



*“Considering Ourselves Under
Indispensable Obligations to
Defend Our Lives and Liberty”*

Essex County on the Eve of the American Revolution



Introduction

What We'll Cover Tonight

- ❖ The State of the British Empire in 1763
- ❖ The Stamp Act Crisis
- ❖ The Townshend Acts
- ❖ The Treatment of Essex County Loyalists
- ❖ The Boston Massacre
- ❖ The Tea Act and It's Consequences
- ❖ Essex County Prepares for War: The Minute Men
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- ❖ The Battles of Lexington and Concord
- ❖ The Ipswich Fright
- ❖ The Merrimack Valley Holds the Line: The Battle of Bunker Hill

A vibrant sunset scene over the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The sky is a mix of deep blue and bright yellow, with scattered white clouds. The ocean is a deep blue, with white-capped waves breaking onto a sandy beach in the foreground. The sand is a warm, golden-brown color, and the water is shallow and clear near the shore.

Inspirational Quote



Statler: What's wrong with you?

Waldorf: It's either this show or indigestion. I hope it's indigestion.

Statler: Why?

Waldorf: It'll get better in a little while.

The State of the British Empire in 1763



England and Her Colonies in 1763

- ❖ The origins of the American Revolution can be traced back to the close of the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Following its conquest of Canada, England began to recognize the harsh realities of its victory.
- ❖ In the months following the Treaty of Paris, Great Britain was forced not just to administer its newly acquired territories, but also to defend them.
- ❖ This necessitated maintaining a ten-thousand-man army to protect North America from future French operations and Native American attacks, such as Pontiac's Rebellion, which ignited after the conclusion of the war.
- ❖ By January 5, 1763, Britain's funded debt was a staggering £122,603,336 with an annual interest of £4,409,797. A year later, the debt was almost £7,000,000 larger and by January of 1767, it had increased yet another £7,000,000.

England and Her Colonies in 1763

- ❖ To curb this financial burden, the English government implemented a series of economic programs aimed at having those it considered to have benefited most by the successful conclusion of the war, the American colonies, share in the burden.
- ❖ After reviewing the state of Britain's finances, Chancellor of Exchequer, George Grenville, concluded that the American colonies had benefited greatly from the protection of the Crown while contributing very little in taxes.
- ❖ At the same time, Grenville pointed out, an active smuggling trade coupled with massive colonial customs mismanagement, particularly in the New England region, had led to an annual £6,000 deficit in custom duties collected in American ports.
- ❖ Accordingly, he suggested that a direct tax be levied on the American colonies in order to generate additional revenue.



The Stamp and Sugar Acts

The Stamp and Sugar Acts

- ❖ The first two revenue raising measures that Great Britain imposed on her American colonies were the Sugar Act of 1764 and the Stamp Act of 1765.
- ❖ The Sugar Act established tariffs on colonial trading and also attempted to curb the American practice of smuggling sugar and molasses from the West Indies by placing a three pence per gallon tax on foreign molasses.
- ❖ The act established a list of “enumerated goods” that could be shipped only to England, including lumber, and set forth procedures for the accounting, loading and unloading of cargo in port.
- ❖ Violations of the act were prosecuted in a vice admiralty court, where defendants would be denied the right to a jury trial and where the presumption was of guilt rather than innocence.

The Stamp and Sugar Acts

- ❖ The second revenue raising measure was the Stamp Act, which levied an unprecedented direct tax on almost every piece of public paper in the colonies.
- ❖ Newspapers, almanacs, deeds, wills, custom documents, even playing cards were among the many papers subjected to the tax.
- ❖ The Stamp Act went so far as to impose a tax upon *tax receipts*.
- ❖ The Sugar and Stamp acts brought on an explosion of riots, boycotts and protests throughout the colonies, particularly in Massachusetts.

The Stamp Act Riots

- ❖ The Sugar and Stamp acts brought on an explosion of riots, boycotts and protests throughout the colonies, particularly in Massachusetts.
- ❖ Violence broke out in Newport, Providence, Boston, Portsmouth (NH) and Plymouth.
- ❖ For example, on August 14, 1765 Bostonians hung an effigy of Andrew Oliver, the appointed stamp distributor for Massachusetts, from a “liberty tree” in plain view by the “sons of liberty.”
- ❖ Two weeks later, a larger mob assembled and descended upon the homes of several individuals suspected of favoring the Stamp Act, including again that of the Lieutenant Governor. Hutchinson managed to evacuate his family to safety before the mob arrived. Then, as Hutchinson later described it, “the hellish crew fell upon my house with the rage of divels and in a moment with axes split down the door and entered ... I was obliged to retire thro yards and gardens to a house more remote where I remained until 4 o’clock by which time one of the best finished houses in the Province had nothing remaining but the bare walls and floors.”



The Stamp Act and Essex County

The Essex County Response

- ❖ The riots of Boston and other urban communities horrified most Essex County residents. Rather than resort to violence, Essex County chose the path of economic boycott and political protest.
- ❖ In Salem, merchants banded together with others to resolve “We the inhabitants of said Salem, being fully convinced that the act lately passed by the Parliament of Great Britain, commonly called the Stamp Act, would if carried into execution be excessively grievous and burthensome to the inhabitants of his Majesty’s loyal province.”
- ❖ Haverhill resolved “to declare that we think the Stamp act to be unconstitutional; which with the Extensive power lately granted to Courts of admiralty are great Infringments upon our rights and priviledges; & that they were unjustly obtained by reason of wrong Information.”
- ❖ Andover residents declared “That by sundry acts, especially by an act commonly called the stamp-act, we are in danger of being not only reduced to such indigent circumstances as will render us unable to manifest our loyalty to the crown of Great Britain ... but of being deprived of some of our most valuable privileges which by charter and loyalty we have always thought and still think ourselves justly entitled to.”

And Then There Was Newburyport ...

