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 Henrys 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.

My Personal Review:
Sleds on Boston Common makes history come alive by focusing on a fictional group of children who want to go sledding during the tension-filled days just before the start of the American Revolution. The story moves beyond the normal heroism of the patriots and the perfidy of the British to put a warm human face on everyone. Reading this story can be the precursor to a wonderful visit to the Boston Common to locate where the best sled runs might be. It can also help ignite an interest in American history. Henry Price lives in Boston, where his father runs a small toy and map shop. Because of rebellious activities, the port of Boston was closed by the king on June 1, 1774. This hurt commerce and everyone was suffering economically. Despite this, Henry's father had made Henry a new sled for his birthday which fell on December 22, 1774. During the two
hour break from school at lunchtime, Henry and his siblings head for the Boston Common with the new sled. They are discouraged to find that thousands of troops are setting up camp there, and the troops block all the best sled runs! What to do? When Henry sees General Thomas Gage, the British Governor of Massachusetts Colony, Henry decides to speak to him. But first, he and his brothers and sister count the troops, horses, and anything else that the patriots want to know. General Gage turns to Henry and says, "Let this boy have his words." After listening to Henry, General Gage says, "I'm a father as well as a soldier for my king . . . ." " . . . I know my own children would like to sled this hill if there were here." "He shook my hand, man to man." "My eldest son is named Henry." In this fictional story, General Gage tells his troops to allow the children to sled, to clear a good run, and to keep the ice in one pond undisturbed for skating. The children were able to return again and again. "Because General Gage was a man of his word." The war started in April 1975, and General Gage was ordered to return to England in October 1975. The illustrations in the book build from splashes of watercolors with inked outlines and details. The images are done in kaleidoscopic form that suggests movement by the figures. The author also provides an end note that describes more about the events described here, in order to help create that bridge into interest in American history. The book is also done in blank verse, which gives the style an elegance and crispness that make it a pleasure to read. I suggest that you also read the poem, The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere, to your child as a follow-on. If the interest continues to build in your family, there are many fine fictional stories about the early days of the American Revolution that you can also read to and with your child. You should also use this book to reinforce the point that even those who oppose you are usually well-meaning. Have a good run!

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Sleds on Boston Common: A Story from the American Revolution by Louise Borden - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!