

Colonization & Revolutionary War - Paul Revere's Ride

by ReadWorks



On April 19, 1775, the American Revolution began. Before the first shots of war were fired, Paul Revere left Boston under a cloak of darkness. He rode his horse to nearby Lexington. Two leaders of the revolution, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, were hiding there. Adams had organized the Boston Tea Party. Hancock would eventually become the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. The British felt that they could squelch the revolution if they could capture these men. Revere was able to warn Hancock and Adams, and both men escaped before the British arrived.

As he galloped across the countryside to Lexington, Revere called out to any colonists that could hear him. He warned them that British soldiers were coming. The colonists had a militia.

These troops could be ready in case of any sort of attack. They were called minutemen because they could prepare so quickly. Minutemen came from farms all over the countryside and gathered together in Lexington. The minutemen lined up and waited for the British to arrive in their red uniforms. The Redcoats came and the men stood facing each other for a few moments. No one moved. Then, the air burst with noise. A shot was fired. No one knows who fired first, but the war started. Shots resounded back and forth. Later, that first shot would be nicknamed the "shot heard 'round the world." The whole world was watching. They wanted to see what would happen to the colonies as they tried to battle one of the greatest countries in the world.

Years later, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a poem about Paul Revere's famous ride. The details of Longfellow's poem are not completely accurate. Longfellow wanted to arouse patriotism rather than record history.

Read the excerpts below from this famous poem. How do they make you feel?

Paul Revere's Ride

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen my children and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year...

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep....
It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,

And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadow brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,--
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why was Paul Revere's ride so important?

- A. He helped John Hancock and Samuel Adams escape from British troops.
- B. He helped Minutemen leaders to hide from the British.
- C. He helped women and children stay hidden from the British.
- D. He helped George Washington escape from the British.

2. Paul Revere helped what group to prepare for the British troops?

- A. Women and children
- B. Families
- C. Old, patriotic men
- D. Minutemen

3. What was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's purpose in writing, "Paul Revere's Ride"?

- A. He wanted to make sure everyone knew the true facts
- B. He wanted to arouse patriotism
- C. He was unhappy with Paul Revere
- D. He wanted to support England

4. In the first paragraph it says Paul Revere left Boston under a "cloak of darkness."

That means he left

- A. Wearing a black coat
- B. During the night
- C. During the day
- D. Wearing a dark coat

5. After reading both the passage and the poem, what is the main point of Paul Revere's ride?

- A. Paul Revere was able to warn citizens so they could prepare for the British
- B. Paul Revere helped the British to prepare for the American Minutemen
- C. Paul Revere gave aid to both the American minutemen and the British soldiers
- D. Paul Revere led an army against the Minutemen

6. Halfway through the poem, Longfellow writes: "And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight; Kindled the land into flame with its heat." What do you think he meant?

7. Why was the "shot heard round the world" so important to other countries?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

John Hancock escaped British capture, _____ becoming the first signer of the Declaration of Independence.

- A. after
- B. later
- C. since
- D. beyond