

Seeds of Revolution

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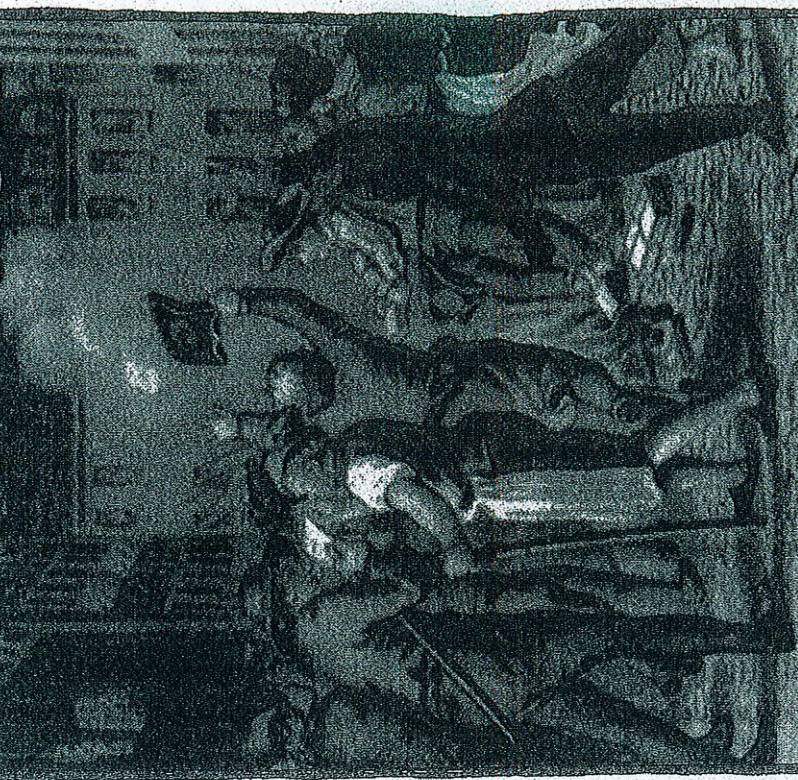


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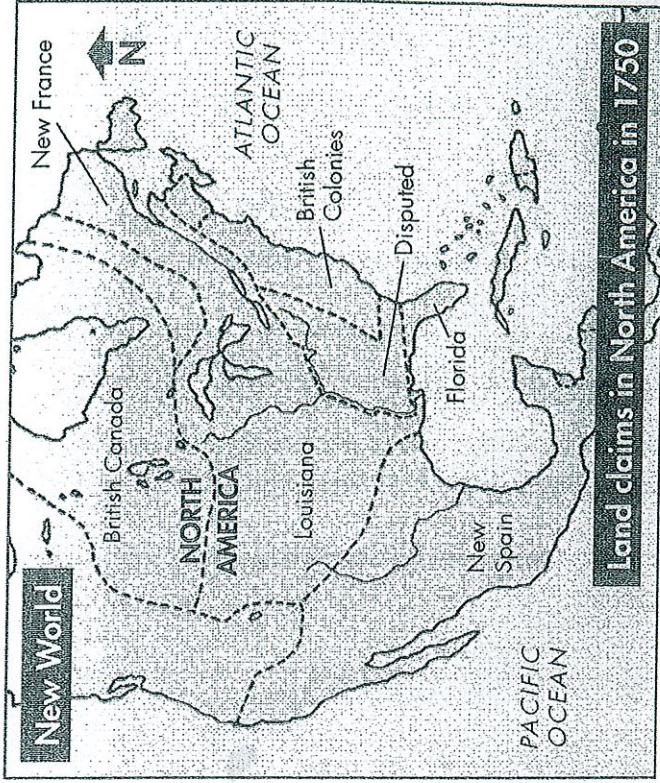
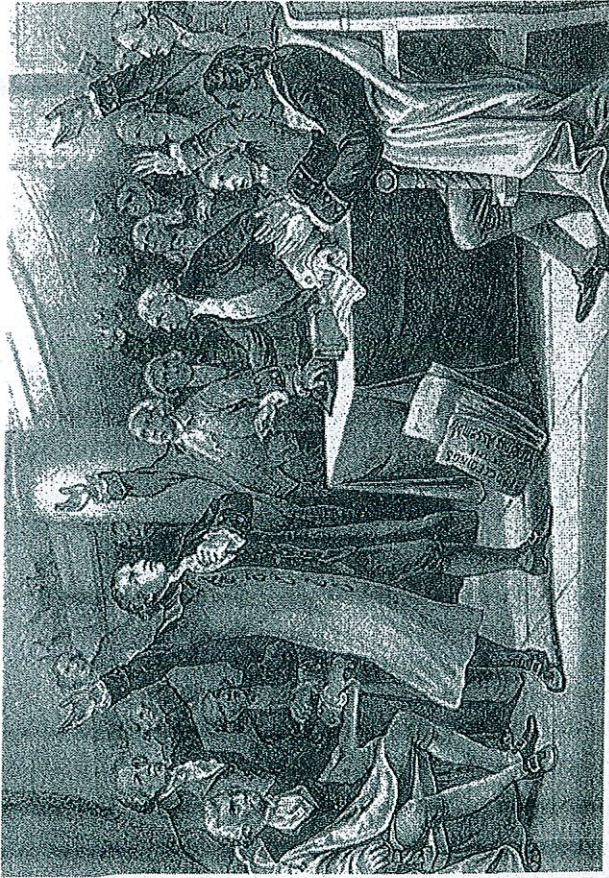
LEVELED Book • X

