



Quincy's Market: A Boston Landmark

John Quincy Jr.

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A bustling commercial center and favorite tourist attraction on Boston's historic waterfront, Quincy Market, the popular name for Faneuil Hall Marketplace, draws throngs of visitors to the magnificent granite buildings and cobblestone concourses that house the area's specialty shops, restaurants, boutiques, pushcarts, and food stalls. Yet few are aware of the rich heritage of this legendary public place and its importance in the history of Boston and the nation. In this elegantly written and lavishly illustrated work, John Quincy, Jr., tells the absorbing story of the Market's unique evolution over the centuries. Beginning with John Winthrop's landing at the Great Cove on the Shawmut Peninsula in 1630, Quincy weaves together a remarkable tapestry of the district's rise, fall, and rebirth. He describes how the site was transformed from open field courts that supplied food stuffs to the early settlers in the town of Boston, to a maze of haphazard wharves, alleys, and buildings, to the permanent market house and town hall generously donated by Peter Faneuil in 1742. By the end of the eighteenth century, the area had lapsed into decay and Boston's means of provisioning its rapidly growing population was in a state of chaos. In the 1820s, visionary Josiah Quincy, Boston's second mayor and the author's descendant, proposed the unprecedented and highly controversial redevelopment of the dilapidated, congested, and noisome Market Square. Drawing on a treasure trove of historical, architectural, and anecdotal material from family papers, the author chronicles in lively detail how Mayor Quincy successfully spearheaded the massive project, a masterpiece of civic design and accomplishment that served as Boston's chief wholesale food distribution center for the next 125 years. By the early 1950s, Quincy Market had once again deteriorated, spurring plans for demolition. The book concludes with an account of how civic leaders reversed their thinking about the preservation of historic structures, and describes how a coalition of federal, state, city, and private agencies restored the market buildings and nearby streets to their nineteenth century grandeur, re-opening the new Faneuil Hall Marketplace in the late-1970s. Boston residents, tourists, and historians will delight in this engaging portrait of a beloved American landmark.

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