

# GARRETT DASH NELSON

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## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2016– **Dartmouth College**  
Postdoctoral Fellow, Society of Fellows and Department of Geography  
Courses taught: “Exploring Nature and Culture in New England,” “Critical Mapping and the Geohumanities”

## EDUCATION

2011–16 **University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
PhD in Geography, Minor in Culture, History, and Environment.  
Committee: William Cronon (chair), Anna Andrzejewski, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, Matthew Turner, Keith Woodward.  
Dissertation: “A Place Altogether: Community Planning and the Search for Unit Landscapes, 1816–1956”  
(*Winner of the Society of American City & Regional Planning History 2017 John Reys Prize*)

2010–11 **University of Nottingham** (*United Kingdom*)  
MA with Distinction in Landscape and Culture, Department of Geography. Fulbright Postgraduate Scholar.  
Thesis: “Olmsted in England.”

2005–09 **Harvard College**  
AB *summa cum laude* in Social Studies with secondary field in Visual and Environmental Studies. Phi Beta Kappa. Thesis: “Towards the New Ruralism.”

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

2018 **Garrett Dash Nelson** and Ryan McKeon, “Peaks of People: Utilizing Topographic Prominence to Measure the Ranked Significance of Population Centers,” *The Professional Geographer* (accepted, in typesetting). doi: 10.1080/00330124.2018.1531039

2018 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Mosaic or Tapestry: Two Metaphors for the Structure of Geography,” *Progress in Human Geography*. doi: 10.1007/BF00131171

2018 Alasdair Rae and **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “From ‘Big Data’ to Big Regions: The Geography of the American Commute,” in LA Schintler and Z Chen, eds., *Big Data for Regional Science* (London: Routledge).

2017 Rebecca Summer and **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Making Stories Significant: Possibilities and Challenges at the Intersection of Digital Methods and Historic Preservation.” *Area* doi:10.1111/area.12395

2016 **Garrett Dash Nelson** and Alasdair Rae, “A New Economic Geography of the United States: From Commutes to Megaregions,” *PLoS One* 11(11):e0166083 doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0166083  
Featured in over 20 major publications, including the *Washington Post*, *National Geographic*, *CityLab*, and *Wired*. Featured in the *PLoS One 10th Anniversary Datasets* collection.

- 2016 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Making the Single City: The Constitutive Landscape and the Struggle for Greater Boston, 1891–1911.” *Landscape Research* 42(3): 243–255, special issue on “Landscape Histories of Urbanization” doi:10.1080/01426397.2016.1267130
- 2015 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Walking and Talking Through *Walks and Talks*: Traveling with Frederick Law Olmsted in England, 1850 and 2011.” *Journal of Historical Geography* 48: 47–57. doi:10.1016/j.jhgg.2015.02.004
- Named one of three “highly commended” articles in 2015 by the journal’s editorial board.

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 2017 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Book Review: William Rankin, *After the Map*.” *Historical Geography* 45.
- 2017 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Book Review: Benjamin Looker, *A Nation of Neighborhoods*.” *Journal of Historical Geography* 56: 148–149 doi:10.1016/j.jhgg.2016.12.007
- 2016 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Book Review: John Stilgoe, *What is Landscape?*” *Historical Geography* 44.
- 2016 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Book Review: Steven Conn, *Americans Against the City*.” *Journal of Historical Geography* 53: 120–121. doi:10.1016/j.jhgg.2015.10.018
- 2014 **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Book Review: Jo Guldi, *Roads to Power*.” *Historical Geography* 42: 405–406.