Seeds of Revolution



Part One of The American Revolution
Written by Terry Miller Shannon and Annette Carrothers

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Britain's Colonies

Over 200 years ago, a ragtag group of colonists fought a war against an empire—and won! Those colonists lived in what is now the United States, and they fought against Great Britain. Britain was a well-established country in the Old World and was trying to secure land in the New World. The New World comprised North, Central, and South America. Many Old World countries in Europe, such as Spain and France, wanted land in the New World too. Over time, Britain had claimed 13 American colonies.

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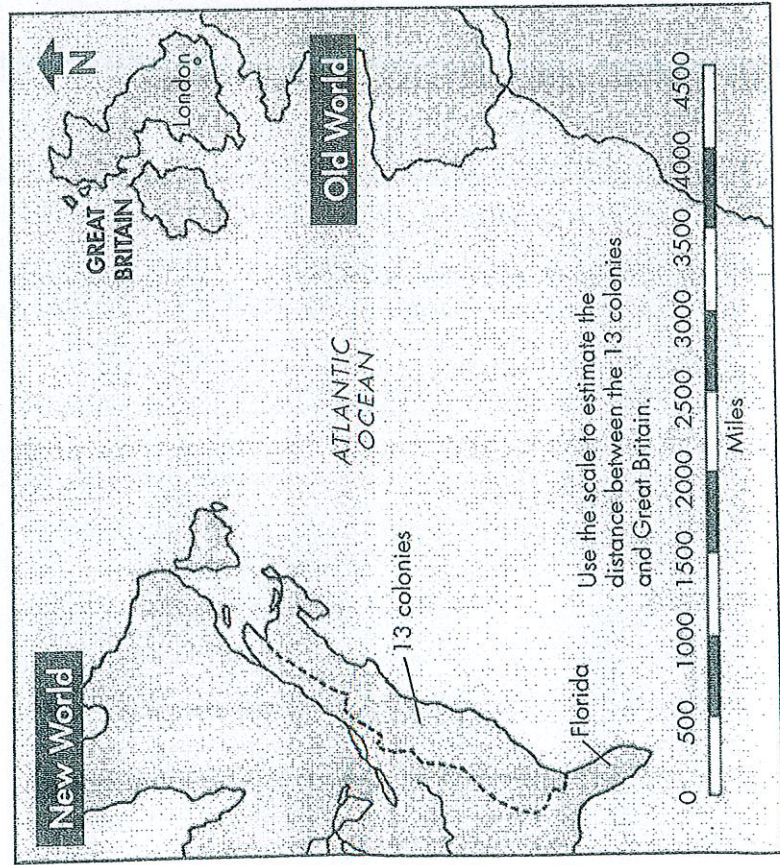
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The people who moved to the British colonies were called colonists, and they lived across the Atlantic Ocean from the country that controlled them. The distance allowed the colonists to develop their own ideas and ways of doing things. It was this independent spirit that fueled the Revolutionary War, even though the colonists and Great Britain had once been friends. In the 1700s, they had worked together to defeat a common enemy—France.

