

Coming to Boston

by Jason Newton, Old Connecticut Path Project, July 8, 2017



Introduction

To experience the arrival in Boston as the Puritan immigrants did requires imagination and a good boat!

Boston offers many ways to connect with the history of the city and the people who arrived starting with the Great Migration and continuing to this day. Arriving in Boston by car, train or airplane provides a modern entrance to the city. To get in touch with the sense of wonder experienced by Puritans who arrived by ship during the Great Migration requires a different approach, coming to Boston by water.

Visit "Coming to Boston" to discover a unique perspective on the Great Migration arrival and the place where America's westward migration began!

About: "Coming to Boston" is the first part of the "Coming to New England" project. This summer the Old Connecticut Path project will feature some of the places from the Massachusetts Bay to the Connecticut valley touched by these pioneers and their descendants. Follow their paths to connect with your own family stories!

Follow the "Coming to New England" project on the Old Connecticut Path Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/oldconnecticutpath>

Atlantic Crossing Ends at Boston

Boston was the major port of entry for Puritan immigrants arriving from England during the Great Migration. The changes in the city and surrounding countryside over the course of almost four centuries make it difficult to envision the experience of ancestors who crossed the Atlantic huddled below deck. From shipboard journals, we know that they saw glimpses of the new world as they sailed down the coast from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine, and New Hampshire before reaching the Massachusetts shore. As they drew closer to arrival at Boston, anticipation must have grown as they eagerly awaited release from their two month shipboard confinement.

As a pilot came aboard their ships to guide them to a safe landing in Boston, the Puritan pioneers beheld the majestic vastness of the Massachusetts Bay and Boston harbor.

The end of the 1635 Atlantic crossing aboard the ship "James"



The "James" Arrival at Boston: August 16, 1635



Photo above top: Long Wharf where ships arrived and modern Boston skyline Bottom: above bottom shows Route of the "James" as the ship arrived from England.

Rev. Richard Mather (August 16, 1635) shipboard journal: "This day wee went on towards Cape Anne, as ye wind would suffer, & our poore sayles further, and came within sight thereof ye other morning; which Sabbath, being ye 13 wee kept on

ship-board, was a marveylous pleasant day, for a fresh gale of wind, & cleare sunshine weather. This day wee went directly before ye wind, and had delight all along ye coast as wee went, in viewing Cape Anne, ye bay of Saugust, ye bay of Salem, Marvil head, Pullin point, and other places; and came to ancre at low tide in ye eveninn, at Nantascot, in a most pleasant harbor, like to wch I had never seene, amongst a great many of llands on every side. I was excercised on shipboard both ends of ye day. After ye evenings excercise, when it was flowing tide againe, wee set sayle, and came y' night to ancre againe before Boston, and so rested y' night with glad & thankfull hearts y' God had put an end to our long journey, being 1000 leagues, y' is 3000 miles English, over one of ye greatest seas in ye world."

Coming to Boston by Water

To experience the arrival in Boston as the Puritan immigrants did requires imagination and a good boat!



The Brewster Islands (above) at the entrance to Boston harbor are now part of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. All were named to honor Elder William Brewster by an expedition from Plymouth led by Miles Standish in 1621. The islands greeted passengers on the ships of the Great Migration at their landfall in America.

Today, Boston offers many ways to connect with the history of the city and the people who arrived starting with the Great Migration and continuing to this day. Arriving in Boston by car, train or airplane provides a modern entrance to the city. To get in touch with the sense of wonder experienced by Puritans who arrived by ship during the Great Migration requires a different approach, coming by water.

