A photograph of a street scene featuring multi-story brick buildings with dark shutters on the windows. A street lamp stands in the foreground, and a bare tree is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Bricks and Shadows

by Leon Spivak



LEON SPIVAK

Bricks

and

Shadows

BOSTON • 2025

Leon Spivak *Bricks and Shadows*

Copyright © 2025 by Leon Spivak

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright holder.

ISBN 978-1-960533-91-3 (hardcover)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025947872

Published by M•GRAPHICS | BOSTON, MA

 www.mgraphics-books.com

 mgraphics.books@gmail.com

Book Design by M•GRAPHICS © 2025

Photography by L. Spivak © 2025

Printed in the USA

To my beautiful daughter Victoria

Acknowledgments

*The author would like to thank all his friends
who supported him in the creation of this book.*

*Special thanks to Michael Minayev, Alexander Litvak,
Michael Efroimsky, Dmitriy Dribinskiy,
Ivan and Ludmila Kurilla, Lana Arefyeva,
Margarita Mozgovaya, and Svetlana Yarmolinskaya
for their valuable corrections
and critical comments*

Three cities have shaped my life. I was born in Chernivtsi, in Western Ukraine. This old city has miraculously preserved the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was barely touched by the two world wars. My early childhood unfolded in the Soviet Union, behind the Iron Curtain but the colorful backdrop for all the city's residents was the atmosphere of the Old World — narrow cobblestone streets, urban legends, and European architecture: Italianate, Beaux Arts, and Art Nouveau.

I lived in St. Petersburg, Russia for twenty-five years. It is a city of palaces and canals, imperial splendor and opulence beneath the northern sky, where the enduring spirit of the Golden Age of Russian culture is still alive.

Boston is my third city, where a new chapter of my life began in 1993.

Massachusetts is a heaven for history lovers. Not every European province can boast such a lineage: Pilgrims and Puritans, preachers and merchants, pirates and witches, rebels, philosophers, and authors. As Oscar Wilde quipped back in the 19th century, Americans have been joking about their youth for two hundred years.

Boston is a city of subtle details, free from pretension of being a dominant capital. This is why wandering the narrow streets of neighborhoods like the North End, Beacon Hill, and Back Bay feels so inviting.

Boston is a graphic city. Black-and-white photography captures so well the mood and texture of its old red brick and gray granite from local quarries, its authentic cast-iron lanterns and wrought-iron balcony railings. Boston is often described by visitors as the most European city in the United States.

I have lived in Boston for over thirty years. This small photo album is my tribute to my new home.

Leon Spivak
August 2025

Boston Sketches

I'm gonna tell you a big fat story, baby;
Aw, it's all about my town;

Yeah, down by the river;
Down by the banks of the river Charles;
Aw, that's what's happenin' baby;
That's where you'll find me;
Along with lovers, muggers, and thieves;
Aw, but they're cool people;

Well I love that dirty water;
Oh, Boston, you're my home;
Oh, you're the number one place.

Edward Cornelius Cobb (1938 – 1999)
musician and songwriter









North End

A Boston man is the east wind made flesh

Thomas Gold Appleton (1812 – 1884)
writer and artist









Beacon Hill

When I got into the streets upon this Sunday morning, the air was so clear, the houses were so bright and gay: the signboards were painted in such gaudy colours; the gilded letters were so very golden; the bricks were so very red, the stone was so very white, the blinds and area railings were so very green, the knobs and plates upon the street doors so marvellously bright and twinkling; and all so slight and unsubstantial in appearance — that every thoroughfare in the city looked exactly like a scene in a pantomime.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

