

Last p. only

(Done during a walk)

Orientation Trip
David Crane

4/22/56

Standing here on the Fruit street entrance to Mass. General Hospital, it occurs to me to think about the general route alternatives that I may want to take. My inclination is to go straight over Beacon Hill, which I see directly ahead of me, with a street running almost along my line of sight, sloping upward. This seems to be the most direct route, but I am well aware that many people skirt the hill and I am a little bit uncertain.

On the Fruit Street side there is only one opening in this visual field, otherwise a very enclosed alley way, very unpleasant. This opening offers the one view of the upper slopes of Beacon Hill, and I cannot see any other landmarks towards Beacon Hill, with Mass. General at my back. The time of beginning 10 minutes to 12:00.

Now, about 50 feet from the intersection of the street I am on with Cambridge Street, off to my left I see the copper Customs House Tower, and one of those tall limestone buildings which I know to be in the office district. I realize at this point, with my back toward the Mass. General Hospital that South Station is about 30 degrees to the left of front, but there is no path to take in this direction, and I realize the reason why there is no consistent direction to follow here. I still prefer to go straight over the hill because than following Cambridge Street. Crossing Cambridge Street now on North Grove Street going up to Beacon Hill. At Cambridge and North Grove, looking down to the right Cambridge I was not surprised to feel that I was proceeding parallel to the water's edge because down there I was conscious of the rotary and the bridge across to Cambridge. The feeling of paralleling the water reinforces the conviction that I am making a dog leg in order to get to South Station.

At Grove and Phillips Street a very quick glimpse to the left of a tall limestone structure in the office district, the only external mark that I see in this very characteristic little area. Now at Grove and Revere Street, to my right a clear view of M.I.T. across the river. To my left this same limestone structure in the office district. Here, if I think about it enough, I realize that being parallel to the water's edge, does not mean that I am not heading fairly directly towards South Station because I am conscious that the far bank where M.I.T. is is definitely not parallel to my line of travel, although the near bank is. I am conscious of the hump or the contour of the shore line at the fill area.

Here, at Myrtle and Grove ahead of me a head end, 60 feet away. To my right, a dead end one block away, and to my left I can see the gray columns of what must be the court house building. This seems to be the only alternative direction of travel. This court house building appears to be three or four blocks away, and is external to Beacon Hill as far as I am concerned. Turning left on to Myrtle, one block down on Myrtle at Anderson Street I am struck by the actual view down to what appears to be a temple, which I think to be a part of the Mass. General Hospital. I see white uniformed men coming out of it, but this ^{spatial} experience is quite striking. Beyond the temple in the far distance are factory towers and a very peculiar skyline. Here at Anderson Street I see over to my right about 100 feet away the sign for Pinckney(?) Street. I know this street more than Myrtle and I feel would be more direct. Turning right now on Anderson Street to get on to Pinckney and leaving my beacon of the court house. Here at Pinkney again, M.I.T. across the river and a very nice framed view looking down hill. To my left nothing in particular but I feel like I want to keep going up toward where the court house and state house must be. This I know will lead me to Park Street, and Park Street to Winter Street, and thence to South Station.

Turning left now on to Pinkney Street from Anderson. Pinkney is to ~~be~~ one of the most characteristic of Beacon Hill. Has a charming small scale and is cleaner than most, with more detail than some of the slummy sections. Over toward the dead end of Beacon I am conscious of the roof structure which appears again to be the court house or the state

house, so I know I am still proceeding in the right direction. At this dead end is a sign for Joy Street, and I turn right onto Joy Street, which I know to intersect Beacon some where near the state house. A right turn at this point is reinforced by the sense of going up hill because I am conscious of Pinkney Street is on the far side of the ridge from the direction in which I want to go. Looking back to my rear as I proceed along Joy Street is the recurrent view of parts of Mass. General Hospital and the down grade to the west end.

Now at Joy Street and Mt. Vernon on the top of the ridge. To my left 200 feet away is the back of the State House with its familiar arched porte cochiere (?) and to my right the tree lined street which I associate with the ritziest part of Beacon Hill going down to Lewisburg Square. Lewisburg Square is about 3 blocks from the position I am in at this moment. Ahead of me I see the Boston Commons, and across it the facades of the Tremont Street buildings. I feel like I want to go straight down and cut across the Commons rather than going towards the State House and down along Park Street. Cutting across the Common I feel sure is the shorter way, as well as being more pleasant.

Directly ahead of me at Beacon Street I see a gateway into the Common, which I was uncertain I would find at this point. Here I will enter and cut across a well marked path which I see ahead proceeding towards the intersection of Winter and Tremont. I am reinforced in my conclusion about directions here by the sight off to my rear left of the golden dome of the State House. To my right the tall silhouette of the John Hancock Building, and ahead of me the irregular unbroken facades of Tremont Street. Also off to my left front the tower of the church whose name I can never remember, but which is at the intersection of Park Street and Tremont. As I enter the Common there are three major choices of direction open to me, one proceeding almost directly in front of the entrance which seems to go down toward the intersection of Boylston and Tremont. One in the middle, to the left of front, seems to go to no particular street intersection with Tremont. The far left one which is going at an angle of 30 degrees from the center of the Commons seems to go where Winter Street is. Winter Street is perhaps half a block down to the west - or the right, of the intersection of Park Street and Tremont. This I know from a memory of the map and not by anything I can see at this point.