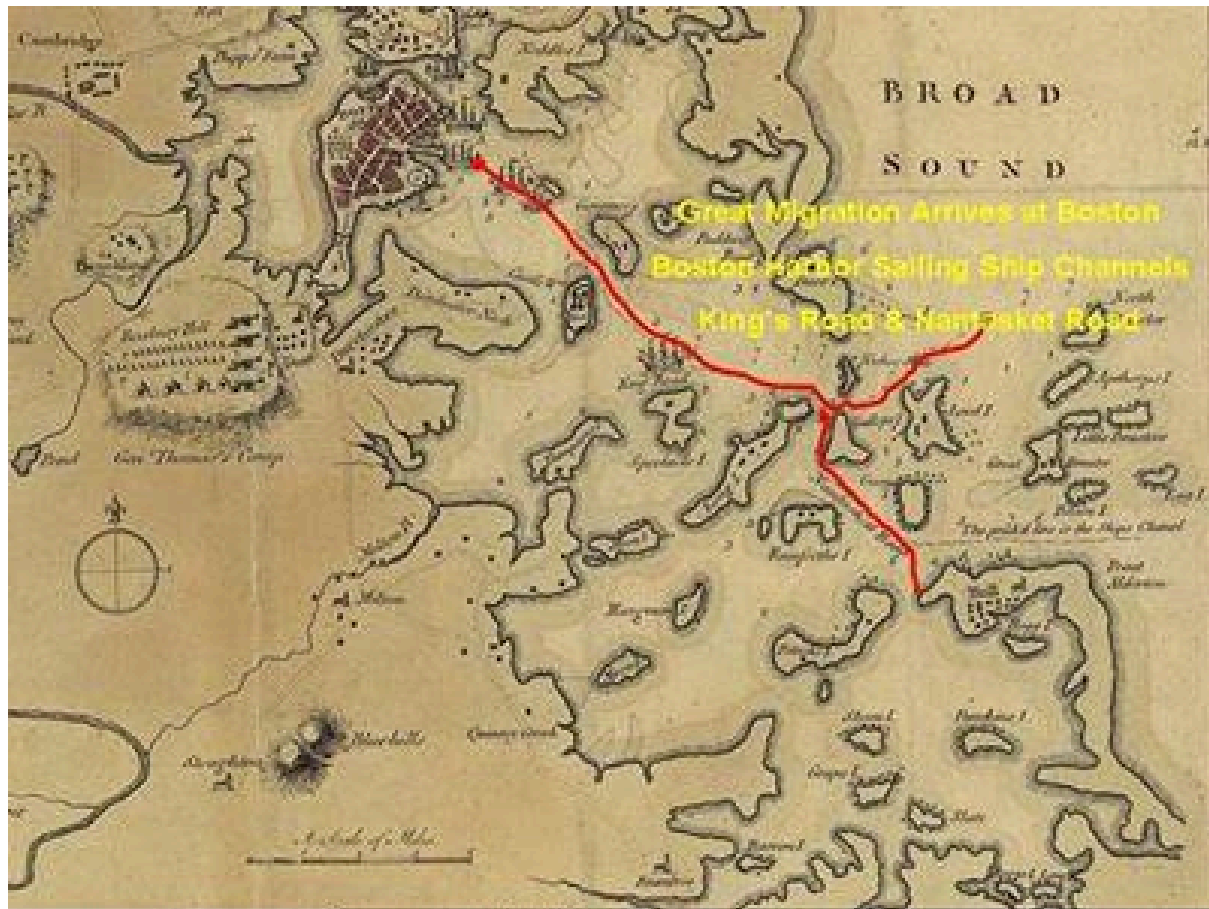
The expanse of Boston harbor fills the horizon from Pemberton Point in Hull. From left to right (below) are Dorchester, Watertown, Boston, Charlestown and Winthrop.



One of the best ways for visitors to Boston can get a taste of arrival by water can be found riding the MBTA Commuter Ferry. For less than \$20, you can experience the approach across Boston harbor to Long Wharf as passengers on the MBTA ferry between Boston-Hingham-Hull. http://www.mbta.com/schedules_and_maps/boats/

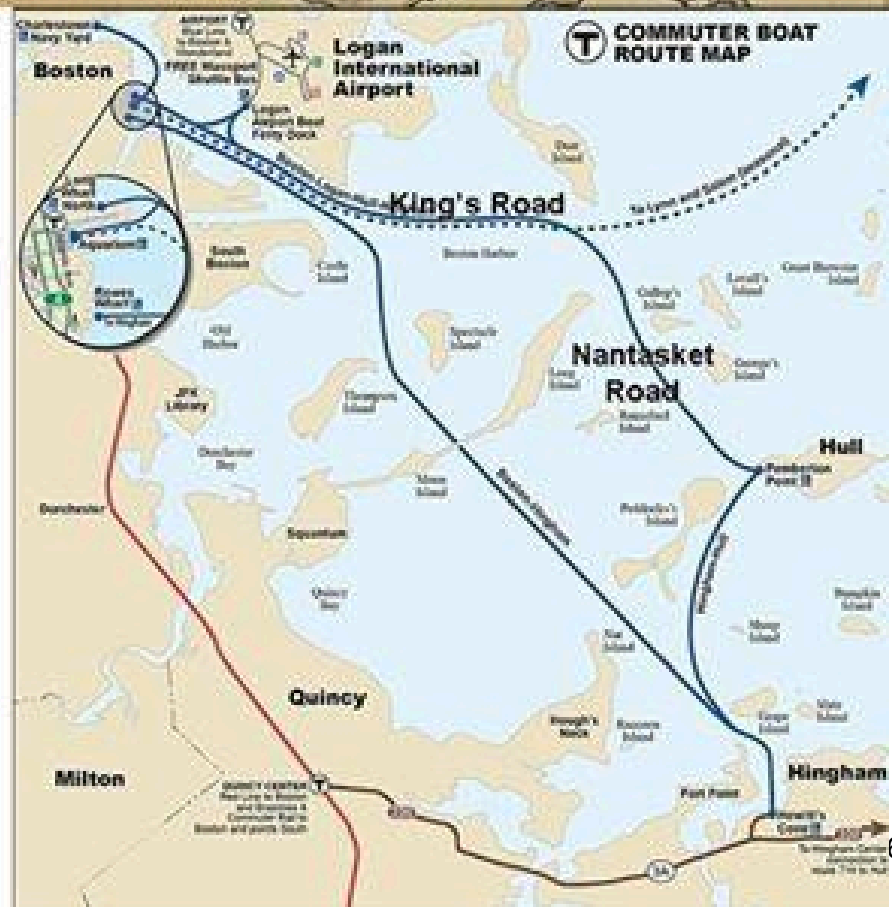
The MBTA ferry from Hingham to Boston's Long Wharf stops at Pemberton Point in Hull, MA. The ferry ride offers stunning views of Boston Harbor, Blue Hill, Harbor Islands and Boston waterfront. Riding the modern high speed ferry opens the opportunity to experience the vast bay that the Winthrop fleet and Dorchester Company experienced in 1630 to reach Boston and Dorchester.

