

# Boston

National Historical Park  
Massachusetts

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Church steeples rise over the Boston skyline in this 1820 view. The large building left of center is the State House. The steeple of Old South Meeting House is the third from the right. Courtesy: Boston Athenaeum.

Bostonians blazed a trail of freedom from colony to independence. They met in town meetings to argue contemporary issues, they spoke against excessive taxes, and they were among the leaders in organizing a defense against British dominion. Today the sites of *Boston National Historical Park*, connected by the *Freedom Trail*, symbolize the accomplishments of that revolutionary generation.

Years before the Revolution, the Massachusetts House of Representatives denied that Parliament had the right to tax the American colonies without representation. A circular letter issued from the *Old State House* sought a meeting of delegates from all thirteen colonies to discuss the Stamp Act. The British, however, continued to impose duties. In *Faneuil*

*Hall* James Otis and Samuel Adams raised their voices to oppose England's oppressive tariffs. Then on the evening of December 16, 1773, more people gathered at Faneuil Hall than could be accommodated. They moved to *Old South Meeting House*, the town's largest building. From there a band of men disguised as Indians went to the waterfront, boarded three British ships, and unloaded their cargoes of tea into the harbor. In retaliation, England closed the port of Boston. In May 1774 British troops occupied the city, and patriots prepared to defend their homeland. In the steeple of *Old North Church*, near *Paul Revere's House*, two lanterns were hung on April 18, 1775, warning the patriots that British troops were crossing to Charlestown by sea. Paul Revere and William Dawes rode to Lexington to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams of the pending

attack. When British troops tried to confiscate patriot arms stored in Concord, the "Minutemen" fought. Shots rang out from Lexington Green and Concord's North Bridge. The war for independence had begun. The British retreated to Boston, and an American army soon took up positions on the hills surrounding the city. Two months later, the British planned to occupy Charlestown Heights. To prevent this, Breed's Hill (*Bunker Hill Monument*) was fortified. Alarmed by the armaments, the British attacked on June 17, 1775. By mid-afternoon a battle raged. It ended in an American retreat, but with substantial British losses. Gen. George Washington arrived to take command and by March 1776 he had fortified Dorchester Heights. Under threat of bombardment, the British evacuated Boston and for the next few years the war moved south.

Although the Revolutionary War was fought primarily on land, a small Continental Navy was built, only to be disbanded at the end of the war. The foundations of the permanent Navy were established by Congress in 1794 with the authorization of six new frigates. *USS Constitution*, built at Hart's Shipyard in Boston, was launched in 1797. Her strength in battle gave her the nickname "Old Ironsides." Now the oldest ship in the United States Navy, she is restored and berthed at *Charlestown Navy Yard*, one of the first naval shipyards in the Nation.

## A Tour of the Freedom Trail



### State House and Archives

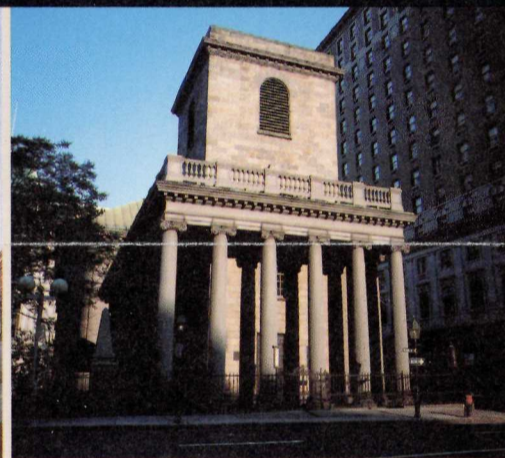
Begin your tour of the Freedom Trail at **Boston Common**, land purchased in 1634 as a militia "traying field" and for the "feeding of Cattell." During the Battle of Bunker Hill the British embarked for Charlestown from the Common. Artist Gilbert Stuart is buried in the Central Burying Ground. The "new" **State House**, designed

by Charles Bulfinch, was built in 1795 on land that originally belonged to the John Hancock family. The **Archives** contains many original documents, including the Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company and the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780.



