

## PAUL REVERE

*Paul Revere is one of the main historical characters depicted by Esther Forbes in Johnny Tremain. He advises Johnny on his work as a silversmith. He lives near the Laphams, and knows who Johnny is, even though Johnny is a mere apprentice. Paul Revere is also a member of the Boston Observers, and is among the actual leaders in the Boston Tea Party. Later in the novel, it is Paul Revere, along with William Dawes, who makes the trip to Lexington on horseback to warn Sam Adams and John Hancock that “the British are coming.”*

*Born in 1735 of French Protestant ancestry, Revere married twice and had sixteen children, several of whom died young. Paul Revere was certainly one of the stalwart members of the Long Room Club, as well as the North Caucus. He was also a Mason, and a member of the St. Andrew’s Lodge, which met at the Green Dragon. Unlike most other members of the Club, he was not a Harvard graduate. Nor was his occupation either professional or mercantile. Revere was a skilled silversmith, who would have been considered a tradesman. In addition to working with silver, he also applied silverwork techniques to copper plate, manufactured and fitted false teeth, produced engravings, designed and printed the first Continental currency, produced the first official seal for the colonies, designed the Massachusetts State Seal, manufactured church bells, manufactured gunpowder, and discovered a way to roll sheet copper. Paul Revere was certainly a busy man.*

*In his “spare time,” Paul Revere was an extremely active member of the Sons of Liberty, and not merely as a planner. He was one of the few leaders who actually took part in the Boston Tea Party, even though he knew the danger if he were captured. His famous ride to Lexington (he was captured by the British before he could arrive at Concord) was only one of several. As Johnny Tremain tells us, Revere went to Portsmouth before the British troops could get there. He was the official courier for the Massachusetts Provincial Assembly to the Continental Congress in 1774 with the “Suffolk Resolves” in hand, and returned to Boston, with messages and promises from the Congress.*

*After the war, Revere continued to work, both in his many business enterprises as well as helping expand various charities and his beloved Masons. When he died in 1813, his contemporaries remembered him for his leadership, his business successes, his technological advances, and his service during the era of the Revolution. His “midnight ride” wasn’t considered to be very important, but Longfellow’s poem changed that.*

**Letter from Azor Orne to Paul Revere, 10 November 1775**

Watertown Nov.<sup>r</sup> 10.<sup>th</sup> 1775.

Mr. Paul Revere

Sir

As you are to [bund?] to Philadelphia, where powder mills are Erected, and the manufacturing powder, carried on with considerable dispatch, and advantage, you are desired to make the following Enquiries, and posses yourself as far as you can of the knowledge of making powder.

Vizt. Obtain an Exact plan of the best constructed powder mill  
The Quantity of powder that may be made in One day in said mill  
The Expence of the powder mill, and  
Wether a person can be obtained, who is well skilled in manufacturing powder, and the Expence of said man per anno.

You are also desired to apply to the Hono. John Hancock, Esqr. and the other members, of the Continental Congress belonging to this colony who are desired to assist you in this Enquiry.

By Order of the Comm.  
appointed to Enquire into  
& report the best and most  
Expeditious methods of Erecting  
powder mills and manuft.  
powder in this colony.

A. Orne per order

Azor Orne to Paul Revere, 10 November 1775, Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society.

**Paul Revere's Deposition, fair copy, c. 1775**

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Paul Revere of Boston, in the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay in New England; of Lawfull Age, doth testify an say; that I was sent for by Docr. Joseph Warren, of said Boston, on the evening of the 18th of April, about 10 oClock; When he desired me, "to go to Lexington, and inform Mr Samuel Adams, and the Honl. John Hancock Esqr. that there was a number of Soldiers, composed of Light troops, & Grenadiers, marching to the bottom of the Common, where was a number of Boats

