Effect Of Boston Massacre On The American Revolution

From the beginning of history, the events that take place have been brought about by something, these events have caused emotions to lift and tensions to come to a snapping point. The Boston Massacre was definitely not an exception; America was feeling all the pressure of what were doing to them and was completely ready to break away from the rule. However, the separation between the two parties could not and would not come with a dispute from both sides. The did not feel the American's had the right to separate from them under rule. Although, the Americans were fed up with taxes and regulations being placed upon them and wanted to break free from their political tyrants. The Boston Massacre is what would be the vocal point in what we would recognized, as the Revolutionary War in American history and where the first-place that lives would be lost for the cost of our liberty. Even though a lot of lives were lost that day, there were eight soldiers that were mendaciously accused of murder when in all reality, it was clearly self-defense. As People who are placed in a situation where their lives are threatened, they certainly have the right to defend themselves. History certainly does not have the right to accuse any event that history may have considered that the enemy was guilty when they are fighting for their lives.

March 5, 1770, was a day that made it into the history books. A mob broke out on King Street. military was a common site to see and the Redcoats felt cornered. Guns were loaded, shots were fired, killing five American colonists in the crowd. This incident is known today as the Boston massacre. The men who fired the guns were put on trial for murder, even though it was only self defense. John Adams fought for those men and worked to prove their innocence. John Adams was a known colonist, and brother of Samuel Adams, leader of the sons of liberty. Adams put his name on the line in order to defend those he felt were innocent, no matter where they came from. The men on trial were Captain Preston and eight soldiers under his command. The public wanted all of men involved to be persecuted, and they made their opinions obvious. This case was intended to be held in the Massachusetts Superior Court, however, The Chief Justice Hutchinson removed himself from the case. Then John Adams became the defense attorney. The trial took place on American soil, and did not end in favor of the Bristish. John Adams was able to save the lives of these men by reducing their sentence and avoiding the death penalty, but he wasn't able to save their reputations. These men were branded as murderers, and no matter the countless claims of self defense, it couldn't be undone.

The people of Boston were starting to become overwhelmed by, tensions were rising, anxiety was high, it was only a matter of time before the pressure would cause something or someone to cave. At the time Boston could have been compared to a tea kettle, sitting on the stove, about to reach its boiling point. The Boston Massacre as history shows us, was the explosion in history that led Americans and to the American Revolution. However, the events that led to the Boston Massacre, put soldiers at a disadvantage that day. The Army had occupied the city, but they were just following the orders given to them by Parliament. The overlooked the pressure that was on the colonists, and they didn't prepare for any kind of mutiny. Unfortunately for them, they should have.

Boston had withstood the life with soldiers before the Boston Massacre in 1770 for two years. The Army landed on the shores of Boston in October of 1768. The citizens of the city had

endured the everyday life of the soldiers as they rose in the morning, trained throughout the day and went back to their tents in the evening. Not only did they see them every day they communicated with them in town when the soldiers came into the town to buy goods and utilized services within the city limits of Boston. A very famous citizen of Boston, Paul Revere, described what he saw as the soldier came into the city. Revere said, “They (the) formed and marched with insolent parade, drums beating, fifes playing and colors flying, up King Street. Each soldier has received 16 rounds of powder and ball.” Troops of the 29th, unable to get lodging in town, put up tents on the common. The smell from their latrines drifted throughout the little city on every breeze. The population of Boston had increased from 20,000 to 24,000 people in a matter of just a few months. To some that probably doesn’t seem like much, but this is an increase of 20% to their city. With such a large arrival of people over just a short period, the city was overwhelmed in attempting to lodge such a group. Even though the Quartering Act of 1767 was repealed, soldiers still lived in many of the homes of the colonists. Despite the tents, and the many homes being vacated, there was still a need for more housing. The british eventually took over the common. The Boston Common was established in 1634 and was an everyday part of Bostonian life. The commons were used over the years as a place to graze cattle, punish prisoners, and in the late 1700’s a place of recreation for the citizens of Boston. Now army was coming in and taking it over and turning it into an encampment, destroying a historical landmark of Massachusetts history. This really puts in perspective of why the Boston residents grew so tired of, even after two years. At this point, there were no established or organized state militias to defend the cities or colonies. The colonists felt they had to defend themselves and protest seemed the way in which they could voice their opinion. However, their protesting would lead to the death of an overlooked young American who was the first to die in the colonists fight for liberation from Britain.

