

## 3-A The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere, 1931

Grant Wood (1892–1942)



3-A Grant Wood (1892–1942), *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, 1931. Oil on Masonite, 30 x 40 in. (76.2 x 101.6 cm.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1950 (50.117). Photograph © 1988 The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Art © Estate of Grant Wood / Licensed by VAGA, New York.

### The Art

This oil painting tells the story of Paul Revere's ride from Boston, Massachusetts, to Lexington, Massachusetts, to warn people that the British invaders were headed their way. The painting highlights the road as a single rider rushes through a country village sending out the alarm. The artist, Grant Wood, tried to tell the story from a child's point of view. He lets us see the village from above, the way children would if they were making the church and houses out of building blocks. Much of the countryside shown in the picture is dark except for the road and the town. This makes people looking at the picture focus on the church, the road, and the rider.

### The Artist

Grant Wood was born in Iowa in 1892. He studied art in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Chicago, Illinois, before teaching school and then painting in Europe. Wood worked in the straightforward style of folk artists. In his most famous painting, *American Gothic*, he used his sister and his dentist as models. As a child, Wood was taken with the tale of Revere's journey through the night and decided to paint a picture honoring what he considered to be a great time in American history.

### The Historical Perspective

The inspiration for Wood's painting of Revere's famous ride came from a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He painted the work in 1931 during the Depression. Wood wanted to offer people a way to remember our beginnings and remind people that America was still a great nation. At the time, American art was becoming less realistic. Younger artists started to focus on more abstract styles from cities such as New York and Paris, France. Wood was determined to continue the realist tradition. In his painting of Paul Revere, Wood tried to link the present to the past and tell a story that would link future generations of Americans to their past.



## Conversations and Teaching Activities

Head Start Children ages 3 to 5

Encourage children to look closely at this painting—the objects, the background, the colors used. Introduce new vocabulary and find books that relate to the painting. New vocabulary may be introduced as the children are sharing what they see in the painting.

### Describing



- ✓ What do you see in the painting?
- ✓ Is it day or night? How can you tell?
- ✓ Are there any buildings like this in your neighborhood? Where are they?
- ✓ Have you seen buildings like this anywhere else?
- ✓ Are there people in the picture? Show me. How many can we find?

### Analyzing and Interpreting



Ask the following questions to stimulate thinking and discussion:

- The title of this painting is *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*. Why do you think the painting was named that?
- If the children do not mention seeing a man riding a horse, ask if someone can find the man riding the horse in the picture. What is the man doing?
- What are the people doing? Why do you think they are awake at night?
- What is happening? Why do you think the man is riding the horse at this time of night?
- Do you stay up late sometimes?
- Are there other things you would like to tell me about this painting of *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*?

## Connecting and Extending

### Introducing Vocabulary

chimney	secret code
code	shadow
emergency	steeple
kettle	town
lantern	village
noon	warning



### Books

*And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?* by Jean Fritz (Putnam Juvenile, 1996)  
Familiar, as well as unfamiliar, aspects of Paul Revere's ride are described.

*Midnight Riders: A Fun Song about the Ride of Paul Revere and William Dawes* by Michael Dahl (Window Books, 2004)  
The ride of Paul Revere is told in a song set to the tune of "Over Hill, Over Dale."

*Paul Revere's Ride* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Puffin, 1996)  
Pictures depict the drama of Longfellow's poem about Paul Revere's ride.

Books continued on page 20



## Connecting and Extending continued...

### Related Family Literacy Experiences

Parents and children can:

- ✓ sing the song “She’ll be Coming Round the Mountain” while waiting in line or on a long car or bus ride.
- ✓ talk about what “emergency” means and review safety and emergency response information.
- ✓ read *While You Were Asleep* in a dark room with a flashlight.



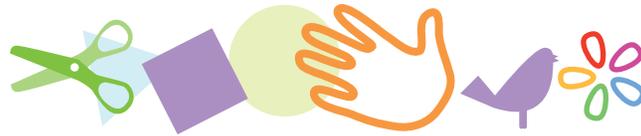
### Books continued...

*Paul Revere’s Ride: A Level Three Reader* by Cynthia Klingel and Robert B. Noyed (Child’s World, 2002)

This brief biography of Paul Revere highlights his role in the American Revolution.

*While You are Asleep* by Gwynne L. Isaacs (Walker, 1991)

While most people are asleep, Marsha is working at the all-night doughnut shop, Phil is driving a taxi, Dr. Kim is in the emergency room at the hospital, and others are pursuing their night jobs.



### Related Educational Experiences

- ✓ Read part of the poem, “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere,” as the children color and draw.
- ✓ Play music, such as the “William Tell Overture,” and allow children to gallop like horses around the room.
- ✓ Discuss the shadows and shapes in the painting, especially in the buildings. Talk about how long it would take to get somewhere by horse, wagon, walking, etc.
- ✓ Precut a variety of shapes, mix paints, collect different art media, and allow children to plan and create a mural that resembles the painting or their neighborhood.

*The ideas listed are just a few of the many activities that could be used to introduce or extend children’s learning. Your knowledge of your children and families supports your ability to ensure positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. As an educator, you probably have ideas for books, songs, finger plays, and activities that you have thought of when introducing or extending children’s learning related to the “A Head Start on Picturing America” artworks. We encourage you to confer with your colleagues, visit the local library or bookstore, and share your ideas with others.*