As usual, I am struck by the magnificence of the State House with all of its symmetrical regularity, although, I am disturbed by the change in color of materials and the inferior quality of the architecture of the wings. Looking off to my right I am conscious of the bend of Tremont Street, which I don't feel that I would be conscious of if I were not seeing it. Here perhaps 150 feet from the edge of Tremont Street I can just glimpse a little bit of the sign of Filene's that's on the street channel ahead of me. I know that I am approaching Winter Street by this mark. There is nothing at this intersection that otherwise distinguishes Winter Street for me other than the sign, but the view of the sign for Gilchrist's and then Filene's down the street tells me that this is Winter Street. I first began to see the opening of this street channel when the trees of the Commons opened up a little bit, perhaps halfway across from the gate at which I entered. Proceeding down this channel now, I am conscious of being in an entirely different sort of district where the materials are more of stone and glass and the scale much larger, with a great deal more pretension and style, though in many cases less successful. Ahead of me now I see the ornate iron facade of Filene's and the sign of Gilchrist's. At Filene's there is the characteristic overhang with the planting above it, the clock, and this green mellow facade of pseudo-classical columns. Jordan Marsh on the right of this intersection of Washington, Winter and Summer. I know this corner very well by these three buildings, Gilchrist's to my back now as I cross the street, Jordans to my right and Filene's to my left.

Proceeding now down Summer Street which is almost a continuation of Winter. On Washington Street I see nothing in particular except that down to my right I see the jumble of very tall yellowish signs which I associate with the _____ quality area of Washington Street. To my left I see the Old State Meeting House, and associate this with the beginning of the North End and the direction of Dock Square. This view to the left of the old State Meeting House is particularly reinforcing of my sense of being on the right path in leaving Washington Street at my back and proceeding down Summer.

Now under the wide marquee of Jordan Marsh I have a very strong feeling of enclosure which I have not had since leaving the Beacon Hill area. At Summer and Holly a T shaped penetration off on Holly I see the tall structures of the office district, which I associate with Milk Street and State Street, and others that intersect Washington further down to the northeast. There is nothing particular familiar about this Summer Street route, other than the overhang of the Jordan Marsh. At Summer and Chauncey Street looking down to my right I am particularly struck by the discrepancy of material, of the rear facade, the newer facade of Jordan Marsh with that on Washington Street. Looking further down I see tall structures which appear to be office buildings and which seem out of place because I associate the office district with being down to my left or Northeast, down towards Milk and State. Down to my left now I see the familiar sight of the Workers Chapel, a neo-modern building with a crucifix and sculpture on the front, which I have seen many times before. That is on Arch (?) Street, and Arch Street I connect with the office district because I have run across it before down in that area.

Again at the intersection of Otis and Keestern (?) with Summer Street. I am conscious of the office district down to my left and the top of the Customs House Tower, which I see only as a pyramid in the sky, but which I am certain to be the tower. Ahead of me Summer Street seems to fork about 35 degrees to the left and 30 degrees to the right, and I see some ramshackle construction down there which I associate with the new construction of the super highway passing South Station. I don't know whether this is the same process or not. Again off to my left as I approach this fork I see the tall stone structures of the office district. To the left branch of this fork I see a great dissipation of space which I associate with Dewey Square, and this is not only true for proceeding in this direction to South Station rather than along the right fork. Of course, as I come to the fork, I notice that the right branch would be taking me in a direction that I sense is paralleling the water rather than approaching the water. The direct approach to the water is the one I would associate with the approach to South Station. I still cannot see South Station at this fork, but I can see this structure which is being dismantled and the dissipation of space beyond around the white Gulf Service Station.

Now at Summer and South Street, another three way intersection with the far right one going almost perpendicular to my line of travel, the far left one going about 30 degrees and the most direct approach, the most direct one towards South Station appearing almost straight ahead of me, and again in the direction of the dissipated space. I think also this huge green Gulf sign painted on the side of a red brick building which I think about two blocks, there is an association I have with the very large open space of Dewey Square at South Station.

Now at the intersection of what was once _____ and Federal Street, this tremendous space opens up with new construction. I am involved in it and if I were on the left side of Summer Street I would have seen a minute or so ago the huge bulk of South Station off to my right. I do not really see this until I come to the intersection of Summer and Atlantic or perhaps the entrances to the subway, these are the first entrances that one encounters. Coming on down to this corner I recognize South Station by the rounded corner entrance, the

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Page 4

huge neo-classical columns, the stone facade, the clock on the top of the entrance, and a long stretch of the building down to the right on Atlantic Avenue. This large space here has bad associations for me. It is so wide open and so naked, one feels naked in it, and one is hard put to find a way to cross the street and get into South Station. I proceed down to my right on Atlantic Avenue to find a somewhat narrower span to cross. The extension of this very large space off to your left down the direction of Atlantic Street, Atlantic Avenue away from the loading area has a blankness which suggests the waterfront immediately behind the facades along my line of vision. I think this blankness a lack of things receding in depth is a very strong indication of a water front.

Proceeding now across Atlantic Avenue and skirting the edge of the construction barriers I am entering the front door of South Station. I enter South Station at 12:35.

The End
Reel 7-13.