

Lost in Boston

by James Collins

My company decided to relocate from New York City to Nashua New Hampshire in 1975. The family moved on a Tuesday and we had three or four days to align ourselves to the new area. I then learned I was to return to New York each Monday morning; work the entire week at packing up the company and come home on Friday night. As a newcomer to the area I had no knowledge of the road system or how to get to Boston Logan Airport. I had one of the personnel who lived in the area give me a detailed list of the turns and the roads that I needed to take to get to the airport. I followed these religiously and was successful.

I completed all the work required during the week and on Friday evening I went back to LaGuardia Airport for my trip back to Boston. Between landing, acquiring my luggage, and finding my parked car I was on the road about 11:45 PM. I retraced my steps very carefully and was looking for Callahan tunnel. I had no luck. I could find the Sumner trouble; I could find Route 1 and other side roads but I could not find the Callahan Tunnel.

About 12:30 PM I spotted a gentleman walking alongside the sidewalk down near the Sumner Tunnel area. I pulled my car over and opened the door stood up and said, "Sir!" The man turned ;looked at me and started running. I felt I was back in New York City. For another 20 minutes or so I drove the roads looking for the tunnel and could not find it. I did not want to enter a unknown tunnel (the Sumner Tunnel). At the outskirts of the traffic flowing into the Sumner Tunnel, I parked my car and gingerly worked my way through traffic up to the toll both.

The gentleman there had a good sense humor and told me ,"You seem to have lost your car."

I told him I was totally lost; I was from New Hampshire and I had no idea where I was.

He said," Where you want to go?"

I replied," Nashua New Hampshire."

He said,"Just drive through here get on Route 93; and go North."

I said, "I came with a set of instructions and I came here using the Callahan Tunnel . I know how to get home going back that way but I have no idea where the Sumner Tunnel goes."

He said," They're one and the same."

I said, "Pardon me, I'm confused. Could you please explain that to me."

He said, "Originally we had the Callahan Tunnel which was one lane each way. Traffic built up so much that this was a total bottleneck. So Boston decided to build another tunnel in parallel and that became

the Sumner Tunnel. Now the Callahan Tunnel is one way going over to the airport and the Sumner Tunnel is one way going back to Boston.”

I said,“I have heard of such a thing. I've traveled all over the world and nobody else has the same Tunnel going in two different directions with two different names. In New York they have the Lincoln Tunnel and the Holland Tunnel both going to New Jersey from Manhattan but if you get on the wrong one you end up going in totally different directions and end up many miles apart. That's why I was reluctant to even come to into this tunnel. That’s why I walked over to speak with you.”

He said,“Welcome to Boston. We do it our way it our way here.”

I went back to my car; drove through the toll booth; followed my instructions and successfully ended at home.

The next day I went to the office and related my story and to the rest of the displaced New Yorkers. A couple of New Englanders were having a good laugh about my confusion. I then said I must have scared the life out of that person when I try to get directions. He must've thought I was a mugger. One of the New Englanders said with your height and size and your big Irish face he didn't think you were a mugger. He thought you were a cop. He was probably a mugger.

This was my introduction to Boston; its traffic; its narrow streets; its one-way signs which its residents take as advisory. I hope to survive.

THE END