



Paul Revere – American Hero

by Margot Morrell



Master craftsman, Paul Revere (1735 - 1818) is famous for his midnight ride on April 18 – 19, 1775, but he made many contributions to the patriots' cause.

When the Revolution's senior leaders, Sam Adams and Joseph Warren, needed someone courageous, reliable, and indefatigable for a formidable task, Paul Revere got the call.

1768 portrait of Paul Revere by his childhood friend and neighbor, John Singleton Copley.

Revere apprenticed as a silversmith and goldsmith with his father who had immigrated from France.

In 1773, Revere created this tea service and flatware for Dr. William Paine of Worcester - the largest order of his career.

Worcester Art Museum





Revere married Sarah Orne in August 1757.
Their home still stands and welcomes visitors
at 19 North Square in Boston's North End.



Sarah and Paul had eight children, seven of whom were living at the time of Sarah's death in May 1773.

Paul then married Rachel Walker. They also had eight children.



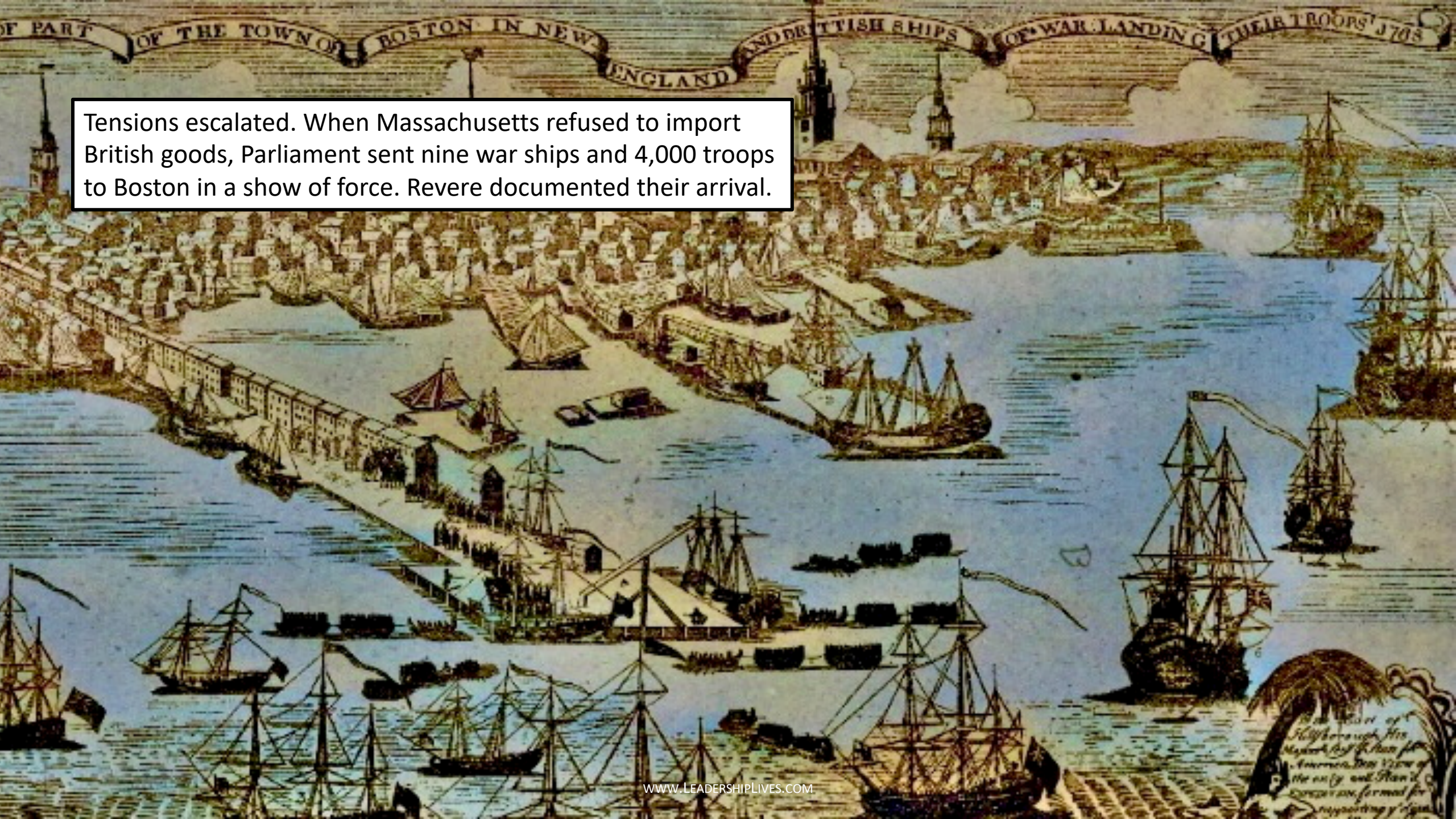


Outraged by the Stamp Act in 1765, Revere organized the Sons of Liberty with other patriots. Their battle cry was "No taxation without representation!"

Revere began to create engravings that memorialized the crucial events that led to the Revolution.



That year, Revere depicted colonists from "Brave Rhode Island" and "Bold New Hampshire," slaying the detested Stamp Act (in the form of a dragon) and Andrew Oliver, commissioner of the Stamp Act in Boston, hanging from the Liberty Tree in effigy.



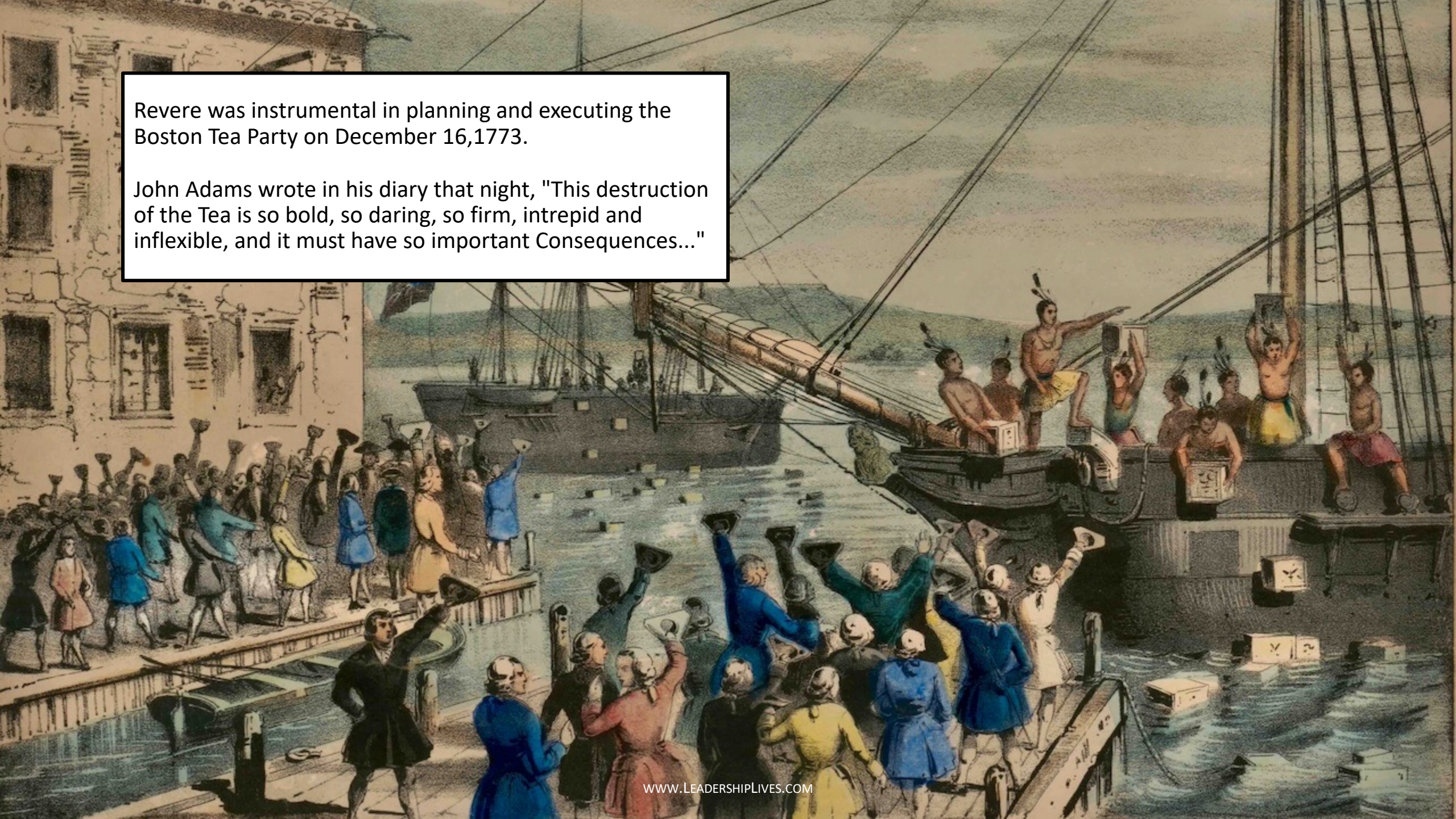
Tensions escalated. When Massachusetts refused to import British goods, Parliament sent nine war ships and 4,000 troops to Boston in a show of force. Revere documented their arrival.

