The Emergence of Portland
Early Homes and Early Maps

Matthew H. Edney
Osher Professor in the History of Cartography
University of Southern Maine
edney@usm.maine.edu

Director, History of Cartography Project
University of Wisconsin–Madison
edney@wisc.edu
Gerhard Mercator, Septentrionalium Terrarum Descriptio (Amsterdam, 1633). OS-1653-2

http://www.oshermaps.org/
The Emergence of Portland

Puffery

1. Framing Cities — and Portland — in Early Maps

2. Portland as Urban Place: *Urbs* and *Civis*

3. Resurgam: The Modern Narrative of Portland’s Foundation

4. Portland’s Ante-Bellum Growth: Internal vs External Views

5. Conclusions
Source Libraries and Archives

**MHS** = Maine Historical Society, many of whose maps are imaged through the *Maine Memory Network*: [www.mainememory.net](http://www.mainememory.net)

**OML** = Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine: [www.oshermaps.org](http://www.oshermaps.org)

**LC** = Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov/maps](http://www.loc.gov/maps)

**Rumsey** = David Rumsey’s amazing collection of mostly nineteenth-century US maps: [www.davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com)

**Harvard** = Harvard Map Collection, Harvard College Library, Harvard University: [hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/maps/digitalmaps/](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/maps/digitalmaps/)
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Framing Cities in Maps

Cities are mapped in several different ways, with differing purposes and differing spatial frames, and must be read accordingly.
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Very Broad: situating the city within a wider region

city located on a regional map

maps of a particular city’s hinterland
John Small, “… this map of the Countys of York, Cumberland & Lincoln” (1761)
www.oshermaps.org/map/42890.0003
“See Maine by Trolley,” in *Trolleying through the Heart of Maine* ([Portland]: Portland Railroad and Lewiston, Augusta, & Waterville Street Railway, ca. 1900)

www.oshermaps.org/map/12140
Cities are mapped in several different ways, with differing purposes and differing **spatial frames**, and must be read accordingly.

**Very Broad:** situating the city within a wider region

- city located on a regional *map*

- *maps* of a particular city’s hinterland

**Very Narrow:** focusing on one fragment of the city

- property *plans* of urban lots

- engineering and planning *plans*, from individual buildings to several blocks
Alexander W. Longfellow, “Plan of a Lot of Land belonging to the Estate of the late Reuben Morton Esq.” (1838)

The parcel is at the corner of Congress and Brown streets (i.e., where we are right now!)

MHS Coll. 185, Box 4/10
Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and John Charles Olmsted, *City of Portland Me. General Plan for Eastern Promenade* (Boston, 1905)

[www.oshermans.org/map/37677](http://www.oshermans.org/map/37677)
Cities are mapped in several different ways, with differing purposes and differing spatial frames, and must be read accordingly.

Very Broad: situating the city within a wider region

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Just Right: mapping cities as discrete and coherent places . . .
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Renaissance scholars were very clear that the *artificiality* of cities made them special places that contrasted markedly with the environment and social systems of the agricultural majority:

**urbs**: the built environment

The Portland urbs: Rosemary Mosher’s 2014 composite image of Falmouth Neck from the map of Portland Harbor in the *Atlantic Neptune* (1776) and 2001 aerial photography. (Ms. Mosher is currently manager of digital data for the city of Auburn.) Private Collection
Renaissance scholars were very clear that the artificiality of cities made them special places that contrasted markedly with the environment and social systems of the agricultural majority:

**urbs**: the built environment

**civis**: the community of the city, free from feudal social strictures

Charles Harris, after John Cranch, after John Seymour Jr., “Falmouth now Portland in Casco Bay in North America” (ca. 1790|1849)
Harvard map G3734 .P8A35 1790 .S4 1849
Renaissance scholars were very clear that the artificiality of cities made them special places that contrasted markedly with the environment and social systems of the agricultural majority:

**urbs**: the built environment

**civis**: the community of the city, free from feudal structures

Mapping of cities as places always captures both aspects, to various degrees.