When the Dorchester Company arrived at Nantasket (Hull) on May 30, 1630, the captain of the Mary & John refused to enter Boston harbor because there was no safe route known for passage of a large sailing ship between the island and rocky shoals. By September 1630, channels had be scouted for passage of the Winthrop fleet to Boston. The map (above) circa 1775 shows the two major channels from the entrance to Boston harbor into the anchorage at Long Wharf in Boston. The King's Road and the Nantasket Road charted by the Puritans in 1630 are still in use as the major routes of passage into the city.



**Great
Migration
Arrives at
Boston:**

**Crossing
Boston
Harbor
Today**



The MBTA Commuter Ferry follows the routes of the Great Migration ships arriving in Boston. The map (above bottom) shows the modern ferry route and the alignment the King's Road and Nantasket Road charted in 1630.



Riding the ferry past Nantasket, the city of Boston rises on the distant shoreline (Photo above). Prudential and John Hancock towers stand above Long Island.

The ferry passes Dorchester Bay (photo below) where the passengers on the Mary & John arrived in June 1630 after crossing Boston harbor from Nantasket (Hull). The rainbow "Dorchester Gas Tank" (center) visible on the Southeast Expressway (I-93) provides a landmark of the area first settled by the Dorchester Company. UMASS Boston, John F. Kennedy Library and Edward Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate stand on the shore of Dorchester Bay.



Shawmut (Native American name for the land that was later named Boston) was noted for three hills called Trimountain. Gov. John Winthrop declared that here "We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."



The place chosen for the Winthrop fleet immigrants to settle in September 1630 has been transformed over passage of almost four centuries.

A view of Boston c.a. 1775 shows the approach to Long Wharf (below top) that extends into Boston harbor. Before construction in 1710, ships had to anchor in the area where the wharf extended and used small boats to reach the shore. Long Wharf is still a part of Boston's waterfront where boats still come to shore.



The MBTA harbor ferry offers fine views of Boston's waterfront and skyline from Rows Wharf (left) and Long Wharf (right bottom). It is likely that many of the Great Migration ships bound for Massachusetts arrived at Boston in the area of Long Wharf.

The Winthrop Society provides settler and ship lists, texts and portraits, and other resources about the people who came to Massachusetts between 1630-1636 as part of the Great Migration on the society's web site <http://winthropsociety.com/>

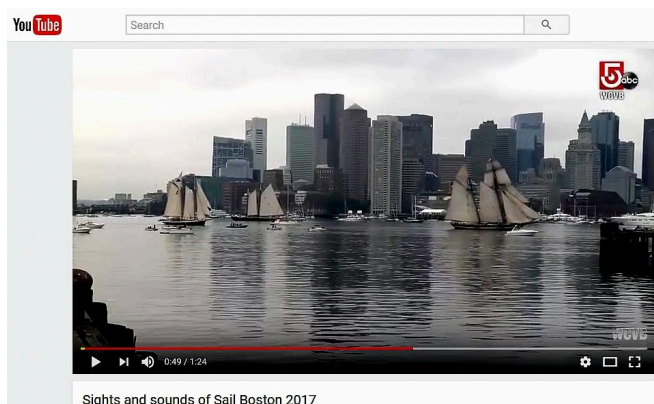


SAILING TO BOSTON

Sailing ships still come to Boston. More than 50 tall ships came to Boston in June 2017. The parade of ships entering Boston harbor brought an image of earlier arrivals by sailing ships starting with the Puritan Great Migration.



