



What We'll Discuss Today

- The Myths of Lexington and Concord
- The Minute Men and Militia of April 19th
- Provincial Tactics of the Day
- Loyalists Who Served with the British Expedition to Concord
- The Horrors of War



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Where people say "You're welcome!"
To remind you to say Thank you



Introduction

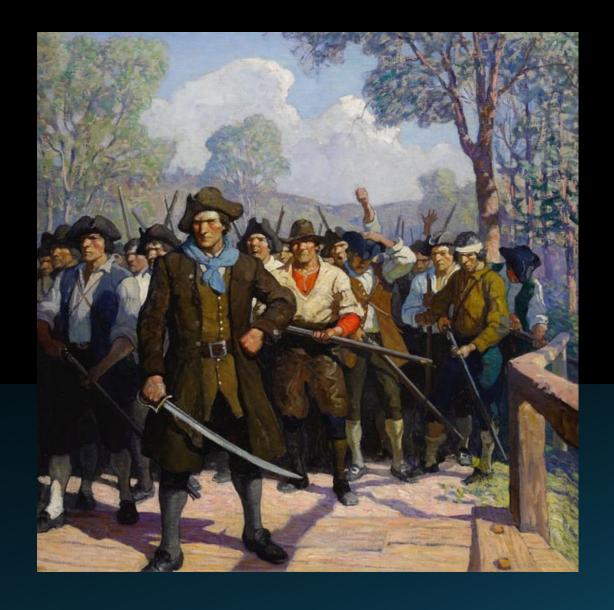
"The Embattled Farmer"

- After the American Civil War and leading up to the Centennial, the myth of the "embattled farmer" took shape, portraying the soldiers of April 19, 1775, as independent fighters who single-handedly pursued and defeated British forces retreating to Boston.
- To downplay the Civil War's violence, 19th- and early 20th-century historians softened the portrayal of Lexington and Concord, framing the conflict as a triumph of American heroism over English tyranny.
- The emphasis on American individualism overshadowed the collective efforts of entire communities to defend "English Liberties" and prepare for war with England.



The Embattled Farmer

The Embattled Farmer





The Embattled Farmer



The Minute and Militia Companies of 1774-1775

Prelude to War: 1774

- When war with England appeared inevitable, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress looked to the colony's militia to serve as its military arm. The Massachusetts Provincial Congress recognized it had to "consider what is necessary to be done for the defence and safety of the province." (October 22, 1774).
- The Massachusetts Provincial Congress first ordered the militias to "meet forthwith and elect officers to command their respective companies; and that the officers so chosen assemble as soon as may be . . . and proceed to elect field officers." (October 26, 1774).
- On October 26, 1774, the delegates also set into motion the formation of minute companies within Massachusetts.



A Call to War

That, as the security of the lives, liberties and properties of the inhabitants of this province, depends under Providence, on their knowledge and skill in the art of military, and in their being properly and effectually armed and equipped, it is therefore recommended, that they immediately provide themselves therewith; that they use their utmost diligence to perfect themselves in military skill; and that, if any of the inhabitants are not provided with arms and ammunition according to law, and that if any town or district within the province is not provided with the full town stock of arms and ammunition . . . that the selectmen of such town or district take effectual care, without delay, to provide the same.



A Call to War

- By December 1774, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress was recommending that colonial towns ensure their minute and militia companies are properly armed and equipped in the event of war with England.
- "The improvement of the militia in general in the art military has been therefore thought necessary, and **strongly recommended** by this Congress. We now think that particular care should be taken by the towns and districts in this colony, that each of the minute men, not already provided therewith, should be immediately equipped with an effective firearm, bayonet, pouch, knapsack, thirty rounds of cartridges and balls."



The Military Buildup

- By January 1775, there are four types of military units in Massachusetts that are actively preparing for war with England:
 - *Minute Man Companies*: Were recruited from town militia companies and generally composed of young men between the ages of 17 and 25.
 - *Militia Companies*: A town's military unit that existed to protect the community from external threats. On the eve of Lexington and Concord the average age range of militia men who were not serving in minute companies was 30 to 55.
 - Alarm List: A town's military reserve. This body of soldiers was composed of the elderly and infirm. An alarm list would only be mobilized in times of dire emergencies.
 - "Independent Companies": Military units composed of the elite, wealthy or influential. These units were rare but did exists in Massachusetts on the eve of the American Revolution.



