

Beaman Memorial Public Library

Community and Library Profile



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West Boylston History

Incorporated in 1808, West Boylston was created from parts of Shrewsbury, Boylston, Lancaster, Sterling and Holden. These lands had been parts of earlier grants made to the settlers of the region. The 18th century witnessed the arrival of pioneers attracted to the area by the fertility of the soil and the opportunities for development afforded by its location at the site where the Quinapoxet River joins the Stillwater River to become the southern branch of the Nashua River.



Apple and rye farms flourished with a gradual change in the latter part of the century from agriculture to manufacturing as a mill complex grew along the above-mentioned rivers.

Familiar names that date from that period include Jonathan Fairbank, Edward Goodale, Robert B. Thomas, founder & editor of the Farmer's Almanac, and Ezra Beaman, who is referred to as "the father of West Boylston." Many of the streets in town were named after these people. Unwilling to travel to the Congregational Church in Boylston for church services and town meetings, thirty families, led by Ezra Beaman, constructed a church three miles west of Boylston on the site of the present common in West Boylston.

The State Legislature was petitioned and precinct status was granted in 1796. Finally, in 1808, the General Court incorporated West Boylston as a town. Ezra Beaman served simultaneously as Selectman, Treasurer and the first Representative of the Town to the Legislature.

West Boylston prospered through the 19th century and by 1890 contained 3,000 residents, five churches, ten schools and many mills and factories which included the Warfield Saw Mill, L. M. Harris Cotton Mill, West Boylston Manufacturing Company of Thread & Wire, the Cowee Grist Mill, the Clarendon Mill and Holbrook Mill where Erastus Bigelow learned about looms and invented the technique to improve carpet manufacturing. Boots and baskets were also manufactured here.

The availability of water power, which attracted the mills here, was responsible for the selection of West Boylston as the best site for a much-needed reservoir to serve the needs of the city of Boston.

From 1896 through 1905 West Boylston endured the building of the reservoir and the destruction of its mills and farms, including the Beaman Farm and its famous Beaman Oak, four churches and eight schools as well as acres of fruit trees. Twenty-five houses and a cemetery were moved and over seventeen hundred residents were displaced.

A decade and \$11,000,000 later, the Wachusett Reservoir was completed with the impressive Old Stone Church (above) standing as the last remnant of the town which was once in the valley. No longer the industrial mill town it once was, West Boylston has grown in population and renewed vitality into a lovely residential community enhanced by the beauty of the tree-bordered Wachusett Reservoir.

SOURCE: Town of West Boylston, MA Website (www.westboylston-ma.gov/about-our-town/pages/history)

West Boylston Community Profile

GENERAL OVERVIEW: The Worcester County House of Correction is located in West Boylston. According to the 2010 Census, 1,225 inmates were incarcerated in the facility. This group represents approximately 15% of the town's total population and impacts many of the community's vital statistics presented below.

POPULATION: In 2019, West Boylston's population was estimated at 8,077. From 2010 to 2019, the town's population increased 5.3%, which matched Massachusetts' population growth rate. It exceeded several neighboring towns' 2010-2019 growth rates (see chart).

POPULATION CHANGES 2010-2019

TOWN	% +/-
Leominster	2.3%
Northborough	6.4%
Rutland	12.0%
Lancaster	-0.2%
West Boylston	5.3%
Worcester	2.5%

While women represented more than half of the U.S. population (50.8%) and 51.5% of Massachusetts' in 2019, a majority of West Boylston residents were men (59%). According to the annually updated *U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP)*, this marked a 3.3% decrease in women since 2010.

RESIDENTS BY AGE

AGE	%
<18 Years	13.8%
18-64 Years	67.1%
65+ Years	19.1%

AGE DISTRIBUTION: Residents who were 65+ years old made up 19.1% of West Boylston's population in 2019. As a percent of total population, it was higher than both the state and national rates of 17% and 16.5%, respectively. Consistent with the national trend towards an ever-increasing aging population, West Boylston's population in the 65+ years age group grew from 2010-2019 (+3%). The town's median age was 42.6 years, which was 10%

higher than the Massachusetts median age of 39.5 years.

RACE AND ORIGIN: West Boylston's 2019 population was predominantly White (79.4%). Hispanics or Latinos (12.3%) and Black or African American (6.3%) were the town's largest non-White groups.

