

# Herrick Family Association

Founded in 2001



*Richard L. Herrick, Founder and President Emeritus*

*Kenneth Herrick, Vice President Emeritus*

*Joann Nichols, Editor Emeritus*

*Virgil Herrick, Counselor Emeritus*

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**Check our Web Page: [www.Herrickfamilyassociation.org](http://www.Herrickfamilyassociation.org) or find us on Facebook!**

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## **Message from the President:**

**Dale E. Yoe, HFA #062**

We are already through our summer and getting prepared for our fall meeting. There is a **deadline of September 8<sup>th</sup>** to get a room at the special price of \$229/night. Just let them know you are with our group. **Herrick's Family Reunion Hospitality + guestroom block October 1-5, 2025** for online registration. I also am attaching a registration sheet for the HFA and another info sheet from American Ancestors, to help with your research.

At this year's meeting we will start with a reception, include a trip to the Museum of the American Revolution, a trip to Valley Forge and lunch at the Black Powder tavern, a trip to see the reenactment of the Battle of Germantown, PA and a farewell dinner. At our meeting we will be talking about the status of our association, future elections, future meetings and will have an auction for the 1846 edition of the Herrick Genealogical Register. Please let me know if you have any questions. Dale- [yoeda@comcast.net](mailto:yoeda@comcast.net).

Let's look at the history of our HFA meetings. They began in 2002 with the initial trip to Salem. That was our biggest meeting with 50 members attending. Since then, we have traveled back to Salem 4 more times. We also have gone to Ft. Wayne Indiana, Washington DC, Salt Lake City Utah, Lansing MI, Albany NY, Hartford CT, Madison WI and of course Leicester, England. From 2002- 2012 we were meeting every year. Once our biggest goal of creating the HGR3 was accomplished, we changed after that to every 2 years. We even had a zoom one during the pandemic.

This year we will have our lowest attendance ever- with just 12 planning to come. But we will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Revolution in Philadelphia. As always, you will have things to do with the group and opportunities to do research on your own. Key institutions for Genealogical research include the Historical Society of PA, the Philadelphia City archives, and the Genealogical Society of PA. The library system also offers resources as do smaller societies like the Germantown Historical Society. Then the sights are, Independence Hall, The Liberty Bell, Carpenters Hall and others as well.

There is still time to join us there- just let me know! Dale

\* \* \*

**Registration for the 2025 meeting  
of the Herrick Family Association**

**October 1-5, 2025  
Philadelphia, PA**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cell phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of others in party:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Will you be staying at the Marriott Hotel Old City?**

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

**2. Number attending if yes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. If no, will you be joining us at:**

**Reception: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Museum of Am. Rev.: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Valley Forge: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Reenactment: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Farewell Dinner: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**4. Any allergies/ special needs etc.**

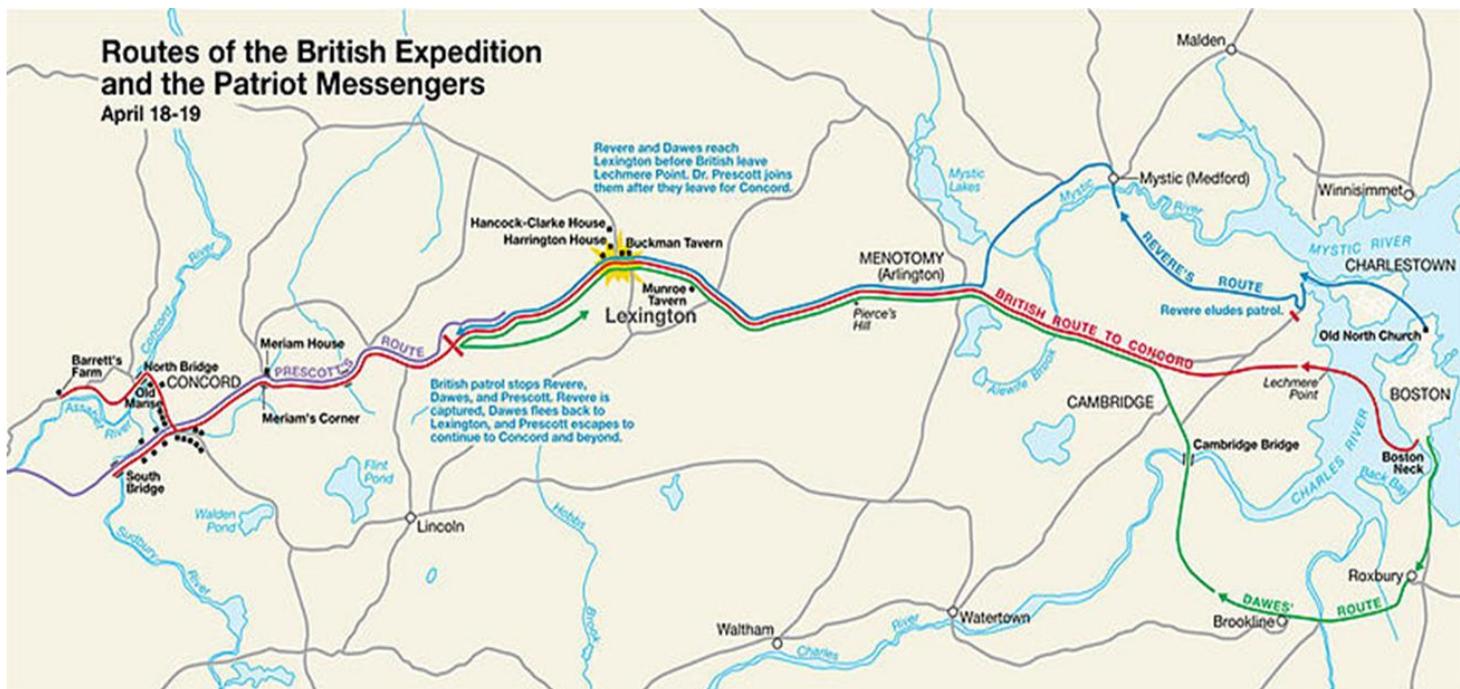
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**Please email or snail mail: Dale Yoe [yoeda@comcast.net](mailto:yoeda@comcast.net)**

**13390 Windrush Court**

**Solomons, MD 20688**

A National Park Service map showing the routes of the initial Patriot messengers and of the British expedition



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### By Curt Herrick HFA #100

Herrick Family Association members, families and friends are gathering in Philadelphia, PA, from 1 through 5 October 2025. Our HFA purpose is to find more Herrick history, have fun, and conduct our mandatory two year HFA meeting. Our James Herrick IV, the Zoom planning host for our 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary, observed that Henry Herrick landed in America on June 22, 1629, almost 400 years ago. Our Henry Herrick arrived in America at Naumkeag (Salem) from the Lyons's Whelp in Higgins fleet to America from England. On June 22, 1629, Henerie Hericke (Henry Herrick) arrived at Naumkeag (Salem) aboard the Lyon's Whelp which was one of three ships transporting the "Higginson Fleet" to the New World.

The ships set sail from Gravesend on April 2, 1629.

Rev. Francis Higginson was forced to flee England because he was under threat of persecution (death, imprisonment) by Bishop Laud and the Church of England for being a non-conformist and continuing to preach after his curacy was revoked.

Henry Herrick was a parishioner and friend of Rev. Higginson. Henry's children were baptized by Rev. Higginson.

Like Higginson, Henry was prosecuted by Bishop Laud in Church proceedings for heretical actions and fined in March of 1628 for not kneeling during the reading of the sacraments and excommunicated for the same behaviors on June 2, 1629, twenty days before departing with the Higginson Fleet.

Once in Salem, Henry lived with Hugh Laskin and family who had arrived in 1628. Newcomers often stayed with other families who had had some time to establish a home. Henry married Editha Laskin around 1634.

Henry was granted a farm of two or three acres on the north side of Massey's Cove January 1635/6. At his death he had accumulated 413 acres of land which was passed on to his heirs.

Henry was accepted as a freeman in 1631 and into the church in 1636.

Editha and Henry had eight children: Thomas -unknown date, Zachariah in 1636, Ephraim in 1637/8, Henry in 1639/40, Josphe in 1645, Elizabeth in 1647, John in 1650, and Benjamin by 1656.

Many of the Herricks in the United States today descend from this family.

Much more information is available about the Herrick family at the Herrick Family Association (HFA) website (<http://www.herrickfamilyassociation.org>). Besides learning more about the activities of the HFA and the research that members have posted, you can also order the Herrick Genealogical Register III (HGR III) on a flash drive for \$10. The four volumes (in 5 books - 3298 pages) contain the Herrick family genealogy from Henerie Hericke who was born in 1598 to the date the volumes were published in 2008. One family member has found it worked very well and is useful for research.

This genealogy has been collected and compiled in three stages:

HGR I: A Genealogical Register of the Name and Family of Herrick, from the Settlement of Henerie Hericke in Salem, Massachusetts, 1629 to 1846, with a concise notice of their English Ancestry by Jedediah Herrick, Bangor, Samuel S. Smith, Printer. 1846

HGR II: A Genealogical Register of the Name and Family of Herrick from the Settlement of Herrick, in Salem, Massachusetts, 1629 to 1846 with a Concise Notice of Their English Ancestry. By Gen. Jedediah Herrick. Revised, Augmented and Brought Down to A.D., 1885. By Lucius C. Herrick, M.D., Columbus, Ohio: Privately Printed. 1885.

HGR III: Herrick Genealogy, Herrick Genealogical Register. A Genealogical Register of the Name and Family of Herrick, From the Settlement of Henerie Hericke, in Salem, Massachusetts. Third Edition, Volume One, Part One. Richard Leon Herrick, Compiler. Herrick Family Association, Inc. Holt, Michigan. 2008. Work continues to discover Henry's family of origin. Research makes clear that his was not the son of Sir William of Beau Manor or from anyone of the "metals" side of the family. Current theory is that he is the son of Thomas Herrick, draper, on the "cloth" side of the family. Likely first cousins, once removed.

Future work will focus on continued examination of Henry's family of origin, documenting Herricks who fought in the French and Indian Wars and Civil Wars and on helping Herrick cousins discover their lineage. Dale Yoe, president of the HFA, helps people use the HGR III and find their family lines. Her email address is [yoeda@comcast.net](mailto:yoeda@comcast.net).

Our meeting in Philadelphia allows us to participate in the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America. The Herricks had been in the Colonies for 150 years and were part of Lexington and Concord, Fort Ticonderoga, Bunker Hill and the establishment of the Continental Army under George Washington. I should have mentioned one item for our meeting notes, of Herrick significance.

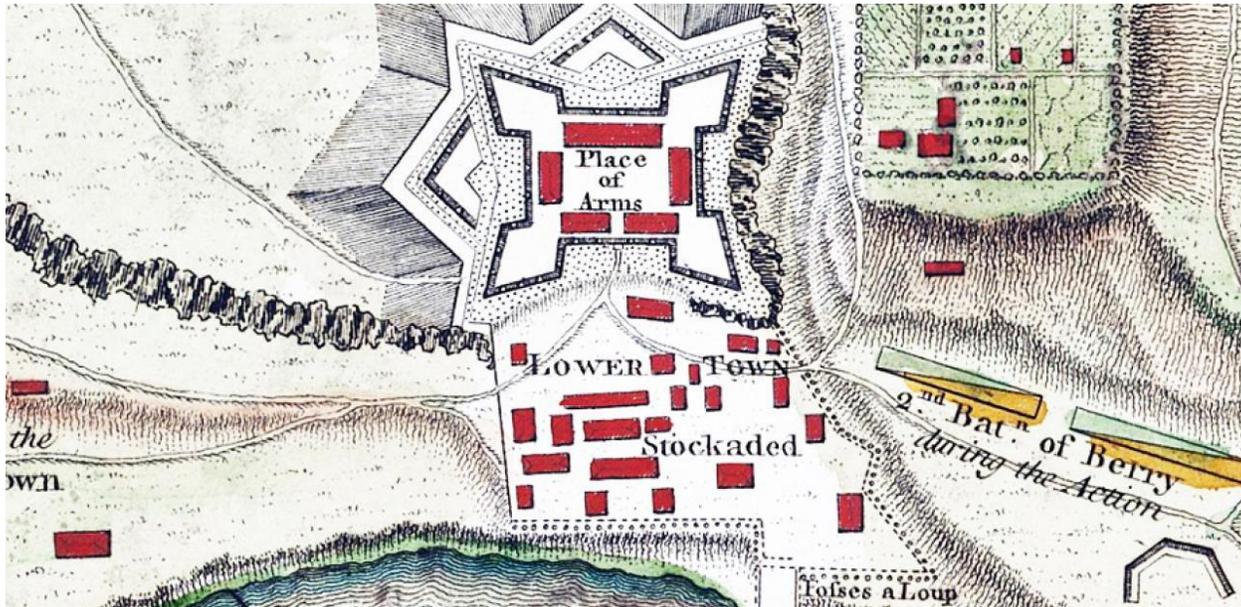
One item of Herrick significance for our meeting notes, James Herrick just published his book: *Dusk and Dawn: 100 Poems for Prayer*. It can be ordered with this link: [https://www.amazon.com/Dusk-Dawn-100-Poems-Prayer-ebook/dp/B0FGYBPDTR/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=HO1KEJ4N7RFM&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.Qwtp2FIL23Y8z8fXAFtIV.Q.V2MaP8-sie\\_QuomeoppCrXWAZnl-HcADpS6J7wdJPfw&dib\\_tag=se&keywords=james+herrick+dusk+and+dawn&qid=1752262929&srefix=%2Caps%2C315&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Dusk-Dawn-100-Poems-Prayer-ebook/dp/B0FGYBPDTR/ref=sr_1_1?crid=HO1KEJ4N7RFM&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.Qwtp2FIL23Y8z8fXAFtIV.Q.V2MaP8-sie_QuomeoppCrXWAZnl-HcADpS6J7wdJPfw&dib_tag=se&keywords=james+herrick+dusk+and+dawn&qid=1752262929&srefix=%2Caps%2C315&sr=8-1)

By A.B. Reynolds HFA# #003

American Battlefield Trust

[battlefields.org/learn.revolutionary-war/battles/fort-ticonderoga-1775](http://battlefields.org/learn.revolutionary-war/battles/fort-ticonderoga-1775)

## Fort Ticonderoga May 10, 1775 and Herricks Who Fought There



Fort Ticonderoga, referred to as the Gibraltar of North America and strategically located at the confluence of Lake Champlain and Lake George, controlled the site of portage between the two bodies of water. Originally built by the French from 1755 - 1758, it was captured by the British during the French and Indian War. By 1775 it had become a backwater post in the British command and was falling into disrepair. But with a full-blown war on the horizon between England and her rebellious colonies, the English high command recognized its strategic significance, since the fort controlled routes of communication and travel between New York City and the Hudson River with British-held Canada.

During the American War for Independence, several engagements were fought at the five-pointed star fort. The most famous of these occurred on May 10, 1775, when [Ethan Allen](#) and his band of Green Mountain Boys, accompanied by Benedict Arnold, who held a commission from Massachusetts, silently rowed across Lake Champlain from present-day Vermont and stormed the fort in a swift, late-night sneak attack. The lone sentry posted was quickly pushed aside. Less than 50 British soldiers made up the garrison. When the British commander asked under whose authority he was acting, Allen is alleged to have replied, "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," demanding the British surrender the fort.

Allen and Arnold, each with a powerful ego, clashed from the moment they met, arguing over who was to lead the attack. Arnold was placated when he was told he could lead alongside Allen. However, their squabble continued after the fort was taken as to who remained the de facto commander. Horrified that Allen's men plundered in the wake of their victory and celebrated by getting drunk, Arnold insisted order be restored. Allen and his men eventually left and Arnold remained behind until he was relieved of command in June 1775, after 1,000 patriots from Connecticut arrived to reinforce the fort and brought with them another General who held a commission from Congress. Taking umbrage, Arnold left and resigned his commission, beginning the long, sour story of his disgruntled relations with Congress and the hierarchy of the Continental Army.

The great prize for the American cause was not the fort itself, but rather the vast trove of artillery that was located at the fort.

On June 17, 1775, the Battle of Bunker Hill took place outside of Boston. Even though the British won the battle, they remained penned up in the City of Boston, besieged by the rag-tag rabble of New England farmers, mechanics, and others whose assembled mob controlled the hills and overlooks of Boston. The process of turning that mob into the nucleus of the American Continental Army began to unfold when George Washington arrived later that month, having been commissioned a General by the Continental Congress and ordered to New England to build an army. Shortly after arriving in Boston, Washington met the gregarious Boston bookseller, Henry Knox, who through a deep love of reading military history had taught himself the arts of war. Impressed, Washington appointed him commander of the American artillery. The problem was that there was very little to be had in the Boston vicinity. Knowing that Fort Ticonderoga was under American control, and well removed from the fighting, Knox decided that he would lead men from Boston to Fort Ticonderoga to retrieve the priceless artillery and return the guns to Boston, where they would be placed on the high ground overlooking the city, threatening British occupation. Washington approved the plan.

