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Boston Through the Lens of Paul Revere

The unfamiliar agent I chose was Paul Revere because He has a unique historical background of Boston to base the context of what I believe would be his observations on. Revere was born in 1735, so many of his experiences with Boston were while the city was very young, which most notably would have contained roadways that were built for horses and carriages. I will reference this later as the roadways would be something that Revere would find of note. Revere's skill in metalwork would undoubtedly impact the kinds of observations he would have made as well, as much of the new construction that he would find foreign contain primarily metal structures.

In regard to congregation, Revere would have been initially taken back by the sight of the density of the buildings, intensity of the lighting, as well as the materials used for the construction of the buildings. Boston in the mid 1750's of course had a much smaller population, so there were fewer structures needed in the city. The Green Dragon Tavern was originally one of the largest structures in Boston at the time, resting on .75 acres of owned property. The building rested on a main dirt road, and served as a distinct landmark that attracted visitors. The Green Dragon Tavern that Revere would be exposed to would be a much smaller building that would be surrounded by many structures of the same size. It blends in much more into the environment of Boston, which would undoubtedly have sucked Revere into the city as it is now. Revere would have also been initially blinded by the lighting, as it would have been his first exposure to the modern lightbulb. However, after he adjusted, he would have noticed how the lighting is extremely important not only for the overall fabric, but for the Green Dragon specifically as well. Taverns in the 1700s had their exterior facade illuminated by lanterns, in part in common practice but also to attract travelers that often found themselves on poorly lit dirt roads. The lighting now serves a similar purpose because the light illuminates the primarily glass facade of the tavern. Since the facade serves to invite travelers in, the lighting is part of the strategy of getting people to patron the building. Buildings in Colonial Boston were also typically made of wood, since that was the material that was most coveted at the time. The industrial revolution had just begun to take form in England, but those technological advances had not yet arrived in the Colonies, meaning materials such as brick would be less commonplace considering they had been made by hand. This would have been most apparent with the Green Dragon Tavern as well. The original structure was an impressive display of

wood frame construction and while the rebuilt model contains an impressive wood facade, much of the structure is made of brick, which Revere would have noticed almost immediately. The brick extends to the roads as well, as Revere would not have been used to the brick roads that lead to the Green Dragon Tavern. In short, Revere would be able to see the skeleton of the building he once recognized, but would have to come to terms with the radical changes.

In terms of Residence, Revere would definitely have the strongest reaction. As I mentioned before, the Flats on D showcases newer construction that had been primarily developed within the past 50 years. The only historical reference in that location is of industrial Boston, which Revere would have no context to base his observations on. Regarding the roads, this would also have shocked Revere considering the roads in the area were built from scratch for cars. Unlike some of the roads in Boston, this area was not meant for horse traffic. However, I don't believe that Revere would have been completely at a loss due to his knowledge of metals. Revere throughout his life was a skilled metal craftsman, and ended up adopting new technology to help heat his metals to higher temperatures. He would have recognized the metal contained in the Flats on D, and would have concluded that this is metalwork he is just unfamiliar with. This is important because it would help him contextualize the rest of the city with newer construction in mind, which would help him begin to ask the question of how historical Boston can integrate with newer Boston, which is a question I myself arrived at in this area. He would also have had similar revelations with the glass, as the Flats on D showcase prefabricated glass. This is not an issue with the Green Dragon Tavern, as that glass even if it was prefabricated would have been modeled after the original glass of the structure. However, he would have again arrived at the conclusion that these are familiar materials, but have construction methods that he is not aware of. Since Revere has experience with roadways, no matter how crude they are, he would have still been able to notice how the Flats on D use the roads to draw people into the enclosure, which has been common practice since the Colonies, as I referenced before. In short, I believe that Revere would have had a very similar experience to mine, even if he would need a little more adjusting in the beginning. However, his experience as a metal worker would make this transition easier than someone else from the same time period.

I believe that would have had similar observations to me if he visited these sights in the order that I have described them. Revere would have noticed the metalwork on the Congress Street Bridge, and how it relates to the familiar sights of the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum. He would have had to adjust to the bridgeway, as most bridges at the time were covered to help the horses, and again would have been made of wood. Even seeing a bridge of that size at the time would have been uncommon.

Aside from the roadways, he would have also noticed how concrete was being used more in construction, as the platform that connects the bridge to the museum is made entirely out of concrete. Concrete had been used since Rome, but again it would have been made by hand in Revere's time which would have made it more uncommon aside from building ornamentation. Again, after the initial adjustment, Revere would have seen the conflict that I noticed when I visited the area. He would have seen how one side of the bridge showcases newer construction and building practices, while the other side preserves the history. Revere might have a better understanding than me considering how the information is fresh, meaning he can see the contrasts without tying all of it back to history. In this site, he would feel a mixture of shock and excitement, since he was someone who adopted new technology at the time. I don't think that the conflict of the area would have been as tense for him as it was for me, considering he was very active during a time of turmoil in Boston. I'd imagine he would look at a city that was again changing before his eyes, and might have a little more optimism about the future than I did when I saw the site. While I saw conflict Revere might see opportunity especially where there is steel construction considering he has more knowledge about it than I do. I would also imagine he would have more ideas about how to manipulate metalwork to better integrate with historical Boston.

Revere would need an adjustment period if he saw Boston the way it is today, especially about the sights that I have listed. There would have been many radical changes that I have taken for granted considering how far building practices have come in the time between me and Revere. Despite this, I believe Revere has enough tools and technical skill to accept the environment, as well as make observations on it. I don't believe his observations would have been wildly different than mine, but different enough considering how different our perspectives on the modern world are. He might have solutions to the problems of a developing Boston due to his unique perspective, and might see a way to help integrate newer Boston with historical Boston.