

Instructions for: "The Shot Heard Round the World" Lesson.

Go to the next page of the lesson (Map page) and follow the instructions on the page. Work your way through the lesson and do the review work and quiz at the end of the lesson.

Most pages have links to other pages or additional information, move your cursor over the page to find the links.

Links within the text are indicated by type in a different color. You can also tell that you are at a link when the cursor changes to a pointing hand, then simply left click on that link.

The British Raid on Lexington & Concord

Follow the Stars from smallest to biggest for the story.





Boston CVB

The British Redcoats in Boston were ordered to make a raid against the Rebel leaders, in Lexington, on the night of April 18, 1775.

General Gage, the Commander-in-Chief of all British forces in North America, gave the orders to the British troops.

Approximately 700 picked troops started on the raid in the early hours of April 19th. They left Boston by crossing the Back Bay in small boats and then planned to march the remaining miles to Lexington. The entire operation was supposed to be secret.

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Boston CVB

What the British didn't take into account in their plan was the efficiency of the Patriot's spy network.

Led by the Boston silversmith **Paul Revere**, the Patriots knew of the British raid before it even left for Lexington.

Revere and others rode into the countryside west of Boston and spread the word that the British were "out". They alerted **John Hancock** and **Sam Adams**, in Lexington, that the goal of the raid was to capture them and then raid Concord for military supplies.

Hancock and Adams got safely away and the warnings for Concord spread westward.

Revere was caught later by the British, but was then let free.

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The Green at Lexington, April 19, 1775.



The minute company at Lexington was fully alerted by the time the British approached the village green at dawn. Some 70 men under the command of Captain John Parker formed up in the center of the green. Parker had already given his orders to hold their fire, but as he said, "If they mean to start a war, let it start here". An eyewitness later stated...

"The British troops approached us rapidly in platoons, with a general officer on horseback at their head. The officer came up to within about two rods of the centre of the company, where I stood, the first platoon being about three rods distant. They there halted. The officer then swung his sword, and said, 'Lay down your arms, you damned rebels, or you are all dead men. Fire!' "

Nearly one dozen Americans fell dead and wounded, the British cheered and the Americans ran for their lives. The first shots of the American Revolution had been fired. Unfortunately for the British, the objective of the raid thus far, the capture of the Patriot leaders, could not be accomplished. Revere had warned Hancock and Adams away, and search as they might, the British could not find them. The British now continued to head west to Concord, military supplies and more American militia awaited them.

As the British column approached Concord, it was clear that the raid was no longer much of a secret. In fact, hundreds, if not thousands, of colonial militia men could be seen marching alongside the British troops. ***They stayed out of musket range, but they were not going away. Bonfires were lit as signals on the surrounding hills and the church bells in the small communities were ringing the alarm.***

When the Redcoats reached Concord, they split up to search for military supplies. Their orders were to destroy the Patriot supply and equipment storage sites, then make the march back to Boston. So far, even though they had failed in their attempt to capture Adams and Hancock, things were going well. They had dispersed the colonial militia at Lexington, they had reached Concord without any losses and would soon be ready to begin the march back.

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It was at Concord's north bridge that everything changed. A small group of the British were recrossing the bridge at the north end of the town to rejoin the main command. They had destroyed some supplies. A large group of American militiamen approached the British near the bridge. Feeling threatened, as well they might, the British fired at the Americans to move them away from the bridge. Shocked that the British had truly shot at them, the Americans replied to the Redcoats' firing with their own. ***The first British blood of the battle was spilled at the North Bridge.***



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It seems that once the firing started, it could not and did not stop. The British officers quickly formed up their column and started the long march back to Boston.

The Americans who had been shadowing the British force closed in and began what would turn out to be a long and deadly running battle with the professionals of the British army. The fight was completely disorganised on the American side and increasingly so for the British. When the Americans stood off and shot at the British, things went well for them. When the British were able to get close to the untrained Americans, the colonists suffered. But, time and numbers favored the Americans.

As the British approached Lexington for the second time that day, all seemed lost. The Redcoats were taking severe casualties, especially among their officers. The famed discipline of the regulars was breaking down and the men were close to complete panic.

The Americans grew bolder. Their numbers were growing all of the time and the pent up frustration of years of conflict with Great Britain was finding a release in a swirling, deadly dance on the road to Boston. The British column was in grave danger of being swamped.

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It was at this point that both the British and Americans heard the measured sounds of military fifes and drums. Coming from the direction of Boston, 1,000 additional British troops had been sent out to help the original raiders. These fresh men were led by the British nobleman Hugh Percy, the earl of Northumberland. Not only did he arrive just in the nick of time with many more men, he also brought cannon with him.

This turned the fight in favor of the British. But, they did not want any more battle. The original raiders, tired and bloodied were escorted back to Boston, covered by the guns that Percy had brought with them, and then by the guns of the British fleet once Boston was reached.



Ensign Jeremy Lister

Lt. John Barker

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The Impact of April 19th, 1775

April 19, 1775 was over. By the end of the day, the British raid to capture Adams and Hancock and destroy military supplies would be seen as a failure. The Redcoats had lost several hundred men with losses particularly heavy among the officer corps. General Gage sent to England for more men and he found himself under siege in the city.

The Americans now surrounded Boston with thousands of men. They had stopped the British attempt to ruin their military preparations, they had inflicted an embarrassing defeat on trained European troops and they had Boston and the British bottled up. What was next?

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Review Questions

Why did the British march to Lexington & Concord?

Did they accomplish their mission?

What events occurred that either helped or hindered their mission?

Who was Thomas Gage?

Who was Captain Parker?

Who was Jeremy Lister?

What was the situation at the end of the day of battle?

Now take the Quiz.

Quiz

Place each in the correct spot in the Patriot/ Redcoat chart.

Patriots

Redcoats

John Hancock

Thomas Gage

Paul Revere

Militia









Minutemen

Sam Adams

Jeremy Lister

John Parker

Attachments

-  [Paul Revere Virtual Museum](#)
-  [Rever's account of his ride](#)
-  [Captain John Parker](#)
-  [National Historic Park](#)
-  [Minutemen](#)
-  [Shot Heard Round the World](#)
-  [Lt. Barker](#)
-  [Ensign Jeremy Lister](#)