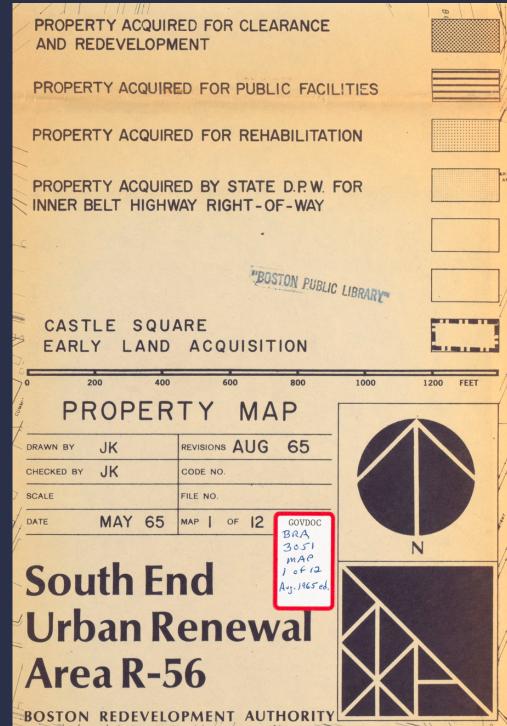
Additional resources featured here but not used in the lesson could be used to further research the history of each case study.











South End urban renewal area R-56: property map
Boston Redevelopment Authority
August 1965

Boston Public Library
Boston Public Library Collection



Tent City

Young students look into Boston
Redevelopment Authority South End
office during BRA sit-in
April 25, 1968

Boston Public Library
Brearley Collection





Tent City Housing August 13, 1987

WGBH Ten O'Clock News

### Other Highlights from the Activism in Boston Over Time Primary Source Set





Inner belt protest march in Cambridge,
Carrol J. Myett
February 26, 1966

Cambridge Historical
Commission
Cambridge Photo Morgue
Collection



SEPTEMBER 23, 1987

### DUDLEY STREET NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY

The plan begins with a description of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and the process for selecting the co sultants.

This is followed by a detailed description of the neigh borhood and residents and their aspirations.

Two key concepts drive the revitalization plan. One is critical mass and the other tandem strategy:

Critical mass is the process of putting together a project of sufficient size so that we can successfully control the character of our neighborhood.

Tandem Strategy discuses our process of developing new construction and rehabilitation of existing housing at the same time.

### 1. REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The Development strategey proposes to use an Urban Village as the key concept. This "village" would have a commons with retail and recreational space. Between 800 and 1000 units of new housing would be constructed and 1080 housing units would be rehabbed. The program would take place over 5 years and is estimated to cost \$134,855,016. New housing would be available for famili with an income of \$10-15,000 or more which requires a subsidy program valued at \$26,000,000. A limited amount of rental housing would be available to familes earning less than \$10,000.

The third purpose is to identify techniques and strategies which will increase the accountability of human service providers to the neighborhood(s) which they serve d to provide mechanisms which organized neighborhood residents can utilize to achieve a greater degree of control over the services being provided.

The fourth purpose is to foster greater coordination and provide opportunities for increased agency/resident cooperation.

### Strategy four: MARKETING RESEARCH APPROACH

Replace conventional needs assessment with focus groups / marketing research.

### Strategy five: COMMUNITY REVIEW

Public hearings through which residents can influence human service progam priorities and funding.

### Strategy Six: THE FORCE

- Major mobilization of community to eliminate crime and drug abuse.
- ° Self help project development.

### Strategy Seven: STRENGTHEN THE RACIAL, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

- Provide assistance to Cape Verdean Community to develop human service programs.
- Encourage agency collaboration in determining best way to build on neighborhood diversity.

### Strategy Eight: CHILD CARE

° Child care advocacy and central neighborhood registry for infants through teenagers.

### Strategy Nine: RECREATION AND ATHLETICS

Obtain staff person from Department of Parks to develop recreation master plan for neighborhood.

### Dudley Triangle

<u>Dudley Street Neighborhood</u>
<u>Initiative: Comprehensive plan</u>
<u>summary.</u>
Dudley Street Neighborhood
Initiative
September 23, 1987

Northeastern University Library La Alianza Hispana records (M55)





<u>Chinatown residents</u>
<u>march in Parcel C</u>
<u>protest</u>
September 1993

Northeastern University
Library
Chinese Progressive
Association records
(M163)

### Want to learn more?

Tune in on **Thursday, September 28th**3:00PM-4:30PM EST for Visualizing Change in
Boston: Using Digital Commonwealth Collections to
Tell Stories of Places and Activism, a more detailed
look at our new primary source sets and
accompanying lesson.

Registration info coming soon!

### Thank you!



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