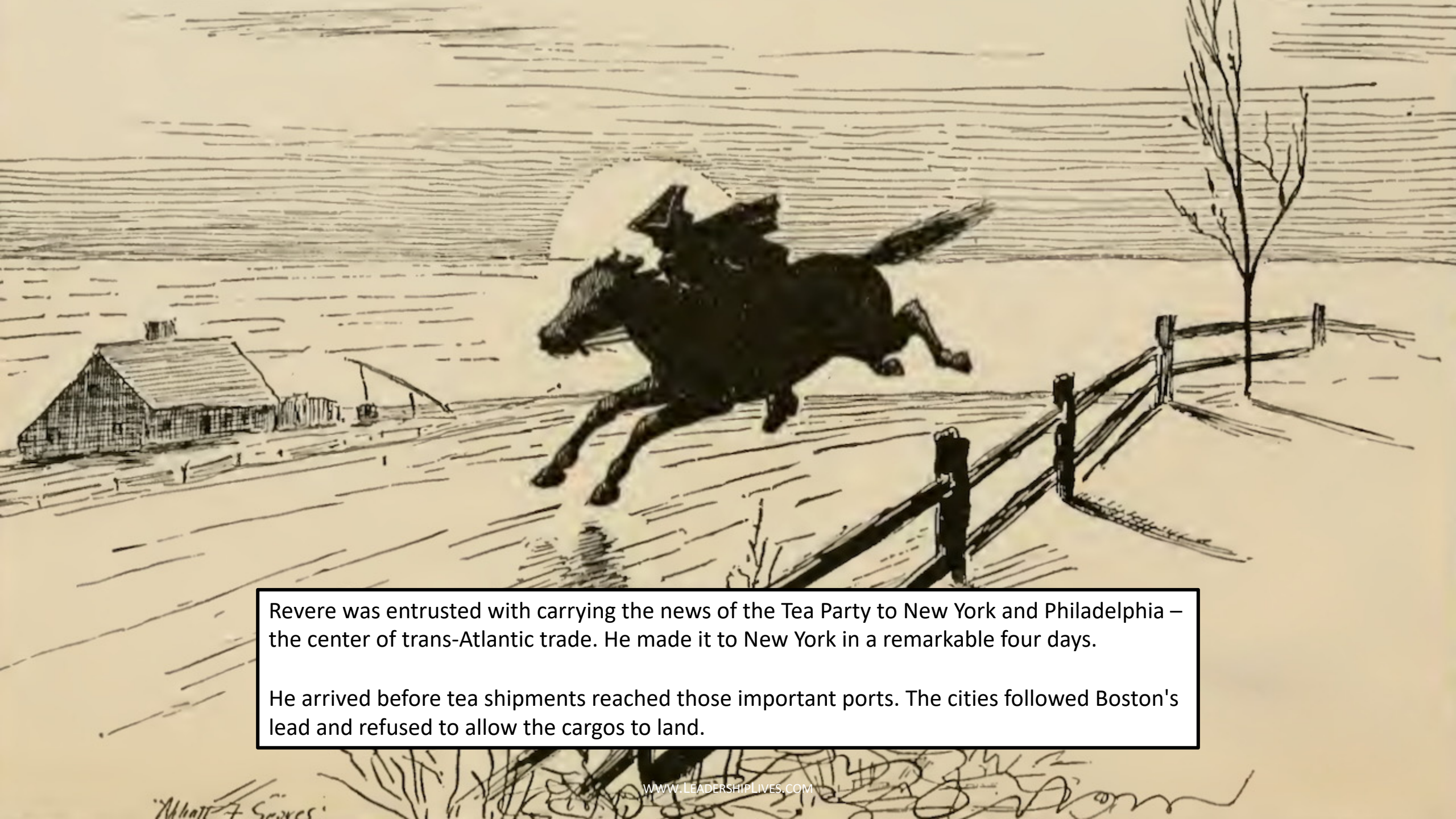
Three weeks after The Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770, Paul Revere produced an engraving based on a drawing by Henry Pelham. From that day forward, "March 5th" became the Patriots' rallying cry.



Revere was instrumental in planning and executing the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773.

John Adams wrote in his diary that night, "This destruction of the Tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important Consequences..."





Revere was entrusted with carrying the news of the Tea Party to New York and Philadelphia – the center of trans-Atlantic trade. He made it to New York in a remarkable four days.

He arrived before tea shipments reached those important ports. The cities followed Boston's lead and refused to allow the cargos to land.



"Birthplace of Liberty"
Suffolk Resolves House, Milton, MA



Carpenters' Hall
Philadelphia, PA

In September 1774, Revere again travelled to Philadelphia. This time to bring the Suffolk Resolves authored by Joseph Warren to the First Continental Congress. Warren's well-honed response to Parliament's heavy-handed retaliation to the Tea Party, crystallized the thinking of the delegates. The Suffolk Resolves were a precursor to the Declaration of Independence.



A 1775 certificate made out for Revere reads,

"This Certifys that Mr. Paul Revear is going express from the Colony of Massachusetts Bay to the American Congress; all persons upon the road are desired to assist him with Horses or any other things he may stand in need off."

James Otis [Senior]
Pres. of Council.



Today Paul Revere is famous for the "Midnight Ride" he made on the night of April 18 – 19, 1775.

In 1798, when he was 63 years-old, at the request of historian Jeremy Belknap, Revere wrote a detailed account of that memorable night.

He began by saying, in the winter of 1774 – 1775, he and 29 other patriots organized teams to monitor British troop activity in Boston.

During the week of April 9th, the patrols observed "movements," that indicated "something serious was [to] be transacted."

That Sunday, April 16th, General Dr. Joseph Warren asked Revere to go to Lexington to see Adams and Hancock. General Warren was, at the time, the senior patriot in Boston.

Years later, it was disclosed that Revere's mission was to warn Adams and Hancock that the British appeared to be planning to march to Concord to confiscate the supply of armaments the colonists had stored there.



General Joseph Warren,
Killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775



Adams and Hancock were staying in Lexington with Rev. Jonas Clarke and his family while the Provincial Congress was meeting in Concord.

The Sunday visit paid an unexpected dividend – Revere was now familiar with the route to the Clarke house.



On his way home, Revere stopped in Charlestown to arrange a signal "with a Colonel Conant and some other gentlemen."

Revere explained, "We were apprehensive it would be difficult to Cross the Charles River, or git over Boston neck." The signal would alert patriots in Charlestown to movement of British troops.

