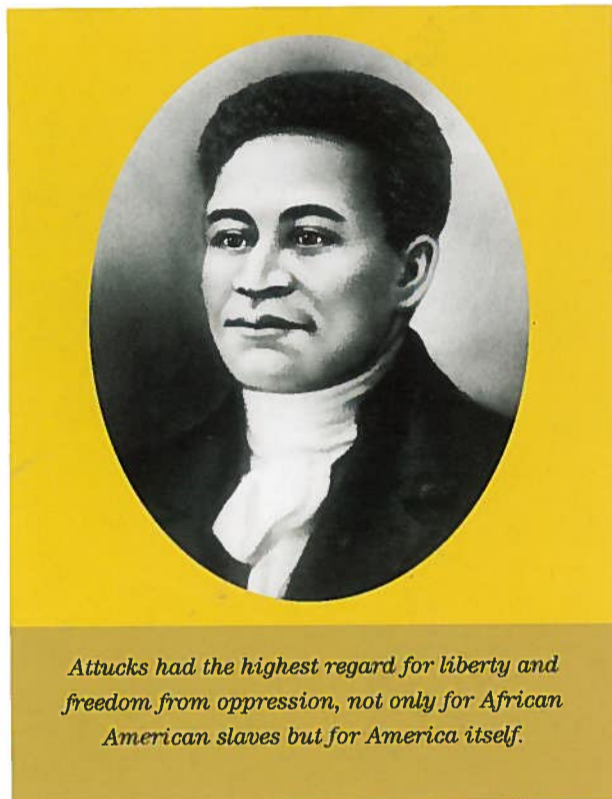


CRISPUS ATTUCKS

CRISPUS ATTUCKS epitomized all that was best in colonial America. Born a slave in Massachusetts, he escaped and became an educated man. He eventually helped begin America's armed resistance against British rule. Attucks was the first to die in the Boston Massacre, and he became a beacon for the American struggle for independence.

Attucks was born a slave around 1723 (he has no known birth date), in Framingham,



Attucks had the highest regard for liberty and freedom from oppression, not only for African American slaves but for America itself.

Massachusetts. He was the son of an African father and a Native American mother. As a child, he was repeatedly sold from one master to another, but he escaped from slavery in 1750. Attucks became a sailor and a whaler; following the sea became his destiny.

This muscular mulatto learned to read and write, and he joined the American struggle for freedom from the British. Attucks attended

Crispus Attucks carried the torch for freedom as the first man to die in the historic Boston Massacre. A runaway slave who became a sailor and taught himself to read and write, Attucks was the ultimate symbol of the American battle for independence.

meetings with other patriots to discuss ways to fight the burdensome taxes levied by England. He then wrote a letter of protest to Governor Thomas Hutchinson, who was the top Tory politician of the province.

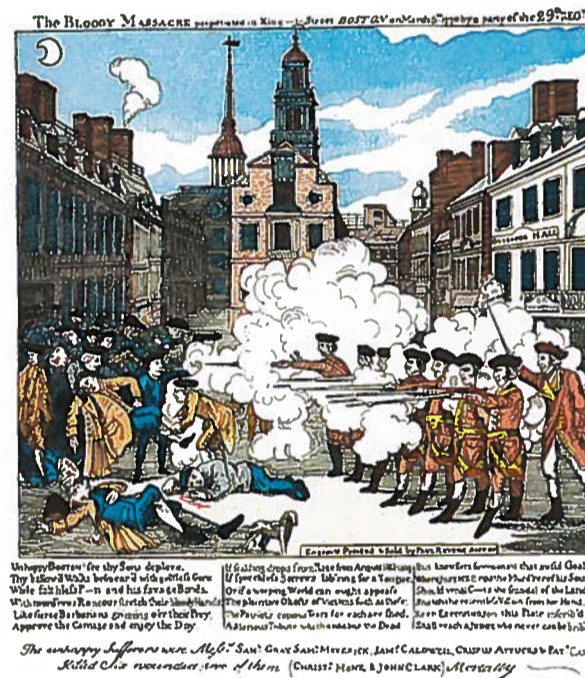
According to most accounts, on March 5, 1770, Attucks spearheaded a noisy crowd of protesters who confronted a company of British soldiers stationed at the Custom House on Boston's King Street. Witnesses say Attucks led the demonstrators, who were armed with banners and clubs, and that the crowd began throwing snow and ice at the soldiers. Attucks then grabbed one British soldier's bayonet and knocked him down. The frightened soldiers fired into the crowd, leaving Attucks dead on the ground. Four others also died. The *Boston Gazette and Country Journal* for March 12, 1770, reported that Attucks was killed instantly. But his death became a symbol of the Revolutionaries' struggle.

According to testimony at the later trial of the British soldiers, prosecutors said Attucks had been "assaulted with force and arms, feloniously, willfully, and of malice aforethought." But defense lawyers for the soldiers, including patriot John Adams, accused Attucks of not only having formed the patriots' attack party

but also said "it was Attucks to whose mad behavior, in all probability, the dreadful carnage of that night is chiefly ascribed."

After the Revolutionary War, Attucks continued to be a symbol for the fight for freedom. African American military companies called themselves the Attucks Guards. And from 1858 to 1870, African Americans in Boston held a Crispus Attucks Day every year. By 1888, blacks convinced city and state officials that Attucks's contributions warranted a monument on the Boston Common. That statue bears the name of all five men who died for the cause.

The five heroes are buried in historic Granary Burying Ground, along with other famous Revolutionary War figures, including John Hancock, Governor William Bradford of Plymouth County, and, ironically, John Adams.



In 1770, leading a revolt against burdensome taxes imposed on the colonies by England, Crispus Attucks was killed by British soldiers. This made him a martyr and an American symbol of freedom during the Revolutionary War.