Mini-Essay:
The Boston Massacre
The Boston Massacre, in many ways, was a tragedy, yet was crucial to the development of America as a nation. It was a misrepresentation of the concept of cruelty in the sense that an entire nation was judged through the rash acts of a few soldiers. The Massacre clearly illustrated the cause and effect of rising tensions between a nation and its colonies.

On March 5, 1770, hostilities exchanged between a civilian and a British soldier resulted in a large mob that gradually swelled to a riot of over 50 men. The brawl escalated from exchanges of words to physical violence. Ice, snowballs, and sticks were thrown. However, the clash became serious when a soldier was knocked to the ground by a club. In the confusion, a musket was fired into the air, which was mistaken by the other soldiers as an order to fire. When the dust cleared, the devastating results were clear: five Bostonians were killed. At that moment, the course of the future for America changed; it contributed to better the United States in the sense that it strengthened the union between the peoples of the colonies, severed any bonds between the colonists and Britain, and ignited the spark for the American Revolution.

The population of Boston reacted collectively; the event was widespread. “… Three men were laid dead on the spot and two more struggling for life…” appeared all the Boston Gazette, and the news travelled rapidly throughout the colonies. On the day of the funeral, all shops in Boston were closed, church bells echoed relentlessly in the solemn town, and thousands of people gathered to remember the five men who died. Never had the colonies been so united against what they perceived to be their common enemy: Britain. At that instant, the colonies became a nation – working, thinking, and grieving together.

As a result of the shooting, discontentment increased tenfold. All lingering trust between the patriots and Britain dissipated the second that the first shot was fired. Almost immediately, a horde of people flooded the streets, demanding for revenge. The public, outraged, named the event a Slaughter of the Innocents, and later, gave it the name known in today’s history as the Boston Massacre. The incident quickly became a symbol of British tyranny and its attempt to enforce its will on the Americans through brutality. This was a crucial step forward for the peoples of the colonies, as they began to wonder whether they were truly subjects of such a cruel nation, or subjects of their own nation: America.
Vicious attacks against the British government and their policies swiftly followed. Numerous articles were published, each antagonizing the soldiers involved in the crisis. Details were omitted, and vigorously exaggerated accounts appeared.

“They took place by the custom house and, continuing to push to drive the people off pricked some in several places, on which they were clamorous and, it is said, threw snow balls. On this, the Captain commanded them to fire; and more snow balls coming, he again said, damn you, fire, be the consequence what it will!”

Perhaps the most famous publication would be Paul Revere’s engraving, depicting the captain standing behind the soldiers and encouraging them to fire at a peaceful crowd. This, of course, was not the case; the mass could hardly be considered peaceful, and the actual scene was chaotic – not nearly as structured as the engraving. However, the purpose was clear: to fuel people’s anger against the British and promote the idea of independence. The Boston Massacre was a precursor the final resolution to the problem: the American Revolution.

A series of misleads and confusion never proved to be more useful to the founding of the United States than this particular event. For years afterwards, until it was replaced by the celebrations of July 4, the Boston Massacre was annually commemorated. It strengthened the bonds between the citizens like nothing other, and separated them further from British hold. In addition, the widespread propaganda that the event generated ultimately led to the founding of the nation. Had the Boston Massacre not happened, and had it not provided the spark that fuelled the Revolution, is there the possibility that the United States could still be part of the British monarchy today?

---

Bibliography


