

For Crown or Colony? Part 2 & Part 3

Guiding Question: How did Patriots and Loyalists understand and respond to the conflict between colonists in Boston and the British colonial government?

Document Analysis

Text Analysis: A Newspaper Account of the Death of Christopher Seider

Below are excerpts from a newspaper story published in Boston on February 26, 1770, about Christopher Seider's death. Because the style of English written and spoken in colonial Boston is different from our English today, the article can be challenging to read. Take your time and use the notes provided to translate each excerpt into your own words. Then answer the questions that follow the article.

	<u>Newspaper Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1	On Thursday last in the Forenoon, <u>a barbarous Murder extended with many aggravating Circumstances</u> , was committed on the Body of a young lad of about eleven Years of Age, Son to Mr. ___ <u>Snider</u> of this Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a murder made even more horrible by the surrounding circumstances • The article had it wrong: the boy's name was Christopher Seider. 	
2	A Number of Boys had been <u>diverting themselves</u> with the <u>Exhibition of a Piece of Pageantry</u> near the House of <i>Theopolis Lillie</i> who perhaps <u>at this Juncture of Affairs may with the most Propriety be described</u> by the Name of an IMPORTER—This exhibition naturally occasioned Numbers to assemble, and in a very	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoying themselves • Participating in a Patriot demonstration • at this time, we would be using our best manners if we called him an Importer 	

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	<p>little Time there was a great Concourse of Persons, especially the younger sort.--</p>		
3	<p>One Ebenezer Richardson, who has been many years employed as an under Officer of the Customs, long known by <u>the Name of an INFORMER, and consequently a Person of a most abandoned Character,</u> it seems, took Umbrage at the supposed Indignity offered to the Importer, and soon became a Party to the Affair-- He first attempted to demolish the Pageantry, and failing in the attempt, he retired to his House, which was but a few <u>Rods</u> from the Exhibition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richardson was a professional snitch; he tattled on colonists whom he felt were breaking English tax or trade laws; he also had a very bad reputation morally. A rod is a measure of length that is no longer used. 1 rod = 5 1/3 yards. 	
4	<p>Several Persons passing by the House, Richardson, who seemed determined to take this Occasion to make a Disturbance, without the least Provocation, gave them the most <u>opprobrious</u> Language, charging them with <u>Perjury</u>, &c., which raised a Dispute between them--This, it is supposed, occasioned the boys to gather nearer Richardson's House, and he, <u>thinking he had now a good Colouring</u> to perpetuate the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hateful, critical Lying under oath (This remark of Richardson's doesn't make any sense.) he had justification, a reason 	

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	Villainy, threatened to fire upon them, and Swore by GOD that he would make the Place too hot for some of them before Night, and that he would make a Lane through them if they did not go away.		
5	<p>Soon after, a Number of <u>Brickbats</u> or Stones were thrown among the People from Richardson's House, but the Witnesses, who were sworn before the Magistrates, declared that it did not appear to them that till then any Sort of Attack was made by the People on the House. This, however, brought on a Skirmish, and Richardson discharged his Piece, loaded with <u>Swan Shot</u>, at the Multitude, by which the unhappy young Person above-mentioned was mortally wounded, having since died of his Wounds—A Youth, Son to Captain John Gore, was also wounded in one of his Hands and in both his Thighs, by which his life was endangered, but he is likely to soon recover of his Wounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broken pieces of any kind of hard material • a large kind of shot (balls) used in shooting fowl 	
6	...We are assured that not less than eleven Shot were found in the Body		

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<p>of the unfortunate Boy, who was inhumanly murdered by the infamous Informer on Thursday last.</p> <p>It is hoped the unexpected and <u>melancholy</u> Death of young Snider will be a Means for the future of preventing any, but more especially the Soldiery, from being too free in the Use of their Instruments of Death.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• miserably sad	
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Document Analysis Questions

1. Do you think the writer of this article is a Patriot or a Loyalist? How can you tell?
2. Write five things the writer tells you that you believe are facts. Try to include all the important information you are given about the incident.
3. If you were a historian investigating this event, what other kinds of documents would you look for to make sure you understood the whole story of what happened?
4. How can you detect the perspective of the creators of news media today? How does the perspective of the creator of a news article or video impact the extent to which you believe it?