The French and Indian War

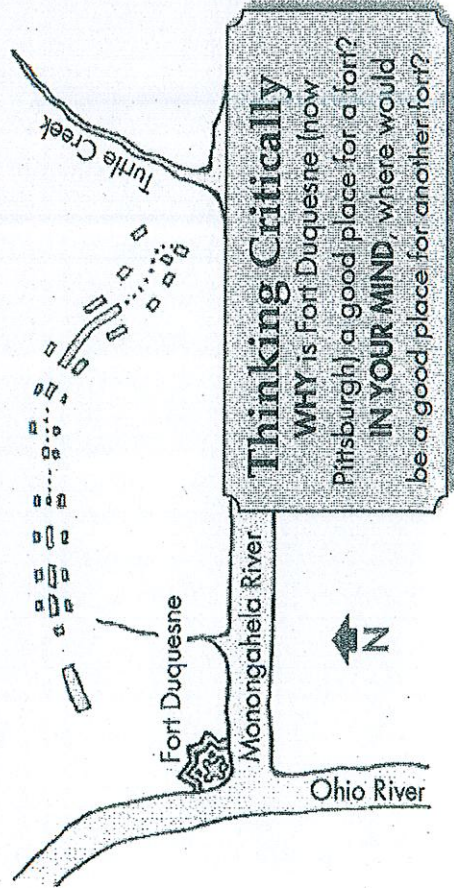
In the 1750s, both France and England wanted the same land in North America. The two countries had competed for hundreds of years to gain power in the Old World, and that competition continued in the New World. The French had explored areas around the Great Lakes and the Ohio River Valley. French fur trappers had established trading posts in those areas. England claimed ownership of the same areas, and colonists settled there.

Native Americans had lived there long before either the French or the British. The French traders and trappers were friendly with many of the Native American tribes of the region. As British settlers moved west from the East Coast, Native Americans lost much of the land they had used for centuries for living and hunting. The British signed treaties, or agreements, with the Native American tribes to pay for and purchase their land. The tribes did not have the same ideas as the British about ownership and often didn't realize the rights they were giving up. Many of the tribes were angry and willing to use force to regain the right to use the land they had always used.

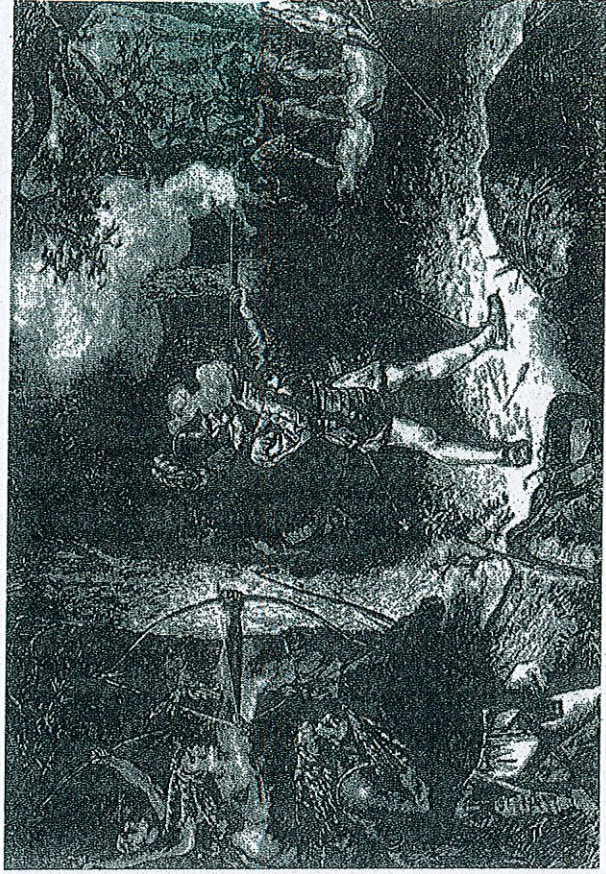


As France and Britain prepared for war in the New World, some Native American tribes sided with Britain and others sided with France. Both sides began to build forts in the Ohio River Valley to protect their rights to the land. In 1754, the French built Fort Duquesne where the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is today. The fort was built in a spot thought to be key to controlling the Ohio River Valley. Both sides wanted the fort.

