

**Paul Revere's Ride - Part I**

**Lead: Listen my children and you shall hear, how Longfellow confused the ride of Paul Revere.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Among American poets few have matched the popularity of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. His works have been required for reading and memorization over many generations of school children.**

**One of Longfellow's most famous and beloved poems was his descriptive**

**narrative of a famous event during the early days of the American Rebellion against England, *Paul Revere's Ride (1860)*. Unfortunately, according to essayist Richard W. O'Connell, on many of the important parts of that evening's excursion, the poet got his meter better than his facts.**

**The political atmosphere of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the Spring of 1775 was highly charged. On April 18th, Governor Gage, hearing there was a colonial powder store in Concord, dispatched several hundred British troops to capture it. Paul Revere and William Dawes went to warn of the British approach.**

**In the poem Revere is portrayed as waiting on the Charlestown side of Boston harbor for a signal hung by a friend in the tower of Old North Church. "One if by land, two if by sea." The truth is Revere was still in Boston when the lanterns were hoisted. The signals were intended for patriots in Charlestown who were supposed to spread the alarm. To check on them the Revere was rowed by two friends across about the time the British were getting in their boats. He found to his shock that the men on the Charlestown side were confused by the elaborate signals and were doing nothing. He borrowed a horse and he was off. Next time: Paul Revere spills the beans.**

# **At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## **Resources**

**Arvin, Newton. *Longfellow: His Life and Work*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, Publishers, 1963.**

**Fischer, David Hackett. *Paul Revere's Ride*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994.**

**O'Connell, Richard W. "'On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five..,' Longfellow Didn't Know the Half of it," *Smithsonian* 4 (1, April, 1973), 72-7**

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