

What Was the Name of Paul Revere's Horse?



Twenty Questions About Paul Revere – Asked and Answered

Patrick M. Leehey
Paul Revere Memorial Association

INSIDE
FRONT
COVER

What Was the Name of Paul Revere's Horse?

TWENTY QUESTIONS ABOUT PAUL REVERE –
ASKED AND ANSWERED

Patrick M. Leehey

Paul Revere Memorial Association
2019

CONTENTS

Introduction

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE

- 1. Was Paul Revere the only midnight rider? 1
- 2. Did Paul Revere finish his midnight ride? 3
- 3. Was Paul Revere paid for his midnight ride?..... 3
- 4. What was the name of Paul Revere’s horse?..... 5
- 5. Is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem “Paul Revere’s Ride”
historically accurate?..... 7

PAUL REVERE’S PUBLIC SERVICE

- 6. What was Paul Revere’s role in the Boston Massacre and in the
Boston Tea Party? 10
- 7. Did Paul Revere ever serve in the military?..... 13
- 8. Is it true that Paul Revere was court-martialed for his actions
during the Penobscot expedition? 15

PAUL REVERE’S PERSONAL LIFE

- 9. What did Paul Revere look like?..... 17
- 10. How tall was Paul Revere? Were people shorter in
Colonial times than they are today?..... 18
- 11. When and where was Paul Revere born?..... 19
- 12. Was Paul Revere married? Did he have any children?
Are there any descendants of Paul Revere alive today? 20
- 13. What price did Paul Revere pay for his house in 1770?
What would this equal in modern money? 21
- 14. What church did Paul Revere attend?..... 23

This publication was funded in part by
the Colonel Ruby W. Linn Fund.

First published 1992; Revised edition 2019

Design by Steve Moniak Design

ISBN 978-0-9619999-5-7

Copyright © 2019 Paul Revere Memorial Association

Cover illustration: Adapted from *Paul Revere’s Ride March Two-Step*.
Sheet Music, published by E. T. Paull Music Company, New York, 1905.
Collection, Paul Revere Memorial Association.

PAUL REVERE'S BUSINESS CAREER

15. Where was Paul Revere's silversmith shop?	25
16. Did Paul Revere make a set of teeth for George Washington?	26
17. Did Paul Revere ever make cookware? What is the origin of Revere Ware? Who makes Revere Ware now?	28
18. Did Paul Revere manufacture copper sheets for the hull of USS <i>Constitution</i> and other ships?	29
19. Was Paul Revere wealthy?	31
20. How old was Paul Revere when he died? Where is he buried?	32
Bibliography	33
For Further Information	35

INTRODUCTION

Without question, the deeds and supposed misdeeds of Paul Revere have long fascinated people. Since 1908, millions of visitors have crossed the threshold of the house that Paul Revere owned for thirty years. As caretakers of his former residence in the North End of Boston, and interpreters of his life and work, the staff of the Paul Revere Memorial Association have answered hundreds of thousands of questions – routine and unusual, serious and comical. This booklet offers our best answers to twenty of the most often asked questions about Paul Revere. I say best answers because we never stop trying to refine our interpretations. Also, even after all these years, new facts have a way of popping up just as a publication goes to press.

Since the 1970s, staff members have been actively engaged in research related to Revere. Much of what you read here is based on the work of former and current staff too numerous to name, yet acknowledged here in spirit. Their research, interpretation, and conversations have helped to make this compilation possible. In our small research library at the Association one can find an entire shelf devoted to unpublished research papers, in which some of the questions posed in this booklet were first addressed and from which some of the answers were condensed and refined. Additionally, some of this material has been published in article form in our quarterly newsletter, the *Revere House Gazette*. All this said, it must be noted that the real credit for this publication goes to Patrick M. Leehey, our long-time Research Director and now Consulting Historian, who has puzzled over, researched, and refined all of these responses.

Finally, the inspiration for this booklet is you, the reader and visitor to the Paul Revere House. For, certainly, there is no sense in developing answers if no questions are posed.



Nina Zannieri
Executive Director
Paul Revere Memorial Association

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE

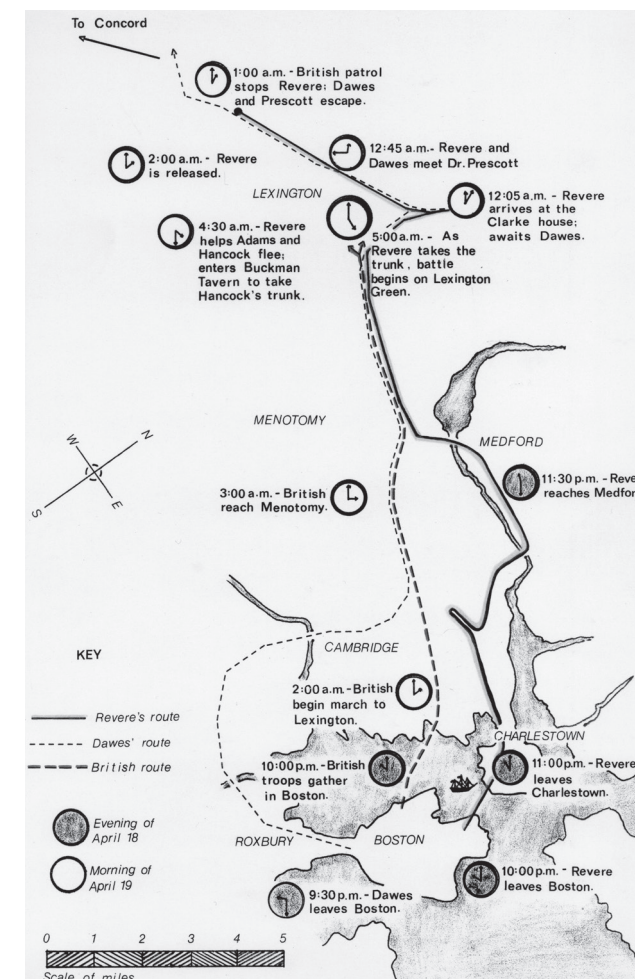
1 Was Paul Revere the only midnight rider?

By no means. An unknown number of riders, at least several dozen, spread the word of the British advance on the night of April 18–19, 1775. The best known of these riders, Paul Revere and William Dawes, were sent to Lexington, Massachusetts, by separate routes, to warn patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock that British regular troops were marching to arrest them. Dawes left Boston first but arrived in Lexington later than Revere because he was assigned the longer land route out Boston neck and around Back Bay to the south before turning north again. Revere took a shorter route directly across the Charles River by boat to Charlestown. Along the way, both Revere and Dawes were to “alarm” the countryside, which they accomplished, not by racing through each town crying out the alarm (which would have accomplished little beyond getting them captured very quickly), but by stopping at each house. Other riders then carried the news to outlying villages and farms.

Not every messenger abroad that night received the news from Revere or Dawes. Acting on his own (perhaps well ahead of Dawes), Ebenezer Dorr alarmed the town of Roxbury, just south of Boston. Richard Devens, having noticed a number of British officers on the main road in Cambridge, succeeded in informing his fellow members of the Committee of Safety then meeting in Menotomy (present-day Arlington), one of whom, Elbridge Gerry, sent an express rider who reached Adams and Hancock long before Revere arrived in Lexington. Devens also claimed to have seen the lantern signals from the Old North Church and to have sent his own messenger to Lexington with the news about the troops. (If this is true, the man never arrived.) In a memorandum drawn up at a later date, Devens even took credit for dispatching Revere to Lexington – a claim discounted by most historians and contradicted by Revere’s own accounts of his ride. In addition, another rider, Solomon Brown of Lexington, observed several armed officers on the road from Cambridge and galloped into Lexington with the news. After the officers passed through, Brown and two others were dispatched

to follow them, but they managed the job ineptly and were themselves captured.

