

Mrs. Mortimer
Post-walk interview

As soon as we turned the corner, I noticed an antique shop. The window was loaded with antiques and that quite took me by surprise. . . We headed left. I don't recall whether that was the street we saw the bookstand on or not, and I was very much interested in that. When I looked forward all I saw was trees, and tall buildings in the distance which I remarked about. Signs painted on one building that I wasn't too impressed with. We looked in windows - antiques. We stopped to admire a ship in ^{the window} -- I don't remember now, but it was a large ship model and very interesting. I wanted very much to admire it and look at it for a while which we did.

We took a sort of rounded corner, I believe. Then we went another block and this was when we went over to the Boston Public Gardens and strolled there for a short while, past the pond. We followed the sidewalk out again and crossed the street; or was this the last of it. Anyway, we went down another block where there were very exquisite dress shops, churches, very expensive looking places on the left side on which side we walked.

It wasn't long before we turned another corner, and there before me was a terrible looking alley, the worst I've seen. And I wanted to know if we had to go down there -- we did! We walked down there. ~~It~~ It was really awful, almost made me sick to go down, and I couldn't get out of it quick enough. Big barrels of trash and awful looking stuff and the roadway was littered up along with the ice.

I'm sure the Boston Gardens came after this. . . I do remember, right at the first I was very impressed with one building - a very plain, tailored looking building which I don't recall the name of. It had sort of 3 pillar-like things separating the 3 large glass windows. I remember that the streets looked very dirty with the dirty snow so I knew that Boston was a very dirty place, what with all the smoke stacks and everything.

(What made the greatest impression?) I was most impressed with that one sort of building I spoke of, and also the dirtiness. (dirtiness in general?) Yes.

(Any particular buildings?) The one on the corner; was it the hotel? (Yes) Only the churches and not favorably impressed, just that I was. There was the one building, the red one, the bridal shop (Bonwit Tellers) I was sort of impressed; it stood out in my mind, anyway.

(Any particular features about these buildings?) The hotel -- it was very boxy-like, straight sides, which I liked very much. The other store, with the big glass windows -- I ~~dis~~ liked the appearance of it. It was neat and plain, tailored-like, which I liked very much about the building. The old church-houses -- well, I liked them; they fit in with my idea of New Eng., but I like homey-like church houses. (do you think they were?) No, but I know that they fit very well with the type of church houses that people -- that all sects go to, as a matter of fact. (Any features about these churches?) I can draw with my hands. They would go up a little bit, nick in, up and in, up and in, until they come to a peak on the top; very jagged. (Bonwit Teller's?) It reminds me of when I was in the 2nd grade and drew a picture of a house. The bottom was red brick and the top was either a gray or ~~people~~ white, with large pillars and then the canopies out to the sidewalk. It looked as if someone was about to get married. On each side there was a large window with a model in a bridal gown.

(People?) No; as I recall we didn't see many people. The only fellow I remembered was, I think, white, small, 5' 4" which I am; he had on a dirty overcoat and a pipe, and he wasn't very appealing. (Types?) No, I didn't see many types. There was also one lady in the Gardens; I don't even remember what she was wearing.

Sounds
(Sounds?) Just noise, lots of noise.

(Smells?) No, ^{yr} I think if it had been a warmer day I'm sure I would have smelled more smells, but being as cold as it was, that's what I contribute - the fact that I didn't smell anything-- anywhere in the area.

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(Traffic?) Very, very heavy. One car after another. As you remember we had a hard time crossing the street because of the thickness and fastness of the traffic. I noticed, too, that all the streets were one-way. (Parking?) They parallel parked. As I remember they parked on both sides of the street, on all the streets except that one by the Boston Gardens.

(How many definite areas?) I'd say three; four starting from the subway. That was mostly sidewalk and antique areas; that was first. The Boston Gardens was a particular area. Then there was the street which seemed like a church area. Then there was the street where there was -- well, not really stores, just business areas. (The first area was the antiques) Where I said the round corner, that's where most of the big business buildings were, not too high and flat looking. It was just before or right after we saw the book stands. (Boylston St.) (Third area?) The hotel, a few big buildings, then the church house; that street seemed to be full of churches to me.

(Anything that gave these 4 areas a character of their own?) I think I've already mentioned them. One area seemed to be business buildings, where the ship was. The Gardens definitely had its own distinctions -- trees and the pond, a very beautiful place, I imagine in the summertime. The church houses. Then the alley is self-explanatory.

(Order in these areas?) I don't quite know how to answer that. Well, yes. Not in the alley; there was no order there at all. I was quite impressed with the Gardens, really. The trees, the way they were situated, and the pond, the way it just lingers at its own free will, I liked that. For a while on the one street, the business stores were in order, but after a while the more streets we went, the more out of order I thought they were. The street with the churches seemed to be all mixed up.

(Continuity?) No.

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(Describe the sidewalk pavement?) I don't think we went on any brick streets, I think it was all paved. (Material?) Concrete, I think. (Street pavement?) Black stuff.

(How does this part fit in with your conception of Boston?) I had really not heard much about Boston, except that I ~~had~~ thought it was a big, beautiful place like New York. I find out it isn't like my idea of New York was, it isn't like my idea of Boston. I thought that people would be snooty, as apparently they were. I didn't quite visualize the traffic before I came. I had no idea that the town would be built up as it is, just on cow paths and up little hills. I'm getting this from my view of looking across the river from Westgate. I just supposed that the city would be beautiful, ~~quite different~~ ^{quite modern}, that the stores would be in order, the dress shops together and the bridal shop with it and not off in a corner all by itself, the antiques would be together, and the big business areas would be business areas. and now found it to be?

(Does this area fit in with the way you thought Boston would be?) Yes, very definitely. Haphazard way.

(Could you find your destination now?) No/. (Did you feel at ease?) In the Garden I did.

(Feelings you experienced?) Very strange. It was all so new, and I felt very insecure. If you hadn't been there I probably would have turned back. I was interested in seeing what was there because I had never been there before, and this was a good opportunity to look around.

From Preston, Idaho. Lived in the Boston area 2 years. Lived in Provo, Utah, just before coming to Boston.