

HISTORICAL HANDBOOK

MINUTE MAN

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

MASSACHUSETTS

by

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VIGNETTE

ENGLISH POLITICS

Parliament emerged from the "Glorious Revolution" and the Revolutionary Settlement with greatly enhanced power that increased during the first half of the 18th century. Under England's Constitution of "mixed and balanced powers," King and Parliament were partners in governing the Kingdom. Although in theory the Crown retained its historic prerogatives, these were exercised in its name by Cabinet ministers who ultimately were as dependent upon parliamentary support as upon royal pleasure.

The parties that functioned in Parliament were not political parties in the modern sense, nor even in the sense that had divided the nation during the Stuart period. Political contests were no longer between Whigs and Tories, but between Whigs in office and Whigs out of office, one shifting coalition against another. The great Tory party of the reign of Queen Anne had been wrecked on the rocks of Stuart restoration. A half century and more of Whig rule and almost unbroken mounting prosperity had made classical Toryism an eccentric anachronism. There were, after all, enough varieties of Whiggery to encompass

almost all practical shades of opinion. So men who two generations earlier would have been Tories changed their idol, if not their idolatry, and believed that George III would do well enough to provide honest, economical government, and to beat the great Whig magnates at their own game. With Whiggery a national resource rather than a party tenet, and Toryism in a state of perpetual hibernation, it was natural that political parties were coalitions organized around persons, prejudices, and local affiliations in which ideologies played a secondary role.

Members of Parliament fell into three general parties. About one-third belonged to what can be called the "Court party." This included courtiers ^{and} placemen, ~~and~~ the contemporary equivalent of permanent secretaries or under-secretaries of state, who looked to the King for employment. These were the permanent "ins," who were prepared to support any minister the King might select, simply because he was the King's minister. Some were political parasites, but most were hard-working officials who provided continuity and stability to government. The second group were the real politicians, men who contended for office and power, the great Whig magnates, the Bedfords, Newcastles, Pitts, Grenvilles, Devonshires, and Rockinghams.

The third was the "Country party," composed of the country gentlemen, or Knights of the Shire, whose watchword was "Independence." They entered Parliament out of a sense of duty to their "country," which in the first instance meant their county. These gentlemen thought of themselves less as legislators than as jurymen, concerned with coming to just and public-spirited views of whatever was brought before them as members of the "Grand Inquest of the Nation" that was Parliament. They did not comprise a disciplined party, but voted independently on both sides on almost every issue that did not involve the Land Tax. Their influence declined during the century, but no government could afford to ignore them; and they came closest to representing prevailing public opinion.

Political success depended upon the ability to "manage" the organization of Parliament through patronage, favors, and mutually beneficial bargains. The King and every political leader engaged in this practice; and economic and political pressure groups operated within the system, whether they supported the ministry or were in opposition.

In spite of the limitations imposed upon the franchise by property qualifications and the control of many parliamentary seats by local magnates as "pocket boroughs," the system was theoretically representative and responsible. Even those who could not vote were considered represented because representation was more closely identified with interest than geography. Thus farmers, artisans, and shop-keepers, regardless of whether they voted, were "virtually" represented by those members of Parliament who shared their interest. By the same token, some supporters of schemes for taxing the Americans argued that the colonists were virtually represented, even though they had no part in electing members, because their interests were represented. The majority of Americans and many Englishmen rejected this interpretation as contrary to reason and justice and inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the English Constitution.

VIGNETTE

GEORGE III

George III was the first Hanoverian king to be born in England and gloried "in the name of Briton." Unlike the first two Georges, he was more interested in England than in Hanover and never even visited his German state. The King was sincerely devoted to the English Constitution of 'mixed and balanced powers' and had no intention of reestablishing royal absolutism. Predominant power within the Constitution had before the Revolution of 1688 and the subsequent Settlement resided in the Crown. In the 19th century it passed to Parliament. It was the lot of the first three Georges to reign when that power was precariously balanced between these two elements. The King could not actively govern on his own initiative, but the initiative could not yet pass to Parliament and Cabinet because Parliament was not organized into a party-system. The King was still the mainspring of the balance. The royal initiative, exercised with due recognition of what was politically possible, was essential for the existence and functioning of the ministries, and this required that the royal function be performed actively and responsibly.

During the reigns of the first Georges the royal initiative had weakened from the inattention of the kings, neither of whom had much interest in England nor were at home with the language; and the initiative passed in large part to the ministry headed by Sir Robert Walpole. George III sought to redress the balance, using the only effective means at his command: the 'management' of elections and an efficient use of the patronage and personal influence that still inhered to the Crown. He was fortunate in that he succeeded to the throne when only 22 years old and without an heir around whom a parliamentary opposition could form a 'reversionary interest', as had been the case during the reigns of the first kings of the House of Hanover.

"Farmer George" possessed a personal courage and steadfastness of character that sustained him through a long and difficult reign. Although not learned, he had a strong and narrow practical intelligence. His personal life was exemplary, and he was deeply sincere when that quality was in short supply among public men. The simplicity and consistency of his life earned him the affection and respect of his people that the loss of part of the empire, the upheavals of the French, and years of mental disorder could not destroy.

VIGNETTE

MILITIA AND MINUTEMEN

Unlike most modern popular revolutionary movements, the Americans began their War for Independence with a large military organization--the colonial militia. This institution had its origin in the Anglo-Saxon fyrd, a locally controlled defence force composed of the entire male population. This fyrd gradually gave way, following the Norman Conquest, to the feudal levy, which was founded upon land and the personal obligations between lord and vassal. However, something of the older organization survived in the general levy that was employed to raise men for siege warfare, freeing the mounted knights for "nobler" duty. As the feudal system expanded, the English kings used the general levy increasingly, along with occasional units of hired professional soldiers, to curb the power of the local barons. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, the practice developed of appointing prominent persons in each shire to command the local militia under royal commissions; and in 1550 each county had a lord lieutenant whose duty it was to raise its military force in time of disorder or war. It was these men who perfected

England's defence when the kingdom was threatened by the Spanish Armada; and under them reliance was increasingly placed upon the local "train bands" for defending the realm.

When the English colonists transplanted themselves in America, they brought with them the only institutions they knew--English ones. The primitive conditions that existed in the New World forced them to revert to the Anglo-Saxon organization, the enrollment of every able-bodied freeman in the local defence force. The need for such a system of universal training and service was obvious in a frontier environment. While their normal responsibility was the protection of their own communities, they were sometimes mobilized for more distant service, as when in 1690, they attacked Port Royal in Nova Scotia; in 1710, Port Royal again; and Louisbourg in 1745.

The militia officers were commissioned by the governor in the name of the Crown, and companies mustered periodically for training. As long as the frontier was nearby, militia duties were serious obligations; but as the country became more thickly settled, the musters became holidays, when men

gathered in the villages, performed a few clumsy drills, heard a muster day sermon, and disbanded for several hours of eating, drinking, and amusement. Gun powder was limited, and whatever skill in marksmanship was acquired ~~was acquired~~ was developed on the men's own time in hunting and occasional target shooting. Volley firing, upon which the effectiveness of the smooth-bore musket depended (there were no rifles in New England and relatively few elsewhere) was rarely practiced.

When, in the autumn of 1774, the revolutionary Provincial Congress became the de facto government of Massachusetts Bay, it created a Committee of Safety to purchase £20,000 worth of arms and ammunition and reorganize the militia.

The reorganization was a complicated process. The local companies chose their officers, who in turn, selected the regimental field officers. These were charged with raising a new force that would consist of at least one-fourth of the total enrolled militia. The townships accordingly polled their manpower and divided it into two groups: the alarm lists and the militia. Although originally intended to include all men capable of service, the alarm lists eventually were composed of the older men, those unfit for active service, and boys.

The militia were organized in companies of at least 50 privates, with nine companies forming a battalion. From the militia a company of "minute men" was chosen to be ready to muster at a moment's notice on orders from the Committee of Safety or, in emergencies, on those of the company commander. The rest of the militia formed a reserve that was subject to call if needed, and the alarm lists provided watchmen and other supporting personnel. However, men and boys from the alarm lists on occasion fought as individuals. Until the Continental Congress adopted the Massachusetts army, the militia was the American military establishment, and even after that time, the militiamen were an important source of short-term manpower.

Chapter I

BIRTHPLACE OF THE REVOLUTION

The colony of Massachusetts Bay was not one of England's more docile daughters. It had its genesis in the Puritanism that grew out convictions that the English Reformation had not gone far enough in repudiating the polity and trappings of medieval Catholicism. Among those to whom the movement had a particular appeal were some of the growing commercial community and the lesser landed gentry who found its emphasis on strict personal righteousness and responsibility and the spiritual efficacy of hard work especially attractive. The Puritans' opposition to what they believed to be the unscriptural and therefore corrupt organization and practices of the religious and political establishment made their position increasingly difficult during the reigns of the first two Stuarts. As the hope of creating a godly commonwealth in England faded, many turned to emigration; and separatists settled Plymouth in 1620 and Salem in 1628.

These emigrations were made under the aegis of chartered commercial companies, especially the Plymouth and New England

Companies. On March 14, 1629, Charles I granted a charter to the successor of the latter, the Massachusetts Bay Company. This charter resembled those of the other companies engaged in colonization with one important difference--no location for the annual meeting of stockholders was specified. On August 26, twelve Puritan members signed the Cambridge Agreement, pledging themselves to migrate to New England provided the charter and government of the company were transferred with them; and the agreement was ratified the next day. This action made possible the transformation of the company into a self-governing commonwealth, subject only to the king.

Political, religious, and economic events operated to stimulate Puritan interest in emigration. The king dissolved Parliament in March of 1630, a move that effectively excluded the Puritan gentry and merchants from participation in political life; William Laud, a staunch and able exponent of strict conformity, became Archbishop of Caterbury; and the Thirty Years War disrupted trade and depressed the wool industry. New England became more and more attractive to earnest, God-fearing gentry, yeomen, and artisans. Men of ability and substance joined thousands of lesser folk in making up the more than 20,000 persons who settled there by the end of 1640.

Under Governor John Winthrop's ^{C/}viable leadership, the founders of Massachusetts Bay set out to build the godly commonwealth that had been denied them in England. This "new Jerusalem" was based upon a system of local government. The people settled in compact communities to which the term towns was applied. They obtained a charter from the General Court, the colony's legislature, established a village as the town's center, and formed a township. As soon as the older settlement experienced a land shortage, a few settlers broke off and repeated the process in a new location. Around each town green were located the meeting-house, the parsonage, and the homes of the most prominent people. Each person admitted as an inhabitant received a house lot, a garden lot, and a strip of "mead" for winter forage. The political organization was accomplished through the agency of the town meeting. At first, while local government was getting established, town meetings were called every month or two. The people soon learned, however, that they could not devote so much time to public business, and the annual meeting became common, with provision for calling special meetings. For managing the town's affairs between meetings, selectmen

were elected. These officials administered the finances, let contracts for public work, appointed certain subordinate officers, and exercised the powers necessary to maintain public safety, convenience, and religious conformity. As stewards of the people, they presented an annual report to the regular town meeting. A clerk served as secretary of the meeting and recorder. The offices of constable, tithing-man, road surveyor, fence-viewer, hog-reeve, field-driver, overseer of the poor, sealer of leather, and assessor reflect the scope of the town's concern of the "good and godly governance of ye people."

The town meetings were forums for discussing every facet of the community's civil and religious life, and no detail was too small to merit their attention. They regulated all matters relating to the local church, choosing ministers and lecturers, fixed their salaries, set the hours of worship, and assigned pews in the meeting-house. They employed the school-master, dictated the curriculum, and prescribed the manner in which the master wielded the rod. They levied taxes, provided for the poor, passed by-laws for the towns' government and public safety.

Through participation in the town meetings and performing the duties incumbent upon holding local offices, the men of Massachusetts Bay became accustomed to participating in the business of government to a degree unequalled before or since. Their role in public affairs had another dimension that was even more important for the future. In addition to their involvement in local matters, the town meetings participated in the election of the governor, lieutenant governor, and assistants, who became the colony's executive and judicial officers and upper house of the legislature; and they also elected deputies to represent them in the General Court, the legislative assembly. This political organization encouraged a creative duality of independence and representative government. The ideas of periodic elections for set terms of all officers--executive, judicial, and legislative--became so popular in the colonies as to be imitated wherever the crown could be induced to grant its consent. They were integral features of the state constitutions of 1776-82; and they survive in the Federal Government. This corporate precedent has given the American political system a complexion that is very different from the parliamentary system that was

evolving in England. Thus American institutions began to diverge from English ones during the third and fourth decades of the 17th century.

The influence of the meeting-house was pervasive; and the franchise was limited, in violation to the royal charter, to church members. The idea of a covenant between God and his elect was central and permeated every aspect of life, personal and corporate. "We are entered into a covenant for this worke," declared John Winthrop. "We have taken out a Commission; the Lord hath given us leave to draw our own Articles . . . and He will expect a strict performance." Each congregation, and hence each new settlement, was formed by a new covenant; and civil, social, and religious obligations and sanctions were united. While the men of Massachusetts had no quarrel with the greater part of their English heritage and were determined to be 'freeborn Englishmen', they intended to subordinate everything to establishing and maintain true religion--the Congregational form of church government and a community spirit characterized by sobriety, pure morals, and commitment to a strong work ethic. Calvinist Puritanism was not an easy faith. It made great demands upon men's minds, bodies, talents, and

loyalties. But while it demanded much, it was also a source of strength that fortified the elect in meeting life's trials and temptations. Right conduct and responsiveness to the moral values that the Puritan found in every issue and event would ultimately be rewarded. Later religious trends and increased secularization of institutions diluted this early orthodoxy, but its moral imperatives continued to inform the political and social precepts of colonial New Englanders.

In spite of the efforts of its critics to abridge the colony's independence, Massachusetts Bay continued to govern itself for 54 years without effective interference from England, even during the English Civil War and the Commonwealth, when fellow Puritans were ascendent. In 1674 Edward Randolph arrived in Boston as a special agent to the crown to bring instructions to the colonial government and to check on the enforcement of the Navigation Acts. Upon returning to England, he submitted reports that charged Massachusetts with failure to enforce the acts and with executing English subjects for the religious convictions, denying the right of appeal to the Privy Council, and refusing to take the oath of allegiance required of all officials. In 1684 the colony's charter was revoked, and two

years later Massachusetts became part of the Dominion of New England under the administration of Sir Edmund Andros. After learning of the success of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, the Bostonians jailed Sir Edmund, who although a capable and humane administrator, was heartily disliked by most New Englanders. In 1691 William and Mary issued a new charter that brought Massachusetts Bay more in line with governments of the other royal colonies. Henceforth, the executive power was exercised by a royal governor, who had the power of veto over acts of the General Court; and religious requirements for voting were abolished. The colony was enlarged by including Plymouth and Maine within its boundaries.

Although it was now a royal colony and no longer independent of the government in London, a half century of history could not be erased from the memory and habits of its people. The tradition of independence not only survived, but, except for the altered executive, the machinery for provincial self-government remained intact. The town meeting, General Court, and Congregationalism still existed. Time and circumstances wrought some changes in all three, but they did not

atrophy from disuse. Like their fellow-subjects in the other English colonies, the white people of Massachusetts were free men.

The colony prospered during the eight decades that followed the promulgation of the new charter. New settlements pushed back the frontier so that by 1775 the older counties and towns had become venerable communities of yeomen and artisans. After two generations of sporadic, sometimes bitter, periods of Indian troubles, the few red men who remained were docile enough to be occasional objects of romantic interest and pity. The colony and its people had a special relationship with the sea. The men of the coastal towns were either seamen or engaged in related crafts and professions, and many a lad followed the ancestral English urge to seek adventure and fortune by "going down to the sea in ships." Even inland towns had an interest in supplying masts and the raw materials that went into ships' stores. Churches multiplied with the settlements and sectarian dissent; and learning flourished with a school in every town and Harvard College at Cambridge. Even the colonial wars that attended the Anglo-French imperial rivalry contributed to the colony's wealth and increased its

commercial and strategic importance. Massachusetts men served in the Royal Navy, on privateers, and in the army that carried Britain's standard in North America. Louisbourg, Crown Point, and Ticonderoga were household words, and a royal governor, William Shirley, had been acting commander-in-chief in North America and one of the authors of plans to drive France out of Canada.