During the winter of 1775-1776, Henry Knox and his men marched to Fort Ticonderoga and gathered the necessary artillery and other supplies. They built special sleds to haul them over the frozen rivers and snow-covered Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts. It was an arduous and heroic task which Knox completed with great alacrity, arriving with the first elements of his train in March 1776. The newly-arrived guns, now aimed at the British, turned the tide in New England and forced the British to evacuate Boston. The future of the American cause looked bright.

Fort Ticonderoga remained firmly in American hands until the Saratoga Campaign of 1777, when the British Army under the command of General John Burgoyne recaptured the fort as they moved south from Canada towards Albany, New York. Seizing the unoccupied high ground of nearby Mount Defiance, Burgoyne's engineers hauled their cannons to the top of the mountain and aimed them at Fort Ticonderoga. Seeing their plight, the American garrison abandoned the fort without a fight on July 5, 1777.

After Burgoyne's defeat at [Saratoga](#) in October 1777, the fort slipped into ignominy, no longer playing a major role in the war as the theatre of British military operations moved South.



## Battle Facts

New York | May 10, 1775

Result: American Victory

Estimated Casualties: 49 (American-1 and British-48)

In May 1775, the Americans who fought at Fort Ticonderoga were primarily members of the Green Mountain Boys militia, led by Ethan Allen, and they were also joined by Benedict Arnold. The Green Mountain Boys, a militia from Vermont, were key to the surprise capture of the fort. Arnold, though not a Green Mountain Boy, was also involved in the capture, bringing formal commissions from Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The **Green Mountain Boys** were a militia organization established in 1770 in the territory between the British provinces of New York and New Hampshire, known as the New Hampshire Grants and later in 1777 as the Vermont Republic (which later became the state of Vermont).[2][3] Headed by Ethan Allen and members of his extended family, it was instrumental in resisting New York's attempts to control the territory, over which it had won de jure control in a territorial dispute with New Hampshire.

Some companies served in the [American Revolutionary War](#), including notably when the Green Mountain Boys, led under the command of Ethan Allen while being assisted by Benedict Arnold, captured Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain on May 10, 1775, and invaded Canada later in 1775. In early June 1775, Ethan Allen and his then subordinate, Seth Warner, induced the Continental Congress at Philadelphia to create a Continental Army ranger regiment from the then New Hampshire Grants. Having no treasury, the Congress

directed that New York's revolutionary Congress pay for the newly authorized regiment. In July 1775, Allen's militia was granted support from the New York revolutionary Congress.

The Green Mountain Boys disbanded more than a year before Vermont declared its independence in 1777 from Great Britain "as a separate, free and independent jurisdiction or state". The [Vermont Republic](#) operated for 14 years, before being admitted in 1791 to the United States as the 14th state.

The remnants of the Green Mountain Boys militia were largely reconstituted as the Green Mountain Continental Rangers. Command of the newly formed regiment passed from Allen to Seth Warner. Allen joined the staff of the Northern Army of New York's Major General [Philip Schuyler](#) and was given the rank of lieutenant colonel. Under Warner the regiment fought at the battles of Hubbardton and Bennington in 1777. The regiment was disbanded in 1779.[4]<sup>:143–145</sup>[5]<sup>:220</sup>[6]

### **From Wikipedia - History**

The original *Green Mountain Boys* were a militia organized in what is now southwestern Vermont in the decade prior to the American Revolutionary War. They comprised settlers and land speculators who held New Hampshire titles to lands between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain, an area then known as the New Hampshire Grants, that is now modern Vermont. New York was given legal control of the area by a decision of the British crown and refused to respect the New Hampshire titles and town charters. Although a few towns with New York land titles, notably Brattleboro on the Connecticut River, supported the change, the vast majority of the settlers in the sparsely populated frontier region rejected the authority of New York.

With several hundred members, the Green Mountain Boys effectively controlled the area where New Hampshire grants had been issued. They were led by [Ethan Allen](#), his brother Ira Allen, and their cousins Seth Warner and Remember Baker. They were based at the Catamount Tavern in Bennington. By the 1770s, the Green Mountain Boys had become an armed military force and de facto government, which was also a militia, that prevented New York from exercising its authority in the northeast portion of the Province of New York. New York authorities had standing warrants for the arrest of the leaders of the rebellious Vermonters but were unable to exercise them. New York surveyors and other officials attempting to exercise their authority were prevented from doing so and in some cases were severely beaten, and settlers arriving to clear and work land under New York-issued grants were forced off their land, and sometimes had their possessions destroyed. At the same time, New York sought to extend its authority over the territory. During an event once known as the Westminister massacre, anti-Yorkers occupied the courthouse in Westminister to prevent a New York judge from holding court, and two men were killed in the ensuing standoff. Ethan Allen then went to Westminister with a band of Boys and organized a convention calling for the territory's independence from New York.

When the [American Revolutionary War](#) started in 1775, Ethan Allen and a troop of his men, along with Connecticut Colonel Benedict Arnold, marched up to Lake Champlain and captured the strategically important British military posts at Fort Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and Fort George, all in New York. The Boys also briefly held St. John's in Québec, but retreated on word of arriving British regulars.[7]

In Summer 1775, the Green Mountain Boys became the basis for the Green Mountain Rangers, a regiment in the [Continental Army](#) that selected colonel Seth Warner as its leader.[8] Some of the Green Mountain Boys preferred to remain with Ethan Allen and were taken prisoners along with Allen in August 1775 in a bungled attempt to capture the city of Montreal. Among them were Congressman Matthew Lyon and Lieutenant Benjamin Tucker.

Vermont eventually declared itself an independent nation in January 1777, and organized a government based in [Windsor](#). The armed forces of the Vermont Republic was based upon the Green Mountain Boys. Although Vermont initially supported the American Revolutionary War and sent troops to fight John Burgoyne's British invasion from Quebec in battles at Hubbardton and Bennington in 1777, Vermont eventually adopted a more neutral stance and became a haven for deserters from both the British and colonial armies. George Washington, who had more than sufficient difficulties with the British, brushed off Congressional demands that he subdue Vermont. During the Haldimand Affair, some members of the Green Mountain Boys became involved in secret negotiations with British officials about restoring the Crown's rule over the territory.

The *Vermont Army* version of the Green Mountain Boys faded away after Vermont joined the United States as the 14th U.S. state in 1791, although the Green Mountain Boys mustered for the War of 1812, The Civil War, the Spanish–American War, and following World War I as the Vermont National Guard.

### Notable members

[Ebenezer Allen](#) – militia member (lieutenant) (Ethan Allen's cousin)[9]

[Ethan Allen](#) – militia leader (general)

[Ira Allen](#) – militia leader, and the founder of the University of Vermont (Ethan Allen's brother)[10]

[Remember Baker](#) – militia member (captain) (Ethan Allen's cousin)[11]

[John Fassett Jr.](#) – Vermont Supreme Court Justice, 1778–1786, diarist who chronicled the Green Mountain Boys' 1775 expedition to Canada.[12]

[David Fay](#) – Vermont Supreme Court Justice, adjutant general of the Vermont Militia[13]

[Jonas Fay](#) – regimental surgeon and political leader of early Vermont[14]

[Jonas Galusha](#) – militia leader (captain), future governor of Vermont[15]

[Joab Hoisington](#) – militia leader, Hoisington's Rangers (major), served in the French-Indian War, and participated in the Battle for Crown Point

[Matthew Lyon](#) – militia member (second lieutenant), and future congressman[16]

[David Robinson](#) – son of Captain Samuel Robinson, a founder of Bennington

[Moses Robinson](#) – colonel in Vermont Militia during American Revolution, 2nd governor of Vermont Republic, one of the first two senators from Vermont.[17]

[Thomas Rowley](#) – poet, militia member, and spokesman, known as the "Bard of the Green Mountains" who "Set the Hills on Fire".[18]

[Elishama Tozer](#) – militia member (lieutenant)

[Seth Warner](#) – militia leader (colonel)[19]

### Herricks who fought at Fort Ticonderoga

**Col. Rufus Herrick** (Edward 4, Stephen 3, Ephraim 2, Henerie 1) (HGR III, Volume 1, Part 1 page 90 and 91 and Vol. 4, pg. 2695) He was living in the region called “nine Partners”, in Dutchess Co., NY in 1762 and was chosen Constable and annually thereafter appointed to some office. On 28 June 1775 he was appointed by the Provincial Congress of NY, Captain of a company in the Fourth Continental Regiment of New York under Colonel James Holmes. His company was ordered to Ft. Ticonderoga where he remained about 18 months and then joined the Army. He later served as Lt. Colonel of New York Militia. At the end of the war, he retired with the rank Colonel. (HGR III, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 90-1 and Vol. 4, p. 2695)

According to Robert O. Bascom in *The Ticonderoga Expedition of 1775, List of Men with Ethan Allen*:

**Col. Samuel Herrick** (Daniel 4, Samuel 3, Ephraim 2, Henerie 1) was with the expedition at Castleton and was sent from there to Skenesborough in command of the expedition directed against the establishment at that place. (Men of Vermont, p. 49.) (HGR III, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 97-98 and Vol. 4, p. 2687)

**Elijah Herrick** of Hartford was one of the Connecticut party. (Listed as Unclassified in HGR III, Vol. 4, pg. 2730.)

## Battles of Lexington And Concord

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Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battles\\_of\\_Lexington\\_and\\_Concord](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battles_of_Lexington_and_Concord)

Updated: 2017-07-19T15:43Z

"Battle of Lexington" redirects here. For the American Civil War battles, see [Battle of Lexington \(disambiguation\)](#).

### Battles of Lexington and Concord

Part of the [American Revolutionary War](#)



[Romanticized](#) 19th-century depiction of Battle of Lexington

<b>Date</b>	April 19, 1775; 242 years ago
<b>Location</b>	<a href="#">Middlesex County, Massachusetts</a> Lexington: <a href="#">42°26′58.7″N 71°13′51.0″W</a> Concord: <a href="#">42°28′08.54″N 71°21′02.08″W</a>
<b>Result</b>	Strategic American victory <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ British forces succeed in destroying cannon and supplies in Concord</li><li>▪ Militia successfully drive British back to Boston</li><li>▪ Start of the <a href="#">American Revolutionary War</a></li></ul>

### Belligerents

 [Massachusetts Bay](#)

 [Great Britain](#)

## Commanders and leaders

<a href="#">John James Parker</a>	<a href="#">Francis Smith</a>
<a href="#">Barrett</a>	<a href="#">John Pitcairn (WIA)</a>
<a href="#">Buttrick</a>	<a href="#">Hugh Percy</a>
<a href="#">Robinson</a>	
<a href="#">Heath</a>	
<a href="#">Warren</a>	
<a href="#">Isaac Davis †</a>	

## Strength

<b>Lexington:</b> 77 <sup>[1]</sup>	<b>Departing</b>
<b>Concord:</b> 400 <sup>[2]</sup>	<b>Boston:</b> 700 <sup>[4]</sup>
<b>End of Battle:</b> 3,960 <sup>[3]</sup>	<b>Lexington:</b> 400 <sup>[5]</sup>
	<b>Concord:</b> 100 <sup>[6]</sup>
	<b>End of Battle:</b> 1,500 <sup>[7]</sup>

## Casualties and losses

49	killed	73	killed
39	wounded	174	wounded
5 missing <sup>[8]</sup>		53 missing <sup>[8]</sup>	

## [Boston](#) [campaign](#) 1774–1776

- [Powder Alarm](#)
- [Suffolk Resolves](#)
- **Lexington and Concord**
- [Boston](#)
- [Thompson's War](#)
- [Chelsea Creek](#)
- [Machias](#)
- [Bunker Hill](#)
- [Gloucester](#)
- [Falmouth](#)
- [Knox artillery train](#)
- [Dorchester Heights](#)

The **Battles of Lexington and Concord** were the first military engagements of the [American Revolutionary War](#).<sup>[9]</sup> The battles were fought on April 19, 1775 in [Middlesex County](#), [Province of Massachusetts Bay](#), within the towns of [Lexington](#), [Concord](#), [Lincoln](#), [Menotomy](#) (present-day Arlington), and [Cambridge](#). They marked the

outbreak of armed conflict between the [Kingdom of Great Britain](#) and its [thirteen colonies](#) in America.

In late 1774, Colonial leaders adopted the [Suffolk Resolves](#) in resistance to the [alterations made to the Massachusetts colonial government](#) by the British parliament following the [Boston Tea Party](#). The colonial assembly responded by forming a Patriot provisional government known as the [Massachusetts Provincial Congress](#) and calling for local militias to train for possible hostilities. The Colonial government exercised effective control of the colony outside of British-controlled Boston. In response, the British government in February 1775 declared Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion.

About 700 [British Army regulars](#) in Boston, under [Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith](#), were given secret orders to capture and destroy Colonial military supplies reportedly stored by the Massachusetts [militia](#) at Concord. Through effective [intelligence](#) gathering, [Patriot](#) leaders had received word weeks before the expedition that their supplies might be at risk and had moved most of them to other locations. On the night before the battle, warning of the British expedition had been rapidly sent from Boston to militias in the area by several riders, including [Paul Revere](#), with information about British plans. The initial mode of the Army's arrival by water was signaled from the [Old North Church](#) in Boston to Charleston using lanterns to communicate "one if by land, two if by sea".

The first shots were fired just as the sun was rising at Lexington. Eight militiamen were killed, including Ensign Robert Munroe, their ranking officer. The British suffered only one casualty. The militia were outnumbered and fell back, and the regulars proceeded on to Concord, where they broke apart into companies to search for the supplies. At the [North Bridge](#) in Concord, approximately 400 militiamen engaged 100 regulars from three companies of the King's troops at about 11:00 am, resulting in casualties on both sides. The outnumbered regulars fell back from the bridge and rejoined the main body of British forces in Concord.

The British forces began their return march to Boston after completing their search for military supplies, and more militiamen continued to arrive from neighboring towns. Gunfire erupted again between the two sides and continued throughout the day as the regulars marched back towards Boston. Upon returning to Lexington, Lt. Col. Smith's expedition was rescued by reinforcements under [Brigadier General Hugh Percy](#), a future duke of Northumberland known as Earl Percy. The combined force of about 1,700 men marched back to Boston under heavy fire in a [tactical withdrawal](#) and eventually reached the safety of [Charlestown](#). The accumulated militias then blockaded the narrow land accesses to Charlestown and Boston, starting the [Siege of Boston](#).

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) describes the first shot fired by the Patriots at the North Bridge in his "[Concord Hymn](#)" as the "[shot heard round the world](#)".<sup>[10]</sup>

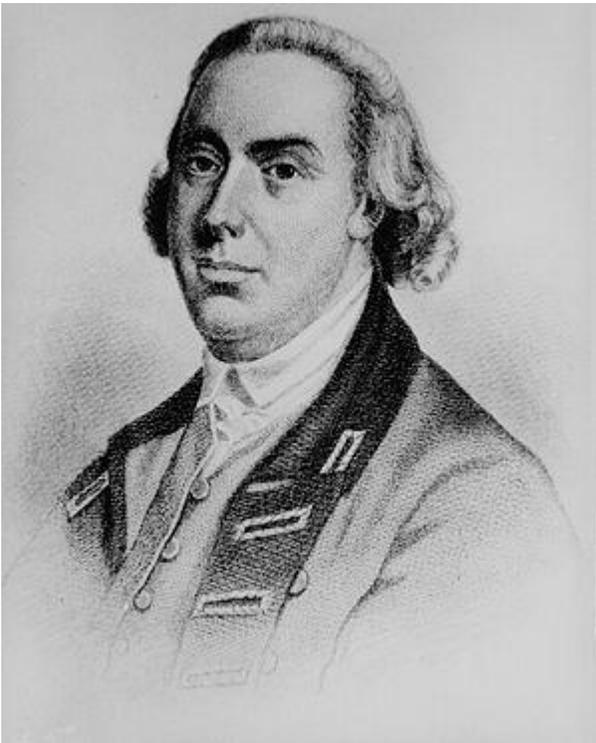
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Background

Further information: [Boston campaign](#)



[Thomas Gage](#)

The [British Army](#)'s infantry was nicknamed "[redcoats](#)" and sometimes "devils" by the colonists. They had [occupied](#) Boston since 1768 and had been augmented by [naval](#) forces and [marines](#) to enforce what the colonists called The [Intolerable Acts](#), which had been passed by the [British Parliament](#) to punish the [Province of Massachusetts Bay](#) for the [Boston Tea Party](#) and other acts of defiance.