English novelist, journalist and social critic



BEACON HILL





BEACON HILL





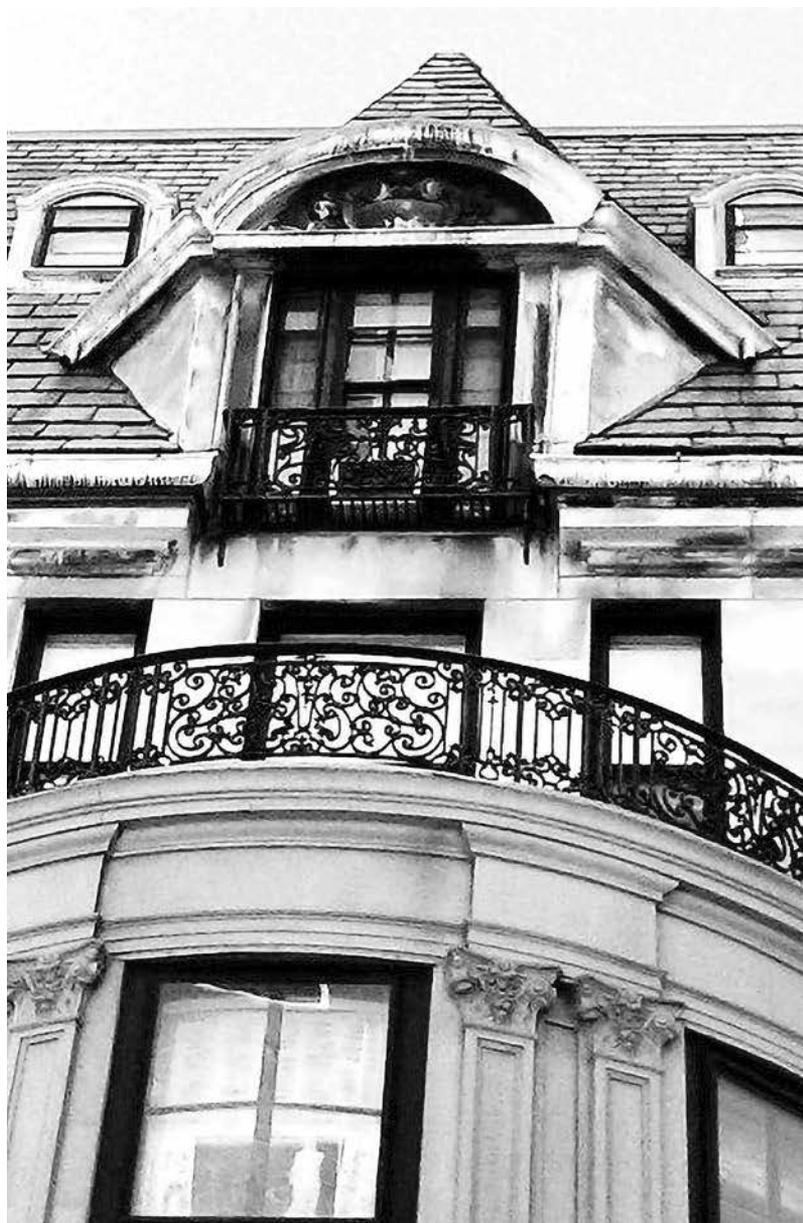
Back Bay

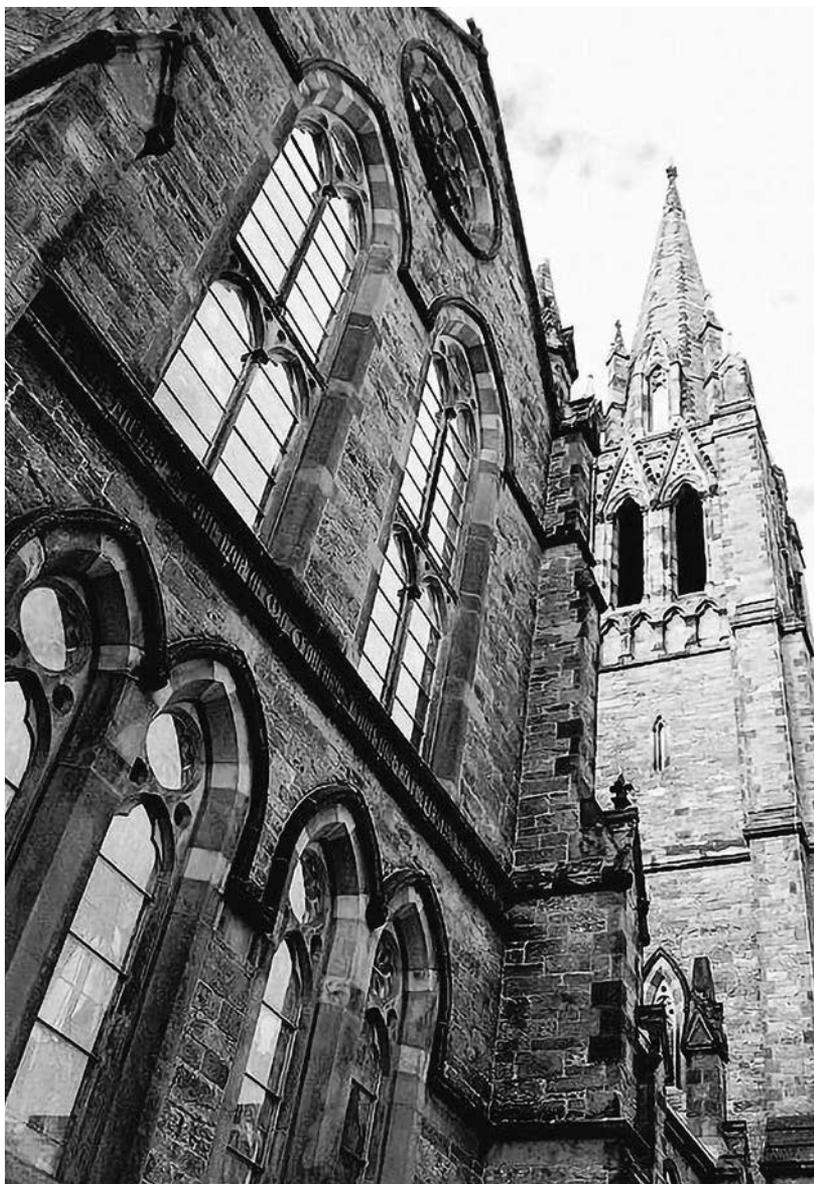
A solid man of Boston; A comfortable man
with dividends, And the first salmon and the
first green peas