## WORK IN PREPARATION

- (2020) **Garrett Dash Nelson**, *The Limits of Here: Contested Geographies of Community, Polity, and Place in American Landscape Planning*, book manuscript of ~100,000 words.
- (2019) **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Transforming and Managing Shared Places: From Evidence to Politics,” in *Applied Data Analysis for Urban Planning and Management*, edited by Cecilia Wong and Alasdair Rae (SAGE).5
- (2019) **Garrett Dash Nelson** and Alasdair Rae, “On the Road Again: The Geography of American Commuter Megaregions,” in *International Handbook on Megacities and Megacity-regions*, edited by Danielle Labbé and André Sorensen (Edward Elgar).
- (2019) **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “Regional Planning as Cultural Criticism: Reclaiming the Radical Wholes of Interwar Regional Thinkers,” *Regional Studies* special issue on “Imagining Regional Futures,” edited by John Harrison, Mark Tewdwr-Jones, and Daniel Galland.
- (2019) **Garrett Dash Nelson**, “From Network to Community to Region: Geographies of Coherence Beyond Territories and Flows,” *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Ggeografie* special issue on “Network Analysis,” edited by Michiel van Meeteren and Justus Uitermark.

## PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

- 2018 “‘The Town Was Us’: How the New England Town Became the Mythical Landscape of American Democracy,” *Places Journal* (July 2018). Reprinted in German translation in *Dérive*. <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-town-was-us/>
- 2018 “Rexford Guy Tugwell and the Case for Big Urbanism,” *Places Journal* (January 2018). <https://placesjournal.org/article/rexford-guy-tugwell-and-the-case-for-big-urbanism/>
- 2018 “What Would a Good Electoral Map Even Look Like?” *CityLab* (March 6, 2018). <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2018/03/can-commuter-patterns-make-for-a-better-electoral-map/554828/>

- 2017 “What Would States Look Like If They Made Sense?” *Edge Effects* (February 23, 2017).
- 2016 “The Deception of Density” *The Atlantic CityLab* (October 21, 2016). <http://www.citylab.com/tech/2016/10/the-deception-of-density/502646>
- 2016 “Can Environmental Thinking Help Solve Gerrymandering?” *Edge Effects* (January 21, 2016).
- 2015 “Do Beautiful Parks Strengthen Democracy?” *Smithsonian and Zócalo Public Square*, “What it Means to Be an American” series. <http://www.whatitmeanstobeamerican.org/ideas/do-beautiful-parks-strengthen-democracy/>
- 2015 “From Yavin’s Moon to the Pit of Carkoon: How Space and Place Change How We Watch *Star Wars*.” *Edge Effects* (December 17, 2015).
- 2015 “How Boston Dreamed of Its Future, a Century Ago.” *Boston Sunday Globe* (Ideas section, January 4, 2015).
- 2015 “‘Nature Led the Way:’ The Legacy of City Planner John Nolen.” Book interview with R. Bruce Stephenson. *Edge Effects* (August 4, 2015).
- 2015 “Planning With the People: Jess Gilbert on the ‘Intended’ New Deal.” Book interview with Jess Gilbert. *Edge Effects* (April 2, 2015).
- 2014 “Review Essay: Taking the Long View.” *Edge Effects* (November 20, 2015).

## CURRENT COLLABORATIONS

- 2018– “Ed Ruscha’s Street-Level View and the Postwar Redevelopment Vernacular,” with Brian Goldstein (Swarthmore) and Francesca Russello Ammon (Penn Design). Funded project to develop a digital humanities project on street photography and urban form.
- 2018– “Spatial Models and Electoral Districting,” submitted proposal for an NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates. PIs: Jim Thatcher (University of Washington-Tacoma) and Courtney Thatcher (University of Puget Sound)
- 2018– “Geosynth: An Experiment in Landscape, Mapping, and Music,” collaboration with the musician Ben Cosgrove, artist-in-residence at the New England Trail, to build a web-based tool that uses mapping as a music synthesizer.

## FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2018–19 **Dartmouth College Venture Fund.** Competitive research funding award used to hire a team to digitize historic records for a project on city-regional spatial integration in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 2017 **John Reps Prize for Best Dissertation in Planning History.** Society for American City and Regional Planning History.
- 2017 **Sir Peter Hall Award for Wider Engagement.** Royal Town Planning Institute. Joint award with Alasdair Rae for our megaregions research.
- 2011–16 **University Fellowship.** University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- 2015 **Summer Writing Fellowship.** Mellon Foundation.
- 2014–15 **Humanities Exchange (HEX).** Center for the Humanities, University of Wisconsin–Madison. Joint award with Rebecca Summer. This public outreach grant enables graduate students to develop public humanities projects in collaboration with community organizations.
- 2015 **Postgraduate Travel Bursary.** Historical Geography Research Group, RGS–IBG.

- 2014 **Vilas Research Travel Grant.** Graduate School, University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- 2014 **Research & Travel Grant.** Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE). *Also received in 2013.*
- 2014 **Trewartha Conference Travel Grant.** Department of Geography. *Also received in 2013.*
- 2014 **Trewartha Research Travel Grant.** Department of Geography.
- 2013 **Clarence W. Olmstead Citizenship Award.** Department of Geography.
- 2011 **Robert S. Birch Student Travel Award.** Society for American City & Regional Planning History.
- 2011 **Vilas Welcome Award.** Graduate School, University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- 2011 **Occasional Lecture Fund.** British Fulbright Scholars Association.
- 2010–11 **Fulbright Postgraduate Scholar.** US–UK Fulbright Commission.  
This funded my study at the University of Nottingham and emphasized the importance of international scholarly exchange as part of the 2010 cohort of graduate students and faculty.
- 2009–10 **George Peabody Gardner Traveling Fellowship.** Harvard College.  
This grant was awarded to one Harvard senior to pursue an independent project in an understudied country. I spent nine months in Albania working on a landscape history of the changes in planning and spatial organization from communism to capitalism.
- 2008 **Phi Beta Kappa.** Harvard College, Alpha and Iota of Massachusetts.
- 2008 **Harvard College Research Program.** Summer research grant.
- 2006 **Detur Prize.** Harvard College.

## TEACHING

- 2018 **Geog 53: Critical Mapping and the Geohumanities.** Newly designed at Dartmouth College  
Syllabus available: <http://dartgo.org/geog53>
- 2017 **Geog 45: Exploring Nature & Culture in New England.** Dartmouth College  
Syllabus available: <http://dartgo.org/geog45>
- 2017 **Spaces of Belonging, Spaces of Inclusion: Mapping Community and Fracture at Dartmouth.**  
Mini-seminar taught under an Arthur Vining Davis Foundation House Communities initiative
- 2014 **“Thinking Historically with GIS” guest lecture.** Geography 377: Introduction to GIS.
- 2013 **Teaching Assistant.** Geography & Environmental Studies 339: “Environmental Conservation,” with Matthew Turner and Lisa Naughton.  
I taught four discussion sections and contributed to the “Tambopata: Who owns paradise?” conservation role-playing exercise.
- 2012 **Teaching Assistant.** History, Geography, & Environmental Studies 460: “American Environmental History,” with William Cronon.  
I delivered a guest lecture, “Public parks and pleasure grounds,” and taught four discussion sections, including the special section for the residential learning community Chadbourne Residential College.

## MEDIA AND PUBLIC APPEARANCES

- 2018 **Wisconsin Public Radio Central Time.** <https://www.wpr.org/how-make-good-electoral-map-geographer-weighs>
- 2018 **New Hampshire Public Radio.** Interview and data visualization. <http://nhpr.org/post/what-drives-nh-commuters-take-bus-boston>

- 2018 **Vital Communities.** This regional community action group invited me several times to speak on issues around housing and rural planning.
- 2017 **American Association of Architects Baltimore Lecture Series: Migration.** Invited lecture.
- 2017 **San Joaquin Conference of Governments Regional Planning Conference.** Invited keynote.
- 2014 **“Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America.”** I appeared on screen as a talking head in this documentary produced by PBS-WNED and Florentine Films–Hott Productions.