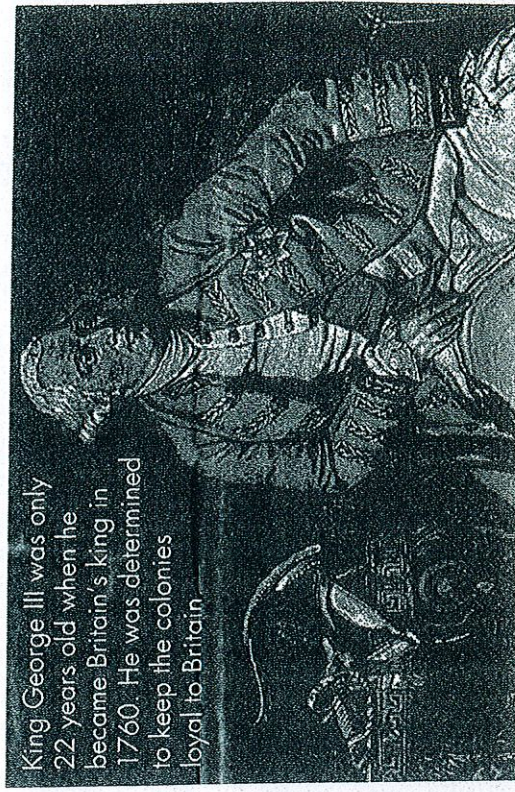
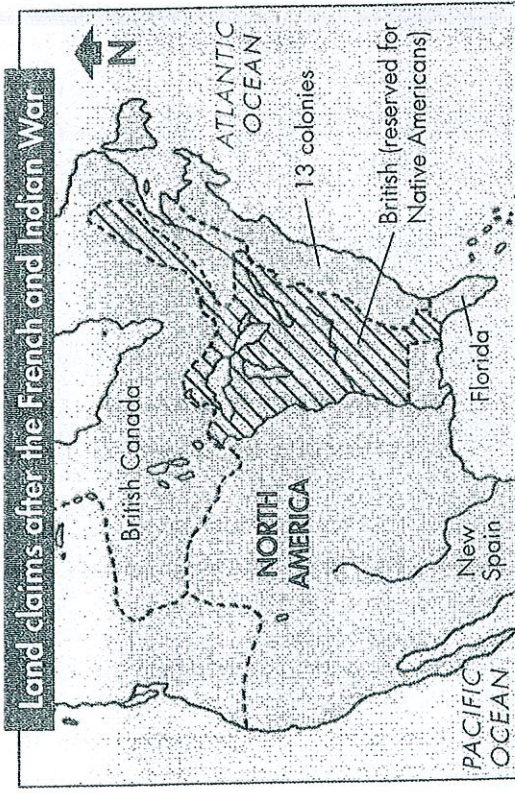
The British sent a young surveyor named George Washington to the fort to persuade the French to leave. The French refused. Washington and his men attacked a group of French scouts, killing 10 men. Washington's group of men built Fort Necessity not far from Fort Duquesne. The French captured Fort Necessity, but Washington and his men surrendered and then escaped.



Washington then went to fight alongside Britain's General Edward Braddock. Braddock's goal was to banish the French from the Ohio River Valley, beginning with Fort Duquesne. However, the French hid soldiers and their Native American allies in the woods alongside the columns of British soldiers marching on the fort. They shot at the British, who panicked and ran. General Braddock was killed, as were more than half of his soldiers. This battle is considered by many to be the first real battle of the French and Indian War.



The French and Native Americans introduced the British to a new style of fighting when they started using the woods to their advantage.



In 1756, Britain declared war on France. The official fighting began that year, although many battles had already been fought in the New and Old Worlds. Britain sent more troops to the colonies, as did France. At first it seemed France would win the war, but the British attacked the critical points of Fort Niagara, Lake Champlain, and Quebec. The French were cut off from the Ohio River Valley, the Mississippi River, and the port at New Orleans. The French depended on supplies coming out of these areas. Without supplies, the French could not survive in the New World.

Britain won the war. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, cut off all French claims to North America. British colonists could now move freely into the areas once controlled by France, including Canada.