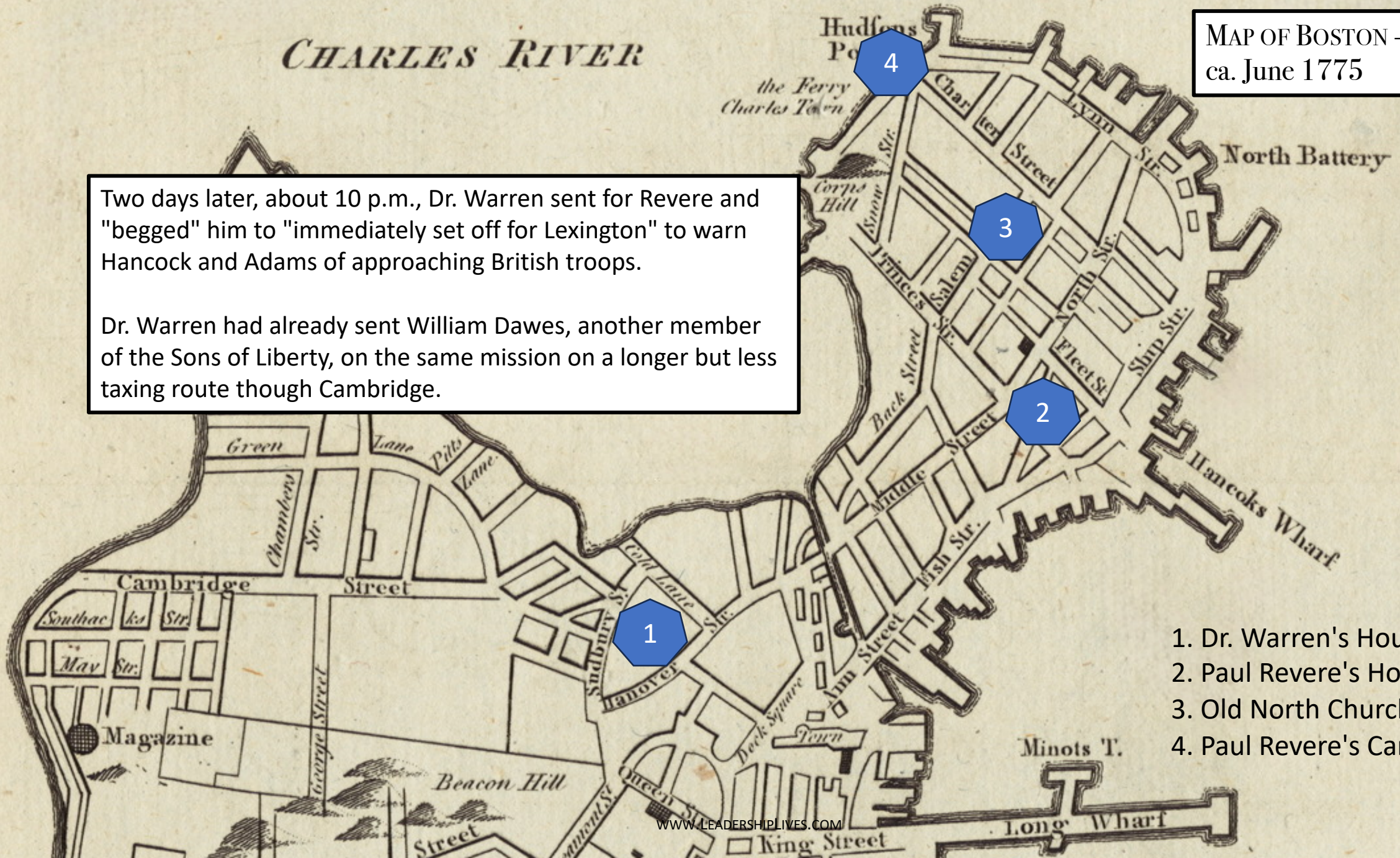
Revere, or a friend, would post lanterns in the "North Church Steeple" – "one, if by land; two, if by sea."

CHARLES RIVER

MAP OF BOSTON - DETAIL
ca. June 1775

Two days later, about 10 p.m., Dr. Warren sent for Revere and "begged" him to "immediately set off for Lexington" to warn Hancock and Adams of approaching British troops.

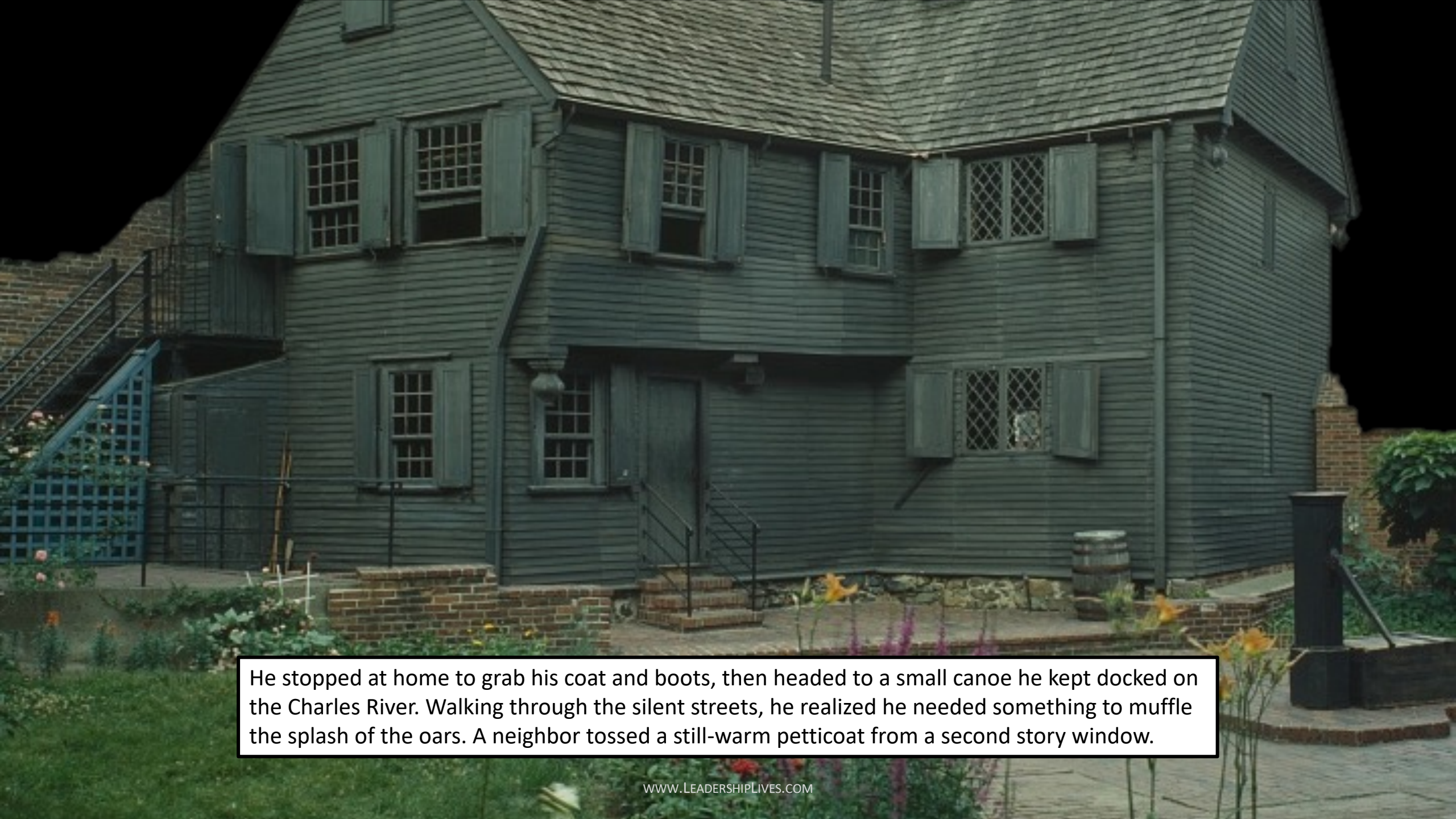
Dr. Warren had already sent William Dawes, another member of the Sons of Liberty, on the same mission on a longer but less taxing route though Cambridge.