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 – 1882),
poet and educator







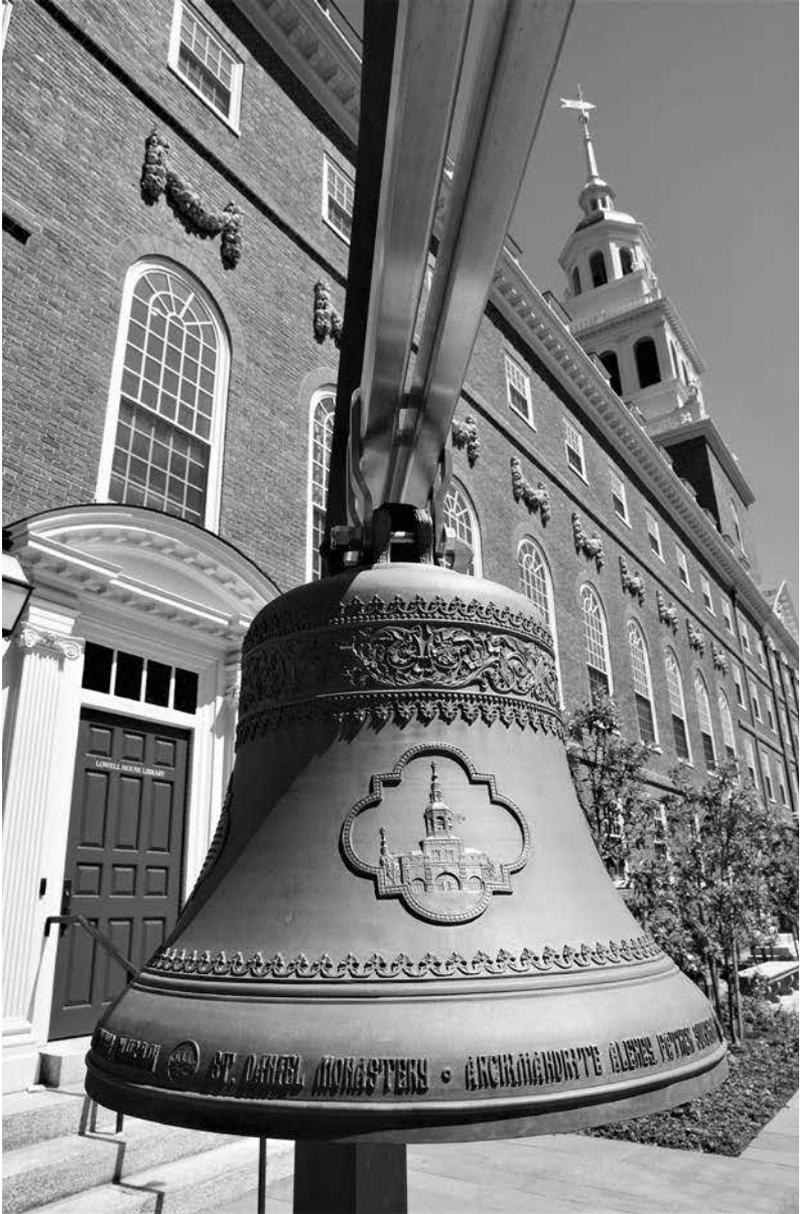


Cambridge

It takes me several days, after I get back to Boston, to realize that the reference «the president» refers to the president of Harvard and not to a minor official in Washington