Colonists were pleased to be part of Britain. Many had fought alongside British troops in the French and Indian War against a common enemy. The colonists were grateful Britain fought for their rights to move west. However, their gratitude did not last long. Just a decade later, gratitude and friendship turned to distrust and revolution.

The distrust began soon after the French and Indian War. Britain had decided to keep 10,000 soldiers in the New World to defend its land there. The soldiers needed places to live and food to eat. Britain also needed money to pay off war debts, and to govern its expanded empire. King George III and Britain's Parliament had an idea: Let the colonists pay for the soldiers' housing and food and pay taxes to help pay off Britain's war debts.

Taxation Without Representation

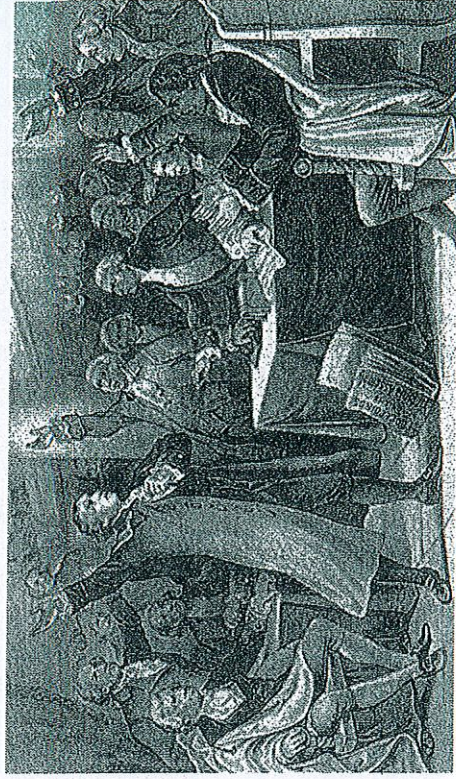
In 1764, just a year after the Treaty of Paris, Britain's Parliament passed the Sugar Act, which taxed Spanish and French molasses and sugar bought by colonists. The cheap Spanish and French sugar that colonists had been buying was now so expensive that they had to buy British sugar. This made money that Britain could use to pay off its war debts.

In 1765, Britain's Parliament passed the Quartering Act, which called for colonists to house the 10,000 British troops still in America after the French and Indian War in their private homes. Britain's soldiers lived with colonists and were not required to pay rent or help the family in any way. But it was the Stamp Act, passed that same year, that really raised an outcry from the colonists. The act required colonists to buy a British stamp for the printed paper they used, which meant they would pay taxes on newspapers, calendars, playing cards, and other paper items.

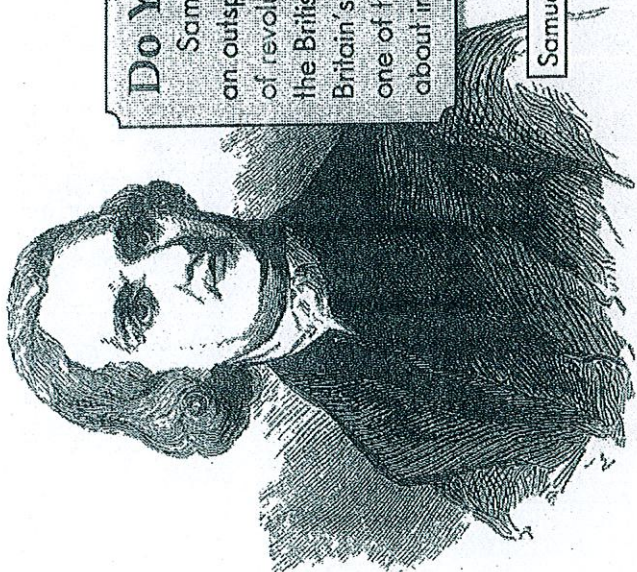
The colonists were not happy about being taxed. They complained most loudly about the fact that they had no voice in the government that taxed them.

Colonists' fury led to cries of "No taxation without representation." They wanted someone in Parliament to speak for them, but King George did not like colonists telling him what he should do. While he was thinking of how to retaliate against the rebellious colonists, the colonists began working together to fight the taxes.

Over the years, colonists had developed ways of ruling themselves. In Virginia, an elected assembly set laws for the colony. This elected assembly argued over the Stamp Act's fairness. Patrick Henry, a young lawyer, stood and announced that no one except Virginians had the right to tax Virginians. The assembly accepted Henry's position, even though some called Henry a traitor for speaking out against King George.



