

## CHAPTER

## 5



# Connecting With . . . Culture

## Main Idea: Growing Tensions With Britain



### Paul Revere and the Boston Massacre

Can a picture change history? Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre, shown here, may not have caused the American Revolution. It certainly played a major role in whipping up colonial fury against the British, though.

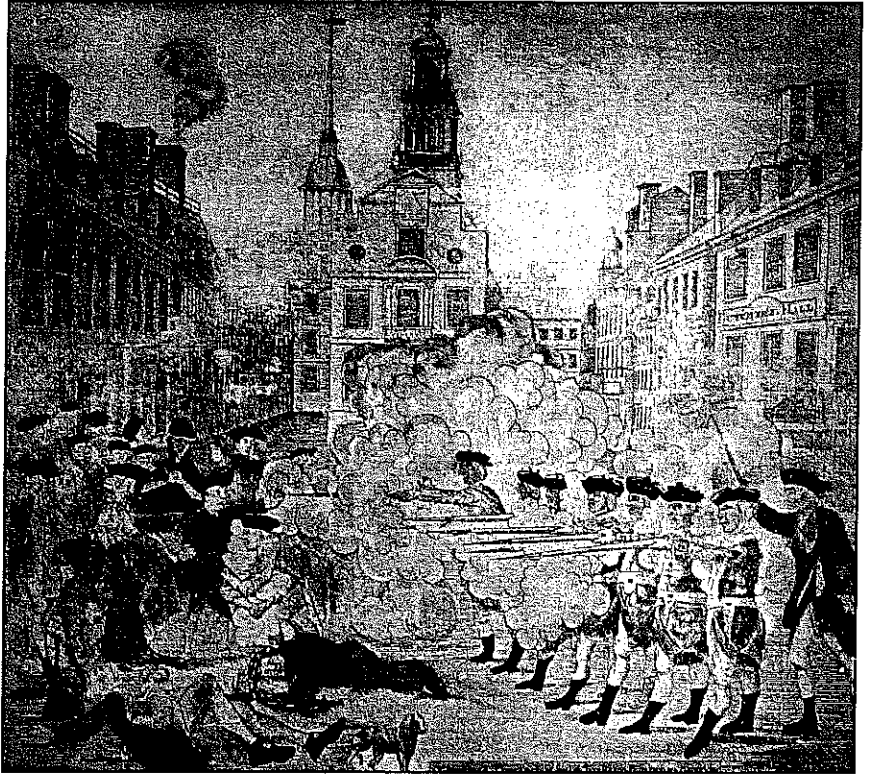
In the engraving, Revere purposely distorted events. At right, for example, is a British officer, Captain Thomas Preston. Sword raised, he is ordering his men to fire. At left, unarmed and orderly citizens look on helplessly. A few distressed Patriots pick up their dead.

This scene, however, did not really take place.

According to eyewitnesses, Captain Preston never gave an order to shoot. The redcoats, faced by an unruly and threatening mob, acted on their own and opened fire.

Revere altered other details, too. He set the bloody scene in front of a building labeled Butcher's Hall. In fact, the event took place in front of the Boston customs house. Finally, at the bottom of the engraving, Revere lists seven dead. In truth, five Patriots, not seven, were killed. Revere wrote a poem to go with the engraving. It, too, sought to stir anti-British sentiment.

Within days, copies of Revere's engraving appeared on walls all over Massachusetts. The "Bloody Massacre," as the engraving was



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

entitled, aroused cries of rage. Revere's vivid but distorted portrayal created a rallying point for colonists who resented British rule.

1. Name three ways that Revere's engraving distorted events to stir up anti-British feeling.
2. Would it be easier or harder today for someone to distort the truth the way Revere did? Explain why.