Beyond Midnight: Paul Revere

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This booklet provides student materials for the Beyond Midnight: Paul Revere exhibition, sharing information about Paul Revere as a maker and about the materials he used for his craftsmanship.

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Response to Revere’s Portrait:

What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

What is the most interesting part of the painting to you? Does anything surprise you about it?
Thinking about Revere’s Portrait

Vocabulary List

- **Portrait** – A painting, sculpture, photograph, or other artistic work that captures a person’s appearance and often their mood and expressions. Portraits traditionally show a person’s face and upper body.
- **Engraving** – A process in which sharp tools, like those on the table in this painting, are used to carve shapes or words onto another object.
- **Burins** – Tools used for engraving.
- **Occupy** – To take control of another state or nation often with military troops.

Today, when people picture Paul Revere, they often think of him on a horse riding through the night to tell the American colonists that the British were coming. Can you envision this scene? On April 18 and 19, 1775, Revere did ride from Boston to Lexington, but if you asked someone in colonial Boston to picture Revere, they would likely provide a description similar to the Copley painting on the previous page. Paul Revere was believed to have been born in 1734 in Boston’s North End. That would make him 33 years old here.

In this **portrait’s** label, you will find the name of the artist, John Singleton Copley, and the year of the painting, 1768. It was not common to have a portrait done in the eighteenth century. A person or family would usually have to pay an artist to create one. It is believed that Copley painted this portrait for Revere to repay the silversmith for making small silver frames for miniature portraits painted by Copley.

In this portrait, Revere is holding a silver teapot with his tools on a table. Underneath the teapot is a round leather bag filled with sand, on which a silversmith would typically rest the object being made while hammering or **engraving**. The two tools with the round wooden tops are called **burins**, and the object by Revere’s elbow that looks like a pencil is an engraving needle that Revere held by its long wooden dowel.
In 1768, the British **occupied** Boston, entering the city and watching the American colonists to make sure they obeyed the rules of England. The colonists were upset with the British because of the Townshend Acts, which put taxes or higher prices on purchased goods and added new laws that colonists felt were unfair.
Becoming a Smith

Paul Revere grew up in Boston. His father, Appollos Rivoire, was a French Huguenot immigrant who landed in Boston around the age of 13 when his family sought safety and the ability to freely practice their Protestant religion. Appollos was apprenticed to a goldsmith to learn the trade. Later, he changed his name to sound more English and became known as Paul Revere. He then taught his son, Paul Revere, the trade of smithing. To be a smith is to work with metals.

Smiths can work with different materials: there are goldsmiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths, and blacksmiths. Smiths heat the metals, hammer the metals, and shape the metals into objects. These objects can be useful, like iron hooks, silver shoe buckles, and copper bells; they can also be beautiful, like a fancy tea set or a beautiful spoon. Many different examples of Paul Revere’s work can be seen in the exhibition here at the Worcester Art Museum.

Often, a smith uses a pattern to create an object. Below is a pattern for a small copper bell that was shared with the Worcester Art Museum by Stephen Smithers, a silver and coppersmith who applies the same methods to create objects today as Paul Revere did 250 years ago. Here, Mr. Smithers has cut out a piece of copperplate that can be heated and shaped into a bell form. He can then heat the metal further and hammer the pattern to shape it.
A Paul Revere Spoon

This is a photograph of a silver spoon created by Paul Revere that is in the collection of the Worcester Art Museum. Below the spoon is information that the Worcester Art Museum uses to record or catalog every item in its collection along with an explanation of why each line is needed.

Silver Spoon This is the title of the object.
Object Number: 1907.129 This number tells us the year the Museum acquired it.
Artist: Paul Revere (American, 1735–1818) This is the name of the artist and when the artist lived.
Date: about 1800 This tells us when the object was made.
Medium: silver This tells us what material(s) the object is made of.
17.4 cm (6 7/8 in.) This is the size of the object.
Classification: Metalwork This is the category used by the Museum to help group the object with other similar objects.
Credit Line: Gift of Stephen Salisbury This is how the Museum acquired the object.
Catalog an Item

Create a museum label for an object that belongs to you. It could be anything from a shoe to a computer.

