

Revolutionary Leaders: Paul Revere

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Portrait of Paul Revere in 1768, painted by John Singleton Copley.

Summary: Paul Revere's midnight ride that warned of the coming British troops was just one of his revolutionary deeds. As the American Revolution was starting, the Boston Patriots led the way. Revere was among this group of Massachusetts citizens whose actions encouraged American patriotism in the 13 colonies. As an artist, Revere's work was used by Patriots to stir up feelings against the British. One of his most famous artworks is an engraving of the Boston Massacre. It depicts British soldiers firing into a crowd of American protesters, killing five people, in 1770.

Early Years And Career

Paul Revere was born in 1734 in Boston. He learned from his father how to make objects from silver. When he was 19, his father died. In 1756, Revere went to fight the French in New York in the French and Indian War.

When he returned to Boston later in 1756, he ran his father's silver shop. On August 4, 1757, he married Sarah Orne.

Revere fought against the Stamp Act of 1765. The act required printed materials like newspapers to be produced on stamped, taxed paper made in London, England. He also joined the Sons of Liberty, a group that opposed the Stamp Act.

The Patriot Network Called The "Mechanics"

Revere later became a member of the Mechanics, the Patriots' first secret spying network. The Mechanics gathered information on British activities, taking turns watching the soldiers.

Their work paid off. They were not fooled when the British tried to hide the march of their army on Concord, Massachusetts. The British planned to take Patriot weapons.

The Midnight Ride

On April 19, 1775, Revere got the job of warning Patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock that they were likely targets of the British. Adams and Hancock were miles away in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Revere had lanterns hung in the Old North Church to alert Patriots to which way the British were going. One lantern would show that British troops were coming by land. Two would warn that their route was across the Charles River.

Two lanterns were hung in the church steeple. Revere then set off on his famous ride. He contacted Adams and Hancock and joined Dr. Samuel Prescott and William Dawes. They rode on toward Concord. The riders were stopped by a British patrol on the way. Dawes got away, and Prescott escaped soon after to alert the Patriots at Concord. Revere was questioned and released. He returned to Lexington to tell Hancock and Adams where British forces were.

The Shot Heard 'Round The World

Following a fight with 70 American soldiers at Lexington, the British went to Concord, where they burned tools, flour and a liberty pole. The stores of weapons the British expected to find had been removed by the Patriots.

The Americans had been alerted, and they attacked the British force on its way back to Boston. The British suffered 73 dead and 174 wounded. Over 4,000 Americans were reported to have fought the British at Lexington and Concord or on the way back to Boston.

One of them had fired "the shot heard 'round the world," remembered later in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem. The Revolutionary War had started.

War Service

Boston was under attack by the British following the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Revere went to Philadelphia and set up a mill making gunpowder for the Americans. Returning to Boston in 1776, he joined the Massachusetts army.

Revere was part of an attempt by the Massachusetts colony to take the British base in Penobscot Bay, Maine. The British navy crushed the Massachusetts army. Revere commanded part of the mission. The Patriots' loss hurt his military career.

Away from the battlefield, Revere designed the first paper money used in the colony.

Later Years

After the war, Revere settled back into life in Boston. He built a giant furnace and opened a foundry that supplied parts for Boston shipyards and made church bells. In 1801, he opened a copper rolling mill. He made copper sheeting for the USS Constitution ship and the dome of the Massachusetts State House.

His wife Sarah died in 1773 after having her eighth child. Revere remarried a few months later to a woman named Rachel Walker. Walker and Revere had another eight children together. Revere died on May 10, 1818. He was 83 years old.

Quiz

- 1 Based on the article, which of the following is TRUE?
- (A) Lanterns were used as a signal to let Patriots know which way the British were approaching.
 - (B) The Mechanics were a patriot group that Revere helped plan to take British weapons.
 - (C) Many Sons of Liberty insisted that Patriots needed to obey laws made by the Stamp Act.
 - (D) The Patriots were unable to remove their stores of weapons before the British arrived.
- 2 Which selection from the article shows that Paul Revere was not always successful in helping to fight the British?
- (A) He returned to Lexington to tell Hancock and Adams where British forces were.
 - (B) The Americans had been alerted, and they attacked the British force on its way back to Boston. The British suffered 73 dead and 174 wounded.
 - (C) Revere was part of an attempt by the Massachusetts colony to take the British base in Penobscot Bay, Maine. The British navy crushed the Massachusetts army.
 - (D) Away from the battlefield, Revere designed the first paper money used in the colony.
- 3 What is the connection between the first section, "Early Years And Career," and the final section, "Later Years"?
- (A) Both describe problems Revere faced when fighting against the British.
 - (B) Both explain how fighting the British affected Revere's job.
 - (C) Both describe what Revere did when he was not fighting the British.
 - (D) Both explain reasons why Revere felt he needed to fight the British.
- 4 Which answer choice BEST describes the structure of the article?
- (A) order of importance
 - (B) order of events
 - (C) cause and effect
 - (D) problem and solution