to receive them; it was supposed, that they were going to Lexington, by the way of Cambridge River, to take them, or go to Concord, to distroy the Colony Stores." I proceeded immeditly, and was put across Charles River and landed near Charlestown Battery, went in town, and there got a Horse, while in Charlestown, I was informed by Richd. Devens Esqr. that he mett that evening, after Sun sett, Nine Officers of the Ministeral Army, mounted on good Horses, & Armed, going towards Concord; I sett off, it was then about 11 oClock, the Moon shone bright, I had got almost over Charlestown Common, towards Cambridge, when I saw two Officers on Horse-back, standing under the shade of a Tree, in a narrow part of the roade. I was near enough to see their Holsters, & cockades; One of them Star-ted his horse towards me, the other up the road, as I supposed, to head me should I escape the first. I turned my horse short, about, and rid upon a full Gallop for Mistick Road, he followed me about 300 yardes, and finding He could not catch me, returned: I proceeded to Lexington, thro Mistick, and alarmed Mr. Adams and Col. Hancock. After I had been there about half an hour Mr. Daws arrived, who came from Boston, over the neck; We set off for Concord, & were overtaken by a young Gentlm. named Prescott, who belonged to Concord, & was going home; when we had got about half way from Lexington to Concord, the other two, stopped at a House to awake the man, I kept along, when, I had got about 200 yards a head of them, I saw two officers as before, I called to my company to come up, saying here was two of them, (for I had told them what Mr. Devens told me, and of my being stoped) in an instant I saw four of them, who rode up to me, with thier pistols in their hands, said G-d d-n you stop. if you go an Inch further, you are a dead Man, immeditly Mr. Prescott came up we attempted to git thro them, but they kept before us, and swore if we did not turn in to that pasture, they would blow our brains out, (they had placed themselves opposite to a pair of Barrs, and had taken the Barrs down they forced us in, when we had got in, Mr. Prescott said put on. He took to the left, I to the right towards a Wood, at the bottom of the Pasture, intending, when I gained that, to jump my Horse & run afoot; just as I reached it, out started six officers, siesed my bridle, put thier pistols to my Breast, ordered me to dismount, which I did: One of them, who appeard to have the command there, and much of a Gentleman, Asked me where I came from; I told him, he asked what time I left it; I told him, he seemed surprised, said Sr. may I crave your name, I answered my name is Revere, what said he Paul Revere; I answered yes; the others abused much; but he told me not to be afraid, no one should hurt me; I told him they would miss their Aim.

He said they should not, they were only awaiting for some Deserters they expected down the Road: I told him I knew better, I knew what they were after; that I had alarmed the country all the way up, that their Boats, were catch'd a ground, and I should have 500 men their soon; one of them said they had 1500 coming; he seemed surprised and rode off, into the road, and informed them who took me, they came down immeditly on a full gallop, one of them

(whom I since learned was Major Mitchel of the 5th Regt. Clap'd his Pistol to my head, and said he was going to ask me some questions, if I did not tell the truth, he would blow my brains out. I told him I esteemed my self a Man of truth, that he had stopped me on the high way, & made me a prisoner, I knew not by what right; I would tell him the truth; I was not afraid; He then asked me, the same questions that the other did, and many more, but was more particular; I gave him much the same Answers; he then Ordered me to mount my horse, they first searched me for pistols. When I was mounted, the Major took the reins out of my hand, and said by G-d Sr. you are not to ride with reins I assure you; and gave them to an officer on my right, to lead me, he then Ordered 4 men out of the Bushes, & to mount their horses; they were Country men which they had stopped who were going home; then ordered us to March. He said to me

