**The Boston Massacre Ms. Chudy**

**The American Point of View:**  **From an anonymous source:**

**Reader One:**

THE HORRID MASSACRE IN BOSTON, PERPETRATED IN THE EVENING OF THE FIFTH DAY OF MARCH, 1770, BY SOLDIERS OF THE TWENTY-NINTH REGIMENT WHICH WITH THE FOURTEENTH REGIMENT WERE THEN QUARTERED THERE; WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF THINGS PRIOR TO THAT CATASTROPHE

**Reader Two:**

In passing to this station the soldiers pushed several persons with their bayonets, driving through the people in so rough a manner that it appeared they intended to create a disturbance. This occasioned some snowballs to be thrown at them which seems to have been the only provocation that was given

**Reader Three:**

The said party (British soldiers) was formed into a half circle; and within a short time after they had been posted at the Custom House, began to fire upon the people. Captain Preston is said to have ordered them to fire, and to have repeated that order. One gun was fired first; then others in succession and with deliberation, till ten or a dozen guns were fired; or till that number of discharges were made from the guns that were fired. By which means eleven persons were killed and wounded, as above represented.

**The British point of view:**

**Excerpt from the report of Captain Thomas Preston:**

**Reader four:**

...In my way there I saw the people in great commotion, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops. In a few minutes after I reached the guard, about 100 people passed it and went towards the custom house where the king's money is lodged. They immediately surrounded the sentry posted there, and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their vengeance on him. I was soon informed by a townsman their intention was to carry off the soldier from his post and probably murder him...

**Reader Five:**

The mob still increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare…

**Reader Six:**

They then asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no, by no means, observing to them that I was advanced before the muzzles of the men's pieces, and must fall a sacrifice if they fired ...While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers having received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired, on which turning to and asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of the use of it, which blow had it been placed on my head, most probably would have destroyed me.

**Reader Seven:**

On this a general attack was made on the men by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them, by which all our lives were in imminent danger, some persons at the same time from behind calling out…-why don't you fire…

**Reader Eight:**

On my asking the soldiers why they fired without orders, they said they heard the word fire and supposed it came from me. This might be the case as many of the mob called out fire, fire, but I assured the men that I gave no such order; that my words were, don't fire, stop your firing. In short, it was scarcely possible for the soldiers to know who said fire, or don't fire, or stop your firing.

**Outcome:**

Four Americans died and a fifth died four days later. Six were wounded.

Paul Revere used the incident to stir up the public's anti-British feelings. His made color prints from his engraving and distributed them around Boston. The prints did not paint an accurate picture of the event and in the modern age would be labeled as political propaganda.

Trial: Captain Preston and eight soldiers were jailed and tried for murder. They were defended by John Adams (who later became the second President of the United States) and all but two were acquitted on grounds of self defense. Those two were convicted of Manslaughter, but claimed benefit of clergy. This means that they were allowed to make penance instead of being executed. To insure that they never could use benefit of clergy again they were both branded on the thumbs. The new country hoped to show that even these hated British soldiers could receive a fair trial, and a just punishment.

Source: http://www.historywiz.com/bostonmassacre.htm