Partly because of their association with the sea and partly because they were generally more literate than most of their contemporaries, the people of Massachusetts were less provincial than colonials usually were. Town meeting, local offices, and ^avigorous legislative assembly conspired to produce a degree of political sophistication that was remarkably broadbased. Newspapers, religious tracts, and books on a variety of subjects from sermons to history and the classics were sidely read, even by an important number of yeomen and craftsmen. Massachusetts was no Attic republic; neither was it an intellecutal back-water.

Boston, the capital, was a 150 year old town, most of who³⁶ people were serious-minded, church-going folk, heirs

of a strong religious tradition, and possessed of an eloquent Old Testament vocabulary of exhortation and denunciation. Most of its intellectual and cultural leaders were Harvard graduates; and whether trained for divinity, law, or counting-house, they were ^{usually} ~~often~~ opinionated and articulate.

At the apex of Boston society stood the royal governor; lieutenant-governor; members of the council; the upper echelons of officialdom; and the wealthier families, most of whom derived their affluence from maritime commerce. Next was a large and vigorous middle class that included the lawyers, printers, physicians, school-masters, and the clergy. Then came the lesser shop-keepers, rope-makers, skilled artisans, day laborers, and mariners. There was a local aristocracy, but the social structure was fluid; and the lines of distinction were often blurred.

Physically, Boston was still almost a large village with expanses of woods and meadows and many private gardens and orchards. Its aristocrats had some mansions that would have graced any city, but most of its citizens lived in relative comfort in soberly modest houses. Shops and counting-houses

represented the business interest; and contemporary pictures show a large number of church spires. Wharves, warehouses, chandler's shops, ropewalks, and taverns dominated the waterfront.

Boston looked like a staid, old-fashioned town. But it was also bustling and business-minded; and not all of its denizens were paragons of respectability. Among its artisans and laborers were men who would resort to mob action, as the attack on Governor Thomas Hutchinson's house and the "Boston Massacre" demonstrated. These were men who belonged to the "Sons of Liberty" and responded with violence to the rhetoric of Samuel Adams and his fellow-radicals.

This was the town that Gen. Thomas Gage, the colony's first military governor, entered with four regiments of foot in May 1774. By April of the next year, it was a garrison town, beyond whose limits the writ of the Governor and his sovereign was practically a dead letter.

Eleven miles from Boston sprawled the more than 19 square miles of the town of Lexington. Already an old community in 1775, many of its 745 white inhabitants were members of

families, like the Stones and Parkers, whose forebears had lived there for three or four generations. As might be expected, there had been a lot of intermarrying among the Munroes, Reeds, Harringtons, Tidds, and Whites whose ancestors had come from the coastal towns, exchanging the sea and fishing for land and farming. Almost everyone farmed to some extent, as the presence of 400 cows within the township testified. Even the cordwainer, smith, wheelwright, joiner, and tavern-keeper had a garden, orchard, and livestock. There were five slaves in 1775.

The town's center, the village of Lexington, was a settlement of hard-working, decently prosperous folk living in houses whose surviving representatives are monuments of sturdy dignity. Its triangular green was dominated the large frame meeting-house, near which stood the belfry. Just beyond it stood the school-house, behind which stood the village pump. Opposite the meeting-house stood the Buckman Tavern; and the homes of Harringtons and Munroes looked out on the green.

The meeting-house on the common would have been the town's nerve center under ordinary circumstances. The two parsons who between them ministered to the townsfolk for all but six years of the parish's existence gave that venerable institution

a special character. The first was old John Hancock, grandfather of the Signer, who for more than 50 years was the arbiter of matters sacred and profane. A witty, eloquent, and resourceful man, his theology was a more liberal and less gloomy one than is usually associated with New England Calvinism. Not uniquely, his liberalism had limits and did not extend to encouraging lay interference in the management of the church's affairs. By the strength of his personality, wisdom, and exemplary life, he led his flock through the theological conflicts that marked the "new light" movement that split many congregations and accustomed the people of Lexington to the role of the parson as a dominant voice in town affairs. When he died in December 1752, he had served the 60 year old parish for 54 years.

Hancock's successor was Harvard-bred Jonas Clarke. The new pastor was an intellectual, more interested in philosophy and the practical social implications of Christianity than in dogma. Possessed of a powerful and attractive personality, he quickly won the respect and affections of his people, and marrying Hancock's granddaughter and becoming a member of Widow Hancock's household did not hurt his career.

Like Hancock, Clarke did not lead a cloistered life, but involved himself in the town's affairs and became its political mentor, giving Calvinism's covenant a secular interpretation. The colony's quarrel with the Mother Country had a keen observer and an effective advocate in the Reverend Mr. Clarke, and almost all of Lexington's citizens followed his lead and shared his shared, in varying degrees, in his sentiments. Thus an orthodoxy prevailed in Lexington. It was not the, by now, sterile theology of Jonathan Edwards, but one that was worldlier and more progressive--still an orthodoxy, nevertheless.

After passing Lexington Green, the old Country Road crossed a portion of the township of Lincoln to reach Concord, the colony's oldest inland town. Only five years younger than Massachusetts Bay, Concord had twice as many people as Lexington, and it was wealthier. It was also more exciting. Orthodoxy was not its outstanding trait, and diverse opinions on every subject were expressed more openly, vigorously, and frequently. Where Lexington knew the unifying and restraining influence of Hancock and Clarke, Concord's church history was turbulent at a time when the meeting-house was the heart of community life. Its contentious flock had ejected ministers, exchanged anathemas

over George Whitefield's "Great Awakening," divided into separate parishes, and generally refused to let church and parson dictate to them. The local minister, William Emerson, was a gentle, bookish man, who was to die a chaplain at Crown Point. A fervid Patriot, he had the respect and affection of his people, but he did not have the authority enjoyed by his contemporary, Clarke.

Concord's effervescent enthusiasm for controversy did not diminish its prosperity and prestige. Its age, wealth, and vigorous independence united with its geographic location in making it one of the colony's more important towns. The men who represented it in the General Court were capable and responsible, never shirking from putting their hands to the tasks of provincial government. When the Provincial Congress convened in Concord in October 1774, and in the following spring the town became the magazine for the colony's military stores, its significance took on a new dimension.

The People

In 1775 the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, including the Maine counties, had a population of more than 270,000. Only Virginia and Pennsylvania had more people. In comparison with the inhabitants of the Middle Colonies and Virginia, those of Massachusetts formed an especially homogenous community. They were overwhelmingly English in origin, and most of them were descended from immigrants who had come to New England before 1650. The vast majority of those ancestors had been yeoman and artisans, with a sprinkling of minor gentry and dissenting clergymen. The Calvinism that had been the hall-mark of the New Englander was by the middle of the 18th century leavened by the workings of the Half-Way Covenant, the presence of small, but important, bodies of Anglicans and Baptists, a growing spirit of rationalism, the impact of the colonial experience, and the influence of the individualism inherent in Congregationalism.

A small aristocracy developed composed of officials and wealthier merchants and ship-owners developed in Boston and other maritime centers, but their influence in the colony was

limited by the fact that the official and commercial interests were often at odds and by the religious rationalism of many of their Anglican members. At the opposite end of the social and economic were apprentices, day laborers, paupers, a few slaves, and the often unruly urban workers. In the middle ~~was~~ ^{were} the farmers, shopkeepers, artisans, schoolmasters, and teachers. The level of literacy was the highest in the British Empire, with the possible exception parts of Scotland. Sermons, broadsides, newspapers, and books were read and discussed by an important number of people.

It is a truism that the colonists shared in the major values of the common English heritage, with the important differences in perspective produced by the classical Puritan concept of the covenant. An important part of that heritage was the English revolutionary tradition that held that lawful government was the product of a contractual relationship created to promote the public good. If rulers failed to live up to the terms of the contract, they forfeited their authority, which reverted to the people, who were obliged to reclaim political authority. Governors and governed were equally subject to the rule of law, and when the former acted outside

the law, the people had the right--even the duty--to revolt.

Another, frequently ignored, tradition was the tendency to resort to popular uprisings, termed "riots" by their victims and critics. Both England and her colonies witnessed frequent expressions of this tradition--sometimes produced by tangible, identified issues when the government acted to enforce an unpopular law or failed to meet an important popular demand. Sometimes they were nothing more than disorderly brawls or traditional brawls, like the celebration of Guy Fawkes Day.

The machinery for law enforcement in both Great Britain and the colonies encouraged the persistent resorting to direct action by dissident elements. There were no professional police forces, and the authorities had to rely upon the medieval "hue and cry," by which the community resorted to summary justice to apprehend felons, and, more commonly, to posse. When greater, more formal support was required, the magistrates could summon the militia. Because both posse and militia were composed of local men, the line between legal and extra-legal popular coercion was easily obscured. If a large political unit, such as a township or a colony,

supported or even acquiesced in the use of mass force, the de jure authority was practically powerless. People of the 18th century accepted the existence of these popular expressions with remarkable ease, and they helped ^{prepare} ~~prepared~~ them for the challenge that the colonists raised against Parliament's authority in the Empire.

Neither formal revolution nor popular resistance was to be lightly resorted to for frivolous or minor reasons. The dominant Whig tradition held that obedience was obligatory and as necessary for the advancement and preservation of liberty as resistance to unlawful authority. Private injuries and malice did not sanction invo^king the right of revolution nor excuse recourse to popular direct action. In the final analysis, the people were justified only when the "Tyranny or Designs of the rulers became Notorious," not to just a few persons, but to the "Body of the People."

These facets of their English heritage are important clues to understanding the state of mind that existed in Massachusetts during the period between 1763 and 1775 and help to explain how the Bay Colony became "the cradle of rebellion."

The people of Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord were excellent representatives of the older non-maritime, non-frontier communities of New England. Almost every white person was descended from an immigrant who had arrived before the outbreak of the English Civil War. Although they often enthusiastically disagreed over fine points of doctrine, they were Calvinists to a man. They belonged to an agricultural society; and, as the large number of third and fourth generation residents demonstrated, they loved the villages, wood-lots, and fields of their native towns. Although every town had a few paupers and indigent widows and orphans under the care of overseers of the poor, there was little evidence of extremes of wealth and poverty. Allowing for individual differences in interest and emphasis, the people conformed to common political views. The more extreme looked back to the republicanism of the English Commonwealth for inspiration, but the vast majority hoped only to govern themselves under an inviolable charter within the British Empire. There were a few persons who became Loyalists when the issue was joined, but their number was so small that they were little more than village eccentrics. The towns-folk were independent; respectful of time-honored authority, but not servile; jealous of

their liberties; intelligent; and provincial. They were good colonial Englishman caught in the vortex of a struggle that changed the course of history--a most unlikely band of revolutionaries.

Chapter II

TRIUMPH AND DISCORD

The Anglo-French imperial contest that troubled the waters of international affairs for seven decades ended with the Treaty of Paris of 1763. France was expelled from the North American mainland, and Great Britain emerged as the world's most powerful nation with a far-flung empire, an exhausted treasury, and a national debt of unprecedented proportions.

With no immediate challengers on the international scene, England's leaders turned their attention to consolidating and reforming the administration of her empire. Several factors complicated the integration of her older North American colonies into the imperial system. With limited and spasmodic direction from London, they had developed into mature communities in which English concepts of personal liberty and representative government were firmly rooted. The colonists, unless they were in servitude, were the freest people on earth. With maturity had come a nascent sense of being American, as distinct from Briton, with interests and perspectives that were often at odds with English and imperial values. Thus at the moment of triumph the bonds of affinity that united

the British North America and England were beginning to unravel.

Tension between England and her colonies had existed with varying intensity throughout much of the colonial period, and mutual suspicion and impatience plagued relations between British civil and military officials and colonial assemblies. Trade and commercial regulations annoyed Americans who believed that their interests were being sacrificed, ^{however,} colonial evasion of the full force of such regulations through bribery and smuggling frustrated British efforts to make mercantilism work effectively. But if these were irritants, there were also strong ties of sentiment and interest. Shared cultural, legal, and political traditions were powerful forces for unity. While economic regulations limited certain forms of colonial development, other important segments of American economy, such as ship-builders, merchant mariners, distillers, and raisers of flax, hemp, and tobacco, benefited from British protection and encouragement. British military and naval power played a decisive role in protecting the colonists from the Spanish, French, and Indians. What deranged this balance between tensions and loyalties and led from local dissatisfaction to revolution?

An instructive point at which to begin to survey the estrangement that developed between the Mother Country and her colonies is with an examination of the different ways they viewed the expulsion of France from the North American mainland. Britain's New World possessions were greatly expanded, incorporating not only Canada and Florida but also the vast region between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River, an area rich in land and furs and inhabited by Indian tribes, some of which had been active allies of France. To the government in Whitehall, this acquisition was a valuable territory that required imperial programs that would provide for orderly settlement of western lands and peaceful relations with the Indians. To those ends, the King issued the Proclamation of 1763 that imposed a temporary limit on settlement west of a line that ran north and south along the crest of the Appalachians, reiterating a pledge made to the western tribes in the Treaty of Easton (1758) to respect native claims and to refrain from settling on them without the Indians' consent.

The Proclamation offended important interests and values. The ignorance of its authors left several hundred whites west of the Proclamation Line in Indiana territory. More fundamental was its violation of the common-sense American belief, amounting to an article of faith, that white men were destined to occupy and exploit western lands and that the Indians must be driven away or destroyed. Settlers, land speculators, and fur-traders competed for the new lands, but they agreed in opposing any form of regulation that limited their freedom of action, especially if it emanated from London.

Ultimately more ominous in the eyes of the Americans than the Proclamation of 1763 was Britain's decision to station 10,000 soldiers in her North American colonies. The Americans argued that with the French threat removed, such a force was unnecessary; and sharing the traditional English hostility to standing armies, they suspected that it would be a threat to colonial liberties by becoming an imperial police force that would be used to give effect to the policies of London, policies that they feared would be inimical to colonial interests. The issue had another, equally important ramification: funds had to be found to pay for the American

garrisons. Although the British public debt amounted to approximately £140,000,000 and included more than £1,150,000 appropriated to reimburse the colonies for expenses incurred during the war, no responsible British official proposed that any part of the debt should be paid by the Americans. However, all parties in England agreed that the colonies should share the costs of their defence, and the search for ways to make them contribute produced policies and legislation that led to the American Revolution.

The Ministry and Parliament launched their campaign by tightening enforcement of the several Acts of Trade, whose more burdensome effects had been lightened by evasion and smuggling, and the enactment of the Revenue Act of 1764, commonly called the Sugar Act, whose avowed purpose was "That a revenue be raised in your Majesty's dominions for defending, protecting and securing the same." This was accompanied by the Currency Act that prohibited the colonies from issuing paper money, causing a currency shortage in America at the same time the Sugar Act cut off the flow of specie from the sugar trade with the West Indies. The next year, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, the first direct levy on the colonies.

Ministerial optimism that the colonists would acquiesce to the Grenville Acts was rudely shattered by the vehemence of American opposition. That opposition took four forms that were to become characteristic of colonial resistance during the next decade: legalistic-political arguments; economic action; propoganda; and mob violence. The first found expression in appeals to constitutional principles and the Stamp Act Congress. The second produced non-importation agreements that boycotted goods taxed by the Sugar Act. The third generated publication of a flood of pamphlets and broadsides. The fourth gave birth to organized mob action led by such groups as the 'Sons of Liberty' that used violence and intimidation to frustrate execution of the laws and overawe loyalist supporters.

The colonists found support among opposition Whigs and British merchants who suffered from the loss of trade. George Grenville's ministry left office in July 1765, and the Stamp Act was repealed the following March. The Americans received the news of repeal with self-congratulatory rejoicing, ignoring for the moment the passage of the Declaratory Act that asserted Parliament's authority to enact laws binding upon the colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

Grenville's successor, the Marquess of Rockingham, and the man who soon replaced him, William Pitt, had opposed Grenville's program and were considered friends of the colonists. But they quickly found themselves faced by the problem of producing alternatives. Increased domestic taxes and duties failed to raise the needed money while depressing the economy. Thus at a time when the colonists' tax burden was lightening, the already heavily-taxed Britons were required to assume a yet greater share of imperial expenses.