### Park Street Church

William Lloyd Garrison gave his first antislavery speech in this church, built in 1809. Adjacent to it is **Granary Burying Ground**, where many notable Americans are interred, including Declaration of Independence signers John Hancock, Robert Treat Paine, and Samuel Adams. Also buried here are the victims of the Boston Massacre.



### King's Chapel

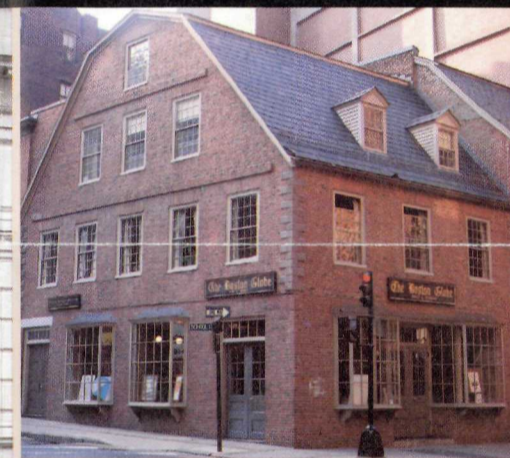
The first Anglican Congregation in Boston was founded in Tremont Street in 1688. The present structure was completed in 1754. In colonial times the church was presented with gifts of silver and vestments by Queen Anne and King George III. After the Revolution it became the first Unitarian Church in America. The burial

ground next door, the first in the colony, shelters Governor John Winthrop and William Dawes, Jr.



### Franklin Statue

Designed by Richard S. Greenough, this portrait statue, the first erected in Boston, commemorates one of the city's most versatile sons. The bronze tablets depict Franklin's career: printer, scientist, and signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Peace Treaty with Great Britain.



### Old Corner Bookstore

Originally built in 1712 as the home of Thomas Crease, this building was the center of literary Boston in the 19th century. Such noted authors as Longfellow, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Oliver Wendell Holmes gathered in the Bookstore here.



### Old South Meeting House

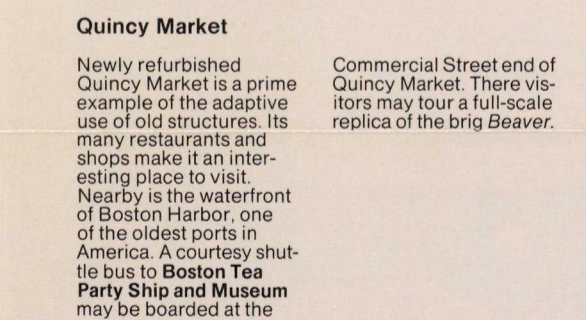
"Old South" was built in 1729 as a Congregational Church. It was the largest meeting house in Boston and was often used for town meetings when the attendance was too large for Faneuil Hall. Such was the situation on the night of December 16, 1773, when the meeting discussed the tea tax. When the meeting adjourned a body of men,

disguised as Indians, left Old South, moved to the waterfront, boarded three vessels, and dumped their cargoes of tea into the harbor. Parliament closed the port of Boston, a critical step on the road to Revolution. In 1877 the church was preserved for historical, religious, and educational purposes.



### Old State House

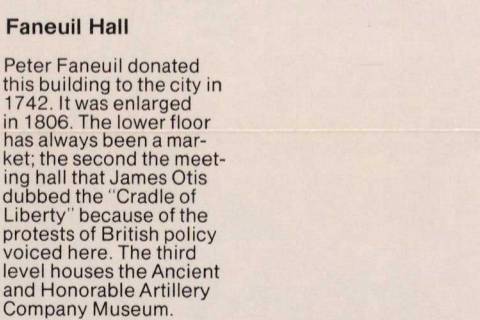
Built in 1713, this was the seat of the colonial government. Here in 1766 the first gallery from which the public could watch government in action was opened. A circle of cobblestones in the street outside marks the **Boston Massacre Site** where on March 5, 1770, British soldiers killed five patriots.



