

The Hidden Spaces of Faneuil Hall

Tourists flock to Boston's Faneuil Hall to do a little fun shopping and enjoy the bevy of street entertainers who make the area such a fun place to hang out. But out of view of the souvenirs and pastries lie the hidden treasures and secrets of Faneuil Hall that really make the building such a historic treasure!



The United States Post Office

On the first floor where the original central marketplace began is a “real” Post Office, although if you look closely you’ll think you’re in the middle of a movie set. This is an old-fashioned Post Office you could well imagine serving Boston’s horse and carriage trade. Check out the large eagle statue on the back wall with a banner reading “established 1775”. If you don’t get shivers from that, I’ll bet it will prompt you to at least ask someone to take your picture there. Look for it just as you enter the front of the building from the Congress Street side.

The Great Hall

Next, go out the backside of Faneuil Hall (across from Quincy Market) and reenter through the center doorway that leads upstairs, which is right about on line with the Millennium Bostonian Hotel across North Street. Why such an inane way to get up there? Because it leads to the Great Hall, where Bostonians met to discuss how they were going to deal with the English Government in the years preceding the Revolution... and English Headquarters (The Old State House) was nearly across the street from the front of the building. This way they could go in and out without being noticed.

Check out the large painting of Daniel Webster addressing a crowd, including the likes of John Adams and John Quincy Adams. On either side are historic portraits of George Washington and Peter Faneuil, who had the hall built

as the first central marketplace. And in the upper back, there's a clock donated by the schoolchildren of Boston in 1850 - after collecting all their pennies. Sniff. Sniff.

By the way, the hall is still used for official purposes even today. It's where new citizens are sworn in, and new members of the Massachusetts Bar, new police recruits, new firemen, etc. You get the idea. Add in an occasional concert or gubernatorial debate and you've got yourself one busy place!

The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company

And we're not quite done yet! Upstairs two more flights (hint: there is a little elevator on the right hand side) is the home of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. And what's that? Just the third oldest chartered military organization in the World, and the oldest in the Western Hemisphere! There they have one of the finest military museums in the United States. It is open to the public free of charge from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the week except on holidays.

- Alan Maltzman of BostonCityWalks.com