

Time Machine (1770): The Boston Massacre

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Paul Revere's 1770 engraving "The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street" Paul Revere

This article was in the March 12, 1770, copy of The Boston Gazette. It is about the March 5th "massacre." The British soldiers were arrested. In court, John Adams was their lawyer. In 27 years, he would become the second President of the United States. He argued they acted in self defense. Captain Preston and most of the others were found not guilty. Two soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter. Their hands were branded. They did not go to jail.

The town of Boston had a law that caused much trouble. The law said soldiers could live in peoples' homes in a time of peace. They said this was done to make more people safe. But this was causing fights between the people and the soldiers. Many said the soldiers were trying to start fights with people of the town.

On the evening of Monday, March 5th, some soldiers were seen parading through the streets and waving swords and rifles. They were hurting some of the people in Boston.

A few minutes after 9 o'clock four young men, named Edward Archbald, William Merchant, Francis Archbald, and John Leech Jr., came down Cornhill together. A soldier was swinging a large sword against the walls. There were many sparks. A mean looking soldier with a large club stood next to him. Edward Archbald warned Mr. Merchant to watch out for the sword. Just then the soldier turned round and cut Archbald on the arm and then stabbed at Merchant. Merchant hit the soldier with a short stick. The other soldier ran to get two more soldiers. They chased Archbald back through the alley. They hit him over the head. The noise brought people out into the street. John Hicks, a young boy, knocked the soldier down, but let him get up again. A large crowd of boys pushed the two soldiers back. In less than a minute 10 or 12 more soldiers came with swords and clubs, and rifles. They attacked the unarmed boys. The young people tried fighting back. Not being able to stop the soldiers who had rifles and swords, they ran off.

On hearing the noise, Samuel Atwood came up to see what was the matter. As the boys were running away, he met the 10 or 12 soldiers chasing them. He asked them if they were going to kill people? They answered Yes! Then two of them hit Mr. Atwood with a club. The soldiers started chasing the young men again. They finally found them. One of the soldiers walked toward a young man who had a thin stick in his hand.

But the young man, seeing a person near him with a sword and club ready to help him, waved his stick at the soldier. The soldiers quietly passed by him and marched over to another street. There they attacked other unarmed persons. There were loud cries and a lot of noise. Thirty or 40 persons, mostly young men, marched down King Street. Captain Preston leading some men with rifles came from the main fort. The soldiers pointed their rifles, telling people to go back to their homes. They continued to push the people away. They stabbed some with knives at the end of their rifles. This caused loud shouting. Some boys started throwing snow balls. The Captain ordered his soldiers to shoot. More snow balls were thrown. One soldier then fired. A man knocked the rifle from his hands. Rushing forward, he tried to hit the Captain with his club. The soldiers kept shooting. Some said 11 guns were fired.

Three Died On The Scene, Others Were Badly Injured And Died Later

Three men were killed. Two more were badly hurt. More were hurt trying to carry away the dead and wounded!

Mr. Benjamin Leigh, a manager at a factory, was able to make Captain Preston pull back his men.

The dead are Mr. Samuel Gray.

Crispus Attucks died.

Mr. James Caldwell, a sailor, was killed.

Mr. Samuel Maverick was learning to be a dice-maker. He was 17. He was shot. He died the next morning.

A young man named Christopher Monk was almost 17. He was learning to build ships. He was shot. They say he will die.

Another 17-year-old was shot. John Clark is learning to sail ships. They say he will die.

Mr. Edward Payne of this town, a merchant, was shot in the arm.

Mr. John Green, a tailor, was shot in the hip.

Mr. Robert Patterson, another sailor was hurt.

Mr. Patrick Carr, about 30 years of age, who worked with Mr. Field, leather pants-maker in Queen Street, was shot.

A lad named David Parker was wounded in the leg.

The people were very upset about this awful massacre. The bells were set a-ringing, and great numbers came to the tragic scene. Their feelings were deeply felt, but they could not explain it. While some were taking care of the dead and wounded, the rest were talking about what to do next.

The soldiers were ordered back to their barracks. They returned to where they lived by 1 o'clock. At 3 o'clock, Capt. Preston was arrested, as were the soldiers who fired their rifles, a few hours later.

Tuesday, the people of Boston met at Faneuil Hall and chose a group of 15 gentlemen. They will meet with the lieutenant-governor. They will ask him to send orders for the soldiers to leave Boston.

Quiz

- 1 Read the first paragraph of the article.

The town of Boston had a law that caused a lot of trouble. The law said soldiers could live in peoples' homes in a time of peace. They said this was done to make more people safe. But this was causing fights between the people and the soldiers. Many said the soldiers were trying to start fights with people of the town.

What can readers learn from this paragraph?

- (A) why the soldiers and people in Boston were fighting
 - (B) when the Boston Massacre happened
 - (C) how many people were injured in the Boston Massacre
 - (D) whether anyone tried to stop the fighting in Boston
- 2 Select the sentence that BEST explains one result of the Boston Massacre.
- (A) The town of Boston had a law that caused a lot of trouble.
 - (B) One of the soldiers walked toward a young man who had a thin stick in his hand.
 - (C) The soldiers quietly passed by him and marched over to another street.
 - (D) The people were very upset about this awful massacre.
- 3 What is the MAIN idea of the section "Three Died On The Scene, Others Were Badly Injured And Died Later"?
- (A) People want the soldiers to be forced out of Boston.
 - (B) The dead and injured were mostly soldiers.
 - (C) Many people were killed or injured because of the Boston Massacre.
 - (D) Soldiers were punished after the Boston Massacre.

- 4 What is the article MOSTLY about?
- (A) how people spoke out against a law they did not like in Boston
 - (B) how there was a violent attack in Boston which hurt many people
 - (C) how people fought against their government in Boston
 - (D) how people had to let soldiers into their homes in Boston