### Quincy Market

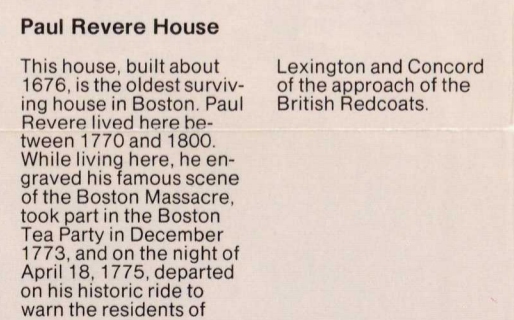
Newly refurbished Quincy Market is a prime example of the adaptive use of old structures. Its many restaurants and shops make it an interesting place to visit. Nearby is the waterfront of Boston Harbor, one of the oldest ports in America. A courtesy shuttle bus to **Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum** may be boarded at the

Commercial Street end of Quincy Market. There visitors may tour a full-scale replica of the brig *Beaver*.



### Faneuil Hall

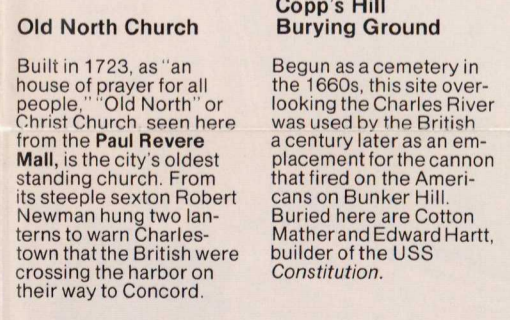
Peter Faneuil donated this building to the city in 1742. It was enlarged in 1806. The lower floor has always been a market; the second the meeting hall that James Otis dubbed the "Cradle of Liberty" because of the protests of British policy voiced here. The third level houses the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company Museum.



### Paul Revere House

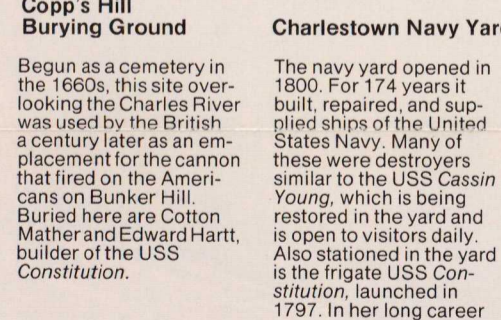
This house, built about 1676, is the oldest surviving house in Boston. Paul Revere lived here between 1770 and 1800. While living here, he engraved his famous scene of the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, and on the night of April 18, 1775, departed on his historic ride to warn the residents of

Lexington and Concord of the approach of the British Redcoats.



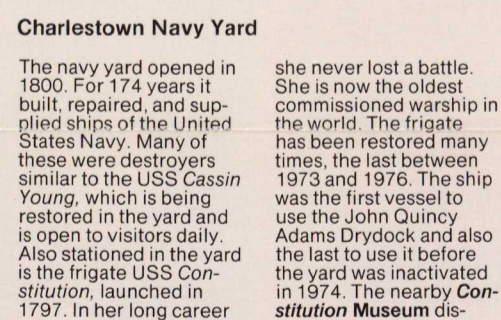
### Old North Church

Built in 1723, as "an house of prayer for all people," Old North or Christ Church, seen here from the **Paul Revere Mall**, is the city's oldest standing church. From its steeple sexton Robert Newman hung two lanterns to warn Charlestown that the British were crossing the harbor on their way to Concord.



### Copp's Hill Burying Ground

Begun as a cemetery in the 1660s, this site overlooking the Charles River was used by the British a century later as an emplacement for the cannon that fired on the Americans on Bunker Hill. Buried here are Cotton Mather and Edward Hart, builder of the *USS Constitution*.