Pitt, who became the Earl of Chatham, had been a great wartime leader, but he not temperamentally equipped to deal with domestic problems. The situation was complicated by an incapacitating illness that left a leadership vacuum. The dominant figure in the Cabinet was Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Townshend and his colleagues faced an ineluctable reality compounded of the need for more revenue, the inadequacies of the Navigation Acts, and a serious disparity between the tax burdens of the people of the United Kingdom and the colonists. The new ministry reacted to that reality with the Townshend Acts. The keystone of the new program was the Revenue Act, which appeared to meet earlier

American objections by limiting itself to imposing external taxes. However, the estimated annual yeild of about £40,000 would be used to defray the costs of defence and, significantly, "the Support of Civil Government, in such Provinces where it shall be found necessary. . . ." Here was a threat that if a colony did not conduct itself in conformity with imperial standards as interpreted by the government in Whitehall, its governors, judges, and other officials would be made financially independent of the provincial assemblies, a threat to the role of the colonial legislatures. The first application of this act was against the royal colony of Massachusetts Bay, which the Ministry looked upon as the cradle of defiance.

The Revenue Act was not expected to stand alone. The enforcement of the navigation and trade laws had been patently defective. To correct this, Parliament passed an act that had been considered for some time setting up a board of customs commissioners. All colonial customs officials were placed under the authority of a board of commissioners appointed under the Great Seal, with their headquarters in Boston. In an effort to improve the inefficient ^execution of the maritime laws, four American vice-admiralty districts, each staffed by a judge

and other officers; with both original and appellate jurisdiction, were created in 1768. In contrast with common law courts, cases were heard without juries. After some delay, these courts were established at Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.

The establishment of the four vice-admiralty courts in completed the creation of the British administrative system for the American colonies. This system was based upon an important constitutional concept that sovereignty within the empire did not reside in the King, nor in the House of Lords, no in Commons, but in all ^{three} ~~there~~ functioning jointly in Parliament. This meant that the King's High Court of Parliament, which for almost a century had been possessed ultimate authority in the British Isles, was also supreme in the dominions beyond the realm. This drastically altered the older doctrine that had obtained during the first half of the 17th century that the Crown could regulate colonial affairs without interference from Parliament. The constitutional change had evolved since the period of the English Civil War and Commonwealth to the point where ^{ultimate} ~~sovereignty~~ rested in Parliament, first at home and now throughout the British Empire.

This constitutional evolution had included a number of acts and judicial decisions that advanced ^{and} secured the civil rights of British subjects while establishing a political system that, with all its inequities and abuses, formed the basis for representative and responsible government. But the extension of parliamentary supremacy to the colonies did not have the some happy effect on their liberties. They could not be effectively represented in the House of Commons, and without active colonial participation in imperial legislative processes, ~~the growing conflict~~ ^{conflicting} between American and imperial interests were bound to collide.

Parliamentary attempts to legislate ^{SLATS} for the Empire were accompanied by centralizing moves that militated against traditional local rights, of which the broad extension of the authority of the vice-admiralty courts at the expense of the common law courts in America was an example. Moreover, to insure the execution of imperial policy, not only were the more important colonial officials--most governors and councilors and all fiscal and customs officials, as well as all vice-admiralty judges--appointed by the ministry, but also most laws passed by colonial assemblies were required to

be submitted to the Privy Council, ^{which} ~~with~~ possessed the power of disallowance or veto. The Privy Council also exercised the right to review cases appealed from the colonial courts.

There was much to commend the system, but during the period during which it evolved, the American colonies grew in population, wealth, and political experience. As they matured, their inhabitants became less British more American. This growing nationalism clashed with the centralization of the Empire. The provincial assemblies were the most important agencies for the expression of American resistance to imperial policy, and at the same time that parliament authority was becoming supreme in the Empire, an important development of conceptions of parliamentary privilege took place within the provincial assemblies that paralleled those that had attended the rise of parliamentary supremacy in England. By 1774 the colonial assemblies claimed complete local legislative autonomy. Thus two institutions that were the products of English concepts of responsible self-government became the vehicles for a conflict of fundamental values and interests.

News of the enactment of the Townshend Acts produced an immediate and unfavorable reaction in America. Although the turbulence that marked the resistance to the Stamp Act was absent, there was wide-spread determination to oppose payment of the new duties. However, the colonial leaders were hard put to find a legal argument. They wanted to deny Parliament's power to tax them, yet they acknowledged ^{it} power to regulate commerce. Responsible spokesmen were not prepared to break loose from the protective system created by the Trade and Navigation Acts, nor could they deny that some of the new regulations were justified by evasions of customs laws and smuggling.

The man who came closest to resolving this delima was not a Boston radical, but moderate, conservative John Dickinson, who impressive attack upon the Townshend Acts, Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies, appeared in twelve installments in the Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser. The significant part of his argument was a tentative advocacy of a federal empire when he wrote:

The Parliament unquestionably possesses a legal authority to regulate the trade of Great Britain and all colonies. . . . We are but parts of a whole; and therefore there must exist a power somewhere to preside, and preserve the connexion in due order. This power is lodged in the Parliament; and we are as much dependent on Great Britain as a perfectly free people can be on another. . . .

Parliament was the supreme legislature of the Empire with certain defined powers to legislate for the colonies, but the latter retained the residue of powers. Parliament could regulate trade and levy duties necessary to that regulation, but it did not have the right to impose taxes--internal or external--on the colonies. Dickinson thus demolished both the distinction that had been made by most Americans between internal and external taxation and the ministerial assertion that plenary authority resided in Parliament. Unfortunately for the Empire, its leaders did not grasp the implications of the federal concept.

Although Letters from a Farmer suffered from some defects in constitutional law, it soon became the leading doctrinal expression of the American position until 1776, when Thomas Paine's Common Sense supplanted it by denying all dependence

upon Britain, including fealty to the Crown. In the meantime, it helped crystallized opposition to the Townshend Acts.

The Royal Governor of Massachusetts Bay, Sir Francis Bernard, thought that extending representation in the House of Commons offered a way out of the developing constitutional impasse; and he strongly urged the idea upon the ministry, although he acknowledged that most Americans did not favor it. To support the governor and silence the radicals, conservative Brigadier Timothy Ruggles urged the Massachusetts House of Representatives to choose members to Commons. ^{His proposal WAS} ~~Not~~ only devoid of legality, but the House, while firmly rejecting the Townshend Acts, repudiated with equal firmness any idea of representation in Commons.

Massachusetts's legislators did not limit themselves to negative action. They addressed a petition to the King in which they voiced the fear that the Townshend Acts indangered their rights as free Englishmen. The same concern was expressed in letters to the Commissioners of the Treasury and to such political leaders as William Pitt and the Marquess of Rockingham. More significant was the decision to address a "Circular Letter" to the legislatures of sister colonies

on February 11, 1768. The "Circular Letter," drafted by Samuel Adams, denounced the Townshend Acts for violating the principle of no taxation without representation. It also summonarily dismissed the idea of colonial representation in Commons, attacked the constitutionality of proposals to provide for a colonial civil list, cited the dangerous implications of the Mutiny Act, and solicited proposals from the other assemblies for united action, while protesting that was no sentiment for independence.

The "Circular Letter" evoked strong support among the American colonies. The assemblies, or their Speakers if they were not in session, of Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Rhode Island, and Virginia endorsed it. Their deliberate defiance of the ministry testified to the Massachusetts Houses's leadership in resisting Parliament's actions.

Official British reaction was hostile. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Hillsborough, declared that the "Circular Letter" was a call to form "unwarrantable combinations" to oppose Parliament's constitutional authority,

and he directed Governor Bernard to call upon the House of Representatives in the King's name to rescind the resolution that authorized the document and repudiate it under penalty of dissolution and reference to Parliament of the whole issue. He also instructed ~~and~~ the governors of all the colonies except Quebec and East Florida, which had no legislatures, to use their influence to keep their assemblies from endorsing Massachusetts Bay's position.

Instead of acceding to Lord Hillsborough's demands, the Bay Colony's legislators voted overwhelmingly to send a detailed defence of ~~the~~ ^{THEIR} conduct to London in which they declared that the King's "request" was entirely improper as being without precedent since the days of the Revolution of 1688 and was the product of an attempt to poison his mind against his subjects, "a crime of the most malignant nature." The defence ended with the request that the Secretary inform His Majesty that the House's actions were those of "affectionate and loyal subjects." Upon being informed of the Houses's stand, Governor Bernard, in compliance with his orders, dissolved the legislature.

Meanwhile, the nonconsumption movement that had started in Boston in October 1767 spread to other New England towns. Boston's importers, aware of the limited effectiveness of nonconsumption in influencing British manufacturers and merchants, took the lead in March 1768 in reviving the ^{non-}importation arguments that had been such an effective economic weapon during the Stamp Act crisis. New York importers agreed during the following August, and finally, after a delay of almost a year, Philadelphia's merchants joined the movement.

The breakdown of normal commercial relations between Old and New England was illustrated by increased smuggling and wide spread violation of the Acts of Trade. By early 1768, customs officials in Boston were ^{aware} that enforcing the laws was a hopeless task. Although smuggling had increased alarmingly during the past three years, only six seizures had been made. Of these, only one had been successfully prosecuted; two cases in Rhode Island had led to acquittals "through the combination and Influence of the People;" one ship at New London was spirited away while the case was being tried; and mobs at Falmouth and Newburyport rescued the other two. A report to the Commissioners of the Treasury preserved in the Shelburne Papers summed up the situation in these words:

Our Officers were resisted and defeated in almost every Attempt to do their duty when the Right of Parliament to lay external duties was acknowledged. Now that the Right of Parliament to lay any taxes whatsoever on the Colonies is denied, we have every reason to expect that we shall find it totally impracticable to enforce the Execution of the Revenue Laws until the Hand of Government is strengthened. At present not a ship of war in the Province, nor a company of soldiers nearer than New York, which is two hundred and fifty Miles distant from this Place [Boston].

"Until the Hand of Government is strengthened" had a fateful ring. For it was in strengthening that hand that seeds of even greater troubles were sown. Governor Bernard was convinced by the spring of 1768 that his colony was on the verge of rebellion, and he voiced that opinion in correspondence with Viscount Barrington, Secretary at War. News from the Massachusetts Bay persuaded the ministry that troops were required in the colony to aid the local magistrates in maintaining law and order. Acting upon this conviction, Lord Hillsborough ordered Maj. Gen. Thomas Gage, Commander-in-chief in North America, then resident in New York, to post at least one regiment in Boston. Gage had anticipated a request from Bernard and had made preparations for transferring troops from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Boston. However, the governor had made it clear to the general that he could not request troops

without the recommendation of his Council, which he was not likely to obtain. A clue to the Council's sentiments may be found in the fact that its members agreed on July 7 to petition the King against levying duties provided for in the Townshend Revenue Act.

Although the radical leaders denied that there was any serious breakdown in public order, the governor and others believed a state of virtual anarchy apparently existed by the summer of 1768. On June 10 the crew of the H. M. S. Romney captured John Hancock's sloop Liberty for alleged violation of the trade acts. A mob seized the vessel and forced the customs commissioners to take refuge on board the Romney. When news of this event reached Whitehall, the 64th and 65th Regiments were ordered from the United Kingdom to Boston, and General Gage took steps to have troops moved from Halifax to support the government. When rumors reached Boston in July that ^{the} regiment was on its way south, there was talk on the part of some of the Sons of Liberty of open resistance, and the selectmen of Boston called a provincial "Convention" to petition the governor against the bringing in the troops. Bernard refused to accept the petition because it came from an illegal body, and he ordered the "Convention" to disband.

Ships appeared in the harbor at the end of September. The day following, men-of-war moved in and fell into formation with springs on their anchor cables, so that broadsides faced the town. They were followed by transports carrying the 14th and 29th Regiments, with some companies of the 59th. At noon, Friday, October 1, the barges brought the soldiers ashore. The ships and soldiers presented a spectacle that combined order, menace, and uncertainty. The sight was in itself unsettling one for the almost 20,000 inhabitants of Boston, and talk of fighting in the streets gave way to councils of prudence.

Boston's first resistance to the presence of the troops was staged not on the docks nor in the streets but in the Court House. When Colonel Dalrymple requested quarters under the Quartering Act, the Council refused. Its refusal was based upon an interpretation of the provision of law which directed that a province was to provide quarters only if there were no barracks or if the barracks were filled. There were barracks at Castle William on Castle Island in the harbor. Those buildings had been erected during the war and ~~was~~ even in a bad state of repair. More important, while the island was legally a part of the town, it was several miles from

Boston proper. If the troops did not first fill those barracks, the Council contended that it would be illegal to quarter soldiers in the town, and it would be impossible to furnish them ~~anything~~^{any} under the terms of the Quartering Act.

The regiments from Ireland, not due arrive for another month, would fill the Castle barracks, but the Council was not inclined to be reasonable. Colonel Dalrymple could not agree to move the troops to the island without defeating the purpose for which they were brought to Boston. While the 29th bivouacked on the Common and the 14th in Faneuil Hall and the Court House, Colonel Dalrymple and the engineer, John Montres^r, rented buildings to house the men. Those buildings were scattered throughout the town: in Water Street, along the docks, in Atkinson Street, where the ropewalks were located, and elsewhere.

The consequences of this dispersing of the soldiers became apparent to everyone--military and civilian. Discipline was extremely difficult to maintain. Within two weeks, 70 men deserted.

To deal with the problem, Colonel Dalrymple^y^c tried to seal off the town from the countryside by placing ~~guards~~^{sentinels} at all the temporary quarters and around the town, especially at Boston Neck, where a strong guard was posted. During the hours of darkness, every person near a guard post was suspect, including those in civilian dress. The sentries found it impossible to distinguish between deserters and bona fide civilians, and they were frequently embroiled in confrontations with irate townsmen.

The potential for conflict between civilians and soldiers was increased by reports that had been circulated by part of the radical leadership that the troops had three assignments: to disarm the people to place the colony under martial law, and to arrest provincial leaders and send them to London for trial. Thus it was not strange that incidents that would have been minor in another context became the occasion for confrontation between soldier and townsman. The officers and non-commissioned officers of the guard ordered the sentinel to keep a sharp watch, challenge every person near his post, and let no deserter slip past, on pain of a lashing for neglect of duty. The soldier would try to execute his orders, ^{but} many civilians would not play

the game. When the sentinel tried to stop strangers who would not answer the summons, several things--all of them unpleasant--might occur. If they were numerous or drunk, they might disarm and beat the soldier. If they were few or respectable, they would take his name and swear out a warrant charging him with assault, and the next day would find him before an unfriendly justice of the peace. A less serious but equally irritating variation was practiced by the town's boys, who pelted the "bloody back" with bricks, stones, or snowballs.

Morale, never high among British troops faced with the prospect of fighting fellow-subjects, suffered and desertion increased. General Gage tried severity and clemency and severity again, but nothing seemed effective. The guards kept it within bounds until February, when a hard freeze made it possible for fugitives to escape over the ice. When the general sent parties in civilian clothes into the countryside to find deserters, the inhabitants and magistrates refused to cooperate and sometimes rescued men who were arrested.

Low morale and ^{impaired} discipline were also reflected in increased drunkenness, and prostitution. Colonial non-consumption and non-importation ~~was~~ ^{were} causing economic depression

and unemployment, compounding the social problem that townsmen and soldiers had to face.

The fact that a year and a half passed before the Boston Massacre entered history was due to the presence of certain forces that operated to prevent an outbreak. One was doubtless the fear the civilians felt for the armed troops. Another was *the* economic benefits that the town derived from the garrison's presence. The soldiers spent their meager pay, in Boston, and the officers patronized local tradesmen. Given the depressed economic conditions, those sources of business were not to be lightly dismissed. Another, less easily gauged, factor was a certain humanitarianism that made the Bostonians feel sorry for the common soldiers. They saw their religious life neglected, a matter of importance to heirs of the Calvinist heritage. They also saw them beaten, bilked of their poor pay, and caught in a system that New Englanders loathed almost to a man. Even readers of the radical "Journal of the Times" were able to see a fellow human being beneath the red coats.

The commanders in Boston deserve much of the credit for preventing an outbreak of full-scale violence. General Gage did all in his power to that end, and after his departure in November 1768, his successors managed to preserve reasonably good order for the next six months. Brigadier John Pomeroy, who arrived with the major elements of the 64th and 65th Regiments, was in command until the following May. When he departed, even the "Journal of the Times" confessed that his conduct had "done honour to the army, and that as a gentleman he was well respected." His successor, Maj. Gen. Alexander Mackay, who served until August, mollified the townspeople by prohibiting horse racing on the Common during Sabbath services and doing his best to prevent confrontations between sentries and civilians.