Revere arrived in Lexington sometime after midnight, and approached the house where Adams and Hancock were lodged. When a sentry challenged him and requested that he not make so much noise, Revere replied, “Noise! You’ll have noise enough before long. The regulars are coming out!” After delivering his message, Revere was joined by Dawes; the two men decided to continue on to Concord, where arms and provisions for the colonial militia had been collected. Along the road they were overtaken by Dr. Samuel Prescott, a Concord man whom they recognized as a “high Son of Liberty.” Soon afterwards all three riders were stopped by the same patrol that had captured Solomon Brown and his men some time earlier. Prescott escaped almost immediately, jumping his horse over a fence and disappearing into the woods. Familiar with the local terrain, Prescott easily found his way home, alarming the militia in Lincoln along the way. According to tradition, Dawes managed to elude his pursuers by means of a ruse, making



Map of the countryside outside Boston, showing the routes taken by Paul Revere, William Dawes, Dr. Samuel Prescott, and the British soldiers on the night of April 18–19, 1775. Original drawing by Heather A. E. Smith. Collection, Paul Revere Memorial Association.

to follow them, but they managed the job ineptly and were themselves captured. Prescott escaped almost immediately, jumping his horse over a fence and disappearing into the woods. Familiar with the local terrain, Prescott easily found his way home, alarming the militia in Lincoln along the way. According to tradition, Dawes managed to elude his pursuers by means of a ruse, making

it appear that he had arranged an ambush. Revere, an experienced express rider who was probably well-known to his captors, was held for some time, questioned, and then released. Deprived of his horse, Revere returned to Lexington on foot in time to witness part of the skirmish on Lexington Green.

2 Did Paul Revere finish his midnight ride?

It is a known fact that Revere was captured on the road outside of Lexington, and that he never arrived in Concord. One must consider, however, what Revere and Dawes intended to accomplish when they set out from Boston. While existing evidence (primarily Revere’s own accounts of his activities that night) is somewhat vague or contradictory on certain points, the main outline of Revere’s (and Dawes’s) mission seems clear. Both Revere’s and Dawes’s primary objective was to contact Samuel Adams and John Hancock in Lexington. It appears that they were given a fairly specific, perhaps written, message to deliver to the patriot leaders. In addition, the two riders were supposed to “alarm” the countryside as they went. A third objective was almost certainly to continue on to Concord to verify that the “Colony Stores” – provisions and ammunition for the Massachusetts militia – were safely dispersed and hidden. The fact that they might have been halted at any point was assumed by both men. They were well aware that many British officers were patrolling the roads that night for the specific purpose of intercepting messenger riders like themselves.

The alarm system devised by the patriots, and set into motion by Revere and Dawes, was specifically designed to ensure that the capture of any one rider would not keep the alarm from being sounded. The mission was too important to leave to one rider alone, even one as experienced and trustworthy as Paul Revere.

3 Was Paul Revere paid for his midnight ride?

No receipt or other record has ever been found to suggest or confirm that Revere was paid for the midnight ride. Available evidence suggests strongly, however, that Revere was paid for most, if not all, of his courier work

for the Massachusetts Committee of Safety and other patriot organizations. The fact that Revere, a middle-class goldsmith, submitted bills for his courier work would not have seemed unusual at the time – only the very wealthy might have considered themselves obligated to serve the public entirely at their own expense.

In the eighteenth century, most governments did not have a regular postal service. Letters could be and were delivered by anyone traveling to a particular destination, whether on official or private business. Under these circumstances, the delivery of correspondence was a haphazard business at best, and anyone wishing speedy or guaranteed delivery of letters or other documents usually hired a courier for the work. From 1773 on, Paul Revere served as just such a courier for the Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, patriot groups authorized by the Boston Town Meeting and the Massachusetts colonial government respectively. Thus, Revere naturally expected to be paid for his messenger work. Not a wealthy man, Revere could not have afforded to operate on a volunteer basis except in an emergency, and at the very least needed to recoup his out-of-pocket expenses.

On January 3, 1774, Paul Revere submitted a bill for £14/2/0 (fourteen pounds, two shillings) for riding to New York and Philadelphia on December 17, 1773, with the news of the Boston Tea Party. In December, 1774, Paul Revere submitted a bill for £5/14/0 (five pounds, fourteen shillings) for riding to and from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with the news that the British authorities planned to reinforce Fort William and Mary, in Portsmouth Harbor, and secure a large supply of powder, ammunition, and cannon that were stored there. Revere’s warning arrived in sufficient time for local patriots to attack the fort, overwhelm the small number of defenders, and remove the military supplies inland to a safer location before a British relief force arrived. In addition, careful analysis of the bill suggests that, rather than just riding to and from Portsmouth on two successive days, as has always been supposed, Revere may have spent as many as five days in New Hampshire, possibly taking part in the attack on Fort William and Mary and the removal of the military stores. Revere charged £1/10/0 (thirty shillings) for hired horses for this trip, far more than the five or six shillings per day he normally charged.

Perhaps the most interesting bill that Revere ever submitted for his

courier work is dated August 22, 1775, and was addressed to the Committee of Safety for reimbursement for his expenses from April 21 to May 7, 1775 (the period immediately following his famous midnight ride). Revere's account is quite detailed and shows charges for his own time (five shillings per day), for expenses for himself and several horses, and for printing one thousand impressions of "soldier's notes" (bills that were used to pay the Massachusetts militia in the early days of the war). The back of this receipt reveals that after a short delay Revere was paid for this work, although the Legislature saw fit to reduce the charge for his own time from five shillings per day to four. In addition, virtually the entire Massachusetts House of Representatives was required to sign this bill before Revere could be paid, showing that, in the early days of the Revolutionary War, the Massachusetts government was carefully watching every shilling.

4 What was the name of Paul Revere's horse?

This question should properly be, "What was the name of the horse Revere rode?" because there is no evidence that Revere owned a horse at the time he made his famous ride. Revere had owned a horse in the early 1770s, according to a notation in his papers, but it appears that he no longer possessed it at the time he began serving as a courier for the Massachusetts Committee of Safety. In any case, even if he had owned a horse in April 1775, he would not have been able to bring it with him when he was rowed across the Charles River to Charlestown north of Boston, prior to setting off on his ride.

On the evening of April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston sent for Paul Revere and gave him the task of riding to Lexington, Massachusetts, with the news that regular troops were about to march into the countryside. Revere contacted a friend (Robert Newman) and instructed him to show two lanterns in the tower of Christ Church (now called the Old North Church) as a signal in case Revere was unable to get out of town. He then proceeded a short distance to the northern shore of Boston where two friends were waiting to row him across the river to Charlestown. Slipping past a British warship in the shadow of the moon, Revere landed safely. After informing Colonel Conant and other local Sons of Liberty about recent events in Boston

and verifying that they had seen his signals in the North Church tower, Revere went to borrow a horse from John Larkin, a Charlestown merchant and patriot sympathizer. While the horse was being made ready, Revere consulted a member of the Committee of Safety named Richard Devens, who warned him that there were a number of British officers in the area who might try to intercept him. About eleven o'clock Revere set off on his borrowed horse and, after several adventures, including narrowly avoiding capture just outside of Charlestown, arrived in Lexington sometime after midnight.

About thirty minutes later, William Dawes arrived in Lexington carrying the same message as Revere. After both men had "refreshed themselves" (probably gotten something to eat and drink), they decided to continue on to Concord, Massachusetts. Along the way, they were overtaken by a third rider, Dr. Samuel Prescott. A short time later, a British patrol intercepted all three men. Prescott and Dawes escaped; Revere was held for some time, questioned, and let go. Before he was released, however, his horse was confiscated to replace the tired mount of a British sergeant. At this point, "Revere's horse" passes out of the historical record.

Revere left several accounts of his ride, and although he states that he borrowed the horse from John Larkin, neither he nor anyone else takes much notice of the mount, or refers to it by name. Revere calls it simply "a very good horse." In the years since 1775 many names have been attached to the animal, the most exotic being "Scheherazade." The only name for which there is any evidence, however, is Brown Beauty. The following excerpt is taken from a genealogy of the Larkin family, published in 1930:

Samuel [Larkin] . . . born Oct. 22, 1701; died Oct. 8, 1784, aged 83; he was a chairmaker, then a fisherman and had horses and a stable. He was the owner of "Brown Beauty," the mare of Paul Revere's ride made famous by the Longfellow poem. The mare was loaned at the request of Samuel's son, deacon John Larkin, and was never returned to the owner.