- ❖ In late September 1765 Newburyport officials declared “the late act of parliament is very grievous, and that this town as much as in them lies endeavour the repeal of the same in all lawful ways, and that it is the desire of the town that no man in it will accept of the office of distributing the stamp papers, as he regards the displeasure of the town and that they will deem the person accepting of such office an enemy to his country.”
- ❖ However, when an unknown Newburyport resident disregarded the town’s warning and accepted an appointment as a “stamp distributor” for the Merrimack Valley seaport, an angry mob quickly mobilized.
- ❖ The crowd immediately started a campaign of intimidation against the stamp distributor. “In Newburyport, the effigy a Mr. I— B—, who had accepted the office of stamp distributor, was suspended, September twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth, from a large elm tree which stood in Mr. Jonathan Greenleaf's yard, at the foot of King street, [now Federal street], a collection of tar barrels set on fire, the rope cut, and the image dropped into the flames ... ‘I am sorry to see that substitute,’ said a distinguished citizen of Newburyport, ‘I wish it had been the original.’”

Mob Rule in Newburyport

- ❖ Not satisfied that their message had been properly conveyed, members of the mob then armed themselves with clubs and patrolled the town questioning strangers and residents alike about their position on the crisis.
- ❖ “Companies of men, armed with clubs, were accustomed to parade the streets of Newbury and Newburyport, at night, and, to every man they met, put the laconic question, “stamp or no stamp”. The consequences of an affirmative reply, were anything but pleasant.”
- ❖ “In one instance, a stranger, having arrived in town, was seized by the mob, at the foot of Green street, and, not knowing what answer to make to the question, stood mute. As the mob allow no neutrals, and as silence with them is a crime, he was severely beaten.”
- ❖ A second man fared better when he was able to provide a clever answer. “The same question was put to another stranger, who replied, with a sagacity worthy of a vicar of Bray, or a Talleyrand, ‘I am as you are.’ He was immediately cheered and applauded, as a true son of liberty, and permitted to depart in peace, wondering, no doubt, at his own sudden popularity.”

The true Sons of Liberty

And Supporters of the Non-Importation
Agreement,

ARE determined to resent any the least
Insult or Menace offer'd to any one or
more of the several Committees ap-
pointed by the Body at Faneuil-Hall, and
chastise any one or more of them as they
deserve; and will also support the Printers
in any Thing the Committees shall desire
them to print.

AS a Warning to any one that shall
affront as aforesaid, upon sure Infor-
mation given, one of these Advertisements
will be posted up at the Door
or Dwelling-House of the Offender.

The Townshend Acts

The Townshend Acts

- ❖ By 1767 England's debt was still out of control. The government was faced with a projected annual cost of almost £400,000 just to maintain her army in America alone.
- ❖ Charles Townshend, the impetuous Chancellor of the Exchequer, of whom it was said, "his mouth often outran his mind", suddenly announced that he knew how to tax the American colonies.
- ❖ The Townshend Acts, as they became known, provided for an American import tax on paper, painter's lead, glass and tea. The acts also tightened custom policies and revived the vice-admiralty courts.
- ❖ Although a minority within the House of Commons opposed such a measure, the majority rationalized it would "raise colonial revenue, punish the colonists for their ill-behavior after the repeal of the Stamp Act, and exercise the rights to which Parliament laid claim in the Declaratory Act."
- ❖ The House of Commons was so pleased with itself that they promptly voted to lower English land taxes from four shillings on the pound to three, resulting in a £500,000 loss of revenue and threatening fiscal chaos.

The Townshend Acts

- ❖ Once again, Boston stood at the forefront of opposition. On October 28, 1767, the citizens resolved, at a town meeting, to oppose the acts by refusing to import English goods and to encourage American manufacture instead. However, by 1768, Boston was once again resorting to violence to indicate its opposition to British policy.
- ❖ The victims of the mob begged Governor Bernard to apply for military protection so the Townshend Acts could be enforced. The governor struggled with the decision, but ultimately applied to the king for troops.
- ❖ In 1768, Governor Bernard was ordered to dissolve the Massachusetts legislature, and two full regiments of British regulars were dispatched to Boston to protect the custom officials and enforce the Townsend Acts.

The Townshend Acts – Initial Reaction

- ❖ Essex County inhabitants reacted with anger and dismay to the acts, as well as the escalation of hostilities by Governor Bernard.
- ❖ The Massachusetts General Court framed a petition to the Crown requesting that the acts be repealed. Ninety-two representatives voted in favor of the petition, seventeen against. Of the seventeen, one was from Salem, and the other from Ipswich. The two towns quickly censured the pair and pressured them to resign.
- ❖ Topsfield voted to offer financial assistance to those Boston rioters injured while “being actually engaged for the good of his Majesty's subjects in this province.”
- ❖ Bradford declared it would “oppose & prevent the Levying or Collecting of money from us not granted by our selves or our Legal Representatives.”
- ❖ Haverhill residents debated whether British troops dispatched to Boston should be met with armed resistance when they landed, while Amesbury and Methuen simply refused to become embroiled in the growing controversy.

The Townshend Acts – Boycott



The Townshend Acts – Boycott

- ❖ While many of the residents of Massachusetts urban areas resorted to threats, violence and vandalism, most communities relied upon a far more effective weapon to combat the Townshend Acts – boycotts and non-importation of English goods.
- ❖ At a town meeting, Ipswich declared “Voted, that we will abstain there from ourselves & Recommend the Disuse of it in our Families, Until all the Revenue Acts are Repealed.”
- ❖ After passing its own non-importation resolution, Newburyport gave “thanks of the town to the merchants and others of Boston for their patriotic resolution of nonimportation of goods from Great Britain.”
- ❖ Marblehead quickly moved to stifle opposition to any non-importation agreement and bitterly denounced any dissent as “blindly preferring the chains of slavery to our most valuable inheritance, English Liberty.”



Fifty citizens of Newbury petitioned the town, requesting “a subscription to sign against purchasing any goods, of certain importers, and also against purchasing or using any foreign tea in our families upon any account ... [and] ... that the names of such persons as shall refuse to sign said subscription may by a vote of the town be recorded in the town book that posterity may know, who in this day of public calamity are enemies to the liberties of their country and their memorial be had in everlasting detestation”.



Brother Against Brother: The Treatment of Loyalists in Revolutionary Essex County

Who Were the Essex County Loyalists?

