

Detail from A Southeast View of the Great Town of Boston in New England in America by J. Carwitham, London 1764. Courtesy The Bostonian Society

To travel back to Revolutionary Boston—to understand the people, the events, and ideals of the 18th century—is a great leap for us today. But the sites along the Freedom Trail do speak eloquently of that time. Bostonians and other colonists shared a notion of liberty that was precious and worth fighting for. The Freedom Trail sites include the scenes of critical events in Boston's and the nation's struggle for freedom. Some visitors choose to trek the entire 2½-mile route or select an individual site to visit at length, while others experience the Freedom Trail as a cohesive story built around the following four "chapters," organized along geographic and thematic lines.

Chapter 1—Revolution of Minds and Hearts For more than a century before the first musket was fired in America's War for Independence, Puritan-bred Bostonians embraced a strong heritage of community and a

culture of freedom that was remarkable among colonial settlements. The sites here include places where townsfolk assembled to proclaim their rights, drill their militias, bury their dead, educate their young, govern their own church congregations, and protect their property from British meddling. "The Revolution was effected before the war commenced," observed John Adams. "The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people." Sites in this chapter include Boston Common, Massachusetts State House, Park Street Church and Granary Burying Ground, King's Chapel and Burying Ground, and the site of the first public school.

Chapter 2—The People Revolt In the year 1760, breaking away from Great Britain was unimaginable to most Bostonians. Between 1761 and 1775, however, differing views of the rights of the colonies under British rule led to actions, reactions, and tumultuous encounters between Britain and the

Boston colonists that snowballed towards war. The sites here feature places where liberty-loving men and women began to take collective action, culminating in events like the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party. They include Old South Meeting House, Old Corner Bookstore, Old State House, Boston Massacre Site, and Faneuil Hall.

Chapter 3—Neighborhood of Revolution In the course of just two pivotal days—April 18 and 19, 1775—years of growing unrest burst into insurrection. Among the families living in the North End, downtown Boston's oldest surviving residential neighborhood, were middle-class artisan Paul Revere, his second wife Rachel, and seven of his children. It was patriot Revere who planned the hanging of warning lanterns in the steeple of the Old North Church on April 18 prior to his famous ride. By morning, colonial militia had assembled in Lexington and Concord for what became the

first military encounters of the Revolution. The North End sites in this chapter include Paul Revere House, Old North Church, and Copp's Hill Burying Ground.

Chapter 4—Boston Goes to War Less than two months after Lexington and Concord, patriots and British troops engaged in one of the bloodiest encounters of the War for Independence—the Battle of Bunker Hill. Though the British won the battle, their losses were immense, inspiring patriots to continued resistance. By 1783, the United States had won its independence. To defend the young nation against pirates, the British, or any other would-be challenger, the newly formed U.S. Navy built the seemingly invincible frigate USS *Constitution*. The Charlestown sites in this chapter include Bunker Hill Monument and USS *Constitution*, berthed in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

All photos below by James Higgins, except as noted

Sites Along the Freedom Trail



Boston Common and State House

The Freedom Trail begins at Boston Common where cattle once grazed and British soldiers once encamped. Established in 1634 by Puritan settlers, it is the oldest public park in the United States. Overlooking the Common is the "new" Massachusetts State House designed by Charles Bulfinch. Samuel

Adams and Paul Revere laid the cornerstone in 1795. The memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Regiment, opposite the State House, marks the start of the Black Heritage Trail® a feature of the Museum of Afro American History and Boston African American National Historic Site.



Park Street Church

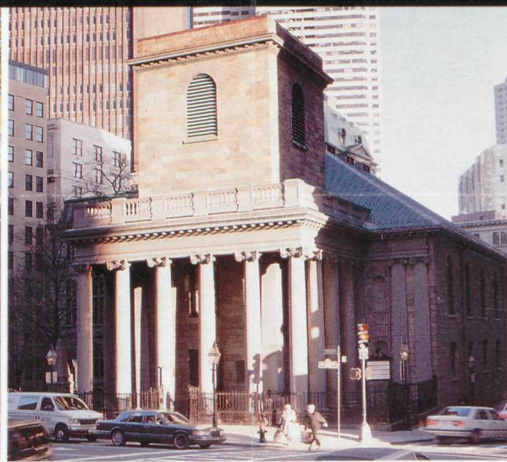
The elegant spire of this church and its carillon, which sounds twice daily from its steeple, have long been landmarks for downtown shoppers. The hymn "America" was first sung here, and abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison gave his first antislavery speech here in 1829. Park Street

Church has stood on this corner since 1809 as an active Congregational church, organized in reaction to Unitarians who were gaining control in many of the old Puritan churches.