According to this source, the famous horse was owned not by John Larkin, but by his father – if true, this would mean that not only did Revere ride a borrowed horse, but a *borrowed*, borrowed horse. That it had a name is difficult to prove in the absence of corroborating evidence. John Larkin's

estate inventory, dated 1808, lists only one horse, unnamed, valued at sixty dollars. It reveals, however, that Larkin was a wealthy man, with possessions valued at over \$86,000, including “Plate” (silver and gold pieces), houses, pastures and other real estate in Charlestown, part of a farm in Medford, bank shares, and notes (for money lent at interest). John Larkin was probably a friend of the patriot cause in Charlestown, and it seems natural that the Sons of Liberty would have depended on someone in his position to provide an expensive item like a horse if the occasion demanded. The fact that the one horse listed in his inventory is unnamed, while not conclusive, does suggest that the Larkin family, like most people at the time, did not name their horses. Thus, it appears that “Revere’s horse” will forever remain anonymous.

5 Is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” historically accurate?

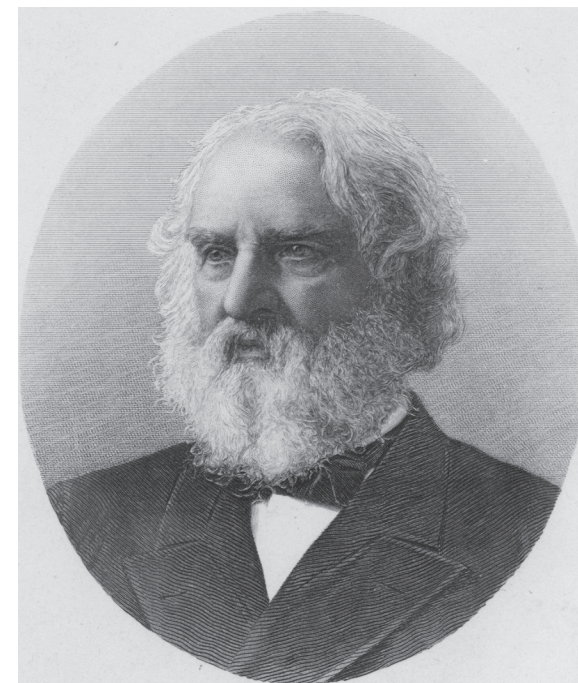
Unfortunately, Longfellow’s version of Revere’s ride has all too often been taken for fact. Longfellow wrote many poems about historical figures and events and at times used authentic period accounts as source materials, but just as frequently he relied on secondary works, folk tales, or even casual conversations as the basis for his poetry. In the case of “Paul Revere’s Ride,” Longfellow apparently was aware of Revere’s own description of the event on file at the Massachusetts Historical Society, which was written at the request of the Society’s corresponding secretary and reprinted in the October 1832 issue of *New England Magazine*. Longfellow almost certainly read this account, as Part V of Longfellow’s own work “The Schoolmaster,” a prose piece about his travels in Europe, also appeared in this issue. Longfellow, however, planned to use the Revere ride story for his own purposes – to warn the American Union that it was in danger of disintegrating (which in the summer of 1860, it was). Longfellow therefore changed some of the story in the interest of making a more effective poem.

According to his own diary, on the day before he began work on the poem (April 5, 1860), Longfellow took a long walk from his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with his friend Charles Sumner and a Mr. Harris, through the North End and back again. Along the way the three men visited Cops Hill

burying ground, and then walked down the hill to the “Old North Church” (Christ Church) where they were allowed to ascend into the bell tower. Longfellow appears to have based a large portion of his poem on information and impressions gathered on this walk, and presumably on a retelling of the events of April 18–19, 1775, provided by Mr. Harris, who acted as their guide. There is no record that Longfellow visited the Paul Revere House at this time.

A careful examination of the poem reveals that a significant portion is devoted to a detailed description of the Old North Church, its surroundings, and the hanging of the signal lanterns in the bell tower. Revere’s ride is described only briefly, and none of the other persons involved in events that night, such as Samuel Adams, John Hancock, or William Dawes, are mentioned at all.

The two most significant deviations from fact in the poem concern the purpose of the lantern signals hung in the Old North Church tower, and Revere’s apparent arrival in the town of Concord at 2:00 a.m. early the next morning. According to the poem, Paul Revere contacted a friend and instructed him to set the signals (“one, if by land, and two, if by sea”) as soon as he observed the movements of the British troops. Revere then rowed himself across the Charles River, past a British warship (the *Somerset*) and then waited “booted and spurred” for the signal to send him on his way. In fact, Revere knew before he left Boston that the troops were preparing to cross the river. Revere communicated this information to a friend, probably Robert Newman, the sexton of the Old North Church, or maybe Captain John Pulling, one of the



Portrait of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882), from a contemporary engraving. Collection, Paul Revere Memorial Association.

vestry men, and instructed him to set the signals to warn the Sons of Liberty in Charlestown. He then proceeded to a point on the northern shore of Boston where two other friends waited to row him across the river. All of this had been arranged in great detail the previous weekend, when Revere made a reconnaissance ride into the countryside as far as Concord and returned through Charlestown. Revere had every reason to fear that he would not be able to row across the river without being stopped by sentries posted on the *Somerset*. As it turned out, Revere reached the Charlestown shore safely, and even verified with a committee of the Sons of Liberty that they had received his signals.

The second major inaccuracy in the poem is simpler. Longfellow describes Revere arriving in Concord, Massachusetts, at 2:00 a.m. As Revere describes in his deposition taken just after the events in question, he and two other riders (Dawes and Prescott) were stopped just outside of Lexington by a party of British officers. Of the three, only Prescott managed to escape and continued on to Concord where he also lived. Nothing about Revere's capture (or anything about Dawes or Prescott) is mentioned in Longfellow's poem.

Surprisingly, Longfellow's poem was criticized as early as the 1870s, when Henry Holland (author of *William Dawes, and his Ride with Paul Revere*, 1878) accused Longfellow of various "high historic crimes and misdemeanors," in particular of having left his ancestor William Dawes out of the story altogether. Curiously, knowledge of the inaccuracies in Longfellow's poem has decreased over time, and Americans today rely more on Longfellow for the historical facts of Revere's famous ride than did their ancestors a century ago. Longfellow's poem was clearly written to create a particular atmosphere, rather than to relate a series of historical events. Perhaps the greatest disservice done to the poem is the assumption that it was intended to be an historical document, which it was not. Longfellow was a poet, not an historian, and was not attempting to write history when he penned "Paul Revere's Ride."

PAUL REVERE'S PUBLIC SERVICE

6 What was Paul Revere's role in the Boston Massacre and in the Boston Tea Party?

Paul Revere is closely associated with both of these famous events, although he may not have participated in either one of them. Paul Revere, like most Bostonians at the time, must have been aware of the confrontation on King Street known as the "Boston Massacre" almost as soon as the shooting occurred. It is possible that Revere was present, but it is not likely, as the crowd surrounding the sentry at the Custom House on the evening of March 5, 1770, was made up largely of apprentices, servants, ropewalk workers, mariners and others of the "lesser sort" in Boston. Angered by recent incidents involving soldiers and local townspeople, the crowd gathered to taunt and threaten the single sentry on duty outside the Custom House, causing the frightened man to summon assistance from the nearby main guardhouse. When reinforcements, consisting of an officer and six men, arrived, a tense stand-off occurred for about fifteen minutes until someone (no one knows for certain who) yelled "Fire!" whereupon the soldiers fired into the crowd, killing three persons and wounding several others (two of whom later died).

In the aftermath of the Massacre, both the government and anti-government parties rushed to collect depositions casting blame for the incident onto the other side. Paul Revere contributed to the anti-government cause by engraving his most famous political print, "The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street." Revere borrowed significantly from either the drawing or the engraved plate for a very similar print by Henry Pelham, a Boston artist and engraver who claimed to have been present at the actual incident. Revere copied Pelham's work almost line for line, adding certain details (such as the words "Butcher's Hall" on the facade of the Custom House), a new title, and satiric verses at the bottom (composed by Dr. Benjamin Church, a member of the Committee of Safety). Revere managed to copy Pelham's image and get his prints onto the market before Pelham, resulting in considerable acrimony between the two men. The fact that Revere "copied" his most

famous print provoked something of a scandal when it was discovered in the mid-nineteenth century. Both Pelham's and Revere's Massacre prints, along with others derived from them, show highly inaccurate views of what actually happened, and were obviously intended as political propaganda.

Prior to engraving his famous print, Revere completed a pen-and-ink drawing of the Massacre scene that demonstrates that he was fully aware of what actually happened. Revere's drawing shows British soldiers in a tight circle outside the Custom House door, with plenty of space for a large crowd to fill the square, and the locations of those who fell clearly marked. Revere's drawing was probably intended as evidence at the trial of the British soldiers, but there is no record that it was ever used. The soldiers were ably defended by Boston lawyers John Adams and Josiah Quincy, and all but two were fully acquitted (the two were convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to be branded on the hand).

