

Document 2:

Boston Massacre by Alonzo Chappel



Document 3: Captain Thomas Preston's Deposition

Historical Context

Captain Thomas Preston was commander of the 29th British Regiment the evening of the Boston Massacre. He and the other troops there that day would be arrested and tried for murder. Captain Preston describes the events of that evening.

Excerpts:

On Monday night about 8 o'clock two soldiers were attacked and beat... About 9 some of the guard came to and informed me the town residents were assembling to attack the troops...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 customhouse where the King's money is held. They immediately surrounded the guard posted there, and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their vengeance on him.

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, fire and be damned, fire g-d damn you, we know you dare not' and much more such language was used. At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob... endeavoring all in my power to persuade them and retire peaceably...

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.

Document 4: Robert Goddard's Deposition

From The Trial of Captain Preston: Key Evidence

The Soldiers came up to the building and the Officer told them to place themselves and they formed a half moon. The Captain told the Boys to go home lest there should be murder done. They were throwing Snow balls. Did not go off but threw more Snow balls. The Captain was behind the Soldiers. The Captain told them to fire. One Gun went off.

A Sailor struck the Captain. He thereupon said damn your bloods fire think I'll be treated in this manner. This Man that struck the Captain came from among the People who were seven feet off. I saw no person speak to him. I was so near I should have seen it. After the Captain said Damn your bloods fire they all fired one after another about 7 or 8 in all, and then the officer told them to load again. He stood behind all the time. Mr. Lee went up to the officer and called the officer by name Captain. Preston.

I saw him coming down from the Guard behind the Party. I went to jail the next day being sworn for the Grand Jury to see the Captain. Then said pointing to him that's the person who gave the word to fire. He said if you swear that you will ruin me forever. I was so near the officer when he gave the word fire that I could touch him. His face was towards me. He stood in the middle behind the Men. I looked him in the face. He then stood within the circle. When he told 'em to fire he turned about to me. I looked him in the face.