ForeWord Reviews

TRAVEL

Chronicles of Old Boston: Exploring New England's Historic Capital
Charles Bahne
Museyon Guides
978-0-9846334-0-1
(Apr 10, 2012)

True tourism is more than souvenir shops and heavily branded bus tours. Bahne's book blends travel guide and historical record to help visitors and residents alike create a deep appreciation for Boston's past and present.

The Chronicles of Old Boston begins as the Puritans and John Winthrop found a city on a hill, and it continues through the shaping of Harvard and the full story of Paul Revere's ride, all the way to the presidency of John F. Kennedy. Each chapter is focused and detailed, as well as concise and engaging.

In addition to this solid historical basis for understanding present-day Boston, Bahne includes intriguing and lesser-known stories and details, like the murder of Dr. Parkman and subsequent mistrial of Dr. Webster, the partnership between Alexander Graham Bell and Gardiner Green Hubbard, the molasses tank disaster in the North End, a list of the hacks on the MIT dome, the meeting of Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott, and even the reaction of fish to tea in the water.

Occasionally Bahne steps a bit too close to history, tingeing facts with opinion and inhibiting readers' ability to interpret for themselves. One example is the end of the sidebar about Anne Hutchinson: Bahne summarizes Winthrop and the Puritans' opinions on Hutchinson, then says, "We might disagree."

Nearly a third of the book is dedicated to walking tours. This great feature helps readers see the sites of old and new Boston on foot. Each tour contains a detailed map, descriptions of all numbered sites, and a mixture of small and large photos of every place. With upwards of thirty sites per tour, some may, however, be too long and involved for a single walk. The book also has a short but potent recommended reading page. *Chronicles of Old Boston* contains extensive and well-rendered art, photos, and maps throughout.

It's clear that Bahne has done decades of research fueled by his love of the city. The resulting book is designed to turn readers into devotees of Boston's historic lore and modern enticements—and it succeeds. Bahne is also the author of *The Complete Guide to Boston's Freedom Trail*

.?

Melissa Anne Wuske