Granary Burying Ground

Patriots John Hancock, Paul Revere, James Otis, Samuel Adams, Robert Treat Paine, and the victims of the Boston Massacre, as well as whole families of settlers ravaged by fire and plague, are interred in this old cemetery next to the Park Street Church.



King's Chapel and Burying Ground

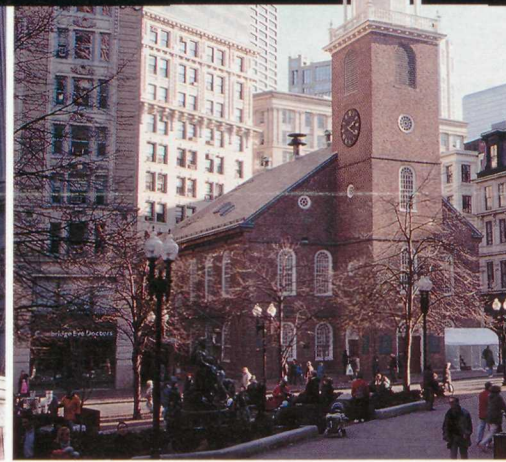
Designed by Peter Harrison in 1749 for the first Anglican congregation in Boston, King's Chapel possesses one of the most elegant Georgian church interiors of the colonial era. Because it was a stronghold of Loyalist opposition, most of the congregation left for England and Nova Scotia

in 1776. In 1787 those remaining organized the first Unitarian congregation in America. The burying ground next to the chapel contains the remains of John Winthrop, the colony's first governor, as well as the gravestone that inspired Nathaniel Hawthorne to write *The Scarlet Letter*.



Franklin Statue and First School Site

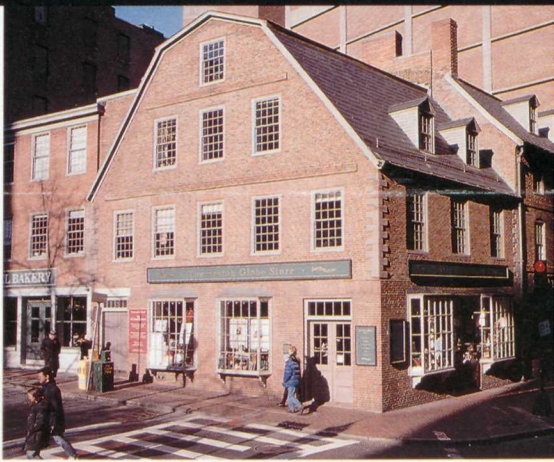
This statue of Benjamin Franklin overlooks the site of the Latin School, the oldest public school in America, established by Puritan settlers in 1635 and which Franklin, Samuel Adams and John Hancock attended. Its first schoolhouse was built here in 1635.



Old South Meeting House

Built in 1729 as a Puritan house of worship, the Old South Meeting House was the largest building in colonial Boston. In the days leading to the American Revolution, citizens gathered here to challenge British rule, protesting the Boston Massacre and the tax on tea. It was here at an overflow meeting on

December 16, 1773, that Samuel Adams launched the Boston Tea Party. The building was saved from destruction in 1876 in the first successful historic preservation effort in New England. Today it is an active meeting place, a haven for free speech, and a museum exhibit, "Voices of Protest."



Old Corner Bookstore

Typical of the kinds of dwellings and shops that lined the streets of Boston in colonial days, this gambrel-roof building was saved from destruction in the 1960s and restored by Historic Boston in 1970. Built as an apothecary for druggist Thomas Crease in 1718, it became a literary center in the mid-19th

century as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Louisa May Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and others brought their manuscripts here to be published by Ticknor and Fields Co.