"We are now going to wards your friends, and if you attempt to run, or we are insulted, we will blow your Brains out." When we had got into the road they formed a Circle, and ordered the prisoners in the centre, & to lead me in the front. We rid to wards Lexington, a quick pace; They very often insulted me calling me Rebel &c. &c. after we had got about a mile, I was given to the Serjant to lead, he was Ordered to take out his pistol, (he rode with a hanger,) and if I run, to execute the Majors Sentence; When we got within about half a Mile of the Meeting house, we heard a gun fired; the Major asked me what it was for, I told him to alarm the country; he ordered the four prisoners to dismount, they did, then one of the officers dismounted and cutt the Bridles, and Saddels, off the Horses, & drove them away, and told the men they might go about their business; I asked the Major to dismiss me, he said he would carry me, lett the consequence be what it will; He then Orderd us to march. When we got within sight of the Meeting-House, we heard a Volly of guns fired, as I supposed at the tavern, as an Alarm: the Major orderd us to halt, he asked me how far it was to Cambridge, and many more questiones, which I answered; he then asked the Serjant, if his horse was tired, he said yes; he Ordered him to take my horse; I dismounted, the Serjant mounted my horse; they cutt the Bridle & saddle of the Serjants horse, & rode off, down the road. I then went to the house were I left Messrs. Adams & Hancock, and told them what had happined; their friends advised them to go out of the way; I went with them, about two miles a cross road: after resting my self, I sett off with another man to go back to the Tavern, to enquire the News; when we got there, we were told the troops were, within two Miles. We went into the Tavern to git a Trunk of papers, belonging to Col. Hancock, before we left the House, I saw the Ministeral Troops from the Chamber window. We made haste, & had to pass thro' our Militia, who were on a green behind the Meetinghouse, to the number as I supposed, about 50 or 60, I went thro' them; as I passed I heard the commanding officer speake to his men to this purpose, "Lett the troops pass by, and don't molest them, with out

The [They] being first." I had to go a cross Road, but had not got half Gun shot off, When the Ministeral Troops appeared in sight,

behinde the Meeting House; they made a short halt. When one gun was fired, I heard the report, turned my head, and saw the smoake in front of the Troops, they imeaditly gave a great shout, ran a few paces, and then the whole fired. I could first distinguish Iregular firing, which I supposed was the advance Guard, and then platoons: at this time I could not see our Militia, for they were covered from me, by a house at the bottom of the Street, and further saith not.

Paul Revere

Paul Revere, Deposition [Fair copy], c. 1775, Special Collections Revere, Massachusetts Historical Society.

### **Letter from Paul Revere to Jeremy Belknap, c. 1798**

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Dear Sir,

Having a little leisure, I wish to fullfill my promise, of giving you some facts, & Anecdotes, prior to the Battle of Lexington, which I do not remember to have seen in any history of the American Revolution.

In the year 1773 I was imployed by the Select men of the Town of Boston to carry the Account of the Destruction of the Tea to New-York; & afterwards, 1774, to Carry their dispatches to New-York and Philadelphia for Calling a Congress; & afterwards to Congress, several times.\* *[This asterisk points to a note in the left margin written by Jeremy Belknap: "Let the narrative begin here." ]* In the Fall of 1774 & Winter of 1775 I was one of upwards of thirty, cheifly mechanics, who formed our selves in to a Committee for the purpose of watching the Movements of the British Soldiers, and gaining every intelegence of the movements of the Tories. We held our meetings at the Green-Dragon Tavern. We were so carefull that our meetings should be kept Secret; that every time we met, every person swore upon the Bible, that they would not discover any of our transactions, But to Messrs. Hancock, Adams, Doctors Warren, Church, & one or two more. About November, when things began to grow Serious, a Gentleman who had Conections with the Tory party, but was a Whig at heart, aquainted me, that our meetings were discovered, & mentioned the identical words that were spoken among us the Night before. We did not then distrust Dr. Church, but supposed it must be some one among us. We removed to another place, which we thought was more secure: but here we found that all our transactions

were communicated to Governor Gage. (This came to me through the then Secretary Flucker; He told it to the Gentleman mentioned above). It was then a common opinion, that there was a Traytor in the provincial Congress, & that Gage was possessed of all their Secrets. (Church was a member of that Congress for Boston.) In the Winter, towards the Spring, we frequently took Turns, two and two, to Watch the Soldiers, By patrolling the Streets all night. The Saturday Night preceding the 19th of April, about 12 oClock at Night, the Boats belonging to the Transports were all launched, & carried under the Sterns of the Men of War. (They had been previously hauld up & repaired). We likewise found that the Grenadiers & light Infantry were all taken off duty.