AND, there is the question of the situation of the map’s makers and readers, whether they are internal or external to the city and its community.

MHS map FF 310
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THE

HISTORY OF PORTLAND,

FROM ITS

FIRST SETTLEMENT:

WITH

NOTICES OF THE NEIGHBOURING TOWNS,

AND OF THE

CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT IN MAINE.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY WILLIAM WILLIS.

PART I.

Portland:
Printed by Day, Fraser & Co.
1831.
“Ancient Falmouth, from 1630 to 1690,” engr. Pendleton’s Lithography, Boston, in vol. 1 of Willis, *History of Portland* (Portland, 1831), frontispiece
oshermaps.org/map/7529.0013
"Grants made by the proprietors of Falmouth . . . between 1722 & 1728," engr. Pendleton's Lithography, Boston, in vol. 2 of Willis, History of Portland (Portland, 1833), opp. 21  oshermaps.org/map/7529.0284
“Falmouth Neck, as it was when destroyed by Mowett,” engr. Pendleton’s Lithography, Boston, in vol. 2 of Willis, *History of Portland* (Portland, 1833), opp. 156 oshermaps.org/map/7529.0426
Limit of destruction

We are here (approx.)
[Lemuel Moody?], “Plan of Falmouth now Portland” (?)  

MHS map F 219
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Portland in 1820s was still a walking city: small, intimate, compact.

Yet its growth and new status led some locals to promote a new, boosterish, commercial product: the directory.


Alas, as Thayer’s preface made clear, “circumstances beyond his control” meant that “he [was] disappointed in what he considered his just expectation of procuring the Plate” for the map.
Abel Bowen, “A New and Correct Plan of Portland ... Population 9000,” from Natheniel G. Jewett, The Portland Directory & Register ... with a New and Correct Plan of the Town (Portland: Todd and Smith, 1823)  MHS map FF 299
REFERENCES
1. First Parish Meeting House
2. Second
3. Third
4. St. Paul's Church
5. Friends Meeting House
6. Baptist Meeting House
7. Methodist
8. Universalist
9. State House
10. Court House and Gaol
11. Academy
12. Central Row
13. Preble
14. Jones
15. Merchants
16. Musseys
17. Union
18. Exchange
19. Columbian
20. Hay Market
21. West Market
22. School Houses
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1. First Parish Meeting House
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18. Exchange
19. Columbian
20. Hay Market
21. West Market
22. School Houses
Lemuel Moody, “Portland with a View of the Different Streets” (1826)
MHS map RR8
References

1. Meeting House 1st Parish
2. Town Hall
3. Methodist Meeting House
4. Court House & Jail
5. Meeting House 3rd Parish
6. Universal Meeting House
7. Baptist Meeting House
8. Friendly Meeting House
9. St. Paul's Church
10. Meeting House 2nd Parish
11. Custom House
12. Cumberland Bank
13. Merchants' Bank
14. Portland Bank
15. Casco Bank
16. Canal Bank
17. Post Office
REFERENCES

1 First Parish Meeting House.
2 Second
3 Third
4 Baptist
5 Methodist
6 Universalist
7 Friends
8 St. Paul's Church
9 Court House and Goal.
10 State
11 Market
12 Academy
13 New Methodist Meeting House.
14 Freewill Baptists do.
15 Christian Chapel.
16 Mariner's Church.
17 Custom House.
18 Theatre.
Bowen, 1823

Colesworthy, 1831
John Cullum, *A Map of the City of Portland with the Latest Improvements* (Portland: John Cullum, 1836)  oshermaps.org/map/11753
Colesworthy & Cullum maps at relative scale
Brightened slightly, to bring out the herald angles . . .
Henry F. Walling, *Map of the City of Portland* ([Philadelphia], 1851)  
Rumsey 1145000
MAP OF THE
CITY OF PORTLAND

FROM ORIGINAL SURVEYS
HENRY F. WALLING CIVIL ENGINEER
1851
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