

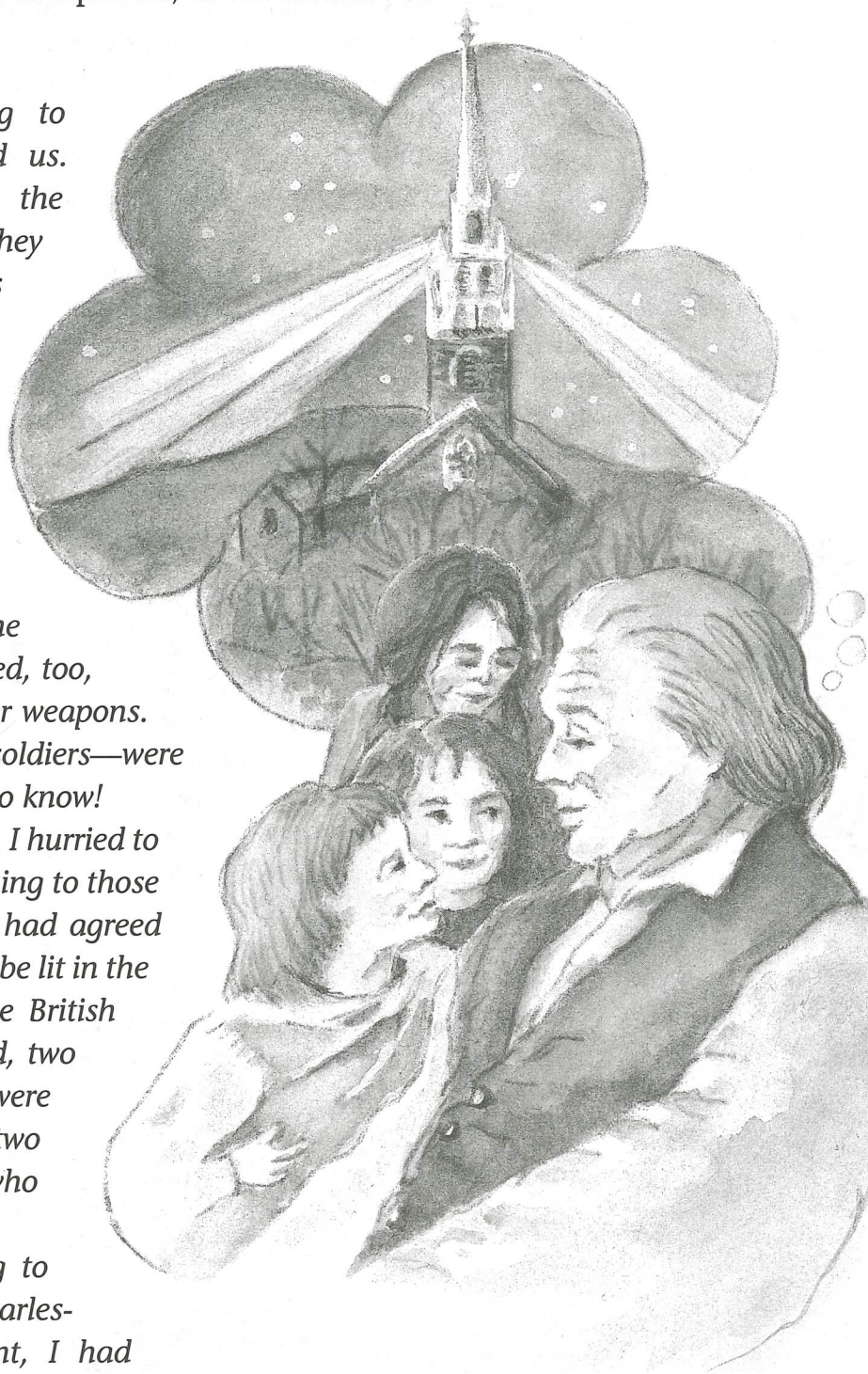
The Famous Ride of Paul Revere

Paul Revere loved his children and grandchildren. (He had at least 51 grandchildren!) He called them his “little lambs.” Imagine that you are sitting with Paul Revere and some of those grandchildren, hearing about the famous ride of April 18, 1775. Listen!

The British were going to march, our spies told us. Soon, they would cross the Charles River. From there they could capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who were in Lexington planning the fight against the British. Then they could march on to capture our patriot weapons, stored in Concord. Adams and Hancock had to be warned. The townspeople had to be warned, too, so that they could defend our weapons. The Regulars—the British soldiers—were coming, and people needed to know!

I had a plan already. First, I hurried to Christ Church, to give a warning to those waiting across the river. We had agreed on a code: one lantern would be lit in the church steeple window if the British were to leave Boston by land, two lanterns would be lit if they were to leave by the river. Light two lanterns, I told my friend who waited in the steeple.