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From these movements, we expected something serious was [ . . . ] be transacted. On Tuesday evening, the 18th, it was observed, that a number of Soldiers were marching towards the bottom of the Common. About 10 o'Clock, Dr. Warren Sent in great haste for me, and begged that I would imediately Set off for Lexington, where Messrs. Hancock & Adams were, and acquaint them of the Movement, and that it was thought they were the objets. When I got to Dr. Warren's house, I found he had sent an express by land to Lexington - a Mr. Wm. Daws. The Sunday before, by desire of Dr. Warren, I had been to Lexington, to Mess. Hancock and Adams, who were at the Rev. Mr. Clark's. I returned at Night thro Charlestown; there I agreed with a Col. Conant, & some other Gentle men, ~~in Charleston~~, that if the British went out by Water, we would shew two Lanthorns in the North Church Steeple; & if by Land, one, as a Signal; for we were apprehensive it would be difficult to Cross the Charles River, or git over Boston neck. I left Dr. Warrens, called upon a friend, and desired him to make the signals. I then went Home, took my Boots & Surtout, and went to the North part of the Town, where I had kept a Boat; two friends rowed me across Charles River, a little to the eastward where the Somerset Man of War lay. It was then young flood, the Ship was winding, & the moon was Rising. They landed me on Charlestown side. When I got into Town, I met Col. Conant, & several others; they said they had seen our signals. I told them what was Acting, & went to git me a Horse; I got a Horse of Deacon Larkin. While the Horse was preparing, Richard Devens, Esq. who was one of the Committee of Safty, came to me, & told me, that he came down the Road from Lexington, after Sundown, that evening; that He met ten British Officers, all well mounted, & armed, going up the Road. I set off upon a very good Horse; it was then about 11 o'Clock, & very pleasant. After I had passed Charlestown Neck, & got nearly opposite where Mark was hung in chains, I saw two men on Horse back, under a Tree. When I got near them, I discovered they were British officer. One tried to git a head of Me, & the other to take me. I turned

my Horse very quick, & Galloped towards Charlestown neck, and then pushed for the Medford Road. The one who chased me, endeavoring to Cut me off, got into a Clay pond, near where the new Tavern is now built. I got clear of him,

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and went thro Medford, over the Bridge, & up to Menotomy. In Medford, I awaked the Captain of the Minute men; & after that, I alarmed almost every House, till I got to Lexington. I found ~~Mrs.~~ Messrs. Hancock & Adams at the Rev. Mr. Clark's; I told them my errand, & inquired for Mr. Daws; they said he had not been there; I related the story of the two officers, & supposed that He must have been stopped, as he ought to have been there before me. After I had been there about half an Hour, Mr. Daws came; ~~after~~ we refreshid our selves, ~~we~~ and set off for Concord, to secure the Stores, &c. there. We were overtaken by a young Docter Prescott, whom we found to be a high Son of Liberty. I told them of the ten officers that Mr. Devens mett, & that it was probable we might be stoped before we got to Concord; for I supposed that after Night, they divided them selves, and that two of them had fixed themselves in such passages as were most likely to stop any intelegence going to Concord. I likewise mentioned, that we had better allarm all the Inhabitents till we got to Concord; the young Doctor much approved of it, & said, he would stop with either of us, for the people between that & Concord knew him, & would give the more credit to what we said. We had got nearly half way. Mr Daws & the Doctor stoped to allarm the people of a House: I was about one hundred Rod a head, when I saw two men, in nearly the same situation as those officers were, near Charlestown. I called for the Doctor & Daws to come up; - ~~were two & we would have them~~ in an Instant I was surrounded by four; - they had placed themselves in a Straight Road, that inclined each way; they had taken down a pair of Barrs on the North side of the Road, & two of them were under a tree in the pasture. The Docter being foremost, he came up; & we tryed to git past them; but they being armed with pistols & swords, they forced us in to the pasture; -the Docter jumped his Horse over a low Stone wall, and got to Concord.