The Tools of War

- Despite popular modern misconceptions, Massachusetts minutemen were not poorly armed and equipped. Instead, it appears most towns took appropriate steps to ensure its minute companies were well supplied for war.
- Many towns also passed resolutions agreeing to provide some or all the accouterments of its minute and militia companies.
- Local men were hired by their respective towns to make certain pieces of equipment for the militia and minute companies. For example, one resident may have made cartridge boxes for his town's minute company while another made bayonet carriages.
- As a result, there was some semblance of uniformity amongst American minute companies on the eve of Lexington and Concord in regard to accounterments carried.

Wartime Buildup

- Methuen resolved to provide bayonets "which should be brought to Capt. John Davis and after the service was over said Davis is to return said bayonets unto the Selectmen of said town."
- Three Bradford men were reimbursed for fitting bayonets to guns, making cartridge boxes and making scabbards and belting for the town's minute company. "Voted, To Phineas Carlton, for 22 Bayonets fitted with Scabbards and Belts, 81. 5s. 0d. Voted, To Phineas Carlton, for Scowering the old Bayonets, and fitting with Belts, 4l. 4s. 0d. For 2 Scabbards and Belts, 0l. 3s. 0d. Wm. Greenough, for fitting one Bayonet and one belt, 0l. 2s. 8d... To Phineas Cole for Leathering 50 Cartridge boxes, 6l. 13s. 4d."
- "Voted, that the enlisted soldiers be furnished with bayonets at the expense of the town. Voted, that a committee be chosen to collect the bayonets now in the hands of individuals in this Town and provide such a number of new ones as will be sufficient to supply the minute men."

A Snapshot of Wartime Production - Lexington

- Jonathan Harrington Sr. father of company fifer Jonathan Harrington, was charged with making cartridge boxes and belting for the militia.
- Phillip Russell- was also making cartridge boxes and bayonets for members of the militia.
- Nathan Simonds was providing blankets to those Lexington militiamen who could not afford them.
- John Parker Was possibly making powder horns for the Lexington Company
- Jonas Parker Was cutting back the stocks of fowling guns to the barrels could accept bayonets



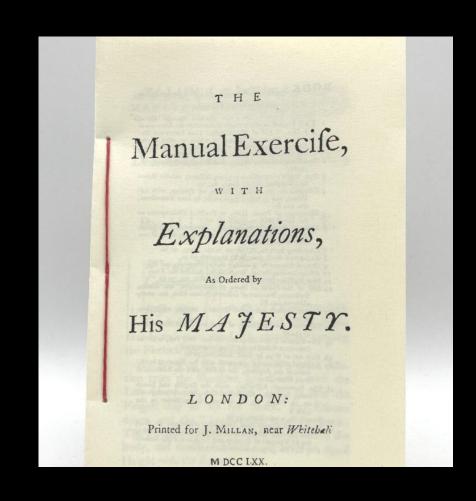


The Firelocks of Massachusetts Forces

- American Muskets
 - Club Butt Fowlers
 - New England Fowlers
 - English Fowlers
 - Composite Fowlers
 - "Committee of Safety" Muskets
- French Muskets
 - 1728 St. Etienne and Charleville French Infantry Musket
 - 1716/1734 Contract Fusil de Chasse Musket
- British
 - Pattern 1730 Musket

The Art Military

- On October 29, 1774, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress addressed what appropriate military exercise the various militia and minute companies should adopt.
- It is possible that the delegates considered the "Norfolk Exercise" or Timothy Pickering's "An Easy Plan."
- However, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress ordered that "it be recommended to the inhabitants of this Province that in order to their perfecting themselves in the Military Art, they proceed in the method ordered by his Majesty in the year 1764, it being, in the opinion of this Congress, best calculated for appearance and defence."



Drilling

- Following the recommendations of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, Andover ordered "[Soldiers] on the said first said day of December meet together and chuse such person only for leading or instructing as shall appear to them to be most skillful in Military Discipline and that they be well equipped with good guns, and other necessary warlike armour in order for their performing of all military maneuvers."
- Amesbury resolved that its minute men would engage in "exercising four hours in an fortnight." Two weeks later, the town modified its order and instructed its minute men to "[exercise] four hours in a week."
- Methuen simply ordered its minute company be "drawn out or exposed to train."
- Lexington was drilling several times a week in preparation for war.

Joint or Battalion Level Drills

- Evidence suggests that minute and militia companies across the colony were holding joint company and regimental level drills. The companies of the Merrimack Valley were no exception.
- On April 13, 1775, minute companies from Haverhill, Bradford and Andover met in Andover to drill. According to documentation, Captain Sawyer and forty six of his Haverhill minute men travelled to Andover to hold a joint drill with Captain Thomas Poor and his men. Sawyer's subsequent report states the purpose of the event "[was to meet] at Andover for Exsise."