Virginia Assembly

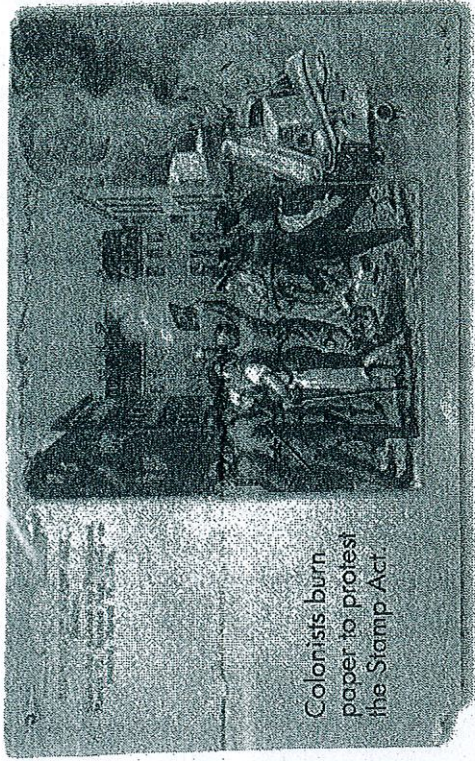


Do You Know?

Samuel Adams was an outspoken supporter of revolution against the British. He opposed Britain's taxes. He was one of the first to speak about independence.

Samuel Adams

Newspapers reported Henry's position, and soon people throughout the 13 colonies were protesting the Stamp Act. James Otis and Samuel Adams joined Henry as just a few of the leaders speaking out against the tax. Colonists like Adams, Henry, and Otis were called Patriots. Colonists who supported King George were called Loyalists. Some of the Patriots formed groups called the Sons of Liberty and the Daughters of Liberty and urged colonists to refuse to trade with or buy goods from the British. Some British stamp agents were even attacked by colonists. More acts from Britain's Parliament were to come, as were more attacks.



Colonists burn paper to protest the Stamp Act.

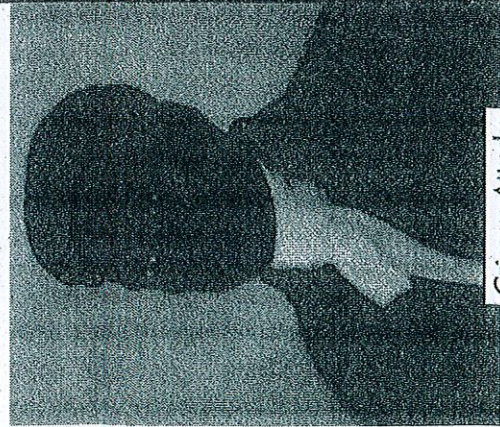
In October 1765, nine colonies out of thirteen sent representatives to New York to take part in the Stamp Act Congress. The congress asked Britain's Parliament to repeal, or cancel, the Stamp Act. In 1766, King George agreed to repeal the Stamp Act. But, in 1767, the Townshend Acts were passed. The Townshend Acts put taxes on glass, paint, lead, paper, and tea. Colonists raged against the new taxes. They boycotted, or refused to buy, British goods. In 1770, Britain repealed all but one of the Townshend Acts because its merchants were losing money.

Tension between the Patriots and Britain was building. British soldiers spread across the colonies to enforce the taxes. More taxes brought more resentment. One night in Boston, the tension and resentment brought more violence.

Acts of Frustration and Retaliation

Large numbers of British soldiers had lived fairly peacefully in Boston after the French and Indian War. Colonists resented the soldiers, but for years, they managed to live side by side. On the night of March 5, 1770, a group of rowdy Boston colonists picked a fight with some British soldiers. One thing led to another, and the soldiers began to shoot. The soldiers killed five colonists.

Patriot Samuel Adams saw the fight in Boston as a way to get more colonists on the side of independence. He asked his friend Paul Revere, a silversmith, to engrave a picture of what happened in Boston.



Crispus Attucks

Do You Know?

Crispus Attucks, a former slave, is believed to be the first person killed in the Boston Massacre. He lived in Boston and worked as a whaler on ships in Boston Harbor. He believed strongly in freedom from Great Britain. At his memorial service, many speeches were given about his bravery.