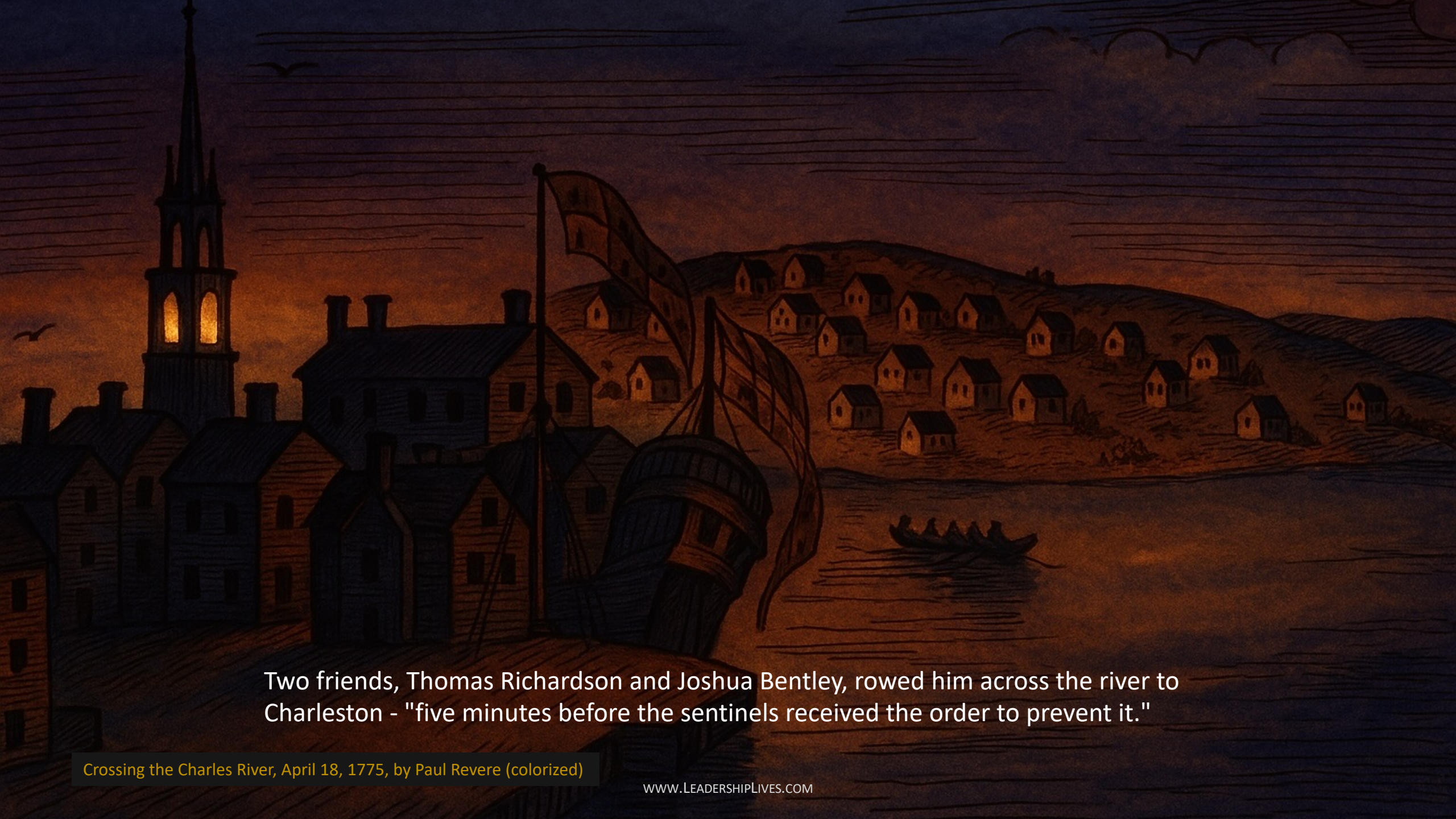
1. Dr. Warren's House
2. Paul Revere's House
3. Old North Church
4. Paul Revere's Canoe



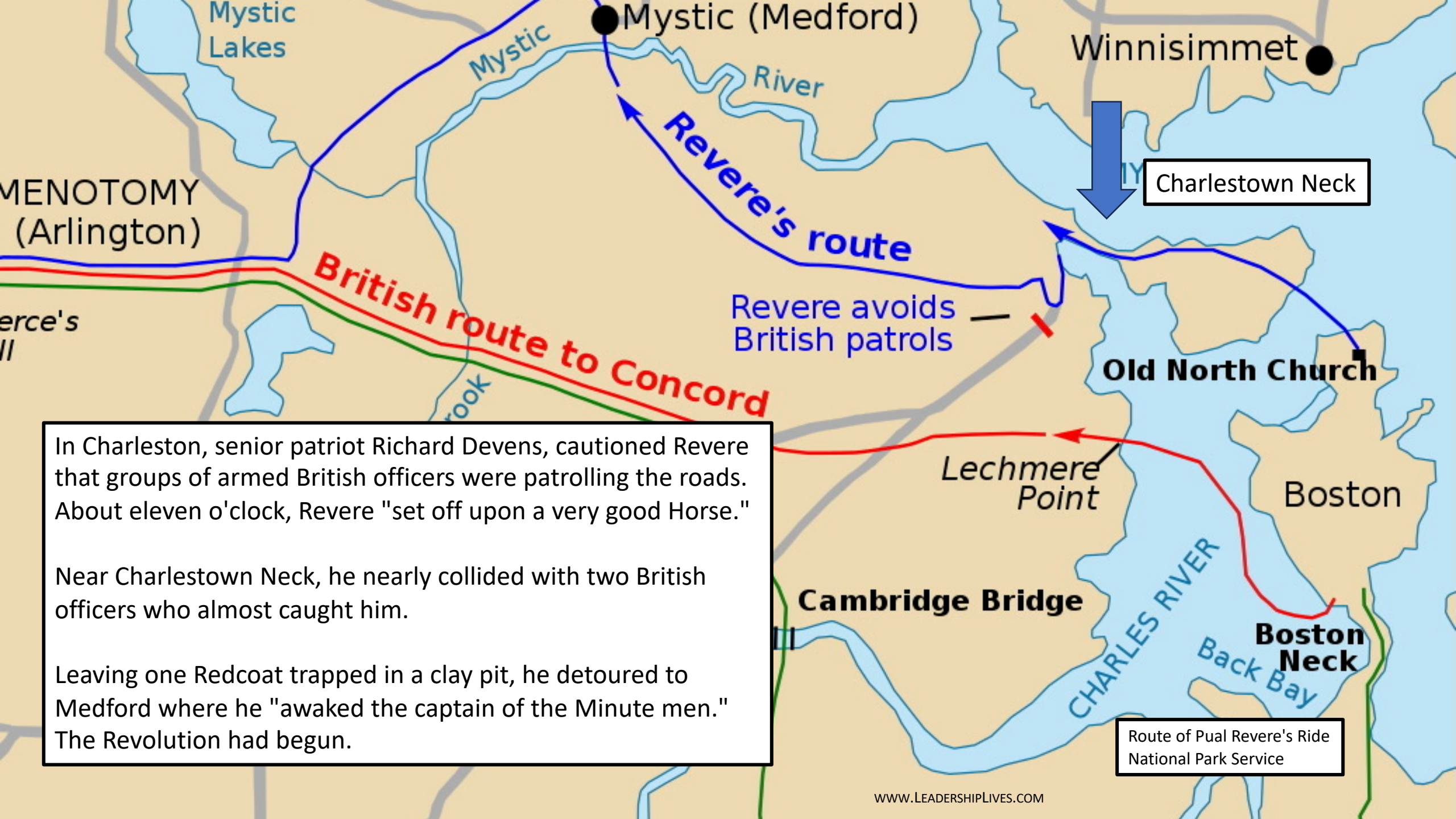
Leaving Dr. Warren's house, Revere went to see his friend, Captain John Pulling, to confirm Pulling should post two lanterns in the North church steeple.



He stopped at home to grab his coat and boots, then headed to a small canoe he kept docked on the Charles River. Walking through the silent streets, he realized he needed something to muffle the splash of the oars. A neighbor tossed a still-warm petticoat from a second story window.



Two friends, Thomas Richardson and Joshua Bentley, rowed him across the river to Charleston - "five minutes before the sentinels received the order to prevent it."



MENOTOMY
(Arlington)

Revere's
Hill

Mystic
Lakes

Mystic
River

Mystic (Medford)

Winnisimmet

Charlestown Neck

Revere's route

Revere avoids
British patrols

British route to Concord

Old North Church

Boston

Lechmere
Point

Cambridge Bridge

Boston
Neck

Back Bay

In Charleston, senior patriot Richard Devens, cautioned Revere that groups of armed British officers were patrolling the roads. About eleven o'clock, Revere "set off upon a very good Horse."

Near Charlestown Neck, he nearly collided with two British officers who almost caught him.

