

8 Angels Hidden in Plain Sight at Famous Church

Visitors to the Old North Church in Boston, Massachusetts, have apparently entertained angels unaware.

Eight paintings of the biblical beings were recently uncovered from thick layers of paint in the historic Boston church, the Associated Press reported Monday.

They've remained hidden for more than 100 years.

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While the paintings were originally created around 1730, church officials had them covered in 1912 as part of a renovation.

The art depicts the angels with wings and round child-like faces.

Centuries-old angels uncovered at Boston church made famous by Paul Revere

– The Associated Press (@AP) December 24, 2024

"It's really been quite a revelation to find these really interesting and historic works of art on the walls of the church that nobody has seen in our lifetime," murals conservator Gianfranco Pocobene said. "Just to be part of a project where we are revealing something from colonial America is really extraordinary."

The Old North Church is famous for its role in the American Revolution in 1775.

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It's the place where the legendary Paul Revere hung two lanterns to warn that the British were coming.

"Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch of the North Church tower as a signal light, – One, if by land, and two, if by sea," the poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow read.

Although the Old North Church paintings were only recently lifted from obscurity, researchers had already suspected their presence based on historical records, according to the AP.

Researchers had a copy of a signed contract from John Gibbs, the church congregant who painted the angels.

A 2017 paint study also confirmed the angels' presence, but their condition was unclear.

"For much of the church's history, people who were coming here to the church would have seen those angels, would have seen the colorful interior," said Emily Spence, the associate director of education at Old North Illuminated.

In total, there were 20 angels painted over.

Efforts to uncover the paintings began in September.

The plan is to uncover another eight by spring, Spence said.

"They all have their own character – they're not copies," Pocobene said. "The artist John Gibbs painted them individually, and they're all in different poses, which gives them a really wonderful rhythmic kind of pattern across the surface of the church."

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