



# Sleds on Boston Common: A Story from the American Revolution

*By Louise Borden*

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**Sleds on Boston Common: A Story from the American Revolution** By Louise Borden

Times were hard for the people of colonial Boston in the winter of 1774. Not only had King George III of England closed the Boston harbor to punish all those who spoke against his harsh laws, he had sent thousands of soldiers, led by their commander-in-chief General Thomas Gage, to reinforce his edicts. Large numbers of British soldiers were encamped on the Boston Common, preventing the people of Boston from using their own public space. But at least the king had not closed the schools -- young Henry Price and his two brothers still had classes every day.

It had snowed hard for three nights, but Henry's ninth birthday was clear, perfect for sled riding. To his delight, despite the hard times, he was given a beautiful new sled made by his father. Excited by the thought of sledding on the Common, which had the best hills in Boston, Henry and his brothers took their sleds to school. Their sister, Kate, met them at lunchtime with corn bread, apple jam, and her own sled. Together, they hurried to the Common -- only to find that British troops had put their tents and cooking fires right in the middle of the sled runs. But Henry was determined to try his new sled. Could he find a way?

Based on the local lore of Boston, this tale of a courageous boy gives a rich picture of colonial life at a troubled time.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Borden (*Good-bye, Charles Lindbergh*) bases her thought-provoking story on Boston folklore. Written in free verse, her lyrical reworking of an alleged incident is set in December 1774, six months after King George III had closed the Boston harbor. Accompanied by his three siblings, narrator Henry Price makes his way to Boston Common on his ninth birthday. Eager to try out his brand-new sled on the steep hill, he finds that soldiers have pitched tents right in the middle of the sled runs. Henry sees General Thomas Gage and concludes that he looks "like a man who would listen,/ a good man,/ a man like my father." When Henry complains to him, the officer praises the child for having "the courage of a good soldier/ as well as the spunk of your local rebels" and instructs his men to allow the children to sled wherever they wish. Though crisply depicting the British soldiers' bright red uniforms, Parker's (*The Hatmaker's Sign*) characteristically sketchy watercolor art is otherwise too vague to give youngsters a sure sense of the story's era or setting. Fortunately, Borden's own eye for detail compensates. For example, readers learn that the runners of the sled are "slick beef bones"; Henry and his siblings surreptitiously count the kegs of powder and the new sheds on the Common, to pass the information back to their father. A lively historical snippet. Ages 9-12. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

Grade 2-4-This story, based on local folklore, takes place in Boston during the harsh winter of 1775. It's Henry's ninth birthday, and he wants to use the new sled that his father has made for him. However, British soldiers camped on the Common have built cook fires right in the middle of the best hill. Henry and his siblings see General Thomas Gage, the royal governor of Boston, speaking with his troops. Noting the man's kind eyes and gentle manner, Henry dares to approach him and asks that the sled run be cleared. Moved by the child's earnest request and by his courage, Gage complies. Later, when the war begins and the general returns to England, Henry watches him leave, knowing that, despite their political differences, Gage is a "good man." This well-told story gives a clear picture of life in pre-Revolutionary Boston, and the changes brought by the blockade of Boston Harbor and the encampment of thousands of "lobster backs." It also shows that one's "enemies" are not necessarily evil simply because their political ideals may differ from one's own. The full- and double-page watercolor paintings create a nice sense of atmosphere and provide a fine backdrop for the action. A helpful author's note provides historical background. Pair this with a version of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride" to place it in a larger historical context.

Nancy Menaldi-Scanlan, LaSalle Academy, Providence, RI

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From [Booklist](#)

The author of *The Little Ships* (1997) and *Good-bye, Charles Lindbergh* (1998) continues her series of fictionalized historical picture books with this story from the American Revolution. Nine-year-old Henry Price and his older brothers plan to try out their new sleds on the hills of Boston Common, until they notice that the British troops have pitched their tents and started cooking fires right in the middle of the best sled runs. With courage and determination, Henry approaches General Gage himself, explains the problem, and is gratified when the royal governor orders his soldiers to move their belongings. Based on local folklore, Borden's story paints an authentic picture of life in colonial Boston and personalizes the events leading up to the War for Independence. Robert Parker's watercolor illustrations include many setting details and complement Borden's lyrical text nicely. This makes a good introduction to the pre-Revolutionary War period for younger students and will help clarify the relationship between colonists and the British during

this important time. *Kay Weisman*

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## **Users Review**

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#### **Maria Scully:**

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#### **Jason Dolly:**

People live in this new day of lifestyle always try and and must have the extra time or they will get lot of stress from both way of life and work. So , if we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely of course. People is human not a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer can unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, typically the book you have read is usually *Sleds on Boston Common: A Story from the American Revolution*.

#### **Cara Fultz:**

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