

BOSTON

# America's Walking City

Nella più irlandese delle città americane si respira storia ad ogni angolo, dai primi insediamenti dei Puritani al Tea Party. La nostra guida, Maryglenn Vincens, ci accompagna in un walking tour alla scoperta dei segreti di Harvard.

By Kathleen Becker LANGUAGE LEVEL B1 (LOWER INTERMEDIATE)

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**B**oston is the gateway<sup>1</sup> to New England and it calls itself "America's Walking City." Why? Because it has a compact layout<sup>2</sup> and athletic residents. It is also a very green city and it is historic: many tourists visit the sites of the American Revolution. For visitors who want a look behind the scenes and have their own personal guide, "Boston Your Way" offers bespoke walking tours<sup>3</sup>.

## THE FREEDOM TRAIL

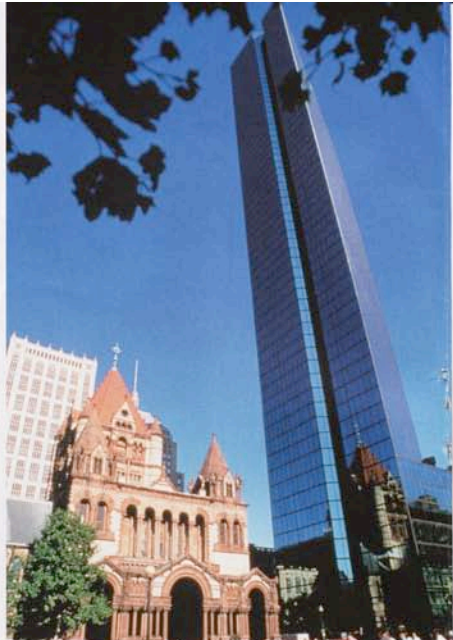
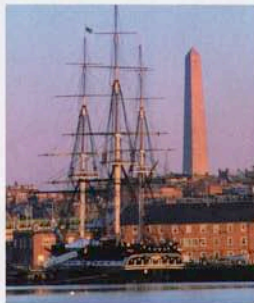
The company's founder, the dynamic Maryglenn Vincens, meets us in the

heart of the city, on the Common. The first Puritans grazed their cattle<sup>4</sup> on this grass. Today, the Common forms part of the city's string<sup>5</sup> of parks. Actors in 18th-century costumes promote the "Freedom Trail," a path<sup>6</sup> that links a series of sites connected with the American Revolution. Maybe the best-known event is the "Boston Tea Party," a protest against England's oppressive taxation of its colony. On December 16th, 1773 the "Sons of Liberty," led by Samuel Adams, boarded British ships in the harbor<sup>7</sup> and threw more than 300 tea crates overboard<sup>8</sup>. ▽



## Glossary

- 1 **gateway** - porta d'accesso.
- 2 **compact layout** - estensione contenuta, compatta.
- 3 **bespoke walking tours** - visite guidate a piedi personalizzate.
- 4 **grazed their cattle** - pascolavano i loro greggi.
- 5 **string** - cerchia.
- 6 **path** - percorso.
- 7 **harbor** - porto.
- 8 **threw... overboard** - gettarono a mare più di 300 casse di tè.



## Glossary

- 9 **I guess... wet Sunday** - credo che Dio abbia creato Boston una domenica di pioggia.
- 10 **golden dome** - cupola dorata.
- 11 **seat** - sede.
- 12 **neighborhood** - quartiere.
- 13 **narrow** - strette.
- 14 **pride** - orgoglio.
- 15 **run** - periodo.
- 16 **every home game has been sold out** - ogni partita in casa ha fatto il tutto esaurito.
- 17 **settlers** - coloni.
- 18 **to do an impression of their accent** - di farvi un'imitazione del loro accento.

Right: the old State House. Above, clockwise: Fenway Park; Trinity Church and John Hancock Tower; the Common; the USS Constitution. Opposite page, clockwise: Maryglenn Vincens; the "Ducklings" statue; Boston Red Sox fans.

That tea would be worth two million dollars today!