- ❖ Essex County colonists who ultimately became “Tories” were not distinguishable from their neighbors who embraced resistance to the Crown.
- ❖ Many loyalists were respected members of their towns; often well-educated Harvard graduates who worked as merchants, doctors, lawyers, distillers or ministers.
- ❖ A small number owned shops, ran taverns or were considered artisans.
- ❖ However, most colonists from New England who remained faithful to the crown hailed from the middle and lower classes of the American colonies. These loyalists enjoyed neither wealth nor privilege. For example, Ninety percent of those loyalists who settled in the Ontario region simply identified themselves as farmers.
- ❖ Over half of the loyalists who hailed from Massachusetts, including Essex County, who settled in were foreign born.

Who Were the Essex County Loyalists?

- ❖ Unfortunately, Essex County loyalists were portrayed by their neighbors, friends and families as enemies of the people. As a result, they were treated with scorn and contempt.
- ❖ Eventually, disagreements and ridicule devolved into violence and the deprivation of English civil rights.
- ❖ In Marblehead, the very wealthy merchant Robert “King” Hooper became the object of mob violence when he refused to cut his economic ties to England. Eventually, Hooper was forced to hide in the hold of one of his ships and sleep on dried codfish until he could flee to the town.
- In Rowley, Loyalist Jonathan Stickney Jr. was quite vocal in his opposition to the “patriot” cause and its leadership. Town officials quickly arrested and delivered him to the Ipswich Jail.

“To the Keeper of Ipswich Jail: You are ordered to receive into your custody Jonathan Stickney Jr., who has been apprehended by the Committee of Inspection, Correspondence and Safety of the Town of Rowley ... for having in the most open and daring manner endeavored according to the utmost of his abilities to encourage & introduce Discontent, Sedition, and a Spirit of Disobedience to all lawful authority among the people by frequently clamoring in the most impudent insulting and abusive Language ... You are therefore to keep him safely in close confinement (in a Room by himself & that he be not allowed the use of pens, ink nor paper, and not suffer him to converse with any person whatever unless in your hearing) till the further order.”



Other Examples of Abuse

- ❖ Mobs from Haverhill, Bradford and Salem, NH targeted Haverhill loyalist Richard Saltonstall. The crowds marched to his home, armed with clubs. Saltonstall opened his door and told them he was under the oath of allegiance to the King and therefore was bound to discharge the duties of the office he held under him, but that he was as great a friend to the country as any of them.
- ❖ The mobs dispersed but a few years later local “patriots” began to grow weary of Saltonstall and his political allegiances. The local militia quickly mobilized and marched on his house. In response, Saltonstall fled to Boston.
- ❖ In Salem , a local loyalist was accused of being an “informant” for royal custom officials. He was quickly arrested. Afterwards, “ Head, Body and Limbs were covered with warm Tar and then a large quantity of Feathers were applied to all Parts, which by closely adhering to the Tar, Exhibited an odd figure, the Drollery of which can easily be imagined.” He was set in a cart with the placard "Informer on his breast and back and escorted out of town" by the mob, who warned him of worse treatment if he returned.

Back to Newburyport ...

- ❖ In early September, 1768, a Newburyport captain and smuggler named John Emery arrived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. While on shore he was arrested by custom officers for violation of the royal revenue laws. Word traveled back to Newburyport and Joshua Vickery, a ship's carpenter, and Francis Magno, a Frenchman, were quickly identified as the informants who disclosed Emery's smuggling ring.
- ❖ On September 10, 1768 a large mob armed themselves with clubs and began to search for the two men. According to the September 27th edition of the Essex Gazette, Vickery was quickly found and "in a riotous manner assaulted in the Kings Highway in Newbury-Port, seized and carried by Force to the public stocks in the said Town, where he sat from three to five o'clock, in the afternoon, most of the Time on the sharpest stone that could be found, which put him to extreme Pain, so that he once fainted."

Back to Newburyport ...

- ❖ When he regained consciousness, Vickery was “taken out of the Stocks, put into a cart and carried thro' the Town with a Rope about his Neck, his Hands tied behind him until the Dusk of the Evening, during which time he was severely pelted with Eggs, Gravel and Stones, and was much wounded thereby; he was then taken out of the Cart, carried into a dark Ware-houfe, and hand-cuffed with Irons, without Bed or Cloathing, and in a Room where he could not lay strait, but made the Edge of a Tar Pot serve for a Pillow, so that when he arofe the Hair was tore from his Head.”
- ❖ Vickery spent the next day (Sunday) under guard in the warehouse. Several of his friends attempted to visit the carpenter, only to be rebuffed by the mob. Only his wife, “who with Difficulty obtained Liberty to speak to him” was granted access.
- ❖ On Monday, September 12th, Vickery was dragged out of the warehouse and subjected to intense questioning. Surprisingly, he was able to convince mob leaders “that he never did, directly or indirectly, make or give Information to any Officer of the Customs, nor to any other Person, either against Cap' John Emmery or any other man whomsoever.”



The Boston Massacre

The Paul Revere Engraving



The Jonathan Mulliken Engraving (Newburyport)





The Boston Tea Party

The Boston Tea Party

- ❖ In 1773, Parliament passed the Tea Act to refinance the shaky economic base of the British East India Company. Established in 1709, the East India Company derived over ninety-percent of its profits from the sale of tea.
- ❖ However, by 1772, due to severe mismanagement, the company was in desperate need of a bailout. The company directors looked to Parliament for relief. Parliament's response was the Tea Act, through which the East India Company was given exclusive rights to ship tea to America without paying import duties and to sell it through their agents to American retailers.
- ❖ American merchants who had for years purchased tea from non-British sources (Dutch tea was a particular favorite of New Englanders) faced the prospect of financial ruin.
- ❖ Massachusetts immediately opposed the act and began to organize resistance. On November 29, 1773, the tea ship *Dartmouth* arrived at Griffin's Wharf in Boston. Three days later, the *Beaver* and the *Eleanor* arrived at the same wharf. Bostonians demanded that Governor Hutchinson order the three ships back to England.
- ❖ On December 16, 1773, the owner of the *Dartmouth* apparently agreed and went to Hutchinson to beg him to let the ships return to England. Hutchinson refused, and at approximately six o'clock that evening, some 150 men and boys disguised as "Indians" marched to the three ships, boarded them and dumped 340 chests of tea into Boston Harbor.