General [Thomas Gage](#) was the military [governor of Massachusetts](#) and commander-in-chief of the roughly 3,000 British military forces garrisoned in Boston. He had no control over Massachusetts outside of Boston, however, where implementation of the Acts had increased tensions between the Patriot [Whig](#) majority and the pro-British [Tory](#) minority. Gage's plan was to avoid conflict by removing military supplies from Whig militias using small, secret, and rapid strikes. This struggle for supplies led to one British success and several Patriot successes in a series of nearly bloodless conflicts known as the [Powder Alarms](#). Gage considered himself to be a friend of liberty and attempted to separate his duties as governor of the colony and as general of an occupying force. [Edmund Burke](#) described Gage's conflicted relationship with Massachusetts by saying in Parliament, "An Englishman is the unfittest person on Earth to argue another Englishman into slavery."<sup>[11]</sup>

The colonists had been forming militias since the very beginnings of Colonial settlement for the purpose of defense against [Indian](#) attacks. These forces also saw action in the [French and Indian War](#) between 1754 and 1763 when they fought alongside British regulars. Under the laws of each New England colony, all towns were obligated to form militia companies composed of all males 16 years of age and older (there were exemptions for some categories), and to ensure that the members were properly armed. The Massachusetts militias were formally under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, but militia companies throughout New England elected their own officers.<sup>[12]</sup> Gage effectively dissolved the provincial government under the terms of the [Massachusetts Government Act](#), and these existing connections were employed by the colonists under the [Massachusetts Provincial Congress](#) for the purpose of resistance to the military threat from Britain.<sup>[13]</sup>

#### British government preparations

A February 1775 address to [King George III](#), by both houses of Parliament, declared that a state of rebellion existed:

We ... find that a part of your Majesty' s subjects, in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, have proceeded so far to resist the authority of the supreme Legislature, that a rebellion at this time actually exists within the said Province; and we see, with the utmost concern, that they have been countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements entered into by your Majesty's subjects in several of the other Colonies, to the injury and oppression of many of their innocent fellow-subjects, resident within the Kingdom of Great Britain, and the rest of your Majesty' s Dominions ....

We ... shall ... pay attention and regard to any real grievances ... laid before us; and whenever any of the Colonies shall make a proper application to us, we shall be ready to afford them every just and reasonable indulgence. At the same time we ... beseech your Majesty that you will ... enforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme Legislature; and ... it is our fixed resolution, at the hazard of our lives and properties, to stand by your Majesty against all rebellious attempts in the maintenance of the just rights of your Majesty, and the two Houses of Parliament.<sup>[14]</sup>

On April 14, 1775, Gage received instructions from [Secretary of State William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth](#), to disarm the rebels and to imprison the rebellion's leaders, but Dartmouth gave Gage considerable discretion in his commands.<sup>[15]</sup> Gage's decision to act promptly may have been influenced by information he received on April 15, from a spy within the Provincial Congress, telling him that although the Congress was still divided on the need for armed resistance, delegates were being sent to the other New England colonies to see if they would cooperate in raising a New England army of 18,000 colonial soldiers.<sup>[16]</sup>



[Francis Smith](#), commander of the military expedition, in a 1763 portrait

On the morning of April 18, Gage ordered a mounted patrol of about 20 men under the command of Major Mitchell of the [5th Regiment of Foot](#) into the surrounding country to intercept messengers who might be out on horseback.<sup>[17]</sup> This patrol behaved differently from patrols sent out from Boston in the past, staying out after dark and asking travelers about the location of [Samuel Adams](#) and [John Hancock](#). This had the unintended effect of alarming many residents and increasing their preparedness. The Lexington militia in particular began to muster early that evening, hours before receiving any word from Boston. A well-known story alleges that after nightfall one farmer, Josiah Nelson, mistook the British patrol for the colonists and asked them, "Have you heard anything about when the regulars are coming out?" upon which he was slashed on his scalp with a sword. However, the story of this incident was not published until over a century later, which suggests that it may be little more than a family myth.<sup>[18]</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel [Francis Smith](#) received orders from Gage on the afternoon of April 18 with instructions that he was not to read them until his troops were underway. He was to proceed from Boston "with utmost expedition and secrecy to Concord, where you will seize and destroy ... all Military stores ... But you will take care that the soldiers do not plunder the inhabitants or hurt private property." Gage used his discretion and did not issue written orders for the arrest of rebel leaders, as he feared doing so might spark an uprising.<sup>[19]</sup>

American preparations



[Margaret Kemble Gage](#) may have given military intelligence to the rebels.

On March 30, 1775, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress issued the following resolution:

Whenever the army under command of General Gage, or any part thereof to the number of five hundred, shall march out of the town of Boston, with artillery and baggage, it ought to be deemed a design to carry into execution by force the late acts of Parliament, the attempting of which, by the resolve of the late honourable [Continental Congress](#), ought to be opposed; and therefore the military force of the Province ought to be assembled, and an army of observation immediately formed, to act solely on the defensive so long as it can be justified on the principles of reason and self-preservation.<sup>[20]</sup>

The rebellion's leaders—with the exception of [Paul Revere](#) and [Joseph Warren](#)—had all left Boston by April 8. They had received word of Dartmouth's secret instructions to General Gage from sources in [London](#) well before they reached Gage himself.<sup>[21]</sup> Adams and Hancock had fled Boston to the [home of one of Hancock's relatives in Lexington](#), where they thought they would be safe from the immediate threat of arrest.<sup>[22]</sup>

The Massachusetts militias had indeed been gathering a stock of weapons, powder, and supplies at Concord and much further west in [Worcester](#).<sup>[23]</sup> An expedition from Boston to Concord was widely anticipated. After a large contingent of regulars alarmed the countryside by an expedition from Boston to [Watertown](#) on March 30, *The Pennsylvania Journal*, a newspaper in Philadelphia, reported, "It was supposed they were going to Concord, where the Provincial Congress is now sitting. A quantity of provisions and warlike stores are lodged there .... It is ... said they are intending to go out again soon."<sup>[24]</sup>

On April 8, Paul Revere rode to Concord to warn the inhabitants that the British appeared to be planning an expedition. The townspeople decided to remove the stores and distribute them among other towns nearby.<sup>[25]</sup>

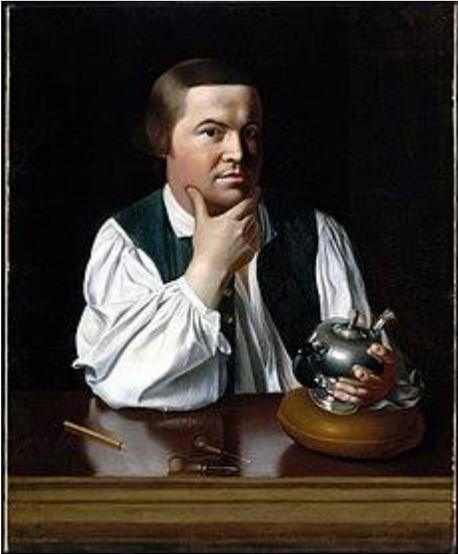
The colonists were also aware that April 19 would be the date of the expedition, despite Gage's efforts to keep the details hidden from all the British rank and file and even from the officers who would command the mission. There is reasonable speculation, although not proven, that the confidential source of this intelligence was [Margaret Gage](#), General Gage's [New Jersey](#)-born wife, who had sympathies with the Colonial cause and a friendly relationship with Warren.<sup>[26]</sup>

Between 9 and 10 pm on the night of April 18, 1775, Joseph Warren told Revere and [William Dawes](#) that the British troops were about to embark in boats from Boston bound for Cambridge and the road to Lexington and Concord. Warren's intelligence suggested that the most likely objectives of the regulars' movements later that night would be the capture of Adams and Hancock. They did not worry about the possibility of regulars marching to Concord, since the supplies at Concord were safe, but they did think their leaders in Lexington were unaware of the potential danger that night. Revere and Dawes were sent out to warn them and to alert colonial militias in nearby towns.<sup>[27]</sup>

Militia forces assemble

Further information: [Minutemen](#)

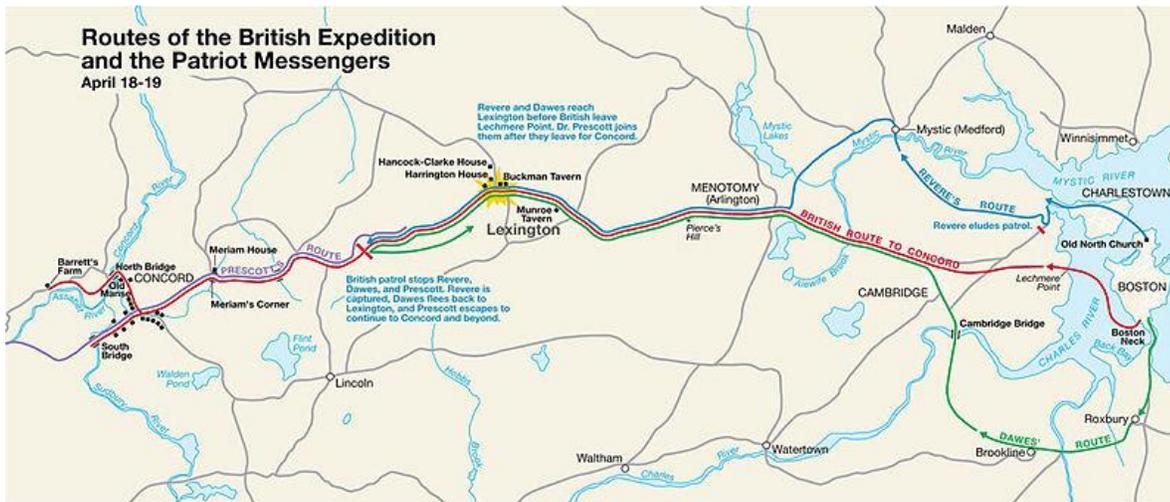
Dawes covered the southern land route by horseback across [Boston Neck](#) and over the [Great Bridge](#) to Lexington.<sup>[28]</sup> Revere first gave instructions to send a signal to Charlestown using lanterns hung in the steeple of Boston's [Old North Church](#). He then traveled the northern water route, crossing the mouth of the [Charles River](#) by rowboat, slipping past the British warship [HMS Somerset](#) at anchor. Crossings were banned at that hour, but Revere safely landed in Charlestown and rode west to Lexington, warning almost every house along the route.<sup>[29]</sup> Additional riders were sent north from Charlestown.



Silversmith [Paul Revere](#) and several other messengers on horseback sounded the alarm that the regulars were leaving Boston.

After they arrived in Lexington, Revere, Dawes, Hancock, and Adams discussed the situation with the militia assembling there. They believed that the forces leaving the city were too large for the sole task of arresting two men and that Concord was the main target. The Lexington men dispatched riders to the surrounding towns, and Revere and Dawes continued along the road to Concord accompanied by [Samuel Prescott](#). In [Lincoln](#), they ran into the British patrol led by Major Mitchell. Revere was captured, Dawes was thrown from his horse, and only Prescott escaped to reach Concord.<sup>[30]</sup> Additional riders were sent out from Concord.

The [ride of Revere](#), Dawes, and Prescott triggered a flexible system of "alarm and muster" that had been carefully developed months before, in reaction to the colonists' impotent response to the [Powder Alarm](#). This system was an improved version of an old notification network for use in times of emergency. The colonists had periodically used it during the early years of Indian wars in the colony, before it fell into disuse in the [French and Indian War](#). In addition to other express riders delivering messages, bells, drums, alarm guns, bonfires and a trumpet were used for rapid communication from town to town, notifying the rebels in dozens of eastern Massachusetts villages that they should muster their militias because over 500 regulars were leaving Boston. This system was so effective that people in towns 25 miles (40 km) from Boston were aware of the army's movements while they were still unloading boats in Cambridge.<sup>[31]</sup> These early warnings played a crucial role in assembling a sufficient number of colonial militia to inflict heavy damage on the British regulars later in the day. Adams and Hancock were eventually moved to safety, first to what is now [Burlington](#) and later to [Billerica](#).<sup>[32]</sup>



A [National Park Service](#) map showing the routes of the initial [Patriot](#) messengers and of the British expedition

British forces advance

Around dusk, General Gage called a meeting of his senior officers at the [Province House](#). He informed them that instructions from Lord Dartmouth had arrived, ordering him to take action against the colonials. He also told them that the senior colonel of his regiments, Lieutenant Colonel Smith, would command, with Major [John Pitcairn](#) as his executive officer. The meeting adjourned around 8:30 pm, after which Earl Percy mingled with town folk on [Boston Common](#). According to one account, the discussion among people there turned to the unusual movement of the British soldiers in the town. When Percy questioned one man further, the man replied, "Well, the regulars will miss their aim."

"What aim?" asked Percy. "Why, the cannon at Concord" was the reply.<sup>[26]</sup> Upon hearing this, Percy quickly returned to Province House and relayed this information to General Gage. Stunned, Gage issued orders to prevent messengers from getting out of Boston, but these were too late to prevent Dawes and Revere from leaving.<sup>[33]</sup>



1775 map of the battles and of the [Siege of Boston](#)

The British regulars, around 700 infantry, were drawn from 11 of Gage's 13 occupying infantry regiments. Major Pitcairn commanded ten elite [light infantry](#) companies, and Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Bernard commanded 11 [grenadier](#) companies, under the overall command of Lieutenant Colonel Smith.<sup>[34]</sup>

Of the troops assigned to the expedition, 350 were from grenadier companies drawn from the [4th \(King's Own\)](#), [5th](#), [10th](#), [18th \(Royal Irish\)](#), [23rd](#), [38th](#), [43rd](#), [47th](#), [52nd](#) and [59th](#) Regiments of Foot, and the 1st Battalion of [His Majesty's Marine Forces](#). Protecting the grenadier companies were about 320 [light infantry](#) from the 4th, 5th, 10th, 23rd, 38th, 43rd, 47th, 52nd, and 59th Regiments, and the 1st Battalion of the Marines. Each company had its own lieutenant, but the majority of the captains commanding them were volunteers attached to

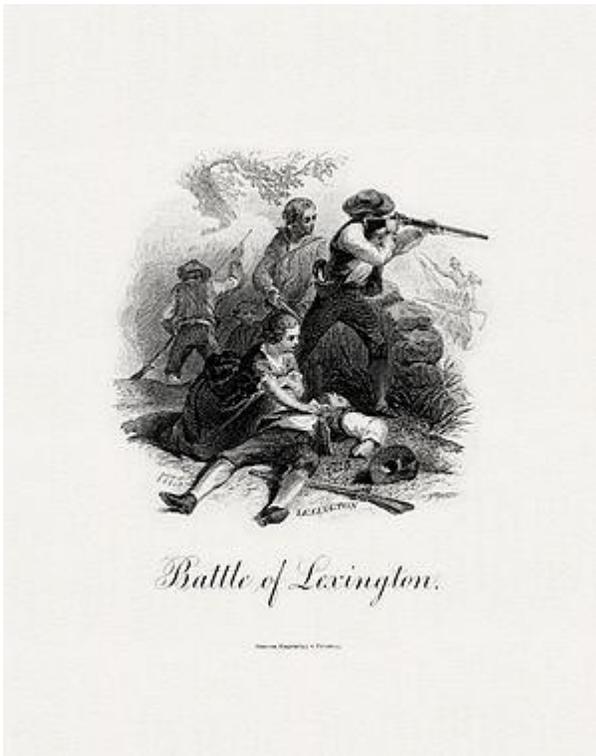
them at the last minute, drawn from all the regiments stationed in Boston. This lack of familiarity between commander and company would cause problems during the battle.<sup>[35]</sup>

The British began to awaken their troops at 9 pm on the night of April 18 and assembled them on the water's edge on the western end of Boston Common by 10 pm. Colonel Smith was late in arriving, and there was no organized boat-loading operation, resulting in confusion at the staging area. The boats used were naval barges that were packed so tightly that there was no room to sit down. When they disembarked near Phipps Farm in Cambridge, it was into waist-deep water at midnight. After a lengthy halt to unload their gear, the regulars began their 17 miles (27 km) march to Concord at about 2 am.<sup>[34]</sup> During the wait they were provided with extra ammunition, cold [salt pork](#), and hard [sea biscuits](#). They did not carry knapsacks, since they would not be encamped. They carried their [haversacks](#) (food bags), canteens, muskets, and accoutrements, and marched off in wet, muddy shoes and soggy uniforms. As they marched through [Menotomy](#), sounds of the colonial alarms throughout the countryside caused the few officers who were aware of their mission to realize they had lost the element of surprise.<sup>[36]</sup>