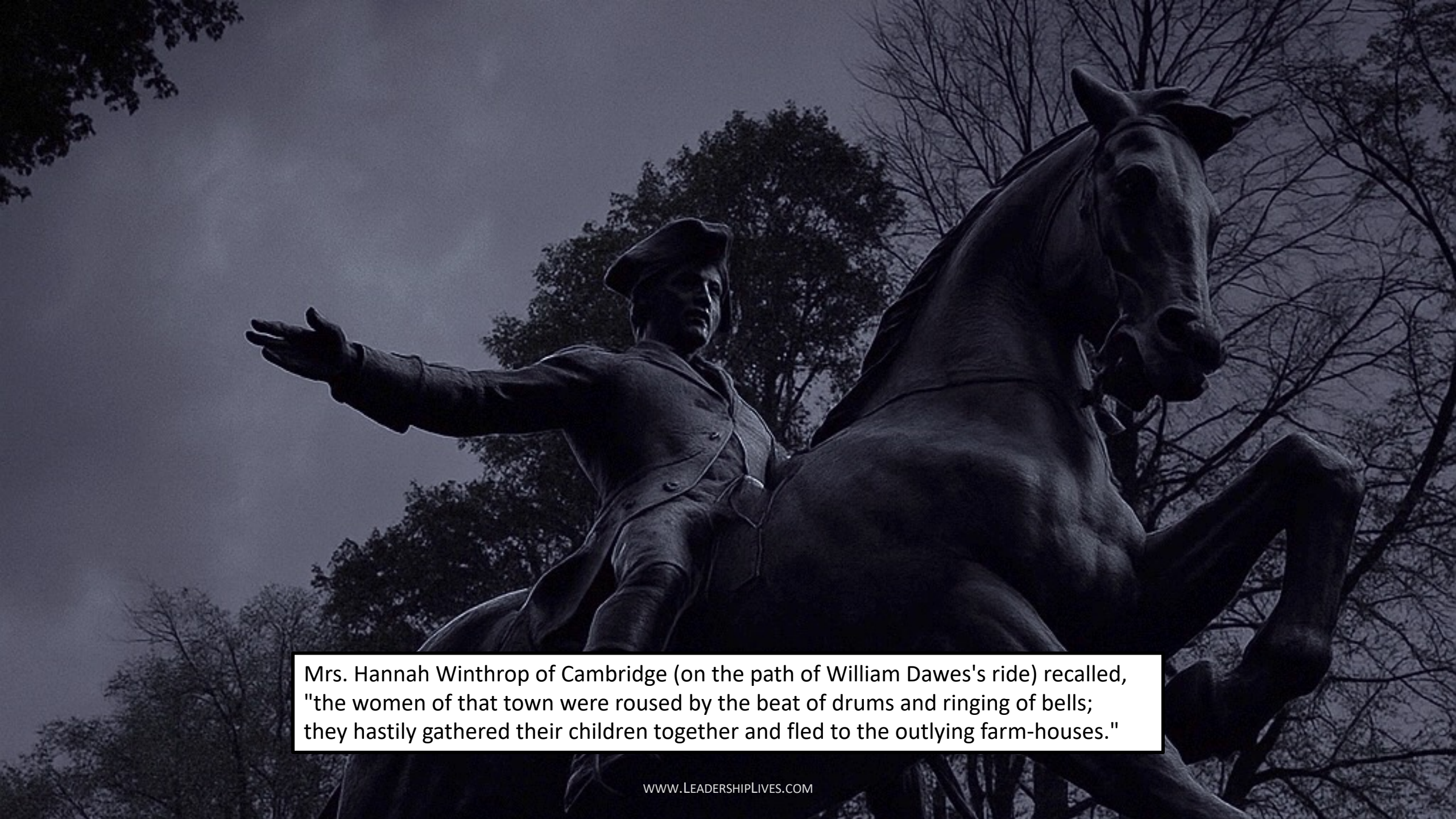
Leaving one Redcoat trapped in a clay pit, he detoured to Medford where he "awaked the captain of the Minute men." The Revolution had begun.

Route of Paul Revere's Ride
National Park Service

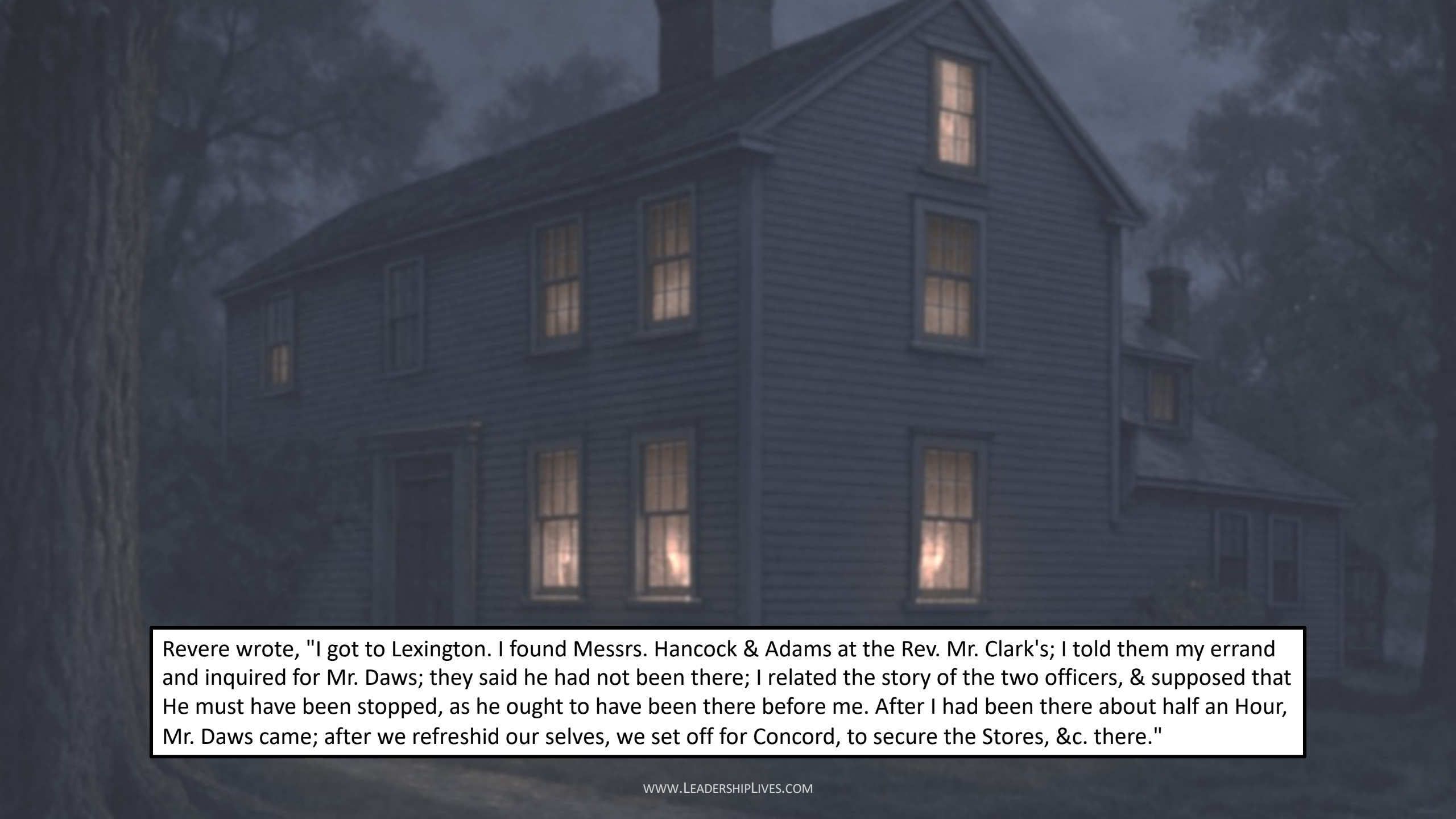


"After that, I Alarmed almost every House, till I got to Lexington."

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Mrs. Hannah Winthrop of Cambridge (on the path of William Dawes's ride) recalled, "the women of that town were roused by the beat of drums and ringing of bells; they hastily gathered their children together and fled to the outlying farm-houses."



Revere wrote, "I got to Lexington. I found Messrs. Hancock & Adams at the Rev. Mr. Clark's; I told them my errand and inquired for Mr. Daws; they said he had not been there; I related the story of the two officers, & supposed that He must have been stopped, as he ought to have been there before me. After I had been there about half an Hour, Mr. Daws came; after we refreshid our selves, we set off for Concord, to secure the Stores, &c. there."

Revere and Dawes planned to continue to Concord, sounding the alarm to every resident along the way.

