

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Sad Departure From Boston

We leave Boston, the birthplace of American liberty, today and I for one am sad at our departure. It has been a great adventure to live for two weeks almost literally in the past. From the evening of Sept. 7, when we saw the archbishop of London at the great opening service of the 57th General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, until today, the 19th, we have been touring New England and seeing the sights of Boston.

On the evening when we had the privilege of shaking hands with the archbishop and his charming wife, we were fascinated by the old-world costume which he wore. From his shoulders to his silver buckled shoes he was a picture. He was attired in a purple waistcoat with black frogs, knee breeches and apron. He greeted everyone with a warm handshake and a big smile. We have heard that 4,000 invitations had been issued but 6,000 more crashed the party, which was held in the Museum of Fine Arts. We are sure that the report must have been true, so great was the crowd.

We have seen Bunker Hill monument, a granite shaft which stands 221 feet high on Breed's Hill, within the lines of the American Redoubt. This was the center of the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. But we did not want to climb to the top, and there was no elevator.

We visited the Boston Public Library, where there was a special exhibit of the books of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, placed there in honor of the triennial convention of that church. This collection, owned by the Boston Library, is one of the richest of its kind. The most outstanding items were, of course, the copies of the first two issues of the Prayer Book, published respectively in March and April 1549, and a copy of Edward VI's second prayer book of 1552, published just 400 years ago. Also included in the exhibition were copies of Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book of 1559, King James's of 1604 and the final revision of 1662.

We were privileged to view the rarest English primers, the Scottish Liturgy of 1637, and the first Prayer Book of the Church of Ireland of 1721. In glass cases were: a New Testament containing Abraham Lincoln's autograph, the prayer book by Robert E. Lee, the Communion Service of Christ Church, dated 1823, and

many other church documents owned by famous people.

As all tourists should, we had a dinner at Durgin Park. The origin of this restaurant and its typical Yankee recipes goes back to pre-Revolutionary days. In 1742, Peter Faneuil, called by contemporaries "the topmost merchant of the town," erected a large market house near the waterfront. Soon afterward a warehouse, the building now occupied by the restaurant, was constructed. On the second floor of the warehouse a small eating house was established. It catered almost entirely to the marketmen and the crews of the ships anchored in the harbor. About 75 years ago one of the customers, Eldridge Park – who owned a livery stable nearby – bought the restaurant in partnership with John Durgin, a commission merchant, and John Chandler, a young dry-goods merchant. It was here that we had and enjoyed Baker Indian Pudding for the first time.

One of the most handsome interiors of all the old churches we visited was the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. The cornerstone for this church was laid in September, 1819, and the church was consecrated on June 30, 1820. The cathedral was designed by Capt. Alexander Parris who served his apprenticeship in a carpenter's shop in Pembroke. He was the construction engineer of the Charlestown Navy Yard and the U.S. Arsenal at Watertown. His assistant, Solomon Willard, is even more widely known as the architect who made the plans for Bunker Hill monument, the court house and the gateway to Granary burial grounds.

Among the historically marked pews in the cathedral are those once occupied by: John Wampas, the Indian owner of the building's site – he was either a Sagamore or a petty chief of the Nipmonks – and Hezekiah Usher, the man who had the distinction of being the first bookseller in America. The first books made in this country were printed for him. He also printed the apostle Eliot's great Indian Bible in 1663.

Among other famous persons' pews are those of Mary Goose (Mother Goose), who died in 1757; Phillips Books, later rector of and builder of old Trinity church; William Blackstone, the first white settler of Boston, and that of John Hull, the first mintmaster, who coined the famous pine tree shillings. This year 1952 is the 300th anniversary of the first coining of these shillings. The mintmaster is said to have given his daughter her weight in shillings as a wedding dowry.