Robert Martello. *Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn: Paul Revere and the Growth of American Enterprise*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. vi + 421 pp. ISBN 978-0-8018-9757-3, $65.00 (hardcover); 978-0-8018-9758-0, $30.00 (paper).

Paul Revere is one of the many iconic figures of the founding era of the United States and his story has been widely told—the most recent biography having appeared in 2010. What has made Revere so well known was an 1861 poem by the nineteenth-century American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Out of those few lines of verse, a little-known Boston silversmith was transformed into a national icon, one of the ordinary American heroes who helped America achieve its independence. As Longfellow tells it, Revere's role in that revolutionary event is largely fictional. But dozens of subsequent biographers—Revere is a particularly popular subject for authors of young readers' biographies, there are some twenty currently in print—have separated fact from fiction and now only the most obvious Founders, the Washingtons, Jeffersons, Adamses, are better known than Revere.

Most accounts of Revere focus on the famous "Midnight Ride" of April 18, 1775, when he traveled from Boston to Lexington in order to warn fellow revolutionaries Samuel Adams and John Hancock that the British Army was coming to arrest them. While Revere and his now-forgotten fellow rider, William Dawes, did warn Patriot farmers along his route that the British were moving West from Boston and while he did manage to deliver his message to Adams and Hancock, Revere's role in subsequent events—particularly the so-called "Shot Heard 'Round the World'," the next day on Lexington Green—was minimal. The night he delivered his famous message, he was detained

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by British troops and released only after the battle for Lexington and Concord had begun.

Perhaps, Revere's most important function during the Revolution was as propagandist for the patriot cause. His skills as a silversmith prepared him well for the delicate work of engraver and print maker. And to this end, he produced some of the Revolution's most redolent and provocative images. The most important of these was surely his famous 1770 depiction of the Boston massacre in which British troops opened fire on a group of civilian protestors, leaving five of them mortally wounded.

These achievements, historians now generally agree, point to what has come to be Revere's more commonly acknowledged significance for students of the Revolutionary era. His political influence was limited, his military role minimal, and even as a propagandist for the Patriot cause his impact was limited by the cost of producing the kinds of engravings for which he was known. But as an artisan, as a maker of things and as a member of that crucial collection of Revolutionaries who occupied the social middle ground, Revere has, if anything, risen in historical importance.

As Robert Martello's important new study so amply demonstrates, much of the reason for this is that Revere was an unusually attentive documentarian and bookkeeper. Of all the tens of thousands of middling Americans who supported the Revolutionary cause—the artisans and craftspeople, the small merchants and tradesmen, the farmers and fur-traders—few documented their lives and their enterprises with the care of Paul Revere. Much of that documentary record now resides in the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Unlike so many of the Revere biographers before him, Martello takes full stock of this vast trove. What this means is that instead of focusing on Revere the Revolutionary, he focuses on Revere the economic actor. In other words, to his great credit, he focuses less on Revere's putative role in American Independence than on Revere's experience as maker of things and businessperson. It is a wise path and accounts for the prime and very substantial contribution of this study. Not only does it illuminate the full arc of Revere's working life but it also offers among the more penetrating portraits of business and enterprise in the early Republic now available. Because of Revere's entrepreneurial spirit, and because he was fortunate enough to reside in Boston, a relative hot bed of economic and commercial innovation, his career offers a glimpse of a striking array of business activities.

For although Revere began his business life as a silversmith, he displayed the common tendency among the most prominent and successful artisans to build from that relatively high-status trade

additional enterprises. For Revere, this meant a host of both lateral and vertical moves. From his silversmith operation, he developed first an engraving business and later a capacity for relatively large-scale production of cheaper silver ware. After the Revolutionary War, he turned his well-developed metallurgical skills to an industry that had suffered substantially but that would begin to boom as Americans rebuilt their war-torn country. He started an iron foundry in Boston and soon began diversifying, first forging bronze bells for the churches and schools being built in and around the city and then entering the arms trade as a forger of cannons.

But perhaps the most important and emblematic of all of Revere's businesses began around 1800 with a plan to supply the new U.S. Navy with copper sheeting for the exterior of its ships' hulls. The British navy had employed this technology to great advantage—the copper sheeting prevented the accumulation of barnacles and other organisms that slowed and damaged sailing vessels. As the new republic made its way in the world, such technology became essential.

What is interesting about Revere's copper-sheeting business is that it was, simply put, government work. As scholars have probed the early republic for America's first capitalists, entrepreneurs such as Revere have loomed large in their story. What was once readily ignored, though, was the fact that so many of these early entrepreneurs functioned very much like their pre-Revolutionary, pre-modern brethren: they depended for their commercial well-being on the state. Ultimately, that is perhaps the most compelling bit of insight to come from Robert Martello's fine study. The growth of American enterprise was inseparable from the growth of American government.

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