
MISSION 1: "For Crown or Colony?"
Part 4: From Bad to Worse (March 5, 1770)
Post-Game Document-Based Activity

Who Started It?

Two accounts of what happened on March 5 in King Street

According to each account: *Who commits the first threatening or violent behavior?*

Account #1. Report in the *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, March 12, 1770.

Thirty or forty persons, mostly lads, being gathered in King-street, Capt. Preston with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the Commissioner's house the soldiers pushing their bayonets, crying, Make way! They took place by the custom-house, and continuing to push, to drive the people off, pricked some in several places; on which [the crowd] were clamorous, and, it is said threw snow balls. On this, the Captain commanded them to fire, and more snow balls coming he again said, Damn you, Fire, be the consequence what it will!

Account #2. Deposition of Captain Thomas Preston of the 29th Regiment

The mob increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare, G-d damn you, fire and be damned, we know you dare not... Some well-behaved persons asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no, by no means.... While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers having received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired. [When] turning to [him] and asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of the use of it....

On this a general attack was made on the men by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them, by which all our lives were in imminent danger. [S]ome persons at the same time called out, damn your bloods-why don't you fire. Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and directly after three more in the same confusion and hurry.