

Before You Read

Johnny Tremain Chapters 1-5

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What personal qualities or accomplishments are you proud of? What are some of the positive effects of pride? What are some of the negative effects of pride?

Chart It!

Jot down memories of situations in which you or someone else felt proud. Think about the positive and negative effects of that pride. Then create a two-column chart listing those effects. Share and discuss your chart with a partner.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how pride affects Johnny Tremain's life.

BACKGROUND

Time and Place

In the 1770s, the city of Boston was almost an island. It projected out into Boston Harbor, connected to the mainland by a thin strip of land called "the Neck." This was both good and bad for Bostonians. It was good because it provided easy access to Boston Harbor, while the Neck's guarded gates helped protect the city from attack. It was bad because it meant that the city could be easily isolated from communities on the mainland.

The city itself was a fairly typical eighteenth-century British-style town. A main feature was the Common, which still exists today. This land was shared by all and was used for pastureland, military training, horse-riding, and general recreation. People gathered at the Common to exchange news, as they did at the many water pumps scattered throughout the city.

Did You Know?

Johnny Tremain, like many poor boys of his time, was apprenticed to a master craftsman to learn his trade: silversmithing. Apprentices worked and usually lived with their masters for a period of about seven years. In exchange for the boy's efforts, the master would train, house, and feed him.

Paul Revere, whom Johnny consults for advice on a difficult smithing task, was a very talented and well-regarded silversmith in Boston. He learned the trade during an apprenticeship with his own father. Revere was particularly famous for his ability to keep the basic beauty of a design, while adding many decorative frills that were popular at the time.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

belligerent [bə lij'ər ənt] *adj.* likely to argue or fight

chagrin [shə grin'] *v.* to distress by disappointment or humiliation

enigmatical [en'ig mat'ik kəl] *adj.* puzzling

exuberant [ig zōō'bər ənt] *adj.* enthusiastic

fatuous [fach'ōō əs] *adj.* silly; foolish

flaccid [flak'sid] *adj.* without energy; limp

nonchalantly [non'shə lənt'lē] *adv.* in a way that shows casual indifference

unobtrusively [un'əb trōō'siv lē] *adv.* without being noticed

venerable [ven'ər ə bəl] *adj.* worthy of respect or awe