

By our chief reporter

March 6, 1770

THEY ARE CALLING it the “Boston Massacre.” British soldiers fired on an angry mob yesterday, killing at least three colonists and injuring others. A 17-year-old boy died earlier today; a fifth person—a man—is said to be close to death.

Violence erupted in front of the Custom House after a young colonist was struck by a British officer. When a small group of soldiers came to help a colleague on guard duty, they were confronted by a mob.

The mob dared the soldiers to shoot, and in an instant, the men lay dead—Crispus Attucks, who was Nipmuc and Black, among them. It is unclear whether the soldiers’ commanding officer, Captain Thomas Preston, ordered them to fire.

The Boston Massacre is certain to fan the flames of revolution across colonial America. Trouble has been brewing for some time. Boston-born Samuel Adams—said to be a founder of the Sons of Liberty patriot group—has been criticized for stirring up mob violence against British rule.

Adams rejects Britain’s authority to impose taxes on its

A BLOODY MASSACRE



13 American colonies and calls on them to unite in action. In Massachusetts, support is growing for Adams’ style of leadership.

Citizens of Boston have also been angered by British troops, called “redcoats,” parading through their streets. They see the troops’

presence as an act of hostility by the British government.

As tensions between Britain and its colonists threaten to erupt into armed conflict, one Massachusetts lawyer is trying to uphold the law. John Adams, second cousin of Samuel Adams, opposes many of

Britain’s policies in America, but will later defend the British soldiers who carried out the Boston Massacre. He will maintain that the soldiers are entitled to a proper defense and that the men acted legally in the face of intimidation by a mob.