At about 3 am, Colonel Smith sent Major Pitcairn ahead with six companies of light infantry under orders to quick march to Concord. At about 4 am Smith made the wise but belated decision to send a messenger back to Boston asking for reinforcements.<sup>[37]</sup>

## The Battles

### Lexington



[BEP engraved](#) vignette *Battle of Lexington* which appeared on the [\\$20 National Bank Note](#)



*Battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775, [New York Public Library](#)*

Though often styled a battle, in reality the engagement at Lexington was a minor brush or skirmish.<sup>[38]</sup> As the regulars' advance guard under Pitcairn entered Lexington at sunrise on April 19, 1775, about 80 Lexington militiamen emerged from [Buckman Tavern](#) and stood in ranks on the village common watching them, and between 40 and 100 spectators watched from along the side of the road.<sup>[1][39]</sup> Their leader was Captain [John Parker](#), a veteran of the French and Indian War, who was suffering from [tuberculosis](#) and was at times difficult to hear. Of the militiamen who lined up, nine had the surname Harrington, seven Munroe (including the company's orderly sergeant, [William Munroe](#)), four Parker, three Tidd, three Locke, and three Reed; fully one quarter of them were related to Captain Parker in some way.<sup>[40]</sup> This group of militiamen was part of Lexington's "training band", a way of organizing local militias dating back to the [Puritans](#), and not what was styled a [minuteman company](#).<sup>[41]</sup>

After having waited most of the night with no sign of any British troops (and wondering if Paul Revere's warning was true), at about 4:15 a.m., Parker got his confirmation.<sup>[42]</sup> [Thaddeus Bowman](#), the last scout that Parker had sent out, rode up at a gallop and told him that they were not only coming, but coming in force and they were close.<sup>[43]</sup> Captain Parker was clearly aware that he was outmatched in the confrontation and was not prepared to sacrifice his men for no purpose. He knew that most of the colonists' powder and military supplies at Concord had already been hidden. No war had been declared. (The [Declaration of Independence](#) was a year in the future.) He also knew the British had gone on such expeditions before in Massachusetts, found nothing, and marched back to Boston.<sup>[44]</sup>

Parker had every reason to expect that to occur again. The Regulars would march to Concord, find nothing, and return to Boston, tired but empty-handed. He positioned his company carefully. He placed them in parade-ground formation, on Lexington Common. They were in plain sight (not hiding behind walls), but not blocking the road to Concord. They made a show of political and military determination, but no effort to prevent the march of the Regulars.<sup>[45]</sup> Many years later, one of the participants recalled Parker's words as being what is now engraved in stone at the site of the battle: "Stand your ground; don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here."<sup>[46]</sup> According to Parker's sworn deposition taken after the battle:

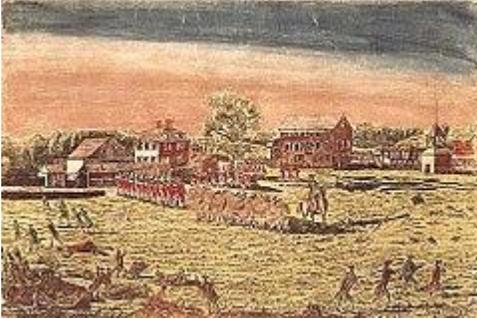
I ... ordered our Militia to meet on the Common in said Lexington to consult what to do, and concluded not to be discovered, nor meddle or make with said Regular Troops (if they should approach) unless they should insult or molest us; and, upon their sudden Approach, I immediately ordered our Militia to disperse, and not to fire:—Immediately said Troops made their appearance and rushed furiously, fired upon, and killed eight of our Party without receiving any Provocation therefor from us.<sup>[47][48]</sup>

— *John Parker*

Rather than turn left towards Concord, Marine Lieutenant Jesse Adair, at the head of the advance guard, decided on his own to protect the flank of the British column by first turning right and then leading the companies onto the Common itself, in a confused effort to surround and disarm the militia. Major Pitcairn arrived from the rear of the advance force and led his three companies to the left and halted them. The remaining companies under Colonel Smith lay further down the road toward Boston.<sup>[49]</sup>

### *First shot*

A British officer (probably Pitcairn, but accounts are uncertain, as it may also have been [Lieutenant William Sutherland](#)) then rode forward, waving his sword, and called out for the assembled militia to disperse, and may also have ordered them to "lay down your arms, you damned rebels!"<sup>[50]</sup> Captain Parker told his men instead to disperse and go home, but, because of the confusion, the yelling all around, and due to the raspiness of Parker's tubercular voice, some did not hear him, some left very slowly, and none laid down their arms. Both Parker and Pitcairn ordered their men to hold fire, but a shot was fired from an unknown source.<sup>[51]</sup>



The first of four engravings by [Amos Doolittle](#) from 1775. Doolittle visited the battle sites and interviewed soldiers and witnesses. Contains controversial elements, possibly inaccuracies. Fire from the militia may have occurred but is not depicted.

[A]t 5 o'clock we arrived [in Lexington], and saw a number of people, I believe between 200 and 300, formed in a common in the middle of town; we still continued advancing, keeping prepared against an attack through without intending to attack them; but on our coming near them they fired on us two shots, upon which our men without any orders, rushed upon them, fired and put them to flight; several of them were killed, we could not tell how many, because they were behind walls and into the woods. We had a man of the 10th light Infantry wounded, nobody else was hurt. We then formed on the Common, but with some difficulty, the men were so wild they could hear no orders; we waited a considerable time there, and at length proceeded our way to Concord.<sup>[52]</sup>

— *Lieutenant John Barker, 4th Regiment of Foot*

According to one member of Parker's militia, none of the Americans had discharged their muskets as they faced the oncoming British troops. The British did suffer one casualty, a slight wound, the particulars of which were corroborated by a deposition made by Corporal John Munroe. Munroe stated that:

After the first fire of the regulars, I thought, and so stated to Ebenezer Munroe ...who stood next to me on the left, that they had fired nothing but powder; but on the second firing, Munroe stated they had fired something more than powder, for he had received a wound in his arm; and now, said he, to use his own words, **'I'll give them the guts of my gun.'** We then both took aim at the main body of British troops the smoke preventing our seeing anything but the heads of some of their horses and discharged our pieces.<sup>[53]</sup>

Some witnesses among the regulars reported the first shot was fired by a colonial onlooker from behind a hedge or around the corner of a tavern. Some observers reported a mounted British officer firing first. Both sides generally agreed that the initial shot did not come from the men on the ground immediately facing each other.<sup>[54]</sup> Speculation arose later in Lexington that a man named Solomon Brown fired the first shot from inside the tavern or from behind a wall, but this has been discredited.<sup>[55]</sup> Some witnesses (on each side) claimed that someone on the other side fired first; however, many more witnesses claimed to not know. Yet another theory is that the first shot was one fired by the British, that killed Asahel Porter, their prisoner who was running away (he had been told to walk away and he would be let go, though he panicked and began to run). Historian [David Hackett Fischer](#) has proposed that there may actually have been multiple near-simultaneous shots.<sup>[56]</sup> Historian Mark Urban claims the British surged forward with bayonets ready in an undisciplined way, provoking a few scattered shots from the militia. In response the British troops, without orders, fired a devastating volley. This lack of discipline among the British troops had a key role in the escalation of violence.<sup>[57]</sup>

Witnesses at the scene described several intermittent shots fired from both sides before the lines of regulars

began to fire volleys without receiving orders to do so. A few of the militiamen believed at first that the regulars were only firing powder with no ball, but when they realized the truth, few if any of the militia managed to load and return fire. The rest ran for their lives.<sup>[58]</sup>

We Nathaniel Mulliken, Philip Russell, [and 32 other men ...] do testify and declare, that on the nineteenth in the morning, being informed that ... a body of regulars were marching from Boston towards Concord ... About five o'clock in the morning, hearing our drum beat, we proceeded towards the parade, and soon found that a large body of troops were marching towards us, some of our company were coming to the parade, and others had reached it, at which time, the company began to disperse, whilst our backs were turned on the troops, we were fired on by them, and a number of our men were instantly killed and wounded, not a gun was fired by any person in our company on the regulars to our knowledge before they fired on us, and continued firing until we had all made our escape.<sup>[47]</sup>

The regulars then charged forward with bayonets. Captain Parker's cousin Jonas was run through. Eight Lexington men were killed, and ten were wounded. The only British casualty was a soldier who was wounded in the thigh. The eight colonists killed were John Brown, Samuel Hadley, Caleb Harrington, Jonathon Harrington, Robert Munroe, Isaac Muzzey, Asahel Porter, and Jonas Parker. Jonathon Harrington, fatally wounded by a British musket ball, managed to crawl back to his home, and died on his own doorstep. One wounded man, [Prince Estabrook](#), was a black slave who was serving in the militia.<sup>[59]</sup>

The companies under Pitcairn's command got beyond their officers' control in part because they were unaware of the actual purpose of the day's mission. They fired in different directions and prepared to enter private homes. Colonel Smith, who was just arriving with the remainder of the regulars, heard the musket fire and rode forward from the grenadier column to see the action. He quickly found a drummer and ordered him to beat assembly. The grenadiers arrived shortly thereafter, and once order was restored among the soldiers, the light infantry were permitted to fire a victory volley, after which the column was reformed and marched on toward Concord.<sup>[60]</sup>

## Concord



The second of four engravings by [Amos Doolittle](#) from 1775, depicting the British entering Concord

In response to the raised alarm, the militiamen of Concord and Lincoln had mustered in Concord. They received reports of firing at Lexington, and were not sure whether to wait until they could be reinforced by troops from towns nearby, or to stay and defend the town, or to move east and greet the British Army from superior terrain. A column of militia marched down the road toward Lexington to meet the British, traveling about 1.5 miles (2 km) until they met the approaching column of regulars. As the regulars numbered about 700 and the militia at this time only numbered about 250, the militia column turned around and marched back into Concord, preceding the regulars by a distance of about 500 yards (457 m).<sup>[61]</sup> The militia retreated to a ridge overlooking the town, and their officers discussed what to do next. Caution prevailed, and Colonel James Barrett withdrew from the town of Concord and led the men across the North Bridge to a hill about a mile north of town, where they could continue to watch the troop movements of the British and the activities in the center of town. This step proved fortuitous, as the ranks of the militia continued to grow as minuteman companies arriving from the western towns joined them there.<sup>[62]</sup>

*The search for militia supplies*

When the British troops arrived in the village of Concord, Lt. Col. Smith divided them to carry out Gage's orders. The 10th Regiment's company of grenadiers secured South Bridge under Captain Mundy Pole, while seven companies of light infantry under Captain Parsons, numbering about 100, secured the North Bridge, where they were visible across the cleared fields to the assembling militia companies. Captain Parsons took four companies from the 5th, 23rd, 38th and 52nd Regiments up the road 2 miles (3.2 km) beyond the North Bridge to search [Barrett's Farm](#), where intelligence indicated supplies would be found.<sup>[63]</sup> Two companies from the 4th and 10th Regiments were stationed to guard their return route, and one company from the 43rd remained guarding the bridge itself. These companies, which were under the relatively inexperienced command of Captain Walter Laurie, were aware that they were significantly outnumbered by the 400-plus militiamen. The concerned Captain Laurie sent a messenger to Lt. Col. Smith requesting reinforcements.<sup>[64]</sup>

Using detailed information provided by Loyalist spies, the grenadier companies searched the small town for military supplies. When they arrived at Ephraim Jones's tavern, by the jail on the South Bridge road, they found the door barred shut, and Jones refused them entry. According to reports provided by local Loyalists, Pitcairn knew cannon had been buried on the property. Jones was ordered at gunpoint to show where the guns were buried. These turned out to be three massive pieces, firing 24-pound shot, that were much too heavy to use defensively, but very effective against fortifications, with sufficient range to bombard the city of Boston from other parts of nearby mainland.<sup>[65]</sup> The grenadiers smashed the [trunnions](#) of these three guns so they could not be mounted. They also burned some [gun carriages](#) found in the village meetinghouse, and when the fire spread to the meetinghouse itself, local resident Martha Moulton persuaded the soldiers to help in a [bucket brigade](#) to save the building.<sup>[66]</sup> Nearly a hundred barrels of flour and salted food were thrown into the millpond, as were 550 pounds of musket balls. Of the damage done, only that done to the cannon was significant. All of the shot and much of the food was recovered after the British left. During the search, the regulars were generally scrupulous in their treatment of the locals, including paying for food and drink consumed. This excessive politeness was used to advantage by the locals, who were able to misdirect searches from several smaller caches of militia supplies.<sup>[67]</sup>

Barrett's Farm had been an arsenal weeks before, but few weapons remained now, and according to family legend, these were quickly buried in furrows to look like a crop had been planted. The troops sent there did not find any supplies of consequence.<sup>[68]</sup>

### *The North Bridge*



The reconstructed North Bridge in Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord

Colonel Barrett's troops, upon seeing smoke rising from the village square as the British burned cannon carriages, and seeing only a few light infantry companies directly below them, decided to march back toward the town from their vantage point on [Punkatasset Hill](#) to a lower, closer flat hilltop about 300 yards (274 m) from the [North Bridge](#). As the militia advanced, the two British companies from the 4th and 10th Regiments that held the position near the road retreated to the bridge and yielded the hill to Barrett's men.<sup>[69]</sup>

Five full companies of Minutemen and five more of militia from [Acton](#), Concord, Bedford and Lincoln occupied this hill as more groups of men streamed in, totaling at least 400 against Captain Laurie's light infantry companies, a force totaling 90–95 men. Barrett ordered the Massachusetts men to form one long line two abreast on the highway leading down to the bridge, and then he called for another consultation. While overlooking North Bridge from the top of the hill, Barrett, [Lt. Col. John Robinson](#) of [Westford](#)<sup>[70]</sup> and the other Captains discussed possible courses of action. Captain [Isaac Davis](#) of Acton, whose troops had arrived late, declared his willingness to defend a town not their own by saying, "I'm not afraid to go, and I haven't a man that's afraid to go."<sup>[71]</sup>

Barrett told the men to load their weapons but not to fire unless fired upon, and then ordered them to advance. Laurie ordered the British companies guarding the bridge to retreat across it. One officer then tried to pull up the loose planks of the bridge to impede the colonial advance, but Major Buttrick began to yell at the regulars to stop harming the bridge. The Minutemen and militia from Concord, Acton and a handful of Westford Minutemen, advanced in column formation, two by two, led by Major Buttrick, Lt. Col. Robinson,<sup>[72]</sup> then Capt. Davis,<sup>[73]</sup> on the light infantry, keeping to the road, since it was surrounded by the spring floodwaters of the [Concord River](#).<sup>[74]</sup>

Captain Laurie then made a poor tactical decision. Since his summons for help had not produced any results, he ordered his men to form positions for "street firing" behind the bridge in a column running perpendicular to the river. This formation was appropriate for sending a large volume of fire into a narrow alley between the buildings of a city, but not for an open path behind a bridge. Confusion reigned as regulars retreating over the bridge tried to form up in the street-firing position of the other troops. Lieutenant Sutherland, who was in the rear of the formation, saw Laurie's mistake and ordered flankers to be sent out. But as he was from a company different from the men under his command, only three soldiers obeyed him. The remainder tried as best they could in the confusion to follow the orders of the superior officer.<sup>[75]</sup>



The third of four engravings by [Amos Doolittle](#) from 1775, depicting the engagement at the North Bridge

A shot rang out. It was likely a warning shot fired by a panicked, exhausted British soldier from the 43rd, according to Captain Laurie's report to his commander after the fight. Two other regulars then fired immediately after that, shots splashing in the river, and then the narrow group up front, possibly thinking the order to fire had been given, fired a ragged volley before Laurie could stop them.<sup>[76]</sup>

Two of the Acton Minutemen, Private Abner Hosmer and Captain Isaac Davis, who were at the head of the line marching to the bridge, were hit and killed instantly. Rev. Dr. Ripley recalled:

The Americans commenced their march in double file... In a minute or two, the Americans being in quick motion and within ten or fifteen rods of the bridge, a single gun was fired by a British soldier, which marked the way, passing under Col. Robinson's arm and slightly wounding the side of Luther Blanchard, a fifer, in the Acton Company.<sup>[77]</sup>

Four more men were wounded. Major Buttrick then yelled to the militia, "Fire, for God's sake, fellow soldiers, fire!"<sup>[78]</sup> At this point the lines were separated by the Concord River and the bridge, and were only 50 yards (46 m) apart. The few front rows of colonists, bound by the road and blocked from forming a line of fire, managed to fire over each other's heads and shoulders at the regulars massed across the bridge. Four of the eight British officers and sergeants, who were leading from the front of their troops, were wounded by the volley of musket fire. At least three privates (Thomas Smith, Patrick Gray, and James Hall, all from the 4th) were killed or mortally wounded, and nine were wounded.<sup>[79]</sup> In 1824, Reverend and Minuteman Joseph Thaxter wrote:

I was an eyewitness to the following facts. The people of Westford and Acton, some few of Concord, were the first who faced the British at Concord bridge. The British had placed about ninety men as a guard at the North Bridge; we had then no certain information that any had been killed at Lexington, we saw the British making destruction in the town of Concord; it was proposed to advance to the bridge; on this Colonel Robinson, of Westford, together with Major Buttrick, took the lead; strict orders were given not to fire, unless the British fired first; when they advanced about halfway on the causeway the British fired one gun, a second, a third, and then the whole body; they killed Colonel Davis, of Acton, and a Mr. Hosmer. Our people then fired over one another's heads, being in a long column, two and two; they killed two and wounded eleven. Lieutenant Hawkstone, said to

be the greatest beauty of the British army, had his cheeks so badly wounded that it disfigured him much, of which he bitterly complained. On this, the British fled, and assembled on the hill, the north side of Concord, and dressed their wounded, and then began their retreat. As they descended the hill near the road that comes out from Bedford they were pursued; Colonel Bridge, with a few men from Bedford and Chelmsford, came up, and killed several men.<sup>[80]</sup>

The regulars found themselves trapped in a situation where they were both outnumbered and outmaneuvered. Lacking effective leadership and terrified at the superior numbers of the enemy, with their spirit broken, and likely not having experienced combat before, they abandoned their wounded, and fled to the safety of the approaching grenadier companies coming from the town center, isolating Captain Parsons and the companies searching for arms at Barrett's Farm.<sup>[78]</sup>

### *After the fight*



Statue memorializing the battle at the North Bridge, inscribed with verse from Emerson's "[Concord Hymn](#)"

The colonists were stunned by their success. No one had actually believed either side would shoot to kill the other. Some advanced; many more retreated; and some went home to see to the safety of their homes and families. Colonel Barrett eventually began to recover control. He moved some of the militia back to the hilltop 300 yards (274 m) away and sent Major Buttrick with others across the bridge to a defensive position on a hill behind a stone wall.<sup>[81]</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Smith heard the exchange of fire from his position in the town moments after he received the request for reinforcements from Laurie. He quickly assembled two companies of grenadiers to lead toward the North Bridge himself. As these troops marched, they met the shattered remnants of the three light infantry companies running towards them. Smith was concerned about the four companies that had been at Barrett's, since their route to town was now unprotected. When he saw the Minutemen in the distance behind their wall, he halted his two companies and moved forward with only his officers to take a closer look. One of the Minutemen behind that wall observed, "If we had fired, I believe we could have killed almost every officer there was in the front, but we had no orders to fire and there wasn't a gun fired."<sup>[82]</sup> During a tense standoff lasting about 10 minutes, a mentally ill local man named Elias Brown wandered through both sides selling [hard cider](#).<sup>[82]</sup>

At this point, the detachment of regulars sent to Barrett's farm marched back from their fruitless search of that area. They passed through the now mostly-deserted battlefield, and saw dead and wounded comrades lying on the bridge. There was one who looked to them as if he had been scalped, which angered and shocked the British soldiers. They crossed the bridge and returned to the town by 11:30 a.m., under the watchful eyes of the

colonists, who continued to maintain defensive positions. The regulars continued to search for and destroy colonial military supplies in the town, ate lunch, reassembled for marching, and left Concord after noon. This delay in departure gave colonial militiamen from outlying towns additional time to reach the road back to Boston.<sup>[83]</sup>

### Return march



A [National Park Service](#) map showing the retreat from Concord and Percy's rescue

### *Concord to Lexington*

Lieutenant Colonel Smith, concerned about the safety of his men, sent flankers to follow a ridge and protect his forces from the roughly 1,000 colonials now in the field as the British marched east out of Concord. This ridge ended near Meriam's Corner, a crossroads about a mile (2 km) outside the village of Concord, where the main road came to a bridge across a small stream. To cross the narrow bridge, the British had to pull the flankers back into the main column and close ranks to a mere three soldiers abreast. Colonial militia companies arriving from the north and east had converged at this point, and presented a clear numerical advantage over the regulars.<sup>[84]</sup> The British were now witnessing once again what General Gage had hoped to avoid by dispatching the expedition in secrecy and in the dark of night: the ability of the colonial militiamen to rise and converge by the thousands when British forces ventured out of Boston. As the last of the British column marched over the narrow bridge, the British rear guard wheeled and fired a volley at the colonial militiamen, who had been firing irregularly and ineffectively from a distance but now had closed to within musket range.<sup>[85]</sup> The colonists returned fire, this time with deadly effect. Two regulars were killed and perhaps six wounded, with no colonial casualties. Smith sent out his flanking troops again after crossing the small bridge.<sup>[86]</sup>

On Brooks Hill (also known as Hardy's Hill) about 1 mile (1.6 km) past Meriam's Corner, nearly 500 militiamen had assembled to the south of the road, awaiting opportunity to fire down upon the British column on the road below.<sup>[87]</sup> Smith's leading forces charged up the hill to drive them off, but the colonists did not withdraw, inflicting significant casualties on the attackers. Smith withdrew his men from Brooks Hill, and the column continued on to another small bridge into Lincoln, at Brooks Tavern, where more militia companies intensified the attack from the north side of the road.



This statue known as *The Lexington Minuteman* is commonly believed to depict [Captain John Parker](#). It is by [Henry Hudson Kitson](#) and stands at the town green of [Lexington, Massachusetts](#).

The regulars soon reached a point in the road now referred to as the "Bloody Angle" where the road rises and

curves sharply to the left through a lightly-wooded area.<sup>[88]</sup> At this place, the militia company from [Woburn](#) had positioned themselves on the southeast side of the bend in the road in a rocky, lightly-wooded field. Additional militia flowing parallel to the road from the engagement at Meriam's Corner positioned themselves on the northwest side of the road, catching the British in a crossfire, while other militia companies on the road closed from behind to attack. Some 500 yards (460 m) further along, the road took another sharp curve, this time to the right, and again the British column was caught by another large force of militiamen firing from both sides. In passing through these two sharp curves, the British force lost thirty soldiers killed or wounded, and four colonial militia were also killed, including Captain Jonathan Wilson of [Bedford](#), Captain Nathan Wyman of [Billerica](#), Lt. John Bacon of [Natick](#), and Daniel Thompson of [Woburn](#). The British soldiers escaped by breaking into a trot, a pace that the colonials could not maintain through the woods and swampy terrain. Colonial forces on the road itself behind the British were too densely packed and disorganized to mount more than a harassing attack from the rear.<sup>[89]</sup>

As militia forces from other towns continued to arrive, the colonial forces had risen to about 2,000 men. The road now straightened to the east, with cleared fields and orchards along the sides. Lt. Col. Smith sent out flankers again, who succeeded in trapping some militia from behind and inflicting casualties. British casualties were also mounting from these engagements and from persistent long-range fire from the militiamen, and the exhausted British were running out of ammunition.<sup>[90]</sup>

When the British column neared the boundary between Lincoln and Lexington, it encountered another ambush from a hill overlooking the road, set by Captain John Parker's Lexington militiamen, including some of them bandaged up from the encounter in Lexington earlier in the day. At this point, Lt. Col. Smith was wounded in the thigh and knocked from his horse. Major John Pitcairn assumed effective command of the column and sent light infantry companies up the hill to clear the militia forces.<sup>[91]</sup>

The light infantry cleared two additional hills as the column continued east—"The Bluff" and "Fiske Hill"—and took still more casualties from ambushes set by fresh militia companies joining the battle. In one of the musket volleys from the colonial soldiers, Major Pitcairn's horse bolted in fright, throwing Pitcairn to the ground and injuring his arm.<sup>[92]</sup> Now both principal leaders of the expedition were injured or unhorsed, and their men were tired, thirsty, and exhausting their ammunition. A few surrendered or were captured; some now broke formation and ran forward toward Lexington. In the words of one British officer, "we began to run rather than retreat in order. ... We attempted to stop the men and form them two deep, but to no purpose, the confusion increased rather than lessened. ... the officers got to the front and presented their bayonets, and told the men if they advanced they should die. Upon this, they began to form up under heavy fire."<sup>[93]</sup>

Only one British officer remained uninjured among the three companies at the head of the British column as it approach Lexington Center. He understood the column's perilous situation: "There were very few men had any ammunition left, and so fatigued that we could not keep flanking parties out, so that we must soon have laid down our arms, or been picked off by the Rebels at their pleasure—nearer to—and we were not able to keep them off."<sup>[94]</sup> He then heard cheering further ahead. A full brigade, about 1,000 men with artillery under the command of Earl Percy, had arrived to rescue them. It was about 2:30 p.m., and the British column had now been on the march since 2 o'clock in the morning.<sup>[95]</sup> Westford Minuteman, Rev. Joseph Thaxter, wrote of his account:

We pursued them and killed some; when they got to Lexington, they were so close pursued and fatigued, that they must have soon surrendered, had not Lord Percy met them with a large reinforcement and two field-pieces. They fired them, but the balls went high over our heads. But no cannon ever did more execution, such stories of their effects had been spread by the Tories through our troops, that from this time more went back than pursued. We pursued to Charlestown Common, and then retired to Cambridge. When the army collected at Cambridge, Colonel Prescott with his regiment of minute men, and John Robinson, his Lieutenant Colonel, were prompt at being at their post.<sup>[80]</sup>

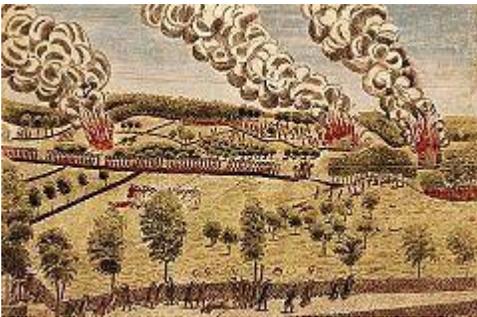
In their accounts afterward, British officers and soldiers alike noted their frustration that the colonial militiamen fired at them from behind trees and stone walls, rather than confronting them in large, linear formations in the style of European warfare.<sup>[96]</sup> This image of the individual colonial farmer, musket in hand and fighting under his own command, has also been fostered in American myth: "Chasing the red-coats down the lane / Then

crossing the fields to emerge again / Under the trees at the turn of the road, / And only pausing to fire and load."<sup>[97]</sup> To the contrary, beginning at the North Bridge and throughout the British retreat, the colonial militias repeatedly operated as coordinated companies, even when dispersed to take advantage of cover. Reflecting on the British experience that day, Earl Percy understood the significance of the American tactics:

During the whole affair the Rebels attacked us in a very scattered, irregular manner, but with perseverance & resolution, nor did they ever dare to form into any regular body. Indeed, they knew too well what was proper, to do so. Whoever looks upon them as an irregular mob, will find himself much mistaken. They have men amongst them who know very well what they are about, having been employed as Rangers against the Indians & Canadians, & this country being much covered with wood, and hilly, is very advantageous for their method of fighting.<sup>[98]</sup>

### *Percy's rescue*

General Gage had anticipated that Lt. Col. Smith's expedition might require reinforcement, so Gage drafted orders for reinforcing units to assemble in Boston at 4 a.m. But in his obsession for secrecy, Gage had sent only one copy of the orders to the adjutant of the 1st Brigade, whose servant then left the envelope on a table. Also at about 4 a.m., the British column was within three miles of Lexington, and Lt. Col. Smith now had clear indication that all element of surprise had been lost and that alarm was spreading throughout the countryside. So he sent a rider back to Boston with a request for reinforcements. At about 5 a.m., the rider reached Boston, and the 1st Brigade was ordered to assemble: the line infantry companies of the 4th, 23rd, and 47th Regiments, and a battalion of Royal Marines, under the command of Earl Percy. Unfortunately for the British, once again only one copy of the orders were sent to each commander, and the order for the Royal Marines was delivered to the desk of Major John Pitcairn, who was already on the Lexington Common with Smith's column at that hour. After these delays, Percy's brigade, about 1,000 strong, left Boston at about 8:45 a.m., headed toward Lexington. Along the way, the story is told, they marched to the tune of "[Yankee Doodle](#)" to taunt the inhabitants of the area.<sup>[99]</sup> By the [Battle of Bunker Hill](#) less than two months later, the song would become a popular anthem for the colonial forces.<sup>[100]</sup>



The fourth of four engravings by [Amos Doolittle](#) from 1775, showing Percy's rescue in Lexington

Percy took the land route across Boston Neck and over the Great Bridge, which some quick-thinking colonists had stripped of its planking to delay the British.<sup>[101]</sup> His men then came upon an absent-minded tutor at [Harvard College](#) and asked him which road would take them to Lexington. The Harvard man, apparently oblivious to the reality of what was happening around him, showed him the proper road without thinking. (He was later compelled to leave the country for inadvertently supporting the enemy.)<sup>[102]</sup> Percy's troops arrived in Lexington at about 2:00 p.m. They could hear gunfire in the distance as they set up their cannon and deployed lines of regulars on high ground with commanding views of the town. Colonel Smith's men approached like a fleeing mob with the full complement of colonial militia in close formation pursuing them. Percy ordered his artillery to open fire at extreme range, dispersing the colonial militiamen. Smith's men collapsed with exhaustion once they reached the safety of Percy's lines.<sup>[103]</sup>

Against the advice of his Master of Ordnance, Percy had left Boston without spare ammunition for his men or for the two artillery pieces they brought with them, thinking the extra wagons would slow him down. Each man in Percy's brigade had only 36 rounds, and each artillery piece was supplied with only a few rounds carried in side-boxes.<sup>[104]</sup> After Percy had left the city, Gage directed two ammunition wagons guarded by one officer and thirteen men to follow. This convoy was intercepted by a small party of older, veteran militiamen still on the

"alarm list," who could not join their militia companies because they were well over 60 years of age. These men rose up in ambush and demanded the surrender of the wagons, but the regulars ignored them and drove their horses on. The old men opened fire, shot the lead horses, killed two sergeants, and wounded the officer. The British survivors ran, and six of them threw their weapons into a pond before they surrendered.<sup>[105]</sup>

### *Lexington to Menotomy*



Percy's return to Charlestown (detail from 1775 map of the battle)

Percy assumed control of the combined forces of about 1,700 men and let them rest, eat, drink, and have their wounds tended at field headquarters ([Munroe Tavern](#)) before resuming the march. They set out from Lexington at about 3:30 p.m., in a formation that emphasized defense along the sides and rear of the column.<sup>[106]</sup> Wounded regulars rode on the cannon and were forced to hop off when they were fired at by gatherings of militia. Percy's men were often surrounded, but they had the tactical advantage of [interior lines](#). Percy could shift his units more easily to where they were needed, while the colonial militia were required to move around the outside of his formation. Percy placed Smith's men in the middle of the column, while the 23rd Regiment's line companies made up the column's rear guard. Because of information provided by Smith and Pitcairn about how the Americans were attacking, Percy ordered the rear guard to be rotated every mile or so, to allow some of his troops to rest briefly. Flanking companies were sent to both sides of the road, and a powerful force of Marines acted as the vanguard to clear the road ahead.<sup>[106]</sup>

During the respite at Lexington, Brigadier General [William Heath](#) arrived and took command of the militia. Earlier in the day, he had traveled first to [Watertown](#) to discuss tactics with Joseph Warren, who had left Boston that morning, and other members of the [Massachusetts Committee of Safety](#). Heath and Warren reacted to Percy's artillery and flankers by ordering the militiamen to avoid close formations that would attract cannon fire. Instead, they surrounded Percy's marching square with a moving ring of skirmishers at a distance to inflict maximum casualties at minimum risk.<sup>[107]</sup>

A few mounted militiamen on the road would dismount, fire muskets at the approaching regulars, then remount and gallop ahead to repeat the tactic. Unmounted militia would often fire from long range, in the hope of hitting somebody in the main column of soldiers on the road and surviving, since both British and colonials used muskets with an effective combat range of about 50 yards (46 m). Infantry units would apply pressure to the sides of the British column. When it moved out of range, those units would move around and forward to re-engage the column further down the road. Heath sent messengers out to intercept arriving militia units, directing them to appropriate places along the road to engage the regulars. Some towns sent supply wagons to assist in feeding and rearming the militia. Heath and Warren did lead skirmishers in small actions into battle themselves, but it was the presence of effective leadership that probably had the greatest impact on the success of these tactics.<sup>[107]</sup> Percy wrote of the colonial tactics, "The rebels attacked us in a very scattered, irregular manner, but with perseverance and resolution, nor did they ever dare to form into any regular body. Indeed, they knew too well what was proper, to do so. Whoever looks upon them as an irregular mob, will find himself very much mistaken."<sup>[108]</sup>