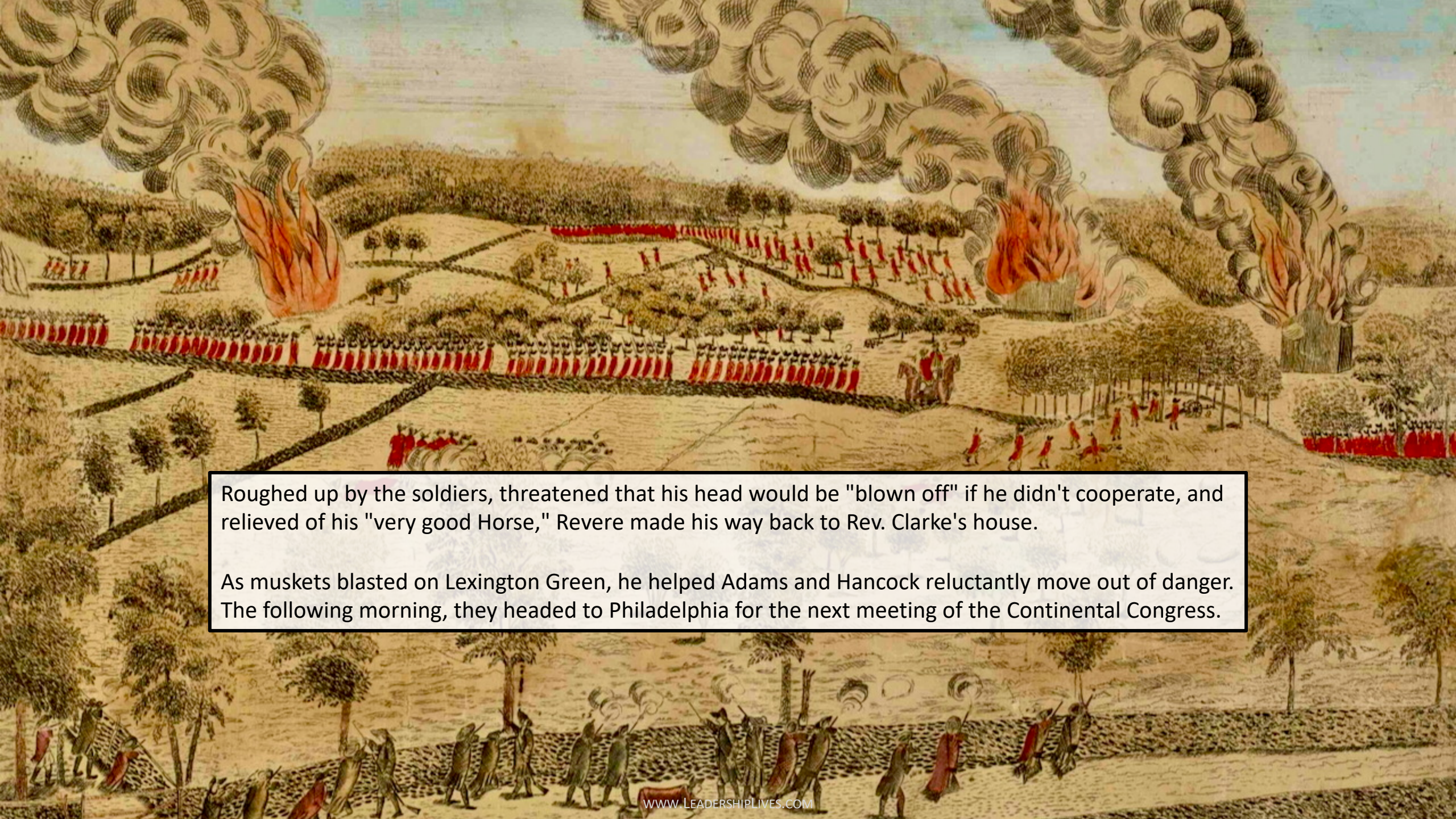
They were joined by "a young doctor Prescott" – a member of the Sons of Liberty – returning to Concord from a visit to his fiancée.

Cautiously, they spread out. Revere was almost a half a mile ahead of the others. Suddenly, he was surrounded by Redcoats.

Thinking fast, Dawes pulled up in front of a farmhouse and shouted for aid. The soldiers scattered unaware the house was empty.

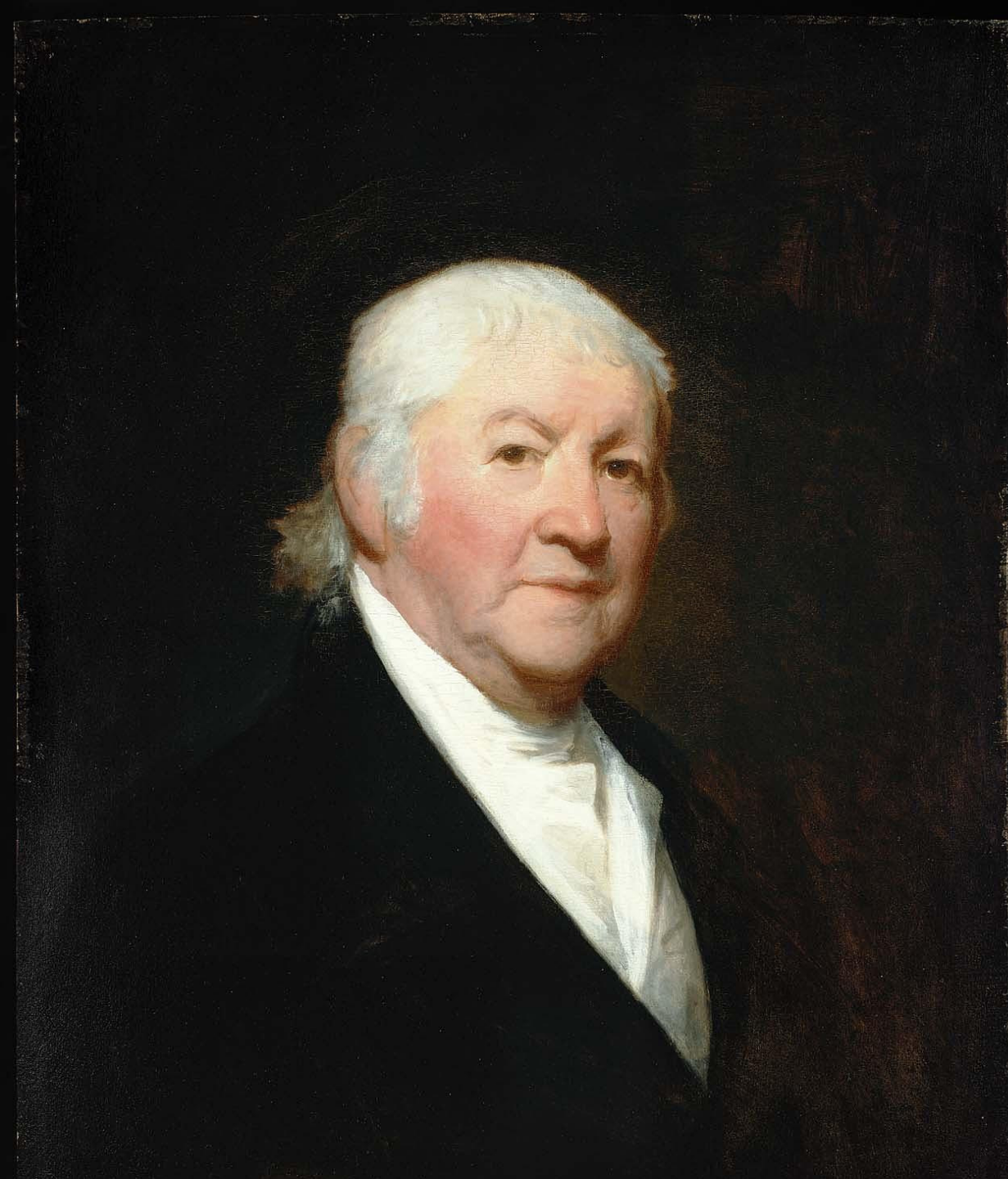
Dr. Prescott "jumped his Horse over a low stonewall and got to Concord" where he sounded the alarm at 2 a.m.





Roughed up by the soldiers, threatened that his head would be "blown off" if he didn't cooperate, and relieved of his "very good Horse," Revere made his way back to Rev. Clarke's house.

