

Liz Kosturko
May 14, 2007
Life in Colonial Boston (1700-1750)
L.D. Batchelder School, North Reading, MA
3rd grade ELA/SS

Boston in the early 18th century was a prosperous port city. It was the largest city in the British colonies, with a population of about 12,000 residents. A thriving seaport. Boston was a city with approximately forty wharves, over twelve shipyards, and six ropewalks. It is obvious that many residents of Boston were involved in marine-related businesses.

The city was oriented very differently than modern Boston is today. The city was essentially a large peninsula, connected to the mainland by only a thin strip of land, called "the Neck." The Neck provided the sole link with the mainland, the only access point into the town via land. Because so much of Boston's business was associated with the waterfront, it makes sense that the most populated area was the neighborhood of the North End, which bordered the water at the northern end of the peninsula. This neighborhood was marked by narrow, twisting streets, which connected the wharves and docks with the commercial area of town.

Near the North End was the financial and governmental heart of the city, with buildings like the Town House and Faneuil Hall (1742). Faneuil Hall was built by a Boston businessman, Peter Faneuil. He intended to build a central marketplace for the vendors in the city, partially for convenience and partially to instill a system of fair pricing between store owners. Faneuil Hall was located just steps away from Long Wharf, the deep-water wharf on the harbor. Long Wharf allowed supply ships to dock in deeper water, and unload their goods to be brought into the city.

Boston Common, which is now a park in the center of the downtown area, was the common grazing ground for livestock. There was also a large powderhouse on the common.

Typical jobs of the time period were sail maker, carpenter, candle-maker, printers, coopers, blacksmiths, metal smiths. Young boys were apprenticed to a craftsman at a young age, their master was responsible for teaching them the craft as well as providing an education in math and reading.

The colonies were under the rule of the English King George III. The British had instituted taxes on a variety of goods and services in Boston.

Essential Questions:

- What was life like in Boston at this time?
- What did the city of Boston look like?
- How did people work together to survive?

Learning Objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding of what life in Colonial Boston was like.
- Students will learn about specific jobs necessary for maintaining life in a colonial city.
- Students will review map-reading skills, such as using a compass rose, to identify key features of a map and locate streets and landmarks in colonial Boston.

Learning Activities:

1. Students will examine a copy of John Bonner's map of Boston, 1722 to learn about how the city was structured.
2. Students will identify Long Wharf, the Town Dock, Boston Common, the Mill Pond, the Battery, the Rope Walk, and a variety of streets to understand how the commercial and residential districts of the colonial port city were connected.
 - Each student will receive a photocopy of this map, which was drawn in 1722 by Captain John Bonner.
 - Using a set of printed directions (seen attached), students will locate a set of landmarks and use a highlighter to indicate the locations of landmarks on the map.
 - Students will speculate why these locations were important, and what activities went on in each location. Students will spend a few minutes independently observing the map and writing their observations on the accompanying worksheet. (See attached).
 - After working independently to identify certain sites on the map, teachers should lead a whole-class discussion to review these sites. Teachers may draw upon students' prior-knowledge of colonial towns and colonial life, as well as the students' speculations as to why these landmarks are important features of a colonial town.

Points for Discussion:

- The most populated areas of the colonial city were those streets of the North End, Salem, Middle, and Ship Streets, as well as the area around Cornhill, King Street and Orange Street in the center of the town. The North End, located directly on the waterfront, was where much of the town's commercial life was focused. Oftentimes people lived and worked in the same structure, so it makes sense that this area of the city was densely populated. The area around Cornhill and King Street contained the governmental focus of the town, with the State House and other important buildings. Thus, it was another area that drew regular traffic of people.
- Long Wharf: Was built in 1710, lined with a continuous row of shops and warehouses. The wharf permitted direct loading and unloading of even the largest ships, without use of smaller boats or packets, to transport goods to land. Also, its location extended a long "avenue" directly from the sea to the rest of downtown Boston (the main thoroughfares of King and Orange streets). This emphasized the importance of the sea and marine trades for Boston at this time.
- Mill Pond: Have students locate the dam that crosses the pond. This marshy area of the Charles River basin was blocked off with a dam to create a mill pond. The pond supported a grist mill, for the grinding of grain, and a saw mill. Later, it also supported a chocolate mill.
- West of Mill Pond, have students locate the Rope Walk, where rope was braided and coiled for marine use. Also locate the Copper Works.

- South of Mill Pond, locate the Common. The Common was the common grazing area for the town, where residents kept their cows. There was also a gallows on the Common.
- South of Long Wharfe was Fort Hill and the South Battery. This was one area of defense for the town. The North Battery was located in the North End. Both structures were located on the waterfront, as the more probable method of attack would be from the water.

