



## 10.6 The Boston Massacre

In 1770, the colonists were still angry that British soldiers were living in their towns and cities. They thought the soldiers were rowdy and rude. Also, they were upset when soldiers took jobs away from them by working for low pay in their spare time.

The soldiers weren't happy, either. They were far from their homes. Not getting along with the colonists only made their job more difficult.

As time went on, the relationship between the soldiers and colonists became worse. Things were especially tense in the city of Boston. The colonists showed their hatred for the soldiers by making fun of their red coats. They called them



Here, we see Paul Revere's famous engraving of the Boston Massacre. The engraving shows soldiers firing at a peaceful crowd, though that isn't exactly what happened.

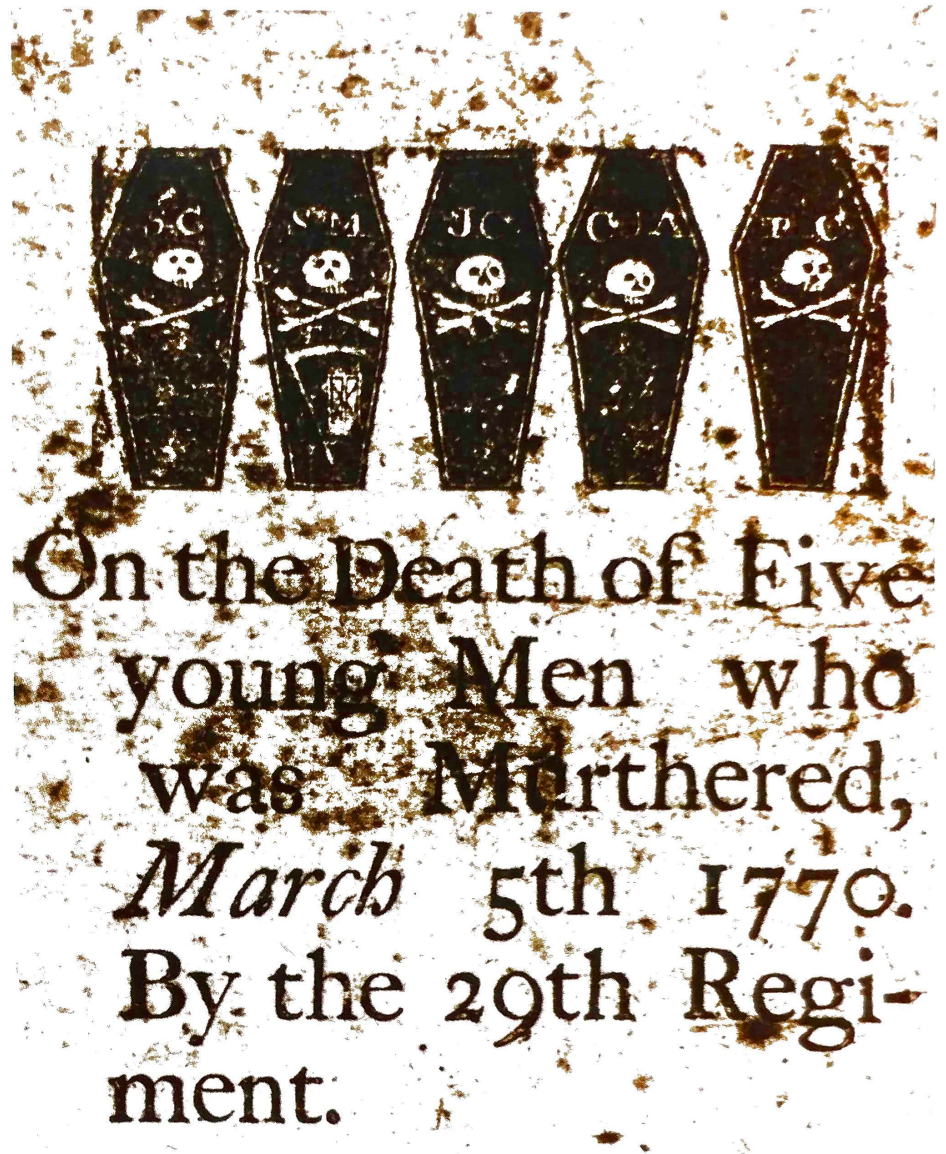
names like “lobsterback.”

And some soldiers went out of their way to bother local citizens. Before long, name-calling and fist fights in the streets were common.