Adams called the fight started by colonists the Boston Massacre. The engraved picture, which showed British soldiers firing into a group of peaceful colonists, was printed in newspapers and other places. The picture was not a true account of events, but it gave Adams the result he wanted. The picture enraged many colonists.



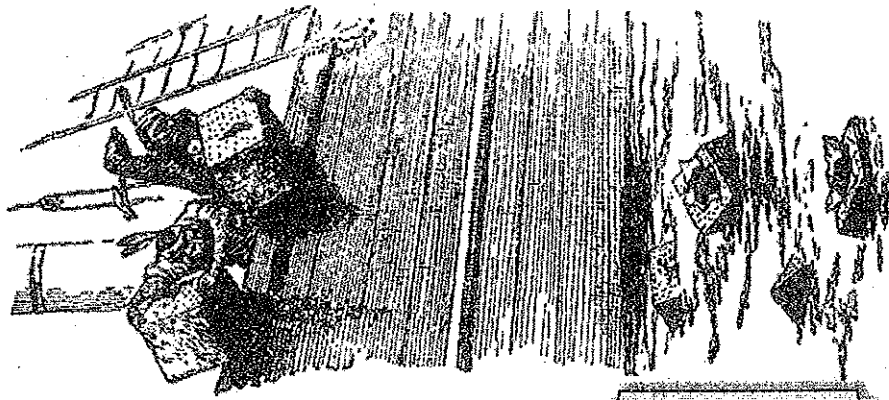
Revere's engraving as it appeared in print

Thinking Critically

HOW was Samuel Adams a spin doctor, or a person who takes the truth and "spins" it to his advantage in political situations? What did Adams gain by his actions?

IN YOUR MIND, is spindoctoring the right thing to do?

In 1773, all that was left of the Townshend Acts was a tax on tea. The Tea Act required colonists to buy tea only from Britain's East India Company. The colonists were still not represented in Parliament, and they were angry that not all of the taxes were repealed. A group of frustrated colonists showed their dislike for the tea tax. They climbed aboard a British ship and dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. They dressed up as Native Americans so they could not be blamed for the trouble they caused. However, the British were neither fooled nor amused. The act became known as the Boston Tea Party.



Thinking Critically

HOW did human nature fuel the outcry against Britain?

IN YOUR MIND, if the same situation occurred today, how would it be different?

The Boston Tea Party took place under the cover of darkness to keep the participants from being caught.

In 1774, King George and Parliament retaliated with the Coercive Acts, which the colonists renamed the Intolerable Acts. These acts were written to punish the rebellious colonists. One of the acts closed Boston Harbor to all ship traffic. That put many Boston colonists out of work and made them worry that they would starve. Colonists in other areas felt sorry for Boston and were furious with Britain. In the meantime, Britain appointed General Thomas Gage as governor of Massachusetts, and sent him to Boston to take control of the city. Gage brought 4,000 troops with him, which the colonists then had to house and feed.

Like the Stamp Act that came before it, the Intolerable Acts united colonists against Britain. In September 1774, twelve colonies sent delegates, or representatives, to Philadelphia to meet in the First Continental Congress. The delegates insisted the Intolerable Acts be repealed. They also insisted that colonists have a say in all tax laws. Britain's Parliament refused the demands of the First Continental Congress and declared the colonies to be in a state of mutiny.

The War Begins

In Boston, General Thomas Gage, the commander of the British troops, became alarmed when he heard reports of colonists' weapons stored at Concord, about 20 miles west of Boston. He sent British soldiers to take control of the weapons on the night of April 18, 1775.



General Thomas Gage

Gage also planned to arrest the leaders of the rebellion, Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were in Lexington, a town not far from Concord.

A Patriot doctor, Samuel Prescott, found out about Gage's plans and warned the militia that the British were coming. On the way to Concord, the British soldiers encountered a group of 70 militiamen, waiting for them on the village green in Lexington. The British soldiers tried to walk past the militiamen, but an unordered shot rang out. No one is sure which side fired the first shot, but that shot started the Revolutionary War. It would become known as "the shot heard 'round the world." In the fighting that followed, eight militiamen died and ten were wounded. The British continued on to Concord.



Patriot soldiers often did not have uniforms.

Do You Know?