The [Jason Russell House](#) in Arlington

The fighting grew more intense as Percy's forces crossed from Lexington into Menotomy. Fresh militia poured gunfire into the British ranks from a distance, and individual homeowners began to fight from their own property. Some homes were also used as sniper positions, turning the situation into a soldier's nightmare: house-to-house fighting. Jason Russell pleaded for his friends to fight alongside him to defend his house by saying, "An Englishman's home is his castle."<sup>[109]</sup> He stayed and was killed in his doorway. His friends, depending on which account is to be believed, either hid in the cellar, or died in the house from bullets and bayonets after shooting at the soldiers who followed them in. The [Jason Russell House](#) still stands and contains bullet holes from this fight. A militia unit that attempted an ambush from Russell's orchard was caught by flankers, and eleven men were killed, some allegedly after they had surrendered.<sup>[109]</sup>

Percy lost control of his men, and British soldiers began to commit atrocities to repay for the supposed scalping at the North Bridge and for their own casualties at the hands of a distant, often unseen enemy. Based on the word of Pitcairn and other wounded officers from Smith's command, Percy had learned that the Minutemen were using stone walls, trees and buildings in these more thickly settled towns closer to Boston to hide behind and shoot at the column. He ordered the flank companies to clear the colonial militiamen out of such places.<sup>[110]</sup>

Many of the junior officers in the flank parties had difficulty stopping their exhausted, enraged men from killing everyone they found inside these buildings. For example, two innocent drunks who refused to hide in the basement of a tavern in Menotomy were killed only because they were suspected of being involved with the day's events.<sup>[111]</sup> Although many of the accounts of ransacking and burnings were exaggerated later by the colonists for propaganda value (and to get financial compensation from the colonial government), it is certainly true that taverns along the road were ransacked and the liquor stolen by the troops, who in some cases became drunk themselves. One church's [communion](#) silver was stolen but was later recovered after it was sold in Boston.<sup>[110]</sup> Aged Menotomy resident [Samuel Whittemore](#) killed three regulars before he was attacked by a British contingent and left for dead. (He recovered from his wounds and later died in 1793 at age 98.)<sup>[112]</sup> All told, far more blood was shed in Menotomy and Cambridge than elsewhere that day. The colonists lost 25 men killed and nine wounded there, and the British lost 40 killed and 80 wounded, with the 47th Foot and the Marines suffering the highest casualties. Each was about half the day's fatalities.<sup>[113]</sup>

### *Menotomy to Charlestown*

The British troops crossed the Menotomy River (today known as [Alewife Brook](#)) into Cambridge, and the fight grew more intense. Fresh militia arrived in close array instead of in a scattered formation, and Percy used his two artillery pieces and flankers at a crossroads called [Watson's Corner](#) to inflict heavy damage on them.<sup>[114]</sup>

Earlier in the day, Heath had ordered the Great Bridge to be dismantled. Percy's brigade was about to approach the broken-down bridge and a riverbank filled with militia when Percy directed his troops down a narrow track (now Beech Street, near present-day [Porter Square](#)) and onto the road to Charlestown. The militia (now numbering about 4,000) were unprepared for this movement, and the circle of fire was broken. An American force moved to occupy Prospect Hill (in modern-day [Somerville](#)), which dominated the road, but Percy moved

his cannon to the front and dispersed them with his last rounds of ammunition.<sup>[110]</sup>

A large militia force arrived from [Salem](#) and [Marblehead](#). They might have cut off Percy's route to Charlestown, but these men halted on nearby Winter Hill and allowed the British to escape. Some accused the commander of this force, Colonel [Timothy Pickering](#), of permitting the troops to pass because he still hoped to avoid war by preventing a total defeat of the regulars. Pickering later claimed that he had stopped on Heath's orders, but Heath denied this.<sup>[110]</sup> It was nearly dark when Pitcairn's Marines defended a final attack on Percy's rear as they entered Charlestown. The regulars took up strong positions on the hills of Charlestown. Some of them had been without sleep for two days and had marched 40 miles (64 km) in 21 hours, eight hours of which had been spent under fire. But now they held high ground protected by heavy guns from HMS *Somerset*. Gage quickly sent over line companies of two fresh regiments—the 10th and 64th—to occupy the high ground in Charlestown and build fortifications. Although they were begun, the fortifications were never completed and would later be a starting point for the militia works built two months later in June before the [Battle of Bunker Hill](#). General Heath studied the position of the British Army and decided to withdraw the militia to Cambridge.<sup>[115]</sup>

### Aftermath

In the morning, [Boston was surrounded](#) by a huge militia army, numbering over 15,000, which had marched from throughout New England.<sup>[116]</sup> Unlike the [Powder Alarm](#), the rumors of spilled blood were true, and the Revolutionary War had begun.



### The Siege of Boston 1775–1776

Now under the leadership of General [Artemas Ward](#), who arrived on the 20th and replaced Brigadier General [William Heath](#),<sup>[117]</sup> they formed a siege line extending from [Chelsea](#), around the peninsulas of Boston and Charlestown, to [Roxbury](#), effectively surrounding Boston on three sides. In the days immediately following, the size of the colonial forces grew, as militias from [New Hampshire](#), [Rhode Island](#), and [Connecticut](#) arrived on the scene.<sup>[118]</sup> The [Second Continental Congress](#) adopted these men into the beginnings of the [Continental Army](#). Even now, after open warfare had started, Gage still refused to impose [martial law](#) in Boston. He persuaded the town's selectmen to surrender all private weapons in return for promising that any inhabitant could leave town.<sup>[119]</sup>

The battle was not a major one in terms of tactics or casualties. However, in terms of supporting the British

political strategy behind the [Intolerable Acts](#) and the military strategy behind the Powder Alarms, the battle was a significant failure because the expedition contributed to the fighting it was intended to prevent, and because few weapons were actually seized.<sup>[108]</sup>

The battle was followed by a war for British political opinion. Within four days of the battle, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress had collected scores of sworn testimonies from militiamen and from British prisoners. When word leaked out a week after the battle that Gage was sending his official description of events to London, the Provincial Congress sent a packet of these detailed depositions, signed by over 100 participants in the events, on a faster ship. The documents were presented to a sympathetic official and printed by the London newspapers two weeks before Gage's report arrived.<sup>[120][121]</sup> Gage's official report was too vague on particulars to influence anyone's opinion. [George Germain](#), no friend of the colonists, wrote, "the Bostonians are in the right to make the King's troops the aggressors and claim a victory."<sup>[122]</sup> Politicians in London tended to blame Gage for the conflict instead of their own policies and instructions. The British troops in Boston variously blamed General Gage and Colonel Smith for the failures at Lexington and Concord.<sup>[123]</sup>

The day after the battle, [John Adams](#) left his home in [Braintree](#) to ride along the battlefields. He became convinced that "the Die was cast, the [Rubicon](#) crossed."<sup>[124]</sup> [Thomas Paine](#) in [Philadelphia](#) had previously thought of the argument between the colonies and the Home Country as "a kind of law-suit", but after news of the battle reached him, he "rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered [Pharaoh](#) of England forever."<sup>[125]</sup> [George Washington](#) received the news at [Mount Vernon](#) and wrote to a friend, "the once-happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched in blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?"<sup>[125]</sup> A group of hunters on the frontier named their campsite Lexington when they heard news of the battle in June. It eventually became the city of [Lexington, Kentucky](#).<sup>[126]</sup>

## Legacy



Gravemarkers along Battle Road in Lexington are maintained with Britain's 1775 version of the [Union Flag](#).

It was important to the early American government that an image of British fault and American innocence be maintained for this first battle of the war. The history of Patriot preparations, intelligence, warning signals, and uncertainty about the first shot was rarely discussed in the public sphere for decades. The story of the wounded British soldier at the North Bridge, *hors de combat*, struck down on the head by a Minuteman using a hatchet, the purported "scalping", was strongly suppressed. Depositions mentioning some of these activities were not published and were returned to the participants (this notably happened to Paul Revere).<sup>[127]</sup> Paintings portrayed the Lexington fight as an unjustified slaughter.<sup>[127]</sup>

The issue of which side was to blame grew during the early nineteenth century. For example, older participants' testimony in later life about Lexington and Concord differed greatly from their depositions taken under oath in 1775. All now said the British fired first at Lexington, whereas fifty or so years before, they weren't sure. All now said they fired back, but in 1775, they said few were able to. The "Battle" took on an almost mythical quality in the American consciousness. Legend became more important than truth. A complete shift occurred,

and the Patriots were portrayed as actively fighting for their cause, rather than as suffering innocents. Paintings of the Lexington skirmish began to portray the militia standing and fighting back in defiance.<sup>[128]</sup>

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) immortalized the events at the North Bridge in his 1837 "[Concord Hymn](#)". The "Concord Hymn" became important because it commemorated the beginning of the American Revolution, and that for much of the 19th century it was a means by which Americans learned about the Revolution, helping to forge the identity of the nation.<sup>[129]</sup>

After 1860, several generations of schoolchildren memorized [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#)'s poem "[Paul Revere's Ride](#)". Historically it is inaccurate (for example, Paul Revere never made it to Concord), but it captures the idea that an individual can change the course of history.<sup>[130]</sup>

By the rude bridge that arched the flood  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled  
Here once the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

— *First verse of Emerson's "Concord Hymn"*

In the 20th century, popular and historical opinion varied about the events of the historic day, often reflecting the political mood of the time. Isolationist anti-war sentiments before the World Wars bred skepticism about the nature of Paul Revere's contribution (if any) to the efforts to rouse the militia. [Anglophilia](#) in the United States after the turn of the twentieth century led to more balanced approaches to the history of the battle. During [World War I](#), a film about Paul Revere's ride was seized under the [Espionage Act of 1917](#) for promoting discord between the United States and Britain.<sup>[131]</sup>

During the [Cold War](#), Revere was used not only as a patriotic symbol, but also as a capitalist one. In 1961, novelist [Howard Fast](#) published *April Morning*, an account of the battle from a fictional 15-year-old's perspective, and reading of the book has been frequently assigned in American [secondary schools](#). A film version was produced for television in 1987, starring [Chad Lowe](#) and [Tommy Lee Jones](#). In the 1990s, parallels were drawn between American tactics in the [Vietnam War](#) and those of the British Army at Lexington and Concord.<sup>[132]</sup>

The site of the battle in Lexington is now known as the [Lexington Battle Green](#), has been listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#), and is a [National Historic Landmark](#). Several memorials commemorating the battle have been established there.

The lands surrounding the North Bridge in Concord, as well as approximately 5 miles (8.0 km) of the road along with surrounding lands and period buildings between Meriam's Corner and western Lexington are part of [Minuteman National Historical Park](#). There are walking trails with interpretive displays along routes that the colonists might have used that skirted the road, and the Park Service often has personnel (usually dressed in period dress) offering descriptions of the area and explanations of the events of the day.<sup>[133]</sup> A bronze [bas relief](#) of Major Buttrick, designed by [Daniel Chester French](#) and executed by [Edmond Thomas Quinn](#) in 1915, is in the park, along with French's *Minute Man* statue.<sup>[134]</sup>

Four current units of the Massachusetts National Guard units (181st Infantry,<sup>[135]</sup> 182nd Infantry,<sup>[136]</sup> 101st Engineer Battalion,<sup>[137]</sup> and 125th Quartermaster Company<sup>[138]</sup>) are derived from American units that participated in the Battles of Lexington and Concord. [There are only thirty current units of the U.S. Army with colonial roots.](#)<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Several ships of the [United States Navy](#), including two [World War II aircraft carriers](#), were named in honor of the Battle of Lexington.

Commemorations



1970 Franklin Mint medallion commemorating Lexington and Concord 1775



[Daniel Chester French's Minute Man](#)

[Patriots' Day](#) is celebrated annually in honor of the battle in Massachusetts, [Maine](#), and by the [Wisconsin](#) public schools, on the third Monday in April.<sup>[139][140][141]</sup> [Re-enactments of Paul Revere's ride are staged, as are the battle on the Lexington Green, and ceremonies and firings are held at the North Bridge.](#)

#### Centennial commemoration

On April 19, 1875, [President Ulysses S. Grant](#) and members of his cabinet joined 50,000 people to mark the 100th anniversary of the battles. The sculpture by [Daniel Chester French](#), *The Minute Man*, located at the North Bridge, was unveiled on that day. A formal [ball](#) took place in the evening at the Agricultural Hall in Concord.<sup>[142]</sup>

#### Sesquicentennial commemoration

In April 1925 the [United States Post Office](#) issued three stamps commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Battles at Lexington and Concord. The Lexington—Concord commemorative stamps were the first of many commemoratives issued to honor the 150th anniversaries of events that surrounded America's War of Independence. The three stamps were first placed on sale in Washington, D.C. and in five Massachusetts cities and towns that played major roles in the Lexington and Concord story: Lexington, Concord, Boston, Cambridge, and Concord Junction (as [West Concord](#) was then known).<sup>[143]</sup> This is not to say that other locations were not involved in the battles.



[Washington](#) at Cambridge



Shot heard round the World *Birth of Liberty*, by [Henry Sandham](#)



*The Minute Man* by [Daniel Chester French](#)

Issues of 1925

Bicentennial commemoration

The Town of Concord invited 700 prominent U.S. citizens and leaders from the worlds of government, the military, the diplomatic corps, the arts, sciences, and humanities to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the battles. On April 19, 1975, as a crowd estimated at 110,000 gathered to view a parade and celebrate the [Bicentennial](#) in Concord, President [Gerald Ford](#) delivered a major speech near the North Bridge, which was televised to the nation.<sup>[144]</sup>

Freedom was nourished in American soil because the principles of the [Declaration of Independence](#) flourished in our land. These principles, when enunciated 200 years ago, were a dream, not a reality. Today, they are real. Equality has matured in America. Our inalienable rights have become even more sacred. There is no government in our land without consent of the governed. Many other lands have freely accepted the principles of liberty and freedom in the Declaration of Independence and fashioned their own independent republics. It is these principles, freely taken and freely shared, that have revolutionized the world. The volley fired here at Concord two centuries ago, 'the shot heard round the world', still echoes today on this anniversary.<sup>[145]</sup>

— *President Gerald R. Ford*

President Ford laid a wreath at the base of *The Minute Man* statue and then respectfully observed as Sir [Peter Ramsbotham](#), the British Ambassador to the United States, laid a wreath at the grave of British soldiers killed in the battle.<sup>[146]</sup>



A citizen of [Acton](#) and Members of the Acton Fife and Drum Corps march to [Concord](#) on the [Isaac Davis Trail](#) during the 2016 annual [Patriots' Day](#) celebration.