On March 5, 1770, the bad feelings in Boston erupted into violence. It was a bitterly cold night, and a soldier was standing guard in front of the Customs House (a building where taxes were collected). Sometime before nine o’clock, a crowd began to gather. People in the crowd called the soldier names. Some of them threw stones and snowballs. Captain Thomas Preston and seven other soldiers hurried to the guard’s side. Loading their muskets (guns similar to rifles), they stood in front of the angry crowd.

The crowd taunted (insulted) the soldiers. More snowballs and chunks of ice were thrown. No one is sure exactly what happened next. Afterward, some said that Captain Preston told his soldiers not to fire their guns. But one soldier said that he heard the command, “Fire!” and so shot his gun into the crowd. When the crowd moved toward them, the soldiers panicked and fired. Within moments, five people lay dead or dying. Six more were wounded.

The colonists called this tragic event the *Boston Massacre*. (A *massacre* is the murder of people who cannot defend themselves.) A silversmith named Paul Revere pictured the event in an engraving (an image etched into copper). The engraving shows soldiers firing at a peaceful crowd, though that isn’t exactly what happened. Samuel Adams, a leader of protests against the British, made sure that news of the massacre spread throughout the colonies.



This illustration was created by Paul Revere to remind colonists of the tragedy of the Boston Massacre.

## 10.7 The Boston Tea Party

After the Boston Massacre, the British government repealed all of the unpopular taxes on the colonists, except the tax on tea. The colonists loved tea, but many of them refused to buy it from Britain. As a result, the largest British tea company, the British East India Company, was losing a great deal of money.

To save the company, Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773. The act said that the British East India Company was the only company that could sell tea to the colonies. The British thought that this law would force the colonists to give in and buy British tea again.

The Tea Act also lowered the cost of tea, but it still made the colonists very angry. To them, it was another unfair law that was passed without their approval. And they didn't like the fact that the law tried to force them to buy tea from just one company. What if the British government decided to let other companies have total control over items other than tea?

Once again, the colonists protested. Many spoke out against the law and refused to buy tea. In Boston, local citizens went even further. On December 16, 1773, a group of men dressed up as Native Americans and climbed aboard the tea ships in Boston Harbor. There, they split open hundreds of boxes and dumped 90,000 pounds of loose tea into the water. The protesters were careful not to damage anything besides the tea. According to one newspaper, they even sent a



Here, we see colonists dressed as Native Americans throwing tea into Boston Harbor. Colonists did this to protest the Tea Act, which they thought was unfair. The colonists later called this incident the *Boston Tea Party*.

ship captain a new padlock to replace one that they had broken.

Afterward, the colonists called this incident the *Boston Tea Party*. Soon people were singing a song about it throughout the colonies. "Rally, Mohawks [Native Americans]," they sang. "Bring out your axes / And tell King George we'll pay no taxes / On his foreign tea." But in England, people were shocked and angry. And King George was furious.

## 10.8 The Intolerable Acts

After the Boston Tea Party, Parliament decided to punish the colonists by passing several new laws. These laws were so harsh that many colonists said they could not tolerate (accept) them. They called the laws the *Intolerable Acts*.

One law, the Boston Port Act, closed Boston Harbor. Trade ships were forbidden to enter or leave the harbor until the lost tea was paid for. Many workers lost their jobs. Some colonists were afraid that the citizens of Boston would starve.

People throughout the colonies promised to help Boston by sending money, food, and supplies. In September 1774, leaders from 12 colonies gathered in Philadelphia to discuss the problems with Britain. Because this meeting included almost all of the colonies on the North American continent, it was called the *First Continental Congress*. The angry delegates agreed to fight the Boston Port Act and the other Intolerable Acts.



The British viewed colonial protestors, especially after the Boston Tea Party, as lawless troublemakers. This illustration shows a tax collector who has been tarred and feathered by colonists. The colonists force tea down the tax collector's throat. To punish the colonists for actions like these, the British passed the Intolerable Acts.

## 10.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you read about events that created tensions between the colonies and Britain from 1754 to the end of 1774. You also used the metaphor of a parent and a child to describe the relationship between the colonies and Britain.

For example, the British behaved like concerned parents who protected the colonists. They thought that the colonists should be grateful and respect British authority. But, like a growing child, the colonies wanted to make their own decisions. They did not like Britain's efforts to control them. When Britain ignored their complaints, they protested, sometimes violently. By 1775, people on both sides were very angry.

In the next chapter, you will learn how some colonists wanted to break away from Britain and create a separate country. Other colonists, however, wanted to remain loyal. Why did some people want to make the colonies a separate nation? Read on to find out.