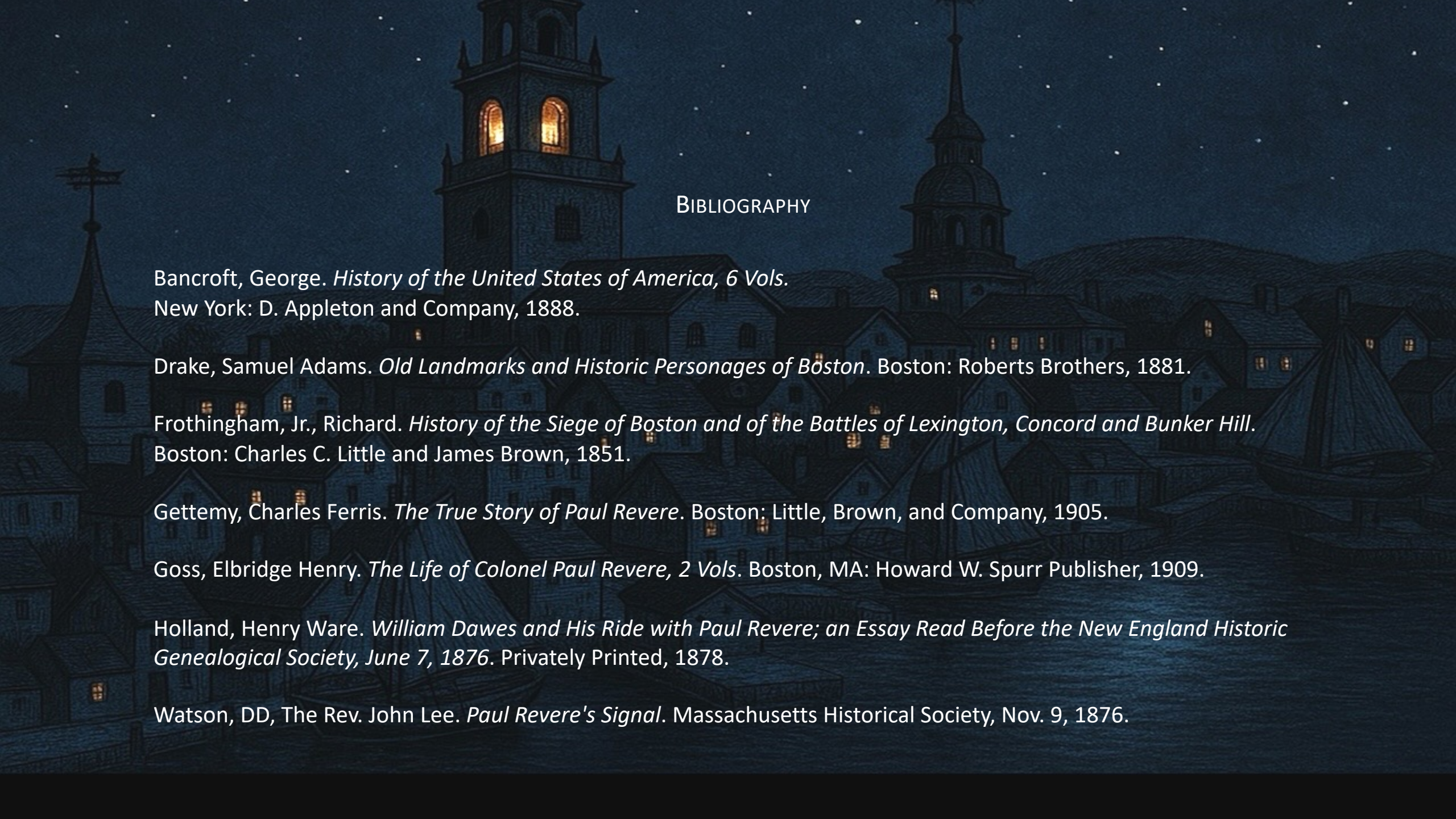
As muskets blasted on Lexington Green, he helped Adams and Hancock reluctantly move out of danger. The following morning, they headed to Philadelphia for the next meeting of the Continental Congress.



Thanks to Paul Revere's efforts on the night of April 18 – 19th, 1775, word had spread like wildfire through the small communities of New England. Minutemen from miles around gathered to meet the British troops in Concord. One fired the "shot heard round the world." A volley that echoes throughout history.

As the British retreated to Lexington, minutemen continued to pour into the area. One British soldier wrote home it seemed that, "men had dropped from the clouds."

Paul Revere, at 78,
by Gilbert Stuart, 1813



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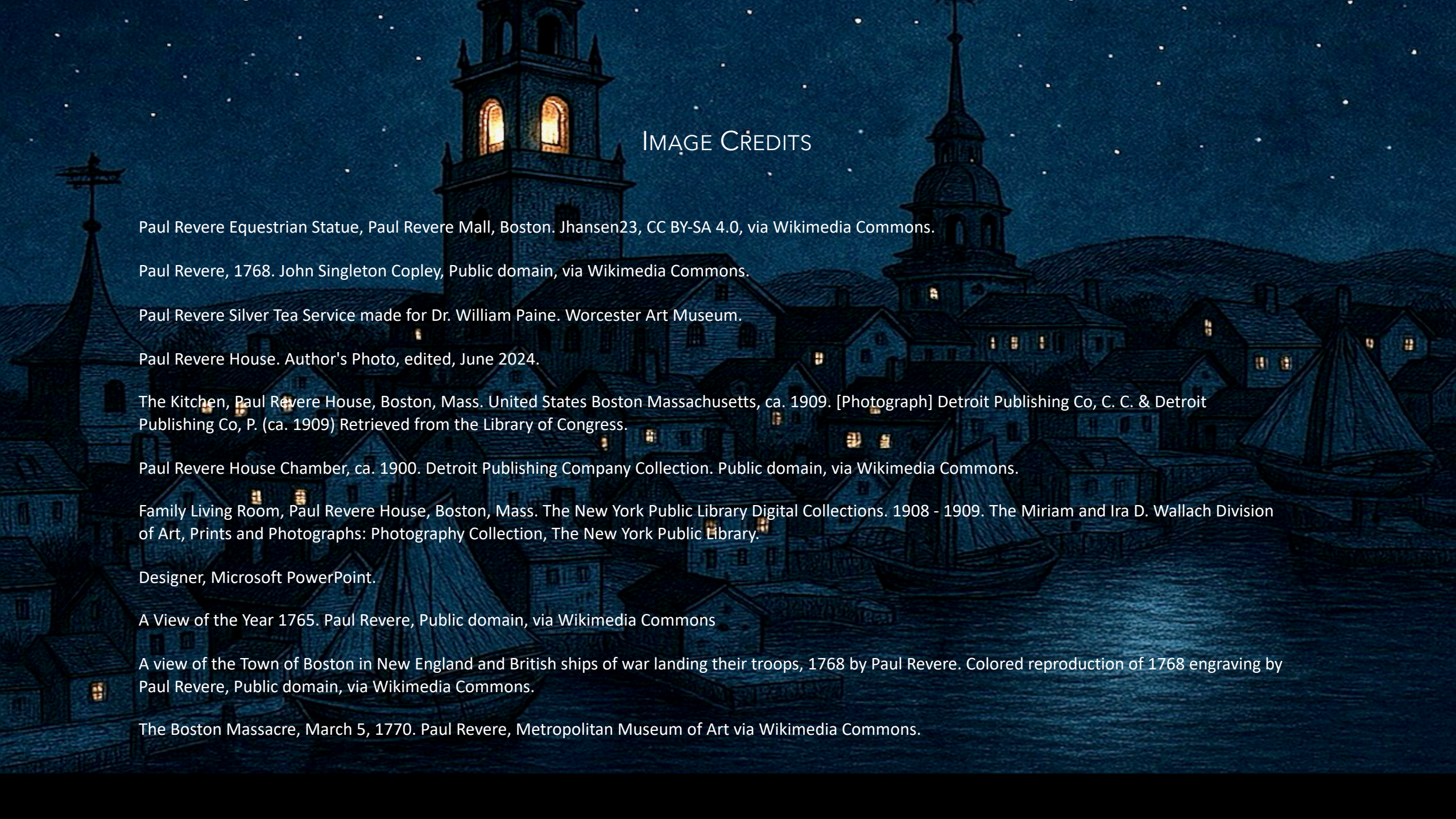


IMAGE CREDITS

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Paul Revere Silver Tea Service made for Dr. William Paine. Worcester Art Museum.

Paul Revere House. Author's Photo, edited, June 2024.

The Kitchen, Paul Revere House, Boston, Mass. United States Boston Massachusetts, ca. 1909. [Photograph] Detroit Publishing Co, C. C. & Detroit Publishing Co, P. (ca. 1909) Retrieved from the Library of Congress.