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I observed a Wood at a Small distance, & made for that. When I got there, out Started Six officers, on Horse back, and orderd me to dismount;-one of them, who appeared to have the command, examined me, where I came from,

& what my Name Was? I told him. ~~it was Revere, he asked if it was Paul? I told him yes~~ He asked me if I was an express? I answered in the affirmative. He demanded what time I left Boston? I told him; and added, that their troops had caught aground in passing the River, and that There would be five hundred Americans there in a short time, for I had alarmed the Country all the way up. He immediately rode towards those who stoppd us, when all five of them came down upon a full gallop; one of them, whom I afterwards found to be Major Mitchel, of the 5th Regiment, Clapped his pistol to my head, called me by name, & told me he was going to aske me some questions, & if I did not give him true answers, he would blow my brains out. He then asked me similar questions to those above. He then orderd me to mount my Horse, after searching me for arms. He then orderd them to advance, & to lead me in front. When we got to the Road, they turned down towards Lexington. When we had got about one Mile, the Major Rode up to the officer that was leading me, & told him to give me to the Sergeant. As soon as he took me, the Major orderd him, if I attempted to run, or any body insulted them, to blow my brains out. We rode till we got near Lexington Meeting-house, when the Militias fired a Voley of Guns, which appeared to alarm them very much. The Major inquired of me how far it was to Cambridge, and if there were any other Road? After some consultation, the Major

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Major Rode up to the Sargent, & asked if his Horse was tired? He ~~told~~ answered him, he was - (He was a Sargent of Grenadiers, and had a small Horse) - then, said He, take that man's Horse. I dismounted, & the Sargent mounted my Horse, when they all rode towards Lexington Meeting-House. I went across the Burying-ground, & some pastures, & came to the Revd. Mr. Clark's House, where I found Messrs. Hancock & Adams. I told them of my treatment, & they concluded to go from that House towards Woburn. I went with them, & a Mr. Lowell, who was a Clerk to Mr. Hancock. When we got to the House where they intended to stop, Mr. Lowell & I my self returned to Mr. Clark's, to find what was going on. When we got there, an elderly man came in; he said he had just come from the Tavern, that a Man had come from Boston, who said there were no British troops coming. Mr. Lowell & my

self went towards the Tavern, when we met a Man on a full gallop, who told us the Troops were coming up the Rocks. We afterwards met another, who said they were close by. Mr. Lowell asked me to go to the Tavern with him, to get a Trunk of papers belonging to Mr. Hancock. We went up Chamber; & while we were getting the Trunk, we saw the British very near, upon a full March. We hurried to wards Mr. Clark's House. In our way, we passed through the Militia. There were about 50. When we had got about 100 Yards from the meeting-House the British Troops appear on both Sides of the Meeting-House. In their

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~~In their~~ Front was an Officer on Horse back. They made a Short Halt; when I saw, & heard, a Gun fired, which appeared to be a Pistol. Then I could distinguish two Guns, & then a Continual roar of Musquetry; When we made off with the Trunk.

As I have mentioned ~~Dr.~~ Church, perhaps it might not be disagreeable to mention some Matters of my own knowledge, respecting Him. He appeared to be a high son of Liberty. He frequented all the places where they met, Was encouraged by all the leaders of the Sons of Liberty, & it appeared he was respected by them, though I knew that Dr. Warren had not the greatest affection for him. He was esteemed a very capable writer, especially in verse; and as the Whig party needed every Strength, they feared, as well as courted Him. Though it was known, that some of the Liberty Songs, which We composed, were parodied by him, in favor of the British, yet none dare charge him with it. I was a constant & critical observer of him, and I must say, that I never thought Him a man of Principle; and I doubted much in my own mind, whether He was a real Whig. I knew that He kept company with a Capt. Price, a half-pay British officer, & that He frequently dined with him, & Robinson, one of the Commissioners. I know that one of his intimate acquaintance asked him why he was so often with Robinson and Price? His answer was, that He kept Company with them on purpose to find out their plans. The day after the Battle of Lexington, I ~~came across~~ met him in Cambridge, when He shew me some blood on his stocking, which he said spirted on him from a Man who was killed near him, as he was urging the Militia on. I well remember, that I argued with myself, if a Man will risque his life in a Cause, he must be a Friend to that cause; & I never suspected him after, till He was charged with being a Traytor.