While an "Appearance of Peace and Quiet in the Place," to use General Gage's language, prevailed, the British ministry, deeply concerned about the seriousness of the American crisis, particularly in Massachusetts, laid a body of papers that included the votes, resolutions, and proceedings of that colony's House of Representatives, as well as copies of Boston newspapers, before the House of Lords for consideration

During the December session, the peers examined these documents, which were incendiary on their face, and addressed eight resolutions to the King, to which the House of Commons was asked to give its assent. These resolutions were concerned with the colonists' denial of parliamentary authority, with the towns' efforts to hold an illegal convention, and with the civil disorders in Boston. The Lords supported the Crown's efforts to uphold the imperial constitution and urged the King to direct the Governor of Massachusetts to collect comprehensive information concerning "all treason, or misprision of treason" committed within the colony during the past year, and to appoint a commission to evaluate the evidence under the provisions of the treason statute of Henry VIII's reign for the purpose of bringing suspects to England for trial.

There was little opposition to the resolutions in the House of Lords, but a large and important minority of the members of Commons eloquently opposed them. After a lengthy and searching debate, they were passed in the House by a vote of 159 to 65. The King responded to Parliament's actions by declaring that he would give the orders that the members had recommended "as the most effective method of

bringing the authors of the late unhappy disorders in that province to ~~condign~~ punishment." Although there were rumors that Samuel Adams, James Otis, and Thomas Cushing were to be arrested, taken to London, and hanged, the King's remarks remained only a threat that hung over the colony for the next half dozen years.

*R*hetoric and debate aside, the Cabinet faced a harsh dilemma. The Townshend duties, which had been levied to lighten the burden of the British taxpayer, had by the spring of 1769 brought in no more ^{than} £3,500, while the non-importation and non-consumption agreements had produced a drop in trade of £700,000 in one year. Most men in public life were convinced that attempting to collect the duties in the face of colonial opposition was economically and politically unwise. At the same time, there was an equally strong conviction that the government could not retreat without endangering the Empire.

The man who presided over THE
the British ministry's efforts to cope with the American problem was not physically nor mentally capable of carrying the heavy burden of responsibility of heading the administration

~~of the assuming office in August 1766~~, and he gradually faded from the political scene before resigning the Privy Seal in October 1768. The new titular Prime Minister, the Duke of Grafton, was a well-intentioned mediocrity who could not command the support of his colleagues. The Lord High Chancellor, Lord Camden, who had strongly opposed the right of Parliament to levy taxes on the colonists, had sat silently through the denunciations of American resistance in the December 1768 session of the House of Lords. Isolated by bitter opposition ^{From} both the ministry and the majority in Parliament, he was forced out of office in 1770. The only public figure who at the moment enjoyed public and parliamentary respect was Townshend's successor as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Frederick North. Shortly after Grafton's resignation in January 1770, North assumed the post of First Lord of the Treasury, becoming the head of the ministry, a position that he held against his own wishes throughout the American Revolution.

The parliamentary debates of 1769 thus took place during a period when the Cabinet was practically leaderless and when any real hope of securing revenue from America through either

external or internal taxation had disappeared. The futility of such a hope was confirmed in Lord Hillsborough's circular letter to the American^s governors of May 13, 1769 in which he wrote, "no measure ought to be taken which can in any way derogate from the authority of Great Britain over the colonies, "but at the same time, he let it be known that the Cabinet did not intend to propose any new taxes and was now prepared to recommend the abolition of the duties on paper, paints, and glass. The willingness to abandon the attempt to secure revenue from the colonies was illustrated by the fact that when the Cabinet decided to retain^{the} duty on tea, it was by one vote, and that the purpose was to vindicate the principles expressed in the Declaratory Act of 1766. Although many members of Parliament supported the repeal^A of all acts relating to the colonies, including the regulatory Navigation Act, the tea duty was retained, along with a preamble of the earlier act that asserted Parliament's authority to levy such a duty.

American political thought³ had undergone such a fundamental change that the retention of the tea duty and the "obnoxious preamble" was considered an infringement of colonial rights. Benjamin Franklin, although in advance of most of his countrymen

in his views of the colonies' constitutional status, voiced a logical extension of American thought when he concluded that the colonies were separate states possessing sovereign rights--even in their dealings with England. He had come to assert that each colony had purposely been established a separate state. While their common sovereign was the King, Parliament had no authority over them, but had usurped that power. Franklin was in the van-guard but not much in advance of the members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Chapter III

A COLONY IN CRISIS

Because Massachusetts was the eye of the storm that was to engulf the 13 "English" North American colonies, it is necessary to follow the events that took place there between the summer of 1769 and the spring of 1775 with some care.

Lulled by the apparent quiet that prevailed in Boston at the end of June 1769, General GAGE decided to transfer the 64th and 65th Regiments to Halifax. He was so optimistic that he even considered withdrawing the two remaining regiments, the 14th and 29th. The Bostonians were elated. Prudence had paid off, and Benjamin Franklin's prediction that if Boston would avoid provoking a crisis "this military cloud that now blusters over you, will pass away, and do you no more harm than a Summer Thunder Shower," seemed justified. Even the radical "Journal of the Times" stopped publication, as though the quarrel with England ^{were} ended.

But the members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives did not even try to avoid a crisis. On July 1, they

unanimously resolved:

That this House do concur in and adhere to . . . that essential Principle, that no man can be taxed, or bound in Conscience to obey any Law, to which he has not given his Consent in Person, or by his Representative.

Although this defiant declaration was watered down to read:

That the sole right of imposing taxes on the inhabitants of his majesty's colony of the Massachusetts Bay, is now and ever hath been vested in the house of Representations . . . with the consent of the council; and of his majesty the king of Great Britain, or his governor for the time being,

it was the original, unamended text that received wider currency. This appeared in the Boston Gazette on July 3, and the controversy was revived with new, fundamental constitutional implications. Gage decided not to withdraw the two regiments. Governor Bernard was recalled to London; and after a stormy session with the Assembly, he left for England. He had devoted nine years to trying to be faithful servant of the Crown and a just governor--but more than fidelity and justice had been required. Native-born Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Hutchinson took over the colony's administration. High-minded, intelligent, learned, and devoted to America, and knowing Massachusetts as no

contemporary knew it, he was one of the Revolution's tragic figures; for he was by his oath of office and his principles "to support an authority to which the body of the people refused to submit." In his classic work, The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay from the Year 1749, until June 1774, Hutchinson succinctly described the changes that had occurred in colonial political thought:

At first, indeed, the supreme authority [of Parliament] seemed to be admitted, The cases of taxes only excepted; but the exceptions gradually extended from one case to another, until it included all cases whatsoever. A profession of "subordination," however still remained; it was a word without any precise meaning to it.

If what the politically active colonists meant by subordination or loyalty was not clear, one fact was—that by early 1770 there was virtually no effective legal government in Massachusetts. As Judge Israel Williams of Hatfield viewed the constitutional crises: "The Sword is drawn. I am as much for liberty, for supporting the rights

of the colonys [sic] and for taking every prudent measure to maintain and defend them as any of my Countrymen. But I differ widely from the generality, *as to what they are, wherein they have been invaded, and also as to the methods of redress.*" [italics added].

Hutchinson realized more clearly than Bernard that the troops in Boston could not be useful in maintaining legal authority because they could not be employed to preserve order or enforce the law without a request from a magistrate, and none would ever call upon them for assistance. At the same time, he did not dare take responsibility for their removal. The Customs Commissioners, who were the main objects of local wrath, also claimed that they could not function without military protection. Thus the two regiments remained in Boston.

While the soldiers could not strengthen the administration's hand, they were a source of potential trouble; and as all too visible symbols of an unpopular authority, they were especially vulnerable targets of the town's frustrations and resentments. Like Englishmen everywhere, the Bostonians had an ancient distrust of and dislike for the professional soldiers. The

position of British troops differed from that of most of their European counterparts. Their actions were severely circumscribed by law and custom; and they could not function as agents of civil authority unless martial was declared, and British officials were most reluctant to resort to that expedient. Dragooning subjects was ~~rarely~~ tolerated.

The Bostonians recognized and exploited the soldiers' vulnerability. ^{when} ~~while~~ they thought that all the regiments were about to withdraw they harassed the men, perhaps to speed their removal or merely to vent their dislike for the government. When it was obvious that the 14th and 29th Regiments were being retained, the pressure intensified and became ugly. Colonel Dalrymple, again in command after Mackay's departure, lived with a constant fear of an outbreak of violence, ^{while} ~~which~~ local radicals ^{insisted} that the time for ~~prudence~~ ^{prudence} was past and that only direct action ~~would~~ get the soldiers out of town.

Townsmen probed for weak spots in the garrison. Sentries who irritated civilians in the performance of their duties were hailed before magistrates like old Richard Dan^aer, who would harangue them: "What brought you here, who sent for you,

and by what authority do you mount Guard, it is contrary to laws of the Province, and you should be all taken up for so offending"; and fine them a month's pay or more. Soldiers accused of more serious crimes were remanded to the Superior Court, but when the Attorney General seemed lax in prosecuting them, the magistrates in frustration levied higher fines. Regimental funds were soon exhausted in paying fines, and magistrates took to binding ^{out} soldiers who could not pay out as servants.

General GAge was justly outraged by the abuse suffered by his men at the hands of local justices. He also feared that the soldiers, who knew that they had some rights as British subjects, would mutiny. By mid-1769 it was becoming increasingly difficult to prevent the troops from seeking redress in the streets and dangerous for officers to be too insistent that they turn the other cheek.

An incidents multiplied, the conviction grew on both sides that justice could not be obtained without violence. The townspeople saw prisoners rescued by their comrades, accused men disappear, and some of those brought before the

Superior Court let off by the Attorney General, Soldiers heard magistrates instruct juries not to believe the unsupported testimony of military men; and they suffered outrageous penalties for obeying lawful orders. Another ominous factor was the officers' changing attitudes. While they usually retained their composure under provocation, the tension was telling on them. Gage and Dalrymple lost their tempers during the summer, and they were certain that they had to support their men to prevent a further deterioration of moral and discipline.

A condition perilously close to gang warfare existed in Boston's streets that neither side could control. Incidents were followed by retaliation and counter-retaliation. Sentries could not fire, regardless of provocation. The townspeople knew this and harassed the despised "bloody backs." The stage was set for the drama that has come down in American history and legend as the "Boston Massacre."

Most of the men of the 14th Regiment were ²quartered in Murray's sugar warehouse near Dock Square; but those of the 29th were scattered in buildings near the waterfront, and were special targets of abuse from dockside toughs and local

5. A fight broke out between rope-walk workers and men of the 29th during the afternoon of Friday, March 2, 1770. Order was eventually restored, but both parties apparently intended to renew the affair; and more fights broke out the next day. Warnings and rumors spread through the town, and the Reverend Andrew Eliot reported that many townsmen looked forward to "fighting it out with the soldiers on Monday" and that the "bells were to be rung to assemble the inhabitants together."

The Provincial Council met on Monday, and Hutchinson solicited its advice and assistance in coping with the mounting crisis. Several members told him that the people would never be satisfied with anything less than the removal of the troops. One even declared that several leading citizens had met several times to discuss the best means of expediting the withdrawal. The acting governor received no help from the council.

March 5 was a clear cold day with¹about a foot of frozen snow on the streets. A tense quiet prevailed until evening, when a body of club¹-carrying townsmen ^{was} ~~were~~ seen near the

military headquarters in King [State] Street and some men and boys began to taunt and throw hunks of ice at Private Hugh White as he stood guard at the Custom House. Another crowd jeered and pelted men billeted in Murray's warehouse before rushing toward the Custom House; and a third group, armed with wooden staves and cudgels, gathered in Dock Square, listened to a harangue from a tall man in a white wig and red coat, and then ran to King Street and the Custom House. While the bells of the Brattle Street Old Brick Church rang, more men poured into the streets and made for King Street.

Private White, fearing for his life, called "Turn out, Main Guard!" Capt. Thomas Preston, with a squad of one corporal and six grenadier privates, forced his way through a mob of more than 300 and formed around White while the crowd closed in, striking at the soldiers with clubs. Magistrate James Murray appeared, perhaps to read the Riot Act; but the crowd, convinced that without a civil justice present, the soldiers could not lawfully defend themselves, stoned him and sent him scurrying to safety. Radicals had encouraged the townspeople to believe in an oversimplification based upon the undoubted truth that soldiers could not use force against civilians

without authority from a civil officer. The corollary of the principle that no one, civilian or soldier, need without retaliation suffer a mortal attack was ignored. Thus, a heedless, cursing, threatening mob, seduced by a legal fiction, faced a confused, angry, frightened squad.

Suddenly a club arched through the air and knocked Private Hugh Montgomery to the ground. Cursing, he rose and fired his musket, but no one was hit. There was a scuffle and a brief lull, followed by more shots. When it was over, three men lay dead and two were mortally wounded.

The scene cleared rapidly, and Captain Preston marched his squad to headquarters, where he turned out the entire guard and formed it for street fighting. All the bells began to ring; drums beat, calling out the town's militia, and cries of "to arms" filled the night. Preston heard the Main Guard's drummer beat the alert for the entire garrison.

The possibility of a real massacre gripped Boston. The only man who could avert that tragedy was Governor Hutchinson, who hurried to the scene and urged the mob to disperse, promising a full inquiry. "The law shall have its course; I will

live and die by the law." Many complied, but others cursed him for a liar and traitor; and a leader of the mob took over the balcony of the Town House and urged the people not to leave unless the troops withdrew first. Hutchinson consulted Lieutenant Colonel Carr, and the latter marched the troops back to their quarters, and the crowd dispersed.

True to his word, Hutchinson immediately set the machinery for an investigation in motion. Throughout the tense night, Justices of the Peace John Treder and Richard Dana took testimony, and at about 3 a.m., they remanded Captain Preston to jail. The next morning, the eight soldiers surrendered and were imprisoned.

During the weeks that followed, the Sons of Liberty controlled, ^{by force} while both sides capitalized on the riot's prop^aganda potential. Samuel Adams staged a demonstration on March 8, the day of the victims' funeral, that left an indelible imprint upon American mythology. Crispus Attacks, alias Michael Johnson, whom contemporaries knew as a water-front ruffian; Samuel Maverick; sailor James CALDwill; and Gray were named martyrs to American liberties.

After much agonized negotiating, the troops were withdrawn to Castle William in the harbor. Preston and the soldiers were tried for murder. Their counsels were John Adams and Josiah Quincy. Preston and four soldiers were acquitted. Two were found guilty of manslaughter, but were released after pleading "benefit of clergy" and being branded on the right thumb.

Boston's radicals made the "Massacre" a milestone on the road to ^{REVOLUTION} independence. The details were distorted and given wide circulation, and an annual memorial service kept its memory fresh. Some students, including Samuel Adams' biographer, have found reason to believe that he provoked the incident. Be that as it may, many Americans still view the event as the propagandists of 1770 painted it, but others concur in historian Claude H. Van Tyne's judgement:

There was a futility in any ^{argument} ~~agreement~~ either at the time or since, because if one held that the citizens were maddened by the soldiery, the answer was that the soldiers were nagged to desperation by the citizens. If against that rejoinder it was argued that the soldiers ought never to have been sent there, the reasonable reply was that the growing ascendancy of the mob-law made military force necessary.

The troops' removal to Castle William was a major victory for the Boston whigs, one that was documented in the town meeting's May 15 instructions to their representatives ^{to} the General Assembly. To the earlier denial of the power of Parliament to bind the colony by statute was added the more revolutionary rejection of the binding power of King and cabinet to instruct the governor. The claims for colonial autonomy found expression in a glossary of new terms. "State House" replaced the title "Town House" or "Court House." "The house of representatives of Massachusetts Bay" became "his majesty's commons." The term "the province laws" was replaced by "the laws of the land," and, significantly, the colony's "charter" was now its "compact."

The victory was made sweeter by the news that on the very day of the Boston Massacre Parliament had repealed all the Townshend duties except the one on tea, which was retained as an assertion of parliamentary authority.

Although the spirit of resistance was by no means dead, the three years following the summer of 1770 were relatively tranquil. The major grievances that had united the colonists

in varying forms of opposition to ministerial and parliamentary imperial policy had been removed, and the radicals found it hard to find a popular issue. Samuel Adams and his confederates did what they could to keep the agitation alive with the annual service memorializing the victims of the Boston Massacre, but in the absence of overt assertions of parliamentary authority, the mass of the people did not rally to the old ^{ISSUES} ~~causes~~. Non-importation had ~~failed~~, and ^a ~~the~~ subsequent revival of trade helped stimulate the colonial economy. A general prosperity prevailed, and imports into New England alone jumped from £330,000 to £1,200,000. Poor harvests in Europe created or greatly increased demand for American corn and wheat. Shipbuilding prospered. Specie was sent from England to buy American products. Thus, although the Gasper affair, a resolution of the King's cabinet to pay governors from royal exchequer funds, and other irritants continued to keep the grievances of the liberty groups alive, the period was one of a general relaxing of tensions. But the fundamental questions raised in the 1760s were still unanswered.

