Analysis of

Paul Revere’s

Bloody Massacre

The presence of British troops in Boston had long been a sore point among Boston's radical politicians. [Paul Revere](http://www.paul-revere-heritage.com/) wasted no time in capitalizing on the Massacre to highlight British tyranny and stir up anti-British sentiment among his fellow colonists. As you will see, Revere's historic engraving is long on political propaganda and short on accuracy or aesthetics.



Notice how the British Grenadiers are shown standing in a straight line shooting their rifles in a regular volley, whereas when the disturbance actually erupted both sides were belligerent and riotous.

Notice also that Revere's engraving shows a blue sky. Only a wisp of a moon suggests that the riot occurred after nine o'clock on a cold winter night.

Notice too the absence of snow and ice on the street, while Crispus Attacks-- a black man lying on the ground closest to the British soldiers-- is shown to be white. As an aside, it should be noted that as a result of his death in the Boston Massacre, Crispus Attacks would emerge as the most famous of all the black men to fight in the cause of the Revolution, and become its first martyr.

Documentation has come to light over the years indicating that Revere copied engraver Henry Pelham's drawings of the Massacre, produced his own engraving, and three weeks after the occurrence was advertising his prints for sale in Boston's newspapers. By the time Pelham's prints hit the street, Revere's print had flooded the market. A third engraving was executed by Jonathan Mulliken , who also issued prints depicting the event. Except for a number of minor differences, all three prints appear alike. Despite of the controversy [Revere actually created another original diagram](http://www.bostonmassacre.net/unknown-diagram.htm) of the scene on King's Street that remains virtually unknown to public.

In his rush to produce his engraving Revere employed the talents of Christian Remick to colorize the print. Remick's choice of colors is simple yet effective. Notice the use of red for the British uniforms and the blood. The other colors-- blue, green, brown and black-- all contribute to make this print what is arguably the most famous in America.

Few historians would deny that the B.M. proved to be a milestone in America's road to independence. By popularizing the tragic event, Paul Revere's print became "the first powerful influence in forming an outspoken anti-British public opinion," one in which the revolutionary leaders had almost lost hope of achieving.

When Paul Revere first began selling his color prints of "The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street" in Boston, he was doing what any like-minded patriot with his talents in 1770 would have done. Only, Paul Revere did it faster and more expeditiously than anyone else, including two other artist-engravers who also issued prints of the Massacre that year.

Pasted from <<http://www.bostonmassacre.net/gravure.htm>>

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The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.

A sensationalized portrayal of the skirmish, later to become known as the "Boston Massacre," between British soldiers and citizens of Boston on March 5, 1770. On the right a group of seven uniformed soldiers, on the signal of an officer, fire into a crowd of civilians at left. Three of the latter lie bleeding on the ground. Two other casualties have been lifted by the crowd. In the foreground is a dog; in the background are a row of houses, the First Church, and the Town House. Behind the British troops is another row of buildings including the Royal Custom House, which bears the sign (perhaps a sardonic comment) "Butcher's Hall." Beneath the print are 18 lines of verse, which begin: "Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore, Thy hallowed Walks besmeared with guiltless Gore." Also listed are the "unhappy Sufferers" Saml Gray, Saml Maverick, James Caldwell, Crispus Attucks, and Patrick Carr (killed) and it is noted that there were "Six wounded; two of them (Christr Monk & John Clark) Mortally."

1 print : engraving with watercolor, on laid paper ; 25.8 x 33.4 cm. (plate)

Pasted from <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Boston\_Massacre\_high-res.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File%3ABoston_Massacre_high-res.jpg)>