MISSION 1: “For Crown or Colony?”
Part 4: From Bad to Worse (March 5, 1770)
Document-Based Activity
Mr. Revere’s Engraving

Directions: For this activity, you will play a different role: instead of Nathaniel Wheeler, printer’s apprentice, you will be Paul Revere, silversmith, maker of false teeth, Patriot, and engraver.

A week or so has passed since the night of March 5, 1770, and you are planning to make an engraving depicting that terrible night. Since you were not there yourself, you have gathered information from others about what happened and what it looked like. Below are some of the accounts of that event that you have to read.

You will want to represent most of what really happened, but you want to do so in a way that moves others to resent the presence of British troops and encourages their sympathy to the Patriots.

First, read the accounts. Next, answer the questions. Finally, make the sketch for your engraving.

Account #1. An Anonymous Account of the Boston Massacre

| Standing | Benjamin Frizzell, on the evening of the 5th of March, having taken his station near the west corner of the Custom-house in King street, before and at the time of the soldiers firing their guns, declares (among other things) that the first discharge was only of one gun, the next of two guns, upon which he the deponent thinks he saw a man stumble; the third discharge was of three guns, upon which he thinks he saw two men fall; and immediately after were discharged five guns, two of which were by soldiers on his right hand; the other three, as appeared to the deponent, were discharged from the balcony, or the chamber window of the Custom-house, the flashes appearing on the left hand, and higher than the right hand flashes appeared to be, and of which the deponent was very sensible, although his eyes were much turned to the soldiers, who were all on his right hand. |
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<th>Account #2. George Robert Twelves Hewes, eyewitness</th>
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<td>Street: On receiving the message, [Captain Preston] came immediately with a small guard of grenadiers, and paraded them before the custom-house, where the British officers were shut up. Captain Preston then ordered the people to disperse, but they said they would not, they were in the king’s highway, and had as good a right to be there as he had. The captain of the guard then said to them, if you do not disperse, I will fire upon you, and then gave orders to his men to make ready, and immediately after gave them orders to fire. Three of our citizens fell dead on the spot, and two, who were wounded, died the next day; and nine others were also wounded.</td>
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<td>Short, heavy club: Thirty or forty persons, mostly lads, being by this means gathered in King-street, Capt. Preston with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the Commissioner’s house the soldiers pushing their bayonets, crying, Make way! They took place by the custom-house, and continuing to push, to drive the people off, pricked some in several places; on which they were clamorous, and, it is said threw snow balls. On this, the Captain commanded them to fire, and more snow balls coming he again said, Damn you, Fire, be the consequence what it will! One soldier then fired, and a townsman with a cudgel struck him over the hands with such force that he dropt his firelock; and rushing forward aimed a blow at the Captain’s head, which graz’d? hat and fell pretty heavy upon his arm: However, the soldiers continued the fire, successively, till [?] or 8, or as some say 11 guns were discharged.</td>
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Account #4. Deposition of Captain Thomas Preston of the 29th Regiment

...I had so little intention of causing anyone's death that I allowed the troops to go to the spot...

This careless behavior may deserve criticism.

I was determined not to act offensively.

...speaking with, and trying with all my might to persuade them to go away peacefully, but I didn't get anywhere.

At this point

...pointing out that I was in front of the soldiers’ musket barrels, and if they fired, I'd get hit;

I immediately sent a non-commissioned officer and 12 men to protect both the sentry and the king's money, and very soon followed myself to prevent, if possible, all disorder, fearing lest the officer and soldiers, by the insults and provocations of the rioters, should be thrown off their guard and commit some rash act. They soon rushed through the people, and by charging their bayonets in half-circles, kept them at a little distance. Nay, so far was I from intending the death of any person that I suffered the troops to go to the spot where the unhappy affair took place without any loading in their pieces; nor did I ever give orders for loading them. This remiss conduct in me perhaps merits censure; yet it is evidence, resulting from the nature of things, which is the best and surest that can be offered, that my intention was not to act offensively, but the contrary part, and that not without compulsion. The mob still increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare, G-d damn you, fire and be damned, we know you dare not, and much more such language was used. At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, parleying with, and endeavouring all in my power to persuade them to retire peaceably, but to no purpose. They advanced to the points of the bayonets, struck some of them and even the muzzles of the pieces, and seemed to be endeavouring to close with the soldiers. On which some well behaved persons asked me if the guns were charged. I replied yes. They then asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no, by no means, observing to them that I was advanced before the muzzles of the men's pieces, and must fall a sacrifice if they fired; that the soldiers were upon the half cock and charged bayonets, and my giving the word fire under those circumstances would prove me to be no officer. While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers having received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired, on which turning to and asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of the use of it, which blow had it been placed on
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| my head, most probably would have destroyed me. |
| On this a general attack was made on the men by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them, by which all our lives were in imminent danger, some persons at the same time from behind calling out, damn your bloods—why don’t you fire. Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and directly after three more in the same confusion and hurry. The mob then ran away, except three unhappy men who instantly expired, in which number was Mr. Gray at whose rope-walk the prior quarrels took place; one more is since dead, three others are dangerously, and four slightly wounded. The whole of this melancholy affair was transacted in almost 20 minutes. On my asking the soldiers why they fired without orders, they said they heard the word fire and supposed it came from me. This might be the case as many of the mob called out fire, fire, but I assured the men that I gave no such order; that my words were, don’t fire, stop your firing. In short, it was scarcely possible for the soldiers to know who said fire, or don’t fire, or stop your firing. |

Account #5. What Nathaniel Wheeler saw from the warehouse.

Describe what you saw on the night of March 5th when you were Nat Wheeler.