

The redcoats came to Boston in 1765. They said they were there to keep order. But their real aim was to make the people pay taxes to England.

Year after year the soldiers stayed. They lived in the homes of Boston people. They made the people feed them and wait on them. And the people of Boston got madder and madder. From time to time street fights took place.

At last, on the night of March 5, 1770, real trouble broke out. It started over a small matter. One of the soldiers had knocked down a young boy. The boy's cries brought people to the spot. Chances are that at some other time nothing would have come of this. But tempers were short in those days.

Soon the great bell of the meetinghouse rang out. It warned the town that something had happened. Crowds rushed to see what was wrong.

On the way they armed themselves with rocks and clubs. But those weapons were not of much use. For when they arrived they found soldiers with guns. They stopped, not sure what to do.

Then a voice was heard above the crowd. "Let's get rid of the soldiers! Cut them down!" It was the angry voice of Crispus Attucks.

Attucks was a tall Negro who worked on the Boston docks. He had seen how heavily the British taxed goods. He knew how unfair it was. And he had good reason to hate those who mistreat others. He had once been a slave.

The people were moved by his words. They began to fight for their freedom.

The redcoats had been told not to shoot if there was trouble. But a few fired into the crowd. The blood of Americans colored the snow.

Crispus Attucks was the first to fall. Samuel Gray came to his aid, but he too was killed. Three more men rushed in to help, and were wounded. One of them died that night, one the next day. The third man died eight days after that.

The five men were buried in one grave. Later a statue was put up to honor them. They were the first to give their lives for American freedom.

The fight in which they died was called the Boston Massacre. And it was the last straw. The people of Boston would take no more. They demanded that the soldiers be tried. Two soldiers were found guilty. They were made to leave the army. And so the people of Boston won the first round in what was to become the American Revolution.

## CHECK YOUR READING

1. The real reason the redcoats were in Boston was to
  - A keep order in the town
  - B make the people pay taxes
  - C guard against Indian attack
2. The redcoats lived in
  - A Boston homes
  - B army tents
  - C English ships
3. The March 5 fight started when a soldier knocked down a
  - A horseback rider
  - B young boy
  - C street sign
4. The people of the town gathered when they heard a
  - A gun go off
  - B woman scream
  - C bell ring
5. The weapons the people carried were
  - A knives and guns
  - B bows and arrows
  - C rocks and clubs
6. When Crispus Attucks was younger, he was a
  - A soldier
  - B slave
  - C teacher
7. The people began to fight when they
  - A saw the soldiers' guns
  - B found a store of weapons
  - C heard Attucks' words
8. The redcoats killed a total of
  - A two men
  - B five men
  - C nine men
9. The men who died were honored with a
  - A statue
  - B medal
  - C parade
10. After the fight the people of Boston demanded that the
  - A soldiers be tried
  - B king be fined
  - C governor be killed