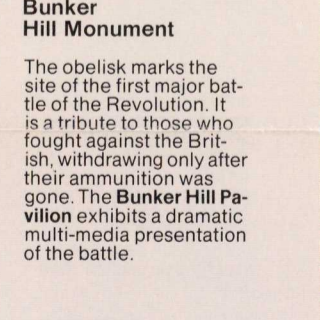


### Charlestown Navy Yard

The navy yard opened in 1800. For 174 years it built, repaired, and supplied ships of the United States Navy. Many of these were destroyers similar to the *USS Cassin Young*, which is being restored in the yard and is open to visitors daily. Also stationed in the yard is the frigate *USS Constitution*, launched in 1797. In her long career

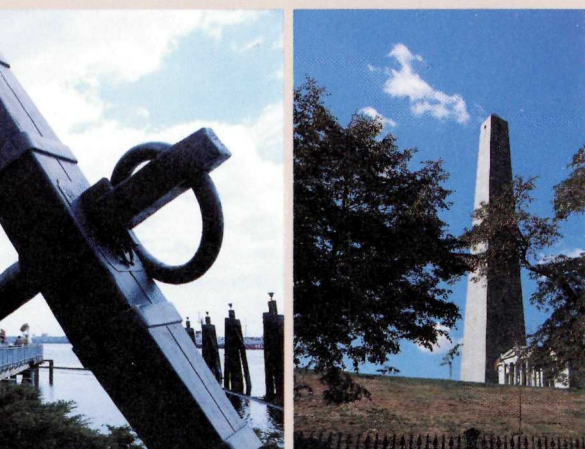
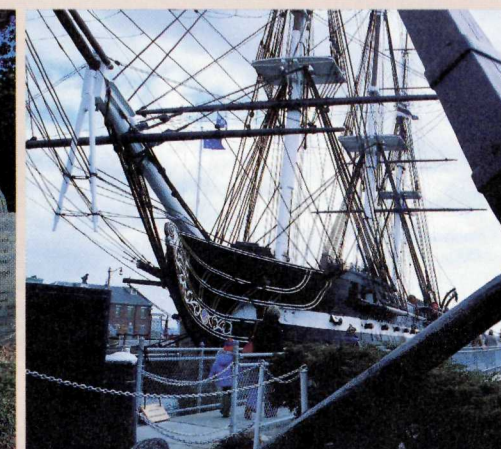
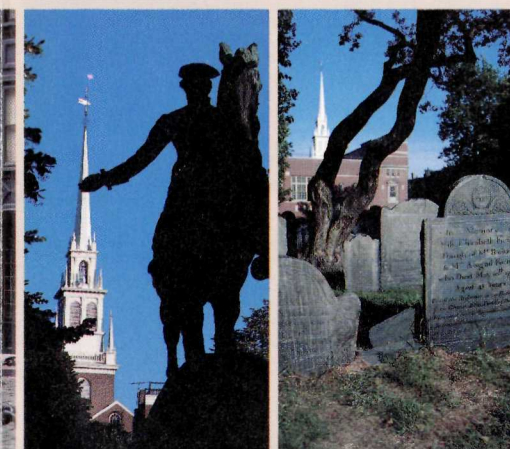
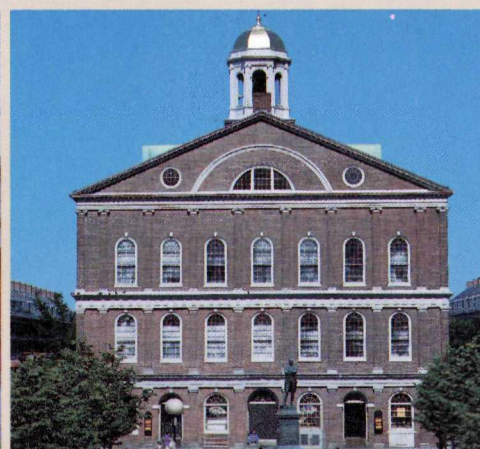
she never lost a battle. She is now the oldest commissioned warship in the world. The frigate has been restored many times, the last between 1973 and 1976. The ship was the first vessel to use the John Quincy Adams Drydock and also the last to use it before the yard was inactivated in 1974. The nearby **Constitution Museum** dis-

plays many historical items that help the visitor understand shipboard life in the 1800s.



### Bunker Hill Monument

The obelisk marks the site of the first major battle of the Revolution. It is a tribute to those who fought against the British, withdrawing only after their ammunition was gone. The **Bunker Hill Pavilion** exhibits a dramatic multi-media presentation of the battle.