Men like Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee, and New York's Sons of Liberty could not view this period with the equanimity of most of their countrymen. Every day of calm strengthened the ministry and Parliament and weakened the colonists' cause. Prosperity dulled vigilance for colonial freedom, and the new efficiency of the Customs service produced enough revenue that the British government was able to put governors and judges on the Crown's payroll. The radicals fumed in vain, but the average American was pleased at not having^{to} pay the royal officials' salaries. Adams and his supporters believed that if the system were allowed to go on colonial liberties would eventually be eroded away. But they needed a spectacular, emotional issue that would arouse Americans from their complacency.

In May of 1773 Parliament provided the issue when, in response to pleas from the ailing East India Company, it passed the Tea Act. The act permitted not only a drawback of duties paid on all tea above 10 million pounds held by the company in its warehouses before being exported to the colonies, but also the direct exportation of this excess amount to America under a special license. The company decided to sell the tea through its own agents, eliminating the independent merchants,

and disposing of the tea at less than the usual price. This monopolistic aspect aroused the colonial merchants and threw them again into alliance with the radicals.

American reaction took varied forms. Consignments to Philadelphia and New York were rejected and returned to England; in Charleston the tea was landed, but not offered for sale. In Boston Samuel Adams' fertile brain produced a dramatic showdown. On the night of December 16, 1773, Sons of Liberty, thinly disguised as Mohawk Indians and followed by a large mob, boarded the three tea ships moored at Griffin's Wharf and destroyed 343 chests of tea valued at about £18,000.

The "Boston Tea Party" accomplished Adams' purpose. It goaded Lord North's ministry into a showdown on the naked issue of power, which was precisely what the Boston radicals wanted. British reaction was swift and fateful. The action that the King and Lord North took was the product of their failure to perceive the realities of the situation--that the old continental colonies had, in actuality if not in theory, become states within the Empire and would no longer tolerate being treated as immature dependencies. Where the British Government

had tried to rule by consent, it now resorted to rule by coercion. But this new formula had first to be applied not against all the colonies but rather against one, the leader of resistance.

In a sense, the British response was the inevitable product of history. The colonies had never retreated one iota on the constitutional issue of parliamentary supremacy. Now the issue was joined: a subordinate unit ^{was defying} ~~had defied~~ the imperial government, setting itself up as the ultimate judge of what was constitutional and challenging the concept of imperial unity. Once the question of whether ultimate sovereignty resided in the Empire or its constituent parts was raised, it had to be resolved.

The new policy of coercion took the form of ^{three} ~~five~~ acts of Parliament that Americans called the "Intolerable Acts." The Boston Port Bill closed that city's port to commerce until the East India company had been reimbursed for its tea, and transferred the custom house temporarily to Salem. The Government of Massachusetts Act made the provincial Council appointive as in other royal colonies. It also gave the governor the

exclusive power to appoint and dismiss all inferior law officers, including inferior judges and sheriffs. The functions of the town meetings were limited, and the method of selecting jurors was altered. The Administration of Justice Act protected royal officials by providing that those accused of capital offenses in the performance of their duties might, at the discretion of the governor, be tried in another colony or in Great Britain.

While the extension of the Quartering Act and the Quebec Act were not integral parts of the coercive system, the colonists so considered them. The former was intended to end the type of disputes that had arisen over whether troops stationed in a colony must be assigned to barracks if their presence away from them was required. It provided that soldiers might be quartered by the governor's orders in uninhabited houses, outhouses, barns, or other buildings that were more suitably situated for a particular purpose. The Quebec Act extended the boundaries of the Province of Quebec, created in 1763, to include those French-speaking settlements in the Ohio Valley and the Illinois Country that under the terms of the Proclamation of 1763 had been left without provision for a civil government.

It also provided that the old French civil law with some modifications would be retained along with English criminal law and procedure. The Test Act, which ~~would have~~ excluded Roman Catholics from office, was waived in favor of an oath of allegiance. Finally, the legality of the Roman Catholic religion within the province was recognized, and the right of the Church to collect tithes was confirmed.

The Americans naturally viewed the Boston Port Bill, the Administration of Justice Act, and the Government of Massachusetts Act as obvious and irrefutable proof of Parliament's intention to destroy provincial autonomy and violate the most precious rights of free English subjects. They saw in the extension of the Quartering Act a move toward using the army in America as a police force to enforce imperial policy. To most Americans, especially the overwhelmingly Protestant New Englanders, the Quebec Act threatened both religious freedom and, through the retention of French civil law, legal rights. By this time, most politically conscious Americans were convinced that a conspiracy against colonial liberty was behind the policies of the British ministry and Parliament, and they judged every act of the imperial government in that light.

The old bonds that had united the Mother Country and her colonies were dissolving under the stress of mutual distrust. The Empire's subjects were no longer one people—they were British and Americans, two distinct nationalities. The INTolerable Acts had made the Revolution all but inevitable.

Instead of isolating Massachusetts, Britain's coercive policy rallied the other colonies to her support. As protests mounted proposals for an intercolonial congress came from various provinces. On May 27 members of Virginia's General Assembly, meeting in the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg, issued a call for such a meeting, and on June 17 the Massachusetts House of Representatives proposed that a congress be held in Philadelphia during September. By the end of August, every colony except Georgia named delegates.

The First Continental Congress that convened in Carpenter's Hall on September 5 met, not to proclaim independence, but to secure liberty within the British Empire. Because it was an extra-legal body whose delegates were chosen by provincial assemblies or popular conventions, the most conservative elements were not represented. **WITH THIS EXCEPTION** ~~Except for this limitation,~~ the delegates

representat~~ed~~ a fair cross-section of American opinion. There were moderates like George Washington and John Dickinson, radicals like the Adamses and Richard Henry Lee, and conservatives like John Jay and Joseph Galloway. The total ~~number of delegates~~ ^{MEMBERSHIP TOTALLED} ~~was~~ 55--large enough to encompass diversity, small enough to encourage genuine debate and effective action.

The delegation included many able men, and their political skills were from the beginning severely tested. They had to project an image of ^{SUFFICIENT} firmness to persuade or frighten the British government into concessions and at the same time avoid a 'spirit of independency' that would alarm conservatives. The character of the Congress was ^{MADE} manifest when conservative Joseph Galloway introduced his truly revolutionary Plan of Union that called for the establishment of a ~~distinct~~ American government with a legislative council, composed of representatives chosen by the colonial assemblies, and a President appointed by the Crown. While the government would be inferior to that of Great Britain, it would have authority to regulate all criminal, civil, commercial, and police matters that affected more than one colony with a right to veto all preliamentary legislation affecting the colonies. On the other

^{THE} hand, right of Parliament to veto the laws of the American Grand Council was conceded.

While the Congress was debating Galloway's Plan, Paul Revere arrived with Dr. Joseph Warren's Suffolk Resolves that declared the Intolerable Acts unconstitutional, urged Massachusetts to establish a new government, and called upon the Congress to adopt commercial sanctions against Great Britain. By a majority of one colony, the Congress voted to shelve Galloway's proposal and endorsed the Resolves.

The Congress then proceeded to adopt a series of retaliatory measures, including non-importation, non^{exp}orattion, and non^{con}s^umption enforced by a Continental Association. Having agreed to this economic counter-offensive, the members passed a Declaration of Rights and Grievances directed to their fellow-subjects at home and in the other colonies and addressed a petition to the King. On October 22, after resolving to meet again the following May if their grievances had not been redressed, the Congress adjourned.

By early 1775, three of the leading American political thinkers, James Wilson, author of Considerations on the Authority

of Parliament; Thomas Jefferson, who wrote Summary View; and John Adams in his Novanglus, had propounded a federal solution to the problem of liberty versus authority within the Empire, a solution that anticipated the theory of self-governing dominions. It is one of the ironies of history that this solution, which the British government dismissed as unthinkable in 1775, was the basis upon which Parliament proposed to make peace in 1778.

Chapter IV

THE EVE OF REVOLUTION

On May 13, 1774, the new Royal Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay arrived in Boston. Gen. Thomas Gage was a scion of a family whose founder, a Norman nobleman named de Gaugi, had accompanied William the Conqueror to England. The Gages of Firle, Sussex, had an ancient penchant for lost causes. King John, Queen Mary I, Charles I, and James II had commanded their loyalties; and they remained Roman Catholics for 150 years after the Elizabethan Settlement. Their support of these causes must have been mixed with a saving blend of cleverness and luck, because while they experienced disabilities, they "were consistently able to avoid the scaffold."

Improvement in the family's situation occurred when the general's father, also named Thomas, conformed to the Church of England, was created a viscount in the Irish peerage and elected to the House of Commons. In spite of this entry into the English political and social mainstream, Lord Gage did not enjoy a very enviable reputation, and of his wife a notorious debtor declared he would settle his accounts when "Lady Gage grows chaste."

Thomas, the second son of this unprepossessing couple, was born late in 1719 or early the next year. He studied at Westminster School, where he knew Francis Bernard, his predecessor as Governor of Massachusetts; John Burgoyne, who surrendered his army at Saratoga on October 17, 1777; William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, who became a Colonial Secretary; the Howe brothers; and George Sackville, who became Lord Germain and Colonial Secretary. In 1741 he entered upon a long, useful military career that in 1754 brought him to America with the 44th Regiment of Foot. He was with Gen. Edward Braddock's disastrous expedition, and in 1758 he pioneered in developing a light infantry capability in America, organizing and commanding the 80th Regiment. After serving in Gen. Sir Jeffrey Amherst's Montreal campaign, he succeeded the latter as commander-in-chief in North America in 1763.

Besides his 17 years service in the Colonies, General Gage had close American ties and was genuinely interested in the country and popular with those colonists with whom he had professional and social dealings. His wife was Margaret Kemble of New Jersey, who was related to several prominent colonial families. However, the marriage was not an unqualified political

asset. The beautified Mrs. Gage was haughty and somewhat unpopular, and she was suspected of capitalizing on her husband's position to obtain favors for her numerous relatives. Since, according to one scholar, "Half of the years between 1761 and 1771 were marked by new arrivals in the Gage family," New York society had enjoyed frequent relief from her overbearing manner and the general was able to enjoy his popularity.

Now, after a leave spent in England, the general was back in America as royal governor of an especially ob^ustreprous province, a post that would have taxed the abilities of the best administrator. The colony's quarrel with the Mother Country had intensified, and Samuel Adams and his radical cohorts were exerting themselves to thwart accommodation and reconciliation. Opinions and positions were crystallizing while mutual distrust, ignorance, and conflicting interests and loyalties strained the imperial fabric. The governor stood in the middle of the crisis, bound by instructions from London, the personification of the policies that were becoming hateful to an increasingly militant portion of the inhabitants of the colony he was commissioned to govern.

On June 1, eighteen days after his arrival in Massachusetts, Gage put the Boston Port Act into operation, closing and blockading the town's harbor. In accordance with the King's instructions, the governor moved the province's capital to Salem and took up residence there, leaving Hugh Earl Percy in command of the regiments brought to Boston to support British authority in the summer of 1774.

The General Assembly met in Salem on June 17 to protest the capital's removal. The governor sent his secretary with an order to dissolve the session. Locking the door against the secretary, the Assembly proposed that a continental congress be called and elected five delegates to represent their colony.

The Massachusetts Act re-formed the colony's government by increasing the power of the governor, by making the Council, or upper house, appointive instead of elective, and by suppressing town meetings, except in those instances in which the governor gave permission for them to convene. Gage, accordingly, appointed 36 members to the Council. Eleven promptly declined to serve, and the others were so insulted and harassed that only 16 accepted, and they took refuge in Boston.

In September Gage, in one of his rare incautious acts, called the General Court, consisting of the Council and the Assembly, to meet in Salem on October 5; but, realizing that his Council appointees would not be permitted to take their seats, he withdrew the summons. The towns, taking the position that the governor could not cancel the call to convene, proceeded to elect delegates to the Assembly who met at Salem on the appointed day. After two days of being deliberately ignored by the governor, the assembly adjourned to Concord and organized themselves into a Provincial Congress with the theatrical John Hancock as president. This body, illegally elected and outside the law and unknown to it, became the de facto government of Massachusetts outside the garrisoned city of Boston.

While the Provincial Congress met in Concord's meeting house, secret, highly placed informers kept General Gage advised of its proceedings. Through them he knew that the colonists had collected military stores in Concord and were planning to organize an army. The Congress adjourned on April 15, the same day that one of the general's agents sent him the following message, which is preserved in the Gage Papers in the Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan:

The Congress have determined upon raising an Army if the other New England Colonies will join them. For this purpose they have sent delegates to these colonies to know their sentiments on that subject. The Army is to consist of 18,000 men 8,000 of whom are to be raised in this province 5,000 in Connecticut 3000 in New Hampshire & 2000 in Rhode Island. Six Companies of Matrosses [Artillerymen]. . . . There was a great division among the members of the Congress & great irresolution shown in the Course of their debates this Week. Many of them opposed raising an army & though it was motioned to take under consideration the appointment of officers for said army they would not enter upon it at all.

The Committee on the State of the Province have now under consideration the means of procuring a fund for the subsistence of the Army voted but find so many insurmountable difficulties that can come to no determination.

Thus the royal governor not only knew of the Congress's plans for armed resistance, but also that a strong minority opposed this exercise of quasi-sovereignty.

The 15th was also the day that Gage ordered the grenadier and light infantry companies "off all duties 'till further orders" for "Exercise and new volutions [drill]." Paul Revere and his patrol of observers noted this detail of troops from their normal routine and reported it to Dr. Joseph Warren, who in turn passed the intelligence on to the Committee of Safety. The colonial radicals immediately suspected that the governor

was preparing to send an expedition to seize the supplies at Concord. Their suspicions were confirmed when about midnight the boats belonging to the troop ships, which had been previously hauled up for repairs, were launched and moved to the sterns of the warships, indicating that they would be used to carry troops across Back Bay to Cambridge.

Revere reported the boats' movement to Dr. Warren, and they decided that Gage probably intended sending the grenadiers and light infantry on a raid to seize the stores at Cambridge or to capture John Hancock and Sam Adams, or to do both. Early on the morning of the 16th, Revere set out for Lexington to warn the two radical leaders, who were staying at the home of the Rev. Jonas Clarke, whose wife was Hancock's cousin. As chairman of the Provincial Committee of Safety, Hancock sent orders to the local committee in Concord to disperse and conceal the supplies. Messengers were also sent to other towns, alerting their minutemen ^{so THAT} they might be summoned. A special meeting of the provincial committee at Concord was called for the next day.

After warning Adams and Hancock, Revere returned to Boston by way of Charlestown, where he paused and in his words, "agreed with Colonel Conant, and some other Gentlemen, that if British went out by water, we would show two lanterns in the North Church Steeple; if by land, one as a signal, for we were apprehensive it would be difficult to cross the Charles River or get over Boston Neck." This arrangement was not intended as a signal to Revere, but to alert Conant and the Charlestown committee so that they could get the word to Lexington and Concord, if Revere and his associates were unable to cross the Charles River or ride over Boston Neck.

General Gage, in Boston, also received a message on April 16. His was a four-month-old letter from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Dartmouth. The burden of his Lordship's long letter was that the general had not been sufficiently aggressive in dealing with the recalcitrant Yankees. He rejected Gage's opinion that the 4,000-man garrison was inadequate to re-establish royal authority. The King and the ministry wanted more decisive action, including the arrest of insurgent leaders. Although it reflected the thinking at Whitehall at the end of 1774, the letter had a very limited

effect upon Gage, to whom the destruction of the colonial military supplies was more practical and important than the capture of radical leaders. Political leaders could be replaced, but a rebel army would be powerless without its matériel--especially when that matériel was irreplaceable.

At Concord, the Committees of Safety and Supplies met, and in response to Hancock's warning, voted to transport some of the cannon to nearby towns for safe-keeping. After deciding to reconvene at the Black Horse Tavern in Menotomy (modern Arlington) the next day, the committees adjourned.