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The same day I met Dr. Warren. He was President of the Committee of Safety. He engaged me as a Messenger, to do the out of doors business for that committee; which gave me an opportunity of being frequently with them.

The Friday evening after, about sun set, I was sitting with some, or near all that Committee, in their room, which was at Mr. Hastings's House at Cambridge. Dr. Church, all at once, started up - Dr. Warren, said He, I am determined to go into Boston tomorrow - (it set them all a staring) - Dr. Warren replied, Are you serious, Dr. Church? they will Hang you if they catch you in Boston. He replied, I am serious, and am determined to go at all adventures. After a considerable conversation, Dr. Warren said, If you are determined, let us make some business for you. They agreed that he should go to get medicine for their & our Wounded officers. He went the next morning; & I think he came back on Sunday evening. After He had told the Committee how things were, I took him a side, & inquired particularly how they treated him? he said, that as soon as he got to their lines on ~~the~~ Boston Neck, they made him a prisoner, & carried him to General Gage, where He was examined, & then He was sent to Gould's Barracks, & was not suffered to go home but once.

After He was taken up, for holding a Correspondence with the British, I came a Cross Deacon Caleb Davis;-we entered into Conversation about Him;-He told me, that the morning Church went into Boston, He (Davis) received a Bilet for General Gage-(he then did not know that Church was in Town)-When he got to the General's House, he was told, the General could not be spoke with, that He was in private with a Gentle man; that He waited near half an Hour,-When General Gage & Dr. Church came out of a Room, discoursing together, like

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like persons who had been long acquainted. He appeared to be quite surprized at seeing Deacon Davis there; that he (Church) went where he pleased, while in Boston, only a Major Caine, one of Gage's Aids, went with him. I was told by another person whom I could depend upon, that he saw Church go in to General Gage's House, at the above time; that He got out of the Chaise and went up the steps more like a Man that was acquainted, than a prisoner. Sometime after, perhaps a Year or two, I fell in company with a Gentleman who studied with Church -in discoursing about him, I related what I have mentioned above; He said, He did not doubt that He was in the

Interest of the Brittish; & that it was He who informed Gen. Gage  
That he knew for Certain, that a Short time before the Battle of Lexing  
ton, (for He then lived with Him, & took Care of his Business & Books)  
He had no money by him, & was much drove for money; that  
all at once, He had several Hundred New Brittish Guineas;  
and that He thought at the time, where they came from.

Thus, Sir, I have endeavoured to give you a  
Short detail of some matters, of which perhaps no person but  
my self have ~~have~~ documents, or knowledge. I have men  
tioned some names which you are acquainted with: I wish  
you would Ask them, if they can remember the Circumstances  
I alude to.

I am, Sir, with every Sentment  
of esteem,  
Your Humble Servant,  
Paul Revere

Paul Revere to Jeremy Belknap, ca. 1798, Special Collections Revere, Massachusetts Historical Society.

### **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Paul Revere's Ride*, 1863**

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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.

He said to his friend, "If the British march  
By land or sea from the town to-night  
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch  
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,--  
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;  
And I on the opposite shore will be  
Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her murrings lay  
The Somerset, British man-of-war;  
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar  
Across the moon like a prison bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,  
Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,  
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,  
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the sombre rafters, that round him made  
Masses and moving shapes of shade,--  
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town,  
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,  
The watchful night-wind, as it went  
Creeping along from tent to tent,  
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"  
A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread  
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent

On a shadowy something far away,  
Where the river widens to meet the bay,--  
A line of black that bends and floats  
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
Now he patted his horse's side,  
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,  
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,

As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.  
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height  
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,  
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

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,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.

He heard the crowing of the cock,  
And the barking of the farmer's dog,  
And felt the damp of the river fog,  
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look upon.

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 meadows 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.  
So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm, --  
A cry of defiance and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear

The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Paul Revere's Ride*, from *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863).

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*A View of the Year 1765:*

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