

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere (and Willam Dawes)!

Two lamps were placed in the tower of the North Church by its sexton on April 18, 1775 at the request of Paul Revere. The British were heading to Concord by crossing the Charles River. The poetic license taken eighty-five years after the event by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow mythologized the facts of April 18, 1775. However, the night was exciting enough.



Paul Revere was the son of a Huguenot silversmith named Apollos Rivoire who anglicized the family name to Revere. Perhaps, this refined surname gave Longfellow his direction in lionizing the patriot. However, it was two men who rode out that night on the same mission, Revere and William Dawes. The two set off a relay of at least 40 other riders to alert the Minutemen and warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock the British were on the move.

At the time, Paul Revere was a well-known silversmith and even dabbled in dentistry and print making. From 1775 to 1779, he printed Massachusetts currency and one bill in 1775 for New Hampshire. Below is an image Revere made of the Boston Massacre that took place in 1770.



Revere was extremely political and was friends with Dr. Joseph Warren who was one of the founders of the Sons of Liberty. Warren regularly used men like Revere and Dawes as express couriers. As a Son of Liberty, Paul Revere was one of the few verified participants to have dressed as a Mohawk, climbed aboard the Dartmouth and spilled the tea in the Boston Tea Party in December 1773. The other two ships that lost their cargo that night were the Eleanor and the Beaver.

The Boston Mechanics was a side group Revere helped form from the Sons of Liberty. It consisted of a group of artisans who helped organize the people and establish an intelligence network to monitor the British army. This is how Revere learned that the British were planning to go to Concord to destroy the patriots' ammunition stores. It was also thought the British were going to arrest Samuel Adams and John Hancock in Lexington on their way. The latter turned out to be false.

The operation had been well-organized by Dr. Warren. In fact, a few days before, Paul Revere made a test ride warning the colonists that the movement was imminent a few days earlier. The Minutemen were prepared to be prepared. Dawes was to take the lower route out of Boston and come up through what was called Boston Neck. Revere rowed silently across the mouth of the Charles River, mounted a waiting horse and took the upper route. Almost immediately he was chased by British soldiers but rerouted himself and got away. He met up with Dawes in Menotomy (now Arlington) and the two carried on together soon being joined by a third rider named Samuel Prescott.

The three men were confronted by British soldiers. Dawes and Prescott escaped but Revere was captured for questioning before being released. Revere warned the soldiers that they were too late, when they reached Concord there would be a militia waiting for them. “The shot heard round the world” at the Battles of Lexington and Concord marked the official beginning of the American Revolution.

Paul Revere died in 1818. William Dawes died in 1799. Dr. Joseph Warren died at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775—just two months after the “Midnight Ride.” The British soldiers had put him a mass grave. However, Warren was finally given a proper burial when Paul Revere was able to identify his body because of the false teeth he had once made for him.

Read [Paul Revere's Account](#) here, and take a look at a [Map of Revere and Dawe's rides](#) here.

The Dean House will be putting two candles in our upper window to commemorate this important event in United States' history. Be sure to look for them, and stop by on April 18th at 7pm when we'll be having a patriot singalong on the front porch!