The decision to move the cannon was carried out the 18th when four 6-pounders were hauled to Groton, about 18 miles northwest of Concord. Groton's minutemen assembled, and nine of them started for Concord, arriving there the next morning, several hours before the British troops reached the town.

During the afternoon of the 18th, General Gage dispatched a number of mounted officers to patrol the roads between Cambridge and Concord to prevent the Boston radicals from alarming the countryside.

In the meantime, he prepared instructions for the officer who was command the raid, Lt. Col. Francis Smith of the 10th Regiment of Foot. He prepared a draft and a final version, both of which are important: the draft because it reflected what Gage knew about the disposition of supplies in Concord; the official order because it defined the expedition's mission.

The draft, which is among the Gage Papers, contains the following information:

Four Brass Cannon and two Mortars or Cohorns with a Number of small arms in the Cellar or out Houses of Mr. Barrett [Col. James Barrett] a little on the other side the Bridge where is also lodged a Qauntity of Powder & Lead.

Ten Iron Cannon before the Town-House [town hall] and two within it which Town-House is in the Center of Town. The ammunition for said Guns within the House.

Three Guns 24 Pounders, lodged in the Prison yard with a Quantity of Cart#ridges and Provision.

A Quantity of Provision and Ammunition in other Places, the Principal Deposits are the Houses of Mess^{rs} Hubbard, near the Meeting [House], Butler, Jones the Tailors, near Hubbards, two men of the name of Bond, g^o particularly at Mr. Whitneys who lives on the Right Hand near the Entrance of the Town, at a House plaistered white a small yard in Front* a large Quantity of Powder and Ball is

* This house, later called the "The Wayside," was during parts of the 19th century the home of the Alcotts and Hawthorne.

reported to be deposited in his store adjoining the House.

Cannon hid in a wood a mile & half from the Center of the River and Malden [Walden] Pond. The wood thick a good deal of underwood. The Ground no little wet, but not a Marsh. Three Guns still mounted, the rest desmounted and carefully hid and even buried. In the same place some Boxes of Arms hid like the Cannon.

The Medicine Chests & Powder Barrells, Tents, etc, distributed in the Chief Houses, particularly Mr. Barretts, Capt. Wheelers, Mr. Hubbards Stores and the two Bonds.

The guns in the Prison Court remain there besides many different Articles.

When he prepared the final draft, the general omitted the details concerning the stores, and wrote:

Boston, April 18, 1775

Lieut Coll. ~~S~~Smith, 10th Regiment foot,
Sir

Having received Intelligence, that a Quantity of Ammunition, Provision, ARTillery, Tents and small Arms, have been collected at Concord, for the Avowed purpose of raising and supporting a Rebellion against His Majesty, you will March with the Corps of Grenadiers and light Infantry, put under your Command, where you will seize and destroy all the Artillery, Ammunition, Provisions, Tents, Small Arms, and all Military Stores whatever. But you will take care that the Soldiers do not plunder the Inhabitants, or hurt private property.

You have a Draught of Concord, on which is marked the Houses, Barns, & c., which contain the above Military Stores. You will order a Trenion to be knocked off each Gun, but if its found impracticable on any, they must be spiked, and the Carriages destroyed [sic]. The Powder and flower, must be shook out of the Barrells into the River, the Tents burnt, Pork or Beef destroyed in the best ways you can devise, and the Men may put Balls or lead in their pockets, throwing them by degrees into Ponds, Ditches &c., but no Quantity together, so that they may be recovered afterwards.

If you meet with any Brass Artillary, you will order their muzzles to be beat in so as to render them useless.

You will observe by the Draught that it will be necessary to secure the two Bridges as soon as possible, you will therefore Order a party of the best Marchers, to go on with expedition for that purpose.

A small party on Horseback is ordered out to stop all advice of your March getting to Concord before you, and a small number of Artillery to go out in Chaises to wait for you on the Road, with Sledge Hammers, Spikes &c.

You will open your business, and return with the Troops, as soon as possible, which I must leave to your own Judgment and Discretion. I am

Sir

Your most obedient
humble Servant
Thos. Gage

The orders were clear and sensible and the objective was explicitly defined. While the capture of Adams and Hancock would have been a windfall, no effort was ordered to accomplish that end. The expedition was not intended to terrorize the countryside nor destroy private property; and certainly Gage had every reason to desire that ~~there~~^Y would be neither resistance nor bloodshed.

The governor made elaborate efforts to keep his intentions secret. He sealed Colonel Smith's order, notified him that he was to command the expedition, and gave him the orders with instructions, to open them only after the troops were assembled. The regimental^A officers met at headquarters at about 8:00 in the evening and were ordered to march their companies to "the beach near the magazine guard," which was located at the foot of Boston Common on Back Bay, at 10:00. They were told nothing about either their destination ~~and~~^{or} mission. The sergeants shook their men awake shortly before 10:00 and silently marched them in small units to the rendezvous on the beach.

As soon as Warren learned that the troops were marching to the beach, he sent cobbler William Dawes and Revere to warn

Adams and Hancock in Lexington that the soldiers had begun their march. Dawes left town via Boston Neck; and Revere took the shorter but more difficult route across the Charles River.

Before going to the waterfront, Revere stopped long enough to make arrangements to have two lanterns displayed in the tower of North Church to let Colonel Conant know that the British were leaving Boston via the river. After being rowed across the Charle^Ns, he walked into Charlestown, where he met Conant, Richard Devens, a member of the Committee of Safety, and a few other men. They had seen the lanterns, and Devens had sent a messenger to alert Adams and Hancock. Revere then set out for Lexington on Deacon John Larkin's "very good horse." After eluding two British horsemen in Charlestown, he rode on to Lexington by way of Medford, reaching Jonas Clarke's house shortly after midnight.

Although the rider that Devens had sent from Charlestown did not reach his destination, Lexington was in a state of alert. Young Solomon Brown had passed a party/^{of}mounted officers on the road from Cambridge; and he informed William Munroe,

tavern-keeper and orderly sergeant of the Lexington minutemen, who posted a nine-man guard at the Clarke house. As word spread around town, 30 other militiamen gathered in the Buckman Tavern, across the Bedford road from Lexington Green.

Revere roused the occupants of Clarke's house and delivered Dr. Warren's warning to Hancock. Capt. John Parker, Commander of the Town's minute company, was summoned. Some of the men in the tavern were sent to rouse other militiamen, about 130 of whom mustered on the Green. After standing in the chilly night air until about 1:30 on the morning of the 19th, Captain Parker dismissed his men with orders to reassemble at the beat of the company's drum. Those who did not live nearby went to Buckman's Tavern to await events.

In the meantime, William Dawes arrived. After refreshing themselves, he and Revere started for Concord on their tired horses. They were soon joined by young Dr. Samuel Prescott of Concord, who was on his way home from visting his sweetheart, Lydia Mulliken. Halfway to Concord, they ran into one of Gage's mounted patrols. Revere was captured, but Dawes and Prescott got away, the former returned on foot to Lexington, and Prescott continued on to Concord giving the alarm as he went.

While Dr. Warren's Messengers and a number of other men were raising the countryside, Gage's expedition, no longer attended by the secrecy he so much desired, was getting off to a slow start. It was composed of 10 light infantry, 11 grenadier, and two Royal Marine Companies, with a total strength of approximately 672 men. It was almost 10:30 at night before the troops embarked in the boats. Because two trips were required to ferry them, it was between midnight and 1:00 a.m. before the last man waded ashore at Lechmere Point in East Cambridge, where they stood in a "dirty road" for two more hours while supplies were brought from the boats and distributed. After each man received a day's ration and 36 rounds of ammunition, the march got underway.

Chapter V

REVOLUTION

Lexington

The British column reached Menotomy, where three members of Marblehead's Committee of Safety, Elbridge Gerry, Jeremiah Lee, and Azor Orne, were asleep in the Black Horse Tavern. Aroused from their beds, the committeemen watched the soldiers marched by. Before they could dress, a search party approached the tavern, and the three revolutionaries fled through the back door into the predawn chill and hid amid the stubble of a nearby cornfield.

It was already 3:00, and Colonel Smith was impatient with the slow progress of his expedition, and his concern increased as the sounds of ringing bells and musket shots told him that the countryside was being raised. The colonel was fat and slow, but he was not stupid. If the men of Middlesex County answered the alarm, as they certainly would, the expedition would have to accomplish its mission as quickly as possible, and reinforcements were needed to overawe the provincials, or if worse came, to support the expeditionary column. To meet

the first necessity, Smith detached six light infantry companies under Major John Pitcairn of the Royal Marines to hurry ahead to and secure the two bridges at Concord. He dealt with the second by sending a messenger back to Boston with an urgent request for reinforcements.

Pitcairn's advanced party marched at "quick step" along the old road to Lexington, where flankers captured three men sent out from Captain Parker's company to scout the British advance. A fourth man, Thaddeus Bowman, eluded the flankers and returned to the village, reporting that the soldiers were a mile and half away. Within minutes, young William Diamond's drum summoned the minute men, and from the Buckman Tavern and nearby homes men of the town's militia answered the drum's roll.

Captain Parker, a French and Indian War veteran, was a prudent man who enjoyed the respect of his company. When the men had first assembled earlier that morning, they had consulted together in good town meeting fashion and, according to Captain Parker's affidavit, had "concluded not to be discovered, nor m~~iddle~~ or make with said Regular Troops (if they should approach) unless they should insult us." Now, with those Regulars only minutes away, he did not deploy his company

behind the nearby stone walls ^{WHERE} ~~when~~ they could watch the "red coats" and if necessary make the latter convenient targets, while preserving for the militia the advantages of surprise and mobility. Instead, he ordered Sergeant Munroe to form the men on the Green in a long, thin line to await the arrival of what Parker believed to be a force of ^{1,200} ~~12,000~~ to ¹⁵⁰⁰ ~~15,000~~ regulars, with orders not to fire.

Why did John Parker take action that contravened the decision he and his men had made three hours before? Someone, perhaps Samuel Adams, may have reminded him of the Provincial Congress's resolution that if troops marched out of Boston, "the countryside should be alarmed and assembled to oppose the march to the last extremity." But this would not explain why the militiamen were formed in line on the open Green, because opposing the British march could have more effectively accomplished from cover. The most logical explanation would seem to be that someone--again Adams seems to be the most probable person--understood the political advantage that might accrue from the confrontation that was made almost inevitable when the company formed on the Green.

~~Then~~ **THERE** the men of Lexington gathered in the early spring light. Some 40 stood in line; more than 30 men milled about, some going to the meeting-house for ammunition, others coming in across the fields from their homes. All told, they constituted about half the town's adult male population. Sixty-five year old Moses Harrington, who was there with his son Caleb and nephew Jonathan, was the oldest. Slightly younger Robert Munroe, with his two sons and sons-in-law, answered the drum's roll. There were eight father-and-son combinations. Twelve of those on the Green were teen-agers, and at least 20 others were under 30 years old. One man, Prince Estabrook, was a slave. There were even some men from other towns who happened to be in Lexington that April 19th.

Militiamen were not the only Americans on the scene. Other townspeople, unarmed bystanders, stood around the Green, in neighboring yards and fields, or watched from nearby windows. Perhaps as many as 100 spectators watched while Parker and his men got ready. And not far away, Paul Revere and John Lowell hauled Hancock's trunk with its cargo of important papers away from Buchman's Tavern.

As Pitcairn's force of light infantry, numbering slightly fewer than 200 men, approached Lexington, it was joined by the patrol that had captured and then released Revere. These men had credulously swallowed their erstwhile captive's bluff that 500 men waited in Lexington to oppose the soldier's march. The major also received a report that an American had aimed his gun at two officers of the advanced guard, but ^{THAT} the piece had misfired. Pitcairn, naturally, interpreted this to be a hostile act, and he halted the column and ordered the men to prime and load, but "on no account to fire, nor even attempt it without orders." Thus prepared, the troops marched into the village fully expecting to find a superior hostile force and anticipating shots from the walls and buildings along the road.

The road ran on a level grade to the Green, where it divided, the left leg leading to Concord, the right to Bedford. In the angle formed by the roads stood the large, barnlike meeting house, to the west of which was a free-standing belfry. Behind and to the right of these was the the open Green, on which Pitcairn saw Parker's men drawn up in two platoons two ranks deep, with an open space between them. Around the borders of the Common stood the spectators.

As the troops came into view of the assembled colonists, Major Pitcairn called out: "Soldiers, don't fire, keep your ranks, form and surround them!" The column swung to the right of the meeting-house and advanced directly toward the colonials. Pitcairn, with the mounted officers, galloped to the ~~right~~^{LEFT} of the meeting-house, and placed himself on the flank of both forces, when he again ordered his troops not to fire and called upon the Americans to lay down their arms. Almost simultaneously, Captain Parker--perhaps even before Pitcairn gave his orders--commanded his men to disperse and not to fire.

Parker's men heard his command and started to break ranks, but they did so singly and without much order. Some drifted off toward the edge of the Green, which others hurried away. None obeyed Pitcairn's directive to lay down their weapons, and a few, like James Parker, apparently did not intend to move.

While Parker's men were thus reacting to his order, the soldiers, as was customary in that period, cheered and ran forward to execute the major's command and disarm the militiamen. Suddenly, a shot rang out, perhaps from the musket of an excited soldier. Or an officer may have fired a warning shot into the air. A spectator may have fired from some place of

the Green; or perhaps the shot was accidental. It certainly did not come from any of Parker's men on the Common.

Other shots followed as the scene erupted in noisy violence. The first platoon fired a volley; and as Pitcairn tried to stop the shooting, the soldiers continued firing and charged onto the Green. Seven or eight Americans, some of whom were not on the Green when they fired, got off a few shattered shots at the soldiers. Although Pitcairn and the other officers tried to restore order, the regulars continued firing. Lieutenant Colonel Smith hurried forward from the main body of the column at the sound of firing. Finding a drummer, he ordered him to beat "to arms." The light infantry responded to the colonel's authority, and the familiar sound of the drum beat reinforced his effort to bring them under control.

The four light infantry companies and the grenadier that comprised the main body of Smith's force arrived at the Green by the time the firing stopped. After some delay, the advanced party reformed and received a reprimand for their conduct. Then *THEY* replenished their cartridge supply, fired a volley, gave three cheers, and resumed the march to Concord.

The affair on Lexington's Green was not a battle, but a massacre executed by poorly disciplined soldiers who earned from Major Pitcairn a contempt for the light infantry that he carried to his death on Bunker Hill.

Concord

The men of Concord had been busy since noon of the 18th. The Committee of Safety's instructions to disperse the military stores collected there put men and carts to moving the precious supplies to safety. Some were moved to nearby towns, while others were concealed at various **POINTS IN CONCORD.**

Dr. Samuel Prescott carried the news of the British advance into his native village about an hour **after** midnight, and the bell on the Town Hall soon summoned the men of the two local minute companies to assemble on the Common in front of Wright's Tavern. There was some skepticism about about the accuracy of Prescott's report, so Reuben ^{**BROWN**} was sent to Lexington for more information; and another man rode to Watertown, in case the British should come by that route. The minute men were soon dismissed with orders to reassemble at the beat of the drum. Many of the men, including their commander, Col. James Barrett, returned to the task of concealing the supplies that remained in the village.

While his fellow-townsmen were busying themselves with these preparations, Reuben Brown rode into Lexington to the

point where the road reached the Green. He got there in time to hear shooting and see men running. Without waiting to learn more, he galloped back to Concord and reported to Maj. John Buttrick, who commanded in Colonel Barrett's absence. The major asked whether the soldiers were firing balls, to which Brown replied, "I do not know, but think it probable." The minute men reassembled, some "150 of us and more," including some Lincoln militia under Captains William Smith and Abijah Pierce, who had just arrived with a rumor that men had been killed in Lexington. In good New England fashion, the citizen-soldiers took council and decided, in Amos Barrett's words: "We thought we wood go and meet the Britsch." Barrett recalled what followed in these words:

We marched Down to wards L[exington] about a mild or mild half and we see them acomming we hatled and stay^d till they got within about 100 Rods then we was orded to about face and march^d before them with our Droms and fifes agoing and also the B[ritish] we had grand musick.

When the British reached Miriam's Corner, they found that the road ran along the base of a long ridge on whose slopes a number of militiamen could be seen. Pitcairn sent the light infantry up the ridge, and the Americans hurried away to the

center of Concord. Thus the British entered the village with the grenadiers on the ~~road~~^{road} and the light infantry functioning as flankers along the ridge. The time was 9:00 a.m. The 17-mile march had taken 11 hours.