## DIGITAL AND WEB PROJECTS

- 2016 **Megaregions of the US.** <http://discovery.dartmouth.edu/megaregions>  
Visualization of data from *PLoS One* study; included in *Places and Spaces: Mapping Science “Macrosopes”* traveling exhibit.
- 2016 **DefiningUV.** <http://matinic.us/defining-uv>  
Participatory map on regional delineation of the New Hampshire–Vermont “Upper Valley.”
- 2016 **PaleoPlaces.** <http://garrettdashnelson.github.io/paleo-places>  
Collaboration with Eric Nost and Elliot Vaughan. We built an interactive tool that visualizes landscapes generated from paleoecological data; part of the 2016 Cart Lab Design Challenge.
- 2014–15 **Goodman to Garver.** <http://www.goodmantogarver.com>  
With Rebecca Summer; funded by Humanities Exchange (HEX) grant. We built a digital storytelling map based on open-source archival software and worked with local history groups to collect stories about the changing landscapes of a Madison neighborhood undergoing redevelopment.
- 2015 **Madison Architectural History Viewer.** <http://garrettdashnelson.github.io/madison-architectural-history>  
This interactive tool, which I programmed in Leaflet and D3, makes it possible to visualize the growth of residential areas in Madison and the historical prevalence of different building types.
- 2015 **Propinquity Voting Tool.** <http://garrettdashnelson.github.io/propinquity-voting/web>  
This interactive map and data analysis tool, which I programmed in Leaflet and D3, is part of an ongoing project which explores how environmental governance might look if political standing is weighted according to distance from an area of impact instead of being aggregated within jurisdictional areas.

## OTHER ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- 2013–15 **Project Assistant.** Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE).  
I served as the primary staff position for the activities of this interdisciplinary research center in the environmental humanities. In addition to administrative and member-management responsibilities, I co-organized and led week-long field workshops on “Landscapes of Extraction” and “Sacred Space, Place, and Time,” and an international conference on “The Anthropocene: A Cabinet of Curiosities.” I designed and coded the Center’s new website, and played a founding role in establishing its online journal, *Edge Effects*.
- 2014–15 **Research Assistant.** Management and curation of digital archival sources, Prof. Gregg Mitman.
- 2013 **Research Assistant.** Illustration research for Yi-Fu Tuan’s manuscript *Romantic Geography*.

## CONFERENCES AND RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

- 2018 **International Conference of Historical Geographers.** *Warsaw, Poland.*  
Presented “From the conurbation to the conchoration: Spatial networks, state planning, and city-region integration in the United States.”
- 2018 **Association of American Geographers.** *New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.*  
Presented “Spatial cohesion and community detection: The spatial structure of city-region borders as seen from commuter networks” and organized panel session on “Building the Geohumanities” with Nicholas Bauch.

