

Anonymous Account of the Boston Massacre

A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston. Printed by Order of the Town of Boston. Re-published with Notes and Illustrations by John Doggett, Jr., (New York, 1849), pp. 13-19; 21- 22; 28-30.

THE HORRID MASSACRE IN BOSTON, PERPETRATED IN THE EVENING OF THE FIFTH DAY OF MARCH, 1770, BY SOLDIERS OF THE TWENTY-NINTH REGIMENT WHICH WITH THE FOURTEENTH REGIMENT WERE THEN QUARTERED THERE; WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF THINGS PRIOR TO THAT CATASTROPHE

It may be a proper introduction to this narrative, briefly to represent the state of things for some time previous to the said Massacre; and this seems necessary in order to the forming a just idea of the causes of it.

At the end of the late [French and Indian] war, in which this province bore so distinguished a part, a happy union subsisted between Great Britain and the colonies. This was unfortunately interrupted by the Stamp Act, but it was in some measure restored by the repeal of it. It was again interrupted by other acts of parliament for taxing America; and by the appointment of a Board of Commissioners, in pursuance of an act, which by the face of it was made for the relief and encouragement of commerce, but which in its operation, it was apprehended, would have, and it has in fact had, a contrary effect. By the said act the said Commissioners were "*to be resident in some convenient part of his Majesty's dominions in America.*" This must be understood to be in some part convenient for the whole. But it does not appear that, in fixing the place of their residence, the convenience of the whole was at all consulted, for Boston, being very far from the centre of the colonies, could not be the place most convenient for the whole. Judging by the act, it may seem this town was intended to be favored, by the Commissioners being appointed to reside here; and that the consequence of that residence would be the relief and encouragement of commerce; but the reverse has been the constant and uniform effect of it; so that the commerce of the town, from the embarrassments in which it has been lately involved, is greatly reduced.

It was not expected, however, that such an outrage and massacre, as happened here on the evening of the fifth instant, would have been perpetrated. There were then killed and wounded, by a discharge of musketry, eleven of his Majesty's subjects, viz.:

- Mr. Samuel Gray, killed on the spot by a ball entering his head.
- Crispus Attucks, a mulatto, killed on the spot, two balls entering his breast.
- Mr. James Caldwell, killed on the spot, by two balls entering his back.
- Mr. Samuel Maverick, a youth of seventeen years of age, mortally wounded; he died the next morning.
- Mr. Patrick Carr mortally wounded; he died the 14th instant.
- Christopher Monk and John Clark, youths about seventeen years of age, dangerously wounded. It is apprehended they will die.

- Mr. Edward Payne, merchant, standing at his door; wounded.
- Messrs. John Green, Robert Patterson, and David Parker; all dangerously wounded.

The actors in this dreadful tragedy were a party of soldiers commanded by Captain Preston of the 29th regiment. This party, including the Captain, consisted of eight, who are all committed to jail.

There are depositions in this affair which mention, that several guns were fired at the same time from the Custom-house; before which this shocking scene was exhibited. Into this matter inquisition is now making.

Vocabulary

1. anonymous-having an unknown name
2. apprehended-understood
3. commerce-the buying and selling of goods
4. contrary-opposite
5. perpetrated-committed
6. province-a territory governed by a country
7. pursuance-putting into effect
8. repeal-to revoke or take away
9. subsisted-existed

Questions

1. In the beginning of this article, in boldfaced print, what are some of the vivid words that the author uses? Why?
2. What are some complaints the author lists against Great Britain?
3. What was the purpose of the Board of Commissioners?
4. Why do you think they reside (live) in Boston?
5. Tell me about one of the men who were killed.
6. How many soldiers were in the regiment that was involved in the Boston Massacre?