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## A Unique City

Boston exemplifies many aspects of America's heritage. Its citizens are a perpetual fountain of individualism. Its scholars and statesmen have profoundly influenced the life of the city and the Nation.

Cities, like people, change and evolve. Boston is famous for its adaptive use of old structures. The old Quincy Market, the Waterfront, and Charlestown Navy Yard are being renovated for a variety of community, commercial, and leisure uses. The marriage of historic preservation and economic revitalization has created a skyline of contrasts: modern skyscrapers and the Government Center vie with the steeple of the Old North Church and clock tower of the Customs House. Architectural and cultural diversity is the essence of Boston.

A walk on the Freedom Trail will also take you through the varied neighborhoods that characterize the city: the Italian neighborhood in the North End, the "Old Boston" neighborhood at Beacon Hill, and the Irish community in Charlestown. Park visitors can best enjoy the city by walking or riding the public transportation system to its museums, theaters, concerts, and shops.

## A Unique Park

Boston National Historic Park is actually an association of a number of sites that together give the visitor a coherent view of the city's role in the Nation's history. Each site brings to life the American ideals of freedom of speech, religion, government, and self-determination.

The park complex is unique in that only three of the sites—the Charlestown Navy Yard, Bunker Hill Monument, and Dorchester Heights National Historic Site—are owned by the Federal Government. The others—the Paul Revere House, the Old North Church, the Old State House, the Old South Meeting House, and Faneuil Hall—are privately or municipally owned and managed. Hence the creation of Boston National Historic Park signifies a new kind of park management, in which the

resources of Federal, State, city, and private organizations are combined in a cooperative relationship. Responsibilities, costs, and technical assistance are shared among all parties.

Most of the historic sites are connected by the Freedom Trail. Recognized as a National Recreation Trail, the 3-mile trail is a walking tour of 16 sites and structures of historic importance in downtown Boston and Charlestown.



## Rapid Transit System

Entrance/Exit for Rapid Transit stations on map at right. Most transit stations are named for the streets, landmarks, or squares at which the stop is located. Stations are usually marked with large signs bearing the transit system logo. Exact change is required, although change is available at stations where turnstiles operate. The rapid transit system operates from 6 a.m. to midnight.

## Historic Boston

0 5 Kilometer (Scale for map at right)  
0 5 Mile

- Freedom Trail
- Black Heritage Site
- Parking
- Bus (route not on map; see below)
- Information
- Public Restrooms

The Freedom Trail is a walking tour of Boston's major historic sites and structures. A red line marked on the sidewalk directs you from site to site. Begin your walking tour at any point, but if you desire to take the whole tour, plan an entire day for the 3-mile round trip.

The sites of Boston African American National Historic Site explore the history of Beacon Hill's black community. The first blacks came to Boston in 1638 as slaves. During the Revolution, black Bostonians were active on both sides. In 1783, the year the war ended, the Massachusetts Supreme Court abolished slavery in the State. Over the next 20 years, many blacks settled on the north side of Beacon Hill. The important sites are marked by distinctive signs.

Parking is plentiful in downtown Boston; and the best way to see the

city is on foot. Leave your car in one of the public or private parking lots. All charge a fee.

Bus transportation is available to take you to some of the more distant sites. A shuttle bus runs between the Boston Tea Party Ship and downtown. Pick up the bus on the Devonshire Street side of the Old State House or the Commercial Street side of Faneuil Hall. To reach the Charlestown sites, take MBTA buses 93 or 111 to City Square, a short walk from Bunker Hill and the Navy Yard. To return from Charlestown, take any bus labelled "Downtown."

Information concerning Boston and the Freedom Trail can be obtained at the kiosk on Boston Common, and without charge at the Park visitor center and the Charlestown Navy Yard. The visitor center in downtown Boston is operated by the National Park Service

and contains exhibits of historical sites and a free audio-visual show to orient you to the park and greater Boston.

Restrooms are available at the public sites indicated by the symbols on the map. Many commercial buildings also have restrooms.