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841 – 1935)
Associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court











Brookline

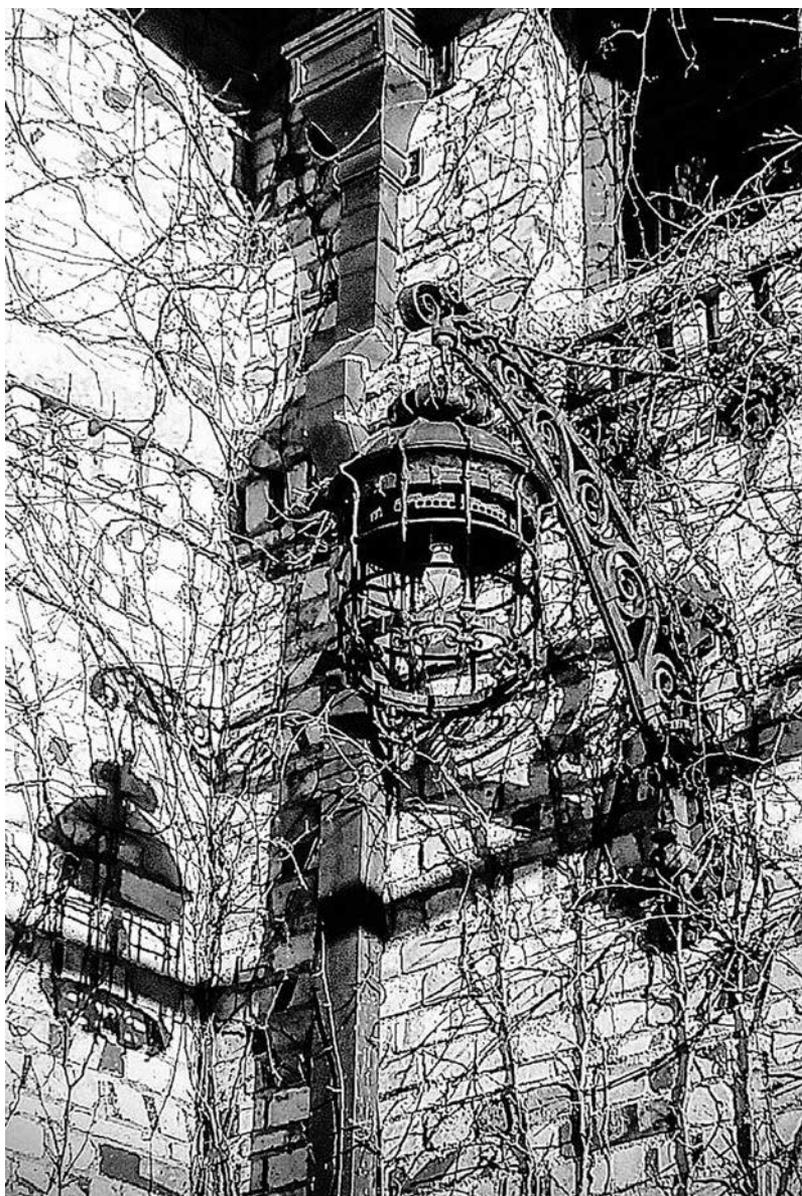
The whole of this neighborhood of Brookline is a kind of landscape garden, and there is nothing in America of the sort, so inexpressibly charming as the lanes which lead from one cottage, or villa, to another... These lanes are clothed with a profusion of trees and wild shrubbery, often almost to the carriage tracks, and curve and wind about, in a manner quite bewildering to the stranger who attempts to thread them alone; and there are more hints here for the lover of the picturesque in lanes than we ever saw assembled together in so small a compass.

Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–1852)
writer, landscape designer and art critic











Wellesley

Life is beautiful. Life is sad.
That is all you need to know.