RACE/ORIGIN 2019	West Boylston	MA	U.S.
Asian	1.8%	9.0%	13.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.5%	1.3%
Black or African American	6.3%	7.2%	5.9%
Hispanic or Latino	12.3%	12.4%	18.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
White	79.4%	71.1%	60.1%

The town's population is increasingly diverse. In 2010, the town's population was 92.9% White. By 2019, this changed to 79.4%. During that same period, the percentage of the Hispanic or Latino population more than doubled from 5.3% to 12.3%.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME:

In 2019, a significant majority (83.9%) of West Boylston residents aged five years and older spoke only English at home, which is higher than both the percentage of MA and U.S. English-only language speakers.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN (5+ yrs. old)	West Boylston	MA	U.S.
Only English	83.9%	76.1%	78.4%
Spanish	9.5%	9.1%	13.3%
Other Indo-European Languages	4.0%	9.0%	3.7%
Asian and Pacific-Island Languages	0.8%	4.3%	3.5%
Other Languages	1.8%	1.4%	1.1%

West Boylston's second most popular language was Spanish (9.5%). While that percentage was close to the state's, it was 3.8% less than the national average West Boylston residents speaking all other languages represents only 6.6% of its population.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: For the 2020-2021 academic year, enrollment in West Boylston's public schools for grades K-12 is 862. This marks a small decrease from 2014 (-4%). West Boylston's public school system includes two schools: Major Edwards Elementary School and West Boylston Middle/High School.

According to the West Boylston Public School website: "*West Boylston School Public Schools is a school choice school system. Since the inception of the school choice program in Massachusetts in the early 1990s, hundreds of students who live outside of West Boylston have chosen to attend the West Boylston Schools. Parents have many different reasons for deciding to send their children to school in West Boylston. The quality of our academic programs, the relatively small size of our schools and a personalized learning environment are reasons often identified by parents making this decision.*"

EDUCATION: In 2019, 88% of West Boylston's residents had earned a high school diploma and 33.2% of the town's adults 25 years or older earned a bachelor's degree or higher. These rates were consistent with the national high school graduation (88%) and bachelor's degree or higher (32.1%) rates. However, they lag behind Massachusetts's high school graduation rate (90.8%) and its bachelor's degree or higher rate of 43.7%.

HEALTH: 3.1% of West Boylston residents under age 65 were without health insurance in 2019. This was slightly lower than the state's uninsured rate of 3.5% but was significantly lower than the U.S. uninsured rate of 9.5%. That year, the town had proportionately fewer residents with a disability (5.6%) than the state and national rates of 7.8% and 8.6%, respectively.

HOUSING: Between 2010 and 2019, West Boylston's housing remained primarily owner-occupied at 82-83%. This rate was significantly higher than the Massachusetts and U.S. rates.

HOUSING CATEGORY 2019	West Boylston	MA	U.S.
Owner-Occupied Housing Rate	82.7%	62.4%	64%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing	\$296,500	\$381,600	\$217,500
Median Gross Rent	\$1,113	\$1,282	\$1,062

In 2019, the median value of owner-occupied housing units was less than the state's median value. However, it was \$79,000 more than the national median value. In 2019, local median gross rent was less than Massachusetts's, but slightly more than the U.S.'s.

2019 HOUSEHOLDS	West Boylston	MA	U.S.
With a Computer	89%	91.4%	90.3%
With a Broadband Internet Subscription	84.4%	86.4%	82.7%

TECHNOLOGY: Slightly fewer West Boylston households had a computer than the state and national households' percentage. The town's percent of households with a broadband internet subscription was lower than the state's and higher than the nation's.

INCOME: In 2019, the Massachusetts and U.S. median household incomes were lower than West Boylston's. The town's poverty rate was consistent with the state's but was lower than the national poverty rate.

INCOME/POVERTY 2019	West Boylston	MA	U.S.
Median Household Income	\$88,906	\$81,215	\$62,843
Persons in Poverty	9.5%	9.4%	10.5%

UNEMPLOYMENT: West Boylston's annual unemployment rates are usually higher than Massachusetts's annual rates but track closely to the national rates.

