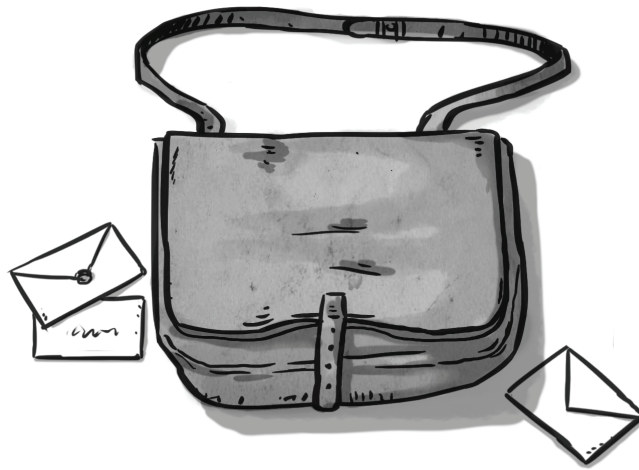


Adventures on the American Frontier

MAIL RIDERS

Part One

Paul Revere, Cross-Country Carrier



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It was rainy and cold that Thursday in December of 1773. The three ships in the harbor at Boston rocked gently, their sails folded. The *Dartmouth*, the *Beaver*, and the *Eleanor* had been there so long that they seemed to be part of the gray, misty harbor itself.



Guards walked back and forth along the waterfront, collars pulled up close against the rain and the chill, waiting for the long day to end. As the gray turned to black, gusts of wind swept the mists away. Looking up, the guards saw the half-moon riding above the chimney pots of the city, with ragged clouds chasing one another across its face.

“Something’s got to happen soon,” one of the guards said as he met another at the end of his march. “You can feel it in the air. Word should have reached that meeting by



now to say whether or not those ships can take that load of tea back to England.”

Just then, from back in the city, the guards heard a wild cry.

“News must have come!” said the other guard. The men listened and watched, but the shouting quickly died into a thud of running feet. In a few minutes, the city was quiet.

Little by little, the stiff shoulders of the guards relaxed. Nothing was happening after all.

Once again the guards huddled into their coat collars, trying to keep warm. They did not see the men with painted and soot-smearred faces, ragged clothing, and feathers stuck in their hair, who slipped up behind them in the dark and tied their hands and feet.

They saw the men running to the docks then, swinging hatchets and axes. Soon every rowboat to be found was full of men moving out toward the three British ships.

The sound of splintering wood came to



them, for on the ships, the men, who were dressed to look like Native Americans, were hauling wooden boxes up from the hold. They split open the boxes and dumped the dry tea leaves inside them over the side into the sea. The Boston Tea Party was in full swing.

The men of Boston had been angry ever since the three ships had arrived, for they had been ordered to pay a new tax on English tea but were not allowed to buy tea that came from anywhere except England.