The Intolerable Acts

- ❖ In response to the Tea Party, the English Parliament adopted several harsh and restrictive measures aimed at punishing Massachusetts.
- ❖ On March 31, 1774, King George the Third signed the Boston Port Bill, intended to severely reprimand rebellious Boston. The port was closed to all seagoing traffic until damages for the destroyed tea were paid in full.
- ❖ The Massachusetts Provincial Charter of 1691, which residents viewed as a sacred guarantee of their liberties, was revoked.
- ❖ Additional regiments of regulars were dispatched to Boston and Major General Thomas Gage replaced Thomas Hutchinson as governor.
- ❖ Gage moved the seat of government from Boston to Salem and the customs office from Boston to Plymouth.
- ❖ The Governor's Council was replaced with a non-elective Mandamus Council, town meetings were prohibited without the consent of the governor and jury trials were abolished.

Essex County's Response

- ❖ Essex County's response varied. Some communities passed stern resolutions condemning the actions of His Majesty's government. Others burned local tea. A few violently lashed out against loyalist and crown officials.
- ❖ Lynn was quite vocal in its protest of the Intolerable Acts and declared "their abhorrence of every species of tyranny and oppression".
- ❖ Marblehead declared loyalists in their community as "enemies of the province" and warned unless they publicly signed "recantations", they would be shunned and at risk of violent attacks.
- ❖ Ipswich declared "if any Person shall have so much Effrontery and Hardiness as to offer any Tea to sale in this Town in Opposition to the general Sentiments of the Inhabitants he shall be deemed an Enemy to the Town and treated as his superlative Meanness and Baseness deserve."

The Ipswich Convention

- ❖ Delegates from all Essex County towns, arrived in Ipswich on Tuesday, Sept. 6, 1774 to discuss the growing crisis.
- ❖ Jeremiah Lee Esq. of Marblehead served as the convention's Chairman.
- ❖ Resolutions were adopted by unanimous vote, binding themselves to stand together in opposition to the Crown, demanding the resignation of officials holding office by Royal appointment, and declaring a Provincial Congress necessary for the common safety of the colony.



The Gauntlet Has Been Thrown Down

- ❖ The common belief emerged that an immoral British government, having exhausted opportunities for plunder and profit in England and Ireland, was now seeking a dispute with the American colonies as an excuse to enslave and deprive them of their wealth and liberties.
- ❖ Parliament had hoped to accomplish this goal quietly, but the furor aroused in the colonies by England's economic policies had given the government a temporary setback. Now, these mysterious men, who controlled Parliament and the king's ministers, were undertaking to openly incite a war, declare American rebels and enslave them.
- ❖ On October 5, 1774, representatives of the Massachusetts General Court met in Salem. General Thomas Gage, acting governor and overall commander of all British forces in North America attempted shut down the meeting but failed. In response, the representatives voted to make the Massachusetts Provincial Congress the governing body of the colony, in order "to promote the true interests of his Majesty, in the peace, welfare and prosperity of the Province."
- ❖ Any hope of avoiding a civil war now seemed dashed.

The Coming Conflict



Massachusetts Prepares for War

- ❖ When war with England appeared inevitable, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress looked to the colony's militia to serve as its military arm.
- ❖ Quickly, it resolved to remove the loyalist officers who commanded it.
- ❖ As a result, militias were ordered 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.”
- ❖ Congress also recognized the need to revitalize and further strengthen the colony's militia system as quickly as possible. On October 26, 1774, the delegates set into motion the formation of minute companies within Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Minute Man Resolution

“[The] field officers, so elected, forthwith [shall] endeavor to enlist one quarter, at the least, of the number of the respective companies, and form them into companies of fifty privates . . . who shall equip and hold themselves in readiness, on the shortest notice from the said Committee of Safety, to march to the place of rendezvous . . . said companies into battalions, to consist of nine companies each.”

Massachusetts Provincial Congress, October 26, 1774

Massachusetts Prepares for War

- ❖ Emphasis on proper military skill and logistical supply was strongly emphasized by the delegates. On the same day as the creation of minute companies, the Provincial Congress resolved "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."
- ❖ The Congress also voted to create a Committee of Safety, charged with the responsibility "to alarm, muster, and cause to be assembled with the utmost expedition, and completely armed, accoutered . . . so many of the militia of this Province, as they shall judge necessary for the ends aforesaid."
- ❖ To support the logistical needs of the Committee of Safety, a sister committee was created to gather "such provisions as shall be necessary for [the militia's] reception and support."

Continued Preparations

- ❖ As tensions continued to mount during the fall of 1774, the Provincial Congress began to pass Resolutions that, if followed, would better prepare the militia for a potential conflict with England.
- ❖ These resolves were not laws and did not alter the old militia act. Rather, they were recommendations that worked within the existing militia framework.



The Massachusetts Provincial Congress

“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.**”

Massachusetts Provincial Congress, “To the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Towns and Districts of Massachusetts-Bay,” Cambridge, December 10, 1774



The 1774-1775 Militia and
Minute Company
Resolutions of Massachusetts
Towns

Essex County Prepares for War

- ❖ The Town of Amesbury voted that its minutemen would be responsible for their own arms and equipment. “Voted that said Minnit men shall upon their own cost be well equipped with arms and aminition according to law fit for a march.” Boxford issued a resolution that its minutemen “arm, equip, and hold themselves in readiness to march in any emergency in defence of the Province.”
- ❖ On November 21, 1774, the Town of Danvers resolved its minute companies would be equipped with “an effective fire-arm, bayonet, pouch, knapsack, thirty rounds of cartridges and balls.”
- ❖ In Andover, the residents voted that its minute company “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.”

In Ipswich ...

“We whose names are hereunto subscribed, do voluntarily Inlist ourselves, as minute men, to be ready for military operation, upon the shortest notice. And we hereby Promise & engage, that we will immediately, each of us, provide for & equip himself, with an effective arm, Bayonet, Pouch, Knapsack, & Thirty rounds of Cartridges ready made. And that we may obtain the skill of compleat Soldiers, We promise to Convene for exercise in the Art of Military, at least twice every week.”

Minuteman Covenant for the Town of Ipswich, January 14, 1775

Did Minute and Militia Companies Drill?

- ❖ Yes! 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.”

Did Minute and Militia Companies Drill?

- ❖ Haverhill initially voted that its minute men “be duly disciplined in Squads three half days in a Week, three hours in each half day.”
- ❖ On March 14, 1775, the town also voted to raise thirty dollars “to procure a military instructor to instruct the Militia in the Art Military.” One week later, it was voted that the minute-men should train one whole day per week, instead of three half days as previously voted. Furthermore, the minutemen were to be trained by a “Mr George Marsden, whom we have hired.”