Old State House

Built in 1713, this historic landmark served as the seat of colonial and state governments as well as a merchants' exchange. In 1761 patriot James Otis opposed the Writs of Assistance here, inspiring John Adams to state "then and there the child independence was born." A cobblestone circle be-

neath its balcony marks the site of the 1770 Boston Massacre when British soldiers fired into a crowd of Bostonians. Fugitive slave Crispus Attucks was among the five victims who died that day. Today the Bostonian Society maintains the building as a museum of Boston history.

Faneuil Hall

This old market building, first built in 1742, sits at the site of the old town dock. Town meetings, held here between 1764 and 1774, heard Samuel Adams and others lead cries of protest against the imposition of taxes on the colonies. The building was enlarged in 1806. Frederick Doug-

lass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Lucy Stone brought their struggles for freedom here in the 19th century. Market stalls on the first floor service shoppers much as they did in Paul Revere's day.

Paul Revere House

Boston's oldest residential neighborhood, the North End, contains some of the city's oldest buildings. The Paul Revere House is the oldest in downtown Boston. Built about 1680, it was owned and occupied by Paul Revere and his family most of the time from 1770 to 1800. Today it is

operated, along with the neighboring Pierce-Hichborn House, as a house museum by the Paul Revere Memorial Association, which restored the dwelling in 1908 after it had been used for a number of different purposes, including a cigar factory and bank.

Paul Revere Memorial Association

Old North Church

Built in 1723, Christ Church is better known as "Old North." It is Boston's oldest church building and still an active Episcopal Church. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow memorialized Old North's role at the start of the Revolutionary War in his poem, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." On

the night of April 18, 1775, sexton Robert Newman hung two lanterns in the steeple to warn Charlestown patriots of the advance of British soldiers. The church, a beautiful example of Georgian architecture, houses America's oldest maiden peal of bells and the first bust of George Washington.

Copp's Hill Burying Ground

British soldiers placed cannon here to bombard Breed's Hill on June 17, 1775. Robert Newman, black educator Prince Hall, and blacks and mulattos who worked in the shipyards of the North End are interred within these ancient grounds dating to 1660.

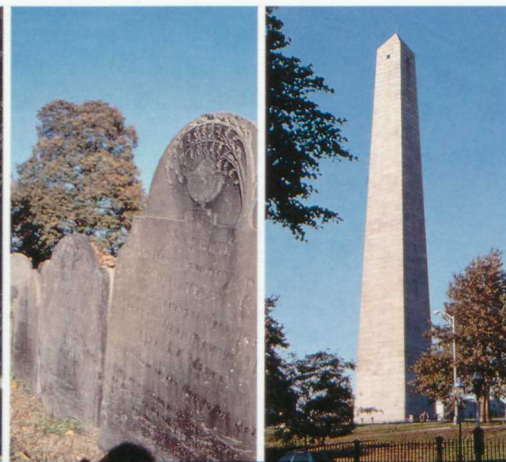
Bunker Hill Monument

Dedicated in 1843, this 221-foot obelisk commemorates the Revolution's first major battle, testing colonial unity and convictions against the might of British forces. The lodge has exhibits on the battle and monument. Visitors may climb the monument's 294 steps.

Charlestown Navy Yard/USS Constitution

Following the Revolution, the nation's citizens proved their willingness to defend their newfound freedom and economic independence through the development and support of a navy. From 1800 to 1974, Charlestown Navy Yard built, repaired, and outfitted U.S. naval vessels. Today the

yard is home to USS *Constitution*, the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world, and the USS Constitution Museum. USS *Cassin Young*, refitted and modernized in the yard's drydock, represents the type of ship built in the yard during World War II.



Exploring Historic Boston

In the 1870s, imbued with the spirit of the nation's centennial, Bostonians began saving colonial and Revolutionary era buildings that were critical in the struggle against British rule. A century later, in 1974, Congress ensured the continuity of this effort—and the preservation of important parts of America's heritage—by creating Boston National Historical Park.

Today the park is an association of sites ranging from steeped churches, grand meeting halls, and battlegrounds to America's oldest commissioned warship. The park is distinctive, mixing historic buildings and landscapes owned by the city, the state, the Federal Government, and private organizations. Only three sites are owned by the Federal Government—the Charlestown Navy Yard, Bunker Hill Monument, and Dorchester Heights Monument.