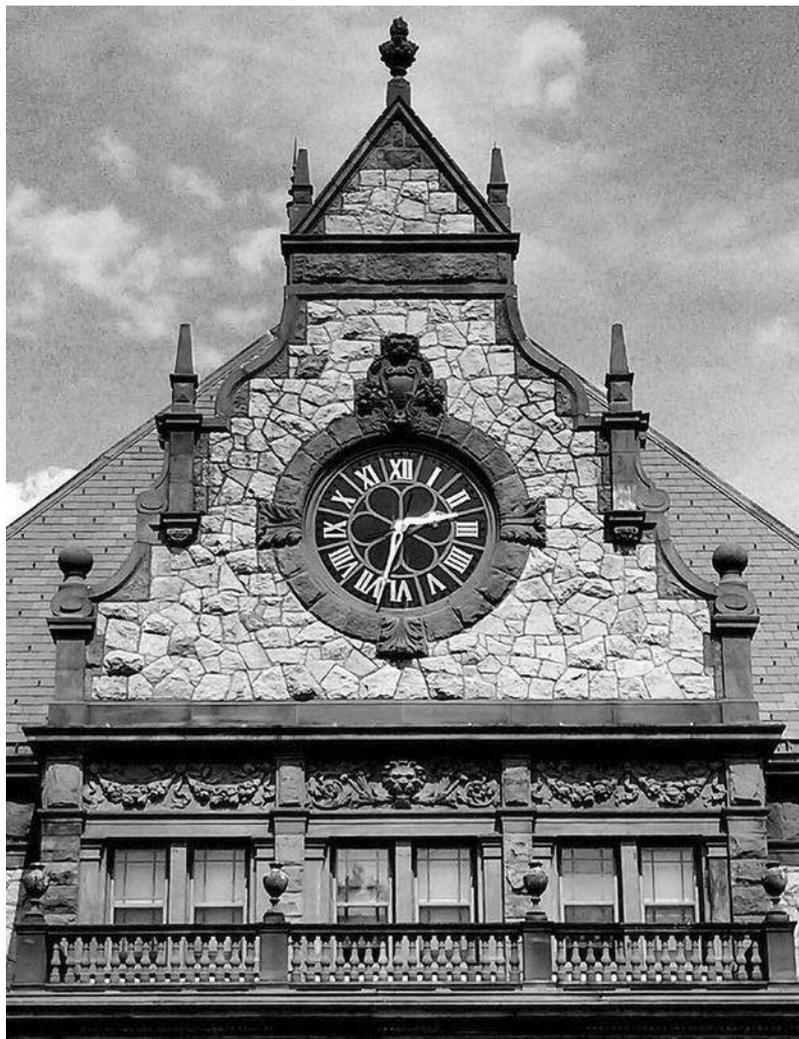
Vladimir Nabokov (1899 – 1977)

novelist and poet.

Advice to a Wellesley College literary student.

















Dr. Leon Y. Spivak, originally from Saint Petersburg, Russia, is a graduate of New York University. A Bostonian since 1993, he is the author of numerous articles about Russian-American cultural ties from the 18th to 20th centuries. His documentary novelettes, including *Stories of the City of Boston*, *A Diplomat's Solitude*, and *When There Was No America*, are devoted to lesser-known moments in American history.



Dr. Leon Y. Spivak, originally from Saint Petersburg, Russia, is a graduate of New York University. A Bostonian since 1993, he is the author of numerous articles about Russian-American cultural ties from the 18th to 20th centuries. His documentary novelettes, including *Stories of the City of Boston*, *A Diplomat's Solitude*, and *When There Was No America*, are devoted to lesser-known moments in American history.

Massachusetts is a heaven for history lovers. Not every European province can boast such a lineage: Pilgrims and Puritans, preachers and merchants, pirates and witches, rebels, philosophers, and authors. As Oscar Wilde quipped back in the 19th century, Americans have been joking about their youth for two hundred years.

Boston is a city of subtle details, free from pretension of being a dominant capital. This is why wandering the narrow streets of neighborhoods like the North End, Beacon Hill, and Back Bay feels so inviting.

Boston is a graphic city. Black-and-white photography captures so well the mood and texture of its old red brick and gray granite from local quarries, its authentic cast-iron lanterns and wrought-iron balcony railings. Boston is often described by visitors as the most European city in the United States.



ISBN 978-1-960533-91-3