Paul Revere House Chamber, ca. 1900. Detroit Publishing Company Collection. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

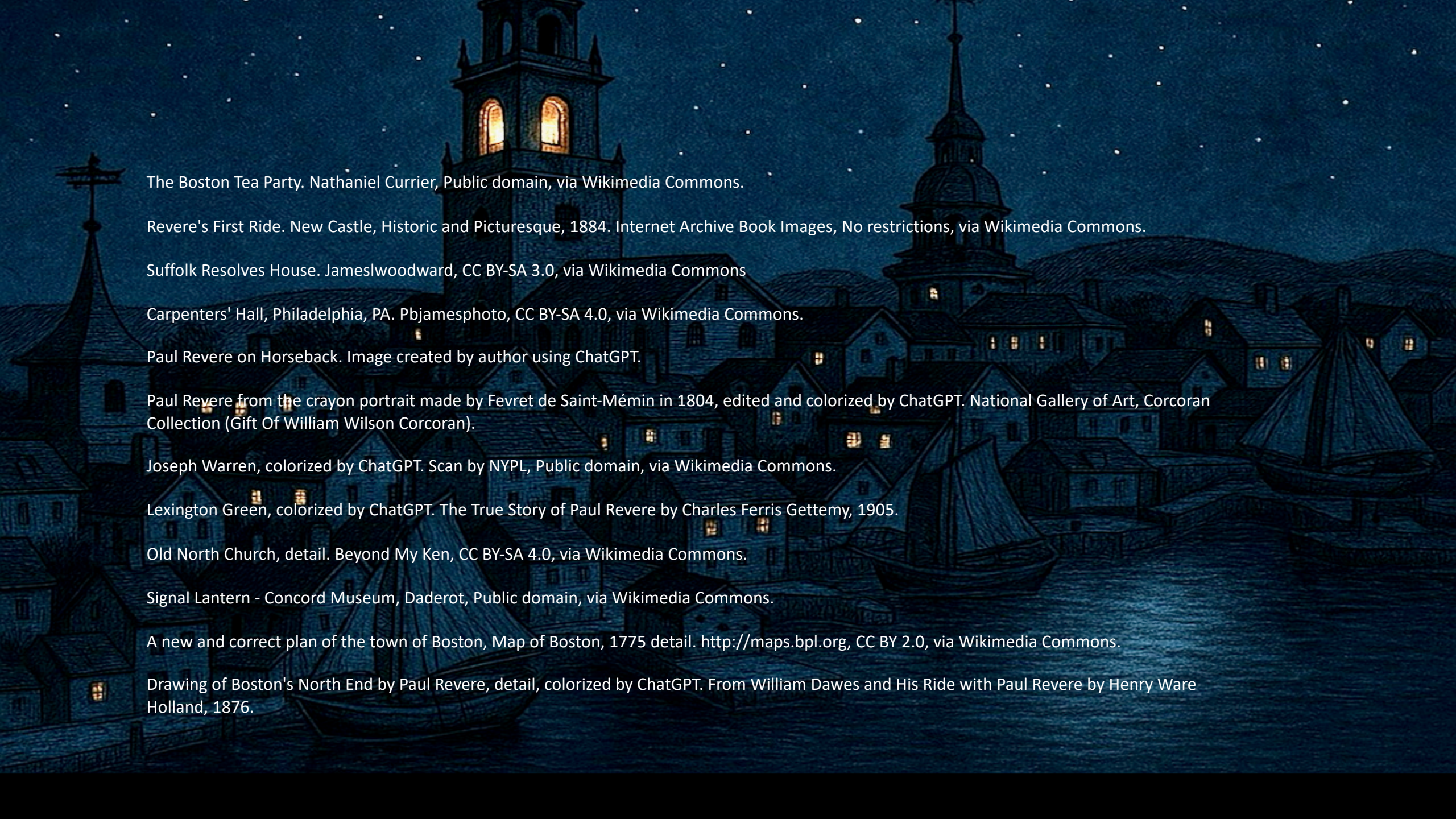
Family Living Room, Paul Revere House, Boston, Mass. The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1908 - 1909. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library.

Designer, Microsoft PowerPoint.

A View of the Year 1765. Paul Revere, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

A view of the Town of Boston in New England and British ships of war landing their troops, 1768 by Paul Revere. Colored reproduction of 1768 engraving by Paul Revere, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Paul Revere on Horseback. Image created by author using ChatGPT.

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Joseph Warren, colorized by ChatGPT. Scan by NYPL, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

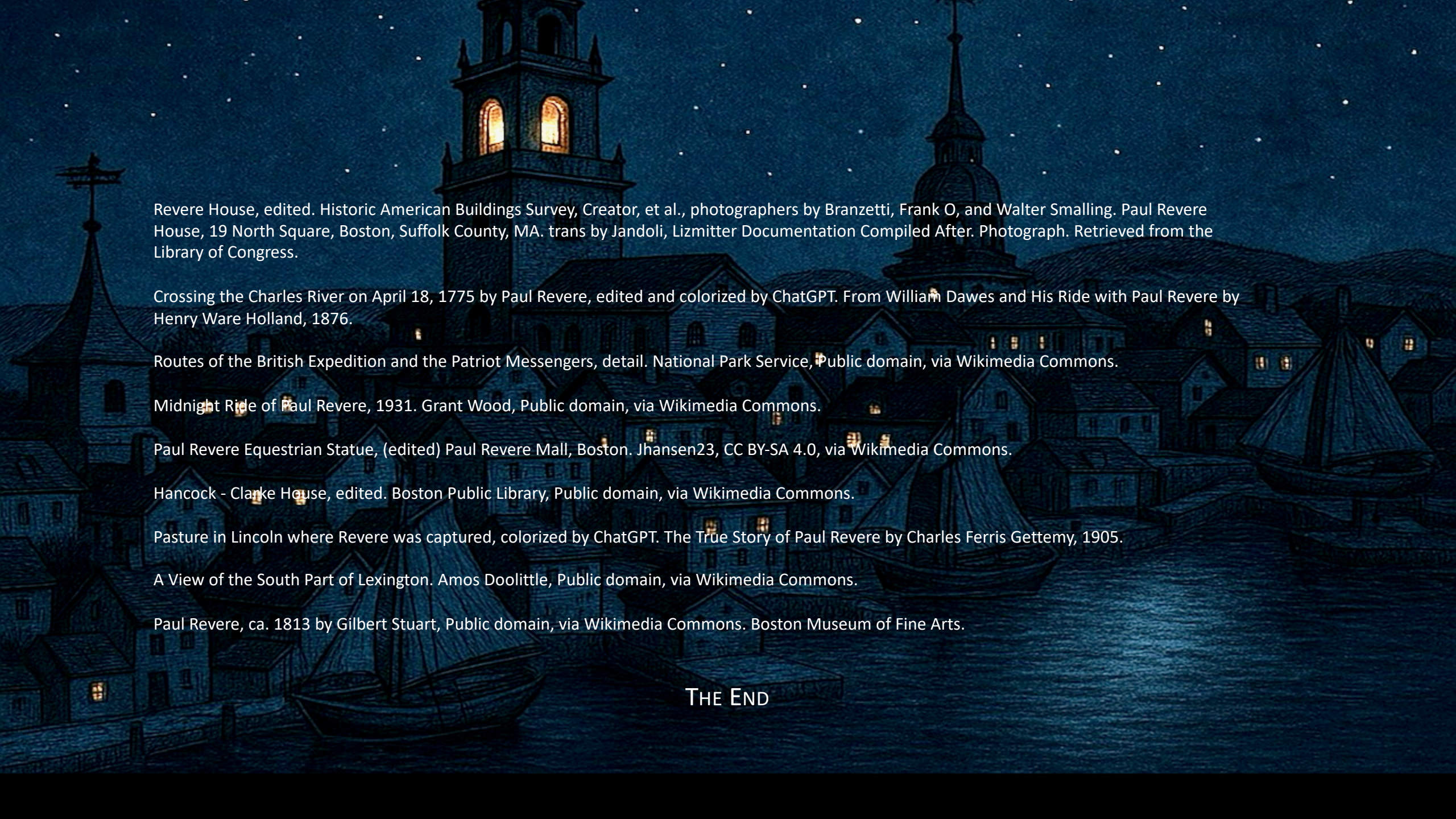
Lexington Green, colorized by ChatGPT. The True Story of Paul Revere by Charles Ferris Gettemy, 1905.

Old North Church, detail. Beyond My Ken, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Signal Lantern - Concord Museum, Daderot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

A new and correct plan of the town of Boston, Map of Boston, 1775 detail. <http://maps.bpl.org>, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Drawing of Boston's North End by Paul Revere, detail, colorized by ChatGPT. From William Dawes and His Ride with Paul Revere by Henry Ware Holland, 1876.



Revere House, edited. Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, et al., photographers by Branzetti, Frank O, and Walter Smalling. Paul Revere House, 19 North Square, Boston, Suffolk County, MA. trans by Jandoli, Lizmitter Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.

Crossing the Charles River on April 18, 1775 by Paul Revere, edited and colorized by ChatGPT. From William Dawes and His Ride with Paul Revere by Henry Ware Holland, 1876.

Routes of the British Expedition and the Patriot Messengers, detail. National Park Service, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Pasture in Lincoln where Revere was captured, colorized by ChatGPT. The True Story of Paul Revere by Charles Ferris Gettemy, 1905.

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Paul Revere, ca. 1813 by Gilbert Stuart, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

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