Visitors can enjoy the city by walking or by riding public transportation to its museums, shops, theaters, concerts, and historic sites.

Boston is a city best seen on foot. Traffic in the downtown area is usually heavy and the street system difficult for newcomers to negotiate. There are several commercial parking garages in downtown Boston and at the Charlestown Navy Yard, and we urge you to park your car and walk wherever possible. You will see parts of the city you might otherwise miss and have a more relaxing visit. For longer distances, depend on the Rapid Transit System.

Boston's Rapid Transit System (the "T") consists of the Red, Green, Blue, Orange, and Silver Lines as shown on the map below. Most station stops within Boston proper are named for streets and squares and marked with a large sign bearing the transit logo—a black "T" in a white circle.

Bus service between Boston and Charlestown is provided by MBTA routes 92 and 93. To reach Charlestown

from downtown, catch one of these buses at Haymarket station north of Faneuil Hall and get off at City Square Park (the first stop after crossing Charlestown Bridge). It is a short walk from here to either the navy yard or Bunker Hill. Catch the return bus at City Square Park in front of the John Harvard Mall. Exact change is required. You may also use the water shuttle service, which runs frequently between Pier 4 at Charlestown Navy Yard and Long Wharf in downtown Boston near the Aquarium rapid transit station.

Other Points of Interest
The Boston African American National Historic Site explores the history of Beacon Hill's 19th century black community. The **Black Heritage Trail®** begins at the Shaw Memorial opposite the State House. Black and brown signs identify sites, including the African Meeting House and the Smith School. Trail folders are available at the park visitor center.

A marble tower atop **Dorchester Heights** in Thomas Park in South Boston commemorates the American actions

that brought about the British evacuation of Boston on March 17, 1776. This bloodless American triumph was the first victory for the Continental Army under George Washington.

The monument was built in colonial revival style in 1902. The tower, designed to resemble a colonial meeting house spire, offers a commanding view of Boston and its harbor. The grounds are open during daylight hours; the tower is open on a limited schedule in summer.

Dorchester Heights is two miles from downtown Boston. To reach the site by public transportation, take the subway (Red Line) to Broadway Station. Here board MBTA Bus #9 (City Point) and get off at "G" Street. It is a short walk uphill to the Heights.

By car, cross into South Boston on the Congress Street Bridge. Turn right onto "A" Street, then left onto West Broadway. Follow Broadway to "G" Street and turn right. The monument is on the left.

Except for the Dorchester Heights Monument in South Boston, all of Boston National Historical Park's historic sites are part of Boston's Freedom Trail. The Freedom Trail is a 2½-mile walking trail of 16 colonial, Revolutionary, and federal sites in downtown Boston and Charlestown that tells the story in four principal chapters (*see other side*) of the people, places, and events that sparked the American Revolution against England and highlights Boston's role in laying the foundation for a new nation.

The Freedom Trail originated in 1951 when Old North Church sexton Bob Winn proposed to *Boston Herald-Traveler* reporter Bill Schofield the creation of a trail to help visitors find Boston's historic sites and to boost tourism. Schofield promoted the idea in his newspaper columns. In June

1951, with the support of Mayor John B. Hynes and the Chamber of Commerce, the city placed signs painted with a colonial rider directing visitors to 12 historic sites from the State House to Copp's Hill Burying Ground.

Over the years the Freedom Trail has expanded and evolved. Today it is recognized as both a National Recreation Trail and a National Millennium Trail. It extends from Boston Common to the Charlestown Navy Yard and Bunker Hill and is marked by a line of contrasting bricks, red paint, and distinctive signage. A wide variety of private and public organizations oversee the welfare of the trail, including the city of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the National Park Service, and the Freedom Trail Foundation. Together these organizations have made the

trail into an exciting, historical adventure—a vital part of Boston's and the nation's heritage. More than 1.5 million people walk the trail every year, discovering the Revolutionary past imbedded in a major modern urban environment.

Boston National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Start your journey into the Revolutionary era by picking up information at Boston National Historical Park Visitor Center at 15 State Street or the Charlestown Navy Yard. Information can also be obtained by writing the Superintendent, Boston National Historical Park, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, MA 02129; calling (617) 242-5642; or checking our website at www.nps.gov/bost on the Internet.

Getting Around

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