



## **Boston Massacre Facts**

- The Boston Massacre took place on the evening of March 5, 1770
- The location of the incident was in front of the Customs House on King Street.
- The heavy military presence in the town that led to the incident was the result of British enforcement of the Townshend Acts of 1767.
- The British soldiers (redcoats) had arrived in Boston on September 28, 1768.
- There were 4,000 British troops and about 20,000 residents at the time of the incident.
- Two famous men led the different factions. Thomas Hutchinson was the royal governor and Samuel Adams was a patriot and the man of the people.
- The day before the incident on March 4, 1770 dozens of Bostonians had clashed with British troops at John Gray's Ropewalk in the Fort Hill district.
- Private Matthew Kilroy had argued with Samuel Gray at Gray's Ropewalks. Private Kilroy would later be convicted of manslaughter of Samuel Gray
- On the snowy evening of March 5, 1770 a British soldier called Hugh White became involved in a confrontation with some citizens. Hugh White struck a young boy called Edward Garrick with the butt of his rifle for insulting a British officer called Captain Goldfinch.
- Private White called for assistance, which was answered by Captain Thomas Preston and 8 British soldiers.
- A redcoat called Private Montgomery was hit in the face by a stick and fired into the crowd killing a black man called Crispus Attucks.
- Other shots were fired. Private Kilroy shot and killed a man called Samuel Gray.
- Altogether 5 civilians were killed. Their names were [Crispus Attucks](#), Samuel Gray, Patrick Carr, Samuel Maverick and James Caldwell.
- Six other civilians were wounded during the incident.
- The soldiers involved were arrested - all pleaded not guilty.
- The victims were hailed as heroes and buried together in the Granary Burying Ground.
- 12,000 Bostonians joined the funeral procession that made symbolic trip to the [Liberty Tree](#).
- The Governor William Hutchison instigated an investigation and reported his findings to London.

- A town meeting held at Faneuil Hall appointed their own committee to investigate the incident. Samuel Adams was the chairman of the committee who insisted that the British troops left the town.
- The British troops left the town and stayed at Castle William which was an old fort in Boston Harbor.
- The term 'Boston Massacre' was coined by Samuel Adams
- John Adams, the cousin of Samuel Adams who would become the second American President, was appointed to defend the Soldiers at the trial together with Josiah Quincy Jr.
- The prosecutors were Robert Treat Paine and Samuel Quincy.
- Captain Thomas Preston and eight of his men were brought to trial on November 27, 1770.
- The 8 British soldiers accused of murder were tried separately from their officer Captain Preston.
- The names of the 8 soldiers were Corporal William Wemms, Private Hugh Montgomery, Private James Hartigan, Private William McCauley, Private Hugh White, Private Matthew Kilroy, Private William Warren and Private John Carroll.
- Captain Thomas Preston was found not guilty and returned to England on December 2, 1770. He awarded £200 in compensation for the troubles he had endured during the incident.
- Two of the troops, Kilroy and Montgomery, were found guilty of manslaughter.
- Nine days after their trial, on December 14, 1770, they returned to court for sentencing - which should have been the mandatory death penalty.
- They both entered a claim, and were granted, the 'benefit of clergy' to avoid the death sentence. They were released but were first branded on their thumb with the letter "M" for manslaughter.
- Samuel Adams and Paul Revere used the incident as political propaganda to stir the patriots in the other colonies.
- The incident was followed by the Tea Act in 1773 followed by the [Boston Tea Party](#) in 1774.