Title:

Object Number:

Creator:

Date Created:

Medium:

Size:

Classification:

Credit Line:
Designing Spoons

We don’t always think about the design of our silverware. Below are two patterns used by Stephen Smithers, a silversmith working today, to create spoons. Look at the patterns. Can you figure out how they might mold together to become a spoon with a detailed handle? Draw what you think the finished product might look like.

Next draw a spoon designed by you. Is your spoon decorative or plain? Will you add any new elements of technology to your own spoon?
Boston Massacre Prints

Paul Revere’s Print
Boston Massacre Prints

Paul Revere was also an illustrator, a person who creates images or pictures. Revere carved images onto copper plates to create illustrations, called prints. He would use sharp tools to engrave the copper plate and then he would put ink on the plate. By pressing the inked plate to paper, his engraved drawing would appear. The colors on the print were painted on to the printed image after the image dried. Revere prints that shared his opinion that colonists should break away from England to start their own country. Because he was using his prints to affect people’s feelings and beliefs, these prints are considered propaganda.

One of Revere’s most famous prints depicts his view of what happened at the Boston Massacre. This event took place on March 5, 1770. British troops were being harassed by Boston residents who were angry about the soldiers occupying the city. As the residents yelled at the British troops, some of them also threw snowballs, stones, and sticks. The British troops fired at the Boston colonists, killing 5 and wounding 6. Among the dead was Crispus Attucks, a man who was formerly enslaved.

Look carefully at this print, and find the title that Paul Revere gave to this image.

Paul Revere sold his prints of this image, but he was not the only person who created a print of the Boston Massacre, nor the first. A few days after the massacre, artist Henry Pelham showed Revere his print, “The Fruits of Arbitrary Power.” Revere then created his own print based on Pelham’s and was able to get his copies to market before Pelham. Other people then made prints similar to Revere’s and sold them, as well. Today, artists often have legal rights to the images they create and can sue a person who “steals” their work. This was not the case in colonial America.
Boston Massacre Prints

Henry Pelham’s Print
Comparing the Prints

Look at the Revere and Pelham prints together. What differences can you find between the prints? Do you prefer the scene in one print more than the other? If so, why?
Paul Revere and Industrial Espionage

Paul Revere was a maker. He was also considered a pioneer in the copper industry. During the eighteenth century, the British insulated the hulls of their wooden ships with rolled copper sheets. This copper sheeting provided extra protection to wooden ships. After the Revolutionary War, Americans still had to purchase rolled copper from England, as they did not know how to make it. Paul Revere saw great value in learning to produce rolled copper to sell in America. In 1801, he opened the first copper rolling mill in America, but he could not make copper sheets that were as good as those made in England.

Photo of copper sheet ready to hammer

Revere therefore sent his son, Joseph Warren Revere, to England with the mission of copying the methods used by the British to create rolled copper. This type of spying is called industrial espionage. It is something that still goes on today, and many companies, especially American companies creating new technologies, have
strict policies on who can access their factories in an effort to prevent people from stealing their methods.

With letters from American officials introducing Joseph Warren Revere to factory owners and politicians in England, Joseph was allowed to tour many different factories and take notes and make drawings about what he saw. He and his father, for example, had trouble making copper sheets that were always smooth and uniform. Joseph Warren Revere therefore visited a factory and wrote down their processes for making copper sheets smooth. Information such as this helped the Reveres to make successful copper sheets that they could sell. Their sheets would line the USS Constitution, which became known as “Old Ironsides” because of the way cannons bounced off its copper lined hull. The Reveres’ sheets also covered the roof of the Statehouse in Boston.

*Joseph Warren Revere used drawings and words to record what he was seeing as he toured British factories. Imagine that you are touring a factory of the past or present. What kind of factory would you want to visit? What do you think you might see at this factory? Describe the scene and draw some of what you would want to bring back home.*