

The Boston Massacre was even less black-and-white than I had thought! Not only was the violence heavily provoked, but everyone seemed to have a different account on what actually happened. This was a confused mess, not the black-and-white civilian slaughter that the patriots painted it as. After reading through the website on the Boston massacre, I feel I understand the conflict a lot more than I did, but my new knowledge doesn't make understanding the event any easier. It seemed like people were spoiling for a fight, threatening each other, then acting all surprised and outraged when violence broke out.

In Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, the author describes the American people as being under a tyrannical monarchy. The first thing that struck me was the tone of the piece. This wasn't trying to gently sway people towards the author's point of view. It was intended to give heart to those who had already decided they were patriots and sway those on the fence by stressing that "a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy". I wonder what the Loyalists thought when they read this piece. They probably reacted as we do today when we don't approve of something: they labeled the author as a raving idiot and worried about how his writing might influence people. And it did influence people, turning many loyalists into patriots. I read some of his other works, which were all very anti-monarchist, anti-slavery and anti-religion. He was also one of the first to advocate a world peace organization and social security for the poor and elderly. He was clearly ahead of his time, and I don't know if he would even be fully accepted today.