



Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts³¹

Lexington and Concord are best known as the locations of the first battles of the American Revolutionary War. The “shot heard round the world” fired at Lexington Common followed by the violent battles that ensued, signified the first step on the road to independence.

This memorable episode in American history began on April 15, 1775. General Thomas Gage had served as the British Military Governor of Massachusetts for over a year; he and his troops occupied the city of Boston. On this day, he received direct orders from Britain to destroy the patriots’ arms supply in Concord, Massachusetts. This move was planned in retaliation for the rousing excitement in Massachusetts generated by colonial leaders John Hancock and Samuel Adams.



North Bridge

General Gage planned on absolute secrecy in destroying the rebel arms buildup. However, Paul Revere and William Dawes delivered the startling news to patriot leaders in Lexington and Concord that the British were preparing an assault. The colonial militia had been training for months in anticipation of a British sneak attack. The task of carrying out the strike, which now lay ahead of the British military leaders, became more troublesome.

At midnight on April 19, approximately 700 British troops left Boston en route to Concord. Because of the readiness of the colonial militia and the bravery of Revere and Dawes, the American forces were prepared. Lexington Militia Captain John Parker had assembled his men on Lexington Green, waiting for the British to arrive.

At dawn the British approached Lexington Green only to find the company of armed colonial militia. The British ordered the militia to disarm themselves immediately, and Parker obliged, ordering his men to disperse. As the patriots were disassembling, a single shot rang out. To this day no one truly knows which side fired. However, the shot prompted the British soldiers to fire at will. The Redcoats killed eight men and wounded ten more. The Revolutionary War had officially begun.



North Bridge Monument

The British troops proceeded to loot Concord in search of military arms. The colonial militia was not only prepared, but significant in size. Word of the opening fire had reached the nearby towns of Lexington and Salem, bringing men to Concord to join the fray. The patriots defeated the Redcoats at the North Bridge, forcing them to retreat to Boston. The “shot heard round the world” had ignited and alerted colonial America. Despite the 1,000 British troops who came as reinforcements, the British suffered mightily. This colonial military success inspired the patriots to advance on the city of Boston, signaling the beginning of the American rebellion.