Two friends were waiting to row me across the river to Charlestown. But in the excitement, I had



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forgotten my spurs! Then I noticed that my little dog had followed me. I wrote a quick note to your grandmother, tied it around the dog's neck, and sent the dog home. The dog returned shortly—carrying my spurs.

Again we were about to start, when we realized that we had not brought a cloth to muffle the squeak of the oars. One of the men had a sweetheart who lived nearby. He whistled at her window. I heard whispers and a rustle of clothing. Then the lady tossed down her petticoat! It was still warm as we wrapped it around the oars.

In Charlestown, my friends met me with a horse. I set off immediately. Once, two soldiers on horseback chased me. But they were no match for the fine horse I rode. In Medford, I woke up the captain of the militia, our patriot soldiers. Then I raised the alarm at every house from there to Lexington: "The Regulars are out! The Regulars are out!" I cried.

I arrived in Lexington around midnight. Sam Adams and John Hancock had been staying there with Hancock's relatives. I warned them that the British soldiers were coming. I had only a short time to rest my horse. Then I set off for Concord to alarm the people there. William Dawes, another Boston messenger, came with me. Soon we met up with Samuel Prescott, a local doctor.

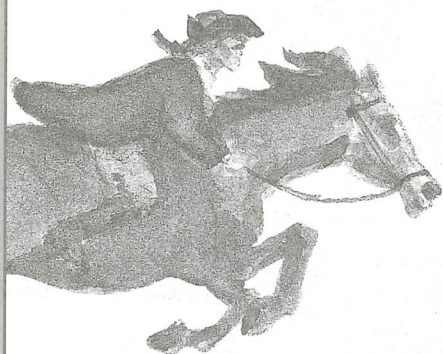
Paul Revere's Horse

Paul Revere was a fine horseman, but he didn't ride his own horse on the night of April 18, 1775. John Larkin, a wealthy patriot, loaned Revere his finest, fastest horse. Even after all these years, we still are not sure of the horse's name. Revere simply called it "a very good horse." Larkin family history tells of a brown mare named Brown Beauty. Was that the horse Revere rode, a horse with the speed and endurance of an Arabian stallion?

Revere reached Lexington safely, but on the road to Concord, he and the horse were ambushed by a British patrol.

"I know what you are after and have alarmed the country . . .," Revere said.

Eventually, the Redcoats took Paul Revere's horse, and he had to walk the rest of the way. The horse was never returned. Paul Revere's borrowed horse was the first prisoner of the Revolution.



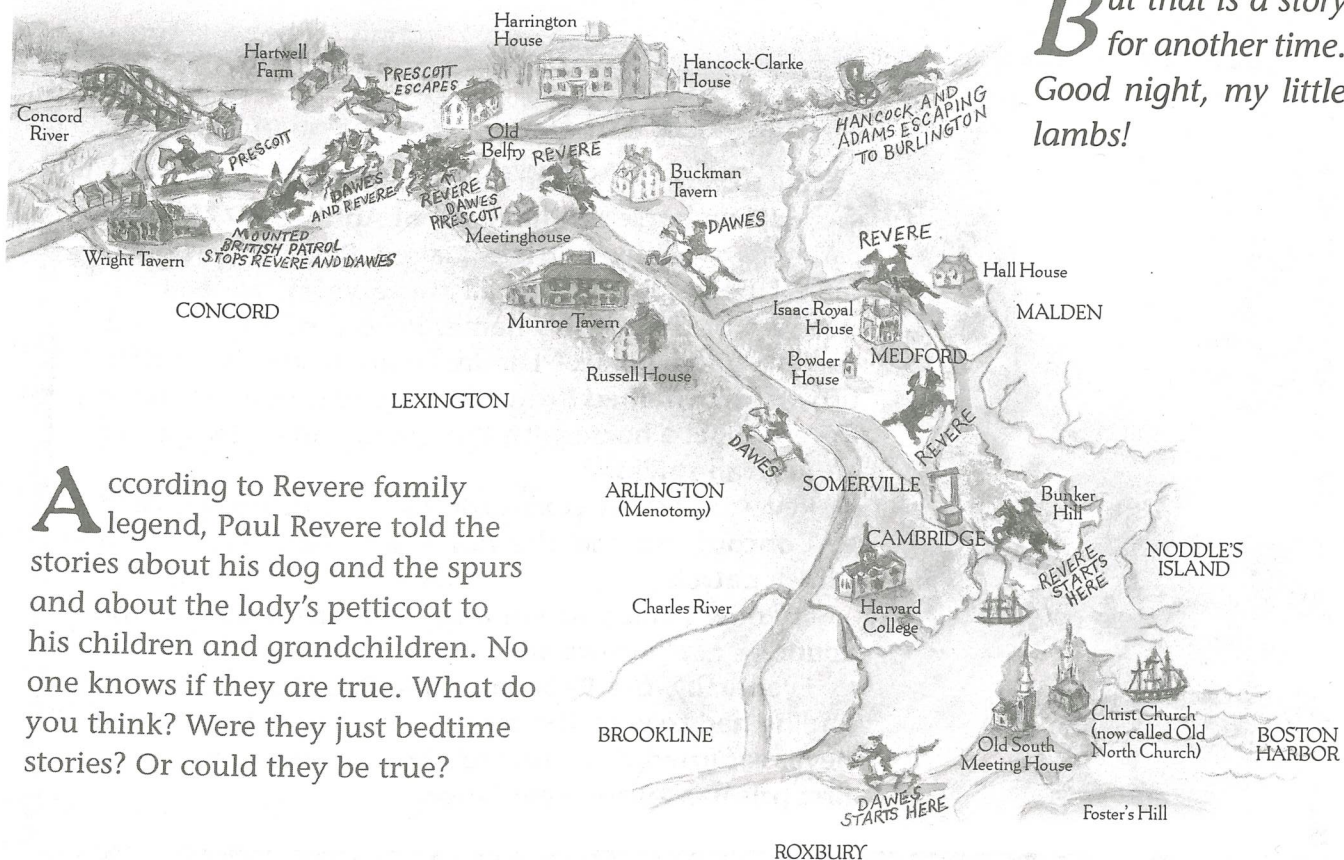
We had gotten about halfway to Concord. Suddenly, I saw a group of officers ahead. In an instant, we were surrounded. The officers ordered us into a pasture. One of my companions jumped his horse over a stone wall. The other got away, too. But I was caught.