See also

-  [American Revolutionary War portal](#)
-  [Philadelphia portal](#)
- [List of American Revolutionary War battles](#)

Notes

1. <sup>^</sup> <sup>^</sup> <sup>^</sup> [Coburn](#), p. 165–67, identifies 77 individuals by name who mustered for the encounter, but he also notes that no official roll was ever submitted to the Provincial Congress. [Fischer](#), pp. 400, 183, cites contemporaneous accounts and those of other historians that put the number between 50 and 70 militia, but notes that Sylvanus Wood, in an account taken 50 years later, recalled only counting 38 militia.
2. <sup>^</sup> [Chidsey](#), p. 29, estimates the colonial force at 500 by the time the confrontation occurred at the North Bridge. [Coburn](#), pp. 80–81, counts about 300 specifically, plus several uncounted companies.
3. <sup>^</sup> The peak strength of militias that massed around the British column on April 19 is uncertain. Many of the militiamen who joined the battle at various locations during the day continued to follow the British column all the way to Charlestown, but some also dropped out and returned home. [Coburn](#) located muster rolls for 79 militia and minute companies engaged that day, listing 3,960 officers and soldiers in all. But there are no tallies for six of these companies, and some units known to be present during the day (such as the Lincoln militia company) are not included at all.
4. <sup>^</sup> [Chidsey](#), p. 6. This is the total size of Smith's force.
5. <sup>^</sup> [Coburn](#), p. 64. This force is six light infantry companies under Pitcairn.
6. <sup>^</sup> [Coburn](#), p. 77 and other sources indicate "three companies". [Chidsey](#), p. 28 gives a company size "nominally of 28".
7. <sup>^</sup> [Coburn](#), p. 114 gives the size of Percy's force at 1,000. This count reflects that estimate plus the departing strength, less casualties.
8. <sup>^</sup> <sup>^</sup> <sup>^</sup> [Chidsey](#), p. 47, cites all casualty figures except missing-in-action. [Coburn](#), pp. 156–59, cites by town and name the American losses, and by company the British losses, including missing-in-action (from Gage's report). Chidsey, Coburn, and [Fischer](#) disagree on some American counts: Chidsey and Fischer count 39 wounded, Coburn says 42. Fischer, pp. 320–21, also records 50 American killed-in-action, in contrast to Chidsey and Coburn's 49.
9. <sup>^</sup> [French](#), pp. 2, 272-273. A controversial interpretation holds that the [Battle of Point Pleasant](#) on October 10, 1774 in what is now West Virginia was the initial military engagement of the

Revolutionary War, and a 1908 United States Senate resolution designating it as such. However, few historians subscribe to this interpretation, even in West Virginia.<sup>[1]</sup>

10. <sup>^</sup> [Emerson's Concord Hymn](#)
11. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 30
12. <sup>^</sup> [Fred Anderson](#), *A People's Army*, and [John Shy](#), "A New Look at Colonial Militias," pp. 29–41
13. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 51
14. <sup>^</sup> [Journals of the House of Commons](#), Volume 35, February 6, 1775, p. 99
15. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 75–76
16. <sup>^</sup> [French](#), pp.23-28.
17. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 89
18. <sup>^</sup> [Hafner](#) discusses this incident in detail, noting how the story can be reconciled with other established facts.
19. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 85
20. <sup>^</sup> [Tourtellot](#), p. 51
21. <sup>^</sup> [Tourtellot](#), pp. 71–72 (colonists have intelligence in late March) & p. 87 (Gage receives instructions April 16)
22. <sup>^</sup> [Tourtellot](#), p. 70
23. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 80–85
24. <sup>^</sup> [Moore](#), p. 62.
25. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 87.
26. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a b</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 96
27. <sup>^</sup> [Paul Revere](#), Letter to Jeremy Belknap, January, 1798, and [Paul Revere](#), Deposition, April, 1775.
28. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 97
29. <sup>^</sup> [Paul Revere](#), Letter to Jeremy Belknap, January, 1798.
30. <sup>^</sup> [Paul Revere](#), Deposition of April, 1775.
31. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 138–145
32. <sup>^</sup> [Frothingham](#), p. 60
33. <sup>^</sup> [Frothingham](#), p. 58
34. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a b</sup> [Tourtellot](#), pp. 105–107
35. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 70, 121
36. <sup>^</sup> [Tourtellot](#), pp. 109–115
37. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 127–128
38. <sup>^</sup> *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (1994) p. 122
39. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 400
40. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 158
41. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 153
42. <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 151.

43. [^ Tourtellot](#), A pp. 116-126.
44. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 43, 75–86.
45. [^ Galvin](#), pp. 120-124.
46. [^ Coburn](#), p. 63
47. [^ a b Isaiah Thomas deposition](#)
48. [^ Tourtellot](#), p. 123
49. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 189–190
50. [^ Deposition of Elijah Sanderson, April 25, 1775](#): "I heard one of the Regulars, whom I took to be an officer, say 'damn them, we will have them;' and immediately the Regulars shouted aloud, run, and fired on the Lexington Company, which did not fire a gun before the Regulars discharged on them." [Deposition of Thomas Price Willard, April 23, 1775](#): "Directly after this an officer rode before the Regulars to the other side of the body, and hallooed after the militia of said Lexington, and said 'Lay down your arms, damn you; why don't you lay down your arms?'" [Deposition of John Robbins, April 25, 1775](#): "... I being in the front rank, there suddenly appeared a number of the King's troops ... at a distance of about sixty or seventy yards from us, huzzaing and on a quick pace toward us, with three officers in their front on horseback, and on full gallop towards us; the foremost of which cried, 'Throw down you arms, ye villains, ye rebels;' upon which said [Lexington] Company dispersing, the foremost of the three officers ordered their men, saying 'Fire, by God, fire;' at which moment we received a very heavy and close fire from them;" [Journals of the Continental Congress](#), May 11, 1775.
51. [^ Fischer](#), pp.190–191
52. [^ John Barker's Diary, p. 32](#)
53. [^ Chronology06](#). Motherbedford.com. Retrieved on 2013-08-16.
54. [^ Fischer](#), p. 193
55. [^ Fischer](#), p. 402
56. [^ Fischer](#) discusses the shot on pp. 193–194, with detailed footnotes on pp. 399–403, in which he discusses some of the testimony in detail.
57. [^ Urban](#), pp. 19–20
58. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 194–195
59. [^ Benjamin Quarles](#), p. 10.
60. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 198–200
61. [^ Tourtellot](#), p. 152
62. [^ Tourtellot](#), p. 154
63. [^ Frothingham](#), p. 67
64. [^ Fischer](#), p. 215
65. [^ Fischer](#) p.207
66. [^ Martha Moulton deposition](#)
67. [^ Tourtellot](#), pp. 155–158. In his orders to Lt. Col. Smith for the expedition, General Gage had explicitly instructed that "you will take care that the soldiers do not plunder the inhabitants, or hurt private property."
68. [^ French](#), p. 197

69. [^ Fischer](#), p. 208
70. [^ Robinson](#) arrived earlier with several Westford Minutemen after he was alerted by rider at his home in Westford-David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride*, Oxford, page 146. George E. Downey, *A History of the First Parish of Westford, Town of Westford*, 1975, page 27. Allen French, *Historic Concord, Cambria*, 1942, pages 66 and 68.
71. [^ Fischer](#), p. 209
72. [^ A. Doolittle](#) print of the Battle indicates this after interviews with eyewitness accounts one month after the Battle
73. [^ Rev. Joseph Thaxter](#) from the *United States Literary Gazette*, Vol 1, page 264., "[Archived copy](#)". Archived from [the original](#) on 2016-03-05. Retrieved 2016-02-23. (Letter by Minuteman at the Battle), Concord resident and Witness of the battle Rev. Dr. Ripley in his published account of 1827, Hodgman, Rev. Edwin. *History of the Town of Westford, 1659-1883*. Lowell: Morning Mail Co., 1883.
74. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 209–212
75. [^ Fischer](#), p. 212
76. [^ French](#), *General Gage's Informers*, p. 97. Laurie reported, "I imagine myself that a man of my Company (afterwards killed) did first fire his piece, tho' Mr. [Lt.] Sutherland has since assured me that the Country people fired first."
77. [^ Concord resident and Witness of the battle Rev. Dr. Ripley](#) in his published account of 1827, Hodgman, Rev. Edwin. *History of the Town of Westford, 1659-1883*. Lowell: Morning Mail Co., 1883, French, Allen. *The Day of Concord and Lexington*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1925.
78. [^ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Tourtellot](#), pp. 165–166
79. [^ Fischer](#), p. 214
80. [^ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Rev. Joseph Thaxter](#) Letter and news article from the *United States Literary Gazette*, Vol 1, page 264 (Rev. Thaxter served as a Minuteman under Lt. Col. Robinson on the Concord Bridge, April 19, 1775)
81. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 214–215
82. [^ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Fischer](#), p. 216
83. [^ Tourtellot](#), pp. 166–168
84. [^ Muster rolls](#) for the militia and minute companies converging at this point are included in [Coburn](#), pp. 7-35. However, as Coburn notes, these rolls are not a complete tally of the militiamen present, because some muster lists were either not submitted or have not been found in archives.
85. [^ Both the British and the local militias](#) were armed with smooth-bore muskets that had an effective range of aimed fire of only 80-100 yards (75-90 m), although the musket ball could have serious effect at a greater distance, if it happened by chance to hit a person. There is no record that any soldiers on either side were armed with longer-range, more accurate rifles. Dr. Benjamin Church, a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress and the Committee of Safety, informed General Gage in March, 1775, that the colonial militiamen "from their adroitness in the habitual use of the firelock suppose themselves sure of their mark at a distance of 200 rods." Even if Church meant yards rather than rods (600 feet versus 3300 feet), it is unclear whether he was profoundly ignorant of the capabilities of a musket, was exaggerating in order to mislead Gage (as Church later claimed when accused of being a spy), or was ridiculing the American militiamen. See [Philbrick](#), p. 92, and [French](#), p. 57-58. On whether Church was a spy, see [French](#), Chapter V.

86. [^ French](#), p. 219, and [Lister](#), *Concord Fight, being so much of the narrative of Ensign Jeremy Lister of the 10th regiment of foot*.
87. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 408–409. Fischer notes conflicting accounts of which militia companies were engaged at this point, and the number of militiamen.
88. [^ Fischer](#) notes on p. 409, "This is not correctly called the Bloody Angle, an error term introduced after the Civil War that is both inaccurate and anachronistic. It has been used uncritically by many historians of the battle and is perpetuated by the National Park Service." The Interim Report of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission, submitted to Congress in 1958 in support of legislation that established the Minute Man National Historical Park, asserted that: "Fittingly, this curving section of the road was *soon to be named* 'The Bloody Angle.'" (p. 47; emphasis added). However, there is no evidence that the term Bloody Angle was ever used by the battle participants or local residents following April 19, 1775, nor did historians use the term prior to the mid-20th century. See Boston National Historic Sites Commission, *The Lexington-Concord Battle Road: Interim Report*, June 16, 1958.
89. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 226–227
90. [^ Fischer](#), p. 232. According to one British officer, ammunition had been wasted earlier in the day out of "too great eagerness of the soldiers in the first action of a war. Most of them were young soldiers who had never been in action, and had been taught that every thing was to be effected by a quick firing. This ineffectual fire gave the rebels more confidence, as they soon found that notwithstanding there was so much [firing], they suffered but little from it." Lt. Frederick Mackenzie, 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers, *Diary of Frederick Mackenzie*, in Allen French, editor, *A British Fusilier in Revolutionary Boston*, Cambridge, 1926.
91. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 410–411. Fischer notes conflicting accounts about where this ambush—now sometimes referred to as "Parker's Revenge"—took place, whether within Lincoln or Lexington.
92. [^ Coburn](#), pp. 106-107
93. [^](#) Ensign Henry De Berniere, "Report to General Gage on April 19, 1775," quoted in [Fischer](#), pp. 231-232
94. [^](#) Lt. John Barker, The King's Own Regiment, "Diary of a British Soldier," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1877, vol. 39
95. [^ Fischer](#), p. 232.
96. [^](#) A remark in Lt. Col. Smith's report to General Gage, dated April 22, 1775, is typical: "Notwithstanding the enemy's numbers, they did not make one gallant attempt during so long an action, though our men were so very fatigued, but [instead] kept under cover." Henry S. Commager, editor. *Documents of American History*, New York, 1948, p. 90
97. [^](#) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Paul Revere's Ride," 1861.
98. [^](#) Lord Percy to General Harvey, April 20, 1775, in Charles Knowles Bolton, editor, *Letters of Hugh Earl Percy*, Boston, 1902. p. 52.
99. [^ French](#), p. 228
100. [^ Frothingham](#), p. 178
101. [^ Tourtellot](#), pp. 184–185
102. [^ Tourtellot](#), p. 185
103. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 241–242
104. [^ Fischer](#), pp. 243–244

105.     <sup>^</sup> [There are several versions of this story. See French, p. 230, and Samuel Abbot Smith, pp. 27-32.](#)
106.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b*</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 245–246
107.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b*</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 250–251
108.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b*</sup> [Tourtellot](#), p. 203
109.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b*</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 256
110.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b c d*</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 258
111.     <sup>^</sup> [Tourtellot](#), p. 197
112.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 257
113.     <sup>^</sup> [Hurd](#), p. 181
114.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 258–260
115.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 261
116.     <sup>^</sup> [Brooks](#), p. 96
117.     <sup>^</sup> [McCullough](#), p. 35
118.     <sup>^</sup> [Frothingham](#), pp. 100–101
119.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 265
120.     <sup>^</sup> [Brooks](#), pp. 96–97
121.     <sup>^</sup> [Journals of the Continental Congress](#), pp. 26-44. Images of the original depositions can be found at <http://www.fold3.com/image/474129/>
122.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 275–276
123.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 263
124.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 279
125.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b*</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 280
126.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 271
127.     <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b*</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 327-328
128.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), p. 329
129.     <sup>^</sup> [Napierkowski](#)
130.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 331–333
131.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 336–338
132.     <sup>^</sup> [Fischer](#), pp. 340–342
133.     <sup>^</sup> [Minuteman National Historical Park Things To Do](#)
134.     <sup>^</sup> ["John Buttrick Memorial". Smithsonian Institution. Retrieved 2010-08-12.](#)
135.     <sup>^</sup> Department of the Army, Lineage and Honors, 181st Infantry. Reproduced in Sawicki 1981, pp. 354–355.
136.     <sup>^</sup> Department of the Army, Lineage and Honors, 182nd Infantry. Reproduced in Sawicki 1981, pp. 355–357.
137.     <sup>^</sup> Department of the Army, Lineage and Honors, 101st Engineer Battalion

138. [^ Department of the Army, Lineage and Honors, 125th Quartermaster Company Archived 2012-08-19 at the Wayback Machine.](#)
139. [^ Massachusetts Legal Holidays](#)
140. [^ Maine Legal Holidays](#)
141. [^ Wisconsin School Observance Days](#)
142. [^ Concord Centennial Celebration Report](#)
143. [^ Scott's United States Stamp Catalog: First Day Covers](#)
144. [^ Time Magazine, April 25, 1974](#)
145. [^ New York Times on Ford's appearance](#)
146. [^ The American Presidency Project.](#)

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- [National Park Service site for Minute Man National Historical Park](#)
- [Buckman Tavern - Lexington Historical Society](#)
- [Why We Remember Lexington and Concord and the 19th of April](#)
- [Rescued cannon returns to Concord](#)
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- [Concord Massachusetts](#)
- [Merriam's Corner](#)
- *"Colonial towns, by the numbers"*. Archived from *the original* on 2011-05-13. Retrieved 2010-04-25. Facts and figures on Acton, Bedford, Concord and Lexington of the period, including the rosters of the towns' Minute Men and Militia
- [Statements of American combatants at Lexington and Concord](#) contained in supplement "Official Papers Concerning the Skirmishes at Lexington and Concord" to *The Military Journals of Private Soldiers, 1758-1775*, by Abraham Tomlinson for the Poughkeepsie, NY museum, 1855.

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## The Battle of Bunker Hill

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On June 17, 1775 British regulars faced an assemblage of independently minded colonial militia at the Battle of Bunker Hill. By evening of that day the British held the Charlestown peninsula, and a new respect for the determination and resourcefulness of colonial forces. The colonials, if shaken from what was for many the first taste of war (and what it reveals of men's character), had proven to themselves that in direct confrontation they could thwart the British army, a force superior in training, equipment, and organization.

Following the beginning of the war at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775 the citizens of Boston found themselves between two armies. General Artemas Ward's New England volunteers surrounded Boston and blockaded the land approaches; General Thomas Gage and 4,600 British soldiers held the city itself. One Bostonian wrote, "We are besieged this moment with 10 or 15,000 men, from Roxbury to Cambridge... We are every hour expecting an attack by land or water."

Critical to the British occupation of Boston was control of the hills on the Charlestown peninsula. An army holding this position overlooked both Boston and her harbor. On June 15 the Americans learned that the British planned to occupy Charlestown. To frustrate them the Americans decided to act first.

On the evening of June 16, Colonel William Prescott, leading 1,200 Massachusetts and Connecticut soldiers, left Cambridge to fortify Bunker's Hill, the dominant hill in Charlestown. Prescott, however, bypassed this position and instead dug in on a lower hill closer to Boston called Breed's Hill. The next morning, the British awoke to find Breed's Hill fortified with an earthen redoubt measuring 160 feet by 30 feet. Gage ordered the position captured.