### AS FOR THE WEATHER...

Thriller writer Raymond Chandler once said: "I guess God made Boston on a wet Sunday<sup>9</sup>"... and it does rain a lot. However, as Maryglenn tells us: "If you don't like the weather in Boston, wait five minutes." In this respect, the most Irish city in the USA is very much like Ireland. North of the Common, the golden dome<sup>10</sup> of the State House designates the seat<sup>11</sup> of the Massachusetts government. This celebrity neighborhood<sup>12</sup>, Beacon Hill, has narrow<sup>13</sup> streets with beautiful Federal-style houses. In contrast, nearby, the blue-glass John Hancock Tower is New England's highest building. At 240m, it defines Boston's contemporary skyline.

### THE GOOD OLD RED SOX

Harvard is just across the Charles River, in Cambridge. Harvard is the oldest university in the country. It was founded in 1636. The first computer was invented in Cambridge, at MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), in 1928. One of Maryglenn's favorite places in Boston is Fenway Park, home to the fa-

mous Red Sox baseball team. The city's sports pride<sup>14</sup> was restored in 2004 when the Red Sox finally won the World Series after a disastrous run<sup>15</sup> of... 86 years! Red Sox fans are famously loyal. For the past seven years, every home game has been sold out<sup>16</sup>. Maryglenn loves the energy at Fenway Park, the competitive spirit and the family friendliness.

Maryglenn is a New Yorker, but she is a great guide to the complexities of Boston society. On the one hand, Boston is the most Irish city in the US - with many pubs and the famous "Kennedy" family connection. On the other, high society still consists of so-called "Boston Brahmins," the descendants of the first English Protestant settlers<sup>17</sup> of the city. Ask Maryglenn to do an impression of their accent<sup>18</sup> - it's very funny!





LANGUAGE LEVEL  
C1 (advanced)  
TRACK 9  
Speaker: Chuck Rolando  
Standard American accent



## THE OTHER CAMBRIDGE

People are often confused by the fact that there are two famous university towns called Cambridge. The older one is in England and it is a popular destination for summer language students: its university was founded in medieval times. The other Cambridge is in the United States. It is across the Charles River from Boston in Massachusetts and it is home to Harvard, "the world's best university." It was founded by Puritan settlers<sup>1</sup> from England in 1636.

Maryglenn Vincens runs a company called "Boston Your Way," which specialises in private tours of the area. As she explains, the American Cambridge was founded by men who had studied at the English version:

### Maryglenn Vincens

(Standard American accent):

They were educated men<sup>2</sup>... men... not women, but the men were very highly educated. They went to Cambridge University, primarily, from that part of England, so they'd come here and they established this town, along the lines of what it was like in England at the time<sup>3</sup>, and it was important to them to establish a college for their young men. First they established a school for little boys and a year later they established a college. And they called it the college of Cambridge, in "New Towne," named after Cambridge University, which is where they had gone. Very soon after that, a minister<sup>4</sup>

near Boston named John Harvard told the founders of the college that he was so impressed<sup>5</sup> with what they had done that he had decided that, when he died, he was going to leave half of his estate<sup>6</sup> to the college, and donate his library as well. And he died very soon after! So this college got a lot of money because this young minister, although he was just a minister, his family was very wealthy<sup>7</sup>. So that was the first big endowed gift<sup>8</sup>, if you will<sup>9</sup>, to a college in America. And they named the college after him, so that's why it's called Harvard. It was established by the Puritans to educate their young men. It was a very strict school at first. In fact they had to fire the first headmaster<sup>10</sup>, he was so brutal. Over the years the college grew, but every man of substance<sup>11</sup> went to Harvard. If you were substantial in Boston you went to Harvard.

For more on Boston Your Way visit:  
[www.bostonyourway.com](http://www.bostonyourway.com)

### If You Go...

Maryglenn Vincens is the president of Boston Your Way  
[www.bostonyourway.com](http://www.bostonyourway.com)  
For tours of Fenway Park, see [www.redsox.com](http://www.redsox.com)  
For more information:  
[www.bostonusa.com](http://www.bostonusa.com)



## Glossary

- 1 settlers - coloni.
- 2 educated men - uomini istruiti.
- 3 along the lines ... at the time - sul modello di com'era l'Inghilterra ai quei tempi.
- 4 minister - sacerdote.
- 5 impressed - colpito (positivamente).
- 6 half of his estate - metà della sua tenuta.
- 7 wealthy - ricca, benestante.
- 8 endowed gift - donazione, lascito.
- 9 if you will (coll.) se vogliamo.
- 10 they had to fire the first headmaster - dovettero licenziare il primo rettore.
- 11 every man of substance - tutti gli uomini agiati.