YouTube Video



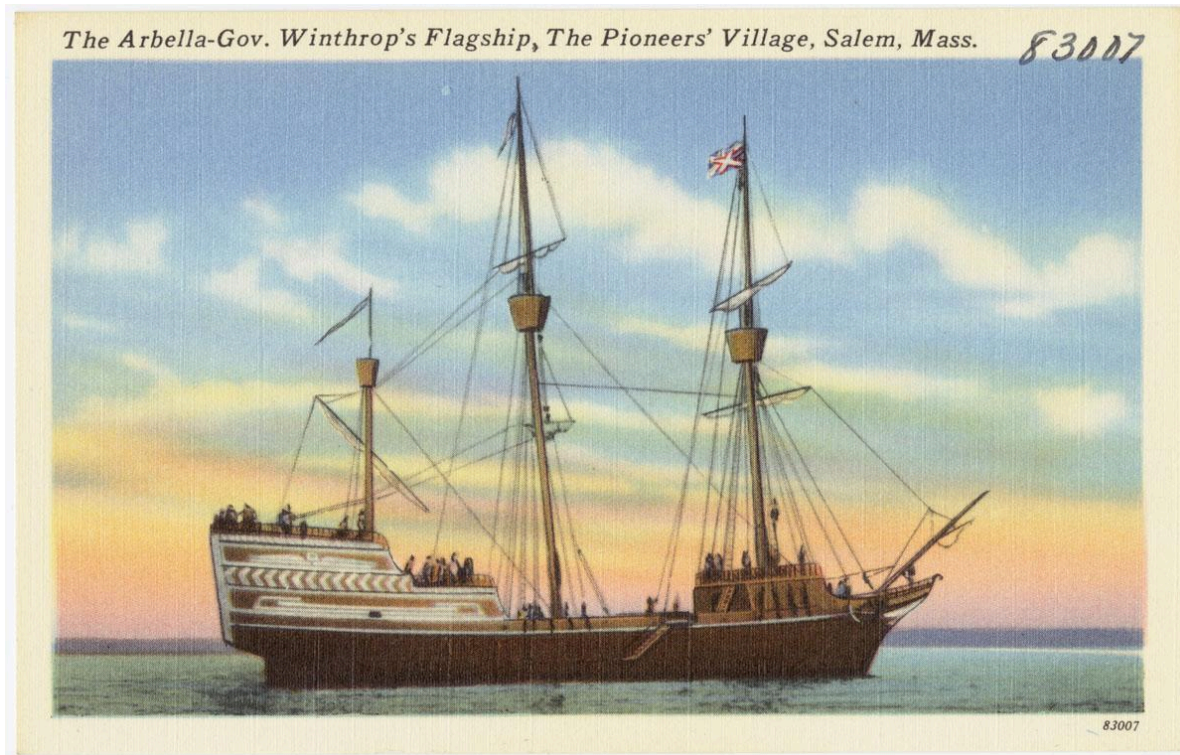
The video "Sights and Sounds of Sail Boston 2017" (1 min:24 sec) by WCVB showcases the sights of the amazing vessels that were a part of the Grand Parade of Sail as they entered Boston. [WCVB "Sights & Sounds of Boston Sail"](#)

El Galeon

Among the fleet of tall ships was the El Galeon below), a replica of a 16th century Spanish merchant, ship that sailed from Spain across the Atlantic to Boston. El Galeón is a 170 foot, 495 ton, authentic wooden replica of a galleon that was part of Spain's West Indies fleet.



El Galleon is a ship similar in size to the Arbella (below), flagship of the Winthrop fleet, and many of the other ships of the Great Migration.



Standing next to El Galeon impresses you with its massive size and complexity. Ships like the El Galeon were "state of the art" technology in the 1600s.

Stepping aboard El Galeon provides a glimpse into the shipboard world of the Puritan immigrants who came to America as part of the Great Migration.

From the stern (photo below), the rigging, deck and bow frame the Boston skyline.



The view from the bow to the stern (photo below) shows the open deck where passengers might walk to get relief from the confinement below deck. The open hatch leads down to the gun deck where passengers lived during the Atlantic crossing.



The gun deck (photo below) would house up to 150 passengers during the Atlantic crossing. The length of the deck is shown in the photo below. Imagine 150 men, women and children confined for two months below deck in this space. The sight of land and arrival at Boston must have been a joyous occasion!



For more views of the ship, visit EL Galeon on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/elgaleonandalucia/>

BOSTON LANDING

Riding the MBTA Harbor Ferry, visitors today can experience the approach across Boston harbor to Long Wharf where Great Migration ancestors arrived. The westward journey along the Old Connecticut Path and Bay Path to the Connecticut valley began here on the shores of Boston harbor and nearby Dorchester bay.