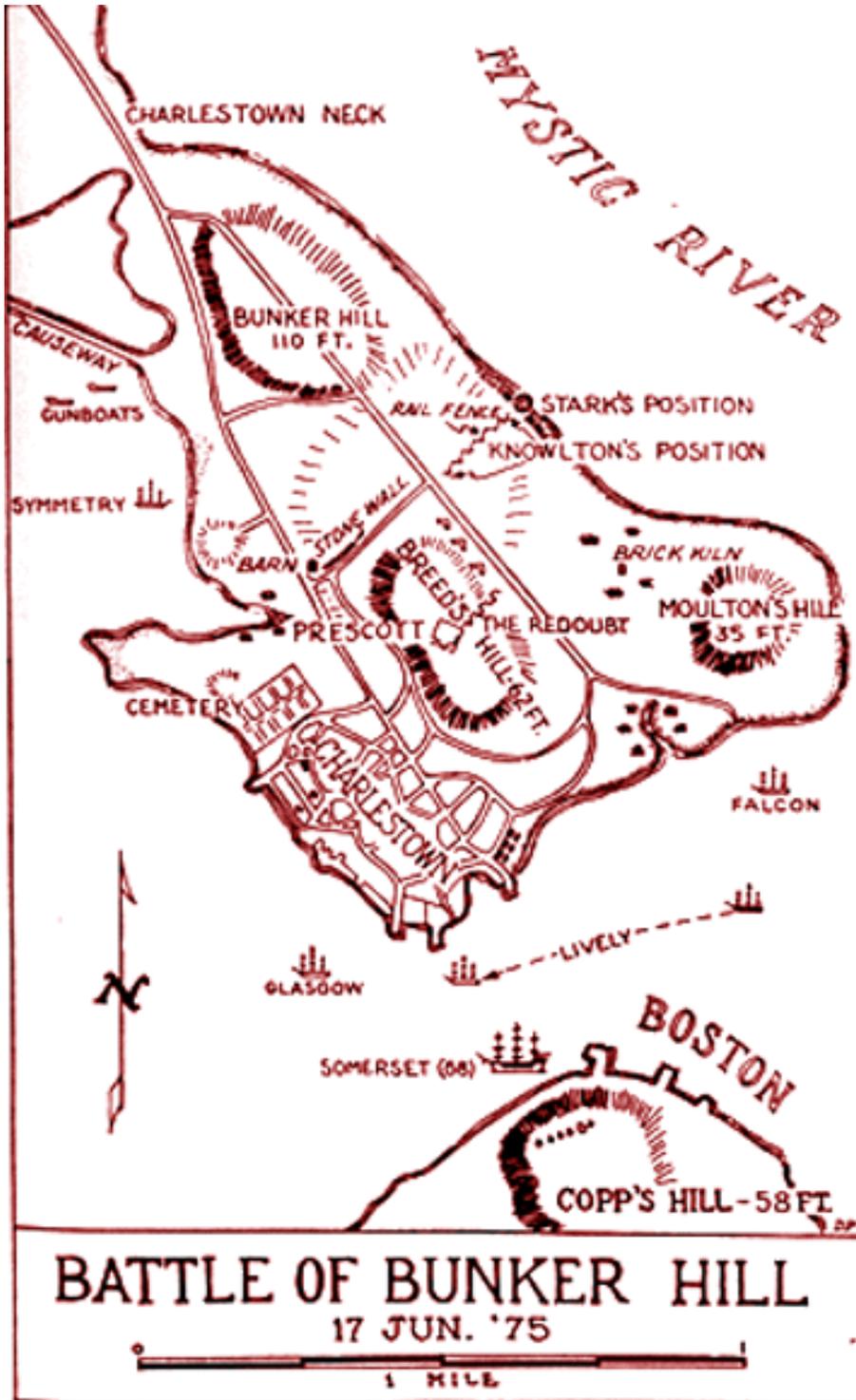
Major General William Howe, Gage's senior officer, was given field command. A shortage of boats, poor navigational maps, and ill-timed tides affected Howe's strategy and delayed the operation. In the end, Howe decided to land his troops at Moulton's (or Charlestown) Point near the mouth of the Mystic River. From here he could press westward across the peninsula, outflank the American redoubt and seize Bunker's Hill and Charlestown neck. While the British waited for the tide to rise, the Americans used the time wisely.

Prescott's men extended their fortifications to the north of the redoubt by building a breastwork. As Colonel Stark's New Hampshire men arrived, they joined Connecticut troops fortifying a rail fence that extended down the slope of Breed's Hill toward the Mystic. Other soldiers constructed three shelters of fence rails, called fleches, in the exposed area between the breastwork and the rail fence. To cover Prescott's right flank, still other men took up snipers' positions in deserted Charlestown. In all, between 2,500 and 4,000 New Englanders manned the lines.

## MAP

Battle of Bunker (Breed's) Hill (610K)

The map below shows the geography of the Charlestown peninsula:



### The First Assault

By 3:30 p.m. transports had delivered Howe's initial force, and reinforcements were landing on the shore between Moulton's Point and Charlestown. When colonial snipers began firing at the arriving Redcoats, Howe ordered immediate retribution and the town was set afire by cannon. As Charlestown burned and spectators crowded to rooftops of



Boston for the best view of the spectacle, Howe launched his first assault.

Howe's primary objective was the rail fence. As a diversion, Brigadier General Robert Pigot was to lead an assault on the redoubt and adjoining breastwork, while an elite group of light infantry would proceed up the Mystic shore to outflank the colonials on their left. Simultaneously, Howe and his principal force would hit defenders of the rail fence hard.

The advance of the Redcoats must have been a terrible sight to the Americans. But nervous as they were, they had to wait. It was critical that the first rounds of fire be coordinated, with men alternately firing and loading to keep up a barrage capable of breaking the enemy's charge. Whether or not they were told to hold fire until they saw the "whites of their eyes," the colonials were told to wait for the order to fire, to aim low, and to pick off British officers.

Interrupting the advance of Howe's and Pigot's soldiers were fences and uneven terrain hidden by tall grass. Unhindered by such obstacles, the light infantry was able to move swiftly along the Mystic shore, only to be met by Colonel Stark's deadly surprise - a stone wall on the beach backed by soldiers who gave no ground. On the meadow above, as Howe's men approached their enemy, they were met by premature but increasingly steady musketry. In the struggle to negotiate fences while under fire, momentum and discipline were lost. Pigot's attack on the redoubt, too, was repulsed. Prescott's men had held.

No sooner was the first assault turned back than Howe regrouped and marched forward again in a hasty, uncoordinated attack all along the American front. Once again the assault was a costly failure.

### **The British Victory**

The colonials were jubilant, but not for long. Confusion, a lack of discipline, inter-colony rivalries, and the resulting lack of reinforcements and supplies were to take their toll. Howe had been frustrated but not defeated. It was true that British troops were no longer fresh or overconfident and had suffered devastating losses of both rank and file and officers. The officers that remained, however, roused their troops and put together for the final charge a group grimly determined.

This time the British drove against the right and center of the American line. They cut through the breastwork and overran the redoubt from three sides. Stark managed to hold on at the rail fence long enough to help cover Prescott's retreat, but the final scene inside the redoubt was carnage.

The surviving colonials retreated northward toward Cambridge. The British, bloodied and exhausted, pursued only as far as Bunker Hill and there dug in. By 5:30 p.m. the fighting was over.

### **Aftermath**

Both armies had fought courageously and learned much. For the Redcoats, the lesson was painful. Although they had captured the hill, out of 2,200 soldiers engaged, 1,034 were casualties. The British attempted no further actions outside Boston for the next nine months. When Howe replaced Gage as military commander in America, the events of that day would

continue to haunt him, and he would time and again fail to follow up a victory over the Americans.

The Americans had shown they could stand up to the British in traditional open field combat. But where they had succeeded, it had been through individual gallantry rather than tactical planning or discipline. Some regiments had fought well, other not at all. Of an estimated 2,500 to 4,000 men engaged, 400 to 600 were casualties. Stronger leadership would be critical to success in further battles. This leadership was provided on July 2, 1775 when George Washington arrived in Cambridge to assume his role as Commander-in-Chief of the new Continental Army.

*"Bunker Hill," Boston National Historical Park*

\* \* \*

**By Dale Yoe HFA #062**

**New Book From James Herrick HFA #244**

Another Herrick Poet

I recently had the pleasure of meeting an amazing young man who happens to be the grandson of Curt Herrick, HFA #100. James is an engineer, singer and poet. James is our chairperson in the HFA for the 400th anniversary meeting in 2029 and has just published a book of poetry called- "Dusk to Dawn, 100 Poems of Prayer".

In James' words, "The day has come! For those who have responded to my poems saying, 'I'm going to take this to my prayer group'; 'You should publish a book!' I finally have a book of poems that I can share with you. Many thanks to everyone who has supported me in the 17-year poetic journey that has culminated with this book. Find

me on pilgrimpoet.blog and Substack (<https://substack.com/@cjamesherrick4>) where I plan to continue the journey with you."

In *Dusk and Dawn: 100 Poems for Prayer*, James Herrick offers a moving and meditative collection that traces the spiritual arc of human life — from the wandering questions of our early journeys, through the battles of dusk, and finally to the hope-filled light of dawn. This is a book to return to again and again — in quiet moments of reflection, in seasons of struggle, and in the daily rhythm of prayer.

Enjoy! Best, James Herrick

\* \* \*

**Message from the Editor:**

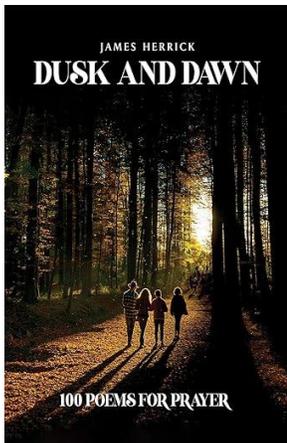
**Nancy Johnson, HFA #212**

Email [NancyJohnson206@gmail.com](mailto:NancyJohnson206@gmail.com)

Thank you to our members, Dale E. Yoe, HFA #062, Alice Herrick Reynolds HFA #003, and Curt Herrick #100, for contributing to this newsletter.

I'd like to remind everyone that I'm happy to accept articles and stories for the next newsletter at any time.

\* \* \*



# Getting Started

IN FAMILY HISTORY WITH



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## Getting Started with County Histories

WALTER P. MILLARD a retired lumber merchant of Tarrytown, N. Y., was born in this village October 8th, 1841. He attended district schools, finishing his studies at Hamilton College and at Bryant and Stratton's Mercantile College at Poughkeepsie.

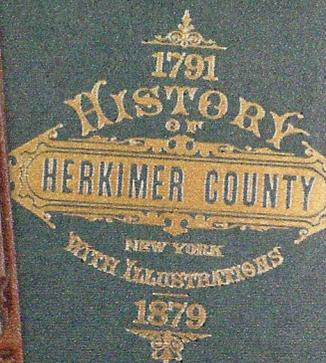
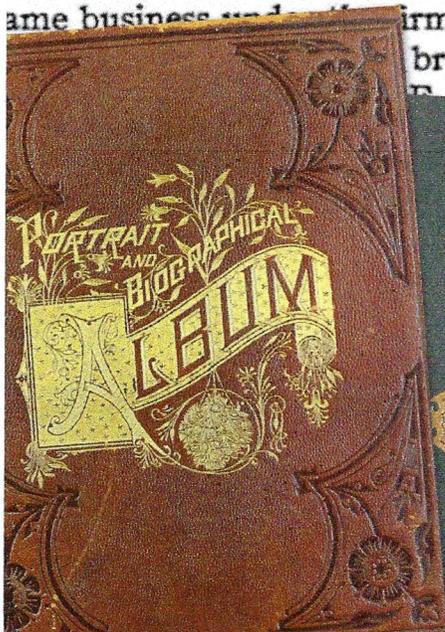
From 1858 to '66 he was employed by his father in the lumber business. They then removed to Tarrytown, where for five years he carried on the same business under the firm name of W. P. & W. Millard. In 1877 he and his brother Justice E. in the firm of J. E. & W. P. Millard. In 1877

1791  
HISTORY

OF

HERKIMER

COUNTY, N.Y.



Getting Started in Family History with American Ancestors is a series of free downloads and short videos that covers the basic research methods genealogists use to find and verify information. Explore the entire series at [Getting Started in Family History](#).

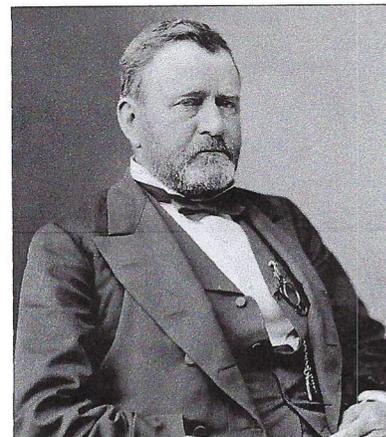


### Introduction

County histories provide a wealth of information for family historians. They offer a snapshot of an ancestor’s community and sometimes even the ancestor themselves—with an image! In May of 1876, to coincide with America’s centennial celebrations, President Ulysses S. Grant endorsed a congressional resolution that recommended every town and county produce a history of its formation to the current day.

These histories are often referred to as “mug books” or “vanity books,” due to the included historical and genealogical sketches of an area’s notable residents. The sketches frequently included a photograph of the person described—hence the term “mug book.”

Large national publishers sent out employees to communities across the nation. Their goal was to find residents to purchase space within the volume for their biography and photograph to be included.



President Ulysses S. Grant.

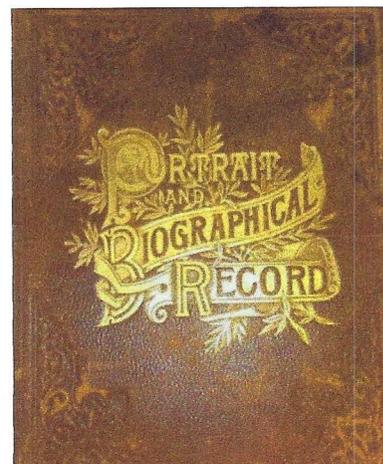
### What is included?

The layout of county histories usually consists of the following chapters:

- History of the county (Native American tribes, adoption of name, parent counties)
- History of individual townships (settlement, migration, first houses of worship, first schools)
- Military honor roll lists by war (usually ending with the Civil War)
- Biographies of notable residents

### Who is included?

These histories most often included biographies of living famers, small businessmen, professionals (such as lawyers and doctors), teachers, and religious officials—primarily male and primarily white. Women were sometimes included, as were deceased residents (featured in memoriam). Biographies often provide the following details:



Cover of a county history.

- Place and date of birth
- Names of parents, siblings, and children (sometimes grandchildren)
- Ancestry
- Political affiliation
- Occupation and place of residence
- Migration history
- Military service
- Marriage information
- Fraternal organizations

WALTER P. MILLARD a retired lumber merchant residing at New Hamburg, N. Y., was born in this village October 8th, 1840, where he attended the district schools, finishing his studies at Hamilton Collegiate Institute, White Plains, and at Bryant and Stratton's Mercantile College at Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

From 1858 to '66 he was employed by his father in the lumber trade at New Hamburg. They then removed to Tarrytown, where for five years they continued the same business under the firm name of W. P. & W. Millard. Our subject then became associated with his brother Justice E. in the lumber business at Yonkers, under the firm name of J. E. & W. P. Millard. In 1877 he returned to New Hamburg where he has since resided.

Mr. Millard was united in marriage November 17, 1868, with Emma, daughter of James D. and Eliza (Hoffman) Bishop. One child Mary Eliza was born to them May 11, 1870. She is now the wife of Frank B. Drake of New Hamburg, who are the parents of Walter Millard, born March 30, 1897, and Edna Frances, born July 24, 1900.

Mr. Millard is a member of the following Masonic organizations: Solomons Lodge No. 196 Tarrytown; Poughkeepsie Chapter R. A. M. No. 172; King Solomon Council No. 31; R. & S. M. Poughkeepsie; and Poughkeepsie Commandery No. 43. He is also identified with other fraternal orders. In religious belief he is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church.

The paternal ancestors of Mr. Millard were from New England. His great-grandfather, John was born in Massachusetts, January 15, 1736, and died November 22, 1812. He married Christina Rust, June 17, 1831. They had the following children: Charles, Rufus, Philo, Ira, Russell, Sarah, Jerusha, Clove, Diantha, of whom Charles, grandfather of our subject was born in Cornwall, Conn., February 19, 1763. He served in the Revolutionary Army, and was stationed at Newburgh under Gen-

Sketch of Walter Millard of Dutchess County, NY.



### Where to Access County Histories?

Luckily, many county histories are out of copyright and can be accessed online for free. Be sure to search for your ancestor's town and/or county at:

- [Internet Archive](#)
- [HathiTrust](#)
- [FamilySearch](#)
- [Google Books](#)
- [Open Library](#)
- [Smithsonian Libraries Digital Library](#)

Other histories have been indexed and are available at:

- Ancestry.com, "[U.S., County and Regional Histories and Atlases, 1804-1984](#)" (Includes eight states: California, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin)
- Ancestry.com, "[U.S., County History Catalog](#)"

### Suggested Reading

Scott E. Casper, *Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

P. William Filby, comp., *A Bibliography of American County Histories* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1985).

Archibald Hanna Jr., "Every Man His Own Biographer," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 80 (October 1970): 291–298.

Clarence Stewart Peterson, comp., *Bibliography of County Histories of the 3111 Counties in the 48 States* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1946).

Clarence Stewart Peterson, *Consolidated Bibliography of County Histories in Fifty States in 1961* (Baltimore: published by the author, 1963).

D. Joshua Taylor, "Vanity Sketches: Mugbook Sources and Truths," *FGS Forum*, 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 13–15.

### Online Lectures

"[Using and Evaluating Mug Books for Family History Research](#)" available at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org)



#### HELPFUL TIP

Many county histories are uncited and repeat, or are the source of, family lore. They do not include reference to where the writer obtained the information. Consider the county history as a hint and try to find original records to corroborate the information provided.



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