The TOWN of BOSTON

IN
New England

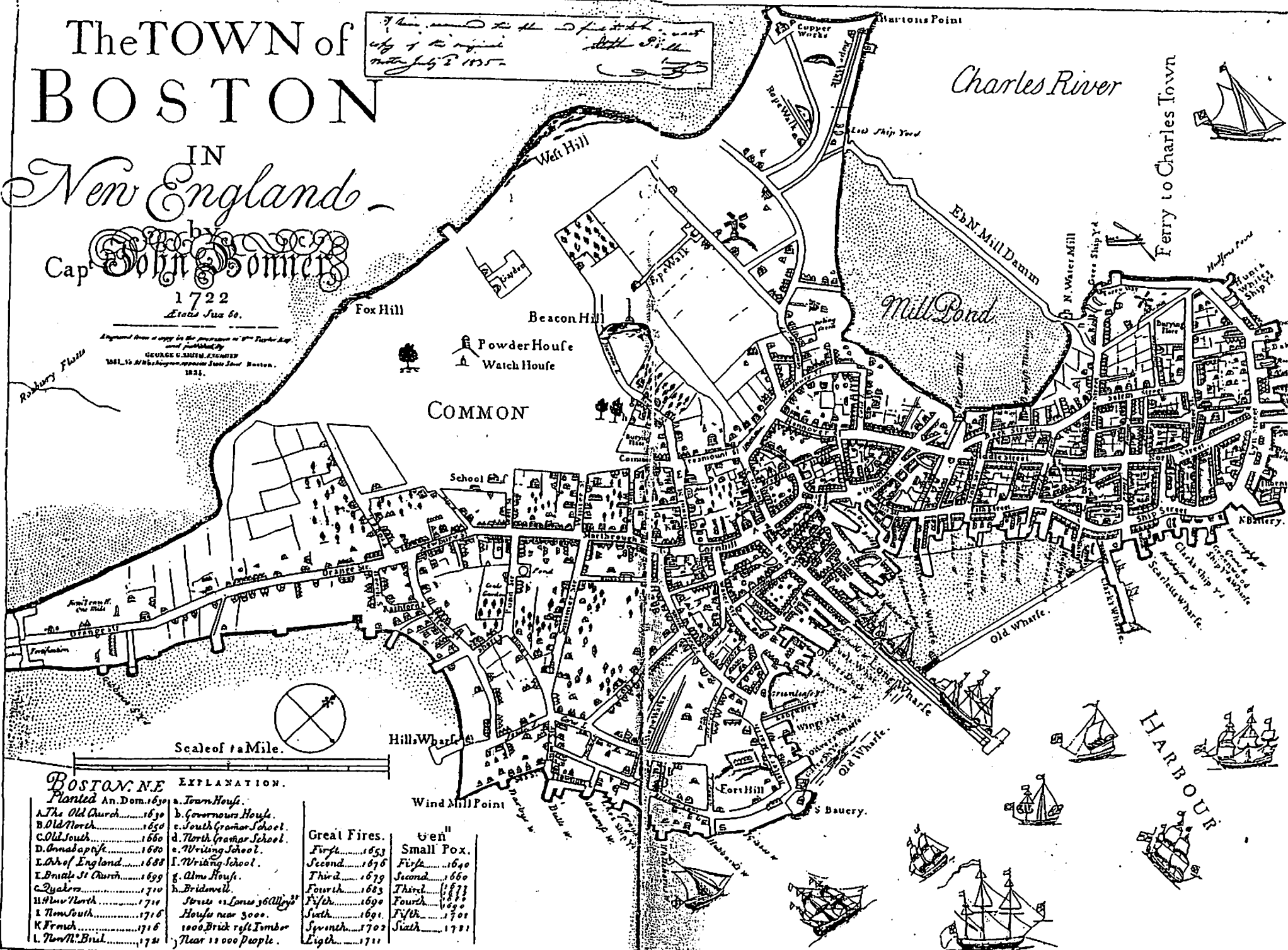
by
Cap^t John Donner

1722

Etats Jun 30.

Engraved from a copy in the possession of the Taylor Map and Published by
GEORGE C. SHUM, ENGRAVER
1841, 10 N. Washington, opposite State Street Boston,
1821.

This map is the first of the town of Boston
city of the original
made July 2 1722



Scale of 1/4 Mile.

BOSTON N.E.

- Planted An. Dom. 1630
- A. The Old Church.....1630
 - B. Old North.....1650
 - C. Old South.....1660
 - D. Annabaptist.....1670
 - E. Ark of England.....1688
 - F. British St Church.....1699
 - G. Quakers.....1710
 - H. New North.....1711
 - I. New South.....1716
 - K. French.....1716
 - L. New M^r. Brick.....1721

- EXPLANATION.
- a. Town House.
 - b. Governours House.
 - c. South Grammar School.
 - d. North Grammar School.
 - e. Writing School.
 - f. Writing School.
 - g. Alm House.
 - h. Bridewell.
 - i. Stone in Lanes 30 Alley^s
 - House near 3000.
 - 1000 Brick wth Tomb^e
 - Near 11 000 People.

Great Fires.		Gen ^l Small Pox.	
First.....	1653	First.....	1640
Second.....	1676	Second.....	1660
Third.....	1679	Third.....	1677
Fourth.....	1683	Fourth.....	1690
Fifth.....	1690	Fifth.....	1701
Sixth.....	1691	Sixth.....	1711
Seventh.....	1702		
Eighth.....	1711		

Name: _____

John Bonner Map of the Town of Boston in 1722.

Directions: Look carefully at the map drawn by John Bonner, think about what you already know about colonial towns, and answer the following questions.

1. What are some of the things you noticed about this map?

2. Around which streets are most of the buildings located?

3. Find LONG WHARFE. What do you think happens here?

3. Find the **COMMON**. What might residents of Boston use this land for?

4. Now look **NORTH** and **EAST** to find the **MILL POND**. What kinds of buildings do you think you might see around its edges?

5. Look to the **SOUTH** of Long Wharfe. Find **FORT HILL**. Why was this structure important for the town of Boston? Why do you think it might have been right on the water?
