

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Old Home of Paul Revere

A visit to Boston without visiting Paul Revere's house would be like visiting Monterey and not seeing the Old Custom House or Washington and not seeing the White House. So, we went to this oldest frame house in the city of Boston and came away delighted that it has been saved for the interested public to see.

The small, two-storied house was built soon after 1676 and was purchased by Paul Revere in 1770; here he resided until 1800. It is in the north end of Boston and is the only type of a Colonial dwelling in the country situated in the heart of a large city, so we were told. The home of the Rev. Increase Mather had once occupied the site, but it was destroyed in the fire of 1676.

The house is low studded and L-shaped. The second story projects and overhangs the first to prevent Indians from scaling the walls. The roof is pitched so heavy snows cannot accumulate. Both living room and kitchen have large fireplaces; the one in the living room being spacious enough for a man to stand in without stooping.

We were told that the kitchen fireplace is exactly as it was when Paul Revere lived in the house, and in it hangs the crane used by him. Mrs. Revere's rolling pin hangs on the wall. The original window frames and leaded diamond panes are in most of the windows. Also, on the wall in a long narrow strip covered with glass, is a piece of the original wallpaper. This wallpaper in shades of yellow and grey, which depicts an old London church tower, has been copied and hung on the other walls of the room. The guide told us that on the back of the original paper was discovered a "hall mark" probably a royal warrant for manufacture.

Some of the floorboards in the two rooms on the second floor are twenty-three inches wide and are, no doubt, the very boards upon which Revere and his family walked. Revere was married and was the father of 16 children.

In a folder which we purchased we find that it is quite probable that the Reveres lived in the house before he purchased it in 1770. Records show that he paid 213 pounds, six shillings and 8 pence for it, for which amount 160 pounds was covered by a mortgage. From

the doorway of this now famous house on North Square Revere went forth on his "Midnight Ride," April 18, 1775.

Numerous pieces of furniture have been given to the house including several pieces which belonged to Revere: a water ewer, flintlock pistols, his cane, a bed post from his bed, a toddy warmer, pewter dishes, his saddle bags, a small box of papers, and a lantern he made himself.

The house is now owned by the Paul Revere Memorial Association and is open to the public for a small fee.

Paul Revere, aside from his famous ride, was also noted as a silversmith and pewterer and as a dentist of sort. He made teeth for George Washington, which is the reason, so history tells us, that we never see the first President smiling in any of his portraits.

Revere died in 1818 and was buried in Old Granary burial ground in Boston – the same city in which he had been born 84 years before. There are probably more memorials to Revere in the city of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and in the New England states than to any other person.