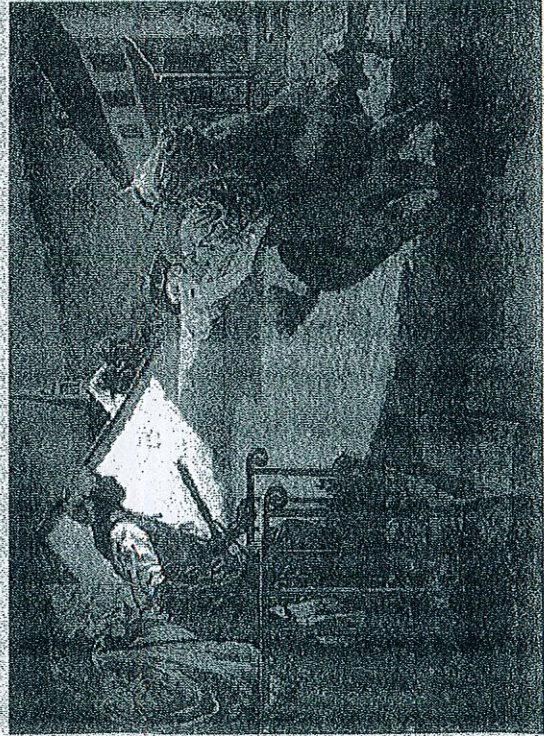
Patriot soldiers were nicknamed "minutemen" because they could get their clothes on, grab their guns, and be out the door in a minute.

British soldiers were nicknamed "redcoats" because their uniform coats were red.

The delegates of the Continental Congress urged colonists in Massachusetts to gather weapons and stop all trade with Britain. The Continental Congress started to train soldiers, known as militiamen or minutemen, for the fight ahead. American colonists were preparing to fight for independence from a country that many no longer believed or trusted.

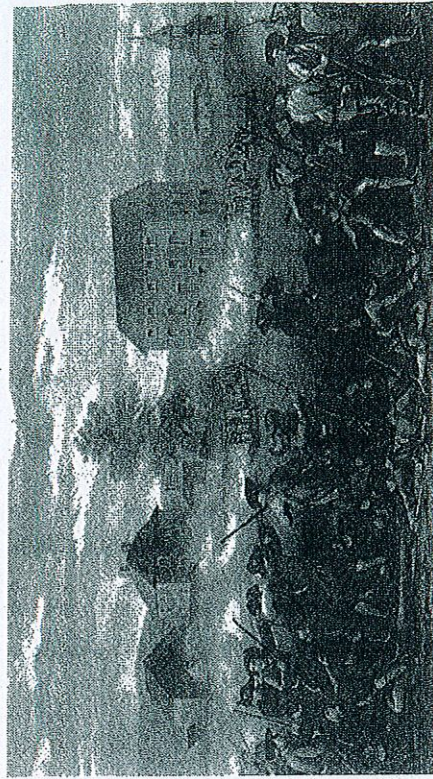
The Truth About Paul Revere's Ride

Bostonian Paul Revere is famous for warning the troops of Lexington and Concord that the British were coming—but that's a tall tale. It is true that he sent a spy to watch the British soldiers. The spy was to signal which direction the British were marching by hanging one lantern or two lanterns in a church tower. If the British soldiers traveled by land, one lantern would be hung. If they were to cross the Charles River, two lanterns would be hung. Revere saw two lanterns in the church tower that night. Revere traveled by horseback with William Dawes from Boston toward Concord to warn of the advancing British soldiers. Samuel Prescott joined the two men. British officers stopped Revere and Dawes, but Prescott escaped, and he was the one who carried the warning to the militiamen.



The British destroyed some supplies in Concord, but the Americans had hidden most of their weapons. Patriot leaders Hancock and Adams escaped arrest. Militiamen arrived at Concord in large numbers. They attacked the exhausted British soldiers at Concord's North Bridge, and continued the attack the next day as the British soldiers began to march back to Boston. The soldiers were retreating from the fight. The militiamen hid behind trees and stone walls to fire upon the lines of British soldiers. The professional British soldiers were humiliated by their defeat at the hands of a ragtag group of quickly trained colonists. At Lexington and Concord, 273 British soldiers and 93 militiamen died.

The Revolutionary War had begun.



Patriot troops face British soldiers on Lexington's village green.