Joint Company and Battalion Level Drills

Joint Drills

- ❖ Evidence suggests that minute and militia companies across the colony were holding joint company and regimental level drills. \
- ❖ 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 west 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."

Salem's Timothy
Pickering and
His Drill

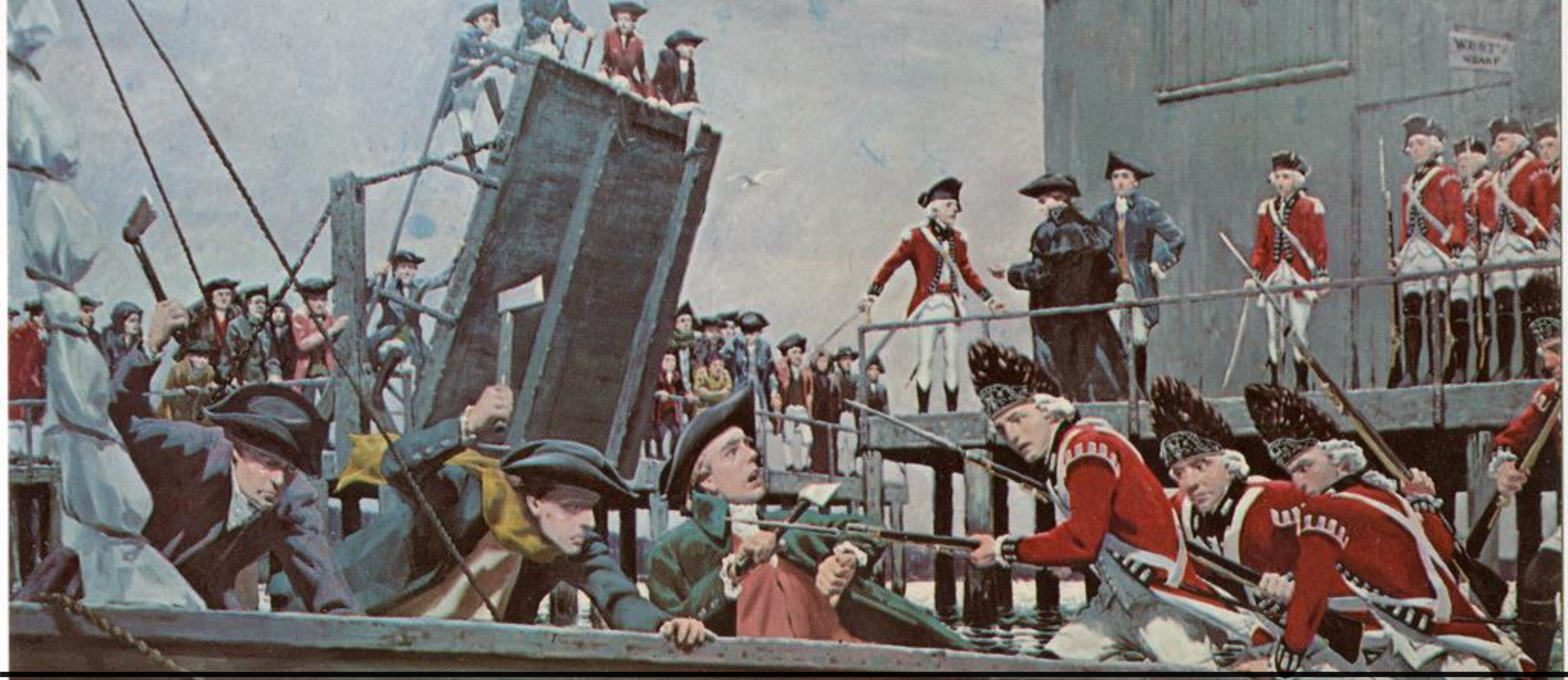
DISCIPLINE
FOR A
MILITIA.

BY
TIMOTHY PICKERING, jun.

THE SECOND EDITION.

“ Almost every *free* State affords an Instance of a NA-
“ TIONAL MILITIA : For *Freedom* cannot be main-
“ tained without *Power* ; and Men who are not in a
“ Capacity to *defend* their *Liberties*, will certainly *lose*
“ them.”

Treatise on the Militia, in 4 Sections, by C. S. London, 1753.



The Salem Affair

The Salem Affair

- ❖ The Salem Affair was the result of General Thomas Gage's desire to locate and recover four missing pieces of brass cannon.
- ❖ On the eve of the American Revolution, brass cannons were considered "weapons of mass destruction". They were light, easily maneuverable and deadly. In September 1774, four of these weapons were stolen while under guard and smuggled out of Boston.
- ❖ In mid-February 1775 Gage received intelligence that "twelve pieces of Brass Cannon" were located in the seaport community of Salem. Shortly thereafter, he learned that the "Field pieces [were] in an old store, or Barn, near the landing place at Salem, ... [and] are to be removed in a few days."
- ❖ Desperate to recover them, he ordered Lt. Colonel Alexander Leslie and 240 His Majesty's 64th Regiment of Foot men to sail from Castle William in Boston Harbor to Marblehead. The strike force would then march four miles to Salem to seize the cannons.

The Salem Affair

- ❖ At two o'clock in the afternoon of February 26th, a Royal Navy vessel anchored off the coast of Marblehead. Since it was a Sunday, many locals attended afternoon religious services. The troops landed and commenced a quick march toward Salem.
- ❖ Of course, the operation was almost immediately detected, and news reached one Colonel Mason that "troops were marching into the town ... to take possession of his guns".
- ❖ Mason raced towards Foster's blacksmith shop. En route, he stopped at Salem's North Church to announce, "The regulars are coming after the guns!". Many church goers assisted Mason and Foster in either hiding or relocating the cannons. Afterwards, they raised a drawbridge over the North River, thereby preventing the regulars from gaining access to Foster's blacksmith shop.
- ❖ When Leslie's strike force arrived, the Salem residents and the troops had a tense standoff. The colonel demanded that the drawbridge be lowered. Foster and Mason refused. In response, according to historian J.L. Bell, Leslie contemplated aloud whether he should order his troops to fire into the civilian crowd.



