

Paul Revere's Ride - Part II

Lead: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow captured the excitement and import of Paul Revere's famous ride, but on that night's events the poet did not get his facts quite right.

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

Content: Sometime in the evening of April 18, 1775, Paul Revere discovered that his best laid plans were falling apart. It was discovered that the British had dispatched several hundred troops to capture colonial ammunition stored at Concord, Revere

had pre-arranged a signal to fellow patriots waiting for news of the British route so the alarm could be spread. When Revere went over to Charlestown to check whether word had been sent, he discovered that his men were confused by "one if by land, two if by sea," and no one was doing anything. Revere borrowed a horse and was off.

According to essayist Richard O'Connell, Longfellow failed to mention that Revere had already covered the same ground two days before and the ammunition in Concord had, for the most part, been moved out of harm's way. Revere's trip on the eighteenth was in large measure, to warn two patriot leaders hiding in

Lexington, John Hancock and Samuel Adams. After a quick bite to eat at the Hancock house, Revere then joined by William Dawes, set out for the seven mile ride to Concord.

On the way they were blocked by six British officers and Revere was arrested. A pistol was placed against his head and the Great Patriot told everything, but he escaped during the night and got back to Lexington in time to help Adams and Hancock get away. In this last escapade, he was quite possibly on foot since the British had confiscated his horse. Revere never made it to Concord, but his ride inspired Longfellow to pen some of the most heroic, if slightly inaccurate, verse in American literature.

**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.**

**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), 72-78.

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