



***The Boston
Massacre***

March 5, 1770

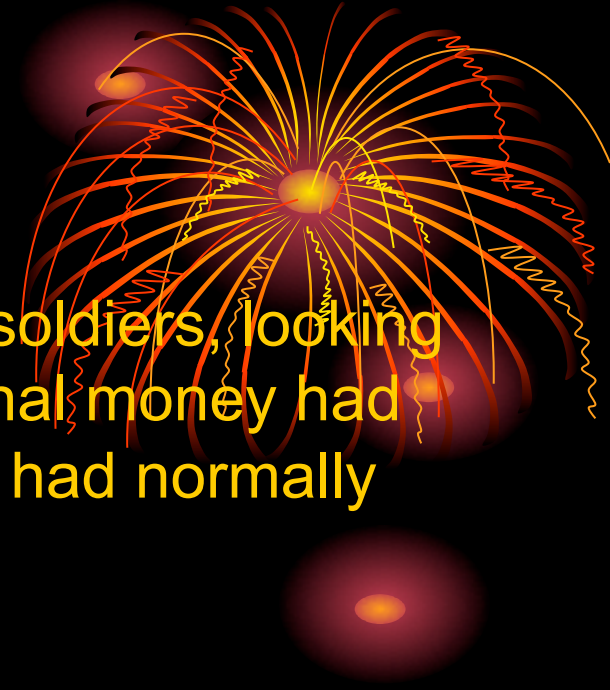
The Back Story....



- British troops were sent to Boston in 1768 to help officials enforce the Townshend Acts, a series of laws passed by the British Parliament....
- On June 10, 1768, customs officials seized the *Liberty*, a sloop owned by leading Boston merchant John Hancock, on allegations that the ship had been involved in smuggling. This caused the Boston colonists to increase their protests & riots against British officials in the colony
- In October of 1768, British troops began arriving in Boston.

The Back Story...

- In the following months, these British soldiers, looking to fill the time and make some additional money had begun taking on some of the jobs that had normally been done by the colonists.
- Naturally, this was upsetting to the colonists...

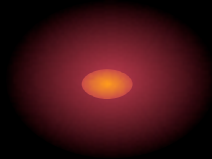
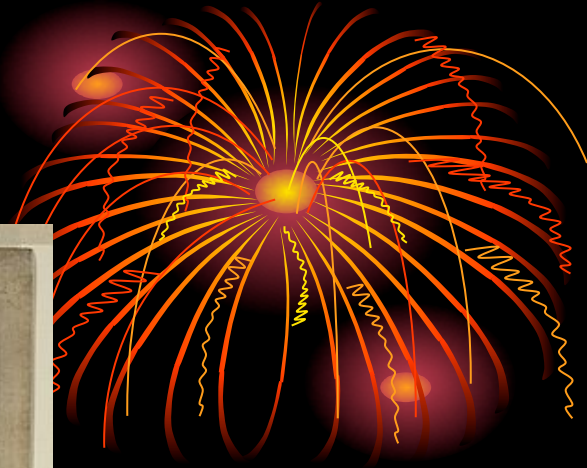


The Incident....



- The event began in the early evening of March 5, 1770 when Boston colonists began to yell insults at a British officer
- The yelling escalated into throwing rocks & snowballs at the soldiers
- A British officer, Captain Thomas Preston, called in additional soldiers, and these too were attacked.
- The soldiers fired into the mob, killing 3 on the spot (a black sailor named Crispus Attucks, ropemaker Samuel Gray, and a mariner named James Caldwell),
- 8 others were wounded, two of whom died later (Samuel Maverick and Patrick Carr).

Paul Revere's Etching



The Aftermath...

- A town meeting was called demanding the removal of the British and the trial of Captain Preston and his men for murder.
- At the trial, John Adams and Josiah Quincy II defended the British, eventually leading to their acquittal and release (they fired in self-defense).
- John Adams (Cousin of *Sons of Liberty* founder Samuel Adams) believed that the colonists behavior (“mob mentality”) was not the proper way to achieve independence from Britain
- Later, two of the British soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter. (They had their thumbs branded with an “M”)



The Impact...

- The outcome of the trials was met in a generally “calm” manner - this is probably due to the evidence at the trials that the soldiers had not fired until they were attacked.
- Another important factor was the withdrawal of the troops from Boston immediately after the "Massacre."
- Newspapers jumped on the term “Massacre” to describe the event to help generate support for the colonists’ growing independence movement
- The "Massacre" served as anti-British propaganda for Boston radicals and elsewhere heightened American fears of standing armies.