64th Regiment.

Some of his soldiers tried to seize a pair of gondolas moored in the North River but the residents got to the boats first and purposely sunk them. Other regulars got into a shoving match with some of the townsmen, resulting in Joseph Whicher being slightly scratched with the tip of a bayonet.

The Salem Affair

- ❖ At the height of the confrontation, Mason loudly announced that alarm riders had been dispatched and Essex militia companies would be converging on the town in mere hours.
- ❖ Violence seemed inevitable. Suddenly, the Reverend Thomas Barnard stepped forward to defuse the situation and negotiate a compromise.
- ❖ Aware that the cannons were long gone, Barnard suggested that the bridge be lowered. Leslie in turn “pledged his honor he would march not above thirty rods beyond it, and then immediately return”. The colonel would not search for the cannons.
- ❖ All parties agreed to the proposal, the 64th marched across the bridge and then marched for Marblehead empty handed.
- ❖ The troops boarded their transport and sailed back to Boston.

NEWBURY-PORT, Ma

It being reported last Monday a large body of Troops were landed at the head and marched to Salem with a view to seize upon some ordinance and other warlike stores that were there, and not knowing what the consequence might be a considerable part of the militia in the neighbourhood set themselves immediately to prepare for a March and would soon have been there, had they not received intelligence that no hostile attempt was made, or like to be made whereby their assistance would be wanted. At Amherst and Salisbury, they had the report by the way of Haverhill, earlier than it reached this and the other town on the lower road, whereupon three companies of brave men set off from thence, under the command of their respective officers, and marched as far as Newbury, where they received the late account; upon which they marched down into Newbury-Port, and at the invita-

When Newburyport Goes on a Roadtrip

- ❖ In the late afternoon of February 26th, an alarm rider arrived in Newburyport with news of the Salem Affair.
- ❖ The nine military units all mobilized and marched for Salem. It appears the men advanced as far as Rowley when they received word that the confrontation was over.
- ❖ The Newburyport soldiers turned around and stopped at the first tavern they found.
- ❖ While there, they raised their glasses to no less than 120 toasts and proceeded to drink the tavern dry. The men then promptly left without paying their tab.
- ❖ For the next two years, the poor tavern keep would write to the Newburyport selectmen asking the town to reimburse him. At first, the town ignored his pleas but eventually, the selectmen reluctantly agreed to repay the bill.



The Battles of Lexington and Concord

Illustration of the provincial company of Lexington 1775 The Public Domain

The Fate of Three Communities - Andover

- ❖ Andover's minute companies were alarmed and mobilized before 9 AM.
- ❖ "April 19, 1775. This day, the Mittel men . . . were Alarmed with the Nuse of the Troops marching from Boston to Concord, at which Nuse they marched very quick from Andover, and marched within about 5 miles of Concord, then meeting with the Nuse of their retreat for Boston again with which Nuse we turned our corse in order to catch them."
- ❖ The units rapidly advanced into Middlesex County and were closing in on the retiring British column when the men halted.
- ❖ Why did they halt? They were hungry.
- ❖ "April ye 19 1775 this morning about seven aclok we had alarum that the Reegerlers was gon to Conkord we getherd to the meting hous & then started for Concord we went throu Tukesbary & in to Bilrica we stopt to Polords & eat some bisket & Ches on the comon."

The Fate of Three Communities – Salem

- ❖ Salem's Colonel Timothy Pickering was in command a full militia regiment from the Salem area on April 19th. After receiving word of the fight in Lexington, he delayed mobilizing his troops.
- ❖ As the regiment advanced towards Boston, he repeatedly ordered the regiment to halt to take breaks or adjust their line of march. Later that day, Pickering had a chance to attack the British troops near Medford, Massachusetts, but chose not to do so. Pickering would later argue General William Heath discouraged him from doing so.
- ❖ The colonel and his men were forced to watch from a nearby hill as the enemy marched into Charlestown and the protection of the Royal Navy.
- ❖ Pickering, whose father was openly a loyalist, was accused by many of intentionally slowing his regiment to allow His Majesty's forces to escape.

The Fate of Three Communities – Danvers

- ❖ The late afternoon engagement in the Menotomy District of Cambridge was a brutal, hand to hand struggle that resulted in an American casualty rate that was higher than the Battles of Lexington and Concord combined.
- ❖ As the British retreated through Lexington around 3 PM, the regulars were subjected to “an incessant fire all round us.”
- ❖ As the troops continued to retreat, they approached the Town of Menotomy. The town was the perfect location for sniper attacks and ambushes as the village road sloped downwards and was flanked on both sides for over a mile with homes, barns and enclosed pastures. Minute and militia companies recognized the opportunity, poured into the village and took up positions inside the homes and along stone walls.

The Fate of Three Communities – Danvers

- ❖ As the regulars continued through the town, the colonists sheltered in the homes opened fire.
- ❖ Recognizing the extremely dangerous situation British officers ordered the homes cleared. Squads of regulars stormed the various structures. The fighting moved from house to house and room to room.
- ❖ One of the first units to incur the British wrath was Captain Gideon Foster's Company from Danvers.
- ❖ Upon arrival, Foster positioned his men along a stone wall flanking a hillside orchard, alongside minutemen and militiamen from Lynn, Needham and Dedham. Some of Foster's company took cover behind another wall across the roadway at Jason Russell's house.
- ❖ As the British column approached, the Danvers men apparently did not see the 4th Foot come up behind them. Now trapped between two bodies of enemy troops, the men from Danvers, Lynn and Needham made a mad dash for the Jason Russell House. Several militiamen were cut down as they tried to escape. One of those was twenty-one-year-old Perely Putnam of Danvers.



The Fate of Three Communities – Danvers

- ❖ The British soldiers pursued the provincials into the Russell House and found two militiamen on the first floor. The first tried to escape and “leaped through the end window, carrying sash and all with him.” Regulars waiting in the yard shot and killed him. The second followed and was wounded in the leg. He somehow managed to escape. Later accounts purport his hat, coat and waistcoat had no less than thirty-two bullet holes in them.
- ❖ British regulars quickly stormed the second floor, cellar and attic. Fighting was close and hand to hand. Many of the regulars relied upon the bayonet. Captain Foster would later assert that three or four of his men surrendered only to be “butchered with savage barbarity.” Nineteen year old minuteman Dennis Wallis attempted to surrender but fled when he realized he was about to be killed. He was shot several times yet somehow managed to survive.