Paul Revere was involved more directly in the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773, than he was in the Boston Massacre. Earlier that year, the British East India Company had devised a plan to raise large sums of needed capital by "dumping" surplus tea in the American colonies at very low prices (low enough that even the smugglers might be undersold). The fact that a small tax (the last of the Townshend duties) would be collected did not improve the chances that the plan would be accepted in America. The real fear, however, was that the East India Company was being allowed to establish a monopoly and drive American merchants out of business. The tea would be sold in America only by certain designated merchants ("consignees"), including several relatives of Governor Thomas Hutchinson.

On November 28, 1773, the first of three tea ships arrived in Boston harbor. Anti-government mobs refused to allow the tea to be unloaded. At the same time, Governor Hutchinson refused to permit the ships to leave until the required import tax had been paid. The deadlock continued until December 16, the day before the tea could be legally seized for non-payment of taxes and then given to the consignees to sell anyway. That evening, following a mass meeting at Old South Meeting House in Boston, groups of men crudely disguised as Native Americans boarded the tea ships and threw the contents of more than 340 large chests of tea overboard. When news of this event reached England, an angry Parliament passed a series



The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street (*Boston Massacre engraving*). Line engraving by Paul Revere, hand-colored by Christian Remick, 1770. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Miss Margaret A. Revere, Miss Anna P. Revere, Mr. Paul Revere, and Mr. John Revere Chapin. 62.506. Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

of measures known in the colonies as the "Intolerable Acts," effectively revoking the Massachusetts Charter and closing the port of Boston.

According to tradition, most of the planning for the Tea Party took place at meetings of the North Caucus at Boston's Green Dragon Tavern in November and December, 1773. Paul Revere, along with many of his neighbors and relatives, was a member of this informal political group. According to Francis S. Drake, in his work *Tea Leaves* (1884), Paul Revere was one of those who took part in the actual destruction of the tea. As the



The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught. Line engraving by Paul Revere, 1774. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.

last of the tea was thrown overboard, Revere prepared to set off on one of his most important express rides, carrying the news of the Tea Party to New York. Revere managed to complete the round trip in just eleven days, returning to Boston on December 27, 1773. A few months later, Revere satirized the Boston Tea Party and the subsequent closing of the port of Boston in one of his last political prints, *“The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught.”*

7 Did Paul Revere ever serve in the military?

Paul Revere served in the military on two separate occasions: briefly, in 1756, during the French and Indian War; and, more extensively, for three years (1776–1779) as an artillery officer during the Revolutionary War. Early in 1756, Paul Revere received a commission from Governor Shirley of Massachusetts as a second lieutenant of artillery in the expedition sent to capture a French fort at Crown Point, in what is now New York State. This

operation was intended as a follow-up to the successful 1755 expedition, in which an important French officer had been captured. Because of dissension within the English leadership, however, little was accomplished. At the conclusion of the campaign, Revere returned to Boston to assume responsibility for his family’s silversmith business.

On April 8, 1776, soon after the British evacuation of Boston, Paul Revere was appointed a major in the Massachusetts militia. Prior to this, Revere had been employed by the Massachusetts Provisional government in Watertown to print currency and to oversee the requisitioning of gunpowder and cannon for the colonial troops. By November 1776, Revere had been promoted to lieutenant colonel of artillery. For the next three years, Revere spent most of his time as commander of “The Castle,” a fort guarding the entrance to Boston harbor. Since the British never attempted to retake Boston, Revere’s command quickly degenerated into the mundane tasks of trying to keep his men from deserting and presiding over numerous courts-martial dealing with minor disciplinary problems.

Revere did take part, however, in several campaigns. In July 1777, Paul Revere and the Massachusetts “State’s Train” of Artillery participated in the first Independence Day celebration in Boston. Soon afterwards, Revere led an artillery detachment to Worcester, Massachusetts, to collect British prisoners captured at the Battle of Bennington in Vermont. In September 1777, and again in the summer of 1778, Revere and the Massachusetts Artillery joined in unsuccessful expeditions to dislodge British forces in Newport, Rhode Island. Then, in June 1779, Paul Revere was placed in command of the artillery on an expedition to capture a small British fort on the Castine peninsula in Penobscot Bay, Maine. The campaign was disastrous and abruptly ended Revere’s military career. Revere was accused of cowardice and insubordination, dismissed from the service, and even placed under house arrest for a time. Over the next three years, Revere repeatedly petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for a court-martial to rule on the charges against him. Revere’s request was finally granted in 1782, and he was formally acquitted of all charges.

8 Is it true that Paul Revere was court-martialed for his actions during the Penobscot expedition?

Yes, although Revere was the one who requested the court-martial in an effort to clear himself of what he felt were unjust accusations regarding his conduct on the expedition. In the summer of 1779, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Revere was appointed commander of the artillery in a large expedition sent to capture a small British fort at Castine, in the Penobscot Bay area of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts. The expedition consisted of eighteen warships (including many privateers), twenty-one transports, and over one thousand men from several state militias and even some Native American tribes. Commodore Dudley Saltonstall of the Continental Navy was given overall command of the expedition. General Solomon Lovell directed land operations, with General Peleg Wadsworth (the grandfather of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow) as his second in command. The expedition left Boston in late June 1779, and arrived in Penobscot Bay about one month later.

Siege operations against the fort were hampered by lack of cooperation among the various army and navy commanders, almost certainly aggravated by the fact that many of the warships were privateers, whose primary objective was to collect booty, not to engage in combat. When a British relief squadron of seven ships was sighted in the bay, the Americans panicked and sailed their ships upriver, where they were scuttled or burned to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. Soon afterwards, the remaining colonial troops in the area (including Revere and his men) were ordered to “shift for themselves,” and made their way back to Boston as best they could.

When he arrived in Boston, Revere, like the other officers involved in the expedition, was relieved of his command and placed under house arrest until a board of inquiry could be held to investigate the causes of the failure of the expedition. All of the officers were blamed to some degree for the disaster. Two officers, Major Todd, one of General Lovell’s brigade majors, and Marine Captain Carnes, as well as General Wadsworth accused Revere of cowardice, insubordination, and unsoldierly behavior. The proceedings of the first, and then a second, Board of Inquiry dragged on until late in 1779. In the end, Commodore Saltonstall received most of the blame, but Revere was censured and dismissed from the militia.

Although he was not formally charged with any wrongdoing, Revere felt strongly that his honor had been besmirched, and over the next several years petitioned seven times for a formal hearing to enable him to clear his name. When a court-martial to consider his case was finally convened in 1782, the general accusations against him had been reduced to two charges. The first was “for refusing to deliver a certain boat to the order of General Wadsworth upon the retreat up the Penobscot River” and the second “for leaving the Penobscot River without orders from his commanding officer.” Revere admitted that he had at first refused General Wadsworth’s order (because his boat was employed by General Lovell), but testified that he had complied with the order a short time later. In answer to the second charge, Revere stated that no superior officer was to be found after the order to retreat upriver had been given, and that he had stayed in the area for two days before departing with his remaining men for Boston. Revere prefaced his testimony with a statement concerning personal conflicts with Major Todd arising out of his service under him at Castle Island, in Boston harbor. He also submitted his logbook and presented witnesses in his own defense. After reviewing all of the evidence, the court reversed Revere’s previous censure, and officially exonerated him. The language employed regarding the first charge was somewhat equivocal; on the second charge, however, it was clear:

The Court finds the first charge against Lieut. Col. Paul Revere to be supported . . . but the Court taking into consideration the suddenness of the refusal, and more especially that the Boat was in fact employed by Lieut. Col. Revere to effect the Purpose ordered by the General . . . are of the opinion, that Lieut. Col. Paul Revere be acquitted of this charge.

On the second charge, the Court considers that the whole Army was in great confusion [and] no regular orders were or could be given, are of the opinion that Lieut. Col. Revere be acquitted with equal Honor as the other Officers in the same Expedition.

Revere realized that he could obtain no better result and accepted the outcome as vindication of his honor.