Those within Boston attempted to keep both army and goods from the Mother Country from coming into not only the colony but also, their city. Merchants would only sell items that either were grown or manufactured within the colonies not imported from England. This caused a lot of turmoil between the colonists and british, and between the colonists themselves. By refusing to buy imported goods, supplies became limited, and frustration became abundant. Some of the store owners did not feel this was fair because many in the colonies still enjoyed merchandise from Britain, and the merchants wanted to cash in on this want from the public. If these merchants were caught or it was rumored that they were selling or had imported items from Britain it would cause many to protest or boycott their business. One such merchant in Boston was Theophilus Lillie who owned a local grocery store in the town. Lille did not support the idea that merchants could not import items into the colony. He felt it was his right to bring in the goods needed to meet the demand of his merchants. He responded to an article in the Boston Chronicle telling the residents of Boston he did not plan to comply the laws of boycotting merchandise. Lille stated, “it always seemed strange to me that people who contend so much for civil and religious liberty should be so ready to deprive others of their natural liberty”. Lille saw no reason why he should not be able import from Britain or wherever he wanted to bring in the products he needed for his store. Lille went on to explain that he in fact never consented to any law that prevented him from importing nor had he elected a government official to execute those orders. He did this in order to exercise and demonstrate that he will stand up for his own rights. Knowing that he would lose business and possibly friends, Lille continued to export his goods for himself and his loyal merchants no matter the risk.

Lille protested these laws and continued to import and sell items that were not regulated by those in Boston. This enraged the residents of Boston and to stop him, they decided to hold a

protest outside of his establishment to shame him and change his in mind about selling these imported items. A group of local citizens took up signs and headed to Lillie’s store to protest his Loyalist views on February 22, 1770. The group grew larger and louder and this concerned Lillie for the safety of his family and store. One of Lillie's workers Ebenezer Richardson realized the situation was getting out of hand and attempted to put an end to the riot. Windows began to break as rocks were thrown of which several struck both Richardson and Lille. One of the projectiles struck Richardson wife in the head. Richardson now fearful of his family’s life retreated into the store for a weapon. He grabbed his musket and fired several shots into the rioting crowd. Richardson had no idea what this fateful decision would lead to as he fired into the crowd. On the receiving in of his musket was an eleven-year-old German boy named Christopher Seider. Christopher came from a poor German family, but worked for a nearby widow in Boston where he was ahead to after leaving school that day. Christopher noticed the commotion in front of Lillie’s store and decided to join in with what he probably thought to be fun. He was struck two times in the chest and once in the leg before hitting the ground. That night young Christopher drew his last breath, but his death become a vocal point, behind what Bostonians would anchor their anger toward troops. This young boy’s death tipped the scales of tension that was coming to a destructive point in Boston. Over 2,000 people attended the funeral of Christopher Sieder not only to pay their respects, but also to show government they were fed up with this overbearing government that they had dealt with for these many years. A revolution was coming, and more blood was going to be shed on American soil. No one knew just how long this would be, but it would not be long before others would die because of this fight for liberty.

Young Sieder’s role in the American Revolution may have seemed insignificant to most, but it may have played a major part inciting one of the most infamous events in the Revolutionary War. Within eleven days of Sieder’s death the town of Boston has become a hotbed of hatred among Regulars and American Colonist. The had established themselves in the town for the last two years and the residents of Boston become accustomed to their presence. However, just because they tolerated their occupation of the city, did not mean by any circumstances indicate that they had befriended this dreaded enemy from across the Atlantic. With this large incursion of soldiers the city began to feel the effects of their existence rather quickly. The problem occurred when everyday military life mundane and the soldiers were looking for something to entertain themselves. This led to the consumption of alcohol specifically rum which was cheap and accessible to those looking to enjoy its effects. The results of the alcohol lead to fighting and promiscuity with prostitutes within Boston. This caused even more conflict within the city. Tensions were already high and mixing this resentment with alcohol made it even worse.

To accomplish this goal, this research paper will include four main sections, one in which has a sub-section. In the first section I will discuss the background of the Boston massacre: soldiers coming to town, how people reflected off the Townshend acts, and the colonist problems from around the world with the soldiers that came to Boston. The second section will include the colonist effects with the soldiers, like how the soldiers were beginning to feel irritated, the patriots role, how the colonists encouraged others to go against the soldiers and how the colonists were mad with parliament so they reflected their anger off the soldiers. Third section including how the colonist caused innocent people to die and how they people in jail for defending themselves from the colonist. Fourth section will talk about how the colonists started the war. Last section will conclude with conclusion with the Boston Massacre, giving a brief summary of the topics main points, restating thesis and a call to action. This paper will also include on the last page a works cited.

In the end, the Boston Massacre affected the pathway of the Revolution in many ways. Not only has the impact lasted up until the present day in regards to the relations between Britain and the United States, but it also sets the tone for the American Revolution. Aside from the fact that this event had enforced the implications of a more people-driven government, it also sparked the nation in a way which pressed into freedom in a much more modern manner. In many books, textbooks, novels, and written theses, the Boston Massacre is approached as a positive step in history for it simply put into terms the reality of colonial America. Being taught in classrooms and regarded as a critical turning point toward freedom in America, the Boston Massacre was and is still a shot heard ‘round the world.

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