

TRANSCRIPT**THE RACE UNDERGROUND: The Nation's First
Subway****Video 2: Boston Breaks Ground**

NARRATOR: On the morning of March 28, 1895, light snow dusted the hats and overcoats of a dozen men standing in a quiet corner of the Boston Common. With little ceremony, a shovel was driven into the ground and the transformation of the nation's public transportation system began. The 1.8-mile subway route would be built in two phases. The first phase was L-shaped, cutting through the heart of the city. Beginning at the southwest corner of the Boston Common, workers would dig east to the corner of Tremont and Boylston streets, before tunneling beneath Tremont to the base of the historic Park Street Church. The second phase would run from Park Street along Tremont to North Station.

BRIAN CUDAHY: There had been underground aqueducts. There had been some underground tunnels. But this was a major construction novelty to build a steel and concrete structure beneath city streets. It was basically a work that was done by men with picks, and shovels, and wheelbarrows.

NARRATOR: Hundreds of Irish and Italian laborers worked for 15 cents an hour. They began to muscle their way deep into the Earth. As the trench deepened, workers installed 8-inch thick wooden braces against the walls to prevent collapse. Large derricks hoisted up dirt-filled skips and dumped the soil onto small steam trains that carried it away. Steel I-beams were erected as sidewalls and laid across the top, serving as the roof of the tunnel. Above ground, masons finished the roof by laying brick arches atop the beams prior to being covered again with soil. A concrete foundation was poured, and then covered with crushed stone on which the steel tracks and wooden ties would be laid.

STEPHEN PULEO: During construction of the subway there is tremendous chaos in Boston. There are still above ground trolleys that are moving. There are merchants whose, the front of their stores are blocked by construction and by workers. So there is this enormous disruption, as you would imagine with any

public works project, but think of one in a core city where you're now attempting to go underground for the first time ever.