A British officer pointed a pistol at me and began to question me. I told him that I knew what they were after. "I have alarmed the country," I said. "There will be 500 Americans here soon!" I could see that my words surprised them.

The officers marched me back toward Lexington, all the while calling me a rebel. Just as we neared the town, we heard gunshots. "What was that for?" one of them asked. I answered that it was to alarm the town. Well, this worried them so much that they let me go—but not before taking that fine horse!

I trudged back to Lexington and found Sam Adams and John Hancock preparing to leave. Mr. Hancock asked me to fetch a trunk he had forgotten. That was what I was doing when I saw the British troops march in, all red coats and brass buttons! Not minutes later, I heard a shot, then two. Then there was a roar of gunfire. I had just heard the first shots of the American Revolution!

But that is a story for another time. Good night, my little lambs!



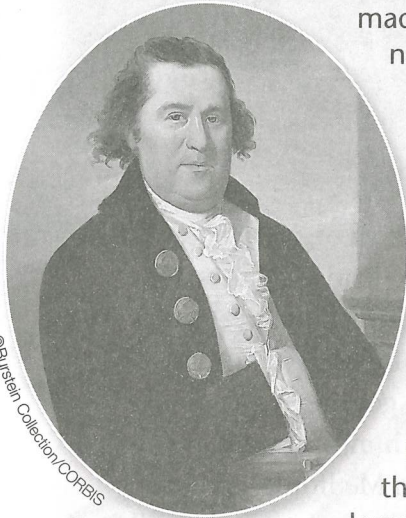
According to Revere family legend, Paul Revere told the stories about his dog and the spurs and about the lady's petticoat to his children and grandchildren. No one knows if they are true. What do you think? Were they just bedtime stories? Or could they be true?

They Rode, Too

It's true that Paul Revere has gotten most of the credit for the famous April 1775 ride. But William Dawes and Samuel Prescott played important roles, too.

William Dawes

Joseph Warren contacted me on that famous April night. He instructed me to take the land route out of Boston, and to warn the towns of Roxbury, Cambridge, and Menotomy [now called Arlington]. Then I was to travel on to Lexington and warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock of the British threat. I had made a few rides for the freedom fighters before, but my face was not as well known as that of Paul Revere, so Warren thought my chances of being recognized by the British were less. Actually, I had befriended some of the British guards, since I traveled frequently, and some of them allowed me to slip through the checkpoints. I am also, if I say so myself, a fair actor, and several times I pulled on a big hat and changed my voice to sound like a drunkard or a country farmer. By 12:30 AM, I had reached Lexington and joined Revere. We continued on toward Concord. We met up with young Dr. Samuel Prescott and rode together until a British patrol stopped us. We all tried to break free, and in the confusion, I yelled out in as many different voices and accents as I could that I had captured some of the American Regulars! In this way I was able to escape. I lost my watch and my horse, but I was able to walk back to Lexington.



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Samuel Prescott

I had just been to visit my fiancée and was enjoying a quiet ride home on that warm April night. Suddenly two men came galloping toward me out of the darkness. I learned that it was Paul Revere and William Dawes, and that they had been sent to warn the citizens and **Regulars*** that the British troops were on the move. Well, since I was local to the area and knew all the roads well, I offered my help to spread the word. When the British patrol intercepted us, I leaped over a nearby wall and made my escape. I made my way back to the main road and continued on, warning each house that I passed. I made it to the town of Concord—the only one of the three of us who did—and warned them as well.



North Wind Picture Archives

* Regulars were paid professional soldiers who fought for the colonies.