

Revering Revere¹

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.

So begins the famous 1861 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem commemorating Paul Revere's Ride to warn of the approaching British Regulars. Longfellow made Paul Revere a household name. However, Revere did not travel alone. Two other patriots, William Dawes and Samuel Prescott, also rode that night. These men rode in harm's way to awaken the Minutemen and warn them of the approaching danger.

Paul Revere was born on January 1, 1735. He was a silversmith and engraver by profession. He engraved the depiction of the Boston Massacre in 1770, stirring the patriots' emotions against the British. He was a devout Christian and a patriot leader. As a young man, he adapted his family's coat of arms and added a Latin motto, "Fight for Your Country." He displayed the attitude of his fellow Americans in their sacrificial spirit for one another and the cause of Liberty. Paul wrote:

³Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others.²

As the British continued levying taxes on the American colonies, Revere joined Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty. He made a medal for each Son and engraved "Sons of Liberty" on it. The Sons used the medals and passwords to identify each other. He was part of the Sons of Liberty Boston Tea Party.

Revere was a cloak-and-dagger man. He was one of the earliest American spies involved with an intelligence network called the Mechanics. These men covertly engaged the British with a warning system, surveillance, and Intel gathering.

On the evening of April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren, a Son of Liberty, assigned Mr. Revere a particular task. He was to ride to Lexington and deliver the news that the British Regulars were on the march. Revere warned Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were visiting Pastor Jonas Clark in the church parsonage, that the British would arrest them. The British planned to remove military supplies from both Lexington and Concord.

Paul Revere began his ride at 11 PM and was nearly captured on the outskirts of Charlestown. He altered his route, riding through Medford. He stealthily rode to patriot homes to wake them with the news without drawing attention to himself from any British troops scattered along the Massachusetts countryside.

Revere reached Pastor Clark's house at about midnight. After giving them the news and refreshing himself with food and drink, William Dawes arrived. Dawes had also been warning the Minutemen. The two proceeded for Concord to continue their advanced warning. They met the patriot Dr. Samuel Prescott and traveled toward Concord. However, they were intercepted by the British. Dawes and Prescott escaped, but the British forced Revere into a pasture. There, they threatened and questioned him. After a few minutes, they took his horse and left him standing in the field.

¹ Much of this is from Williams, Pat, and Jim Denney. *Revolutionary Leadership*. Grand Rapids, Revell, 2021, pp. 63-70.

² Philippians 2:3-4 (NKJV)

It was April 19, 1775, and Paul walked back to Lexington as the Minutemen assembled on the town green. They lined up in two rows and waited for the British soldiers to arrive. Forty Americans lined up against hundreds of British while another thirty scattered through the town.

Captain John Parker knew they were outgunned and, after a short while, ordered his militia to disperse but not to give up their weapons. As the Americans began to leave the field, a shot was fired. The British troops began shooting at the Minutemen from forty yards. Their commander could not regain control of his forces. Some colonials returned fire, and the War for Independence was on.

The British chased the Americans off the Green with a bayonet charge and then through the town. They regrouped, fired a victory volley, shouted "Huzzah," and marched to Concord. They killed eight American patriots while one of their soldiers was slightly wounded. Adams and Hancock had time to escape and continue their work for Liberty.

Let's close with the last two stanzas of Longfellow's poem:

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 farmyard 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.

Keep The Light *of a Determined Spirit* Burning!
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