

# Two Accounts of the Boston Massacre

## **I. John Tudor, a Boston merchant, was an eyewitness to the events of March 5, 1770. He wrote:**

On Monday evening the 5<sup>th</sup>, a few minutes after nine o'clock, a most horrid murder was committed in King Street before the customhouse door by eight or nine soldiers under the command of Captain Thomas Preston.

This unhappy affair began when some boys and young fellows threw snowballs at the sentry placed at the customhouse door. At this, eight or nine soldiers came to his aid. Soon after, a number of people collected. The captain commanded the soldiers to fire, which they did, and three men were killed on the spot and several mortally wounded, one of which died the next morning. The Captain soon drew off his soldiers up to the main guard; if he had not done this, the results might have been terrible, for when the guns fired, the people were alarmed and set the bell a-ringing as if for a fire, which drew many to the place of action.

Lt. Governor Hutchinson, who was commander-in-chief, was sent for and came to the Council Chamber, where some of the judges waited. the Governor desired the crowd to separate about ten o'clock and go home peaceably. He said he would do all in his power to see that justice was done. The 29<sup>th</sup> Regiment was then under arms on the south side of the Townhouse, but the people insisted that the soldiers should be ordered to their barracks first before they would separate. When this was done, the people separated about one o'clock.

Captain Preston was arrested by a warrant given to the high sheriff by Justices Dana and Tudor. He was questioned at about two o'clock, and we sent him to jail soon after three, having enough evidence to commit him, because he ordered the soldiers to fire; so about four o'clock the town became quiet. The next day the eight soldiers that fired on the inhabitants were also sent to jail.

## **II. General Gage, a British General, wrote the following to a friend in England, five days after the incident:**

On the evening of March 5th, the people of Boston had a general uprising. they began by attacking several soldiers in a small street, near the barracks of the 29th Regiment. The noise of the attack caused several officers to come out of the barracks and investigate. they found some of the soldiers greatly hurt, but they took the soldiers into the barrack.

The mob followed them to the barrack door, threatening and waving clubs over the officers' heads. The officers tried to make peace, and asked the mob to leave.

Part of the mob then broke into a meetinghouse, and rang the bell as if there were a fire. This seems to have been a prearranged signal. Immediately, many people assembled in the streets. Some of them were armed with guns, but most carried clubs and similar weapons.

Many people came out of their houses, thinking there was a fire. Several soldiers, thinking the same thing, headed for their duty posts as they were supposed to do. On the way they were insulted and attacked. Those who could not escape were knocked down and treated very badly.

Different mobs moved through the streets passing different barracks. These mobs tried to make the soldiers angry and urged them to come outside. One group went to the main guard and tried to stir up trouble, but they failed. The guard soldiers stood their positions quietly.

From there the mob moved to the customhouse, and attacked a single soldier on guard there. He defended himself as well as he could, and called for help. Several people ran to the main guard to tell of the danger to the soldier.

Captain Preston, who was in charge of the guard that day, was at the main guard station. When he heard of the attack on the soldier, he sent a sergeant and twelve men to aid him. The Captain soon followed to help prevent the troops from starting unnecessary trouble.

The mob attacked the group of soldiers. Some of the mob threw bricks, stones, pieces of ice, and snowballs at the soldiers. Others moved up to the soldiers' bayonets, trying to use their clubs. People in the mob called out to the soldiers to fire their guns, and used insulting language.