Major Buttrick and his fellow officers kept their companies out of reach of the soldiers while managing to retain for themselves the advantages of observation and initiative, moving from ridge to ridge as their strength^N increased with the arrival of additional companies from neighboring towns.

The tired British regulars paused briefly in ranks along the road and in the village square before Lieutenant Colonel Smith put into execution the plan he had made before Lexington. For the second time he detached units to secure Concord's bridges and seize the supplies at Colonel Barrett's farm. One company of grenadiers under Capt. Munday Pole marched to the South Bridge, where they knocked the trunnions off three iron 24-pound cannon, burned some cannon carriages, and destroyed a quantity of flour. Six companies of light infantry under Capt. Laurence Parsons of the 10th Regiment marched from the square toward the North Bridge.

From their vantage point on Ripley Hill, the Americans watched the light approach en route to the bridge and debated the course they should take. Some of the more aggressive advocated advancing to intercept the soldiers; the local minister, William Emerson, and some others favored making a stand where they were; but the majority in Emerson's words "thought it best to retreat till our strength should be equal to the enemy's by recruits from neighboring towns that were continually coming in to our assistance." Col. James Barrett, who had rejoined the militiamen, led them across the North Bridge to Punkatasset Hill, where they could watch the British and still be accessible to the reinforcements arriving from Acton, Bedford, Chelmsford, Littelton, and Westford. Barrett then returned to his farm to supervise the concealing of stores.

While the light infantry detachment followed the Americans to the North Bridge, the other British troops began searching for and destroying the colonial military supplies. They conducted the search with a scrupulous regard for private property and a reasonable degree of courtesy to the townsfolk. In fact, they were so solicitous that they almost seemed to connive in the ruses practiced to frustrate the search. For instance,

the soldiers who searched Amos Wood's house compensated the occupants for their inconvenience with a tip of a guinea for each person. Finding one room locked, the officer in charge asked whether some girls were in the room. Mrs. Wood's evasive reply did not disabuse him, and he forbade its search. According to tradition, the room was filled with supplies. The story of how Timothy Wheelre handled the situation illustrates the nature of the search:

He had the charge of a large quantity of provincial flour, which, together with some cashs of his own, was stored in his barn. A British officer demanding entrance, he readily took his key and gave him admission. The officer expressed his pleasure at the discovery; but captain Wheeler, with much affected simplicity, said to him, putting his hand on a barrel, "This is my flour. I am a miller, Sir. Yonder stands my mill; I get my living by it. In the winter I grind a great deal of grain, and get it ready for market in spring. "This, pointing to one barrel, "is the flour of wheat, this," pointing to another, "is the flour of corn; this the flour of rye; this" putting his hand on his own cashs, "is my flour; this is my wheat; this is my rye; this is mine." "Well," said the officer, "we do not injure private property," and withdrew, leaving this important depository untouched.

Ephraim Jones, whose inn adjoined the town jail and who served as jailor, was treated less gently. He had reason to be reluctant to have the premises searched. Henry Gaffner, Treasurer of the Provincial Congress, had left his trunk in one

of the rooms, and two 24-pounder cannon tubes lay concealed in the jail-yard. Jones bolted the doors and refused to admit the search party. Major Pitcairn ordered the doors broken down, accompanied Jones to the yard, and brandished his pistol until the latter led him to the cannon. While Jones was held in the yard, soldiers searched the inn, but did not disturb Gardner's trunk when Hannah Burns, who lived there, identified it as belonging to her. Pitcairn had the trunnions knocked off the cannon and ordered breakfast. Jones reverted to the role of inn-keeper, served the major, rendered his bill, and was paid.

In spite of the limitations imposed on the search, the soldiers did find some supplies, including musket balls and flour, which they threw into the mill-pond. The flour swelled in its casks and suffered little damage, and the colonists recovered both commodities the next day. Gun carriage, intrenching tools, and some wooden trenchers and spoons were burned. Fires started in the Town Hall and Reuben Brown's harness shop, but the soldiers quickly extinguished ^{THESE} ~~these~~.

While this superficial search continued under Smith's and Pitcairn's supervision, the stage was set for the "shot heard 'round the world."

When Colonel Smith dispatched Captain Parsons with the six light infantry companies, he gave him two missions. The first was to secure the North Bridge; the second to search Col. James Barrett's farm, which General Gage had identified as one of the places where supplies were collected. Therefore, Parsons detailed the companies of the 5th and 43 companies under Capt. Walter Laurie to remain at the bridge.* He next marched the remaining four companies up the hill along the Groton Road until they reached the homes of Ephraim and Willard Buttrick, where he left his own company, the 10th, under Lieutenant Kelly. Lieutenant William Sutherland, one of the chroniclers of the day's events, attached himself to this unit as a volunteer. Moving on, Parsons detached the 4th company on or near the so-called "Muster Field." With the 38th and 52d companies, he continued on toward the Barrett farm. About 30 minutes later, a seventh company, the 23d, arrived at the bridge, picked up the 5th, and went on to join Parsons at Barretts.

* For convenience the light infantry and grenadier companies were identified by the numbers of their parent battalions [regiments].

While the militiamen on Punkatasset Hill watched the light infantry deploy, their numbers grew to more than 400 men. After the usual discussion, their leaders decided to move nearer the bridge and village to where they would have a better view of events; and they marched toward the "Muster Field." The 10th company abandoned its position near the Buttrick houses, joined the men of the 4th, and together both retreated to join Captain Laurie and the 43d company at the west end of the bridge.

The Americans moved into the "Muster Filed," joined again by Colonel Barrett. They now halted and continued observing the soldiers at the bridge and the smoke rising from where the wooden equipment was burning in the village. English-born James Nichols of Lincoln, whom Amos Baker described as a fine singer and "droll fellow," remarked to fellow militiamen, "If any of you will hold my gun, I will go down and talk to them." Someone held his musket, and he walked to the bridge and spoke with the soldiers. Then he went back up the hill, got his gun, and said he was going home, and home he went to obscurity.

Tension increased among both the soldiers at the bridge and the militia on the hill. The former were worried about their separation from the companies that had gone to Barrett's farm, and the Americans were apprehensive about the smoke rising from Concord. Men who had left their families in the village feared for their safety, and the billowing smoke increased their concern. While Colonel Barrett took council with the company commanders ^{AND} ~~at~~ some members of Concord's Committee of Correspondence, adjutant Lt. Joseph Hosmer noticed "an unusual smoke" rising from the center of the village and demanded: "Will you let them burn the town down?" ^{WHEREUPON,} ~~Whenupon,~~ the leaders unanimously decided to cross the bridge and return to Concord village. Colonel ^{BARRETT} ~~A~~ ordered the men to march with muskets primed, but not to shoot unless the soldiers fired first, "then to fire as we can." The fifes and drums struck up the "White Cockade," and the Americans started toward the bridge, marching by twos with Capt. Isaac Davis's Acton company in the lead, accompanied by Major Buttrick.

The 84 light infantrymen who comprised the three companies on the western side of the river were in an indefensible position, with no cover, the stream behind them, and only an

exposed, narrow bridge over which to retreat. Captain Laurie sent Lieutenant Robertson back to Colonel Smith for reinforcements. The soldiers stood their ground until the column was about 200 yards away, when they crossed the bridge, leaving a small party to remove the flooring. Major Buttrick shouted at them to stop and quickened his pace. By now, the colonials were dangerously near, and the party stopped tearing up the planks and rejoined their comrades.

The soldiers now found themselves massed at the eastern end of the bridge in a narrow lane between stone walls. Captain Laurie ordered the companies of the 4th and 10th Regiments to form for street fighting, while the 43d company was sent over the wall of the Maise field to extend a line to the left. Street fighting formation required a unit to face the enemy in ranks of four and to a depth of up to eight men. The first rank would fire, divide and wheel to the rear, when it would reload while succeeding ranks repeated the movement. It could be used in advancing, standing in place, or retreating within a confined street or road. The execution of Laurie's orders was confused. The men were inadequately trained in the tactic, and only three or four men of the 43d company followed Lieutenant Sutherland over the wall into the field.

While Laurie's men clumsily got into position, some fired a few shots that fell short, followed by a single shot that wounded Luther Blanchard of Acton and Jonas Brown of Concord. Then, when the two forces were about 75 yards apart, the first rank of light infantry fired a volley, killing Captain Isaac Davis and Abner Hosmer. "God Damn it, they are firing ball!" yelled Concord's Captain Brown, and Major Buttrick shouted, "Fire fellow soldiers, for God's sake, fire!" As many of the Americans as could obeyed, killing two men of the 4th company, mortally wounding a third, and wounding four officers, a sergeant, and four privates. A few more scattered shots, and the confused, desperate soldiers fled in disorder.

When the retreating regulars were about half way to the town's Common, they met Colonel Smith, who with a detachment of grenadiers was on his ponderous way to their support. The colonel counter-marched and took his grenadiers and beaten light infantrymen back to the village.

Some Americans continued across North Bridge, but instead of pursuing the soldiers, they continued up a road to Ripley Hill, assembled behind a stone wall, and watched the retreating

foe. Others picked up their wounded and went back up the hill to John Buttrick's farm.

Captain Parsons and his detachment completed their search of Barrett's farm and, ignorant of the fight at the bridge, started back toward Concord Village. Fortunately for them, the Americans did not intercept their march. When Parson's men reached the North Bridge, they were shocked to find the bodies of the soldiers who had died there. One of them was a man who, after being wounded, ^{HAD} crawled off the road into the grass, where a local boy found him and split his head with a hatchet. The shaken troops hurried on to the main body in the village and started the stories that the Americans were scalping the wounded--a rumor that was to influence the soldiers' conduct during the long, tragic afternoon that lay ahead.

For some two hours, the British lingered in the village, while the Americans moved from one hill to another, and the tired men of the 10th company of light infantry kept them under surveillance, a task they found "most fatiguing." Local physicians Timothy Minot and John Cumming cared for the wounded,

since no surgeon accompanied the expedition. Severely injured men were loaded into chaises commandeered from John Beaton and Reuben Brown, and the worst cases were taken into homes.

The Americans' numbers continued to increase as companies arrived from Westford, Chelmsford, and Stow. By now, news of Lexington had reached villages and towns throughout Middlesex, Suffolk, and Norfolk counties, and as the afternoon wore on, men from Billerica, Reading, Charlestown, Danvers, Dedham, Needham, Medford--eventually from more than 40 communities--hurried to join their countrymen. Before the day was over, at ^{LEAST} 3,600 colonials in companies of from 10 to 40 men swarmed along the 15-mile line between Concord and Cambridge.

The Americans' strength was not commensurate with their numbers. After the North Bridge fight, there was no unified command, and the militia, as companies or even individuals, made their own decisions, taking positions, opening fire, retreating, attacking as opportunity and personal inclination led them. Neither Colonel Barrett nor any other local leader made an effort to impose unity of command or action.

The Retreat

Lieutenant Colonel Smith had no reason to be gratified with the day's events. His mission was badly botched. Few colonial supplies had been seized; blood had been ~~spilled~~ ^{SPILED;} the countryside was aroused; and almost 20 dangerous miles lay between Concord and the safety of General Gage's army.

Finally he gave the order to march, and at noon, the weary, apprehensive soldiers marched eastward out of the village. The grenadiers tramped along the same road they had followed that morning, and the light infantry deployed as flankers in the meadows and on the ridge north of the road. The "walking wounded" and those unable to walk, who were mounted upon horses, were in the center of the column. Lieutenants Hull and Gould, too seriously wounded to ride horseback, were sent ahead of the column in the commandeered chaises. This time ~~there~~ ^{THERE} was no music. The objective was to return to Boston as quickly and unobtrusively as possible.

For about 15 minutes the column limped along until it reached Meriam's Corner, where a road from Bedford joined the old "Country Road." Nathan Meriam's century-old house stood,

then as now, near the junction. Just east of Meriams, the road crossed a narrow bridge over a small brook. The ridge along which the flankers had deployed ended and they rejoined the main body in the road, which in a compact column moved to cross the bridge. Then the Americans struck. Men from Concord, who had cut across the fields, and Capt. John Brooks' Bedford company fired into the massed column, killing or wounding several men. The soldiers returned the fire, and because there was little cover for the Americans east of the brook, the troops had a brief respite.

A little less than a mile farther east, the road ran north of Hardy's Hill, There Nathaniel Cardworth's East Sudbury company opened fire. For less than half a mile, the road ran downhill past Samuel Brooks' house to Elm Brook and then made a steep climb and a turn to the left. Here the action became more than a series of isolated skirmishes--this was the beginning of "Bloody Angle," where the pursuing militia and new men from Woburn took cover behind trees on both sides of the road and caught the soldiers between two fires. From there, it was a running fight past the North Lincoln school-house, Joseph Mason's home, the old Hartwell Tavern, and Samuel Hartwell's

house. The soldiers fought desperately to break out of the fatal corridor. Flankers leaped the walls, trying to drive away the swarming provincials, and the action in that wooded angle was unmatched in ferocity until the British reached Menotomy late in the afternoon. The next day, old Ephraim Hartwell, whose sons John and Samuel were Lincoln minute men, gathered up British dead and hauled them in his wagon to the Lincoln burying ground. Others were interred alongside the road.

More militia joined the fight that continued sporadically along the road past the home of Lincoln Minute Company commander Capt. William Smith.

One of Smith's men, William Thorning, concealed himself in a meadow where the road curved northward near the Lexington-Lincoln town line. From his hiding place, he got off a shot or two at soldiers, who returned the fire and chased him from cover. The minute man ran for his life as the flankers opened fire. Diving into a ditch, he eluded his pursuers, and after they passed on, he took cover behind a boulder on Josiah Nelson's land and killed two soldiers.

A little further east, a soldier was killed as he emerged from looting Thomas Nelson's house. Morale and discipline, always precarious, ⁱⁿirregular combat, was breaking down among Colonel Smith's troops.

As the British approached Lexington's town line, they met the same company that faced them that morning on the Green. Capt. John Parker's men were back in the fight, but now they did not stand alone. Capt. Samuel ^WButcher's Cambridge company was there too. But for a brief time, the soldiers had some relief from their tormenters because the land bordering the road did not afford cover for the colonists. Then the road reached a bluff and ran along its base for about 600 feet--600 feet of death for the soldiers if the Americans should occupy the ridge. A party of troops went up the bluff to face militiamen crossing Jacob Wittemore's fields. The Rev. Edmund Foster from Bedford described the action:

When we had advanced near Benjamin's tavern, a man rode up on horseback, but unarmed. The enemy were there passing round the hill just below the tavern. They had posted a small body of thin troops on the north side of the hill, which fired upon us. The horse and rider fell instantly to the ground; the horse died immediately, but the man received no injury. We were quickly at the spot, from which we returned the fire. The enemy were then rising and passing over Fiske's hill.

After leaving the bluff, the road turned eastward and began to climb Fiske Hill. It was mid-afternoon when the nearly exhausted and almost completely demoralized soldiers reached its western slope. Colonel Smith had been shot in a leg; but because being on horseback made ^{HIM} too conspicuous a target, he limped along on foot. Active direction devolved upon Major Pitcairne, who tried to rally the men as they climbed the hill. As he rode among the men, Americans fired on him. His frightened horse threw the major and dashed away to the enemy with Pitcairne's pistols still in their saddle holsters. General Israel Putnam used the pistols throughout the war, and the horse was sold at auction. The attempt to rally the regulars failed, and they retreated over the creast of the hill and down its eastern slope past Ebenezer Fiske's, where some of the wounded were carried into the house. A soldier who lingered too long encountered James Hayward at Fiske's well. Both men fired; the soldier died immediately and Hayward soon after.

By the time the British reentered Lexington, their situation was desperate. Ensign Henry de ^{SERRIERE} ~~Benoire~~ of the 10th Regiment recorded:

All the hills on each side of us were covered with rebels . . . so that they kept the road always lined, and a very hot fire on us without intermission; we, at first, kept our order and returned their fire as hot as we received it, but when we arrived within a mile of Lexington, our ammunition began to fail, and the eight [light infantry] companies were so fatigued with flanking they were scarcely able to act, and a great number of the wounded scarcely able to get forward, made a great confusion. Colonel Smith (our commanding officer) had received a wound through his leg, a number of officers were also wounded, so that we began to run rather than retreat in order--the whole behaved with amazing bravery, but little order; we attempted to stop the men and form them two deep, but to no purpose, the confusion increased rather than lessened. At last, after we got through Lexington, the officers got to the front and presented their bayonets, and told the men that if they advanced they would die! Upon this, they began to form under a very heavy fire.