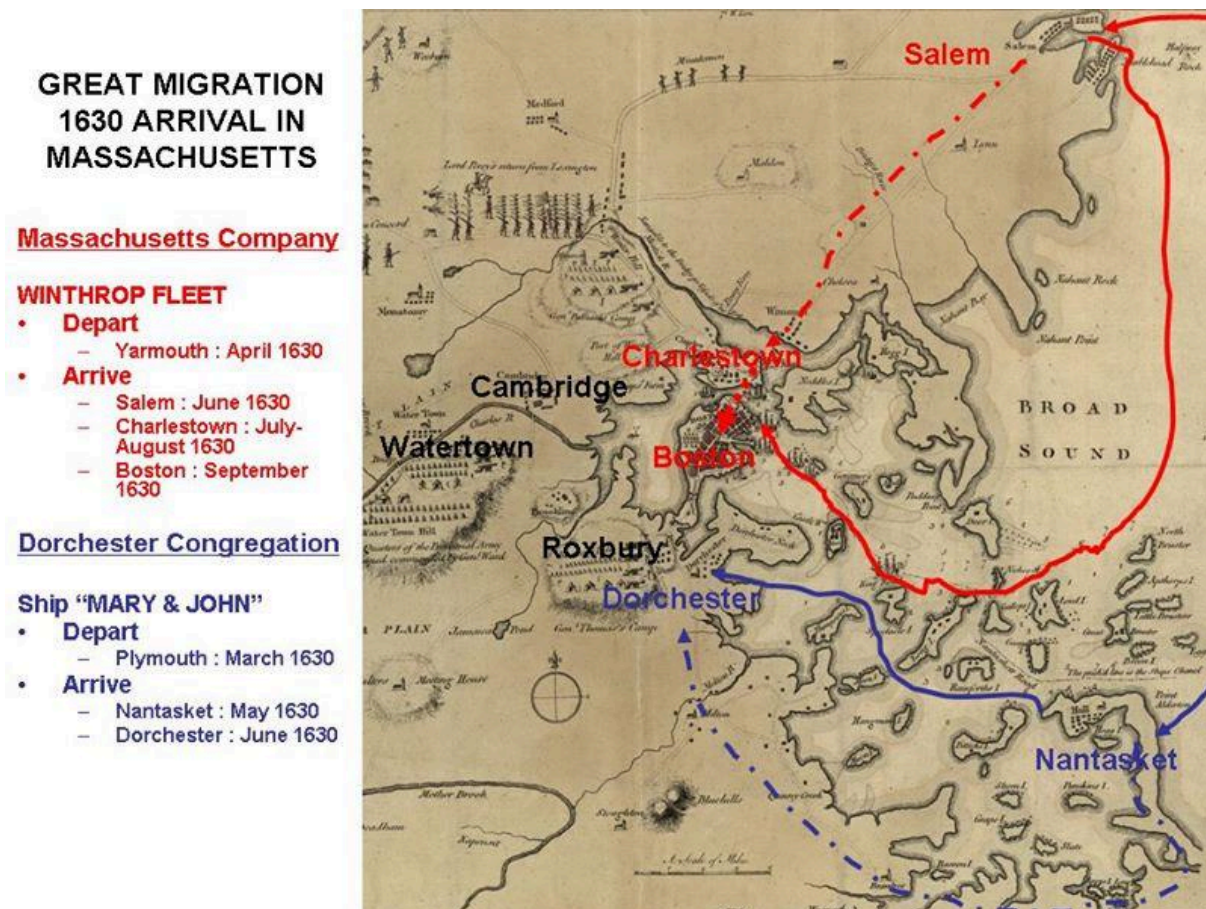


Sailing ships bringing the Puritans to Boston would have anchored in the area of Long Wharf and reached shore by small boat.

The Dorchester Company arrived on the ship Mary & John at Nantasket on May 30, 1630 and crossed Boston Harbor to Dorchester by June 1630. (Blue line on map below)

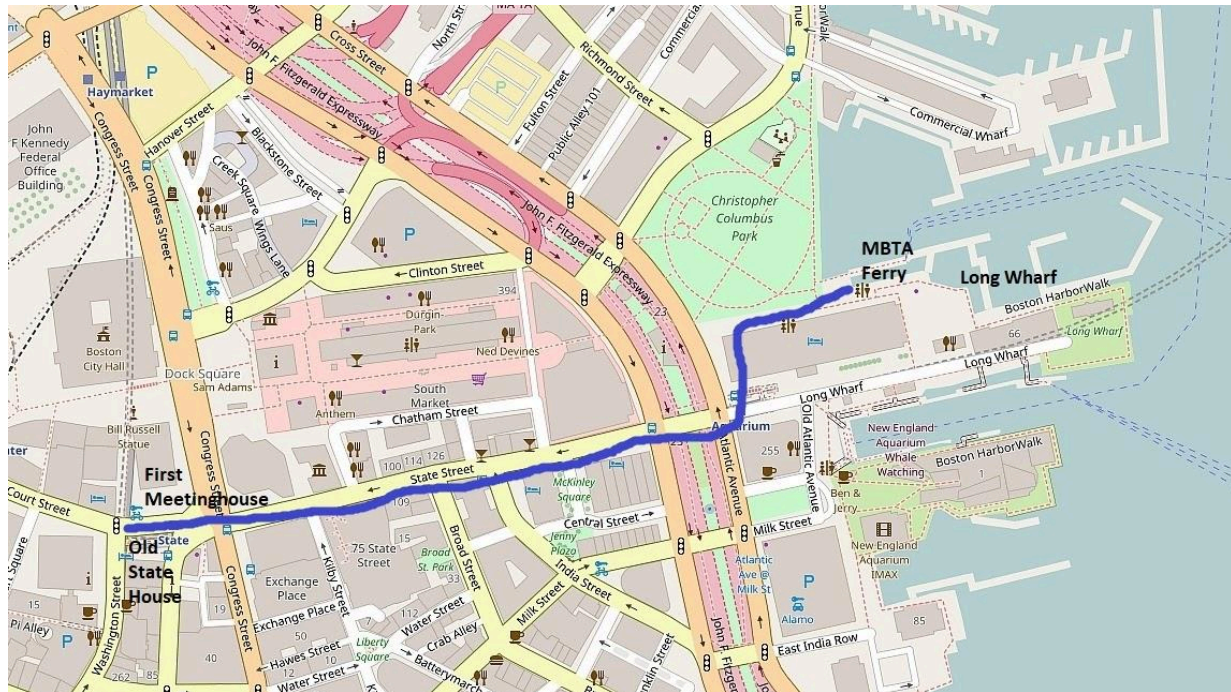
The Winthrop Fleet arrived at Salem in June 1630 and arrived at Charlestown during the summer of 1630. Gov. John Winthrop moved the settlement to Boston by September 1630 (Red line on map below)

The anchorage of the Winthrop Fleet is likely to have been in the area where Long Wharf now stands.