Danvers Pays the Price

By the time the fighting in and around the Russell House had concluded, eleven men were dead. Danvers suffered the greatest loss, with seven men killed, two wounded and one man captured. Only John Parker's Lexington Company had a higher casualty rate for that day.

Amesbury's Order to Mobilize to War

Open to John Currier Capt of a military foot
Company in Amesbury This Day I have received intelli
gence that the ministerial troops under the Comon
and of General Gage did Last evening march out
of Boston and marched to Lexington & there killed
a Number of our American Soldiers & thence
proceed to Concord killing and Destroying our men
and interest. These are therefore to Order you forth
with to Notify and muster as many of your under
officers and Soldiers as you can possible to meet imme
diately to some Suitable place: and then to march of
forthwith to Concord or Else where as in your Discret
ion you shall think best to the relief of our Forts
and Country: and also to order those who are now
absent & out of the way to Follow after and join you
as soon as they shall be apprized of the Alarm
and when you have marched your men to some part
of our army you are to appoint some officer to head
them in case you return home your self: till some
Further Order may be taken: in this Traile Not
Given under my Hand and Seal at Amesbury this
Fifteenth Day of April in the Fifteenth year
of the Reign of George the third Anno Domini: 1775

The Horrors of War: Account of Andover's James Stevens

“April ye 19 1775 this morning about seven aclok we had alarum that the Reegerlers was gon to Conkord we getherd to the meting hous & then started for Concord we went throu Tukesbary & in to Bilrica we stopt to Polords & eat some bisket & Ches on the comon. we started & wen into Bedford & we herd that the regerlers was gon back to Boston **we went through Bedford, we went in to Lecentown. 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 plainered 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.”



The Ipswich Fright

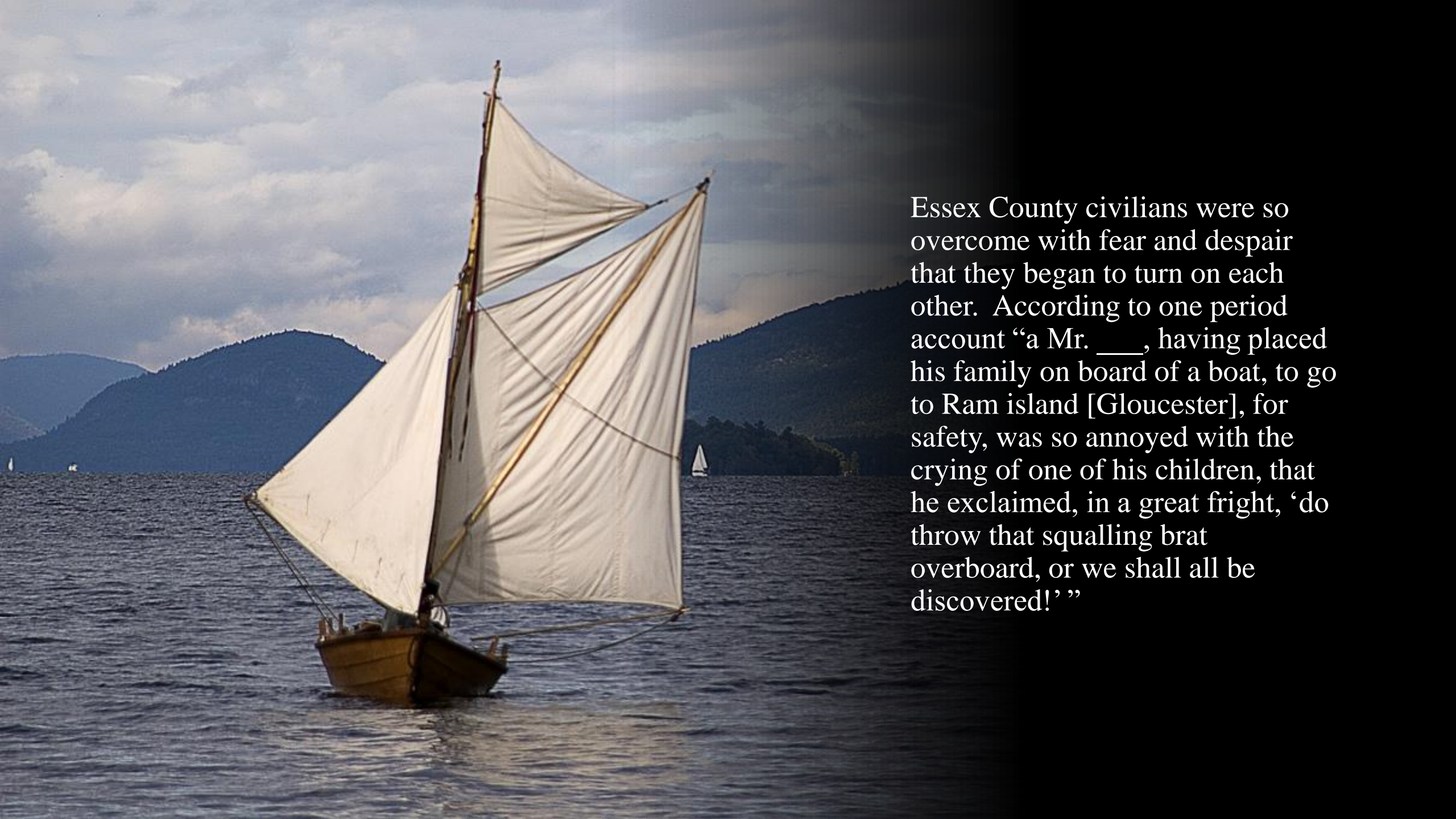
- ❖ Two days after the Battles of Lexington and Concord, widespread panic set in amongst the Massachusetts population.
- ❖ Known as the “Ipswich Fright”, this psychological phenomenon led to the mass abandonment of homes and the evacuation of North Shore and Merrimack Valley residents into New Hampshire.
- ❖ Local tradition suggests that on the morning of April 21, 1775, a British naval cutter anchored at the mouth of the Ipswich River. In response, the local alarm list mobilized but did not engage the enemy. Nevertheless, an unfounded rumor began to spread inside the town that British regulars had landed and were laying waste to everything before them.
- ❖ With most Essex County minute and militia companies away at the Siege of Boston, a massive panic set in. The rumor quickly spread to other towns.
- ❖ A few hours later, the rumor had reached as far away as Newburyport.