Thus, the troops staggered past Lexington Green and onto the road to Cambridge. Just when it seemed that they could go no further, a cannon roared and a ball crashed into the meeting house. Hugh, Earl Percy, had arrived with the relief column that General Gage had sent out at 9:00 a.m. after he realized that the secret of his Concord expedition was out and the countryside was aroused. After an 7-hour march, Percy's column entered Lexington from the east as Smith's arrived from the west.

After a half hour's rest, Smith's men reformed under the protection of the fresh troops and began the march back to Boston. Although the Americans kept their distance while the British reformed, they now renewed the attack, reinforced by still more newly arrived companies. The colonials also began to have a semblance of military order and command because Maj. Gen. William Heath had arrived from Roxbury.

The British did their most effective fighting on the march from Lexington as flankers drove colonials from the cover of houses and walls. At Menotomy Percy set up his field pieces, reformed his flankers, and held off the increasingly numerous militia from the towns around Boston. For four hours the regulars marched and fought under an almost constant galling fire until, at 8:00 p.m., Percy got his brigade and its beaten charges on to the hills of Charlestown and under the protection of the 64-gun Somerset.

The nineteenth of April was over. Seventy-three of the King's soldiers and 49 Americans had died. Two hundred thirteen--174 British and 39 Americans--were wounded; 26 soldiers and 5 colonials were missing. Thus, British casualties totaled approximately 20 percent, while the American losses number between two and two and half percent.

Chapter VI

EPILOGUE

The events of April 19 did not present a flattering picture of Anglo-American military competence. While Gage's strategic objective was defensible, given the delicate political and military situation, his headquarters' execution of its staff duties was inexcusable. Lieutenant Colonel Smith was a poor choice to command an expedition that required speed, initiative, and discretion. The junior officers were often unfamiliar with their men they commanded; they frequently did not know what to do, and what they did was done badly. Pitcairn conducted himself with intelligence and courage, but he was a marine officer commanding soldiers to whom he was almost a stranger. The performance of the soldiers, especially the light infantry upon ^{whose} ~~who~~ effectiveness success depended, was a disgrace to their service. They were disobedient and hysterical, alike in success and adversity. Yet they displayed a pathetic courage when, weary from a long march and caught in a situation for which they were untrained by an enemy that outnumbered them by almost five to one, they marched and fought for five miles before they ran. Once under the competent command of

Lord Percy and reinforced by their fellow-solders, the men who marched to Concord showed a soldierly spirit.

For all the fervor and patriotic zeal, the Americans did not achieve a military success commensurate with their numbers and tactical advantage. Fighting without either a strategic objective or unity of command, and with every man his own commander, there was no effective employment of their overwhelming numerical superiority. They did not destroy Smith's force before Percy resumed it, and they failed to cut off the latter's retreat at either the bridge over the Charles or at Charlestown Neck. The quality of their marksmanship was so poor that ^{an} estimated 300 shots were fired for every man hit—only one person in 15 hit anyone.

Although the "battle" was militarily unimpressive, its political significance was immediate and far-reaching. One immediate result was the isolation in Boston of General Gage's army, ending even the shadow of imperial government in the colony. More important was the unifying effect that the day had, first upon Massachusetts and eventually upon all the older English colonies.

The revolutionary leadership acted with consummate skill during the days following the 19th. Samuel Adams and John Hancock left for Philadelphia to attend the scheduled meeting to the Continental Congress, which now became a national revolutionary forum. Political exploitation of the events of April 19 came under the direction of Dr. Joseph Warren, who proved to be an most effective propagandist. This protégé of Sam Adams had twice delivered Boston Massacre anniversary orations in which he turned waterfront toughs into martyrs. Now he had better material with which to work. The men who fell on Lexington Green, at North Bridge, and along the Battle Road were sober, upright Yankees who had fallen in defense of their homes--not in a city street riot. While Artemas Ward and the militia general were setting up headquarters in Cambridge, Warren established a kind of civilian counterpart and within less than 24 hours wrote the first circular on Lexington and Concord and sent it out to the other towns in the province. His account read:

Gentlemen - The barbarous murders committed on our innocent brethren, on Wednesday, the 19th instant, have made it absolutely necessary that we immediately raise an army to defend our wives and children from the butchering hands of an inhuman soldiery who, incensed at the obstacles they met in their bloody progress, and enraged at being repulsed from the field of slaughter, will, without the least doubt, take the first opportunity in their power to ravage this devoted country with fire and sword. We conjure you, therefore, by all that is dear, by all that is sacred, that you give all assistance possible in forming an army. Our all is at stake. Death and devastation are the instant consequences of delay. Every moment is infinitely precious. An hour lost may deluge our country in blood and entail perpetual slavery upon the few of your posterity who may survive the carnage. We beg and entreat, as you will answer to God, himself, that you will hasten and encourage by all possible means the enlistment of men to form the army, and send them forward to headquarters, at Cambridge, with that expedition which the vast importnace of the affair demand.

This circular contained no facts, gave no names, and cited no statistics. Its purpose was to arouse, not enlighten; and it was worded in a way that would confirm every rumor, exaggeration, and deliberate falsehood, and put them to work to achieve one great objective. That objective was the same one that had engaged Sam Adams' energies since Massachusetts' First Provincial Congress had assembled in October 1774 ^{and} that was failing as the Second Congress came to a halfhearted close at Concord less than a week earlier: the raising of a provincial army.

Atrocity stories spread throughout the colonies and to Britain. Tales of women, children, invalids, and old men abused, tortured, and killed; wholesale looting and burning; and soldiers sweeping the countryside in a mad career of murder and pillage were eagerly believed, expanded, and passed on. The facts were different. No women and children ^{WERE} even so much as slapped by a soldier. No one was killed in any house in Concord or Lexington. Except for a very few felled by random shots, every person wounded or killed was actively engaged in the fight; and the only old man killed was 79-year-old Deacon Josiah Haynes of Sudbury, who was enthusiastically shooting at the soldiers when he was shot down. But patriotism outdistanced facts, and Dr. Warren and his circular succeeded.

An army sprang into being overnight as a steady stream of men came from as far as 100 miles away and set up camp in Harvard Yard at Cambridge, most them arriving during the 20th. Gen. Artemas Ward took over the command from William Heath; and some 20,000 colonials laid seige to 4,000 British soldiers in Boston.

The Massachusetts Committee of Safety, with Warren at its head, had its army. But until it was organized and a functioning administrative system established, its 20,000 men were little more than a mob. Most of the men had marched to Cambridge in response to an immediate and specific alarm, not to join an army. They came unprepared for extended service. ~~They had now~~ **NOW THEY HAD** to be organized, fed, sheltered, and subjected to a political authority. The Committee immediately moved to ~~impose~~ **IMPOSE** the Colony's authority, insure that the militiamen would remain in service, and to cull out those who could or should not undertake unlimited service.

On the 21st the Committee adopted an enlistment form that dealt with both length of service and political authority by promulgating an oath that read:

I, A. B. do solemnly engage and enlist myself as a soldier in the Massachusetts service, from the day of my enlistment to the last day of December next, unless the service should admit to a discharge of a part or the whole sooner, which shall be at the discretion of the Committee of Safety; and I thenby promise to submit myself to all the orders and regulations of the Army, and faithfully to observe and obey all such orders as I shall receive from any superior officer.

To create a manageable force out of the mass of militiamen, the Committee passed a resolution that established an 8,000 man army organized into regiments of nine companies each.

The Committee of Safety's parent body, the Provincial Congress, met in Concord on the 22nd and adjourned to Watertown to be near its new army. Dr. Warren was elected president in Hancock's absence, and he immediately turned his attention to producing an account of the battle of the 19th that would prove that the colonists were innocent, honorable victims of the royal troops' ruthless, inhuman aggressiveness. It was important that this be accomplished before General Gage and his subordinates could get their version before the public. To that end, Congress appointed a committee to take depositions "from which a full account of the transactions of the troops under General Gage, in their route to and from Concord, &c., on Wednesday last, may be collected." On the 23rd it appointed members of another committee to prepare the official narrative of the events of the 19th.

The depositions committee wasted no time. It was in Lexington on the 23rd, and during the next three days, it

interviewed 97 persons and collected 21 sworn accounts. Some of these sworn statements were made by individuals, others by groups numbering from four to 40. They were terse, rather undramatic, devoid of atrocity stories, and followed a single theme; the British had fired the first shots at both Lexington and Concord. On this point every deponent was explicit, including some who could not have had firsthand knowledge. The committee delivered the depositions to the Congress on the 26th, but the committee charged with composing the official narrative had already completed its assignment.

The chairman of the narrative committee was Dr. Benjamin Church, the vocally patriotic, double-dealing member of the Congress who had so accurately reported its secrets, including the location of the colonial supplies, to General Gage. The story that the doctor and his committee prepared was very different from the depositions--emotional, accusatory, and abounding in atrocities committed against women in "child-bed" and helpless old men. The British retreat was described as an orgy of plundering and arson. Nowhere in this official account was there a reference to colonial military action. Captain Parkers' company on Lexington Green was a "small body

of inhabitants." The parade of Concord minute men along the Lexington road accompanied by music of fife and drum "to meet the British" was ignored; and the 400 men who marched to the North Bridge were "some inhabitants of Concord and adjacent towns, who were collected upon a bridge." When the colonists "assumed their native valor" and fought the soldiers, they acted individually without reference to any military organization.

Even a cursory examination of the Congress's official narrative reveals its cavalier treatment of the facts. No women and children were abused by British soldiers that day. The "aged men" who participated in the fighting were as aggressive as their younger comrades, and the only unarmed "aged men" killed were 43-year old Jason Winship and 39-year old Jabez Wyman who were drinking in Benjamin Cooper's^o tavern. American snipers had been active in the neighborhood, and soldiers entered the tavern to clear it. The Coopers took refuge in the cellar, but their patrons were shot while trying to flee. According to returns filed with the Provincial Congress, three houses were burned--all of them in Lexington where Lord Percy reformed the column for the retreat to Charlestown--and all had been vacated. Looting was physically limited

by the circumstances under which the tired, hard pressed soldiers had neither leisure nor strength to indulge in wholesale plundering. The findings of the Congress's committee to survey the "damage done at Cambridge, Lexington and Concord" estimated the total, including the three houses burned at Lexington at slightly more than £3,000, and most of the claimants were not conservative in estimating the value of their losses.

The official narrative was broadcast throughout the Colonies. Couriers carried the word southward down the coast, and within less than a week, newspapers from Massachusetts to Georgia published their stories, borrowing liberally from one another and enlivening their accounts with apocryphal details of atrocities. Headlines trumpeted the news that a murderous, pillaging soldiery had set upon unresisting, law-abiding citizens. Isaiah Thomas' Massachusetts Spy press, recently moved from Boston to Worcester, issued a broadside that a score of papers throughout the Colonies reprinted.

AMERICANS! forever bear in mind the BATTLE OF LEXINGTON - where British Troops, unmolested unprovoked, want only and in a most inhuman manner fired upon and killed a number of our countrymen, then robbed them of their provisions, ransacked, plundered and burned their houses! NOR could the

tears of defenseless women, some of whom were in the pains of childbirth, and the cries of innocent babes, nor the prayers of old age, confined to beds of sickness, appease their thirst for blood - or divert them from their DESIGN of MURDER and ROBBERY!

Dr. Warren's horizons were not limited to North America. Viewing the outbreak of hostilities as the beginning of a civil war between loyal citizens and an usurping Government, he believed it important to give his fellow subjects in Great Britain the colonist's version of April 19 before General Gage's report reached London.

Wealthy Salem merchant Richard Derby owned a fast schooner, the Quero, and the Congress commissioned it to carry the official narrative letter, copies of the depositions, and letters of instructions to Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee, colonial agents in London. Capt. John Derby sailed his father's ship out of Salem harbor during the night of April 28. One month later, on May 28, he reached London. Copies of the narrative and depositions were quickly made and the originals placed in the custody of the radical Lord Mayor of London, John Wilkes. Within days, the American version of the Battle of Lexington and Concord was widely circulated throughout the United Kingdom.

During the first two weeks of June, other ships from America brought oral confirmation of the news of the events of April 19th. Finally, two weeks after the Querro's arrival at the Isle of Wight, Gage's report arrived on the packet Sukey. By that time, the Americans had achieved a propaganda success that the Government was never quite able to negate.

The American's effective use of the events of April 19th was the real victory of Lexington and Concord. The quiet New England villages were suddenly a symbol that united England's old North American colonies in the cause that produced a new nation.

NOTES ON SOURCES

Because of the large volume of sources and secondary literature on the subject, these notes will be very selective. Among the numerous studies that analyze the development of Anglo-American discord between 1763 and 1775 are several that make especially valuable contributions to an understanding of that development. Among these are the following: George L. Beer and Charles M. Andrews, The Colonial Background of the American Revolution (New Haven, 1924) a study that is sympathetic to the British problems. A more colonialcentric study is Merrill Jensen's The Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1776 (New York, 1968). Arthur M. Schlesinger, Senior's The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution (New York, 1918) and Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain (New York, 1958) and Bernard Bailyn's The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) and Pamphlets of the American Revolution (1 vol. to date, Cambridge, Mass., 1965) are important interpretive sources. Gordon S. Wood's The Creation of the American Republic (Chapel Hill, 1969), Clinton Rossiter's Seedtime of the Republic: The Origins of the American Tradition of Political Liberty

(New York, 1953), Caroline Robbins' The Eighteenth Century Commonwealth (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), H. Trevor Colborn's The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1965), Esmond Wright's Fabric of Freedom, 1763-1789 (Chicago, 1956), Dan Lacey's The Meaning of the American Revolution (New York, 1964), Richard B. Morris's The American Revolution Reconsidered (New York, 1967), and Jack P. Greene's The Reappraisal of the American Revolution in Recent Historical Literature (Washington, D. C., 1967), make especially valuable contributions to understanding the philosophical backgrounds of the Revolution.

Studies of British colonial policy include: Sir Lewis Namier's The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (2 vols., London, 1929) and England in the Age of the American Revolution (London, 1930), Fred J. Hinkhouse's The Preliminaries of the American Revolution as Seen in the English Press, 1763-1775 (New York, 1926), Charles R. Ritcheson's British Politics and the American Revolution (Norman, Okla., 1954), and J. Steven Watson's The Reign of George III, 1760-1815 (Oxford, 1960).

Specialized works that help illuminate the prewar story and are especially useful in understanding the situation in New England are: Oliver M. Dickerson's The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution (Philadelphia, 1951), Bernard Knollenberg, Origin of the American Revolution, 1759-1766 (New York, 1960), Thomas C. Barrow's Trade and Empire: The British Customs Service in Colonial America, 1660-1775 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), Carl Ubbelohde's The Vice-Admiralty Courts and the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1960), Edmund S. and Hellen M. Morgan's The Stamp Act Crisis (Chapel Hill, 1953), Benjamin W. Labaree's The Boston Tea Party (New York, 1964), ~~Harold~~ ^{HINER} B. Zobel's The Boston Massacre (New York, 1970), Richard D. Brown's Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts: The Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Towns, 1772-1774 (Cambridge, Mass., 1970). John Shy's Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution (Princeton, 1965) is an extremely valuable study.

For the account of the events of April 19, 1775, the following primary sources are basic: The original depositions taken by the Provincial Congress during the period April 23-25 in Lexington, Concord, and Charlestown, twenty-one in number,

University of Virginia and Harvard College; also published in Force, American Archives, II, 487-501. Ten depositions taken in 1825, printed in Elias Phinney's History of the Battle of Lexington (1825). Lt. John Barker's Diary, in Elizabeth E. Dana, ed., The British in Boston (Boston, 1924). Barrett Amos's "Concord and Lexington Battle" in Henry True, Journals and Letters (Marion, Ohio, 1906). ^{HENRE} ~~Henri~~ De Berniere's Narrative of Occurrences, 1775 in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, IV, 204 ff. Percy Papers, Alnwick MSS, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland, England. Secondary works of special value are John Richard Alden's General Gage in America (Baton Rouge, 1948); Alden French's three pioneer studies: General Gage's Informers (Ann Arbor, 1932), Day of Lexington and Concord (Boston, 1925), and The First Year of the Revolution; Harold Murdock's The Nineteenth of April, 1775 (Boston, 1923); and Arthur B. Tourtellot Lexington and Concord (New York, 1959).