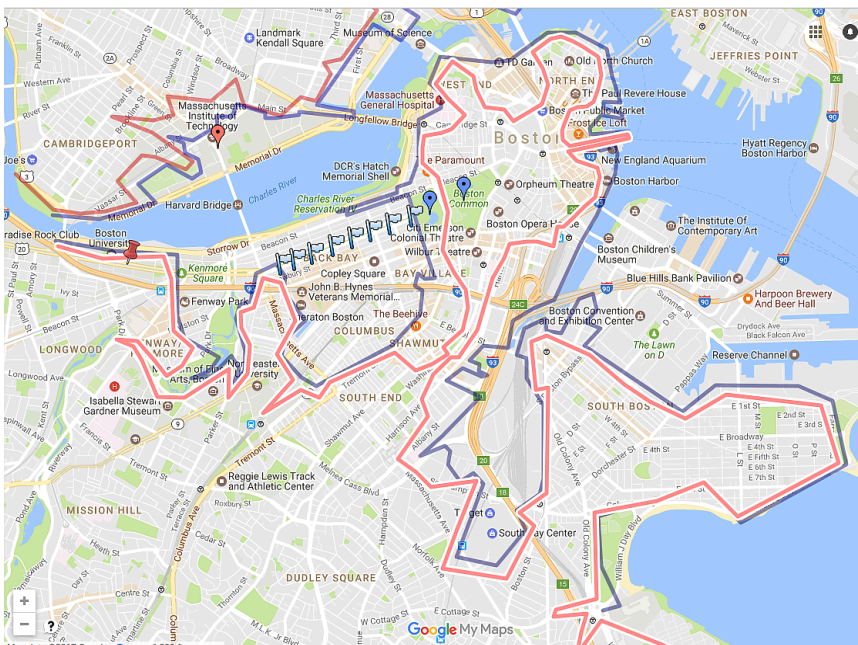
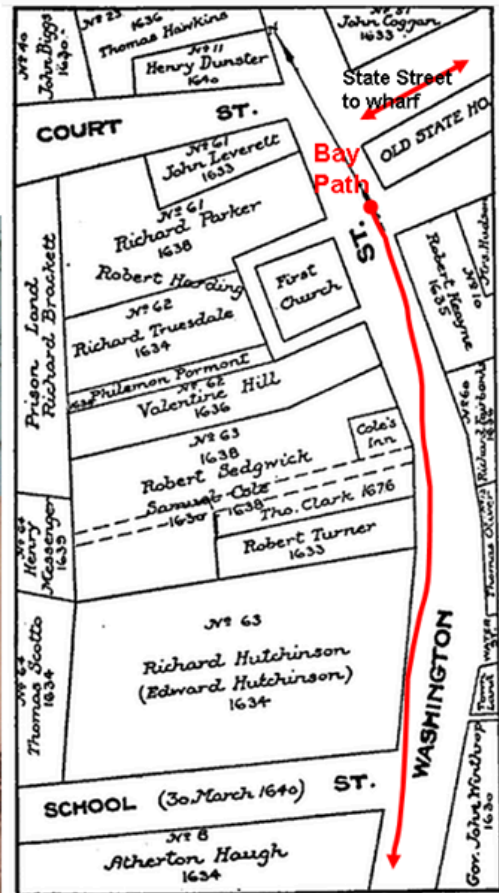
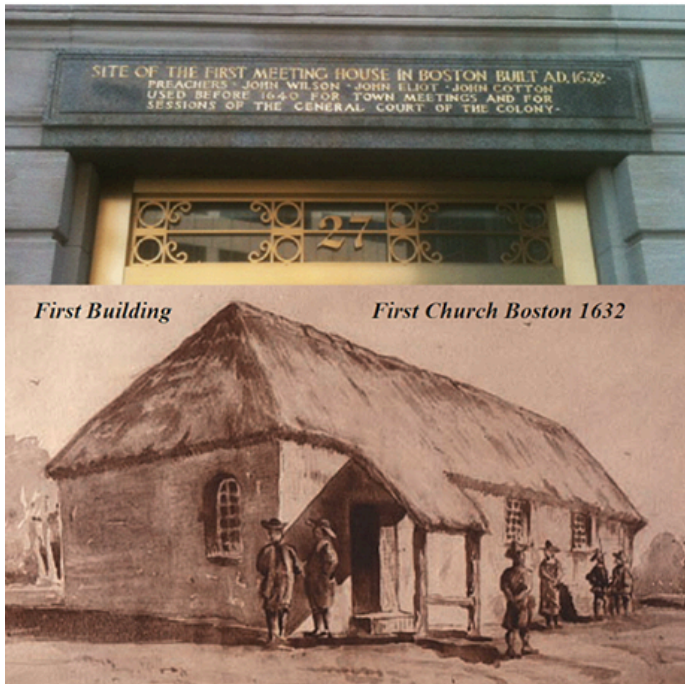
Today it is possible to follow the footsteps of Puritans arriving in Boston from the landing place at Long Wharf of the MBTA Ferry up to the site of Boston's First Meetinghouse.