- 2017 **Society for American City and Regional Planning History.** *Cleveland, Ohio, USA.*  
Presented “Neighborhood unit or regional unit: Community, sovereignty, and geographic cohesion in midcentury planning theory.”
- 2017 **Association of American Geographers.** *Boston, Massachusetts, USA.*  
Presented “Neighborhood, township, province: Dreams of spatial togetherness in Progressive Era American thought.”
- 2016 **Massachusetts Historical Society Environmental History Seminar.** *Boston, Massachusetts, USA.*  
Presented “Assembling the City, Arresting the City: Competing Geographies of Boston and its Region, 1890–1930.”
- 2016 **Urban History Association.** *Chicago, Illinois, USA.*  
Organized “Cities Beyond City Limits” panel and presented “Assembling the City, Arresting the City: Competing Geographies of Boston and its Region, 1890–1930.”
- 2015 **Society for American City and Regional Planning History.** *Los Angeles, California, USA.*  
Presented “Landscape, planning, and the intellectual case for Progressivism.”
- 2015 **Land and Water: A Long-term Perspective.** *Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA.*  
Presented “Territorialization on the Left.”
- 2015 **International Conference of Historical Geographers.** *London, United Kingdom.*  
Session organizer of “Distributed Landscapes: Histories of Centers and Edges in American Planning” with Peter Ekman. Presented “Abstracting the Township: Community Wholeness, Geographic Scale, and Regionalism in Interwar Planning,” and “Sugar, Grain ... Gone? A Participatory Landscape History Project on Madison’s East Side.”
- 2015 **Association of American Geographers.** *Chicago, Illinois, USA.*  
Session organizer of “Landscape, Region, and Time: Geographic Construction in Historical And Social Context.” Presented “Making the Single City: The Constitutive Landscape in Boston, 1890–1915.”
- 2015 **Graduate Research Symposium.** *Department of Geography, Madison, WI, USA.*  
Presented “Propinquity Voting: A Speculative Model for Borderless Environmental Representation.”
- 2015 **Center for Culture, History, and Environment Research Colloquium**  
Presented “In Search of the ‘Unit Landscape’: Planning, Community, and Territory in American History.”
- 2014 **Newberry Library Scholl Center Urban History Group.** *Chicago, Illinois, USA.*  
Presented “Stitching Together a Metropolis: The Constituting Landscape in Sylvester Baxter’s Boston.”
- 2014 **Relational Landscape Studies of Urbanization.** *Alnarp, Sweden.*  
Presented “Stitching Together a Metropolis: The Constituting Landscape in Sylvester Baxter’s Boston.”
- 2014 **American Society for Environmental History.** *San Francisco, California, USA.*  
Delegate to the “Digital Environmental History” pre-conference workshop.
- 2014 **Dimensions of Political Ecology.** *Lexington, Kentucky, USA.*  
Presented “‘It Shows What Ought To Be’: Benton MacKaye and the ‘Geotechnics’ of the Planned State.”
- 2013 **Graduate Research symposium.** *Department of Geography, Madison, WI, USA.*  
Presented “A Landscape History of the Future.”
- 2013 **Social Science History Association.** *Chicago, Illinois, USA.*  
Presented “The Instructive Landscape: Social Reform and Environmental Thought in the Progressive Era.”
- 2012 **Graduate Research Symposium.** *Department of Geography, Madison, WI, USA.*  
Presented “In the Mirror of Historical Geography: Mumford, Sauer, and the Prospects of *Man’s Role*.”
- 2011 **Society for American City and Regional Planning History.** *Baltimore, Maryland, USA.*  
Presented “Civilization and Communicativeness: The Social Theory of Frederick Law Olmsted.”

2011 **Museum of English Rural Life Seminar Series.** *Reading, United Kingdom.*  
Presented “Transatlantic Traffic in Rural Imaginations.”

## ACADEMIC SERVICE

- 2018–19 **Speaker Series Co-organizer.** Department of Geography, Dartmouth College.
- 2015–16 **Graduate Student Treasurer.** Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- 2014–15 **Representative to the Faculty.** Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- 2012–13 **Representative to the Graduate Studies Committee.** Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- 2011–12 **Representative to the Speakers Committee.** Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

## LANGUAGES, PROGRAMMING, CARTOGRAPHY, AND DESIGN

**Languages.** English (native), Albanian (intermediate), Spanish (beginner). Formerly studied Arabic and Latin.

**Programming languages.** JavaScript, Python, HTML, PHP, CSS, \*nix shell.

**Geospatial and data visualization packages.** QGIS, gdal, Arc suite, Leaflet, Spatialite, D3.js/Observable, Pandas/Geopandas, Fiona/Shapely

**Design software.** Adobe Creative Cloud suite, Final Cut Pro

**Other software.** Microsoft Office suite, Apple Pages and Numbers, SQL

*For portfolio samples, please visit <http://people.matinic.us/garrett/#work>*

## AFFILIATIONS

Association of American Geographers (Specialty groups: Digital Geographies, Historical Geography, Cultural Geography, Landscape, Regional Development and Planning)

Historical Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society with IBG

Society for American City and Regional Planning History

Urban History Association