UNEMPLOYMENT ANNUAL RATES	West Boylston	MA	U.S.
2017	4.8%	3.7%	4.4%
2018	4.1%	3.4%	3.9%
2019	3.7%	2.9%	3.7%
2020 (Year-End Rate)	7.4%	7.1%	8.1%



Community Profile Data Sources:

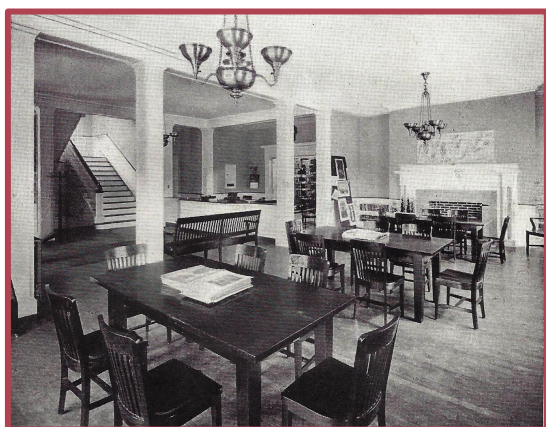
- Census Reporter (<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US2502775155-west-boylston-town-worcester-county-ma>)
- Massachusetts Labor and Workforce Development (mass.gov/lwd/economic-data/labor-force)
- Massachusetts Department of Education School and District Profiles (<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=03220000&orgtypecode=5&>)
- Towncharts.com (www.towncharts.com/Massachusetts/Demographics/West-Boylston-town-MA-Demographics-data.html)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics – Unemployment Rate (https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU04000000&years_option=all_years&periods_option=specific_periods&periods=Annual+Data)
- U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey 2019 – Languages Spoken at Home (https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B16007&primary_geo_id=06000US2502775155&geo_ids=06000US2502775155,05000US25027,04000US25,01000US)
- U.S. Census Bureau - Quick Facts (www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/westboylstontownworcestercountymassachusetts,US/PST045219)
- West Boylston 2019 Community Survey Results (www.westboylston-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1421/f/uploads/community_survey_2019.pdf)
- West Boylston - Town Demographics via 2010 U.S. Census (www.westboylston-ma.gov/about-our-town/pages/demographics)
- West Boylston Public Schools – School Choice (www.wbschools.com/District/1122-School-20Choice.html)

Beaman Memorial Public Library History

The first public library in West Boylston opened in 1878 following a \$100 bequest from the estate of David Lee Child. In addition, Lydia Maria Child, his widow, donated 170 volumes from her personal collection. This Library was first housed in the high school located in the center of town in the valley. Very shortly thereafter, it expanded to the second floor of the Primary School across the road. In 1904, during the construction of the Wachusett Reservoir, it was relocated to a space in the new Town Hall on Central Street.



In 1911, George Calvin Rice, a local farmer, approached the Town with a plan for building a new library in honor of his great-grandfather, Major Ezra Beaman. He proposed donating \$20,000 to build a library if the Town purchased the piece of land at the junction of Central and Newton Streets. At Town Meeting the townspeople voted to approve the funding for the purchase of the land and to support the additional funding necessary to run the Library. The Beaman Memorial Public Library opened to the public on September 6, 1912.

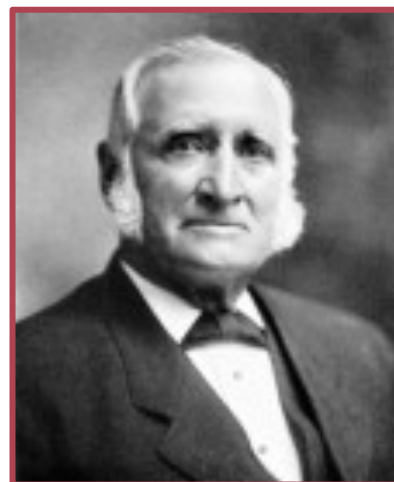


The building was a wonderful mix of elegance and good common sense. When it opened in 1912, it housed a collection of 8,000 books but was designed to eventually hold 15,000 books. That total was reached and exceeded by the early 1960s necessitating a second floor of metal shelving in the rear book stack and the addition of shelving in the Meeting Room to provide space for the growing reference collection. In addition, the Trustees' room became the Director's office allocating more space for the growing staff. In the early 1970s an area of the basement was converted to a Children's Room, with space for an office and two restrooms. By early 1980, it was obvious that the

community and its needs for modern library services had outgrown this building.

In 1999, with a \$1 million grant from the State and generous local funding of \$1.34 million, the building was renovated and expanded. The community further raised \$200,000 to purchase furnishings and shelving for the new space. The vision of George Calvin Rice has been translated into a modern facility that is handicap accessible, provides room for future growth, accommodates new technologies, and offers the public a comfortable and welcoming library.

In 2016, the Library was named to the National Registry of Historic Places.



MISSION STATEMENT: The Beaman Memorial Public Library brings people and information together. The Library enriches the community by providing print and electronic resources, a community gathering space, and opportunities for personal growth and development.

