



What Happened Here? Boston Knowledge Cards Deck

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What Happened Here? Boston joins Pomegranate's expanding flotilla of such decks devoted to cities (Chicago, London, New York, San Francisco, Washington) and other popular travel destinations (England and Ireland, so far) to inform visitors, residents, or part-time historians. Sticking to its predecessors successful format, What Happened Here? Boston presents an address, a date, and a bit of map on one side of each card. The other side reveals What Happened There and the event's historical context. Readers will learn Eugene O'Neill's ruefully funny last words, and learn about the 1950 Brink's Job that brought its perpetrators a take of \$2,775,000, Ben Franklin's presumably happy childhood and Edgar Allan Poe's strange, sad one, and the even stranger Great North End Molasses Flood--and forty-three other entertaining details of Boston's long history. Size: 3 1/4 x 4 inches.

A sample card: Summer and Kingston streets, November 9, 1872. Answer: Sparks in the basement of a department store set the merchandise ablaze, creating an inferno that, over the next twenty-four hours, spread to and destroyed 700 other downtown buildings.

The damage done by what became known as the Great Boston Fire was exacerbated by the buildings proximity and wooden roofs; their height, which exceeded the reach of fire companies ladders by two stories; their granite walls, which, superheated, exploded on contact with water; clogged water mains, ignited gas lines under the street, and an equine flu epidemic that limited the horses available to pull fire engines. Fire companies from surrounding towns arrived, and by pumping seawater from the harbor were able to stop the fire just short of the Old South Meeting House.

A nationwide outpouring of aid began arriving soon afterward, a major contributor being the citizens of Chicago, who had survived an even more devastating fire the previous October. Partly because of this fire, downtown Boston has few pre Civil War buildings.

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