From the MBTA ferry landing at Long Wharf, cross the wharf to State Street. Head up the rise towards the Old State House. Boston's First Meetinghouse was located opposite to the state house. (Blue line on the map below)



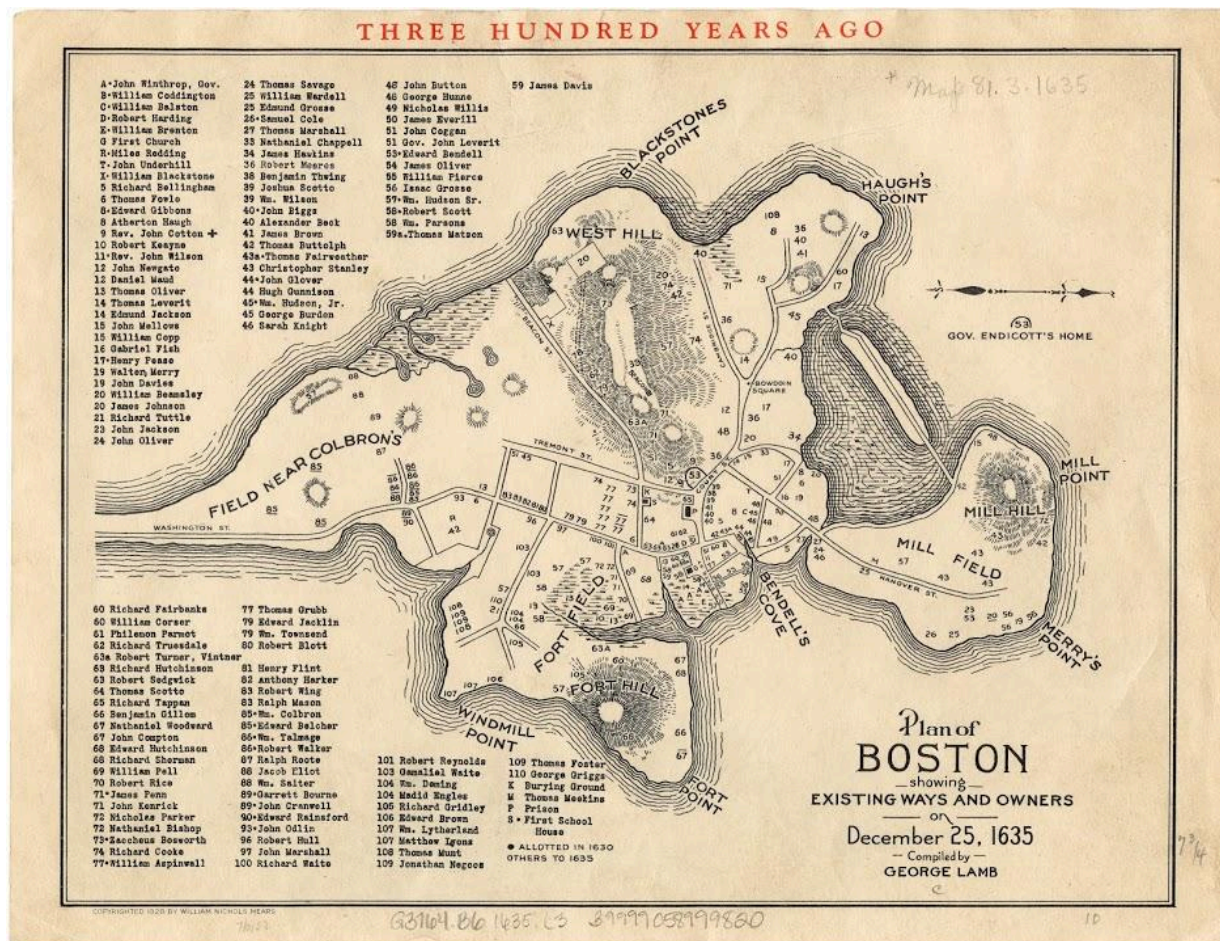
The Puritan church and state functioned around the Meetinghouse. It is likely that Puritan immigrants arriving at the Boston anchorage (now Long Wharf) made their way to the Meetinghouse to register and receive directions to places where they might receive shelter. News of settlements seeking tradesmen to join their community would be available to help give direction to the newly arrived immigrants.