Pay and Reimbursement

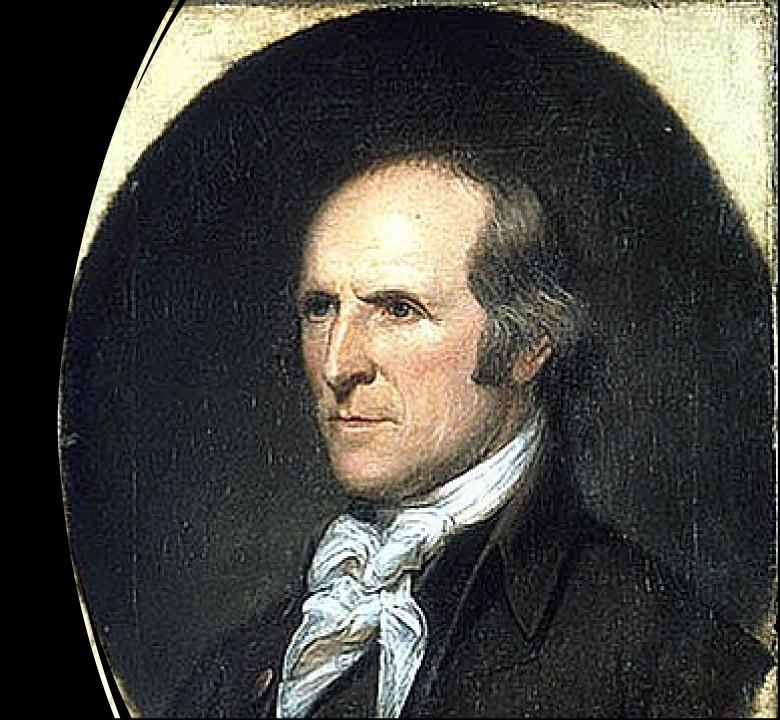
- To ensure and maintain enlistments, many towns established a salary and reimbursement of expenses for those who joined the ranks of minuteman companies.
- The Town of Amesbury ordered "each man shall have one shilling for exercising four hours in an fortnight and that the commanding officer of said Minnit men shall exhibit an account of them that shall exercise to the Selectmen for to receive their pay for exercising."
- The residents of Bradford voted "To give each man a dollar for billeting, when they are called to march, and seven dollars per month while in actual service."





The Battles of Lexington and Concord

Tactics of the Day - The Contributions of Colonel Timothy Pickering



Examples of Carefully Selected Ambush Sites

- Meriam's Corner
- Brook's Hill
- The Bloody Curve
- Parker's Revenge
- The Bluff
- Fiske Hill
- Menotomy Village



The Loyalists of April 19, 1775



The Forgotten Volunteers

- One group that has been noticeably absent from period accounts of the Battles of Lexington and Concord were the loyalist guides who assisted the military expedition to Concord.
- Little has been written about the role loyalists played in Gage's military operation prior to 2016. Many early historians initially suggested that only two to three loyalists accompanied Smith's regulars to Concord. This is incorrect.
- Likewise, the role of armed and mounted loyalists present when Lord Hugh Earl Percy's relief force marched to Lexington the afternoon of April 19, 1775 has been completely overlooked.



Why Recruit Loyalist Guides?

- In the days leading up to the March to Concord, General Thomas Gage actively recruited Loyalist men to assist in the military operation.
- Why recruit Loyalist civilians?
 - They were familiar with the countryside, especially the route from Boston to the Concord area.
 - They were familiar with the location of hidden military stores in Concord.
 - Some had previous military experience and as a result, could help identify hostile forces and potential ambush sites.
 - If necessary, they could serve as a communication line between Boston and the battle front.



Position During the March to Concord

- It appears the guides were interspersed throughout the column.
- For example, Lieutenant William Sutherland of the 38th Regiment of Foot references on two separate occasions a "guide" attached to the front of the column. "When I heard Lieut. Adair of the Marines who was a little before me in front call out, here are two fellows galloping express to Alarm the Country, on which I immediately ran up to them, seized one of them and our guide the other, dismounted them and by Major Pitcairn's direction gave them in charge to the men."

