

## **Paul Revere's ride**

Paul Revere was born in the North End of Boston on January 1, 1735. His father, Apollos Rivoire, was born in France but came to Boston at the age of 13. He soon changed his name to Revere because it sounded more British. Paul Revere was the third of 12 children. At 13 he left school and became an apprentice to his father who worked with silver. The silversmith trade gave him connections with many people in Boston society. These connections helped him a lot when he became active in the American Revolution.

In April of 1775, British troops were planning on invading Boston and destroying weapons and supplies that the colonists were hiding in the towns of Lexington and Concord. Between 9 and 10 p.m. on the night of April 18, 1775, the king's troops invaded Boston in hopes of reaching Lexington and Concord. They were also told to capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock. Paul Revere told the man in charge of North Church to send a secret signal to the people that would tell them which direction the British soldiers were heading. One lantern in the church steeple would mean that the army chose the land route while two lanterns would signal the route "by water" across the Charles River. He then crossed the Charles River by rowboat, and snuck past the British warship HMS Somerset. Crossings were banned at that hour, but Revere safely landed in Charlestown and rode to Lexington. He managed to warn almost every house in Somerville, Medford, and Arlington. Many of these people set out on horseback to deliver warnings of their own.

## **The Salem Witch Trials**

The Salem witch trials were a series of prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft in colonial Massachusetts, between February 1692 and May 1693. Salem Village (present-Danvers) was known for its many fights with Salem Town (present-day Salem). Arguments about property lines, grazing rights for animals, and church privileges were just a few problems. As a result, the population of Salem village was seen as "quarrelsome" by its neighbors. In 1672, the village had voted to hire a minister of their own, apart from Salem Town. Their first two ministers, James Bayley (1673–79) and George Burroughs (1680–83), only stayed only a few years because Salem Village stopped paying them. Eventually, a man named Samuel Parris became the town minister. Because many people in town disliked him, the fighting and arguing amongst the people grew larger. In Salem Village in the winter months of 1692, Betty Parris, age 9, and her cousin Abigail Williams, age 11, the daughter and niece (respectively) of Reverend Parris, began to act strangely. The girls screamed, threw things around the room, made strange sounds, crawled under furniture, and contorted themselves into peculiar positions. Soon, other young women in the village began to exhibit similar behaviors.

Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba, were the three women accused of putting spells on Betty Paris and Abigail Williams. Because Tituba was an African slave from the Caribbean, people assumed she worshipped the devil and caused the problem. Sarah Good was a homeless girl who was an easy target. Sarah Osborne was a woman who had remarried after her husband died. This made her an easy target because most Puritans felt that men could remarry if their wives died but women could not. In a matter of weeks, many more people were randomly accused of witchcraft. Most of these people either died in jail, were hanged, or crushed to death.

## **The Boston Massacre**

In 1768, the British began taxing the Massachusetts colonists when they bought supplies that British ships were bringing over. The colonists immediately refused to pay the taxes and wrote angry letters to the King of England. The King decided to send more soldiers to Boston in order to protect and support British politicians who were trying to enforce these taxes and laws.

On the evening of March 5, Private Hugh White, a British soldier, stood on guard duty outside the Custom house on King Street, today known as State Street. A young wigmaker's apprentice named Edward Garrick called out to a British officer, Captain Lieutenant John Goldfinch, that Goldfinch had not paid a bill due to Garrick's master. White called out to Garrick that he should be more respectful of the officer. Garrick exchanged insults with Private White, who left his post and struck him on the side of the head with his musket. As Garrick cried in pain, one of his companions, Bartholomew Broaders, began to argue with White. The crowd around Private White grew larger and more boisterous.

Church bells were rung, which usually signified a fire, bringing more people out. Over fifty of the Bostonian townspeople gathered, throwing things at Private White and challenging him to fire his weapon. Soon, more British soldiers came to the scene to help Private White control the situation. The crowd continued to press around the soldiers, taunting them by yelling, "Fire", and by throwing snow balls and other small objects at them. The British soldiers fired many shots which hit eleven men. Ropemaker Samuel Gray, mariner James Caldwell, and a mixed-race runaway slave turned sailor named Crispus Attucks — died instantly. Samuel Maverick, an apprentice ivory turner of seventeen, was hit by a ricocheting musket ball at the back of the crowd, and died a few hours later. Irish immigrant Patrick Carr died two weeks later.

Eight soldiers, one officer, and four civilians were arrested and charged with murder. Six of the soldiers were acquitted, while the other two were convicted of manslaughter and given reduced sentences. The sentence that the men guilty of manslaughter received was only a branding on their hand.

### **The Boston Tea Party**

The Boston Tea Party arose from two issues confronting the British Empire in 1765: the financial problems of the British East India Company, and an ongoing dispute about the extent of Parliament's authority, if any, over the British American colonies without having any elected representation for the colonists. The British decided that they could save the East India Company if they taxed the colonists for buying tea and other supplies. They called this the Tea Act.

In September and October 1773, seven ships carrying East India Company tea were sent to the colonies: four went to Boston. In the ships were more than 2,000 chests containing nearly 600,000 pounds of tea. Americans learned the details of the Tea Act while the ships were almost in Boston, and opposition began to mount. The Sons of Liberty, began a campaign to raise awareness of the unfair amount of power the British had over their lives. In fact, the tea tax was an affordable tax for most of the colonists, and many were willing to pay. However, the Sons of Liberty wanted to stress the idea of "no taxation without representation," which warned the colonists that even a small tax was unfair if the money did not go back to help the Massachusetts colony. Furthermore, because the Tea Act made legally imported tea a little bit cheaper, it threatened to put colonial smugglers of Dutch tea out of business.

### **The Battle of Bunker Hill**

On June 13, 1775, the leaders of the colonial forces in Boston learned that the British generals were planning to send troops out from the city to occupy the unoccupied hills surrounding the city. In response to this intelligence, 1,200 colonial troops under the command of William Prescott snuck onto Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill, constructed a fort on Breed's Hill, and built light walls across most of the Charlestown Peninsula.

When the British found out about what the colonists soldiers had done, they planned an attack against them. The first two assaults on the colonial lines were stopped with many British casualties. However, on the third attack, the British finally captured the hill after the colonists in the fort ran out of ammunition. The colonial forces retreated to Cambridge over Bunker Hill, suffering their most significant losses on Bunker Hill.

While the result was a victory for the British, they suffered heavy losses: over 800 wounded and 226 killed, including a large number of important officers. Although the British won the hill, the battle is seen as a victory to the American colonists because the British lost so many soldiers in the battle. In other words, the immediate gain (the capture of Bunker Hill) was modest and did not significantly change the state of the war, while the cost (the loss of nearly a third of the deployed forces) was high. Meanwhile, colonial forces were able to retreat and regroup in good order having suffered few casualties. Furthermore, the battle demonstrated that relatively inexperienced colonial soldiers were willing and able to stand up to trained army troops in a real battle.

The commander of the colonist army said a famous line during this battle. Before he would let his soldiers fire their guns at the British troops, he demanded that they not fire "until you see the whites of their eyes." Many people believe that he said this in order to show the British troops how confident his army was. However, it is more likely that

he said this because his army did not have much extra ammunition. If they waited until they could see the “whites” of the British soldiers’ eyes, the colonists aim would be more accurate. Therefore, they would not need the extra ammo.