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES: The Beaman Memorial Public Library is governed by a six-member Board of Trustees, who are elected for a three-year term. The Library Trustees set policy and have fiduciary responsibilities.

FRIENDS OF THE BEAMAN MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY: The Friends is a nonprofit group formed to support the Library. It is managed by a governing board that works in a variety of ways to help improve the Library by providing funding for programming, technology, the Museum Pass Program, and other expenses not covered in the municipal budget. They also are important advocates for the Library. In 2021, they celebrated their fortieth year!

The Friends' group derives most of its income from annual membership dues and the Friends' Book Sales. In addition to raising funds via its Annual Book Sale, the Friends maintain an ongoing sale in the Newton Street vestibule. This sale features an assortment of both fiction and nonfiction selections by popular authors.

When the Covid-19 pandemic forced the Friends to cancel its March 2020 Annual Book Sale, the Friends adapted by sponsoring an outdoor, socially distanced book sale during the West Boylston town-wide yard sale in September 2020.

The Friends membership year runs from January through December each calendar year. You can also support the Friends by enrolling in the Amazon Smile program. See below for details.

The Friends of the Beaman Memorial Public Library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Support the Friends through Smile.Amazon.com



We are pleased to announce a new way to make a difference at our library:

- If you shop at Amazon.com and want a percentage (0.5%) to go to the Friends, log in through smile.amazon.com (It will not work if you start shopping at amazon.com)
- On the right it says Select a Charity. Halfway down it says "Or pick your own charitable organization."
- Do a search for 'Friends of Beaman.' Select the one that says West Boylston, MA.

Happy Shopping!

ENDOWMENT: In 2011, the Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Beaman Memorial Public Library jointly established The Endowment Fund to raise money to strengthen our Library's future, and to enhance and expand Library programs and services. The Endowment Committee partnered with Greater Worcester Community Foundation to manage the fund. In recent years the Endowment hosted matching gift challenges, and silent auction fundraisers. In March 2020 Endowment fundraising activities were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On December 31, 2020, The Endowment Fund's balance was \$245,035.33.

Beaman Memorial Public Library Profile

GENERAL OVERVIEW: During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Library Trustees monitored safety conditions, CDC guidelines, and library best practices to determine how to bring library services to the public. Library Staff worked hard to delight patrons and developed procedures for safe, contactless pickup of library materials, crafts for patrons of all ages, custom book bundles, and made all programs virtual.

The pandemic changed the way that many use the Library, and this is reflected in the statistics.

The Library provides services to the community forty-four hours each week, five days a week, including three evenings and Saturday hours. In 2016, the College of the Holy Cross pledged a five-year gift to the Library allowing an expansion of Saturday hours by three each week and enabling the Library to be open on Saturday mornings throughout the summer. This has been a great benefit to the community.

The Library is a member of the Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resources Sharing Network (CW MARS). This allows reciprocal borrowing for patrons from other member libraries throughout Central and Western Massachusetts. Patrons tell staff how much they appreciate this membership and the ability to use their library card at libraries across the region.

FACILITY: The Library building consists of three floors of 19,000 square feet of ADA compliant and accessible space. Public meeting space consists of two meeting rooms and one small study room. Library meeting rooms were used 358 times during FY 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the total number of visits to the Library decreased 26% from 71,422 in FY 2019 to 52,894 in FY 2020.

COLLECTION: In FY 2020, the Library's collection was comprised of 192,315 items including print, media, and electronic materials for adults, young adults, and children.

CIRCULATED ITEMS	FY19	FY20	# +/-	% +/-
Total eBook Circulation	3,885	5,296	1,411	36%
Total eAudio Book Circulation	939	2,839	1,900	202%
Total Circulation	78,297	72,024	(6,273)	-8%

STAFF: The Library staff consists of twelve employees, including three salaried staff members, eight part-time Library Assistants, and one part-time custodian. This equates to approximately 5.7 FTE's.

VOLUNTEERS: A key element of our Library team has always been the numerous volunteers who help keep our library running. Library volunteers assist at circulation desks with shelving and clerical work, enter data in computer systems, serve on boards and committees, assist with programs, copy and count out newsletters for mailing, dust shelves and furniture, deliver books to homebound individuals, prepare craft kits and much more. A broad use of volunteers frees up the professional staff from some of the routine daily activities of the Library, allowing them to concentrate on more complex and time-consuming tasks. In FY 2020, sixty-six volunteers provided 908 hours of service. In FY 2019 seventy-four volunteers provided 1,708 hours of service. The volunteer program was paused in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

PROGRAMMING: The Library offers diverse programs for all age groups. In compliance with local safety protocols, the Library continued providing its key programs and services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

For example, the Library facilitated patron borrowing by offering contactless pickup services. Also, the Library adapted its program delivery process to sponsor virtual programs, which resulted in increasing the number of programs offered by 44%. Offering live and pre-recorded virtual programs enabled the Library to minimize the loss of program attendees by a mere 3%.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 summer reading program was entirely virtual. The summer reading program for children 11 years old and younger was most significantly affected as it attracted far fewer than usual participants (47 vs. 509).