PAUL REVERE'S PERSONAL LIFE

9 What did Paul Revere look like?

Although there is no way of knowing what Paul Revere looked like during his childhood or adolescence, a good idea of his appearance as an adult can be gained from three portraits produced at different times of his life. All three show considerable similarities. The first and most famous is the portrait painted by John Singleton Copley in 1768. Copley shows Revere in his early thirties, seated at what appears to be a work bench with the tools of his trade scattered in front of him. From this likeness, several of the most important aspects of Revere's appearance are immediately apparent: 1) his slightly dark or florid complexion, probably indicative of his southern French ancestry, 2) his powerful build, as shown in particular by his thick forearms and wrists, and 3) his average or slightly below average height for the time.



Portrait of Paul Revere, by John Singleton Copley, 1768. This, the best-known portrait of Revere, shows him in workman's dress surrounded by the tools of his trade. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Joseph W. Revere, William B. Revere, and Edward H. R. Revere. 30.781. Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The second portrait was done in 1800, when Revere was 65, by Charles-Balthazar-Julien F vret de Saint-M min, a French artist who used a mechanical device known as a physiognotrace to create a large profile drawing of Revere, which he then reproduced as smaller engravings. Saint-M min's likeness confirms Copley's – Revere's features remain much the same, although he has put on some weight, as befitted a man of his economic and social position.

The third and final portrait of Revere was painted in 1813 by the noted American artist Gilbert Stuart. By this time Revere has become fairly well-to-do, as revealed by his bearing as well as his elegant clothes. Although the Stuart portrait of Revere is not considered to be among the artist's best works, it clearly reveals many of the same physical characteristics found in both Saint-M min's and Copley's likenesses, and the depiction of Revere's face is remarkably similar to the one by Copley.

10 How tall was Paul Revere? Were people shorter in colonial times than they are today?

Paul Revere's exact height is not known – no document has ever been discovered that gives a specific measurement. Judging from his appearance in three portraits, particularly in the famous painting by Copley where his size in relation to everyday objects surrounding him can be estimated, Revere clearly was not a tall man. A good estimate of his height might be between 5 ft. 5 in. and 5 ft. 8 in. The only member of Revere's family for whom an actual height is known is Paul's son Joseph Warren Revere, who is listed as 5 ft. 10 in. on his 1805 passport.

Contrary to popular opinion, colonial Americans were comparatively tall by eighteenth-century standards. Studies of military and maritime statistics, corroborated by measurements taken from the few surviving skeletons, show that the average height of males in the American colonies in the eighteenth century (5 ft. 7 in. to 5 ft. 8 in.) was not much different from the average height of Englishmen today (modern Americans are slightly taller). The standard of living was high in the American colonies, a fact noted by Hessian mercenaries during the Revolutionary War. The good diet and relatively healthy living conditions in the colonies allowed people to grow taller.

The misconception about people's heights "back then" is derived from several sources. Rooms in colonial houses were often small, and ceilings and doorways low, to conserve heat. Older beds often look shorter than they are because they were equipped with bolsters and pillows, allowing people to sleep with their backs elevated. Clothing and furniture sizes varied considerably, since nearly everything was made to order. In some cases, children's clothing and shoes have been mistaken for adult garments, because children were dressed in much the same manner as adults. Careful examination and measurement reveal that many colonial artifacts are the same or nearly the same size as the corresponding items today.

11 When and where was Paul Revere born?

There has always been some confusion regarding Paul Revere's date of birth. What is generally referenced is his baptism date, which was

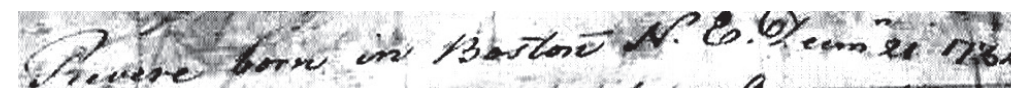
December 22, 1734, according to the records of the "New Brick" Congregational Church in Boston. This date is in the "Old Style" uncorrected calendar in use in the British Empire until 1752. When translated into the "New Style" or modern calendar, this date becomes

January 2, 1735, the date sometimes quoted as Revere's birth date. To further complicate matters, the marker on his grave reads: "Paul Revere, born in Boston, January, 1734" which is clearly wrong.



Detail from The Town of Boston in New-England and British Ships of War Landing Their Troops! 1768 showing the waterfront of the north part of Boston. Line engraving by Paul Revere, hand-colored by Christian Remick, 1770. Boston Athenaeum.

In the front of a family bible recently acquired by the Paul Revere House, Paul Revere recorded his birthdate as December 21, 1734. A man of fixed habits, Paul Revere probably always thought of himself as being born in December, 1734, although December 21, 1734 "Old Style" does translate into January 1, 1735, in the modern calendar.



Paul Revere's exact place of birth is unknown. At the time Revere was born, his family was living in rented quarters in Boston's North End. In 1730, Paul Revere's father, also named Paul Revere (born Apollon Rivoire in France in 1702), moved his home and shop from Dock Square, near the center of Boston, into the North End, "over against Colonel Hutchinson," as recorded in a newspaper advertisement. At that time Colonel Hutchinson lived in a house on the south side of North (today's Hanover) Street near the New North (now St. Stephen's) Church. The Reveres probably lived quite near this dwelling, perhaps on the opposite side of the street, on or near the corner of present day Tileston and Hanover Streets.

12 Was Paul Revere married? Did he have any children? Are there any descendants of Paul Revere alive today?

Paul Revere was married twice, and was the father of sixteen children, eleven of whom survived infancy. Very little is known about Revere's first wife, Sarah Orne, the mother of his first eight children. Sarah was the daughter of obscure Boston artisans, but she had many relatives scattered around New England, some of whom were quite wealthy. In fact, Paul Revere's largest single silver order, for a forty-five-piece tea service, was made for Dr. William Paine of Worcester, Massachusetts, as a wedding gift for his wife Lois Orne, a distant cousin of Sarah's. Sarah Orne Revere died on May 3, 1773, at the age of thirty-seven, soon after the birth of her eighth child. Little has survived that might provide clues about her personality.

On October 19, 1773, Paul Revere was married for a second time, to

Rachel Walker, the daughter of Richard and Rachel Carlisle Walker of Boston. Rachel assumed responsibility for raising Sarah's surviving children plus the eight she and Paul would have together. Surviving letters, personal objects and two portraits provide considerable insight into Rachel's strong and generous character. Rachel Revere died on June 26, 1813, only a few weeks after Gilbert Stuart had completed portraits of Rachel and Paul, both commissioned by her son Joseph.



Miniature portrait of Rachel Revere, by Joseph Dunkerley, about 1784–1785. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of Mrs. Pauline Revere Thayer. 35.1850. Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Most of Paul Revere's children married and had large families of their own. The Revere genealogy is, not unexpectedly, quite extensive, and there are thousands of direct descendants of the well-known American patriot alive today in all parts of the world. The number carrying the Revere name is somewhat limited, however, because Paul Revere had more daughters than sons. Still, there are hundreds of people named Revere who can trace their ancestry directly back to the famous American patriot.

13 What price did Paul Revere pay for his house in 1770? What would this equal in modern money?

According to the deed, Paul Revere paid £213/6/8 (213 pounds, six shillings, and eight pence) for his North Square house in 1770. Of this amount, £160 was a mortgage owed to Captain John Erving, the previous owner. Revere apparently made a “down payment” of about £53 – no small feat for a

craftsman in an era when hard currency was scarce and workmen's wages averaged between two and five shillings per day. By the terms of the sale Revere was required to pay off the mortgage, plus interest, by February 16, 1771. Whether or not Revere was able to meet this deadline is not known, but a notation in the margin of the deed reveals that in December 1798, Elizabeth Bowdoin, Captain Erving's daughter and the widow of Governor James Bowdoin, appeared before the registrar and verified that Revere had paid off the mortgage. Presumably this was done to make it easier for Revere to sell the house, which he did in 1800.

Converting eighteenth-century currency into modern money is extremely difficult because of the chronic instability of Massachusetts currency in the colonial era, inflation over a period of two hundred years, and changes in living standards. Since the average craftsman earned about £60 per year in the eighteenth century, Revere appears to have paid three to four times this amount for his house (as a shop owner, Revere's income was probably higher than the average worker's). If one assumes that the average worker today earns about \$40,000, this results in a price for Revere's house calculated in modern currency of approximately \$120,000 to \$160,000.

