

Volume 18

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Lexington, Massachusetts, April, 1775

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Lead: A brief skirmish between British Regulars and colonial militia in Lexington, Massachusetts in April 1775 set off a revolution.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Thomas Gage, the Royal Governor of Massachusetts in the spring of 1775, liked Americans, but it seemed as though the sentiment was not mutual, at least among a certain number of his colonial charges. Led by Samuel Adams and John Hancock, some of the provincials were in thinly

disguised rebellion. They had tossed together a Provincial Congress and had begun to assemble war material in the tiny village of Concord westward, 21 miles up the Boston Neck. Gage, under pressure from London, had his eyes on those arms and the colonial leaders, to seize the weapons and arrest Hancock and Adams.

On the night of the 18th of April Gage dispatched 700 light infantrymen and grenadiers on the mission, and after what seemed to be endless delays they marched into the countryside aware that it was alive with warnings of their approach - bells ringing, muskets firing - but there was a bright moon and they were off to do the King's bidding. In Lexington their

movement had been well-heralded by Paul Revere and Billy Dawes, and the Minutemen were roused long before the Brits got anywhere close.

At dawn a shabby line of 60 or so men stretched themselves across the Lexington green and watched as the British regulars tumbled into view, filling the eastern limit of vision. Militia Captain John Parker saw he was hopelessly outnumbered and ordered his Minutemen to disperse into the village with their weapons. There were shouts and then, with horrible lucidity, a single shot, echoing across the quiet village, followed by a scattered response building to an enormous crescendo. Eight Americans and any fleeting hopes for a peaceful

resolution of colonial demands and British sovereignty in North America lay dead in the grass on the Lexington green. Next time: a bridge too far.

At the University of Richmond's School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I'm Dan Roberts.

Resource

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