As the panic set in, many residents quickly gathered their valuables and fled northwards. In Newburyport, Amesbury, Haverhill, Bradford and Methuen civilians overwhelmed the local ferries as they tried to cross the Merrimack River.



The Flight

- ❖ In Newbury, one woman “having run four or five miles, in great trepidation, stopped on the steps of reverend Mr. Noble's meeting house to nurse her child and found to her great horror, that she had brought off the cat and left the child at home.”
- ❖ Residents of the North Parish district of Andover (present day North Andover) fled to a woodlot known as Den Rock and remained there for at least a day.
- ❖ In Newburyport “the houses at Turkey hill were filled with women and children who spent the night in great trepidation.”
- ❖ One Rowley man yoked up his oxen and taking his own family, and some of his neighbor's children in his cart, drove off to escape the regulars.”



Essex County civilians were so overcome with fear and despair that they began to turn on each other. According to one period account “a Mr. ____, having placed his family on board of a boat, to go to Ram island [Gloucester], for safety, was so annoyed with the crying of one of his children, that he exclaimed, in a great fright, ‘do throw that squalling brat overboard, or we shall all be discovered!’ ”

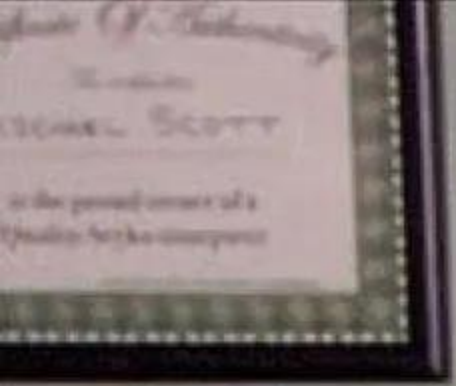
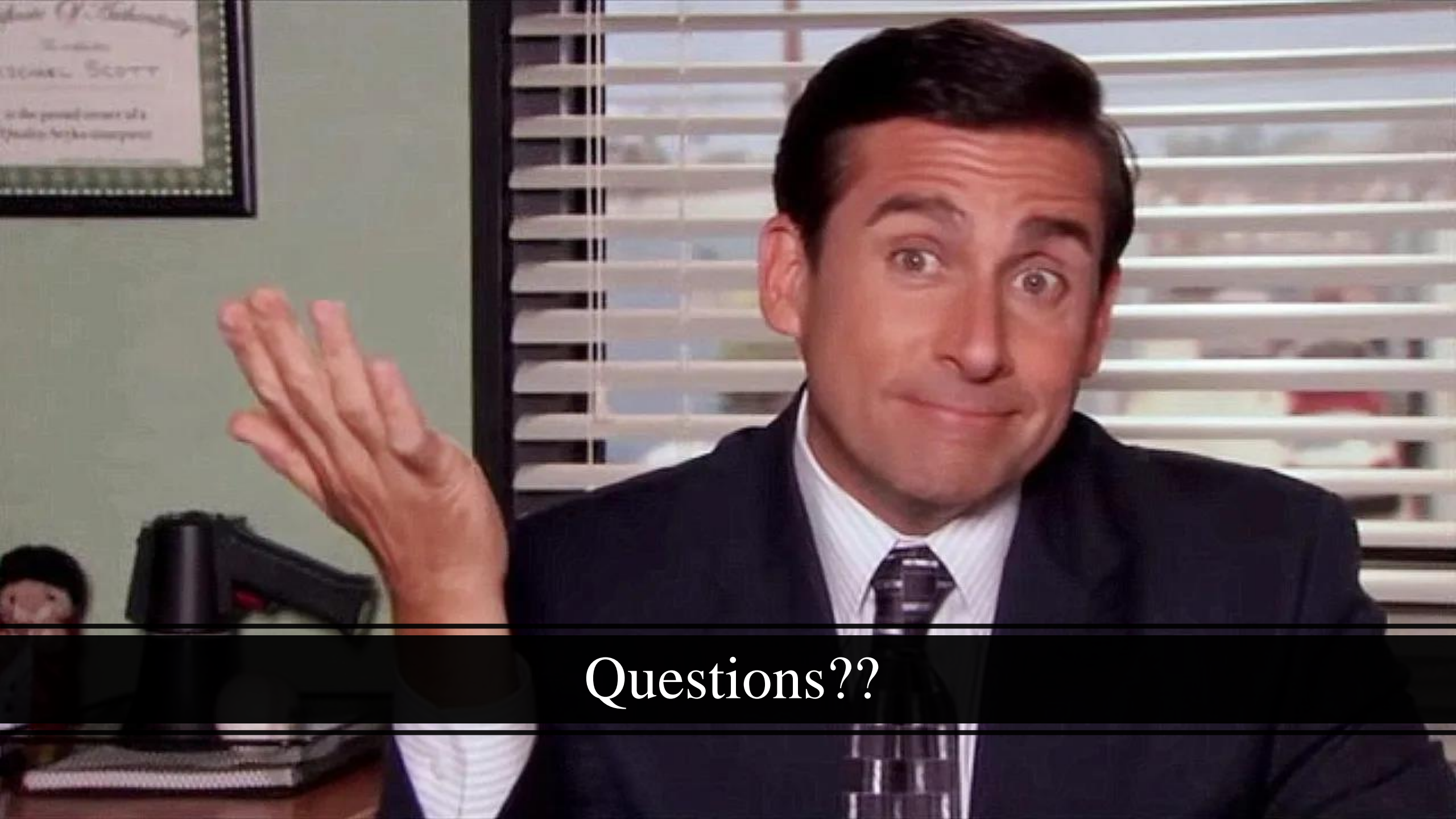
Meanwhile in New Hampshire

- ❖ The panic continued well into the early morning of April 22, 1775. By then, residents of Exeter (NH) had begun to suspect the entire ordeal was an unfounded rumor.
- ❖ In turn, the town dispatched an alarm rider towards Newburyport with a message that the account of a British army invading Essex County were false.



The Merrimack
Valley Holds the
Line: The Battle
of Bunker Hill





Questions??

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