Perhaps a more accurate way to gauge how much Paul Revere's house cost in real terms in 1770 is to compare its price with the prices of other houses known to have been sold the same year. Such a comparison reveals that houses in the North End tended to be somewhat cheaper than houses in the newer



The Paul Revere House as it might have appeared when Revere lived here. Line drawing by F. C. Detwiller, 1993, McGinley Hart & Associates.

parts of town, particularly the South End, and that house prices in general varied from as low as £80 for a “tenement” or inexpensive house to £500 or better for a three-story “dwelling-house” in a fashionable part of town. Thus, the price that Paul Revere paid for his house seems to have been just about in the middle, which is consistent with his social and economic standing in 1770.

14 What church did Paul Revere attend?

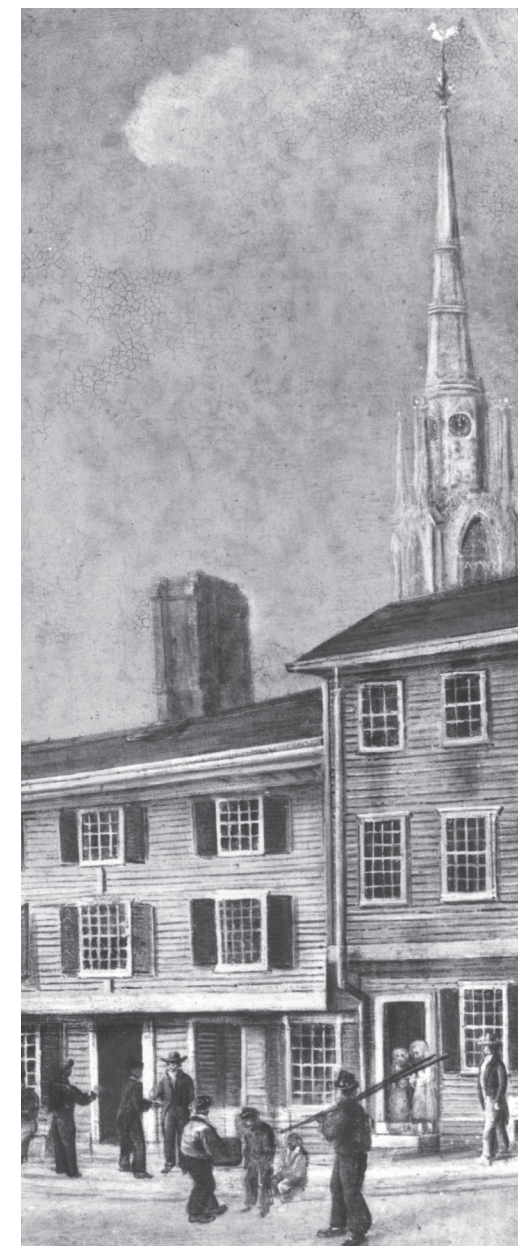
Although Paul Revere’s father was of French Protestant (Huguenot) ancestry, there is no evidence that he ever attended the Boston French Church, located on School Street near the present-day Old South Meeting House. The elder Paul Revere (born Apollos Rivoire) appears to have been a member of the Seventh Congregational, or “New Brick,” Church, on Middle Street in Boston’s North End (this church was also known as the “Cockerel” Church, after the rooster-shaped copper weathervane at the top of its spire). Nine of Paul Revere, Sr.’s children were baptized at the New Brick Church; his wife, Deborah Hichborn Revere, owned the covenant there in 1732; and his name appears on a 1747 subscription list for the support of the two ministers then serving the congregation. The famous Paul Revere, born on December 21, 1734, was baptized in this church on December 22, 1734, “Old Style” (January 2, 1735, in the modern calendar).

Prior to the Revolutionary War, Paul Revere seems, like his father, to have attended the New Brick Church. Revere’s North Square property, which included a large portion of the center of the block in his day, communicated directly with the New Brick Church property; presumably Revere and his family could have walked to meeting through their own backyard. Evidence for Revere’s membership in this congregation is strong. His parents belonged to it, and five of his children were baptized in this church prior to the dissolution of the congregation in 1779.

In that year the Seventh and the Second Congregational Churches were combined as a result of events that had occurred during the war. Sometime after April 1775, the original Second Church building, located in the center of North Square, had been dismantled for firewood by the occupying British

army. Following the evacuation of the British troops in 1776, the Second Church congregation was invited to use the Seventh Church’s building. In 1779, the two congregations combined, assuming the name and records of the Second Church.

All the available evidence suggests that Paul Revere and his family maintained their membership in the new combined church until at least the early 1800s. Surviving Second Church records for the years after 1779 show that Paul Revere was an active member of the Standing Committee chosen each year to transact business between yearly church meetings. (Revere’s name appears on every committee list between 1787 and 1803.) Other records show that at least one of Paul Revere’s younger children (John, born in 1787) as well as several of his grandchildren and relatives were baptized at the Second Church after 1783. Thus, it appears that after 1779 Paul Revere and his family continued to attend meetings in the same building as before – the only difference was that the name of the congregation had changed.



Detail of Rupert Sadler's painting (c. 1845) of North Square. The Revere House is on the right with the spire of the New Brick Church in the background. Collection, Paul Revere Memorial Association.

REVERE'S BUSINESS CAREER

15 Where was Paul Revere's silversmith* shop?

Prior to the Revolutionary War, Paul Revere operated his silversmith business at several locations in Boston's North End. When Paul, Sr. died (1754) and Paul took over the family shop, it may have been located near Clark's Wharf. The earliest evidence for the Clark's Wharf location is provided by Revere's 1768 advertisement for his dentistry business, which he announced was carried out at his shop "near the Head of Dr. Clarke's Wharf, Boston." This wharf was the largest in the north part of town at the time, and provided Revere with a prime business location. Wealthy merchants, many of whom had their warehouses near (or even on) Clark's Wharf, would often pass by Revere's shop. While Revere, like other silversmiths in his day, produced and repaired silver and gold items for customers of all classes, he depended on the wealthy for his largest and most profitable commissions, such as elaborate tea services.

Until 1770, when he purchased his now famous home in North Square, Paul Revere seems to have operated his silversmith business on the ground floor of the same building that he rented as a residence. At the conclusion of the war, Revere returned to his silversmith business, but soon became involved in other occupations, including a hardware store (1783–1789); foundry (from 1788 on); and sheet copper rolling mill (from 1801 on). As he mentioned in a letter to his London agent (1783), Revere intended to use the proceeds from his silversmith shop to finance his new hardware business; the silversmith shop would be operated by his son, Paul, Jr., under his supervision. By the 1780s the Revere silversmith business had become a large operation with a number of journeymen and apprentices assisting Revere, his son Paul, and possibly other sons and relatives. During these years the Revere silversmith shop seems to have moved several times within what is now the downtown area of Boston (Dock Square and the South End in those days).

*At his shop, Paul Revere worked in both gold and silver. Because Revere did most of his work in silver, he is usually referred to as a silversmith today. However, throughout his life, Paul Revere almost invariably referred to himself as a goldsmith.

For a time, the silversmith and hardware businesses were carried out at the same location.

The Revere silversmith shop seems to have ceased operations in the early 1800s. The shop records terminate in 1797, and the last identifiable (marked) piece of Revere silver known today was produced about 1810. The exact date or reason for the demise of the Revere silversmith business is unknown, but it seems clear that it did not survive its proprietor.

It is often assumed that the majority of eighteenth-century craftsmen operated their shops in their own houses, but this is something of a myth, at least in the American colonies. While many craftsmen did keep their shop and residence in the same building, many also had their shops in separate buildings next to or near their houses, or at locations some distance away, particularly near the waterfront. Boston was primarily a maritime city in the eighteenth century, and Bostonians of all classes, whether mariners, leather workers, ship's chandlers, craftsmen like Revere, or wealthy and prominent lawyers and merchants, quite sensibly wished to locate their businesses as near as possible to the center of economic activity.



