

Boston massacre propaganda

[History](#)



The events of March 5, 1770, dubbed as "The Boston Massacre", was a tragedy in which 5 Bostonian civilians lost their lives at the hands of British Redcoats. Although the Redcoats, terribly at fault, shot into the masses, the rebellious Bostonians played a role in the shooting as well. Although they were quite justified in doing so, the townspeople of Boston severely over exaggerated the events of that day in order to gain public sympathy and pit more colonists against the British regime. Within three weeks of the event in March 1770, an engraving by Paul Revere began circulating throughout the colony.

His depiction of the shooting contained not a clash of brawlers, but instead innocent citizens, whom the British had no foreseeable reason to shoot at. Revere's intention was to convince viewers of the indisputable justice of the colonial cause. The public, enraged over the killings, began joining the Separatist cause, and revolts became very frequent. Revere's engraving, however, was mere propaganda used to oppose the British, for his depiction did not correctly display the unfolding of events.

The British shot, not at innocent civilians posing no threat, but at rebellious colonists, many of whom were taunting the soldiers and throwing snowballs and rocks in their vicinity. Although the outrageous behavior of the Bostonians bore no reason for the Redcoats to open fire, it certainly changes the complexity of the situation. Both sides were in some degree to blame for the mass shooting. In an interview printed by the Nova Scotia Chronicle following the shooting, an anonymous Bostonian recounted the events of the aforesaid day.

His account of the situation, while correct in many senses, was aimed to gain public sympathy for the townspeople of Boston. He claims that " the [British] soldiery aimed to draw and provoke the townsmen" in order to " make use of... weapons" (Nova Scotia Chronicle 1). The colonist essentially claims that the Redcoats are guilty of premeditated murder, contradicting previous reports of the event. Multiple sources, from either side of the conflict, reported that the townspeople, many of whom were drunken, wielded clubs, and some even went as far as to attack sentry towers in the area.

Angered over the recent death of a ten-year-old boy, shot during a protest against a merchant who had defied the colonial boycott of British goods, colonists felt that the Redcoats were to blame and that they deserved this treatment. The soldiers, uneasy and provoked by the mob, heard someone yell " fire", and believing the voice to be that of their commander, shot into the jeering crowd. The article depicts the colonists affected by this event as harmless and innocent, displaying the article's inability to print the entire story.

In this regard, the colonists used The Boston Massacre to encourage the spread of outrage among the colonies against the British. The Boston Massacre still stands today as one of the most tragic events in United States history. However, in the subsequent weeks and months, reports and depictions of the event were, for the most part, one-sided, in favor of the colonists. The colonists used The Boston Massacre in a multitude of ways to gain public sympathy and spread anger directed toward the British all across the American colonies.