Background: At the request of Samuel Adams, Paul Revere engraved this famous depiction of the Boston Massacre in 1770. Paul Revere was a famous American colonist and a leader in the movement for American independence. Along with Samuel Adams, Revere was an original founding member of the rebellious group of American patriots fighting for freedom from Great Britain, Sons of Liberty. Originally produced as a woodblock engraving, it was replicated as a print and spread throughout the colonies in 1770. It appeared in many colonial newspapers, brochures, and pamphlets to illustrate the cruelty of the British government, and to gain sympathetic support for the revolutionary movement.
Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore
Thy hallow’d walks besmear’d with guiltless gore
While faithless P____n and his savage bands
With murd’rous rancour stretch their bloody hands
Like fierce barbarians grinning o’er their prey
Approve the carnage and enjoy the day.

If scalding drops from rage, from anguish wrung
If speechless sorrow, lab’ring for a tongue
Or if a weeping world can ought appease
The plaintive ghosts of victims such as these
The patriot’s copious tears for each are shed
A glorious tribute which embalms the dead.

But know, Fate summons to that awful goal
Where Justice strips the murd’rer of his soul,
Should venal C____ts, the scandal of the land,
Snatch the relentless villain from her Hand
Keen execrations on this plate inscrib’d
Shall reach a Judge who never can be brib’d.

The unhappy sufferers were Mesr’s Sam’l Gray, Sam’l Maverick, James Caldwell Crispus Attucks, & Patr. Carr. Killed Six wounded; two of them (Christ’r Monk & John Clark) mortally.