Boston First Meetinghouse 1632

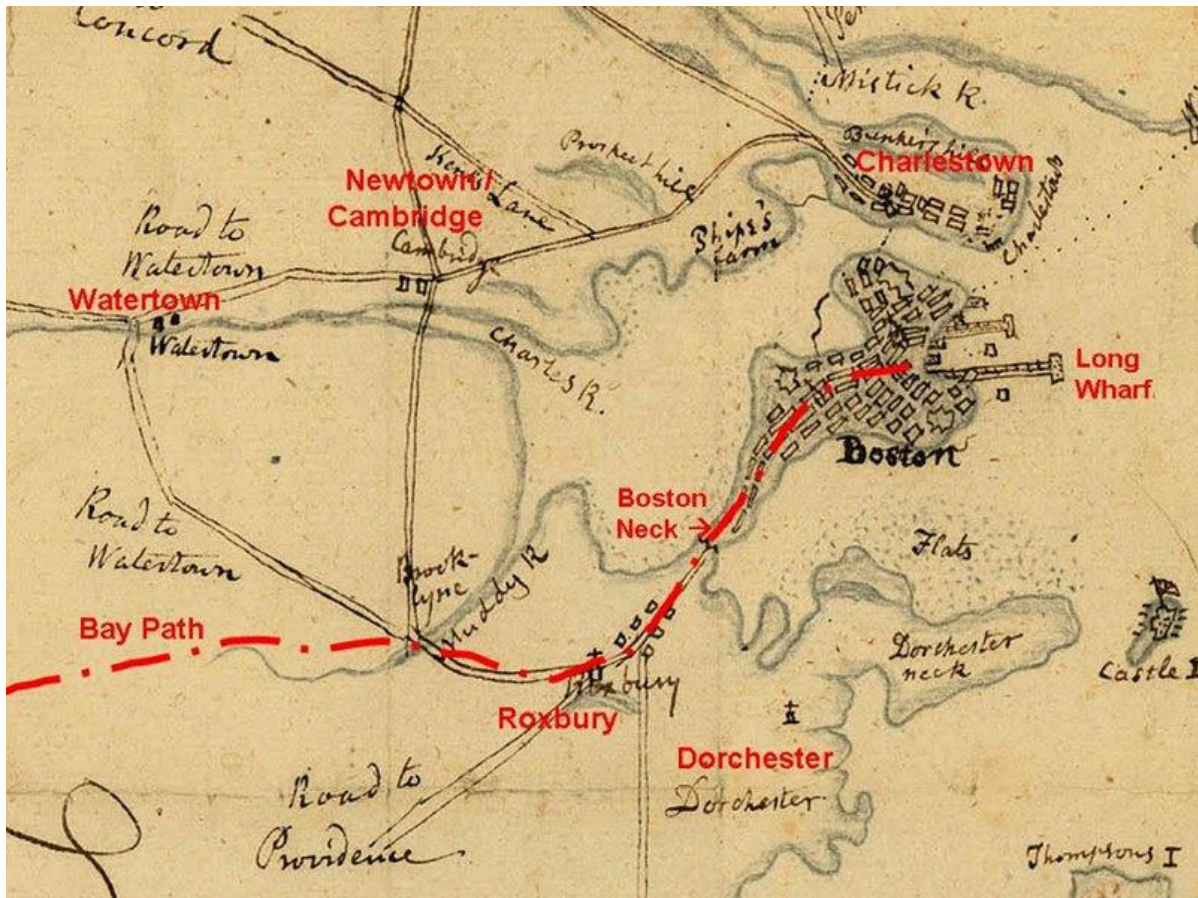


As you stand at the Old State House across from the site of the First Meetinghouse, it is hard to imagine how much smaller Boston was in 1630. The map (left) shows the outline of 1630 Boston in red. Areas outside the red boundary were filled over the course of centuries to create the city of Boston.

Some of the earliest Puritan immigrants to arrive set up homes in Boston. The 1635 map of Boston (below) shows the places they settled and the shape of the town before later expansion.



Boston's small area offered little land for settlement by the thousands who came during the Great Migration. During the early years, most immigrants moved west across Boston Neck to nearby communities (Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Cambridge, Charlestown) and beyond. As these towns grew, they searched for land to expand their towns further from Boston. Over time, these separated from their "mother" towns and became new towns.



By 1635-1636, groups from Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown and Cambridge were heading west through the wilderness on Native American trails to the Connecticut valley. There they established Windsor, Springfield, Wethersfield and Hartford.

Boston's Freedom Trail and the Bay Path meet at the intersection of State Street and Washington Street in front of the Old State House (photo below). This point marks the place where the Native American trail, the Bay Path, began a westward track leading to settlements near Boston and further west to the Connecticut valley.

Where the “Bay Path” begins



America's westward migration began here moving from the Massachusetts Bay to the Connecticut valley along ancient Native American trails known as the Bay Path and the Old Connecticut Path.

COMING TO BOSTON: GETTING HERE BY MBTA FERRY

Visitors today can experience the approach across Boston harbor to Long Wharf as passengers on the MBTA ferry between Boston-Hingham-Hull.

http://www.mbta.com/schedules_and_maps/boats/

The MBTA Ferry can be accessed from Boston, Hingham and Hull. A round trip ticket is recommended (Adult \$18.50. Senior \$9.20).

If you are in Boston, a suggested route is to take the ferry from Long Wharf to Hingham. Stay on the boat and return to Boston. The ferry follows a circuit so you will have different views of Boston harbor coming and going.

If you are driving on the South Shore area (RT 3, Plymouth), it is suggested that you board the ferry in Hingham. Parking is \$4.00/day (versus high cost in Boston). Take the ferry to Long Wharf with the option of a) getting off explore the city or b) remain on the ferry to return to Hingham. If you stay in the city, plan to catch a ferry returning to Hingham allowing for "rush hour" crowds.

Parking is extremely limited at the Hull terminal. Traffic can be heavy here during summer due the popularity of Nantasket Beach. A visit to Nantasket where the ship Mary & John arrived with the Dorchester Company is suggested for off season.

Tickets and ferry locations are listed below:

Boston Ticket Office

Long Wharf North, adjacent to Christopher Columbus Park

Hingham Shipyard Ticket Office:

30 Shipyard Drive
Hingham, MA 02043

Hull Ticket Office:

Pemberton Point Ferry Dock
183 Main Street
Hull, MA 02045

Comments:

“Coming to New England” and “Old Connecticut Path” projects are an ongoing effort to connect the places of New England with the pioneers who settled here, and their descendants.

Your comments and family connection stories are welcomed!

Follow the Old Connecticut Path and the Coming to New England projects on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oldconnecticutpath>

Contact Jason Newton at the Old Connecticut Path project by e-mail at oldconnecticutpath@gmail.com

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