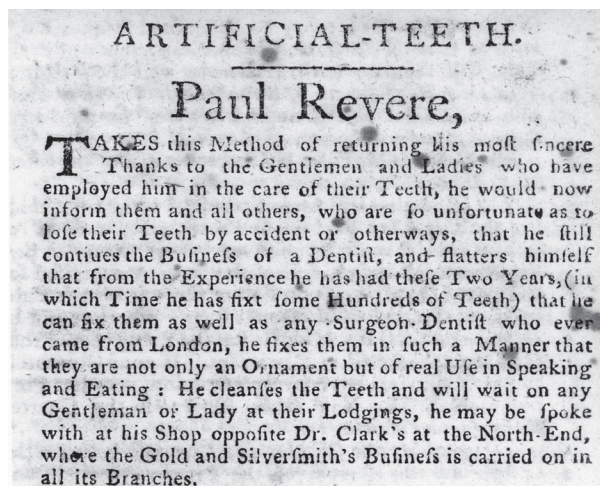
Salt spoons made in the shop of Paul Revere in 1796. Collection, Paul Revere Memorial Association. Photograph by John Miller Documents.

16 Did Paul Revere make a set of teeth for George Washington?

No. Paul Revere did practice dentistry, to the extent that his skills allowed, from the mid 1760s until the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Revere wired in false teeth and cleaned teeth at his silversmith shop on Clark's Wharf, but he never made a complete set of dentures for George Washington (or anyone else, for that matter) – such a task was beyond his ability.

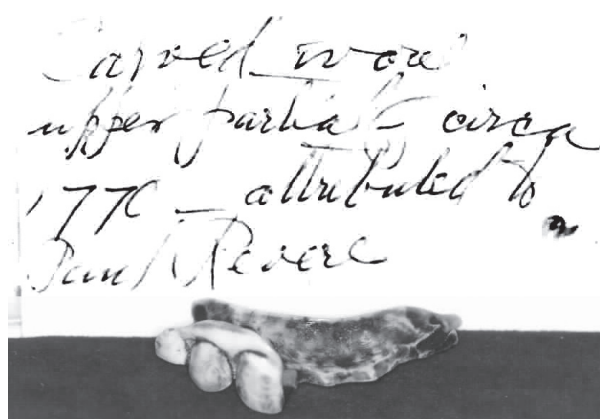
The practice of dentistry in the eighteenth century was a part-time or

itinerant profession, and it was not uncommon for silversmiths to engage in dentistry as a secondary occupation, as they already had on hand the silver wire used to wire in false teeth, and the polishing pumice used in toothpaste. They also had the trained eye and steady hand needed for such intricate work. Revere learned the rudiments of the trade from John Baker, an English dentist who had spent some time in Boston. Revere never claimed to be a “surgeon dentist” like Baker and never, except in one instance, attempted to pull teeth (a gruesome and dangerous procedure at the time) or to construct whole sets of dentures. Evidence for Revere’s dentistry practice comes primarily from advertisements in the *Boston Gazette* in 1768 and 1770. There are very few notations for dentistry work in Revere’s business records, which would seem to contradict his assertion (in his 1770 advertisement) that he had fixed “some Hundreds of Teeth.” The probable explanation is that dentistry was a cash business for Revere; since no bills were to be sent, ledger entries were unnecessary.



This advertisement for Paul Revere's dentistry business appeared in the July 30, 1770, issue of the Boston Gazette.

Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.



This partial denture carved from Hippopotamus ivory has been attributed to Paul Revere. The handwritten note reads "Carved ivory upper partial. Attributed to Paul Revere."

The small wooden pegs helped to hold the denture in place.

Collection, Paul Revere Memorial Association.

Gift of H. Martin Deranian.

17 Did Paul Revere ever make cookware? What is the origin of Revere Ware? Who makes Revere Ware now?

There is no evidence that Paul Revere made cookware as part of his goldsmithing business (he did make a few items out of copper or brass, such as gunner’s calipers), but he may have been involved in the cookware business in an indirect way at a later date. In the early 1800s, Revere established a copper-rolling mill in Canton, Massachusetts, a town south of Boston. At his mill, Revere manufactured primarily medium and heavy-gauge copper sheets for use plating ships’ bottoms, covering roofs, and constructing boilers and other large items. In an effort to diversify his business, Revere attempted from about 1805 on to break into the market for lightweight copper sheets in New York and Philadelphia (lightweight copper sheets were used by coppersmiths to make cookware and other similar items), but he met stiff competition from imported English copper and this branch of his copper mill business does not seem to have been successful.

Following Revere’s death in 1818, the copper rolling mill and foundry continued under his son Joseph Warren Revere at the Canton, Massachusetts, location. In 1828, Paul Revere and Son combined with James Davis and Son, brass founders, to become the Revere Copper Company. This company then merged with two other local companies to become the Taunton-New Bedford Copper Company in 1900. A much more extensive merger involving companies in Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, and Rome, New York, as well as the Taunton-New Bedford Company, took place in 1928. The new firm took the name General Brass Corporation, but within a year the name had been changed to Republic Brass Corporation and, finally, on November 12, 1929, to Revere Copper and Brass, Incorporated.

Interestingly enough, Revere Ware did not originate at the Revere Copper Company in Canton, nor at the Taunton-New Bedford Company, but at the Rome Manufacturing Company, in Rome, New York, the forerunner of the Rome division of Revere Copper and Brass. The Rome Manufacturing Company was founded in 1892; its first products were nickel-plated tea kettles! The company later manufactured numerous other cookware items as well as

bedsteads, tubing, and other metal products. Following the 1928 merger, the Rome plant became a center for cookware experimentation. Initial efforts concentrated on various platings for copper, all of which proved unsatisfactory. Eventually it was discovered that copper plating on stainless steel provided the best combination of durability (steel) and heat conductivity (copper). The resulting “Revere Ware” provoked something of a revolution in the cookware business when it was first sold in the 1930s. Revere Ware pots and pans worked well, resisted denting (unlike all-copper pots) and were attractive enough to be displayed in the kitchen. The manufacture of Revere Ware was suspended during World War II, but after the war additional plants at Riverside, California, and Clinton, Illinois, were built to accommodate the demand.

Revere Ware has maintained its great popularity up to the present day, although it is no longer manufactured by Revere Copper and Brass, Inc. In the early 1980s, this company underwent extensive restructuring, and the Revere Ware division was sold to Corning; Corning was then acquired by World Kitchen, which was in turn acquired by Corelle Brands. No one manufactures Revere Ware copper-bottomed cookware at present; it is only available on the secondary market. Revere Copper Products, Inc., a successor company to Revere Copper and Brass, Inc., continues to produce sheet metal and copper tubing for industrial uses at its plant in Rome, New York.

18 Did Paul Revere manufacture copper sheets for the hull of USS *Constitution* and other ships?

The Revere Copper Mill in Canton, Massachusetts, supplied copper sheets for plating the hulls of ships, including that of USS *Constitution* in 1803. The Revere mill did not, however, provide the original copper sheets for this famous warship. When *Constitution* was being constructed in the 1790s, Paul Revere was operating a bell and cannon foundry on Boston’s North End waterfront, and had yet to establish his copper mill. The fact that English copper was used to plate the hull of USS *Constitution* when it was built had a direct bearing on Revere’s decision to attempt the risky venture of founding a sheet-copper manufacturing business south of Boston.

USS *Constitution* was constructed at the Hartt shipyard in Boston’s North End, from materials including live oak, white oak, pitch pine, and red cedar acquired both locally and from as far away as South Carolina and Georgia. Paul Revere’s foundry, a few blocks away at the corner of Lynn and Foster Streets, supplied most of the copper and brass fittings. Nails and gun carriages were also obtained in Boston from other sources. The cannon, however, came from Maryland, while the copper sheets to plate the hull (to ward off shipworms, barnacles and other nautical pests) were manufactured in England. The ship was launched in 1797, and spent most of the next six years chasing French and Spanish privateers in the Caribbean Sea; during this time, Revere became interested in the possibilities of rolling sheet copper in America (the United States government was equally interested, especially after the English government began limiting copper exports in the late 1790s). In 1800 Revere received the promise of a government loan and purchased an old iron mill in Canton, Massachusetts, south of Boston, which by 1801 he converted into a mill for rolling sheet copper. By 1802, the Revere mill had produced over thirty thousand pounds of copper sheet, most of which was intended for use on a proposed seventy-four-gun ship-of-the-line. Some of this stock was then diverted to a more pressing purpose – re-coppering the hull of *Constitution* in 1803.