LIBRARY PROGRAMS

LIBRARY PROGRAMS			FY19	FY20	# +/-	% +/-
Virtual Programs	Live	# Programs	0	45	N/A	N/A
		Program Attendees	0	388	N/A	N/A
	Pre-Recorded	# Programs	0	68	N/A	N/A
		Program Views	0	590	N/A	N/A
In-Person Programs	Adult	# Programs	138	174	36	26%
		Program Attendees	2,670	1,781	(889)	-33%
	Young Adult	# Programs	22	77	55	250%
		Program Attendees	138	309	171	124%
	Children’s	# Programs	279	269	(10)	-4%
		Program Attendees	6,436	5,865	(571)	-9%
TOTALS		# Programs	439	633	194	44%
		Program Attendees	9,244	8,933	(311)	-3%

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES: The Library supports the community's technological needs by offering free tools and services. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the building. In 2020 the Library boosted the Wi-Fi signal to make it accessible from parking spaces nearby the Library. This was made possible by a grant from the West Boylston Cultural Council.

The Library is active on social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. During the pandemic, the Library created a separate Children's Room Facebook page to highlight children's programming.

In 2020, there were an average of 63 users on computers in a typical week.

GRANTS: The Library continuously applies for and receives numerous grants each year.

- In 2016, the College of the Holy Cross made a five-year pledge to the Library to give \$12,000 a year for five years. The grant enabled the Library to open on Saturdays from 9am-12pm during

FOLLOW THE LIBRARY ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



FACEBOOK:

www.facebook.com/BeamanPublicLibrary



INSTAGRAM:

www.instagram.com/beamanlibrary OR
@beamanlibrary



TWITTER:

<https://twitter.com/beamanlib> OR @BeamanLib

the summer and extend its Saturday hours during the school year from closing at 2pm to closing at 5pm. The grant funds the Library's expanded Saturday hours through May 2022.

- In 2019, the Library was awarded a Walmart Community Grant of \$1,000 which was used towards the purchase of a photocopier.
- In 2020, the Library received a \$2,850 grant from the West Boylston Cultural Council to boost the Wi-Fi to make it accessible from the parking spaces nearest the Library, to purchase new puppets, and for a summer reading presenter.
- In 2020, the Library was awarded a \$230 Ezra Keats Grant for a future puppet show.
- In 2020, a \$4,385 Reeve Foundation Grant was awarded to install an automated door opener at the interior Newton Street entrance.
- In 2020, the Library was awarded a two-year Beanstack grant through the Institute of Museums and Library Services and expanded through the CARES act. This provided funding of \$1,670 for a two-year subscription to the program. The Library uses this program for online tracking of reading challenges.
- In 2020, the Library was awarded a grant of \$950 from the Hyde Family to support the newspaper and magazine collection in the Hyde Family Reading Room. This grant has been annually awarded in varying amounts since 2016.
- In 2020, the Library received a \$24,000 State earmark for technology upgrades, used to purchase new computers and technology, and to upgrade computers to Windows 10.
- For the past few years, the Library received an annual grant through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in the amount of \$2,500 as a Small Library in Network grant. This money goes towards the costs of West Boylston's membership in the CW MARS library network.



Library Staff "Zoom" Photo April 2021

**During the Covid-19 pandemic
Library staff hosted meetings and
programs virtually using the
Zoom platform.**

Pictured here starting in upper left corner:

- * Steve Carlson, Library Assistant
- * Anna Shaw, Library Director
- * Karen Suffin, Children's Library Assistant
- * Julie Koven Levine, Library Assistant
- * Sandy Barakian, Library Assistant
- * Jessica Wright, Young Adult Librarian
- * Lauren Espe, Assistant Library Director
- * Sandie Kelly, Library Assistant
- * Martha Moore, Library Assistant
- * Sue Smith, Head of Children's Services
- * Rachel Carter, Library Assistant
- * Paul Terra, Custodian