Responsibilities During the March to Concord

- Loyalist guides assisted British officers in identifying enemy combatants. Lieutenant William Sutherland describes how a Loyalist guide identified a captured American prisoner as being a person of importance.
 - "I mett coming out of a cross road another fellow galloping, however, hearing him some time before I placed myself so that I got hold of the bridle of his horse and dismounted him, our guide seemed to think that he was a very material fellow and said something as if he had been a Member of the Provincial Congress."
- In addition to leading the column to Concord, the guides also had the responsibility of assisting search parties in locating military stores.
 - "The troops renewed their march to Concord, where, when they arrived, they divided into parties, and went directly to several places where the province stores were deposited. Each party was supposed to have a Tory pilot."

Why Did Gage Keep the Loyalist Guides Out of His Official Report?

- It is likely General Gage had excluded his Loyalist Guides from his official reports to shield them from retribution. Why?
- The presence of Loyalists with the British column on April 19, 1775, eventually garnered the attention of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.
- On June 16, 1775, Congress proposed to pardon all enemies who surrendered, except General Gage, Admiral Graves "and all the natives of America, not belonging to the navy or army, who went out with the regular troops on the nineteenth of April last, and were countenancing, aiding, and assisting them in the robberies and murders then committed."

The Horrors of War





Account of the Rev. Samuel West

"The news reached us about nine o'clock A.M. The east company in Needham met at my house as part of the Military stores were deposited with me, they there supplied themselves, and by ten o'clock all marched for the place of action with as much spirit and resolution as the most zealous friends of the cause could have wished for. We could easily trace the march of troops from the smoke which arose over them, and could hear from my house the report of the cannon and the Platoons fired by the British."





Account of James Stevens of Andover

"We went to the metinghous & there we come to the distraction of the Reegerlers thay cild eight of our men & shot a Canon Ball throug the metin hous. we went a long through Lecintown & we saw severel regerlers ded on the rod & som of our men & three or fore houses was Burnt & som hoses & hogs was cild thay plaindered in every hous thay could git in to thay stove in windows & broke in tops of desks we met the men a coming back very fast we went through Notemy & got into Cambridg we stopt about eight acloke for thay say that the regerlers was got to Chalstown on to Bunkers hil & intrenstion we stopt about two miles back from the college."

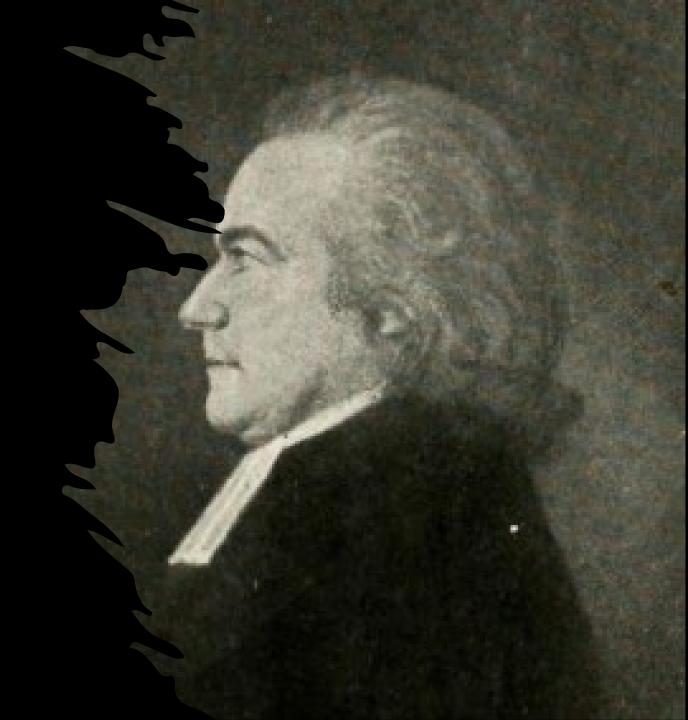


Recovery of the Dead

On April 20, 1775, Hannah Winthrop and her husband passed through Menotomy (Arlington)/ She recalled "But what added greatly to the horror of the scene was our passing through the bloody field at Menotomy, which was strewed with the mangled bodies. We met one affectionate father with a cart looking for his murdered son and picking up his neighbors who had fallen in battle, in order for their burial."

"Dreadful were the vestiges of war on the road. I saw several dead bodies, principally British, on & near the road. They were all naked, having been stripped, principally, by their own soldiers. They lay on their faces. Several were killed who stopped to plunder & were suddenly surprised by our people pressing upon their rear.... The houses on the road of the march of the British, were all perforated with balls, & the windows broken. Horses, cattle & swine lay dead around. Such were the dreadful trophies of war, for about 20 miles!"

Source: Diary of Reverend David McClure, April 20, 1775



Questions?



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