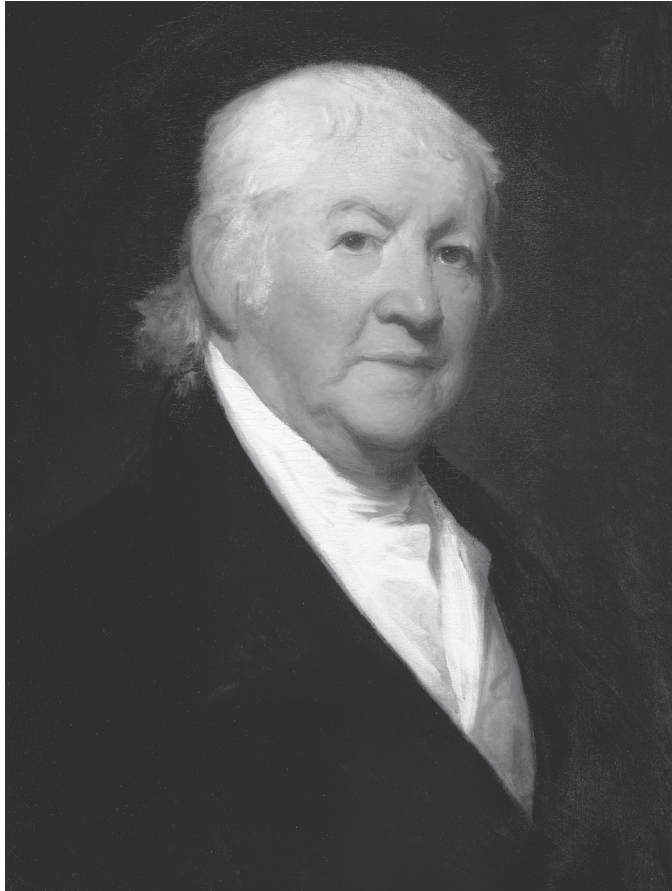
Despite convincing evidence, some have questioned whether Paul Revere actually supplied the copper used to replate *Constitution* in 1803. The best and most direct proof that he did is a letter from Paul Revere and Son to Josiah Quincy dated December 12, 1809, which contains the following statement: “The sheets with which the *Constitution’s* Bottom was cover’d before she went to the Mediterranean [August 1803] was manufactured by us.” This statement can be corroborated by other evidence from about the time that the re-coppering work was done. On May 28, 1803, Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy, wrote to Samuel Brown, United States Navy Agent in Boston: “If you have enough [copper] in store of the proper kind furnish Captain Preble [of *Constitution*] with it and engage Mr. Revere to replace what you may so furnish.” Since Revere supplied most, if not all, of the original stockpile, the logical conclusion is that the copper used on *Constitution* in 1803 must have been Revere copper, although there remains the slight possibility that a portion may have been acquired from some other source at a previous time.

19 Was Paul Revere wealthy?

No, at least not until the last ten years or so of his life. As a goldsmith, Paul Revere occupied one of the upper ranks in the highly stratified world of the colonial craftsman, but this did not put him anywhere near the income level of someone like John Hancock, who was reputed, not without reason, to be the wealthiest man in Massachusetts, or of George Washington, arguably the largest landowner in the American colonies.

Revere has often been portrayed as either one of the leaders of colonial Boston society, or as a typical representative of Boston's working class. In reality he was neither. In the 1780s Revere wrote to his cousin John Rivoire in Guernsey, England, that he was "In middling circumstances, and very well off for a tradesman." This describes fairly well

Revere's circumstances throughout most of his adult life. Revere owned his own shop, one of the largest in Boston, and there is no evidence that he was ever in any serious financial difficulty, but his income level probably varied



Portrait of Paul Revere, by Gilbert Stuart, 1813, showing Revere as a wealthy Federal-era gentleman. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Joseph W. Revere, William B. Revere, and Edward H. R. Revere. 30.782. Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

considerably from somewhat below to somewhat above average for most of the eighteenth century. It was only after 1800, as a result of the success of his foundry and copper-mill businesses, that Revere began to accumulate significant wealth; by the time he died in 1818 he can accurately be described as well-to-do. Revere's estate was worth \$37,464.49, according to an inventory taken a few days after his death, and included the following: a dwelling-house in Boston; the copper mill property (including a house) in Canton; other properties in Sharon and Stoughton, Massachusetts; personal possessions; household furnishings; and forty-seven pieces of silver valued at \$113.19.

20 How old was Paul Revere when he died? Where is he buried?

Paul Revere died at the age of eighty-three, on May 10, 1818, at his home on Charter Street, in Boston's North End. Revere's cause of death is listed as "Old Age" in the Boston city records, suggesting that he was in generally good health up to the time he died. Paul Revere is buried in a tomb at the back of the Granary Burying Ground, on Tremont Street near Boston Common. Revere's grave is marked with a small monument, probably placed sometime in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, with the following inscription: "Paul Revere Born in Boston, January 1734 [*sic*]. Died May, 1818." Because there is no obvious sign of a tomb under the grave marker, there has always been some mystery concerning Revere's grave. Unfortunately, even recent restoration work around the base of the monument failed to reveal any evidence to either confirm or completely rule out the existence of a tomb. There is also a small footstone not far away with the words "Revere's Tomb" carved on it in block letters. Although the stone itself is old, the letters appear to have been added at a later date, and the authenticity of the stone has been seriously questioned. What is perhaps even more interesting is that nowhere in the graveyard is there any mention of or any gravestone for Paul Revere's second wife Rachel. Presumably she is buried next to her husband, but there is nothing at the Revere grave to indicate this.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Angel, J. Lawrence. "Colonial to Modern Skeletal Changes in the U.S.A." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 45, no. 3 (November, 1976): 723–735.
- Brigham, Clarence S. *Paul Revere's Engravings*. Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1969.
- Buhler, Kathryn C. *Paul Revere, Goldsmith 1735–1818*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1956.
- Buker, George E. *The Penobscot Expedition: Commodore Saltonstall and the Massachusetts Conspiracy of 1779*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002.
- Forbes, Esther. *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942, 1969.
- Goss, Elbridge Henry. *The Life of Colonel Paul Revere*. Two Volumes. Boston: Joseph George Cupples, Publisher, 1891. Reprint. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- Greenburg, Michael M. *The Court-Martial of Paul Revere – A Son of Liberty and America's Forgotten Military Disaster*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2014.
- Labaree, Benjamin W. *The Boston Tea Party*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1964. Reprint. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1981.
- Lincoln, William Ensign. *Some Descendants of Stephan Lincoln, Edward Larkin, Thomas Oliver, Michael Pearce, Robert Wheaton, George Burrill, John Porter, John Ayer*. New York, 1930.
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth. "Paul Revere's Ride." *Atlantic Monthly* 7, no. 39 (January, 1861): 27–29.
- Marcosson, Isaac F. *Copper Heritage – The Story of Revere Copper and Brass, Inc.* New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1955.
- Martello, Robert. *Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn – Paul Revere and the Growth of American Enterprise*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.
- Nielsen, Donald M. "The Revere Family." *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Volume 145 (1991): 291–316.
- Olsen, Donald W. and Russell L. Doescher. "Paul Revere's Midnight Ride." *Sky and Telescope* 83, no. 4 (April, 1992): 437–440.
- Paul Revere, Artisan, Businessman and Patriot – The Man Behind the Myth*. Boston: Paul Revere Memorial Association, 1988.

Paul Revere's Boston: 1735–1818. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1975.

- Paul Revere's Three Accounts of His Famous Ride*. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1968.
- Steblecki, Edith J. *Paul Revere and Freemasonry*. Boston: Paul Revere Memorial Association, 1985.
- Stickney, Edward and Evelyn Stickney. *The Bells of Paul Revere, his sons and grandsons*. Bedford, MA, 1976.
- Tourtellot, Arthur B. *Lexington and Concord*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc. (Norton Library), 1963.
- Triber, Jane. *A True Republican – The Life of Paul Revere*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.
- _____. *From History to Folklore*. Boston: Paul Revere Memorial Association, 1981.
- Weisberger, Bernard A. "Paul Revere, the Man, the Myth, and the Midnight Ride." *American Heritage* 28, no. 3 (April 1977): 24–37.
- Zobel, Hiller. *The Boston Massacre*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc. (Norton Library), 1970.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

We would love to hear from you! Do you have questions about Paul Revere that we didn't answer? For more information on Paul Revere's life and work, or to find out how to visit his home, become a member of the "Friends of Paul Revere," or make a donation, write, call, or visit:

Paul Revere Memorial Association
19 North Square
Boston, MA 02113
(617) 523-2338
www.paulreverehouse.org

INSIDE
BACK
COVER

BACK
COVER