

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Churches of Old Boston Town

In the last issue of the Diary, written from Boston, we began a tour of the historic churches of the city, but succeeded only in writing about "Old North Church" of Paul Revere fame. Today we will take you on a tour with us of Park Street Church, King's Chapel, The Old South Meeting House, The Old State House, and Trinity Church in Copley Square.

The Park Street Church occupies the site of the town granary in which grain purchased by the authorities to be sold to the needy at a slight increase over the wholesale price, was stored. Here the sails for the Constitution, "Old Ironsides," were made. It is said that this church is the best remaining example of Boston's 19th century ecclesiastical architecture and was designed by an English architect, Peter Banner. The construction engineer of Bunker Hill monument, Solomon Willard, made the Ionic and Corinthian capitals of the steeple. Besides having the honor of having "America" first sung here by school children on July 4 1831, the Honolulu church was organized here, and many other notable events have taken place in the Park Street Church down through the years.

King's Chapel was established in Boston in 1686 by Rev. Robert Ratcliffe, the private chaplain of King James II who had come from England commissioned to establish the Church of England in the Colony. He finally succeeded in acquiring one corner of the burial ground where the King's Chapel still stands, and a wooden edifice was erected. It was first occupied June 30, 1689 and enlarged in 1710.

We were told that there was no organ in the colony until Thomas Brattle imported one from England. At his death he left his organ to the church and the chapel received the organ in 1713. It is still in use in Portsmouth, N.H.

The granite in the walls of King's Chapel was the first to be quarried in this country. The bell in the tower was recast by Paul Revere & Son in 1816. King's Chapel was the first Episcopal church in New England.

We spent some time in the Old South Meeting House, erected in 1729. It is a Congregational church and the one in which Benjamin Franklin was baptized on January 17, 1706 when he was three hours old. It was also from

this meeting house that the Boston citizens proceeded to Griffin's Wharf for the famous Tea Party. "Old South" was saved for posterity by generous citizens; the women of Boston and New England playing a prominent part in its preservation.

The Old State House occupies the identical site in the earliest marketing place of Boston chosen for the first Town House. The present building was built in 1713 after the interior was destroyed by fire in 1711.

The first religious service of the Church of England was held in Old State House June 6, 1686. The Town Library, the first public library in America, was established herein. The Boston Massacre occurred in the Square in front of the building on March 5, 1770. From the eastern balcony the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed. The State House is now the headquarters of the Bostonian Society, where a collection of historical material and the Marine Museum collection are open to the public and well worth seeing.

Copley Square in Boston is considered one of the finest municipal squares in the country, if not in the world. Here is situated Trinity Church the façade of which is one of the richest examples of ecclesiastical architecture in the city. Interior decorative work is by John LaFarge. Here is another example of St. Gauden's work in the statue of Phillips Brooks, the rector of the church from 1869 to 1891. In the cloister are stones brought from St. Botolph's Church in Boston, England.

We have walked and walked the old streets of Boston, almost believing we were in England for the streets have such names as Berkeley, Milk, Quincy Market, Salem, Ruggles and many other such British names. We have listened to lectures, rode the buses to historic places about the city and absorbed history almost to the point of saturation but we are still willing to start out again, to learn more of America's past and see the places in which this history was enacted. The visit to Boston has made us appreciate more the historical background and tourist interest in Monterey. May we never destroy all our Monterey past!